



Analyzing Influence of Media and Society on Public Opinion Formation: A Content Analysis

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Introduction

"The media's the most powerful entity on earth. They have the power to make the innocent guilty and to make the guilty innocent, and that's power. Because they control the minds of the masses."

Malcolm X

Even as human rights activist Malcolm X talked about the power that the media wield in society and stated that the various platforms of media 'controlled' minds of the common people, well known director Nicolas Winding Refn was not far off the mark when he said 'cinema is mass media, it is both overtly gross and exciting. It is our great mirror of society'.

In fact there is no doubt in saying that since time immemorial as humanity evolved into civilizational culture, there have various sources of communication within the communities. What's more, these sources of communication have been tapped by opinion makers and pollsters to formulate, change and impact public opinion for their own vested interested. Moreover, in media studies, mass communication, communication theories, media psychology, sociology etc media influence and media effect have been dominant subjects of public discourse. These subjects have discussed that how media culture affects individuals and audiences habits, thoughts. Attitudes and various behaviors. Through the channels of the written word, televised and audio presentations, films watching, spoken channels, mass media have in their grasp a large chunk of audience, listeners and viewers and 'Media influence is the actual force exerted by a media message, resulting in either a change or reinforcement in audience or individual beliefs. Whether a media message has an effect on any of its audience members is contingent on many factors, including

audience demographics and psychological characteristics. These effects can be positive or negative, abrupt or gradual, short-term or long-lasting. Not all effects result in change; some media messages reinforce an existing belief. Researchers examine an audience after media exposure for changes in cognition, belief systems, and attitudes, as well as emotional, physiological and behavioral effects'. These influences that impact public opinion can be seen in myriad aspects of human life, right from voting behavioral patterns to perceptions of violence, from evaluations of scientists to one's understanding of others' opinions etc. ^{[1][2][3]}

Understanding public opinion

At this juncture it is also important to comprehend what is public opinion and historically how it has been formulated? The Britannica states that public opinion is, "An aggregate of the individual views, attitudes, and beliefs about a particular topic, expressed by a significant proportion of a community. Some scholars treat the aggregate as a synthesis of the views of all or a certain segment of society; others regard it as a collection of many differing or opposing views. Writing in 1918, the American sociologist Charles Horton Cooley emphasized public opinion as a process of interaction and mutual influence rather than a state of broad agreement. The American political scientist V.O. Key defined public opinion in 1961 as "opinions held by private persons which governments find it prudent to heed." Subsequent advances in statistical and demographic analysis led by the 1990s to an understanding of public opinion as the collective view of a defined population, such as a particular demographic or ethnic group. The influence of public opinion is not restricted to politics and elections. It is a powerful force in many other spheres, such as culture, fashion, literature and the arts, consumer spending, and marketing and public relations."

In fact it is not surprising to note that famed American editorialist Walter Lippman said 'there have been skilled organizers of opinion who understood the mystery well enough to create majorities on election day'. Therefore, it can be assessed that even as public opinion has been accepted as a reality that exists in today's era, there is a lot of variety in the way public opinion is defined, reflecting in large measure the different perspectives from which scholars have approached the subject. Contrasting understandings of public opinion have taken shape over the centuries, especially as

new methods of measuring public opinion have been applied to politics, commerce, religion, and social activism.

In fact historically speaking, in the Western part of the world, public opinion as a term was not used until the 18th century. But there is no denying that similar phenomena had occurred in the past. The Britannica states that, "The ancient histories of Babylonia and Assyria, for example, contain references to popular attitudes, including the legend of a caliph who would disguise himself and mingle with the people to hear what they said about his governance. The prophets of ancient Israel sometimes justified the policies of the government to the people and sometimes appealed to the people to oppose the government. In both cases, they were concerned with swaying the opinion of the crowd. And in the classical democracy of Athens, it was commonly observed that everything depended on the people, and the people were dependent on the word. Wealth, fame, and respect-all could be given or taken away by persuading the populace. By contrast Plato found little of value in public opinion, since he believed that society should be governed by philosopher-kings whose wisdom far exceeded the knowledge and intellectual capabilities of the general population. And while Aristotle stated that "he who loses the support of the people is a king no longer," the public he had in mind was a very select group, being limited to free adult male citizens; in the Athens of his time, the voting population probably represented only 10 to 15 percent of the city's population." Additionally, even in the Middle Ages, the Britannica adds that 'the traditional rural European societies of the Middle Ages, most people's activities and attitudes were dictated by their social stations. Phenomena much like public opinion, however, could still be observed among the religious, intellectual, and political elite. Religious disputations, the struggles between popes and the Holy Roman Empire, and the dynastic ambitions of princes all involved efforts to persuade, to create a following, and to line up the opinions of those who counted'. The propaganda battles between emperors and popes were waged largely through sermons, but handwritten literature also played a part. Even as education started increasing among the lay people, public opinion also gathered steam. Even as Italian political philosopher Niccolò Machiavelli, a contemporary of Aretino, wrote that princes should not ignore popular opinion, particularly in regard to such matters as the distribution of offices, it is noteworthy that origin of the word *propaganda* came about due to the the Roman Catholic

Church's missionary organization Congregatio de Propaganda Fide (Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith). What added to the spread of public opinion was the invention of printing from movable type in the 15th century and the Protestant Reformation in the 16th further increased the numbers of people able to hold and express informed opinions on contemporary issues. Further, with passage of time public opinion was popularized by Jacques Necker in France who repeatedly said in his writings that public credit depended upon the opinions of holders and buyers of government securities about the viability of the royal administration. For him, the people who collectively shaped public opinion were those who could read and write, who lived in cities, who kept up with the day's news, and who had money to buy government securities. As progression took place in the 20th century, various theories of public opinion were developed. The Britannica states that 'According to a framework suggested by the Canadian communications theorist Sherry Devereux Ferguson, most of them fall into one or the other of three general categories. Some theories proposed in the first half of the 20th century treat public opinion as a welling up from the bottom levels of society to the top, ensuring a two-way flow of communication between representatives and the represented. This "populist" approach acknowledges the tendency of public opinion to shift as individuals interact with each other or respond to media influences. It has been opposed by theories of the "elitist" or social constructionist category, which emphasize the manipulative aspects of communication and recognize the multiplicity of perspectives that tend to form around any issue. Reflecting a more pessimistic outlook, theories belonging to a third category, known as critical or radical-functionalist, hold that the general public including minority groups has negligible influence on public opinion, which is largely controlled by those in power'.

And given this background of the West, Indian public opinion is also no different. Right from the British era to the modern day, Indians have been formulating public opinion and as the media platforms open up, public opinion in Indian democracy also gets formulated.

Impact of media on public opinion

It is a well-known fact that as the formats of media have changes over the decades, their overall impact on public opinion have also changed. And as it will

continue to do so, it can be said that in the new media environment, there are dual identities - consumers and creators. Not only people obtain information through new media, but also disseminate information to wide audiences. And the impact of media on children is also profound.

In fact historically speaking, as media platforms developed, their impact on formulating public opinion also changed with time. According to various media experts, "During the early 20th century, developing mass media technologies, such as radio and film, were credited with an almost irresistible power to mold an audience's beliefs, cognition, and behaviors according to the communicators' will. The basic assumption of strong media effects theory was that audiences were passive and homogeneous. This assumption was not based on empirical evidence but instead on assumptions of human nature. There were two main explanations for this perception of mass media effects. First, mass broadcasting technologies were acquiring a widespread audience, even among average households. People were astonished by the speed of information dissemination, which may have clouded audience perception of any media effects. Secondly, propaganda techniques were implemented during war time by several governments as a powerful tool for uniting their people. This propaganda exemplified strong-effect communication. Early media effects research often focused on the power of this propaganda. Combining through the technological and social environment, early media effects theories stated that the mass media were all-powerful." Additionally, experts state that representative theories like the hypodermic needle model considered the audience to be targets of an injection or bullet of information fired from the pistol of mass media. The audience are unable to avoid or resist the injection or bullets. The effects of the magic bullet were direct, uniform, and powerful. ^[4]

In fact, experts claim that 'starting in the 1930s, the second phase of media effects studies instituted the importance of empirical research while introducing the complex nature of media effects due to the idiosyncratic nature of individuals in an audience. The Payne Fund studies, conducted in the United States during this period, focused on the effect of media on young people. Many other separate studies focused on persuasion effects studies, or the possibilities and usage of planned persuasion in film and other media. Hovland et al. (1949) conducted a series of experimental studies to

evaluate the effects of using films to indoctrinate American military recruits.” And researchers found lots of ‘empirical evidence of the idiosyncratic nature of media effects on individuals and audiences, identifying numerous intervening variables such as demographic attributes, social psychological factors, political interest, and different media use behaviors. With these new variables added to research, it was difficult to isolate media influence that resulted in any media effects to an audience's cognition, attitude, and behavior. As Berelson (1959)^[5] summed up in a widely quoted conclusion: "Some kinds of communication on some kinds of issues have brought to the attention of some kinds of people under some kinds of conditions have some kinds of effect. Though the concept of an all-powerful mass media was diluted, this did not determine that the media lacked influence or effect. Instead, the pre-existing structure of social relationships and cultural contexts were believed to primarily shape or change people's opinions, attitudes, and behaviors, and media merely function within these established processes. This complexity had a dampening effect upon media effects studies’. Even as impact of mass media is to understood on how they formulate public opinion, it is noteworthy to know how mass media operate. Noam Chomsky states that there are five filters through which mass media operate. They are ‘Ownership: At the end of the day, mass media firms are big corporations trying to make profit so most of their articles are going to be whatever makes them the most money; Advertising: Since mass media costs a lot more than what most consumers are willing to pay, media corporations are in a deficit. In order to fill this gap, advertisers are used. While the media is being sold to consumers, those consumers are, in effect, being "sold" to advertisers; The Media Elite: By its nature, journalism cannot be completely regulated, so it allows corruption by governments, corporations, and large institutions that know how to "game the system"; Flak: It is difficult for a journalist to stray from the consensus because the journalist will get "flak". When a story does not align with the narrative of a power, the power will try discrediting sources, trashing stories, and trying to distract readers; The Common Enemy: Creating a common enemy for audiences to rally against unifies public opinion’.

In fact, in the 1950s and 60s, TV consumption ‘indicated its unprecedented power on social lives. Meanwhile, researchers also realized that early investigations, relying heavily on psychological models, were narrowly focused on only short-term and

immediate effects. The "stimuli-reaction" model introduced the possibility of profound long-term media effects. A shift from short-term to long-term effect studies marked the renewal of media effects research. More attention was paid to collective cultural patterns, definitions of social reality, ideology, and institutional behavior. Though audiences were still considered in control of the selection of media messages they consumed, "the way media select, process and shape content for their own purposes can have a strong influence on how it is received and interpreted and thus on longer-term consequence".

While impacting public opinion, new research on effects of individual or group behavior in computer mediated eco-system has also shown that in early 1970s, 'the social interactions and impressions that CMC partners formed of each other, given the restrictive characteristics of CMC such as the anonymity and lack of nonverbal (auditory or visual) cues'. What this indicated was that 'New media and web technologies, including social media, are forcing communication scholars to rethink traditional effects models (Bennett and Iyengar, 2008). With changing media environments and evolving audience behaviors, some argue that the current paradigm for media effects research is a preference-based effects model. This model is called preference-based reinforcement because the increasingly fragmented online news environment matches content with audiences based on their existing beliefs and preferences. This is driven by three phenomena: Media outlets have become increasingly tailored towards narrow ideological fragmented publics in order to create more lucrative advertising environments. Individuals rely on self-selected information consistent with their prior beliefs aggregated into personalized feeds, called echo chambers or filter bubbles and new media interfaces, such as tailored results from search engines, lead to narrow information tailoring by both voluntary and involuntary user input'.

While impacting public opinion, there is no denying that media's role is bigger than it has ever been. Experts says that 'the best part is that media is still growing and influencing our lives as the days go by. The media plays a central role in informing the public about what happens in the world. People rely on media such as television, the press and online to get news and updates. Anyone can now find out almost anything they want to know by the click of a button on their smartphone or tablet.

However, with how intoxicating the media is today, it does tend to have the power to shape public opinion, especially over major topics such as education and religion. The role of the media is to transmit the reality and uncover the underlying facts of things. Changing the mentality of the people through media to be more permissive, understanding and educative is a very difficult task. Audiences form their beliefs and attitudes, either by themselves or with others, in response to media messages. The level of influence of media varies, however, and messages from the media are not received uniformly by all audiences’.

Experts say that ‘Direct experience, knowledge from other sources and logic are a few factors that contribute to the degree to which audiences accept or reject messages from the media. The media has a massive responsibility in providing factual coverage that does not perpetuate myths or stereotypes, encourage generalizations or spread misinformation. The agenda-setting theory is the primary emphasis on shaping public opinion. Pertaining to the news, there has been a phenomenal nationwide decrease in local news networks and papers and an increase in national news networks and papers. If a news item is covered more frequently, especially on national news, the audience will regard the issue as more important’.

In fact Lumen Learning states that “Two basic assumptions underlie most research on agenda-setting: One, that the press and the media do not reflect reality, they filter and shape it; and two, that media concentration on a few issues and subjects leads the public to perceive those issues as more important than other issues.” Agenda-setting occurs through a cognitive process known as “accessibility.” Accessibility implies that the more frequently and prominently the news media cover an issue, the more instances that issue becomes accessible in the audience’s memories. Mass media coverage in general and agenda-setting in particular have a powerful impact on what individuals think other people are thinking as well. The agenda-setting theory has a huge effect on shaping public education because a majority of parents have very strong opinions about where their child gets their education. Parents will pick schools for their children based on a number of factors: sports, religion, theater, teachers, reputation, etc. Pertaining to public versus private school, parents also tend to favor one over the other depending on where they themselves went to school. If they hear bad news about one school or about an outbreak of sickness on some national news

media, parents will be quick to form their opinions about certain schools. Especially since everything is online now, parents can see anything positive or negative about a school.”

The Fourth Pillar of Democracy

Even as media is the fourth pillar of democracy, the other three Legislature, Executive, and Judiciary keep a system of checks of balances to keep the wheels of society running. Similarly, media also keeps a check on the functioning of the three independent organs of government to keep the system intact. According to Dhritiyadav 18 in article ‘Public Opinion and Role of Media’, the writer states that ‘The role of media is to ensure that the people are aware of the social, economic, political developments taking place around them. In performing its role in spreading information, media also plays a pivotal function in creating public opinion. It holds significance in a democracy as a positive public’. Explaining how media affect public opinion, the author states that ‘public opinion is nothing but an amalgamation of opinions, views, beliefs, and attitudes of individuals which can be on a particular subject matter, voiced by a comparatively significant segment of the society.

Human nature is such that it makes them eager to know about their surroundings, the tendency of being informed, such an atypical nature makes them prone to relying upon and getting influenced by the information that they receive without critically thinking about the authenticity of the information. It can be observed that sometimes the information providers not only tell the bare information but also state their opinion along with it. Mass Media including news channels, internet (social media), newspapers, etc. have the power of changing people's perspectives on an issue in hand. All such instances combined help in the formation of public opinion, depending on the authenticity of the news and how the people wish to interpret it. Public opinion matters as with the help of public opinion, several policy decisions can be taken by the government. In a democracy, government policies and programs are people-centric and to know whether the government can create the desired impact through its actions, public opinion is necessary. Mass media works as a medium between the government and the public. Its function is to provide the people with information for them to form an opinion based on the piece of information’.

Elaborating the point with an illustration, the writer says 'The media coverage that was received by Anna Hazare brought the issue of corruption into the limelight. Anna's support to the Lokpal Bill reached masses which helped in the formation of public opinion so as to fight against corruption. Thus, creating awareness is the primary task in the hands of media to make the public capable of forming some sort of opinion because to form an opinion on a particular issue it is vital to be aware of what is going in and around the society'. Elaborating further, the writer also says that the concept of trial by media or 'jantaadalat' has now sought to interfere with court proceedings. "Not only the press but social networking sites like Facebook, Instagram, X, etc. have their own share of the role that they play in passing their own verdict. Even if an accused gets acquitted from the court but the amount of trolling that is received by the person on these networking sites is in itself enough to defame him/her and once that is done even if the person gets an order of acquittal still social bullying not only cause mental trauma but also tarnishes one's reputation... Social Media is also a platform to influence public opinion and this act is done by the social media influencers. A social media influencer can be anyone from a celebrity to a blogger who has the credibility to persuade people according to their recommendations. As social media is a platform where anyone and everyone can express their opinions, influencers have the power to shape opinion as well.

