Media, Gender and Society:
Emerging Trends and Interpretations

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Foreword

This collection of critical essays seems to be splendidly catering to a multidisciplinary audience. It is an intricate tapestry of various pedagogic dissemination striding across disciplines like media studies, cultural studies etc.

This volume negotiates the multidisciplinary subject positions in terms of various theoretical underpinnings. As posited by the New Education Policy 2020, the emphasis on multidisciplinary critical studies has been placed in most Indian universities under the new curricular framework. This collection is therefore a laudable attempt to create a consortium of multidisciplinary ideologies.

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Disgust as Rebellion: Reading the Metaphors of Disgust in the Songs from Obzen by Meshuggah

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The established normative order of the state or any regime demands that each subject feels satiated and satisfied with their existence pertaining to various domains established by that very order. This satisfaction would necessarily drive an individual subject to the point of complacency so that any kind of questioning, dissent or rebellion can be prevented. For that rebellion raises questions, disrupts and tends to reverse the established order. Art has forever been used to raise questions, cause dissent, inspire rebellion throughout human history. From the most revered names in literary history of the world like Ovid to Hugo, from the liked Dante to Bunin, all these men of letters had attracted the wrath of their respective rulers for their resistance in belief and in art that they had to flee from their native soil (Krispyn 3). Protest art, music, film, literature have also been questioned in terms of their effective participation and the necessary outcome in terms of the real act of resistance or revolt but to this point it can be noted even if the liberal humanist or the radical left artistic production couldn't prevent the Third Reich from establishing their totalitarian rule but they definitely disturbed and bothered the centre of that power which is why the necessary measures of suppression were taken, for example writers and poets in Soviet Russia during the Stalinist period were marked as counter revolutionaries or Trotskyist (the followers of Leon Trotsky) and appropriate and harsh punitive measures were taken.

Post War Twentieth Century and early Twenty first Century music has often raised itsvoice against various contemporary issues and have successfully tried to cause the disturbance within the established order of the capitalist world. The songs by the musical group Rage Against the Machine have frequently raised their voice against the United States and its various war efforts, foreign policies and internal laws. Rage Against the Machine stands out as a fearless musical force that harnessed the power of protest through their songs. With incendiary lyrics and blistering guitar riffs, they didn't just perform music; they ignited political fires, challenging societal norms with every note. Tracks like "Killing in the Name" weren't just songs; they were rallying cries against systemic injustice, encouraging listeners to question authority and demand change. The band, fronted by Zack de la Rocha and driven by Tom Morello's guitar wizardry, became synonymous with political activism. Their music transcended mere entertainment; it was a sonic protest, amplifying the voices of the marginalized and spotlighting the darkest corners of political corruption.

Meshuggah a Swedish musical group wrote their most highly rated album *Obzen* where they have tried to capture the contemporary world as a dystopian reality. The human condition and world is presented as driven by evil intent as humanity selects as the 'zen' where new state of equilibrium and balance for humanity is the obscene and the obscure, in blood and in violence ("Inside 'obZen': How Meshuggah Pushed Themselves to the Limit to Make a Masterpiece"). Released in the first decade of the twenty first century this album takes for it foregrounding the capitalist order, the war in Iraq, Afghanistan and the overall crisis that humanity is driven into due to its interaction with violence. Haake the songwriter of Meshuggah intents to not only portray this crisis but chooses a unique way to present and revolt against. He uses the various metaphors and images throughout all the songs in the album that arouses an intense feeling of 'disgust'

for the readers and listeners, for example in the song *ObZen*,

> A state of perfection Immersed in filth Equilibrium obtained
>
> Pure in devotion to all things unwell
>
> This sweet zen of our ill condition sustained A new belief system
>
> Salvation found in vomit and blood

