Gina Shodh SANGAM

New Dimension in Research from the Indian Perspective

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सम्पादक की कलम से.......

प्रिय पाठकों,

भारत एक ऐसा देश है, जिसकी आत्मा उसकी ज्ञान–परंपरा और शोध–संस्कृति में रची–बसी है। यहाँ का हर कण, हर ध्वनि और हर प्रतीक गहरी ऐतिहासिक चेतना से भरा है। भारतीय चिंतन केवल दर्शन या अध्यात्म तक सीमित नहीं रहा, बल्कि उसने समाज, राजनीति, साहित्य, विज्ञान, कला, शिक्षा और संस्कृति को भी अपने विशिष्ट दृष्टिकोण से आलोकित किया है। इसी कारण भारतीय शोध हमेशा से बहुआयामी और बहुविषयक रहा है। इस विशेषांक का विषय "New Dimension in Research from the Indian Perspective" इसी परंपरा और आधुनिक वैश्विक आवश्यकता का जीवंत संगम है।

भारतीय अनुसंधान केवल तथ्यों की खोज भर नहीं, बल्कि जीवन–मूल्यों और मानवीय आदर्शों की तलाश भी है। वेद, उपनिषद, बौद्ध त्रिपिटक, जैन आगम और गीता की व्याख्या इस तथ्य की पुष्टि करती है कि यहाँ ज्ञान केवल बौद्धिक चेष्टा न होकर साधना और आत्म–साक्षात्कार का माध्यम रहा है। यही कारण है कि भारतीय शोध हमेशा समाज और संस्कृति से गहराई से जुड़ा रहा है।

आज जब वैश्विक विमर्श पूँजी और तकनीक पर केंद्रित हो गया है, तब भारतीय दृष्टिकोण शोध को मानवीयता और समरसता की राह दिखाता है। शोध का उद्देश्य केवल 'जानना' नहीं, बल्कि 'समझना' और समाज को दिशा देना है। यही दृष्टि इस अंक के शोध–पत्रों में भी दिखाई देती है। कहीं प्राचीन भारतीय शिक्षा प्रणाली और नालंदा–तक्षशिला की विरासत पर चर्चा है, तो कहीं राष्ट्रीय शिक्षा नीति–2020 के परिवर्तनकारी स्वरूप पर विमर्श। कहीं 1857 की क्रांति की स्मृतियाँ जीवित होती हैं, तो कहीं डिजिटल युग में बच्चों के समाजीकरण की भूमिका का विश्लेषण है।

भारतीय शोध की शक्ति उसकी विविधता में है। इस विशेषांक में ईको–फेमिनिज्म, चिपको आंदोलन और जनजातीय ज्ञान–परंपरा जैसे आलेख यह बताते हैं कि हमारी शोध दृष्टि प्रकृति को जीवन और संस्कृति का हिस्सा मानती है। वहीं स्त्री विमर्श से जुड़े आलेख मीरा की काव्य–परंपरा से लेकर आधुनिक संदर्भों तक स्त्री की भूमिका को उजागर करते हैं। इस विशेषांक में अतीत की स्मृतियाँ और समाज की सांस्कृतिक चेतना साथ–साथ गूँजती हैं : जहाँ क्रांतिकारी बलिदान की कहानियाँ हैं, वहीं लोक आंदोलनों और जन–संघर्षों की प्रेरक विरासत भी शामिल है।

इस अंक में विज्ञान और तकनीक पर भी गंभीर अध्ययन किया गया है। प्राचीन भारत की पुल–निर्माण तकनीक, औपनिवेशिक युग में सार्वजनिक भवनों का निर्माण और श्रमिकों की भूमिका–ये सब दर्शाते हैं कि भारत, परंपरा का संरक्षक होने के साथ–साथ नवाचार का भी अग्रदूत रहा है।

भारतीय दृष्टिकोण शोध को केवल आंकड़ों की कसौटी पर नहीं, बल्कि नैतिकता और मानवीय मूल्यों से भी परखता है। यही कारण है कि योग, आयुर्वेद, नाट्यशास्त्र, संगीत, लोकनाट्य और संत परंपराएँ भी शोध का विषय बनती हैं। इस विशेषांक में छत्तीसगढ़ के संत बाबा गुरु घासीदास का समाज–दर्शन और भारतीय दार्शनिक परंपराओं की पुनर्व्याख्या इस परंपरा को और पुष्ट करती है।

भारत का शोध दृष्टिकोण स्थानीय होते हुए भी वैश्विक संदर्भों को स्पर्श करता है। भारत–नेपाल संबंध, बांग्लादेश की राजनीति का भारत पर प्रभाव, दिल्ली सल्तनत और मध्य एशिया के संबंध, तथा 21वीं सदी में वैश्विक दक्षिण में भारत की भूमिका – ये सभी आलेख भारत को वैश्विक विमर्शों से जोड़ते हैं।

इस विशेषांक की सबसे बड़ी विशेषता यही है कि यह शोध को विश्वविद्यालयों और प्रयोगशालाओं तक सीमित नहीं रखता, बल्कि लोकजीवन, संस्कृति और समाज से भी जोड़ता है। यहाँ शोध का अर्थ है–अपनी परंपराओं को समझना, वर्तमान की चुनौतियों से संवाद करना और भविष्य की राह तय करना। इस प्रकार यह विशेषांक अतीत की स्मृतियों और भविष्य की संभावनाओं, दोनों को समेटे हुए है। इसमें धर्म और दर्शन के विमर्श हैं, विज्ञान और तकनीक की चुनौतियों का विश्लेषण है, और समाज की विविध परतों की आवाजें दर्ज हैं। यही बहुआयामिकता इसे विशिष्ट बनाती है और "New Dimension in Research from the Indian Perspective" की थीम को सार्थक करती है।

अंत में, मैं उन सभी विद्वानों और लेखकों का हृदय से आभार व्यक्त करता हूँ, जिन्होंने इस विशेषांक को समृद्ध बनाने में अपनी बौद्धिक ऊर्जा और दृष्टि प्रदान की। मैं विशेष रूप से विशेषांक संपादक डॉ. नीरज रुवाली सर एवं संपादक डॉ. नरेश कुमार सिहाग सर का भी आभार प्रकट करता हूँ, जिनकी दूरदृष्टि, रचनात्मक नेतृत्व और संपादन दक्षता के कारण यह अंक अपनी विषयगत गरिमा और गुणवत्ता को साकार रूप दे सका है। साथ ही, मैं अपनी शोध–सहयोगी और मित्र ज्योत्सना भट्ट का भी धन्यवाद करता हूँ, जिनका रचनात्मक सहयोग और विचारशील सहभागिता इस विशेषांक को एक समृद्ध और सारगर्भित रूप देने में सहायक रही है। संपादन मंडल का भी धन्यवाद, जिनके सहयोग के बिना यह अंक संभव न होता।

आशा है कि यह विशेषांक पाठकों के चिंतन को समृद्ध करेगा और उन्हें अपनी सांस्कृतिक जड़ों को आधुनिक दृष्टिकोण से समझने की प्रेरणा देगा।

–मोहित कुमार शर्मा
विशेषांक संपादक

Eco-feminist Discourse in the North-Eastern Folklore: A Critical Evaluation

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Abstract :-

Folklores are not just stories about the collective beliefs, aspirations and imaginations of communities but they are also carriers of their cultures, values, traditions and perceptions. This folklore can be used as a source to understand the conscious and sub-conscious elements of human life. North-East India have received scant attention from the scholars even though each of the territory of these region have a rich legacy of folklores and mythology. These folklores even when they are derived from existing tropes of folklore use their culture specific elements and edifices to create a new cultural discourse.

From our vantage point, these stories reflect two crucial elements - one, a close proximity to the nature reflecting a symbiotic and mutually coexisting ecosphere, and secondly, the central role of women in mediating the relation between humans and the nature, thus giving weightage to the nature-culture debate where women exist in close association with the nature due to their inherent social role as a nurturer and carer.

The present research will seek to do a comprehensive survey of the multiple folklores from different parts of the North East India and use them to analyse the status of women in the society vis-a-vis the nature.

Keywords :- Environment, Nature, Gender, Women, Folklore

In the past few decades, studies centred on folklores and their role in shaping the cultural, social and intellectual history of the masses has been recognised and scholars now are increasingly engaging with the source material to understand the perceptions, attitudes and value systems of the North Eastern societies. In the present research, we will try to survey some of the important folktales prevalent in the North East and will to understand how these stories try to create an affinity between the lives of women and environment. Folklores thus become a major source to understand eco-feminist

discourses and also help in visualising the traditional role of women as a nurturer-carer in the traditional society of North East India.

Folk tales need to be seen as a source of historical construction. For a long time folk tale were neglected as a source of history and were seen as an alternate versions or retellings of a greater tale. This demarcation between the great and the little traditions according to A.K. Ramanujan are not absolute as both written and oral sources assimilate, negate, mimic and influence each other. All the versions of text are retellings and we can't talk about an original version because the text is molded over a long period of time.

There was a belief for a long time that oral or folk versions are native and local retellings of a narrative and forms what is known is Meta narrative. But it is not completely true in the sense that these tales also travel from one place to another. Either a particular folk tale diffuses in different forms in different cultures or similar models of folk.

Folktales present a counter-system to the dominant brahmanical tales. Folk genres divide into the domestic and the 'public' spheres. Sometimes these House- hold tales evolve into publicly personified epics, settings where their anonymous characters receive names and histories. Folklorists in India have usually focused on the conventional genres of folklore which included elements of religiousity, nature, places, local history and customs and traditions, social heroes and saints. Many of these narratives overlap with each other and offer universal and timeless themes which help in understanding, adapting and analyzing the world they live in. These stories are mostly oral in nature which is percolated down from generation to genration through retellings.

While some of these stories are orginal, most of them are based on familiar tropes or derived from existing source materials ranging from *Panchatantra* stories to even western fiction like *King Lear*. But the interesting aspects of these stories are how they choose to adapt these narratives according to the local ambience and include culture specific elements into it. Another important aspect of these stories is that these folklores try to subvert the existing patriarchal structures by often giving voice to the concerns of women, which if doesn't always destroy the patriarchy, does create a niche for women's voices to be raised.

One of the most important stories that initiate a correlation between Ecology and gender is known as *Kongliang Otsu.* This is a naga story that talks about a girl who transforms herself to a bird after being heartbroken by the injustice meted out to her by her elder sister. This story serves multiple purposes through its plot device - one, it shows nature as a source of emancipation as against the cruel and often discriminatory human relations. The flight of the bird reflects the attempt of the girl to escape from the misery of her existence. Also her voice reaches far and wide as he chirps from one

tree to another singing the song for the ages. Secondly, it tries to identify the melancholy in the sounds of the nature. The chirping of the bird is actually cry of a humiliated girl. Thirdly, this story is used to teach people to be more loving, sensitive and attached to each other and embrace each other as nature embraces all of us.

There is another Mao-Naga folklore which tries to explain the origins of components of nature. Such myth making allows different cultures to understand and explain the mysteries of the world around them, which they are not able to explain through their existing knowledge. These stories also allow the deification of nature and create a mythical relation between nature and humans. Thirdly, such folklores act as cautionary tales to maintain harmony between humans and nature. In this particular story, Tiger, Spirit and Mankind are seen as three brothers who have mythical origin ascribed to the union between the first woman on the earth and the clouds in the sky. This woman was named as Dziiliimosiiro which means 'purest water' or 'crystal clear water'. She became pregnant while resting in the modern Mao Naga country, when a cluster of clouds dropped some drops of liquid on her sexual parts. This led to the birth of a Tiger, Spirit and Man or human being. Such origin stories act as an allegory to natural phenomena wherein women are seen as the procreative power of the nature, and nature is seen as the agent of creation which transforms the procreative energy of the woman into material existence. This story also reminds us of a similar trope found in the Ramayana where a crocodile gets pregnant by intaking a drop of sweat of Lord Hanuman.

The story also posits humans as superior to that of tiger and spirit because of the destructive qualities of the latter. The narrative follows the 'ecological opportunitist' approach wherein humans are seen as the force having the ability to overcome the restrictions imposed by nature, and create opportunities out of it Tiger serves his mother but harbours a desire to eat her flesh. Spirit makes the mother feel psychologically traumatised. Humans have an edge over others because of his innate goodness and sense of service instilled in them. Eventually the land was handed over to the man as he was deemed fit as the caretaker of earth. Tiger went into deep forests and spirits into the nether regions. Here also woman becomes the arbitrar in determining the legacy of the nature and giving the baton to the one who can carry forward the role of a carer.

Yet another folklore comes from the Singhpo community of Arunanchal Pradesh, which further reiterates not only the relation between mankind and nature but also utilizes the tropes of folklore which are often used in epic texts like Mahabharata and Ramayana, where the protagonist go on a adventurous quest to complete a vow given to an elder and faces different kind of difficulties on the way and eventually emerges victorious. Another trope utilised in this particular narrative is that of 'beauty and the beast' where the protagonist, who is repulsed and discriminated on the basis of his

looks or appearance, proves his worth and in the end, is transformed into a handsome and desirable youth. Another familiar setting that this story reminds us of is that mentioned in the Mahabharata where the two wives of sage Kashyap battle for one upmanship but one of them gives birth to a deformed bird, who eventually proves his worth and becomes the charioteer of the Sun God. In this particular story we have seven different wives who are impregnated at the same time. While six of them deliever a human child, the seventh wive bore a tortoise. Quite evidently, she becomes the centre of mockery and jest and the king gives scant attention to her and her child. His moment of adventure comes when he decides to join his brothers when they sail the river for trade. He starts playing his flute due to which the trees start moving near the river bank (this is to explain why the trees are found near riverside in Arunanchal Pradesh). He also acquires previous gems and ornaments from the sea which he hides in his shell. Later he asks his mother to get him married to the neighbouring king's daughter. His mother was really worried about him but she does the same to please him. The neighbouring king asks for precious jewels in return which the tortoise procures from his shell much to everyone's amusement. The touch of the princess transforms him into a charming prince.

As we can see, throughout this story, the female counterparts appear to be much more sensitive and inclusive as compared to the men. And nature provides opportunities for the protagonist to prosper despite his shortcomings.

Another Arunanchali folklore titled "The Cricket and the Crab" talks about the mythical yet common origins of crab and the cricket, which also tried to explain the migratory route of the latter. The story briefly also deals with the role of women as a nurturer-carer. The folklore talks about a single mother taking care of her daughter cricket and son crab. She decides to got to Tibet for trade but simultaneously is also concerned about the hairs of her daughter, so she took the daughter with herself leaving the son crab behind. Eventually the mother dies and cricket decides to bring her brother to Tibet, but he refuses. In anger she beats her up which causes his legs to be deformed as we see them today. And the migration of crickets from Tibet to Arunanchal every year during rains is also explained as an annual ritual of the cricket to meet her brother crab.

Lastly, we have folklore from Sikkim, which follows a trope which is very common in the Himalayan regions with different variations. This story titled *Jyamphi Moon* tells us about the other side of the nature, wherein the wild and the wilderness represents among other things, threats like spirits and mystical creatures. Flute is a very common element in folklore of the Himalayan region to evoke these mystical creatures. In the folklore from Uttrakhand we find similar story with the name of *Jeetu Bagadwal*, the key difference being the tragic ending in the story from Uttrakhand but the Sikkim based folklore has a happy ending to the crisis. The folklore reinforces the diversity found in

nature of the North East and at the same time upholds the traditional wisdom of the local people to resolve the crisis. Here the female comes across as a Yeti, a sexually frustrated and terrifying figure, who can't be won over by brute force. In this story the flute of the protagonist attracts the Yeti, who then forces the man to play the instrument every night. The man eventually devises a plan by applying butter on his body, which the Yeti imitates. He goes further by bringing a log from the hearth which is imitated by Yeti. But while the man cleverly brings a unburnt log, Yeti brings a burning log which catches fire due to the butter in Yeti's body. Yeti this ran away from there and now lives very far from human settlements. The resolution of the crisis seems to be similar to the Puranic story of Bhasmasura, wherein Vishnu in the form of Mohini intices the demon Bhasmasura to imitate her, and then tricks him to put his hand on his head thus burning him alive, according to a boon.

In conclusion we can say that folklore encompasses within its ambit many diverse narratives, and helps us in understanding the proximity between the lives and beliefs of the people of North-East and their environment, Women in particular are center of such narratives, and most of these stories shows how women folk are impacted by the changes in their environment and vice-versa. Women is designated the role of the nurturer-carer and in most of these folk stories, they are associated with the origin of the world they live in. Thus, these folk stories can be used to analyze the socio-cultural and ecological history of the local population of the North-East India. One of the ironies that we witness in these folklores is the performative tradition of such tales, which have their own arena. Often the public performance of folk narratives gets hijacked by men of the family and women have to find alternative, informal spaces to voice their own stories. The perpetual male gaze that permeates through the discourse allows the procreative role of women emphasized more than their agency as an individual. Nevertheless, women tales becomes closely entangled with their socio-economic and cultural status in a patriarchal society which gets reinforced, contested or subverted according to the context of the narrative.

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Role of Indian Heritage in the Age of Globalization

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Introduction :-

Indian heritage, a rich blend of diverse cultures, traditions, and histories, has been shaped over thousands of years by various civilizations, from the Indus Valley to colonial influences. Globalization, marked by increased connectivity through trade, technology, and cultural exchange, has transformed how this heritage interacts with the world. This article explores how Indian heritage navigates the age of globalization, highlighting its impacts, preservation efforts, and future prospects.

Historical Context :-

India's cultural heritage, rooted in ancient civilizations like the Indus Valley (circa 2500 BCE), includes art, architecture, literature, music, dance, philosophy, religion, and social customs. Historical influences, such as the Vedic period, Mauryan and Gupta empires, Islamic rule, and British colonialism, have created a unique cultural mosaic. Post-independence, India has balanced modernity with heritage preservation, embedding diversity and secularism in its constitution.

Impact of Globalization :-

Globalization has enriched and challenged Indian heritage:-Positive Impacts: Indian culture, such as Bollywood movies, yoga, and food, has found international acceptance, generating economic gains through cultural exports. Preservation efforts have been facilitated through digitization. Negative Impacts: Threats include cultural homogenization, with Western media overpowering, and commercialization of traditional arts, risking loss of authenticity. Linguistic diversity is threatened by the spread of English, and social structures, such as family systems, are affected by modern lifestyles.

Role in Global Culture :-

Indian heritage influences globalization by spreading its traditions worldwide. Yoga and meditation are integral to global wellness, Indian cuisine is adapted globally (e.g., curry in the UK), and Bollywood impacts fashion and music. The Indian diaspora, with communities in the US and UK, promotes festivals like Diwali, enhancing India's soft power and global cultural dialogue.

Preservation and Future Prospects :-

Conservation of Indian heritage is undertaken through government efforts such as the Archaeological Survey of India (Indian Culture), NGOs such as INTACH, and technology in the form of virtual museum tours. The challenges are authenticity and finance, but opportunities are innovation, cultural exchange, and heritage tourism for economic development. The future looks bright with balanced adaptation to ensure heritage survives in a globalized world. Survey Note: Detailed Analysis of Indian Heritage in the Age of Globalization This comprehensive survey note delves into the intricate role of Indian heritage within the context of globalization, drawing from extensive research and analysis. Conducted on March 21, 2025, this note aims to provide a detailed examination, expanding on the key points and offering a professional, academic perspective suitable for scholars, policymakers, and cultural enthusiasts.

Background and Methodology :-

The study started with the definition of Indian heritage as including art, architecture, literature, music, dance, philosophy, religion, and social customs, shaped by millennia of historical interactions. Globalization was understood as the integration of economies, societies, and cultures through global networks, accelerated by the 1991 economic reforms in India. Sources included academic books, online articles, and institutional reports, with a focus on certified books for credibility. The analysis involved synthesizing information from search results, ensuring a broad and balanced view.

Historical Evolution of Indian Heritage :-

India's cultural heritage traces back to the Indus Valley Civilization (circa 2500 BCE), known for urban planning and trade, as noted in Indian Culture : A Compendium of Indian History, Culture and Heritage. The Vedic period brought Sanskrit and early Hinduism, and the Mauryan and Gupta empires (321 BCE–550 CE) were periods of flourishing arts and sciences. Islamic influences during the medieval period brought architectural marvels like the Taj Mahal, and British colonialism brought Western education, which sparked cultural renaissances. Post-independence, India's constitution enshrined diversity, reflecting efforts to preserve heritage amidst modernization.

Defining Globalization and Its Characteristics :-

Globalization, according to Globalisation and Indian Economy, is economic integration by way of trade and investment, cultural exchange through media, technological innovation such as the internet, and enhanced mobility. The 1991 liberalization in India was a watershed moment, opening up markets and enabling global connectivity, as explained in Globalization in India.

In-depth Impact Analysis :-

The influence of globalization on Indian heritage is two-pronged, with enriching and challenging

impacts :

Positive Impacts :-

Global Recognition : Indian culture has seen increased global visibility, with yoga becoming a wellness staple (Impact of Globalization on Indian Culture), Bollywood films influencing global cinema, and Indian cuisine, like curry, adapted worldwide. Economic benefits include cultural exports, with films and handicrafts boosting revenue.

Conservation Initiatives : Globalisation has led to documentation and digitalization, especially with virtual tour options on Indian Culture, working towards conservation and preservation. Along these lines lie the efforts that institutions like National Mission on Monuments and Antiquities aim for.

Drawbacks :-

Culture Homogeny : The trend of global entertainment and media systems, as the Globalisation: Impact On Indian Society article concludes, threatens native cultures, whereas international brands crowd out local lifestyles. Commercialization: Traditional arts, such as Madhubani painting, face authenticity challenges when mass-produced for tourists, as per Cultural Heritage and Indian Economy.

Linguistic Threat :-

The spread of English, driven by global business, threatens regional languages, with social media platforms like Instagram facilitating this shift (Communication in Globalization).

Social Changes : Traditional family structures are impacted by urban lifestyles, with globalization promoting individualism, as discussed in Indian Culture and Globalization.

Nfluence on Global Culture :-

Indian heritage's influence on globalization is significant, acting as a cultural ambassador: Yoga and Meditation: Originating in ancient texts, yoga has become a global fitness and wellness practice, with studios in the US and Europe, enhancing India's soft power (Yoga's Global Impact). Indian Cuisine: Dishes like naan and biryani are staples in global menus, with adaptations reflecting glocalization, as per Glocalization in Culture.

Bollywood :-

With a massive global audience, Bollywood influences fashion and music, as seen in its popularity in Africa and the Middle East (Bollywood's Global Reach).

Philosophy and Spirituality :-

Concepts like karma and dharma influence global thought, with meditation practices adopted in corporate wellness programs.

Diaspora Role :-

The Indian diaspora, with communities in the UK and US, promotes festivals like Diwali, enhancing cultural exchange, as noted in Indian Diaspora and Culture.

This cultural export strengthens India's position in global cultural dialogues, contributing to soft power, as per India in a Globalized World. Preservation and Promotion Strategies Efforts to preserve Indian heritage amidst globalization include:

Government Initiatives :-

The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) and cultural academies, as mentioned in Indian Heritage and Culture, protect historical sites. Policies like the National Mission on Monuments and Antiquities support conservation.

NGOs and Organizations : INTACH works on conserving sites, while Sangeet Natak Akademi promotes traditional arts, as per Culture Change in India.

Education and Awareness : Curricula include Indian history, fostering pride, with universities offering courses on heritage, as noted in Understanding Indian Culture and Heritage.

Technology Use : Digitization of manuscripts and virtual tours, available on Indian Culture, make heritage accessible globally, enhancing preservation efforts.

These strategies are taken to balance traditions with modern aspects, overcoming problems of funding and authenticity.

Issues and Opportunities : A Balanced Outlook Preservation of heritage under globalization is confronting the following difficulties:

Authenticity :-

Sustaining practices in crafts, such as Pattachitra, under commercial threats may lead to dilution. Funding: Necessary resources are in demand, wherein heritage tourism appears to be generally underfunded compared to any other sector of tourism. Balancing tradition: Adaptation through technology requires balanced planning. It also opens windows of opportunities with:

Innovation : Fusion music and dance, blending Indian and Western styles, create new expressions, as per Cultural Globalization.

Cultural Exchange : Globalization facilitates learning, enriching heritage through global collaborations.

Economic Growth :-

Heritage tourism, with sites like the Taj Mahal attracting millions, drives economic development, as noted in World Tourism Today.

This balance is crucial for sustaining heritage in a globalized era.

Indian Classical Arts :-

Indian performing arts, such as Bharatanatyam, Kathak, and Odissi, have gained followers globally, with educational institutions around the world teaching Indian classical dance and music. Bollywood, the film industry of India, has also contributed significantly towards the promotion of Indian culture on a global level, blending traditional storytelling with contemporary cinematic methods.

Economic Contribution of Indian Heritage :-

India's handicrafts and textile heritage has given livelihood to millions of people and shaped global fashion trends. Art forms such as Madhubani painting, Pashmina weaving, and Kanjeevaram silk manufacturing are highly sought after in the world, boosting India's soft power diplomacy.

Tourism and Heritage Conservation :-

Tourism related to India's cultural and historical places, like the Taj Mahal and Ajanta Caves, continues to be a strong economic contributor. The Indian government, by projects like Adopt a Heritage, has collaborated with private sectors in protecting and enhancing heritage tourism.

Indian Heritage in Global Diplomacy :-

Cultural diplomacy has been the cornerstone of Indian foreign policy. Indian festivals such as Diwali and Holi are now being celebrated across the globe, boosting India's soft power. Bodies such as the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) facilitate cultural exchanges, enhancing diplomatic relations through heritage.

Science and Traditional Knowledge :-

Ayurveda, a medical system dating back to centuries, has been recognized in integrative medicine. Organizations such as the All India Institute of Ayurveda are striving to integrate traditional medicine with scientific studies.

Mathematical and Astronomical Contributions :-

Ancient Indian mathematicians like Aryabhata and Brahmagupta laid the foundation for modern mathematics, introducing concepts like zero and infinity. In the era of globalization, Indian scholars continue to make significant contributions to STEM fields, drawing inspiration from this rich heritage.

Challenges and Preservation Efforts :-

In spite of its increasing popularity, Indian heritage is threatened by issues like cultural appropriation, loss of traditional art forms, and poor conservation. The government and non-governmental organizations are putting efforts towards heritage conservation through digital documentation, heritage education, and policy initiatives in favor of artisans.

Case Studies :-

Illustrative Examples To ground the analysis, consider these case studies :

Yoga :-

From ancient texts to global wellness, yoga's spread, with studios in New York, reflects preservation and economic benefits, as per Yoga's Global Phenomenon.

Bollywood :-

Its global influence, with films watched in Africa, showcases Indian culture, impacting fashion and music, as discussed in Bollywood's Impact. Indian Cuisine: Adaptation, like curry in the UK, maintains relevance, with restaurants worldwide, as noted in Globalization and Indian Society.

Traditional Crafts :-

Such arts as Madhubani painting are challenged by mass production but saved by international markets, according to Cultural Heritage and Economy.

These examples demonstrate the dynamic relationship between heritage and globalization.

Conclusion and Future Prospects :-

The role of Indian heritage in globalization is a dynamic interplay of preservation and adaptation. While challenges like homogenization and commercialization exist, opportunities through technology, diaspora, and cultural exchange offer pathways for thriving. Future prospects depend on balancing authenticity with innovation, ensuring Indian heritage remains a vibrant contributor to global culture. This requires collaborative efforts from government, NGOs, and global communities, leveraging platforms like Indian Culture for sustained impact

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The Development of Bridge Technology in Odisha : From Pre-Colonial Causeways to Colonial Engineering

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Abstract :-

Odisha has many rivers that make travel both beautiful and challenging. To cross these wide rivers and streams, people built different kinds of bridges in different times. In the pre-colonial period, local kings, landlords, and temple trusts built small stone causeways and bridges mainly helped villagers, traders, and pilgrims reach markets and sacred places — the Atharanala Bridge in Puri is a famous example that still stands today. When the British took control, they built bigger and stronger bridges using new materials like iron and concrete. These bridges were needed for railways, roads, and irrigation projects to help trade and make administration easier. By studying the history of these bridges, we learn how local building skills and British engineering changed Odisha's transport network and connected its towns and villages. Today, these old bridges remind us of how people solved problems and connected communities in different times and these old bridges are not just useful, they are a part of Odisha's rich heritage.

Kew Words :- Pre-Colonial, Landlord, Irrigation, Transport Network, Communities, Heritage Bottom of Form

Introduction :-

Odisha's rivers like- the Mahanadi, Brahmani, Baitarani, Subarnarekha, and countless smaller streams have long shaped the lives, trade routes, and pilgrim paths of its people. For centuries, bridges and causeways have played a quiet yet crucial role in linking with various settlements, market places, and sacred sites across this riverine landscape. In the pre-colonial period, bridge technology in Odisha was modest but contextually inventive: simple stone slab causeways, wooden footbridges, and enduring masonry structures like the Atharanala Bridge at Puri stand testament to local engineering knowledge and community patronage.

The arrival of British colonial rule in the 18th century brought radical changes in both the

scale and purpose of bridge construction. Bridges evolved from locally maintained crossings to strategic pieces of imperial infrastructure — built to move troops, facilitate trade, control floods, and connect railway lines across challenging territories. New materials such as iron girders and steel trusses, alongside institutionalised irrigation works like anicuts and barrages, transformed Odisha's rivers into engineered corridors of colonial governance and commerce.

This article explores the historical development of bridge technology in Odisha across these two contrasting eras, highlighting how changing political priorities and technological advancements redefined the region's physical and economic landscape.

Geography of Odisha's riverine :-

Odisha has many big rivers — like the Mahanadi, Brahmani, Baitarani, and Subarnarekha along with countless small streams. These rivers made the land fertile but also made travel difficult. People needed safe ways to cross them to reach markets, villages, towns, and temples. Without bridges, people depended on boats or had to wait for the water to go down. So, bridges became very important for daily life.

The role of bridges in trade, pilgrimage, and administration :-

Bridges in Odisha played a crucial role in connecting people and places by enabling trade, pilgrimage, and administration. They allowed farmers, traders, and merchants to transport goods like rice, fish, and spices from villages to towns and ports more quickly and safely, boosting local economies. For pilgrims visiting sacred sites such as the Jagannath Temple in Puri, bridges like the historic Atharanala provided vital crossings over rivers, ensuring easier and safer journeys. Under British rule, roads and bridges became essential tools for governance, as they facilitated the movement of officers, soldiers, and tax collectors, helping the colonial administration extend its control over remote and flood-prone regions.

Bridge technologies in Odisha :-

Odisha has many rivers and seasonal streams made crossing essential for local travel, trade, pilgrimage. Before the colonial rule, simple slab causeways(low-level bridges) were common. Timber from local forests was used for basic beam bridges. Villagers commonly built temporary bamboo bridges tied with coir or rope. Communities adapted local materials for bridge building and the maintenance was often done by local zamindars or temple trusts. But the colonial engineers introduced advanced bridge building methods. Iron and Truss bridges were common. They also introduced new methods of construction like Riveting and Bolting for steel structures.

British engineer's role in bridge building :-

During the colonial period, British engineers played a key role in transforming Odisha's bridge

infrastructure by introducing modern materials, industrial construction methods, and systematic design standards. Tasked with overcoming the challenges stood by the state's wide, flood-prone rivers, they surveyed river systems, planned durable crossings, and supervised the construction of iron truss and girder bridges supported by masonry piers. Their work connected remote regions with ports and administrative centres, boosting trade and enabling tighter colonial control. In the process, they also trained a generation of Indian engineers and overseers, laying the foundations for modern civil engineering practices in the region. Sir Arthur Cotton, known for irrigation and anicuts in the Madras Presidency (his influence reached Odisha through linked river works)

Pre-Colonial Odisha : Particular Bridges :-

Unlike colonial bridges, pre-colonial ones were mostly small, local and rarely monumental, so they are rarely named in records.

Bridges connected to Temple :-

Atharanala Bridge, Puri (13th century,

Ganga dynasty)

Most famous pre-colonial bridge in Odisha.Built during the reign of the Eastern Ganga kings. which had been started as early as 13th century AD by Bhanu Deva I (1266–1278) of the Eastern Ganga Dynasty and continued by Narasimha Deva II (1279–1306). Made of laterite stone with 18 arches (hence 'Atharanala' = eighteen arches).Still standing — a major example of Odisha's pre-colonial bridge architecture. Pilgrims entering Puri town towards Jagannath Temple through this bridge.

Causeways on pilgrim routes :-

Several small stone causeways existed on paths connecting Bhubaneswar, Puri, and Jajpur. For example:Ancient stone slab causeways over rivulets near Jajpur town (once a major tantric and Shakti worship site).

Colonial Period: Particular Bridges :-

Major Railway Bridges :-

Old Mahanadi Railway Bridge (Jobra Bridge), Cuttack

The first Mahanadi Rail Bridge was opened on 1 January 1899. The bridge had 64 spans of 100 feet (30 meters) each, on wells 19 ft 6 in (5.94 meters) in diameter sunk to 60 ft (18 meters) below low water level. William Beckett, was the engineer in charge of construction to built the first Mahanadi Rail Bridge who won a gold medal from the Institution of Civil Engineers in 1901 for a paper he presented on the bridge construction. Completed in 1901 by the Bengal Nagpur Railway (BNR).Critical link on the Howrah–Madras trunk line. Double-purpose: railway bridge and flood control weir (Jobra Anicut).The structure included a barrage with sluice gates and iron spans.

- **Brahmani River Bridge (near Jajpur Road)**

Brahmani river bridge was built during 1890s–1910s.It was part of the East Coast Railway line.

Road Bridges & Anicuts :-

- **Jobra Anicut (Irrigation-cum-Bridge)**

After the Great Odisha Famine it was built in 1866-67. British irrigation engineers built it to control Mahanadi water flow. It also served as a low-level road crossing too.

Social and Economic Impact of Bridge Construction in Odisha :-

The construction of bridges in Odisha brought about significant social and economic transformations that reshaped the region's connectivity and daily life. Improved bridges provided safer, year-round access across rivers, linking remote villages with towns, markets, schools, and hospitals. This enhanced connectivity boosted local trade, helped farmers and traders reach wider markets, and reduced transport costs and travel time. Socially, bridges enabled easier access to

education and healthcare, strengthened community ties, and made religious and cultural gatherings.

Social impact of bridges in Odisha :-

Bridges in Odisha brought significant social change by reducing the isolation of villages and enabling easier movement of people for education, festivals, and family connections. They made pilgrimages to famous temples like Puri's Jagannath Temple more accessible, strengthening shared religious and cultural bonds. By linking communities divided by rivers, bridges encouraged interaction between different regions and social groups, fostering a sense of connectedness. They also helped rural people reach schools, markets, and health centres more easily, gradually improving literacy, education and health.

Economic impact of bridges in Odisha :-

Bridges in Odisha had a strong economic impact by connecting agricultural villages with nearby towns and ports, allowing farmers and traders to transport goods like rice, fish, and forest produce more quickly and safely throughout the year. This boosted local trade, encouraged surplus production, and opened up new markets for rural producers. Bridges also supported the growth of coastal and riverine trade networks, linking Odisha's hinterland to major ports and railway lines during the colonial period. By improving transport, they reduced travel time and costs, attracted businesses, and helped develop local industries such as rice mills, weaving, and handicrafts. In the long run, bridges laid the foundation for better roads and regional growth, strengthening Odisha's economic integration with the rest of India.

Conclusion :-

The story of bridge development in Odisha is really a story of how technology, society, and governance evolved together over time. In the pre-colonial period, local rulers and communities built simple structures like stone slab causeways, wooden footbridges, and bamboo crossings. These early bridges were often seasonal or temporary, mainly built to help people cross rivers and streams during dry seasons or low floods. They reflected local knowledge and available materials, and were often built near temples, markets, or trade routes to serve pilgrims, traders, and villagers. When the British came and established their colonial administration, they brought new engineering ideas, modern materials like iron and steel, and systematic planning. They needed better bridges for moving goods, raw materials, and troops efficiently across the region. As a result, many stronger and more permanent bridges were built over major rivers like the Mahanadi and Brahmani. British engineers used modern surveying techniques and construction methods, which led to the building of bigger and safer bridges that could withstand floods and heavy loads.

These bridges not only improved connectivity between remote areas and urban centres but

also boosted trade and agriculture by linking markets, ports, and railway lines. They made it easier for people to travel for work, education, and pilgrimage, changing the social fabric of communities. Over time, bridges became symbols of modernity and development in Odisha, opening up isolated regions and integrating them into larger economic and administrative networks.

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Bhar Tribe of Avadh and Purvanchal : A Study of Historical and Cultural Contributions

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Introduction :-

The Bhar tribe, often referred to as Rajbhar in contemporary contexts, is one of the indigenous communities of northern India, particularly concentrated in the Avadh and Purvanchal regions. Historically, the Bhars were a dominant group, known for their warrior ethos, administrative acumen, and contributions to the cultural fabric of the region. Their legacy is evident in archaeological sites such as Daldev Fort in Dalamau, Raebareli, Baldev ki Bawadi, and Dasahwamedh Ghat in Varanasi. However, colonial policies, notably the Criminal Tribes Act of 1871, stigmatized the Bhars, labeling them as "hereditary criminals," which led to their socio-economic marginalization. This paper aims to reconstruct the historical and cultural contributions of the Bhars, drawing on primary sources such as the Imperial Gazetteer of India, District Gazetteers, and works like Al-Masudi's Muruz Al Dahab, alongside secondary sources and archaeological evidence.

Historical Context of the Bhar Tribe :-

Origins and Early History :-

Regarding the origin of Bhar/Rajbhar caste, it is the generally accepted opinion of many scholars that Bhar caste is a branch originating from the ancient Naga clan. Nagvansh is considered to be one of the major tribes of the ancient origin of India. It is believed that in ancient times, a group of Nag people from the Kashmir region of the Himalayas migrated towards the Gangetic plains. He later visited Mathura and Padmavati; Established Nagvanshi states in Gwalior, the time of which is considered to be the post-Mauryan period.

It is accepted by many scholars that before the Gupta period, these rulers had completely eliminated the Kushans from North India. On the occasion of defeating the Kushans, Bhar rulers organized 10 Ashwamedha Yagyas at Ganga Ghat in Varanasi. These budding Nagvanshis had established

a new tradition of worshiping Shiva by wearing Shivalinga on their shoulders. Therefore, due to this new method of worship, it became famous by the name of naming *"Bharshiva"*. The famous Dashashwamedh Ghat is named after the organization of 10 Ashwamedha Yajnas.

"Bharashiv" An article clarifying the nomenclature has been found in Balaghat, Madhya Pradesh. In which their origin has been described in this way-

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भागीरथीः अमल–जलः मूर्द्धाभिशिक्तानाम्,

दशाश्वमेधः अवभृथ स्नानाम् भारशिवानाम्............................ ।"

</div>

Translation- " By carrying the burden of Shivlinga, who had satisfied Shiva well, who got the coronation done with the holy water of Bhagirathi Ganga obtained from his bravery and who performed the Avabhritha Snan (bath after completion of Yajna) by performing Dash Ashwamedha Yagya, Thus the dynasty of those 'Bharshiv' Maharajas started."

By the turn of the 11th century, they had made their position very powerful in Awadh and Purvanchal region. Till that time, the entire area of Awadh which included present-day, Hardoi, Lucknow, Unnao, Ayodhya, Sultanpur, Rae Bareli, Pratapgarh, Jaunpur, Allahabad, Shravasti, Bahraich and the entire part of Purvanchal which included present-day Bhadohi, Banaras, Azamgarh, Gorakhpur, The rulers of Bhar caste had established their regional states in Basti and other places.

From many historical documents we get the information that in the 12th century, 5 Rajputs from Maunas dynasty came to Banaras from Amber (Old Jaipur). Seeing the prosperity of the people around here, they settled here and later invited other Rajput families here also. Which includes Bais *Rajput (Jhusi Allahabad), Maunas Rajput (Kawai), Sonak Rajput (Meh), Tisyal Rajput (Sikandra), Nanwak Rajput (Nawabganj).*

The Bhars are considered one of the ancient indigenous groups of India, potentially linked to the Dravidian or pre-Aryan inhabitants of the subcontinent, as suggested by Gustav Solomon Oppert in On The Original Inhabitants Of Bharatavarsa Or India (1893). Their origins are debated, with some scholars tracing their lineage to the ancient Kiratas mentioned in the Mahabharata or to the Naga tribes, as discussed by M.B. Rajbhar in Naag Bharashiva's History (1985). The Bhars established themselves as a ruling class in Avadh and Purvanchal, with historical records indicating their control over significant territories during the early medieval period.

Primary sources, such as Abul Fazal's Ain-i-Akbari (translated by Jarrett and Sirkar, 1985), document the Bhars as a powerful community in the Awadh region, often engaged in agriculture, trade, and military activities. Minhajuddin Siraj's Tabakat-i-Nasiri (translated by Jarrett and Sarkar, 1985) mentions their resistance to Muslim invasions, highlighting their martial prowess. Al-Masudi's Muruz Al Dahab (1861) references their presence in northern India, describing them as a formidable

group with distinct cultural practices.

Political Contributions :-

The Bhars were significant political players in pre-medieval and medieval India. According to M.B. Rajbhar's Bhar/Rajbhar Samrajya (2015), they established several small kingdoms and principalities in Avadh and Purvanchal, with centers of power in areas like Sultanpur, Raebareli, and Allahabad. Archaeological evidence, such as the Daldev Fort in Dalamau, Raebareli, and Baldev ki Bawadi, points to their architectural and defensive capabilities. These structures, constructed with mud and brick, reflect a sophisticated understanding of fortification and water management, indicative of their administrative organization.

Charles Alfred Elliott's The Chronicles of Unnao (1862) notes the Bhars' role as local rulers in Unnao, where they maintained control until the arrival of Muslim rulers in the 13th century. Their governance was characterized by a decentralized system, with tribal chiefs managing local affairs, as described by Kashi Prasad Jayaswal in Hindu Polity (1943). The Bhars were known for their resistance to external rule, notably during the 1857 rebellion, where they allied with other groups against British forces, as documented by Shahid Amin in Conquest and Community (2015).

Cultural Contributions of the Bhar Tribe :-

Religious and Spiritual Influence :-

The Bhars have significantly influenced the religious landscape of Avadh and Purvanchal. Archaeological evidence, such as the Dasahwamedh Ghat in Varanasi, suggests their involvement in maintaining sacred sites. M.A. Sherring's Hindu Tribes and Castes (1974) notes the Bhars' adherence to a blend of animistic and Hindu practices, including worship of local deities and participation in Vedic rituals. Their association with the Dasahwamedh Ghat, a key pilgrimage site, underscores their role in preserving religious traditions.

Badri Narayan's Fascinating Hindutva (2008) discusses how the Bhars have been integrated into the broader Hindu fold, particularly through the adoption of Kshatriya identity in the 20th century. This shift is evident in their participation in festivals like Holi and Diwali, which they adapted to include local folk traditions, as described by Naval Niyogi in Tribal Nag Civilization of India (2003).

Social Structure and Cultural Practices :-

The Bhars' social structure was clan-based, with strong kinship ties, as outlined by William Crooke in The Tribes and Castes (1896). Their communities were organized around extended families, with leaders known as Rajas or Thakurs overseeing local governance. M.A. Sherring's The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (1871) describes their vibrant oral traditions, including folk songs and dances that narrate their historical struggles and triumphs.

The Bhars also contributed to the region's agrarian economy. H.C.A. Conibier's Note on Pargana Dudhi (1879) highlights their expertise in agriculture and animal husbandry, which sustained the economies of Mirzapur and surrounding areas. Their nomadic and semi-nomadic lifestyles, as noted in The Imperial Gazetteer of India (Web ID: 8), facilitated trade and cultural exchange across regions.

Archaeological Evidence :-

Archaeological sites provide tangible evidence of the Bhars' contributions :

- **Bhar Deori** (a ruined gateway near Lalganj),
- **Khera mounds** in Dalmau and Bachhrawan,
- **Ancient** stepwells and temples later rebuilt under Rajput or Muslim patronage.
- **Daldev Fort, Dalamau, Raebareli :** This fort, constructed with mud and brick, indicates the Bhars' strategic planning and defensive capabilities. Its location suggests control over trade routes.
- **Baldev ki Bawadi, Raebareli :** A stepwell reflecting advanced water management techniques, attributed to Bhar rulers.
- **Bhardeeh, Allahabad, and Bhadohi :** These sites, named after the Bhars, indicate their historical presence and influence.
- **Kurebhar, Sultanpur :** A historical center of Bhar governance, with remnants of administrative structures.
- **Dasahwamedh Ghat, Varanasi :** Associated with Bhar maintenance of sacred sites, reinforcing their religious significance.

These sites, documented in District Gazetteers and F.H. Fisher's Statistical, Descriptive and Historical Account of the North Western Provinces (1883), highlight the Bhars' architectural and administrative legacy. The ASI has not extensively excavated these sites, but local surveys and oral narratives suggest strong continuity of Bhar presence prior to medieval disruptions

Colonial and Post-Colonial Challenges :-

The Criminal Tribes Act of 1871 marked a turning point for the Bhars, as detailed in The Indian Economic & Social History Review (Web ID: 7). The Act's blanket surveillance and restrictions on movement disrupted their traditional lifestyles, forcing many into settled, marginalized communities.

Post-independence, the Habitual Offenders Act of 1952 continued this stigmatization, as noted in Economic and Political Weekly (Web ID: 20). Despite these challenges, the Bhars have sought to reclaim their identity, with movements for Kshatriya status and political representation, as discussed by Badri Narayan in Caste in Question (2004).

Bajnath Prasad's History of Rajbhar Jati (1940) and Rajaballab Sahay's Untouchable Hindu

Race (2015) document the Bhars' efforts to assert their historical significance through social and political mobilization. The rise of the Bharatiya Janata Party's Hindutva politics, as analyzed by Narayan (2008), has further complicated their identity, with some Bhars aligning with saffron politics to gain visibility.

Contemporary Relevance :-

Today, the Bhars, often identified as Rajbhars, constitute a significant portion of Uttar Pradesh's population. According to the 2011 Census, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes, including the Bhars, form a substantial demographic in Avadh and Purvanchal (Web ID: 9). Their cultural practices, such as folk music and dance, continue to enrich the region's heritage, as noted by Yogesh Pravin in Lucknow Nama (2018). However, they face ongoing socio-economic challenges, with limited access to education and employment, as highlighted by Govind Sadashiva Ghurye in Caste, Class and Occupation (1950).

The Bhars' historical contributions are being reevaluated through modern scholarship. Shahid Amin's Conquest and Community (2015) underscores their role as warrior communities, while Ayodhya Prasad Pandey's Chandel Kaalint Bundelkhand ka itihas (1890) connects their legacy to broader Kshatriya traditions. Their archaeological sites remain a testament to their enduring influence, urging a reassessment of their stigmatized status.

Conclusion :-

The Bhar tribe of Avadh and Purvanchal has made profound historical and cultural contributions, from establishing regional polities to preserving religious and social traditions. Archaeological evidence, such as Daldev Fort and Dasahwamedh Ghat, alongside primary sources like the Ain-i-Akbari and secondary works by scholars like Badri Narayan, affirm their significance. Despite the setbacks of colonial policies like the Criminal Tribes Act, the Bhars' legacy persists through their cultural practices and ongoing efforts to reclaim their identity. Further research and recognition are essential to fully appreciate their role in shaping India's historical and cultural landscape.

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Environment and Sustainable Development Issue in India

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Abstract :-

Human activity has drastically impacted the earth's ecology, resulting in significant changes in the environment over the ages. Developing countries like India have extensive intervention of life from activities which has intensified environmental problems. Soil degradation, greenhouse effect, global warming, and ecological imbalance — these problems have directly impacted the quality and maintenance of the environment. In this situation, sustainable solutions such as bioremediation for water pollution and microbial decomposition for crop residue waste are becoming increasingly important and demand huge exposure in order to minimize the negative effect of human activities and assure sustainable development. Microorganisms play a significant part in carbon as well as other nutrient cycling processes, and their influence on climate change deserves special consideration. If microorganism and nutrient cycling are connected, they operate as an effective strategy for addressing many environmental issues.

Thus this paper aimed to close a research on environmental challenges and their proper long-term solution.

Introduction :-

Environment is defined as the total planetary inheritance and the totality of all resources. It includes all the biotic and abiotic factors that influence each other. Environment has many resources for human beings. If the resource extraction is not above the rate of regeneration of the resource, and the wastes generated are within the assimilating capacity of the environment — when this is not so, the environment fails to perform its vital function of life sustenance, and this results in an environmental crisis. This is the situation today in India and all over the world.

Environmental issues are the set of challenges and problems facing Earth and its natural systems. Environmental issues result from a combination of natural causes and human impact. While the Earth's

ecosystems are designed to handle certain amounts of natural disturbances (such as forest fires and floods), human activities can create circumstances in which they happen with greater frequency or intensity.

Human activities are the main factors in the destruction of Earth's living conditions. Human impact has led to a rise in the amount of greenhouse gas emissions, global warming, soil contamination, natural resource depletion, and contamination of the soil, water, and air. Species extinction, the build-up of dangerous recalcitrant compounds — in present times, most of the environmental issues are :
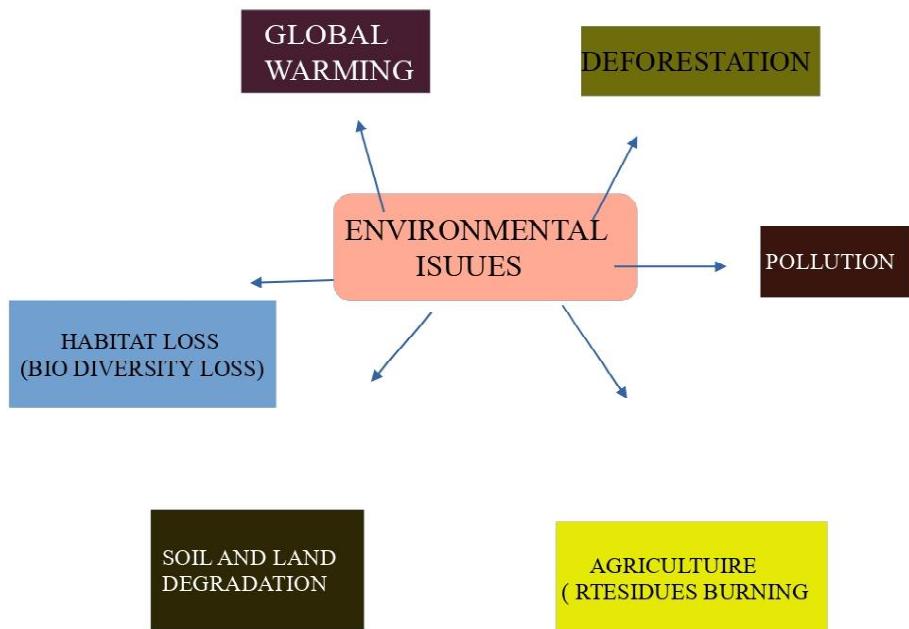
Climate Change :- refers to the long-term changes in temperature, precipitation, and other weather patterns caused by human activities such as burning fossil fuels. These activities have increased the number of greenhouse gases; these gases leading to increasing.

Global temperatures :- Biodiversity is essential to the ecological balance of the planet. Biodiversity refers to the variety of life on earth, including animals, plants and microorganisms.

In India, human activities such as deforestation, agricultural expansion, land use changes and pollution contribute to the overall loss of biodiversity.

Habitat degradation, human-wildlife conflict and insufficient resources are some challenges in India's rich biodiversity. India has abundant natural resources in terms of rich quality of soil, hundreds of rivers and tributaries, lush green forest and rich quantity of minerals. However, the developmental activities in India have resulted in pressure on its finite natural resources and deforestation leads to land degradation, biodiversity loss and air pollution. Soil erosion, deforestation and wildlife extinction are some of the most pressing environmental concerns of India.

Land in India suffers from varying degrees and types of degradation stemming mainly from

unstable use and inappropriate management practices. Some of the factors responsible for land degradation are –

(i)   Loss of vegetation occurring due to deforestation

(ii)   Unsustainable fuel wood and fodder extraction

(iii)   Shifting cultivation

(iv)   Encroachment into forest land

(v)   Forest fires and overgrazing

(vi)   Non-adoption of adequate soil conservation measures

(vii)   Improper crop rotation

(viii) Indiscriminate use of chemicals and fertilisers

(ix)   Extraction of ground water in excess of the recharge capacity.

The quantity of nutrients lost due to erosion each year ranges from 5.8 to 8.4 million tonnes. Pollution of air, water, land — pollution is one of the most harmful environmental problems we face today. It affects the air we breathe, the water we drink, and land we depend on for food. Air pollution is a significant environmental and public health issue. Plastic waste is a new growing problem, with 91% of plastic never being recycled. Most plastic waste is in landfills or the rivers, harming wildlife and ecosystems. Microplastics also enter the food chain, affecting animals and humans alike.These human activities like deforestation and pollution are endangering these systems.

In current time, andling waste is a growing challenge, especially e-waste and solid waste piling up. When this type of garbage isn't managed properly, it harms wildlife, pollutes water, and fills landfills faster than expected. The fashion industry has a big environmental impact. Making clothes uses huge amounts of water and energy, and many items are thrown away after only a few years. This creates textile waste, pollutes water, and adds to carbon emissions. In the ocean, overfishing is creating risks. Unsustainable practices and illegal fishing have reduced fish populations and harmed marine ecosystems. Urban sprawl occurs when cities continue to expand into natural areas. It destroys habitats and reduces biodiversity. It also increases pollution, traffic, and resource use, putting more environmental strain. Desertification, global warming, landslide in hilly areas, melting glaciers, and increasing sea water level are the current environmental problems or issues. In India, extreme weather events — such as hurricanes, floods, wildfires, droughts, landslides — are becoming more frequent and severe due to climate change. These events pose a threat to both the environment and human populations and can significantly damage infrastructure, homes and ways of life. Rising temperatures and rising sea levels among other factors contribute to the increase in extreme weather conditions.

To solving these environmental issues, sustainable development is a strong step. Environmental

governance advocates sustainability as the supreme consideration in managing all human activities. The concept of sustainability relies on sustainable development. It can be explained in various ways. The most widely cited definition was phrased by the Brundtland Commission in 1987: "Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." Sustainable development is based on the three pillars of sustainability – economic, environmental, and social.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) :-

- Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all.
- Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sustainable for all.
- Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth.
- Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.
- Conserve & sustainably use the ocean seas and marine resources for sustainable development.
- Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forest, combat desertification, and halt & reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.

To solve the environment and sustainable development issues like – climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution, drought and water scarcity, resource depletion, deforestation, poverty, economic growth, healthcare, inequality, social and regional imbalances, poverty, unemployment – strong steps are necessary.

Three Spheres of Sustainability :–
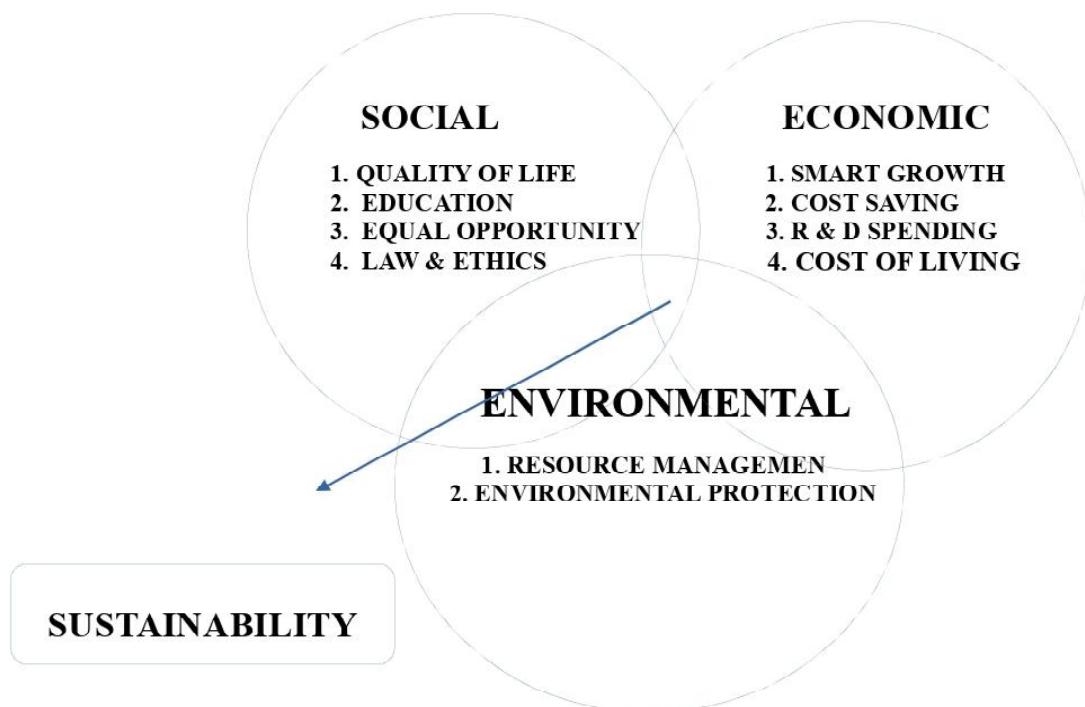
Environmental Sustainability :-

In a truly sustainable environment, an ecosystem would maintain populations, biodiversity, and overall functionality over an extended period of time. When decisions are made, one part of the discussion should always relate to environmental sustainability. One of the concepts that is of the most important is the proper management of our natural resources. Using the Z-squared approach to sustainability: In some cases, we can even promote restoration and preservation as means to negotiate a successful solution to a problem.

Social Sustainability :- It is based on the concept that a decision or project promotes the betterment of society. In general, future generations should have the same or greater quality of life benefits as the current generations do. This Concept also encompasses many things such as human rights, environmental law, and public involvement & participation.

Economic Sustainability :- Economic sustainability means that decisions are made in the most equitable and fiscally sound way possible while considering the other aspects of sustainability. For many people in the business world, economic sustainability or growth is their main focal point. However, when good business practices are combined with the social and environmental aspects of sustainability, you can still have a positive result that is for the greater good of humanity. Government should look to promoting "smart growth" through no-nonsense sustainability, land use planning, and subsidies or tax breaks for green development.

Conclusion :-

To solve the environmental and other issue or problem, the long-term sustainability of the environment is vital to humanity's survival. We should switch to green substitutes if we want to rehabilitate the environment and deliver things ahead to normal since anthropogenic activities are destabilizing the globe.

Microorganisms and plants, among other biological tools and entities, can aid in the restoration of polluted ecosystems and the reduction of the effects of global warming and climate change. Using environmentally friendly and low-input biotechnological technologies. According to Herman Daly, a leading environmental economist, to achieve sustainable development the following needs to be done—

• Limiting the human population to a level within the carrying capacity of the environment.