For instance, the recent killing of an African-American, George Floyd, by a cop in the USA has gathered the attention of many of the celebrities and this has in turn brought the issue of racism into the forefront yet again. Violent protests are being carried out against police brutalities targeted towards the blacks in the United States. Celebrities in and around America are condemning such practices of the US policy, which has not only helped in shaping public opinion but has also given momentum to the protests," the write adds.

Continuing in the same vein, it is also imperative to understand the impact of digital communication. Rooh Ullah et al state in 'The Role of Mass Media in Shaping Public Opinion' that, 'with the explosion of digital communication technology in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, the question of what forms of media should be classified as mass media became more prominent. For example, it is controversial whether to include cell phones, video games and computer games in the definition. In the 2000s, a classification called the "seven mass media" became popular. In order of

introduction, they were print media, recordings, cinema, radio, television, internet, cell phones. Television is now the most captivating form of mass media that has acclaimed preferences of the masses all around the globe. It has emerged as a pioneer in transmitting information and broadcasting entertainment shows all around the globe. It has now become a basic necessity in life. This shows that the television media has the highest reach to audience and as a result it possesses the greatest power of "social persuasion." Mass media has at times changed the dynamics of the society for the worse. The greatest power of mass media is "Social Persuasion." This is because people buy what they are being told by the Media. In the current world where people are too busy (or too lazy) to verify the news telecasted in the leading media channels & print media believe the mass media completely. Hence media has achieved control over the Value Judgments of the viewers & readers who are not able to distinguish between right and wrong. Media has become the supreme source of information which is held to be true at any cost. Thus it gives license to the people who use mass media personally to shape the opinion of the people and thereby adversely affect the society'. The authors also state that 'Mass media has a prominent role to play in modern society. It can bring about radical changes and improve social situation as it influences our social, civil, cultural, political, economic and aesthetic outlook. Modernization has converted media into an indispensable feature of human activity. However, factors like age, education, economic condition, personal needs and availability of proper components decide the quantum and frequency of media use. This is evident from the fact that most media centers are located in urban areas. The majority of consumers of media products are also concentrated in and around cities and towns. The influence of media on society has been growing fast renewals in the community. Renewal of the intangible changes nothing and there are negative toward the positive direction. Media influence is related to other aspects such as the nature of a communicator, the content information from the media itself, as well as responses from the community. Consciously or unconsciously, people are often influenced by mass media, such as persuading the media to use a particular product or indirectly persuaded to support a particular political ideology or political party. Consciously or unconsciously the mass media has become an important part of community life. Through media we can learn many things that can be made a lesson. News about the events that occurred abroad and domestic to know quickly and easily

through the mass media. This is because the mass media have the ability to deliver information effectively’.

Aeshiti Patel states in article ‘The role of media in shaping public opinion’ that, “The role of media is bigger than it has ever been. The best part is that media is still growing and influencing our lives as the days goes by. The media plays a central role in informing the public about what happens in the world. People rely on media such as television, the press and online to get news and updates. Anyone can now find out almost anything they want to know by the click of a button on their smartphone or tablet. However, with how intoxicating the media is today, it does tend to have the power to shape public opinion, especially over major topics such as education and religion... The influence of media affects the presentation of the reports and issues made in the news that affects the public mind. The news reports make it in a way that when a particular news report is given importance and attention than other news the audience will automatically perceive it as the most important news and information are given to them. Agenda setting occurs through a cognitive process known as “accessibility”. Media provides information which is the most relevant food for thought, portrays the major issues of the society and reflects people minds... Levels of agenda setting theory: First Level: The first level is usually used by the researchers to study media uses and its objectives or the influences that media creates on people and the most proximal thought that people will have on the exposure to the information given by media house. At the second level, the media focuses on how people should think about the nature of the issues. Thus, rationalization of news reports may happen to bring in the interest of the audience. In fact, media wants to grab attention and implant thoughts in people minds about some serious issues. That’s why media turn certain issues viral. Agenda setting theory is used in a political ad, campaigns, business news, PR (public relation) etc. The main concept associated with the theory is gate keeping. Gatekeeping is in charge of and has control of the selection of content discussed in the media. It is assumed that the public cares mostly about the product of a media gatekeeping. Editors are the main gatekeepers of media itself. The news media decides ‘what’ events to broadcast and show through the media ‘gates’ on the basis of ‘newsworthiness’... Media does play an important role in forming perception towards a protest, movement or a policy. Media only highlights the limelight issues and avoids the other side of issues maybe because all media houses are funded and are

held by a strong and powerful political party. Take for instance-The Rafale deal controversy is a political controversy in India related to the purchase of 36 multirole fighter aircraft for a price estimated at €7.8 billion by the Defence Ministry of India from France's Dassault Aviation. All the opposition parties were attacking NDA through a volley of questions and major criticism by the president of India national congress. Instead of stating facts, figures and showing the two sides of the story, the media houses started showing the accusations by two main parties such as that the documents had been stolen," He alleged Ambani got a Rs 30,000 crore offset and this was given to him by Modi. BJP hit back at the Congress, alleging that Gandhi had not read the verdict and leveled false allegations that amount to contempt of the apex court."

Conclusion

In conclusion it can be said that as many media formats and houses are in a rat race to get a TRP position, and get more sponsors, they are now accustoming themselves to publishing prejudiced cum selective opinions, facts and figures. They are not keen on being transparent so that they can have a credible reputation. At the same time, the fourth pillar of democracy is the only one avenue that can sway or impact opinion of the masses.

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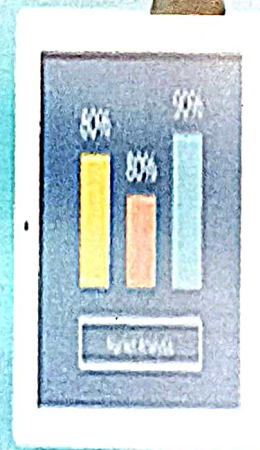
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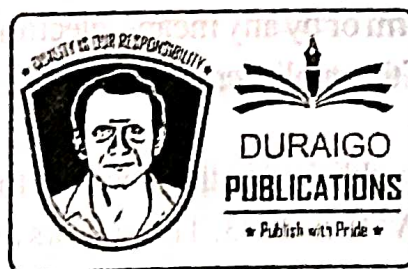
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The Librarian : A Human Asset For Library Science

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Abstract : Historically, as seen over the millennia, libraries have played an important role in not only shaping individuals but also shaping and formulating communities. Whether it be the library of Alexandria, the library of Pergamum, or the Trivandrum Public library or maybe even the New York Public Library, these repositories of knowledge have shaped the world and thoughts of people who live in it. But the question that comes to mind is that although these storehouses of knowledge have empowered individuals and communities, how has it been possible? It has been possible as the human resource manages books and knowledge resources so that repositories can be accessed without impediments. The present study looks at how the human resource factor has adapted to the changing scenario of digitization and instead of being just a helping hand in the library, this human resource is now the information personnel that is the bridge between knowledge provider and recipient.

Keywords: Communities; Knowledge, Repository.

Introduction : *"Librarians are almost always very helpful and often almost absurdly knowledgeable. Their skills are probably very underestimated and largely underemployed."*

Charles Medawar (specialist on medical policy and drug safety, director of a small London-based unit, Social Audit Ltd) in The Social Audit Consumer Handbook: A Guide To The Social Responsibilities Of Business To The Consumer.)

It started with the purpose of sharing information by government researchers in the Sixties. But by the time the last decade of the 20th century approached, that is the Nineties, the phenomenon that we know today as the Internet, had started being used on a macro and commercial level. The advantage that the Net offers is instant communication across large and small distances and at the same time sharing information from any corner of the world and accessing information or facts to any query that one has in moments. In fact hardly has the third decade of the 21st century started that this young concept has already become an institution. Not only Gen Z, millennials, or even Seniors, are caught in its web of enchantment. And with phenomena like ChatGPT or AI adding to the charm, the Internet is the hottest sensation of the decade.

Even as this 'galactic network' of computers becomes a marvel to be admired, the speed of sharing information and receiving responses is astounding. It is this factor, that is the speed, that has added the dimension of fake information, misinformation and disinformation to this otherwise superb technological development.

What needs to be understood is that this false information is spread through 'circular reporting' where one source publishes misinformation and then this news is picked by other news outlets crediting the original source as giving accurate information. The process then perpetuates the cycle. This goes viral because the hallmark of WWW is the large availability of user provided content on online media facilitating aggregation of people around common interests, narratives and global views. And this operation enables the Net to diffuse rumors, unverified information etc.

However, as Verletta Kern says, "In an era of misinformation, libraries can play a key role as a bridge between the community and the academy." Hafijull Mondal adds to this that, "Human resources area unit the foremost important resource in any library as all the opposite resources can be utilised solely by the employees of the library. A significant portion of the budget is typically spent on the employees of the library. So as to produce best services, it's essential to own well trained and extremely motivated employees to form effective use of the resources of the library and to satisfy the strain of the community. The operations of a library need to be a team effort which needs shut operating relationship between all members of library employees. It is thus important that employee's carries out the tasks associated with their skills and qualifications. It is a wasteful use of this scarce resource if extremely qualified library personnel do solely routine or clerical library functions. Similarly, for constant reason, it's not necessary to own a extremely qualified bibliothec in all kinds of libraries in spite of size and alternative activities." [1] [2]

Even as there is a paradigm shift in knowledge sharing as digitization takes place across the globe, there is still no doubt in saying that libraries will still remain repositories of knowledge. For millennia they have been knowledge service providers and that replacement even by the Net is next to impossible. Of course, as information is omnipresent thanks to the Internet, presently it can be said that without service, libraries are almost indistinguishable from museums. Despite information being omnipresent, libraries still hold their own. And their management by the human resource factor, the librarian is also crucial in dissemination of information. In a little bit of context here, it needs to be understood that library and information science is an interdisciplinary study field centring on documentation of knowledge. And the professionals serving in management of libraries are custodians of the printed materials that serve as documentation, records, images and AV materials.

The relevance of the present study is that even as the world gets digitized, the bridge that needs to be built between knowledge provider and receiver is essential and the study has focused on the issue that how libraries and library staff are the major conduits for this passage of knowledge. The human resource element not only needs to look at the physical transfer of knowledge but also how the library collection can be shared via digital tools.

The research has tried to highlight the fact that digital era is here to dominate but the library and its human management resource cannot be dismissed so easily. Even if the Net provides answers for everything, there are still nuggets of information that can only be found in libraries. The present study seeks to look at how the human resource element working in libraries can contribute for organizing, distributing, and preserving information resources for one and all even on the digital platforms.

Objectives

- (i) To assess importance of human resource factor and its management in library science
- (ii) To probe the future of human resource management as in libraries as digitization of information takes place.

Research Methodology & Theoretical framework : The present research is pivoted on secondary resources, both online and offline and then aggregated data has been analysed. The theoretical framework looks at the fact that human resource management is actually a key element in establishing and running the day to day activities of an organization. This resource is all the more important in a library as libraries are academic outfits. They are providers of various types of knowledge and information to different categories of persons. The importance of human resource management in library science that all functions and activities which enhance the standards of a library, which is a resource provider, depends on the effective decision making, implementation and evaluation of functions of the library by the human resource working there.

Discussion : At the onset it is important to understand what is human resource factor. KA Swathappa says that 'human resource management refers to a self of programmes, functions and activities designed and carried out in order to maximize both employees as well as organizational effectiveness'. [3] Explained in other words, human resource management is not just simply where employees come to workplace and work. Human resource management can be described as that type management with human and social implications of the changes being carried out internally in organizations with maximum benefits to the organization.

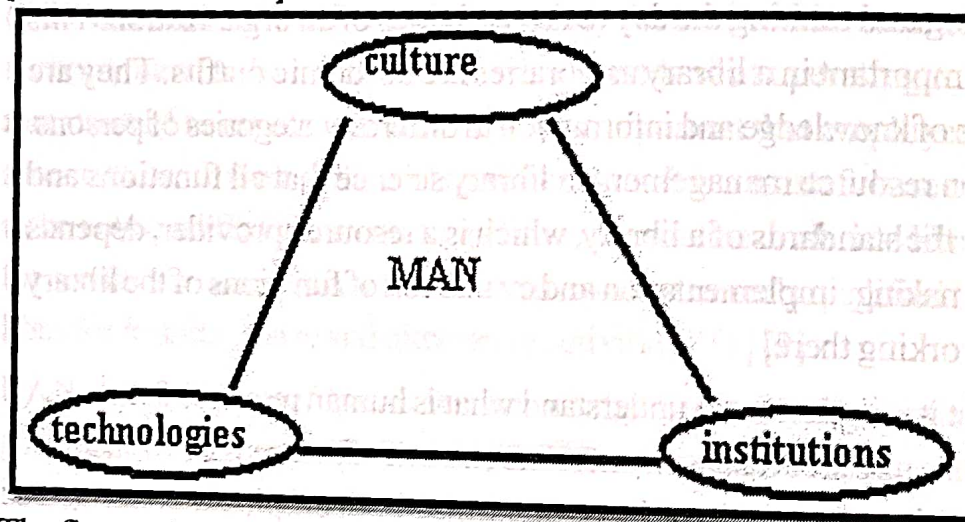
As digitization starts taking place in libraries, the model of data capacity, data recovery, securing, cataloguing and classification, circulation of material, serials control, administration insights and authoritative exercises such as budgeting etc have all started changing as information and communication technology becomes prominent. Therefore administering the human asset also becomes vitally important. "Data innovation has changed the complete world into a worldwide know with a global economy, which is expanding subordinate on the inventive administration and dispersion of data. Presently, within the 21st century, the age of knowledge and information is in its libraries... Application of ICT in libraries has helped librarians and information specialists, and researchers to improve their information

products and services through enhanced search outcomes in terms of specificities of documents retrieval, provision/ dissemination in use of requisite information retrieved or generated. ICT has become an important field for all information professionals; this is because of perceived relevance, and practical applications to tasks in libraries and information centres Management is the process of deciding how best to use a business's resources to produce goods or provide services. A business's resources include its employees, equipment, and money. (Soe, 2020)."

While focusing on the human factor, it is to be understood that research on human centred perspectives is a holistic approach of both individual and social spheres. However, with the involvement of digitization, the traditional library has also undergone a sea change. A conventional library's attitudes, functions, methods etc are also undergoing change.

Figure : Model of factors with impact on a position of man in information work

[Source: The Net]



The figure shows how man or the human resource factor is at the centre of the figure while other aspects center around the resource. From the figure it is amply clear that it is not possible to do away with the human factor. Of course, there is no denying that as technology advances in the core of library science, direct involvement of human resource on the face of it seems to decline. But delve a little deeper and the picture takes on a different hue. As digital libraries are on the rise, they have opened up additional facilities, provide myriad options of media and also exhibit improved performance and assure greater economy in time, money and effort. But, as the concept gets more complex to select the right useful facts from the vast amount of data that is available, human hands are required to sift through and guide the recipients. So now this human resource trained in library science has to perform the role of an e information specialist. As it is librarians obtain professional knowledge through various educational courses, professional and working experiences. Now, this know-how aids them in getting certain professional skills including mechanical skills, expertise and intellectual activity. They have also adapted to the new electronic information environment.

By adaptation is meant that as they have learnt about new technologies and as they become aware of its strengths and weaknesses, that knowledge helps them in managing electronic/digital era. Various professional groups are expected to map out the strategies that lead to produce, manage, maintain and provide the information. So now this information professional must be able to actively participate in the educational process rather than gathering information and disseminate it to the public in physical mode (Vishwakarma et al).