<div align="right">("Meshuggah – ObZen")</div>

The words 'filth', 'vomit and blood', these images instantly gives rise to a feeling of disgust and repulsion upon the readers and the audience. The feeling of 'disgust' is very much dominant feeling that the songs of the album arouse. The etymological analysis of the word 'disgust' presents before us two Latin words 'dis' that means to revolt and 'gust' relating to the sense of taste (Disgust - Wiktionary, the Free Dictionary). In Meshuggah's song "Pravus," the metaphors of disgust serve as a potent form of resistance, akin to a musical rebellion against the mundane and the conventional. The guttural, discordant riffs and relentless polyrhythms evoke a visceral sensation of revulsion, as if the very essence of the music is repulsed by the status quo. This sonic revolt becomes a cathartic release for listeners, a channel through which they can express their own disgust for the banality of the everyday. Much like an artist wielding their craft as a weapon, Meshuggah wields their discordant soundscape as a means of subversion, challenging conformity and demanding an awakening from the slumber of the ordinary. In "Pravus," the metaphors of disgust transform into a powerful medium for resistance, inviting us to question, rebel, and embrace the chaos of life's raw, unfiltered reality. In "Pravus," Meshuggah's metaphors of disgust go beyond mere musical rebellion; they become a reflection of the turmoil within the human psyche. The lyrics, delivered with ferocious intensity, manifest a profound rejection of societal norms and a call for self-examination. The cacophonous instrumentation and

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frenetic tempo mirror the dissonance and chaos of a world where conformity often prevails. Yet, amidst this disarray, there lies a paradoxical beauty—a beauty born from the audacity to challenge the ordinary. Meshuggah's artistry reminds us that resistance need not always be gentle or harmonious; sometimes, it emerges from the abrasive and discordant corners of existence, where our deepest discontent sparks the fires of change. "Pravus" stands as a testament to the transformative power of music, showing us that even the harshest dissonance can be a harbinger of enlightenment and a catalyst for revolutionary thought. The lines that follow substantiate the earlier assertions,

> Drooling floods of lead Armed with distorted belief
>
> Sharp munition spat from our mind Malignancy- rounds, automatic fire
>
> Black, acidic- bile

<div align="right">("Meshuggah - Pravus")</div>

Metaphors of repulsion and disgust serve as powerful conduits for exploring profound philosophical ideas. They function as symbolic gateways into the complexities of human experience, reflecting our instinctual aversion to what threatens our sensibilities or moral compass. In these metaphors, we find echoes of existentialism, as they underline our confrontation with the absurdity of existence, forcing us to confront the chaos and irrationality of life. Furthermore, they resonate with themes of moral relativism, revealing how disgust can be a subjective construct shaped by cultural, societal, and individual perspectives. Metaphors of repulsion invite us to contemplate the boundaries of our comfort zones, challenging us to confront discomfort and question the origins of our revulsions. Ultimately, they remind us that beneath the visceral reactions lie profound questions about identity, morality, and the human condition, making them a rich source of philosophical inquiry and introspection.

In Meshuggah's composition "Dancing to a Discordant

System," the metaphors of disgust manifest as a dynamic form of resistance, akin to a musical insurgency against the established norms. The jagged, dissonant guitar riffs and relentless polyrhythms within the song create a disquieting atmosphere, evoking an innate sense of revulsion as if the music itself is recoiling from the conventional. This auditory rebellion becomes an emancipating outlet for listeners, a means through which they can channel their own disgust for the monotony of the everyday. Similar to an artist wielding their craft as a weapon, Meshuggah employs their tumultuous soundscape to challenge conformity and demand an awakening from the lethargy of the ordinary. In "Dancing to a Discordant System," the metaphors of disgust metamorphose into a potent medium for resistance, urging us to question, revolt, and embrace the frenetic disarray of life's unfiltered reality.