• Conservation of natural assets.

• Renewable resources should be extracted on a sustainable basis.

In 2015, the UN formulated 17 Sustainable Development Goals, intended to be achieved by the year 2030. The environment is not a luxury for the rich but a necessity for the poor. Therefore,

while it is no easy task for India to develop sustainable, it is absolutely necessary and requires tremendous cooperation and will. With the determination of the government, private sector, NGO's and people, India can perhaps achieve sustainable development.

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Ecofeminist Aspects of Chipko Movement

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Ecofeminism emerged from the radical political movements and the publication of Rachel Carson's *The Silent Spring* in 1962.[i] Ecofeminism as a concept evolved in the 1970s. The phrase "ecofeminism" first appeared in intellectual gaze after the publication of Le feminisme ou la mort by Françoise d'Eaubonne in 1974.[ii] The tenets of Ecofeminism says that females have a constructive and intimate relationship with nature. This is because women are more in tune with the rhythm of nature due to their maternal instinct and reproductive roles. Owing to nurturing nature, women are more susceptible to the effects of ecological degradation. According to ecofeminists, there exists a bond between the exploitation of nature and the exploitation of women. One can understand the nature's oppression by linking it with the oppression of women in societies. because it is built on patriarchy dualism, which prioritizes the mind over the body, the man over the female, and culture over nature. By forging link between nature and women, ecofeminism aims to correct this inequality and duality. According to ecofeminism, feminist concept should bear in mind the ecological perspective, and ecological issues must be addressed from a feminist perspective.[iii] As Val Plumwood had rightly said that ecofeminism desires to completely integrate women into human civilization from liberal feminism. It derives a knowledge of power dynamics and dominance systems from socialist feminism. And also willing to replace the culture's masculinity. Because it has denigrated feminism to a large extent.[iv] Eder has mentioned that the twin theme of the modern relationship to nature, one the fear of nature as the enemy and other love of nature as Mother and Friend has been the dominant theme. since the seventeenth century, particularly modern science and technology's pre-eminence and objectification of nature. It is not useful to speak of ambivalences alone when referring to the changing waves of romanticism and rationalism. which have characterized European history since the

Enlightenment. The 'lust for nature', the adoration, the romanticizing and sentimentalizing of nature went hand in hand with the theoretical interest.[v]

The Indian ecofeminism had started from Rigvedic period of civilisation in Indian sub-continent. The close association of women with domestic works and environment was depicted in the references of words like Aryanani for the goddess of jungle.[vi] Daughter was referred as Duhita which means the milcher of cow.[vii] Even in Indus Valley Civilisation we found the evidence of Mother Earth.[viii] In medieval period we find references that Mughal princess Zebunnisa had planted Chaharbrji Garden in Lahore.[ix]

Gail Omvedt had rightly said that another prominent movements of our time is chipko that the image of women holding trees has almost completely spread throughout the world. and in the imaginations of activists everywhere, "environmentalism" in India has practically became synonymous with Chipko. In due course of time the number of people supporting in the name of the Chipko movement has increased, and its many supporters argue that this ecological movement is significant feminine in nature.[x] we find the inspiration of Chipko in AD 1730 when a courageous woman, Amrita Devi of the Bishnoi tribe in the nearby Marwar district gave her life, along with the lives of her three daughters and 363 other people, in protecting the trees. To accomplish the requirement of woods for build a palace. the soldiers of Maharaja Abhay Singh, the local king of the time, desired to cut down Khejri trees. However, the Bishnoi tribe, led by Amrita Devi, embraced the trees and confronted the soldiers' axes. Following the incident, the ruler acknowledged his mistake and ordered his soldiers to return. Even now, the community of Khejarli, where the massacre occurred, holds an annual fair in remembrance of the 363 people who died.[xi]

Reclaiming the economic progress of the nation after independence was compatible with prior nationalist protests against colonial exploitation. As it was to be expected for the new Indian state. that's why the independent Indian state became the embodiment of many aspirations which resulted in an exalted state in both text and spirit, and the emblem of the nation's fulfillment in 1947. The goals were lofty: to eradicate poverty, illness, and inequality; to provide a sufficient standard of living; and to "wipe every tear from every eye" (Nehru 1947).[xii]

The State has gradually encroached on the rights and privileges of the people of forest and their resources in the previous century. At various places of India, the populace has resisted this invasion primarily by using the "Forest Satyagraha" Gandhian technique of non-cooperation. This kind of protest was renewed in independent India as the "Chipko" or "Embrace-the-Tree" movement to defend trees scheduled for cutting particularly the hilly areas.[xiii] where women of the home take care of the family. Women and girls shoulder the majority of the liability of carrying the produce from the fields. Senior patrilineage men hold political positions and

exercise social influence on the women in their households.Women are mainly accountable for gathering firewood and bringing water, as well as cooking and other food preparation for daily meals. Women spend close to four to five hours of their day collecting firewood for their fireplaces and livestock feed.[xiv]

Before the spontaneous burst of Chipko movement,under the leadership of the Sarvodaya couple Sunderlal and Vimla Bahuguna, the anti-liquor movement was active in Silyara in 1965.It extended to Chaukhutia and Garur in Almora, and Thal in Pithoragarh. The movement included a significant area of the Tehri district following the successful opposition of a proposal to open a liquor store in Ghansali, close to Silyara. Twenty Distilleries were blocked in a number of locations following after the meeting two between gandhians Chief Minister Sucheta Kripalani and a delegation of women led by the Sarala Devi.[xv]

The episode of Reni is very important in Chipko movement because the situation in Reni had dramatically twisted. The men of the contractors who were on the bus from Joshimath to Reni. they halted just before Reni. They avoided the villagers sight and headed for the woods. When a young girl child saw the workers using their tools. she hurried to Gaura Devi, the Mahila Mandal (Women's Club) leader of the community. The housewives were soon organized by Gaura Devi,who then marched to the forest.[xvi] These 28-women and young girls: 1.Smt.Gaura Devi 2.Smt Bhadi Devi, 3. Smt. Bhatti Devi, 4. Smt. Gomti Devi, 5. Smt Bati Devi, 6. Smt. Chandri Devi, 7. Smt Sauni Devi, 8. Smt Gauma Devi, 9. Smt. Harki Devi, 10. Smt. Uma Devi, 11.Smt. Rupsa Devi, 12. Smt. Duka Devi 13. Smt. Ukha Devi 14. Smt. Uma Devi,15. Smt. Chiladi Devi, 16. Smt. Moosi Devi, 17. Smt. Falguni Devi, 18. Smt.Gauma Devi, 19. Smt. Maita Devi, 20. Smt. Kooni Devi, 21. Smt. Maita Devi, 22. Smt. Belamati Devi, 23. Smt. Kalee Devi, 24. Kr. Jhooti Devi 25. Kr. Bali Devi 26. Kr. Maingulu Devi, 27. Smt. Indri Devi, 28. Smt. Tulsi Devi destroyed the route, breaking cliffs. They broke down the dangerous cement bridges leading to the forests and sat down on the rest stopping the lumbermen.[xvii] The women originally faced hostility and threats when they begged the labors not to begin chopping of the trees. The labors were eventually forced to retire because the women's firm opposition.[xviii] While some of the men appeared willing to heed the women's cries, others had been drinking. The inebriated people sought to harass the women or cursed at them for trying to obstruct the felling of trees. One of the inebriates approached the women staggeringly brandishing a gun.Gaura Devi stood in front of him, bared her breast, and said, "This forest is like our mother. You will have to shoot me before you can cut it down."[xix]

As Gaura Devi recounted, "It was not a planned organisation of the women for the movement, rather it happened spontaneously. Our men were out of the village that's why we had to come forward and defend the trees. It indicates the nature of the movement as a joint struggle based on gender collaboration. Thus, while the men in

the concerned villages were diverted by a clever official move, the women took up the mantle of resistance."[xx]

On another day of felling operations (5 January 1978) the women of Pulna, despite 40 cm of snow, surrounded the labourers, and confiscated their implements, and gave them a receipt for the tools. In this manner 621 trees were saved.[xxi] Vimla Bahuguna and other ladies mobilized the village women on the issue.[xxii]The watch for the forest went on. On December 28, more than 400 locals participated in another demonstration. Shyama Devi, Indra Devi, Jethuli Devi, Jayanti Devi, and Parvati Devi arrived in Phata. All of them participated actively in the Gopeshwar anti-alcohol campaign and worked in social service.women's of village started showing up in greater numbers for meetings due to their presence.[xxiii]

The Uttarakhand region of Uttar Pradesh has been engulfed in a sizable social movement since early 1984. The "nashe nahin rozgar do" movement, which means "give us employment, not intoxication," targets the disease of alcoholism brought on by the selling of alcoholic beverages, including both legal and illegal spirits and spirits offered as remedies, as well as the economic and political interests that support this trade. The movement quickly extended to Nainital and other districts of Uttarakhand after beginning in the Almora district under the direction of the Uttarakhand Sangharsh Vahini (USV) and with the assistance of numerous other mass organisations.[xxiv]

Members of the Mahila Mandal Dal, in Gopeshwar, complained that the men in their families were mistreating the women of Dongri Paintoli village. Women leaders were subjected to defamation and asked not to attend the Chipko meetings, which were led by a leader who was portrayed as a cruel man. the women in the village demonstrated a superior ability of judgement. No number of intimidating actions from their soldiers could not inhibit them from taking action once they were convinced of the fundamental importance of forest conservation.[xxv] For his outstanding contribution Mahila Mangal Dal received the Indira Gandhi Priyadarshani Vrikhmitra Award in 1984 from Rajiv Gandhi.[xxvi]

In conclusion, the success of movement was due to the large-scale willing participation of women. Besides protecting environment, it was multi-faced movement which raised the local issues of unemployment and had adopted anti liquor campaigns in his programmes.

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Hinduism and Buddhism: A Historical and Philosophical Interrelationship

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Abstract :-

Both Buddhism and Hinduism are important religious traditions that originated in ancient India. This study investigates the intricate historical and philosophical ties that exist between the two different religions. They differ significantly in their metaphysical interpretations, particularly with regard to the teaching of Anatta (no-self) in Buddhism and the belief in Atman (eternal self) in Hinduism. Despite the fact that both traditions share key concepts such as karma, dharma, samsara, and moksha, those interpretations are not the same. Through the dynamic exchanges that took place during the Mauryan, Gupta, and Pala periods, the study outlines their origins, which can be traced back to the Vedic period and Sramana movements. These contacts were characterised by reciprocal impact in ritual practices, art, philosophy, and social structures within these periods. Additionally, it examines the ways in which Buddhist reformists challenged the rigidity of castes, which ultimately led to the Bhakti movements and the absorption of Buddhist ethical ideals into Hindu thought. Ambedkarite Buddhism and neo-Hindu ideologies are two examples of contemporary movements that continue to exemplify this progressive rhetoric. Rather than being two distinct traditions, the study focusses on how the ongoing interaction between Buddhism and Hinduism has shaped South Asian religious thinking. This connection has resulted in the formation of interwoven systems that are engaged in an ongoing philosophical discussion.

Keywords :- Hinduism, Buddhism, Karma, Dharma, Anatta, Atman, Historical Interrelationship, Indian Philosophy

Methodology :-

This study employs a qualitative methodology centred on the analysis of secondary materials, such as scholarly articles, academic publications, and peer-reviewed journals regarding Hindu-Buddhist connections. Historians, philosophers, and theological academics offer comparative interpretations that facilitate the analysis of doctrinal parallels, differences, and cultural exchanges, so assuring a thorough grasp of their interconnections.

Objectives :-

The research seeks to examine the historical and intellectual connections between Hinduism and Buddhism, focussing on their common conceptions and doctrinal distinctions. It aims to comprehend how secondary sources elucidate their reciprocal impacts, cultural exchanges, and continuous dialogues, emphasising their effect on spiritual, ethical, and philosophical thought on the Indian subcontinent.

Introduction :-

Buddhism and Hinduism are two opposing yet connected religious traditions that originated in ancient South Asia. Over the course of millennia, these two religions have become intricately intertwined. Buddhism began in the sixth century BCE as a reform movement that challenged Brahmanical ritualism, caste systems, and philosophical dualities. This is in contrast to the origins of classical Hinduism, which can be traced back to the Rigveda and the Upaniṣads. Co-evolution occurred between the two traditions, which resulted in continuous theological, ceremonial, and intellectual exchanges. This occurred rather than the formation of two completely separate systems. According to surveys conducted by scholars, it is emphasised that Buddhism and Hinduism were never separate religious and cultural systems. They have always engaged with one another, and their ideas and practices have always overlapped with one another **(Mason, 2022).** Under the rule of Emperor Ashoka, Buddhist monastic communities grew, which led to the rise of Buddhist philosophy. This, in turn, prompted Brahmanical philosophers to systematise and defend Hindu metaphysics, which ultimately resulted in the formation of Vedanta and the Bhakti movements. Philosophically, the Buddhist epistemological tradition, which has its origins in the works of thinkers such as Dignāga and Dharmakīrti, has had a considerable impact on Hindu schools like Nyāya and Vedānta. This is because of the stress that these thinkers placed on pratyakṣa (perception) and anumāna (inference). Similarly, the later Kashmiri Śaiva philosopher Utpaladeva severely examined Buddhist nominalist and idealist doctrines in his work

Sambandhasiddhi, demonstrating that these discussions persisted until the mediaeval era **(Lawrence, 2024).**

The principal soteriologies of Hinduism and Buddhism encompass a foundational South Asian issue, also present in Jainism and other traditions, regarding a cycle of suffering stemming from the temporal limitations of worldly existence, perceived as the continual recurrence of losses over successive lifetimes (saṃsāra) a driven by karma). Hindu and Buddhist soteriologies have sought various forms of freedom, or a "cessation" of this cycle of persistent suffering (mokṣa, nirvāṇa, etc.).While perceptions of the conquest of temporality differ significantly, as elaborated below, a realisation of the transtemporal is frequently observed in more immediate or "mystical" experiences with an Ultimate across the world **(Underhill, 1961).** The cultural intersection of visual and ritual elements between Hinduism and Buddhism is apparent. A new exhibition review highlights the persistence of sacred ecology—reverence for yakṣas, nāgas, and tree spirits—across both faiths, and how initial abstract representations (e.g., footprints, tree symbols) evolved into anthropomorphic deities in both Hindu and Buddhist art **(Frankopan, 2025).**

Doctrinal Contrasts and Shared Concepts :-

Although Buddhism and Hinduism use many of the same phrases and ideas, their interpretations of these terms and ideas differ somewhat. The core tenet of both Buddhism and Hinduism is that karma—that is, deeds and their results—is the basis for the endless cycle of life, suffering, death, and reincarnation known as samsara. Though they take different routes to get there, Buddhism and Hinduism both hold that it is possible to be freed from samsara. This freedom from samsara is referred to be moksha in Hinduism and nirvana in Buddhism. The core concepts of both systems are samsāra (cycle of reincarnation), karma (activity and consequence), and dharma (duty/law), which are taken from the Vedas. Dharma in Buddhism refers to the lessons and law of nature, as well as the teachings of the Buddha, while in Hinduism it alludes to duty and cosmic order. By teaching anattā (non-self) and impermanence, Buddhism denies the concept of an immortal ātman that is ultimately one with Brahman, which is a central tenet of Hindu theology. It was the belief of the Buddha that the existence of a permanent self is the source of attachment and suffering **(Adams, 2020).**

Puja, deity worship, caste-based obligations, and the recital of śruti texts are all examples of rituals that are deeply ingrained in Hinduism. On the other hand, Buddhism places less of a focus on ritual, putting more of an emphasis on meditation, mindfulness, and ethical discipline, namely the Five Precepts and the Noble Eightfold Path, in order to

achieve moral change and freedom **(Jadyram V).** An expression that means "to the right side" in Sanskrit is Pradakshina. One must move around a sacred object while keeping the sacred object to one's right side in order to perform this. The performance of this is always carried out in a clockwise manner, which is a direction that is advantageous. Historically, practitioners would perform a circumambulation around a temple, an image of a god, a sacred tree or stone, and recite mantras or pray while doing so. Additionally, this is a symbolic exercise in addition to being a ritualistic one. It is one of the ways to identify oneself in the religious domain, both mentally and physically, and it is characterised by humility and humility and respect **(TOI, 2025).**

Shared Practices and Ethical Orientation :-

Despite their differences in structure, both religions have evolved yogic and meditative practices. Hindu yogic techniques strive to achieve unity (samādhi) with Brahman, while Buddhist jhāna/mindfulness insight seeks to realise impermanence and selflessness. Although the Noble Eightfold Path and Eight-limbed Yoga have structural similarities, they are not the same in terms of their emphasis on metaphysics. Both Buddhism and Hinduism place a strong emphasis on fundamental ethical principles, including ahimsa (non-violence), compassion, and selfless behaviour. While Buddhism places a greater emphasis on karuṇā, Hinduism incorporates compassion into seva and dharmic duty **(Pradeep, 2025).**

Cultural and Historical Synthesis :-

Buddhism and Hinduism coexisted on the Indian subcontinent for centuries and engaged in a significant amount of interaction with one another. Buddhism originated as a kind of protest, but it gradually re-entered the Brahmanic fold in a variety of forms. In fact, numerous Hindu traditions consider Buddha to be an avatar of Vishnu, which allowed Buddhist tales to be incorporated into Hindu cosmology. There are a number of storytelling traditions in Hinduism, including Jātaka tales, which are similar to Puranic and epic narratives. Philosophical texts, such as Yoga-Vāsi-ṣṭha, utilise logic that is similar to that of anattā. The ethical and meditative fabric that weaves both traditions together indicates the fact that there has been a "conversation" for a long time rather than a borrowing that is favouring one side **(Pradeep, 2025).**

Conclusion :-

The historical and intellectual connection between Hinduism and Buddhism exemplifies India's vibrant spiritual environment. Originating from a same Vedic cultural context, both religions cultivated unique worldviews—Hinduism affirming the

supremacy of the Vedas and the concept of an everlasting self (ātman), whilst Buddhism dismissed both in favour of anattā (no-self) and the principle of dependent origination. Notwithstanding their doctrinal differences, the two systems have profoundly impacted each other through centuries of discourse, contention, and cultural interchange. Buddhist epistemology appropriated Hindu logical frameworks such as Nyāya, whilst Advaita Vedānta assimilated Buddhist notions of emptiness into its non-dualistic metaphysics. Ritual activities, contemplative disciplines, and ethical constructs such as dharma, karma, and ahimsa emerged as common ideals, albeit interpreted via distinct philosophical perspectives. Buddhism's critique of caste and ritual formality incited reformative introspection within Hindu philosophy, while Hinduism re-integrated Buddhist tales, recognising Buddha as an avatar of Vishnu. This interaction illustrates a relationship characterised by dynamic synthesis rather than strict opposition. In modern times, these faiths continue to interact, addressing contemporary social, ethical, and spiritual concerns. The conversation between Hinduism and Buddhism constitutes an ongoing discourse, embodying a shared exploration of the essence of self, suffering, and ultimate liberation.

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Aurobindo Views on Spiritual Nationalism

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Abstract :-
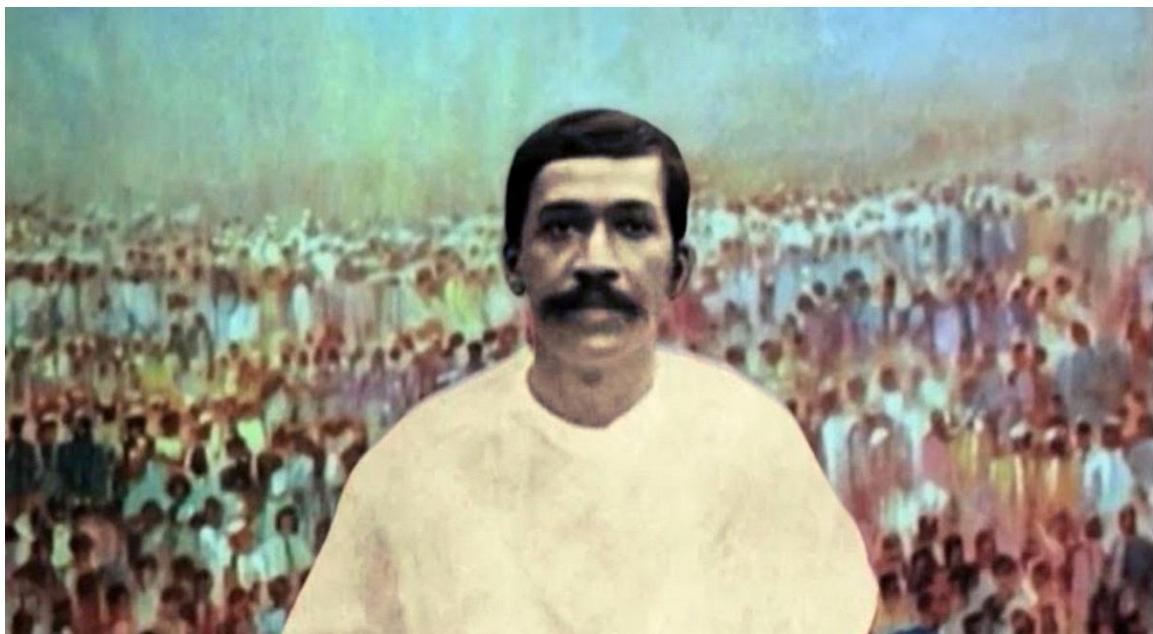
Sri Aurobindo's concept of spiritual nationalism centers on the idea that a nation is a divine entity, not just a geographical or political one. He believed that true freedom for India required both political independence and spiritual awakening. This involved infusing nationalism with spiritual values, fostering a sense of unity and higher consciousness among the people. Aurobindo envisioned India's role as a spiritual guide for the world, contributing to the unity of humanity.

Keywords :- Shri Aurobindo, Spiritual, Nationalism, Swadeshi movement

Introduction :-

This Article is all about the Spiritual Nationalalism by Shri Aurobindo Ghosh as he had played an Important in the Freedom Struggle especially in the Swadeshi movement.India today is politically free. But is free India on her way to rediscover her unique temperament, her true role and mission? Are we as a people working toward a true Indian renaissance that is grounded in India's eternal spirit

and truths? India is a civilisational nation and to see and know India only from the vantage point of a modern nation-state is to see and know only the outer surface. Today, as India goes through a deeply significant transition in the process of her rediscovery of her own way, a deeper way of being, it is critical that Indians must know India from a deeper vantage point. August 15, Sri Aurobindo's birthday and India's Independence Day, is a good day to remind ourselves of the continuing relevance of Sri Aurobindo's view of spiritual nationalism for today's and tomorrow's India.

Sri Aurobindo's political and revolutionary work inspired by his spiritual vision of the truth of India as the Mother, and his yogic insight into the mission and destiny of India as a spiritual leader for humanity and the world. At the outset, it must be said that mere politics was never the end-goal of Sri Aurobindo's revolutionary work. In fact, his political writings in BandeMataram clearly anticipate the philosophy we have come to associate with the yogi of Pondicherry. He wrote on July 3, 1907: "…the next great stage of human progress…is not a material but a spiritual, moral and psychical advance…"[ii]. He was, it may be said, intuitively aware of his work in that next stage of human perfectibility and progress.

Aurobindo Contribution in Freedom Struggle :-

Sri Aurobindo played a very remarkable role in the Indian freedom struggle in a very unique way. He contributed To the national movement right after returning to India from England; firstly with the help of his writings and later By actively participating in politics especially after the partition of Bengal. For the independence of India, he worked As a fierce thinker by means of his secret publications (Yadav, 2021). Articles of Aurobindo were quite radical which Created sensation among youth. To quote few he published an article titled 'No compromise' and in 1906 by means Of a Bengali newspaper titled 'Yugantar' he preached open revolt and demanded complete independence1. He was Against the policies and way of working of congress. He criticized the demand of moderates for dominion status And in turn fought for poornaSwaraj and self-rule. Aurobindo criticized congress's methodologies and working policies in his 'New lamps of old' in Indu Prakash magazine (Yadav, 2021: 6456). He was of the view that congress is a defective organization and their rule is equivalent to the rule of blinds (Singh, 1980). After the Surat split of Congress, he joined the extremist group of congress and was radically working for Indian independence. In 1908 Aurobindo was accused in the Alipore bomb case on charges of conspiracy to wage a war against the British Government. He was released after a long trail and in 1910 he shifted to Pondicherry where his revolutionary phase Of life got replaced with philosophical and spiritual tendencies.Although the active political phase of Ghosh's life is for a very little period, he played a significant role in the Indian Freedom struggle, initially he contributed by

way of revolutionary activities . later with his spiritual tendencies And thus influenced the national movement intellectually

Aurobindo Role in Swadeshi :-

Aurobindo Ghosh played an Important Role in the Swadeshi Movemnt as was one of the main Leaders of Extremists after Lala Lajpat Rai, Bipn Chandra Pal,BalGangadharTilak. During Swadeshi movement in 1905.Aurobindo Ghosh Tied Rakhi on hands as a symbol of Unity.AfterReturning to India, he learned the Bengali language and began reading **Anandamath, Dharmatatva, written by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay.** These writings sowed a sense of spiritual hunger and patriotism in him. Relocating to Calcutta in 1906 after Bengal's partition, Aurobindo inspired revolutionaries like BaghaJatin and Jatin Mukherjee alongside his brother Barin. He co-founded youth clubs, including the AnushilanSamiti, promoting physical fitness and martial training.

In 1906, he left Baroda to become Principal of the newly founded Bengal National College in Calcutta.

Journals by Aurobindo Ghosh :-

Aurobindo Ghosh Even had published those various journals such as BandeMataram,Karmayogin and Yugantar.He even has,inspiredyoung Indians to join the freedom struggle , advocating for Nationalism , Complete Independence and critiquing British Rule while outlining strategies of the Mass movement.During his stay at Baroda, he contributed to many articles for Indu Prakash and spoke as a chairman of the Baroda college board.[32] He started taking an active interest in the politics of the Indian independence movement against British colonial rule, working

behind the scenes as his position in the Baroda state administration barred him from an overt political activity. While traveling to these states, he linked up with resistance groups in Bengal and Madhya Pradesh. Aurobindo established contact with LokmanyaTilak and Sister Nivedita.

Aurobindo as Principal :-

In 1906, Aurobindo was appointed the first principal of the National College in Calcutta and started to impart national education to Indian youth.[34] He resigned from this position in August 1907, due to his increased political activity.[35] The National College continues to the present as Jadavpur University, Kolkata.

Aurobindo was influenced by studies on rebellion and revolutions against England in medieval France and the revolts in America and Italy. In his public activities, he favored non-cooperation and nonviolent resistance; in private, he took up secret revolutionary activity to prepare for open revolt in case the passive uprising failed. In Bengal with Barin's help he established contacts with Barin Ghosh and BaghaJatin who is later popularly known as JatindranarhMukherjee..

From Politics to Spiritualism :-

As Aurobindo After the Surat Split he had to leave politics.The Main Reason was Aurobindo was also arrested on charges of planning and overseeing the attack and imprisoned in solitary confinement in Alipore Jail. The trial of the Alipore Bomb Case lasted for a year, but eventually, he was acquitted on 6 May 1909. His defense counsel was Chittaranjan Das.[42]

During this period in the Jail, his view of life was radically changed due to spiritual experiences and realizations. Consequently, his aim went far beyond the service and liberation of the country.[43] Aurobindo said he was "visited" by Vivekananda in the Alipore Jail: "It is a fact that I was hearing constantly the voice of Vivekananda speaking to me for a fortnight in the jail in my solitary meditation and felt his presence."[44]

In 1910 he had went to Pondicherry as that time it was a french colony. He even had established here Aurovilleafter his death in 1968 and Aurobindo Ashram was being set up in 1926.Its a must visit place while you plan to visit Pondicherry.

Aurobindo Views on Spiritual Nationalism :-

Sri Aurobindo proposed the concept of spiritual nationalism. He emphasized on a blend of spiritual values with the Socio-political dimensions of nationalism to foster a higher consciousness and unity among the masses. He laid the Stress on that spiritual nationalism is the essence of united and harmonious India. Spiritual Nationalism is the Combination of two words spiritual and nationalism and these two are the pillars on which lies the essence of this concept and both are interrelated and supplementary in nature. The first concept is of the nation and the second one of spiritualism and for

him the nation is not merely a piece of territory or something political but it is much Beyond that, it is a divine concept.1 He termed the nation as mother India. Thus, from here we can locate that Sri Aurobindo's concept of nationalism is non-conventional in nature. It is not Conventional because it goes beyond the traditional concept of focusing wholly on the socio-political institutions While spiritual nationalism simultaneously emphasizes on individuals and society (Rana and Lal, 2023).

Thus, this Principle of spiritual nationalism challenged the conventional Western-centric approaches to nationalism. Also,Aurobindostressed on the significance of Gita and Upanishads and proclaimed that every Indian should feel proud Of its rich and diverse cultural history (ibid.). Aurobindo believes that nations are the creation of God and they are Supposed to be independent; to live under colonial rule is against the will of God and it is the primary duty of Everyone to fight against the colonial and to constantly strive for self-rule (Singh, 2002). Therefore, he opposed Colonialism and his message was that no nation can progress under the foreign rule and therefore it is the duty Assigned by God to achieve independence and one has to sacrifice everything for the nation's independence. He was never in favor of dominion status of India and staunchly criticized the policies of moderates and even dubbed thieir rule as rule of blinds (Singh, 1980) and he wanted to achieve PurnaSwaraj not by demanding from the British But by fighting against them.3 Aurobindo called nationalism as a "holy yajnya" (ritual) which is much more than Political activity and for achieving this higher purpose he even recommends the use of violence. He was a radicalAnd he proclaimed that if our nation (mother) is being exploited then one is fully allowed to use violence for ending That exploitation (Singh, 2002: 25). Sri Aurobindo's nationalism was not even limited to any religion or to any territory; it is applicable for the whole of Humanity and he didn't make any differences on the basis of ethnicity, caste, creed, or religion. Whatever the Immediate aim of nationalism, the ultimate aim for him is to achieve higher ideals of humanity (Rana and Lal, 2023: 334). He never treated India's freedom as an end and for him emancipation of the human race is the ultimate aim. Also, there is an astonishing coincidence that India achieved independence on the birth date of Sri Aurobindo i.e. On 15th of August.

Political Thought of Aurobindo :-

Sri Aurobindo Ghosh is primarily recognized for his spiritualism but his political thought played a remarkable Significance in the Indian freedom struggle. He has contributed to Indian political thought in the early 20th century which reflects a unique blend of western political ideas and eastern spirituality. Aurobindo strongly criticized colonial rule in India and fully agreed that the west lacked moral values. But at the same time, he recognizes the value of Their political ideas and strongly recommends a synthesis of ancient vedanta and modern European political philosophy (Varma, 1955). He put forward the idea of 'political vedantism' which is a concrete social philosophy for the

reconstruction of the social and political life of a dependent nation and is not merely a restatement of the World-affirming tendencies of the Upanishads (Varma, 1955:235) and the ultimate aim is the unity of man and God. At the same time he believed in the notion of spiritual nationalism with the help of which he wanted to fuel the Souls of masses with the fire for independence. On his return to India Aurobindo felt the need to learn his mother Tongue in order to connect with the people and he began digging texts for this reason. He studied GeetaUpanishads and realized their importance in practical life. Here he got influenced by the Bankim Chandra song Bandemataram and being influenced by him Sri Aurobindo developed a feeling of radical nationalism (Haldar, 1972). As Aurobindo was a revolutionary, he never cared about means and put the whole emphasis on end (Haldar, 1972:63). For him the end goal was the nation's independence and for this even the use of violence is justified. It can be achieved with the participation of masses and with sacrifices of each and everyone. The incident of partition Of Bengal by Lord Curzon in the year of 1905 proved a blessing in disguise for Sri Aurobindo because this event field the spirit of Ghosh with militant revolutionism and from here began his political career in the Indian national Movement goal of which is not only to achieve political independence from British but emancipation of human life as well. Thus, he developed a vision of integral nationalism whose aim is not only political or economic governance But also the development of moral and spiritual spheres. For Aurobindo education along with spiritual nationalism Is the important weapon to achieve the higher purpose of life. He developed his educational philosophy on the basis Of vedanta and upanishads (Hussain and Yadav, 2018). Education should be provided to an individual in such a way that it can bring all round development to an individual (ibid.) and to inculcate these multiple all-round dimensions In human beings is basically the integral education (Saini, 2017). Aurobindo believes that everybody innately born With a potential and need is only to bring it out. Aurobindo'spolitical thought evolved over time, later he delved more towards spiritualism and integral Consciousness.

Creation of Auroville :-

Auroville was being set up in 1968 was Founded by MirraAlfassa being named after Shree AurobindoGhosh.Asfuturistic city 'Auroville' in the state of Tamil Nadu in south India. Founded in 1968 as a 'universal' city, and planned to have 50,000 inhabitants that would take the next step in human evolution to exist as a self-sustaining community independent of nation states, Auroville manifests another utopian attempt to create a 'common' space which resonates with communist hopes to reclaim the commons from capitalist enclosure. This paper explores the problems that face Auroville when it creates its 'commons' on existing peasant land and becomes implicated in colonial politics. At its Annual Conference in 1964 and with MirraAlfassa as its Executive President, the Sri

Aurobindo Society in Puducherry passed a resolution for the establishment of a city dedicated to the vision of Sri Aurobindo. Alfassa was the spiritual collaborator of Sri Aurobindo, who believed that "man is a transitional being."[citation needed] Alfassa expected that this experimental "universal township" would contribute significantly to the "progress of humanity towards its splendid future by bringing together people of goodwill and aspiration for a better world". Alfassa also believed that such a universal township would contribute decisively to the Indian renaissance.

Conclusion :-

To conclude this from this Article we had get to know about Role of Aurobindo Ghosh in Spiritual Nationalism as He had played an Important Role in Freedom Struggle,Afterhe left politics he had turned into spirituslists.His impact on Freedom Struggle have played an Important Role in spiritual nationalism and political activism. His combination of spiritualism and activism not only wanted to liberate mother India from colonial subjugation but also from the internal strife. He emphasized that the primary goal is to achieve Independence but his definition of independence is more broad than mere political independence and its one important dimension is emancipation of humans and realization of higher purpose in life. He stressed on inner transformation and the spiritual awakening of individuals which remarkably contributed to the broader quest for India's independence. His various writings also inspired youth to unite for the ultimate purpose of Indians. The Ideas of Ghosh not only motivated the freedom fighters but also fueled the masses with spirit to fight for Independence. Although Ghosh withdrew from active politics, his vision for free India kept motivating everyone For India's freedom struggle His concept of Bharat mata even played an Important Role.

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        A Call to the Youth of India compiled from the speeches of Auroville and mother.

        Spiritual Nationalism: UnravelingAurobindo Ghosh's Influence On Indian Freedom Struggle
*1Vikash Kumar Meena and 2Arti Devi

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Untold story of Punnapra-Vayalar uprising

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Abstract :-

This paper is all about the Punnarapa -Vayalar Movement that took place in Alleppey present day Alphuzza in Kerala in October 1946. This Movement was being lead by the Group of p of Communists in The Princely state of Travancore British India against the Prime Minister, C. P. Ramaswami Iyer and the state. The revolt is named after the two places in which it took place; beginning in Punnapra and ending in Vayalar.

Keywords :- Punnarapa,Vayalar , Alleppey, Trivandrum, Kerala, Communists,CP Ramaswamy Iyer

Introduction :-

This Paper is all about the Punnarapa -Vayalar Movement also known as the Labour Movement, that took place at Alphuzza in Kerala in October 1946.This movement is being remembered as a courageous and pivotal movement in India's Struggle for the Independence and the Justice.This movement was being lead by CP Ramaswamy Iyer.The district and the two villages, which were storm centres of the first political general strike in Travancore in 1938, came to prominence once again in 1946 as the centres of a major struggle against the autocratic rule of the maharaja and his dewan. These two villages came to special notice because they were the scenes of pitched battles between the armed forces and militant workers who had no arms other than crudely made wooden spears, Further will get to know more about the movement.

Images of CP Ramaswamy Iyer,C.T Balarama Varma, Former Maharaja of Travancore

Context of Punnarapa Vayalar Movement :-

The uprising occurred in the context of growing communist influence in Travancore, particularly among coir workers, and opposition to the Diwan's policies. As the peasents fought bloody battles with Trivandrum's Authority as after CP Ramaswamy Ayyar Proposed constitutional changes in January 1946.

Causes :-

It is called for an unsccesable executive on the American Model.The state Congress disapproved of it as Unacceptable. Throughout the state,the phrase" American Modal Arabi Kaadil Renteled the air.which was seen as autocratic, and his declaration of an independent Travancore.

Post Second World War :-

The end of the Second World War was followed by unemployment and starvation. There was acute scarcity of food, rice, cloth, sugar, kerosene, etc, which were available only in the black market. Tenants and agricultural workers in this region were often beaten and tortured, women raped and their houses demolished by landlords. They were treated as bonded slaves. A young agricultural worker girl who refused to satisfy the lust of a landlord, was caught, tied with rope and dragged to his house where she was raped, tortured and then buried up to her neck and kicked on her head by him.People of the area, particularly workers, agricultural labourers and tenants began to organise themselves in the resistance movement under the leadership of the Coir Workers' Union and the Communist Party of India. Other workers were also organised. Ward committees were already formed by agricultural workers all over Cherthala taluq in 1944-45.

Numerous Events during this period :-

The revolt began with a march from Alappuzha to Punnapra on October 24, 1946, which turned violent when police intervened.

The uprising escalated with clashes between workers and the police and military in Punnapra and Vayalar.

The workers, armed with crude weapons like wooden spears, clashed with the police and military forces.

The revolt resulted in numerous deaths, with estimates ranging from hundreds to over a thousand.

Impact of AITUC :-

In response, fishermen, farmers, coir workers alike unionised for an armed struggle. The trigger that marked the beginning of the revolt is said to have happened on October 24th, 1946. The All India Trade Union Congress had called for a nationwide strike. The strike took place in the form of a march from Alappuzha to Punnapra on King Chithira Thirunal Balarama Varma's birthday. The march turned violent when the police got involved. The protestors were lathi-charged and brutally dispersed.

Over the course of the revolt many died. Workers and police were in constant conflict and the state spiralled into chaos. Travancore's independence was unacceptable to the Government of India. Discussions with the Dewan began during June of 1947. In July an assasination attempt was made on the Dewan by KCS Mani, a socialist leader. Post the attempt, the House of Travancore acceded to the Indian Union. A year after the Punnapra-Vayalar revolt, Pattom Thanu Pillai became the first Chief Minister of Kerala.

The Anti-Communist Version :-

A Shameful Betrayal. According to this account, the Communists saw themselves losing their hold on the masses. They had achieved this hold. largely by default, during 19~2-5 when &;real&dquo; Nationalists, sympathetic to Gandhi and the Indian National Congress and opposed to the war, had had their activities curtailed by the Travancore government. With the war over, these Nationalists soon beganto re-establish their influence. The Communists, as one exponent of thisview wrote, &dquo;had gone down so low in public esteem that to regain the prestige they had lost...they decided to stage an insurrectionary move-ment.Though no first-rank Communist leader died, hundreds of ignorantworkers were sent-not led, one should note-to the slaughter to prove the vitality of the Communist Party.

Communist Volenteer Camps :-

A number of Communist volunteer camps imparting para–military training to the workers were located here. C.K.Kumara Panikkar who came to be known as 'Vayalar Stalin' was the most prominent leader of the local Communists9. At this juncture, R.Sankar an important leader of the S.N.D.P.Yogam established contacts with the Communist leaders, allegedly at the instance of Sir C.P.Ramaswami Aiyar and tried to persuade them to wind up the volunteer camps and avoid a head on

collision with the authorities who were bent upon crushing the Communist movement by force. However R.Sankar's mediatory mission failed to achieve the desired result10.

After Effects :-

The killings of communist comrades turned the Communists and even some non-communists totally against Iyer. When, on 3 June 1947, United Kingdom accepted demands for a partition and announced its intention to quit India within a short period, the Maharaja of Travancore desired to declare himself independent.[5][6][7] Supported by the Diwan C.P.Ramaswami Iyer, the Maharaja Chithira Thirunal Balarama Varma issued a declaration of independence on 18 June 1947. As Travancore's declaration of independence was unacceptable to India, negotiations were started with the Diwan by the Government of India. Even Sardar Patel in presence of Mountbatten had warned Sir CP and Travancore Kingdom against the move for Independence.Family sources indicate that C. P., himself, was not in favour of independence but only greater autonomy and that a favourable agreement had been reached between C. P. And the Indian representatives by 23 July 1947 and accession to the Indian Union could not be carried out only because it was pending approval by the Maharajah. Nevertheless, an assassination attempt was made on C. P. By K.C.S. Mani who was an activist of a Socialist group, on 25 July 1947 during a concert commemorating the anniversary of Swathi Thirunal Rama Varma.

Five Member Committee :-

It set up a five member committee consisting of T.M.Varghese, A.J.John, K.A. Gangadhara Menon, A. Sankara Pillai and A.P.Udayathanu to enquire into the Punnapra Vayalar incidents12. A.P.Udayabhanu who wrote the report for the committee has recorded that in the course of the extensive evidence collected by the members during their visit to the area, it was brought to their notice that the Communist volunteers who became fatal victims of firing by the police and the military had been made to believe that the rifles and guns being carried by the police and the military did not have bullets. This partially accounts for the heavy casualties for the Communist volunteers became complacent and over confident 13.

Historians Views :-

Historian Manu S. Pillai described Punnapra-Vayalar as an Ezhava uprising against the Travancore Kingdom and its Nair aristocracy. The communists who took part in Punnapra revolt were mostly coir workers of Rural Alappuzha. They still form the backbone of Communist parties in Kerala even today.

Punnapra-Vayalar is described by Robin Jeffrey as the only moment in history when an organised working class led an armed revolt against a British-backed kingdom.

Historian A Sreedhara Menon (who snubbed the government's attempt to get a book written on Kerala's role in the Indian freedom struggle) said the current claim – that the struggle was aimed against an independent Travancore – was really 'farfetched'.

"When the stir began in Alapuzha district there was absolutely no move at all for an independent Travancore," he said. The Travancore dewan, Sir C P Ramaswamy Aiyar, came out with the proposal only later. And he himself dropped the move after a meeting with Sardar Vallabhai Patel and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Menon said.

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Monument dedicated to labours who lost their lives in this movement

Conclusion :-

To conclude this from this Article we had get to know about the Punnarapa -Vayalar Uprising, The uprising ultimately led to the Diwan's resignation and the eventual integration of Travancore into the Indian Union. It also marked a significant turning point in the history of Kerala, paving the way for land reforms and social change in the region.The Punnapra-Vayalar uprising is remembered as a courageous and pivotal moment in India's struggle for independence and social justice.Thought the Communist movement was put down, the sacrifices made by the workers and peasants did not go in vain in the long run. They hastened the end of the autocratic rule of the Diwan and helped in the early establishment of responsible government in Travancore and marked the gradual ending of landlordism in Travancore . Punnapra Vayalar has become a symbol of heroic martyrdom for Communists all over the country. The Martyr's Memorial at Punnapra has been a place of political pilgrimage .

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Sri Raman Mahrshi On Conquering The Fear of Death: Analysing The Issue In Indian Context

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Abstract:-

Death is a natural part of life, yet many people fear it deeply. In Indian philosophy, death is not seen as the end but as a transition, especially in the Advait Vedanta tradition. This paper explores how the Indian sage Shri Ramana Maharshi addressed the fear of death through his method of *Atma Vichara* (self-inquiry). It begins with an overview of Indian philosophical views on death, particularly from the Upanishads and Vedanta, which teach that the true Self (*Atman*) is eternal. The paper then looks at how Ramana Maharshi's own near-death experience led to his spiritual awakening. The main argument is that fear of death comes from ignorance of our real nature, and that realizing the Self can free us from this fear. In today's world, where anxiety about death is increasing due to materialism and loss of spiritual values, Ramana Maharshi's teachings offer a meaningful path to inner peace and a deeper connection with life.

Keywords:- Ramana Maharshi, Atma Vichara, Fear of Death, Self-Realization

In Indian philosophical system, death is not just considered about leaving the body or the permanent cessation of breathing but it is much more about the soul, the breath of life. The term death is not opposite of life but the opposite of birth and these two events indicate a shift from one phase to another. (Sharma, 2017) In Indian Schools of thought on death have different point of views but somewhere they all are trying to tackle the issue of fear which comes from thinking about death or through experiencing the death. It is important to understand that even if this is the reality that one who born with a body, will die one day, yet why we have fear of death so much? Why we all scared of experiencing it? This paper is concerned with these questions and deals with it through the teachings of an Indian sage, Sri Ramana Maharshi, who is renowned for his non dualistic approach towards life and his valuable insight which is rooted in Advait vedanta. Raman mahrshi addresses this issue through

his personal experience when he experience the fear of death in a very early age and overcome that fear.

The objective of writing this paper is to understand and analyse the meaning of death and the method to conquer the fear of death in the teachings of Ramana Maharshi and considering his method of conquering the fear of death in the present context where people are experiencing this fear in their daily lives.

Meaning of death in Philosophical Background :-

In Indian philosophical traditions, death is not perceived merely as the end of physical life but as a transformation in the ongoing journey of the soul (Atman). The various school of Indian philosophy approach death from distinct metaphysical perspective, yet most converge on the view that the self is eternal and death is transitional phase rather than a final cessation. Unlike in purely materialistic frameworks, where death signifies the complete end of existence, Indian thought sees death as the dissolution of the bodily sheath (sarira), not the annihilation of the self.

Among these schools, the Upnishads — particularly texts like the kathopnishad— play a central role in shaping the metaphysical understanding of death. In the Kathopnishad, the young seeker Nachiketa engages in a profound dialogue with Yama, the Lord of death, questioning the nature of existence, the fate of the soul after death and the essence of immortality. Through Yama's teachings, the text affirms that the true self(Atman) is unborn, eternal and untouched by death.

Philosophical systems such as vedanta, Samkhya and yoga all uphold this distinction between the transient body and the eternal self. Advait Vedanta in particular asserts the nondual nature of reality, where the individual self is not separate from the ultimate reality(Brahman). Death, in this view, is simply a misperception caused by ignorance(avidya) —a failure to recognise the unity and continuity of existence.

In contrast, Charvaka the materialist school, sees death as the end of consciousness and identity, denying the existence of the soul or any afterlife. However, this view remains as a minority in Indian philosophical landscape.

Across most traditions, then, death is framed not as an end but as an opportunity for liberation and rebirth, depending on one's spiritual insight and karmik imprint. The fear of death, according to these systems, arises not from the event of death itself but from ignorance of one's true nature. This forms the very basis upon which Ramana Maharshi's teachings rest, as he emphasizes the experiential realization of the self as a means to overcome the fear of death.

Ramana Maharshi's Early Experience Of Death :-

This is a true incident from the life of Maharshi Ramana as a sudden death experience which

turn his mind inwards and make him realise his true self. Sri Ramana, one of the most luminous spiritual figure, born as Venkatraman Iyer in the year of 1879 in Tiruchuli, a village in Tamilnadu. When he was at the age of 16 and he has no kind of health issues or sickness, suddenly experience an intense fear of death without any prior spiritual training. He felt like he was going to die, that time he was alone at home and he felt that he had to tackle this on his own. The fear of death turned his mind inwards and without uttering a word he keep questioning himself that what does it means by death? What is actually dying— this body or anything else..? He realizes that the witnessing force is different from the body which is untouched by this fear. This fear of death is only related to the 'I' which identify itself with the body and mind. This realization marked the birth of a great sage later known as Ramana Maharshi. (Osborne, 1954)

The Nature Of Death In Ramana Maharshi's Teachings :-

Raman Maharshi's spiritual awakening was triggered by a profound near death experience at the age of 16. This intense moment of facing fear of death brought a radical shift in his perception of reality. He realised the impermanence of the body and imperishability of the true self— the pure awareness that underlies all experiences.

According to Sri Ramana what dies is not the real self but the ego self— the false sense of identity that arises from identifying with the body and mind. This ego self is centred around the thought 'I', which he often referred to as the 'I' thought it is the ego or false self that believes in individuality and separation. When we equate our existence with the body and mind, we fall into the illusion of separateness and mortality— a state that Maharshi describes as ignorance.

So for him death is not the end of our true being, but the dissolution of the ego or false 'I'. Realizing this truth dissolves the fear of death and leads to realisation. The death of the ego paves the way for the recognition of the self— pure, undivided and ever present.

" The birth of the 'I' thought is one's own birth, its death is the person's death. After the 'I' thought has arisen, the wrong identity with the body arises." (Raman Maharshi,1992, p. 45)

When the ego dissolves, the true self illuminates an essence of pure being, consciousness and bliss. Unlike the fleeting construct of the mind and body, this true self is eternal, untouched by birth and death. It is the silent witness behind all experiences, the unchanging presence in a world of constant change. Free from illusion and limitation, it stands as the only true reality, ever existing, ever aware and ever fulfilled.

" The self is self luminous without darkness and light and is the reality which is self manifest." (Ramana Maharshi, 2024, p. 24)

Method Of Overcoming The Fear Of Death: Atma-Vichara :-

The method of overcoming the fear of death, as taught by Shri Ramana Maharshi, is known as Atma-Vichara, or self-inquiry. This profound practice is rooted in his own direct and transformative experience of the self. Atma-Vichara is not merely a philosophical concept but a practical method to discover our true nature— the self that lies beyond the body and mind.

At its core, Atma-Vichara is about turning the mind inward, away from the outside world and distractions, and focusing on the basic sense of "I"—the feeling of simply being aware or existing. Maharshi pointed out that all thoughts arise from a single root thought— the 'I' thought. Every experience, emotions and Idea is centred around the basic sense of I am. By tracing this 'I' thought to its source, we begin to realise that the self is not the body, nor the mind but something deeper and ever present.

Our suffering and fear — particularly the fear of death, stem from our mistaken identification with the body and mind. We believe ourselves to be the body which is perishable, and the mind which is restless and constantly changing. This false identity gives rise to desires, attachments ultimately— fear, especially the fear of loosing everything when the body dies.

In Atma-Vichara, the ignorance is gradually dissolved. The persistent inquiry — by asking 'Who am I?' and seeking the origin of the I thought — the ego which is a bundle of mistaken identities and mental constructs, begin to loose it's grip. Eventually the ego dissolves entirely and what remains is pure awareness — the true self which is eternal, changeless and free from fear.

When the ego ends, duality ceases. There is no longer a separate 'I' that fears death or clings to life. Only the self remains— infinite, formless and beyond birth and death. Realizing this is the true conquest over the fear of death

Fear Of Death In Modern Context :-

In the current world, the fear of death has become one of the most widely spread and psychologically disturbing experiences for individuals. Despite the immense growth in science, technology and health care, the fear of mortal nature of the body remains deeply implanted in the human mind because the materialistic point of view towards life increase this fear, as life is mostly identified with the body, status, rights, emotions and external achievements. We see death as an annihilation of existence rather than a transition leading to existential anxiety.

We are living in the era which is characterized by individualism, consumerism, and a disconnection from our traditional spiritual values that only intensifying this fear. Death anxiety, panic attacks and health related other kind of psychological conditions are growing day by day and pointing to a deeper discontent rooted in ignorance of one's true nature. This inner turmoil indicate

the same error that Ramana Maharshi addressed— mistaking the impermanent body or the ego self to the real self.

So in this context, Shri Ramana's teachings becomes so relevant because it offers a radical shift in perception from body consciousness to self awareness. The core problem of today's people is ignorance of the self that brings spiritual restlessness amidst material abundance. Maharshi's direct approach invites modern seekers to investigate their identity not through any kind of belief system or intellectual understanding, but through experiential inquiry. In a time where information is abundant but wisdom scarce, Maharshi's teachings serves as a compass, pointing toward the inner self, the only true reality where lasting peace and fearlessness can be found.

Practical Applicability Of His Teachings :-

The practicality of Shri Ramana's teachings lies in its simplicity and universality. His profound method of Atma-Vichara is not restricted to any religious belief system or cultural background but it is accessible to anyone who is willing to question inner source of their own identity and to know the nature of their own existence.

In daily life, we can experience fear of death in various forms— fear of loss, growing old, failures and separation. Practicing Atma-Vichara enables individuals to be aware of their witnessing consciousness which remains unaffected by change. This practice can be deeply therapeutic and transformative for individuals who are struggling with anxiety, identity crisis or existential worries. A consistent inquiry into 'who am I?' can bring clarity and a grounded sense of being.

As it can be said that Atma-Vichara is not an escape from life but a deep engagement with it. It encourages mindfulness, detachment and presence by dissolving the ego through inquiry, and make someone more able to deal with life's challenges without fear or glitching.

In modern times where mental health concerns are increasing and many of us feel alienated despite social connectivity, Ramana Maharshi's teachings presents a timeless remedy that leads to a more compassionate and fearless way of living. By realizing the immortal nature of true self, individuals not only overcome the fear of death but also awaken to life of inner freedom, peace and authenticity.

Conclusion :-

Shri Ramana Maharshi's insight into the nature of death and self offer not just a metaphysical understanding, but also a practical path for overcoming one of the most fundamental fears of human existence. His own fearless confrontation with death at an early age and the transformative awakening that followed, laid the foundation for his life long teachings centered around Atma-Vichara— the path of self inquiry. In a culture deeply rooted in spiritual-inquiry like India's, his teachings resonate with the timeless wisdom of the upnishads, while also offering a fresh, experiential clarity that

transcends doctrinal boundaries.

By emphasizing the fear of death stems from mistaken Identity with the body and mind, Maharshi points toward a radical yet simple truth: that we are not perishable body or the changing thoughts, but the unchanging awareness that witnesses both. In realizing this awareness, the illusion of ego dissolves and along with it, the fear of death.

Ultimately conquering the fear of death is not about escaping it, but about seeing through it. When one realizes that the self is unborn and undying, death is no longer a threat but a transition — just as birth was. Therefore Maharshi's message is not one of renunciation but a fearless engagement with life rooted in the recognition of what is real and eternal within us. In this realisation lies the possibility of living a life of peace, authenticity and freedom— beyond fear, beyond ego and beyond death.

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India-Nepal Relations : Deeprooted Historical, Cultural And Economic Ties Spanning Centuries

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Abstract :-

India and Nepal share a rich history, including shared cultural and religious traditions and a long bond that facilitated trade, migration, and cultural exchange. Both countries share similar religions and cultural relations, with Buddha's birthplace, Lumbini, located in present-day Nepal. The two countries have strong familial and marital ties, often referred to as "Roti-Beti Ka Rishta" (bread and daughter relationship). Many Nepalese people have ties to the Indian states of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh and share a common heritage with the Maithili population. Both countries have three-tier city governance as well.

Keywords :- India, Nepal, Historical, Cultural, Relations.

India and Nepal share a long and intricate history, characterized by cultural and religious connections, trade, and political ties that date back to ancient times. These relationships have been shaped by geographical proximity, shared cultural traditions, and historical interactions, making them close neighbours. The birthplace of Gautam Buddha, the founder of Buddhism and first sermonizer, is Lumbini in present-day Nepal. Buddhism flourished in both Nepal and India, further solidifying their religious connection. The Licchavis, from one of the most powerful republics of ancient India, migrated to Nepal in the 3rd century CE, establishing their rule over the Kiratis in the Kathmandu region.

The Magadh and Shakya republics in the 6th century BCE held territories on both sides of the current Indo-Nepal border. Buddhism has played a major role in the cultural connectedness between both the nations, especially after the spread of the Vajrayana school

of thought of Buddhism. The origin of Buddhism is believed to have started with Siddhartha Gautama, also known as Buddha, who was born in Lumbini which is in present-day Nepal. The Enlightenment had occurred here in Bodh Gaya, a fact well accepted, which is also the reason why Indian and Nepal cultural ties have remained strong. The Newar society of Nepal adopted this religion and preserved a mass of Buddhist manuscripts which could have been lost due to Turkish invasions. So from North India, the manuscripts that arrived were preserved, as there were many Indian monk-scholars who came to Nepal on their way to Tibet. The destruction of Buddhist centres became a major reason for many to flee to Nepal, who were later given shelter by Newari people of Nepal. Later, this became one of the main reasons for the mutual respect shared between India and Nepal as the religious sentiments were involved.

India's contribution to human resource development in Nepal is noteworthy, with thousands of scholarships and seats provided annually to Nepalese nationals for various courses in Indian institutes.Cultural exchanges and initiatives to promote people-to-people contacts are an integral part of this bilateral relationship. Several agreements have been signed between Indian and Nepalese cultural and media organizations.

The Gorkha Regiments of the Indian Army are raised partly by recruitment from hill districts of Nepal. India, from 2011, every year undertakes a joint military exercise with Nepal known as "Surya Kiran". India has signed three sister-city agreements for the twinning of Kathmandu–Varanasi, Lumbini–Bodhgaya, and Janakpur–Ayodhya.The Gorkha soldiers from Nepal, who have served in the Indian army, have also played a significant role in the history of Indo-Nepal relations.India and Nepal share unique multilateral and military platforms such as BBIN, BIMSTEC, NAM, and SAARC. During his visit, the Prime Minister of India performed the Shilanyas ceremony to launch and construct the Indian International Centre for Buddhist Cultural and Heritage in the Lumbini Monastic Zone. The facility is aimed at catering to scholars and pilgrims from all over the world who visit Lumbini.

A huge number of Indians live in Nepal, including businessmen, traders, doctors, engineers, and labours, etc. India is Nepal's largest trade partner and the largest source of foreign investments, besides providing transit for almost the entire third-country trade of Nepal. The two countries not only share an open border and unrestricted

movement of people, but they also have close bonds through marriages and families—ties popularly known as" Roti-Beti Ka Rishta".The India–Nepal Treaty of Peace and Friendship of 1950 forms the bedrock of the special relations that exist between them.

FOSWAL (Foundation of SAARC Writers and Literature) is a non-governmental organization that works on collaborating with artists, writers, and intellectuals from across the borders to talk about the issues persisting in their specific society. The aforementioned organization is a prime example of people-to-people interaction with common sensitivities and common concerns for any kind of socio-political issues.India-Nepal relations are characterized by long-standing historical, cultural, and economic ties. These include shared cultural and religious heritage, open borders, and significant economic cooperation. The India-Nepal Treaty of Peace and Friendship of 1950 serves as a foundational framework for these relations.India is Nepal's largest trading partner, with Nepal exporting goods like edible oil, coffee, tea, and jute, andimporting from India items such as petroleum products, iron and steel, and vehicles.