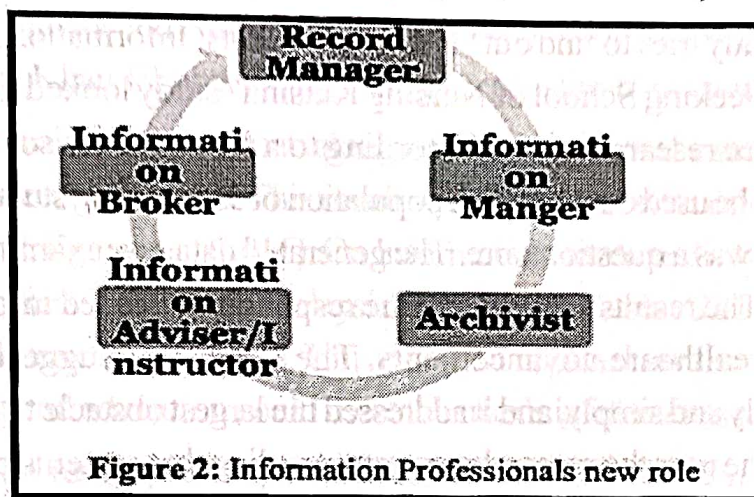


Figure 2: Information Professionals new role

Source: The Net

Findings

- (i) Even in the modern day era of digitization human resource is a valuable asset for library science.
- (ii) Human resource has adapted itself to the ever evolving era of digitization. Now they have to adapt as per the requirements of the tech era.

Conclusion

In conclusion it can be said that like all traditional institutions even the public library is undergoing change. The human resource management has been a constant factor then and now too.

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**Nursing Student's Information Needs, Perceptions, and
Information Seeking: A Case Study School of Nursing Katsina**

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Abstract : The study tries to find out "Nursing Students' Information Needs, Perceptions, and Information Seeking School of Nursing Katsina" study looked into this topic. It was influenced by three research goals. According to a research advisor chart, 170 students are the intended to be used out of overall population of 350 nursing students. The instrument for gathering data was a questionnaire. The generated data was examined using frequency and percentages. The results showed that the respondents needed information on disease prevention and healthcare advancements. The study also suggested ways to obtain information quickly and simply, and it addressed the largest obstacle to finding information a lack of time by the user the researcher recommending that systems be simple to use and easy to access in order to respond to queries and save readers' time. Information about pharmacological therapy, policies, and processes are among the most crucial categories of information resources. They should be well-versed in the therapeutic field, and they ought to use methods like literature filtering and information delivery in clear formats. It is advised that several sorts of information be needed in the field of learning beyond registration. It is also advised that nursing students be given permission to conduct research while on duty and that this should be recognized within the nursing culture. These are more library-oriented and include databases, the internet, journals, and books.

Key words: Information Needs, Information Seeking, Nursing Students

Objectives of the Study

1. To ascertain the information requirements of nursing students at the Nursing School in Katsina
2. To ascertain nursing students' attitudes and information seeking behavior in the area of study
3. To identify the issues nursing students go with when looking for information about their field of study.

Methodology of the study : This research design, which will employ a questionnaire to collect data from a sample population, was carried out using the survey research approach. The population of this study included nursing students at school of Nurse Katsina. Which are two hundred and two (102)

Major Findings : The results of this study are consistent with findings from earlier studies

in terms of nurses' preferred information sources. The utilization of human information sources by them was discovered. This was most likely brought on by the ease and greater accessibility of these sources. It was interesting to note that among the nurses, using electronic information sources was the least preferred. The minimal utilization of electronic information sources may be a result of nurses' poor search abilities and lack of awareness of their presence. (Popoola 2018.), and have similar findings with that of Ikoja & Mostert (2006). Information seeking behavior and Fatima & Ahmad (2008). Information seeking behaviour of the students at Ajmal Khan Tibbiya College, Aligarh Muslim University

Similarly, it was discovered that taking part in professional training and seminars helped to address the needs of nurses. This result was consistent with other earlier studies conducted by Edewor & Egreaena. (2016). On Information needs and information seeking behaviour of Rural dwellers in Sarawak, Malaysia and Majid & Kasim (2019) on Information seeking behaviour of international Islamic University, Malaysia, Law faculty members that demonstrated training and education could meet the user's information needs.

According to the results, the majority of respondents (50, 49.01%) need information on healthcare advances, followed by 32, 31.4% who need it on illness control and 13 (12.75%) who prefer it on the need for information on medicine updates. The least 02 (1.10%) and the most 05 (4.90%) require information on using machinery and medications, respectively. Findings show that the majority of respondents (34.31%) use search engines and the internet to find information, 20 respondents (19.61%) consult a catalog, 17 respondents (16.66%) use indexes, and 30 respondents (29.41%) use online databases to find information to improve their medical services. The study collaborates with that of Case. (2015). Information needs and information seeking patterns: Perceptions of foreign students in the university of Mysore and Campbell (2017). On the information-seeking habits of Architecture faculty. College and Research Libraries

According to the results, nurses were questioned about their usage of various medical information resources for clinical decision-making and nursing care. The majority of nurses consult their supervisors and coworkers, which is evident from the data (68.63%), followed by (14.71% who use printed and electronic sources, with (7.84%) and (4.90%) discussing with coworkers, and the least (3.92%) discussing with librarians as their sources of information, respectively. The study agree on that of Acheampong & Dzandu (2015). Information needs and use of Library resources by special needs students in selected Government Schools in Kaduna State and Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Nigeria, Ajiboye & Tella (2017). University Undergraduate students Information Seeking Behaviour: Implications for Quality in Higher Education in Africa

According to survey results, the provision of human information sources is the most common solution to problems, chosen by 41 respondents (40.28%), followed by the

holding of workshops and seminars by 30 respondents, the hiring of health information management specialists by 18 respondents (17.65%), and the provision of healthcare databases by 7 respondents (6.86%). Finally, responders with 6 (5.80%) choose to take their time to research solutions to their concerns. The finding is in line with that of Baro (2013). Information seeking behaviour of undergraduate students in the humanities in three universities in Nigeria and Anyanwu, & Benson (2016) Meeting the information needs of nurses for effective healthcare delivery in Nigeria

Implications of the study : The study is having a number of implications that will help nursing students' information needs, perceptions, and information seeking. It also adds to the body of academic knowledge. The study will also help nurses face additional obstacles as they compete to learn the various information-seeking strategies. Additionally, the study will assist nurses in recognizing trouble spots and offering remedies for these issues when treating patients in order to advance the growth of healthcare.

Recommendation

1. The future of info buttons in the clinical area is the first suggestion to be made. They would remove the largest obstacle to information seeking a lack of time by making it quick and simple for nurses to find information. It is advised that the systems be simple to use, accessible, and capable of providing information in the manner of a search engine. They should be able to provide information about pharmacological therapy, policies, and processes, as well as other forms of information.
2. It is suggested that a clinical librarian be made available as a human information source. They ought to be well-versed in the therapeutic field, and they ought to apply literature screening and information delivery in clear formats.
3. It is advised that various sorts of information be needed in the field of learning beyond registration. Databases, the Internet, periodicals, and books are among these resources that are more library-focused.
4. Training in information skills should be offered, and this should include computer literacy instruction. User education and orientation programmes
5. It is also advised that current computer systems be improved. They must be conveniently located and organized.
6. The transition program should incorporate library training as a necessary component. It would be a good idea to engage librarians to conduct training sessions because imparting this knowledge early on can help nurses in their nursing practice.
7. In addition to being given the time incentive to attend library training, nurses should be given the time to search for the scientifically sound knowledge they need for their practice. Hospitals might plan a "day in the library" and provide instruction on a variety of library



CIVIL SOCIETY'S CAMPAIGN AGAINST CHILD LABOR AND ITS SOCIO-CULTURAL DETERMINANTS : A SOCIOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION

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Dr. Amar Pal Singh**

ABSTRACT

The evil practice of child labor is a global phenomenon violating a child's natural rights. Studies on the subject cover the issue's myriad aspects. Yet, studies have not successfully highlighted how NGOs tackle the problem by looking at the issue in its entirety and have set roadmaps to fight the problem. This aspect of assessing NGOs' efforts becomes an area of study. The current study uses descriptive design to find out how NGOs looking at the issue of child labor, have in fact, launched unique campaigns and initiatives that look at the problem holistically.

Keywords : ILO, socio-cultural factors, ethics, patriarchal society

Introduction

ILO defines child labor as work depriving children of their childhood, potential and dignity, and that which is mentally, physically, socially and morally dangerous for the child while interfering with his schooling. It adds it is important to consider the developmental aspects of childhood.

However, when it comes to a child and his family's survival, then dependence on a child's earnings become important. Family poverty forces children to work because a child's income is vital for his and family's survival. Then considerations like child's education take a backseat for parents as family's socio-cultural situation takes over. Europe's industrial revolution showed socio-cultural factors bred and multiplied the child labor problem.

It would be pertinent to mention French Marxist philosopher Louis Pierre Althusser who believed a society is a complete superstructure comprising individuals with all their beliefs, desires, preferences and judgments all intertwined to form an ideology. He means practices and beliefs inherent to ideology produce a sense of identity. The philosopher advances two theses on

ideologies: 'Ideology represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence and 'ideology has a material existence.' This is applicable to the existing socio-cultural factors which reflect an ideology where the marginalized sections of society have succumbed to the whims of the established order.

PAST LITERATURE REVIEWS ON CHILD LABOR

- (i) Studies on causes of child labor: Pramod Kumar Agarwal and Dr. Anil Chandra Pathak, state in a study 'A socio – economic analysis of child labor in India' basic causes of child labor. Faraz Siddiqi's study titled 'Study of Child Labor Among School Children in Urban and Rural Areas of Pondicherry', Harry Anthony Patrinos's study titled 'Child Labor: Issues, causes and Interventions' etc.
- (ii) Studies on consequences of child labor: Anandita Dawan's study 'The Forbidden Social Crime Of Child Labor: A Case Study of Its Existence in the City Of Kolkata, West Bengal', Sarita Bharti and Dr Shalini Agarwal in a study "Physical and

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Psychological Hazards faced by Child Labor-A Review Article'etc.

- (iii) Studies on child rag pickers: Pyali Chatterjee's study, 'Child Ragpickers in India and Violation of Their Human Rights', Shabnam Parveen in study, 'Child Ragpickers in Aligarh City', Bhosale Savita G. and Korishetti Vijaya B in a study titled, 'Problems of Child Ragpickers' etc.

These researches have covered many aspects of child labor issue but what they have not taken into account is how NGOs, civil society and non-profits are working committedly in tackling the issue in a holistic manner.

The current research paper attempts to find out despite socio-cultural factors in society giving birth to and breeding child labor practice, certain NGOs globally, in general, and specific in Indian context, have addressed this issue.

Objectives

- (I) To find out the influence of parental motivation on child labor practice.
- (ii) To assess the role of education in general and education of the child to make a child a laborer.
- (iii) To probe cultural traditions and ethics in determining the problem of child labor.
- (iv) To investigate the efforts of NGOs in special reference to address the socio-cultural factors.

Research Methodology

The study is a sociological investigation based on descriptive research design. The rationale behind using this design was to get precise information about socio-cultural factors affecting child laborers, and work of NGOs in combating the evil. To arrive at conclusions, NGOs Pratham and BBA were selected for the study.

Primary and secondary sources of data collection have been used. In primary source, interview schedule, observation method and focused interview tools were used. Secondary sources consisted of already published and unpublished articles.

The researcher interviewed 300 respondents included 63 working child laborers, 62 rehabilitated child laborers, 125 parents/guardians and 50 employers from different places of Lucknow, Bareilly in Uttar Pradesh as well as in Bal Ashram at Virat Nagar, Jaipur (Rajasthan). The data was analyzed using Microsoft Word.

This research paper is part of current PhD thesis fieldwork.

Data Analysis

To find out about the influence of parental motivation on child labor practice, following questions were asked. Responses are in table form.

Table-1

Distribution of responses on was child's survival at stake if he did not contribute to family income and hence became a laborer, are being shown in the table below.

	Category of Respondents				Total
	Working Child Laborers	Rehabilitated Child Laborers	Parents/ Guardians	Employers	
Strongly Agree	11 17.7%	32 51.6%	15 24.2%	4 6.5%	62 20.7%
Agree	8 12.1%	5 7.6%	32 48.5%	21 31.8%	66 22.0%
Undecided	3 20.0%	2 13.3%	7 46.7%	3 20.0%	15 5.0%
Disagree	34 32.4%	15 14.3%	41 39.0%	15 14.3%	105 35.0%
Strongly Disagree	7 13.5%	8 15.4%	30 57.7%	7 13.5%	52 17.3%
Total	63 21.0%	62 20.7%	125 41.7%	50 16.7%	300 100.0%

Data in above table shows of total respondents, 35% disagreed. 51.6% rehabilitated child laborers strongly agreed. Secondary data shows that a child's survival is at stake if he does not contribute to family income. Rossana Galli in 'The Economic Impact of Child Labor' says experts studying child labor practice agree that poverty is the main determinant of child labor supply

and child labor significantly increases probability of family's survival.[1]

Table-2

Distribution of responses on did family want child to acquire any skills by working as a laborer shown in table below.

	Category of Respondents				Total
	Working Child Laborers	Rehabilitated Child Laborers	Parents/ Guardians	Employers	
Yes	39 24.4%	25 15.6%	76 47.5%	20 12.5%	160 53.3%
No	24 17.1%	37 26.4%	49 35.0%	30 21.4%	140 46.7%
Total	63 21.0%	62 20.7%	125 41.7%	50 16.7%	300 100.0%

Data in above table shows 47.5% of parents/guardians said they wanted their children to work as child laborers so that the child could acquire a skill.

Table-3

Distribution of responses on to state reasons if

families wanted them to acquire skills or not by working as a child laborer are given in table below.

Table-3a

Distribution of responses if answers were yes.

	Category of Respondents				Total
	Working Child Laborers	Rehabilitated Child Laborers	Parents/ Guardian	Employers	
Had to pursue family occupation/	12 31.6%	7 18.4%	17 44.7%	2 5.3%	38 23.8%
Had to learn a skill to help increase family income	11 18.3%	6 10.0%	27 45.0%	16 26.7%	60 37.5%
Had to become self-employed	16 25.8%	12 19.4%	32 51.6%	2 3.2%	62 38.8%
Total	39 24.4%	25 15.6%	76 47.5%	20 12.5%	160 100.0%

Present research reveals parental illiteracy and

family's financial poverty contribute to a child not realizing long-term benefits of education.

Table - 3b

Distribution of responses if answers were no.

	Category				Total
	Working Child Laborers	Rehabilitated Child Laborers	Parents/ Guardians	Employers	
They wanted me to work only because employer gives food	6 9.7%	15 24.2%	26 41.9%	15 24.2%	62 44.3%
Had to earn money to help family	14 33.3%	8 19.0%	13 31.0%	7 16.7%	42 30.0%
Due to incapability	4 11.1%	14 38.9%	10 27.8%	8 22.2%	36 25.7%
Total	24 17.1%	37 26.4%	49 35.0%	30 21.4%	140 100.0%

Present research shows rehabilitated child laborers under BBA care said sending children into the workforce was just a means to an end of earning income for the family.

Table-4

Distribution of responses on was becoming or making a child laborer a forced or voluntary decision shown in table below.

	Category of Respondents				Total
	Working Child Laborers	Rehabilitated Child Laborers	Parents/ Guardians	Employers	
Voluntary	51 25.0%	20 9.8%	91 44.6%	42 20.6%	204 68.0%
Forced	12 12.5%	42 43.8%	34 35.4%	8 8.3%	96 32.0%
Total	63 21.0%	62 20.7%	125 41.7%	50 16.7%	300 100.0%

Data in the above table shows that 43.8% rehabilitated child laborers said the decision to work as a child laborer was a forced one. 44.6% parents/guardians and 20.6% employers said it was voluntary.

Table-5

Distribution of responses on was parental illiteracy responsible to send or hire a child as a laborer to add to family income shown in table below.

