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**Artist: Basudev Mondal. Title: Meditative Nature.**

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Volume: 1 / Issue: 27 / June 2025 - ISSN: 2270 0670

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Volume 1/ Issue: 27/June 2025-ISSN: 2270 0670

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Volume: 1/ Issue: 27/June 2025-ISSN: 2278 8670

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## PREFACE

It is our pleasure that we have been able to publish our June, issue of our journal. We are grateful to our members for their continuous support and hard work. We have tried our level best without any compromise with the quality of the journal. We hope we shall be carrying out the publication of the journal in future. Our journal has been recognized all over the world which is a great achievement to us. A beautiful painting from renowned artist Basudev Mondal, has been placed on the cover page of the journal as usual, who is also a member of our journal society. The title of the painting is "Meditative Nature".

Basudev Mondal is Assistant Professor & H.O.D, Bengali at Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Satabarshiki Mahavidyalaya, Helencha, W.B. Apart from his teaching profession he is a renowned artist. He is one of the members of the board of associate editors of our journal. He has achieved various awards and honours in the field of art and painting. Some of the achievements are mentioned here:

### Awards:

1. Triple Champion Medalist, Calcutta University.
2. Honour and Felicitation from Kolkata Theatre for Human Development at Rabindra Sadan Kolkata.
3. Bina Pani Samman from Barasat Suti Sanskriti Sanstha, 24 Pgs(N).
4. Honour and Felicitation from Bongaon Charukala Parsad, 24 Pgs(N).
5. Honour and Felicitation from Cultural Unit of Duttafulia, 24 Pgs(N).
6. Honour from 'DOUR' Bengali Magazine, 24 Pgs(N).
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8. Honour from 'BALMIKI' Bengali Magazine at Bangla Academy, Kolkata.
9. Honour and Felicitation from 'AMAR EKUSHE' Bengali Magazine, 24 Pgs(N).
10. Honour and Felicitation from 'EKATA SANGHA' 24 Pgs(N).
11. West Bengal Govt. CRIRA O YUBAKALYAN BIVAG Award (2<sup>nd</sup>).
12. Certificate of Proficiency (1<sup>st</sup>) C. R. Roy Memorial Art Contest.

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1. 2012 AJANTA ART GALLERY, Kolkata-124.
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6. 2009 Charukala Parsad, Bongaon, 24 Pgs(N).

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1. 2012 All India Annual Painting Exhibition, Ajanta Art Gallery, Kolkata-700124.
2. 2011 Japan, Tokyo-CHUWA GALLERY, Tokyo-104-0061 Japan.
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4. 2011 Academy of Fine Arts, Kolkata.
5. 2011 Kala Mela Academy of Fine Arts, Kolkata.
6. 2011 Bongaon Charukala Parsad, 24 Pgs(N).
7. 2010 Academy of Fine Arts, Kala Mela Kolkata.



Volume: 1/ Issue: 27/June 2025-ISSN: 2278 8670

8. 2010 Chemould Art Gallery, Kolkata.
9. 2010 Banipur Art Society, 24 Pgs(N).
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13. 2009 Book Fair Exhibition Ashoknagar, 24 Pgs(N).

Always our effort is to present a good quality journal before the society as a whole and before the intellectual community in particular. Any valuable suggestion for the betterment of the quality of this journal from your end is highly appreciated.

Thank you.

**Dr. Barin Kumar Roy,**  
Editor-in-Chief, IJIRD.



## INDEX

1. INVESTIGATING KANYASIKREE: WEST BENGAL'S ELECTORAL ACCOUNTABILITY IN EDUCATION	Debajit Goswami	1 – 26
2. NAVIGATING CHANGE: THE INFLUENCE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE ON EDUCATION POLICY DEVELOPMENT	Dr Shohini Chakraborty	27 – 36
3. ROLE OF <i>YAMA</i> (VIRTUOUS RESTRAINT) IN SUSTAINABLE PEACE	Dr. Iti Chattopadhyay	37 – 47
4. রবীন্দ্র সাহিত্যে ব্যতিক্রমী নারী যারা এ যুগেও সমান প্রাসঙ্গিক: বিশেষতঃ “বিমলা”	ডঃ তুলিকা কর	48 – 53
5. GENERAL INTERPRETATION OF THE HEART SŪTRA THROUGH THE GLANCE OF CONZE	Dr. Namramita Bhuiya	54 – 62
6. A BRIEF SOCIAL AND CULTURAL HISTORY OF THE LEPCHAS	Dr. Pemu Tshering Lepcha	63 – 72
7. TAMANG WHAI: A FOLK SONG TRADITION THROUGH A MATRIARCHAL PERSPECTIVE	Arpana Kalden and Miss Anamika Subba	73 – 78
8. FOLK DEITIES WORSHIPPED IN THE DARJEELING PULBAZAR BLOCK	Dr. Gyandendra Subba	79 – 88
9. STUDIES ON ORNITHOFAUNA AT KANKRAJHORE AND NEIGHBOURING AREAS OF WEST BENGAL, INDIA	Dr. Debabrata Das and Atmaja Avirupa Das	89 – 101
10. छायावाद और महादेवी वर्मा	डॉ. सुलेखा कुमारी	102 – 107



## INVESTIGATING KANYASHREE: WEST BENGAL'S ELECTORAL ACCOUNTABILITY IN EDUCATION\*

\*This paper is part of the doctoral thesis titled *Electoral Accountability in Health and Education: Comparative study of the states of Odisha and West Bengal* by

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(Paper published on 1<sup>st</sup> June, 2025.)

### Abstract

*This paper explores the crucial aspect of promissory representation in West Bengal, particularly attempting to analyze the degree of electoral accountability in the domain of education, as manifested by the TMC (Trinamool Congress), the incumbent regional party in the state of West Bengal, India. Political parties make various electoral promises when contesting elections, but, after forming the government, there is a perceived lack of political will to fulfill the pledged promises, which erodes electoral accountability.*

*This paper undertakes a survey research approach with the collection and analysis of responses from a sample of a hundred beneficiaries of the Kanyashree educational scholarship programme in West Bengal. By investigating the party's degree of fulfilment of electoral pledges, and the consequent beneficiaries' perception of party's accountability, this paper endeavours to provide insights on the relationship between performance of educational scholarship policy, the degree of political awareness of voters and their consequential relation to the electoral accountability of the party-Trinamool Congress (TMC). This in turn reflects the status of accountable governance in West Bengal, from which broader generalizations may be drawn in the context of the policy landscape in India.*

**Keywords:** Electoral Accountability. West Bengal. Education. Kanyashree.

### Introduction

Within the framework of a democratic political system, the incumbent party and its representatives are expected to be accountable towards their pre-election commitments and the implementation of concrete policies or steps towards fulfilment of those pledges is both fundamental and essential. Their ability to stand by those promises and deliver on the electoral pledges through definite policies or legislative actions reflects their political will to uphold electoral accountability and justifies the mandate given to the political parties. In the context of the thriving Indian democratic landscape, it is a public

as well as academic perception that most political parties, in their pursuit of garnering mass support, make numerous claims and electoral pledges when contesting elections (it may be through the party manifestos as well as the party's and leader's speeches, social media handles). However, once elected and after forming the government, there is a perceived lack of political will and effective policy formulations undertaken to manifest and fulfill these pledged promises, thus eroding the notion of electoral accountability of the incumbent parties. This apparent disparity between the policies promised by the parties prior to election and the subsequent inertia in the implementation of the policies raises serious questions vis-a-vis the party's electoral accountability and the upholding of promissory representation which is expected within a framework of accountable governance.

This paper is significant from the standpoint of promissory representation in Indian democracy and accountable governance, as it examines the degree of electoral accountability in education, albeit at the state level. By critically investigating the dual aspects of electoral promises pledged before and during the elections and consequent actions taken for their realization, this thesis endeavours to provide insights on the domain of promissory representation and accountability of India's vibrant democracy which in turn reflects the robustness of democratic governance mechanisms and the degree of accountable governance in India. Such an analysis, moreover, carries the potential to decipher the various factors which contribute to the making or breaking of pledges and expose the dynamics of policy formulation as well as the obstacles that hinders its execution. Eventually this holistic analysis of the dynamic interrelation among the pre-election promises and post-election policies, degree of accountability of the elected representatives and the evaluation of subsequent programmes taken to fulfill the promises can accentuate public perception on electoral accountability. Additionally, this research could provide valuable insights into the necessary mechanisms that need to be addressed for ensuring an enhanced credibility of the democratic processes and the responsiveness of parties to the mandate of the electorate, thereby contributing to a more robust framework for democratic governance and accountability. Thus, through the examination of the interplay between electoral pledges, implementation of programmes, and accountability perceptions of the beneficiaries and their degree of political awareness, this research contributes to the strengthening of democratic processes, encouraging accountable governance, and augmenting the accountability of democratic

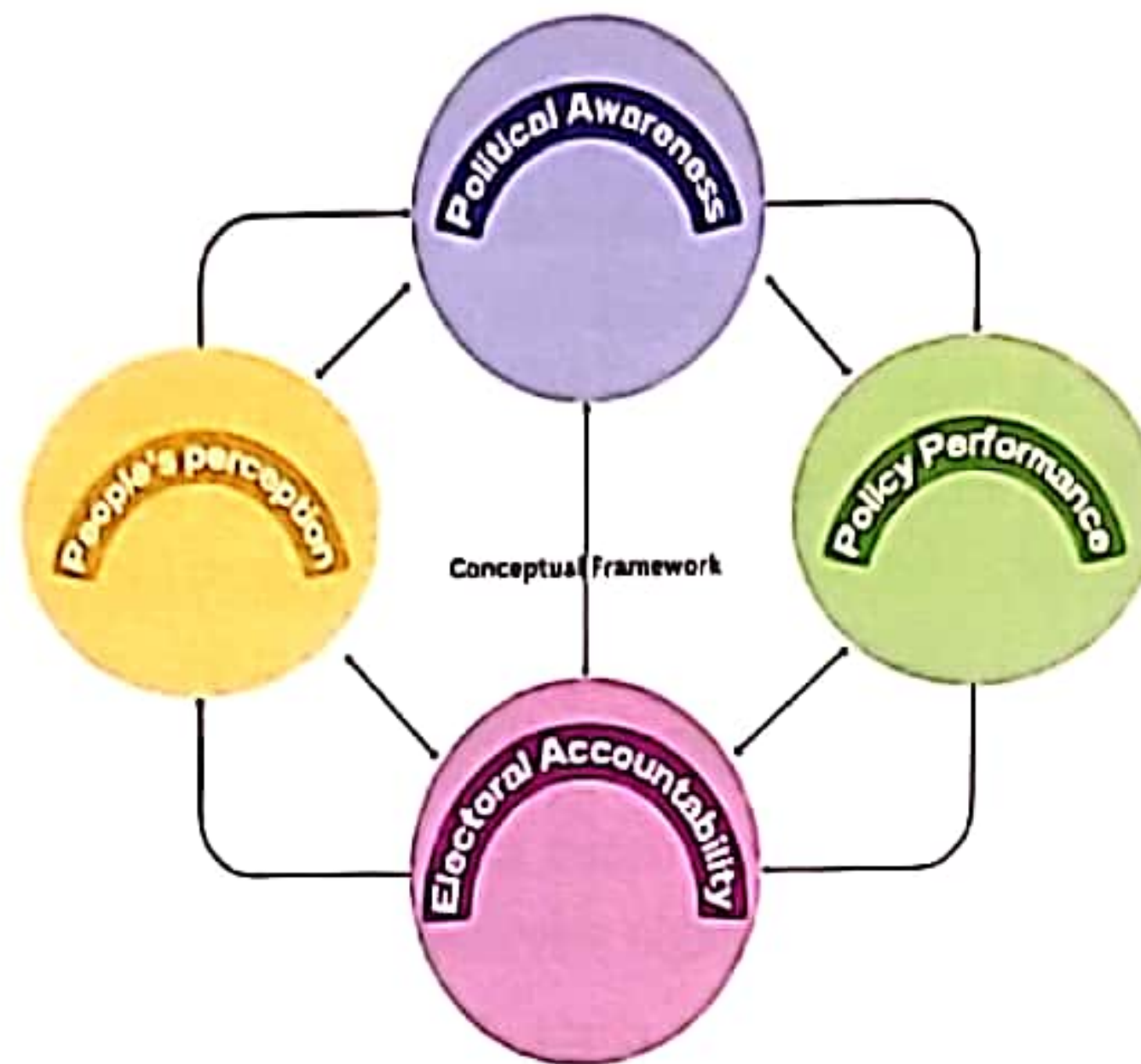


institutions and parties at the state level. Finally, this research has the potential to contribute to a broader discussion about democratic consolidation, accountable governance, and public empowerment through the promotion of electoral accountability, particularly across our political and educational policy landscapes.

Political awareness, in Zaller's understanding, would indicate the degree to which a person is politically attentive or engaged with politics and comprehends what they have experienced (Zaller, 1992). So, awareness would mean the intellectual ability or capacity of an individual to engage with matters of political life or public affairs. Political awareness could be a valuable tool that influences public participation, articulation of demands and active recognition of rights, entitlements and legitimate claims, which in turn also instills a sense of scrutiny of accountability and responsiveness on the government. Politicization, in its broadest sense, refers to the demand for, or act of, transferring a problem or an institution into the realm of politics—turning previously unpolitical issues into political issues (Zurn, 2019). As a result, politicization can be broadly described as bringing a degree of active participation or awareness into the arena of public choice or politics. Electoral accountability would mean there is a relationship of accountability between the policy makers or the government and the people, whereby the former fulfills, or attempts to realize the promises made to the latter or, through public policy decisions, satisfy the needs of the people.

Conceptually, a general framework of electoral accountability may be estimated in terms of its direct relationship to the political awareness and degree of politicization of the electorate, where the increase or decrease in the latter directly results in corresponding proportional change in the degree of electoral accountability of the governments (as visualized in Figure 1 below). The political awareness or degree of politicization of the masses in democracies, provides an incentive to the incumbent to satisfy the people's demands, or the party's promises to its people during the elections, thus making the government more accountable to the electorate.

**Figure 1.** The degree of political awareness of voters have a corresponding relation to their perception of electoral accountability (created by author, licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 4.0)



The above diagram displays a proportional relationship between the degree of politicization and political awareness of the masses and their consequent scrutiny of electoral accountability of the government.

Some of the questions this paper seeks to address are as follows:

#### Research Questions

- What were the promises made by the TMC in the domain of education, as reflected in their 2016 assembly election manifesto, and what were the corresponding policies made to fulfil them after forming the government?
- What is the extent of actual penetration (public cognizance, perception and attested assistance received) of the selected educational scholarship programme of TMC (2016-21) amongst the inhabitants of Kolkata district of West Bengal?
- What is the perception of electoral accountability of the TMC, through the analysis of responses of *Kanyashree* beneficiaries and whether their political awareness has any linkage to the government's electoral accountability?



### Review of Literature

The challenges faced in the domain of education in West Bengal is reflective of the same issues faced in the country. In the Educational Index, India has a value of 0.569, while West Bengal falls behind the national average, with a score of 0.551 (Custom set of indicators 2022 – Sub national HDI Table – Global Data Lab). Though there has been a steady hike in primary school enrollment as well as attendance in primary classes, there has been a steep decline in school enrollment in recent years, with school enrollment in India dropping by 37 lakh in 2023-24, ie. students in 2022-23 was 25.17 crore, while it dropped to 24.80 crore in 2023-24 (UDISE+ 2023-24). This increasing rate of dropout not only reduces opportunities for individuals but also demonstrates the state's failure in forging a skilled workforce that could contribute towards the economic development at large. Moreover, the Union government's expenditure on education is reduced to 2.67% in the 2021-2022 budget with the Department of School Education and Literacy being allocated Rs 54,874 crore, while the Department of Higher Education has been allocated Rs 38,351 crore (Demand for Grants, GoI 2021-22). This truncated expenditure on education is a major threat considering the unequal allocation of resources in primary and secondary education further deteriorating the situation. There is a well known stark difference in annual schooling costs between government and private schools in India, as is the case in the two states of study– with private education expenditures rising approximately five times more since 1950s (Motkuri and Revathi, 2024)– raises critical questions about educational equity and the quality of public education. This disparity potentially reinforces socio-economic divisions, limiting upward mobility for disadvantaged groups.

The most crucial public services for the poor are also the most vulnerable to three political market distortions; They are- lack of voter awareness, increased social polarisation, and the lack of legitimacy of political party agendas (Keefer & Khemani 2005). The authors posit that these institutional imperfections exert substantial systemic influences, yet their comprehensive implications remain insufficiently integrated into policy design strategies targeting public goods provisions. They further correlate the relationship between public expenditure and services available to the poor. Sometimes in developing nations like India, the politicians are often inclined to devote resources to secure political profits and private transfers that enrich a few groups at the expense of the majority. These inequalities can be traced back to flaws in political markets, which



are more pronounced in some nations than others (Keefer & Khemani, 2005). The present research does agree with the authors and while analysing the accountability of state governments in education, considers the public expenditure behind the education scholarship policy of West Bengal.

Mansbridge (2003) points out that there ought to be a proper list of policy commitments and pledges made by the political parties during their election campaigns, which should be kept by means of public policy formulation, when the respective representatives and party gets elected to power. The list of policy commitments in India is reflected in the Common Minimum Programme which enlists the policies the coalition intends to fulfil or implement once in power. This line of argument is aligned to the present study as we seek to identify particular electoral promises made by the *Trinamool Congress*, in education, during their campaign stages, and thereafter examine the performance and accountability of the government, post elections, in the fulfilment of those promises. For example, in the 2016 manifesto of the TMC in West Bengal, they declared "Kanyashree plus is going to be implemented..... The programme will be expanded in the future...." It means they made substantial pledges in the domain of education, and it has been found that they implemented specific strategies towards its fulfilment. When understanding formulation of policy initiatives we may apply three logics to understand the institutional discourse as a reflection of styles of governance. The first is the logic of difference- which allows those in the power bloc to selectively accept specific democratic demands separately from each other. The second is the logic of governance, while the third is the logic of accountability (Das and Goswami, 2022) which applies to the fulfilment of pledged policy promises and aligns with the present study.

Sanyal (2007) examines the nature of the post-colonial capitalist state and the principles of governmentality in the country. The Indian state preserves the needed economy or subsistence economy to sustain a large section of the masses. For this purpose, the true culprit and string-puller is a somewhat mysterious entity 'welfarist governmentality' which ensures the bare minimum for the sustenance of masses. Policy making is a means of governments' way of supporting and preserving the needed economy. Upliftment of downtrodden and eradicating class difference are not a concern but maintenance of a subsistence economy which provides the bare minimum, essentially maintaining the status quo. His notion of 'capital non-capital complex'



exposes a version of capitalism that is malleable and protean. Logic of Non-corporate capital necessitates populist policies are adopted and democratic demands of the people are met, thus reflecting some sort of accountability. This research draws important insights from Sanyal's observations and does agree that welfarist governmentality has lead to a sort of subsistence economy, however, we must also keep in mind that welfarist governmentality, although does not aim at emancipating the people, is needed for the basic access to essential services, especially for the underprivileged classes.

Posani and Aiyar (2009) critically expose the systemic crisis of accountability that lies at the heart of governance. In terms of the institutional apparatus, India seems to be well placed if examined by global institutional standards. With the presence of multiple parties, free elections, free press, independent judiciary, autonomous institutions and vibrant civil society, Indian democracy ought to perform responsively and accountability. However, in reality, there is a paradox of accountability since, despite the presence of all the necessary institutions, the implementation of welfare policies, the delivery of services and the fulfilment of promises are often found wanting which exposes incompetence and failure of accountability of the parties. It is agreed by the present study that the system suffers from a systemic accountability crisis which has led to the poor performance in the actual implementation and delivery of programmes, despite the adequate institutional set-up to do so. Thus, it becomes more pertinent to examine the success of the state run programmes to assess the performance of the system.

On the other hand, under the TMC regime, the focus of electoral accountability in education is exemplified by initiatives like *Kanyashree* for incentivizing education of the girl child and preventing early marriage, which also won the United Nations Public Service Award in 2017. By 2021, the scheme had benefited over 60 lakh girls, showcasing a tangible policy impact that resonates with voters. However, disparities in school enrollment and literacy rates in West Bengal, particularly among backward classes underscore the need for targeted educational policies to enhance educational outcomes across scheduled tribes and non-scheduled tribe communities (Biswas & Sharma, 2022). While this is true, it is also true that the inequalities in literacy status are not limited between the scheduled tribe and non-scheduled tribe communities, but also among the different genders, and even the learners from southern West Bengal and



North Bengal. Thus, concerns over school enrolment, retention and literacy status has to be accounted for holistically, within the state.

Critiquing higher education policy-making in India Tilak (2012) exposes how education has come to be a 'Non-merit Good' in the country. The neo-liberal policies in India led to a drastic cut in public expenditure on higher education and it came to be defined as 'non-merit good' that did not deserve to be financed by the State. On the whole, education has suffered in the last couple of decades, including in the areas of policy making and planning. The observations of Tilak may not be far from the truth, as the conditions of education across many states remain alarming, though, of late, West Bengal has fared slightly better in terms of primary education, the qualitative assessment of higher secondary and secondary levels of education still remains a concern in the state.

This paper examines variables like political awareness, people's perception of policy performance and attempts to draw linkages to the nature of their relation to the governments' accountability in the selected education domain. The existing literature to this end, is wanting, as it only deals with the conditions of education, as well as politics and governance in the state. Some literature also deals with accountability in India in general. The present study seeks to address this gap and contribute to domain knowledge, specifically drawing linkages between electoral accountability in the state vis-a-vis performance of select education policy promised by the ruling party (TMC) and the degree of political awareness of the people of the state and their consequent electoral preferences in terms of performance (through Kanyashree) of the incumbent party.

### Methodology

The research design is based on a survey research approach with the collection and analysis of information from a sample of 100 respondents from Kolkata district of West Bengal by means of a structured interview. A survey has been undertaken with a mix of open and close-ended questions to gather insights regarding the beneficiaries' perception of the degree of electoral accountability in education. The sample population consists of beneficiaries (parents) of the child subscribed under the state-sponsored programmes: *Kanyashree* in West Bengal. Sampling: A purposive sampling (non-probability sampling) technique was employed to interview the participants (parents) whose children were subscribers of the state-sponsored programmes from the Kolkata district



of West Bengal. This strategic approach allowed the researcher to focus on individuals with direct experience and knowledge of the programmes, ensuring that the findings were grounded in authentic and relevant perspectives. This approach also allowed for the interview of participants, more efficiently, making optimum use of time and resources. Open-ended responses were analysed using thematic analysis to identify recurring themes and patterns related to programme satisfaction, problems, and perceptions of electoral accountability. Closed-ended responses were analysed using comparative percentages to summarise the data and identify key trends.

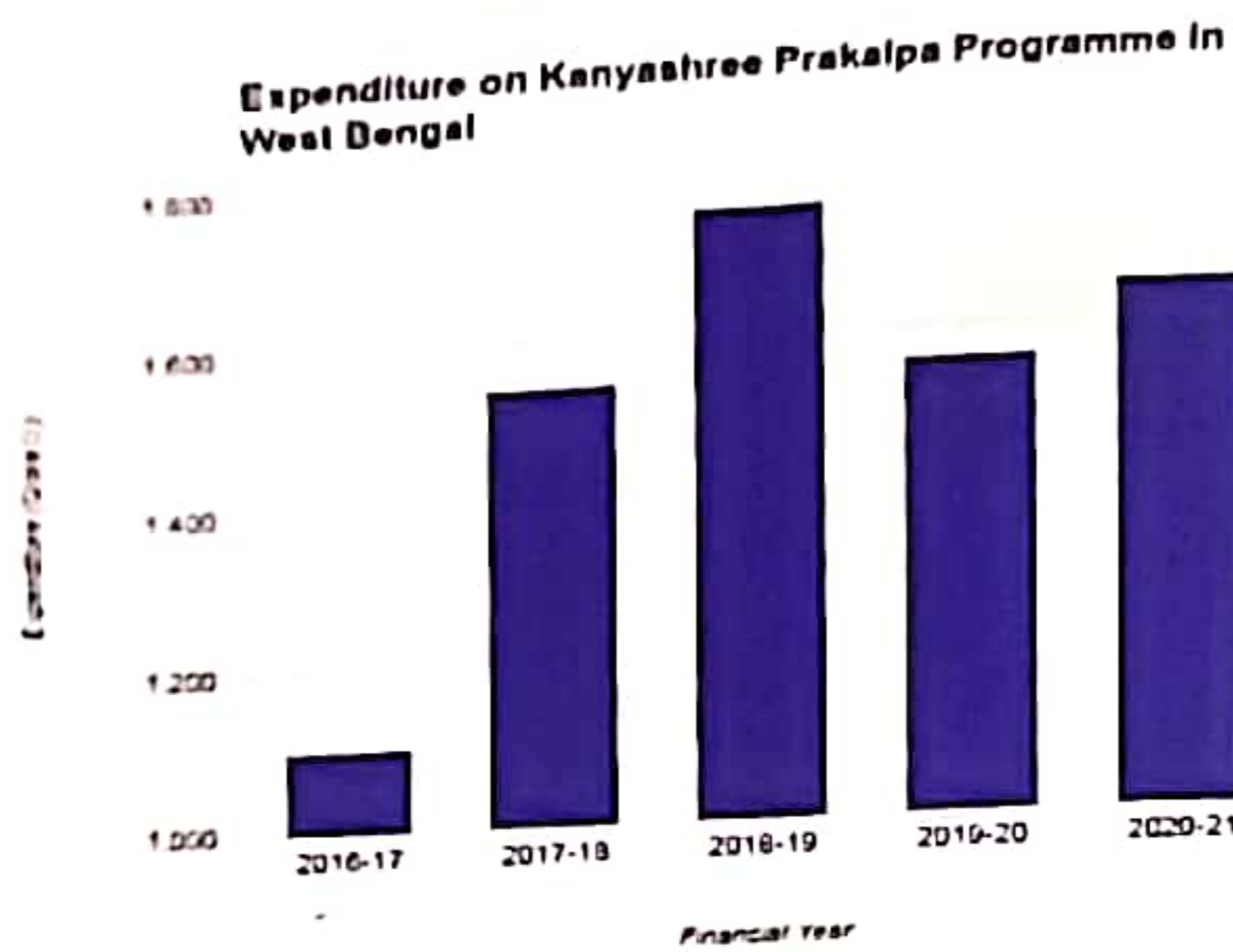
### Findings

**Table 1**  
Features of Kanyashree scholarship policy of West Bengal\*

Educational support / scholarship programmes	Kanyashree
State	West Bengal
Primary Objective	Increasing the mean years of schooling of the girl child and prevention of child marriage through financial aid
Beneficiary	Children studying in Government and Government aided schools, including madrasa and other minority institutions
Eligibility	Girl child (Class VIII-XII) from families below a certain income threshold (annual family income not more than Rs. 1,20,000)
Benefits	Conditional cash transfer of scholarship of Rs.1000 for every standard and one time Rs.25,000 upon enrolment in college

\*Source: Compiled by research scholar from official website of the programme  
<https://www.wbkanyashree.gov.in/>

Figure 2



*\*Figure Source: Expenditure on Kanyashree by Department of Women and Child Development, and Social Welfare, West Bengal during 2016–17 to 2020–21, in 2011–12 prices.*

Figure 2.1 presents the state governments' actual expenditures on Kanyashree in West Bengal. The time frame of analysis for West Bengal's Kanyashree is from 2016 to a period of five years, but it was launched by Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee in 2013. The previous term of TMC in West Bengal (2016) has been considered. West Bengal's Kanyashree received a significantly high allocation of Rs. 1,102.6 crore in 2016-17, representing 0.689% of the total state expenditure. This demonstrated a strong commitment to the programme's implementation. For Kanyashree, the second year expenditure increased substantially by 40.33% to Rs. 1,547.3 crore. The third year expenditure for Kanyashree saw the upward trend to continue in the third year with expenditure reaching its peak at Rs. 1,759 crore, representing 0.898% of the total state expenditure. This is the highest share of state expenditure behind the educational support programme in West Bengal, across all five years under consideration. Kanyashree's expenditure decreased in the fourth year by 11.28% to Rs. 1,560.6 crore, accompanied by a decline in its share of total state expenditure to 0.655%. This decrease could be attributed to factors such as budget constraints, especially due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. In the fifth year Kanyashree's expenditure increased slightly to Rs.1,648 crore in 2020-21 with an increase of share in total state expenditure (0.701%), suggesting a stabilisation of the programme's funding and potentially a renewed focus



after the decrease during the Covid years. However, the allocations immediately after the pandemic remain low compared to the pre-pandemic period.