Operation Maitri was more than just a disaster relief mission; it was a symbol of India's compassionate diplomacy, military professionalism, and regional responsibility. India received widespread international praise for its speed, scale, and effectiveness. Operation Maitri became a blueprint for future humanitarian missions by India. It underscored India's growing stature as a first responder in South Asia. Operation Maitri remains one of the most positively remembered foreign interventions in Nepal's modern history.

This research article is an attempt to highlight the people-to-people connections between the two nations, i.e., India and Nepal. In a highly globalized world, it is

extremely crucial to look for the opportunities globally, but at the same time our neighbours should not be ignored. India–Nepal relations have always been important from the perspective of national security as well as regional stability. So, cultural cooperation amongst people and governments creates trust between nations. These amicable relations help in building foreign policies that are mutually beneficial.This article critically examines the layers of cultural relations between India and Nepal, which go from people-to-people directly to the governments themselves. Also, the specialty is the involvement of the non-state actors like NGOs and the cinematic

impacts which have influenced relations positively. Along with the positive impacts, this article explores the criticisms related to identity crises amongst people and how they deal with it.The more we focus on soft power in the modern era, the better.

As close neighbours, India and Nepal share a unique relationship of friendship and cooperation characterised by open borders and deep-rooted people-to-people contacts of kinship and culture.On 16 May 2022, our Prime Minister visited Lumbini in Nepal on the momentous occasion of Buddha Purnima. Both Prime Ministers attended a special ceremony arranged by the Lumbini Development Trust under the auspices of the Nepalese government to commemorate the 2566th Buddha Jayanti.Indian investment in Nepal is significant, with Indian companies being major investors in various sectors. India has been actively involved in supporting Nepal's development by providing assistance in various sectors such as infrastructure, health, water resources, education, and rural development. They have collaborated on the development of border infrastructure including roads and rail links.India–Nepal has a long history of cultural connections. Nepal is important for India's economic and strategic interests. Having a friendly and supportive Nepal will serve as a buffer between India and assertive China. The Indian government should engage constructively with the new leadership in Nepal and work towards enhancing cooperation in various areas. This will benefit India's long-term interests.

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Lexicography as Science and Tradition in Ancient India

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"kośaś caiva mahipānāmī kośaś ca vidusām api I

upayogo mahān eṣa kleśas tena vinā bhavet II"

The word *Kośa* derived from the root '*kuśa-kuśyati*' with *Kartari* suffix '*ac*' in the sense of *adhara*, means a vessel, a container and content, treasury and treasure also. The above mentioned verse precisely points out the importance of 'treasure of wealth' for a king and 'treasure of vocabulary of language' for a learned man. We know that language is the highest boon God has conferred upon man for expression and preservation of knowledge; while a lexicon or a dictionary of a language is a man-made device, like a master key to unlock the treasure of knowledge. (Sathe, 2004-2005)

Sanskrit is the classical language of India with a remarkably long history of over three thousand years and contains a vast technical and scientific literature along with purely literary works. The story of Sanskrit lexicography starts with the sacred texts of the Brahmanical tradition such as the *Ṛgveda* (c. 1500 BCE), the earliest extant Indian literature. *Ṛgveda* contains hymns or prayers addressIn the Vedic tradition, precise pronunciation of hymns was considered crucial, as even a slight deviation in accent was believed to nullify the spiritual benefits of the sacrifice. This belief necessitated memorizing the Vedas with exceptional accuracy and care. To ensure such accurate preservation of the Vedas, various methods of recitation were developed. In *saṁhitāpāṭha* (continuous recitation), words are chanted using rules of

euphonic combination (*sandhi*), while in *padapāṭha* (word-by-word recitation), words are pronounced in their original forms, without such combinations. The *padapāṭha* method also involves analyzing individual words, thereby aiding in the interpretation and understanding of the verses. (Deokar & Chevillard, 2019)

The above paragraphs bring in lots of words and concepts such as lexicon, pronunciation, euphonic combination. These are all associated with the discipline of lexicography. Through this essay, these concepts will be discussed briefly, along with looking at the tradition of Sanskrit lexicography in ancient India. Further, some significant lexicons and associated texts will also be explored.

What is Lexicography?

Lexicography is defined as the 'art of writing a dictionary' or the 'science of compiling a dictionary'. It is derived from the Greek word *lexico* meaning 'speech' or 'word' (adjective from *lexis* meaning 'way of speaking'). It is also closely associated with Lexicology which is derived from *lexico* meaning 'word' and *logos* meaning 'learning' or 'science', i.e., the science of word. Lexicography is therefore derived from *lexico* 'word' and *graphia* 'writing', i.e., writing of words. The etymological meaning of these words speaks for itself the scope of these branches of linguistics. Lexicography is the writing of the word in concrete form - in the dictionary. (Krishnan, 2019)

A dictionary has been defined as a book listing words of a language, with their meaning in the same or another language usually in alphabetical order, often with date regarding pronunciation, origin and usage. As it is clear from the definition of the dictionary, it includes the meaning, etymology, pronunciation and other related information of the words of one language in the same language or in another language. (IGNOU, 2023)

Lexicography as a Science:-

From the above paragraphs, it is clear that lexicography plays a major role in the space of literature, grammar and even history. Why then, is it called a science?

This is primarily due to the methodology involved in the creation of a dictionary or lexicon.

Lexicography is considered a science because it follows systematic principles, methodologies and empirical analysis to study and document language. It involves systematic data collection and analysis, as seen in Amarakosha (4th–5th century CE), which categorizes synonyms under thematic sections based on careful observation of word usage in Vedic and classical Sanskrit texts. Lexicography is also empirical and evidence-based, as demonstrated by Medinikosha (11th century CE), which compiled words and meanings drawn from authentic literary sources rather than personal interpretation. Like taxonomy in biology, lexicography requires classification and organization, exemplified by Trikandasesha (13th century CE), which grouped words into three sections - nouns, verbs and indeclinables - following a structured linguistic approach. (Krishnan, 2019) (Margalitadze, 2018)

Standardization and objectivity are key aspects, as seen in Halayudh Kosha (10th century CE), which provided fixed meanings to words, ensuring linguistic consistency. Lexicography is inherently interdisciplinary, incorporating elements of linguistics, history, and philosophy, much like the Nighantu (c. 1000 BCE), the earliest known Vedic lexicon, which was later analyzed by Yaska's Nirukta to explain the origins and meanings of archaic words. It also serves predictive and descriptive functions, as in Hemachandra Kosha (12th century CE), which not only documented language but also influenced the standardization of Prakrit and Apabhramsha, shaping their future evolution. Thus, lexicography in ancient India was a scientific discipline that systematically classified, analyzed and preserved language with a rigorous methodological approach. (Krishnan, 2019) (Margalitadze, 2018)

Types of Lexicons and Dictionaries :-

As we already saw above, due to the inclusion of different types of information, we get to see different types of dictionaries. These can be language-based dictionaries as well as other than language-based dictionaries. Due to their various

types, we have to take some basis and classify them so that they can be understood properly. (IGNOU, 2023)

Given the vast variation in the functions and meanings of words across different periods and regions, Sanskrit dictionaries must be broadly classified into two main types: encyclopaedic and historical (or linguistic). Encyclopaedic dictionaries focus on the extra-linguistic world, organizing entries by terms that represent various aspects of human knowledge, often spanning multiple volumes and fields such as specialized sciences. In contrast, historical dictionaries, specifically diachronic linguistic dictionaries, trace changes in word forms and meanings over time based on available textual evidence. Since presenting individual senses and citations chronologically would be overwhelming, such dictionaries group meanings and examples logically according to their semantic relationships. (Bhatta, 2004-2005)

Aside from this, there are two other ways of classification that I came across and would like to bring to light here. The first category is the most usual way in which dictionaries existed and were therefore classified in ancient times. The second type of classification is done more for the ease of our understanding today.

Type 1

Ancient Indian dictionaries were of two main types: synonymical and homonymical. Synonymical dictionaries listed words with the same meaning, often arranged by subject and resembling encyclopaedias, while homonymical dictionaries focused on words with multiple meanings (*anekārtha* or *nānārtha*). Many synonymical dictionaries also included sections on homonyms. The arrangement of entries varied, using principles such as alphabetical order (by initial or terminal letters), number of syllables, word length (from larger to smaller groups) or grammatical gender. Homonymical dictionaries typically listed meanings either side by side in the nominative case or used the locative case. Dictionaries also frequently included information about the gender of words. (Winternitz, 1967)

Type 2

Sanskrit lexicons (kośas) are classified in two ways: by subject matter and by style or structure. Based on subject matter, there are general kośas, which include words from all domains of life (e.g. *Amarakosha*, *Abhidhānacintāmaṇi*) and specialized or niche kośas, which focus on specific fields like medicine (*Dhanvantarinighaṇṭu*), mathematics (*Gāṇitānamālā*), astronomy (*Agastyanighaṇṭu*), Tantra (*Tantrakośa*). Based on structure, kośas are categorized as *ekārtha* (synonymical), *nānārtha* (homonymical) and *miśra* (mixed), depending on whether they deal with synonyms, homonyms or a combination of both. (Abhyankar, 2014)

The Lexicographer :

Lexical meaning lies at the heart of a lexicographer's work, as all their decisions are directly related to it. Before analyzing the various senses of a word, the lexicographer must first grasp its lexical meaning, which is the *artha* (meaning) conveyed through *śakti* (designation or denotation) inherent in every lexical unit. For example, in the case of the word *agni*, meaning fire, 'fire' is the *artha* expressed through *śakti*. Without this denotative function, the word *agni* would fail to convey its intended meaning. Therefore, understanding this process of denotation is crucial to any analysis of meaning in language. (Bhatta, 2004-2005)

In Sanskrit, meaning is conveyed not only through denotation (*śakti*) but also through etymology and convention. The lexicographer must distinguish between denotative words (*vācaka*), like *padma* (lotus), which express meaning through *śakti*, and conventional words (*rūḍha*), like *paṅkaja* (mud-born), which mean "lotus" through usage or *rūḍhi*. However, if a conventional word is used in its etymological sense in a given context, the lexicographer must provide only the etymological (*yogic*) meaning, omitting the conventional one. (Bhatta, 2004-2005)

Nighaṇṭu and Vedāṅgas :

The starting point in the compilation of works on lexicography may be said to be the Nighaṇṭu, a vocabulary of Vedic words and thus the oldest lexicon so far known. (Gandarillas, 2021) According to the derivation of the word *nighaṇṭu*, it

comprises a list of Vedic words, however some are of Dravidian origin too. (Dwivedi, 2018)

As it has come down to us, the Nighaṇṭu consists of five chapters (*kandas*), the first three of which form the main body of the book and are called *naighaṇṭuka-kanda*. The fourth is called *naigama-kända* and the fifth *daivata-kanda*. The first *kanda* deals with synonyms, the second with homonyms, while the third gives the names of deities. The topics include: (i) physical things such as earth, air, and water; (ii) objects of nature such as clouds, dawn, day, and night; (ii) the human body and its limbs such as arms and fingers; (iii) objects and qualities associated with people such as wealth and prosperity or anger and fighting; (iv) physical abstract qualities such as heaviness or lightness. (Chaterji, 1991)

While the intention of Nighantukara was only to enlist the words of the Vedas, different authors have mentioned different purposes of writing. For example, Dhanvantari writes that his purpose is to club different names of *materia medica* together so as to avoid the embarrassment that a doctor may face in a foreign land. (Winternitz, 1967)

Two commentaries on the Nighaṇṭu are known to us: the Nirukta by Yaska (800-700 BCE) and the Nighaṇṭu-nirvacana by Devaraja Yajvan (1100 CE). The Nirukta is a thorough commentary on the Nighaṇṭu. Instead of merely explaining the words or passages occurring in the text, the Nirukta gives, besides the meanings of the words, the references to the terms as they are used in the Vedic literature. (Chaterji, 1991) This now brings us to the Vedangas.

Among the six Vedangas, four have something to do with lexicography. They are: Šiksā (articulatory phonetics), Vyakarana (grammatical treaties), Nirukta (etymology) and Chandas (prosody).

The Nirukta tradition recognized four-fold classification of words: *nāman* (nomen), *ākhyāta* (verbum), *upasarga* (preverb/preposition), *nipāta* (particle). The Nirukta begins by addressing word classification, root principles, its significance, and interpretative rules in Chapters 1 and early Chapter 2, while the preface to Chapter 7

focuses on explaining the names, nature, and forms of Vedic deities. Each word along with its root and explanation is directly discussed by Yaska. For example, "*nadya kasmat nadanaa bhawanti shabdvatsya*" (what is the root of the word 'river', and why is it called so?). In reply, Yaska says, *nadi* (river) is made of the root *nad* (to make a sound) because a river makes a lot of noise while flowing. (Dwivedi, 2018)

Śikṣā is primarily concerned with phonetics and pronunciation. It focuses on the correct articulation of Sanskrit sounds, covering aspects such as the letters of the alphabet, accent, quantity, stress, melody and the rules governing euphonic combinations during Vedic recitation. Vyākaraṇa deals with Sanskrit grammar and involves the analysis and decomposition of words, their formation from roots, and the construction of complex sentence structures. Chanda, the study of Vedic metres, involves examining the various metrical patterns used in the composition of hymns. (Howladar, 2016)

While these texts do shed light on the roots of the origin of lexicography in the country, the main focus is usually on the Vedas with the branches of lexicographic study playing the role of 'supporting actors' per say. So, let us now look at texts which were written with the intention of adding to the epistemology of Sanskrit lexicographic studies in ancient India.

Pāṇini's Aṣṭādhyāyī :-

In the 5th century B.C. the linguist Pāṇini wrote a complete grammatical treatise on the Sanskrit language in 8 parts (Aṣṭādhyāyī), that explained precisely how to formally derive both a correct enunciation and a paraphrase of its meaning, according to the locutor's intention. More than a mere grammar of the language, it is actually a non-deterministic algorithm generating linguistic forms as phonemic streams derived from root syllables and meta-linguistic operators (*anubandha*). The Aṣṭādhyāyī theorizes correct utterances as sequences of word forms respecting functional dependencies through a notion of semantic role (*kāraka*). These word forms are glued together through a process of phonetic smoothing (*sandhi*) to produce

continuous speech. This linguistic generative process operates on sound, discretized as a set of 50 phonemes (*varṇa*). (Huet, n.d.)

To effectively use Pāṇini's Aṣṭādhyāyī, several auxiliary treatises are essential. These include the *dhātupāṭhas* (databases of verbal roots marked with *anubandhas* to indicate stem formation and other morphological features), the *gaṇapātha* (a catalogue of nominal stem families that share similar morphological patterns) and the *uṇādisūtrakośa* (provides supplementary rules for forming primary nominal stems not derived directly from verbal roots). Additionally, other auxiliary texts address aspects like gender and accent rules, supporting the comprehensive application of Pāṇini's grammatical system. (Huet, n.d.) We can thus see from this that the tradition of lexicography in ancient India was a well developed and important discipline. Now, we come to Amarakoṣa (c. 500 CE), considered as 'the first classical Sanskrit lexicon which is extant in its entirety'. (Patyal, 2000-2001)

Amarakoṣa :-

Amarakoṣa was by Amarasiṃha, a Buddhist scholar at the court of king Vikramāditya (Candragupta II, 4th century). In 1000 stanzas, the dictionary defines 9000 word types, organized as a thesaurus expressing an ontological structure of notions. It is also known by the name Namalinganusasana which means 'a work which deals with vocables and their genders'. (Gandarillas, 2021)

It is also known as Trikāndi, since it is divided into three books or *kandas*: *swarga-kanda* (dealing with heavenly matters), *bhūmi-kanda* (dealing with earthly matters) and *samanya-kanda* (dealing with general matters). (Chaterji, 1991) In section I we find words for the heaven, gods, atmosphere, stars, time, word, language, sound, music, dance, netherworld, snakes, sea, water, island, ship, river, water-animals and water-plant; in section II there are words for the earth, city, mountain, forest, trees and plants, animals, man, woman, relationships, illness, parts of the body, different kinds of garments, ornaments, the four castes and their professions; section III contains adjectives, compound words and supplements on homonyms, indeclinables and on the gender of nouns. (Winternitz, 1967)

The introduction is similar, in which other synonymous words occur and the subject-matter is divided into three sections. The whole work is written in metrical form in *anustubh* metre. The major part of the work deals with synonyms. A small section called the *nanartha-varga* (miscellaneous section), is devoted to homonyms and is arranged after the final consonants. The indeclinables are treated in one chapter, while the last section is devoted to the general rules for determining gender. However, the arrangement of the work is faulty as it is extremely difficult, without the help of an index, to trace a particular word in the lexicon. (Chaterji, 1991)

Conclusion :-

As we have now come to the end, we have encountered several aspects of lexicography and the tradition of Sanskrit lexicography in ancient India, either through the examples given while explaining certain aspects and concepts, or the more detailed expansions of the most significant lexicons and texts associated with the science that is lexicography. From this, stem some common observations that help in understanding the broad space of lexicography in ancient India.

Sanskrit lexicons have evolved in two thousand years in terms of subject matter, style and structure. They have become bulkier, subtler, diverse and experimental with advancing years. Influence of other contemporary languages and culture has increased and Sanskrit language itself has gone accommodating new words and concepts in it. Newer branches of knowledge have been addressed by lexicographers. (Abhyankar, 2014)

Evolution of lexicons is a study which throws light on several other types of evolutions running parallel to it such as evolution of culture, politics, science, arts, philosophy and life in general. For example, Amara enlists 9 types of horses while Hema goes on to record 30 types. The space allotted to the topic shows how horses were an essential part of the life of ancient India. Vaijayantikośa contains a chapter titled 'Purādhyāyah' which not only reveals names of important cities of the period but also describes in detail their architecture and the various structures which constituted them. In this way, lexicons are mini-encyclopedias and various disciplines of knowledge can benefit from their study. (Abhyankar, 2014)

It is impossible to trace the journey of Sanskrit language from the Vedic period to the modern age without taking cognizance of kośas. From the Nighaṇṭu which contains exclusively Vedic words to Amarakośa, which has many words of Dravidian origin. Study of lexicons reveals the procedure of blossoming of lexicography into a full-fledged science. Although the Nighaṇṭu was a mere collection of words, Yāska interpreted it using the principles of lexicography. Different lexicographers brought in different techniques of composition which can guide even modern day lexicographers. (Abhyankar, 2014)

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An Ethnographic Account of Indigenous Liquor Practices and Their Socio-Ritual Significance among the Tribes of Balasore, Odisha

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Abstract:-

The tribal communities, as the indigenous people of Odisha, possess a distinct cultural identity and traditional knowledge system that significantly contributes to the broader cultural landscape of the region. Among these traditions, the preparation and consumption of indigenous liquor is not merely a way of life but an intrinsic part of their ritual practices and symbolic expression. This study examines the cultural and ritual significance of indigenous liquor practices among tribal communities in Balasore, Odisha, focusing on groups such as the Santal, Munda, and Bathudi. Drawing from ethnographic fieldwork, including interviews, participant observation, and oral narratives, it explores how traditional beverages like *handia* (rice beer) and *mahua* (flower-based liquor) function not just as consumables, but as vital elements of tribal identity, cosmology, and ceremonial life. These liquors are central to key rituals such as birth, marriage, ancestor worship, and harvest festivals, reflecting ecological knowledge, social cohesion, and gendered labor roles. The study also highlights the challenges posed by state regulations, modernization, and cultural change, revealing both the resilience and contestation of these traditions. By situating indigenous liquor within broader anthropological discourse, the research underscores its role in preserving intangible heritage and tribal epistemologies in contemporary India.

Key Words:- Ethnography, Indigenous Liquor, Intangible Heritage, Traditional Knowledge System

Introduction :-

Odisha, with its rich indigenous heritage, has long been shaped by the cultural presence of tribal communities. While centuries of assimilation have blurred the origins of many customs, several tribes have retained distinct cultural identities. In Balasore district, home to groups like the Bhuyan, Bathudi, Ho, Kandha, Kolha, Munda, Santhal, Bhumija, and others, traditional life remains closely tied to nature, reflected in practices such as nature worship, non-vegetarian diets, and the ritual use of indigenous liquor.

Among these practices, the preparation and consumption of traditional alcoholic beverages—made from mahua flowers, rice, or date palm sap—holds enduring cultural and ritual significance. These brews are central to community gatherings, life-cycle ceremonies, and offerings to deities and ancestors. Despite the growing presence of commercial liquors, traditional alcohol continues to symbolize tribal identity, spiritual continuity, and resilience amid social change.

The tribal communities of Odisha prepare traditional liquors like *Mahuli*, *Mahua*, *Tadi*, *Handia*, and *Rasi* using locally available natural ingredients. These beverages are not only intoxicants but also hold deep ritual, medicinal, and social significance.

- **Mahuli** is made by fermenting boiled rice using herbal yeast cakes (*ranu* or *bakhar*) made from forest herbs and then distilling the mixture.

- **Mahua** liquor is brewed from sun-dried flowers of the *Madhuca longifolia* tree, fermented in water and then distilled. It holds sacred value in many tribal rituals.

- **Tadi** (toddy) is a naturally fermented sap collected from date or palmyra palm trees. It is mildly intoxicating when fresh but becomes stronger with time.

- **Handia** is a rice beer prepared by fermenting cooked rice with *ranu* and consumed during festivals and rituals, especially among the Santhals, Mundas, and Ho tribes.

- **Rasi**, similar to Handia, is a fermented rice drink common among the Ho tribe and is used in both festive and religious contexts.

These traditional liquors reflect the tribes' deep connection with nature, ancestral knowledge, and cultural identity.

Cultural Ecology of Alcohol among Tribal Communities :

Alcohol, whether fermented or distilled, has been integral to human society since prehistoric times, serving religious, medicinal, and social functions across diverse cultures. In tribal and indigenous communities, traditional liquors are used in sacred rituals, ancestral offerings, and community celebrations, symbolizing spiritual and social unity. These beverages foster hospitality and solidarity, often making refusal socially inappropriate.

Medicinally, fermented drinks were valued for their healing properties and as safe alternatives to unsafe water. They also contributed to nutrition during food scarcity. The preparation of traditional alcohol, using local ingredients like rice, mahua flowers, or palm sap, reflects ecological awareness and cultural identity. Often passed down by women, these practices preserve ancestral knowledge and community traditions.

Despite modern pressures and legal restrictions, the continued use of indigenous liquors highlights the resilience of tribal heritage and the assertion of cultural autonomy.

Among the indigenous communities of Balasore, traditional liquors like *Handia*, *Mahuli*, *Mahua*, and *Tadi* play a significant role in ceremonial, social, and religious life. These beverages, often fermented from rice or forest produce, are deeply embedded in the cultural practices and belief systems of various tribes.

The Munda population is primarily concentrated in regions such as Soro in the south and Nilagiri in the west, where traditional cultural practices remain vibrant and deeply rooted in everyday life. Among these practices, the preparation and consumption of *Handia*, a fermented rice beer holds particular significance. The Munda community considers *Handia* a central element in festivals and communal gatherings, reflecting its deep social and ritual value. Similarly, the Santhal tribe, also residing in the region, consumes *Handia* during their harvest festival *Sohrae*, (Hembram & Tripathy, 2023) underscoring the beverage's role in agricultural celebrations and seasonal rites.

The Bhumija tribe is primarily found in regions such as Baliapal (north), Khaira (south), and Nilagiri and Remuna (west). Within the Bhumija community, traditional liquors like *Mahuli* and *Handia* play a vital role in major life-cycle rituals, particularly during marriage and death ceremonies. These beverages are not merely consumables but are embedded in a complex belief system centered on the supernatural. The Bhumijas maintain a strong belief in the existence of both benevolent and malevolent spirits, including entities such as *Kudra, Bisaya Chandi*, and *Varam*. Misfortunes, illnesses, and deaths are often attributed to the influence of these malevolent forces. To protect themselves and their communities, they seek the intervention of traditional healers, who prescribe ritual sacrifices as a means of appeasement. Offerings typically include fowls, goats, and locally brewed liquors like *Mahuli* and *Handia*, which are central to these propitiatory rites (Mishra, 2014).

The Kolha tribe is predominantly settled in areas such as Khaira (south) and Nilagiri (west). Within their cultural framework, *Handia*—a traditional rice beer—holds an essential place, particularly during Makar Parab, a major festival celebrated with ritual and communal significance. While *Mahuli* is also occasionally consumed, recent trends indicate a growing inclination among the Kolha community toward commercially available alcoholic beverages, including foreign liquor. Additionally,

the Kolhas are known to consume *Kusna*, a lesser-known local variant of fermented drink, which continues to feature in certain customary contexts (Tudu, 2018).

The Bhuyan tribe is primarily located in regions such as Khaira (south), and Nilagiri and Remuna (west). Among the Bhuyans, traditional liquors such as *Handia* and *Mahua* are commonly used in various social and religious functions, serving both ritualistic and communal purposes. A distinctive feature of their mortuary customs is the collective consumption of Mahuli on the third day after a person's death. This ritual takes place following specific observances, including the cutting of nails and hair and ritual bathing of the bereaved. The community then assembles in the evening to share *Mahuli*, signifying the conclusion of the initial mourning period and reinforcing collective solidarity (Ota, Mohanty, & Patra, 2020).

the Ho tribe is primarily concentrated in the Simulia region (south). The Ho community traditionally consumes a variety of indigenous alcoholic beverages, including *Matkam Rasi*, *Tadi*, and *Handia*. These drinks serve not only for personal consumption but also hold ritual significance as sacred offerings to deities and ancestral spirits. Through such offerings, the Ho express reverence, gratitude, and maintain spiritual communion with the divine and the departed, reflecting a deep interconnection between their cultural practices and cosmological beliefs (Munda & Nayak, 2025). The use of traditional liquors among these tribal communities serves multifaceted purposes like ritualistic, medicinal, social, and symbolic. It reflects a profound intertwining of indigenous knowledge systems, animistic beliefs, and ritualistic practices that continue to sustain their cultural identity and community coherence.

Conclusion :-

The preparation and consumption of country liquor are intricately woven into key life-cycle events and seasonal ceremonies, underscoring the interconnectedness of tradition, environment, and social structure. The production of these liquors often involves gender-specific roles, with women playing a crucial part in maintaining and transmitting this traditional knowledge across generations. However, the continuity of these practices faces challenges from modern regulatory policies, socio-economic changes, and cultural assimilation pressures. Despite such challenges, indigenous liquor remains a resilient expression of tribal autonomy and intangible heritage. Recognizing and preserving these practices is essential not only for safeguarding tribal cultural identity but also for appreciating the broader anthropological significance of indigenous knowledge systems in contemporary India.

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Naga Cult- The Cultural Transmission, Interaction and Performance in Bhadarwah, Jammu and Kashmir

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Abstract :-

Cultural continuity can be seen worldwide and at both the pan-India and regional levels. There was an overlap in culture and continuity linked to mythologies, rituals and traditions. Bhadarwah is situated in the Middle Mountains comprising the valleys of Bhadarwah, Kishtwar and Padar. The Bhadarwah region is called the *Nag Bhoomi* or serpent's land. The *Nags*, *Devi* and *Devtas* are the oldest in the hills and of aboriginal origin. The Bhadarwah region is bound to the Hindu religion and there is also the assimilation and acculturation of the *Naga* culture. The eating habits and the higher status of women show *Naga's* influence. Place names, clan names (*nagvamsi*), musical instruments (*narsinghas*), dance (*kodd* or *dhekku*), food culture (*cchatoi*), festivals (*jatras, Mela Patt*), absence of caste segregation and untouchability, the irrigation system, and most temples and shrines are ascribed to the *Naga* Culture. *Mela Patt* or *Patte-ru-kodd* is celebrated in the worship of *Vasuki Nag,* the king of *Nagas*. The *Jatra* festival is celebrated for the entire month. The impact of *Naga* Culture is quite profound in Bhadarwah, as every natural water spring is referred to as a *Nag* and is believed to be the abode of the *Nagas*. The ancient practice of *baoli* or step wells is renowned for its distinctive art and architecture. *Naga* culture is carried on in its entirety to this day. *Pahari,* the inhabitants of the Middle Mountains have their language in the hills, where old customs, beliefs and prejudices still prevail, untouched by the progress of civilisation. Folk songs, folk dances, folk music and oral traditions are integral to its cultural continuity. Some plants, such as *Nagfan* or snake-hooded, are associated with the *Naga* cult.

Keywords:- *Naga* cult, Culture, Bhadarwah, religion, customs and rituals, *baolis*.

Introduction :-

The *Nags*, *Devi* and *Devtas* are the oldest in the hills and of aboriginal origin. A detailed fieldwork study of the site visits to the Bhadarwah region has found the *Naga* deity in almost every temple. *Nagas* held an exalted status in Indian society due to their strength, vigour and valour. The sites are located within a 40-kilometre radius of the Doda District in the Jammu and Kashmir Union Territory. *Basak Nag, Vasuki Nag* or *Bas Dev* is regarded as the patron deity of Bhadarwah, and the first *Raja* of the valley is said to be the King of the *Nagas*. The whole Bhadarwah region is called *Nag Bhoomi* or the land of *Nagas* and the five-headed *Vasuki Nag* and the temple are present in *Kablaas Kund*, the highest peak in Bhadarwah. Many fairs and festivals, customs and rituals, such as *Jaagru*, *Piyala*, *Nivala*, *Pattarpuja*, *Khadaal* and *tirthas* or pilgrimages like *Kablaas Yatra*, *Sonbain Yatra*, *Subhardhar Yatra*, as well as dance and music, the *jatra* festival, veneration of step-wells or *baolis* and the food culture, are associated with the *Naga* cult. The culture of Bhadarwah is unique and plays a vital role in the life of the people in every aspect, giving it an identity of its own. The impact of *Naga* Culture is quite profound in Bhadarwah, as every natural water spring is referred to as a *Nag*, which is treated with great reverence and is believed to be the abode of the *Nagas*. The ancient practice of *baoli* or step wells is renowned for its distinctive art and architecture. *Naga* culture is carried on in its entirety to this day. Many folk songs, folk dance, folk music, and oral traditions are part of its cultural continuity. This paper will highlight the *Naga* cult in Bhadarwah, the culture of Bhadarwah and the art, architecture and sculpture associated with the *Naga* cult in the Bhadarwah region.

Geographical location of Bhadarwah :-

Bhadarwah is located in the northeastern part of Jammu, situated in the Middle Mountains, comprising the Valleys of Bhadarwah, Kishtwar and Padar. It is located in the *Bhadardesh* of *Duggar Pradesh* between the *Iravati* or Ravi and *Chanderbhaga* or Chenab rivers. Bhadarwah is situated in the upper *Niru* valley (the Chenab tributary), with fertile land supported by canal irrigation. It is known by different names in ancient times, like *Bhadravakasha, Bhadrakashi, Bhadrashram* and presently called Bhaderwah and *Bhaddlah.* The ancient capital was at *Dughanaga* which now stands in the village of Sartingal. The name is believed to have derived from *Bhadarkali*, the presiding deity of the region before the *Nagas* arrived in this region.

Historical Context :-

In Kalhana's *Rajatarangini,* the Bhadarwah region is referred to as *Bhadravakasha,* meaning Happy Region. According to James Fergusson, these *Nagas* were not originally serpents but worshippers of serpents. Dr. C.F. Oldham referred to these *Nagas* as the descendants of the Sun and

identified the hooded serpent as their totem, with *Takshashila* or Taxila serving as their chief city. Historical evidence reveals a period of struggle between the *Nagas*, the original inhabitants of the land and the *Aryan* settlers. Numerous villages have names with suffixes or prefixes derived from *Naga* (Raina 189). The people of Bhadarwah speak *Bhadarwahi*, a variation of the *Pahari* language (Pathik and Sharma 7). They are the devotees of *Naag Devtas* or serpent deities (Pathik and Sharma 9). This region has allowed little interaction with the outside world, resulting in little Brahmanical penetration (Atrey 7). Brahmanical Gods are placed second in importance to the local deities during the family rituals (Atrey 131). *Thakkars* and *Meghs* mostly have *Naag-devatas* as their *kul* or family deity due to their origin's connection to the land. Many Megh families living in Bhadarwah seem to be *Naagvamsi* (Atrey 146-147). *Meghs* or Scheduled Caste have a respectable position in Bhadarwah called *bijantaris* or drummers and are the ancient musicians.

No *Aryan* influence or signs of *Vedic* Culture are seen in this area (Aash 4). Springs are associated with *Nag* or snake worship; the word *Nag* denotes a spring and a *Nag* temple is found nearby (Enriquez 64). There is an ancient temple of *Vasuki Nag* on the highest mountain peak of Bhadarwah called *Kaplas* (Pathik and Sharma 9). The annual progress report of the Archaeological Survey of Punjab, 1904, gave reference to the three temples- two in the villages of upper Bheja and Nalthi, dedicated to *Baski* or *Vasuki Nag* and the third one in the Sartingal village belongs to *Santhan Nag*. The ancient temples of Vasuki Naag are located at Gatha, Bhadarwah proper and Nalthi village.

The entire Hindu population of Bhadarwah believes in *Naag* worship. They regard them as the tutelary deity and the people of Bhadarwah celebrate *Naag* festivals and rituals irrespective of caste or creed (Sharma 226). There are several temples of *Basak Naag* built in vernacular style in and around Bhadarwah. The sanctum sanctorum or *garbhagriha* of the temple is a human-sized idol of *Basak Naag* and Jimootvahan made of black granite. The oldest temple of *Vasuki Nag* at Village Gatha has the idols of *Maharaja Jimootvahan* and *Nagraj* and there is an inscription at the base of the idol. In the Dandi village and its surrounding areas, there is an ancient *Shesh Naag* temple where residents can observe the *Jaatra* ritual and worship the *Naag* deity (Sharma 227). Unlike the stone *Shikhara* Temples of *Vishnu* and *Shiva* that are found in other states, most likely brought from the Punjab Plains, all of the temples of Bhadarwah are in the shape of simple square cells of layers of stone alternating with wooden beams surrounded by a *verandah* and covered with a conical wooden roof (Archer 55). There is a technique for constructing houses and the temples with pillars are occasionally built for the central supports and corners of homes and temples. Pairs of square wooden slabs, a few inches thick, are positioned vertically with one set placed on top of another at right angles (Drew 104). There is an inscription on the *Vasak Dehra* stone fragments at Bhadarwah, which

consists of *Sharda* characters from the eleventh Century. This is a part of a statue that somehow broke and was either thrown away or left to wither at the site (Kaul 77).

Cultural transmission :-

Pahari, the inhabitants of the Middle Mountains have their language in the hills, where old customs, beliefs and prejudices still prevail, untouched by the progress of civilisation. In *Mela Patt,* every community participates in the *dashnaan*, with ten families making arrangements for the conduct of this festival. Place names like *Naagni* in Bhadarwah and *Naagseni* in Kishtwar, clan names *Naagvamsi*, musical instruments such as *narsinghas, dhauns, jhelli* or a cymbal, dance-*kodd* or *dhekku*, food culture-*cchatoi, rolay, piyala* festivals- *jaatras, Mela Patt*, absence of caste segregation and untouchability, the irrigation system, and most temples and shrines are ascribed to the *Naga* Culture. The people have *Naag-devatas* or serpent-deities as their Kul or family deity due to their localities in the land. The eating habits and the higher status of women show *Naga's* influence. The *Jaatra* festival is celebrated for the entire month in Bhadarwah. The springs are worshipped and respected and the festival cum ritual *Naagjuhaarnu* or worshipping the springs and cleaning, is held. *Naga* is both in serpent form and human form in Bhadarwah.

The *Kud* or *Kodd* dance, locally known as Dhekku, is a nocturnal dance performed during the festival in September, called *Mela Patt* or *Patte-ru-kodd*, in the worship of *Vasuki Nag* for three days. The festival is celebrated after the *Raja* Nagpal of Bhadarwah. The silken cloth, embroidered and bound together, forms a temple-shaped pillar topped with golden urns, known as *Patt*. A devotee carried the Patt on his head and swirled it in the temple courtyard and the royal place called Khakhal to display the gifted items. In the evening, the traditional *Dhekku* or *Kodd* dance is performed.

Cultural Interaction :-

The *Shakti* cult was present in the Bhadarwah region, as mentioned in the *Vasuki Purana* and the local *Vansavalis*, and was further supported by a fieldwork study in the area, where a Temple of *Mata Hadimba Devi* stands in the Village of Sungli. Many myths, folktales and oral traditions are associated with the arrival of *Nagraj Vasuki* in the region. The commonly held belief is that *Vasuki Nag* came to Bhadarwah from Kashmir through Kishtwar. *Vasuki* became the *Raja* of Bhadarwah over his two brothers, *Mahal Nag* and *Subar Nag.*

The people of Bhadarwah also worship *Subhardhar Nag, Mahal Nag* and *Budhar Nag. Subhardhar Nag* in Chinta is an incarnation of *Sheshnag. Takshaka Nag* is present at Thuba on the way to Chinta, where a temple is devoted to him (Ganhar 74). People venerate many *Nags,* including *Vasuki Nag, Mahal, Buddha, Surakh, Takshak, Neela, Maloth, Kali* and *Kera Nag* (Aash 40).

Temples are constructed and stone idols are placed around the springs to provide sanctity and

to perform rituals for worshipping the deities who provide water resources. Many temples are associated with the *Naga* cult and the images of different *Nagas* are seen along with their symbols. Temples are adorned with wood carvings of snakes in many forms. There are natural water springs known as *Nag* in Bhadarwah. A *baoli* in Sungli village features a beautiful black-stoned, moustachioed crocodile hose in the Gandharan style. The stone used in the platform and the walls is very flat, with niches for holding sculptures, including idols of *Brahma*, a combined idol of *Shiva, Brahma* and *Vishnu*, a female goddess and a combined idol of *Vishnu, Narshima* and *Varaha* incarnations, all in the Gandharan style. The picture might have been influenced by the *Naga* culture which remained dominant over the whole region for a long time. The black-coloured granite stone is used in every monument and the structure is also included in the *baoli* and the idols. The largest *baoli* called *Sonbain* or *Suvarnavapi* or the golden tank glacier is always covered by snow throughout the year and is situated on the top hill of Bhadarwah, the *Ashapati* Mountain at an elevation of 7000-8000 feet. This is a chief *baoli* (Kumar and Bhoi 38). This glacier is a source to *Neru*, a tributary of the River *Chenab*. The reference to the mountain is present in the *Mahabharata* as *Ashav Pati,* from where the *Pandavas* procured the *Panch Kalyani* horse for the *Rajasuya Yajna.*

Cultural Performativity :-

In a temple of *Vasuki Nag* at Gatha and of *Sibbi Nag* at Neota, women are prohibited from entering. In mythical accounts, stories of women becoming pregnant by entering such a temple attest to their credulity. Many Tridents and musical wind instruments in the temple, such as *Narsinghas* and *dallab*, represent the *Naga* culture. Several scriptures like Bhadarwah have their own *Purana*- the *Vasuki Purana* which is related to local Geography. Some very different kinds of plants are shaped like hooded snakes, with a tongue emerging from the mouth. The Asiatic species is known as the Cobra lily, and its scientific name is Arisaema. These are locally called *Nagchatris*, *Nagkukkri* and *Nagfan* or snake-hooded.

Grihni or *dlhani* is the shaking of the body, either a particular dance or the extreme worship of the kuldevta, performed by the chief priest, *Chela* or *pujari*. The *Chela* walk barefoot on the heap of hot coals of the bonfire lit the whole night before and proved no harm to the body. In Bhadarwah, on the day of *Makara Sankranti* or *Uttlan*, in all the temples of *Vasuki Nag*, the idols are thickly covered with clarified butter in an elaborate ritual called *Ghaal denu*. Idols are then covered with thick cotton quilts called *Talsee* or *Bugg*. The images remain covered, except for their feet, until *Baisakhi,* thus protecting them from the harsh winters. Preserving hay appears unique to this region and differs from that practised in Kashmir (Bates 130). The art of making a large rick is found in Bhadarwah, unlike in other parts of India or the Himalayas (Drew 104). The haystack is unique to this

region, resembling the *Vimana* of the temple.

Conclusion :-

The idols of *Maharaja Jimootvahan* and *Vasuki Nag* are equally venerated in the temple's sanctum, symbolising their royal status, decorated with jewellery and carved ornaments. *Nag*-shaped tridents, known as *Nag nishani* and musical instruments, such as *narsinghas*, highlight *Naga* culture. A *Shiv Linga* is also worshipped alongside the *Naga* idols. Covering the idols with cotton quilts in winter reflects the community's connection to the rulers and the *Nagas*. Additionally, local cuisine, dress and dance continue to showcase the influence of *Naga* culture. The springs are revered and are called *Nag,* besides which there are temples or the installation of images of gods and goddesses.

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Postmodernist analysis of the event of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose's death

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Abstract :-

Through this paper, it will be argued that a postmodernist approach can be applied to analyse historical developments. The case study of Netaji's death and the varying theories surrounding it will show how a postmodernist perspective of history is important. The paper has looked into the various possible theories of Netaji's death provided by various people and organisations in order to show how the most common dominant narrative of an event might not necessarily be the only narrative.

Keywords : postmodernism, dominant narrative, interpretations, multiple truths, perspectives

Postmodernist analysis of the event of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose's death :-

There can be no single truth when it comes to history writing. This is because one event can have multiple implications and interpretations. German-Swiss philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche had said, "Against [empiricism], which halts [observable] phenomena—'There are only facts'—I would say, no, facts are precisely what there is not, only interpretations. We cannot establish any fact 'in itself': perhaps it is folly to want to do such a thing." He argued that truth is impossible—there can only be perspective and interpretation. That is exactly what postmodernism believes in. It believes in the existence of multiple truths or perspectives. Postmodernism challenges the notion that there is a single objective reality that can be discovered through reason or empirical observation. Instead, it suggests that reality is constructed through language, discourse, and social interactions. This means that different groups or individuals may have different experiences of reality and different ways of interpreting the world around them.

The researcher intends to take the case study of the Indian nationalist leader Subhas Chandra Bose and analyse it from a postmodernist perspective. Postmodernism emphasises the idea that knowledge and truth are socially constructed and shaped by language, culture, and historical context. In the case of Netaji's death, this means that different perspectives on what happened may reflect

different social, cultural, and political interests. In the case of the death of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, several postmodernist theories could be applicable some of which are as follows :

The power and control theory :- This theory suggests that the mystery surrounding Netaji's death may be seen as a symptom of broader social and political issues, such as the concentration of power in the hands of a small elite. According to this theory, the Indian government and other institutions have deliberately withheld or distorted information about Netaji's death in order to maintain their control over the narrative of Indian history.

The deconstruction theory :- This theory seeks to question dominant narratives and assumptions surrounding Netaji's death. According to this theory, there is no objective truth to be discovered about Netaji's death, as different perspectives and interpretations will inevitably lead to different conclusions. From this perspective, the mystery surrounding Netaji's death may be seen as an opportunity for diverse voices and perspectives to be heard.

The cultural memory theory :- This theory suggests that the way in which we remember historical events is shaped by cultural and social factors. According to this theory, the mystery surrounding Netaji's death may be seen as a product of India's cultural memory and the way in which the country has constructed its national identity. From this perspective, the controversy surrounding Netaji's death may reflect broader debates about the meaning and significance of Indian history.

The official account of Netaji's death suggests that he died in a plane crash in 1945, but this account has been contested by various individuals and groups who have put forward alternative theories. These theories are often shaped by specific interests and perspectives, such as nationalist sentiment, political agendas, or personal beliefs. From a postmodernist perspective, the diversity of perspectives on Netaji's death can be seen as reflecting the complex, socially constructed nature of truth and knowledge. Additionally, the controversy surrounding Netaji's death highlights the power dynamics that can shape the construction of historical narratives. Postmodernism emphasises the importance of recognizing how power relations and social hierarchies can shape the way that history is written and remembered. In the case of Netaji's death, this means examining how various actors, such as the Indian government, the British colonial authorities, and other interested parties, have influenced the construction of the dominant narrative surrounding his death.

First, we will be looking at the most commonly known narrative of his death. The bomber in which Netaji was being transported as a guest of Lieutenant General Tsunamasa Shidei of the Imperial Japanese Kwantung Army is said to have crashed upon takeoff from the airport in Taihoku, Japanese-occupied Formosa, now Taipei, Taiwan, on August 18, 1945, causing third-degree burns that led to his death.

Different Versions Of Netaji's Death :-

1.   Killed At Lal Quila (Red Fort) – A Case Of Presumptions And Assumptions :-

Mr. Usha Ranjan Bhattacharjee, a resident of Calcutta, claimed that Netaji was deliberately murdered in the Red Fort in New Delhi on August 15, 1945, three days before the alleged air crash in Taiwan. However, his story was said to be completely baseless and lacked any evidence. Bhattacharjee's theory was likely chosen to make the killing more poignant and dramatic, as the date coincides with India's Independence Day, and the Red Fort was the venue for INA trials held by the British in the aftermath of World War II. There is no evidence to support the idea that Netaji was arrested, flown to India, and then murdered in the Red Fort by the British. Bhattacharjee did not provide any evidence to support his theory, and his book on the subject was really a work of imagination. According to his theory, Netaji was first confined in a cell in the Red Fort, then brought out and shot, after which his body was burnt and the ashes buried in the Red Fort. However, Bhattarcharjee had no proof or documents to support his claims, and ultimately confessed that his story was based on presumption and assumption.

2.   Death Of Subhash Bose In A Holy Man's Avatar In 1977 :-

The second theory claims that he died in Dehradun in 1977 under the guise of a holy man named Shaulmari Baba. The second theory gained popularity when a religious centre called Shaulmari Ashram was established by Sharadanandji or Shaulmari Baba in Falakata, District Cooch Behar in 1959. Initially, people ignored the Ashram, but as its campus expanded, people became curious about the Sadhu's true identity. A rumour started that the Sadhu was actually Netaji in disguise, and this rumour persisted until 1961, when Major Satya Gupta, a former associate of Netaji, met the Sadhu and claimed that he was indeed Netaji. This claim was published in several national newspapers, and notable persons visited the Ashram to confirm the Sadhu's identity.

The issue was also raised in the Indian Parliament, but the question of whether the Sadhu was actually Netaji remained unresolved. The Sadhu eventually moved to Dehradun in 1973 and died there in 1977. The Khosla Commission and the Mukherjee Commission both examined the question of whether the Sadhu was Netaji, but no reliable evidence was found to support the claim. While eight witnesses claimed that the Sadhu was Netaji, three witnesses disputed the claim. Only one document, a letter allegedly written by Netaji and handed over to a Bengali gentleman named Mr. Bikesh Chandra Guha, was produced as evidence, but handwriting experts ruled that the author of the letter was not Netaji. The Mukherjee Commission concluded that there was no reliable evidence to prove that the Sadhu was Netaji and that the question of Bose's death in Dehradun in 1977 did not arise.

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3.   Netaji Survived A Plane Crash In India – With Hitler :-

The third theory discusses the alleged death of Subhash Chandra Bose, which claims that he survived an air crash that occurred in India and not Taiwan. According to this theory, Bose survived the crash along with Hitler and Habib ur Rahman. However, this theory seems baseless as it contradicts the statement of Habib ur Rahman, who claimed to have been with Bose during the crash in Taipei. The theory also suggests that Bose transformed into a Sadhu named Jyotirdev and lived in anonymity in a village in Madhya Pradesh until his death on May 21, 1977.

The commission rejected this theory as it is "patently absurd" and has no supporting evidence. The motivations behind such baseless theories are questioned, whether it is for self-publicity or due to the love and hope for Bose among his followers. However, it is difficult to understand why Bose, a man who strived for freedom and was known as "the springing tiger," would choose to live a reclusive life as a Sadhu.

4.   Escaped From Russia, Re-Invented Himself As Gumnami Baba And Died In Faizabad :-

The Fourth Theory regarding the death of Subhash Chandra Bose, also known as Netaji, has been extensively examined by the Commission. This theory suggests that Netaji escaped to Russia, where he was imprisoned and later escaped to India, where he assumed the identity of Gumnami Baba, also known as Bhagwanji, and eventually died in Faizabad. The Commission gave more attention to this theory as there were 31 witnesses who claimed that Gumnami Baba was indeed Subhash Bose. These witnesses included highly educated individuals and senior journalists who had actually met Netaji during his lifetime.

The witnesses, including family members such as Bose's niece Lalita, testified before the Commission that Gumnami Baba was indeed Netaji. They claimed that after the death of Stalin in March 1953, Netaji escaped from the Soviet Union and lived at various places in Uttar Pradesh. The last known place where he resided was 'Rambhawan' in Faizabad. In September 1985, he left 'Rambhawan' for an unknown destination, leaving behind a large number of household articles including family photos, books, letters, and other documents. These articles were taken into custody by the District Magistrate of Faizabad and kept in the treasury.

Senior journalists investigated the mystery surrounding Gumnami Baba and wrote articles in their respective newspapers, magazines, and books, relying upon the statements made before them by several persons. The Commission found it necessary to visit Faizabad and carefully scrutinise over 2,600 items found at 'Rambhawan'. They determined that about 700 items might be relevant to their investigation and brought them to their office in Kolkata. Handwriting experts examined the writings found in books and journals at 'Rambhawan' by Gumnami Baba and compared them with Netaji's.

Teeth found at 'Rambhawan' were also sent for DNA testing to ascertain whether they belonged to Netaji's lineage.

Apart from these theories, one of the most compelling pieces of evidence supporting the theory that Bose did not die in the plane crash is a series of letters that were allegedly written by him in the years after his supposed death. These letters were sent to Bose's family and supporters and contained detailed accounts of his life in hiding. However, there is no way to confirm the authenticity of these letters, and some experts have suggested that they may have been forged.

Another piece of evidence that supports the theory that Bose did not die in the plane crash is the fact that his body was never officially identified. The Japanese army, who controlled Taiwan at the time, claimed that the body recovered from the crash was Bose's, but there is no concrete evidence to support this claim.

According to the fake death theory, Netaji did not die in the plane crash but instead faked his own death in order to escape the British and live out his life in anonymity. This theory is based on the fact that there have been many reported sightings of Netaji over the years, both in India and abroad.

There is also another theory which suggests that Bose was murdered. Some believe that British intelligence agencies were involved in his death, as they saw him as a threat to their rule in India. Others believe that Bose was killed by the Soviet Union, as he was seen as a rival to Soviet-backed leaders in India. Further, a book by Retired Major Gen. GD Bakshi boldly claimed that the plane crash was just a distraction that the Japanese used to help Netaji escape to Russia. According to him, Netaji was possibly tortured to death in a Siberian gulag – either by the British interrogators or under the orders of Stalin. Another theory exists which says that he was betrayed by Jawaharlal Nehru and Mahatma Gandhi and was jailed in Russia.

In his testimony to both commissions of inquiry, Colonel Habib ur Rahman was unequivocal in stating that Netaji had perished in the plane crash and had been cremated at Taihoku under the direction of the Japanese Army. The purported ashes have lain in this state ever since being transported to Tokyo and kept at the Renukaji temple. Netaji's family, however, is unhappy with the commission's recommendations and the government's response. In a recent RTI response regarding Subhas Chandra Bose's death, the Modi administration once more endorsed the theory that he died in a plane crash. Even though the government had mandated that the Netaji files be declassified, the response was still given. According to reports, Chandra Kumar Bose in particular from one of Netaji's family clans mocked this response.

Despite the numerous investigations into Bose's death, the truth about what really happened may never be known. The various conspiracy theories surrounding Bose's death are a testament to his

enduring legacy and the impact that he had on India's struggle for independence. The death of Subhas Chandra Bose has been the subject of much controversy and speculation over the years. While there is evidence to support various conspiracy theories, the truth about what really happened may never be known. Bose's legacy as a prominent leader in India's freedom struggle remains strong, and his death continues to fascinate and intrigue people around the world. Through the event of his death, we can see how postmodernist analysis of history is highly necessary. Without it, every event would only have a black and white narrative.

"We live in the postmodern world, where everything is possible and almost nothing is certain." – Vaclav Havel. It is through postmodernism that various other less known narratives and perspectives come to light which not only makes historical events more interesting but also leads one to think before believing the most obvious answer. A postmodernist analysis is important for history because it challenges the traditional idea of objective historical truth and emphasises the subjective nature of historical narratives. By acknowledging the subjective nature of historical narratives, postmodernism allows for a more nuanced and inclusive understanding of history. It encourages us to question dominant narratives and consider alternative perspectives, including those that might have been excluded in the past.

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Cultural Ideals of *Pirasthan* : Special Reference to Pir Jahania, Astaranga, Puri, Odisha

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Abstract :-

The human society evolved throughout the ethical norms which has been give consideration to their social culture. When multiple cultures are assimilated and blended together into one, a new society is created that shares cultural principles and unquestionably incorporates their art, architecture, language, literature, way of life, food habits, culture, and tradition. The merger of two cultures, namely Hindu and Muslim, in India has put an end to the discussion over the transition of mediaeval civilization. Odisha, an Indian state known for its temples, experienced cultural amalgamation when Muslims arrived there. The Sufi saints' religious organisation in Odisha held a prominent place in the eyes of the general populace as a way finder, which sparked the development of Pir culture there. Regardless of caste, class, or religion, the shrine of the Sufi saints became the epicentre of spiritual perfection for regular people. These shrines are frequently referred to as *Pirsthan*. One of the *Pirsthan* in Odisha, Pir Jahania is known for its Indo-Islamic cultural beliefs and is a popular tourist site in addition to its natural beauty.

Key words :- *Pir*-Culture, Saint, *Pirsthan*, Indo-Islamic, Religion.

Introduction :-

In both India and Odisha, the general people portray Pir culture as being exceedingly wealthy. Saints of the Pir culture preach their spiritual philosophies and impart profound lessons on the art of living, elucidating principles that elevate our understanding and guide us towards a virtuous existence. A Pir is not bound by religion. He was present for everyone and was particularly well-known among Muslims and Hindus. Pir Jahania is a famous tourist place in Odisha for its cultural fusion and natural beauty of sea beach. *Pir* Jahania is famous with the name of Mukudan Jahania Jahagast a Muslim saint from Iraq. This location is close to the Puri district of Odisha on the Astarang Beach. After Jahania passed away, one of their disciples built what is now known as the Pir Jahania Temple. Here, Jahania

is revered by both Muslims and Hindus through ritual fusions. In the seventeenth century A.D., Mukudan Jahania Jahagast travelled from Baghadad to India with a few of his pupils. Through the neighbouring state of Bengal, he arrived in Odisha. He travelled throughout a lot of Odisha before settling down at Astarang. Muslims and Hindus both perform worship at the shrine. Along the Bay of Bengal coast, where it flows, there is a beautiful picnic area. The well-known shrine of Pir Jahania is located close to the beach. Pir Jahania is neither a temple nor a mosque; it is a *Pirsthan* but it famous as Pir Jahania Temple by government of Odisha. The place where the tomb of *Pir baba* venerated by his disciple or devotees is known as *Pirsthan*. We can identify *Pir Baba* in Odisha as a Sufi Saint. As their ideology, thought and the way to find out the happiness in life were made him more popular among the common people. The history of Odisha is more vibrant with the cultural assimilation from very ancient time.

Pirsthan succeeded in its own way and has a distinctive ultural significance. Both the Hindu and the Islamic cultures were undoubtedly influences on *Pirsthan's* art, architecture, rituals, fairs, festivals, and other aspects of culture.

Pir Jahania-

Each place has a distinct history and mythology. According to the traditional histories of the Pir Jahania Temple, that monument was erected in honour of the Islamic saint Mukudan Jahania Jahagast. He was the nephew of Hazrat Sayed Jalal-ud-din Al Bokari Shah, a revered Muslim saint known as Bukhari Baba who lived in Khordha district during the time of Raja Ramachandradeva II. Saint Jahania resided in the Puri district of Odisha, close to the

seaside town of Astaranga. Mastan Ali Shahu was a renowned follower of Saint Jahania. According to oral histories, Mastan Ali dreamed of seeing Pir Jahania while he was receiving intuition underwater, where the Jahania monument (*Sunya Mandira*) was located. He once travelled by water to a monument located beneath the ocean. He used to ask the sea to clear a passage for him so that he could visit the memorial. He could easily travel to the monument inside the sea because the sea was also clearing a

route for him. His youngest son accompanied him one day on that path to the shore when he was unconscious. He sensed someone's presence behind him after a while. Suddenly, he turned around and noticed his son standing there. He also urged his kid not to turn around while travelling, following the counsel of Saint Jahania. His son likewise went back, but as he was about to arrive at the beach, he turned to look at the monument and noticed that it was sinking into the water, and the path the sea had previously provided had quickly disappeared. Mastan Ali Shahu and other Pir Jahania devotees built a tomb in his honour. His mementos, an umbrella and a wooden shoe, are still there (Khan, 2003). For those indigenous people, he was a deity due to his popularity and philosophy. He gained enormous popularity among the people of Odisha over time. People used to send incense sticks to Pir Jahania in order to be healed of serious illnesses since they believed that he was there to fulfil their wishes.

The Pir Jahania structure that stands now is not the best illustration of Indo-Islamic architecture. since this monument was recently built. According to an in-depth conversation with natives, the shrine was built shortly following saint Jahania's inspiration. The only remaining remnant of the original building is the base of Jahania's tomb. According to A.C. Pradhan, Orissa cannot make the same claims about having the best examples of Muslim architecture as some other regions of India. The underlying factor may be the disregard shown by Islamic leaders to the presence of Islamic missionaries in coastal regions like Orissa.