	Category of Respondents				Total
	Working Child Laborers	Rehabilitated Child Laborers	Parents/ Guardians	Employers	
Strongly Agree	45 31.0%	48 33.1%	42 29.0%	10 6.9%	145 48.3%
Agree	11 11.5%	8 8.3%	49 51.0%	28 29.2%	96 32%

Undecided	1 25.0%	1 25.0%	2 50.0%	0 0.0%	4 1.3%
Disagree	1 6.2%	0 0.0%	9 56.2%	6 37.5%	16 5.3%
Strongly Disagree	5 12.8%	5 12.8%	23 59.0%	6 15.4%	39 13%
Total	63 21.0%	62 20.7%	125 41.7%	50 16.7%	300 100%

Data in above table shows that of total respondents, 48.3% strongly agreed.

Secondary data shows in study by Adekunle Victor Owoyomi 'Parental Educational Status and Child Labor: Implication for Sustainable Child Development in Lagos Metropolis, Nigeria', "Participation of children in paid

employment is high where the level of education of their parent is low and the rate of participation reduces as the educational status of the parent improves." (2)

Table-6

Distribution of responses on as there is a cause and effect of relation between education and child labor is shown in the table below.

	Category of Respondents				Total
	Working Child Laborers	Rehabilitated Child Laborers	Parents/ Guardians	Employers	
Strongly Agree	42 39.3%	29 27.1%	33 30.8%	3 2.8%	107 35.7%
Agree	11 9.9%	8 7.2%	57 51.4%	35 31.5%	111 37.0%
Undecided	2 66.7%	0 0.0%	1 33.3%	0 0.0%	3 1.0%
Disagree	6 10.0%	20 33.3%	24 40.0%	10 16.7%	60 20.0%
Strongly Disagree	2 10.5%	5 26.3%	10 52.6%	2 10.5%	19 6.3%
Total	63 21.0%	62 20.7%	125 41.7%	50 16.7%	300 100.0%

Data in the above table shows of total respondents, 37% agreed that education plays a role in not making a child work as a laborer.

Table-7

Distribution of responses on if non-formal schooling or school facilities were provided within the community, would it alleviate child labor which are being shown in the graph below.

	Category of Respondents				Total
	Working Child Laborers	Rehabilitated Child Laborers	Parents/ Guardian	Employers	
Insignificant	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	2 100.0%	0 0.0%	2 0.7%

Minor	23 100.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	23 7.7%
Moderate	0 0.0%	1 100.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 0.3%
Major	11 33.3%	10 30.3%	10 30.3%	2 6.1%	33 11.0%
Severe	29 12.0%	51 21.2%	113 46.9%	48 19.9%	241 80.3%
Total	63 21.0%	62 20.7%	125 41.7%	50 16.7%	300 100.0%

The present research reveals as part of non-formal schooling, Pratham sets up multiple activity centers (MACs) or colloquially called Pratham centers.

Table-8

Distribution of responses on did parents want the child to follow their footsteps and work as a laborer, being shown in the table below.

	Category of Respondents				Total
	Working Child Laborers	Rehabilitated Child Laborers	Parents/ Guardians	Employers	
Yes	14 38.9%	2 5.6%	13 36.1%	7 19.4%	36 12.0%
No	49 18.6%	60 22.7%	112 42.4%	43 16.3%	264 88.0%
Total	63 21.0%	62 20.7%	125 41.7%	50 16.7%	300 100.0%

The present research reveals that Pratham initiated efforts to interact with parents and influenced them to change their mindsets regarding their children and their education.

Table-9

Distribution of responses on should girl child be educated and not made a child laborer as has been the tradition which are being shown in the table below.

	Category of Respondents				Total
	Working Child Laborers	Rehabilitated Child Laborers	Parents/ Guardians	Employers	
Yes	58 32.4%	57 31.8%	61 34.1%	3 1.7%	179 59.7%
No	5 4.1%	5 4.1%	64 52.9%	47 38.8%	121 40.3%
Total	63 21.0%	62 20.7%	125 41.7%	50 16.7%	300 100.0%

Data in the above table shows that of the total respondents, 59.7% said yes. 32.4% working child laborers and 31.8% rehabilitated child laborers also said yes. 52.9% parents/guardians said no.

Table-10

Distribution of responses on is the mindset of 'more children more working hands' or a large family with

many children the reason to send/hire children as laborers which are being shown in the table below.

	Category of Respondents				Total
	Working Child Laborers	Rehabilitated Child Laborers	Parents/ Guardian	Employers	
Strongly Agree	29 23.8%	49 40.2%	40 32.8%	4 3.3%	122 40.7%
Agree	11 11.0%	4 4.0%	50 50.0%	35 35.0%	100 33.3%
Undecided	7 43.8%	0 0.0%	7 43.8%	2 12.5%	16 5.3%
Disagree	13 29.5%	7 15.9%	17 38.6%	7 15.9%	44 14.7%
Strongly Disagree	3 16.7%	2 11.1%	11 61.1%	2 11.1%	18 6.0%
Total	63 21.0%	62 20.7%	125 41.7%	50 16.7%	300 100.0%

Data in above table shows that of the total respondents 40.7% strongly agreed. 40.2% rehabilitated child laborers also strongly agreed while 35% employers agreed.

Table-11

Distribution of responses on did respondents think family planning would help break their 'circle of poverty' and not make children work as child laborers which are being shown in table below.

	Category of Respondents				Total
	Working Child Laborers	Rehabilitated Child Laborers	Parents/ Guardian	Employers	
Yes	61 22.6%	57 21.1%	110 40.7%	42 15.6%	270 90.0%
No	2 6.7%	5 16.7%	15 50.0%	8 26.7%	30 10.0%
Total	63 21.0%	62 20.7%	125 41.7%	50 16.7%	300 100.0%

Data in the above table shows that of the total respondents, 90% said yes.

Table-12

Distribution of responses on did respondents think

a male child of the family was preferred over girl child to follow the traditional family occupation or skills which are being shown in graph below.

	Category of Respondents				Total
	Working Child Laborers	Rehabilitated Child Laborers	Parents/ Guardian	Employers	
Strongly Agree	42 39.3%	29 27.1%	33 30.8%	3 2.8%	107 35.7%

Agree	11 9.9%	8 7.2%	57 51.4%	35 31.5%	111 37.0%
Undecided	2 66.7%	0 0.0%	1 33.3%	0 0.0%	3 1.0%
Disagree	6 10.0%	20 33.3%	24 40.0%	10 16.7%	60 20.0%
Strongly Disagree	2 10.5%	5 26.3%	10 52.6%	2 10.5%	19 6.3%
Total	63 21.0%	62 20.7%	125 41.7%	50 16.7%	300 100.0%

Data in above table shows 51.4% parents/guardians agreed there was discrimination between boys and girls of the family in carrying out domestic work and family occupation.

Secondary data reveals in study by Dr PG Sunanda Bhagvathy and P Saranya in paper titled 'Review of Gender Discrimination in Society', "Boys are given very little work... While girls are given domestic chores like cooking, cleaning utensils,..." [3]

Data Interpretation

It's evident from tables 1 and 4 as family poverty is main determinant of child labor supply, so children have to work to earn money to help family.

Rehabilitated child laborers under care of Pratham and BBA are now aware how parents unscrupulously manipulate children to make them work. They realize by working there's no physical and mental growth for the child. Tables 2, 3a and 3b show, these children under NGOs' care are aware that what they earlier considered acquiring skill by working as a laborer turned out to be their families had manipulated to make them earn money.

Evidently, from tables 5 and 6, respondents agree that education is must for children while from tables 7 and 8, Pratham and BBA have initiated efforts to tackle the issue of lack of education in communities by providing non-formal schooling within the communities.

Tables 9 to 12 show, socio-cultural traditions and ethics determine the practice of child labor. Conventions determine that boys have a better future than girls in mainly patriarchal society.

Findings

- Parents have a major influencing role in breeding the problem of child labor practice. They, as guardians are the first to decide whether child will be a laborer or not.
- The precautionary and curative initiatives launched by NGOs on education determine how through education child labor practice can be combated at the grassroots level.
- Even as cultural traditions and ethics determine the problem of child labor, initiatives launched by certain NGOs take a holistic view of the socio-cultural factors affecting child labor practice so that can be eliminated in its entirety.

In conclusion it can be said certain NGOs working to eradicate child labor practice take a holistic view of the whole problem. By looking at precautionary and curative measures, these NGOs initiate innovative efforts to combat the problem in its entirety and they come out with flying colors. Approaches introduced by these NGOs are a roadmap for NGO-government and multitasked holders collaborations.

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CHAPTER 5

Respecting Sustainability: Analyzing Conservation Attempts to Mitigate Futuristic Environmental Stress

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Abstract

With advent of industrial revolution in the 1800s, there was accentuation on bettering the economic status of people in society, mainly in the western hemisphere. Although the efforts were laudable helping many improve their lives economically, the cost at which this affluence came was too high. Depletion of natural resources and wilful exploitation of finite assets just to achieve this material comfort was a consequence so devastating that well into the third decade of the 21st century, environmental sustainability is a topic of public domain globally. Right from climate change, deforestation, acid precipitation, air pollution, rapid population growth, food production and equitable distribution or maybe depletion of the atmospheric ozone, the environment has taken the hit 360 degrees. But the attempts that are being made to reverse the natural losses are too far and few while the depletion rate is still high. The present study seeks to investigate that what are the factors that have caused these limited resources to be exhausted at a faster rate than their speed of renewal. Additionally, the present research will also assess what more can be done in terms of political cohesion, economic development and uplift, community participation among other factors that can help in stemming the stress on the environment so that the future generations do not bear the brunt of a resource-depleted natural eco-system.

Keywords: *Acid precipitation, industrial revolution, deforestation, climate change, environmental sustainability.*

Introduction

"What is the use of a house if you haven't got a tolerable planet to put it on?"

— Henry David Thoreau, Familiar Letters

Nineteenth century American philosopher, poet, environmental scientist, and political activist Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862) was not off the mark when he said if the general populace did not have a planet, where would they build their houses? In fact, it is a penny for one's thoughts that why did Thoreau make such a claim. The poet was compelled to make such radical observations simply because the times, that are the 19th century onwards, in which he lived, were those moments when the industrial revolution was

peaking in society. Across the board, accompanying monetization and tangible remunerations, was degradation of the environment. Even as there was material progress for members of society who had the wherewithal to rise to the top layer of society while reaping fruits of the industrial revolution, the rich-poor gap within the communities had started to manifest. The obvious economic disparity within society became a prominent propeller to fuel public discourses on sustainability and development. What went unrealized was as industrial progress took place, the unmatched exploitation of raw materials and natural resources for this industrial development had started leading to environmental ruin. Stephanie Safdie in article titled 'What was the Industrial Revolution's Environmental Impact?' says, "The industrial revolution didn't only transform the way goods were manufactured or how people transported from one place to another - but it created the divide between a world before technology, and after. It is highly unlikely that the world will ever return to the state it was in prior to the industrial revolution's environmental impact: such as using candles for light and heat or writing things by hand on pen and paper. The industrial revolution has taken away many warm-hearted traditions, and in turn has accelerated the personality of mankind to be more mechanic than humans were before. These personal effects of the industrial revolution can also be held accountable for one of the worst things to come out of the industrial revolution - how it negatively impacted the environment. During the industrial revolution, finite resources were being used at an implausible rate - one that created an undesirable smog in the air of cities like London and New York due to the newfound excessive emissions polluting the atmosphere. This wasn't a temporary change of scenery - the industrial revolution left behind long lasting consequences for the environment." [1] The author goes on to add that 'Many people see the industrial revolution as an event that happened once, but the reality is - there were several industrial revolutions. Each industrial revolution added to the growing amount of pollutants in the atmosphere, and created new standards of living. The problem with each industrial revolution was that it resulted in crowded cities growing due to the new machineries presenting new opportunities for people to travel and work in these places. Dirt accumulated on the streets, fossil fuels from the factories working at an unprecedented rate were emitted into the atmosphere, and waterways were infiltrated with various debris from the factories as well. Keep in mind that all of this occurred before technologies like carbon capture and storage - meaning there was truly no way to mitigate the effects of climate change that continued to occur'. She goes on to add that 'the problem with the industrial revolution's environmental impact, is that it wasn't noticed until decades after the industrial revolution had begun. It took years to notice signs of the consequences of industrialization on the planet - such as a

newfound depleting ozone layer, which wasn't discovered by scientists until the 1980s'.

Adding to this is Jacobus A. Du Pisani, Professor of History, who says, "Never in the world's history had there been more drastic growth in production, consumption and wealth than after the Industrial Revolution. In the period between 1800 and 1970, when the world's population tripled from around 978 million to 3632 million, seemingly unslackened economic growth occurred and the quantity of manufacturing production in the world increased about 1730 times. International annual average economic growth rates stayed between 2.9% and 3.7% from the 1780s to 1900, then rose above 4% at the start of the 20th century, dropped back to under 3% in the inter-war years, and rose to above 4% again in the 1940s and then to 5.6% between 1948 and 1971... The unprecedented growth during the long boom of the 1950s and 1960s stimulated expectations of unlimited economic growth and ever-increasing affluence. Mainstream economists from the neoclassical orthodox school were aware of the sustainability problems related to the massive consumption of resources, but assumed that, once a product or a factor input would become scarce, new technologies would be introduced to economize on the scarce input." [2]

It also needs to be understood that Industrial Revolution may have laid the ground for natural resources depletion. But the concept of development and moreso sustainable development did not arise until mid-20th century. The Committee on Comparative Politics of the United States Social Science Research Council (cited in Peet 1999: 77) went on to state that as there was advancement of science and technology and the world economy grew, the concept of 'development' received attention from the mid-20th century. Development was then defined as 'an evolutionary process in which the human capacity increased in terms of initiating new structures, coping with problems, adapting to continuous change, and striving purposefully and creatively to attain new goals'. Also, various theories propounded on development across the decades after the second world war adapted to the changing world order specially as a new global order was emerging following the Cold War and how international relations altered by the end of the 1980s when Cold War ended. But the bottom line remains that these theories' basic assumptions remained significantly influential whenever debates and discussions were held on the subject of development, including a dialog on sustainable development.

Development was encouraged as it marked progress and betterment of people's economic status. In fact, John M Gowdy says in 'Discussion Papers: Progress and Environmental Sustainability' that progress had given some form of validation for the reign of free market, for colonizers to exploit non-Western communities and societies and to ravage the biosphere. But

progress was just an illusion as the criteria applied for progress of humans showed that at 'no stage in world history had real human progress taken place.'^[3] However, what catches attention is the fact that material progress in all walks has been visible across the decades, but this progress was now pointing in some another direction that of sustainable development.

Now as newer generations had been realizing that progress being made was at the cost of depleting the earth's resources, voices across the globe in the 1980s started denouncing this progress achieved at the cost of exhausting finite natural resources. Concerns about environment became more acute and radical because of the fear that economic growth might endanger the survival of the human race and the planet. Anxiety was expressed in a growing body of academic literature that 'if we continue our present practices we will face a steady deterioration of the conditions under which we live' (Nathan Glick in Dubos et al. 1970: 2). As sustainable development became a primary area of concern for experts and global community, in 1987, the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), set up in 1983, published a report 'Our common future'. This document became famous as 'Brundtland Report', after the Commission's chairperson, Gro Harlem Brundtland. It developed guiding principles for sustainable development as understood today. Brundtland said very aptly 'Sustainable development is the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'. The importance of the present study lies in assessing how sustainable development should get its due that it deserves while looking at the causes and solutions of preserving sustainable development.

Objectives and Methodology

Objectives of the study are (i) To probe causes of environmental issues and (ii) To investigate solutions that can help in decreasing stress on the environment.

The present study is pedestaled on secondary data and then analyzed. The data have been accessed from online sources, books, research articles, newspapers and journals.

Discussion

There is no denying that humans, flora and fauna and our environment are all interconnected. Individuals may live in a world of fallacy that people are separate from forests, oceans and other life on earth. But this is not the case. All life on earth is interconnected.