**Table 2**  
Demographic characteristics of respondents (N=100)

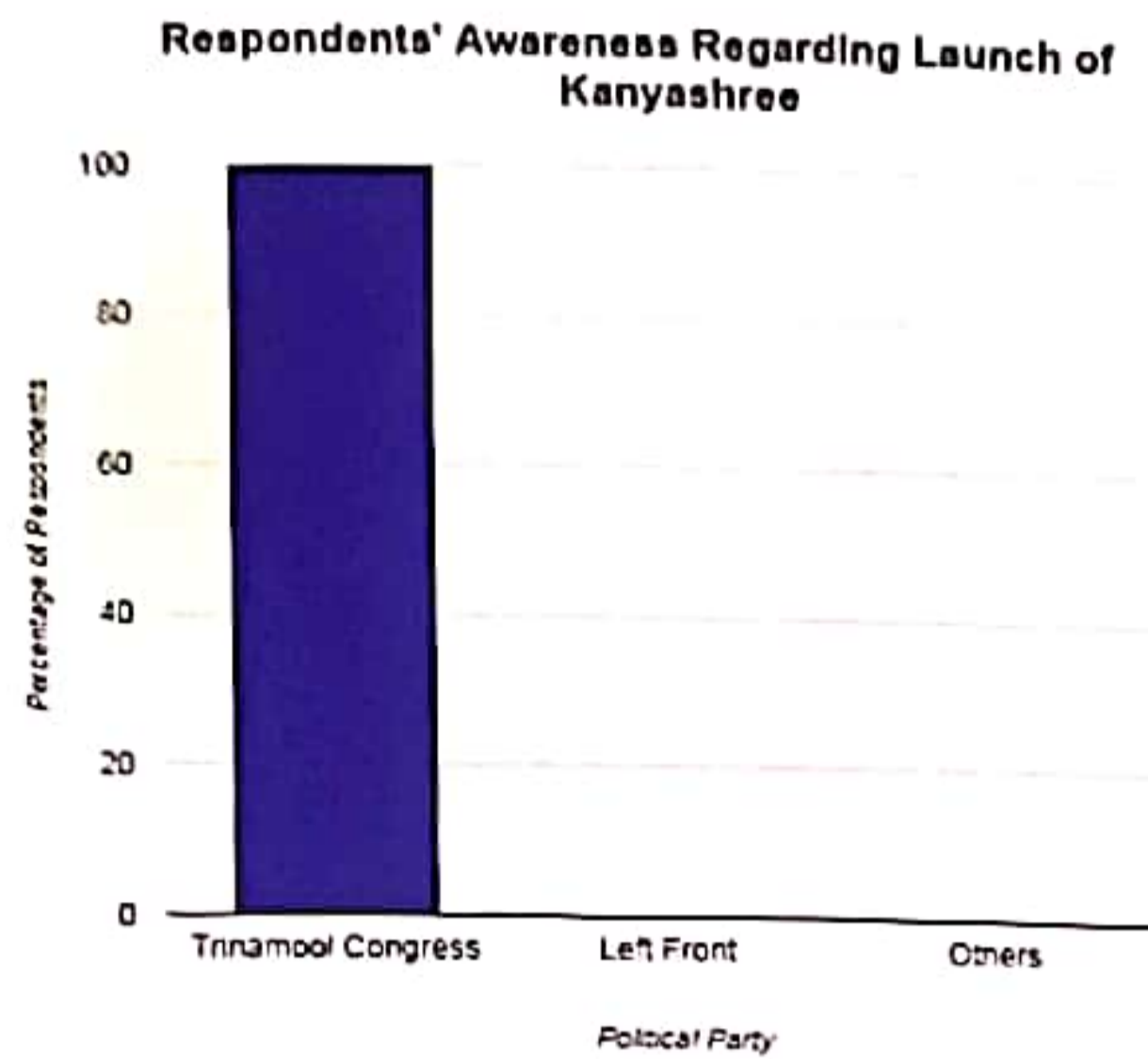
State Educational support Programme	West Bengal
	KP 100
<b>Gender</b>	
Male	0
Female	100
Total	100
<b>Age group</b>	
13-14	46
15-16	33
17-18	21
18 and above	0
Total	100
<b>Income group (monthly income in rupees)</b>	
<2500	37
2501-5000	12
75001- 7500	17
7501- 10,000	25
10,001- 15,000	5
15,001>	4
Total	100
<b>Income source</b>	
Salaried	7
Land/ agricultural income	2
Wage labour	54



No Income	37
Total	100
<b>Type of Housing</b>	
Kaccha (clay/ mud/ informal)	7
Pacca (brick & mortar)	19
Semi-pacca (asbestos/ tin/ informal)	46
Slum (including street dwellers)	28
Total	100
<b>Religion</b>	
Hindu	41
Muslim	32
Christian	19
Buddhist	6
Other	2
Total	100
<b>Caste</b>	
SC	16
ST	0
OBC A	24
OBC B	7
UR	53
Total	100

*\*Source: Primary survey done by research scholar*

**Figure 2.2**  
Respondents' awareness regarding who launched Kanyashree\*

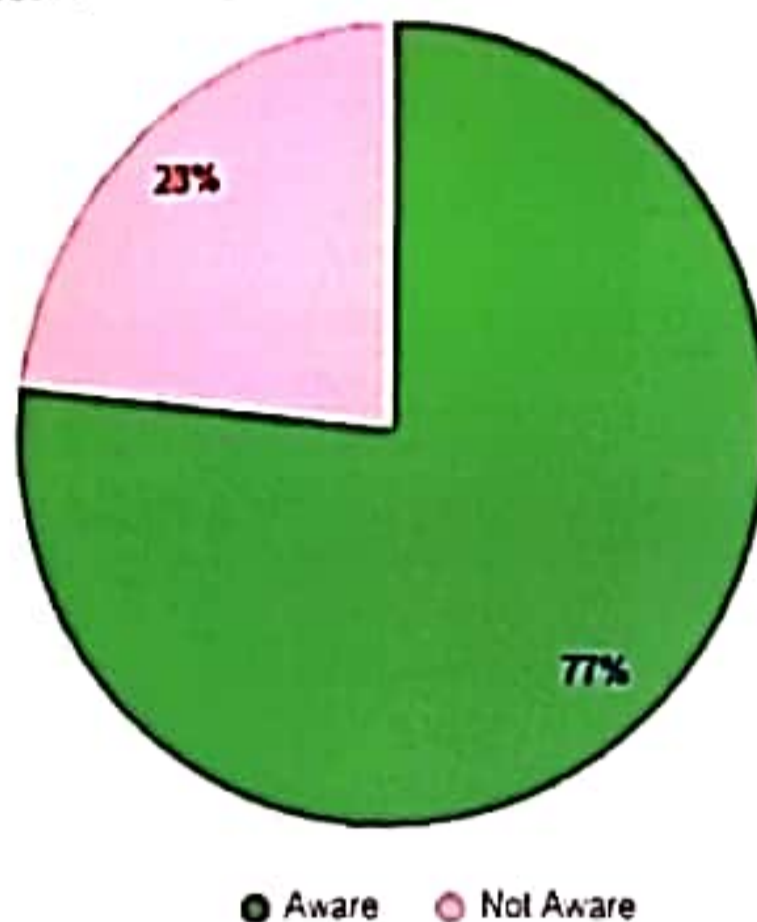


*\*Source: Primary survey done by research scholar*

Figure 2.2 shows the political awareness of the respondents regarding the government and CM who launched the educational programme. In West Bengal, 100% of respondents accurately identified Kanyashree policy with Trinamool Congress party under Chief Ministership of Mamata Banerjee. This reflects a high degree of political awareness of the respondents as well as a substantial populist reach of CM Banerjee.

**Figure 2.3**  
Respondents' awareness regarding education pledges of scholarship through Kanyashree\*

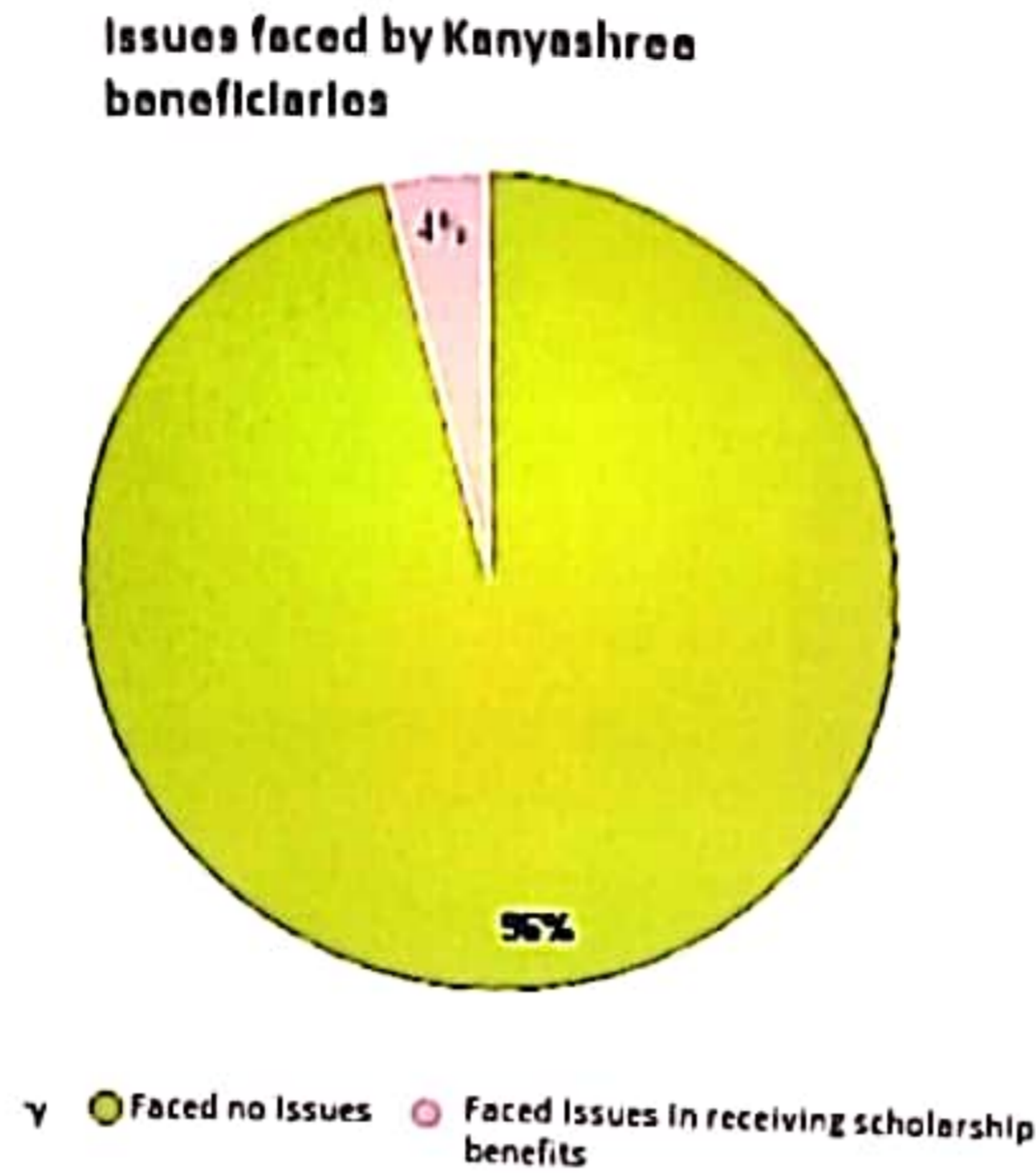
**Respondents' Awareness Regarding TMC's Electoral Pledge In Education**



*\*Source: Primary survey done by research scholar*

Figure 2.3 shows respondents' political awareness regarding the education promises of TMC. In the 2016 assembly elections manifesto, Trinamool Congress had promised 'Expansion of educational scholarship through Kanyashree Plus' and 77% were aware of the pledge while 23% were not aware. Again, this reflects a great degree of political awareness amongst the respondents of West Bengal.

**Figure 2.4**  
**Beneficiaries of Kanyashree who faced issues\***

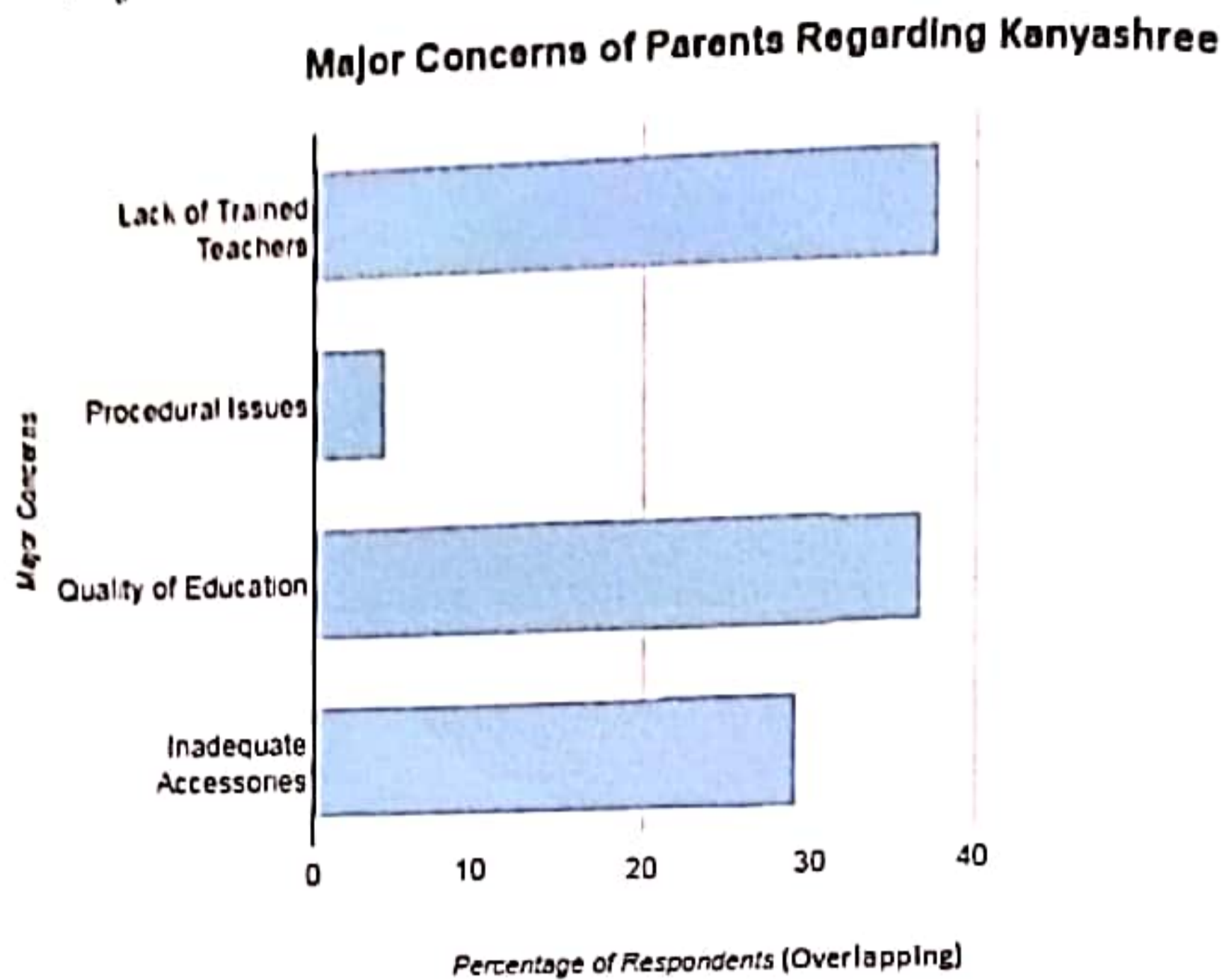


*\*Source: Primary survey done by research scholar*

Figure 2.4 gives information about the issues faced by the respondents while availing the benefits of Kanyashree. In the case of West Bengal, 96% beneficiaries of the Kanyashree reported no issues in receiving the annual scholarship while only 4% reported issues in receiving the scholarship benefit. This reflects a high success of the educational support in West Bengal. This can be attributed to the scheme of benefit transfer, where West Bengal follows a direct scholarship benefit transfer policy, to the account of the beneficiaries.



**Figure 2.5**  
Major concerns of the Respondents (parents) of Kanyashree)\*

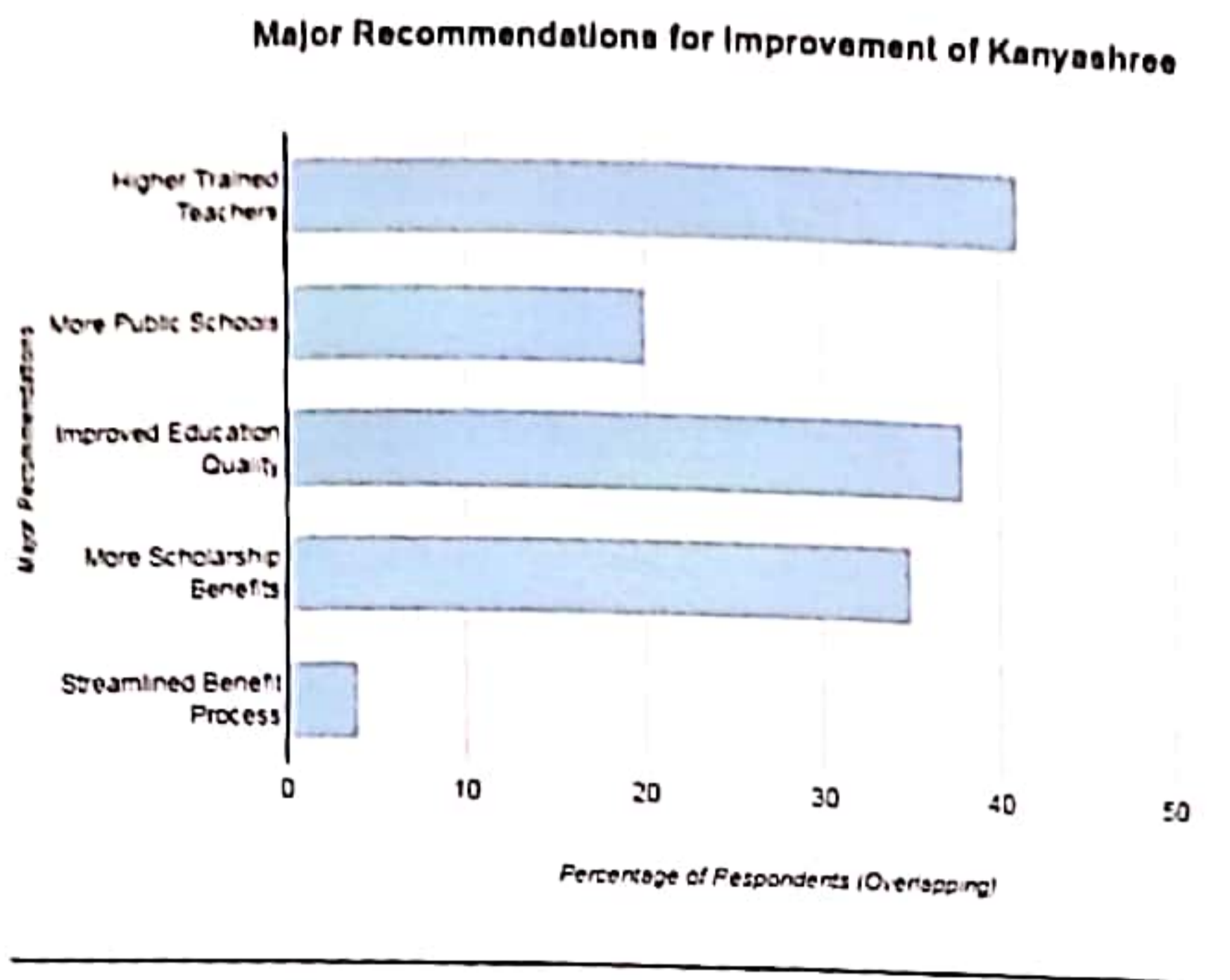


*\*Source: Primary survey done by research scholar*

Figure 2.5 shows the major concerns of the respondents and shows overlapping percentages of responses regarding the multiple issues faced by the respondents, since they have more than one concern at the same time hence the responses percentage are overlapping meaning multiple issues have been cited by the same respondents.

The most reported issue faced by West Bengal's Kanyashree respondents is regarding the lack of trained teachers in public schools, with 37% of Kanyashree respondents reporting the same. This is followed by 31% Kanyashree respondents expressing concern regarding the quality of education imparted in public (government) schools. Only 4% in West Bengal reported procedural issues in receiving scholarship benefits under Kanyashree. This is reflective of previous findings where the direct benefit transfer model of West Bengal provides more seamless transfer of scholarship.

**Figure 2.6**  
Major Recommendations of the Respondents (parents) of Kanyashree\*



*\*Source: Primary survey done by research scholar*

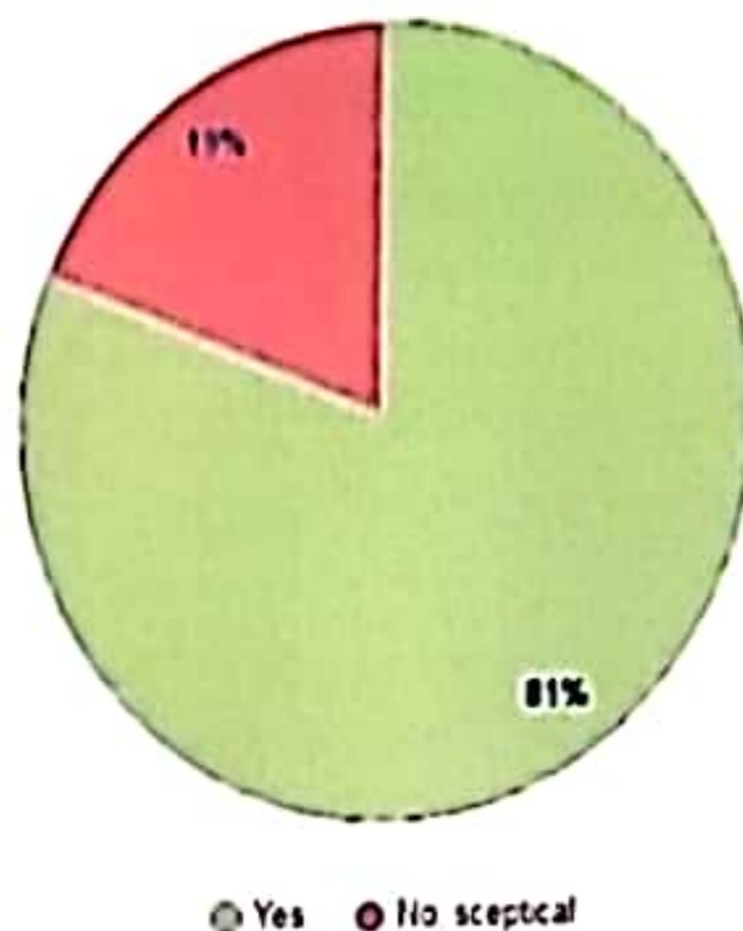
Figure 2.6 provides insights into the recommendations made by respondents (overlapping responses) for improving Kanyashree programme. The percentage reflects overlapping responses as the same respondents have given more than one recommendation.

The most frequent suggestion, made by 41% of Kanyashree respondents, is to increase the number of trained teachers in public schools. Close second, 38% of Kanyashree respondents recommend improving the overall quality of education imparted this aligns with the previous concerns about trained teachers and quality of education. 35% of West Bengal respondents suggest an increase in the amount of the scholarship received annually. Additionally, 20% of Kanyashree respondents recommend establishing more public schools, potentially to address issues of universal access. Only 4% of Kanyashree beneficiaries suggested streamlining of the scholarship transfer process. These overlapping responses from Kanyashree respondents reflect high satisfaction with Kanyashree scholarship programme.

**Figure 2.7**  
Respondents' opinion on whether they expect political parties to fulfil its electoral promises in education, after forming the government:\*

**Respondent's expectancy of political parties to fulfil its electoral promises in education after forming government**

**West Bengal**

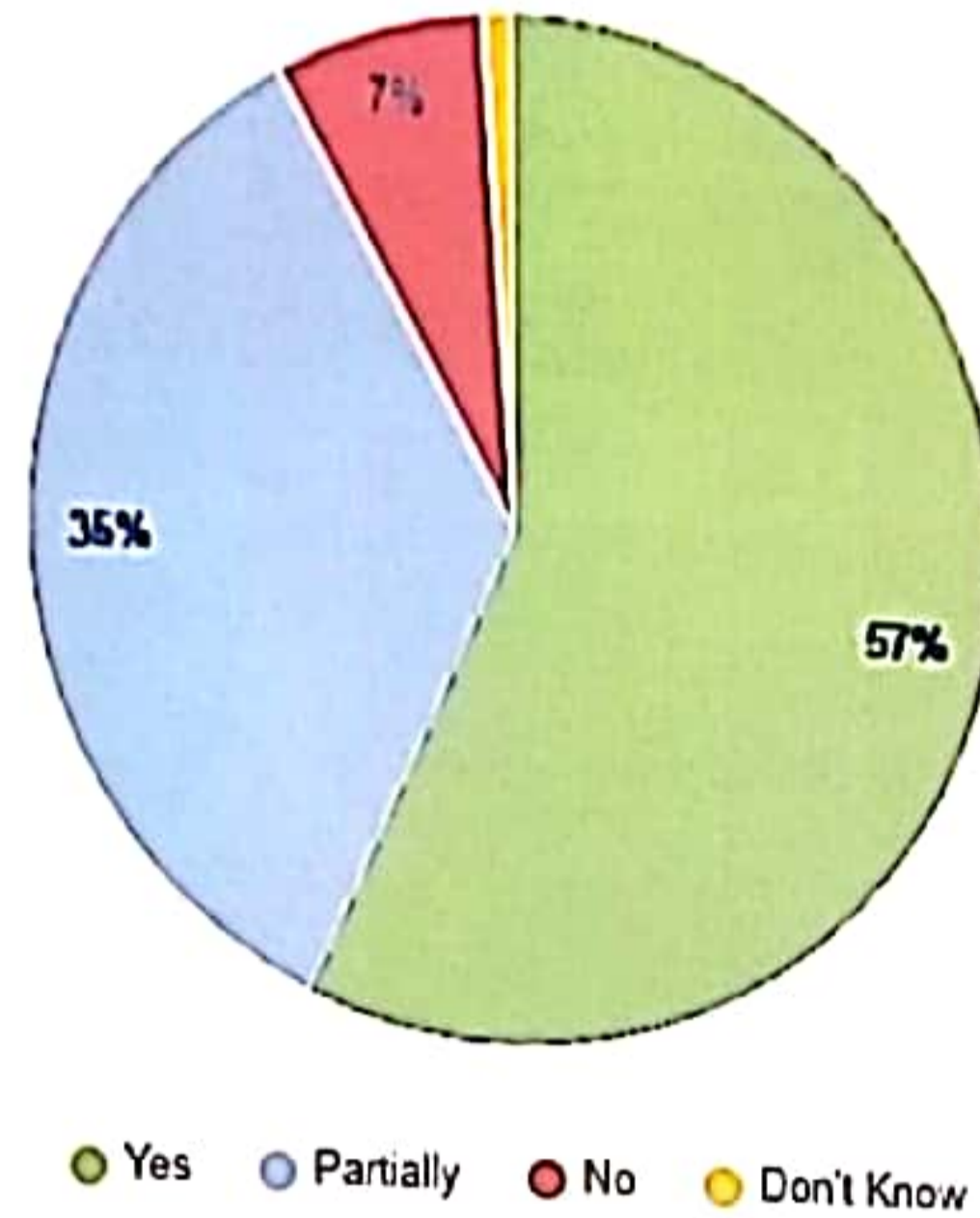


*\*Source: Primary survey done by research scholar*

Figure 2.7 shows the respondents' opinion on whether they expect political parties to fulfil their electoral promises in education, after forming the government. This also reflects the level of political awareness of the people. In case of West Bengal an overwhelming majority ie. 81% respondents expected parties to fulfil their promises in education, post- elections. Whereas only 19% of respondents said they dont expect the parties to fulfil its promises in education. This stark contrast reflects a higher degree of political awareness amongst respondents of West Bengal.