The rites of Pir Jahania were based on both Muslim and Hindu traditions. People can light candles (*dia*) like in Hinduism, but they must wear a head covering as in Islam, both men and women. While there is no equivalent of a Hindu God or Goddess to worship, people do offer Chadar to the shrine, which was once the saint's tomb. In front of the shrine, we can observe both Hindus and Muslims praying together. Like in Hindu tradition, the worshippers gave the deity food as well. No sense of being touchable or untouchable existed. Devotees accepted food as *Prasad* and were said to believe in communal meals rather than a formal dining system. The shrine's priest was a member of the Islamic faith. Thus, the general public may witness the different important ceremonies of the Islamic faith. The front door is opened at sunrise. Following washing up, the Khadim plays the *Nagara* (drum). The devotee opened the shrine's door and cleaned the interior. All of the doors on Muslim religious structures faced west, whereas the *Pirsthan's* doors faced east. Flowers and treats are placed on the mali and the *Gudia* in preparation for God's worship. The Khadim offers flowers and sandal

paste while also lighting a ghee lamp. *Sirki* is then provided. The drum is also played in the evening, and incense is distributed. Here, *Satya Narayan Pala* is presented. Flowers and chadar are always used to adorn the shrine. A specific Hindu sect performs *pala* in order to fulfil peoples' desires. The peacock feathers that the Pala reciter carries are claimed to represent both Satya Narayan and Satya Pir, who are actually one and the same because Khadim blesses shrine pilgrims with the same peacock feather. Muslims don't sing or support Pala in any way. But according to experts, the Hindu Satya Narayana Puja and the Muslim Satya Pir fundamentally symbolise the same beliefs and ceremonies. (Karim, 2015)

Festivals are an important aspect of civilization that help draw a large crowd to one location. However, on sometimes, these celebrations combine two different civilizations in one area. An open celebration called the Beach Festival takes place in Pir Jahania Astaranga on the seashores of the Bay of Bengal. Astaranga Sea Beach in the Puri district of Odisha offers you an opportunity to reflect in peace and quiet away from the busy city life. The name Asta-Ranga speaks for itself! Together, the words "*Asta*" and "*Ranga*" stand for "colourful sunset." Every year, it takes place in November, the same month as Odisha's "*Karthik Purnima*," a harvest festival. In remembrance of the old maritime trading via Kalinga known as *Boita Bandana*, people commemorate *Kartik Purnima* by worshipping a boat formed of a banana stem and a coconut stick. After the *Boita Bandana* celebration on *Kartik Purnima*, people used to go to the Pir Jahania monument, and starting that day, a beach festival was held in front of the monument. The beaches are used to set up fairs during the beach festival. The most alluring aspect of the event was the exhibition of traditional craft, home furnishings, toys, snack stalls, etc. More than 1500 booths participated in this celebration, which began on the day of *Kartik Purnima* and continued for three days. Numerous worshippers have been drawn to this Jahania temple by this celebration.

Conclusion :-

The Odisha government renamed Pir Jahania as Pir Jahania Temple. It demonstrates that the adoption of Pir culture by the general populace in Odisha has a strong foundation. People are drawn to Pir Jahania because of its customary observance during Odisha's holy month. With the help of the local population and pir culture believers, the region's cultural transparency and principles could become more dynamic.

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Political Instability in Bangladesh : Implications for Bilateral Relations with India

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Abstract :-

Political instability in Bangladesh has had profound implications for its bilateral relations with India, a neighboring nation with deep historical, cultural, and economic ties. Since Bangladesh's independence in 1971, periods of political turmoil, marked by military coups, contested elections, and protests, have shaped its domestic and foreign policy decisions. These upheavals often influence the dynamics of India-Bangladesh relations, creating challenges and opportunities for cooperation in areas such as security, trade, and regional development. This study examines how the ongoing Bangladesh's domestic political instability impacts its bilateral engagements with India. It analyzes key events, such as the shifts in political leadership, the rise of Islamist groups, and their effect on border security, cross-border migration, and the atrocities against Hindus. The research also evaluates India's diplomatic responses to Bangladesh's internal crises, considering New Delhi's strategic interests in maintaining stability in the South Asian region. Additionally, the paper explores how political instability in Bangladesh affects bilateral trade agreements, infrastructure projects, and joint efforts to combat.

Keywords :- Political instability, Bilateral cooperation, Border security, Trade and connectivity, Radicalism, Terrorism.

Introduction :-

Since the August 2024 student-led movement caused Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to resign and flee to India, political instability in Bangladesh has worsened. Since there is no mechanism for interim governance, her departure caused a constitutional crisis under Article 123, which resulted in the formation of a caretaker government led by Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus. Bangladesh's anti-India sentiment has gotten worse since Hasina, a long-time ally of New Delhi, was overthrown and an

interim government was installed that was allegedly softer on Islamist organisations like Jamaat-e-Islami. India's previous open backing of Hasina has suddenly turned into a diplomatic burden. The new government appeals for national unity against what it describes as moves to reinstate Indian hegemony and publicly accuses India of meddling **(Alam, 19 July, 2025).** In terms of strategy, the instability challenges India's long-standing role in the area by creating opportunities for further Chinese and Pakistani influence in Bangladesh through defence and infrastructure involvement. The Yunus government's Islamist rise exacerbates security issues such cross-border terrorism, refugee influx, and conflict over shared river water and border management **(Channan, 2024).** In light of these developments, India must recalibrate its diplomatic strategy—balancing support for democratic processes while protecting its economic and strategic interests. Mitigating instability, safeguarding investments, and preserving regional stability remain key aims amid the evolving political landscape in Bangladesh.

Political Turmoil and Power Transition :-

To demonstrate their might ahead of an anticipated election next year, hundreds of thousands of followers of the biggest Islamist party in Bangladesh gathered in the capital on Saturday. The next election is scheduled for April, according to an interim government led by Muhammad Yunus, a Nobel Peace Prize winner. However, his government did not rule out holding elections in February, as the Bangladesh Nationalist Party and its supporters have vehemently requested. On Saturday, Jamaat-e-Islami, which supported Pakistan during Bangladesh's 1971 independence struggle, had promised to organise one million people. The party made seven demands of the Yunus-led government on Saturday: justice for all mass murders; a free, fair, and peaceful election; necessary reforms; and the declaration and execution of a charter pertaining to the mass revolt of the previous year. Additionally, it calls for the election to be conducted under a proportional representation system **(Alam, 19 July, 2025).**

After weeks of violence that started on July 15, 2024, killed hundreds of people, Nobel calm Prize winner Muhammad Yunus, who was appointed leader of a new interim administration, pledged to run a credible election to return to democracy, implement electoral and constitutional reforms, and bring calm back to the streets. The Yunus-led government has had difficulty containing the uprising's aftermath a year later. Bangladesh is enmeshed in a difficult law-and-order environment, religious polarisation, and increasing political unpredictability. In Bangladesh, there is a great deal of uncertainty regarding the future of democracy. The student demonstrators that overthrew Hasina established a new political party with the pledge to end the dominance of Hasina's Awami League and the Bangladesh Nationalists Party, or BNP, two significant dynastic political parties. Opponents of the party, however, have charged that it is close to the Yunus-led government and uses state institutions to sow disarray in

order to gain political advantage.The largest Islamist party in Bangladesh, Jamaat-e-Islami, has returned to politics more than ten years after Hasina's government crushed it, further dividing the country's political landscape. It is in line with the student-led party and aims to cover for the Awami League, which was outlawed in May. For crimes against humanity, Hasina, its leader, is on trial. It is unknown how strong Jamaat-e-Islami was in its opposition to Bangladesh's 1971 independence from Pakistan.

Nowadays, the BNP and the Jamaat-e-Islami party are fighting for control of the government, the courts, and even college campuses. Additionally, they disagree on when to hold a new legislative election. Although Yunus said that the elections would take place in April of the next year, there is uncertainty due to the bad state of law and order and the absence of a clear political agreement. Yunus objected to the military head of Bangladesh's desire for an election in December of this year. Bangladesh is not an exception to the rule that post-revolution honeymoons are short-lived, according to Michael Kugelman, a senior fellow of the Asia Pacific Foundation and a South Asia specialist based in Washington. There were high expectations placed on the interim administration to bring democracy and prosperity back. However, as an unelected government without a popular mandate, this is particularly challenging **(Alam, 15 July, 2025).**

Erosion of India's Strategic Ally :-

In the areas of infrastructure, economics, and counterterrorism, Hasina had remained close and cooperative with New Delhi. Her departure has cost India its trusted ally in Dhaka. Since the overthrow of the Sheikh Hasina government on August 5, relations between India and Bangladesh have been deteriorating, and they appear to be in a downward spiral at the moment. Not only are official remarks becoming more accusatory, but there is also turbulence that is affecting the lives and livelihoods of regular people.Truckers and dealers have stopped doing business with Bangladesh amid rising indignation over reported mistreatment of Hindus in that country, and Indian hospitals are turning away patients from across the border. Fear-stricken Bangladeshis in India are fleeing home amid reports of border closures. The dispute occurs during a tense period in Bangladesh-Indian ties.

The arrest of Bangladeshi Hindu monk Chinmoy Krishna Das in Chittagong on sedition charges for allegedly disrespecting the country's flag sparked a verbal spat between India and Bangladesh just days before the Agartala event. His arrest sparked protests by BJP and Hindu groups in a number of Indian towns, as well as skirmishes and tensions in Bangladesh **(Ramachandran, 2024).** A rise in anti-India feeling has been developed among political elites as well as grassroots organisations as a result of the language of the interim administration, which frames the issue as an alleged "conspiracy to re-establish Indian hegemony" **(TOI, 2025).**

Economic Disruptions and Commercial Fallout :-

Given the recent political turbulence in Bangladesh, Indian exporters have voiced concerns on the possible effects on bilateral trade relations. The circumstances in the next nation have already resulted in disturbances, particularly impacting the shipment of perishable commodities at the border. Indian exporters, facing payment delays attributed to Bangladesh's foreign exchange deficiency, are concerned that the prevailing political uncertainty may intensify existing difficulties. India's exports to Bangladesh, encompassing cotton, machinery, and food products, have decreased from USD 12.21 billion in 2022-23 to USD 11 billion in 2023-24. Imports from Bangladesh, mostly comprising jute and seafood, have declined from USD 2 billion to USD 1.84 billion within the same timeframe.

Notwithstanding these apprehensions, some individuals maintain a sense of optimism. Ajay Sahai, Director General of the Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO), articulated optimism that the circumstances will stabilise promptly, facilitating uninterrupted trade operations. The Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) emphasised the necessity of safeguarding garment and other manufacturing facilities, along with preserving unobstructed supply routes across the border to preserve economic activity. Ajay Srivastava, founder of GTRI, observed that Bangladesh's economic difficulties had adversely affected bilateral trade in recent years. India, as the foremost trade partner in South Asia, and Bangladesh, as India's second-largest trade partner in Asia, underscore the critical significance of their economic connection for the region's stability. Experts emphasise the necessity of a balanced strategy that takes into account both geopolitical and economic aspects to effectively address the current crisis and sustain economic stability and prosperity **(KNN, 2024).**

Bangladesh limited land-port Indian imports. The National Board of Revenue (NBR) of Bangladesh suspended land-port imports of yarn, rice, paper, tobacco, and milk powder from India. Bangladesh imports 45% of India's cotton yarn exports through land ports. Bangladesh has been India's fastest-growing cotton yarn export market, gaining 25% over the past five years. India exported $1.5 billion cotton and $85 million manufactured fibre in 2024. Political commentators see this Bangladeshi limit as an indication of Chinese influence after interim government adviser Muhammad Yunus's March visit to China, where multiple deals were struck. India recently restricted the land import of Bangladeshi commodities including readymade clothes and processed food in retaliation.

Garments, Bangladesh's main sector, would be allowed through Nhava Sheva and Kolkata ports, according to the Directorate General of Foreign Trade. This recent decision by New Delhi hurts Dhaka because it affects a large percentage of its $700 million garment exports to India. The edict will restrict Bangladesh from exporting to India via land ports, disrupting a supply chain that relied on overland routes for efficiency and affordability. The Indian ready-made garment sector, especially

MSMEs, may profit from restrictions by increasing their competitiveness. The notification also stated that Bangladeshi goods traversing India to Nepal and Bhutan are exempt from the prohibition. Yunus's provocative statements, such as "We are the only guardians of the ocean for all this region" and "Bangladesh could be an extension of the Chinese economy" have exacerbated tensions between the two neighbouring countries, but India has not commented. India's Neighbourhood First Policy guides its relations with neighbours. Thus, maintaining links with Bangladesh is essential. India cannot afford another Pakistan neighbor **(Business India, 2025).**

Conclusion :-

Political instability in Bangladesh has profoundly disturbed India's enduring strategic, economic, and cultural relations with Dhaka. The ousting of a pro-India administration has engendered diplomatic obstacles, economic instabilities, and geopolitical shifts that advantage competitors such as China. India must reassess its "Neighbourhood First" strategy by involving various political entities in Bangladesh, protecting commercial and infrastructure investments, tackling security challenges, and handling communal tensions with diplomatic caution. Achieving bilateral stability necessitates a flexible, multi-faceted strategy that harmonises India's regional objectives with the evolving political dynamics of Bangladesh.

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Health Infrasturcture in Bihar During Colonial Rule : Gaps and Developments

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ABSTRACT :-

This paper attempts to study the evolution of modern public health services in Bihar. It also examines the health-related infrastructure that existed during the colonial period, particularly in the context of epidemic prevention. During that time, Bihar was one of the provinces most vulnerable to various epidemics such as cholera, plague, and kala-azar. Even during the COVID-19 pandemic, the need for a stronger public health infrastructure became evident. Therefore, society requires a robust health system to effectively combat pandemics and ensure public well-being.

In this context, the paper addresses the colonial health infrastructure, as it remains relevant for understanding the historical development of healthcare in the region. It explores whether the colonial-era infrastructure—hospitals, clinics, health officials, and testing laboratories—was adequate for the needs of the population. The colonial authorities were often reluctant to provide sufficient healthcare facilities for the local population, especially when compared to the British enclaves. There was a significant disparity between rural and urban health infrastructure during colonial rule.

This paper focuses particularly on the major towns of present-day Bihar—Patna, Muzaffarpur, Darbhanga, Gaya, and Purnia—within the colonial context.

Keyword :- Bihar, infrastructure, epidemic, colonial, health services, plague, Town

Evolution of Public Health Services in Colonial Bihar :-

The development of public health services in colonial Bihar during the late 19th century can be traced through official reports documenting the classification, establishment, and management of charitable dispensaries. A notable change occurred in the classification of dispensaries between 1887 and 1889. Several dispensaries in Bihar were either reclassified or newly established, reflecting the

dynamic and responsive nature of colonial public health administration.

In 1887, multiple dispensaries were upgraded or transferred into different classes based on their performance and infrastructure. For instance, dispensaries in Jehanabad and Aurungabad, located in Gya district, and Muddelpore, Soogle, Protabgunge, and Barka in Bhagalpore district, were among those reclassified from lower categories to higher ones (e.g., from class II or IIIA to class II or IIIB). This reclassification highlights the British administration's emphasis on expanding and institutionalizing medical care facilities in response to public health needs.

By 1888 and 1889, this pattern of reclassification continued. The Jehanabad dispensary was moved from class IIIA, and new dispensaries like Bussuntpore in Purnea district and Dinapore in Patna district were established, demonstrating efforts to improve healthcare reach across Bihar.

However, alongside these administrative upgrades, challenges persisted. The number of dispensaries in class IIIA showed fluctuations: 74 in 1887, 73 in 1888, and then reduced to 71 by 1889. This decline was attributed to the removal of some institutions from the Government list and closures due to inefficiency or poor performance—e.g., the Chandra, Goberdanga, Shamnaghur, and Kurruchmaria dispensaries.

Despite such setbacks, the establishment of seven new dispensaries across 1887–1889 (including in areas like Halisahar, North Dum-Dum, and Kamarhatty in the 24-Pergunnahs district) reflects ongoing public health efforts.

In Bihar, the progress of public health infrastructure was also visible through institutions like Dupchanchi, Burigunge, and Jaypur (in the Bogra district), whose establishments were sanctioned in 1887, though they did not open immediately. Similarly, six dispensaries were sanctioned in 1889, but delays in operationalization meant returns could not be reported that year.

The report notes the difficulties in obtaining timely returns from certain dispensaries—highlighting administrative inefficiencies. Nonetheless, this period signifies a critical phase in the evolution of structured public health systems in colonial Bihar, with a growing network of dispensaries, albeit unevenly distributed and varying in quality and accessibility.

Patna :-

Patna witnessed a severe cholera outbreak in 1894. Another devastating outbreak occurred in 1905, resulting in the deaths of nearly 8,000 people in the district. In response, the colonial government established several hospitals primarily serving the European enclaves. Patna General Hospital, established in 1867, was one of the oldest institutions providing Western healthcare in Bihar. Bankipur Hospital was founded later, in 1880. However, these hospitals were largely inaccessible to the rural population.

Patna Medical College and Hospital (PMCH) :-

Originally established in 1925 as the Prince of Wales Medical College, PMCH became one of the most prominent healthcare and medical education institutions of the time. Before PMCH, the Temple Medical School in Patna was a significant center for medical education in eastern India. It was founded on June 23, 1874, and its first Academic Superintendent was Surgeon-Major Boys Smith. Hindustani was used as the medium of instruction in Hindustani classes. The government, in coordination with local authorities, Early Arrangements and Structure of Temple Medical School (TMS), Patna.

The government provided essential resources such as accommodation, classrooms, and books to support medical training. Initially, due to a shortage of space, existing structures like the Mission House compound were repurposed for immediate accommodation. A temporary shed was also constructed for dissection work. S. Cotton, the Junior Secretary of the Government of Bengal, sanctioned a sum of ?5,000 to facilitate the necessary arrangements for the school.

Transition from Temple Medical School to Prince of Wales Medical College :-

Efforts were made to transform the Temple Medical School (TMS) into a full-fledged medical college. Initially, the government rejected this proposal, citing concerns over the quality of education and inadequate infrastructure. However, over time, the standard and opportunities at TMS gradually improved. Eventually, it was upgraded to the status of a medical college and renamed **Prince of Wales Medical College (PWMC)**.

Following the establishment of PWMC, the TMS was shifted to **Darbhanga**. The newly formed college began its academic activities with six major subjects :

- **Biology** – Prof. S. S. Choudhury
- **Anatomy** – Prof. H. Hyder Ali Khan
- **Organic Chemistry** – Dr. Bagchi (Chemical Analyst of the Public Health Laboratory)
- **Physiology** – Dr. B. Narain and Dr. Prasad
- **Materia Medica and Pharmacology** – Dr. T. N. Banerjee (Faculty of Pharmacology) and Dr. P. C. Ray (Senior Demonstrator)
- **Pathology** – Junior Assistant S. P. Verma

Barh Dispensary and Public Health Conditions (1887–1889) :-

Public health conditions in **Barh** were poor during the late 1880s. Cholera was notably prevalent in the town during the months of July, August, September, and October in both **1888** and **1889**.

The **Barh Dispensary**, categorized as a Class II dispensary, was managed by the local municipality. It was under the medical charge of **Assistant Surgeon Kali Prosonno Banerjee**.

Patient statistics over three years reflect the growing need for healthcare :

- **1889**: 177 inpatients, 4,397 outpatients
- **1888**: 135 inpatients, 4,300 outpatients
- **1887**: 238 inpatients, 4,250 outpatients

The most common ailments treated included **worm infestations, malarial fevers, and ear diseases**. Noteworthy surgical procedures performed included :

- Three **lens extractions**
- One **hernia reduction**
- Three **leg amputations**

Darbhanga Medical College (DMC) :-

Darbhanga Medical College (DMC), located in Darbhanga, Bihar, India, has a rich history that reflects both colonial influence and local initiative. Though often cited as being established in 1946 under the name **Temple Medical College**, historical records also reference the establishment of a medical institution in **1925**, attributed to the efforts of **Maharaja Sir Kameshwar Singh** of Darbhanga. A prominent ruler and philanthropist, the Maharaja played a key role in founding one of the earliest medical colleges in Bihar.

While the college formally gained its identity post-independence, the vision and planning for a medical college in Darbhanga were shaped during the British colonial period. The British administration faced increasing public health challenges, which led to a growing demand for trained medical professionals across India. These circumstances influenced the push to establish local medical institutions capable of addressing healthcare needs and providing medical education.

Maharaja Kameshwar Singh's initiative aligned with colonial administrative goals: to improve public health services and create a pool of trained Indian medical personnel. His efforts culminated in the foundation of a medical college that mirrored the structure and academic model of British-established institutions.

Initially starting with a small number of students, **Darbhanga Medical College** gradually grew in capacity, reputation, and academic scope. It became a vital institution not only for Bihar but also for neighbouring regions.

In essence, while DMC was officially established during the late colonial or early post-colonial period, its roots and development were deeply influenced by both **colonial public health policy** and **local leadership** committed to improving healthcare and education.

Darbhanga Dispensary :-

The public health situation in Darbhanga in 1889 was fairly good. However, cholera and

diarrhoea were prevalent during the second half of the year. Malaria was also very common. The dispensary was categorized as Class 3A and was managed by the Darbhanga Raj. The Raj took a keen interest in the institution, which was well appreciated by the local population. The most commonly treated ailments included malarial fever, intestinal worms, skin diseases, goitre, rheumatic affections, dyspepsia, and diseases of the eyes and ears.

Madhubani Dispensary :-

In 1889, the public health in Madhubani was not as good as in previous years. Fever and cholera were highly prevalent. The area also suffered significantly from scarcity and high food prices, which likely contributed to declining health among the population. The dispensary, categorized as Class 2, was managed by the municipality. The managing body took interest in the functioning of the institution, which was generally liked by the people. Commonly treated conditions included intestinal worms, malarial fever, skin diseases, goitre, spleen disorders, and dyspepsia.

Tajpur Dispensary :-

The state of public health in Tajpur in 1889 was generally good. The dispensary, classified as Class 3A, was managed by a local committee. However, except for the vice-chairman and the secretary, most committee members took very little interest in the management of the institution. Despite this, the dispensary was highly appreciated by the public and was frequented by patients who came from long distances to seek treatment.

Gaya :-

The public health of the district was generally good in 1889. The Civil Surgeon Gya district reported that in 1888 the public health of the district, except the town of Gya, contrasted favourably with the year 1887, the year in which the general health of the district, exclusive of Gya-town, contrasted unfavourably with that of 1886. There were six dispensaries at work at the ends of each of the past three years. There were treated in all the dispensaries 974 in and 21,405 out patients in 1889, 799 in and 20,393 out in 1888, and 793 in and 18,783 out in 1887. There was a marked increase in the number of in and out patients in 1889 in the Suddur dispensary. The increase in the number of indoor patients was mainly due to a large number of cataract cases, and that in the number of outdoor patients.

The town of **Gaya** suffered from several severe **plague epidemics** in the years **1900–1903**, **1907–1908**, **1911**, and **1917–1918**. Among the notable local practitioners during this period were **Uma Sankar (alias Raja Babu, aged 63)** and **Rama Sankar (aged 60)**, two brothers from a **Bengali Bhattacharya family** who had settled in a part of Gaya town. They practiced **homeopathy** and were later joined in the profession by **Uma Sankar's two sons, Bhabani Sankar and Bijoy Sankar**, as well as **Jnansankar**, the son of Rama Sankar. All of them continued the family tradition of medical

practice in the area.

During the **British colonial era**, Gaya was an important administrative district in Bihar. Like many other regions of British India, it had medical facilities either established or maintained by the **colonial government**. While detailed records about hospitals in Gaya are not as extensive as those for major cities like **Patna** or **Calcutta**, it is clear that the medical infrastructure in the region remained **rudimentary by modern standards**.

The British administration prioritized the construction of hospitals in **administrative and military centres**. As Gaya held administrative significance, it likely housed a **government-run hospital**, referred to at the time as a **District Hospital** or **Civil Hospital**. These institutions were primarily intended to serve **colonial officers and military personnel**, though they also extended limited services to the local Indian population.

In addition, the **Gaya Mission Hospital**, established in **1880**, played a key role in providing medical care to the general population. These facilities were often staffed by **British medical officers**, and the medical practices followed were based on **European medicine**, which itself was still developing at the time.

Aurangabad Dispensary :-

According to the civil surgeon's report, the public health of the locality in 1889 was generally good. The managing body showed genuine interest in the charitable work, which appeared to be well appreciated by the local population. The institution was under the charge of Civil Hospital Assistant Chundra Bhushan Bhattacharjee.

The dispensary saw the following number of patients :

- **1889 :** 62 indoor and 1,002 outdoor patients
- **1888 :** 61 indoor and 1,066 outdoor patients
- **1887 :** 59 indoor and 882 outdoor patients

Most of the indoor patients were pilgrims from upcountry regions en route to Gaya and Puri. The most common illnesses treated were ague (malaria), bowel complaints, rheumatic affections, and ear and skin diseases. Notably, in 1887, the dispensary was maintained through native subscriptions, reflecting community involvement in public health**.**

Tikari Dispensary :-

The public health of the Tikari locality was reported as good in 1889. The dispensary was classified as a Class 2A institution and was maintained by the Tikari Raj. It was managed under the Court of Wards and operated under the supervision of Assistant Surgeon Hera Lal Dutta.

- Patient statistics were as follows :

- 1889 : 81 indoor and 4,116 outdoor patients
- 1888 : 59 indoor and 4,043 outdoor patients
- 1887 : 68 indoor and 3,905 outdoor patients

Common ailments included fever, ear complaints, rheumatic affections, and skin diseases. Impressively, the dispensary maintained an invested capital of Rs. 27,000 at the end of each of the past three years, reflecting substantial financial backing and sustainable management.

Purnia : A Hotspot of Infectious Diseases During the Colonial Era :

The district of Purnia was a major hotspot for various infectious diseases during the colonial period, particularly malaria and kala-azar. Between 1901 and 1907, the death rate due to malaria fever was alarmingly high—32.5 per thousand (O'Malley, L.S.S., *Bengal District Gazetteers: Purnia*, Bengal Secretariat Book Depot, Calcutta, 1911, p.73).

The infrastructure and medical facilities in regions like Purnia were extremely limited. The British colonial administration primarily focused on larger cities or strategically important areas, leaving peripheral regions like Purnia with rudimentary healthcare services. Available health facilities generally took the form of dispensaries or small hospitals, mainly aimed at serving British officials and, to a limited extent, the local population.

Purneah Dispensary : Colonial-Era Medical Relief in Purnia :-

The Purneah Dispensary was classified as a Class 2 institution and managed by the local municipality as a charitable facility. It was primarily used by the poorer sections of society, as middle-class men typically did not seek treatment there. The dispensary provided both indoor and outdoor medical relief and was under the charge of Civil Hospital Assistant Poornanda Das Gupta.

In 1889, the dispensary treated 210 indoor and 3,626 outdoor patients. In the previous year, 1888, it served 140 indoor and 3,782 outdoor patients.

These dispensaries played a crucial role in delivering healthcare to the population of Purnia during colonial times, especially as the district was frequently impacted by epidemics such as kala-azar and cholera. However, they often faced challenges like inadequate funding, limited accessibility, and cultural and linguistic barriers, which hampered their overall effectiveness.

Government became serious after recording high morality in Bihar by various epidemics. And revolt of 1857 pushed British government to deploy more British soldier in India therefore it was crucial for safety of soldiers from infectious disease. Civil hospitals were set up in district headquarters for basic medical services. These facilities were often designed for European officials but later expanded to treat Indian patients.

Bhagalpur, and Munger a significant administrative town during colonial rule, had a civil hospital

that served the surrounding areas. In Munger, railway hospital for railway employees in late 19ᵗʰ century. Other were Munger Sadar hospitals 1868 was established. Jesuit hospitals were from 1665 according to sources.

The expansion of the railway network in Bihar areas. during the late 19th and early 20th centuries necessitated the establishment of railway hospitals to cater to railway employees and their families. For example, railway colonies in Munger, Purnia and other key junctions often had small hospitals or dispensaries.

Conclusion :-

The colonial health services in Bihar were primarily designed to serve British officials, the military, and urban elites, rather than the general Indian population. While the British introduced Western medical practices, established hospitals, and conducted public health campaigns, these efforts were limited in reach and often failed to address the needs of rural communities, where the majority of Bihar's population lived.

The health infrastructure remained inadequate, with poor sanitation, high mortality rates, and frequent outbreaks of diseases like kalazar, cholera, malaria, and plague. Indigenous healthcare systems continued to play a significant role due to the inaccessibility and unaffordability of colonial medical services.

In conclusion, while colonial health services laid the foundation for modern healthcare in Bihar, they largely neglected the well-being of the common people. The focus on European interests, combined with a lack of investment in public health for locals, resulted in persistent health challenges that continued even after independence.

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Contribution of Punyashloka Ahilyabai Holkar in Multidimensional Development of Artisans in the second half of 18th Century in Indore State

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Abstract :-

Punyashloka Ahilyabai Holkar was a prominent ruler of the 18th century of the Indore state. She remains a towering figure in Indian History for her profound contributions to the socio-economic and cultural domains. This paper explores her inspirational leadership in advancing traditional handicrafts preservation and the economic growth of Artisans in Malwa Region. This paper draws attention to how Punyashloka Ahilyabai used inclusive tactics to support underprivileged artisans' communities by looking at historical documents, legislative actions and their long-term effects. Through the establishment of trade hubs, financial assistance, cultural patronage and infrastructure development. She promoted a flourishing environment for traditional crafts like metalworking, weaving and pottery.

Punyashloka Ahilyabai's governance combined cultural preservation with economic advancement going beyond simple economic measures by empowering women artisans. She fostered gender inclusivity and created a network of training facilities to revitalizing the local economy. Her policies helped Malwa's craftsmanship gain international recognition. This study highlights Punyashloka Ahilyabai Holkar's lasting legacy as a patron of the arts, crafts and community welfare through a nuanced analysis. She has established herself as a model of inclusive leadership in pre-modern India and her contributions continue to influence contemporary approaches to sustainable development and cultural preservation.

Keywords :- Artisans, Handicrafts, Hindu, temple, Trade.

Introduction :-

Punyashloka Ahilyabai Holkar (1725–1795) was an early modern pioneering ruler of Malwa. Her rule is widely cited as an example of good and ethical governance. Her progressive policies, especially those that lifted marginalized communities, such as artisans, have brought her acclaim. Significant role of artisans in shaping 18th century socio-economic landscape of India. But the community was repeatedly confronted with systemic disadvantages, from lack of access to markets, raw materials and financial assistance. This paper explores how the leadership of Punyashloka Ahilyabai and her policies addressed these challenges, created an environment conducive to artisans and handicrafts, providing them a sustainable ecosystem.

Geographical Conditions of Malwa :-

Malwa is called the heartland of India. Malwa is a triangular plateau situated in the Vindhyan Hills Region. In terms of height, it is almost flat land. Black loamy soil is found here which is considered very suitable for agriculture. The climate here is suitable for agriculture. There is abundance of rivers and reservoirs in Malwa region. Which originate from the stones of Malwa. The major rivers of Malwa are Narmada, Betwa, Bes, Chandrabhaga, Kshipra and Chambal. These rivers provide water to the Malwa region. Malwa is a plateau region whose land is surround by Vindhyachal and Satpura mountain ranges. Because the land if Malwa is always covered with greenery, it is known by the name "Shabe Malwa". Due to the pleasant and prosperous climate, this area had been a center of cultural activities.

There is an opinion among historians regarding the name of Malwa that 'it was named 'Malwa" due to the arrival of Malav Ganas (480 A.D. – 600A.D.) and their residence there. According to historian Dr. S.K. Dixit 'This region was named Malwa because of the Malwa Kings, because the kingdom of the Maukhari dynasty was established here and lasted till about 600 A.D. Tathagat Buddha and before him Malwa region was part of Avanti district. The word "Malwa" has been mentioned for this particular region in many texts. The word 'Malwa' also indicates fertile land. The word 'Maal' is also used for the land where crops are sown.

Geographical Boundaries of Malwa :-

The course of history has given Malwa unity and rich traditions. The eastern part of Malwa is known as 'Darshana' and the western region is known as 'Avanti'. It includes Chambal River in the north and Narmada River in the south. The political boundaries of Malwa region have been changing with time but the cultural boundaries are determined in this way. Its northern boundary passes through Mukundwara town in the north-west, south of Shivpuri. On eastern border of Malwa, Chanderi, Vidiasha

and Bhopal fall under it. In the west the boundaries are determined by Dahod of Gujrat. To its north, Kanthal and south Bangar and Rath region are parts of Malwa.

Leaving aside the foreground of historical Asirgarh situated in the Narmada valley, the entire area from western Nimar to Hoshangabad (Now- Narmadapuram) comes under Malwa. In the medieval period, Chambal River was situated in the north of Malwa, Narmada River in the south, Gujrat in the west and Bundelkhand and Gondwana states in the east. Presently this entire area is situated in western region of Madhya Pradesh state.

A Brief History of Indore state :-

In the year of 1734, Subedar Malhar Rao Holkar got the fruit of his deep loyalty and spirit of service towards Maratha Peshwa Bajirao (first). In the same year Peshwa Bajirao gave hereditary rights over Malwa to Subedar Malhar Rao Holkar for eternity and gave some parganas to the Holkar family. These parganas included Maheshwar pargana and 9 villages of Indore pargana. The Jagir of these parganas was known as 'Kharasi' Jagir. Indore state is established from that day, when Kharasi Jagir was given.

Subedar Malhar Rao Holkar laid the foundation of Holkar dynasty in Indore of Malwa region. Along with being the founder of the Holkar dynasty, he was also an organizer of state. After the third battle of Panipat, he suppressed the anti-Maratha forces and established peace in the state by strengthening the Maratha Power. The only son of Subedar Malhar Rao Holkar was Khanderao. Khanderao was killed while capturing Kumbher in 1754. After the death of Malhar Rao in 1766, Khanderao's only son Malerao Holkar was declared the heir to the throne of Indore. But soon he also died. These incidents created a political crisis in Indore state.

Amidst these incidents, Khanderao's widow and Malerao's mother Ahilyabai Holkar took the reins of the Indore state in her hands. Subedar Malhar Rao Holkar established the state of Indore and his daughter-in-law strengthened the Malwa state by ruling efficiently for 30 consecutive years. Punyashloka Ahilyabai Holkar was revered and called Lokmata because of her religious works. Punyashloka Ahilyabai Holkar died in the year 1795 at the age of 70. She left her great legacy for future generation to get inspired for social welfare.

Punyashloka Ahilyabai Holkar : A Visionary Leader :-

Princess of Malwa, Maharani Ahilyabai Holkar is an iconic ruler in Indian history. She known for her exemplary leadership, administrative brilliance and dedication to public welfare. Ahilyabai Holkar was born in Chondi, Maharashtra, on May 31, 1725 and later visited to be embodied in the Holkar dynasty of the Malwa kingdom, which stood as a centre of governance, culture and spirituality in the 18th century.

It is said that Ahilyabai's Family was small and poor. Malhar Rao Holkar, who was king of Malwa, saw her promise early on and chose to merry her to his son Khanderao Holkar. Khanderao was killed during the battle of Kumbher in 1754 , though and her life took a sad turn. When Malhar Rao died in 1766, Ahilyabai stepped up to throne and led the Holkar country . From 1767 to 1795, Ahilyabai was king and her rule was marked by good leadership and new policies. She worked on welfare-oriented administration, making sure that justice, openness and acceptance were all upheld. She holds an open court for justice where any one can come and approach her. In Malwa region she was famous for her justice and love to her people.

Cultural and spiritual Legacy :-

Punyashloka Ahilyabai Holkar made unique contributions to art, building and spirituality that have never been matched. She gave money to build and fix up many shrines all over India like Kashi Vishwanath Temple in Varanasi, Somnath temple in Kathiawar, both temples were destroyed by Mahmud Gaznavi. She rebuilt holy temples in Ayodhya when it was under the rule of Nawab of Oudh, Mathura, Kashi Vishwanath temple in Banaras, Allahabad, Ujjain and Gaya.

She was the first rural in India who spotted out an ancient Hindu Worship pilgrimage Called Naimisharanya in Hardoi. At that period Hardoi were the part of Oudh state and ruled by Nawab. Not only were her projects beautiful works of architecture but they also showed how much she cared about preserving India's spiritual and cultural History. She constructed the rode from Calcutta to Gaya (Bihar) to facilitate pilgrimage of eastern India. Not only in plains but she also constructed roads and bridges in Badrinath in Himalayan region with food-giving institutions.

The time of Punyashloka Ahilyabai Holkar is often called a "golden age" in Malwa. Leaders are still inspired by her model of government, which balanced social justice, economic growth and cultural protection. She died on August 13, 1795, but the many changes, social changes and cultural treasures she left behind will live on. The story of Ahilyabai Holkar shows how leadership based on vision, empathy and service can change things. Her story shows how a leader can make society better while also protecting its history and traditions. She carried forwarded Shivaji Maharaj's campaign to promote and propagate Sanatan Dharma.

Economic policies for Artisans :-

The inclusive and progressive economic policies of Punyashloka Ahilyabai Holkar's reign are well known, particularly her encouragement of artisans. She put in place a number of policies that promoted the development and advancement of artisans because she understood their crucial role in the socio-economic structure of her realm. Punyashloka Ahilyabai Holkar understood the importance of traditional crafts to her kingdom's economy and culture. She encouraged regional artisans continue

traditional crafts like weaving, pottery and jewelry in order to support and grow these industries.

Commissioned artwork and craftsmanship for public building, temples and palaces, consistently supporting craftspeople in order to provide artisans with improved trade opportunities. She made investments in the construction of roads, marketplaces and storage facilities. Building markets in cities like Maheshwar, which enable artisans to sell their wares locally and draw traders from nearby areas, was one of the main policies. Building caravanserais and ghats, which made trade and transportation easier, particularly for artisanal goods.

Financial support and skill development of Artisans :-

Punyashloka Ahilyabai put in place rules to help artists with their money problems. She Made loans available to artisans with no or little interest so they can buy materials and tools . That helped a lot to artisans. She also exempted some craft groups from paying to many taxes, so that state levies would not take away from their earing. Training and getting better at things to keep the quality of the work good, she pushed for the training of new artisans. This is new things that we have seen in her time.

Financial support Through Temple Construction :-

Making sure demand by Building temples Punyashloka Ahilyabai's huge temple-building projects kept people in need of a wide range of craft skills. Stoneworkers, artisans, painters and metalworkers had a lot of work to do because of her building projects. Many skilled workers were employed for a king time to do the building and decoration work needed for shrines like the Kashi Vishwanath Temple.

Social Security for Artisans :-

Providing housing and community areas for artisans and their families, Punyashloka Ahilyabai looked at the welfare of artisans as a whole, letting old craftsmen who could no longer work get pensions or cash help. Economic policies that helped artisans leave a legacy of Punyashloka Ahilyabai Holkar's economic strategy made a great environment for artisans, which helped them make a living and kept their crafts alive for future generations.

People can learn from her ideas about how to include local businesses and traditional knowledge in plans for long-term growth. During her rule, these steps not only helped artisans, but they also left a lasting culture and economic legacy, which can be seen in the rich art and craft practice of places like Maheshwar today.

Promotion of Handicrafts and traditional skills :-

For hundreds of years, traditional crafts and skills have been an important part of the social, economic and cultural identities of societies. These hobbies, which are often passed down from one

generation to the next, show how creative, technical and heritage-rich a society is. Promoting these kinds of crafts and skills not only helps keep national identity alive, but it also helps the economy grow, especially in rural and artisanal areas. Throughout history leaders and lawmakers have known how important traditional skills and crafts are. During the stone age, people in places like the Harappan society were very good at making pots, beads and metalwork. Punyashloka Ahilyabai Holkar, helped artisans buy materials and tools by giving them interest-free loans or grants.

Social and cultural Dimensions of Economic Policies for artisans :-

Punyashloka Ahilyabai's policies were rooted in her commitment to societal welfare. By integrating economic development with cultural preservation. She ensured that artisans' skills were not only economically viable but also culturally respected. Her establishment of educational and training centers for artisans fostered skill enhancement and knowledge transfer across generations. Punyashloka Ahilyabai's initiatives resulted in the revitalization of traditional crafts and the economic empowerment of artisan communities. Her emphasis on sustainability ensured that these crafts survived beyond her reign, contributing to the cultural heritage of India.

Promotion of Maheshwari Sarees by Punyashloka Ahilyabai Holkar :-

Punyashloka Ahilyabai Holkar, the visionary queen of the Malwa region, is celebrated for her unparalleled contribution to India's cultural and economic landscape. Among her numerous achievements, the promotion and development of Maheshwari sarees stand out as a testament to her support for traditional crafts and artisans. These sarees, now globally renowned, owe their origins and popularity to her patronage and foresight.

Maheshwari sarees are a distinctive type of handwoven fabric originating from Maheshwar, Madhya Pradesh. Known for their simplicity, elegance, and lightweight texture, these sarees are made using a blend of cotton and silk threads. Her efforts not only preserved a traditional art form but also created a sustainable economic model that uplifted the livelihoods of countless artisans. Punyashloka Ahilyabai's influence extended to the design and aesthetics of Maheshwari sarees.

Weaving artisans of Maheshwari sarees :-

On the banks of sacred Narmada River, lies the regal town of Maheshwar. Endowed with a historical fort where the Holkar clan ruled, pilgrimage which is crowded all year round and lastly, the settlement of traditional weavers of Maheshwari fabric are some of the eclectic fusions which make Maheshwar a more multi-dimensional and admired place to visit in Madhya Pradesh.

Maheshwar is best known for being the hub of handloom weaving since the 5th century, but it gained fame during the rule of the powerful Maratha queen Punyashloka Ahilyabai Holkar (1767-1795). The delicate Maheshwari fabric is woven with silk and cotton yarns, which gives it a soft

texture and makes it a perfect summer textile. It is believed that the age-old weaving setup has a mention in Kautilya's Arthashastra. It is assumed that the very first Maheshwari sari was designed by Punyashloka AhilyaBai. Being a designer herself, in 1760, the queen outsourced talented handloom weavers from Surat and Mandu to work for her empire. They were appointed in order to prepare turban fabric and exclusive nine-yard Nauvari saris which would be worn by the females of Malwa court and used for the gifting purpose to the royal guests.

Well-known for being subtle and rich in quality, Maheshwari saris have always exuded dignity and elegance. Due to the advent of factories, new and inexpensive clothes in the market, gradually the weaving tradition dropped. The revival of Maheshwari saris is credited to the members of the royal family including Richard Holkar and Sally Holkar, son and daughter-in-law of Maharaja Yeshwant Rao Holkar II. In 1979, the couple formed a non-profit organization called Rehwa Society to provide employment to women and revive the centuries-old institution of handwoven Maheshwari saris, dupattas and dress material. The society today comprises approximately 250 weavers and over 1500 looms. Earlier, the Maheshwari saris were made of finest cotton yarns with motifs inspired from the intricacies engraved on the Maheshwar fort and temples.

Protection and Promotion of Artisans :-

Punyashloka Ahilyabai provided protection to artisans and established better workshops for them. During her reign textile weaving, metal crafts, and other handicraft industries were revived. She constructed trade routes and markets, transforming places like Maheshwar and Indore into major hubs for artisans and traders. She made Maheshwar her administrative centre, where special facilities were provided for artisans.

The Maheshwari saree, which is still renowned today, owes its origin to that era. Punyashloka Ahilyabai also gave significant importance to women artisans. She provided them with training and employment to make them economically independent. Additionally, Punyashloka Ahilyabai commissioned the construction of numerous temples, ghats, and other public structures, which created employment opportunities for local artisans.

Evaluation and Concluding Remarks :-

Punyashloka Ahilyabai Holkar has attained the place of a great ruler in Indian history. When we look at the history of Punyashloka Ahilyabai, we should not ignore the incidents that happened to her in personal life. The death of her husband and son during her lifetime must have deeply hurt her as a person. Perhaps for these reasons, she considered the society as her family and the country as her home and decorated it with Hindu culture. Along with this she also developed her Capital Maheshwar as the cultural centre.

Punyashloka Ahilyabai Holkar's contribution towards to artisans is unique. She worked to improve every aspect of the lives of artisans. Punyashloka Ahilyabai Holkar invited artisans from outside the state to her state and provide them financial assistance so that they could start their business. After this, she also made arrangements for skill development of artisans to improve their art skills. She also opened the doors of trade and commerce with other states. Punyashloka Ahilyabai Holkar made every possible effort for the development of the artisans of her state.

She left his mark as a ruler. According to his contemporary Nawab of Hyderabad "There is none, among contemporary rulers to equal the devi. She utilized the vast wealth amassed by the late Subedar Malharjee to the best purpose. She has resigned her person and her purse to the purpose of providence."

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Reimagining Tradition: A Semiotic and Postcolonial Analysis of Myth in Indian Graphic Novels

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Abstract :-

This article examines the significant trend of mythological reimagination within contemporary Indian graphic novels, positioning these works as a critical departure from earlier, reverential retellings. It argues that these graphic novels function as a form of postcolonial counter-discourse, utilizing the hybrid medium of visual-textual narrative to challenge established patriarchal, social, and colonial ideologies. Employing a theoretical framework that integrates semiotics (Barthes), postcolonial theory (Bhabha), and character analysis, the study investigates how artists deconstruct and re-engineer traditional iconography to address modern concerns. Through case studies of key works such as Amruta Patil's *Adi Parva* and *Sauptik*, and Vijayendra Mohanty and Vivek Goel's *Ravanayan*, the analysis demonstrates how familiar symbols and archetypes are imbued with new meanings to explore themes of moral ambiguity, gender identity, and psychological trauma. The findings reveal that mythological figures are transformed from monolithic archetypes into complex, relatable characters, while their narratives are reconfigured to critique contemporary social and political realities. Ultimately, this paper concludes that the engagement with myth in Indian graphic novels is a vital cultural act, reflecting a sophisticated dialogue between past and present that is instrumental in shaping a pluralistic modern Indian identity.

Keywords :- Indian graphic novels, mythology, postcolonialism, semiotics, iconography, counter-discourse, *Mahabharata*, Amruta Patil.

Introduction :-

In the vibrant landscape of contemporary global arts, a powerful trend of "remix culture," the practice of deconstructing and reassembling existing cultural products to create new works, has taken firm root. Within this global movement, the re-emergence of ancient myths in the burgeoning medium of Indian graphic novels represents a particularly potent and culturally specific phenomenon. This

development marks a significant departure from earlier, more didactic forms of Indian comics, such as the popular *Amar Chitra Katha* series, which primarily aimed to transmit traditional tales to a young audience with moralistic reverence. The new wave of Indian graphic novels, by contrast, engages in a far more complex and critical dialogue with the past. This article investigates how contemporary Indian graphic novelists utilize and subvert traditional mythological iconography, the established visual and symbolic system of figures, motifs, and narratives from Hindu epics to navigate the intricate terrain of postcolonial identity. The inherently hybrid nature of the graphic novel, a medium that merges textual narrative with visual rhetoric, offers a unique "contact zone" where traditional symbols can be juxtaposed with modern aesthetics and global artistic influences, fostering a space for profound cultural introspection.

Drawing upon the semiotic theory of Roland Barthes, who posited that modern myths function as a "type of speech" capable of being co-opted to naturalize new ideologies, this study argues that Indian graphic novelists deploy myth as a flexible and powerful framework to dissect pressing contemporary issues, including gender inequality, entrenched social hierarchies, political nationalism, and existential alienation (Barthes 109). Through detailed analysis of key works, including Amruta Patil's feminist epics *Adi Parva* and *Sauptik* and Vijayendra Mohanty and Vivek Goel's revisionist *Ravanayan*, this article will apply a tripartite theoretical lens. A postcolonial framework reveals how these narratives actively challenge and dismantle colonial-era historiographies that often either dismissed or romanticized Indian traditions. A semiotic approach, informed by the work of Barthes and Umberto Eco, will uncover the mechanisms by which artists imbue traditional symbols with new, often subversive, connotative meanings. Finally, character theory illuminates the transformation of monolithic archetypal figures into psychologically complex, morally ambiguous individuals who reflect the anxieties of modern life. The visual-centricity of the medium is paramount in this process. As art theorist Mieke Bal notes, "iconic signs are loaded with prior meaning," a concept especially resonant in the Indian context where visual cues from temple sculpture to calendar art carry immense cultural and emotional weight (13). This article, therefore, explores how these dense visual systems are mobilized not merely to recall myth, but to actively reshape and reclaim it for a contemporary India engaged in the ongoing project of defining its modern identity.

Myth, Iconography, and the Graphic Medium: A Postcolonial Counter-Discourse :-

In the Indian cultural landscape, mythology is not a relic of a distant past but a living, breathing repository of ethical codes, social norms, and historical consciousness. It is a foundational metanarrative that informs the nation's collective visual and conceptual imagination, from the architectural grammar of temples to the dramatic structure of Bollywood cinema and the charged

rhetoric of political rallies. Graphic novels, as a medium, tap directly into this reservoir, translating mythic archetypes and narratives into new visual forms that deftly navigate the space between the sacred and the secular. Traditional Indian art has long relied on a sophisticated system of iconographic codes—a deity's specific posture (*mudra*), chosen weapon (*ayudha*), or skin color—to semiotically convey their identity, attributes, and cosmic function. The serene blue skin of Vishnu, for example, denotes his transcendent, cosmic nature, while the crescent moon adorning Shiva's head signifies his mastery over time and consciousness. Graphic novelists inherit this rich visual literacy but crucially recontextualize these established signs, using them as tools for critical inquiry rather than objects of passive veneration.

Postcolonial theory provides an essential framework for understanding this act of recontextualization as a form of cultural resistance. The colonial period subjected Indian mythic traditions to a dual violence: on one hand, they were often dismissed by British administrators and missionaries as primitive superstitions; on the other, they were appropriated through an Orientalist lens, which, as Edward Said argued, constructed the "Orient" as an exotic, timeless, and irrational "other" to the rational West (Said 4-6). In the postcolonial era, Indian creators have sought to reclaim their narratives from this legacy of misrepresentation. The graphic novel has emerged as a potent site for this counter-discursive practice. As the influential postcolonial theorist Homi K. Bhabha contended, postcolonial identity is often forged in a "third space" of enunciation, a hybrid space where cultural meanings are not fixed but are constantly negotiated (Bhabha 54-56). This hybridity is visually manifest in the artwork of many Indian graphic novels, which might blend the intricate line work of indigenous art forms like Madhubani painting with the dynamic paneling of Japanese manga or the gritty chiaroscuro of American noir comics.

This formal hybridity facilitates a thematic one. The non-linear and multi-modal nature of the graphic novel allows for the seamless juxtaposition of past and present, realism and myth, thereby challenging the linear, progressive model of history imposed by colonial thought. In *Adi Parva*, Amruta Patil's use of fluid, watercolor aesthetics and mandala-like compositions encourages a contemplative, feminist reading of the *Mahabharata* that stands in stark opposition to a straightforward, patriarchal telling. This process exemplifies what scholar W.J.T. Mitchell has termed the "pictorial turn," a broader cultural shift towards recognizing the image not as a mere illustration of text but as a primary site of intellectual and ideological work (13). Furthermore, the unique structure of the graphic novel, as theorized by Scott McCloud in *Understanding Comics*, relies on "closure," the act of the reader mentally filling the narrative gap in the "gutter" between panels (McCloud 66-67). This participatory act invites the reader to become a co-creator of meaning, actively connecting

ancient symbols to modern contexts. Thus, mythological iconography in these works operates simultaneously as a cherished cultural inheritance and a versatile tool for incisive social commentary, challenging the certitudes of the present by offering a revised visual language for the past.

The Myth in Frames: Semiotic Codes and Visual Languages :-

The unique power of myth in Indian graphic novels is derived from the artists' sophisticated manipulation of visual language to create dynamic systems of communication. This section examines how mythological symbols are semiotically re-engineered to convey new and often challenging ideas. At the core of this transformation lies iconography, the visual shorthand through which a character's identity and power are instantly communicated. Vishnu's discus (*chakra*), Shiva's trident (*trishula*), or Ravana's ten heads are all iconic signs that possess both a denotative (literal) meaning and a rich, culturally embedded connotative meaning. As Roland Barthes theorized, myth functions as a "second-order semiological system" where the sign of the first system (e.g., the image of a trident) becomes the signifier for the second system, attaching to it a broader cultural concept (e.g., destructive power, asceticism, divine justice) (115). Graphic novelists skillfully play within this second-order system, altering established signs to guide an audience toward new ideological interpretations.

A clear example is the treatment of Ravana in Mohanty and Goel's *Ravanayan*. In traditional iconography, his ten heads are a signifier whose connotation is monstrosity and unbridled ego. The graphic novel, however, reframes this sign. The artists use the ten heads not to denote a literal monster but as a powerful visual metaphor for Ravana's immense intellect, his internal moral conflicts, and the multifaceted nature of his personality as a scholar, king, and devotee. The signifier (ten heads) is retained, but its connotative meaning is shifted from "evil" to "complexity." This is a deliberate semiotic intervention designed to challenge the reader's preconceived moral judgments. Similarly, in a work like *Parshuram*, the depiction of a divine Vedic weapon, the axe, rendered in a hyper-kinetic, manga-influenced style, transforms it from a symbol of righteous anger into a visual representation of deep-seated psychological trauma that haunts the protagonist in a modern context.

Color functions as another crucial semiotic tool, operating as a "visual rhythm" that guides the reader's emotional and intellectual response. The palettes chosen by artists are rarely arbitrary. The traditional use of blue to connote divinity can be subtly altered; a muted, somber blue might suggest a deity's sorrow or detachment, while a vibrant, electric blue could signify otherworldly power. In the graphic novel *Devi*, which explicitly merges Indian mythology with the American superhero genre, color is used dynamically: warm, earthy tones ground the protagonist in her human life, while explosive, primary colors dominate during her battles as the goddess, creating a clear visual code for her dual identity. The visual grammar of these novels is thus meticulously constructed

to communicate meaning beyond the literal text. As semiotician Umberto Eco noted, deep knowledge of a code enables the anticipation and interpretation of meaning (36). Indian graphic novelists leverage this principle by playing with the audience's expectations, often inverting familiar codes of color, form, and composition to provoke a more profound inquiry into the nature of belief, identity, and power in contemporary India.

Case Studies: Reimagining Mythic Personas and Challenging Morality :-

A closer examination of specific works reveals the depth and diversity of this revisionist project. Amruta Patil's graphic novels, *Adi Parva: Churning of the Ocean* (2012) and its sequel *Sauptik: Blood and Flowers* (2016), stand as exemplary instances of a sophisticated, feminist reimagining of myth. Both works retell episodes from the *Mahabharata* in a manner that consciously disrupts patriarchal authority and linear narrative conventions. In *Adi Parva*, Patil makes the audacious choice to have the river goddess Ganga serve as the primary narrator (*sutradhar*). Her voice, fluid and lyrical, weaves through the epic's events, providing a perspective that is at once intimate and cosmic. Visually, Ganga is often portrayed as an androgynous, elemental force, her form blending into the water and the natural landscape. This depiction elevates her from a marginal figure, often remembered only as a tragic mother to the symbolic, life-giving core of the narrative, fundamentally resisting traditional interpretations that center male heroes. The artwork, a stunning blend of charcoal, collage, and watercolor, mirrors this fluidity, encouraging readers to see the epic not as a fixed history but as a flowing, multi-layered text open to new meanings.

Sauptik shifts to a much darker, more visceral tone, reflecting its focus on the bloody aftermath of the Kurukshetra war. Here, the narrator is the cursed and embittered warrior Ashwatthama, a figure condemned to wander the earth for millennia. Patil uses his tormented voice to explore themes of trauma, grief, and moral ambiguity, positioning him as a potent symbol of modern disillusionment and the inheritor of ancestral violence. The artwork in *Sauptik* is correspondingly chaotic and fragmented. Sacred symbols are depicted as broken or blood-stained, divine figures are rendered with terrifying intensity, and the very panels seem to break down, reflecting Ashwatthama's shattered psychological state. This turns the divine and heroic figures of the epic into politically charged symbols, forcing the reader to confront the brutal human cost of a "righteous" war. Through Ashwatthama, Patil questions the very foundations of dharma and victory, suggesting that the legacies of violence are far more enduring than the glories of heroism.

Other works employ different aesthetic and narrative strategies to explore similar themes of moral ambiguity. Vijayendra Mohanty and Vivek Goel's multi-volume *Ravanayan* (2011–2013) is a powerful example of revisionist myth-making from a subaltern perspective. By retelling the *Ramayana*

from the viewpoint of its primary antagonist, the series undertakes the ambitious task of dismantling one of India's most deeply entrenched moral binaries. The narrative presents Ravana not as a demonic despot but as a charismatic and learned king, a devoted family man, and a tragic figure whose pride leads to his downfall. This humanization challenges readers to reconsider the epic's politics, questioning whether Ravana's actions, while condemnable, were entirely without cause within the context of inter-kingdom rivalries. Visually, the artists depict his kingdom, Lanka, not as a crude lair of demons but as a technologically and culturally advanced civilization, a direct counter to traditional representations. This reframing of the antagonist's world is a classic postcolonial strategy aimed at deconstructing the "us vs. them" logic that often underpins epic narratives.

Conclusion: A New Dialogue with Old Myths :-

The sustained and critical engagement with mythological iconography in contemporary Indian graphic novels signifies a pivotal cultural shift, a move away from passive reverence towards active, and often radical, reinterpretation. By leveraging the unique visual and narrative potential of the graphic medium, creators are forging a new, dynamic visual language to scrutinize and challenge long-held cultural assumptions about gender, justice, and identity. From a postcolonial perspective, these works are vital acts of cultural reclamation and resistance. They seize the narrative authority to retell national epics, not as a means of reviving a monolithic past, but to dissect the complexities of the present. These narratives highlight marginalized figures in mythology, such as women, outcasts and antagonists, and contribute to constructing a more inclusive and critical understanding of national identity.

Mythological figures are reborn in these pages not as static gods or demons, but as complex, relatable characters embodying both timeless archetypes and trenchant modern critiques. The fusion of traditional Indian art forms with global comic book techniques—from manga's kinetic energy to the introspective style of European *bande dessinée*—results in a new visual grammar that is at once distinctly Indian and globally resonant. The myths, in this process, are not merely represented; they are, to use a scientific metaphor, "refracted" through the prism of contemporary realities, their constituent colors separating to reveal a spectrum of previously unseen meanings. Ultimately, this vibrant dialogue between past and present empowers these graphic novels to be more than just aesthetically pleasing artifacts. They are crucial interventions in the ongoing, often contentious, process of defining modern Indian identity, proving that the most powerful way to honor a tradition is not to preserve it in amber, but to engage it in a relentless, transformative conversation.

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From Cotton to Cholera: Economic Expansion and Epidemic Spread through the GIPR Network

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Abstract :-

This article explores the dual role of the Great Indian Peninsular Railway (GIPR) in colonial India from 1848 to 1900 as both a catalyst for economic expansion and a conduit for epidemic disease. While the railway was instrumental in integrating Indian markets and accelerating the export of raw materials, particularly cotton, it also facilitated the rapid spread of diseases such as cholera and plague. Drawing on colonial records, public health reports and secondary literature, this study investigates how a single infrastructure project became both a symbol of modernity and a vector of vulnerability. It argues that the GIPR exemplified the contradictions of colonial development, economic integration hand-in-hand with epidemiological disintegration.

Keywords :- Great Indian Peninsular Railway (GIPR), Cotton trade, Cholera, Colonial India, Public Health.

1. Introduction :-

The construction of the Great Indian Peninsular Railway (GIPR), beginning in 1848 and culminating in an expansive network by 1900, marked a major shift in India's economic and social landscape. The GIPR was the first railway in India, inaugurated in 1853 with the line from Bombay to Thane. It eventually stretched deep into the Deccan and Central India, linking raw material zones with major ports and reshaping patterns of trade, labour and mobility. At the heart of this transformation was the cotton trade. The railway enabled the swift transport of cotton from interior regions like Berar and Nagpur to the port of Bombay, connecting Indian peasants and traders to the global textile economy. Yet even as cotton rode the rails to markets abroad, so many diseases specially cholera and plague travel along these same tracks, laying bare the fragile underpinnings of colonial infrastructural modernity. In this paper investigates the twin dynamics of economic expansion and epidemic spread

through the GIPR network, arguing that its celebrated role in development must be re-evaluated in light of its public health consequences.