(i) **Socio-cultural ties and sustainable development:** The UNESCO says among the four pillars of sustainable development are society, environment, culture and economy. Vasilis Bouronikos in article 'The Importance of Cultural Sustainability to Achieve the SDGs' says "Despite humans

originating from a common ancestor, there are many differences between individuals or social groups. Since ancient times humans have been moving from one place to another for various reasons such as avoiding danger, having access to resources, or finding a more suitable climate. Wherever people went, they formed communities and developed a common identity and distinct cultures. Culture is defined as the customary beliefs, social norms, and material traits of a racial, religious or social group. Essentially, culture encompasses everything about daily life like manners, habits, dresses, language, religion, art, laws or morality. Culture is one of the pillars of sustainable development, and therefore, cultural aspects cannot be missing from any sustainable development strategy. Sustainable development takes place within cultural contexts. Culture can promote economic growth (cultural tourism, handicrafts, food etc.) and environmental sustainability (cultural and natural heritage preservation). For this reason, it is essential to preserve cultural identities across the world as they can accelerate the transition to a more sustainable future.” [4] He says ‘Cultural sustainability relates to sustainable development and highlights culture’s important role in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Although none of the 17 SDGs focuses explicitly on culture, there are many cultural references in their subsequent targets. For example, target 4.7 wants to ensure that *“all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for global citizenship and the appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development”*. Despite talk of culture and sustainable development going hand in hand, what is lacking is ‘a persistent clear deficit in taking into account cultural aspects in the sustainability debate at all levels. This has many reasons, one of which certainly is that in a modern society characterized by functional differentiation, pluralization of ways of life, and individualization of lifestyles, a guiding concept as complex as that of sustainable development, or the complicated cause-effect relations of environmental problems, are difficult to illustrate by clear pictures and hard to make people aware of...There is another deficit in the sustainability debate, namely that many cases still are narrowed down to environmental aspects, technical approaches to problem solving or orientation by the efficiency principle...there is also a deficit in reflecting on sustainability among players and politicians in the cultural sector. Where this principle is treated at all in culture and the arts, the outcome frequently is a restricted view of its environmental aspects’.

(ii) **Community involvement for securing sustainability** :There is no doubt in claiming that when communities at the local level are involved in developing their eco-system and their collective intelligence is tapped into, sustainable development gets prioritized automatically. Ilona Lodewijckx in article ‘Promoting sustainable development with community engagement’

stresses that, "Overarching goals for countries to strive towards, real change starts on a local scale. By informing residents and directly involving them in any actions taken towards the SDGs, local governments not only have a much better chance of actually achieving progress, but they also ensure that the measures taken are adjusted to the local context and directly serve the community. After all, every community has its own unique needs. While communities in rural areas may be keen to take more meaningful steps to combat climate change or protect marine life, communities in metropolitan centers may be more concerned with reducing poverty, supporting economic development, or improving industry and infrastructure. There are several strategies that local governments can consider to inform, involve, and empower local communities. From conducting a simple poll or in-depth survey on the main priorities to tackle, to allocating resources to the various Sustainable Development Goals, community engagement equips local governments with the insights required to guide inclusive and responsive decision-making. This boosts accountability, since communities can monitor efforts, measure results, and provide feedback. And, in turn, community engagement also strengthens trust between community members and their elected officials, and promotes buy-in for policy choices, increasing the likelihood of actual change occurring."

(iii) **Political cohesion&economic sustainability:** There is no doubt in saying that higher the political freedom in a country, the higher its environmental performance. This political freedom is gauged on parameters like political rights, civil rights and freedom of the Press. Joakim Kulin et al state in research paper 'The Role of Government in Protecting the Environment: Quality of Government and the Translation of Normative Views about Government Responsibility into Spending Preferences' that 'While it is becoming increasingly evident that environmental problems such as climate change and global warming constitute existential threats to human societies, these problems will very likely persist and even intensify unless governments enact effective and potentially costly environmental policies. However, government policies and spending ultimately rely on public support, thus underscoring the need to increase present knowledge about the processes underlying citizens' policy attitudes. In this study, we focus on the relationship between citizens' normative views about government responsibility and their support for government spending on the environment. While people who think that, as a general principle, it ought to be the government's responsibility to protect the environment should be more likely to support increasing government spending on the environment, this relationship is dependent on the quality of government'.

Moreover, as attempts are made to combat rising inequalities and pull out people from poverty, stress on environment is likely to get reduced and economists are working in that direction.

Conclusion

In conclusion it can be said that there are multiple causes for environmental degradation and while solutions are being found to help decrease environmental stress, more efforts have to be put in so that future generations prosper and live in tandem with the environment.

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CHAPTER-2

WOMEN IN MEDIA: REDRESSING THE UNDERREPRESENTATION

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Abstract

Although the world has now entered the third decade of the 21st century and as artificial intelligence makes inroads into many functioning of life, society's patriarchal attitude and behavior towards women is something that is still not changing. This very misogynistic conduct is obviously apparent in the world of mass media. At the entry level in media women do rise progressively, but at the decision making level or the top most tier, men outnumber women in the world of media. The present study seeks to investigate as to why despite gender gap decreasing in most societies including India, women still bear the brunt of this prejudice against them. Even as they ace competitive exams and are also rising the professional rungs rapidly, somehow women are still at the receiving end. But the silver lining to this dark cloud is that as women become more enlightened, they are not taking things lying down and are fighting their situation to decrease their underrepresentation in the media.

Keywords: Patriarchal attitude, Misogynistic, Prejudice, Mass media

Introduction

"You should never write about what the world wants to read - instead, write about everything you want the world to read." — Laura Chouette

Travel and fashion blogger Laura Chouette, a Gen Z herself, speaks and reflects on that generation that not only knows their mind, but is also adventurous, looks at and uses social media uniquely, and is ambitious enough to achieve what they desire most in life and the above-mentioned quote by Chouette reflects how most female members of her generation think and act and express and behave themselves

similarly in the media. But, if one were to pause here momentarily, there is fodder for thought. Realistically speaking, do women possess that kind of freedom where they have the independence of thought and autonomy of expression that they can articulate on public platforms anyhow they want? It may come as a surprise that the term "symbolic annihilation" was first introduced by a communication professor in 1976 to describe the absence or underrepresentation of specific groups in the media, often based on factors such as ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic status. This concept is widely recognized in the social sciences as a mechanism for perpetuating social inequality. Within feminist discussions of media criticism, the term is frequently used to highlight how certain identities are negated or marginalized in the media, while stereotypes persist.

In 1978, Gaye Tuchman further elaborated on the concept of symbolic annihilation, defining three subcategories that contribute to its manifestation: omission, trivialization, and denunciation. Through the deliberate exclusion of representation across various forms of media, including movies, music, books, news media, and visual art, this comprehensive approach not only marginalizes entire communities but also attempts to render them invisible. It is crucial to recognize the right of individuals belonging to these communities to be seen and heard in the media, making the issue of symbolic annihilation a significant concern. Tuchman said that any accomplishments made by women were unreported, downplayed, or maybe were seen as less significant than things like their appearance. Tuchman said that women were often shown in positions that adhered to gender stereotypes, such as those associated with mothers and home tasks, in advertisements for washing powder. In these ads, it was shown that mothers and little girls were working together while boys were the ones to be covered in mud.

It wasn't until the 1970s and onwards that academics of feminism started using this notion of eradication, so to speak, to discourse and concentrate on the effect that underrepresentation and misrepresentation, and/or the absence of women in mass media had on women. Consideration was also given to the fact that the lack of women in mass media contributed to these problems. The result that these experts have been emphasizing is that women who wish to enter the mass media discipline were either unable to

obtain stable positions for themselves or may be unable to develop their careers in the workplace, and even failed to build a 'distinct personality' for themselves on public platforms. According to Lisa P. Herbert, the media plays a crucial role in shaping and disseminating gender ideologies, thus influencing the process of gender socialization. Gender socialization refers to the assimilation of societal norms, ideologies, and principles related to gender. It involves both learning and teaching and is integral to the continuity of social and cultural norms. Developmental psychology is intertwined with this process, as individuals need social interaction to acquire their culture and ensure their survival. Socialization encompasses the lifelong process of learning and significantly influences the behavior, beliefs, and actions of both children and adults.

Understanding feminism is crucial in addressing gender inequality. Feminism encompasses a wide array of socio-political movements and ideologies that strive for political, economic, personal, and social equality between genders. It recognizes that societies tend to prioritize the male perspective, leading to unfair treatment of women. Feminist philosophy seeks to challenge these biases and works towards creating equal opportunities and outcomes for women in various domains such as education, employment, and interpersonal relationships.

Feminist movements have a long history of advocating for men's rights, starting from the late 18th century in Europe and continuing to the present day. These rights include the ability to vote, hold public office and work among other things. It has been suggested by experts in the industry that mainstream depictions of women and girls are influenced by prevailing racial, gender, and class ideologies. When these standards deviate from reality, it can result in distorted representation, characterized by demeaning stereotypes or trivializing portrayals. Feminist theorists argue that these inaccurate media representations further contribute to distorted perceptions of women, their

societal roles, and how individuals should interact with them. They emphasize that a consequence of this pattern is the symbolic erasure or annihilation of strong and positive female role models in popular media. This pattern comes at a significant cost, as it reinforces stereotypes and leads women who consume such media to internalize oppression over time. Dr. Marty Klein suggests that many women feel compelled to regulate and compromise their sexuality to conform to the conventional ideals portrayed in mass media, and to be perceived as respectable individuals. [4]

Objectives and Research Methodology

The objectives of the present study are to investigate factors responsible for women being underrepresented in the mass media discipline and to probe how women are now making efforts to redefine the conventional image. The current research is descriptive and analytical in its attempt as it seeks to evaluate why gender equality and feminism are not getting their due accruing to them. The research is pivoted on secondary data aggregated from online sources, books, research articles, newspapers, and journals.

History, Women, and Mass Media

"Building egalitarian societies is a key focus for modern democratic states," emphasizes author Anna Davtyan-Gevorgyan. The mass media plays a significant and distinctive role in facilitating the formation of a society where both men and women enjoy equal rights. Promoting an egalitarian society necessitates educating women about their legal rights and responsibilities. This objective can be achieved through various approaches, such as psychological, social, economic, philosophical, and political means, as well as promoting awareness of human rights. The media plays a crucial role in achieving success in these fields. It has the power to either support and accelerate ongoing changes or, conversely, impede and hinder their implementation. [5][6]

In various forms of mass media, women are often limited to a narrow range of roles. If we categorize mass media content into fiction and news reporting, we observe that women are frequently associated with domesticity or objectified as sex symbols in a fictional content. However, in news reporting, their roles are limited, with only a few women serving as primary presenters or experts. This situation is partly due to the underrepresentation of women in these fields, although even the current number of women in such positions remains significantly lower than that of their male counterparts.

Looking back over the past few centuries, the presence of women in the media has gradually emerged. Prominent figures such as Jane Grey Swisshelm, the first notable woman in political journalism, Sarah Hale, the first American woman to edit a major women's magazine (the Ladies' Magazine, 1828), Ann Franklin, the first woman newspaper editor in America (1762), and Elizabeth Timothy, the first woman to publish a formal newspaper and hold a female franchise in the American colonies (1739), come to mind. Women began fighting for their right to work as professional journalists in North America and Europe around 1839. Noteworthy names also include Margaret Fuller, the first American woman to publish a newspaper entirely run by women (the weekly "Woman's Advocate," 1855), Shirley Dinsdale, the first recipient of an Emmy Award for Outstanding Television Personality (1949), Katharine Graham, the first female CEO of a Fortune 500 company as CEO of The Washington Post Company (1972), and Barbara Walters, the first female anchor. This list is not exhaustive but provides a glimpse into the remarkable women who have made their mark in mass media and journalism across different cultures and locations throughout history.

It is crucial to acknowledge that women working in the media have had to fight for respect, recognition, and equal treatment, advocating for their rightful place in the industry. They have defied industry norms in journalism, public relations, television, radio, advertising, and other media outlets, breaking barriers and securing positions that were previously dominated by men. In 2020, McKinsey & Company conducted a comprehensive study titled "Shattering the Glass Screen," authored by Lucas Beard, Jonathan Dunn, Jess Huang, and Alexis Krivkovich, to assess the status of women in the media and entertainment industry. The study acknowledged the

existing challenges faced by women in the industry and presented an objective analysis. It highlighted that women in the early stages of their careers in the industry have achieved equal representation compared to their male counterparts, which sets a solid foundation for future progress. The study also revealed that women in the early career stages have higher promotion rates and the percentage of women recruited externally is equal to or higher than men. The findings showed that women in the industry expressed satisfaction with their career paths and a strong desire for advancement.

The study further reported that HR respondents in the media and entertainment industry demonstrated a commitment to achieving gender parity, with 93 percent expressing that gender diversity was a goal. While progress has been made in achieving gender representation at the management level through promotions in the early career stages, the study noted that this progress diminishes as women advance closer to senior positions. The study observed that C-suite roles are predominantly filled by men through external recruitment, resulting in a corporate culture where women are well-represented at the early career stages but remain a minority in senior leadership positions. Only 27 percent of executive roles in the media and entertainment industry are held by women, and similar trends were observed in the news media subset.

The study emphasized the importance of addressing the diminishing representation of women as they climb the professional ladder, highlighting the presence of the glass ceiling. It noted that at the transition from senior manager to vice president, on average, one woman from this group drops out of the pipeline. By the time professionals in mass communication or journalism are on the cusp of reaching the C-suite, less than three out of ten executives are women. Promotions from senior vice president to the C-suite are infrequent, with a promotion rate of less than 1 percent for both men and women. The underrepresentation of women in leadership positions is exacerbated by a tendency to hire more men than women from external sources to fill executive roles. The study revealed that men filled C-suite positions through external recruitment 79 percent of the time, while women filled them only 21 percent of the time.

To accelerate women's participation in the C-suite, companies in the media and entertainment industries need to provide women with greater access to internal and external pathways to top positions. This may require challenging existing corporate structures. The study highlighted the potential for progress, as many companies and industries have appointed more women to senior management positions in recent years. Currently, close to 45 percent of companies have three or more women in the C-suite, compared to less than 30 percent in 2015. Although achieving gender parity still requires significant effort, the study suggests that it is indeed feasible."

The above-stated study is not far from the truth. Another example is the historical representation of female characters in Disney Films. These films always showed the female character as a 'delicate princess' to be rescued by the stronger male character. The below info graphic depicts this

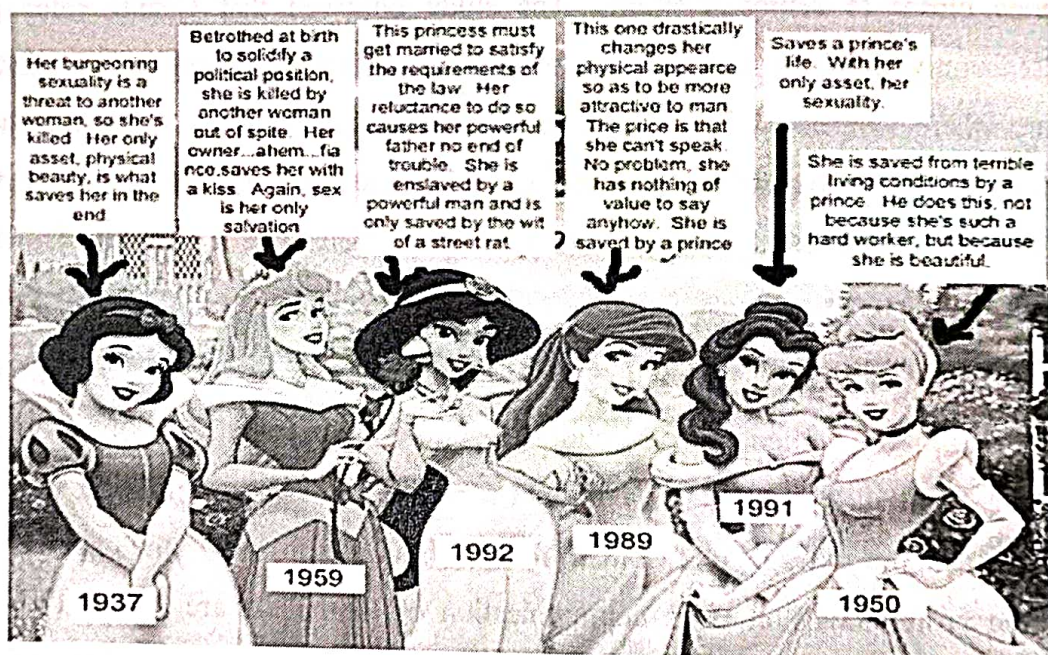


Fig: Blog from Society Pages

Not only the past three centuries, but even in the 20th century where modernization in every way was the buzzword, women associated with mass media directly or indirectly were in the same frame as it was 300 years ago. According to Laurel Wilson's research thesis on "Changes in Newspaper Portrayals of Women, 1900-1960," significant shifts occurred during that time period. Wilson observed that major newspapers of the day poorly represented

women in terms of staff and content, failing to reflect the growing number of educated and working women. In 1900, only slightly more than two percent of reporters were female, and they were often limited to writing for women's pages, which focused on homemaking, fashion, and social roles. These depictions were highly stereotypical and restricted.