**Figure 2.8**  
 Respondents' opinion on whether implementation of Kanyashree by the ruling regime (TMC) has upheld electoral promise in education:\*

**Respondents' Opinion on Kanyashree Upholding Electoral Accountability In Education (West Bengal)**

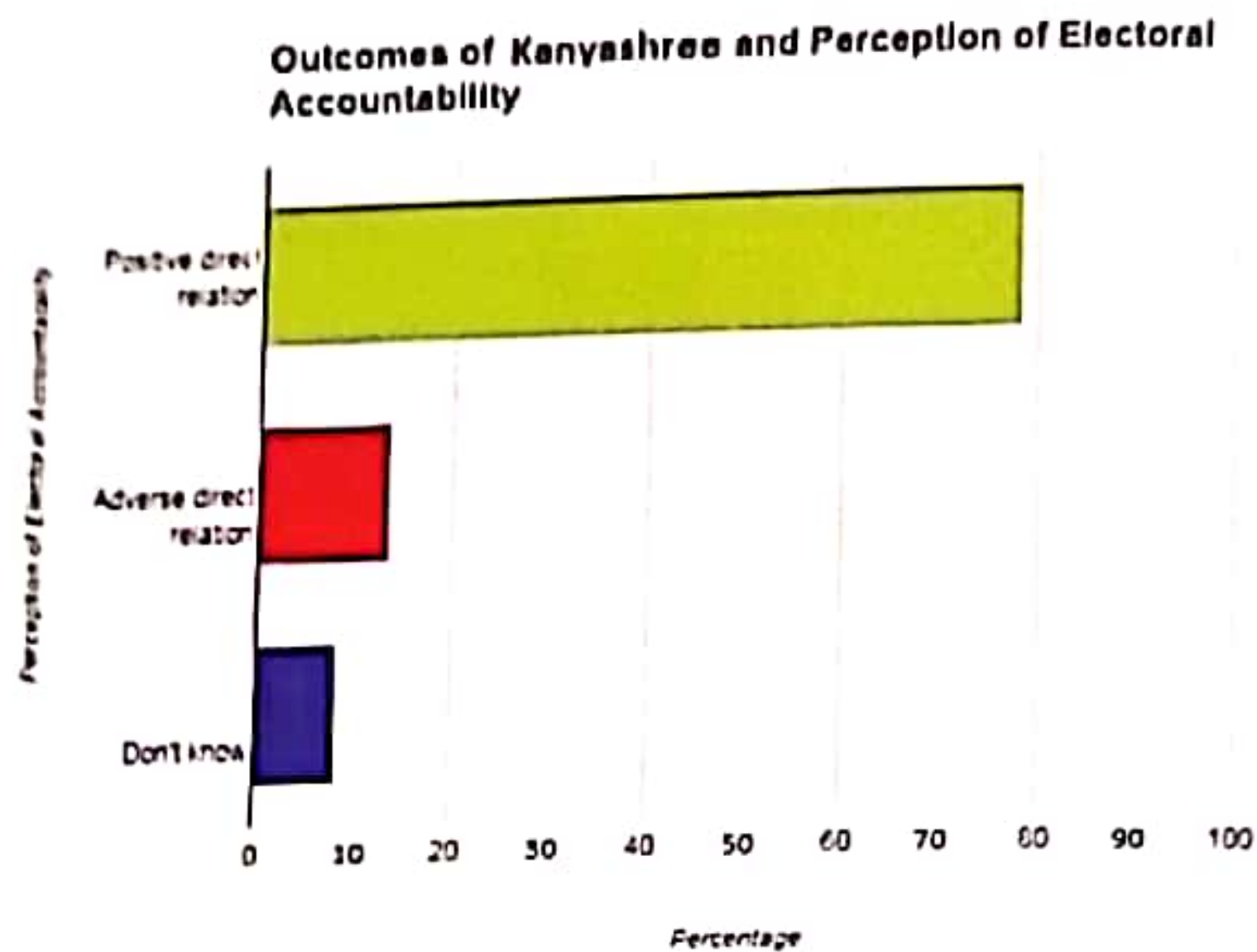


*\*Source: Primary survey done by research scholar*

Figure 2.8 deals with the opinion of the respondents on whether implementation of Kanyashree educational support programmes by the ruling regime (Trinamool Congress) has led to upholding of electoral promise in education. A majority of 57% respondents believe that through the implementation of Kanyashree, TMC upheld its electoral promise of education. This reflects greater perception of accountability for TMC, translating to fulfilment of electoral pledge in education. Another 35% believe partial fulfilment through Kanyashree. However, a small section of ie. 7% respondents believed that implementation of the education support programmes did not lead to the fulfilment of the electoral promise in education. This reflects a high degree of political awareness and the people's ability to draw linkages of policy performance with education accountability directly, suggesting an onus on the state government to fulfil its promises in education.

**Figure 2.9**

Respondents' opinion on how might the outcomes of Kanyashree, affect perception about the ruling regime (vis-a-vis electoral accountability):\*

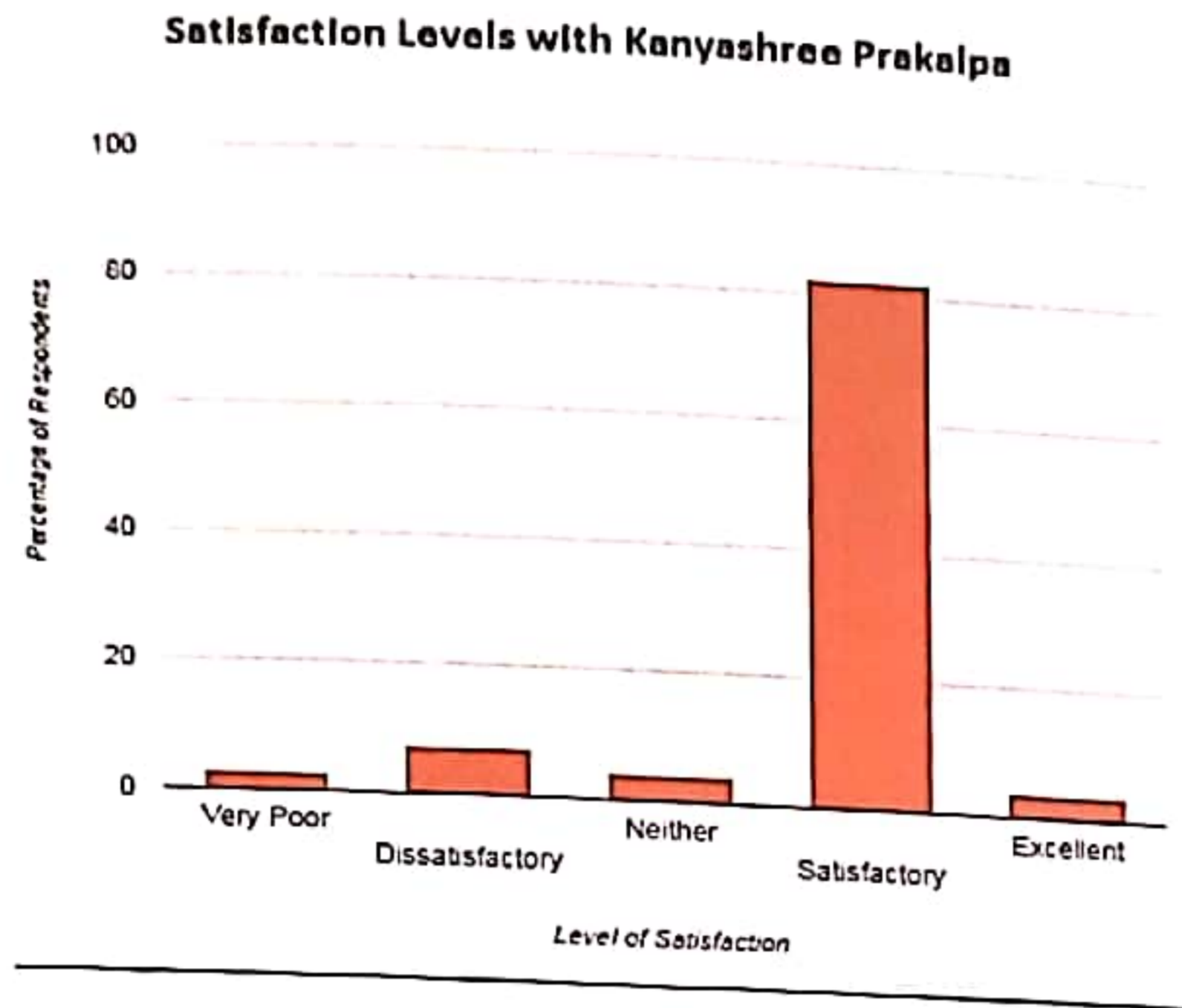


*\*Source: Primary survey done by research scholar*

Figure 2.9 shows the respondents' opinion on how the outcomes of Kanyashree, affects their perception about the ruling regime (vis-a-vis electoral accountability).

The largest group of respondents believe that there is a positive influence in favour of the ruling regime, ie.78% of respondents believe positive perception of accountability based on Kanyashree performance. This indicates that the programmes might be a factor securing votes for the incumbent TMC governments. While only 14% of the respondents suggested adverse perceptions based on Kanyashree outcomes. This suggests the programme's lack of performance may have an adverse effect on the government's accountability perceptions amongst some people. While 8% of people are not sure about the performance of policy and relation to the perception about the ruling regime (vis-a-vis electoral accountability) which suggests some differences in political awareness and perceptions of accountability between the respondents.

**Figure 2.10**  
 Respondents level of satisfaction, on a 5-point Likert scale with Kanyashree scheme in meeting their educational needs:\*

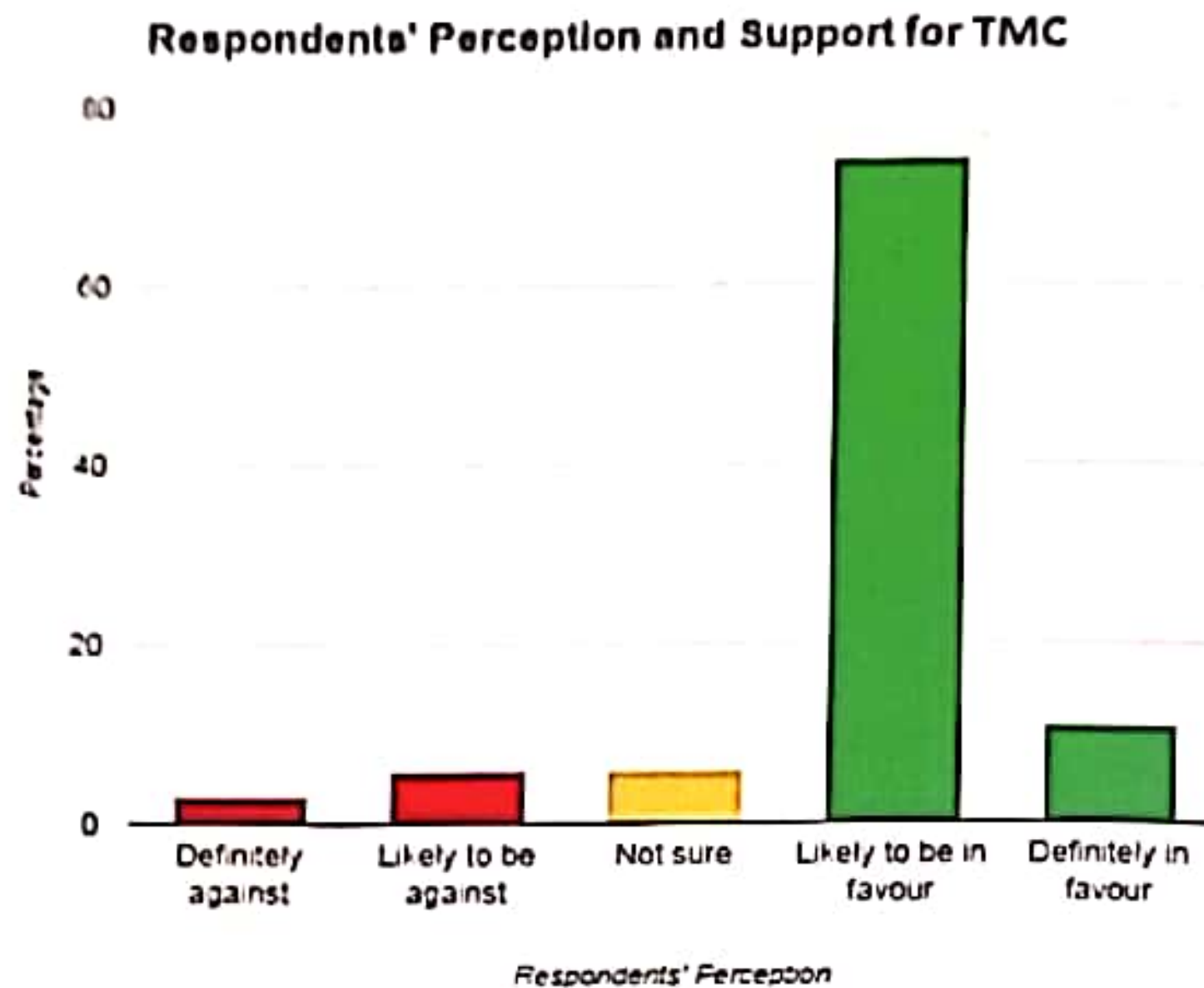


*\*Source: Primary survey done by research scholar*

Figure 2.10 shows the respondents level of satisfaction, on a 5-point Likert scale, with the Kanyashree scheme in meeting their educational needs.

In West Bengal, a combined 9% respondents of Kanyashree rated dissatisfaction with the programme (Very Poor 2% & Dissatisfactory 7%). This reflects some dissatisfaction amongst respondents. Only 5% of Kanyashree respondents felt that the policy was neither satisfactory nor dissatisfactory, suggesting a neutral experience. However the largest satisfaction percentages are at the positive end, more than three-fourth (86%) of Kanyashree respondents reflected levels of satisfaction (82% Satisfied + 4% Excellent). This suggests the Kanyashree programme has been largely successful for a significant portion of the population in addressing their educational needs.

**Figure 2.11**  
 Respondents' perception and support for/against the ruling regime based on the outcomes and impact of educational support policy:\*



\*Source: Primary survey done by research scholar

Figure 2.11 reflects the respondents perception and support for/against the ruling regime (TMC) based on the outcomes and impact of Kanyashree. This reflects a direct linkage between the ability of the respondents to relate the policy and its outcomes to their voting preferences, thus drawing a direct connection between policy performance, accountability perceptions and electoral preferences of the beneficiaries.

A combined opposition to TMC (Definitely against + Likely against) was reflected by only 9% of Kanyashree beneficiaries while combined support (Definitely in favour + Likely in favour) for TMC was an overwhelming 85% reflecting a greater perception of support for the ruling regime based on the impact and outcomes of the Kanyashree. Whereas only 6% of Kanyashree respondents were unsure of their choices. This data on political support for/against the ruling regime aligns fairly closely with the satisfaction levels from the previous figures, suggesting a relation between satisfaction with the Kanyashree scholarship policy and political support for the Trinamool Congress (TMC). The higher degree of political awareness



(regarding policy performance) led to the more decisive electoral preferences amongst respondents of West Bengal, based on the outcomes of Kanyashree.

### Conclusion

The findings indicate that there is a linkage between the degree of people's political awareness and their perception of accountability of the party which in turn has a reflection on their electoral preferences, thus providing an incentive to the incumbent parties, to not only fulfil its electoral promises in education through definite programmes but also to effectively work towards its implementation and genuine realization amongst the people or targeted beneficiaries.

During the time of the study West Bengal was governed by charismatic, populist leader- CM Mamata Banerjee- who adopted governance strategies to fulfil their pledged promises in the domains of education. A greater level of political awareness of the respondents of West Bengal has been observed. This was evident by the higher percentages of people who could successfully identify selected education policies with the promises pledged in manifestos, associate the policies with the correct political party and Chief Minister, as well as opine on the performance and lacunas of the selected policies. The percentage was higher in case of respondents from West Bengal.

For the selected educational scholarship programme under scrutiny, a combined 9% respondents of Kanyashree indicated dissatisfaction with the programme. This reflects a minor degree of dissatisfaction amongst beneficiaries of education scholarship programme in West Bengal. The research highlights that even well-intentioned educational support programmes must be critically assessed from the perspective of their target beneficiaries. While the percentages of respondents' satisfaction and their accountability perceptions show positive feelings towards the educational programme. The findings underscore the importance of continuous programme evaluation and targeted interventions to enhance beneficiary experience and programme outcomes. Adopting simple strategies like implementing a comprehensive feedback system to systematically capture and address beneficiary concerns, simplification of the application processes and documentation requirements while providing offline kiosks for registration along with online channels, and enhancing transparency in scholarship allocation and disbursement



mechanisms which can be tracked by all stakeholders, will go a long way in improving the accountability of the parties in the domain of education. In tune with the policy performance and satisfaction levels, perceptions of electoral accountability reflect a similar picture. The Trinamool Congress (TMC) in West Bengal demonstrates a substantially high perception of electoral accountability, with 78% of respondents having a positive perception of accountability based on Kanyashree performance. This gets reflected in terms of the political support landscape too, where respondents exhibit a remarkably cohesive political consensus, with an overwhelming 85% of Kanyashree beneficiaries expressing electoral support for the ruling regime. A distinguishing factor emerges in political awareness and engagement of the people as 6% of respondents remain neutral or uncertain about their political choices. The research illuminates the complex interplay between educational support and scholarship policies, perceived governmental accountability, and electoral preferences. Overall, West Bengal demonstrates an effective alignment between educational support programme outcomes and political engagement. The present research reveals a significant correlation between political awareness, policy outcomes, and electoral accountability perceptions among the respondents (policy beneficiaries) from Kolkata, West Bengal. Thus, the findings substantiate the hypothesis that the degree of political consciousness directly influences citizens' evaluation of governmental performance and electoral accountability.



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## NAVIGATING CHANGE: THE INFLUENCE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE ON EDUCATION POLICY DEVELOPMENT

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### *Abstract*

*The New Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) has been instrumental in transforming the education sector in India. One of the key strategies to achieve this transformation is the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in education. AI has the potential to revolutionize education by making it more personalized, efficient, and effective. In this article, I will explore the role of AI in implementing the NEP 2020 and its potential impact on education. In an era defined by rapid technological advancement, artificial intelligence (AI) stands out as a informative force reshaping various sectors, particularly education. As educational institutions and policymakers grapple with the implications of AI, it becomes imperative to understand its impact on education policy development. The integration of AI in education poses both opportunities and challenges, necessitating informed policy responses that align with the evolving landscape of teaching and learning.*

*Key words: NEP, AI, technology, education, development.*

### **The New Education Policy 2020**

The NEP 2020 is a comprehensive policy that aims to transform the education sector in India. The policy emphasizes the importance of education in achieving the country's goals of economic development, social justice, and democratic values. The policy is built on five key principles: access, equity, quality, affordability, and accountability.

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is a groundbreaking framework aimed at transforming the education system in India, focusing on holistic and multidisciplinary



education. One of its key features is the emphasis on a flexible curriculum structure, termed the National Curriculum Framework, which encourages a lifelong learning approach. This involves a shift from rigid subject boundaries to a more integrated learning experience, where students can choose subjects across streams, fostering creativity and critical thinking. The NEP promotes the establishment of Multidisciplinary Education and Research Institutions (MERIs) to facilitate interdisciplinary education and research, which aligns with global educational standards.

Another significant aspect of the NEP 2020 is the focus on early childhood care and education (ECCE) as critical for cognitive and emotional development. The policy proposes the introduction of a national mission to focus on ECCE, ensuring foundational literacy and numeracy by Grade 3, thereby laying a strong educational foundation. Furthermore, the policy aims to increase Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) in higher education to 50% by 2035, enhancing access to quality higher education through the establishment of new higher education institutions, model colleges, and National Higher Education Accreditation Council.

In pursuit of equity and inclusion, the NEP underscores the need for special attention to marginalized and disadvantaged groups. It advocates for scholarships, financial support, and adequate infrastructure to ensure equal opportunities in education. The NEP also emphasizes vocational education, integrating it into mainstream education from Grade 6 onwards, thus equipping students with practical skills that are aligned with industry requirements.

Digital education and technology integration form a crucial component of the NEP, with plans for the creation of a National Educational Technology Forum (NETF) to promote the use of technology in all educational processes. This focus on leveraging technology aims to enhance learning outcomes and provide students with access to high-quality educational resources, irrespective of their geographical location.

Lastly, the NEP 2020 introduces significant reforms in teacher training and recruitment processes, emphasizing continuous professional development and the need for educators to be well-versed in modern pedagogical practices. The introduction of a National Educational Policy Framework for teacher education is aimed at improving the quality of teaching and



ensuring that educators are at the forefront of implementing these transformative changes. Overall, the NEP 2020 is poised to reshape India's educational landscape, aligning it with global standards while addressing local needs, thus ensuring holistic development for students across all strata of society.

### **Artificial Intelligence in Education**

AI's influence on education policy can be observed through several dimensions, including personalized learning, data-driven decision-making, and operational efficiency. The ability to tailor educational experiences to individual students' needs is one of AI's most promising capabilities. Algorithms analyse huge amounts of data to recognize learning patterns. Educators customize content and instructional strategies. This move toward personalized learning requires policies to embrace innovation and ensure equity and accessibility for all students, especially for marginalized communities.

Furthermore, the dominance of AI in educational settings makes reconsider of data privacy and ethical considerations. With the collection of extensive data on student performance and behavior, policymakers must establish guidelines that protect student information while allowing for the responsible use of data in informing educational practices. This includes developing frameworks that address consent, data ownership, and the potential biases inherent in AI systems. Policymakers must navigate these complexities to uphold the principles of equity, transparency, and accountability in education. AI has the potential to transform education by making it more personalized, efficient, and effective. Some of the ways AI can be used in education include:

1. **Personalized Learning:** AI-powered adaptive learning systems can tailor learning experiences to individual students' needs, abilities, and learning styles.
2. **Intelligent Tutoring Systems:** AI-powered virtual tutors can provide one-on-one support to students, helping them to overcome learning difficulties and improve their understanding of complex concepts.
3. **Automated Grading:** AI-powered grading systems can accurately assess student performance, reducing the workload of teachers and providing instant feedback.
4. **Natural Language Processing:** AI-powered chat-bots and virtual assistants can facilitate language learning and improve communication skills.



### Implementation of AI In Education

As AI continues to evolve, its implications for education policy will become increasingly profound. Policymakers must adopt a proactive stance, engaging with educators, technologists, and stakeholders to craft policies that not only harness the potential of AI but also address its challenges. Engaging in open dialogues about the ethical, social, and pedagogical ramifications of AI will be vital in shaping an educational landscape that is equitable and responsive to the needs of all learners.

The NEP 2020 emphasizes the importance of implementing AI in education to make it more effective and efficient. The policy encourages schools and educational institutions to use AI-powered tools to improve teaching and learning. The implementation of artificial intelligence (AI) in education presents both transformation opportunities and significant challenges. On one hand, AI can personalize learning experiences, catering to individual student needs and learning styles. By leveraging data analytic, adaptive learning systems can assess students' proficiency in real time and adjust instructional content accordingly. This professionalization fosters greater engagement and better academic outcomes as students receive support tailored to their unique challenges. Moreover, AI-powered tools can automate administrative tasks, allowing educators to focus more on teaching and less on paperwork. From grading assignments to managing schedules, AI can streamline operational workflows, enhancing efficiency within educational institutions.

However, the integration of AI in education also raises critical concerns. One major issue is the potential for algorithmic bias, where AI systems might reinforce existing inequalities. If the underlying data used to train these systems is biased, the algorithms can perpetuate stereotypes and disadvantage certain student populations. This underscores the importance of using diverse and representative datasets in AI training to avoid discriminatory outcomes. Additionally, the reliance on AI tools could diminish the essential human elements of education. Emotional intelligence, empathy, and interpersonal skills are crucial in teaching and learning, and the over-reliance on technology might lead to a depersonalized educational experience. Educators may fear losing their roles, leading to resistance against adopting AI-driven solutions.



Another concern is data privacy. The implementation of AI in education often involves collecting vast amounts of personal data from students, raising questions about consent, data security, and how this information is used. Schools must ensure that they have robust policies in place to protect sensitive student information from breaches and misuse. Furthermore, the digital divide presents another challenge, as not all students have equal access to technology or the internet, potentially exacerbating educational disparities.

AI holds great potential to enhance educational practices and learning outcomes, its implementation must be approached with caution. Stakeholders, including educators, policymakers, and technologists, must collaborate to develop ethical frameworks that address bias, preserve privacy, and maintain the indispensable human element of education. By strategically integrating AI into educational systems, we can harness its benefits while safeguarding against its risks, thereby creating a more equitable and effective learning environment for all students.

### **Challenges in Implementing AI in Education**

AI automates administrative works, like grading and scheduling. Educators can focus more on teaching rather than on bureaucratic functions but, the implementation of AI mechanisms open questions about workforce implications. Policymakers need to consider professional development opportunities for educators and ensure that they are equipped to leverage AI effectively in their classrooms. This includes fostering a culture of continuous learning and adaptation to new technologies, which is essential in an ever-changing educational landscape.

Furthermore, AI's role in education extends to enhancing assessment methods and accountability measures. Traditional assessment tools often fail to capture the diverse competencies of students. AI-powered assessments can offer a more nuanced understanding of student capabilities, thereby influencing curriculum development and instructional practices. Policymakers must, therefore, prioritize funding and support for research and development in AI-driven assessment tools to ensure they are effectively integrated into educational systems. AI has the ability to revolutionize education but there are several challenges that need attention

1. **Infrastructure:** The implementation of AI requires significant infrastructure investments, including high-speed internet connectivity, hardware, and software.



2. **Teacher Training:** Teachers need to be trained on how to use AI-powered tools effectively, which requires significant investments in teacher training programs.
3. **Data Security:** The use of AI-powered tools requires the collection and storage of large amounts of data, which raises concerns about data security and privacy.
4. **Accessibility:** The implementation of AI requires access to technology, which can be a challenge for students from low-income backgrounds.

### **Benefits of Implementing AI in Education**

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is revolutionizing the education sector, bringing forth a myriad of benefits that enhance learning experiences and outcomes. One of the most significant advantages of AI is its ability to provide personalized learning pathways tailored to individual student needs. By analyzing a student's strengths and weaknesses, AI-driven platforms can adapt content delivery to suit varying learning styles, ensuring that no student is left behind. This customization fosters greater engagement and understanding, leading to improved academic performance.

Moreover, AI can automate administrative tasks, allowing educators to focus more on teaching and mentoring rather than paperwork. Grading assessments and managing schedules become more efficient with AI tools, thus freeing up precious time for teachers to engage in one-on-one interactions with students. This leads to a more focused educational environment where personalized attention is prioritized.

Additionally, AI fosters accessibility and inclusivity in education. Advanced algorithms can support students with disabilities by providing adaptive technologies that cater to their unique learning requirements. For instance, speech recognition software can assist students with visual impairments, while AI-driven applications can help those with learning difficulties by breaking down complex concepts into manageable parts.

Furthermore, AI aids in delivering real-time feedback, enabling students to grasp concepts more quickly and adjust their study techniques accordingly. In summary, the integration of AI in education not only enhances personalization, efficiency, and accessibility, but also cultivates a more inclusive and effective learning environment that prepares students for the demands of the future workforce.

Thus the benefits of implementing AI in education can be summarised as:



1. Improved Student Outcomes: AI-powered adaptive learning systems can improve student outcomes by tailoring learning experiences to individual students' needs.
2. Increased Efficiency: AI-powered grading systems can reduce the workload of teachers and provide instant feedback.
3. Personalized Learning: AI-powered virtual tutors can provide one-on-one support to students, helping them to overcome learning difficulties.
4. Cost Savings: AI-powered tools can reduce costs by automating routine tasks and improving resource allocation.

The future of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in education is likely to be informative, with AI expected to play a significant role in shaping the way we learn, teach, and interact with students.

The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in education is poised to transform the learning landscape, presenting several promising trends that enhance both teaching and learning experiences. One significant trend is the rise of personalized learning powered by AI algorithms, which can analyze individual student behaviors and tailor educational content to meet diverse learning needs. This customization not only fosters better engagement but also helps identify gaps in knowledge, allowing educators to offer targeted support. Additionally, AI-driven analytics can provide educators with valuable insights into student performance, enabling data-informed decision-making that enhances instructional strategies.

Another emerging trend is the increasing use of AI-powered tutoring systems and chatbots that provide instant assistance outside traditional classroom hours. These tools can answer questions, facilitate learning, and offer resources, making education more accessible and continuous. Furthermore, AI is being leveraged to automate administrative tasks such as grading and scheduling, allowing educators to dedicate more time to direct student interaction and mentoring.

Moreover, as AI technologies evolve, the development of immersive learning environments, such as virtual and augmented reality, is becoming more prominent, offering students



interactive experiences that deepen understanding of complex subjects. However, these trends also raise considerations around equity and data privacy, necessitating careful implementation to ensure that AI in education serves all learners effectively. As the educational landscape continues to evolve, the thoughtful integration of AI offers exciting possibilities for enhancing learning outcomes and shaping the future of education.

Here are Key potential trends and developments:

1. **Virtual Learning Environments:** AI-powered virtual learning environments will simulate real-world scenarios, making learning more engaging and interactive.
2. **Natural Language Processing (NLP):** ALP-powered AI systems will enable students to interact with educational content using natural language, making learning more accessible and intuitive.
3. **Data-Driven Instruction** AI-powered analytic will provide insights on student performance, enabling teachers to identify areas of improvement and adjust instruction accordingly.
4. **Content Generation:** AI-powered content generation tools will create customized educational content, reducing the time and effort required to develop new materials.
5. **Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR):** AI-powered VR and AR technologies will create immersive learning experiences that simulate real-world environments, making learning more engaging and effective.
- 6 **Teacher Support** AI-powered systems will provide teachers with real-time support, helping them to identify struggling students, track student progress, and develop targeted interventions.
- 7 **Accessibility:** AI-powered education systems will increase accessibility for students with disabilities, providing equal opportunities for all learners.

#### **Challenges:**

1. **Equity and Access:** Ensuring that all students have equal access to AI-powered education systems, regardless of their socioeconomic background or location.
2. **Job Displacement:** The potential impact of AI on teaching jobs and the need for educators to adapt to new roles.



3. **Bias and Fairness:** Ensuring that AI-powered education systems are fair, unbiased, and do not perpetuate existing social inequalities.
4. **Data Protection:** Safeguarding student data and ensuring that it is used responsibly and in accordance with ethical guidelines.
5. **Human Touch:** Maintaining the human touch in education, as AI-powered systems may lead to a loss of personal connection between teachers and students.

#### **Opportunities:**

1. **Improved Outcomes:** AI-powered education systems can lead to improved student outcomes, increased academic achievement, and better retention rates.
2. **Increased Efficiency:** AI can automate routine tasks, freeing up teachers' time to focus on higher-level tasks and improving overall efficiency.
3. **Enhanced Engagement:** AI-powered education systems can make learning more engaging, interactive, and fun, leading to increased student motivation and participation.
4. **Personalized Learning Paths:** AI-powered systems can provide personalized learning paths for students, allowing them to learn at their own pace and in their own style.
5. **New Career Opportunities:** The development of AI-powered education systems will create new career opportunities in fields such as instructional design, educational technology, and data analysis.