2. Historical Context: The Birth of the GIPR :-

The establishment of the GIPR came at a time of both imperial ambition and technological enthusiasm in Britain. The success of railways in Britain and North America spurred the colonial government to replicate the model in India, not only to stimulate trade but also to improve military mobility and political control. The East India Company and later the British Crown worked with private capital through guaranteed return schemes which de-risked investment for British shareholders. The GIPR Company incorporated in 1849, was among the earliest beneficiaries. By 1870 the line had extended to Nagpur and Jabalpur, forming a backbone that connected Bombay with the fertile cotton belts of the Deccan Plateau. Economic motives, especially the export of cotton during the American Civil War (1861–65), strongly influenced the railway's expansion. However, the speed and scale of development often ignored ecological and epidemiological factors oversights that would become tragically evident.

3. Cotton and Commerce: Engines of Colonial Growth :-

3.1 The Cotton Boom :-

The GIPR significantly lowered the cost and time of transporting cotton, especially from the interior regions of Maharashtra and Central India to Bombay. Previously it could take weeks for cotton bales to travel by bullock cart. With the beginning of the GIPR, this was reduced to days, dramatically increasing the volume of exports. During the American Civil War, the blockade of Confederate ports disrupted cotton supplies to British textile mills. Indian cotton particularly from Berar and Gujarat became a strategic substitute. Bombay's cotton exports soared and the city witnessed an economic boom.

3.2 Integration and Exploitation :-

The railway integrated rural regions into a global capitalist economy. However, this integration came at a cost. Subsistence agriculture gave way to cash crop monoculture leaving farmers vulnerable to price fluctuations and famines. The GIPR played a role in this shift by privileging cash crops over food grains in freight operations. As Daniel Thorner and Bipan Chandra have noted, this economic reorganization far from being neutral, was engineered to benefit colonial interests turning railways into extractive tools rather than instruments of equitable development.

4. Disease on the Rails: The Cholera and Plague Connection :-

4.1 Cholera's Railway Ride :-

Cholera long endemic to the Indian subcontinent, became increasingly epidemic in nature

during the railway age. The GIPR was especially implicated in the spread of cholera during religious pilgrimages as thousands of devotees travelled in masses on third-class carriages with minimal sanitation. Railway stations became incubators of infection, with contaminated water sources, poor drainage and overcrowding papulation. But the construction of the railways themselves was no less hazardous. Railway building crews were deployed in some of India's most geographically and climatically challenging terrains. Mountains and deeply incised hilly areas, deserts, extensive jungle tracts and flood-prone river valleys taxed the skills of engineers and the endurance of labourers. Even in the flat Gangetic plain, embankments and elevated tracks had to be constructed to withstand seasonal flooding. The drastic alternation between monsoon and dry seasons created unpredictable working conditions. Great rivers that appeared as harmless streams for half the year would become high-velocity torrents after the rains transforming railway construction into a perilous venture.

4.2   The Plague Epidemic of 1896 :-

The bubonic plague outbreak in Bombay in 1896 exposed the dark underbelly of colonial infrastructure. The disease, likely introduced via maritime trade, rapidly spread inland through railway routes most notably the GIPR. In response the colonial government enacted harsh plague regulations under the Epidemic Diseases Act of 1897. These included mass quarantines, house searches and disinfection protocols measures that sparked widespread fear and resistance among the Indian population. While the GIPR facilitated the quick movement of health officials and medical supplies, it also became the very medium through which the disease proliferated. The paradox was stark the same infrastructure used to enforce health became the pathway of its failure.

4.3   Disease, Labour Camps and Mortality :-

Compounding the engineering difficulty was the medical ignorance that framed the early decades of railway construction. The workers lived and toiled under unsanitary and crowded conditions in tropical agglomerations of labour, often with stagnant water, poor drainage and little access to clean drinking water. Cholera was the most frequent and rapidly acting among mass killers but it wasn't alone. Pneumonia, typhoid, smallpox and kala-azar (blackwater fever) devastated railway labour forces. Malaria start though slower-acting was no less deadly and frequently reached epidemic proportions. Despite these dire circumstances, railway construction moved forward at a staggering pace. By 1861, 1,587 miles of track were operational and another 1,295 were under construction. A decade later these figures had nearly tripled. Over 250,000 workers were involved in railway construction in 1861 alone and by the end of the century more than 10 million workers had laboured under often fatal conditions to build the Indian railway network.

5. Colonial Health Responses and Their Limits :-

Colonial public health responses to railway borne diseases were marked by a combination of scientific ignorance and administrative arrogance. Sanitary Commissioners often lacked reliable data and relied on racialized theories that blamed Indian hygiene rather than infrastructural shortcomings. Efforts to sanitize railway stations, fumigate carriages and regulate passenger movements were often too little. Moreover, colonial health policies disproportionately targeted the Indian poor, whose mobility and economic necessity forced them into unsanitary third-class compartments. Railway hospitals were underfunded and inaccessible to most and the emphasis remained on protecting European personnel and commercial continuity rather than addressing structural health inequalities.

6. The Dual Legacy of the GIPR :-

The GIPR's legacy is thus deeply ambivalent. On one hand, it catalysed economic modernization, linked markets and fostered new urban centers like Nagpur. On the other, it transformed India's epidemiological profile, turning local outbreaks into national crises. The railway's role as both a vector and victim of epidemics underscores the limits of infrastructural modernity under colonial rule. The logic of profit and empire outpaced the logic of care and protection

Conclusion :-

The start of the Great Indian Peninsular Railway is not merely one of steel tracks and economic ambition. It is also a story of disease, displacement and disillusionment. From cotton to cholera, the railway carried more than just goods, it carried the contradictions of colonial rule. In this study highlights the need for a holistic understanding of infrastructure as both a material and social phenomenon. The GIPR did not just build a railway system, it reshaped India's economy and health landscape in enduring and often tragic ways.

Figures :-
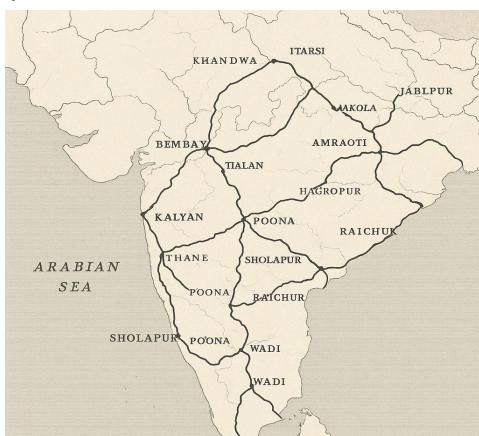
Map. 1

Map. 2
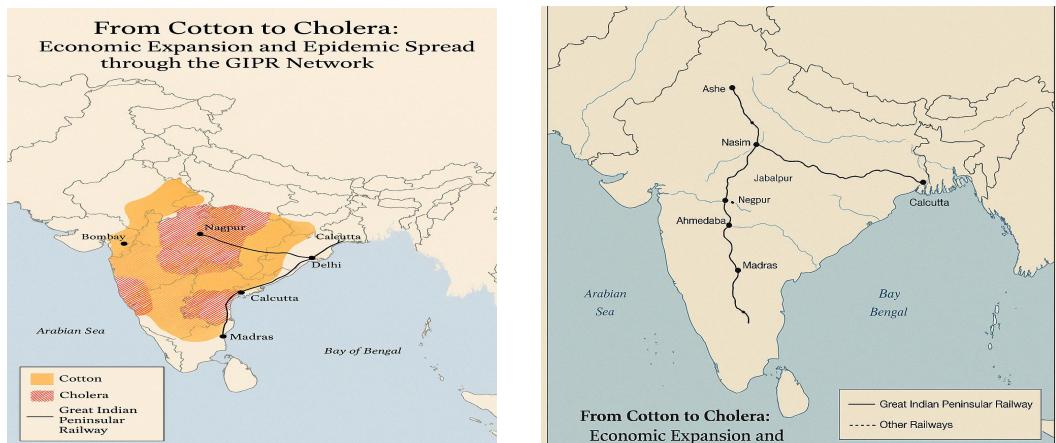
Map. 2

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A Comparative Analysis of Dr B. R. Ambedkar's Critique of Caste and Mahatma Gandhi's Approach to Social Reform

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Abstract :

This paper is about two important people from India's history: Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and Mahatma Gandhi. They both had different ideas about how to deal with the caste system, which has been a big problem in India for a long time. The caste system divides people into different groups and leads to discrimination and unfair treatment.

Dr B.R. Ambedkar, a visionary leader and scholar, offered a scathing analysis of the caste system's oppressive nature, emphasizing the necessity of annihilating caste divisions for social justice. In contrast, Mahatma Gandhi, a revered figure in India's struggle for independence, advocated for a more nuanced approach, seeking to reform the caste system from within while promoting unity and nonviolent resistance.

Dr. Ambedkar believed strongly that the caste system needed to be completely wiped out to make society fairer for everyone. He spoke out against the system's cruelty and wanted to get rid of it entirely. On the other hand, Mahatma Gandhi thought differently, that through peaceful means and bringing people together, the caste system could be reformed without causing too much disruption. This analysis is going to look closely at the ideas of these two leaders and how they wanted to change society. By understanding their different perspectives, we can learn more about how to make India a fairer and more inclusive place for everyone.

Introduction :

The caste system has been a pervasive social issue in India, and both Ambedkar and Gandhi played pivotal roles in the quest for social justice and reform. This analytical study will deepen our

understanding of their ideologies, critically examining their critiques of caste and their distinct approaches to societal transformation. The Indian society was deeply entrenched in the rigid caste system for centuries, perpetuating discrimination, social hierarchy, and oppression. Two prominent leaders who emerged during India's struggle for independence, Dr B.R. Ambedkar and Mahatma Gandhi, had contrasting perspectives on addressing the issue of caste and promoting social reform. The comparative analysis will explore the divergent approaches taken by these leaders in their fight against caste-based discrimination and their visions for a just and inclusive society. The comparative study of Dr B.R. Ambedkar's critique of caste and Mahatma Gandhi's approach to social reform delves into two significant perspectives on addressing the deeply entrenched issue of caste hierarchy in India. Dr B.R. Ambedkar, a visionary leader and scholar, offered a scathing analysis of the caste system's oppressive nature, emphasizing the necessity of annihilating caste divisions for social justice.

In contrast, Mahatma Gandhi, a revered figure in India's struggle for independence, advocated for a more nuanced approach, seeking to reform the caste system from within while promoting unity and nonviolent resistance. This study aims to explore the distinctive viewpoints of these two prominent figures, shedding light on their differing strategies for societal transformation and their lasting impact on modern India. Dr B. R Ambedkar a prolific scholar and social reformer, wrote extensively on the caste system and its impact on Indian society. Some of his major writings on this topic include: The historical context surrounding the "Untouchables," now referred to as Dalits, is a crucial lens through which to understand the complexities of the caste system in India. The origins of this social hierarchy can be traced back to ancient times, where society was divided into varnas, initially based on occupation. Over time, these varnas morphed into a rigid system of social stratification, with the Brahmins at the top and the Dalits at the bottom, subjected to extreme marginalization and discrimination. The question of why the Dalits became "Untouchables" is deeply rooted in religious, social, and economic factors. *(The Untouchables: Who Were They and Why They Became Untouchables?).*

Sudras, who were traditionally considered the lowest caste in the Hindu caste system, varied over time and across different regions. Many Sudras experienced discrimination and social exclusion due to their lower status. Some accepted their position as a part of the social order, while others sought to challenge and change the caste system. Over the years, social and political movements have emerged to address caste-based inequalities and advocate for the rights of marginalized groups, including Sudras. Keep in mind that these views are complex and can't be generalized for all Sudras throughout history. **(*Who were the Sudras*)**

In **"**Annihilation of Caste," Ambedkar challenges the traditional Hindu caste hierarchy by exposing its oppressive nature and the injustices it inflicts upon the marginalized sections of society.

He argues that caste divisions have led to a hierarchical social structure where a few upper castes dominate and exploit the lower castes, particularly the Dalits, relegating them to a life of indignity and suffering. Annihilation of Caste" encapsulates Ambedkar's belief that true social reform cannot be achieved without addressing the root causes of castebased discrimination and dismantling the structures that uphold it. (***Annihilation of Caste" 1936***):

A scholarly essay written by Dr B.R. Ambedkar in 1916, during his postgraduate studies at the London School of Economics. This essay provides a comprehensive analysis of the caste system in India, exploring its origins, evolution, and the mechanisms that sustain it. In this essay, Ambedkar delves deep into the historical and sociological aspects of caste, arguing that it is not merely a religious division but a complex social structure that has deep-rooted implications for India's social fabric (***Caste in India:* Their Mechanism, Genesis, and Development" 1916)**

Dr B.R. Ambedkar presents a critical examination of various aspects of Hinduism, including its scriptures, practices, and social norms. While this work does touch upon the caste system indirectly, its primary focus is on raising questions about contradictions and inconsistencies within Hindu religious texts and traditions. Ambedkar's views on the caste system are intertwined with his critique of Hinduism's treatment of the lower castes. (***Riddles in Hinduism" 1956***)

"Mahatma Gandhi", another significant figure in the Indian freedom struggle and social reform, also wrote extensively on the issue of caste. Gandhi's reflections on the caste system offer insight into his vision for a transformed Indian society. His views on caste reflect his broader philosophy of nonviolent resistance, self-reliance, and a return to traditional values. He acknowledges the deeply entrenched nature of the caste system in Indian society but believes that it should be reformed from within rather than completely abolished. He advocates for a more harmonious and equal interpretation of the caste system, emphasizing the principle of mutual respect and cooperation among different castes. His approach to caste contrasts with Dr B.R. Ambedkar's call for the complete annihilation of the caste system. Gandhi believes that caste can have a positive role if it is redefined as a division of labour based on aptitude and not birth. He envisions a society where each caste is valued for its unique contribution and where there is no exploitation or discrimination. (***Hind* Swaraj" 1909)**

Young India" was a weekly journal published by Mahatma Gandhi from 1919 to 1932, and it served as a platform for him to share his views on various social, political, and cultural issues, including the caste system. Gandhi's views on the caste system evolved over time, and "Young India" reflects this evolution. In the early years of the journal, Gandhi expressed his concern about the social divisions perpetuated by the caste system. Throughout the publication of "Young India," Gandhi consistently

emphasized the need for social reform to eliminate untouchability and to promote harmony among different castes. (*Young India" 1921-1931*).

Literature review :

Gary Michael Tartakov : There is no segment of India's population as important, or still as ignored by outsiders, as its Untouchables, the people who have recently moved to identify themselves as Dalits. Even as we proceed in reevaluating the imperial viewpoints of our Orientalist heritage, few, I think, realize the degree to which the contemporary western view of South Asia is permeated by a Sanskritization that incorporates elite caste prejudices. And yet, we know we need to understand better what the graded discrimination of caste hierarchy and untouchability has meant, and continues to mean.

Susan Bayly : The phenomenon of caste has probably aroused more controversy than any other aspect of Indian life and thought. Some scholars see India's caste system as the defining feature of Indian culture, although it is dismissed by others as a colonial artefact. Susan Bayly's cogent and sophisticated analysis explores the emergence of the ideas, experiences and practices which gave rise to so-called' caste society' over a period of 350 years, from the pre-colonial period to the end of the twentieth century.

Arundhati Roy : The little-known story of Gandhi's reluctance to challenge the caste system, and the man who fought fiercely for India's downtrodden. Democracy hasn't eradicated caste, argues bestselling author and Booker Prize–winner Arundhati Roy—it has entrenched and modernized it. To understand caste today in India, Roy insists we must examine the influence of Gandhi in shaping what India ultimately became: independent of British rule, globally powerful, and marked to this day by the caste system. Roy states that for more than a half century, Gandhi's pronouncements on the inherent qualities of black Africans, Dalit "untouchables," and the labouring classes remained consistently insulting, and he also refused to allow lower castes to create their own political organizations and elect their own representatives.

Nishikant Kolge : In 1909, while still in South Africa, Gandhi publicly decried the caste system for its inequalities. Shortly after his return to India though, he spoke of the generally beneficial aspects of caste. Gandhi's writings on caste reflect contradictory views and his critics accuse him of neglecting the unequal socioeconomic structure that relegated Dalits to the bottom of the caste hierarchy. So, did Gandhi endorse the fourfold division of the Indian society or was he truly against caste? In this book, Nishikant Kolge investigates the entire range of what Gandhi said or wrote about caste divisions over a period of more than three decades: from his return to India in 1915 to his death in 1948. Interestingly, Kolge also maps Gandhi's own statements that undermined his stance against

the caste system.

Bal Ram Nanda : The book explores the evolution of Gandhi's ideas, his attitudes toward religion, the racial problem, the caste system, his conflict with the British, his approach to Muslim separatism and the division of India, his attitude toward social and economic change, his doctrine of nonviolence, and other key issues.

NS Gehlot : Dr BR Ambedkar, the leader of the depressed classes of his time (1891-1 956) should be viewed as a social scientist, reformist, thinker, writer, statesman and a constitutional authority. He is known as the messiah of the social revolution against all kinds of oppressive and discriminative practices prevailing in our social structure. He was vehemently opposed to the caste system and the practice of untouchability as propounded by the Hindu religion. To do away with these social evils Dr Ambedkar evolved a theory of safeguards and protections for the backward classes and weaker sections of society for the cause of social justice and equality.

Suhas Palshikar : Gandhian and Ambedkarian discourses are not antithetical. Both are concerned with the issue of emancipation. At present when the legitimacy of theemancipatory discourse is being challenged, and the dominant discourse upholds capitalism, it is all the more essential to broaden the scope of Gandhian and Ambedkarian discourses.

Awanish Kumar : Ambedkar identified the land monopoly of caste Hindus in village society as the material basis of the caste system. The land question for Dalits is concerned with human dignity, with freedom from bondage and caste-based exploitation in village society. Ambedkar was critical of mainstream land reforms discourse for its disregard of the interests of the mass of landless Dalits, and its focus on the creation of peasant proprietors, which, he argued, was counterproductive for the agricultural development of India.

Christopher S Queen : Outside of India, Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar remains virtually unknown. Everyone knows that Mahatma Gandhi led the fight for Indian independence and that his nonviolent marches inspired Dr King and the American civil rights movement. Most educated men and women have heard of Nehru and some of the political and literary figures that India has produced in modern times.

Methodology :

The paper is based on analysis and synthesis of diverse sources. Primary sources consisted of case study, questionnaire, observation will use for collecting requisite information. The study will rely on using traditional sources such as journals, Speeches, newspapers, in an attempt at teasing out ideas that speak to the ideological differences between Ambedkar and Gandhi on reform in caste system.

The secondary sources of the fields work will be original research (journal article books), writing of Ambedkar and Gandhi, data entries, letter artifacts, audio and video broadcasts, eyewitness account or interviews, legal documents, public records. These sources are germane to gaining an understanding of broader issues pertaining to discourse of difference in ideology for the reform in caste system.

Discussion :

After scanning the various past researches and works of B.R Ambedkar and Mahatma Gandhi on ideological differences on reform in the caste system. This comparative study will ensure the fundamental differences in perspective of both great thinkers. It is believed that the outcomes of the study will contribute to the historians to study the unknown facts and information which is hidden till now and it will also help in development of different studies and programme for the betterment of understanding the ideological differences.

Conclusion :

In conclusion, the comparative analysis of Dr B.R. Ambedkar and Mahatma Gandhi's perspectives on caste and social reform provides valuable insights into the complexities of India's social fabric. Through their writings and actions, both leaders illuminated contrasting paths toward addressing the deep-rooted issues of caste discrimination and societal transformation. Dr. Ambedkar's relentless critique of the caste system underscored the urgent need for radical change. His call for the annihilation of caste divisions resonated with the marginalized sections of society, highlighting the pervasive injustices perpetuated by the hierarchical structure. In contrast, Mahatma Gandhi's approach emphasized reform from within, advocating for harmony and cooperation among different castes. While acknowledging the entrenched nature of the caste system, Gandhi proposed a more gradual and inclusive path toward social equality, rooted in nonviolence and mutual respect. By drawing lessons from the legacies of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and Mahatma Gandhi, we can strive towards building a more just and inclusive society, where every individual is afforded dignity, equality, and opportunity, regardless of caste or background.

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A Comparative Legal Analysis of the Consumer Protection Act and Its Progressive Amendments in India : Doctrinal Shifts and Contemporary Implications

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Abstract :-

This paper undertakes a doctrinal and policy-oriented comparative analysis of India's Consumer Protection legislation, tracing the statutory evolution from the Consumer Protection Act, 1986 to the substantially revised Consumer Protection Act, 2019. It examines how successive amendments have responded to evolving market structures, digital transformation, and consumer vulnerabilities. The study critically evaluates the jurisprudential and institutional innovations embedded in the 2019 Act, such as the establishment of the Central Consumer Protection Authority, codification of product liability, and the regulation of e-commerce. While acknowledging these reforms as progressive, the paper identifies enduring implementation challenges and provides normative recommendations for improving regulatory efficacy, adjudicatory efficiency, and consumer legal consciousness.

1. Introduction :-

"Most important visitor in our premises is a consumer. Consumer is not dependent on us but we the (seller) have to depend on him. He does not interfere in our work but he is the purpose of our business without the consumer, seller cannot survive. A favour is not given by the seller to the consumer by giving him an opportunity to purchase rather he is doing us a favour by giving an opportunity to serve him"- **Mahatma Gandhi**

Consumer protection constitutes an essential facet of economic governance, reflecting the state's obligation to ensure fairness, transparency, and accountability within market transactions. In India, the legislative framework governing consumer rights has evolved incrementally in response to industrial liberalization, technological advancement, and the diversification of market practices. The Consumer Protection Act, 1986 marked the inception of a rights-based approach to consumer

jurisprudence. However, the emergence of digital commerce, cross-border transactions, and complex supply chains necessitated a more comprehensive regulatory framework, resulting in the enactment of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019. This paper seeks to comparatively analyse the original legislation and its subsequent amendments, with a focus on doctrinal developments, structural reforms, and the shifting regulatory paradigm.

2. The Consumer Protection Act, 1986 : Genesis and Doctrinal Limits :-

2.1 Statutory Objectives and Framework :-

The 1986 legislation aimed to protect consumer interests through the recognition of specific rights and the establishment of accessible quasi-judicial bodies. It introduced the three-tier system of Consumer Disputes Redressal Commissions at the district, state, and national levels. The Act was premised on the ideals of affordability and speedy justice.

2.2 Jurisprudential Contributions :-

The Act expanded the contours of public interest litigation and introduced consumer standing. Seminal judgments, such as Indian Medical Association v. V.P. Shantha (1995), extended the ambit of the term "service" to include medical treatment, thereby embedding consumer protection within the broader constitutional ethos of access to justice. There were many other cases which expanded the arena of protection of rights of consumer.

2.3 Structural and Normative Limitations :-

Despite its progressive intent, the 1986 Act was increasingly seen as inadequate in addressing contemporary market realities. It failed to anticipate issues arising from digital transactions, lacked a central enforcement agency, and imposed minimal penalties, thereby limiting its deterrent value. Procedural inefficiencies and infrastructural constraints further undermined the adjudicatory framework.

3. The Consumer Protection Act, 2019: Regulatory Modernization and Expanded Scope:-

3.1 Legislative Rationale :-

The 2019 Act was promulgated to realign consumer law with the digital economy, ensure greater accountability, and empower consumers in technologically mediated marketplaces. It significantly redefined the statutory and regulatory landscape of consumer protection in India.

3.2 Key Legislative Innovations :-

• **Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) :** A dedicated regulatory authority empowered to initiate investigations, enforce compliance, and undertake class action proceedings.

• **Product Liability Regime :** For the first time, a comprehensive liability framework was

introduced, imposing strict liability on manufacturers, service providers, and sellers.

• **E-Commerce Regulation :** Explicit inclusion of online platforms within the statutory framework, along with disclosure obligations, grievance mechanisms, and prohibition of unfair trade practices.

• **Endorsement and Advertisement Oversight :** Provisions to penalize misleading advertisements, including liability for endorsers and influencers.

• **Alternate Dispute Resolution :** Introduction of mediation cells as a means of promoting consensual, cost-effective dispute resolution.

• **Digital Access to Justice :** Provisions enabling electronic filing of complaints and virtual hearings, thereby enhancing procedural accessibility.

4.   **Comparative Doctrinal Analysis :-**

Doctrinal/Regulatory Element	**Consumer Protection Act, 1986**	**Consumer Protection Act, 2019**
Regulatory Authority	Absent	Statutory establishment of CCPA
Product Liability	Implicit and fragmented	Codified, with clear definitions and strict liability
E-Commerce	Not contemplated	Explicitly regulated
Dispute Resolution	Forum-based, litigation-centric	Includes ADR through mediation
Misleading Advertisements	Minimal enforcement	Defined provisions with civil penalties
Procedural Access	Physical filings only	E-filing and remote adjudication enabled
Penalties and Sanctions	Nominal	Substantially enhanced with deterrent effect

4.1   Changes made by the CPA 2019 :-

Definition and meaning of the consumer is expend by the New consumer act 2019, Now consumer include a person who purchase product or avail services by the any method it can be online

or offline ways or via „electronic means or by teleshopping or multi level marketing

1.   The CPA 2019 provides a new mechanism for the redressal of complaint regarding any fault or defect in the product or any deficiency in services by the seller, or manufacturer.

2.   Under the new act at all the level redressal commission is set up for adjudicating consumer complaint with the increase of pecuniary jurisdiction up to Rs 1 crore to 10 crore and above Rs 10 crore.

3.   Complaint by the aggrieved party can be filled electronically and from the place where consumer reside, carry on business, or personally work for gain.

4.   Commission set up under the new act has power to declare unfair term of the contract as null and void.

5.   By the new act the term unfair contract? is defined. It means a contract is unfair which significantly change the right of the consumer adversely.

6.   Under the new act for the disposal of the complaint time period is prescribed or defined, now complaint is disposed of within three months if no analysis or testing is mandatory in the complaint but if analysis is required in such a case time required to dispose of the complaint is five months.

7.   Under the New CPA 2019 central consumer protection authority (CCPA) is set up to safe or protect the consumers rights as a class. It has power to order safety notice for all the dangerous articles, order refunds of money to check the goods again and rule against advertisements of misleading nature.

Earlier there was provision that, complaint can be filled in the court where seller or service provider were resided or located. But now under the new act of 2019 big relief is provided to the consumer as consumer can lodge complaint with the court from anywhere he or she reside. It is the need of the hour as in the era of ecommerce; seller can be residing in the state. Under the new act, hearing via video conferencing can be done by which lot of time of the court as well as of both the party can be saved.

5.   Impact of the 2019 Legislative Reforms :-

5.1   Enhanced Regulatory Enforcement :-

The establishment of the CCPA marks a shift from passive adjudication to active regulation. It enables market surveillance, enforcement of compliance orders, and initiation of class action suits—addressing systemic malpractices rather than isolated grievances.

5.2   Consumer Empowerment in Digital Commerce :-

The recognition of digital consumers and e-commerce entities within the statutory definition

ensures greater transparency and consumer choice. However, the effective enforcement of these provisions remains uneven across jurisdictions.

5.3   Integration of Technology in Dispute Resolution :-

The institutionalization of digital filing and mediation represents a paradigm shift toward efficiency and inclusion. Nevertheless, technological disparities between urban and rural jurisdictions impede uniform access.

6.   Persistent Challenges and Systemic Constraints :-

6.1   Structural Bottlenecks :-

Consumer redressal commissions, despite statutory support, remain under-resourced. Delays in appointments, inadequate infrastructure, and procedural inefficiencies continue to plague the system.

6.2   Limited Legal Consciousness :-

Despite the enhanced legislative framework, public awareness of consumer rights and available legal remedies remains suboptimal, particularly among marginalized and rural populations.

6.3   Enforcement Ambiguities :-

The overlapping jurisdiction of sectoral regulators and the CCPA occasionally leads to regulatory fragmentation. Moreover, cross-border e-commerce transactions present complex issues of extraterritoriality and jurisdictional conflict.

7.   Judicial Engagement and Policy Developments :-

Judicial pronouncements post-2019 have reaffirmed the progressive interpretation of the new provisions. The judiciary has emphasized the enforceability of product liability claims and upheld the binding nature of mediation settlements. Concurrently, the Consumer Protection (E-Commerce) Rules, 2020, issued under the 2019 Act, seek to operationalize statutory obligations by prescribing compliance mechanisms for online marketplaces.

8.   Policy Recommendations :-

- **Institutional Strengthening :** Enhance the capacity of consumer forums through regular training, digital infrastructure, and increased financial support.

- **Awareness Initiatives :** State and central governments should collaborate on multilingual legal literacy programs targeting vulnerable and digitally excluded populations.

- **Cross-Border Redressal Mechanisms :** Engage in bilateral and multilateral legal frameworks to safeguard consumer interests in transnational digital commerce.

- **Regulatory Synergy :** Establish formal protocols for cooperation between the CCPA and sector-specific regulators to ensure coherence and avoid duplication.

- **Data-Driven Regulation :** Utilize AI and big data analytics for market surveillance, detection

of deceptive practices, and real-time consumer feedback integration.

9. Conclusion :-

The evolution of consumer protection law in India, culminating in the enactment of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019, signifies a decisive shift toward regulatory sophistication and consumer-centric governance. The new framework substantially enhances legal remedies, institutional capacity, and market accountability. Nevertheless, the realization of its transformative potential hinges on effective enforcement, institutional coordination, and widespread public engagement. As India continues to integrate into the global digital economy, the imperative for a responsive, inclusive, and adaptive consumer protection regime becomes ever more pressing.

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The Representation of Migration and Identity in the Poetry of Meena Alexander and Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni

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Abstract :-

Through its stories, history has repeatedly demonstrated the intricate nature of migration. Although migrants initially struggle with language, identities, social norms, and values, they eventually develop their own linguistic and social identities by adjusting to the new social environment. Meena Alexander and Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, two well-known contemporary Indian English poets, are among the many contemporary poets whose works profoundly address the themes of migration and identity. This study looks at the intricate connection between identity and migration as it is expressed in the poetry of Meena Alexander and Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni. This essay examines their poetry to demonstrate how they address themes of identity exploration and displacement. The study analyzes how selected poems describe the emotional and psychological components of migration, offering an extensive understanding of how identity is generated and remade in diasporic contexts. The analysis emphasizes Alexander and Banerjee's thematic and stylistic approaches for conveying the various experiences of migration, adding to broader conversations about the junction of literature, identity, and transnationalism.

Keywords :- Migration, Identity, contemporary poetry, cultural memory.

The process of migration is not linear; rather, it takes place within numerous kinds of settings. Many stories of migration originate in the complicated and frequently unstable "in between" locations where people balance their previous lives and new realities. These narratives, which examine displacement and adaptation extensively, are excellent for thorough geographical and multidisciplinary analysis. Such investigations can provide richer insights into migrants' experiences, such as how

individuals navigate social, cultural, and physical landscapes during their trips and settlements. These studies can offer deeper understandings of the lives of migrants, including as people's methods for navigating physical, social, and cultural environments when traveling and settling. As they adjust to expectations and behaviors that are very different from those in their home country, migrants often develop a keen awareness of the social and contextual aspects of gender. According to narrative theory's "Identity," individuals construct their own identities. By fusing their disparate and contradictory life experiences into a continuous yet ongoing story that gives them a sense of coherence over their significant path.

As migrants transition from one society to another, their self-representations change more or less subtly. But for women and non-heterosexual people, migration usually results in abrupt and profound changes that profoundly alter the most personal aspects of people's lives: emotions, social interaction and self-representation techniques, and the capacity to envision and design their own life paths. The concept of identity is becoming more and more important in the contemporary social and human sciences. Since the 1980s, a great deal of research has been done on how meanings, expectations, and conflicts relate to the various locationalities of people and groups; how people use one or more aspects of their identities to represent themselves; how these aspects can be categorized; and how multiple identities are combined and negotiated when they conflict.

Identity, according to T. Linhard and T. H. Parsons, is a collection of ideas that characterize and Determine a person's place in a particular culture. A person's identity may be based on their race, ethnicity, Language, sexual orientation, gender, class, culture, religion, and other distinguishing factors traits, but there are other factors as well. Alternatively put, identities are not like hats. Which has multiple wearables. They can also be enforced by others, which often results in significant damage. Given the current situation, "migrants" and "refugees" are vulnerable to distinct legal statuses and treatment in their host nations. But the intricacies of Their lives transcend these concepts and their meanings, a circumstance that has persisted for a long time.

It should be noted that the term "Identity" has been used primarily in the singular, but it refers to a lifelong process of negotiation that, in the case of migrants, becomes especially evident and crucial, and at times a matter of life and death. Particularly for migrants, identities are fragmented and contradictory conceptions rather than merely a combination of multiple countries or ethnicities.

According to descriptions that result from a complex interplay between the narratives migrants tell themselves and those others tell about them, identities usually take on narrative shape. Identities in these stories are inseparable from place and time. As Murat Aydemir and Alex Rotas have explained, a "thickened" area during migration becomes a space filled with a variety of memories, thoughts,

dreams, fantasies, nightmares, expectations, and idealizations. Through the experiences of both native-born people and migrants, these factors interplay.

Meena Alexander is a well-known author, poet, and critic. She is a writer from the South Asian American diaspora the wife of South Asian scholar David Lelyveld. She was born in Allahabad, India, on February 17, 1951. When she was four or five years old, her family was forced to move from Allahabad and Kerala to Sudan because her father was a scientist for the Indian government, which was then independent. She received honors from Khartoum University in 1969. Nottingham University awarded her a Ph.D. in English with a focus on Romantic Literature. She went back to India, where she was born. She was a professor at universities in Hyderabad and Delhi. Alexander traveled to New York City after departing India. She joined Fordham University as an assistant professor. Her literary works include The Bird's Bright Ring (1976), I Root My Name (1977), Without Place (1978), House of a Thousand Doors (1988), The Storm (1989), Night-Scene, The Garden (1989), River and Bridge (1996), among others. Her works explore the idea of home, dislocation, and the search for identity. Her poetry's recurring themes include migration and boundaries. It raises a question about identity. Maxine Hong Kingston has remarked: "Meena Alexander sings of countries, foreign and familiar, places where the heart and spirit live, and places for which one needs a passport and visas. Her voice guides us far away and back home. The reader sees visions and remembers and is uplifted."

Alexander's experiences with multiple migrations lead her to a quest for identity and selfhood. Her poetry reflects a blend of native and foreign influences, exploring themes of home and personal identity. Her work is deeply rooted in the struggle between leaving her native background and striving to create a new sense of belonging and identity through her writing. Her path is a fragmented exploration of existence, brimming with questions of life and hope which she reflects through one of her poem "Fragments":

I begin to compose fragments,

Addressing both myself and an imagined other.

Who resides within my mind?

Is it possible for the mind to sustain its hope? (Alexander, Fragments)

"House of a Thousand Doors" (1988) exemplifies the influence of familial relationships on artistic expression. It signifies her bond with her origins, her residence, and her grandmother through the artwork. In the following lines of the poem, Meena Alexander wrestles with the limitations of the past while examining her search for identity via the persona of her grandmother, Kunju. The poem highlights the agony of crossing borders while reflecting on the state of humanity in the midst of world catastrophe. Notwithstanding these difficulties, it emphasizes a strong and unwavering bond

with one's native country :

In dreams

Waves lilt, a silken fan

In grandmother's hands

Shell colored, utterly bare

As the light takes her. (Alexander, House of a Thousand Doors)

Writers from the diaspora, mostly explore the concept of identity within the context of immigrant experiences and highlighting the significance of identity for social existence and self-reorganization throughout their work. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is another notable writer who focuses on her quest for identity through their works. She was born on 29th of July, 1956 in Calcutta. She got her primary education by a convent school and completed her graduation from Calcutta University in 1976. After completing her graduation she shifts to United States of America and then she completed her further education. She has completed her masters from Wright State University in Ohio and doctorate from the University of California. Divakaruni has been an active supporter of immigrant women by establishing 'MAITRI,' an organization in the year 1991 that is committed to supporting South Asian women in adjusting to new cultures. Chitra Banerjee was an Indian born American author, mostly famous for her novels but she started her writing career as a poet. Her notable poetry collections are Dark Like the River (1987), Reason for Nasturtiums (1990), and Black Candle (1991), Leaving Yuba City (1997). These works explore a variety of topics, including love, marriage, domestic violence, and immigration, among others. The Mistress of Spices, her 1997 debut novel, is notable for its unique fusion of lyrical and prose elements.

It is possible to observe the concept of cross-cultural experience in the poetry written by Chitra, in which some individuals attempt to integrate themselves into a new culture, while others cling to the values that they have maintained throughout their lives. "Indian Movie, New Jersey," a poem written by Divakaruni, focuses on the concept of collective identity and togetherness among Indian settlers who established themselves in a strange place. The poem, which takes place in a movie theater in New Jersey, depicts the way in which a group of Indian expatriates feel a sense of camaraderie while viewing a film that embodies their traditional Indian ideals in the middle of the alien environment of their host country. She writes :

The flickering movie-light

Wipes from our faces years of America, sons

Who want mohawks and refuse to run

The family store, daughters who date

On the sly. (Divakaruni, Indian Movie, New Jersey)

Divakaruni provides a very realistic portrayal of the struggles of Indian immigrants in the United States in her poem "The Founding of Yuba City." The poem authentically portrays the immigrants' initial experiences in California through these lines :

Let us suppose it a California day

Bright as the blinding sea that brought them

Across a month of nights

Branded with strange stars

And endless coal shoveled

Into a ship's red jaws. (Divakaruni, The Founding of Yuba City)

In addition to focusing on the anguish of an immigrant child, the poem "Yuba City School" also tells the story of the mother of an immigrant. In this poem the term "black trunk" refers to the evidence of the American identity that has been ingrained in the individual. The foreigner grabbed a blue American skirt from the trunk. Divakaruni tells the tale of the immigrant's discrimination in this poem.

Tomorrow in my blue skirt I will go

To see the teacher, my tongue

Stiff and swollen

In my unwilling mouth, my few

English phrases. She will pluck them

From me, nail shut my lips. My son

Will keep sitting in the last row

Among the red words that drink his voice. (Divakaruni, Yuba City School)

The above lines of this poem reveal the mother's suffering. Here the poet depicts the family's struggle to fit in with their new cultural background, where one of the challenges is language. Due to their ignorance of sophisticated English, recently arriving immigrants frequently encounter unpleasant experiences in the English-speaking world. Although the lines are straightforward, they convey the mother's anxiety over saving her son from her own teacher.

In conclusion, Alexander's poetry examines her prior cultural identity through their poems, mythologies languages, and memories. Her work explores critical problems like as ethnicity, identity, belonging, and racism, reflecting her efforts to bridge the gap between India and America while Divakaruni's poetry frequently focuses on the diasporic journey from a more pragmatic and often humorous perspective and her investigation of identity includes the contradictions between traditional

beliefs and new desires in the immigrant experience.

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Multilingual Nature Of The Mughal Court

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Abstract :-

The Mughals were well-educated and learned rulers. They were always eager to learn more about the people they ruled and their traditions. The languages played a key role in this. Along with Turkish, they learned Persian, Sanskrit, Hindi, Braj Bhasha, and Urdu. This resulted in the development of a great literary culture, which inspired the generations. Their cross-cultural interactions and endeavours were part of the imperial project and cultural politics.

Key Words :- Multilingual, Multicultural, Cross-cultural interactions, Cross-cultural endeavours, Culture politics, Imperial project, Languages, Self-legitimization, Patronization, etc.

Introduction :-

The Mughal Empire was one of the most powerful and dominant empires that ruled between the early 16th to mid-19th centuries. This period was also known for the cross-cultural activities. The Mughals were not only great diplomats but also patrons of different traditions and cultures. They were enthusiasts and eager to know more about the people they ruled and their cultures. Apart from their native and official language, Turkish and Persian, they patronised the Sanskrit, Hindi, Braj Bhasha, and Urdu languages. They were never skilled in any of the vernaculars. Their cross-cultural endeavours were part of the major imperial project and politics. Self-legitimization was the main goal of such multicultural and multilingual nature of the Mughal Court. Partonization of different regional languages developed the multicultural environment, which helps the empire itself to adopt the various morals and ideas, and the promotion of Indo-Persian culture. This paper tries to explore different languages familiar to the Mughals and the development of literary culture in them.

Hypothesis :-

The multilingual nature of the Mughals was a part of their multicultural activities as well as a deliberate strategy of building the imperial image and sovereignty. On the other hand, their cross-

cultural interactions and efforts show their great respect and positive attitude towards the culture of the people they ruled.

Methodology :-

This paper is written with the help of secondary sources or reference books.

- **Turki Or Turkish Language :-**

The Mughals belonged to the Chingisid and Timurid lineages, who used to speak the Chagatai Turkish language. The founder of the Mughal Empire, Babur, wrote his memoir, Baburanama or Tuzuk I Baburi, in the Chagatai Turkish language or Turkic language. When Babur and his family settled down in the Indian subcontinent, they still used to communicate in their native language. Mostly, the elder members used the language. This shows the great respect for their tradition and culture. The use of the Turkish language was their way to remember their early days and lifestyles. The language was one of the ways to cherish their Timurid legacy and memories of their ancestors.

After Babur, Humayun continued the legacy of the language. Along with his memoir, Babur composed verses in both Turkish and Persian. Humayun maintained a large library that contained several books which provided a great resource of literature to his predecessors. Texts like Farhang I Turki, a Turkish dictionary compiled during the Mughal period, show the presence of the language. The influence of the language did not extend over a longer period. After Babur, the usage of the language became limited to the royal family. From Humayun, the domination of the Persian language increased as the Iranian or Persian nobility started gaining prominence in the Mughal court. The presence of Urdu, Hindi, and other vernacular languages increased as the diverse nobility was included in the Empire. Perhaps the language declined in the later 18th or early 19th century.

- **Persian Language :-**

Persian had already dominated the Indian subcontinent even before the establishment of the Mughal Empire. It was already the official language of the Delhi Sultanate and the Bahamani Sultanate. When Humayun returned from the exile of Shah Tahmasp, the Iranian King, he came along with Persian artists, thinkers, and poets, who influenced his court culture.

Emperor Akbar declared Persian as the official language of the Mughal court in 1582. Afterwards, the Persians actively promoted administration and literary works. Persian influence varied aspects of Mughal culture. Mughal miniature paintings, calligraphy, and architecture all reflected Persian styles. The Persian scholars also contributed to Mughal religious discourse, especially during Akbar's reign. There were several vernacular texts translated into Persian, which contributed to the development of the language.

Humayunnama by Gulbadan Begum, Akbarnam and Ain I Akbari by Abul Fazl, Muntakhab-ul-

Tawarikh by Badauni, Tabaqat I Akbari by Nizam-ud-din Ahmad, Tarikh I Alfi, etc., were some of the important Persian works commissioned during the period.

- **Sanskrit Language :-**

Sanskrit was one of the oldest languages in the Indian subcontinent. Before the establishment of the Mughal Empire, Sanskrit was known by the Delhi Sultanate, the Bahamani Sultanate, and many more. During the period of Akbar, there were several Sanskrit works translated into Persian. He was fascinated by the knowledge and wisdom of the Sanskrit scholars. He invited Jains and Brahmans into his court and discussed religious things with them.

Jains were the most prominent figures in the court. They played an important role in the survival of the Mughal Court. On the other hand, Brahmans scholars were not impressed by the policies of the Mughals, so they usually preferred to stay away from the court. Translation of Sanskrit texts into the Persian language had a long legacy. Ramayana, Mahabharata, Upanishads, Panchatantra, and several other Sanskrit texts were translated into Persian. After the increasing influence of Hindi, Sanskrit started losing its prime position during the period of Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb.

Padmasundara was the first Jain scholar to visit Akbar's court. Harivijaya, Krsnadasa, Santicandra, Vijayasena, etc, were Jain Scholars who composed various Sanskrit treatises during the period of Akbar. Mahabharata, Ramayana, Upanishads, Panchatantra, etc famous Sanskrit literature translated into Persian. Dara Shikoh translated the Sanskrit Upanishads into Persian and named his work Majma al-Bahrayn (Confluence of Two Oceans). In this way, translation activities played a crucial role in the development of the contemporary literature tradition.

- **Hindi, Braj, And Urdu Language :-**

During Shah Jahan, the influence of the Sanskrit language started declining. Braj and Hindi languages started gaining prominence in the court. Braj spread rapidly during the sixteenth to seventeenth centuries across Northern India. Rajputs played an important role in the development of Braj Bhasha. On the other hand, Hindi became the mediating language between the nobles and the Emperor. It also served as a link between different scholars and the emperor. While translating Sanskrit or other languages into Persian, scholars usually used Hindi as a medium to communicate.

Urdu emerged between the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries, and it was promoted by the Sufi saints. It was the fusion of Persian, Arabic, and Hindi. Mostly during the later Mughal Period, Urdu was one of the important court languages. The emergence of Hindi and Urdu gradually replaced the prominence of the Sanskrit and Persian languages. Later Mughals used Urdu as the language of administration.

- **Impact of Multilingual Literary Culture :-**

As seen above, the Mughals adopted several languages. Their efforts towards the language are appreciable. From Babur to the last Mughal Emperor, several Indian languages developed. They well known about the fact that to rule over India it requires the basic knowledge of the indigenous people and their social–cultural legacy.

Mughals came in contact with scholars and intellectuals of various languages, who fueled the desire of learning languages. Adoption of different language cultures and knowledge systems continuously evolved through the period of different Mughal Emperors.

The promotion of the regional languages such as Sanskrit, Hindi, Braj, and Urdu impacted the Mughal literary culture in several ways. There were many intellectuals and scholars attracted to the Mughal court. Brahmans and Jains were prominent among them. Their foremost goal was to acquire political benefits and advantages for their survival in the empire. Despite their intentions, their contribution to the development of the literature is great. Due to their efforts, Sanskrit became a part of the imperial literary language. Ramayana, Mahabharata, Upanishads, and several Sanskrit treaties translated into the Persian language. There was a special translation department called Maktab Khana or House of Translation established by Emperor Akbar at Fatehpur Sikri. Translation of multilingual books into the Persian language was one of the major political projects. Patronage to different thinkers and scholars played an important role in Mughal sovereignty. Politics and aesthetics played a key role in the development of multilingual culture.

In Ain I Akbari, Abul Fazl provides insights into the different imperial projects and their objectives related to Indian Knowledge systems. He supported the cross-cultural interactions for the survival of the Mughal empire in the subcontinent. Promotion of different languages fertile the relationship between religion and power. Repeated cross-cultural engagements played a major part in the Indo-Persian tradition.

Last, the Mughals patronized different cultures and traditions, which bolstered their imperial image. Their contribution to the development of literary culture is great. Their multilingual legacy is still appreciated by the modern intellectual society.

Conclusion :-

The Mughals had given great patronage to the vernacular languages. The Changtai Turkish, Persian, Sanskrit, Hindi, Braj Bhasha, Urdu, etc, flourished during different periods. The Royal patronage of the languages influenced the contemporary literary culture to a great extent. The Aim of the multilingual nature of the Mughal Court was to promote inclusivity and strengthen the imperial image. The study of the vernacular languages to know more about the social, political, and cultural

structure of the land they ruled was the motto of the Mughal rulers. After the decline of the Mughal Empire, their literary legacy still inspired the generations.

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Recreate the Role of Women in Early Indian Society (c. 200 B.C. – 200 A.D.)
An Analytical Study Based on Dharmasastric and Buddhist Traditions

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Introduction :-

The educational and spiritual agency of women in ancient India reflects a complex interplay of cultural ideals, philosophical openness, and patriarchal constraints. In the Vedic era, girls received formal education comparable to boys, with Upanayana initiation, Vedic hymn memorization, and options for higher learning or domestic life. The dual archetypes of *Brahmavadinī* and *Sadyovadhū* illustrate a nuanced spectrum of female aspirations—spiritual pursuit and domestic dedication—both respected within early Vedic society. Women seers like Vak and Lopāmudrā composed hymns included in the *Rigveda*, affirming their intellectual and metaphysical authority. Epigraphic and literary evidence from the Sangam period and Buddhist traditions further reveals women's participation in public life, patronage, and renunciation. However, the Buddhist era presents a paradox: while the doctrine acknowledged women's capacity for enlightenment, societal and monastic attitudes remained ambivalent or overtly discriminatory. Figures like Ānanda emerge as rare advocates for gender equality, challenging entrenched biases. Despite systemic limitations, many women—courtesans, queens, slaves, and scholars—sought refuge in education, renunciation, and spiritual practice, carving spaces of autonomy and transcendence within rigid social frameworks.

Gender, Ritual, and Legal Boundaries in the Manusmṛti :-

The Manusmṛti (c. 2nd century B.C.–2nd century A.D.) constructs a complex framework of domestic roles and legal recognition for women, portraying the wife as the saha-dharmacāriṇī—a co-participant in ritual and moral duties. **Verse 3.56** famously states,

"Yatra nāryastu pūjyante ramante tatra devatāḥ"

("Where women are honoured, there the gods rejoice"), yet this reverence is conditional, as women are to be protected rather than empowered. **Vers 5.154** asserts,

"Na strī svatantryam arhati"

("A woman should never be independent"), and mandates obedience even to a morally compromised husband. Daughters, though generally excluded from ritual succession, gain limited recognition through the Putrikā clause (Verses 9.127–128), which allows them to inherit and perform śrāddha rites in the absence of male heirs:

"Yasya nāsti suto jātastām putrikām vidur budhāḥ"

("She whom a man designates as his daughter shall be regarded as a son"). Later commentaries like Mitākṣarā expanded this provision, hinting at latent female ritual agency. Aesthetic norms further shaped matrimonial politics, with Verses 3.8–3.10 prescribing ideal traits for brides—slender limbs, soft skin, and auspicious names—while excluding those with red hair, deformities, or names like Karala ("terrible"), reflecting a eugenic concern with varna-purity. Despite condemning āśura vivāha (bride-price) in Verses 3.31–3.32, Manu acknowledges its prevalence, referencing tulyamūlya ("equal price") and normalizing dowry. Monogamy is idealized, yet polygamy is permitted for kings and Brahmins (Verses 9.101–102), reinforcing patriarchal privilege, while polyandry is conspicuously absent. Deviance is encoded through terms like Punarbhu (remarried woman) and Parpuruṣa (woman cohabiting across caste lines), with Verse 9.76 warning,

"Na punarbhuvam nārīm na parpuruṣagāminīm"

("Do not associate with a remarried woman or one who goes to another man"). These stigmas hardened over time into legal disabilities such as child marriage, widowhood, and inheritance denial. The Yājñavalkya-smṛti (Verse 1.56)

yad ucyate dvijātīnāṃ śūdrād dāropasaṃgrahaḥ |

naitan mama mataṃ yasmāt tatrāyaṃ jāyate svayam ||

(What is said about the acceptance of a Śūdra woman as a wife by members of the twice-born (dvijātī) — this is not my view, because the offspring born of her is self-born i.e., not ritually sanctioned). further restricted women's rights, marking a

post-Gupta ossification of gender norms and reinforcing the patriarchal architecture of Dharmaśāstra's tradition.

Education System of Women in Pre-Buddhist & Buddhist Era :-

The Education of girls in Vedic society received as much importance that of the boys at the early stages. As the girls were married only when they were 16 & 18 years old. They have more than 10 years of studies in their parent's home before marriage. During this period, they used to learn by heart the Vedic hymns prescribed for daily periodical rituals & for those sacraments which they had to take an active part after marriage. There is ample evidence to show that like men, women also used to offer regularly their Vedic prayers both in the morning & evening.

Not Much is known about co-education of boys & girls. While there was no bar to it, there were not many instances of co education except within the family. In the Vedic age, education at least in the primary stages was centered on the family. Brothers Sisters & cousins probably studied together under the family elders. Subsequently when specialization became the order of the day scholars had to go out to the distant places to study under Celebrated Acharya`s. When there were competent lady teachers' available parents must have naturally Preferred to send their daughters to study under them. In Technical subjects like Theology Philosophy & medicine, most of the experts were males & lady students used to go to them for studies. Post Vedic literature records instances of co-education of boys & girls in higher education & Specializations as seen in Uttara Rama Charitra, Malti Madhava & the Puranas Which is evidently & continuation of the Vedic Tradition. Upanayana or the initiation ceremony of girls in Vedic age used to take place as regularly as that of boys at the normal time. The Vedic Age held that Bramhacharya discipline was as much necessary for girls as for boys & that a girl could win a suitable Husband only through such discipline.

(Atharvaveda XI.5.18). "ब्रह्मचर्येण कन्या युवानं विन्दते पतिम्। अनड्वान्ब्रह्मचर्येणाश्वो घासं जिगीर्षति ॥* "Through brahmacharya, a young woman finds a worthy husband Similarly, a bull and a horse, through disciplined effort, strive to obtain nourishment (symbolized by grass).*

It's a poetic reflection on how self-restraint and dedication lead to fulfilment—whether in human relationships or in the natural instincts of animals.

After the Upanayana the girls used to follow a discipline Similar to that of the boys. They were however shown certain concessions. There was no need for them to grow matted hair. While the boys enjoined to beg for their daily food, girls were exempted. When the marriage of a girl was fixed, she was permitted to discontinue her

studies. Girl Students had the option either to Enter matrimony at the age of 16 to 18 after minimal Vedic studies or peruse higher studies & Specialization.

Remaining Single: They might get married after completing their studies or even continue to remain single; The former were called *Sadyovadhu* & the later were known as *Brahmavadinis. A* Brahmavadini is of an ascetic type striving for the highest philosophical knowledge of the truth of the self of Brahman. Thus, here the ideal of life is spiritual wellbeing. The Sadyovadhus on the other hand is of a domestic type, dedicating herself to the welfare of the family & spending her time mostly on domestic duties of an ordinary kind. Each was great in her own place. Hence there was no real opposition between the status of Brahmavadini & that of a Sadyovadhu & no such opposition was tolerated in India, at least in the earliest Vedic age & also for many centuries later. That was why it was by no means obligatory for a Brahmavadini to take vow of celibacy, renounce the world & carry on meditations in a far-off secluded cave. On the contrary quite a few Brahmavadinis who came to be blessed with the realizations of Brahman, were married women. In the same manner many Sadyovadhus were also of a high spiritual nature & even during their multifarious domestic work, they strove for a spiritual perfection & attained realization.

Some of the Brahmavadinis reached great spiritual hights & their hymns were considered worthy of inclusion in Rigveda. The Brahad Devata of Saunka enumerates the names of twenty-seven women seers of Brahmavadinis whose Hymns figure in the Rigveda (*Brhad Devata ii 82-84*). The well-known Vedic commentator Sayana has mentioned the names of two more such women seer in addition to the above

Buddhist Women :-

Patriarchal Values in relation to women are also reflected in early Buddhist literature Such an assertion may appear to a contradiction since the period is supposed to have been characterised by a higher status for women than in the past for dissident sects allowed women to join their respective sects. The Samana culture no doubt recognised that regardless of caste, class, or sex everyone had the potential for salvation. But apart from conceding this principle the attitude of society was generally against women. The narrative describing the entry of Bhikkhunis into the sangha illustrates the bias. The Buddha did not want the Bhikkhunis in Sangha. If permission was finally granted it was because Ananda made the Buddha concede that women were as capable of salvation as men, which was a recognised principle of Samana culture. In fact, in the entire early Buddhist literature only Ananda seems to have genuinely believed in the principles of equality between men & Women & he Systematically championed their cause. After Buddhas death The Sangha even criticized him for espousing the cause of women on the two occasions: first for pleading Mahaprajaapati Gautami's case on the question of the entry of women into

the Sangha; & second for his gesture of sympathy to the weeping Malla women who wanted a glimpse of the Buddhas last remains. This was treated as defiling the Buddhas sacred body.

Ananda's View: Whatever Ananda's compatriots may have thought, Ananda's gesture was born out of out of his genuine humanity which recognised women as equal human beings. Ananda in fact appears to be the only figure in Buddhist literature who was concerned about the evidently unequal relationship between men & women. On one occasion he sought an explanation from the Buddha as to why women did not sit in court or conduct business. Ananda obviously felt that they should have been participating in all such activities. Apart from Ananda's espousal of their cause, the general tone of Buddhist literature is antagonistic to woman. Considerable distrust of women is displayed in the Buddhist texts. They are linked to the black snakes, treated as evil smelling & adulterous; They are accused of ensnaring men & are libelled as secretive & not open. In fact, some cases the Bhikkhunis were receive severer punishments than bhikkhus for similar offences.

Despite the general discrimination against women which is reflected most sharply in their lower status vis a vis the bhikkhu within the social world of the sangha, women did join the organization in noticeable number. The fact that a woman had to wait on a man all her life sometimes without the slightest recognition was resented by some woman for whom the sangha represented a measure of freedom. Other seems to have turned to it for succour in times of distress. One of the features of this period is the fact that that the courtesan did not suffer from social ostracism or a low status. The Buddha accepted Ambpalis invitation to a meal & received the gift of Amba Vana from her. Nevertheless, the most valued principle for a woman remained that in the in which she was the dutiful wife & mother, a matriarch who ruled over her family full of numerous children & grandchildren, as exemplified in person of Vishakha Migaramata. It may be argued that the early Buddhist want of sympathy for women is not a unique phenomenon, but rather one that was typical of monastic sentiment all over the world. It is also typical of the sixth century B.C social environment, notwithstanding the presence of an exceptional progressive like Ananda. Like-minded men& women must have existed along with Ananda but not in significant no to have made any real impact on the discrimination against women.

5.1 Feminized Dharma and Gender-Inclusive Enlightenment in Buddhist Texts:-

The Śrīmālādevī Siṃhanāda Sūtra elevates Queen Śrīmālādevī as a doctrinal authority on Tathāgatagarbha (Buddha-nature), where she proclaims, "The womb of the Tathāgata is stainless, beyond defilement" (Wayman & Wayman, 1974), asserting the purity and transcendence of Buddha-nature beyond physical constraints. Her prophesied future as Buddha Samanta Prabha affirms that gender poses no barrier to

enlightenment, positioning her voice not as peripheral but central to Mahāyāna metaphysics. Similarly, the Therīgāthā, a collection within the Khuddaka Nikāya, preserves the verses of early Buddhist nuns who attained Arahantship, offering rare autobiographical insights into female renunciation. Nun Mutta's declaration— "So freed! So thoroughly freed am I—from my pestle, my shameless husband, and my mouldy old pot" (*Therīgāthā 11.1*)—challenges the domestic ideals upheld by Dharmaśāstra traditions, revealing the liberative power of spiritual autonomy. Further, the *Lotus Sūtra* (chapter 12) presents the story of the eight-year-old Nāga princess who attains Buddhahood instantly, defying male scepticism. Her transformation is not a prerequisite gender change but a symbolic gesture underscoring the irrelevance of gender in spiritual realization. Together, these texts articulate a vision of Dharma that transcends gendered limitations, affirming the spiritual authority and potential of women within Buddhist soteriology.