Interestingly, despite the limited representation of women in newspapers, an increasing number of women were entering the workforce, including the mass media industry. However, in the early 21st century, newspapers continued to downplay the significance of women by emphasizing traditional roles as housewives and mothers. This perpetuated Victorian-era social standards, unaware of the forthcoming shifts in women's societal positions.

Wilson observed that women in the 1960s faced contradictions in their lives, which fueled their fight for equal treatment, wages, and reproductive rights. Female reporters, in particular, encountered a dilemma during this time. While they appreciated the opportunity to cover women's news, they were frustrated by their exclusion from important topics such as politics, sports, and science. The percentage of women working in the print news industry had increased to 37 percent by 1960, leading them to advocate for equal pay and the elimination of women's pages.

Overall, Wilson's research highlights the evolution of newspaper portrayals of women from limited and stereotypical depictions to a growing recognition of women's rights and the need for their inclusion in all areas of news coverage. ^[7] Even as women break the glass ceiling, 'women won't be equal anywhere until they're equal everywhere – including the media'. Across 114 nations, women consist of only 24% of persons that are read about, seen, or heard on TV or in the public domain or radio, or newspapers. This has been found in a study carried out over 20 years.

Presence of women in TV media has been a subject of scrutiny, with some labeling it as reinforcing stereotypes of glamour and fashion rather than promoting gender equality. A study conducted in India by the Global Media Monitoring Project and the Network of Women in Media revealed a notable decline in the presence of women as subjects and sources in news coverage. According to the study, the percentage of women in news coverage across print, TV, and radio dropped to 14% in the previous year, compared to 22% in 2010 and 21% in 2015. Men were predominantly featured as subjects and sources, ranging from 68% to 89% across all news categories.

The study also highlighted that women had relatively better representation in certain areas such as Social and Legal (17%), Crime and Violence (15%), Science and Health (14%), and Economy (12%), as well as in Celebrity, Arts and Media, and Sports. However, this could suggest that women are more likely to be featured in the media when they are victims of gender-based violence, rather than being adequately represented across all news categories. In addition to the underrepresentation of women as subjects and sources, the study highlighted a decline in the number of women journalists. This decline extends beyond women's representation solely as subjects or sources in news coverage. The percentage of women who report for print media has decreased significantly between 2015 and 2020, falling from 43% to 13%, while the percentage of women who report for television has decreased from 60% to 52%. Even though radio was not included in the study's monitoring in 2015, there were 20% of women reporters working on radio in 2014'. As if these data are not enough to highlight that a number that should be equal to men is already scaling down, COVID-19 added to the downward spiral. Coupled with it the whacking that the economy has taken has also contributed to the declining figures. Women currently form 52% of TV news reporters, 20% of radio newscasters, and 13% of print reporters in India. The figures were low as they are and when compared to the overall statistics from Asia that is 55% in TV, 42% in radio, and 31% in print.

What can set the alarm bells ringing is that this pathetic underrepresentation is killing the female perspective so much required in any reportage of news. Facts and numbers show that beats allotted to both sex journalists have a wide rift. Most topics are covered by male reporters both in 2015 and 2020. Additionally, celebrity, arts, media and sports, gender, crime, violence, etc were majorly covered by male reporters. The declining number of women scribes following corona can be attributed to the fact that in general women's participation in the economic workforce took a hit. Women journalists were part of the economy. World Bank data showed that the percentage of women working in India, in general, decreased from 26% to 19%. This was a period when jobs were cut; people stayed back home and women were the first to take the blows. There was rising demand for domestic labor, a job profile with which women are identified most. This was the time when schools were shut, children stayed at home, and migrant laborers were returning to their home villages, then home management became an issue and it was obvious that working women would take care of this new responsibility. As it is men have a cultural aversion to home chores, and women had to sacrifice their careers to look after homes even as men did not shirk their professional duties and even worked from home (WFH). "News organizations, despite not openly discriminating against women, can still subtly push them into certain beats, according to independent journalist Kalpana Sharma's article in the Times of India. Sharma reflects on her experience in journalism half a century ago when only a few women worked in the print media industry.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the number of women working in print media increased, but most of them were desk sub-editors or worked in magazine and feature sections. There were very few women working as reporters, and those who managed to enter the field faced challenges in securing their desired beats. Typically, women were assigned "soft" beats such as health, education, and culture, while positions of power in areas like

politics, business, military affairs, or sports were almost unheard of for women. It took approximately another decade before major newspapers started assigning women to cover these traditionally male-dominated "hard" beats. By the late 1980s, women were reporting on war and conflict, politics, business, and even sports, which had previously been male-dominated areas.. She makes the very fascinating point that during the Corona epidemic, the finest coverage of the pandemic was done by women journalists due to their extensive prior expertise on all matters about health. This is a point that she brings up, which is extremely intriguing.

Women journalists are increasingly turning to new media since conventional media has yet to abandon its patriarchal mindset. It is important to keep in mind, however, that this new format for media is still in the process of developing, and the same safeguards and levels of dependability that apply to conventional media do not yet exist. However, benefits like as paid sick leave, retirement plans, and maybe even maternity leave are still not forms that are generally recognized in either the conventional or the new media. According to a report published by the United Nations with the title "Gender Inequality in Indian Media," female journalists in India's main media organizations continue to be denied their rightful part of the work. According to the findings of the report, women fared better in their percentage of representation in online media compared to television and print. According to the findings of the report, "According to a study conducted by the International Center for Journalists (ICFJ) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the representation of women in leadership positions within the mass media industry is significantly low. The study found that among online portals, 26.3% of top leadership positions were held by women, while TV channels employed 20.9% and magazines employed 13.6% of women in such roles. The study defines leadership positions as editor-in-chief, managing editor, executive editor, bureau head, or

input/output editor. It is notable that none of the newspapers examined, including seven in Hindi and six in English, had a female editor in charge.

The study also sheds light on the challenges faced by women journalists, particularly the threats of physical and sexual violence. According to the survey respondents, 25% reported receiving threats of physical violence, including death threats, while 18% reported experiencing sexual violence. Shockingly, these threats extend beyond the journalists themselves, as 13% of respondents stated that they had received threats against their loved ones, including children and newborns. The study further highlights that 20% of women survey participants reported being physically assaulted or abused in real life as a result of the online violence they encountered. The forms of online abuse against women journalists vary, ranging from large-scale assaults and violent threats to ongoing harassment in the form of networked gas lighting. Additionally, the report addresses the role of political actors, including presidents, elected representatives, party officials, and members, in instigating and fueling online violence campaigns against women journalists. These findings emphasize the serious obstacles and risks that women journalists face in the media industry, highlighting the urgent need for addressing gender disparities and creating a safer environment for women professionals.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be that even as India is up eight spots to 127 in the gender gap index as stated by World Economic Forum 2023, women in mass media are still at the end of the receiving stick. However, as they become more empowered by the day, they are taking up the cudgels against factors that inhibit their professional growth in the media.

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LGBTQ+ and Societal Pride: Defining Safe Spaces

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Abstract-

History has been witness to the fact that ancient civilizations did not discriminate between normal people and trans genders in their society. Any discussion on homosexuality or heterosexuality was not a quotidian subject. This was so because homosexuality was considered a normal act and was not something that needed to be frowned upon or had to be hushed up. This thought pervaded not only in western culture, but across most civilizations. But it becomes ironical that as passage of time passed, rules of the game started to change. Gradually, as time passed there was disapproval of same sex relationships and those who indulged in were relegated to the backburner status in the society. What developed that as a societal trend has continued to the present day. So much so that members of the LGBTQ+ community have to seek legal redressal to get their grievances redressed. Additionally, to fend for their identity, members of the community have even formed associations globally to get social recognition.



The present study attempts to look at how members of the LGBTQ+ community have worked towards getting social credibility and are still continuing to labor in their efforts so that they get absolute accreditation in every sphere of social life. The silver lining to this series of initiatives is that across many segments of society, this community is finding its place under the sun like for example, corporates who pursue favourable management and HR policies to benefit LGBTQ+, governments giving legal and social credence by way of abrogating former constitutional Acts which banned the community among other endeavours. Gradually this group is getting to have a standing of its own in many public domains. But, a lot still needs to be done so that unfairness and indignity meted out to these individuals over the centuries is done away with and members of the LGBTQ+ community can find communal spaces which they can call their own.

Keywords: Homosexuality, backburner status, heterosexuality, ancient civilizations, transgenders.

Introduction-

When self-described 'gay Betsy Ross' Gilbert Baker stitched a hand-dyed eight strips of brightly colored cloth into a flag of rainbow hues and displayed in a parade on June 25, 1978, it was an obvious sign. An indication that it would come to be recognized as an emblem of LGBTQ+ Pride. Ever after that, this 'rainbow flag' has 'become a universal symbol for inclusion, peace and love'. An insignia created to exemplify the LGBTQ+ movement and showcase their pride.

This flaunting of pride and somewhat societal acceptance seen in today's times was an achievement that cannot be called a walk in the park. It was sheer perseverance and ongoing struggle which marked their place in society. From a normal standpoint, opposites attract. But, when one shows feeling towards a person of one's own sex, it is looked upon as 'unnatural' and even 'abnormal' in

society. Such situations are even talked about in undertones and the matter is hushed down. Not only in the 21st century, this clam up has been happening for long. Starting with the word 'gay', back in the 1940s and 50s, this word was accepted as a code within the community to express same sex desire, albeit in murmurs. A far cry from 'gay' being accepted as something that means happy.

But this so-called murmuring and hush-hush had to somehow surface someday. Eventually, the simmering had to boil over in society. "In 1965, as the civil rights movement won new legislation outlawing racial discrimination, the first gay rights demonstrations took place in Philadelphia and Washington, D.C., led by long time activists Frank Kameny and Barbara Gittings. The turning point for gay liberation came on June 28, 1969, when patrons of the popular Stonewall Inn in New York's Greenwich Village fought back against ongoing police raids on their neighbourhood bar. Stonewall is still considered a watershed moment of gay pride and has been commemorated since the 1970s with "pride marches" held every June across the United States. Recent scholarship has called for better acknowledgement of the roles that drag performers, people of color, bisexuals and transgender patrons played in the Stonewall Riots." [1]

1970s onwards LGBTQ+ community started to come out of its self-imposed isolation while braving society's internalized hatred towards them. It is only in recent decades, mainly the last two decades of 20th century and first two decades of this century, that LGBTQ+ form mainstream discourse. Public platforms, including online, now do not shy away from talking about them. Even LGBTQ+ community members now 'dare' to talk about their issues in public domain. Functional Democracies such as the US, India have, in the last few decades, passed laws favouring this community. The US has passed legislations on prohibiting discrimination against LGBT and protecting LGBTQ marriage rights. India too passed judgements on decriminalizing gay sex in 2018, a ban that had existed in India for over 200 years. Yet, a niggling doubt persists. Have these initial measures managed to give a momentum to these marginalized members of society so that they can say with Pride they are what they are.

The 'Invert' Down the Ages

It is a dichotomy that ever since human thought and society evolved leading to advancements of cultures and civilizations across the globe, same sex relationships were not frowned upon. Moreover, the need to designate homosexuality or heterosexuality for individuals was not part of public conversations as society did not feel the need. The act was pretty commonplace. But as cultures advanced, certain dos and don'ts started appearing on the horizon regarding same sex relationships whose impact are still reverberating today right till into the third decade of the 21st century. Joshua J. Mark in article 'LGBTQ+ in the Ancient World' writes "Ancient writers regularly pass over an individual's sexual orientation unless it has some bearing on an event under consideration because sexual identity was a complete non-issue.... Distinctions concerning sexual identity, and prohibitions on same-sex relationships, only begin to appear after the rise of Christianity which rejected practices associated with earlier religious beliefs. It was not, then, a same-sex relationship that was being condemned but any activity non-Christians participated in such as sacrificing to pagan gods or attending non-Christian religious festivals." [2] The writer also adds that in 'cradle of civilization' Mesopotamia, same-sex relationships were common and they were shown equally with those of the opposite sex. The evidence of this fact has been resourced from artwork as well as literature.

Even scholar William Naphy notes that a striking feature of the ancient Near East was 'how few cultures seem to have any significant 'moral' concern about same-sex activities...most cultures seemed to accept that males might have sexual relations with other males'.

Indian Culture

The culture of ancient India, like ancient Western culture, had a place for the transgender. They were termed as Hijras, Kothis, Aravanis, Jogappas or Shiv-Shakthis. The Vedic culture acknowledged

the three genders calling the third gender as 'tritiya-prakrti' (third- nature). In Vedic astrology, also, the nine planets have been assigned to one of the three genders. So for the third gender 'tritiya-prakrti', Mercury, Saturn and (in particular) Ketu are attributed to it. The Puranas also refer to three kinds of devas of music and dance. Apsaras are female, gandharvas are male and kinnars are the neuter gender. Michelraj says, "The foundational work of Hindu law, the Manu Smriti (200 BC - 200 AD) explains the biological origins of the three sexes: "A male child is produced by a greater quantity of male seed, a female child by the prevalence of the female; if both are equal, a third-sex child or boy and girl twins are produced; if either are weak or deficient in quantity, a failure of conception results. Indian linguist Patanjali's work on Sanskrit grammar, the Mahabhasya (200 BC), states that Sanskrit's three grammatical genders are derived from three natural genders. The earliest Tamil grammar, the Tolkappiyam (3rd century BC) also refers to hermaphrodites as a third "neuter" gender (in addition to a feminine category of unmasculine males)." [3] Down Indian history, during the Mughal reign, hijras played an important role and had access to all spaces and society. They even rose to positions of political advisors, administrators, generals and guardians for the royal harems.

It was in the 18th century onwards when the British started laying claim to Indian land as rulers that there was a shift in how this community was looked at. The British and early European travellers to India just could not fathom why the hijras were looked upon with respect by one and all. They were actually disgusted with presence of hijras anywhere. In the 19th century, finally the British sought to criminalize this community and ensured the third community was deprived of its civil rights and all societal benefits that they had enjoyed. This pre-partition move has had wide ramifications till date in India. Rashtra Swayamsevak Sangh supremo Mohan Bhagwat said recently during an interview to RSS-affiliated magazines Organiser and Panchjanya, "It's not that these people have never existed in our country. People with such proclivities have always been there for as long as humans have existed. Since I am a doctor of animals, I know that such traits are found in animals too. This is biological, a mode of life." The RSS chief was speaking on Hamsa and Dimbhaka, two generals of king Jarasandha, who had waged a long war against Lord Krishna — saying they were "in that sort of a relationship". Bhagwat said, "... yeh LGBT ki samasya hai. Jarasandha ke do senapati they Hamsa aur Dimbhaka. Woh itne mitra they ki Krishna ne afwaah failayi ki Dimbhaka mar gaya hai, tou Hamsa ne atmahatya kar li. Do senapatiyon ko aisehi maar dala. Ab yeh kya cheez...yeh woh hi cheez hai. In dono ke waise sambandha they (When Krishna fanned the rumour that Dimbhaka has died, Hans committed suicide. That is how Krishna got rid of those two generals. Come to think of it: what does the story suggest? This is the same thing. The two generals were in that sort of a relationship."