In conclusion, the future of Artificial Intelligence in education is both exciting and challenging. While there are concerns about job displacement, bias, and equity, the potential benefits of AI-powered education systems are significant. By addressing these challenges and embracing the opportunities offered by AI, we can create a more effective, efficient, and engaging educational system that prepares students for success in an increasingly complex world. Navigating the change brought about by AI in education requires prudent policy development that balances innovation with ethical considerations. As educational institutions embrace AI, it is crucial to foster an environment where technology serves as a tool for empowerment, equity, and enhanced learning outcomes. By doing so, policymakers can ensure that the future of education remains inclusive, adaptive, and forward-thinking. Instigating the change brought about by AI in education requires prudent policy development



that balances innovation with ethical considerations. As educational institutions embrace AI, it is crucial to foster an environment where technology serves as a tool for empowerment, equity, and enhanced learning outcomes. By doing so, policymakers can ensure that the future of education remains inclusive, adaptive, and forward-thinking.

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## ROLE OF YAMA (VIRTUOUS RESTRAINT) IN SUSTAINABLE PEACE

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### Abstract

*We are standing on the verge of Third World War. Many countries of the world are engaged in war directly or indirectly. World leaders have started peace talk among themselves for peace. Thus, peace is an international concern as it is essential for the survival of mankind. The main goal of the United Nations Organization, formed after the Second World War, is to establish and promote sustainable peace throughout the world and to have such peace, the organization has been passing resolutions since its inception which are insufficient until and unless we transform ourselves internally and herein lies the importance of Yama-s found in Yoga-sūtra, an ancient Indian text, which teaches five virtuous restraints known as Yama-s deeply intertwined with peace both internal and external. This article is an attempt to show whether these yama-s can be helpful in bringing such sustainable peace along with the resolutions passing by the U.N.O. in this era of materialism and consumerism, two dreaded diseases posing threat to peace.*

*Keywords: peace, technology, development, organization, yoga.*

Although attempting to bring about world peace through the internal transformation of individuals is difficult, it is the only way.... Peace must first be developed within an individual.... love, compassion, and altruism are the fundamental basis for peace. Once these qualities are developed within an individual, he or she is then able to create an atmosphere of peace and harmony. This atmosphere can be expanded and extended from the individual to his family, from the family to the community and eventually to the whole world.

-Dalai Lama.

### Introduction:

The main objective of this research is to explore the concept of *Yama* (virtuous restraint) embedded in *Yoga -sūtra* and thereby to show how they can be an effective tool to attain the chief goal of United Nations Organization, i.e. sustainable peace and wellbeing in this age of materialism and consumerism. We are living in the era of science and technology and both of these have brought revolution in almost all aspects of our lives. The remarkable development of Science and Technology has allowed man to explore space, unravel most of the secrets of the universe, learn to split atom and many more on the one hand, on the other, a rapid erosion of human values have started all over the globe. We the modern men are increasingly becoming selfish and cruel and we hardly have any concern about others. We find two dreaded diseases of this era are materialism and consumerism. It is a critical time in our civilization where every day we know from various types

of media about the horrifying stories of violence and crimes committed to humanity mainly out of too much possessiveness. We want material pleasures more and more which is far beyond our basic needs. This obsession with materialistic indulgence leads modern men chronically dissatisfied resulting in frustration and depression. Thus, desire for enjoyment of material enjoyment fosters hatred, anger, selfishness, jealousy and other harmful traits which are dangerous to peace and harmony.

So, the world is at stake. The signs are everywhere. Corruption, Climate change, environment pollution, deforestation, human rights violation, terrorism, wars, women and drug trafficking, discrimination between male and female, family breakdown etc. are the direct products of the degradation of human values posing threat to peace.

### Peace:

Peace is something essential and much desired for survival of mankind. When we talk about peace, first of all we should know the meaning of the term peace. Generally peace is defined as the absence of hostilities and war, but the connotation of it much more than this. In fact, it is very difficult to define the term as it is an abstract and multidimensional concept. Politicians, social workers, historians, religious persons, philosophers and others are not in agreement regarding the definition of the term peace. We are aware of it by its absence only. That's why, Johan Galtung,



a Norwegian peace researcher, distinguishes between “positive” and “negative” peace. “Positive” peace denotes ‘absence of structural violence’. It includes positive and life enhancing values like love, compassion, harmony, justice, equality etc. and social structures and conditions free from exploitation and even slight underlying structural violence, whereas, negative peace denotes “absence of organized collective violence” and large scale violence and conflict.’ For our purpose in this work, we will use both the senses of the word peace.

We know peace is an international concern. After the end of Second World War in 1945, The United Nations Organization was formed in the same year with the purpose of establishing and promoting sustainable peace all over the world. Peace is not only the main goal of United Nations Organization (henceforth United Nations Organizations will be abbreviated as U.N.O.) but to make it durable which we find in its preamble which focuses on saving ‘succeeding generations from the scourge of war’. For this purpose, the U.N.O. has started over the years to identify the elements that can make peace sustainable. The preamble of this U.N.O. defines sustainable peace as a situation that covers activities which are able to prevent the outbreak, increase, continuation and reappearance of conflict. But, though the UNO aims at peace, but it provides insufficient strategies for the parameters of long-lasting peace.

In 2015, United Nations Organization proposed seventeen goals, known as Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for sustainable peace and development for the people across the globe<sup>iii</sup>. These are as follows:

1. No poverty
2. Zero hunger
3. Good health and well-being
4. Quality education
5. Gender equality
6. Clean water and sanitation
7. Affordable and clean energy
8. Decent work and economic growth
9. Industry, innovation and infrastructure
10. Reduced inequality
11. Sustainable cities and communities



12. Responsible consumption and production
13. Climate action
14. Life below water
15. Life on land
16. Peace, justice and strong institution
17. Partnership for the goals.

Though peace is mentioned as one of the Sustainable Development Goals, but it is closely connected and thereby encompasses the other sixteen goals because all the other sixteen issues mentioned as SDGs need to be addressed in order to achieve peace both internal and external.

Today we are witnessing, instead of peace, we are at the verge of Third World War. U.N.O. has been passing resolutions year after year but failed to achieve its main goal i.e. sustainable peace.

From this, it is assumed that these resolutions of U.N.O. are not sufficient to achieve the much-needed sustainable peace. We need our inner development and transformation along with these resolutions and in order to develop and transform ourselves internally, the ideals of *Yama* (virtuous restraint) prescribed by sage Patañjali in *Yoga-sūtra* are essential that offer significant awareness about the nature of peace at an individual as well as societal level. We find this concept of *Yama* teaches various rich ideals that are deeply intertwined with peace and harmony and thereby can play important role in establishing and promoting sustainable peace.

Though the core of *Yoga-sūtra* is inner peace, through the strategies taught by this philosophy, we can attain peace as a whole. We know individuals make group, groups make communities and communities make society, societies make country and countries make the world. So, individuals are the corner stone or bedrock of the world. Peace that is cultivated within individuals (inner peace) has an effect on their group, communities, societies, countries and the world as a whole. Thus, inner peace which is an asset and core of *Yoga-sūtra* is a vital constituent of sustainable peace.

From Indian perspective we find true and sustainable peace means both the absence of external conflict as well as the presence of inner peace, harmony, and wisdom in an individual. In a word both positive and negative peace mentioned by Johan Galtung. Only such persons who experience peace and harmony internally, they are more likely to be able to contribute to build a



peaceful society. Such type of internal state of being can be achieved through the practice of truth, non-violence, and detachment and like these values cultivated by *Yoga-sūtra*.

### Research Methodology:

Methodology of this research includes relevant data from various primary and secondary sources, descriptive as well as analytic.

*Maharṣi Patañjali* (circa 300B.C.E.), a philosopher, physician and grammarian authored the *Yoga-sūtra* as a collection of aphorisms organized into chapters. The *Yoga-sūtra* has four broad sections namely- *Samādhipāda* (Transcendence accomplishment), *Sādhanpāda* (Practice accomplishment), *Vibhūtipāda* (Glory displayed) and *Kaivalyapāda* (Segregation accomplished). These four sections contain one hundred and ninety-six aphorisms. *Yama* or virtuous restraints have been discussed in the *Sādhanpāda* of *Yoga-sūtra*.

*Yoga* is an age-old Indian concept which and the word is derived from a Sanskrit root, meaning “to go to trance, to meditate”. Others, however, think the meaning of this word is to join. According to them *Yoga* is the science that advocates the technique of union of the human soul with the divine. In this way, we see *Yoga* has been interpreted in various ways, but *Patañjali* in the *Yoga-sūtras*, defines *Yoga* as “*Yogaḥcittavṛttinirodhaḥ*”<sup>iv</sup>. “*Yoga* is the inhibition of the modifications of mind”<sup>v</sup>.

### Eight-fold *Yoga* (*Aṣṭāṅga Yoga*):

We find *Maharṣi Patañjali* has identified five<sup>vi</sup> fundamental causes of suffering viz., ignorance, (*avidyā*), egoism (*asmitā*), attachment (*rāga*), repulsion (*dveṣa*) and desire for life (*abhiniveśa*). Eradication of these five causes is not only needed for liberation, the main goal of *Yoga* philosophy, but for peace also. Therefore he prescribed systematic effort or disciplined actions consisting of eight-fold-paths to control human body, mind and spirit, three parts of an individual and the overall well-being of an individual can be attained through the harmonious equilibrium of these three parts. To achieve peace and liberation, *Patañjali* advocates eight components of *Yoga* in the *sādhanpāda*<sup>vii</sup>. These are *yama* or abstinence, *niyama* or practice, *āsana* or posture, *prānāyāma* or breath control, *pratyāhāra* (sensory withdrawal), *dhāraṇā* (contemplation), *dhyāna* (attention) and *samādhi* (concentration) are the eight ways that can eradicate sufferings and bring



liberation. This article aims at to explore how *Yama* which is one limb of the Eight-fold limbs, prescribed by Maharsi Patanjali can be conducive to bring sustainable peace which is the prime goal of United Nations Organization.

### *Yama (Virtuous Restraint):*

The first method of the eight-fold- techniques is *yama* that indicates 'be moral'. It is formed of five moral principles<sup>viii</sup>, namely, abstinence from injury (*ahimsā*), veracity (*satya*), non-stealing (*asteya*), continence (*brahmacarya*) and non-possessiveness (*aparigraha*). These are negative virtues.

#### **First Principle: Non-violence (*Ahimsā*):**

The first principle of moral restraint is non-violence. Though the vow of non-violence in *Yoga-sūtra*, means not killing without any reservation and exception, i.e. violence should be avoided in all possible ways and at all times. Its implication is much more that includes non-injury in words, thoughts and deeds. In the *Yoga Bhāṣya*, non-violence is considered as tenderness, good will and compassion to all living creatures<sup>ix</sup>. *Vyāsa* in his commentary emphasizes that injury in all forms like which is done by an individual, which is caused to be done and which is allowed to be done should be avoided. *Vyāsa*, the commentator on *Patañjali's Yoga-sūtra*, thinks, the concept of non-violence is so powerful that others restraints are rooted in it and they are meant to attain it. Hence, *yoga* system advocated absolute non-violence.

#### **Second Principle: Veracity (*Satya*):**

Veracity is the second principle that is described in the *Yoga-sūtra* in the following way: words and actions of an individual who lives in truthfulness carry power<sup>x</sup>. *Vyāsa* describes the nature of truth as 'word and thought being in accord with facts.', and fact according to him 'what has been heard, seen and inferred as such.' otherwise the purpose of truth i.e., transferring knowledge or fact to others will not be served. He stresses that deceptive, confused and the speech carrying no information should be avoided. However, truth that harms other should be avoided because truth is rooted in non-violence. Thus, truth should be spoken for the good of all living creatures only otherwise, it will become falsehood. If the consequence of veracity harms others, it is not



considered as real veracity, but an appearance of it. (*satyābhāsa*).

### Third Principle: Non-stealing (*Asteya*):

Vyāsa describes non-stealing as taking other's belonging unlawfully. Thus, refraining from stealing means absence of the desire of taking the belongings of others unlawfully. *Vācaspati Miśra* pointed out that by mentioning 'absence of the desire of taking the belongings of others unlawfully', Vyāsa actually indicates here that the mental modification is the key factor in the case of non-stealing.

### Fourth Principle: continence (*Brahmacarya*):

Continence means control of the sexual organs. In the *Yoga-sūtra*, it is said that a person whose continence is established his vitality is increased<sup>xi</sup>.

### Fifth Principle: Non-possessiveness (*Aparigraha*):

Non-possessiveness in *Yoga-sūtra* consists in refraining from taking objects of enjoyment. *Vacaspati Misra* thinks possessiveness increases the desire of enjoyment and also stresses upon the fact that, any kind of enjoyment leads injury to others.

Thus, *yama* or virtuous restraint actually teaches refraining from five immoral activities namely violence, falsehood, stealing, incontinence and possessiveness. All these five *Yama-s*, namely non-violence, truth, non-stealing, continence and non-possessiveness are considered as great vows and should be practiced by yogis always as these vows are not limited by anything like life-state, space, time and circumstances<sup>xii</sup>. These vows are obligatory and universal categorical imperatives. These vows are absolute. There is no exception or reservation in performing these five rules. That's why *yama-s* are considered as the 'Great Vows' which are universal and not restricted by life-state, space, time and condition<sup>xiii</sup>.

### Result of the practice of these vows:

*Patañjali* in *Yoga-sūtra* shows the effective results of practicing such virtuous restraints which are the fundamental elements in establishing and promoting sustainable peace. The habit of non-causing injury is so powerful that in its presence, hostilities are given up by living being<sup>xiv</sup> which creates and promotes an environment of peace. *Vācaspatimiśra Miśra* shows the power of non-violence by giving the examples of horse and buffalo, rat and cat, snake and mongoose who are



natural enemies to each other, but they too can give up their hostilities following the affinities of the mind of an individual whose tendency of non-violence towards all creatures is confirmed. Thus, the vow non-violence prepares the mind of an individual for doing good things only. The practice of non-violence promotes kindness, compassion and non-harming conduct that are conducive to sustainable peace.

Likewise, in a peaceful society, integrity, transparency, responsibility, trust, co-operation, purity of mind etc. are essential which can be promoted by truth fullness only. *Maharsi Patañjali* Prescribes truthfulness in words, thoughts and deeds and such practice can create an environment where transparency, trust, accountability etc. can reign.

Though the United Nations, which is formed after the World War II, promised to maintain sustainable peace throughout the world and taken many attempts over the years, but we see there is no effective technique mentioned in its Charter for achieving such goal. In 1992, the Agenda for peace of UN emphasized the need of transparency in decision making in order to achieve durable peace<sup>xv</sup>. We see one can achieve such quality of transparency through the practice of truth, one of the limbs of *yama*.

Like non-violence and truth, to show the importance of non-stealing, it is said that when non-stealing of an individual is established strongly, all jewels come to him<sup>xvi</sup>. This verse teaches that by the practice of non-stealing, practitioner actually enjoys richness from all quarters. Practicing non-stealing creates trust, both within oneself and with others.

Similarly, if the practice of non-possessiveness is confirmed, the practitioner will be able to know about his existence in the past, present and future<sup>xvii</sup>. The practice of both continence and non-possessiveness arrest excessive material pleasures.

#### Remedy for tackling trouble during practice:

It is very difficult to make theory in practice. Realizing this, *Patañjali* prescribed how to tackle the trouble during practicing such vows. He suggests one should train the mind on the contrary ideas. It is called *pratipakṣabhāvanā*<sup>xviii</sup>. *Vyāsa* explains in this way. If the ideas of killing, lying, stealing, accumulating things etc., come to the mind of a practitioner, he should habituate himself to think upon the contraries of such ideas or sins. So, here the means is habituation or practice of the mind on the contrary ideas that can prevent the practitioner of doing anything wrong. Thus,



thinking opposite quality is the key of overcoming the obstacles in implementing the practice of *yama*.

### Conclusion:

We see *ahimsā*, the core and foundation of sustainable peace, is the root in which the other restraints and observances have their origin. In fact, they are intended to achieve *ahimsā*. Trust, love, compassion, tolerance, brotherhood, justice, co-operation, empathy, non-possessiveness etc. are the determinants of sustainable peace and we find in *Yama*, all these determinants are there. Thus, practice of *yama* can bring positive behavioural elements of an individual such as positive thinking, mental stability, inner peace, love, compassion, empathy, non-violence and other values that are required for sustainable peace. The measures taken by the UN are not adequate unless such transformation of an individual takes place. *Yoga* is a process through which one can purify not only body, but mind and spirit also. Thus, *yoga*, especially *yama-s* or five virtuous restraints can be helpful in establishing and maintaining sustainable peace by promoting inner peace, well-being, healthy relationship among people, culture of trust, justice, compassion etc., needed for more peaceful society. Only human can behave rationally, emotionally as well as with love and compassion. Only human is capable to convert the hostility into love, the fundamental pillar of sustainable peace. Einstein says:

We need an essentially new way of thinking if mankind is to survive. Men must radically change their attitudes toward each other and their views of the future. Force must no longer be an instrument of politics. Today, we do not have much time left; it is up to our generation to succeed in thinking differently. If we fail, the days of civilized humanity are numbered. —Albert Einstein.

### Notes and References:

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<sup>i</sup>. Galtung, J.; *Theories of Peace*; International Peace Research Institute, Oslo, 1967, pp., 12-17.

<sup>ii</sup>. Structural violence denotes violence in the very nature of various institutions such as social, economical, cultural etc. Structural violence is a kind of social oppression, political repression inflicted



- upon individuals or groups in a very systematic and organized manner. For example, slavery.
- ii. Mentioned in Security Council resolution 2282(2016) and General Assembly resolution 70/262.
- iv. *Yoga-Sūtras*, I:2
- v. I.K. Taimni, *The Science of Yoga, India: The Theosophical Publishing House*, .p. 6.
- vi. "Avidyāsmītā-rāga-dveṣābhiniवेशāhkleśāḥ". *Yoga-Sūtras*, II:3.
- vii. "Yamanīyamāsanaprāṇayāmapratyāhārādhāraṇādhyānasamādhiastauṅgāni". *Yoga-Sūtras*, II:29.
- viii. "Ahimsā-satyāsteya-brāhmacaryāparigrahāyamāḥi". *Yoga-Sūtras*, II:30.
- ix. *YogaBhaṣya*, II.30.
- x. "Satyapratisthāyamkriyaphalaashrayatvam". *YogaSutras*, II.36.



<sup>v</sup> "Brahmacharyapratisthayamviryalabhah". *Yoga-sūtra*, II:38.

<sup>vi</sup> *Yoga-Sūtras*, II.31.

<sup>vii</sup> "JātideśakāsamāyānavachchhinnāḥSārvabhaumāḥMahāvratam". *Yoga-Sūtras*, II.31.

<sup>viii</sup> "Ahimsā-pratiṣṭhāyāmtat-samnidhauvairatyāgaḥ." *YogaSūtras*, II:35.

<sup>ix</sup> UNGA. An Agenda for Peace (17 June 1992) UN Doc. A/47/277, paras 56-7.

<sup>x</sup> "Asteyapratisthayamsarvaratnaupasthanam". *YogaSūtras*, II.37.

<sup>xi</sup> "Aparigrahashtairyejanmakathantasambodhah". *YogaSūtras*, II:39.

<sup>xii</sup> "VītarkabādhanePritipakṣabhāvanam". *YogaSūtras*, II:33.



## রবীন্দ্র সাহিত্যে ব্যক্তিত্বমী নারী যারা এ যুগেও সমান প্রাসঙ্গিক: বিশেষতঃ "বিমলা"

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### Abstract:

শুধু বাংলা সাহিত্য নয়, বিশ্বসাহিত্যেও রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর হলেন সেই ব্যক্তি যিনি সাহিত্যকর্মের পুরো সফরপথে বিভিন্ন লেখায় নারীর জীবন পরিচয় ও তাদের পরিবর্তিত রূপ অঙ্কন করেছেন। পুরুষতান্ত্রিক সমাজে নারীরা বার বার অবহেলিত হয়েছেন, এমনকি আজও তারা নির্যাতনের শিকার। এই সমাজে নারীর অবস্থান, অপমান, অনাদর, অবমাননা, সুখ দুঃখ, বঞ্চনা নারীর প্রতি বৈষম্যমূলক আচরণ এবং সেই সঙ্গে তার প্রতিবাদ, প্রতিক্রিয়া, আত্ম প্রতিষ্ঠার লড়াই, আত্মমর্যাদা ও আত্মসম্মান আহরণের দারুণ মিথষ্ক্রিয়ার প্রকাশ ঘটেছে রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুরের ছোটগল্পে, উপন্যাসে। বাংলা সাহিত্যে অবিস্মরণীয় সব নারী পেয়েছে রবীন্দ্রনাথের হাত ধরে। তাঁর সৃষ্ট নারীচরিত্ররা একাধারে যেমন কোমলমতি, মমতাময়ী, স্নেহশীল, প্রেমিকা অন্যদিকে তেমনই তারা নীতির প্রশ্নে অনমনীয়। তাঁর সৃষ্ট নারী চরিত্ররা সমসাময়িক লেখকদের থেকে অনেকটাই আলাদা। অন্যান্য কবি সাহিত্যিকরা যেখানে তাঁদের কাব্য প্রেরণার অংশ হিসেবে নারীকে দেখেছেন, পুরুষের প্রেরণা ভেবেছেন সেখানে রবীন্দ্রনাথের সাহিত্য কর্মের কেন্দ্রীয় চরিত্রে বিরাজ করেন নারী। রবীন্দ্রনাথ তাঁর সাহিত্যে নারীকে উপস্থাপন করেছেন প্রগতিশীল, প্রখর ব্যক্তিত্বময়ী, স্বাধীনচেতাসরূপে যেটা উনিশ শতকে প্রায় অকল্পনীয় ছিল। রবীন্দ্রনাথের নারীরা যুগের তুলনায় আশ্চর্য রকমের অগ্রসর। রবীন্দ্র গবেষকরা মনে করেন ব্যক্তিজীবনে ঠাকুর বাড়ির যে সকল নারীর স্বতন্ত্র বৈশিষ্ট্য তিনি প্রত্যক্ষ করেছেন তারই প্রতিফলন পড়েছে তাঁর সৃষ্ট নারী চরিত্রদের মধ্যে। সেজন্য তাঁর সৃষ্ট চরিত্রের মধ্যে বারবার আমরা কাদম্বরী, জ্ঞানদানন্দিনী, স্বর্ণকুমারী, সরলা ঘোষাল, ইন্দिरা দেবী প্রমুখের ছায়া পাই।

সূচক শব্দ: নারী, প্রতিবাদী, নারী স্বাধীনতা, বিমলা, ঘরে বাইরে।

### সূচনা:

বর্তমানে নারী স্বাধীনতা, অধিকার ও মর্যাদা নিয়ে সকলেই সোচ্চার কিন্তু অতীতে সমাজ এতটা প্রগতিশীল ছিল না। সেসময় নারীরা ছিল অন্তঃপুরবাসিনী ও পুরুষের ওপর নির্ভরশীল। কেবল বাংলা সাহিত্য নয়, বিশ্বসাহিত্যেও রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর হলেন সেই ব্যক্তি যিনি তাঁর বিভিন্ন লেখায় নারীর জীবন, পরিচয় ও তাদের পরিবর্তিত রূপ অঙ্কন করেছেন। রবীন্দ্র সাহিত্যে আমরা নারীর অপমান, বঞ্চনা ও বৈষম্যের পাশাপাশি তাদের প্রতিবাদ, আত্মপ্রতিষ্ঠার লড়াই, আত্মমর্যাদা



ও তাদের সংগ্রামের চিত্র দেখতে পাই। তাঁর ঘরে বাইরে উপন্যাসে বিমলার মত চরিত্র আমাদের মনে করিয়ে দেয় যে রবীন্দ্র সাহিত্যে নারী কেবল সমাজের প্রতীক হিসাবে নয় আধুনিকতার প্রতীক হিসাবেও সমান প্রাসঙ্গিক। বিমলার চরিত্রের স্বাভাৱ্যতা, অভিনবত্ব ও আধুনিকতার বিশ্লেষণ করাই এই লেখার মূল উদ্দেশ্য।

### রবীন্দ্রনাথের সৃষ্ট নারী চরিত্ররা:

বড়ই বিচিত্র রবীন্দ্রনাথের নারী চরিত্র। প্রতিটি চরিত্রই স্বতন্ত্রমন্ডিত, অনন্য। সেই কারণেই তাঁর সৃষ্ট প্রতিটি নারী চরিত্র নিয়েই আমাদের এত কৌতূহল। রবীন্দ্রনাথের হাত ধরে বাংলা সাহিত্য পেয়েছে এক অমূল্য ভান্ডার যা আজীবন বাঙালীর জীবনে প্রাসঙ্গিক থাকবে। রবীন্দ্র সাহিত্যের উপন্যাসে ও বড় গল্পে আমরা যাদের পেয়েছি তারা হলেন ল্যাবরেটরির সোহিনী, ঘরে বাইরের বিমলা, স্ত্রীর পত্রের মৃগাল, নষ্টনীড়ের চরুনতা, গোরার সুচরিতা, চোখের বালির বিনোদিনী, দেনাপাওনার নিরুপমা প্রমুখ। রবীন্দ্র নাটকে পাই রক্তকরবীর নন্দিনীকে।

মানুষের জয় গান গাওয়া রবীন্দ্রনাথের কাজের একটা জায়গা ছিল নারী জাগরণ। উনিশ শতকে নারীর অধিকার নারীর ক্ষমতায়ন ছিল প্রায় অকল্পনীয়। কিন্তু সে সময়ে কবিগুরু রবীন্দ্রনাথ নারীকে তুলে এনেছেন তার লেখনির কেন্দ্রীয় চরিত্রে। নারী তার চরিত্রে হয়ে উঠেছেন স্বাধীনচেতা। রবীন্দ্র চেতনায় নারীকে গৃহলক্ষ্মীর সম্মানে অধিষ্ঠিত দেখার চেয়ে পুরুষের হৃদয়সনে অধিষ্ঠিত করার প্রবণতা বেশি দেখা যায়। রবীন্দ্রনাথের আগে কোন সাহিত্যিক সেভাবে নারীকে আত্মস্বাতন্ত্র্যমিত করে প্রকাশ করতে পারেননি। তিনি নারীকে এঁকেছেন শব্দ তুলির হরেক আঁচরে, কখনো সেই নারী সুখে উজ্জ্বল কখনো বা দুঃখে মলিন, ধূসর, জীর্ণ। তবে নারী যেমনই হোক সবটুকুই তাঁরই আবিষ্কার। এই আবিষ্কার রবীন্দ্র মনের রবি কিরণের বালকানি। তাইতো তিনি বলে ওঠেন “আমি আপন মনের মাধুরী মিশিয়ে তোমারে করেছি রচনা” আবার নারী দুর্দশায় যখন তাঁর মন কাঁদে তখন তাকে আমরা বলতে শুনি “নারীকে আপন ভাগ্য জয় করিবার কেন নাই দিবে অধিকার সে বিধাতা”।

### সামাজিক প্রথায় প্রতিবাদী রূপ:

রবীন্দ্রনাথের বিখ্যাত ছোট গল্প গুলির মধ্যে অন্যতম হলো দেনা পাওনা, হৈমন্তী, স্ত্রীরপত্র, অপরিচিতা ও পয়লা নম্বর। এই গল্প গুলোর নায়িকারা হলেন নিরুপমা, হৈমন্তী, মৃগাল, কল্যাণী, ও অনিলা। এই চরিত্র গুলোর প্রত্যেককেই এক একটি প্রতিবাদী চরিত্র। এরা সমাজের তথাকথিত বিবাহ রীতি, সংসার ধর্ম, পণপ্রথা, শ্বশুরবাড়ির অত্যাচার, নিপীড়নের বিরুদ্ধে এক একটি প্রতিবাদী চরিত্র। এই গল্প গুলোর মধ্য দিয়েই রবীন্দ্রনাথ নারীদের বিয়ে দেবার ক্ষেত্রে কিছু অন্যায় সামাজিক রীতিনীতি তুলে ধরেছেন। একজন নারীর বিয়ের পর শ্বশুরবাড়িতে তার বাবা-মাকে যে অপমান অপবাদ সহ্য করতে দেখিয়েছেন তা আজও অনেক ক্ষেত্রেই প্রাসঙ্গিক। আবার একই সাথে তাদের প্রতিবাদী রূপটিও আমরা প্রত্যক্ষ করি যেমন, দেনা পাওনাতে আমরা দেখি নিরুপমার বাবা পনের পুরো টাকা দিতে পারেননি বলে শ্বশুরবাড়িতে শাওড়ির প্রবল নির্যাতনের শিকার নিরুপমা। তার বাবা যখন মেয়াকে সুখী করার জন্য তার শেষ সম্বল বসতবাড়িটি বিক্রি করে দেন তখন সেই টাকা দিতে বাধা দেয় নিরুপমা। আমরা দেখি কিছু সংলাপে নিরুপমার বালসে ওঠা ব্যক্তিত্ব “টাকা যদি দাও তবেই অপমান। তোমার মেয়ের কি কোন মর্যাদা নেই। আমি কি কেবল টাকার খলি, যতক্ষণ টাকা আছে ততক্ষণ