6. Guān Yīn and the Feminization of Avalokiteśvara: Compassion Beyond Gender:-

Guān Yīn and the Feminization of Avalokiteśvara : Compassion Beyond Gender

The transformation of Avalokiteśvara—the male Bodhisattva of compassion in Indian Buddhism—into Guān Yīn, the female saviour figure in East Asian traditions, marks a profound religious and cultural adaptation. Originally depicted in Indian texts like the *Kāraṇḍavyūha Sūtra* as a princely male figure seated in *lalitāsana*, bearing a lotus and water pot, Avalokiteśvara's iconography included Amitābha Buddha in his crown, multiple arms in tantric forms, and attendant female deities like Tārā and Bhṛkutī, who later influenced his feminization. In Indian art from Gandhāra, Mathura, and Ellora, he appears regal and masculine, a saviour from worldly perils. As Buddhism entered China during the Han dynasty, Avalokiteśvara's image evolved, and by the Sui-Tang period, Chinese artists reimagined him in feminine forms such as Willow Guān Yīn (with a healing willow branch), Water-Moon Guān Yīn (in poetic contemplation), and White-Robed Guān Yīn (associated with fertility). These depictions emphasized maternal symbolism, soft features, and nurturing aesthetics, aligning with Confucian ideals and Daoist yin-yang cosmology. Ulrich Mammitzsch argues this feminization was devotional and strategic, making Guān Yīn more relatable to Chinese women. Folk legends like that of Miaoshan further localized her image, portraying her as a self-sacrificing daughter. By the Song dynasty, Guān Yīn was fully embraced as a female deity, often depicted with children and lotus thrones, surpassing even Shakyamuni Buddha in household devotion. Philosophically, Guān Yīn's identity remains fluid; in Chan Buddhism, she embodies gender-neutral compassion and non-duality, while the *Lotus Sūtra* (Chapter 25) lists 33 manifestations—male, female, animal, and celestial—affirming that compassion

transcends form. Her iconographic legacy endures in modern art, literature, and popular devotion, where she symbolizes empathy, healing, and spiritual universality. Statues of Guān Yīn grace temples and homes across East Asia, often in white robes with a vase of nectar or a child in her arms, reflecting her timeless appeal as a maternal saviour and embodiment of boundless compassion.

7. Economic and Legal Agency in the *Arthaśāstra* :-

The *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭilya (c. 3rd century B.C.) is a landmark treatise on governance, administration, and jurisprudence, markedly distinct in tone and intent from normative Dharmaśāstric literature. Where texts like the *Manusmṛti* framed gender through religious dharma, Kauṭilya adopts a pragmatic approach: women appear not as spiritual symbols or moral risks, but as real actors embedded within the machinery of statecraft. Their roles span economic productivity, surveillance, contractual autonomy, and property rights.

7.1 Occupational Roles and Strategic Labor Inclusion :-

Kauṭilya recognizes women's capacity for productive labour, especially within regulated industries and artisanal guilds :

- **Textile and Garment Production** : Women were employed as weavers, dyers, embroiderers, and garland-makers. These industries often operated under state oversight, and women received regulated wages (*Book II, Chapter 1*). Kauṭilya ensures wage parity and tax compliance, recognizing their role in both domestic and public supply chains.

- **Salt, Oil, Liquor, and Metalwork Licenses** : Women could run cottage industries under royal license. Particularly in oil pressing and brewing, skilled female labourers were taxed at standard rates and inspected for quality control (*Book II, Chapters 25–27*). This normalized female entrepreneurship within a controlled economic ecology.

- **Agricultural Leasing and Estate Management** : During war, famine, or shortage of male labour, women could lease plots, supervise sowing, and participate in grain trade. This contradicts agrarian exclusion often seen in religious texts and highlights gendered contingency planning in Kauṭilya's economic model.

- **Intelligence and Espionage** : Perhaps most radically, women served as undercover agents, informants, and courtesans in Kauṭilya's elaborate espionage network (*Book I, Chapter 11*). Widows, mendicants, and itinerant performers were particularly valued for their mobility and social inconspicuousness.

Such engagement affirms that women were not peripheral to the economy but tactically integrated into its infrastructure.

7.2 Gender Justice and Property Rights in the Arthaśāstra :-

In contrast to the paternalistic and ritual-bound prescriptions of the Dharmaśāstra tradition, Kauṭilya's Arthaśāstra presents a pragmatic and contractual model of gender justice, recognizing women as autonomous legal agents. It affirms the concept of Strīdhana (women's wealth), ensuring that gifts received at marriage—such as ornaments, garments, and cash—remain the wife's legal property, with unauthorized use or seizure by husbands or in-laws punishable by fines or restitution, prefiguring modern notions of financial agency and marital equity. Women under threat or incapacity were entitled to state-appointed guardianship, and mismanagement or fraud by guardians attracted penalties, with royal officers tasked with protecting female estates. The text also permits remarriage for women abandoned without cause or widowed young, subject to waiting periods and legal registration, reflecting a welfare-oriented logic rather than ritual purity. In the absence of male heirs, competent women could administer family property, enter contracts, and serve as legal witnesses, marking a shift from varna-based exclusion to competence-based inclusion. Yet the Arthaśāstra is not utopian—it acknowledges moral risk and prescribes surveillance and accountability. Those who defrauded, coerced, or assaulted women faced fines, corporal punishment, or confiscation, and repeat offenders were barred from public office. Courtesans, while valued for roles in espionage and entertainment, were monitored for tax compliance, health standards, and political neutrality. Women engaged in business or trade contracts had access to legal arbitration, with breaches resulting in restitution and penal fines. These provisions—affirming Strīdhana, permitting remarriage under state oversight, and ensuring protective guardianship—stand in stark contrast to the Manusmṛti's moralistic tone, offering a more inclusive and regulated framework that respects women as active participants in legal and economic life.

8. Ethical Paradigms in Tamil and Jain Traditions :-

The Tamil and Jain traditions offer distinct ethical frameworks that diverge from the ritualistic and hierarchical norms of Dharmaśāstra. Thiruvalluvar's Tirukkural (c. 1st century B.C.–2nd century A.D.) promotes a companionate morality rooted in emotional reciprocity and mutual virtue, as seen in verses like "The home is no home, but a thorny bush, when the wife is not kind" (Kural 45) and "A good wife is the priceless wealth of a man" (Kural 51). The text notably avoids casteism and ritualism, emphasizing kindness, integrity, and shared ethical responsibility within domestic life. In contrast, Jain Agamas such as the Sūtrakṛtāṅga, Ācārāṅga, and Bhagavatī Sūtra frame gender through the lens of ascetic discipline. Women were

permitted to undertake renunciation and became śrāvikās, yet moral ambivalence persisted: the Svetambara sect accepted that women could attain moksha, while the Digambara sect maintained that women must be reborn as men to achieve liberation. Despite this doctrinal tension, figures like Chandanā, Mahāvīra's first female disciple, are revered as archetypal ascetics, embodying Jainism's emphasis on mental austerity over bodily purity. Together, these traditions reflect alternative ethical paradigms—Tamil humanism and Jain asceticism—that challenge dominant Brahmanical narratives and offer more inclusive visions of virtue and liberation.

Female Agency and Philosophical Fluidity in Vedic, Epigraphic, Sangam, and Buddhist Traditions :-

While later Dharmaśāstra texts marginalized women's ritual status, early Vedic literature—especially the Rigveda—recognizes several female rises (seers) such as Lopāmudrā, Apālā, Ghoṣā, and Vak. In Rigveda 10.125, Vak proclaims: "I am the Queen, the gatherer-up of treasures… I create all beings on earth."

अहं राष्ट्री संगमनी वसूनां

चिकितुषी प्रथमायज्ञियानाम्।

तां मा देवा व्यदधुः पुरुत्रा

भूरिस्थात्रां भूर्यावेशयन्तीम्॥

(Devi Sūkta, also known as the Vak Sukta, Rigveda Mandala 10, Hymn 125)
These hymns reflect a pre-patriarchal cosmology where feminine speech and cognition (Vak and Prajñā) held metaphysical authority, and the ritual exclusion of women in later Smṛti literature signals do not progress, but restriction. Epigraphical records from Nāgārjunakoṇḍa, Nasik, and Amarāvatī (1st–3rd centuries A.D.) further affirm female agency, with elite women like Queen Bhāgavatī of the Ikṣvāku dynasty sponsoring chaitya halls and stupas, and Nāgānikā, queen of a Satavahana ruler, commissioning rock-cut caves at Nasik. These women were not anomalies but part of a broader tradition of religious patronage, challenging assumptions of domestic seclusion. Sangam literature, including Akanāṉūṟu, Puranāṉūṟu, and Kuruntokai, presents women as lovers, poets, heroines, and counsellors. In Kuruntokai 25, a young woman declines marriage, asserting autonomy through poetic voice, while in Puranāṉūṟu 312, a mother exhorts her son to embrace honourable death, embodying stoic resolve. These texts express affective interiority and subjective sovereignty, suggesting that early South Indian ethics valued emotional legitimacy and moral partnership over rigid patriarchal codes. Complementing these cultural expressions, Buddhist metaphysics—especially in Mahayana thought—subverts binary thinking through doctrines like anattā (non-self), which denies a permanent self-including gender identity, and śūnyatā (emptiness), which asserts that all phenomena, including gender roles, lack inherent essence. As Nāgārjuna writes in the Mūlamadhyamakakārikā: "Whatever dependently arises, that is explained to be

emptiness. That, being a dependent designation, is itself the middle way." This philosophical foundation dissolves fixed hierarchies and offers a fluid understanding of identity and liberation, where gender is not an obstacle but a mutable designation on the path to awakening.

The ordination of women in Buddhism began with Mahaprajaapati Gautami, the Buddha's foster mother. Her request was initially denied three times but later accepted under the

Canonical Affirmation and Philosophical Fluidity: Women in Buddhist Enlightenment :-

Despite structural limitations in ancient societies, Buddhist doctrine consistently affirms that women can attain enlightenment, with texts like the Therīgāthā offering profound insight from elder nuns. Sister Soma rebukes Māra with the verse: "What does womanhood matter at all When the mind is concentrated well?"—a direct challenge to gender-based spiritual doubt. The Lotus Sūtra features the Nāga Princess, an eight-year-old girl who attains Buddhahood instantly, symbolizing gender transcendence in Mahayana thought, while the Śrīmālādevī Siṃhanāda Sūtra presents Queen Śrīmālādevī as a teacher of Tathāgatagarbha (Buddha-nature), affirming that spiritual authority is not gender-bound. The Therīgāthā includes verses from women of diverse social backgrounds—royalty like Khemā and Bhaddākuṇḍalakesā renounced luxury; courtesans like Ambapālī and Vimala found insight through transformation; Brahmin women like Soma and Sukkā critiqued gender norms philosophically; and slave women like Punnā and Pūrṇā attained liberation through devotion and education. Many joined the Sangha after personal tragedies, seeking refuge, autonomy, and spiritual fulfilment. Buddhist women were not only renunciants but also educators and scholars: Soma, mentioned in the Avadānasataka, taught mantras and attracted students; Bhikkhunī Sangha Mitta, daughter of Emperor Aśoka, brought the Bhikkhunī Order to Sri Lanka and taught the Vinaya and Abhidhamma; the Dipavaṃsa praises nuns like Sivala, Mahiruha, and Agnimitra for their scholarship in Anuradhapura; and the Sāsanavaṃsa (Myanmar) records village girls mastering entire suttas and Pali grammar, reflecting grassroots literacy and doctrinal fluency. Underpinning these affirmations is Buddhist metaphysics, which dissolves fixed identities through anattā (non-self) and śūnyatā (emptiness), asserting that all phenomena—including gender roles—lack inherent essence. As Nāgārjuna writes in the Mūlamadhyamakakārikā, "Whatever dependently arises, that is explained to be emptiness." This philosophical foundation allows for fluidity of identity, making gender irrelevant to liberation and affirming the inclusive potential of Buddhist soteriology.

11.6 Modern Revival and Global Movements in Buddhist Women's Leadership :

The modern revival of Buddhist women's roles has gained significant momentum, particularly with the re-establishment of the Bhikkhunī Order in Theravāda countries during the late 20th century, supported by organizations like Sakyadhita International. Contemporary leaders such as Ayya Khema, Pema Chödrön, and Joan Halifax have played pivotal roles in expanding women's participation in teaching, activism, and monastic leadership across traditions. This resurgence is marked by global solidarity and intellectual engagement, exemplified by the 19th Sakyadhita Conference held in 2025 in Sarawak, themed "Navigating Change: Buddhist Women in Transition," which brought together scholars, practitioners, and activists to explore evolving roles and challenges faced by Buddhist women worldwide.

Conclusion :-

The historical trajectory of women's education and spiritual agency in pre-Buddhist and Buddhist India reveals both continuity and contradiction. From the Vedic celebration of female intellect and ritual participation to the Buddhist recognition of women's potential for liberation, the ideals often outpaced social realities. While texts and traditions offered pathways for women to pursue knowledge, renunciation, and enlightenment, societal norms frequently imposed restrictions and moral suspicion. Yet, the resilience of women—whether as Brahmavadinīs, royal patrons, poets, or Bhikkhunīs—demonstrates a persistent striving for dignity, wisdom, and self-realization. The legacy of figures like Vak, Chandanā, Sangha Mitta, and Ambapālī underscores the enduring relevance of female voices in shaping India's spiritual and intellectual heritage. Their stories challenge us to reimagine historical narratives not as linear progressions but as layered dialogues between aspiration and constraint, where women continually negotiated space for autonomy and transcendence.

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Astronomy in Ancient and Mediaeval India

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The sciences of astronomy and astrology in India have been studied and written about for countless centuries, by a variety of scholars. The exact origin of this field has been a centre of debate and controversy in the subject of oriental studies for some time, including the notable Bailly-Bentley extremes. This theory, named after the two researchers who theorised that astronomy as a subject was either discovered first around 4300 B.C.E (as stated by Jean Sylvain Bailly), or around the 11th century A.D. (as stated by John Bentley). There was also a debate around the question whether the Indians had borrowed the science of astronomy from other contemporaneous civilisations or had they discovered it themselves: John Playfair writes in 1817 that "the data are nowhere quoted from which the Indian tables were computed and there there is no record, not even any tradition, of regular astronomical observations having been made by the Hindus". On the other hand, Sir William Jones stated that the Indian Brahmans were "...too proud to borrow their science from the Greeks, Arabs, Moguls, or any other nation…". There has been a discovery of an Indus Valley seal that, according to some scholars, depicts lunar motion through an asterism. In summary, the earliest properly available source of Ancient Indian astronomy were the Vedic literature, which were undoubtedly a later recension of astronomical studies done much earlier.

The Sanskrit word 'jyotiṣa' in Vedic literature connotes both astronomy and astrology, and is part of the six auxiliary texts of the Vedas, i.e. the 'vedāṅga'. The 'Vedāṅga Jyotiṣa' has been traditionally connected to the author Lagadha, and notes auspicious times for several yagnas, such as monthly and annual rituals, and stated a five-year period of 366 civil days each, 61 months of 30 days, 62 synodic months, and 67 sidereal months according to the lunar cycle. The Rig Veda also contains Vedic hymns dedicated to celestial phenomena and divine beings associated with them, including Surya, Savitr, Mitra, and other Adityas. Constellations of stars have also been mentioned, such as the seven Rishis or the Saptarishis which could be corroborated with the Great Bear, stars like Sirius and Orion, and planets like Venus, Jupiter, Rahu, etc. The Taittiriya Samhita of the Yajur Veda lists 27 asterisms or 'nakshatras' (changed to 28 in some other literary works), commencing with Krittika; and that "the full moon in Phalguni (month) is the beginning of the year" – thus denoting two of the most important astronomical contributions of the Vedic period. The Atharva Veda refers to eclipses on several occasions, the contributor of them being Rahu and the removers Soma and Rudra. Even the solar zodiac, which included figures representing the twelve signs with corresponding constellations, had been in use in all historical periods, having nearly the same characteristics among the Greeks, Egyptians, Persians, and Indians.

Dhruva, or the Pole Star, is mentioned quite late in ancient Indian literature, probably for the first time in the Maitrayana Brahmana Upanishad which speaks of the 'moving of Dhruva' to be inconceivable. According to Hermann Jacobi, it might have been discovered around 2780 B.C.E., and could have been noticed by shepherds tending to their flocks at night and the observation shared amongst the locals by immigrants from China or other areas.

The post-Vedic and classical astronomical works like the Jaina works Suryaprajnapti and Jambudvipa Prajnapti and Hindu works like Vishnu Purana, Aryabhatta's (476-550 CE) Aryabhatiya, Brahmagupta's (598-668 CE) Brahmasphutasiddhanta, Lāṭadeva's (circa 505 CE) Surya Siddhanta, Varahamihira's (circa 505 CE) Panchasiddhantika and Brhat Samhita enumerate various developments on the already discovered indigenous works, but it cannot be said that

all concepts in this era were purely Indian in nature. The main portion of this literature is post-Alexandrian, and thus showcases an influence of the ancient Babylonians, Persians of the Achaemenian Empire and the Greeks, or '*Yavanas*' as they were called by the ancient astronomers Garga and Parasara. For example, the concept of a mountain at the centre of the world, around which our world and the various other worlds, stars, heavenly bodies, and planets are located is mentioned as Mount Meru among the Hindus, Jainas, and Buddhists, and Girnagar by the Zoroastrians.

Amongst the astronomical equipment used in ancient India, the gnomon or '*sanku*', which marks a principal part of a sundial, was used to ascertain cardinal directions, the latitude of the point of observation, and the time of observation., as mentioned by Varahamihira, Aryabhata, Bhaskara, and others. A clepsydra or water clock, known to the Indians as the "*ghatī-yantra*" was used till recent times to measure the passage of time. The "*gola-yantra*" or the armillary sphere has been mentioned in the works of Aryabhatta and Parmesvara, which was based on equatorial coordinates but had an elliptical loop. This was unlike the Greek armillary sphere, which was solely based on elliptical coordinates.

Another dedicated branch to the science of astronomy was seen in Kerala, where the Kerala school of astronomy and mathematics was established. This school, which flourished between 14th and 16th centuries CE, was established by Madhava of Sangamagrama in Tirur. Notable scientists who were associated with this school were Parameshvara Nambudiri, who created the *Drgganita* or the Drig system which derived its computations from observations of astronomical phenomena; Nilakantha Somayaji, whose equation for the centre of the planets Mercury and Venus, revised using Aryabhatta's model, remained the most accurate from the 16th century CE till the time of Johannes Kepler, and had also created a more accurate system for a partially heliocentric planetary model than that of Tycho Brahe; and Achyuta Pisarati, who suggested improvements in methods of calculation of eclipses. These works were completed approximately two centuries before the invention of calculus in Europe and provided what is now considered as the earliest example of a power series in mathematics.

Archaeological evidence of Indian development in astronomy and their observational skills has also been seen in the epigraphical mention of the sighting of the Halley's Comet in 1456 CE in Andhra Pradesh. A copper plate inscription belonging to the Vijayanagara ruler Mallikarjuna and currently preserved at the Srisailam Mallikarjunaswamy temple refers to the appearance of a comet and a subsequent meteoric shower, and the ruler's attempt to "mitigate the great calamity believed to arise due to the appearance of a comet (*dhūmakētu mahōtpāta śāntyartham*), and the associated meteor shower (*prakāśyāya mahōtpāta śāntyartham*)" by donating a village as an *agrahara* to a Vedic scholar well versed in astronomy.

Medieval literary records and evidence can be seen both in the era of the Delhi Sultanate and the Mughal Empire. Mahendra Suri's Sanskrit treatise '*Yantra-rāja*' is based on the astrolabe, an early star chart and physical model of the visible half-dome of the sky, during the time of Firuz Shah Tughlaq. Another instrument, the seamless celestial globe, was invented in Mughal India, one of the earliest by Ali Kashmiri ibn Luqman in 1589-90 CE during Emperor Akbar's reign in Kashmir using the lost-wax technique.

One of the biggest equinoctial sundials in the world is seen in the UNESCO World Heritage site of Jantar Mantar at Jaipur. This building is an assembly of stone-built astronomical instruments which was designed to be seen by the naked eye, and was established by Sawai Jai Singh II, the ruler of the kingdom of Amber in the early 18th century. Five of these sites were built in total: at New Delhi, Ujjain, Mathura, Varanasi, and the most prominent one at Jaipur, which was the capital city of the Maharaja. The king had a special interest in mathematics, astronomy, and architecture, and the construction of the equinoctial sundial, quadrant of a circle to determine the time of the day and the declination of the Sun and other heavenly bodies, and the world's largest sundial, namely the Samrat Yantra, showcase his dedication in raising a scientific inclination and awareness amongst his subjects and the layered history of Indian astronomy.

In conclusion, the science of astronomy has seen a holistic development and progress in the Indian subcontinent, ranging from the prehistoric times, where stars

were used as guiding lights to newer environments, till date. Use of astronomical bodies has been seen in a variety of sectors such as maritime travel, performance of rituals, temple architecture, and many more. This progress has continued even now, with the establishment of the Indian Space Research Organisation in 1969 and the launch of a variety of satellites over the years. One can perhaps say that our Indian ancestors, who were accomplished astronomers and scientists even before the introduction or subsequent "discovery" of these sciences in Europe, were the forefathers of space research and have guided indigenous astronomical studies since the Vedic times.

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From Sarais to Satellite : The Evolution of Indian Connectivity

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ABSTRACT :-

Communication was historically a luxury, predominantly reserved for ruling elites and leaders. For subaltern communities, communication was largely limited to face-to-face interaction until the 19th century, when new technologies such as the postal system and telegraph transformed it into a daily necessity. This article traces the evolution of Indian connectivity and the profound socio-economic and political changes brought about by these evolving means of communication in India, especially through Post Offices. The word "satellite" is a symbol of a new kind of connectivity that gradually replaced the older, tactile forms, and it refers to the paradigm shift in communication technology—from handwritten letters carried by runners, camels, and trains, to the broadcast of information via satellites. This shift marked the end of an era in which communication was slow, physical, and deeply human, and the beginning of an era where information became instantaneous, visual, and mass-mediated. This article studies the Indian Postal system as a connecting thread between the sarais and satellite, the two extremes, and how this 'silent revolution' empowered and restructured lives, especially at the grassroots, facilitating migration, opinion-building, and connectivity.

History of communication system is closely linked to history of mankind[1] and improved communication has played very important role in acculturation process[2] and creation of informed citizens. Today India is land with highest number of post offices in world, and they have been blend of tradition and modernity, playing role of catalyst for social change, breaking social barriers.[3] Post office as an institution, is universally admitted as only means of obtaining maximum amount of efficiency with greatest convenience rendered to public. For Adam Smith, this was the only mercantile project which successfully managed by every sort of government.[4] This article traces the evolution of Indian Post, from the medieval time when it was only reserved to ruling elites, to the time, when it

became a daily necessity for masses.

Initial idea of postal system is due to Persians, and speed of couriers, according to Herodotus, was 'nothing mortal surpassed'.[5] In India, Postal Service is first recorded by Barani, who described horse and foot postal organization in 1296 of Allauddin Khilji. In 1341, Ibn Batuta also commented on highly organised postal service under Tughlaqs. This was run on two different lines, 'El-wolak', which was a form of horse delivery and 'El-davah', which was the system of foot runners. Sikandar Lodi (1489-1517) established small posts everywhere, which Babur (1526-30) developed later and added horse courier system, particularly along the road from his capital at Agra upto Kabul.[6] Significant changes occurred during Sher Shah (1540-1545) who built road for postal service, from Bengal to Sindh. He established horse dispatches throughout the empire, and also made 1700 sarais along the roads, to make communication easier. Two horses were always kept ready to ensure quick transfer of dispatches. Later Akbar (1556-1605) developed same, and also added camels, as they were suitable for the deserts.

Initially, East India Company used postal runners already in position. Dauriya tracts were important in connecting and creating the territories of control and empire, writes Joshi.[7] With increased trade, the need was felt of regular service, and company begins to employ its own runners known as Cossids (Kasid) in Bengal, and as Patmars and Harkaras in rest of country. But there was very little beyond official mail. Bazaar cossids in time of Peter Mundy (1628-34) carried letters from Patna to Agra in 11-15 days, and between Delhi to Surat in 15-20 days, and it took 20 days for Patmars to travel between Goa and Masulipatnam.[8] Mysore was the first state in India to have postal system, Raja Chick Deo in 1672 organized postal service throughout his domain, headquartered at Mysore, along with communication, this also served as spy system.

In 1688, Company directed that a proper post office should be established in Bombay, similar measures were also taken in Madras. By 1766, Robert Clive started organizing sound government services for post. His orders being, for the better regulation of Dauks, in future all letters be dispatched from government house; the postmaster or his assistants attending every night to sort and see them off; that the letters to the different inland settlements be made up in separate bags sealed with the company's seal; and that no one may open the packets except the chiefs at different places.

After eight years, in 1774, Warren Hastings reorganized system, and in addition now private persons could also dispatch letters on payment of a fee, but reach was limited to company's ruling area, thus old runner system remained important, for the regions out of company's territories. Later, due to initiatives of Hastings, British gained 'de-facto' postal monopoly and secured dominance by opening British post officers in French and Danish India.[9] The postal administration by now emerged

consisting of three areas of Bengal, Bombay and Madras. In 1837, major change in structure of post office in India took place with 'Post Office Act XVII'. This act united post office organisation throughout three presidencies into one all India service. Act enabled public to use service, and private postal arrangements were abolished and criminal proceedings were to be instigated against any person continuing to run such private services. Before 1854, post office was still medley of services in different provinces, with each province having different rules. Finally, 'Post Office Act of 1854' converted post office into an imperial department under head called Director General and adhesive stamps were introduced, enabling letters to be dispatched at low uniform rates. Post was thrown open to all, at nominal rate of half anna to any part of India.[10] This has gradually made postal services accessible to the masses.

Post office became one of the only imperial institutions which went deep into interiors. Competition between villages to obtain post offices is often very keen. Post offices were divided into head-office, sub-office and branch offices. In smaller places, branch office sometimes was put in charge of school master or shopkeeper, these are visited periodically by village postman. Being local, postman also has to face certain amount of public opinion. To inhabitants he brings news of outside world, he also used to write letters on behalf of the illiterates. Officials of post office are consulted in all kinds of family troubles, they have to deal with curious superstitions to overcome prejudices. Indian villager dreads presence of government officer in his neighborhood, but he makes an exception in case of post office employees. Postman was always a welcome visitor. This made Post offices unrestricted means of diffusing knowledge, Commerce, and promoting social and intellectual improvement of people, says Giles. Department has entered into lives of people with its line of communication, saving Bank, money orders, and payment of pensions. Probably in no country in world is poor man so dependent upon post office for transmission of small sums of money as in India, noted Clarke.[11]

The adaptation of the new means of communication was not convenient, vernacular correspondence presented many difficulties with which Indian post office has to contend, as has been written by the early colonial officials who gave firsthand account of Indian Post. To oriental mind, writes Hamilton, outside of letter is appropriate place for sending salutations, and for person addressed cannot be named without long complimentary titles. Sir Arthur Fanshawe describes another difficulty, which was vagueness, habit of dwelling on generalities, which he called characteristic of life in east. In Indian towns houses are not numbered, and person addressed is indicated in most general way (for example, in direction of Jumma mosque). Another problem was of unpaid letters, which amounted one-seventh of whole, in 1897.[12] Caste-based social hierarchies also shaped the functioning of postal

system, as we come across clashes emerging due to caste system. On Malabar side, where strict Brahmanism prevails, persons of low caste are forbidden to enter quarters of town occupied by Brahmins, care has to be taken to place these quarters under high caste postman. In Palghat there was almost riot on one occasion when postman of inferior caste attempted to enter Brahmin Street in performance office duties.

Post Office and its services were not confined to literate population. It was also largely used by people who can neither read nor write, and this was made possible by existence of some literate people in the villages and professional letter writers, who are to be found in every town and village in the country. Most towns also had substantial communities of Bazaar writers acting for ordinary people who could pay them. For example, school masters of villages helped people to communicate with folk in distant parts. Following India's independence, Post Offices remained important state institution and state actively promoted communication infrastructure, as reflected in the 7th Five-Year Plan (1985–1990), which emphasized communication development, particularly for rural populations, aiming to produce better-informed citizens.[13] Overall, by late 20th century, prominence of traditional postal systems began to decline significantly with the advent of satellite-based communication technologies. The expansion of telecommunications infrastructure, particularly after 1980s, introduced faster and more efficient modes of information exchange. This shift marked a broader transformation in global communication order, privileging immediacy, accessibility, and electronic data transfer over postal mails.

The introduction of a new medium is a significant historical moment, where established patterns tied to older forms of media are interrogated and often transformed. These transitions become arenas for negotiating social norms, power, authority, and representation. The existing audience adapts to these shifts by projecting older habits onto new platforms that disrupt established social distances, prompting efforts to restore social equilibrium.[14]

In the early stages of human history, knowledge was primarily preserved through memory and oral traditions, with the art of memory being a highly valued skill.[15] Bayly, in *Empire and Information*, argues that early modern societies possessed decentralized information orders composed of overlapping knowledge-rich communities. Literacy functioned as a specialized resource, accessible to elites who used it to signify status. Unlike Western trajectories, Bayly asserts that India had developed an effective information order based on oral communication, which was strategically reinforced by select written media. This reduced the necessity for widespread printing until colonial transformations demanded new modes of dissemination. In this context, informal settings such as betel-nut stalls and sweet shops often functioned as more influential news forums than print media. Francis Robinson

similarly emphasizes the prominence of oral exposition and the role of the physical presence of learned teachers in the Islamic culture of pre-print North India.[16]

Despite a delayed adoption of print, North India saw the rise of complex political debates and resilient knowledge communities. These groups successfully appropriated books, pamphlets, newspapers, and the British postal system, to critique colonial rule and resist Western cultural hegemony.[17]Gradually, knowledge began transforming into a public good and a citizen's right. However, Bayly notes that the flow of information remained uneven across regions, time periods, and social groups.[18] In contrast, the modern era has witnessed an unprecedented acceleration in the production and dissemination of information. Harari underscores this transformation and explores how shifts in information flows have profoundly influenced democratic institutions.[19] Thus, we may argue that assured connection with the roots allowed people to migrate and made masses to have educated opinions about the world and democracy, in which Postal system as a means of communication played an important role.

To conclude, the evolution of communication in India—from the sarai to the satellite—encapsulates a broader historical shift from elite and oral forms of connectivity to global, instantaneous, and mass-mediated systems. The Indian postal system, positioned at the fulcrum of this transition, not only served as an administrative apparatus but also became an agent of social transformation, enabling participation, mobility, and democratization of knowledge. The layered history of communication reveals how infrastructural changes reshape not only the flow of information but also the contours of social and political life. Understanding this trajectory allows us to appreciate how connectivity has never been merely technical, but deeply embedded in the cultural, economic, and political fabric of any society.

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Public Buildings and Indigenous Labor : Class, Caste and Community in the Construction Workforce of Colonial Bengal

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Abstract :-

The colonial period in Bengal witnessed the construction of an extensive network of public buildings—courthouses, jails, railways, educational institutions, and administrative offices—which came to symbolize the physical and ideological consolidation of British power. Behind this monumental architecture lay the largely invisible labor of indigenous workers drawn from diverse caste, class, and community backgrounds. This research article explores the complex socio-economic and cultural landscape of the construction workforce in colonial Bengal, examining how class stratification, caste hierarchies, and regional community affiliations shaped labor relations on public works. It investigates how the colonial state and native contractors mobilized and managed this labor force, and how workers themselves navigated this exploitative system. By centering the experiences of indigenous laborers—often categorized as subaltern—this study contributes to a broader understanding of colonial infrastructure not just as material artifacts, but as contested social spaces built upon layered inequalities and resistance.

Keywords :- Colonial Bengal, Indigenous Labor, Public Buildings, Construction Workforce,Labor History, British Empire.

Introduction :-

The landscape of colonial Bengal underwent a dramatic transformation from the mid-eighteenth century onward, as the British East India Company and, later, the imperial government undertook expansive programs of public works. From the imposing red-brick courthouses of Calcutta to the network of district jails, railway stations, and civil lines buildings scattered across the province,

these structures were not only architectural manifestations of colonial authority but also critical instruments of governance, control, and extraction. However, the human labor that made these edifices possible has largely remained marginalized in mainstream historical narratives.

This research focuses on the indigenous workforce that physically built colonial Bengal's public infrastructure. It interrogates the composition of this labor force through the interrelated lenses of **class, caste, and community**, unpacking how each category influenced access to labor, the nature of work assigned, and the working conditions endured. The construction laborers were not a monolithic group but included **skilled masons, carpenters, unskilled coolies, and bonded or coerced workers**, whose experiences varied greatly depending on social background and local affiliations.

Moreover, the colonial state's relationship with labor was mediated through native contractors, local zamindars, and caste-based labor networks. These intermediaries played a crucial role in labor recruitment, wage negotiation, and control, often reinforcing existing social hierarchies while adapting to the demands of the colonial bureaucracy. Caste-based occupational specialization (such as the roles of *kachis*, *rajmistris*, and *mistris*) was often both a source of employment and a mechanism of social confinement, creating a complex dynamic of dependency and domination.

This paper aims to analyze how laborers' identities as **members of oppressed castes, impoverished classes, or marginalized tribal communities** shaped their experiences within the colonial construction industry. It also highlights the limited yet significant forms of resistance, negotiation, and adaptation employed by these workers in an exploitative and racialized labor regime. By foregrounding the lives of indigenous laborers—whose hands quite literally built the colonial state—this article contributes to a growing body of literature that seeks to **recenter subaltern agency within the history of empire**. It argues that public buildings in colonial Bengal were not merely products of British architectural ambition, but were also sites of social conflict, labor exploitation, and indigenous resilience.

1.   **Colonial Infrastructure and the Expansion of Public Works in Bengal :-**

The British colonial administration in Bengal embarked on an ambitious program of constructing public infrastructure beginning in the late 18th century, which intensified under direct Crown rule after 1858. The development of courthouses, police stations, post offices, collectorate buildings, district jails, schools, railways, and irrigation canals served not only administrative efficiency but also imperial dominance.

Public buildings became symbols of law, order, and "civilization," but they also functioned as material mechanisms of surveillance and control. This transformation necessitated a vast, cheap, and

obedient labor force—mostly drawn from Bengal's rural hinterlands. The Public Works Department (PWD), formally established in 1854, played a central role in the design and implementation of such projects, often in collaboration with British engineers and Indian contractors.

2. Labor Recruitment and the Role of Intermediaries :-

Recruiting indigenous labor for large-scale construction projects was a complicated process that involved multiple layers of intermediaries. Contractors, often from influential native families or trading castes (e.g., Kayasthas, Banias), were subcontracted by the PWD to supply labor. These contractors, in turn, relied on caste-based networks and rural middlemen to mobilize workers. The recruitment process often blurred the lines between voluntary and coerced labor. Poor peasants, debt-bonded laborers, and landless tribals were drawn into the workforce through promises of wages, or through the pressure of indebtedness and famine. The famine of 1873–74 and others that followed made rural populations particularly vulnerable to exploitative recruitment practices.

The role of **sardars** (labor leaders) was crucial in organizing labor gangs. These sardars usually came from dominant local communities and were responsible for maintaining discipline, allocating work, and ensuring productivity. They also acted as intermediaries between the laborers and colonial engineers, often benefiting from their position of authority.

3. Caste and Occupational Segmentation in Construction Labor :-

Caste played a defining role in the organization of labor. The colonial state, while officially neutral, reinforced traditional caste-based occupations by relying on them for labor categorization. For example :

- **Rajmistris** (masons) were predominantly drawn from artisan castes like the **Karmakars**, **Shundis**, or **Sadgops**.

- **Coolies** or unskilled laborers were often recruited from the lowest rungs of the caste hierarchy—**Doms**, **Chandalas**, and **Bauris**—and from **Adivasi communities** such as the **Santhals** and **Bhumij**.

- **Skilled carpenters** were often from **Mahishyas**, **Kayasthas**, and even some **Muslim artisan groups** like **Mistris**.

- **Water carriers**, sweepers, and lime mixers were largely from **Dalit castes**, reflecting an occupational hierarchy that mirrored ritual pollution taboos.

This segmentation meant that wages, work security, and living conditions were all differentially distributed based on caste and community. Skilled upper-caste workers often received better pay, more stable contracts, and limited supervisory roles, while the lower castes and tribal workers bore the brunt of physical labor under degrading conditions.

4.   Working Conditions and Everyday Struggles :-

The working conditions of laborers on colonial construction sites were harsh and exploitative. Wages were meager, hours were long (10–12 hours per day), and health and safety were virtually nonexistent. Workers were often housed in makeshift camps or shanties near the construction sites, lacking sanitation, medical facilities, or adequate food.

Outbreaks of disease such as cholera, dysentery, and malaria were common. Injuries and deaths from worksite accidents were frequent, yet compensation was rare. Despite the formalization of the labor bureaucracy after the Factories Act of 1881 and subsequent labor reforms, construction labor—especially on government buildings—remained largely unregulated.

Women were employed in lesser numbers, typically as water carriers, sweepers, or lime mixers, and were paid significantly less than men. Children too were sometimes employed under coercive conditions.

5.   Resistance, Adaptation, and Community Solidarity :-

Despite the overwhelming power imbalance, indigenous workers were not entirely passive. Subtle and overt forms of resistance shaped labor relations :

- **Absenteeism**, **slowdowns**, and **non-cooperation** were common tactics to express dissatisfaction.
- At times, workers engaged in **petitions to PWD officials** demanding fair wages or better conditions.
- In major urban centers like Calcutta and Howrah, early forms of labor organization emerged among skilled workers—especially **mistris**, **carpenters**, and **stone cutters**—who began to bargain collectively.

Caste and community networks often provided support to workers during hardships. Among tribal workers like the Santhals, kinship and village ties helped migrants adjust to the exploitative urban labor environment. Seasonal migration became a survival strategy, with workers returning to their villages during monsoons or agricultural cycles.

6.   Public Buildings as Sites of Social Contradiction :-

Colonial public buildings were meant to represent order, justice, and modernity, but their construction relied on the **labor of those who were excluded from these ideals**. Courthouses were built by those denied justice; jails by those often imprisoned in them; schools and universities by those denied formal education. This contradiction reflects the **ideological hypocrisy** of colonial modernity.

In the process, however, these sites also became spaces of **community formation**, **inter-**

caste interaction, and **labor mobilization**, creating new social dynamics that would influence later working-class consciousness in Bengal.

7.   Legacy and Historical Erasure :-

The laboring classes that built colonial Bengal's infrastructure have been largely **erased from public memory**. The names of colonial engineers, architects, and Viceroys are inscribed on foundation stones, while the lives of thousands of unnamed workers remain undocumented. This research attempts to retrieve that forgotten history—placing indigenous labor at the center of Bengal's colonial built environment and challenging narratives that focus solely on colonial vision and design.

Conclusion :-

The construction of public buildings in colonial Bengal was not merely a story of architectural achievement or colonial statecraft—it was also a story of invisible labor, caste oppression, class exploitation, and community mobilization. While the colonial state celebrated the modernity of its infrastructure, it simultaneously exploited a complex and stratified indigenous workforce whose contributions went largely unacknowledged. This study has revealed that labor recruitment and deployment were deeply entangled with local hierarchies of caste and class, with marginalized groups—particularly Dalits, Adivasis, and landless peasants—bearing the brunt of physical toil under exploitative conditions. The rigid occupational segmentation and unequal wages reflected and reinforced the larger social order that both the colonial administration and indigenous elites had a stake in preserving.

Yet, within this oppressive framework, indigenous laborers were not without agency. Through everyday acts of resistance, community solidarity, and labor migration, they shaped and negotiated their own survival and dignity. These workers played a crucial role in shaping the urban and administrative landscape of Bengal, and their stories must be recognized as integral to the region's colonial history. By recovering the lived experiences of the indigenous construction workforce, this research aims to challenge the elitist and colonial-centric narratives that dominate architectural and labor history. It is only by centering subaltern labor that we can arrive at a more just and holistic understanding of how colonial Bengal was built—both literally and metaphorically.

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Significance of Indra in the Rigveda

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India has a long history of worshipping Gods and Goddesses. Some are so old that their very names and attributes have been forgotten and lost to time. The first properly named deities are from the Vedic age, more specifically the Rig Veda. Although very few physical depictions were made of these Deities there is a lot of information about their attributes, feats, spheres of control and ways to please them[1]. Among this plethora of Deities, the God Indra stands out. Indra is the most important of the Vedic Gods[2].

In the Rig Veda he has the largest number of Hymns associated with him[3]. There are about two hundred and fifty hymns addressed to him and this makes up around one fourth of the Rig Veda[4]. Like many other Gods of the Vedic Era the birth of Indra and his lineage varies among various Hymns associated with him within the text. The most accepted and repeating one in the Vedas is given as follows. According to the 17th Hymn of the 4th Mandala of the Rig Veda[5]:

सुवीरस्ते जनिता मन्यत द्यौरिन्द्रस्य कर्ता स्वपस्तमो भूत् ।

य ई जजान स्वर्यं सुवज्रमनपच्युतं सदसो न भूम॥४॥

"4.Thy Father Dyaus esteemed himself a hero: most noble was the work of Indra's Maker, His who begat the strong bolt's Lord who roareth, immovable like earth from her foundation."

He is the son of Dyaus who is sometimes referred to as embodying the Heaven[6]. He is also considered as the son of Heaven and Earth (Dyaus and Prithvi)[7]. In verse 33 of Hymn 164 of the 1st Mandala of the Rig Veda it is clearly said[8]:

द्यौर्मे पिता जनिता नाभिरत्र बन्धुर्मे माता पृथिवी महीयम्।

उत्तानयोश्चम्वोर्योनिरन्तरत्रा पिता दुहितुर्गर्भमाधात्॥३३॥

"33.Dyaus is my Father, my begetter: kinship is here. This great earth is my kin and Mother. Between the wide-spread world-halves is the birth-place: the Father laid the Daughter's germ within it"

These two examples prove the genealogy of Indra as being like other traditional Indo European Thunder Gods as the son of the sky and the earth[9].

Feats of Indra :-

1) Slaying of Vrtra :-

Indra was a very powerful God in the Rig Veda and thus has many feats attributed to Him. The first of these and the most important one was the feat of him slaying the "serpent" or "dragon" Vrtra. Hymn 32 of Mandala 1 of the Rig Veda explains the entire event and legend of how Indra slew Vrtra[10]. The first verse of this hymn gives the basic understanding of why Indra slew Vrtra, it says[11]:

इन्द्रस्य नु वीर्याणि प्र वोचं यानि चकार प्रथमानि वज्री।

अहन्नहिमन्वपस्ततर्द प्र वक्षणा अभिनत्पर्वतानाम्॥१॥

" 1. I WILL declare the manly deeds of Indra, the first that he achieved, the Thunder-wielder. He slew the Dragon, then disclosed the waters, and cleft the channels of the mountain torrents."

Here the "Dragon" refers to Vrtra which can be seen later on in the hymn. From this opening verse of the hymn the crux of the story can be derived, that Vrtra hid the

waters of the land and Indra upon slaying him with the thunderbolt or Vajra thereby freed the water. Hymn 19 of the 4th Mandala of the Rig Veda is important, it says[12]:

अतृष्णुवन्तं वियतमबुध्यमबुध्यमानं सुषुपाणमिन्द्र।

सप्त प्रति प्रवत आशयानमहिं वज्रेण वि रिणा अपर्वन्॥३॥

"3. The insatiate one, extended, hard to waken, who slumbered in perpetual sleep, O Indra,- The Dragon stretched against the seven prone rivers, where no joint was, thou rentest with thy thunder."

From this Verse it can be seen that Vrtra had blocked the waters of the seven rivers or the "Sapra Sindhu" as they were known in later times. This shows that the Vedic people were residing in this region between the River Indus and its tributaries[13]. Indra slaying Him thus allows the waters of the seven rivers to flow into the region and benefit the people.

2) **Freeing the Cattle** :-

After the feat of slaying Vrtra the freeing of the Cattle from the Panis is one of the most important feats of Indra and is mentioned many times in the Rig Veda. As with many other feats of Indra this too is not told in a story form as the Rig Veda is a collection of Hymns and not of stories and legends of the Gods like how the Puranas are. The story begins with a group of beings called as Panis who have stolen and hidden the cattle of the Vedic people[14]. To find the cattle Indra sends his divine hound named Sarama to find them, and she does, hymn 108 of the 10th Mandala of the Rig Veda tells of the interaction between Sarama and the leader of the Panis[15]. To now quote from the above-mentioned hymn[16]:

इमा गावः सरमे या ऐच्छः परि दिवो अन्तान्त्सुभगे पतन्ती।

कस्त एना अव सृजादयुध्व्युतास्माकमायुधा सन्ति तिग्मा॥५॥

"5. These are the cattle which, Sarama, thou seekest, flying, O Blest One, to the ends of heaven. Who will loose these for thee without a battle? Yea, and sharp-pointed are our warlike weapons."

From this Verse it can be seen that the leader of the Panis is accepting and openly telling Sarama that they have captured the cattle. He even challenges her and asks who can release the cattle from their cave. Not only the cattle but a great deal of Treasures have been stolen by the Panis which can be seen further in the hymn where it is said[17]:

अयं निधिः सरमे अद्रिबुध्नो गोभिरश्वेभिर्वसुभिर्न्यृष्टः।

रक्षन्ति तं पणयो ये सुगोपा रेकु पदमलकमा जगन्थ॥७॥

"7. Paved with the rock is this our treasure-chamber; filled full of precious things, cattle, and horses. These Panis who are watchful keepers guard it. In vain hast thou approached this lonely station."

From these two verses it is clear that the cattle of the people along with a variety of other treasures such as horses have been stolen and hidden in a cave by the Panis. After the discovery of the cattle, Indra came forth to free them; there are references to him defeating Vala and freeing the cattle. Some scholars believe Vala to be the leader of the Panis and say that it was Him who had the dialogue with Sarama[18]. In hymn 67 of the 10th Mandala of the Rig Veda it is said[19]:

इन्द्रो वलं रक्षितारं दुघानां करेणेव वि चकर्ता रवेण।

स्वेदाञ्जिभिराशिरमिच्छमानोऽरोदयत्पणिमा गा अमुष्णात्॥६॥

"6. As with a hand, so with his roaring Indra cleft Vala through, the guardian of the cattle. Seeking the milk-draught with sweatshining comrades he stole the Pani's cattle and left him weeping."

From this Verse it can be seen that even though Vala is not explicitly declared as the leader of the Panis he was a hero among them and slaying him was enough for Indra

to be able to take back the cattle. What is also interesting is that here Indra did not use physical violence but by his voice only did Indra slay Vala. Another reference of Indra slaying Vala and rescuing the cattle can be seen in hymn 62 of the 1st Mandala of the Rig Veda which says[20]:

यदीं वलस्य गव्या अनीकं वि तस्थाने अङ्गिरसो गोपाम्।

उदू सजा प्र तवसे सहस्रा यदिन्द्र गा अग्रणीतो गभीराः॥३॥

"3. When, Indra, thou with those who sang the praises, the Angirases, didst break the strongholds of Vala, Thou openedst the cave that held the cattle: the lowing kine thou broughtest forth to mortals."

From these references this important feat of Indra can be understood as to how he discovered and returned the cattle which were stolen by the Panis. To do this he slew Vala and broke the cave of the Panis and freed the cattle.

3) <u>**Defeat of Enemies and destroying of forts**</u> :-

The Rig Veda mentions many enemies defeated by Indra, but because it is a collection of Hymns and not stories, it does not expand on them. Indra was not just a sky God but had become a war God and the protector of the Vedic people[21]. Not only did he defeat their enemies but also broke down the forts that protected many of these enemies earning him the title of "Purandara". Most scholars take this word to be "The destroyer of forts" but some say it means "Destroyer of Cities" and believe that this was applied to Indra as he was the God prayed to, to destroy the cities of the Non- Aryan people[22]. There is a lot of controversy surrounding the nature of the enemies who Indra destroyed, whether they were the indigenous people or were beings of evil, etc. This paper does not analyse into the nature of these people but only aims to show that one of the reasons why Indra was significant to the Vedic people is that he slew their enemies and smashed the forts.

Now to look into a few verses that mention Indra doing these feats. There are references to these feats from the 1st Mandala of the Rig Veda itself, where in Hymn 33 it can be seen[23]:

न्याविध्यदिलीबिशस्य दृळ्हा वि शृङ्गिणमभिनच्छुष्णमिन्द्रः।

यावत्तरो मघवन्यावदोजो वज्रेण शत्रुमवधीः पृतन्युम्॥१२॥

" 12. Indra broke through Ilibisa's strong castles, and Suspa with his horn he cut to pieces: Thou, Maghavan, for all his might and swiftness, slewest thy fighting foeman with thy thunder."

In this verse it can be seen that Indra broke through the castles of a being called Illibisa and cut Suspa into pieces. Neither have been mentioned later but it is evident that the story and reasons for Indra doing this were known to the Vedic people or else it would not have been mentioned at all. Another instance can be seen in hymn 31 of the 6th Mandala of the Rig Veda[24];

त्वं शतान्यव शम्बरस्य पुरो जघन्थाप्रतीनि दस्योः।

अशिक्षो यत्र शच्या शचीवो दिवोदासाय सुन्वते सुतक्रे भरद्वाजाय गृणते वसूनि॥४॥

" 4. Thou smotest to the ground the hundred castles, impregnable, of Sambara the Dasyu, When, Strong, with might thou helpest Divodasa who poured libations out, O Soma-buyer, and madest Bharadvaja rich who praised thee."

From this verse it can be seen that Indra helped Divodasa, who prayed to Indra. In answer to his prayers Indra destroyed a hundred castles of cities of a king named Sambara who was a Dasyu. Divodasa was a king of the Bharata clan, but there is some debate among scholars as to who was Samhara, some believe him to be the king of a clan of "fallen Aryans" who stopped following the Vedic ways[25]. There are many more instances of Indra slaying various enemies and destroying the forts of many more.

4) Cosmic feats of Indra :-

Not only did Indra have a variety of feats set in the world of men, he is also attributed to have many cosmic feats showcasing his importance and strength as a Deity. There is a vast variety of cosmic feats and the creation and preservation of many aspects of nature and the cosmos attested to Indra[26]. Now to look into some of them through verses of the Rig Veda. Hymn 15 of the the 2nd Mandala of the Rig Veda says[27]:

अवंशे द्यामस्तभायद्बृहन्तमा रोदसी अपृणदन्तरिक्षम्।

स धारयत्पृथिवीं पप्रथच्च सोमस्य ता मद इन्द्रश्चकार॥२॥

" 2. High heaven unsupported in space he stabilised: he filled the two worlds and the air's mid-region. Earth he upheld, and gave it wide expansion. These things did Indra in the Soma's rapture."

This Verse explains that it was Indra who set the various regions of the world in place and order. High heaven here can be understood as the sky, then he stabilised the Earth and the middle region between heaven and earth he filled with Air. There are only two worlds mentioned here as Heaven and Earth. Another reference of Indra setting stable the Earth can be seen in Hymn 17 of the 2nd Mandala of the Rig Veda which says[28]:

स प्राचीनान्पर्वतान्दृंहदोजसाधराचीनमकृणोदपामप:।

अधारयत्पृथिवीं विश्वधायसमस्तभ्नान्मायया द्यामवस्रस:॥५॥

"5. He with his might made firm the forward-bending hills, the downward rushing of the waters he ordained. Fast he upheld the earth that nourisheth all life, and stayed the heaven from falling by his wondrous skill."

From this verse it can be seen that not only did Indra stabilize and set the position of heaven and Earth but also made the mountains of earth and decided that water should flow downwards. This goes to show that he was regarded as a creator of natural

phenomena such as gravity as well. Not only stabilizing the heaven and Earth there are few references in the Rig Veda that mention, Indra himself created the heaven and earth, one of these is found in hymn 36 of the 8th Mandala which says[29]:

जनिता दिवो जनिता पृथिव्याः पिबा सोमं मदाय कं शतक्रतो।

यं ते भागमधारयन्विश्वाः सेहानः पृतना उरु जयः समप्सुजिन्मरुत्वाँ इन्द्र सत्पते॥४॥

4. Creator of the heaven, creator of the earth, O Satakratu, drink Soma to make thee glad."

The concept of Indra as being not only the stabilizer of the world and universe but also its creator is very interesting as it sets Indra as an almost supreme deity for the Vedic people. Indra is also strongly associated with the Sun[30], from hymn 7 of the 1st Mandala of the Rig Veda which says[31]:

इन्द्रो दीर्घाय चक्षस आ सूर्यं रोहयद्दिवि।

वि गोभिरद्रिमैरयत्॥३॥

" 3. Indra hath raised the Sun on high in heaven, that he may see afar: He burst the mountain for the kine."

One can see that Indra is said to have raised the very Sun in the sky or heaven thereby bringing light to the world. Another association with the Sun can be seen in hymn 30 of the 3rd Mandala which says[32]:

दिशः सूर्यो न मिनाति प्रदिष्टा दिवेदिवे हर्यश्वप्रसूताः।

सं यदानळ्धन आदिदश्वैर्विमोचनं कृणुते तत्त्वस्य॥१२॥

"12. Surya transgresses not the ordered limits set daily by the Lord of Tawny Coursers. When to the goal he comes, his journey ended, his Steeds he looses: this is Indra's doing."

This verse is particularly important because from this it can be seen that not only did Indra set the path for the Sun to traverse but also set the duration for the day and night. From these few instances of the many cosmic feats associated with Indra it can be seen that Indra was not just a warrior and thunder God to the Vedic people but was a Deity of much more power and cosmic importance.

These are just four sets of feats performed by Indra in the Rig Veda, but they are not limited to these. The paper mentions these only because they set a broad framework for the type of deity Indra was to the Vedic people. Seeing the variety of feats associated with Indra one can rightly assume that the cult of Indra was almost henotheistic in nature. While scholars such as Max Muller have suggested Henotheism in the Rig Veda he has not explicitly mentioned Indra as the center of this[33]. The author through this paper has tried to show that at some point of the Vedic Civilization Indra had become the most important God and while other Gods were worshipped none received as much importance as Indra.

As can be seen from the references given in this paper Indra was more than just a thunder and war God, he was associated with wealth, protection, strength, victory in war, the river waters, helping and protecting his devotees, stabilizing and creating the heaven and earth, creating light, setting the path and duration of the Sun, etc. Thus Indra was a multifaceted and powerful deity who held great significance to the Vedic people.

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The Legacy of Rajguru : The Revolutionary Freedom Fighter

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Abstract   :-

This paper explores the life, contributions, and legacy of Shivaram Rajguru, one of India's most prominent revolutionary freedom fighters who played a significant role in the struggle against British colonial rule. Rajguru was deeply involved in the revolutionary activities of the early 20th century and is most famous for his involvement in the assassination of J.P. Saunders, a British police officer, in 1928. Alongside other freedom fighters like Bhagat Singh and Sukhdev, Rajguru's sacrifice and dedication to India's independence have left an indelible mark on the nation's history. The paper delves into his early life, revolutionary activities, execution, and the impact of his actions on India's freedom movement. Through a detailed examination, this paper aims to shed light on Rajguru's unwavering commitment to India's independence and his enduring legacy as a hero of the freedom struggle.

Keywords :-

Rajguru, Indian freedom movement, revolutionary activities, Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev, British colonialism, execution, independence, sacrifice, Indian history.

Introduction :-

The Indian freedom movement was shaped by the contributions of numerous individuals, each playing a crucial role in dismantling British colonial rule. Among the many revolutionaries who emerged during this period, Shivaram Rajguru stands out for his courage, commitment, and role in key revolutionary actions. This paper explores his life, the revolutionary activities he engaged in, and his ultimate sacrifice for India's independence.

Early Life of Rajguru :-

Shivaram Rajguru was born on August 24, 1908, in Khed, Maharashtra. Raised in a patriotic

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environment, Rajguru's early exposure to nationalist ideas and the revolutionary movements against British rule shaped his outlook. He was drawn to the ideals of liberty, nationalism, and the necessity of armed struggle to achieve India's independence. Rajguru's formal education, although limited, was complemented by his keen interest in the works of other nationalist thinkers, which further fueled his desire to resist British oppression.

Joining the Revolutionary Movement :-

Rajguru's commitment to India's liberation led him to join the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association (HSRA), a revolutionary group founded by Bhagat Singh, Chandra Shekhar Azad, and other like-minded individuals. The HSRA advocated for the use of armed struggle to expel the British and secure independence. Rajguru quickly became an active member, known for his ability to organize and his dedication to the cause.

The Saunders Murder and the Role of Rajguru :-

One of the most defining moments in Rajguru's revolutionary journey came in 1928 when he, along with Bhagat Singh and Sukhdev, plotted and executed the assassination of J.P. Saunders, a British police officer. Saunders was responsible for the lathi charge that led to the death of Lala Lajpat Rai, a revered nationalist leader. The assassination was a retaliation against the British authorities and a call for a more aggressive stance in the fight for independence.

Rajguru's role in the plot was pivotal. While Bhagat Singh was responsible for the actual shooting, Rajguru acted as the primary accomplice, guiding the team and ensuring their escape. This act of defiance against British rule gained immense popularity among the Indian masses, particularly the youth, who viewed Rajguru as a symbol of resistance.

Rajguru's Arrest, Trial, and Execution :-

Following the assassination, Rajguru, along with Bhagat Singh and Sukhdev, was arrested by the British authorities. The trial that followed was politically charged and seen by many as an attempt by the British to suppress revolutionary movements. Despite facing harsh interrogation and an unfair trial, Rajguru remained resolute and steadfast in his commitment to India's freedom.

On March 23, 1931, Rajguru, Bhagat Singh, and Sukhdev were sentenced to death. They were executed in Lahore Central Jail. Their execution sparked widespread protests and a sense of collective outrage among the Indian populace. Rajguru's final moments were marked by his unwavering spirit and commitment to his cause, making him an immortal symbol of resistance and sacrifice.