Islamic Culture

In Islamic culture, it is governed by Islamic law or Shariah. The Shariah is 'first and foremost concerned with questions of proper worship, ritual purity, prohibited or permitted foods, sacred times and sacred places. Only then does it expand to encompass areas like contracts, property, marriage, inheritance, civil and criminal law'. Jonathan AC Brown in article 'Muslim Scholar on how Islam really views homosexuality' says, "When looking at the issue of gay marriage, two main features of the Shariah are most pertinent. First, the Shariah is law. It is concerned primarily with actions as opposed to emotions or wishes. Second, marriage in the Shariah is not a sacrament. Stripped of all the cultural accretions Muslims have added on, and minus the obviously crucial elements of love and companionship, marriage is nothing more than — literally — a contract between a man and a woman in which the man provides the woman with financial support in return for exclusive sexual access... The Shariah doesn't have a position on homosexual desire. Indeed, it can be quite normal. But the Shariah does have a clear position on sexual acts. All sexual contact between unmarried men and women is forbidden. Sexual contact less than vaginal intercourse is punishable by the judge's discretion." [4]

Indigenous Cultures

History has been witness to the fact that indigenous cultures across the globe have been tolerant to LGBTQ+ within their various communities. But as they became colonized by Europeans during various phases of history, their native cultures were thrown out the window and colonizers imposed their thinking on the colonized. Resultantly, the acceptance and tolerance shown towards the Queer community was also categorized as criminal. Two-Spirit and of Eastern Cherokee and Nanticoke descent in the US Hudson Tibbetts says, "Colonization demonized Two-Spirit and other LGBTQ indigenous people. When the first Europeans came to this continent, they did find Two-Spirit or (LGBTQ) people – their European eyes – and they were condemned." Such individuals within their own communities or tribes were ostracized, depreciated and even considered defective as it was felt that they could not be a productive member of society. So effective had been the policy of criminalization and societal unacceptance of this community within indigenous cultures, that according to Marlon Fixico Blackkettle 'many tribes and individual families poorly judge Two-Spirits' or any member of the LGBTQ+ community in present times. That oppression exists within tribes today, too. In addition, adds, Mattee Jim of Albuquerque, New Mexico that 'even within our own communities, or our own tribes, sometimes we've had to deal with the homophobia and the transphobia'.

Blackkettle adds, "We are still here decimated and born of many societal ills, but we are being reborn and we are reclaiming our places lost among certain tribes... We have much to offer and teach to the mainstream LGBTQ community and to the world at large."

A recent study carried out in Western Australia and published in June 2021 reveals that LGBTQ people 'frequently experienced heterosexism and racism. They often felt invisible or marginalised within the LGBTIQ+ community, Indigenous communities and broader society'. The study showed that 'more than 73% reported experiencing discrimination in the past 12 months, discrimination included being ignored or teased, maliciously 'outed', followed in public, or being victims of physical violence and other crimes, close to 13% experienced homelessness or housing insecurity because of their sexual orientation or gender identity and participants experienced both racism and queer phobia, but racism was more frequently observed as being most problematic'. [5]

Literature Reviews

Yadav (2021) examines that sexual minorities in India are an easy victim of hate crimes. They are convenient targets for physical, sexual and verbal exploitation by institutions designed to protect them. The study looks at how this community is fighting for survival in society despite having provisions in place. The study recommends that in order to raise this community's status in society, government and laws should be more friendly towards them. It states in order to uplift this community it is important that every other section becomes aware and courteous to them. [6]

But the paper does not state methods in detail as to how laws and government can be more conducive towards LGBTQ+ community. The present study will look at how conditions can be made more advantageous for this community.

Russell and Fish (2016) examine mental health issues of LGBT youth. The study finds that today's youth who are part of this community are declaring their affiliation at much younger ages than seen in prior groups of youth in this community. It also finds that 'younger ages of coming out intersect with a developmental period characterized by concerns with self-consciousness, conformity, and peer regulation and coming out is typically stressful for LGBT youth but is also associated with positive mental health, especially over the long run'. The study also highlights that LGBT mental health must be understood in their context of persona identities. [7]

Although the study does mention the substantial advances that have been made to support LGBT in mental issues, what else can be done to improve this scenario needs to be detailed.

Duhaylungsod, Madrid, Lapiz, Pongasi and Tan (2018) state in their study that people have mixed emotions towards this community. They further say that this community should be pitied and at places they looked at with repulsion. In terms of positive emotions, findings show that society supported the LGBTQ+ people, they were admired because of their strength and people felt that being an LGBTQ+ showed value in diversity and homophobic attitudes should be taken head on. But of the majority respondents, these constructive feelings were just a drop in the ocean. A majority still harboured negative thought towards these people. [8]

As the above stated research does not focus on any suggestions for safe spaces for the community, the current study has attempted to concentrate on the same and give useful suggestions for uplift of the community.

Sharma (2021) states by giving various judgements passed by Indian courts on issues related to LGBTQ+ community that developments have been taking place as regards this issue. Despite these moves and initiatives, this community is still suffering and is not getting its societal due. Sharma says the importance of these judgements passed has benefited these people as they have been recognized as a third gender, homosexuality has been decriminalized, these verdicts have laid the roadmap for how more progress can be made on this complex issue and a basic groundwork has been laid to bestow civil rights which earlier they had been denied. Although the author speaks in favour of the LGBTQ+, he does not detail suggestions how any roadmap can be laid out conducive to the interests of the community. [9]

The current study has tried to give recommendations that can actually be implemented by stakeholders and all those involved for the uplift of the community and its welfare.

The relevance of the present study is then to analyse whether LGBTQ+ have attained what they aspired for in terms of achieving societal pride and to probe has society provided them with access to safe places so that they can prosper. The content analysis for the research has been done with secondary data sources. Secondary data sources include both printed and online sources.

Discussion

The LGBTQ+ community may be spurned by one and all. But a silver lining to this is that of late, Gen Z and millennials are identifying themselves in large numbers as LGBTQ+. A variety of factors like access to representation, information and excess use of social platforms has brought this change. This was not seen earlier. Aashank Dwivedi in his Times of India blog 'Problems Encountered by LGBT Youth in India' says, "More Indian youths than ever before may accept homosexuality and queer identities today, but within the confines of family, home, and school, acceptance of their sexuality and freedom to openly express their gender choices still remain a constant struggle for LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) people."

To elaborate on Dwivedi's claim, a majority of this community still shies from talking about themselves in open. Even if the younger crowd does talk about their inclination, it is only a drop in the ocean as safe spaces still need to be identified for this community.

(i) Social discrimination: It is important to know what is discrimination. Discrimination can be described as 'any sort of act or behavior that distinguishes or singles out individuals on account of factors such as age, sex, race, national origin, sexual orientation, and gender identity. This can include revoking or extending preferential treatment'. This is quite true when it comes to social discrimination against this community. The social castigations are encountered in settings like academic institutions, community centers, parties, restaurants, and transportation services just to name a few. A UNESCO report of 2018 states that LGBTQ+ children are bullied in their academic institutions scarring them for life. Even honour killings are carried out if families find out that there are LGBTQ+ members in the family. This is more pronounced in rural parts of India than urban localities. So to escape this 'honour

killing' LGBTQ individuals forsake their families and loved ones to be on their own. The worst is faced by women if they declare themselves as lesbian or bisexual. Rejected by families, most commit suicide. Families decide on corrective measures like 'family sanctioned corrective rapes'. An article in Mint states 'Vyjayanti Vasanta Mogli, a transwoman LGBT activist and public policy scholar at Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Hyderabad, who has openly spoken about her abuse at school, says that lesbian women and transmen in rural areas end up at the bottom of the hierarchy when it comes to basic human rights within the unit of family and village'. [10]

All this is a result of social rigidity which dictates education, marriage, careers, and lack of family support in cases like these. This can lead to social isolation, pressure to adhere to social norms leads to depressions, suicidal thoughts and psychosomatic diseases. Even if kith and kin accept LGBTQ+ members, curbs are put on them in terms of dressing, interaction with others and most importantly to behave like a heterosexual.

Social spaces like social media platforms have helped. Platforms like Gaysi and Gaylaxy, and publishers like Queer Ink have helped the community to carve a niche for themselves and work together with similar minds. But even on social media like Twitch TV, a live streaming platform safer spaces should be made for community members so that they are safe from swatting (using a person's home address to call police and falsely report a crime at their residence) and boxing (finding personal details of someone you know online and making them public). Social media may be safe up to some extent but when platforms like Kiwi Farms and similar hate forums actively encourage harassment of persons they 'deem different' to the extent of encouraging targeted persons to commit suicide, then the situation can be alarming. TV shows like Satyamev Jayate, The Tara Sharma Shows have attempted to create an environment of social empathy on the subject especially among parents. Even academic institutions are taking initiatives. For example, a report states that IIT Gandhinagar has a gender and sexuality club called Orenda. Rohit Revi, one of the founders of Orenda, says without LGBT activism in educational institutions, LGBT issues largely remain 'untalkaboutable'. He adds that their wider perspective is to encourage visibility of LGBT students and their struggles because 'invisibility is the first and biggest challenge that we need to take up'.

(ii) Workplace Challenge: As it is, conventionally speaking, workplaces threw up challenges like gender equality issues. But now a new issue dominates the horizon: How to treat marginalized groups like LGBTQ+ at the workplace. According to Prof Premilla D'Cruz, who teaches organizational behavior at the Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad many companies have neither embraced gender inclusivity nor put any particular effort into employing the LGBTQIA+ Community. She says, "Often, the management assumes that there are no LGBTQIA+ employees and do not have policies to help those who decide to disclose their gender identity or sexuality." Adds Susweta GuhaThakurta who writes, "The main challenge of LGBT professionals in the workplace today is that they are discouraged to disclose their sexual orientation in the workplace. If their sexual orientation is made public in the workplace then their contribution is not appreciated by their superiors. Therefore now the senior management is faced with the task of handling this issue by inculcating workplace practices that challenge the mind-set of the workforce, thus fostering a safe and open environment for LGBT professionals." [11] The LGBTQ+ community faces upheavals as there is lack of corporate attention, no role models from the community to follow, absence of diversity awareness training and rampant discrimination. At certain times they have to hide their preferences to get jobs. An article in Outlook while quoting Zomato HR Head Daminee Sawhney says, "We firmly believe it is only when you have created an environment of collaboration, where capabilities thrive and passions drive results that you have succeeded in creating a foundation for your employees where they deliver their best." [12]

Safe spaces can only be established for this marginalized group when workers at a company are comfortable within their own skin and the organization has a 'backbone of policies and framework that recognises them for what they bring to the table, regardless of where they come from, their gender

preferences or sexual orientation'. In addition, 'well-thought-out HR guidelines need to be crafted to on board a gender-diverse workforce and retain them, which is easier said than done. These need to funnel down the chain of command—from the management to managers to co-workers—to foster dialogue and understanding of the challenges faced by the LGBTQIA+ community and promote an inclusive workplace'. For example Hindustan Unilever Ltd (HUL)'s has a ProUd network within its Global Unilever ProUd Network. The company makes efforts to create awareness about LGBTQIA+ issues through this network.

Although efforts are there, the problem comes about when a sense of belongingness is not incorporated despite there being inclusivity. MNCs like PepsiCo, Amazon India are sensitive to the LGBTQ+ issue. But the momentum is still needed to empower these individuals and equip community members to be sensitive to their needs.

(iii) Legal empowerment: Undeniably, the LGBTQ+ community has had to face physical, emotional, mental and economic upheavals down the decades. The cataclysms they have experienced or are undergoing is something only they can explain as communal empathy for them is negligible for society favours heterosexuality and homosexuality is looked at being abnormal. This feeling is still prevalent even when in 2018 the apex court decriminalized consensual homosexuality between adults by downplaying Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code. The court gave its verdict excluding it from the scope of the landmark Navtej Singh Johar vs. Union of India. At the same time Article 15 of Indian Constitution states that discrimination is prohibited on basis of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth and all will have access to public places.

SC advocate Saurabh Kirpal, who was also lawyer for petitioners in the case that led to the decriminalization of homosexuality says, "India does not have a comprehensive anti-discrimination code. While the Constitution prohibits discrimination, that injunction only applies to the government and its instrumentalities. The private sector thus can discriminate with impunity in matters of employment, housing, health and education among other areas. While there is a discussion about the need for such a law, there appears to be very little political consensus towards the enactment of such a law. Even the courts have not yet woken to this problem which materially affects the lives of the queer community." [13] He adds that even the Queer community is a heterogeneous group within itself.

In fact, if the problem is looked in its entirety, certain facets become obvious indicating that the marginalized group needs to be pumped up. The community needs to ally with groups and movements that are feminist and subaltern. It should be understood that their number is not so large to make a substantial impact therefore their merging with others is vitally important if they want to have a say in society. There is growing support for the LGBTQ+ but the traction and cohesiveness needed for strengthening the movement needs to be intensified.

Findings

(i) The LGBTQ+ community members are in the process of achieving that status of societal Pride they have aspired for in mainstream society.

(ii) Society is striving to provide them with safe spaces. But cohesiveness of this marginalized group will provide them the social acceptance they crave for.

In conclusion, it can be said that society has to be more empathetic towards this group and as the poet has said 'I am what I am, so take me as I am'.

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MODERNIZED CLASSROOM : MAKING LEARNING A WILLING AFFAIR

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Introduction

The Government of India in the introduction of its policy statement on NEP 2020 states that ‘The global education development agenda reflected in the Goal 4 (SDG4) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by India in 2015 - seeks to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” by 2030. Such a lofty goal will require the entire education system to be reconfigured to support and foster learning, so that all of the critical targets and goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development can be achieved. The aim must be for India to have an education system by 2040 that is second to none, with equitable access to the highest-quality education for all learners regardless of social or economic background. This National Education Policy 2020 is the first education policy of the 21st century and aims to address the many growing developmental imperatives of our country.

This Policy proposes the revision and revamping of all aspects of the education structure, including its regulation and governance, to create a new system that is aligned with the

aspirational goals of 21st century education including SDG4, while building upon India's traditions and value systems'. As the government gradually rolls out the policy, one young bureaucrat from Uttar Pradesh, Shashank Chaudhary, presently Chief Development Officer at Meerut, a district in the state, has already moved forward to modernize the classroom in various government schools in Meerut block. Naming the project 'Aadharshila', the young IAS officer from the 2017 batch and an electrical engineer from Delhi, equipped panchayat schools in the Meerut block with scientific and robotics labs. And lo behold, students from these schools where these amenities have been provided, inspire to become IPS officers, plan projects on robotics and what not.

In an interview to YouTube Channel Lallantop, Chaudhary very proudly says that every school here can give competition to international schools abroad and every school is equipped to produce APJ Kalams. In addition Choudhary also says that as the government introduced NEP 2020 where the stress is on more practical understanding than theoretical, introduction of hi tech in classes in day to day learning has been a natural corollary of the new policy. He says that during his school days he was exposed to a lot of scientific concepts like observatories. Elaborating, Chaudhary says even as gram panchayats are spending to provide infra facilities to these basic shiksha schools, why not incorporate the type of knowledge that he had acquired in his school days with the

knowhow being taught at these government schools and the result was a small level knowledge center in these schools. He added in his interview that children in the government schools should have the same exposure as that imparted in the private schools and primarily to retain students in government schools, it was a good way to start incorporating smart knowhow in the classroom modernization.

Additionally, after remodeling these villages with the latest scientific know-how, now Chaudhary has turned his attention towards library in each panchayat. Chandhary says “Meerut has around 479 gram panchayats and every year these panchayats get fund from the government for the development of their area based on the total population. “What we have done is asked all the panchayats to add libraries in the yearly working plan. We are only acting as the guiding force and letting them create the libraries based on their own vision. Initially, we also shared few designs, but since we didn’t want any centralized theme, so we have left the responsibility on the Pradhan and Panchayat Secretary. Every Panchayat Bhawan has some empty space or some room which has not been used for years. The Pradhans are using those spaces to create the libraries. We have made it clear that all the libraries should have some basic facilities like good lighting, ventilation, inverter, and separate spaces for sitting. Other than that, it all depends on the village leaders how attractive they want to make the library.