আমার দাম, না বাবা, এ টাকা দিও তুমি আমাকে অপমান করোনা"। যদিও বাবার সাথে নিরুপমার শেষ দেখা হয়নি। অবহেলায় নির্গতনে মৃত্যু হয় নিরুপমার। অন্যদিকে নিরুপমার চেয়ে হৈমন্তী মানসিকভাবে দৃঢ় চরিত্রে সে যদিও সবকিছু হেসে উড়িয়ে দিত কিন্তু অপমানের যন্ত্রণায় গীতে গীতে অসুস্থ হয়ে মৃত্যুবরণ করে। আবার স্বীরপক্ষের বাহুপ বাড়ির মেয়ে মৃগাল কিন্তু তার বুদ্ধিমত্তা ও প্রতিবাদ করার দৃঢ় ব্যক্তিত্বের সাথে এই নিপীড়নের গণ্ডি থেকে বের হতে পেরেছিল। অপরচিতা গল্পে কল্যাণীর বাবা শম্ভুনাথ পাত্রপক্ষের দাবি অনুযায়ী মৌতুকের টাকা ও অলংকার দিতে প্রতিশ্রুতি হল। বিয়ের আসরে পাত্রের মামা যখন মেয়ের গা থেকে সকল অলংকার খুলে তা মেয়ে দেখেন যে প্রতিশ্রুতি থেকে অনেক বেশি গয়নাই তিনি দিয়েছেন তখন পাত্রপক্ষ সম্মুখে হলেও বাবার শম্ভুনাথ বলেন "আমার মেয়ের গহনা আমি চূড়ি করিবো একথা যারা মনে করে তাদের হাতে আমি কন্যা দিতে পারি না"। এভাবেই দৃঢ়তার সাথে তিনি মেয়েদের নিম্নম জায়গা তৈরি করতে সাহায্য করেছিলেন।

### রবীন্দ্র উপন্যাসে ব্যতিক্রমী নারী ঘরে বাইরের বিমলা:

রবীন্দ্রনাথ তার লেখনির মাধ্যমে নারীর জাগরণে গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ভূমিকা রাখেন। নারী স্বাধীনতা বা নারীর ক্ষমতায়ন নিয়ে তার লেখনী রীতিমতো প্রথা ভাঙার এক অন্যরকম সংগ্রাম। নারীর ক্ষমতায়নের কথা বারবার উঠে এসেছে কবিগুরু লেখায়। রবীন্দ্রনাথের গল্প নারী মুক্তির দরজা খুলেছে পুরুষতন্ত্রের বিরুদ্ধে। তিনি নারীকে সত্যের মুখোমুখি দাঁড় করিয়েছেন। তার লেখায় তিনি নারীর প্রতিবাদী রূপ তুলে ধরেছেন। রবীন্দ্রসাহিত্যে আমরা এমন বেশ কয়েকজন নারীকে পাই যারা কুসংস্কারাচ্ছন্ন সমাজে আধুনিকতার প্রতীক হয়ে আলো জ্বালিয়েছেন। আর এভাবেই বিমলার মত চরিত্র স্বমহিমায় প্রকাশিত হয়েছে। রবীন্দ্র উপন্যাসে বিমলা যুগ যুগ ধরে নারীর উপরে হওয়া নিপীড়ন, শোষণ, অত্যাচারের বিরোধিতা করে পাঠক সমাজের কাছে একেবারে আধুনিকতার চরমে এসে দাঁড়িয়েছে। তাই নারী মুক্তির নৃত্রেই বারবার করে আসে ঘরে বাইরে উপন্যাসের কথা। ঘরে বাইরে খুব তথ্যবহুল উপন্যাস। এর ছত্রে ছত্রে ভাবার অবকাশ আছে ভক্তের অনবদ্য মীমাংসা।

রবীন্দ্রনাথ স্বাধীনতা আন্দোলনের পটভূমিকায় ঘরে বাইরে রচনা করলেও এই উপন্যাসের মূল বিষয়বস্তু নারী স্বাধীনতা ও অধিকার। রবীন্দ্রনাথের নিজের কাছেই জিজ্ঞাসা ছিল যে সমাজ বিশেষ করে সংসারে স্বামী যদি নারীকে জীবনাচরণের ক্ষেত্রে পূর্ণ স্বাধীনতা দেয় তবেই সেই অধিকার বহন করতে কি প্রস্তুত নারী !!! কারণ মেনে নেওয়া ও মানিয়ে নেওয়ার চেয়েও কঠিন কাজ নিজেস্বত্ব ও পারিপার্শ্বিকতার মেলবন্ধনে সম্পূর্ণ হয়ে ওঠা। আর এই জিজ্ঞাসা থেকেই রবীন্দ্রনাথ নৃষ্টি করেছিলেন তার "ঘরে বাইরে" উপন্যাস। উপন্যাসের নায়িকা বিমলার কথায় আসতে গিয়ে আমরা বলতে পারি রবীন্দ্রনাথ বিশ্বাস করতেন "রমণীর মন) সহস্র বর্ষেরই/ সাধনার ধন"। স্বামী নিখিলেশ বিমলার মধ্যে ব্যক্তি স্বাধীনতার স্বীকৃতি বন্দন করতে সক্ষম হয়েছিলেন নিখিলেশ বুঝেছিলেন নারীকে সত্য রূপে পেতে হলে তার উপর থেকে সমাজের সংস্কারের চাপ উঠিয়ে নিতে হবে। তাকে স্বাধীনতা দিতে হবে। আপন পথে সত্যরূপে বিকশিত হয়ে ওঠা সে যেন সত্যের পথ নিজের মত করে গুঁড়ে নিতে পারে সেজন্য তাকে আধুনিক শিক্ষায় শিক্ষিত করতে হবে আর ঘরের বন্ধন কাটিয়ে তাকে দাঁড় করাতে হবে বাহির নিশ্চে। আপন হতে বাহির বাহির হয়ে বাইরে দাঁড়া, এই ছিল তার মূল মন্ত্র। তাইতো বিমলাকে সে বলেছে তাইতো "আমার ইচ্ছে আমি কোথাও কইবো না চূপ ও রইবো না তুমি একবার বিশ্বের



মাঝখানে এসে সমস্ত আপনি বুঝে নাও এই মনগড়া গানিত্র মনো কেনলমাত্র ধর করেন টুক করে যাওয়ার জন্য তুমি হওনি। আমিও হইনি। সত্যের মনো আমাদের পরিচা যদি পাকা হয় তবেই আমাদের ভালোনাগা সার্থক হবে"। নিশ্চয় মাঝে দাঁড় করানোর জন্যই তিনি বিমলাকে আগে থেকেই আধুনিক শিক্ষায় শিক্ষিত ও আধুনিক জীবনগাপনে অভ্যস্ত করে পড়ে তা ভালার সব উদ্যোগ নিয়েছেন। বিমলাকে তিনি নিজের বাড়ির আত্মনাতে ইংরেজি শিক্ষা দেন। ইংরেজি কায়দা কানুন মুক্তচিন্তা ও মুক্ত চর্চা করতে পারে নিখিলের তাকে আধুনিক পোশাক পড়তে বুতো পড়তে অভ্যস্ত করে ছেলেছিল। দিয়েছিল নিজস্ব মতামত প্রকাশের স্বাধীনতা।

আধুনিক শিক্ষায় শিক্ষিত হলেও শিক্ষা বিমলার মনের ভক্তিবান কাটিয়ে দেয়নি। যে মুক্তি নিখিলেশ তাকে দিয়েছিল তা সে নিজে চায়নি। স্বামীর সমস্ত উদ্যোগকেই সে ভেবেছে স্বামীর অভিনব আদর। আর যোগ্যতার অতিরিক্ত আদর পাওয়ায় আদরের যথাযথ মূল্য সে নির্ধারণ করতে পারিনি। তাই নিখিলেশের দেওয়া স্বাধীনতায় সে ধীরে ধীরে হয়ে উঠেছে স্বেচ্ছাচারী। নিখিলেশ বরাবরই তার বন্ধুদের সামনে স্ত্রীকে বের করতে চেয়েছিল। কিন্তু বিমলা বের হয়নি। যখন বেরোলো তখন সত্যকে জানার বাসনা নিয়ে সত্যকে জানার বাসনা নিয়ে।

সন্দীপের অভূত দুই চোখে বিমলা পূজোর প্রদীপের আলো দেখেছিল। কিন্তু সন্দীপের অভূত দুই চোখে পূজোর প্রদীপের আলো নয় কামনার লেলিহান শিখাই যে ছিল তা সেদিন বিমলার মোহ মুগ্ধ চোখে ধরা পড়েনি। কিন্তু যেদিন সে বুঝতে পেরেছে "আমার স্বামীর সঙ্গে তার তুলনাই হয় না" কিংবা "সন্দীপের মধ্যে যে জিনিসটাকে পৌরুষ বলে ভ্রম হয় সেটা চাক্ষু মাত্র"। তখন সে নতুন নেশায় মত্ত। সন্দীপ দেশের কথায় বিমলকে প্রলুব্ধ করলেও অল্পদিনের মধ্যেই দেশের কথা ফেলে আধুনিক নরনারী মিলন ও প্রেমের কবিতার আলোচনা শুরু করেছে। বিমলা সেটা টের পেলেও সেখান থেকে নিজেকে সরিয়ে আনার চেষ্টা বা শক্তি কোনটাই ছিল না। তার এই মত্ততা সেই দিন জোড় আঘাত পেয়েছে প্রথম যেদিন স্বামীর কাছে কিছু চেয়েছে ও ব্যর্থ হয়েছে। সেদিন স্বামীর মন ভালানোর জন্য তার প্রিয় খোঁপা বাধা ও সাজ সজ্জার প্রেমহীন আয়োজন করে তাকে লজ্জিত করেছিল আর এই লজ্জার মধ্য দিয়েই বিমলা উত্তরণের পথ খুঁজে পায়। তারপর নিখিলেশ যেদিন চন্দ্রমল্লিকার বাগানে তাকে মুক্তির কথা বলেছে, সেদিন নিখিলেশের দেওয়া মুক্তির মধ্যে সে চাক্ষুষ করেছে স্বামীর ভালোবাসা ছাড়া নিজের অসহায়ত্ব, সে ভেবেছে: "ছুটি কি একটা জিনিস, মাছের মত আমি যে চিরদিন আদরের জলে সাঁতার কেটেছি হঠাৎ আকাশ ধরে যখন বললে এই তোমার ছুটি তখন দেখি এখানে আমি চলতেও পারিনি বাঁচতেও পারিনি।"

বিমলের অনুরোধ প্রত্যাখ্যান এবং তাকে সম্পূর্ণ স্বাধীনতা দান করতে নিখিলেশের প্রচণ্ড মানসিক শক্তির প্রয়োজন হয়েছে এবং সেই শক্তির পরিচয় দিয়েছে সত্যনিষ্ঠার পরীক্ষায় উত্তীর্ণ হয়েছে। তার এই সত্য আচরণই বিমলাকে আঘাত করে আলো জ্বলে দিয়ে তার সত্যে ফেরার পথ সুগম করেছে। অসীম একাকিত্বের মধ্যে দাঁড়িয়েই বিমলা বুঝতে পেরেছে স্বামীর সত্য প্রেমের জগত থেকে সে ঠিক কতটা দূরে চলে এসেছে এবং তার উত্তরণের উপায় কি। নিজের স্বপ্ন সম্পর্কে সচেতন হওয়ার সঙ্গে সঙ্গে সন্দীপের লালসা ও নগ্ন চেহারাটা সে স্পষ্ট দেখতে পেয়েছে এবং তাকে ঘৃণা করতে শুরু করেছে। সন্দীপের যেখানে জাদু তার কথার মায়াবিস্তার তীক্ষ্ণ ব্যাঙ্গে বিমলা সে মায়াজাল ছিন্ন করেছে। আর নিস্তর অন্ধকার রাতে অনন্ত আকাশের নিচে ছাদের উপর লুকিয়ে পড়ে অবিশ্রান্ত কানায় নিজের পাপ তাপ ধুয়ে ফেলে নবজন্ম লাভ করে নিয়েছে স্বামীর প্রেমময় আশ্বাস। এটাই বিমলার সত্যে ফেরা। বাইরের জগতে বিমলা প্রতিষ্ঠা ফেলেও



ঘরের বন্ধন যে আরও সত্য জীবনের ত্রাণ মুহূর্তে বিমলা ড় অনুভব করে এবং গিরে আসে নিখিলেশের কাছে জীবনের উত্তরোত্তর আদর্শবাহিতার উপর আস্থা ও সর্বোপরি তথাকথিত সত্যের অহংকারের কারণে সে বাইরে থেকে নিজেকে ঘরের স্থাপিত করতে পেরেছিল। এবং ঘরে বাইরের টানা পড়েন থেকে নিজেকে রক্ষা করতে পেরেছিল এবং এই কারণেই ঘরে বাইরে উপন্যাসের আদর্শ নারী বিমলাই যাকে রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঘরে বাইরে বিস্তৃত জীবনধারণ মধ্যে প্রতিষ্ঠিত করেছেন, বিশ্বের মাঝে দাঁড়িয়ে দায়িত্বের সঙ্গে যে সত্য প্রেমের সম্বন্ধে রচনা করতে পারে, যে ঘরের মূল্য জানে আবার বাইরের মধ্যে নারীর সত্য অবস্থান। ও ভূমিকা সম্পর্কেও যে সচেতন জীবনের তিক্ত অভিজ্ঞতার মধ্য দিয়ে বিমলা এই আধুনিক জীবন সত্য লাভ করতে পেরেছে। নিখিলেশের জীবন সাধনা, তাই যেমন ব্যর্থ হয়নি তেমনি বিমলা নানও সার্থক হয়েছে।

### উপসংহার:

“আমি আঙনের মধ্য দিয়ে বেরিয়ে এসেছি, যা পোড়বার ছিল তা পুড়ে ছাই হয়ে গেছে। যা বাকি আছে তার আর মরণ নেই” বিমলের এই উক্তি তার মতো অনেক সংগ্রামী নারীদের মনের কথা। রবীন্দ্রনাথের পূর্বতন বা সমসাময়িক ভাষ্যেই, বর্তমান শতকের অনেক কথাশিল্পীও নারী অধিকারের সদস্ত ঘোষণায় রবীন্দ্রনাথের মত এত নিঃসঙ্কোচ হতে পারেননি। সেজন্যই হয়তো বিমলার মত নারী চরিত্রকে লাভ করেছি আমরা, যে চরিত্র আধুনিক, যুক্তিবাদী, প্রগতিশীল এবং অবশ্যই গৃহী। নারীর অর্থনৈতিক অধিকার নিয়ে রবীন্দ্রনাথ এখানে ভাবিত নয় তার ভাবনা ঘরে বাইরে আধুনিক নারীর দায়িত্ব, ভূমিকা এবং ব্যক্তি ও বিশ্বের সঙ্গে তার সত্য সম্বন্ধ নিয়ে। সেক্ষেত্রে বিমলার মধ্য দিয়ে তিনি এই সিদ্ধান্তে উপনীত হচ্ছেন যে আধুনিক নারী শিক্ষাদীক্ষা, চিন্তা ভাবনায় কোথাও এতটুকু পিছিয়ে থাকবে না কিন্তু কোনক্রমেই হবে না আত্মকেন্দ্রিক, সে হবে ত্যাগী, পরওসুখসুখিনী এবং কল্যাণী। এ প্রসঙ্গে একটা কথা বলার বলা আছে আজকে আমরা যখন নারীর ক্ষমতায়ন নিয়ে এত আলোচনা করি বা আমরা সচেতন নারীর ক্ষমতায়নে নারীর অধিকার অর্জনে তখন আমরা দেখতে পাই রবীন্দ্রনাথ আজও সমান ভাবে প্রাসঙ্গিক। নারী পুরুষের সমান অধিকার নিয়ে রবীন্দ্রনাথ সোচ্চার ছিলেন আজও আমরা নারী পুরুষের সমান অধিকারের জন্য লড়াই করে চলেছি। এ প্রসঙ্গে আমি শেষ করব রবীন্দ্রনাথের লেখা চিত্রাঙ্গদা কবিতার লাইন দিয়ে।

“হেলা করি মোরে রাখিবে পিছে

সে নহি নহি,

যদি পার্শ্বে রাখ মোরে

সংকটে সম্পদে

সম্মতি দাও যদি কঠিন ব্রতে

সহায় হতে

পাবে তবে তুমি চিনিতে মোরে।”



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## GENERAL INTERPRETATION OF THE HEART SŪTRA THROUGH THE GLANCE OF CONZE

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### Abstract:

The *sūtra* is called the heart because it is the original extract of the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*. The heart *sūtra* has a great effect on several *Mahāyāna* Buddhist countries, such as China, Japan, Tibet, Mongolia, etc. The mantras of *Prajñā Pāramitā Heart sūtra* are chanted daily many times in the shrines of Japan. So, one who knows the *Heart sūtra* knows everything.

Two versions of the *Heart Sūtra* are familiar in the Buddhist community. One is the original version of the *Heart Sūtra*, which is written in Sanskrit, and the other is Conze's version of the *Heart Sūtra*. Conze's version of *Heart Sūtra* is more popular among these two versions. Conze mainly displays in his *Heart Sutra* that everything is *śūnya*. The main aim of one's life is to achieve wisdom or *prajñā*, which is also *śūnya*. *Śūnya* means that which is not described in words. It only depends on realization. When one attains the stage of wisdom, then only they can understand *śūnya*.

**Keywords:** *Heart Sūtra, Prajñāpāramitā, Śūnya, Wisdom*

### Introduction:

The *Heart sūtra* is one kind of discourse. This discourse happens between two famous characters in the Buddhist field, one is Avalokiteśvara and the other is Sariputra. Avalokiteśvara is one of the eminent Bodhisattvas. Bodhisattva is the true image of Buddhahood and forms the adherence to the Heart Sutra. He is mainly depicted as the symbol of perfect wisdom. On the other hand, Sariputra is one of the famous followers of Buddha.





liberation. This Ārya Avalokiteśvara was sunk because of the practice of wisdom that carries one above the perceived and non-perceived.

At this stage, he observed and watched the *pañcaskhandhas*. Then he observed that *pañcaskhandhas* were by characteristic or *Svabhāva* empty. Everything in this world is made by these *pañcaskhandhas* or five constituents whose nature is empty or *śūnya*, i.e. they are *svabhāvaśūnya*. If everything is empty then only the existence of the speaker happens. But here the self of the speaker is also made by the *pañcaskhandhas* which is why the self is also empty. In this way, there is no presence of Avalokiteśvara and at the same time, there is also no availability of speaker and listener. In the light of Avalokiteśvara whatever their speech is not – Avalokiteśvara can find that all things are nothing but appearances which means they are nothing but *śūnya*. Several meanings of *śūnyatā* have been accepted by Buddhism. But “as a technical term, it denotes in Buddhism the absence of any kind of self.”<sup>4</sup>

On the other hand, *śūnya* means -*Svabhāvaśūnya* which means everything depends on something. That is why everything is *śūnya* all *dharmas* are *śūnya* i.e. –“the absence of an own being”.<sup>5</sup>

The next verse of the *Heart sūtra* is explained as –

“*Iha Śāriputrarūpaṃ śūnyatā śūnyataivarūpaṃ Rūpānnaprithaksūnyatā śūnyatāyā  
naprithagrūpaṃ yad rūpaṃ sū śūnyatā yā śūnyatā tad rūpaṃ evameva Vedanā samjñā -  
saṃskāravijñānaṃ.*”<sup>6</sup>

From the Buddhist perspective, everything in this world is made by the *pañca-skandhas*. These *pañcha-Skandhas* are -Material form [*Rūpa*] feelings (Pleasant, Painful, and neutral), perceptions, impulses, and Consciousness. Even the self or soul is also composed with by the *pañcha-Skandhas*. So everything is made by the *pañcha-Skandhas* and at the same time everything is empty.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid p-95

<sup>5</sup> Ibid p-95

<sup>6</sup> Here O *Śāriputra* form is emptiness and the very emptiness is form emptiness does not differ from form –Ibid p-96



Previously, Avalokiteśvara saw that everything is made up of these five components. Currently, Avalokiteśvara found out that form as well as the other components are the same as emptiness and emptiness is the same as form. In other words, it can be said that appearance and reality are taken into account. Avalokiteśvara holds the point that emptiness is form and form is emptiness. The form is nothing but a union of our material elements in the earth, water, fire, and air, five sense organs, and five sense objects. Feelings are the combination of pleasant, unpleasant, and neutral things. Perception is made by the six senses. *Samskras* is the a priori stimulus of every person with which he or she is born. *Vijñāna* means – Consciousness.

*Sūtra* does not abandon the world of appearance. The Heart sūtra does not refuse that appearance is empty. All the things are made of *Pañchaskandha*. The Heart Sutra of Buddhism squeezes being and nonbeing self and self as the same presence and absence, momentariness and eternity all the things vanish at the magic touch of Buddhism. Every assertion is therefore true. Buddhism opines that existence is what is, suchness is the truth. Without the help of *vijñāna* it cannot be explained.

The *Heart Sūtra* further executes:

“*Iha Śāriputrasarva-dharmāḥ śūnyatā -lakṣaṇā, anutpannā Aniruddhā, amalā avimalā anūnā aparipūrṇāḥ*”.<sup>7</sup>

All the *dharmas* are noticeable with *dharmas*. *Dharmas* are perceived as emptiness. There are two types of *dharma*, i.e. Conditioned and Unconditioned *dharmas*. Conditioned *dharmas* are 72 (like the form thought etc) in number and unconditioned *dharmas* are space and two kinds of *nirvāṇa*. Unconditioned *dharmas* are neither born nor caused. It is eternal. This division of *dharmas* has been accepted by *Sarvāstivāda* (One of the major groups of Hinayāna).

From the standpoint of Early *Abhidhārmikas* accepted the divisions of *dharmas* from their point of view. They make a distinction between soiled *dharma* apart from unsoiled *dharma*. Soiled *dharma* means *dharma* that are polluted with greed, hatred, etc. Conditioned *Dharmas*

<sup>7</sup> Here O Śāriputra all dharmas are marked with emptiness they are not produced or stopped not defiled or immaculate not deficient or complete. *The Diamond Sutra The Heart Sutra* by Edward Conze Dev Publishers New Delhi, 2017, p-100



evolved and stopped whereas unconditioned *Dharmas* were marked by *nirodha*, All the *Dharmas* have the same characteristic, and that is emptiness. That is why Conze expresses in his translation of the *Heart sūtra* that it expresses the view on *Dharmas* and their emptiness.<sup>8</sup>

Conditioned and Unconditioned *dharmas* are the two separate entities of *dharmas* from the point of *Abhidhārmic*. They also expressed the fact that conditioned dharmas are incomplete. But Avalokiteśvara claimed that all dharmas are empty. The differences occur just because of our illusions and our unfounded thoughts about the different dharmas. So the main essence of all dharmas is emptiness. This is neither complete nor incomplete.

After that, Avalokiteśvara says to śāriputra that all *dharmas* are *śūnya* or empty. There is no such kind of *dharma* that exists in *śūnyatā*. *Dharmas* are whatever either is conditioned or unconditioned or it may be defiled or undefiled there is no such category of *dharma* exists in *śūnyatā*. All these *dharmas* are nothing but drawn from our ignorance.

Everything is empty. This means five *skandhas*, the twelve sense -fields the eighteen elements twelve links of conditioned co-production, and the four holy truths (Suffering, Cause of Suffering, end of suffering, way to the end of suffering, or eightfold path.<sup>9</sup>The last path of the eightfold path, which means *saṃādhi*, can help one achieve full enlightenment or the way to Buddhahood through the proper practice of Meditation. This meditation helps one know the actual knowledge of dharma, which is nothing but *śūnya*. Hence, Sunyata is the main fragrance of dharma. Also, keep in mind that meditation and all other things must help one realize the idea of enlightenment.

<sup>8</sup> “Dharmas are empty of all that could mark off a separate existence for each one of them, i.e. they have no separate existence. And as this is their only characteristic, and there is no other can say that it is their mark not only to be empty but to be emptiness itself.” Ibid p-101

<sup>9</sup>*TasmācChāriputrasūnyatāyāṃ narūpaṃ navedanā nasamjñā nasamskārāḥ navijñānam .nacakṣuḥ-śrotra-ghrāṇa-jihvā -kāya -manāṃsi .narūpa -śabda-gandha -rasa-spraṣṭavya-dharmāḥ .nacakṣur -dhāturyāvannamanovijñāna -dhātuḥ na avidyā naavidhyā kasyoyāvannajarā -maraṇaṃ najarā -maraṇa -kṣayo. Na duḥkha -samudaya -nirodha -mārgā .najñānam, naprāptirnaaprāptiḥ* ibid p-104



Then

“*TasmācChāriputraaprāptivādbodhisattvasyaPrajñāpāramitāmāśrityavīharatyacittāvarāṇaḥ. Cittāvaraṇa -nāstityādatrastoviparyāsa -atkrāntoNishīhā -nirvāṇa -prāptaḥ.*”<sup>10</sup>

Avalokiteśvara expresses his view to Śāriputra that only *Bodhisattva* can attain the perfection of wisdom. Here, Perfection of Wisdom same as Emptiness on the other hand *Bodhisattva* must be standing on emptiness, which can help to attain Perfect Wisdom. Here also emphasizes the point that if a *Bodhisattva* wants to attain perfect wisdom, then he must be free of his mind of all kinds of thoughts. In Yoga Philosophy it also found that *Yogaścittavṛitti -nirodhaḥ*.<sup>11</sup> That means the mind becomes thoughtless or thought-free. Avalokiteśvara achieves our mind to a thoughtless or no-mind state. Thought cannot properly take this world. It cannot able to know the original truths. Thought reads the world in pieces, and it pieces the world. The world is

neither complete nor incomplete from the view of original truths. Hence, a *Bodhisattva* gets clean of thought coverings, he has no fear. He has overcome any kind of thought. He has overcome any kind of thought. That is why he attains *nirvāṇa*. In this verse, one word also emphasizes that is “*acittāvaraṇam*.”<sup>12</sup> *Āvaraṇa* means -Curtain or Veil. Our *citta* or mind is covered with three kinds of things – *Karma -āvaraṇa*

“*Kleśa -āvaraṇa*  
*Jñeyā -āvaraṇa*”<sup>13</sup>

<sup>10</sup>Therefore O Śāriputra it is because of his non-attainment of wisdom that a *Bodhisattva* through having relied on the perfection of wisdom dwells without thought -coverings. In the absence of thought coverings, he has not been made to tremble he has overcome what can upset and in the end, he attains *Nirvāṇa*. *The Diamond Sutra The Heart Sutra* Edward Conze Dev Publishers New Delhi ,p-108

<sup>11</sup>*Yoga -Sūtras* I ,2

<sup>12</sup>*The Diamond Sutra and The Heart Sutra* Edward Conze Dev Publishers 2017 Delhi,p-110

<sup>13</sup> The *Karma āvaraṇa*- which are the obstacles to spiritual development that arise from those wrong deeds of the past. The *kleśāvaraṇa* – the obstacles arising from the defilements such as greed, hate, and so on. The *jñeyā -āvaraṇa* –the obstruction from what is cognizable *ibid* p-111



*Bodhisattva* can overcome all these kinds of *āvaraṇa* or veil. When all kinds of *āvaraṇa* are dismantled, there is awareness with all, and the world turns into awareness of *Bodhisattva*. Then only *Bodhisattva* can attain *nirvāṇa*, and that is why when all the delusions of our mind can be removed only *nirvāṇa* happens. *Bodhisattva* becomes a Buddha through the way of *nirvāṇa*. The next verse Portyed as –“*tryadhva-vyavasthītāḥ sarvabuddhāḥ prajñāpāramitāmāsritya -amuttarāṇi -samyaksambodhimabhisambuddhāḥ*”.<sup>14</sup>

1) All the Buddhas can attain their final realization of emptiness. Here, all the Buddhas mean innumerable Buddhas; they are present in the past, present, and future (three periods of time). All these Buddhas are –1) “*Buddhāḥ*”

2) “*Abhisambuddhāḥ*”

3) “*Bodhi*”

4) “*Sambodhi*”

5) “*Bodhisattva*”.<sup>15</sup>

All these Buddhas have full faith in perfect wisdom. They can free themselves from all kinds of ignorance and completely know about the four noble truths and the eightfold paths. This path can also go the road of emptiness which can also echo in perfect wisdom.

Although Perfect wisdom may be understood as *-prajñāpāramitā* has carries several types of meanings, sometimes *prajñāpāramitā* may be understood as a book, sometimes it may be understood as an image or the highest kind of wisdom, but in the Heart *sūtra*'s last verse *prajñāpāramitā* is understood as *mantra*, or in Conze's translation or Conze's translation it may be understood as a spell. This *mantra* can also help to attain the qualities of Buddha, also make it possible to attain *nirvāṇa*, which is the truth or the absolute. That is why chanting of

<sup>14</sup> All those who appear as Buddhas in the three periods of time fully awake to the utmost right and perfect enlightenment because they have relied on the perfection of wisdom Ibid p-114

<sup>15</sup> *Buddhāḥ Buddhas* *Abhisambuddhāḥ*- have fully awoken, *bodhi* awakening *Sambodhi* perfect enlightenment and *Bodhi sattva* *Bodhisattva* translated into English on the same pattern these words would be the Enlightened Ones have been fully enlightened enlightenment. Ibid p-114



*Heart Sūtra* mantra removes all kinds of suffering. That is why mantra is similar to the term *nirvāṇa*.

The last sentences uphold the *sūtra* praise blindly *prajñāpāramitā* mantra or a *mantra* assimilating the highest wisdom. The *sūtra* ends with the devotion of that *mantra* –

"*Gate gatepāragatepārasaṃgate bodhi svāha*". Translates the *Mantra* as –

"Gone, Gone, gone beyond, altogether beyond. Oh what an awakening! all hail!"<sup>16</sup>

Here or in this phenomenal world. In Conze's translation, it is also found that if analyzing the term gone (in the Sanskrit term *Gate*) from the Grammatical Context, then it finds two meanings of gone. One stands for the feminine Vocative and the other one is the Masculine Vocative<sup>17</sup>.