The Impact of Rajguru's Sacrifice :-

Rajguru's sacrifice, along with those of Bhagat Singh and Sukhdev, had a profound impact on India's struggle for independence. Their martyrdom ignited the flames of nationalism and led to

widespread protests against British rule. The trio's execution also contributed to the rise of revolutionary movements that sought to challenge the British in new and radical ways.

Rajguru's legacy as a freedom fighter remains a source of inspiration for generations. His commitment to the cause, even in the face of death, exemplified the ideals of selflessness and patriotism. His role in the assassination of J.P. Saunders, alongside Bhagat Singh and Sukhdev, continues to be a significant event in the history of India's freedom struggle.

Legacy and Commemoration :-

Today, Rajguru is remembered as a martyr and a symbol of resistance against oppression. Various schools, institutions, and memorials have been established in his honor, ensuring that his contributions to India's independence are never forgotten. In the larger narrative of India's freedom struggle, Rajguru's courage and sacrifices continue to inspire countless individuals to fight for justice, freedom, and equality.

Conclusion :-

Shivaram Rajguru's life and martyrdom exemplify the spirit of sacrifice and commitment to a cause greater than oneself. As a prominent revolutionary, his contributions to India's struggle for independence were crucial in inspiring the youth and instilling a sense of nationalist pride. Although his life was short, his actions left a lasting imprint on the Indian independence movement. The bravery, sacrifice, and patriotism displayed by Rajguru are integral to the rich history of India's freedom struggle, and his legacy remains an essential part of India's narrative.

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The Forgotten Flame of Indian History : Maharani Avantibai Lodhi

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Introduction :

The Revolt of 1857, often referred to as the First War of Indian Independence, can be considered the soul of nationalism against imperialism across India. It ignited the spirit of nationalism across the subcontinent and united princely states and kingdoms against the imperial British rule, with the Ramgarh State of Dhindori district of Madhya Pradesh being a significant centre. It laid the foundation for the Indian national movement for the upcoming century.

This region of Sagar and Narmada bore witness to the first clarion call of freedom. The heavy responsibility of leading the revolution in this area was shouldered by the brave queen of Ramgarh State, Maharani Avantibai Lodhi. She etched the pages of history with her blood.

Though Maharani Avantibai had limited resources and an army of untrained and inexperienced farmers, she became a thorn in the side of the British. Ignoring the scarcity of means, and driven by the spirit of devotion to the motherland— "Janani Janmabhoomishcha Swargadapi Gariyasi" ("Mother and motherland are greater than heaven")—she chose the path of active resistance with unwavering determination and unyielding courage to fight and die for the freedom of her country.

Background :

The state of Ramgarh was established in the year 1680 CE. Its founder, Raja Gaj Singh, was granted the Mukutpur taluka by the reigning Gaud king as a reward for his courage and remarkable acts of valour. Following Raja Gaj Singh's reign, the state was ruled by Raja Dhan Singh and subsequently by Raja Hemraj Singh. After them, Raja Lakshman Singh ascended the royal throne. Upon Raja Lakshman Singh's death in 1850, he was succeeded by Raja Vikramjeet, who later assumed the title of Maharaja.

During the reign of Maharaja Vikramjeet, British interference in the affairs of Ramgarh gradually intensified. The Maharaja, known for his deep religious devotion, was labelled as mentally unstable

by the British—a portrayal that served their political agenda. Their primary objective was to undermine the authority of the Maharaja in every possible way, ultimately paving the path for the annexation of the state. In 1851, as they did with many other princely territories, the British downgraded Ramgarh to a tehsil (administrative division) and appointed a tehsildar, Sheikh Sarbarahkar (local official), to govern it. Maharaja Vikramjeet vehemently opposed this imposition.

Although his health eventually deteriorated, his legacy of defiance laid the foundation for the events leading to the uprising of 1857. In the face of mounting adversity, his courageous wife, Maharani Avantibai, rose to the occasion with remarkable strength and resolve, becoming a central figure in the struggle against colonial oppression.

The Struggle for Sovereignty :

Amidst such extraordinary and testing times, Maharani Avantibai found herself compelled to take control of the state's affairs. Following a contentious dispute over succession and the administration of the estate, the officials of the East India Company in the Central Provinces placed the Ramgarh estate under the authority of the *Court of Wards*. They appointed a *tehsildar* to manage the region, effectively taking administrative control into their own hands and sidelining the rightful rulers.

Maharani Avantibai, left with no other recourse, chose to resist this unjust imposition with determination. Rather than surrender to colonial power, she made the ultimate sacrifice in the service of her motherland.

Early Life :

A beacon of patriotism and valour, Maharani Avantibai was born on 16 August 1831 in the village of Mankhedi, located in Seoni district. She was the daughter of Zamindar Rao Jujhar Singh Lodhi, and her mother's name was Narmada Bai. Through marriage, she became the queen of the princely state of Ramgarh. Her husband, Vikramaditya Singh, was later declared insane by the British. After his death, the British refused to acknowledge their sons, Aman Singh and Sher Singh, as legitimate heirs to the throne, citing their minority as justification. Consequently, the British declared the estate as territory under the *Court of Wards* and installed their administrator, Sheikh Sarbarahkar, to govern the region.

A Call to Arms :

Refusing to accept this unjust takeover, Maharani Avantibai rose to defend the honour and sovereignty of her kingdom. Demonstrating fearless leadership, she expelled the administrator appointed by the British and boldly declared open resistance to colonial rule. Her actions marked a turning point in the struggle against British dominance in the region.

To rally support, Maharani Avantibai sent out her trusted messengers, known as *herkaare*, to nearby princely states, carrying urgent messages of defiance and unity. Along with the letters she dispatched, Maharani Avantibai's courage ignited a wave of inspiration across the region.

When the rulers of these neighbouring territories received and read her letters, they were deeply moved by the strength of her resolve and the clarity of her purpose. Her call to arms resonated far and wide, galvanizing support and awakening the spirit of independence in many hearts. Recognizing the significance of her stand, they began to see her rebellion not just as a local dispute but as part of a greater call for resistance against foreign rule. Her leadership, determination, and willingness to challenge the might of the British Empire cemented her legacy as one of the foremost warriors of India's first war of independence.

Along with her letters, Maharani Avantibai sent bangles—a potent symbol of her message. The letters carried a daring challenge :

"If you regard it as your sacred duty to serve Bharat Mata, then draw your swords and fight the British. If not, wear these bangles and retreat into your homes."

The symbolic act and fearless message triggered a powerful ripple effect. This stirring appeal questioned the courage and honour of those rulers who had yet to take a stand. Numerous local thakurs, zamindars, and regional chieftains rose in solidarity, pledging their allegiance to the cause of India's freedom. What began as one queen's defiance quickly grew into a widespread uprising, as the region answered her call to arms.

Jagat Singh, ruler of Shahpur, launched an attack on Narayanganj, while Bahadur Singh Lodhi led resistance in Shahpura. In Salimnabad, Indian soldiers stationed under British command revolted and joined forces with Subedar Baldev Tiwari at Patan.

As the revolt intensified, Maharani Avantibai herself took command of a growing alliance. Joining her in this united rebellion were prominent leaders such as Suraj Prasad Singh of Vijayraghavgarh, Kishore Singh Lodhi, Shankar Shah, and his son Prince Raghunath Shah, and Umrao Singh Lodhi. Together, they orchestrated an armed resistance across the northern region of the Narmada River, confronting British forces with coordinated strength and unwavering resolve.

United by purpose and guided by Avantibai's fearless vision, they formed a strong front that challenged British authority along the northern banks of the Narmada River, fuelling the growing fire of the independence movement.

The First Battle: Triumph at Kheri :

Maharani Avantibai established her military base near the village of Kheri in the Mandla region, preparing for an assault on the British garrison stationed at Mandla. However, before she could initiate

her offensive, British Commander Waddington advanced toward her encampment, leading to an unexpected early confrontation.

In the fierce battle that followed, Maharani Avantibai displayed extraordinary courage and martial skill. Mounted on horseback and wielding her sword with lightning speed, she charged through enemy ranks with unrelenting force. As Waddington attempted to encircle her while riding his horse, the queen met his advance head-on. With a swift and powerful strike, she aimed for the commander. At that critical moment, her horse surged forward, causing her sword to land on Waddington's horse, severing its neck completely. The beast collapsed, throwing the commander to the ground.

Stunned and terrified, Waddington pleaded for his life. In a gesture of honour befitting a true warrior, Maharani Avantibai chose to spare him. The British forces, overwhelmed by her bravery and tactical prowess, were routed, and the town of Mandla fell under her control. In his desperate retreat, Waddington abandoned his young son, Romeo, on the battlefield. Demonstrating compassion even amidst war, Maharani Avantibai ensured the child was safely returned to the British camp. The act reflected her nobility and character as a leader.

On 26 September 1857, Maharani Avantibai's forces struck another decisive blow by driving out British officers from Ramgarh and taking control of the treasury. The British responded quickly, leading to what would become the first major battle at Kheri. It was here, with her keen strategic acumen and fearless leadership, that Maharani Avantibai achieved one of the rare Indian victories during the Revolt of 1857.

British Retaliation and Guerrilla Warfare :

Shamed by his earlier defeat, Commander Waddington returned with a reinforced British contingent, this time joined by the forces of the King of Rewa, who had aligned with the colonial power. Determined to reclaim control, they launched a massive offensive and laid siege to Ramgarh. Recognizing the overwhelming strength of the enemy, Maharani Avantibai executed a calculated retreat to the Devhargarh hills, where she regrouped and restructured her strategy.

As the British advanced across the region, they systematically captured several key towns and outposts. Their campaign led to the occupation of Vijayraghavgarh, Patan, Sangrampur, Salimnabad, Narayangunj, and parts of Ghughri. Upon reaching Ramgarh, they found the city deserted. Infuriated by the lack of confrontation and resistance, the British set the capital ablaze, reducing it to ashes in a fit of vengeance.

Undeterred, Maharani Avantibai launched a new phase of resistance—guerrilla warfare. From the rugged terrain of the Devhargarh hills, she and her loyal fighters adopted hit-and-run tactics, ambushing British camps, targeting their supply lines, and striking swiftly before vanishing into the

forests. These unexpected assaults caused significant losses and sowed confusion within British ranks. One of her most daring operations was a surprise attack on Waddington's camp, which inflicted such disruption that the British were temporarily forced to retreat. Despite being vastly outnumbered and lacking access to modern weaponry or formal military training, Avantibai's army demonstrated unwavering resolve and courage. Their strength came not from resources but from a deep-rooted patriotism and the fierce will to protect their land from foreign domination.

As more reinforcements poured in to support the British, including troops from the northern Indian states and the Rewa kingdom, Maharani Avantibai stood her ground. Her continued resistance in the face of overwhelming odds made her a symbol of undying defiance and sacrifice in the war for India's independence.

Martyrdom Over Surrender :

In the final chapter of her courageous resistance, Maharani Avantibai and her remaining forces found themselves surrounded by British troops in the dense forests of Devhargarh. Vastly outnumbered and with no avenue for retreat, she faced an impossible choice. Rather than allow herself to be captured or humiliated by colonial forces, the brave queen chose the path of honour. On 20 March 1858, at the young age of 27, she fell upon her sword, embracing martyrdom with unwavering dignity and pride. Her final words, according to legend, were steeped in the memory of another iconic warrior queen. She declared:

"हमारी दुर्गावती ने जीते जी वैरी के हाथ से अंग न छुए जाने का प्रण लिया था. इसे न भूलना बड़ों।"

("**Our Durgavati vowed never to let the enemy touch her while she lived. Do not forget this, elders.**")

With this declaration, she invoked the legacy of Rani Durgavati, drawing strength from the history of resistance that ran deep in the region.

In Ramgarh, a short distance from the ruins of the royal palace, at the base of a hill, lies the tomb of Maharani Avantibai. Today, it remains severely dilapidated, quietly bearing witness to the courage and sacrifice of a queen who chose death over dishonour. Close to her resting place are the tombs of other members of the Ramgarh dynasty, equally timeworn and neglected—monuments to a proud past slowly fading into silence.

Her sacrifice marked a solemn and heroic chapter in the history of India's first war of independence. In giving her life for the motherland, Maharani Avantibai became a timeless symbol of resistance, selflessness, and courage in the face of tyranny. Her bravery and sacrifice lit the path for future generations of revolutionaries.

Legacy and Recognition :

Maharani Avantibai Lodhi stands as a towering figure in India's long and arduous struggle for independence. She epitomized the spirit of womanhood, the fire of nationalism, and the unyielding will to resist injustice. Her life and sacrifice continue to inspire, serving as a powerful reminder of the critical role women have played in shaping the nation's destiny. Her legacy lives on in the hearts of millions, a beacon of courage and conviction for generations to come.

Though long overlooked in mainstream historical narratives, the contributions of Maharani Avantibai Lodhi are now receiving the long-overdue recognition they deserve: The Narmada Valley Development Authority has named a major dam in her honour—Rani Avantibai Lodhi Sagar, located in Jabalpur, India Post, along with the Government of Maharashtra, has released commemorative postage stamps celebrating her legacy, her heroism is being revived and honoured through books, folk ballads, academic studies, and cultural programs across India. Once relegated to the margins of history, Avantibai's name has now emerged as a powerful emblem of female empowerment, patriotic resistance, and unshakable defiance against colonial oppression. Her story continues to inspire movements that seek justice, equality, and freedom—values she upheld until her final breath.

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The Rise of Citizen Scientists in Bihar through AI and ICT Tools

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Abstract -

Citizen scientists are ordinary individuals who actively participate in scientific research without formal training. They collect data, observe phenomena and contribute to knowledge building in fields like environment, health and education. Their involvement bridges the gap between professional scientists and communities, fostering inclusive, grassroots-level scientific engagement and public participation in research.The rise of citizen scientists marks a shift from centralized research to community-driven science. With access to digital tools and growing awareness, more people are contributing to data collection, problem-solving and innovation. This movement empowers local voices and decentralizes knowledge creation, making science more democratic, collaborative and socially relevant.Bihar a historically rich Indian state is undergoing a quiet transformation through education and technology. Despite challenges its people exhibit resilience and curiosity. With growing access to the internet, mobile devices and learning platforms, Bihar's youth and rural population are increasingly engaging in innovation, community development and participatory research initiatives.

AI means those machines and software that mimic human intelligence & learning from data, recognizing patterns and making decisions. In citizen science, AI helps analyze massive datasets, predict trends and automate repetitive tasks. It enhances research accuracy, speeds up discovery and enables non-experts to draw insights from complex information easily.Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools include devices and platforms like smartphones, internet, apps, GPS and cloud services that facilitate information access, sharing and communication. In citizen science, ICT empowers users to collect, document and report real-time data from the field, promoting transparency, collaboration and faster decision-making processes.The objective of this research is to

explore how AI and ICT tools empower citizen science in Bihar. The Research methodology includes qualitative analysis based on secondary resources.The findings of this paper will help to enable Bihari citizens to actively contribute to research and local innovation

Keyword - Citizen Science, Artificial Intelligence, ICT Tools, Community Innovation, Digital Empowerment, Participatory Research, Bihar Development, Grassroots Technology.

Objective -

- To explore AI's role in enhancing citizen participation in scientific research.
- To examine ICT tools enabling real-time data collection by local citizens.
- To study how citizen science supports innovation in rural Bihar communities.
- To identify ways digital tools empower youth in participatory research.
- To assess challenges and future scope of citizen science in Bihar.

Methodology -

This research adopts a qualitative methodology to explore how AI and ICT tools are fostering the rise of citizen scientists in Bihar. The study is based on secondary sources such as academic journals, government reports, policy documents, case studies and media articles that highlight the role of technology in citizen science. It examines real-world initiatives and programs within Bihar where local individuals have used digital tools for data collection, monitoring and problem-solving in sectors such as agriculture, health and environment.The research further analyzes how AI applications like data analysis tools, predictive models and automated systems are supporting non-expert citizens in interpreting complex datasets. Similarly, the role of ICT tools including mobile phones, GPS, social media platforms and cloud-based apps are reviewed to understand their contribution in enabling real-time communication and collaborative research.

Introduction -

In the contemporary era of digital transformation, the role of the common citizen in scientific advancement is being fundamentally redefined. No longer confined to laboratories or academic institutions, scientific inquiry is expanding its reach into the hands of everyday individuals & ordinary people who, despite lacking formal scientific training, are driven by curiosity, civic responsibility and the desire to bring about change. Globally, **citizen science** has made significant contributions in diverse fields such as climate change monitoring, biodiversity conservation, public health and astronomy. However,what makes its rise in India particularly in the state of Bihar, unique is the convergence of this participatory model with emerging technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools. **Bihar** has long been associated with centers of ancient learning such as Nalanda and Vikramshila. Despite its proud legacy, the state has

grappled with challenges like poverty, low literacy rates and limited infrastructure. Yet, Bihar is also a land of immense potential. In recent years, it has witnessed a silent revolution catalyzed by digital inclusion and educational reforms. Today, mobile phones, internet connectivity and online learning platforms are penetrating even the most remote parts of the state. It is enabling Bihar's rural population, particularly the youth, to access knowledge, connect with larger networks and participate in meaningful socio-economic and scientific activities. Against this backdrop, the emergence of citizen science in Bihar is both timely and transformative.

The modern citizen scientist is no longer a passive consumer of information but an active contributor to data and knowledge systems. Whether it is mapping polluted water sources in a village, monitoring crop diseases, recording local weather patterns, or identifying healthcare gaps in underserved communities & citizen scientists in Bihar are beginning to engage in diverse activities that were once considered the domain of professional researchers. What makes this grassroots movement effective and scalable is the integration of AI and ICT tools.**Artificial Intelligence** refers to the simulation of human intelligence by machines and software, enabling them to learn from data, recognize patterns and make informed decisions. In the context of citizen science, AI acts as a powerful enabler. It allows for the processing of large datasets collected by non-specialists, helps in identifying patterns and anomalies, automates routine analysis and presents user-friendly visualizations that even laypersons can understand. For instance, an AI-enabled app can help farmers identify pest infestations through image recognition or predict rainfall patterns based on localized data. Such tools make it possible for rural citizens to participate in high-level research without needing formal training.

ICT tools in which include smartphones, internet services, mobile applications, GPS, cloud storage, data-sharing platforms and infrastructure on which citizen science efforts are built. These tools enable real-time data collection, easy documentation of observations, swift sharing of information and collaboration across geographies. In Bihar, where transportation and communication infrastructures are still developing, ICT tools bridge significant gaps by offering platforms that are mobile, affordable and adaptable to local contexts. For example, a smartphone with GPS can help a villager geotag a polluted pond, while a messaging app can allow immediate dissemination of that information to local health authorities or environmental groups.Together, AI and ICT are transforming citizen science from an experimental activity into a reliable, community-led and technology-supported research mechanism. They are democratizing science by making it accessible, understandable and actionable. This transformation is particularly crucial for Bihar, where engaging local populations in development and innovation processes can lead to more sustainable and context-specific solutions.The rise of citizen scientists in Bihar is also deeply tied to educational reforms and digital literacy

initiatives. Programs such as Digital India and BharatNet have played instrumental roles in bringing broadband internet to rural areas. Similarly, various NGOs and government schemes have introduced digital literacy programs aimed at training youth, women and marginalized communities. These efforts have sown the seeds of a participatory culture where knowledge is no longer top-down but circulates in a networked, collaborative environment.Another important aspect is the cultural context of Bihar.

The state has a strong tradition of community participation, collective decision-making (as seen in Panchayati Raj institutions) and local knowledge systems. Integrating citizen science within this socio-cultural fabric strengthens its relevance and impact. For instance, traditional knowledge about agriculture, herbal medicine or water conservation can be scientifically documented, validated and shared using digital platforms. AI tools can further enhance the utility of this local wisdom by organizing, analyzing and integrating it with modern scientific knowledge.Moreover, citizen science offers a unique opportunity to address local issues through local participation. Many environmental, health and agricultural challenges in Bihar are best understood and resolved by those who experience them daily. For example, if a village observes a rising incidence of vector borne diseases, a network of trained citizen scientists equipped with mobile tools can track symptoms, map occurrences and alert authorities well before an outbreak becomes unmanageable. In this sense, citizen science is not only about knowledge generation but it is about prevention, problem-solving and community resilience.

One must also recognize the role of educational institutions, local governance bodies and civil society organizations in promoting citizen science. Schools and colleges can integrate citizen science projects into their curriculum, encouraging students to engage in field-based learning. Gram Panchayats can use data generated by citizen scientists for planning and governance. NGOs and social enterprises can provide training, mentorship and technological support. Such a multi-stakeholder ecosystem can ensure that citizen science in Bihar does not remain a one-time effort but evolves into a sustainable and institutionalized practice.The fusion of AI, ICT and citizen science also opens new doors for entrepreneurship and employment. Data collected by citizen scientists can be valuable for startups working in agri-tech, ed-tech, health-tech and clean energy. It can inform product design, service delivery and impact assessment. Young innovators in Bihar can thus find new opportunities at the intersection of technology, community service and scientific inquiry.

Historical and Socio-Economic Context of Bihar -

Bihar, one of India's most populous and historically significant states, has often been portrayed as a region burdened by poverty, low literacy, migration and underdevelopment. However, this image fails to capture the spirit of its people marked by resilience, community cohesion and a thirst for knowledge. In recent decades, Bihar has witnessed progressive strides in education and digital

connectivity. The efforts of government schemes such as Digital India, Bihar Skill Development Mission and the Har Ghar Bijli Yojana have significantly contributed to digital empowerment and access to ICT infrastructure even in rural areas.The state's youth, comprising nearly 58% of the population, are increasingly tech-savvy and open to new ways of learning and participation. With the proliferation of smartphones and digital learning apps, even marginalized communities are now part of the digital ecosystem. This widespread access lays the groundwork for citizen science, allowing ordinary people to document local issues, collect scientific data and interact with experts and policymakers.

Understanding Citizen Science in the Bihari Context -

Citizen science refers to public participation in scientific research processes from formulating questions to collecting, analyzing and interpreting data. In Bihar, this participation has a unique flavor. Unlike urban citizen science projects that often focus on environmental monitoring or astronomy, rural Bihar projects are more grounded in the needs of the community such as agriculture, sanitation, health, water quality and education.For instance:

- Farmers may track changes in crop patterns or pest infestations.
- Villagers may report contaminated water sources via mobile apps.
- Students may participate in biodiversity mapping in their local areas.

These localized, grassroots engagements turn passive recipients of government schemes into active contributors to scientific data and knowledge creation. The involvement of citizens creates more inclusive, democratic and responsive research processes that directly reflect the challenges and aspirations of Bihar's people.

Role of ICT Tools in Empowering Citizen Science -

ICT tools form the backbone of citizen science in Bihar. These tools allow for easy access, communication, documentation and data sharing. Key ICT tools being used include :

- **Smartphones & Mobile Apps :** Mobile-based applications allow real-time data entry, photo capturing and location tagging. Apps like mBillionth, Akvo Flow or eBird empower individuals to contribute information about health, water, sanitation or biodiversity.

- **Internet and Cloud Storage :** The growing reach of 4G internet and data storage platforms enables data to be uploaded, shared and analyzed collaboratively. Cloud-based dashboards display results that citizens and authorities can view and act upon.

- **GPS and Geotagging Devices :** These help map issues geographically. For example, waterlogging or potholes in a district can be mapped and reported accurately by local citizens.

- **Communication Platforms (WhatsApp, Telegram, Google Meet) :** These allow

communities to organize themselves, receive training, and interact with scientists or NGOs. Language is no longer a barrier, as many tools are now available in Hindi and regional dialects.

- **Educational Content Platforms :** YouTube channels, digital classrooms and podcasts have made it easier to explain scientific methods and tools to rural populations.

The success of ICT tools depends on ease of use, local language compatibility, offline features and community training. Several NGOs in Bihar are actively developing or customizing ICT tools to suit the literacy levels and technical capabilities of rural users.

Artificial Intelligence: Amplifying the Power of the People -

While ICT tools facilitate access and communication, Artificial Intelligence (AI) adds a layer of intelligence and efficiency to citizen science. AI enables machines to process the vast data collected by citizens, identify patterns, generate insights and even predict outcomes. In Bihar, AI applications are gradually being integrated into citizen science projects across domains.Key contributions of AI include :

- **Image Recognition :** AI models can identify crop diseases from photographs taken by farmers using mobile phones. Apps like Plantix are already being used in rural areas.

- **Predictive Analytics :** AI can forecast rainfall, pest outbreaks or disease spread based on previous and real-time data, enabling timely action.

- **Natural Language Processing (NLP) :** NLP tools allow voice-based inputs in Hindi or Bhojpuri, making apps more accessible to non-literate populations.

- **Data Validation and Cleaning :** AI can identify incorrect data entries, anomalies or duplication in citizen-generated data, ensuring accuracy and reliability.

- **Chatbots for Citizen Engagement :** AI-powered chatbots can assist users in understanding how to use an app, enter data or interpret results — all in local languages.

These AI capabilities are essential for processing the massive datasets generated through citizen participation, making science fast, efficient and responsive to the ground reality.

Real-World Applications and Case Studies -

Several successful pilot projects and initiatives in Bihar highlight the promise of citizen science powered by AI and ICT :-

- **Agro-Climate Data Collection by Farmers :** A network of farmers in Nalanda and Gaya districts uses mobile apps to record rainfall, temperature and soil conditions. The data is fed into an AI model that provides customized crop advice. This has led to increased crop yields and reduced fertilizer costs.

- **Water Quality Monitoring in Muzaffarpur :** With the help of a local NGO, villagers were

trained to collect water samples from wells and ponds. Using color-coded test strips and mobile apps, they recorded arsenic and fluoride levels. The data was uploaded and analyzed using AI tools, leading to the installation of water purification systems by authorities.

- **Wildlife and Biodiversity Documentation :** In Valmiki Tiger Reserve, students and forest-dwellers use smartphones to log sightings of birds, animals and plants. This crowdsourced biodiversity data is being used by conservationists and researchers across India.

- **Citizen Health Tracking in Rural Bhojpur :** During COVID-19, local volunteers in Bhojpur district collected data on symptoms, temperature and movement. AI analyzed trends and created hotspot maps that helped district officials take quick preventive actions.

These case studies demonstrate that when empowered with the right tools, ordinary citizens in Bihar can become valuable collaborators in data-driven governance and development.

Challenges in Implementing Citizen Science in Bihar -

Despite the promise, there are several challenges that need to be addressed for citizen science to flourish :

- **Digital Divide :** While mobile penetration is high, many still lack access to smartphones, stable internet or digital literacy.

- **Language and Literacy Barriers :** Tools and platforms are often English-based, alienating large parts of the population who are more comfortable in Hindi or regional dialects.

- **Skepticism and Trust Issues :** Some communities are skeptical of data collection, fearing surveillance or misuse.

- **Lack of Institutional Support :** Government agencies may not always recognize or utilize citizen-generated data in decision making processes.

- **Data Privacy and Security :** Citizen-generated data needs protection from misuse, manipulation or unauthorized access.

- **Training and Awareness Gaps :** Sustainable citizen science requires ongoing training, support and awareness building—something that many rural communities currently lack.

Opportunities for the Future -

Despite these challenges, the future of citizen science in Bihar looks promising, especially if supported by long-term policies and collaborations. Key opportunities include :

- **Integration into School Curricula :** Introducing citizen science projects in schools can foster early interest in science and civic responsibility.

- **Government Partnerships :** Schemes like Jal Jeevan Mission, Swachh Bharat or Smart Villages can incorporate citizen science for monitoring and evaluation.

- **Local Innovation Hubs :** Setting up innovation labs or digital libraries in Panchayats can encourage youth to develop apps and AI models for local issues.

- **AI in Vernacular :** Developing AI tools in Hindi, Maithili, Magahi and Bhojpuri will ensure greater inclusivity.

- **Data-Driven Governance :** Citizen data can guide resource allocation, scheme targeting and crisis response—making governance more efficient and participatory.

Desk Research -

- **Digital Access in Bihar :** According to the **Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI, 2023),** Bihar had over 88 million wireless subscribers with internet connectivity, indicating strong mobile penetration in both urban and rural areas. As per BharatNet project data (2023), more than 46,000 Gram Panchayats in Bihar have been connected with fiber-optic broadband to boost rural digital connectivity.

- **Education and Youth Demographics :** As per the **Census of India 2011 and projected estimates by the National Statistical Office (2021),** over 58% of Bihar's population is below the age of 25, providing a large base of young, potential digital learners and innovators. The Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) at the elementary level in Bihar increased to 96.3% (UDISE+ Report, 2022), showing growing access to education a key factor for citizen science participation.

- **AI and ICT in Governance (India-wide and Bihar context) :** Under the **Digital India Mission (MeitY, 2022),** Bihar ranks among the top five states in e-governance service adoption, including platforms like eMitra, RTPS, and Jeevika. The AI for All initiative launched by NITI Aayog aims to democratize AI education, with pilot programs reaching rural schools in Bihar, especially through the Atal Innovation Mission and AI labs in schools.

- **Environmental & Health Projects Using Citizen Data :** The National Jal Jeevan Mission **(2023)** reported over 3 crore water quality tests conducted by local citizens (including Bihar) using field test kits and digital reporting apps. Swachh Bharat Mission (Rural), Bihar Dashboard (2022) shows over 90% sanitation coverage, with community-level reporting and monitoring enabled by mobile ICT tools.

- **Skilling and Digital Empowerment : The Bihar Skill Development Mission (2022)** trained over 1.2 million youth in ICT, digital literacy, and soft skills, fostering a digital-ready population. Common Service Centers (CSCs) in Bihar have crossed 13,000 centers across blocks and villages, providing ICT access, digital services and citizen training.

Suggestions -

- Promote digital literacy programs in rural Bihar to train citizens in using AI and ICT tools.
- Develop citizen science mobile apps in Hindi and regional languages for better accessibility and participation.
- Integrate citizen science activities into school curriculums to build scientific interest from an early age.
- Establish rural innovation hubs to provide training, mentorship and access to digital infrastructure and tools.
- Encourage government-NGO partnerships to implement local data collection projects using community participation models.
- Use AI-powered dashboards to visualize citizen data and support evidence-based decision-making in governance.
- Ensure data privacy, transparency and community consent while collecting and using citizen-contributed information.
- Recognize and reward active citizen scientists to build motivation, ownership and long-term engagement locally.

Conclusion -

The rise of citizen scientists in Bihar marks a powerful shift in how knowledge is created, shared and utilized for community development. In a state long perceived as lagging behind in terms of infrastructure and access, the emergence of citizen-driven science empowered by Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is reshaping traditional development models. It is transforming local populations including farmers, students, homemakers and youth into informed, capable contributors to scientific processes, decision-making and innovation.Citizen science is no longer limited to elite institutions or urban centers. Through the use of smartphones, internet access, mobile apps, GPS technology and cloud platforms, even villagers in remote areas are participating in scientific activities that address real-world problems from agriculture and environment to health and education. AI further enhances this participation by simplifying data analysis, predicting trends and offering real-time solutions based on localized data. Together, these tools democratize science, making it more inclusive, transparent and community-oriented.Bihar's cultural strength lies in its strong community ties, grassroots leadership and deep traditional knowledge systems. When these are paired with digital tools and AI applications, the result is a model of citizen science that is both modern and locally rooted. From mapping water quality and tracking pests to reporting disease outbreaks or documenting biodiversity, Bihari citizens are creating valuable datasets

that aid researchers, planners and policymakers.

However, for this movement to reach its full potential, there is a need for sustained support in the form of policy frameworks, capacity-building programs, institutional partnerships and technological innovation. Ensuring digital inclusion, data privacy, language accessibility, and consistent training will be critical in fostering long-term engagement. Moreover, recognizing and rewarding citizen contributions can further fuel this culture of inquiry and problem-solving.In essence, the rise of citizen scientists in Bihar is not just about bridging the gap between science and society—it is about reimagining development as a collective, participatory process. It is about empowering people with the tools, knowledge and confidence to become agents of change in their own communities. If nurtured properly, this movement can make Bihar a national example of how AI and ICT, when placed in the hands of the people, can unlock transformative possibilities for grassroots science, governance and sustainable development.

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Tribal ways of knowing : Myths, deities and philosophical parallels in India

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India is home to a diverse variety of indigenous communities, often referred to as "tribes" or *Ādivāsīs*, meaning original dwellers, who have preserved their distinct worldviews, knowledge systems and cosmologies across centuries. These communities are spread out across all parts of India. Often considered as primitive tales or folklore, their oral history, religion, science and philosophy hold a strong connection to the land they belong to, making these indigenous systems of epistemologies a vast and rich repository of knowledge shaped by lived experience and collective memory.

This paper explores the philosophical depth of tribal myths, especially creation myths, and thus the deities and rituals, exploring the ecological wisdom, metaphysical inquiry, ethical codes and theories of existence of these communities, while comparing them with frameworks found in mainstream Indian philosophical systems.

A myth is a traditional narrative that conveys a community's understanding of the origins and structure of the world, often serving as a vehicle for cosmological and metaphysical beliefs (Eliade, 1963).

Each religion, region and community in India has their own myths about the beginning of this world. While some of these myths are very specifically centered around a particular region or community, some are more universal in nature, with common themes and slight variations. One such universal belief is of the great flood, as seen in the below tribal creation myths -

Certain tribes from Odisha like the *Goṇḍ* , *Kaṇḍhā* , *Bhuñjiā* and *Pahāṛiyā* believe that in ancient times before the creation of civilization there were a couple called *Ḍokrā* and *Ḍokṛī* . As the myth goes - "One fine day, *Ḍokrā* went hunting into the deep forest and was about to shoot an arrow at a deer, when the deer started speaking to *Ḍokrā* in his own language. The deer pleaded, "My friend, please don't kill me. Try to save your clan instead, for after seven days from now there is going to be non-stop heavy rains for seven days and seven nights, whereby, the whole world will be flooded and everyone and everything will be swept away." *Ḍokrā* became worried and asked the deer how he could save his clan. The deer replied that there was a way, *Ḍokrā* should act immediately and take two big bottle gourds and stuff them with food enough to last for twelve years and then put his two children inside the gourds and set them afloat on the great deluge. These children would ultimately salvage the human race, he said. *Ḍokrā* did exactly that. True to the words of the deer there was heavy rain and devastation and the deluge swept away everyone from the village, only the two bottle gourds were afloat in the waters. After long years, Goddess *Parbatī* wanted to know if any human being had survived at all; she, therefore, created a crow from some sweat and dirt of her skin and asked the crow to find out if there were any human beings alive on earth. The crow searched and searched and found the two bottle gourds floating on the waters. He even saw two little children inside the Gourds. The crow communicated this to *Parbatī*, who became concerned. Seeing this her consort *Mahādeva* decided to give the children some land to live on. Therefore, he then created the Earth from some sweat and dirt taken from his own skin. The two Gods came to learn that the children inside the bottle gourds were brother and sister and marriage or conjugation was forbidden between siblings, so they separated the siblings for twelve long years during which the two completely forgot each other and then could live as husband and wife, producing many children who were the first humans on this earth." (Das, 2019)

Similarly, the *Jarawā* and *Oṅge* tribes from the Andaman regions have a creation myth centered around a great flood. According to their belief, *Puluṅgā* , the supreme creator deity,

fashioned the world, created the first human pair and gave them knowledge. Their descendants were later dispersed across the islands, each group receiving distinct dialects. *Puluṅgā* also established moral laws. When humans broke these laws, he summoned a catastrophic flood that submerged much of the land. Only four individuals survived - two men and two women named *Loralolā*, *Poilolā*, *Kalolā* and *Rimalolā* , by chance or divine selection in a small canoe. After the flood, *Puluṅgā* recreated animals and plants, but did not restore fire, leaving survivors to rediscover it, giving the survivors agricultural and cultural skills as they restarted human civilization, guided by divine memory. (Radcliffe☐Brown, 1922)

These myths can be compared to the Hindu creation myth, mentioned in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, Mahābhārata* and various *Purāṇas*, according to which, during the emergence of a new cosmic cycle, when the world had fallen into chaos and moral decline, the Earth witnessed a catastrophic flood. King *Manu* was performing ablutions in a river when he encountered a tiny fish begging for protection. Out of compassion, *Manu* placed the fish in a jar, but the creature, growing larger, soon outgrew a pot, tank, river and finally the ocean. Realizing the fish was no ordinary being, *Manu* prayed for guidance. The fish revealed itself as *Viṣṇu* in *Matsya avatāra* , to warn *Manu* of the flood, instructing him to build a massive boat and to gather the *Saptarṣis*, seeds of all plants and the primary animals to preserve life for the next cycle of creation, and then guided the vessel through the flood, after which *Manu* performed a sacrifice and from the ghee offered in this rite emerged a new generation of humans, marking the beginning of the present *manvantara*. (Dikshitar, 1935)

We can draw parallels among all these myths, not just about the occurrence of the flood because of human disobedience of divine laws, but of the presence of the first couple (s), of the supreme deity *Puluṅgā* as well as *Viṣṇu* who ensured the continuity of the human race and its knowledge, as well as of plants and animals. Certain differences exist, however, which help us understand the worldview of the communities and what they consider as important. While the Hindu creation myth speaks about the preservation of the *Veda*-s by *Manu* and *Viṣṇu* in the *Matsya avatāra* , and a *yajña* following the flood; the Andamanese myths talk about ecological knowledge and cultural skills being taught by the *Puluṅgā*, which was essential to them as forest-dwelling communities. On the other hand, the Puranic myth mentions a large boat, similar to the Noah's ark of the Abrahamic traditions, while the Andamanese tribes mention canoes, which are

traditionally used by them to gather marine resources; and the tribes from Odisha mention the survivors being hidden in bottle gourd, a crop that is traditionally cultivated by them. They also mention animals like cows, crows and deer, which are a part of their semi-rural and rural, settled and partially settled lives.

We see other tribal creation myths, centered around their occupations or subsistence patterns.

For example, the *Muṇḍā* tribe of eastern India has a unique creation myth relating to their agrarian nature. The central deity *Siṅbonga*, the sun god, brings the world into being from a primordial expanse of water. He commands a tortoise, a crab and a leech to retrieve clay from the ocean floor. While the tortoise and crab fail, the leech succeeds, enabling *Siṅbonga* to fashion the earth. He later creates the first human beings from a swan's egg, positioning them as ancestors of the *Muṇḍā* people and instructing them in agriculture and forest life. (Ghosh, 2021) The *Muṇḍā* people believe that *Siṅbonga* himself taught them the act of cultivation; gifting them the sacred crop of corn, symbolizing the transition from chaos to order and the beginning of human society. (Yamada,1957)

Similarly, the *Toḍā* creation myth centers around buffaloes, indicating their pastoral nature and the importance of cattle as their means of livelihood. The myth begins with the deity *Ön*, son of the primordial creator *Pithi*, and his wife *Pinârkûrs*. Together, they draw the world's first buffaloes directly from the earth using an iron staff set across the *Nīlagiri* hills. *Ön* pulls forth the sacred buffaloes, while *Pinârkûrs* produces the ordinary herd. From this act of creation, the first *Toḍā* man emerges, grasping the tail of the final sacred buffalo, while the first *Toḍā* woman is then fashioned from the man's rib, emphasizing on the indispensable nature of both sexes. *Ön* later transitions to the realm of the dead, assuming authority over ancestral spirits. (Walker, 2018) This myth reflects the *Toḍā* social structure and ritual practices, particularly the sacred dairies and strict purity rules tied to buffalo husbandry.

Certain creation myths, like the story of the origin of the *Khāsīs*, a matrilineal tribe from Meghalaya, reflect the social organization in the community. The *Khāsīs* call themselves children of *Ki Hynñiew Trep* (The seven huts or families). As the myth goes:

"God, in the beginning, created sixteen families and allowed them to stay with him in heaven. There was a tree which served as a ladder to these sixteen families for their communication between heaven and earth. This tree grew on the hill *U Lum Sohpetbneng* (the navel peak of Heaven) which was in the center of the earth and formed the golden ladder ensuring physical contact between man and God. One day when only seven women were on earth, the evil one cut off this tree forcing these seven women to stay back. These seven women mothered the whole of mankind and they lived at first at Shillong peak." Most of the clans including the clans of the chiefs (*Syiems*) have their own "legends" tracing the origin from a female ancestor emphasizing matrilineal descent. (Sen, 2012)

As seen from the above myth, there is no mention of the fathers or men, signifying the importance of the role of the mother and the matrilineal nature of the tribe.

It is often seen that tribal myths are centered around their surroundings. They observe the world around them and try to make sense of it, using their belief systems, imagination and creativity. A perfect example for this would be the below creation myths from the *Sāntāl* tribe, primarily found in Eastern India, and the *Bhīl* tribe, from the western and central parts of India.

According to the *Sāntāl* creation myth, "In the beginning there was a vast expanse of water overlying the earth. Then *Ṭhākur Jīu* or the lord, in the first phase, created crabs, crocodiles, prawns and other forms living in water. Subsequently, he made a pair of birds out of the material pulled out from his own chest and infused life into them. To provide food and shelter to his newly created beings, he requested the crab, crocodile and each of the other creatures to lift the earth from under the water. He caused the earth to be harrowed and this, in turn, led to the formation of mountains. He sowed some seeds on the earth, planted grass and trees. The birds, having found food to sustain themselves, now made a nest and laid two eggs from which emerged a boy and a girl. They subsisted on the grain and remained naked till lita (the principal *Boṅgā* of *Sāntāls*) gave them a fermented drink. This made them conscious of their sexes and nudity. They covered their bodies with leaves and procreated seven children. The numbers multiplied. *Ṭhākur Jīu* then realized that humankind had gone astray and, sparing the first boy and girl, who had now become adults, by providing them shelter in a mountain cave, he let fire rain on all beings. However, once again procreation and multiplication of human population began. This time, however, the founders divided the people into groups that traversed

in different directions and settled in, what are today, the *Sāntāl Parganās*" (Bodding, 1942 as cited in Mathur, 2012).

On the other hand, *Dharan na Mānkhavtār* (Myth of Creation) is the central myth of the *Ḍuṅgarī Bhīls*. It describes the creation of the Earth in a painstaking way: There were no stones, no mountains, no sky, no moon, no sun, nor nine lakh stars. There was water as far as one could see. It was nine yojan deep. Only fishes, crocodiles and serpents resided in the water. *Vāsuki Nāga* reigned in the underworld. God was in the *avatāra* of a worm in the seventh underworld. After twenty ages an egg emerged from the seventh underworld and started circling on the surface of the water. For twenty ages there was a fierce competition between the wind and the water. After twenty ages the egg hatched and *Jālukar Bhagavān* was born out of it. Nectar spurted from *Bhagavān's* mouth and *Umiyādevī* was born. *Bhagavān* said, "*Beṭā* go to the underworld and get the seeds of the Earth". *Umiyā* turned into a she-tortoise and went under water. The myth goes on to graphically describe how the trees and vegetation were created, how the cow was created, how the pillar of the Earth was made from the cow's milk, how the earth was baked in fire into stones and mud, how god created the sun from his right eye and the moon from his left eye, how the tiger, etc. were created. (Burke, 2013)

In both of these myths, the community believes in what they see around them, the nature, animals, vegetation, plants, sun, Earth, etc., and the Gods they believe in, weaving fascinating stories around them. It is interesting to notice how both these myths coincide with the scientific evolutionary theories of the origin of aquatic beings first, and then terrestrial.

Drawing a comparison between tribal cosmology and cosmological frameworks as mentioned in the classical schools of Indian philosophy, one can see a vast difference in the theories and themes dominating these schools of thoughts.

For example, amongst the *Āstika* or orthodox schools, the *Sāṃkhya* and *Yoga* schools base the origin of the universe on the union of *Puruṣa* (pure consciousness) and *Prakṛti* (primordial matter), while the *Advaita Vedānta* school speaks about the universe we perceive as *māyā* or illusory and the only reality being *Brahman*, hidden by sheaths of ignorance; and the *Nyāya–Vaiśeṣika* schools accept an atomistic view of creation. The *Nāstika* schools, Buddhism and Jainism, refuse all of these theories, describing the universe as beginningless, endless,

eternal and uncreated; while the *Cārvāka*-s believe in materialism, all denying the existence and role of God. (Sharma, 1962)

These complex ideas consisting of metaphysics and deep philosophical theories are written by scholars, astrologers, philosophers, theologians, after years of studying and contemplating. On the other hand, tribal cosmology emerges from the people who live simple lives, in close contact with nature and their surroundings, alien to these scriptural theories and ideas. Their myths are rooted in their surroundings, in nature, in the Earth, sky, water, trees, animals, birds and the rest of the living and non-living world around them, and these shape their occupations as well as social and religious systems, as can be inferred from the above case studies from various tribes of India.

However, we also notice certain similarities. The primal elements of water, earth, air, fire and space, the *Pañcamahābhūta*-s, are universal and the occurrence of these elements in the cultural materials of developed civilizations and simple tribal cultures is well recognized by scholars, forming the base upon which myths concerning the origin of the universe, creation, cosmology and cosmogony have been founded, right from the *Vedā*-s, to the *Purāṇa*-s, to the *Āstika* and *Nāstika* schools, as well as in tribal societies. (Vatsyayan, 1995, as cited by Mathur, 2012) Themes from mainstream Brahmanical philosophical frameworks, like *ṛta* (cosmic order) and *dharma* (laws governing the cosmic order), also occur in tribal cosmology. For example, in the Andamanese tribal myths, we can see rules and laws (*dharma*) set by the supreme creator *Pulaṅgā,* to be followed by the human beings to maintain order (*ṛta*), failure of which resulted in destruction.

Another interesting area of study is the comparison of tribal deities with mainstream Hindu gods and goddesses. Let's have a look at some of the tribal deities mentioned in this paper, and draw parallels with Hindu deities. *Mahādeva* or *Baḍādeva,* as mentioned in the creation myths of the *Gond* and *Bhuñjiyā* tribes, is the Hindu deity *Śiva* or *Rudra*, along with his consort - *Pārbatī* or *Pārvatī*. An interesting contrast here is that while *Śiva* is usually known as the destroyer of the world, these myths give him the role of the creator who brings life into being on Earth after the great flood from his sweat. *Vāsuki Nāga*, the serpent ruler, appears in Hindu mythology as well as *Bhīl* cosmology. *Siṅbonga* of the *Muṇḍā* tribe is associated with the sun, similar to *Sūrya* from the Hindu pantheon, but here, he is the creator god, indicating that the

tribal people were aware of the knowledge that the sun is the source of energy for all living beings. *Lita*, the principal *Boṅgā*, who gave the first couple a fermented drink can be considered similar to the Vedic god *Soma*. *Ṭhākur Jīu*, the *Sāntāl* creator deity who created life from his chest and *Puluṅgā*, the creator god in the *Jarawā* and *Oṅge* myths, can both be compared to *Brahmā* or *Prajāpati* - the Hindu creator God. *Jalakur Bhagavān* of the *Bhīl*-s, is believed to be born from a cosmic egg, and then create vegetation, animals, Earth, sun, moon etc. A parallel can be drawn to this with the story of the *Hiraṇyagarbha*, a golden embryo or cosmic egg, out of which *Prajāpati* was born, giving rise to the heavens and the earth, and all forms of life. This tale appears first in the *Hiraṇyagarbha Sūkta* of the *Ṛgveda* (10.121), and later in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (11.1.6.1) as well as the *Viṣṇu, Bhāgavata* and other *Purāṇa*-s. *Umiyādevī*, the *Bhīl* goddess can be associated with *Bhūdevī*, Goddess Earth or even *Lakṣmī*, the goddess of abundance and prosperity in the Hindu pantheon.

We can see certain similarities in the *Khāsī* myth of *Ki Hynñiew* Trep with the *Saptamātṛkā*-s- the auspicious number seven, the divine femininity - *Śakti*, and maternal strength, but the nature, context and functions of the seven female energies in both are very different. While the *Khāsī* myth sees these women as progenitors and creators, the Hindu and *Tāntrika* stories see them as warrior goddesses and protectors, along with their divine counterparts being given importance, unlike the *Khāsī* myths, where the husbands are not mentioned. While the tribal deities are more nature- centric, much like the early Vedic gods, later mainstream Hindu gods and goddesses have far more imaginative, social and abstract narratives involved.

To conclude, we can see how the myths of India's tribal communities are not just stories of origin, but are profound expressions of cosmology, ecological awareness and ethical systems rooted in lived landscapes. These myths reflect the intimate connection indigenous communities share with nature, offering a worldview that does not separate the spiritual from the material or the mythical from the real, each narrative deeply embedded in specific ecological and social contexts.

When compared with the structured metaphysics of classical Indian philosophical schools, tribal cosmologies may appear simple. Yet, they often echo similar ontological and ethical themes. These parallels highlight that tribal thought is not devoid of philosophical

reflection as often portrayed, it simply follows a different path, rooted in oral memory, observation and symbolic imagination rather than in textual interpretations. The comparison of tribal deities with Hindu counterparts reveals both common threads and critical distinctions, further proving the complexity and ingenuity of tribal thought processes.

In an age of ecological crisis and cultural homogenization, these indigenous epistemologies are often sidelined or dismissed as primitive folklore, but they offer not only alternative ways of thinking about the origins of life and the role of divinity but also articulate ethical modes of being in harmony with the Earth. To study and understand these myths is to remember that philosophy, like the Earth itself, has many roots.

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Veterinary Surveillance and Agrarian Control : The Role of Animal Health Policies in Colonial Bengal

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Abstract :-

The article is an inquiry into the history of veterinary medicine in colonial Bengal (1858-1947), one in which animal health emerged as a key to British imperial rule and its strategies of rural reform. There being an animal based agrarian economy of Bengal, the British founded veterinary colleges such as Bengal Veterinary College and the Indian Veterinary Service to fulfil their own military and economic interests. The need to provide scientific animal healthcare was justified by the epidemics, like rinderpest and anthrax. Nevertheless, the indigenous knowledge did not lose all influence, but was present in conflict to colonial veterinary in the figures of , as well as mahouts. This paper demonstrates that veterinary medicine was reflective of both colonial anthropology whereby classifications of who and what were in charge with the intention of dominant control of animals and humans. In this way, veterinary history in colonial Bengal demonstrates more general issues of power, science, and rural life in the realm of the empire.

Keywords :- Colonial Bengal,Veterinary history,Animal health,British Empire,Bengal Veterinary College,Colonial science,Empire and science.

Introduction :-

The colonial history of veterinary medicine in Bengal illustrates the complex relationship between empire, science, and local communities. During British rule (1858–1947), animal health became a key aspect of imperial policy, linked to both the agrarian economy and military needs. The colonial state institutionalized veterinary medicine by establishing colleges, appointing trained officers, and launching disease control campaigns, marking the rise of a standardized, Western veterinary science.[1]

However, this process often conflicted with indigenous animal healing traditions, such as

those practiced by mahouts, who remained active in local animal care. This tension reflects broader colonial dynamics of knowledge production, control, and resistance. The development of veterinary medicine in Bengal was deeply tied to military and bureaucratic goals, as well as cultural exchanges and social transformation. This narrative is supported through archival records, official reports, and veterinary literature, highlighting how animal health became a tool of imperial governance and social change.[2]

Institutionalization of Veterinary Medicine in Colonial Bengal :-

An increasing interest in the livestock health by the colonial administration especially when viewed through the lens of military and economic urgencies resulted in the systematic institutionalization of veterinary medicine in Bengal in the late nineteenth century. However, before the formal arrival of colonial rule, animal healthcare in Bengal was mostly handled in native systems, such as folk healer, traditional horse doctors (chikitsaks) as well as mahouts, whose practice was dependent on traditional Ayurvedic medications, and herbal medicine techniques as well as empirical information gained through centuries of experience. As British war campaigns expanded and more emphasis was placed on transport animals such as horses, bullocks and elephants however, the colonial state had an interest in monopolizing and modernizing veterinary practices using western scientific models.[3]

A critical point in this institutionalization process was the setting up of the Bengal Veterinary College in Calcutta in the year 1893. Founded on the persuasion of the Army Veterinary department and the Public Works department, the College would produce veteran surgeons who would be equipped with the modern medical skills and knowledge hence able to respond to the civilian and military demands. It also reflected modern developments in veterinary science in Britain and particularly focused its curriculum in the fields of anatomy, pathology, pharmacology, and epidemiology. Alumni of the College made the pillars of the Indian Veterinary Service (IVS) which was under the twin lead of the colonial civil government and the military.

This was the army of veterinary professionals that was mobilized in a system of veterinary hospitals, dispensaries and remount depots, located around the Bengal major cities and in the British army cantonments, i.e., Barrackpore, Dum Dum and Fort William. These facilities were used as treatment centers, immunization points and surveillance points of the animals mainly in: treating and preventing epidemics of rinderpest, anthrax and glanders, which posed Brian Compounds to economic productivity and the military preparedness.[4]

Prescriptions of colonial veterinary policy also exercised colonization of indigenous healers. On the one hand, the local knowledge was sometimes usurped, but, on the other hand, unlicensed

practitioners were frequently criminalized, and their practices were described as unscientific. This marginalization was part of the broader colonial policy that embedded scientific power and bureaucratic control over people and animals of the rural population.[5]

Altogether, the institutionalization of veterinary medicine in colonial Bengal was an important step towards bureaucratization and militarization of animal health and introduction of veterinary science being a part of the colony process of governance and economic exploitation as well as military readiness.

Economic Importance of Livestock in Bengal's Agrarian Society :-

Livestock in colonial Bengal agrarian economy served more than just food and raw materials to the society, but were also indispensable as producers of agricultural productivity and rural livelihood. The agrarian based dominant society of Bengal depended largely on the use of bullocks, buffaloes, cows, goats and poultry that helped in the ploughing, transport of goods, milk products and manure provision thus supporting the chain of cultivation and food security in a major way.

The main draught animals were bullocks and buffaloes which used to plow large areas of farmlands. They are appropriately stronger and enduring which helps in sowing and harvesting at the right time, particularly in various topographical regions of Bengal- fertile Gangetic plains and the marshy deltaic regions. The health and condition of these animals were determinants of the production of crops as well as the financial status of the peasant families. Furthermore, the use of carts-powered by animals was important to local transportation of the rural agricultural produce between the villages and the markets and the trade centers, therefore connecting the rural Bengal to other economic systems in the region.

Cows and buffaloes were considered as a means of daily subsistence as they bred milk, ghee, and other dairy products, which played a part in feeding the families and local communities. An additional income to the small-scale farmers and the pastoralists was to sell cured excess milk and dairy products as supplementary income.

Also, livestock manure was a resourceful inclusion in the organic farming operations, which increased soil fertility since extensive use of synthetic fertilizers was unknown. This manure was used to feed the traditional agricultural systems and this enhanced the ecological balance of the region.

Livestock was also valued economically as regards to artisans and crafts people who relied on the by-products of animals such as hides, bones, and wool. Such products supplied the cottage industries in the locality and helped Bengal to have a mixed rural economy.

Being aware of these manifold economic significance, the colonial government tried to sustain

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and promote the health of farm animals on any level, even in terms of controlling livestock as a way to preserve and increase agricultural productivity and tax extraction. Nevertheless, the indigenous practices were frequently challenged by the colonial interventions bringing an overall conflict between the state policies and the local realities.

Therefore, livestock in the agrarian Bengal society was an economic nexus with agriculture work, rural revenue, and environmental sustainability, which explains the necessity of veterinary services and imperial administration.

Veterinary Surveillance and Colonial Control Mechanisms :-

The practice of veterinary surveillance became an important tool of statecraft during the colonial era in Bengal and it bound together the management of animal health and more general processes of colonial domination. In the economic drives and fears of the zoonotic diseases, the British colonial government established a structure of veterinary governance to protect the agricultural production, military supply lines, and social health. These were not just technical interventions but represent a wider surveillance regime that widened the sphere of penetration of the colonial state into rural Bengal.

This epidemic of epizootic illnesses (rinderpest, glanders and anthrax) in cattle and equines animals needed in agriculture, transportation and the military sphere) made the state start a regime of veterinary observation. Other colony laws include the Livestock Importation Act (1898) and the Glanders and Farcy Act (1899) which aided the inspection, quarantine and slaughter of sick livestock. Veterinary inspectors and civil surgeons were sent to the rural areas, and generally educated in British medical colleges and had the power to regulate indigenous veterinary industry and to enforce Western modes of scientific procedure.[6]

This surveillance did not come about only in disease control, but also in disciplinary grounds. Via vaccination campaigns, livestock census, and management of the animal markets, the colonial state tried to categorize and place under control the populations of the rural regions and their interaction with their animals. Bureaucratic control was performed through veterinary hospitals and dispensaries that could cover limited people though merged the state control with the medical one.But such a method was opposed. There was always a degree of suspicion in the quarantines or compulsory vaccines forced upon them by the state that challenged or even threatened their customary rights and area control or the right to government interference. Although claimed to be a civilizational/humanitarian mission, veterinary surveillance was deeply rooted in a colonial system of extractive governance and biopolitical domination. Surveillance of veterinary medicine, in colonial Bengal, is, in this way, an instance of the tendency in which the regulation of animal health held a direct relationship with the

augmentation of colonial power to governing both human and non-human population.

Animal Health Policies and Revenue Implications in Colonial Bengal :-

Animals health policy in colonial Bengal was not only about preventing diseases or animal well-being but it was also closely connected to the economic policies of the colonial state and the tax regime. The agrarian economy of Bengal as well as its mode of transportation was based on livestock and particularly on cattle, buffaloes, elephants and equines. Their health had direct impacts over agricultural productivity, military movement and the free movement of tax paying commodities. It is in recognition of this that the British colonial rule started to impose policies on animal health which were effectively geared towards the agendas of fiscal reporting.[7]

At the end of the 19th century, the government of colonies started the programs of vaccination of the animals and the implementation of veterinary laws along with the opening of veterinary dispensaries that would help keep the animals safe. New laws like **livestock Importation Act (1898)** and **Glanders and Farcy Act (1899)** were proposed to control the travel of animals in a way that does not cause the spread of any disease that would destabilize rural economies. These policies were described in terms of the common good, where at the centre was the defense of income-generating sectors like agriculture, forest, and the military logistics.[8]

Transmission of diseases such as rinderpest and foot-and-mouth disease could potentially turn over whole agricultural cycles robbing of land revenue collections and causing destabilization of the countryside. As a reaction, the colonial state invested a few funds in strategically located veterinary infrastructures. Vet officers were also assigned the responsibility of not only treating the animals but also providing information that was of vital importance in mitigation of risk and economic projections. In addition, healthy animals were vital in cartage services, military mules, and timber hauling which are all vital in colonial economic activities. Therefore, veterinary policies constituted an effective economic tool, as the welfare of animals was directly related to the amount of revenues provided by the state. Although the existence of these policies led to modernization of the veterinary practices, they were contoured and guided by the interests of an extractive colonial state.