Some panchayats have actually created libraries that are astonishing in design and can compete with some of the best libraries in the country.” Also, these libraries are of great help for the girls especially, as they usually don’t go to study in the city for security reasons mainly. A new library near their home is like a blessing for them to pursue their dream of higher studies and career. For the collection of books... few teams have been created that connect with big schools in the city and get 1000 to 1500 books as donation from them. These are then distributed among the libraries. There are few publications in Meerut like Arihant, which are also helping in the arrangement of books. Procurement of books is based on the demands and preferences of the students going to the libraries. Mostly, they want competitive exams related books, so the focus is on that. What comes out from this exemplary illustration is that modernization of the classroom under the gambit of NEP 2020 shows that when facilities and knowhow are provided to students in classrooms the impact of learning takes on a greater dimension than is normally understood where there is only chalk and talk.

Objectives and research methodology

The objectives of the chapter are to analyze what impact does NEP 2020 have on modernization process of the classroom and how do students perceive this upgradation of theory and practical knowhow. The data for the chapter has been taken from secondary sources and then analyzed.

Modern Education : Soaring to newer heights

Gregor Prajs says in article 'Modern education is awesome – What you need to know' that 'The term "modern" means up-to-date. Modern education, or simply progressive education, is a type of education that develops students' abilities and skills. In other words, modern education focuses more on the development of human beings rather than on training them for specific jobs. That is why modern educators call themselves progressive educators.' The author further adds that among the features of modern education are easy to distract meaning that individual students learn to use their own initiative and creativity, dependence on resources as educators have various sources to take information from to support what they are teaching in class, student centered as they take active participation 'in discussions, ask questions, and express opinions', problem solving comprises students finding solutions to real-life problems by themselves, and integrative meaning to encourage integration among subjects.

Even as Prajs explains what is modern education, he concludes by saying 'in a nutshell, modern education is a system that employs the current theories and practices. It uses collaboration, technology, and creativity, unlike traditional education. However, it shares many similarities with conventional education. For instance, both teach knowledge and skills, use textbooks, and develop students' thinking abilities'. In the digital age there is no doubt in saying that

modern education has just moved forward by leaps and bounds. An article 'Modern education : A significant Leap forward' states that 'The advancement of human civilization is significantly influenced by education. Since the beginning of time, the way that people learn has changed significantly over time and continues to do so as a result of developing technology. However, thanks to the internet and other digital technology, online learning environments are becoming more popular than traditional classrooms.

The spatial restriction of a physical classroom has been entirely eliminated by the current educational system, benefiting a wide variety of pupils simultaneously throughout the world'. Further elaborating while drawing a differentiation between traditional and modern education it states, "Both traditional and contemporary education is connected to and distinct from one another. There was a point in our nation's early history when there were no schools. The education or information is passed down to the children from their ancestors. At the time, this expertise was primarily concerned with survival abilities. The people who lived in jungles received their education from their predecessors, who demonstrated to them how to build tools, use animal skins for various uses, and hunt for sustenance. They received instruction on their rites and practices. Their respective beliefs were discussed in class. They imparted moral lessons to them through the tales of their gods and monarchs.

In India, the monarchs used to send their sons to institutions known as gurukuls. They learned how to wield various weapons, how to defend themselves, and how to assault their adversaries at these gurukuls. Additionally, they learned the fundamentals of governing an empire. These kinds of schools weren't intended for the community. The royal families were the only ones who had access to it. The expertise that their parents possessed was passed on to the other children in the empire by them. The value of education grew across the nation as the democratic government was created in the next years. Schools were opened where any kind of student could come and learn. Modern education was established at this time." The article further states that 'the academic curriculum needs to be modernised not simply to keep up with the times, but also to better educate students about the rapid breakthroughs in technology. Becoming flexible to changing times, helps students become skilled at employing both conventional abilities and technical competence with equal ease.

The existing educational system does ordinary people an injustice by limiting their potential, making it impossible for them to handle the intricacies of both private and public life. Since there are many different issues facing mankind in today's competitive world, the educational system must be made adaptable enough to educate pupils for this dynamic environment'. While opinions abound whether the education

system caps people's potential or not, the NEP2020 visualizes 'Pedagogy must evolve to make education more experiential, holistic, integrated, inquiry-driven, discovery-oriented, learner-centred, discussion-based, flexible, and, of course, enjoyable. The curriculum must include basic arts, crafts, humanities, games, sports and fitness, languages, literature, culture, and values, in addition to science and mathematics, to develop all aspects and capabilities of learners; and make education more well-rounded, useful, and fulfilling to the learner.

Education must build character, enable learners to be ethical, rational, compassionate, and caring, while at the same time prepare them for gainful, fulfilling employment. The gap between the current state of learning outcomes and what is required must be bridged through undertaking major reforms that bring the highest quality, equity, and integrity into the system, from early childhood care and education through higher education'. As part of this intention, the policy envisages that :

- Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) consists of flexible, multi-faceted, multi-level, play-based, activity-based, and inquiry-based learning, comprising of alphabets, languages, numbers, counting, colours, shapes, indoor and outdoor play, puzzles and logical thinking, problem-solving, drawing, painting and other visual art, craft, drama and puppetry, music and movement.

- Anganwadi Centres will be strengthened with high-quality infrastructure, play equipment, and well-trained Anganwadi workers/teachers. Every Anganwadi will have a well-ventilated, well-designed, child-friendly and well-constructed building with an enriched learning environment.
- Enjoyable and inspirational books for students at all levels will be developed, including through high-quality translation (technology assisted as needed) in all local and Indian languages, and will be made available extensively in both school and local public libraries. Public and school libraries will be significantly expanded to build a culture of reading across the country. Digital libraries will also be established. School libraries will be set up - particularly in villages - to serve the community during non-school hours, and book clubs may meet in public/school libraries to further facilitate and promote widespread reading. A National Book Promotion Policy will be formulated.
- Special care shall be taken to ensure that no school remains deficient on infrastructure support. The credibility of Government schools shall be re-established and this will be attained by upgrading and enlarging the schools that already exist, building additional quality schools in areas where they do not exist, and providing safe and practical conveyances and/or hostels, especially for the girl children,

so that all children have the opportunity to attend a quality school and learn at the appropriate level.

- Teaching and learning will be conducted in a more interactive manner; questions will be encouraged, and classroom sessions will regularly contain more fun, creative, collaborative, and exploratory activities for students for deeper and more experiential learning.
- Teachers will aim to encourage students with singular interests and/or talents in the classroom by giving them supplementary enrichment material and guidance and encouragement. Topic-centered and Project-based Clubs and Circles will be encouraged and supported at the levels of schools, school complexes, districts, and beyond. Examples include Science Circles, Math Circles, Music & Dance Performance Circles, Chess Circles, Poetry Circles, Language Circles, Drama Circles, Debate Circles, Sports Circles, Eco-Clubs, Health & Well-being Clubs/ Yoga Clubs and so on.
- Schools will develop smart classrooms, in a phased manner, for using digital pedagogy and thereby enriching the teaching-learning process with online resources and collaborations.
- The establishment of school complexes/clusters and the sharing of resources across complexes will have a number of other benefits as a consequence, such as improved

support for children with disabilities, more topic-centred clubs and academic/sports/arts/crafts events across school complexes, better incorporation of art, music, language, vocational subjects, physical education, and other subjects in the classroom through the sharing of teachers in these subjects including use of ICT tools to conduct virtual classes, better student support, enrolment, attendance, and performance through the sharing of social workers and counsellors.

Given the fact that NEP 2020 visualizes for a modernized classroom to encourage a high level quality of educational learning, Anuj Kumar Jha says in an article ‘The New National Education Policy 2020, released by the Ministry of Education (MoE), strongly emphasises digital and online learning to make education accessible to every child in India. Leveraging the power of modern technology in education, NEP Policy 2020 aims to completely transform the Indian education system and make the country a “Global Knowledge Superpower” by 2030. NEP Policy 2020 recommends the following key initiatives: Digital Infrastructure The New National Education Policy 2020 acknowledges the need for creating an open, evolvable, and interoperable public digital infrastructure in the education sector. Multiple platforms and point solutions can use this infrastructure to improve India’s device penetration. Online Teaching Platforms and Tools : NEP Policy 2020 advocates the extension of existing eLearning

platforms to provide teachers with a rich set of assistive tools to monitor their student's progress.

Tools, such as learning management systems, are the need of the hour, as the COVID-19 pandemic has shown. Virtual Labs : According to the New National Education Policy 2020, schools should leverage the existing eLearning platforms to create virtual labs so that all students can access practical, hands-on learning experiences. In addition, there is a dire need to provide students and teachers access to online learning through appropriate digital devices, such as tablets with preloaded content. Content Creation, Digital Repository, and Dissemination. NEP Policy 2020 recommends schools create a digital repository of content that includes coursework and other play/activity-based learning material. Also, the learners should be able to rate the quality and effectiveness of the content. Schools can use student-appropriate tools like apps and games for fun-based learning. Blended Models of Learning: The New National Education Policy 2020 clearly states that schools should not overlook the importance of face-to-face, in-person learning while promoting digital learning and education. Accordingly, different effective blended learning models should be offered for appropriate replication for different subjects."

Conclusion

In conclusion it can be said that as PM Narendra Modi has said, “I dream of a digital India where quality education reaches the most inaccessible corners driven by digital learning.” This is quite true as India aims for a third largest global economy, that will only come about with good quality education in a modernized classroom.

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Social Media & Society: A Double-edged Sword?

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Abstract:

The most interactive medium to have emerged in the recent decades to speed up human interconnectivity are the various social media platforms. These platforms have completely transformed the way human communication is now done and will be done in future. But what is also seen is that this phenomenon, now an institution in its own right, has also been behaving like a Frankenstein which needs to be curbed. The present study seeks to analyze why social media platforms also have a negative side to them. The research methodology for the paper is based on secondary sources. Sources like websites, portals, books, online sources have been studied and then analyzed. It can be said that the demerits of social media can be tackled by governments so that these platforms are free from malaise and have the potential to do more good than bad.

Introduction:

The 20th Century has seen some mega events and advancements unfolding in the last 100 years whether they be political, social, economic or technological. The biggest technological achievement that the century witnessed was the evolution of social media. It comes as no surprise that following the first supercomputers' creation in the 1940s, engineers and scientists actually started developing networks between those computers later leading to the birth of the Internet and the World Wide Web (WWW). By the time the Seventies came around, networking technology had drastically improved and by 1979 UseNet had permitted users to communicate through virtual newsletter and digital bulletin boards. By 1980s personal computers were common on everyone's tables and internet relay chats which evolved in the 1980s remained popular well until the 1990s. Now even as this social media was on an expansion spree, what gave it the momentum was the having a social media site with the launch of Six Degrees in 1997. The factor that hurtled this website to an upward spiral was that it enabled users to upload a profile and make friends with other users. Just immediately after this in 1999, the first blogging sites became popular for user generated content creating what can be called as a sensation.

As we enter the third decade of the 21st century, millennials, and the current Gen Z, social media craze is just on the rise. Jason Riddle says, "The more popular social media websites are centered around a wall of information that is populated by friends and advertisers. Social media has helped increase communication and information travel internationally and across borders. The uses of social media are varied, but they do have a common goal. The main goal and life of social media is to share. People can share thoughts; people can share information; people can share funny or offensive pictures and

videos. No one is forced to read anything on social media because the user controls what he or she views. The social media user can choose who to be friends with, what information to see, what information to click on to read more about, what information to believe, who to accept communications from, and ultimately to be a part of social media with an active profile... Social media is now an effective social change system in our society today.” [1]

In fact taking Riddle’s concept forward, going by the present trends, communication has advanced so much forward as nearly everyone has smartphones in their hands or maybe other mobile devices for digital communication that social media platforms are now literally in the palms of users’ hands at any time and place. What’s more, with social media firmly entrenched among the populations of the globe, the data generated by its users is just as valuable.

Additionally, as it gives rise to concepts like influencer culture social media like any other societal practice is imbued with its pros and cons, making it a double edged sword for its users conceptually and practically. The engagement of users with one another and the data generated by this engagement is also noteworthy.

Now, with 4.48 billion people engaging in social media worldwide and average social media user engaging with an average of 6.6 various social media platforms, the gargantuan expanse of social media platforms outreach is truly mind boggling.

The phenomenal rise but at a cost

With 692 million internet users in India in early 2023 and India’s internet penetration touching 48.7% of the total population, undoubtedly the astonishing rise of the platforms is also proving to be a mixed blessing. An why can be the question? Even as the positive growth has democratized information on one hand, on the other hand, it is imposing to be a challenge for both society and country.

Dr Suman Kumari and Prof. P. Bobby Vardhan in article ‘Social Media: Key Issues And New Challenges - A Study Of Nalgonda District’ say ‘The key features such as immediacy, responsiveness and social presence of interaction which have been possible with new media channels constitute a qualitatively and substantively different experience than what would otherwise has been possible through traditional mass media. Despite the fact that there are many debates which continue about the scenery and quality of mediated communication, especially in contrast with face-to-face exchange of dialogue as the presumed *ideal* mode of interpersonal communication, mediated interactivity nonetheless has long been exhilarated as the ultimate difference between new media and mass media... The last two decades have witnessed a rapid transformation of traditional media into new media that includes computerized, digital, and networked information and communication technologies. Today, an increasing entertainment of social phenomena, ubiquitous data and computational process can be observed in many domains and context, including social media. There is a palpable shift from conventional media to new media. This shift has raised many concerns and discussions around the pros and cons of the new media, and other related issues.” [2]

The Benefits First:

Of course undoubtedly the phenomenon that is called social media has a plethora of benefits. Even as information gets democratized through this concept, netizens are empowered as they can bypass traditional curators of information and they themselves are creators and disseminators of content. The new avenues that social media offer include giving a voice to the voiceless as they assert themselves in a strong way on social media. YouTube is an apt illustration of this. And then there are the online communities which are heterogeneous when compared to physical communities. In contrast to not being able to participate in many public discourses in physical mode, online communities have the advantage of giving voice to all so that individuals can advance their thoughts and ideas. With online content creation being soft skill driven, anyone with help of technology can create good content which is easy and cheap. The social media platforms offer an excellent alternative to traditional sources of knowledge. With instant connectivity as its hallmark, social media offers the advantage of staying connected with family and friends. Another fantastic advantage of social media platforms is that it offers direct interaction with governments and avail government services directly.

The Challenges still remain:

The New York Times is reported to have stated that 'The election of Donald J. Trump is perhaps the starkest illustration yet that across the planet, social networks are helping to fundamentally rewire human society'. Of course, when compared to other media, social media platforms allow freedom of communication and thus the influence of these platforms in political campaigns cannot be doubted. A Pew research states that one in five adults in the US get their political news through social media. But at the same time, the study states, that those who get news from social media are less well-informed and more or less exposed to unproven claims that people who get news from traditional sources. This highlights the fact that the flip side of social media is the fact that it is killing 'activism' and encouraging 'slacktivism'. What this means is that when activism on social media talks about bringing awareness about societal issues, people opt out or prefer to remain passive. Their support is only limited to pressing the like button. But in physical mode, people actually contribute to the charity they feel close to. Social media fuel hate speech, mis-and-disinformation rumors. As everyone is connected thanks to mobile telephony, fueling false rumors to achieve one's targets are a natural corollary on social media. This apart, trolling and fake information are also widely recognized follies emanating out of extensive media use. As freedom of communication is a hallmark here, anyone can comment on anything without realizing what damage that comment can make. Experts opine that privacy is also a major issue for social media use. A report published in The Hindu titled 'Ensure equal Net privacy for Indians and others: Centre' states that social media companies, however big, have to comply with Indian laws and 'have to treat Indian citizens with an equal degree of privacy', as per a hearing in Supreme Court. Also there have to be facilities for the physically disabled to access social media platforms.

In addition, there is no safety net for women using the Net which should be put in place by governments to protect women from being abused online.

Conclusion:

In conclusion it can be said that social media have immense potential to formulate people's opinions and decisions. For example eco conservation issues, women's issues can be talked about on social media platforms and well meaning opinion garnered to make the issues viable discussion subjects in form of campaigns, hashtags etc. Data storage issue also needs to be looked at as identity theft, sexual predation, stalking etc need to be addressed in an amicable manner so that the social media should not be seen as a double-edged sword.

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