Finally, it represents the self. There are no divisions between women and men. So the ultimate meaning of the term gone is that the self is gone. The second gate stands for -gone from the unconditioned, which means *-nirvāṇa*. *Parāgate* means – Going beyond a conditioned and unconditioned world, *Samsāra* and *nirvāṇa*, and even going beyond the concept of *śūnyatā*. *Svāhā* means -Good or well. So the overall meaning of this *mantra* is – When you have become a Buddha, all is good, all is well.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid p-118

<sup>17</sup> Ibid p-119



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## A BRIEF SOCIAL AND CULTURAL HISTORY OF THE LEPCHAS

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### Abstract:

*The Lepchas are considered to be the original inhabitants of Sikkim and Darjeeling Hills. They are known as "Mutanchi Rong Kup" or the Rongs which means the "sons of the snowy peak" or the sons of God. They claim to inhabit an imaginary homeland, which they term to be Mayel Lyang i.e., 'land of the hidden paradise' which lies to the south and east of Mt. Kanchanjunga. They believe that their first and foremost primogenitors, Nazaongnyo and Fodongthing were created by God from the snows of mount Kanchanjunga. They proudly proclaim themselves to be Rong, which mean dwellers of the rocky land. Today the Lepchas are known by two names: (i) 'Lepcha', is the exoethnonym by which they are known to outsiders and (ii) 'Mutanchi Ronkup' is the endoethnonym which is used by the ethnic group themselves.*

*Lepchas are very proud of their language, which they proclaim to be Rongring. They believe that their language was not descended from any other languages but was given to them by God. It was the most beautiful, comprehensive and pure language as not a single word of abuse existed in Lepcha language. It was the official language of the whole region of Darjeeling till 1904. Coming of the Tibetans and later the British was followed by the homogenizing impulse of the Nepali language. All this had the effect of degradation and marginalization of the Lepcha language. Since language is the key which mirrors the culture, customs, traditions and history of the community. This paper will make a modest attempt in highlighting the social and cultural history of the community and attempts made the community to protect and safeguard their culture and heritage.*

*Keywords: Lepchas, inhabitants, homeland, Sikkim, Darjeeling, heritage, community.*

As original inhabitants of Sikkim and Darjeeling, Lepchas or Rongs claim to inhabit a partly real and partly imaginative home land, which they term as Mayel Lyang i.e. the land of the hidden paradise which is believed to be located at the base of Mount Kanchenjunga. In the foothills of this mighty mountain there exists a village called *Mayel Lyang*<sup>1</sup> from which all Lepchas owe their existence and the place where they are destined to go after death.<sup>2</sup> This

<sup>1</sup>Geoffrey Gorer, *Himalayan Village: An Account of the Lepchas of Sikkim*, Pilgrims Publishing, Varanasi, 2005, p. 236, Also see, Kerry Little, *Lepcha Narratives, Transforming Cultures*, Vol 3 No. 1, February 2008, p. 83

<sup>2</sup> According to Lepcha folklore, Mayel Lyang was inhabited by the Mayel dwellers, or Mayelmu that existed in sevens i.e., seven brothers, seven couples and seven families. They were born as children in the morning, were matured and young in the afternoon and as elders in the evening only to be reborn as babies the next day. These immortal Mayelmu have been identified as Lepcha ancestors.



mythical *Majel Lyangis* now equated with Dzongu, a Lepcha Reserve<sup>3</sup>, located in North Sikkim between 4000 to 7000 feet above sea level. Considered to be the holy land of the Lepchas and a bridge to *Majel Lyang*, all major sacred rivers and mountains sacred to the Lepchas have their origin in Dzongu.

Lepcha life revolves around the mountains, the rivers and the lakes of the region and are considered to be the sacred deities of the Lepchas. Being nature lovers and nature worshippers, Lepchas offers prayers and supplications to the rivers, mountains, land and to the God Almighty, their creator. Their religion Munism and Bongthingism also revolve around the worship of Mount Kanchanjunga. In their daily prayers, the Lepchas invoke "*Kong Chen*" which in Lepcha language signifies Kanchanjunga which means the 'big stone'. Their primogenitors were also created from Mount Kanchenjunga, their protector and life giver. Lepchas believe that apart from Kanchenjunga there are innumerable mountains or *chyu*, each Lepcha clan being connected to these mountains. Being animistic nature worshippers, they perceive divinity in all natural objects. For them, stones mostly *sadaer longs* or *long choks* is held to be sacred and gift of thunder god. Long choks or upright stones are used worshipping and invoking of gods and in appeasing devils.<sup>4</sup> They are believed to be replicas of Mount Kanchenjunga or the big stone.

Regarding their origin, colonial writers like Hooker, Campbell, Waddell, Gorer, Fred Pinn were all unanimous in their views that Lepchas were the original inhabitants of the region. Though some minor colonial versions had emphasized the foreign origin of the Lepchas. In response to these latter colonial anthropologists, writers from within the community have emphasized the indigenous origin of the Lepchas. Their works have relied on oral stories, narratives, folk tales and folk lores of the community. With the publication of C. De Beauvoir Stocks' *Folk lore and Customs of the Lapchas of Sikkim* in 1925, a growing realization has dwelled that folk lore contains valuable information about the people and society. K.P. Tamsang, a Lepcha linguist and activist, taking reference from Lepcha mythology about the oppression of Lepchas under the demon king *Lasomoong Pano*.<sup>5</sup> To save themselves they fled away from their own land upto Tibet in the north, Assam in the east, Burma in the south and Nepal in the west. Thus, *Rongs* were compelled to leave their land

<sup>3</sup>Dzongu was the private property of the Maharani of Sikkim. By the proclamation on 30<sup>th</sup> August 1956 by Maharaja Tashi Namgyal, Dzongu became a protected zone exclusively for the Lepchas.

<sup>4</sup>A.R. Foning, *Lepcha My Vanishing Tribe*, Chyu Pandi Farm, Kalimpong 1987, p. 43

<sup>5</sup>K.P. Tamsang, *The Unknown and Untold Reality About the Lepchas*, Mani Printub Press, Kalimpong, 1981, p. 41



owing to fear from the demon king till their savior Tamsangthing delivered them at Tar- Kol-Tam- e- tam in Renzong (Sikkim).<sup>6</sup>

The Lepcha clan originated from the slaying of Laso Mung Pano. After slaying of the demon king, Lord Tamsangthing conferred different honours and titles to the brave Lepcha warriors and leaders who had performed heroic courage and active bravery in the twelve years war with the demon king.<sup>7</sup> Today, Lepchas are known by their patrilineal clans termed as *Rong Kup Kati*, which meant Ten Lepchas. The names of the Lepcha clan are Luksom, Samik, Sangut, Sang- dyang, Karvo, Manlammoo, Joriboo, Adenmoo, PhyoongTalimmoo and Brimoo.<sup>8</sup> The titles and honours thus received were later used by the descendants of these people in their names as titles. In this way the various clans of the community originated. Today geographically and politically Lepchas are divided into four regions; namely:

- i. *Renjyongmoo*, are the Lepchas of Sikkim, Darjeeling, Kurseong and Siliguri. These regions were under the control of the Sikkimese kingdom until the region was taken over by British in 1835. Lepchas of Sikkim are called by this name.
- ii. *Damsangmoo* are the Lepchas of Kalimpong. Damsangmoo had never been a part of Sikkim, it was ruled by independent Lepcha chiefs or kings until under the last Lepcha king GaebooAchyok, the region came under Bhutanese control in 1708. Kalimpong was later annexed by British from Bhutan in 1865.
- iii. *Ilammoo* are the Lepchas of the eastern parts of Nepal. Illam was once a part of Sikkim but went under the sovereignty of Nepal with the Treaty of Sugauli. In 1825 when Bholod, a Lepcha Prime Minister and a maternal uncle of Chogyal Tsugphud Namgyal was murdered owing to Lepcha- Bhutia ethnic rivalry, some 800 Lepcha families, owing to fears of being massacred fled to Kota, near Illam. Since then, Lepchas of the Illam region came to be known as Illamoo. Lepchas of Illamoo waged rebellion against the ruling Namgyal dynasty, which came to be known as Kotapa rebellion.

<sup>6</sup> According to Lepcha oral stories, when Lepchas were suffering from the oppression of Laso Mung Pano, the demon king, they prayed to God for protection. To save them God came down to Mount Pandim and created Tamsangthing or the saviour and bestowed him with supernatural powers. He was sent down to Mayel Lyang to kill the devil. When he arrived at Tarkaol Tam-E- Tam he found that the Lepchas were extremely harassed by the demon king. To rejuvenate the morale of the Lepchas, he wished to give supernatural powers to a chaste man and woman. In this way the first Lepcha Boongthing (ThikoongAzoarBoongthing) and the first Mun (NyookoongNyolik Mun)

<sup>7</sup> K.P. Tamsang, *The Unknown and Untold Reality About the Lepchas*, Mani Printing Press, Kalimpong, 1998, p. 38

<sup>8</sup> Yishey Doma: *Legends of the Lepchas Folk Tales from Sikkim*, p.20-21



iv. *Promoo*, are the Lepchas of Bhutan i.e., Lepcha inhabitants of western Bhutan. After the annexation of Dalimkot region by the British, all Lepcha households including Lepchas inhabiting the Terai regions were uprooted by the British tea planters. They settled in Chamurchi, the western part of Bhutan. Thus, Lepchas of Bhutan came to be known as *Promoo*.

The names of the various places in Sikkim and Darjeeling hills including the names of rivers and mountains have Lepcha origin and their meanings can be derived from Lepcha terminology. Lepchas being naturalists, gave names to mountains, rivers, sites, all-natural product, animals and vegetables. The Bhutias, on settling in Sikkim, bestowed their own names on many of the already named sites to express their contempt for the Lepchas.<sup>9</sup> Lepchas had their own unique system of giving names to the rivers. Most of the rivers in the region start with *Ru* e.g., *Rungit* (Rangit), *Rushi* (Reshi), *Rungyoo* (Teesta), *Ru- syot* (Dikchu), *Ruli* (Relli) etc. Names were also given according to topographical and physical features of the region. In Lepcha hills and hillocks are known as *Pung*. Thus, Kalimpong is derived from *KaalenPung*, Rinchenpong is derived from *RyenchyaoPung*.<sup>10</sup> Similarly, Peshok came from the term 'Pazok' that meant forest, Sandakphu from *thesam* meaning heart and *dokpu* meaning hurt i.e., hurting somebody's feelings. Rumtek comes from *Rum*, that is the Lepcha equivalent for God, meaning place of God. These facts validate the point that Lepchas were indeed the earliest inhabitants and the autochthones of Sikkim and Darjeeling Hills.

Today the Lepchas have been given a constitutional status of Scheduled Tribe within the Union of India. They are mainly concentrated in the State of Sikkim, Kalimpong and Darjeeling hills in the state West Bengal. In Sikkim they comprise 13 percent of the total population. Whereas in West Bengal they formed 2.07 percent of the total population according to the Census of 1991.<sup>11</sup> Due to their numerical minority, they are economically weak and politically unrepresented. They were subjected to different forms of colonial control during different historical epochs, which ultimately culminated in the marginalization of the community. Despite their minority status Lepchas are one of the richest communities in terms of history, language and culture.

<sup>9</sup>L S S O' Malley, Bengal District Gazetteers, Logos Press, New Delhi, p. 212

<sup>10</sup>D.C. Roy and Debangana A Complete Lepcha Life: Culture, Custom, Tradition, Belief, Language and Religion of a Hill Community, Samiksha Printers, Kalimpong, pp.

<sup>11</sup> 1981-1991; Census of India 1991, series 26, Part XII-B, District Census Handbook, Census of India- 1981, West Bengal, Series-23, Special Istahar S/T



### Cultural Beliefs and Practices

Lepcha's intrinsic connection with nature is reflected in their prayers, offerings and invocations known as '*Rum Faat*'. Rum means God and Faat are special offerings to different elements of nature for the protection and happiness of the Lepcha race. Some of the popularly known Rum Faats are as follows:

*Lyaang Rum Faat*: The word lyaang refers to land. It is prayer and offering to the soil, earth, rain for prosperity and good harvest as Lepchas mostly practice settled agriculture. It is the worship of land and is celebrated every year during the spring season with the onset of Basant Panchami Day.

*Chyoo Rum Faat*: The word Chyoo signifies mountains. It is prayer and offerings to Mt. Kanchanjunga, Mt. Pandim and other sacred peaks of the Sikkim Himalayas. This prayer is usually conducted in the month of October, but before the onset of winter season to plead God for adequate snowfall to feed the rivers below.

*TendongLho Rum Faat*: There is a belief among the Lepchas that Mt. Tendong had saved the Lepcha race from the great deluge. It is prayers, offerings and thanksgiving to the mountain for saving the Lepcha race from the great deluge. In order to celebrate the occasion, the Govt. of Sikkim has declared a holiday on the 8<sup>th</sup> of August.

*Mook Zek Ding Rum Faat*: This is a Lepcha festival on environment and ecology. Mook in Lepcha refers to greenery. It is a community worship and during this time prayers and offerings are made to Mother Nature for sufficient rain, mist, good climate, vegetation and for the fertility of the soil.

*Pong Rum Faat*: This is a sacrifice made to Pong Rum and his wife Shing Rum the god of the hunters. He is considered to be the God of all wild things on earth. He is the God concerned with physical safety and security of the Rongs.

*SoogeeLyot- Soogee Tek*: During this occasion, all the Muns and Boongthings assemble in a particular place and renew their knowledge on herbs and offer prayers to NyaolikNyaosaong Mun and ZaorBoongthing, the first consecrated Lepcha priestess and priest respectively to seek their blessings.

*Sakyoo Rum Faat*: These are prayers and offerings to the seven immortal Lepcha couples of Nye Mayel Kyong, who is believed to have given the Lepchas cereals, fruits and seeds to plant in Mayel Lyang. Thus, by planting those seeds from the immortal village, the Lepchas started practicing settled agriculture.

All these ceremonies highlight their intrinsic closeness and connectedness to nature, which is unsurpassed by all communities in the world. "In Mayel Lyng, Lepchas include every leaf, blade of grass, all creatures, and water from the heavens, rivers and lakes in their prayers. For them environment and religion are intertwined".<sup>12</sup>

### Lepcha Language and Literature

Language and literature are considered to be a storehouse of information on the community. It is a mirror which reflects the customs, traditions, culture, resources and history of the community. A community's advancement and level of development can be discerned from its language and literature. It is considered to be the single most marker of group identity. The Lepcha language belongs to the Tibeto-Burmese group of languages. Since language in Lepcha means *aring*, therefore their language is known as *Rong Aring*. They are very proud of their language which they believe was given to them by God, their creator. However, there are a number of views on the origin of the language. A number of philologists have claimed that the language belongs to the Tibeto-Burman group of languages spoken by the tribes inhabiting the sub-Himalayan region. The Lepchas discarding such views have been proclaiming proudly that they have a script of their own which is a rare phenomenon among the tribals. The language is monosyllabic in character. It is comprehensive and structurally simple in nature. In the words of Foning, "Lepcha language is not descended from any of the languages like Hindi, Nepali, Bengali and others which have their origin in Sanskrit. Compared with some of the languages and dialects spoken in the region, this language has reached a fairly high standard but, unfortunately, due to neglect arising out of environment and other changes coming into the tribe, the language is dying out gradually".<sup>13</sup>

The language and literature of the Lepchas consists of *Namthars*, myths, legends and oral stories popularly known as *Lungten Sung*. Christian religious texts, Buddhist religious texts that includes *Naamthars*, works of linguists and grammatologists like Mainwaring, Grunwedel, Heleen Plaisier, R.K. Sprigg, Beauvoir Stocks, Kharpu Tamsang etc. *Naamthar* or *Naamtho* *Naamthars* are old Lepcha manuscripts that deals with Lepcha myths, legends, stories and Lepcha philosophies. '*Naam*' means year and '*tho*' means records and events, which are partly religious and partly secular.

<sup>12</sup> Kerry Little, *Lepcha Narratives*, e-journal, *Transforming Cultures*, Vol 3 No. 1, February 2008. Available online at: <http://epress.lib.uts.edu.au/journals>

<sup>13</sup> A.R. Foning, *Lepcha My Vanishing Tribe*, p. 153



An account about the language of the Lepchas would remain incomplete without highlighting the contributions of Lepcha oral stories and folk lore towards the emergence of a rich Lepcha language and culture. These stories collectively are termed as *Lungten Sung*<sup>14</sup>, that is considered to be a vehicle and medium to 'fashion and shape the very behaviour and attitude of the Rong Tribal society as a whole. In fact, they are a veritable treasure house of Lepcha culture'.<sup>15</sup> Some of these stories includes, 'the Creation of the First Lepcha Man and Woman', 'The Deluge', 'The Origin of Chi', 'The Death of Lasso Mung Pano', 'The Race Between Teesta and Rangeet', 'The Marriage Between Tarbong Nom and Narip Nom', story about 'The Sun and the Moon' etc. These stories reflect the traditional beliefs, rituals and values of the Lepcha community. They also reflect the history of the community, their ethics and moral philosophy. Folklore is one of the identifying marks of a community and through them culture of the community is kept alive. Though Lepchas have a rich and diverse oral tradition, but it is sad that the tradition is slowly losing ground. It is only among the ritual specialists (muns and boongthings) and some interested elders of the society who have kept this tradition alive.<sup>16</sup>

Christian religious texts form an important part of Lepcha language. Towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with the coming of the British colonialist, the European Christian missionaries also actively started their mission of converting and proselytizing the innocent Lepchas. The missionaries translated the book of Genesis and part of Exodus along with the Gospels of St. John and St. Matthew into Lepcha. In 1841 a school for the Lepchas was started at Takvar by Rev. William Start. Along with schools, hospitals, dispensaries were set up in the interior places. In this respect, the contribution made by Rev. MacFarlane in 1970s should also be taken into account. He was the first Scottish missionary to undertake missionary activities in Darjeeling and Kalimpong. To tame the carefree children of nature, they found it necessary to revive their so called dead written language.<sup>17</sup> The Macfarlane Memorial Church was established in Kalimpong in 1890. Christian religious books and book of Catechism was printed in 1911. Christian prayers started to be said in Lepcha language, hymns were sung in the language, sermons were given in Lepcha language. These missionaries produced books

<sup>14</sup>Here Sung means traditional stories which were not written down but were transmitted orally

<sup>15</sup>A.R. Foning, *Lepcha My Vanishing Tribe*, p. 87

<sup>16</sup>Kachyo Lepcha, *Culture Kept Alive through Oral Traditions: A Peep into the World of the Lepchas*, in Sarit K. Chaudhuri, Sameera Maiti and Charishma K. Lepcha (ed.) *The Cultural Heritage of Sikkim*, Routledge 2020, pp. 86-88.

<sup>17</sup>A.R. Foning, *Lepcha My Vanishing Tribe*, p.160



by the modern method of printing. The Baptist Mission in Calcutta, which had undertaken the printing of Christian books and literature in Hindi, Bengali and English brought out a Lepcha font, and it was in this press that the first modern Lepcha books saw the light of the day.<sup>18</sup>

The activities of the missionaries were however short lived. In 1873 Hindi was declared as the court language and a language to be used in Darjeeling hills.<sup>19</sup> With the First World War the missionaries started showing little interest in the development of Lepcha language. Nepali language received more attention in the day-to-day administration as well as the medium of instruction in church under the leadership of Rev. Ganga Prasad Pradhan. Bible, hymns, literature, pamphlets and circulars started to be printed in Nepali. Popularisation of the Nepali language by the Christian missionaries and the changing demographic profile due to the imperatives of colonial development posed a major threat to Lepcha language. The Nepali speaking population that stood at 18.19 percent of the district population rose to 59.9 percent in 1961.<sup>20</sup> Introduction of Nepali from the schools to the University and the production of literary works led to the standardization of the language. The rising linguistic nationalism that swept the Darjeeling hills and the marginalization of the Lepchas led to the formation of Lepcha Associations that have embarked upon ethnic-linguistic-cultural revivalist movement among the Lepcha community. These associations since their emergence had become vocal in organizing seminars, conferences, workshops and training programmes for the promotion of Lepcha language and culture. Several Lepcha night schools were established and Lepcha leadership had worked consistently for the introduction of Lepcha language in schools.

### Conclusion

A community's advancement and development are contingent upon the sense of historical development, memories, culture, traditions, language and literature. There is a link between the socio-cultural life of a community and the status and position of the community.

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid

<sup>19</sup> Letter no. 3418 dated 19<sup>th</sup> September 1873 from C. Bernard, officiating Secretary to the Govt. of Bengal in the General Department to the Director of Public Instruction. Cited by Jahar Sen.

<sup>20</sup> Barun De, Darjeeling District Gazetteer, p. 118-120



Lepcha associations have emerged as important vehicles for the assertion of their distinct cultural identity. These associations have published Lepcha text books, Lepcha- English dictionary for primary and higher secondary level. They have established Lepcha Language and Literary Award for the protection and development of the language. They have also organized a number of competition and festivals to make Lepchas aware about their customs and traditions. Festivals strengthen social and emotional bonding among the members of the community. Of late Lepchas have unitedly resisted against government sponsored development projects. Two major developmental activities that had threatened the very existence of Lepcha identity was the declaration of Kanchenjunga National Park in 1977 and hydro power projects in the north, east and south districts of Sikkim. Out of the 26 hydel power projects, six major projects proposed in Dzongu Lepcha Reserve had threatened the very identity and culture of the Lepchas. Lepchas not only in Sikkim but throughout the world registered their collective protest against state sponsored developmental activities on the ground that, being nature worshippers, their land is sacred and will be destroyed by development. These associations were successful in organising dharna, hunger strike and satyagraha andolan demanding the government to put an end to these projects. These movements led by the emerging educated middle classes to protect their culture, traditional values, language should be incorporated within the modern political idea of 'right to culture'.

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## TAMANG WHAI: A FOLK SONG TRADITION THROUGH A MATRIARCHAL PERSPECTIVE

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### Abstract

*Tamang folk songs richly woven in the traditions of the Tamang community reflect the rhythms of nature, the joys of life, and the essence of Himalayan culture, blending storytelling with vibrant music and movement. The Tamang people are an indigenous ethnic group primarily found in Nepal, with significant populations in India and Bhutan. They have a rich heritage of language, music, rituals, and oral storytelling. Whai, a Tamang song, traditionally opens with 'Matri Vandana', a heartfelt prayer to the mother, often expressed through verses like 'Ammaile hoi Ammaile' (Mother, oh Mother). The Tamang song Whai begins with a sacred tribute to the mother, reflecting deep cultural reverence. Their signature musical instrument, the Damphu, is traditionally played by both men and women. Literature on Tamang music is scarce, with limited documentation of its folk songs and dances. These cultural expressions are vital to the community, carrying historical significance, yet they are rarely preserved or studied in depth.*

**Key words:** Folk Song, Tamang Whai, Tamang People and Damphu.

### Introduction

Tamangs are widely found in the Darjeeling district of West Bengal and Sikkim. Tamangs are counted as one of the major tribal communities in the region. They practice a form of Tibetan Buddhism along with the Bon tradition and there are Buddhist temples in many villages. The Tamang community exhibits a vibrant and unique culture that sets them apart from other ethno-linguistic groups. Moreover, most of the Tamangs in Darjeeling and Sikkim are Buddhist by faith and worshipped at Buddhist monasteries. Tamang villages are home to Tambas (historians) and Bonpos (priests), who play essential roles in preserving traditions and fulfilling social and religious duties. Although Bonpos have largely been replaced by Buddhist Lamas in religious ceremonies, Tambas continue to uphold their responsibilities, preserving Tamang history and traditions within their communities.

Folk songs are an essential part of traditional music, carrying deep cultural significance. The Tamang community has a rich tradition of folk songs, performed in their native language on various occasions both in solo and groups. These songs are accompanied by folk musical instruments such as the Damphu and Tungna that enhance their appeal, drawing the audience into the performance and making the experience more immersive. The rhythmic beats of folk instruments enhance the vibrancy of performances, making them not just entertaining but deeply immersive. Additionally, Tamang folk songs often serve as a medium for storytelling, passing down historical events, myths, and wisdom from one generation to another. They capture emotions ranging from joy and love to sorrow and struggle, creating a strong emotional bond within the community. These songs also play a crucial role in preserving indigenous knowledge, as they reflect the Tamang people's connection to nature, spirituality, and social customs. Despite modernization influencing music styles, efforts are being made to safeguard Tamang folk traditions through festivals, cultural programs, and digital platforms that showcase their enduring significance.

In the Tamang community, Tamang Whai is incomplete without Damphu dance (one of the most well-known traditional dances). It is performed by almost everyone from a young age, making dance an integral part of Tamang life. Various forms of dance exist, including agriculture dance, festival dance and wedding dance, each reflecting different aspects of their culture. Through these dances, the Tamang people celebrate their traditions, express joy, and convey a range of emotions. The Tamang people have a vibrant cultural heritage, expressing their joy through dance, music, and songs. Some performances last for days and nights, showcasing their deep connection to tradition. However, dance is strictly avoided during funerals, and individuals refrain from participating in celebrations if a relative has passed away or if a death has occurred in their home.

Tamang Whai are light songs as well as songs with philosophical thoughts. These songs express the day today joys and sorrows of life. The songs containing traditional faith are generally sung by the Tamba which is called Tambala Whai (grace offer to god). These are also duet songs which are sung between two parties in the form of questions and answers, one party put some riddles which the other party has to reply in time. The songs related to agricultural seasons that express universal themes of love, union, desire, pain and suffering in simple but hauntingly lyrical and melodious manner and are indeed the treasure of Tamang folklore. Apart from the folk songs described above, which can be placed on a larger category of workmen songs, there is also a form of folk songs among the Tamang community that reflects the pain and suffering of the labourers.

Tamang songs are an integral part of every occasion, especially marriages and other social functions. During these ceremonies, men and women often sit in two groups and begin singing traditional Tamang songs in their native dialect. This exchange of songs can turn into an engaging duel, lasting through the night and sometimes into the following day. In some cases, the defeated one in this musical battle may end up eloping with the victor, becoming their life partner. The Dampha song, accompanied by the Damphu dance is a signature Tamang folk tradition performed by two or three individuals in full traditional attire, adding to the grandeur of the celebration. The Damphu, a beloved Tamang musical instrument, is a



round, flat drum covered with deer skin, secured with 32 sharpened bamboo pegs around its edges, giving it a distinct appearance and sound. Alongside the Damphu, other significant Tamang musical instruments include the Tungna, a stringed instrument, and the Gonggap, crafted from a small piece of iron. These instruments enrich their musical traditions, adding depth to the melodies and dances that are central to Tamang heritage.

### Story of the origin of Damphu through Tamang Selo

According to Tamang beliefs, the Tambas narrate the story of Peng Dorjee (symbolically representing Lord Shiva and the creation of the Damphu, the principal musical instrument of the Tamang people. As the legend goes, Peng Dorjee and his beloved Ruisang (Parvati) wandered through the dense Himalayan forests. Tired from their journey, they paused to rest. Suddenly, Peng Dorjee spotted a Ghoral, a species of Himalayan deer, and was overcome by the desire to hunt it. He aimed his arrow and struck the deer, but seeing the animal suffer; Ruisang was filled with sorrow and chastised him for his cruelty.

Realizing his mistake and seeking forgiveness, Peng Dorjee promised to create a memorial for the fallen creature. He skinned the Ghoral, removed its bristles, and dried the hide in the sun. Using a branch from a Koiralo tree (*Bauhinia Variegata*), he carved a circular wooden frame. Chanting the names of various gods and goddesses, he stretched the hide over the frame and secured it with thirty-two bamboo nails. To complete the instrument, he attached a small split cane of bamboo at the lower part of the ring, allowing the fingers to produce a one-time beat. Once finished, Peng Dorjee played the Damphu with three fingers, producing the distinct rhythm Tap dhung dhung. He saw this creation as a tribute to the fallen deer and believed it had come to life through the blessings of Saraswati, the Goddess of Music. To honor her, he dedicated the instrument to her before playing it, marking the birth of the Damphu, a sacred and beloved instrument of the Tamang community.

Peng Dorjee had crafted a musical instrument, yet it remained unnamed. One day, while wandering through the jungle, he played his creation, composing a song in his state of ecstasy. As he played, he noticed a Damphe (Pheasant) performing an enchanting dance to impress its beloved Munal (Impeyan Pheasant) a few steps away. The bird moved gracefully shaking its crest, raising its head, then bowing down. At times, it hopped energetically, stretched its wings, stepped forward, turned back, and even spun in place. Fascinated by the rhythmic movement of the Damphe, Peng Dorjee was inspired to imitate its dance while playing his instrument. After practicing for some time, he finally performed before his beloved Ruisang, singing and dancing. Overjoyed by his performance, she admired the instrument he had crafted from the hide of a wild goat. When she learned that the dance was inspired by the Damphe, she suggested naming the instrument Damphu. Peng Dorjee agreed, and from that moment on, the instrument was called Damphu, derived etymologically from Damphe. Since that day, the Damphu drum has remained unchanged, preserving its original form. Tamang oral traditions, expressed through songs and dances, reveal the richness of their ancient past. The Tamangs have their Mundum, a song narrating their ancestry, which they sing on religious and social occasions to the rhythmic beats of their beloved Damphu.