Indigenous Veterinary Practices and Colonial Marginalization :-

Before British colonial rule, veterinary medicine in Bengal was rooted in oral traditions and local culture, led by rural healers like go-matyas, , and hakims. These practitioners used herbal medicine, spiritual rituals, and environmental knowledge, drawing from Ayurvedic and Unani systems developed over centuries. However, with the rise of Western veterinary science in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, especially through institutions like the Bengal Veterinary College (est. 1893), indigenous practices were increasingly marginalized and dismissed as superstitious or unscientific.

The colonial state's push for standardized, bureaucratic control—through vaccination drives, regulation of cattle fairs, and laws like the Livestock Importation Act—often clashed with local customs. These interventions not only excluded traditional knowledge systems but criminalized aspects of indigenous animal management. Despite colonial pressure, traditional practices persisted through adaptation and parallel use. This marginalization reflects broader patterns of cultural dispossession under imperial rule, where native epistemologies were systematically excluded from formal veterinary and agricultural development discourse.

Resistance and Challenges in Veterinary Campaigns :-

Veterinary campaigns in colonial Bengal during the late 19th and early 20th centuries faced strong resistance from rural communities and indigenous knowledge systems. Although the colonial Veterinary Department introduced mass vaccinations, disease reporting, and quarantine measures to control epizootic diseases like rinderpest, anthrax, and foot-and-mouth disease, these efforts were often met with suspicion and non-cooperation.

This opposition stemmed from several factors. Firstly, there was a cultural disconnect—local communities viewed animal diseases as divine punishment or supernatural imbalance and preferred traditional remedies over biomedical methods. The inability of British veterinarians to communicate in local languages deepened this alienation. Secondly, forced vaccinations and government mandates created fear and mistrust, especially when treatments showed limited or adverse effects. Cattle owners often hid sick animals to avoid culling or quarantine.[9]

Thirdly, logistical barriers such as lack of infrastructure, shortage of trained staff, and poor transportation hindered implementation, especially in remote and flood-prone areas like Birbhum, Midnapore, and the Sundarbans. Overall, these resistances highlighted the limitations of colonial authority and the disconnect between imperial policies and rural realities in Bengal.

Rinderpest Vaccination Campaigns in Bengal :-

The rinderpest epidemic and subsequent vaccination campaigns in colonial Bengal illustrate the intersection of veterinary medicine and imperial control. Rinderpest, a highly infectious cattle disease, threatened agrarian livelihoods and colonial revenue in Bengal, where cattle held economic and religious significance. Initially, British responses were uncoordinated and ineffective. However, by the 1890s, with the establishment of the Bengal Veterinary Department and institutions like the Bengal Veterinary College (1893), systematic vaccination efforts began, using serum-based vaccines developed at places like Muktesar.

Although science seems to have won this battle, these campaigns were not without opposition in the form of villagers afraid of losing cattle, distrusting of the colonial agenda or their own medicine

(go-matya, kabiraj). Rift in culture and communication also worsened the efforts. Issues on logistics like storage of vaccines, transportation problems, inaccessibility due to monsoon and lack of trained personnel led to a challenge.

By the 1920s, the vaccination was further naturalized to use fairs and village schemes as a construct of colonial rule. These were not solely made to concern animal health but also served as the system of surveillance and control, thus integrating the colonial power in rural areas by means of veterinary intervention.

Conclusion :-

This article explores the development of veterinary medicine in colonial Bengal following its formation out of an economic imperative to take care of livestock that is paramount to agricultural activity and state income, emerging much later as a means of imperial domination and rural modernization/Management. The veterinary institutions, medical colleges and vaccination campaigns were not only to spread their control over rural knowledge and life because the British were supposed to control diseases like rinderpest; rather than to spread their control, they also tried to create their dominance because now they could easily control the diseases spreading because they could check over the medicines. Although these interventions made economic sense in livestock, they also acted as coordination and surveillance mechanisms, constituting a larger colonial biopolitical approach.

Western veterinary science effectively excluded traditional animal healers (in some cases accusing them of unscientific knowledge) even though the local breeds and various diseases are well known to them. That caused a break in the ecological and medical tradition in Bengal. There is a maintenance of skepticism and selective participation of the villagers in the colonial veterinary services with an inconsistent balance of compliance and opposition. Finally, the history of colonial veterinary work shows that behind the initial plans there is an imperial motive to reorganize the rural population and rethinking the notions of health, science, and power.

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India as the Voice of the Global South: Reimagining Global Leadership in the 21ˢᵗ Century

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Abstarct :

Global power dynamics is witnessing a fundamental shift in 21st century. The voice of the Global South is becoming more vocal on the international stage. This research paper focus to understand and analyse the emerging role of India's leadership in the context of evolving voice of the Global South. India's foreign policy advocates an inclusive, equitable world order . India is reimagining global leadership beyond traditional dimension through South- South cooperation, Climate justice , Digital governance, Global Health but India has to face several key challenges . This study argues the emerging leadership of India as a voice of global south for multipolar and democratic world order.

Key Words- Multipolar World, Power Dynamics, Strategic Leadership, Heartland, Multilateralism.

Introduction :

The Global power dynamics are witnessing significant power shifting 21st century. Global South is emerging as a 'Heartland' of world politics. In this perspective, India emerge as an empowered voice, leverging its historical experience, democratic values and economic progress to represent the aspirations of developing Nations. This study analyse the emerging role of India as a voice of Global South . This study examine the India's diplomatic initiatives , multilateral engagement and strategic narrative to reimagine Global leadership. This study tries to unravel a new definition of global leadership in a multipolar world by understanding India's effort towards equitable development, climate justice and inclusive governance. This research paper focus to understand and analyse the emerging role of India's leadership in the context of evolving voice of the Global South. India's foreign policy advocates an inclusive, equitable world order as Non Aligned Movement, G-20, BRICS , United Nations. India is reimagining global leadership beyond traditional dimension through South- South cooperation, Climate justice , Digital governance, Global Health but India has to face several key

challenges . This study argued the emerging leadership of India as a voice of global south for multipolar and democratic world order.

Conceptualizing the Global South in the 21ˢᵗ Century :

In the 21st century the concept of Global South is not only limited to geographical connotation but has emerged beyond it. The Global South Nations shared historical experience of colonialism , economic marginalization and developmental aspirations. In 21st Century, Global South is challenging the dominance of monopolistic structure of traditional western power through active and lead role in global governance . These countries have common demands like equitable representation, fair trade policies ,climate justice ,democratic international order , reform in multilateral institution like WTO , UNSC, WHO . In this multipolar global order , Global South is not only a passive recipient of aid but an active participant in shaping global trajectory and norms. This research study represent Global South as a dynamic political and economic group, examines how India contributes to redefining its voice and vision in international platforms.

India Geopolitical Evolution: From Non Alignment to Strategic Leadership :

India geopolitical evolution , from Non Alignment to strategic leadership is the symbol of its adaptive foreign policy and emerging aspirations. During the Cold War era, India conceptualized its foreign policy on the basis of Non Aligned Movement which emphasis on sovereignty, peace and neutrality in global tensions. This policy advocates strategic autonomy of India's foreign policy and provide opportunity to newly independent and developing nation to voice their concerns.

After the Cold War and advent of Globalization, global power dynamics has changed India started to shape its foreign policy according to the needs of the multipolar world. In 21st century ,India emerge as a influential and active player in global power dynamics which represent the common interest of global south while maintaining its strategic relations with global power.

BRICS, G-20 presidency, International Solar Alliance, Global South Summit, India is emerging as a voice of global inclusive governance, sustainable development, climate actions. This transformation reflects India's evolving role from moral diplomacy to pragmatic leadership that balances national interests and global responsibilities.

India and the Agenda for Global South :

India is world largest democracy and fastest emerging global power. In 21st century Indian Foreign Policy has evolved according to the changing dynamics of global politics. It's strategically influential role in South-South cooperation, anti colonial approach, non aligned strategies provide moral and strategic leadership which provide pathway to emerge as a voice of global south.

In 21ˢᵗ century Indian foreign policy is evolving in perspective of world order. India is

reimagining global leadership, placing equity, inclusiveness, sustainability at the core of global discourse. In international forums as – BRICS, G-20, Voice of Global South Summit, India has highlighted the priorities of developing countries to the forefront of the global agendas.

India's Agenda for Global South :

- Reform multilateral institutions as WTO, UNSC
- Equitable representation
- Equal representation in international financial institutions
- Climate justice
- Sustainable development
- Ensuring food, health and energy security for all
- Bridging North-South divide though inclusive development
- Promote digital public infrastructure
- Promote new international economic order
- Ensuring inclusivity in the advent of upcoming technologies

This approach is based on shared aspirations and struggles. India is not only reimagining its role as a balanced leader but also provide new direction to voice of global south.

Challenges and Critique :

India's aspiration to be the voice of global South is commendable . Indian foreign policy is continue evolving in this dimension but it has to face significant challenges which can be understand in the following way-

- **Domestic Developmental Gaps** - The first challenge is gaps in domestic development as poverty, inequality , security, inadequate infrastructure undermines credibility of Indian development model for global south.

- **Inconsistent Foreign Policy-** India's silence and selective responses to global crisis have raised the concern about its fundamental core stance on justice and democracy. As silence approach on Myanmar's political situation.

- **Alignment with Global North-** Sometime India has to face contradictory position during strong economic and strategic ties with countries like US, EU while considering independent voice of the global south.

- **Limited Financial Capacity-** India has to face some economic challenges to fulfill its aspiration for voice of global South. India has limited financial capacity in comparison to China, USA.

- **Gap Between Rhetoric and Implementation-** The gap between rhetoric and implementation

is one of the major concern. The above concerns like limited financial capacity, regional tension with China, Pakistan , gaps in domestic development are causing the difference between rhetorical implementation which create trust gaps between India and countries of global south.

To realize it's ambition, India will have to bridge the gap between action and vision and earn the trust of the global south.

Reimagining Global Leadership: India's Strategic Vision for Future :

In 21st century the strategy of Indian foreign policy for the Global leadership is based on core discourses as inclusivity, multipolarity, sustainable development. As a representative leadership of global South, Indian wants to reform in international institution so that the voice of developing countries become stronger in global decisions.

India provide a world system model which core principles are equality, digital democracy , shared development and climate justice. International Solar Alliance, Digital public infrastructure, Digital resilient infrastructure are the practical example of India's practical and effective initiative for leadership of global south.

India' s Strategic Vision for the future :

- Reform multilateral institutions as WTO, UNSC
- Equitable representation
- Equal representation in international financial institutions
- Climate justice
- Sustainable development
- Ensuring food, health and energy security for all
- Bridging North-South divide though inclusive development
- Promote digital public infrastructure
- Promote new international economic order
- Ensuring inclusivity in the advent of upcoming technologies

Conclusion :

India's emergence as a voice of Global South makes a transformative change in global leadership dynamics. India is re-defining leadership beyond traditional power structures, making inclusive development, climate justice, justice, multilateralism and south-south cooperation champion. Through the forums such as G20, BRICS, and its developmental outreach in Africa, Latin America and Southeast Asia, India explains the aspirations of emerging countries advocating a more representative global governance structure. Its decent ethos of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (the world is a family) underlines this inclusive approach. Since challenges such as climate change, global inequality

and digital division are more complex, bridging role increases between India's developed and developing world. Ultimately, India's re -designed leadership is not on dominance but on dialogue, diplomacy and development, indicating a more participation in the 21st century and a change to a balanced global order - which listens to the voices of the global south, and shapes.

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Diplomatic Relations of the Delhi Sultanate with Central Asia

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Abstract :-

The Delhi Sultanate's diplomatic ties with Central Asia are examined in this paper. From its founding in 1206, until its demise in 1526, the Delhi Sultanate's diplomatic ties with Central Asia were a crucial component of its foreign policy. The Sultanate, a major force on the Indian subcontinent, used a combination of economic cooperation, military strategy, and diplomacy to interact with Central Asian nations. At first, the Delhi Sultanate concentrated on strengthening its hold over northern India. However, the Sultanate's northern borders were directly threatened by the Mongol Empire's spread over Central Asia. Early on, the Sultanate engaged in careful relations with Central Asian countries, mainly addressing the Mongol invasions and putting defensive measures in place.

During the Tughlaq dynasty (1320–1414), relations with Central Asia were more intense. Ambitious military expeditions and diplomatic ploys to forge alliances with Central Asian monarchs were hallmarks of Sultan Muhammad ibn Tughlaq's reign. He made an effort to handle relations with the Timurids, whose 1398 invasion of India had a major effect on the Sultanate, and to form alliances with the Chagatai Khanate. With an emphasis on preserving regional peace and stabilizing trade, the Lodi dynasty (1451–1526) persisted in its diplomatic interactions with Central Asia. Building on these diplomatic pillars, the Mughal Empire, which succeeded the Delhi Sultanate in the early 16th century, developed its own ties with Central Asian nations.

All things considered, the Delhi Sultanate's diplomatic contacts with Central Asia were essential for controlling outside threats, developing business partnerships, and affecting the region's larger political landscape. These exchanges influenced the Sultanate's historical course and strengthened its resilience.

Keywords:- Delhi Sultanate, Diplomatic Relations, Central Asia.

Introduction :-

From 1206 until 1526, the Delhi Sultanate, a prominent Muslim kingdom of the Middle Ages, controlled a sizable portion of the Indian subcontinent. The Sultanate, which was established by Qutb al-Din Aibak, a former Ghurid dynasty slave general, became a powerful force after the Ghurid Empire declined. Since it signaled the start of Islamic dominance in India, this era is significant in South Asian history. Islamic administration architecture and the development of a centralized administrative system were hallmarks of the Sultanate's reign. Over the course of its history, it was divided into five dynasties: the Sayyid, Khalji, Tughlaq, Lodi, and Mamluk (Slave) dynasties.

Delhi developed into a significant political and cultural hub during the Delhi Sultanate. Through its military conquests, administrative improvements, and cultural patronage, the Sultanate significantly influenced the history of the area. Important architectural accomplishments like the Red Fort and the Qutb Minar were built during this time. The Delhi Sultanate created long-lasting commercial routes and diplomatic links with Central Asia, despite facing many difficulties such as internal dissension and Mongol invasions. The legacy of the Sultanate prepared the way for the ultimate rise of the Mughal Empire, which would further alter the Indian subcontinent.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY :-

This study explores the Delhi Sultanate's Diplomatic Relations with Central Asia.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY :-

This study is based on secondary sources of data such as articles, books, journals, research papers, websites and other sources.

DELHI SULTANATE'S DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH CENTRAL ASIA :-

The Delhi Sultanate, which dominated much of the Indian subcontinent during the 13th and 16th centuries, had extensive diplomatic and military ties with Central Asia. Here's a summary of the main elements of these relationships :

Early Contacts and Expansion :-

The Delhi Sultanate, founded in 1206 by Qutb al-Din Aibak, signaled the start of a new political age in the Indian subcontinent. The early rulers of the Sultanate focused on establishing their power in the region. Qutb al-Din Aibak, a former slave general of the Ghurid dynasty, was most concerned with protecting his newly acquired domains from internal and external dangers. His immediate successors, including Iltutmish and Balban, continued the consolidation process. Central Asia's political landscape was dynamic and divided at the time. It comprised formidable organizations like the Khwarezmian Empire and several Mongol khanates.

Although they were few in number, the Delhi Sultanate had some diplomatic contacts with

Central Asia during this time. In the face of the Mongol threat, the Khwarezmian Empire periodically turned to the Delhi Sultanate in search of possible allies. However, resolving internal dissension and maintaining authority over northern India were the Sultanate's top priorities. The Sultanate saw substantial consolidation under Iltutmish, building a more organized government and expanding its power. During his rule, he worked to strengthen the Sultanate's control over its lands, including repelling Mongol invasions. Notwithstanding these difficulties, the Sultanate focused on fortifying its position in India and kept a cautious approach toward Central Asia.

Iltutmish's successor, Balban, made major efforts to strengthen the Sultanate's fortifications. During his rule, military preparedness and administrative effectiveness were highly valued. The Mongols, who still posed a threat to the Sultanate's northern boundaries, were another challenge to Balban. In order to control these dangers and maintain peace, the Delhi Sultanate maintained intermittent diplomatic ties with Central Asian nations.

Mongol Invasion :-

The Delhi Sultanate was significantly impacted by the major Mongol invasions that occurred in the 13th and 14th centuries. Under Genghis Khan and his successors, the Mongol Empire quickly spread throughout Central Asia and into the Indian subcontinent. The Delhi Sultanate was seriously threatened by this growth, and both military and diplomatic measures were required. The Delhi Sultanate fought back against the first Mongol invasions of northern India. During his reign from 1290 to 1296, Jalal-ud-din Khalji had to deal with the first significant Mongol invasion. Under Qutlugh Khwaja's command, the Mongols conducted multiple incursions into the Delhi Sultanate. The main goal of Jalal-ud-din's defensive reaction was to shield his kingdom from the Mongol danger.

Alauddin Khalji, Jalal-ud-din's successor, took a more assertive stance against the Mongols. During his 1296–1316 reign, he launched a number of military operations aimed at securing the Sultanate's boundaries and fending off Mongol incursions. Building fortifications and assembling a disciplined army were two of Alauddin's strategic military strategies that were essential in protecting the Sultanate from Mongol invasions. After taking the kingdom in 1325, Muhammad bin Tughlaq carried on the military readiness strategy against the Mongols. A number of bold military operations and diplomatic initiatives to combat the Mongol threat defined his reign. To protect the Sultanate's lands, Tughlaq organized military expeditions and formed alliances with the leaders of Central Asia.

The foreign policy of the Delhi Sultanate was significantly impacted by the Mongol invasions. The Sultanate was compelled to commit significant funds on military readiness and defense. In order to manage relations with Central Asian countries and lessen the impact of Mongol threats, diplomatic efforts were also essential.

Tughlaq Dynasty (1320 -1414) :-

The Delhi Sultanate and Central Asia had substantial interactions during the Tughlaq dynasty, which lasted from 1320 until 1414. During his reign from 1325 to 1351, Muhammad ibn Tughlaq made significant diplomatic and military contacts with Central Asian nations. During his rule, Muhammad bin Tughlaq had grand intentions for growth and unification. He aimed to increase the Sultanate's power in Central Asia as well as outside its conventional boundaries. As part of his diplomatic endeavors, Tughlaq formed partnerships with other Central Asian leaders and participated in talks meant to improve the Sultanate's standing.

Tughlaq's endeavor to establish ties with the leaders of the Chagatai Khanate, a Mongol power in Central Asia, was one of his most noteworthy initiatives. In order to combat the threat posed by the Ilkhanate and other Mongol factions, Tughlaq sought to form a strategic alliance. In an attempt to gain the favor of the monarchs of Central Asia, he sent gifts and diplomatic missions. Tughlaq conducted a number of military wars in addition to diplomatic initiatives to increase the Sultanate's power. Expeditions into Central Asia and efforts to seize control of strategic areas were part of these wars. However, Tughlaq's lofty ambitions encountered difficulties and had varying degrees of success.

Interactions with the Timurid Empire, which became a major force in Central Asia under Timur (Tamerlane), also occurred throughout the Tughlaq dynasty. The 1398 Timur invasions of northern India had a significant effect on the Delhi Sultanate. One significant incident that brought to light the Sultanate's difficulties in contending with Central Asian forces was Timur's sacking of Delhi. The Tughlaq dynasty persisted in using both military and diplomatic means to interact with Central Asia in spite of the failures. Efforts were made to handle the difficulties brought on by the Timurid rulers' expansionist goals and to manage relations with them.

Temurid Influence :-

The Delhi Sultanate was significantly impacted by the late 14th-century development of the Timurid Empire. In Central Asia, Timur, also called Tamerlane, founded a strong kingdom and conducted numerous campaigns. His impact reached the Indian subcontinent, where the Delhi Sultanate was significantly impacted by his invasions. One significant incident that demonstrated the Sultanate's susceptibility to Central Asian powers was Timur's 1398 invasion of India. When Timur's army overran Delhi, it caused extensive damage and marked the end of the Delhi Sultanate's dominance. An important turning point in the Sultanate's relations with Central Asia was this invasion. The Timurid Empire remained influential in the area even after Timur's death in 1405.

A combination of tactful engagement and diplomacy defined the Delhi Sultanate's relations with the Timurid kings. The Sultanate addressed the possible dangers posed by Timurid aspirations

while simultaneously attempting to preserve peace and control its contacts with Central Asia through diplomatic means. The area was impacted culturally by the Timurid influence as well. Cultural connections, including the transmission of architectural and artistic traditions, were made possible by the Delhi Sultanate's interactions with the Timurid Empire. This cross-cultural exchange led to the rich cultural legacy of the Indian subcontinent and had a long-lasting effect on its development.

Lodi Dynasty (1451-1526) :-

Before the Mughal Empire rose to power, the Delhi Sultanate was ruled by the Lodi dynasty from 1451 until 1526. The Delhi Sultanate had diplomatic and commercial ties with Central Asia throughout this time. The Lodi kings concentrated on controlling their relationships with Central Asian nations and establishing their dominance. In contrast to previous turbulent eras, the Lodi dynasty was characterized by relative stability. The Lodi dynasty's emperors, including Sikandar Lodi and Bahlul Lodi, aimed to control their exterior connections and solidify their hold on power. In order to maintain peace and advance trade, they engaged with Central Asian states as part of their diplomatic endeavors.

During the Lodi period, diplomatic ties with Central Asia were marked by initiatives to promote trade and preserve peace. To protect their borders and handle possible disputes, the Lodi kings negotiated with Central Asian nations. During a time of regional upheaval, these diplomatic initiatives were crucial to preserving peace and guaranteeing the Sultanate's continued existence. The Lodi dynasty's foreign policy likewise placed a high priority on trade links with Central Asia. The Delhi Sultanate was able to engage economically with Central Asia because of its strategic location at the intersection of major trade routes. In order to support the economic growth of the area, the Lodi rulers aimed to foster trade and business relationships with Central Asian nations.

The Delhi Sultanate ended with the advent of the Mughal Empire in the early 16th century. The Mughal emperors carried on the tradition of interaction with Central Asia by establishing their own diplomatic and commercial ties with the region. Building on the Delhi Sultanate's foundation, the Mughal Empire forged new ties with Central Asian nations.

Overall Significance :-

The history of the area was significantly shaped by the Delhi Sultanate's military and diplomatic contacts with Central Asia. A mix of military reactions, diplomatic discussions, and cultural exchanges characterized the Sultanate's attempts to control relations with Central Asian countries. The Delhi Sultanate's internal dynamics and foreign policies were significantly impacted by the Timurid influence, Mongol invasions, and contacts with Central Asian powers. The Sultanate's tenacity and strategic savvy were demonstrated by its ability to overcome these obstacles and preserve stability. The

interactions with Central Asia also facilitated cultural and economic exchanges, contributing to the development of the region's rich heritage.

CONCLUSION :-

A key element of the Delhi Sultanate's development and survival plan was its diplomatic ties with Central Asia. The Sultanate negotiated a challenging geopolitical environment with fluctuating alliances, military challenges, and economic possibilities during its three centuries in power. Consolidating control within the Indian subcontinent was the primary goal at first, but the Mongol Empire's growing prominence demanded a more active foreign policy. The foundation for later military and diplomatic tactics was laid by the early monarchs, such as Iltutmish and Balban, who largely used defensive tactics to counter Mongol threats. A significant shift was brought about by the Tughlaq dynasty's more active involvement. Sultan A geopolitical strategy that intended to balance Mongol and Timurid hegemony was evident in Muhammad bin Tughlaq's bold expeditions and diplomatic initiatives to forge alliances with Central Asian nations, including the Chagatai Khanate and eventually the Timurids. Nonetheless, the Sultanate's ongoing difficulties were highlighted by the Mongol invasions and Timur's assault of Delhi. The significance of these contacts in maintaining regional stability is demonstrated by the Lodi dynasty's ongoing maintenance of vital diplomatic and commercial ties with Central Asia, despite its greater emphasis on internal consolidation.

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Famine, Forests, and Revolt: An Environmental History of the 1857 Uprising in Colonial India

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Abstract :

Apart from being traditionally analyzed from political, military, and cultural perspectives, the colonial Indian environmental history can also be used to account for the 1857 Uprising. This article is a critical examination of the channels through which environmental conditions, in this case, hunger, forest resource use, and ecological imbalance, contributed to the critical tensions and grievances fueling the rebellion. Food shortages were aggravated by British colonial policies, disrupted forest-based economies, and altered land-use patterns dramatically, all contributing to rural despair. Our understanding of 1857 as a socio-ecological catastrophe, rather than a simple political-military event, is extended by this study's locating of the rebellion within such environmental stresses. The study claims that environmental degradation was a key but neglected cause of resistance, drawing on ecological data, historical evidence, and prior scholarship.

Keywords : 1857 Uprising, Environmental History, Colonial Ecology, Famine and Forests, Peasant Revolts.

Introduction :

Already commonly known as India's "First War of Independence," the 1857 Uprising has been studied well on political, cultural, and economic grounds. However, comparatively much less is known about the effects of environmental factors, particularly famine, deforestation, and land use changes. Commercial forestry, cash-crop production, and revenue-maximisation measures under British rule pushed subsistence practices to the margins, triggering far-reaching alterations in the colonial Indian ecological environment. Peasants, artisans, tribal groups, and soldiers alike were directly affected by these alterations in nature, rendering ecological disequilibrium a passionate cause of rebellion.

We are prompted by a new study in environmental history to move beyond stories of the battlefield to the fields, rivers, and forests where resentment fermented. The material conditions

leading to the 1857 Revolt are examined in this paper, including resource alienation, environmental degradation, and food shortages. The research highlights how customary relations to land and forest were disrupted, rural communities were alienated, and collective resistance was evoked by British domination of natural resources.

Colonial Land Policies, Agrarian Distress, and Forced Commercialization :

Different land policies introduced during British colonialism transformed India's farm economy, imposing widespread misery and long-term impact on the country's rural economy. Indian farming was largely communal and local-need-based before British occupation. Such types of systems were, however, uprooted by British policies of increasing land revenue and Indian agriculture for the colonial economy, placing peasants in a cycle of economic distress.

One of the earliest and most significant colonial land plans was the Permanent Settlement, which was implemented in Bengal in 1793. Under the scheme, the British established zamindars, or landlords, who were legally defined as landowners, and they were required to pay land revenue to the government. While the zamindars remitted the fixed revenue, they would raise peasant rents in an attempt to turn a profit. The land would be confiscated by the British if the tax was not remitted. A debt and dispossession cycle ensnared the peasants, who were already frequently strapped by poor crops. The inflexible system brought a great deal of suffering and resentment to the rural areas.

The British brought in the Mahalwari and Ryotwari systems, both with their own problems, in different regions of India. Land tax was the duty of the whole village in the Mahalwari system; therefore, if one farmer could not pay, the entire village had to pay. In southern and western India, the Ryotwari system forced individual farmers to pay tax. The system subjected the farmers to huge pressure as they had to pay heavy taxes irrespective of crop yields, even though it eliminated the middlemen zamindars. During the days of crop failures or famine, the majority of the farmers went into debt and often lost land to moneylenders as they did not get any help.

Yet another major characteristic of colonial land policy was the shift towards commercial cultivation. Instead of growing foodgrains, British forced or coerced farmers to grow cash crops like opium, cotton, tea, and indigo. The reason behind this change was to fulfill world market demands and British industries. For many peasants, commercialisation of agriculture proved to be disastrous, however. The peasants were consistently caught in debts and became vulnerable to international market fluctuations. A case of peasant resistance against forced commercialization is the Indigo Rebellion of Bengal, and it took place from 1859 to 1860. From this time on, cultivators were forced to grow indigo for exports.

The British imposed exorbitant tariffs on farm produce in addition to coercive planting of

cash crops. Even taxes were collected in cash and not in kind even during the period of crop failure under an exploitative and merciless tax regime. The agrarian crisis was also deepened by the heavy taxation and destruction of traditional farming practices. Farmers lacked money to eat and support their family because they were compelled to grow crops for export.

Agrarian distress was a direct consequence of pressure towards commercial agriculture and the transformation of the system of land revenue. British legislation dislocated local farming systems and also resulted in the elimination of common land resources and left the farmers at the mercy of volatile market forces. Widespread poverty, famine, and dispossession in the countryside of India followed. When peasants along with other outraged sections of the population revolted against the oppressive colonial state, the agrarian crisis generated by these measures was one of the principal causes of the 1857 Rising.

Forest Policies, Early Colonial Forest Exploitation, and Forest Communities' Rebellion :

British colonial-era economic plunder of India's natural resources was made possible in large part due to laws of the forest, which resulted in local people being widely dispossessed of their wealth. Forests, which were first considered a common good, came under colonial governmental control more decisively. In addition to their destructive impact on the environment, the policies had harsh social and economic effects on rural citizens, especially the people dependent on the forests and the tribes.

During the early 19th century, the British state initiated passing laws that transformed forests into state property. One such important milestone in this direction was the Indian Forest Act of 1865. The Act authorized the British state to classify large tracts of land as "reserved" woods, with strict access controls. The local population lost access to the land, which previously was used by indigenous people for hunting, the collection of firewood, and grazing. The Act reserved the sole power over the forest produce to the colonial state, and breaking the law was a punishable offense that entailed fines or imprisonment.

The increasing need for timber, especially for construction development, railway development, and other infrastructure projects, was one of the main reasons for British exploitation of Indian forests. Timber was also one of the main export products to Britain and other countries. Deforestation on a large scale, thus, took place with little concern for the effect on the ecosystem or the local community. For instance, the timber harvesting in Central India and the Himalayan foothills resulted in extensive environmental degradation, such as soil erosion and depletion of forest products essential to the local community.

Forest inhabitants experienced acute alienation by virtue of early colonial forest exploitation.

Having subsisted on the land for centuries, communities like the Gonds, Santhals, and Bhils were abruptly dispossessed of the resource base upon which they had subsisted for so long. Commercial logging and extraction supplanted traditional forest management using sustainable practices and communal rights. With severely restricted firewood, material for shelter, and grazing ground, communities were unable to access their fundamental needs.

Growing discontent and unrest were created by forest communities being cut off from their supplies. Many tribes that depended on forests opposed the British policies because they believed that they were a threat to their lifestyle. A classic example of such resistance was the Santhal Rebellion of 1855–1856, which demonstrated the fury of forest communities against colonial resource exploitation despite the fact that it was largely a reaction to the oppression of peasants and the persecution of zamindars. Land grievances and the exploitation of forests, where the Santhal tribals had been denied access to resources they had long used for survival, were the triggers for the mass rebellion.

The British forest policies triggered other small uprisings across India apart from the Santhal Rebellion. Locals in Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh states rose up against the imposition of forest regulations, grazing prohibitions, and wood gathering. They were significant since they came before the resistance of large forest populations against colonialism, although the British army normally crushed them.

Forest societies were impacted culturally and spiritually as well as economically because of the alienation. Forests were sacred lands to most tribal cultures and also lands from which they could get food. Their spiritual bond with the country was severed by the denial of access to these forests, which made them more resistant to British domination.

Early colonial exploitation of Indian forests and British forest policy had ruinous effects on Indian and tribal societies. Apart from destroying the livelihood of these tribes, British withholding of their resources gave rise to a chain of revolts that contributed to a larger wave of resistance against colonial rule. Forest exploitation, driven by the demand for wood and other resources, is a classic case of colonial extraction patterns and their ruinous effect on Indian society.

Famine, Environmental Degradation, and Rural Hunger :

During colonial India, famine was a widespread disaster which had a direct correlation with the ecological destruction imposed by British colonial rule. The failure of indigenous agricultural practices and the degradation of natural resources increased the vulnerability of the rural population, already bearing the brunt of heavy taxation and enforced commercialisation, to famine. British policies, particularly concerning land revenue and agricultural commercialization, were key to the climatic

conditions which led to universal famine and deaths in times of crop failure.

Indian farmers were already under immense pressure because of colonial land policies such as the Ryotwari System and the Permanent Settlement of 1793, which had heavy exactions irrespective of harvest yields. Farmers often had to sell their harvests to meet tax requirements, leaving minimal for consumption. There was not much to resort to when crops were lost due to droughts or other environmental stressors, resulting in severe food shortages. Especially in areas that were already susceptible to environmental stress, this system left rural communities even more susceptible to famine.

The Great Indian Famine of 1837–38 :

The Great Indian Famine of 1837–1838, which mostly struck Punjab and Sindh in northwestern India, was among the most devastating famines to afflict the nation during British rule. After a sequence of severe droughts resulting in extensive crop loss, there was hunger. Nevertheless, colonial policies played a significant role in exacerbating the disaster. The government in Britain didn't do much to stop the situation or help the affected people because it was too engrossed in tax collection. Millions of lives were lost due to the famine, and a great number of them succumbed to starvation, illness, and malnutrition.

The colonial administration's reaction to the famine was grossly inadequate. The British were more interested in maintaining tax revenues from the affected areas, thus relief attempts were poor and tardy. The commercialisation of farming, which spurred farmers to grow cash crops such as cotton and indigo instead of foodstuffs, exacerbated the famine substantially. When natural circumstances were adverse, this shift rendered the populace more vulnerable to food scarcity. The failure of the British government to move quickly or provide the suffering people with adequate relief during the 1837–1838 famine contributed to the extent of the tragedy.

Ecology of Vulnerability :

human knowledge The impact of famine in colonial India necessitates an understanding of the ecology of vulnerability. Famine vulnerability stemmed from economic and environmental exploitation under the colonial system rather than from crop failure. Farmers were more environmentally exposed due to the British colonial state's preoccupation with profit-oriented agriculture that led to deforestation, soil erosion, and depletion of natural resources. Farmers find it increasingly hard to grow crops in times of drought or floods because of land degradation caused by the denudation of trees, particularly in the foothills of the Himalayas.

Moreover, rural people became increasingly dependent on the pressure of the international market due to the shift from subsistence to cash crop farming. Farmers could not afford to pay their

taxes or buy food when market rates for such crops as cotton or indigo went down. Individuals who had earlier relied on local food production for survival were now reliant on markets that were unable to sustain them during periods of crisis, adding another layer of vulnerability. As grain was exported instead of stored for domestic consumption, British policies during famines, most notably the Great Famine of 1876–1878, left vast regions without food stocks.

The ecology of vulnerability highlights the way in which British colonial economic methods and exploitation of resources created a system wherein even small environmental stresses could have catastrophic effects. The poor rural populations bore the brunt of famine as they did not have any means to escape starvation and malnutrition.

During colonial India, famines were a dire outcome of the interaction between oppressive colonial policies and environmental degradation. A superb example of how British economic interests, including revenue extraction and commercialisation of agriculture, left peasants vulnerable to the disastrous effects of crop failure is the Great Indian Famine of 1837–1838. The depth of the British government's disregard for the welfare of its colonial people was established by the failure to introduce substantial relief measures in times of crisis.

Sepoys, Subsistence, and Ecological Ties :

The Sepoy force was deeply connected to the land and the countryside since it consisted mainly of Indian soldiers employed by the British East India Company. The overwhelming majority of the Sepoys came from the countryside, specifically Bengal, Bihar, and Uttar Pradesh, where their economic existence rested on subsistence agriculture. These fighters, often recruited from rural communities, had a deep connection with the earth, which heavily shaped their views on resistance, power, and identity.

Military service was an extension of rural existence for most Sepoys. Although they had left their villages to become soldiers, their connection to the land remained a source of identity for them. The social and cultural cohesion of these fighters rested in the agrarian economy, which was more than simply a subsistence means. Several Sepoys hailed from families of old landownership traditions, and agrarian rhythms conditioned their views on justice, survival, and fidelity. Rather than cutting them off from such an ecological milieu, the transition to soldiering solidified their lasting connection to the land.

But these relationships began to be affected by the harsh realities of military life under British rule. The Sepoy families suffered financially due to the land revenue system imposed on rural communities and the British requirement for cash crops. Subsistence agriculture was disrupted by oppressive taxation, enforced commercialization of farming, and the transformation of local food

production into cash crops such as opium and indigo. Sepoys became disconnected from their ecological and cultural connections alongside losing a source of stable livelihood for their households when they were disengaged from their rural roots.

Rural Roots of the Sepoy Army :

Since most of its soldiers came from rural regions, the Sepoy army enjoyed deep roots in rural India. The army mostly recruited from rural regions, in which men were attracted by the promise of land grants and a secure wage. In order to maintain control of India's immense territory, the British East India Company needed an educated and stable military force. They hired primarily from the countryside in an effort to fulfill these demands, drawing on the agricultural base of Indian civilization. Sepoy recruitment was often considered a route of peasant upward mobility. They can escape the difficulties of farm labor, including excessive taxation, uncertain economic times, and oppression by zamindars and moneylenders, by joining the army. But due to their rural background, the Sepoys were also subject to the climatic and social changes caused by British policies. These troops were caught between their rural culture and the increasing discontent with British economic policy as colonial exploitation became more widespread. When they saw firsthand the destructive impact of colonial policies on their families and communities, their loyalty to the Company began to dwindle.

Environmental Imaginations in Sepoy Discourse :

The Sepoys' resistance to colonial domination and participation in the 1857 Uprising were shaped by their worldview, which was created by agrarian and rural existence. Their connection to the earth had a powerful impact on their rhetoric, or the way in which they framed their grievances and opposition. To the Sepoys and their families, the destruction of the environment caused by British policies—forest depletion, land seizure, and commercialisation of agriculture—was a lived reality. The Sepoys felt that the British were primarily responsible for this destruction since most of them had witnessed their natural resources degrading.

Sepoys and others who took part in the 1857 rebellion characterized the British as enemies of their subsistence and homeland as well as their religion and culture. For them, the rebellion was both a struggle to reassert their traditional relationship with the land and a political and ecological action. The grievances expressed by the Sepoys in their address illustrated an environmental imagination—a knowledge that the disappearance of their way of life was bound up with the disappearance of the land.

Sepoys framed their rebellion as a defense of their material and spiritual worlds, employing the discourse of ecological rights in their struggle. They thought that the British were polluting their culture and the nation. In a large sense, the rebellion was an attempt to restore control over the

cultural and ecological dimensions of their lives, which had been turned upside down by colonial practices.

Both their service in the British army and last rebellion were influenced by the Sepoy army's deep attachments to the countryside and rural life. Sepoys had become disillusioned with the realities of British economic policies, land exploitation, and environmental degradation and became more aware of the ill effects of colonial rule. Their rebellion, which had its origins in an ecological and rural imagination, was a reflection of their strong desire to restore their cultural relationships to the land as well as their subsistence ways.

Forests as Strategic and Symbolic Spaces :

In warfare history, forests have always been significant from both a strategic and symbolic perspective. This was particularly the case in the Indian Uprising of 1857. India's dense woods, which cross the Deccan Plateau, Chhattisgarh, and the Himalayan foothills, were crucial zones for the insurgency's guerrilla tactics. To the combatants of the British East India Company, these natural environments provided resources and shelter. The insurgents could rapidly move, evade arrest, and surprise the British forces with an attack due to the heavily forested landscape. Forests in this context were more than topographical elements; they were instrumental in survival and resistance strategies. Forest tracts offered strategic natural defenses that it was difficult for the British to overcome. Topography of India, consisting of dense and often impassable jungle, created ideal terrain for fighting off a dominant colonial army. Utilization of the forestlands as a Guerrilla war basis was facilitated enormously by the tribesman and the peasant communities living in such zones. In contrast to British soldiers, who were not conversant with native ecosystems, local residents had an extensive background in forest management and deep knowledge of the land in most areas.

Forests in Guerrilla Warfare :

Several of the rebel factions made use of the forests as base camps from where they carried out attacks against the British forces throughout the 1857 Uprising. Forest guerrilla warfare, characterized by ambushes, sabotage, and hit-and-run operations, was waged in the forest. By employing the woodlands to launch surprise attacks, conceal themselves in secure sites, and bypass direct confrontation with British troops—whom generally were better disciplined and better-equipped— the rebels gained advantage through familiarity with their physical environment.

The Central Indian tribal regions, where insurgents such as Rani Durgavati and Tantia Tope led rebellion movements against the British, witnessed one of the most prominent instances of guerilla warfare in the jungles. In an attempt to evade British retaliation, these leaders utilized the woodlands as a base of operations and utilized the natural cover. The British struggled to track or control the best

hiding spots that the dense trees provided. The rebels effectively employed guerilla warfare as they learned to blend in with their environment as the British tried to cut off supplies and chase them. Second, the forested lands provided rebel soldiers sustenance, drink, and habitation—all vital resources necessary to help them survive. Even despite being removed from typical lines of supply, the insurgency managed to carry their cause for longer lengths of time because to such resources naturally occurring within them. When partaking in an ongoing battle, the capability of survival based upon land was an immense advantage to bear against facing the might of the British war effort.

Symbolic Power of the Forest :

Forests had a symbolic role to play within the 1857 Revolt as well as their strategic role in guerrilla war. For the rebels, the forest became an emblem of identity, autonomy, and defiance. Many tribal societies, particularly those in central India, perceived the forest as a spiritual and cultural space as well as a geographical one. It was at once a sanctuary and symbol of freedom from colonial oppression. Nonetheless, as part of their broader plan to conquer and extract resources from India, the British sought to dominate the woods.

Consequently, the forest had come to symbolize the struggle of the native people against the colonial state. It was a site for worship, a hold on to the traditions of their ancestors, and a source of livelihood for others. In their efforts to assert dominance over the country and its wealth, the British were seen to be invading not only the land but also the identity of these tribes. The bigger narrative of resistance was one about the forest being symbolically important as a site of resistance.

In addition, new forms of solidarity emerged in the woods. Hitherto divided by caste, religion, or geography, many tribal communities and peasants united in the forests to battle colonial authority. Consequently, the woodlands became a site of social and physical security where rebels could congregate, share resources, and seek protection.

The forests in the 1857 Uprising were not merely sites; they were symbolic and tactical sites, imperative to the battle against British rule. They were sites of guerilla warfare, providing the rebels with provisions and protection to continue their struggle. The forest also became a vital part of the greater battle for freedom from colonial rule and a powerful symbol of native resistance and cultural heritage.

Colonial Responses and Environmental Counterinsurgency :

Both counterinsurgency military and environmental strategies were applied in the British colonial response to the 1857 Uprising. The British, following the rebellion, sought to reassert control of the strategic and vast terrain, particularly the woodlands that had become sites of resistance, along with suppressing the uprising. To suppress any future rebellions and maintain their colonial

authority, the British recognized that domination over these natural zones was vital.

The deliberate elimination of forest resources, imposition of strict forest management rules, and strategic deployment of woods to suppress subsequent revolt were all instances of environmental counterinsurgency strategies employed by the British military. To complement the usage of conventional military strategies, the British army strategy emphasized new efforts towards the regulation of natural resources that the rebels depended upon. After the rebellion, the Indian Forest Act of 1865 was one of the most significant Acts aimed at implementing state control over forests and symbolizing the beginning of a more systematic and disciplined method of handling forests.

Retaliation Against "Rebel" Landscapes :

The British subsequently labeled the forests which had been the rebels' site of refuge and resistance as "rebel landscapes." These landscapes, which were marked by guerilla warfare and revolutions, needed to be pacified in an attempt to halt future disturbances, so it was believed. The British countered these "rebel landscapes" by denying the rebels access to necessary resources by environmental means.

The systematic burning of villages, crops, and forests was among the numerous scorched earth strategies employed by the British army. In order to deprive the rebels of shelter and sustenance, the British would incinerate crops, destroy homes, and even fell trees in areas where insurgencies had been most widespread, i.e., the tribal provinces of Central India. These reprisals were designed to make an unmistakable declaration to the inhabitants of the country that revolt would be met with complete devastation alongside weakening the revolt's material underpinnings.

The British also imposed strict controls over the use of forest resources. Previously owned by the locals, forests were converted into state-controlled areas. The locals had used the forests for food, shelter, and fuel, and these measures were meant to limit their independence. The British sought to undermine the socioeconomic basis of potential rebellion by withholding access to these resources.

Institutionalizing Forest Control :

After the revolt in 1857, the British created a system that amalgamated colonial governance and environmental control, thereby asserting sovereignty over the forests of India. A major milestone in this development was the Indian Forest Act of 1865. It built a comprehensive administrative mechanism for carrying out forest administration in addition to setting apart vast tracts of land as "reserved forests," curtailing the access of local communities to them. The Act empowered the British colonial government to restrict the local population's access to forest resources, such as timber, fuel, and grazing pasture.

As part of a broader British effort to impose direct control over India's natural and social

worlds, forest control was institutionalized. By the harvesting of timber and other products, forests became an instrument of political power as well as a source of economic revenue. The British were able to control rural communities' movements and activities by limiting access to forests, which kept them from utilizing these spaces for acts of resistance.

British military troops and forest officials were sent across India to monitor and enforce the new regulations. These officials were responsible for ensuring forests were utilized for colonial purposes, such as furnishing timber for the growing military needs of the British Empire and railroads. The British also had an easier time controlling labor, resources, and human movement due to the intentional removal of indigenous people from wooded areas.

In addition, the British considered institutionalisation of forest management a means to prevent future uprisings. The British wanted to make it harder for resistance groups to utilise trees for survival, planning, and camouflage by preventing local inhabitants from accessing them. The overall plan of the colonial state to maintain authority over India's populace and resources later encompassed forest rules and regulations as an integral part.

In addition to military revenge, the British government tactically used environmental counterinsurgency strategies following the 1857 Uprising. The British aimed to destroy the biological roots of rebellion by converting forests into managed, state-administered lands and restricting entry to these necessary resources. An important aspect of this policy was the institutionalisation of forest management, which consolidated British control over India's natural resources while transforming the relationship between local residents and the land.

Environmental Historiography of the 1857 Uprising :

One significant shift in how historians have approached colonialism and resistance in India can be observed within the environmental historiography of the 1857 Uprising. War, military strategy, and the roles of key figures such as Mangal Pandey, Rani Lakshmibai, and Tantia Tope were the central subjects of conventional political and military histories of the uprising. This focus disregarded the ecological and environmental factors of the revolt in favor of focusing on its political and cultural origins. Current studies, however, have paid attention to the environmental context under which the revolt occurred, highlighting how the resources, terrain, and environmental degradation affected the course and outcome of the rebellion.

Colonial resource extraction policies such as land revenue systems, deforestation, and the commercialisation of agriculture resulted in extensive agrarian suffering, which in turn generated rural communities' general discontent. These policies turned traditional ways of life on their head in addition to ruining local enterprises. The destruction of local ecosystems, such as forests and water

resources, was one of the prime reasons for rendering rural populations vulnerable since they had been relying on these resources for survival in the past. Therefore, a major theme in researching the 1857 rebellion from an environmentalist perspective was the impact of colonialism on the environment, which was directly linked to the causes and experience of the rebellion.

Conclusion :

In the context of environmental history, the 1857 Uprising should be interpreted as a socio-ecological rebellion against colonial alterations that endangered rural subsistence, forest access, and customary land use. The uprising embodied entrenched ecological issues and was far from a purely political or military venture.

Colonial policies heightened ecological degradation, displaced forest peoples, dispossessed peasants of their land, and commodified agriculture to the detriment of food security. Mass mobilizations were initiated by the material deprivations brought about by famines and food crises, which were direct consequences of such policies.

Knowledge of the 1857 revolt's environmental components disrupts classic historiography and opens new spaces for the understanding of complex colonial impacts on Indian ecology and society. The revolt is a powerful demonstration of how the direction of resistance against colonial rule in India was influenced by struggles for land, forest, and livelihood.

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Archaeological Exploration and Historical Significance of Garh Panchakote : Uncovering Ancient Fortifications and Cultural Heritage in India

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Abstract :-

Garh Panchkot roughly means Fort of Five Sections, and the name comes from a long-gone stronghold that once ringed the seat of Panchkot Raj, a small kingdom ruled by the Singh Deo family until the middle of the eighteenth century. Historians believe that ruined fortress was built in five distinct layers of stone and earth. Locals also suggest the word Panchkot, sometimes heard as Panch Khunt, refers to five tribal lineages, with early British records shortening the name to Panchet.

Archaeological sites and old temples like these pull in history enthusiasts, casual tourists, and devoted pilgrims, giving a lift to village shops and guesthouses. Keeping the stones and carvings safe is vital for the area's cultural face and for teaching tomorrow's children what came before them. The still-standing shrines and scattered palace walls mix several building styles. Rich terracotta plaques on some temples hint at earlier Bengali art, maybe even influences from before the Muslim period.The paper focuses

Keywords :- Garh Panchakote, Terracotta,Heritage Conservation and Preservation, Bishnupur style, Singh Deo Dynasty, Bengali Temple Architecture , Pancharatna design.

INTRODUCTION :-

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE :-

The shrine shows off the iconic five-tower or Pancharatna design that defines Bengali temples. In simple terms, a large main ratna rises from the centre, while four smaller companions guard each corner. So, the word Pancha, meaning five, neatly explains the clusters overhead. This layout is more than decorative; it marks one of Bengals key gifts to Indian temple building. Onlookers can see how local architects adapted classic forms to Bengali's humid skies and readily found bricks.

Materials :-

The walls are made mostly of red-brick set with laterite blocks, a stone common in low-country quarries. The laterites rusty shade and rough, pockmarked surface grow darker over time and rain. Above them, the ceiling shows concentric squares turned charcoal grey, perhaps from smoke and sitting moisture. This deep tone sharply sets off the paler walls and makes the ceiling pattern pop.

Shikara (Towers) :-

Standing tall, the central shikhara sweeps upward in a smooth, curving line that draws every gaze. Beneath that arc, the four corner towers echo the curve, each one scaled down but still proud. Together, they seal the Pancharatna look, a skyline of rounded forms rising boldly against the sky.

Arched Entrances :-

The temple sports several curved doorways, a common hallmark of Bengali buildings, each frame marked by fine carving. Above them rises a grand vaulted roof set with nested squares that draw the eye upwards. This ceiling, called a corbelled dome-or lantern roof-news layers of brick or stone stepped inward until they meet at a peak, all done without temporary scaffolding. A glance at the columns reveals schemes of crisp geometry, lush blossoms, or human figures, changing with each rulers taste and era. Such arches show craftsmen knowing how to carry weight over openings while eliminating heavy lintels. Their steady march across the facade gives the whole front a rhythmic pulse and soothing visual flow.

Terracotta Ornamentation :-

Numerous temples in the area, especially the Pancharatna ones, feature rich terracotta reliefs showing mythic tales, blossoms, and bold grids. Such detail highlights the artisans pride in craft. In contrast, the plain stretch under study hints that it played a practical role inside the larger temple court. Possibly a walkway, a closet for sacred items, a ritual nook, or even a small audience room for visiting rulers, it simply didnt call for lavish carving.
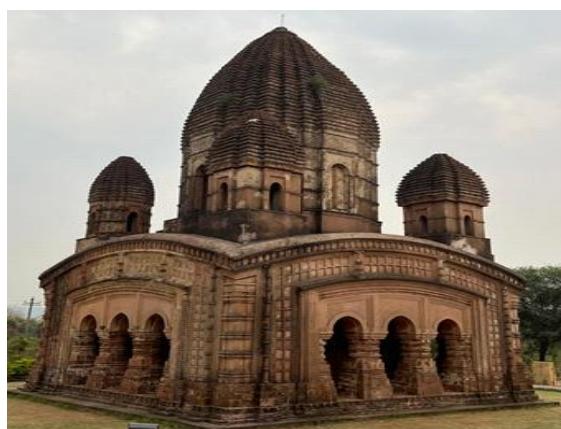
Fig 1 : Garhpanchakot Temple (Baranti Circuit)

Multi-tiered Structure :-

The temples front presents several stacked sections, and every level is lined with a neat series of arches that lean inward at the top. Together, these elements give the building a dramatic, up-to-the-sky look that catches the eye from every angle.The arches themselves are formed from wedge-shaped blocks, a craft handed down through generations and still common in local masonry. Such methods show how builders here make the most of local stone while drawing on years of shared know-how.

Arcaded Corridor\Passageway :-

The temple has a long,narrow arcaded corridor or passageway.This is a significant architectural feature,as it indicates a structured and planned layout for the temple complex.Such corridors often serve as circumambulatory paths(pradakshina patha) for devotees,allowing them to walk around the sanctum sanctorum(garbhagriha) in a clockwise direction as a form of worship.The corridor has a tiled floor,which is another notable feature.The tiles might be made of terracotta or stone,and their patterned arrangement adds to the visual interest of the space.

Cultural Heritage :-

Temples like this are an integral part of the cultural heritage of Bengal. They reflect the region's rich history, artistic traditions, and religious beliefs.

Historical Importance :-

Khoka ghumalo, paada judaalo bargi elo deshe, Bulbulite dhaan kheyechhe, khaajnaa debo kishe?''(As the children fall asleep and silence sets in, the Bargis attack our country. Birds have eaten the paddy, how shall we pay the tax to the Bargis?)This well-loved lullaby has been sung for generations, mothers gently linking the fear of a plundering Bargi to help babies drift off to sleep. Alongside such verses, countless temples scattered across the landscape carry stories of old rulers, battles, and changing fortunes; their stone walls act like quiet historians, giving visitors clues about past social, political and economic life. The quarrel of Alivardi khan (then Nawab of Bengal) with Rustam Jung (brother-in-law of Sarfraz Khan) caused Maratha Ruler of Nagpur Raghoji Bhonsle to join the conflict of Bargi Attack Invasion between 1741-1751. Marathas under Raghoji Bhonsle and his commander Bhaskar Pandit invaded Bengal 6 times. The constant pressure from one side made it impossible for the Nawab of Bengal to hold out and eventually culminated in the defeat of the Nawab of Bengal. The war was eventually brought to a close with a peace treaty (1751) that was signed between the Marathas and Nawab of Bengal.

Religious Significance :-

Besides Radha-Krishna shrines, sturdy pre-colonial temples of other styles remain, some thought to have welcomed fierce Kali, telling us that the kingdoms once embraced a patchwork of

faiths. The Shyam Raghunath Temple, built in flowing Shikhara style, now stands among Purulia's biggest stone houses of worship, its high spires tugging at the sky. A few kilometres away, temples wearing the Bishnupuri cut, with rounded roofs and intricate terracotta tales, echo later Vaishnaivite moods, an artistic shift many believe rose after Chaitanya Mahaprabhu crossed the land. The ruler was a Rajput chieftain with a Shakta heart, yet his shrines leaned toward Vaishnava iconography. That shift is often linked to the charisma of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, the wandering Vaishnava saint of his day. Because of this mix, the site shows two clear building styles: the later Bishnupuri style and an older method of stacked stone blocks. Tradition holds that Bishnupuri shrines welcomed images of Krishna; their priests and pilgrims ate only vegetables. In contrast, the Stone Temples were home to the fierce Kali, drawing followers who ate meat and sometimes offered sacrifices. Such evidence supports the king's broad-mindedness; a nearby cave carved by Jains adds yet another layer to his faith.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE :-

The image shows the ruins of Garh Panchkot, a historically significant site located at the foothills of the Panchet hills in the Purulia district of West Bengal, India.Its archaeological significance stems from several factors :

Garh Panchkot was the capital of the Singh Deo dynasty,who ruled the region for over 800 years, from 940 CE to around 1750 CE. The ruins of the fort and palaces offer valuable insights into the architecture, governance and lifestyle of this once-powerful kingdom.

The Archaeological data is very limited as not much exploration or excavation has been done. However, further exploration or excavation will uncover a lot of truths which are still unknown to the masses and encourage researchers to dig more and study the history and archaeology of this place.

Fig 2 : Archaeological ruins.

CONCLUSION :-

Even after getting attacked by the Marathas for 6th times,it didn't make them any weaker. This shows their resilience and dedication. The history and archaeology of Bengal is vast and is rich in heritage, culture. The archaeological ruins in this picture show a lot of hidden truths which is still buried and needs to be discovered and excavated for posterity. Our future generations had to see and learn what India actually is, with the diversified cultures and backgrounds it holds. These cultural heritage should be preserved and protected by all means. Our government as well as all the citizens should come together and contribute for better future.People should be more aware of their legacy and should have a sense of pride within themselves to protect, preserve for future generations to come and see.Further excavations should be initiated by the state as well as central government to further dig into the past of this place which will enable new scholars to study and explore about this place which is forgotten by many.

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तालिका– 2

शैक्षणिक / शोध अंक की गणना हेतु विश्वविद्यालय और महाविद्यालय के शिक्षकों के लिए कार्यप्रणाली

(आकलन शिक्षकों द्वारा प्रस्तुत साक्ष्यों पर आधारित होना चाहिए, जैसेः प्रकाशनों की प्रति, परियोजना स्वीकृति पत्र, विश्वविद्यालय द्वारा जारी उपयोग तथा पूर्णता प्रमाण पत्र, पेटेंट दर्ज कराने संबंधी अभिस्वीकृति और स्वीकृति पत्र, विद्यार्थियों को पीएचडी उपाधि प्रदान किए जाने संबंधी पत्र इत्यादि।)

क्रम सं.	शैक्षणिक / शोध क्रियाकलाप	विज्ञान / अभियांत्रिकी / कृषि / चिकित्सा / पशु–चिकित्सा विज्ञान संकाय	भाषा / मानविकी / कला / सामाजिक विज्ञान / पुस्तकालय / शिक्षा / शारीरिक शिक्षा / वाणिज्य / प्रबंधन तथा अन्य संबंधित विधाएं
1	समकक्ष व्यक्ति समीक्षित अथवा विश्वविद्यालय अनुदान आयोग द्वारा सूचीबद्ध पत्रों में शोध पत्र	08 प्रति पत्र	10 प्रति पत्र
2	प्रकाशन (शोध पत्रों के अतिरिक्त)		
	(क) लिखी गई पुस्तकें, जिन्हें निम्नवत के द्वारा प्रकाशित किया गया :		
	अंतर्राष्ट्रीय प्रकाशक	12	12
	राष्ट्रीय प्रकाशक	10	10
	संपादित पुस्तक में अध्याय	05	05
	अंतर्राष्ट्रीय प्रकाशक द्वारा पुस्तक का संपादक	10	10
	राष्ट्रीय प्रकाशक द्वारा पुस्तक का संपादक	08	08
	(ख) योग्य संकाय द्वारा भारतीय और विदेशी भाषाओं में अनुवाद कार्य		
	अध्याय अथवा शोध पत्र	03	03
	पुस्तक	08	08
3	आईसीटी के माध्यम से शिक्षण ज्ञान– अर्जन, शिक्षण शास्त्र और विषयवस्तु का सृजन तथा नए और नवोन्मेषी पाठ्यक्रमों और पाठ्यचर्या का विकास		
	(क) नवोन्मेषी अध्यापन का विकास	05	05
	(ख) नई पाठ्यचर्या और पाठ्यक्रमों को तैयार करना	02 प्रति पाठ्यचर्या / पाठ्यक्रम	02 प्रति पाठ्यचर्या / पाठ्यक्रम

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