Tamang Whai is a sacred song performed during rituals and social gatherings among the Tamang people. It traditionally begins with a Prayer to Mother (Matri Vandana), expressed through verses like 'Ammaile hoi Ammalle' (Mother, oh Mother), accompanied by burning Sang (incense) and Sagun (alcohol or milk) placed before the singers as an offering. This ritual underscores reverence and spirituality in Tamang music. The Whai always concludes with the phrase 'Lhaso mannala Dannai lala', which conveys the wish for the golden ash of incense to enter the mind, symbolizing enlightenment and purity. However, in modern times, the increasing number of meaningless songs, presented under the label of Selo, poses a threat to linguistic and cultural integrity. To safeguard their ancient traditions, Tamba, the Tamang historian, plays a crucial role in preserving and passing down the Whai ensuring that Tamang culture, language, and values remain strong in the face of change.

### **There are various types of Whai (Songs) in Tamang community**

**Shang la whai (Offering Incense):** During any rites, the gods and goddesses are worshipped first. At this moment, Tamba offers incense to the deities while singing songs that describe the incense and the incense pot. Since this song is performed during the incense offering, it is known as Shang la whai.

**Sergem la whai (Offering Fruits):** After the incense is offered, fruits are presented to the deities of the region and the household, as well as to the deities of different directions. This ritual is called Sergem la whai.

**Damphu Sebha whai (Story of Damphu making):** After the completion of Sang Sergem Whai, the story of Damphu making is sung. Peng Dorjee, a skilled hunter, killed a Ghoral and later used its hide to craft a musical instrument. He carved a circular frame from the koiralo tree, stretched the hide over it, and secured it with thirty-two bamboo nails. Chanting the names of gods and seeking absolution, he assembled the instrument and played it, producing rhythmic beats—Tap dhung dhung. Inspired by Saraswati, the Goddess of Music, he dedicated his creation in worship. One day, while playing, he noticed a pheasant, the Damphe, dancing in the wild. Enchanted by its movements, he imitated its steps, creating a dance to accompany his instrument. His beloved Ruisang, impressed by the artistry and the inspiration from the Damphe, suggested naming the instrument Damphu. Since then, the Damphu has remained unchanged, preserving its original form and cultural significance.

**Moibala Whai (Prayers to Regional Gods and Goddesses):** This ritual serves as an invocation to the deities of all four directions, seeking their presence and blessings. It also grants permission to continue singing Selo, ensuring harmony between spiritual devotion and artistic expression.

**Sachya Namcha La Whai (Description of the Universe):** This ritual narrates the origin of the universe and emphasizes the divine blessings that permeate all four directions of the Earth, reflecting the interconnectedness of creation and spirituality.



**Ne La Jinbal Whai (Songs of Pilgrimage):** This ritual recounts various sacred pilgrimage sites, with a particular focus on Buddhist destinations. Through its verses, it awakens deep religious sentiments among listeners, fostering devotion and spiritual reflection.

**Gandi Chya La Whai (Origin of the River Ganga):** This ritual narrates the origins and significance of great rivers, including the Ganga, Brahmaputra, Bhagirathi, Sutlej, and Sindhu. It celebrates their divine connection and the life-giving force they provide across regions.

**Rhui Chen Chopge La Whai (Origin of the Tamang Sub-Clans):** This ritual serves to affirm one's ancestry, ensuring a clear understanding of lineage and the importance of avoiding marriage within one's own people. It provides a detailed account of 49 surnames, their places of origin, and the deities associated with each, preserving the traditions and identity of the Tamang community.

### Conclusion

Tamang folk songs possess distinct and diverse characteristics in both meaning and expression. Like many tribal communities in the Himalayan region, the Tamangs have preserved their own musical and dance traditions. However, Tamang songs and dances stand out for their distinct character, reflecting the simplicity and antiquity of their heritage. Tamang Selo embodies the philosophy and ethos of an ancient civilization, making it unique from other cultural traditions. The distinctive nature of Tamang Selo has greatly enriched their folk music, ensuring its lasting significance in their community.

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## FOLK DEITIES WORSHIPPED IN THE DARJEELING PULBAZAR BLOCK

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### Abstract

*This paper explores the worship practices and belief systems surrounding folk deities in the Pulbazar block of Darjeeling district. By examining localized religious rituals and community practices, the study highlights the relationship between spirituality, environment, and traditional ecological wisdom.*

*Keywords: Pulbazar Block, Folk Deities, Ancestral Worship, Animism, Darjeeling Rituals, Environmental Beliefs.*

### 1. Introduction

The hilly region of Darjeeling district in the Indian state of West Bengal is divided into three subdivisions: Darjeeling Sadar, Kurseong, and Kalimpong. For administrative convenience, these subdivisions are further divided into several development blocks. Among them, Darjeeling Pulbazar Block is one. This block falls under the Darjeeling Sadar subdivision and is geographically the largest of the three blocks within the Darjeeling subdivision. The block comprises 23 Gram Panchayats and four Census Towns. It covers an area of 416.304 square kilometers and, according to the 2011 Indian Census, has a total population of 126,747. The elevation of this area ranges from a minimum of 760 meters to a maximum of 11,929 feet above sea level. Located in the northern part of Darjeeling district, it is bordered by the state of Sikkim to the northeast, Sukia-Jorebunglow Block of Darjeeling Sadar to the south, Rangli-Rangliot Block to the east, and Nepal to the west. The northwestern part of the block is covered by the Singalila forest range, the central part consists mainly of khasmahal lands, and the eastern part is dominated by tea gardens. Communities residing in this block include Rai, Limbu, Lepcha, Yakkha (Dewan), Sunuwar (Mukhia), Bhujel, Magar, Garung, Sherpa, Thami, Chhetri, Bahun, Kami, Damai, Sarki, Newar, Majhi, Bhote, Dukpa, Jogi, Tamang, Bihari, and Marwari, among others. The Nepali language is commonly used, while languages such as Limbu, Lepcha, and Sherpa are also spoken within their respective communities. Besides Nepali language the oral chanting in these languages is also popular while performing rituals and worshipping by the shamans of particular communities. The Folk life of this region, which is based on rich cultural and biological diversity, has been deeply influenced by deities. The people of this area primarily worship deities either inside the home or outside. This paper mainly presents the deities worshiped outside the home.



## 2. Folk Belief and Deity Worship

### 2.1 Folk Beliefs and Deities

Folk belief is the traditional belief that people have collectively accepted as truth.<sup>1</sup> This includes popular beliefs and folk practices related to the universe, nature, animals and birds, trees and plants days, months, dreams, omens and so on.<sup>2</sup> Folk beliefs constitute a key element of oral folklore. They represent collective trust in unseen forces, particularly deities associated with nature, animals, and ancestors. These beliefs guide community behaviour and provide spiritual explanations for environmental phenomena. Folk Belief encompasses the traditional beliefs, superstitions, and world view of a group, including religious beliefs, omens, and magical thinking. When such beliefs are accepted collectively by the people as traditional truths, they are called folk beliefs<sup>3</sup>.

### 3. Household Deities

Communities in Pulbazar revere certain deities within their homes, commonly known as Kula Deuta (ancestral deities). Ancestor worship plays a central role, reflecting deep-rooted beliefs in the power of the spirits of forebears to protect the household. While multiple deities may be acknowledged, one is typically held as the principal household god or goddess.

### 4. External/Folk Deities

Deities worshipped outside the home—often in forests, cliffs, or hills—hold communal significance. Seasonal rituals like the Ubhauri Puja (spring) see mass participation, aiming for agricultural prosperity and protection against natural calamities.

#### 4.1 Jangali Devi

The forest goddess Jangali is feared and revered as a protector of wilderness. She is offered sacrifices—typically black hens—before major activities in the jungle. She is believed to cause mental disturbances or even death if angered.

#### 4.2 Shikari Devata (Hunter Deities)

<sup>1</sup> Motilal Parajuli, Lokgathama Loktatwa, Jiwendradev Giri (Editor), Nepali Lokvarta, Nepal Academy, Kathmandu, 2072 (Bikram Sambat), page no 41.

<sup>2</sup> Chudamani Bandhu, Nepali Loksahitya, Ekta Books, Kathmandu, 2058 (Bikram Sambat), page no 15.

<sup>3</sup> Alan Dundes, interpreting folklore, Interpreting Folklore, United States of America, American University press 1980.



Typically believed to be seven brothers, these hunter deities—such as Shiring Shikari, Namrung Shikari, and others—are worshipped with offerings of eggs, poultry, and wild animal meat. They are especially revered by communities involved in hunting.

#### 4.3 Singhdevi/Chandi Kali

Worshipped at the start of the monsoon (late April-May), she is believed to protect people, animals, and land from landslides, storms, and other disasters. Devithans, situated at caves and rocky cliffs with stone alters, are focal points for community worship where she is believed to visit twice a year in autumn and spring seasons known as Udhawli and Ubhawli in Nepali language although the mass participation for this worship takes place in the Ubhawli.

#### 4.4 Sansari

This communal ritual includes offerings, prayers, and feasting. It is marked by symbolic acts like releasing pigeons and scattering leaves to mark the end of the ceremony. Also known as Satmai Sansari, this worship involves the entire community contributing money and materials. Unlike the Devi Puja, it is performed on clean hills instead of steep caves.

#### 4.5 Nag-Nageni (Snake Deities)

These deities are worshipped near water sources, believed to protect springs and prevent diseases caused by water contamination. Milk, flowers, and vermilion are among the offerings.

#### 4.6 Bhume Devata

Worshipped predominantly by the Thami community, the Bhume Puja spans two days and is conducted at special shrines with symbolic stones and sacred plants like Artemisia (Titepati).

#### 4.7 Chyuram (Himalayan Deity)

Worshipped only by Lepchas, this god is notable for non-bloody offerings, reflecting a distinct cultural ethos.

#### 4.8 Chyen or Karmi Lama Lamani

Located in Aletar, this deity represents ancestral spirits of a lama and lamani who once meditated there.

Worshipped on a hill called Aletar in the Kaijale Gram Panchayat. A shrine resembling the remains of an old stone house is dedicated to this deity. According to local Lepchas, two lamas—male and female—once worshipped here and disappeared. They are now worshipped as deities. Local shamans (Bunghing, Dhama, Jhankri) always address these deities first in rituals. Worship of this deity is limited to the immediate locality and is not common in other parts of the block. Shrines are marked with bamboo poles and red flags.



### 5. Conclusion

The Pulbazar region's spiritual landscape is deeply entwined with nature and ecological understanding. Worship practices like offering to forest and water deities demonstrate a folk form of environmental conservation. While modern influences are leading to changes—like a shift from animal to plant offerings—the core belief system remains vital. These traditions illustrate an ancient animistic worldview, with deities believed to migrate seasonally and rest at designated Deorali (resting places). Such practices embody a rich legacy of cultural ecology, offering insights into sustainable living rooted in spiritual respect for nature.

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## Appendix

### 1. Map of Darjeeling Pulbazar Development Block-<sup>1</sup>



### 2. Map of Darjeeling District showing Darjeeling Pulbazar Block



Picture-2

<sup>1</sup>Map of Darjeeling Pulbazar Block, Source – Darjeeling Pulbazar Block Development Office.

Map-2: Darjeeling Pulbazar Block under Darjeeling District,



Source: <https://www.mapsofindia.com/maps/westbongal/tehsil/darjiling-tehsil-map.jpg>, 17.02.2019



writer with Thami Shamans at kainjalia busty during Bhume Puja



An offering made on stone alter.



Limbu Shaman priest looking into the egg for divination during worshipping Hunter (Sikari) deity.



One of the Chettri priest performing Devi puja



## STUDIES ON ORNITHOFAUNA AT KANKRAJHORE AND NEIGHBOURING AREAS OF WEST BENGAL, INDIA

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### Abstract:

Ornitho-fauna means species under the category birds which are very interesting creatures of nature and ecosystem driver. So, they act a key indicator and govern the ecosystem processes smoothly. They help to complete the pollination process, helps to disperse seeds and plant propagules, induce to break seed dormancy and helps in many ways to make vegetation as it is. In barren lands, creation of vegetation cover is due to the direct and indirect activity of birds. Other way vegetation makes a key role to settle birds in a habitat and regulate the population size and structure of plants and animals even make a complete bonding between plants and insects. Common phenomenon is found in case of woodland birds. Heavy woodland birds indicate the presence of healthy ecosystem. Grass land birds help to reduce the insects and some animals in a same habitat. Water birds control the quality of ecosystem and make a complete aquatic environment. Indeed, it is true that birds have negative role in some cases, but the positive role is more in terms of ecological process. Scavengers and birds of prey govern the process of ecosystem so nicely that they have specific roles in the ecosystem and monitoring process of number and biomass in ecosystem pyramids. Several bird species of birds have been recorded in the study area that help the energy flow and ecosystem dynamics are governed by the process of ornithon-fauna. In this communication, bird species under 21 families in and around Kankrajhore areas in the Jhargram district of West Bengal have been presented with key ecosystem processes. Here, more than 67 bird species and their status have been presented.

*Keywords: Ornitho-fauna, ecosystem process, Kankrajhore, Conservation, management.*



### Introduction:

Kankrajhore is a remote place in Jhargram district and adjacent to Purba Singhbhum district of Jharkhand state. Hilly areas cover many habitats and mixed with red lateritic vegetation dominant with sal (*Shorea robusta*) species. The site is under Mayurjhama Elephant reserve that started from Dalma region of Jharkhand state and a wild corridor of elephants and various wild animals. Forests, agriculture land, waste land, wet land, rivers, rivulets, ponds and hills and grasslands are common in this region. During dry season deciduous sal forest show forest fire and during monsoon sal forest shows green patch along with high density cover of herbs and shrubs. During post monsoon and in winter the landscape shows beautiful scenic beauty and show many ornithon-fauna that are common and some are migrants time to time. Good example is malkoha and hornbills. This may be the adjacent Similipal biosphere reserve of Odisha state. In Jharkhand dam and reservoir make the site very beautiful and attracts many water birds during winter seasons. Some residential birds are recorded but the diversity pattern and size of the population is not exact over time due to fluctuations of ecosystem specificity. The low-density population with tribal groups makes the site more diverse as the site is covered with different tribal groups. The virgin village and simple life style make the land eternal beauty and fruitful for the conservation of nature and natural resources. In some areas people protect peacock and peafowl at their home premises and these are easily available like the domestic birds. Many interesting birds like Indian paradise flycatcher, pitta, malkoha and hornbills, wood-owl, nightjar and many more are recorded from the site. People choose the site for birding and local birders are available from the area.

Nocturnal birds, water birds, agricultural birds, birds of prey, woodland birds, grassland birds, birds of dry lands, birds of domestic kinds are common though winter - migrants are not fixed because of the change of habitat over time. Many tourists and outsiders visit the site so the landscape of the site has been changed and changing time to time and exotic threats impact on the birds and the habitats too. The site exhibits many common birds. The area shows warblers, babblers, munias, spotted dove, Eurasian collared dove, drongo, green bee-eaters, laughing doves, oriole, house crow, sparrow, lark, bulbul, kite, kingfisher, pond heron, egrets, open bill, grey heron, Eurasian coot, grebe, red and yellow wattled lapwing, leaf bird, cuckoo etc. Threatened birds like black-headed ibis and lesser adjutant stork species are also seen during winter. Wagtails, Asian open bill storks and various water birds are winter migrants. Locally available rare birds like grey francolin; red-napped ibis etc. are also seen in the rice field along with black and yellow bitterns. There are many more interesting birds,



plants and flying creatures found in this area and the place is full of diversity in terms of ornitho-fauna. Mammals like elephants, deer, hare, fishing cats, jackal, jungle cat, wild boar, porcupine etc. are found here. Recently royal Bengal Tigre was recorded. Rodents like rat, mole, mice etc. are common. Nocturnal birds like night heron, owls, nightjars etc. are found here. As a whole the landscape of the Kankrajhore is a treasure of many diverse but wild flora and fauna. In this communication, only ornitho-fauna have been documented which have been recorded during last 3 years visit from 2022 onwards after lockdown.

#### Study Area:

Study area includes Kankrajhore area, Jhargram in West Bengal. It is under Binpur-II community development block of Jhargram District in West Bengal. It is approximately 65 km away from Jhargram district town in West Bengal. Kankrajhore and Khandarani sites were selected for study of birds and their habitats.

#### Materials and Methods:

Field study was done during 6:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. in the morning and 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. in the evening seasonally. Repeated seasons were taken into account for same pattern of study. Camera, binocular, notebook, guide book, pen, altimeter, sound recorder etc. were used during study. Line transect method was used to record birds during field. Night trails were done to study nocturnal birds during field but it was conducted nearby the guest house within 9 p.m. Literature was used mentioned below as serial no from 1- 32 for further study.

#### Result and Discussion:

The site is unique as it falls under protected areas in West Bengal. Vegetation and landscape govern the diversity of species in connection with seasonal variations. Here, more than 67 bird species have been observed during 3 years study in Kankrajhore and Khandarani areas of Jhargram. Grassland birds are common while many woodland birds are seasonal. During monsoon common birds found here are egrets and cormorant including two various species of kingfisher. Indian Black ibis seen in the month of October to March but the number is a few along with many open bills. Bulbuls and munias are common while in winter various wagtails have been recorded. Common iora was found round the year. Landscape diversity supports the flourish of many birds like hoopoe and paddy field pipits. Shrikes were found during winter while in



summer the juvenile bird species of the same have been found with low number. Many scavenger birds like black kite, black shoulder kite along with house crows were observed.

Night birds like nightjars, owls and night herons are common but the frequency is low in compare to the community based protected site like Khnadarani. Most of the species are least concerned while species like black-headed ibis and Leeser adjutant stork are recorded as near threatened species. Birds like red whiskered bulbuls seen at various areas prominently with spotted dove during summer when the birds are actively engaged in nesting. As a whole statistical analysis of 67 species were documented during study under 21 families (Table 1, 2, Fig. 1, Fig. 2-5).

Table 1. Birds of interest at Kankrajhore and neighbouring areas of W.B.

Sl. No.	Scientific names	Common Name	Kankrajhore	Khandarani	IUCN
<b>Order: Anseriformes</b>					
<b>Family: Anatidae</b>					
1.	<i>Dendrocygna javanica</i> (Horsfield, 1821)	Lesser Whistling-Duck	✓	✓	LC
2.	<i>Mareca strepera</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)	Gadwall	✓	□	LC
3.	<i>Nettapus coromandelianus</i> (Gmelin, 1789)	Cotton Pygmy-Goose	✓	□	LC
4.	<i>Tadorna ferruginea</i> (Pallas, 1764)	Ruddy Shelduck	✓	□	LC
5.	<i>Spatula clypeata</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)	Northern Shoveler	✓	□	LC
6.	<i>Tadorna tadorna</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)	Common Shelduck	✓	✓	LC
7.	<i>Dendrocygna javanica</i> (Thomas Horsfield, 1821)	Lesser Whistling Duck	✓	✓	LC
8.	<i>Anas crecca</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)	Common Teal	✓	✓	LC
<b>Order: Charadriiformes</b>					
<b>Family: Recurvirostridae</b>					
1.	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)	Black-winged Stilt	✓	✓	LC
2.	<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)	Pied Avocet	✓	□	LC
<b>Family: Charadriidae</b>					
1.	<i>Pluvialis fulva</i> (Gmelin, 1789)	Pacific Golden-Plover	✓	□	LC
2.	<i>Vanellus indicus</i> (Boddaert, 1783)	Red-wattled Lapwing	✓	✓	LC
3.	<i>Charadrius dubius</i> Scopoli, 1786	Little Ringed Plover	✓	□	LC
4.	<i>Vanellus cinereus</i> (Blyth, 1842)	Grey-headed Lapwing	✓	□	LC
<b>Family: Glareolidae</b>					
1.	<i>Glareola lactea</i> (Temminck, 1820)	Small pratincole	✓	□	LC
<b>Family: Scolopacidae</b>					
1.	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)	Common Sandpiper	✓	✓	LC



2.	<i>Tringa ochropus</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)	Green Sandpiper	✓	✓	LC
3.	<i>Tringa glareola</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)	Wood Sandpiper	✓	✓	LC
4.	<i>Calidris temminckii</i> (Leisler, 1812)	Temminck's Stint	✓	✓	LC
5.	<i>Gallinago gallinago</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)	Common Snipe	✓	□	LC
6.	<i>Calidris minuta</i> (Leisler, 1812)	Little Stint	✓	✓	LC
7.	<i>Tringa nebularia</i> (Gunnerus, 1767)	Common Greenshank	✓	□	LC
8.	<i>Phalaropus lobatus</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)	Red-necked Phalarope	□	✓	LC
<b>Family: Jacanidae</b>					
1.	<i>Metopidius indicus</i> (Latham, 1790)	Bronze-winged Jacana	✓	✓	LC
2.	<i>Hydrophasianus chirurgus</i> (Scopoli, 1786)	Pheasant-tailed Jacana	✓	✓	LC
<b>Family: Laridae</b>					
1.	<i>Sterna hirundo</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)	Common Tern	✓	✓	LC
2.	<i>Larus brunnicephalus</i> (Jerdon, 1840)	Brown Headed Gull	□	✓	LC
3.	<i>Larus ridibundus</i> (Linnaeus, 1766)	Black-Headed Gull	□	✓	LC
<b>Order: Ciconiiformes Family: Ciconiidae</b>					
1.	<i>Leptoptilos javanicus</i> (Horsfield, 1821)	Lesser Adjutant	✓	✓	NT
2.	<i>Anastomus oscitans</i> (Boddaert, 1783)	Asian Openbill	✓	✓	LC
<b>Order: Coraciiformes Family: Alcedinidae</b>					
1.	<i>Halcyon smyrnensis</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)	White-breasted Kingfisher	✓	✓	LC
2.	<i>Ceryle rudis</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)	Pied Kingfisher	✓	✓	LC
3.	<i>Alcedo atthis</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)	Common Kingfisher	✓	✓	LC
4.	<i>Pelargopsis capensis</i> (Linnaeus, 1766)	Stork-billed Kingfisher	✓	✓	LC
<b>Order: Piciformes Family: Megalaimidae</b>					
1.	<i>Psilopogon asiaticus</i> (Latham, 1790)	Blue-throated Barbet	✓	✓	LC
2.	<i>Psilopogon haemacephalus</i> (Statius Muller, 1776)	Coppersmith barbet	✓	✓	LC
3.	<i>Psilopogon zeylanicus</i> (Gmelin, JF, 1788)	Brown-headed barbet	✓	✓	LC
<b>Order: Caprimulgiformes Family: Apodidae</b>					
1.	<i>Cypsiurus balasiensis</i> (Gray, 1829)	Asian Palm Swift	✓	✓	LC
<b>Order: Gruiformes Family: Rallidae</b>					



1.	<i>Amaurornis phoeniceus</i> (Pennant, 1769)	White-breasted Waterhen	✓	✓	LC
2.	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)	Common Moorhen	✓	✓	LC
3.	<i>Porphyrio poliocephalus</i> (Latham, 1801)	Grey-headed Swamphen	✓	□	LC
<b>Order:</b>					
<b>Pelecaniiformes</b>					
<b>Family: Ardeidae</b>					
1.	<i>Ardea cinerea</i> Linnaeus, 1758	Grey Heron	✓	✓	LC
2.	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)	Cattle Egret	✓	✓	LC
3.	<i>Ardeola grayii</i> (Sykes, 1832)	Indian Pond-Heron	✓	✓	LC
4.	<i>Egretta garzetta</i> (Linnaeus, 1766)	Little Egret	✓	✓	LC
5.	<i>Ardea alba</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)	Great Egret	✓	✓	LC
6.	<i>Ardea intermedia</i> (Wagler, 1829)	Intermediate Egret	✓	✓	LC
7.	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)	Black-crowned Night-Heron	✓	✓	LC
8.	<i>Ardea purpurea</i> (Linnaeus, 1766)	Purple Heron	✓	✓	LC
9.	<i>Ixobrychus sinensis</i> (Gmelin, 1789)	Yellow Bittern	✓	✓	LC
10.	<i>Ixobrychus cinnamomeus</i> (Gmelin, 1789)	Cinnamon Bittern	✓	□	LC
11.	<i>Ixobrychus flavicollis</i> (Latham, 1790)	Black Bittern	✓	□	LC
<b>Family:</b>					
<b>Threskiornithidae</b>					
1.	<i>Threskiornis melanocephalus</i> (Latham, 1790)	Black-headed Ibis	✓	✓	LC
2.	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i> (Linnaeus, 1766)	Glossy Ibis	✓	✓	LC
<b>Order:</b>					
<b>Passeriformes</b>					
<b>Family:</b>					
<b>Hirundinidae</b>					
1.	<i>Hirundo rustica</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)	Barn Swallow	✓	✓	LC
<b>Family:</b>					
<b>Aegithinidae</b>					
1.	<i>Aegithina tiphia</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)	Common Iora	✓	✓	LC
<b>Family:</b>					
<b>Motacillidae</b>					
1.	<i>Motacilla tschutschensis</i> (Gmelin, 1789)	Eastern Yellow Wagtail	✓	✓	LC
2.	<i>Motacilla citreola</i> (Pallas, 1776)	Citrine Wagtail	✓	✓	LC
3.	<i>Motacilla alba</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)	White Wagtail	✓	✓	LC
4.	<i>Motacilla maderaspatensis</i> (Gmelin, 1789)	White browed Wagtail	✓	✓	LC
5.	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i> (Tunstall, 1771)	Grey Wagtail	✓	□	LC
<b>Family:</b>					
<b>Turdidae</b>					
	<i>Geokichla citrina</i> (Latham, 1790)	Orange-headed thrush	✓	✓	LC
<b>Order:</b>					
<b>Podicipediformes</b>					
<b>Family:</b>					
<b>Podicipedidae</b>					
1.	<i>Tachybaptus ruficollis</i> (Pallas,	Little Grebe	✓	✓	LC



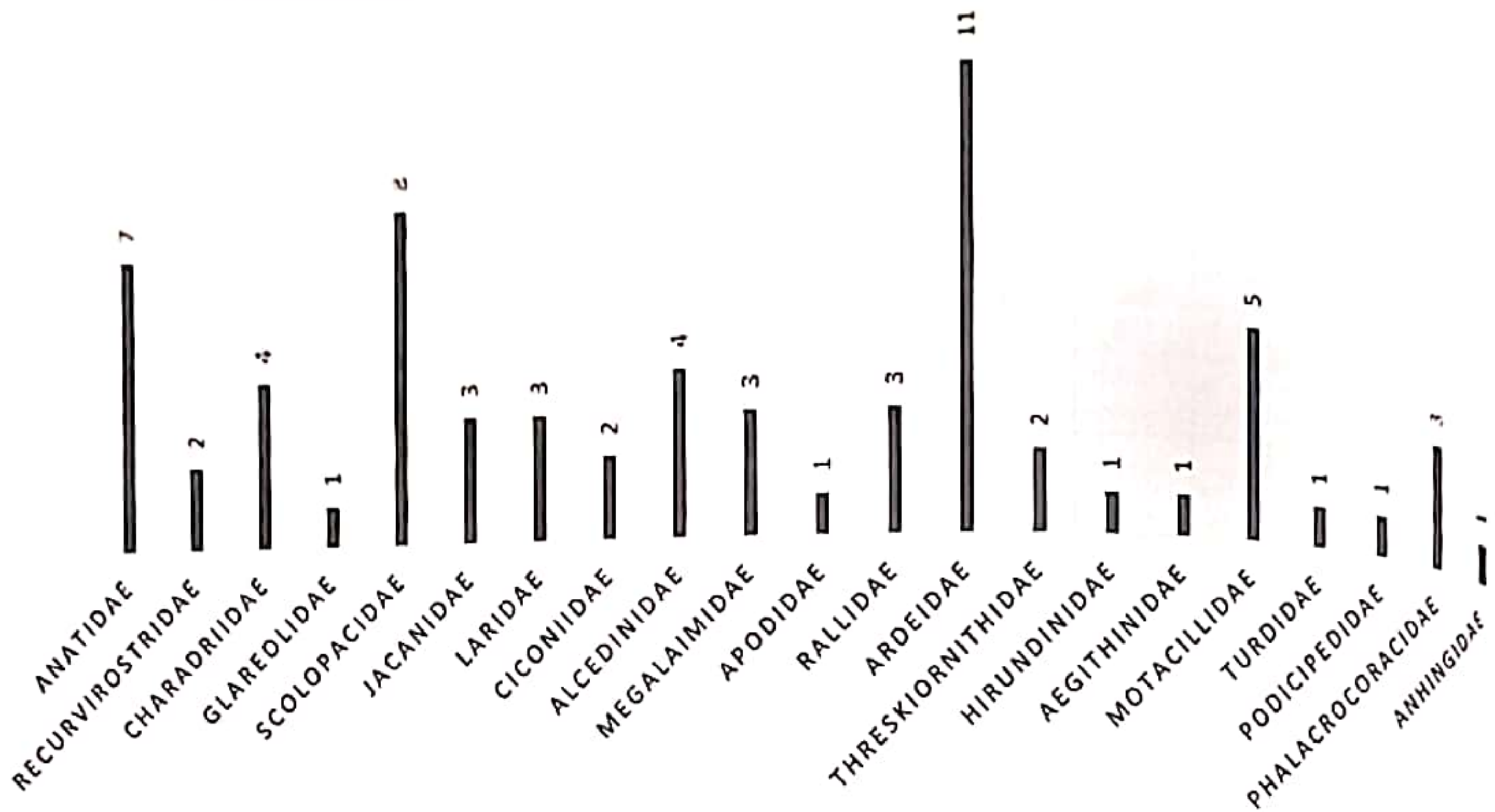
Order: Suliformes		176-1)			
Family: Phalacrocoracidae					
1.	<i>Microcarbo ulger</i> (Vieillot, 1817)	Little Cormorant	✓	✓	LC
2.	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)	Great Cormorant	✓	✓	LC
3.	<i>Phalacrocorax fuscicollis</i> (Stephens, 1826)	Indian Cormorant	✓	✓	LC
Family: Anhingidae					
1.	<i>Anhinga melanogaster</i> (Pennant, 1769)	Oriental Darter	✓	□	NT

Table 2. Familywise bird species recorded in the study area at Kankrajhore and its surroundings, Jhargram.

Sr. No.	Name of the bird Family	Number of species
1.	Anatidae	7
2.	Recurvirostridae	2
3.	Charadriidae	4
4.	Glareolidae	1
5.	Scolopacidae	8
6.	Jacaniidae	3
7.	Laridae	3
8.	Ciconiidae	2
9.	Alcedinidae	4
10.	Megalaimidae	3
11.	Apodidae	1
12.	Rallidae	3
13.	Ardeidae	11
14.	Threskiornithidae	2
15.	Hirundinidae	1
16.	Aegithinidae	1
17.	Motacillidae	5
18.	Turdidae	1
19.	Podicipedidae	1
20.	Phalacrocoracidae	3
21.	Anhingidae	1



## NUMBER OF BIRD SPECIES UNDER EACH FAMILY



**Fig. 1** Familywise species number at Study site

Highest number of species recorded in case of Ardeidae with 11 species followed by Scolopacidae with 8 species, while least number has been recorded in case of Glareolidae, Apodidae, Hirundinidae, Turdidae, Podicipedidae, and Anhingidae with single species. In total, 67 species have been recorded from the study site with study status.



Fig. 2 Coppersmith barbet at Kankrajhore, Jhargram

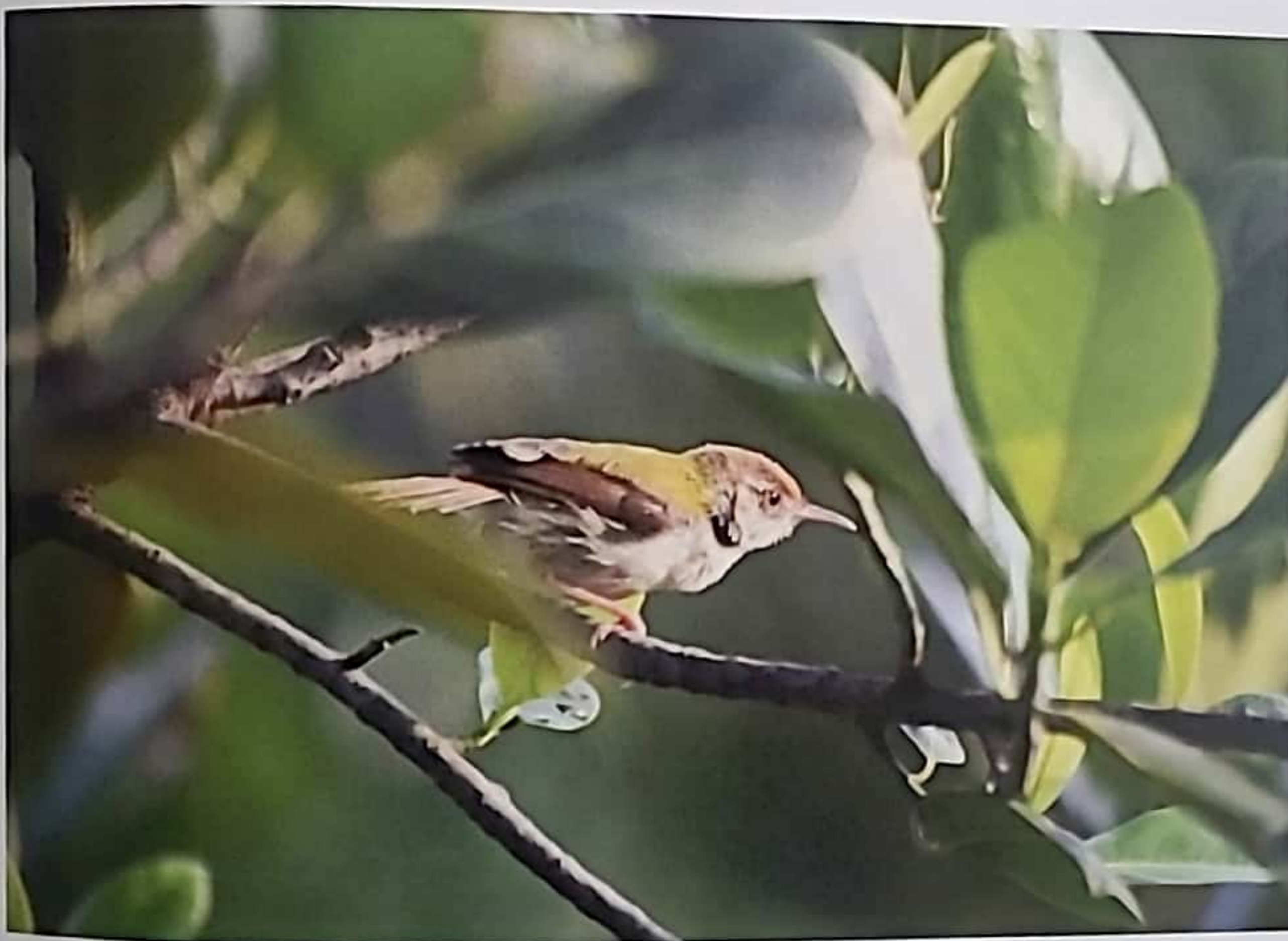


Fig. 3 Tailor bird at Jackfruit tree

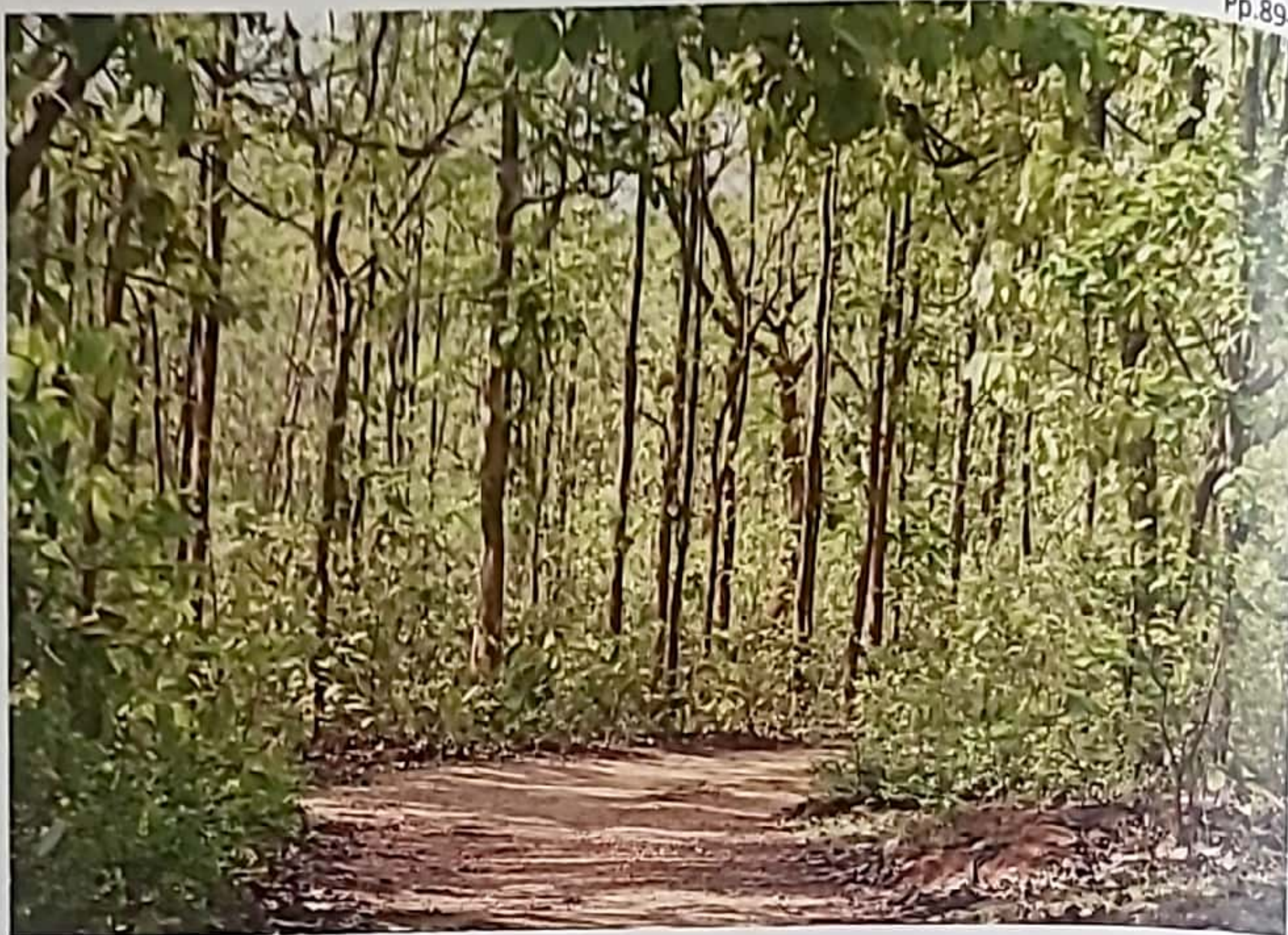


Fig. 4 Woodland with sal vegetation



Fig. 5 Common flame back at the tree



### Conclusion:

Birds are important creatures in nature and take part in ecosystem development. As a part of the nature, they serve the helper component in the ecosystem. They pollinate flowers, helps to set up fruits and seeds, clean the environment by eating the dead carcasses, and protect plants by eating their parasites and pests which can damage the parts of plants. They also indicate the healthy environment. Almost all birds maintain a balance in nature and all the creatures of nature are independent on each other directly or indirectly. So, we humans one of the most intelligent creatures of the nature should play our key role by protecting animals and birds and doing afforestation.

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## छायावाद और महादेवी वर्मा

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### शोध-सार/Abstract:

आत्माभिव्यक्ति का स्वर छायावाद युग का प्रमुख स्वर है। साहित्य में भी किसी और चरित्र के माध्यम से अपने स्व की अभिव्यक्ति नहीं हो सकती थी। कवियों ने बड़ा भरी उलटफेर कर दिया। राधा-कृष्ण को नायक-नायिका बनाकर अपने भावों का आलम्बन नहीं किया। कवि सीधा कविता द्वारा अपने भावों को खोलने लगा। अब तक कविता आत्माभिव्यक्ति के झीने परदे में रची जाती थी। छायावादी कवि ने इस झीने परदे को बीच से उठा दिया। कविता से साक्षात्कार का युग है यह। इसके कारण कविता पूरी तरह बदल गई। कविता की सीमाएं बदल गयीं। यह बदलाव आत्माभिव्यक्ति के स्वीकार के साहस का परिणाम था। महादेवी वर्मा का स्वर इस कारण भी महत्वपूर्ण है कि जहाँ पुरुषों के लिए आत्माभिव्यक्ति एक साहसिक प्रयास सी प्रतीत हो रही थी वहाँ एक स्त्री के लिए स्व की अभिव्यक्ति कितनी दुःसाहसिकता का कार्य है।

बीज शब्द/Keywords: छायावाद, आत्माभिव्यक्ति, स्त्री, प्रकृति, रहस्यवाद

### शोध-विस्तार:

छायावाद ने साहित्य में प्रकृति और नारी दोनों की पूर्वगत छवियाँ बदल दी। प्रकृति और नारी दोनों के व्यक्तित्व को छायावाद में एक नया स्पन्दन मिला। प्रकृति में नारी के व्यक्तित्व के आरोपण द्वारा कवि की कल्पना सजीव हो उठी और नारी ने प्रकृति से जुड़कर स्वयं के अस्तित्व की विराटता का अनुभव किया। सम्पूर्ण विश्व में नारी के अस्तित्व और उसकी सामाजिक-स्थिति को लेकर नई चेतना फैल रही थी। इसका प्रभाव भारतीय समाज पर भी पड़ा। छायावादी कवियों ने भी नारी के नवीन स्वरूप को अपने काव्य का विषय बनाया। नारी और प्रकृति के बीच समानता और शोषण के पुरुषवादी तरीकों की पहचान 20 वीं शताब्दी का नवीन विमर्श बन चुका है जिसे पर्यावरण के गंभीर होते संकट के बीच स्त्रीवादी विमर्श से जोड़कर स्त्री-परिस्थितिकिवाद कहा जाता है। प्रकृति और स्त्री दोनों ही जीवनदायनी हैं, सर्जन का स्रोत हैं किन्तु दोनों ही पुरुष के अधिकारवादी अहं के कारण शोषित और वंदिनी हैं। प्रकृति और नारी को उन्मुक्त

र सायावाद ने काव्य के धरातल पर सर्वप्रथम उनके व्यक्तित्व की एकाग्रता का एक अपूर्व जीवन की अभिव्यक्ति का चित्रण किया। असाधारणता की सीमा तक पहुँच कर कवि ने अपनी दृष्टि का विस्तार किया। तब विचार और उम्र विराट के समक्ष अपने हृदय को खोलकर रख दिया। यह परिचयात्मक मानसिक मात्र नहीं बल्कि जीवन का अतुल्य सौन्दर्य भी जाग उठा है। मध्यकालीन सायनामयी दृष्टि के समक्ष छायावाद ने सौन्दर्य की बेतनामयी परिकल्पना द्वारा नारी के व्यक्तित्व को एक नयी आभा दी।

सायावाद में महादेवी वर्मा का स्थान एक प्रसिद्ध कवयित्री के रूप में अपनी पहचान रखती हैं मगर वह उनके सर्जक व्यक्तित्व का एक ही पक्ष है। काव्य के साथ ही उन्होंने गद्य में भी लिखा है। गद्य में लिखकर उन्होंने अपने युग की नारियों के लिए बहुत बड़ा कार्य किया। स्त्री-विमर्श को आधुनिक परिदृश्य में देखने वाली महादेवी पहली महिला चिन्तक है जिन्होंने साहित्य में नारी की स्थिति को लेकर गहन चिंतन किया। उन्होंने स्पष्ट शब्दों में लिखा है- "स्त्री के जीवन की अनेक विवशताओं में प्रधान और कदाचित उगे सबसे अधिक जड़ बनाने वाली अर्थ से सम्बन्ध रखती है और रखती रहेगी, क्योंकि वह समाजिक प्राणी की अनिवार्य आवश्यकता है।"<sup>1</sup>

महादेवी का काव्य संसार सीमित है और एक समय के बाद तो उन्होंने गद्य ही अधिक लिखा है। छायावाद के उपाकाल में रचित उनकी काव्य-कृतियाँ नीहार (1930), रश्मि (1932), नीरजा (1934), सांध्यगीत (1936) दीपशिखा (1942) में ही उनकी प्रमुख काव्यगत विशेषताएं दिख जाती हैं। महादेवी वर्मा का जन्म सन 1907 ई। में हुआ। सात वर्ष की आयु से ही इनमें साहित्यिक रुचि के लक्षण दिखने लगे थे। मात्र 23 साल की उम्र में इन्होंने अपनी प्रथम काव्य-कृति *नीहार* की रचना की। एक तरह से देखे तो इनके जीवन का यौवनकाल पद्य का और प्रौढ़ काल गद्य का काल दिखता है। कुल 12 वर्षों में उनकी काव्य-यात्रा एक तरह से पूरी हो जाती है। यौवनकाल का प्रभाव पद्य रचनाओं में स्पष्टतः दिखता है। पद्य में जो भावुकता है वह गद्य में आकर विचारों की दृढ़ता में बदल जाती है। शृंखला की कड़ियाँ (1942), विवेचनात्मक गद्य (1942), साहित्यकार की आस्था तथा अन्य निबन्ध, अतीत के चलचित्र, पथ के साथी आदि उनकी प्रसिद्ध गद्य रचनाएं हैं। गद्य में उनकी दृष्टि की स्वच्छता और स्पष्टता का एक उदाहरण छायावाद की भूमिका के तौर पर यदि देखे जहां वह लिखती हैं- "बुद्धि के सूक्ष्म धरातल पर कवि ने जीवन की अखंडता का भावन किया, हृदय की भाव-भूमि पर उराने प्रकृति में विखरी सौन्दर्य सत्ता की रहस्यमयी अनुभूति की और दोनों के साथ स्वानुभूत सुख-दुःख को मिलाकर एक ऐसी काव्य-सृष्टि उपस्थित कर दी जो प्रकृतिवाद, हृदयवाद, अध्यात्मवाद, रहस्यवाद, छायावाद आदि अनेक नामों का भार संभाल सकी।"<sup>2</sup>

विचार की स्पष्टता और भाषा की सौम्यता छायावाद की कवयित्री महादेवी वर्मा के हैं, जिनपर छायावाद के ऊपर लिखी ज्यों-ज्यों पुस्तकों में कोई खास नोटिस ही नहीं लिया जाता। छायावाद के वास्तविक स्वरूप को जितनी सूक्ष्मता से महादेवी वर्मा ने स्पष्ट किया है वह अन्यत्र मिलना दुष्कर है। डॉ। नामवर सिंह



जैसे बड़े पद के आलोचक ने 'आधुनिक साहित्य की प्रवृत्तियाँ' पुस्तक में महादेवी वर्मा द्वारा दी गई छायावाद की परिभाषा के विषय में लिखा है- "परन्तु छायावाद में जहाँ एक ओर सामन्ती और साम्राज्य मान्यताओं के विरुद्ध इस प्रकार का भाषात्मक विद्रोह है वहीं दूसरी ओर इनसे पलायन की भी प्रवृत्ति दिखाई देती है। महादेवी जी छायावाद को 'प्रकृति के बीच जीवन का उद्गीथ' भले ही कहे, किन्तु छायावादी कविता में प्रस्तुत और अप्रस्तुत रूप में प्रकृति की ही प्रधानता है।"<sup>3</sup>

अवश्य छायावाद में प्रकृति प्रमुख है जीवन को और अधिक विस्तार देने के लिए। प्रकृति महत्वपूर्ण है संकुचित स्व को उससे जोड़कर आत्मप्रसार के लिए। पराधीनता की वेड़ियों में जकड़े व्यक्ति के लिए प्रकृति की उन्मुक्तता का भावन स्वाधीनता के आस्वाद की तरह होता है, जो उसे स्वाधीन पक्षी की तरह उड़ने, स्वच्छंद नदी की तरह बहने की प्रेरणा देती है। प्रकृति मनुष्य के भावों के आरोपण के लिए छायावाद की सीमा में बंधी नहीं है बल्कि स्वयं प्रकृति भावों की प्रेरणास्त्रोत भी है। जिसने कभी स्वाधीनता को जाना ही नहीं वह भी प्रकृति के मध्य क्या स्वयं को उन्मुक्त महसूस नहीं कर सकता? इस उन्मुक्त जीवन के लिए क्या वह पराधीनता की वेड़ियाँ तोड़ने के लिए जीवन संग्राम में प्रवृत्त नहीं होगा? महादेवी ने छायावाद की जीवनोन्मुखी व्याख्या करते हुए लिखा है- "छायावाद तत्त्वतः प्रकृति के बीच जीवन का उद्गीथ है। अतः कल्पनाएँ बहुरंगी और विविधरूपी हैं। पर वैभव की दृष्टि से वह आज के यथार्थ के कितने निकट है यह तब प्रकट होता, जब छायायुग का स्वप्नद्रष्टा गाता है- 'प्राची में फैला मधुर राग / जिसके मंडल में एक कमल खिल उठा सुनहला भर पराग' (कामायनी)"<sup>4</sup>

नए युग के नए प्रभात ने पिछली रात की कालिमा पोंछ दी। यह सात्विक प्रेरणा नए युग का आशावाद था जिसका प्रकाश भारत के क्षितिज पर फैल रहा था। इसके प्रभाव के कारण छायावाद की सीमा में आकर जीवन खुलने लगा। छायावाद ने दो सख्त और कठोर काव्यधाराओं के मध्य अपना मधु संचय किया। एक तरफ द्विवेदी युग की नैतिकता दूसरी तरफ प्रगतिवाद की नीरसता के बीच में जीवन की छाया उसी तरह पलने लगी जिस तरह प्रकृति कठोर आवरण में कोमलतम वस्तु छुपा कर रखती है। जीवन का मधुरतम रस छायावाद में संचित है। यहाँ जीवन की छाया सीधे प्रकृति पर पड़ती है। इस कारण प्रकृति का चित्रण अधिक महत्वपूर्ण हो जाता है। वह सजीव हो उठती है। प्रकृति के साथ मनुष्य का भावनात्मक सम्बन्ध नया नहीं है किन्तु छायावाद में प्रकृति और जीवन के विषय में महादेवी वर्मा लिखती हैं- "छायावाद ने मनुष्य के हृदय और प्रकृति के उस संबंध में प्राण डाल दिए जो प्राचीन काल से विम्ब-प्रतिविम्ब के रूप में चला आ रहा था और जिसके कारण मनुष्य को अपने दुःख में प्रकृति उदास और सुख में पुलकित जान पड़ती है।"<sup>5</sup>

छायावाद कविता की मनस-पुत्री है। कवि मानसिक धरातल पर स्वयं के भावों का साधारणीकरण कर सकता था। आत्माभिव्यक्ति ने आत्मप्रसार का विशाल संसार खोल दिया। छायावाद ने मध्यकालीन काव्य रूढ़ियों के बंधन को तोड़ दिया। यह युगधारा न सिर्फ साहस के साथ आगे बढ़ता गया बल्कि इसने



गुप्त नया करने और रचने में भी पार्थ चुनौतियों का का सामना किया। काव्य के रूपक को छानने पूरा बदल कर रख दिया। विषय वस्तु के साथ काव्य भी संरचना और भाषा भी पूरी तरह बदल गई। यह युग समय परिवर्तन का था। सामान्य जनता स्वयं की शक्ति को पहचान रही थी। हर एक जन के मन और मस्तिष्क में नए युग के नए स्वप्न पल रहे थे। अब साधारण व्यक्ति भी स्वयं को साधारण नहीं समझ रहा बल्कि वह स्वयं को एक वृहत जन उद्देश्य और भारत माता के स्वतंत्रता रूपी दीप का रक्षक मानता था। इस आत्मप्रसार का ही स्वरूप प्रकृति पर मानवीय भावों के आरोप में छायावाद में हर स्थान पर दिखता है। सही मायने में अगर देखा जाए तो अस्मिता विमर्श के जितने भी स्वर हैं वो सब इसी समय की देन हैं। यह समय ही इतना महत्वपूर्ण था की 20वीं शताब्दी में भारतीयों के समक्ष नया देखने समझने और जानने के लिए बहुत कुछ था और उसकी अभिव्यक्ति के लिए भी। सर्वप्रथम व्यक्ति स्वयं की ओर मुड़ा। व्यक्ति का जागरण समाज के लिए आवश्यक था। जब तक व्यक्ति स्वयं की अस्मिता और पहचान की समझ नहीं रखता तब तक उसका व्यक्तिगत अस्तित्व एक वृहत समाज के भावी उद्देश से भले जुड़ जाए मगर उसके प्रयास दिशाहीन हो जाते हैं।

आचार्य रामचन्द्र शुक्ल ने छायावाद का पहला और वास्तविक अर्थ रहस्यवाद माना है। उन्होंने महादेवी वर्मा के रहस्यात्मक गीतों को देखते हुए लिखा- "छायावाद का केवल पहला अर्थात् मूल अर्थ लेकर तो हिंदी काव्य-क्षेत्र में चलने वाली श्री महादेवी वर्मा ही हैं। पन्त, प्रसाद, निराला इत्यादि और सब कवि प्रतीक पद्धति या चित्र भाषा-शैली की दृष्टि से ही छायावादी कहलाये।"<sup>6</sup>

सामान्यतः चिंतन के क्षेत्र में जो अद्वैतवाद है भावना के क्षेत्र में वही रहस्यवाद कहलाता है। रहस्यवाद पर स्वयं महादेवी वर्मा ने लिखा है और वह इतना स्पष्ट है कि छायावाद की रहस्यात्मकता को एक नवीन दृष्टि से देखने का मार्ग प्रस्तुत होता है। वह लिखती हैं-"जब प्रकृति की अनेकरूपता में परिवर्तनशील विभिन्नता में कवि ने एक ऐसा तारतम्य खोजने का प्रयास किया जिसका एक छोर किसी असीम चेतन और दूसरा उसके ससीम हृदय में समाया हुआ था तब प्रकृति का एक-एक अंश एक अलौकिक व्यक्तित्व लेकर जाग उठा।"<sup>7</sup>

प्रकृति का सचेतन हो उठना छायावाद के रहस्यात्मकता की अहम विशेषता है। इनके सारे प्रतीक और उपमान प्रकृति से लिए हुए हैं। चाहे स्वयं के परिचय के लिए वादल का प्रतीक हो या शृगांर के लिए अप्रस्तुत योजना हो, महादेवी वर्मा लिखती हैं "क्यों वह प्रिय आता पार नहीं / शशि के दर्पण में देख-देख, / मैंने सुलझाये तिमिर-केश"<sup>8</sup> इस प्रकार की रहस्यात्मक प्रणय निवेदन को देखकर ही आचार्य रामचंद्र शुक्ल ने उन्हें सबसे अधिक रहस्यवाद के नजदीक पाया। प्रायः सभी कवियों ने प्रकृति पर मधुरतम व्यक्तित्व के आरोपण द्वारा कवियों ने अपने रागात्मक भावों की अभिव्यक्ति की है। प्रकृति और नारी के सौन्दर्य से जुड़कर छायावाद ने मानवीय भावों की सूक्ष्म से सूक्ष्म अभिव्यक्ति की। छायावाद का रहस्यवाद साधनात्मक



रहस्यवाद नहीं था। प्रायः सभी कवियों ने अपने गोगल भावों की अभिव्यक्ति के लिए प्रकृति से उदाहरण प्रस्तुत किये हैं। इसके लिए कवियों ने प्रभाव-साम्य का आधार लिया है। जहाँ प्रकृति पर नारी के व्यक्तित्व के आरोहण और अपने मनोभावों के लिए कवियों ने कभी बाहरी और कभी आंतरिक प्रभाव-साम्य को गिलावर अप्रस्तुत योजना की है। ज्यादातर छायावादी काव्य इसी के कारण रहस्यात्मक बन पड़ा है। आचार्य रामचंद्र शुक्ल ने लिखा है "इस प्रकार साम्य-भावना का ही प्राचुर्य हम सर्वत्र पाते हैं। यह साम्य-भावना हमारे हृदय का प्रसार करने वाली शेष सृष्टि के साथ मनुष्य के गूढ़ सम्बन्ध की धारणा बांधने वाली अत्यंत अपेक्षित मनोभूमि है। इसमें संदेह नहीं।"<sup>9</sup>

शेष सृष्टि में चेतन तत्व की प्रतिस्थापना ने प्रकृति और मनुष्य के बीच नए तरह का सम्बन्ध स्थापित किया। यह रहस्यवाद का साधनात्मक पक्ष नहीं था जहाँ साधना की गूढ़ातिगूढ़ उक्तियों द्वारा चमत्कार उत्पन्न किया गया है और मिलन में मुक्ति है। पर-ब्रह्म के दर्शन की अभिलाषा भी यहाँ अपवाद ही है। कवि ने अपनी जिज्ञासा और भावों की मधुरता की अभिव्यंजना के लिए प्रकृति को रहस्यात्मकता से भर दिया है। वहाँ किसी अलौकिक शक्ति की परिव्याप्ति का आभास अवश्य प्राप्त होता है किन्तु काव्य के स्तर पर यह अलौकिकता प्रधानता नहीं प्राप्त करती। प्रधान है प्रकृति पर उन भावों का आरोपण जिसका अनुभव सार्वभौमिक है और वह इसी लौकिक जगत की अनुभूति है। प्रकृति सदा से मनुष्य के भावों का आलंबन भी है और उद्दीपन भी। प्रकृति के नजदीक जाकर मनुष्य एक ऐसे सर्ववाद की अनुभूमि करता है जिस भूमि पर उसका आत्मप्रसार हो जाता है। उसकी भावना मात्र उसकी निजी भावना न रहकर किसी की भी भावना हो सकती है। महादेवी वर्मा ने लिखा है- "छायावाद में यह सर्ववाद अधिक सूक्ष्म रूप पा गया है, जिसमें जड़ तत्व से चेतन की अभिन्नता सूक्ष्म सौंदर्यानुभूति को जन्म देती है और व्यक्तिगत चेतना से व्यापक चेतना की एकता, भावात्मक दर्शन सहज कर देती है।"<sup>10</sup>

#### निष्कर्ष:

प्रकृति मनुष्य को मनुष्य के और करीब लाती है। यही छायावाद का सर्ववाद है जहाँ विराट सत्ता के समक्ष व्यक्ति आत्मनिवेदन करता है। प्रकृति के प्रत्येक अंश में किसी विराट चेतना का स्वरूप ही छायावाद की भाववादी संपत्ति भी है। संपूर्ण विश्व में एक ही चेतन सत्ता का प्रकृति के माध्यम से प्रत्यक्षीकरण कर सर्ववाद की संकल्पना ने सूक्ष्म रूप में ही सही एकत्व की स्थापना और भौतिकता का परित्याग किया। इसे महादेवी ने भलीभांति समझा और समझाया है - "जहाँ तक भारतीय प्रकृतिवाद का संबंध है वह दर्शन के सर्ववाद का काव्य में भावगत अनुवाद है।"<sup>11</sup>



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