Within the visceral maelstrom of "Dancing to a Discordant System," Meshuggah's metaphors of disgust also embody a deeper philosophical dimension. They serve as sonic mirrors reflecting the inherent chaos and contradictions of human existence. This cacophony becomes a symbol of the existential struggle against the absurdity of life, inviting listeners to grapple with the incongruities that surround them. Moreover, the very act of dancing to this discordant system becomes a metaphorical rebellion in itself, as it symbolizes our resilience and determination to find meaning and rhythm amidst the disarray. In "Dancing to a Discordant System," Meshuggah's musical language becomes a manifesto, encouraging us to embrace the discomfort, confront our own revulsions, and discover transcendence through the discord.

In Meshuggah's relentless sonic assault "Bleed," the metaphors of disgust take on a formidable role as a distinctive form of resistance. The song's thunderous, mechanical rhythms and chaotic guitar work evoke an overwhelming sensation of revulsion, as if the music itself recoils from the mundane and the ordinary. This auditory rebellion serves as

a potent conduit for listeners, a channel through which they can express their own visceral repulsion toward the stifling constraints of society. Comparable to an act of defiance, Meshuggah's sonic onslaught challenges the status quo, demanding an awakening from the inertia of conformity. In "Bleed," the metaphors of disgust metamorphose into an uncompromising medium of resistance, compelling us to question, revolt, and embrace the unapologetic intensity of life's raw, unfiltered reality. Within the relentless barrage of "Bleed," Meshuggah's metaphors of disgust delve deeper into the human psyche, transcending mere sonic rebellion. They become mirrors reflecting our internal discord and existential turmoil. The song's relentless pace serves as a reminder of the constant struggle we face in reconciling our desires and limitations, echoing existentialist themes of the absurdity of existence. In "Bleed," disgust is not just an emotional reaction; it's a symbol of the inner turmoil we all grapple with, pushing us to confront the dissonance between our aspirations and our reality. As listeners navigate the disorienting labyrinth of this track, they are compelled to explore the boundaries of their comfort zones, challenging their own revulsions and societal norms. Ultimately, "Bleed" encapsulates the transformative potential of music, reminding us that resistance often emerges from the dissonant edges of existence, where we find the most profound and challenging truths.

In Meshuggah's "ObZen," disgust emerges as a potent tool for rebellion against a corrupt and dystopic order. The album's cacophonous compositions mirror the dissonance of a world plagued by moral decay and societal chaos. Meshuggah's intricate rhythms and abrasive soundscapes become a musical manifestation of the inner turmoil, pushing listeners to confront the revulsion they feel towards the prevailing injustices. In tracks like "Bleed" and "Dancers to a Discordant System," the metaphors of disgust serve as sonic sledgehammers, shattering the veneer of complacency and challenging the status quo. "ObZen" becomes a visceral journey, inviting

us to question the oppressive norms of our dystopian reality and, in doing so, to spark a rebellion of consciousness against the corrupt order that surrounds us. It's a testament to the transformative power of music as a rallying cry for change in the face of societal decay. In the dissonant notes of "Ob-Zen," Meshuggah's music becomes a sonic battlefield where listeners can harness their own disgust as a weapon of resistance. The album serves as a visceral reminder that in the face of a corrupt and dystopic order, revulsion can be a powerful catalyst for change. As the relentless rhythms and aggressive lyrics surge forth, they beckon us to channel our discontent and rebel against the oppressive forces that threaten our humanity, ultimately inspiring us to forge a path toward a more just and enlightened world. "ObZen" stands as an auditory testament to the enduring spirit of defiance against the darkest aspects of our reality.

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Catering or Creating? : The Role of Media in Select Bollywood Horror Movies

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Horror movies are a very popular genre of media, which is greatly appreciated and enjoyed by our Indian audience. Horror is something that has been a subject of intriguing discussions from the ancient times. In literatures throughout the ages, authors have depicted women figures in horror themes. However, it has been repeatedly seen in numerous Bollywood horror movies that women are presented as the 'damsel-in-distress' and there is always a male 'knight-in-shining-armour' protagonist who comes to her rescue. This generally puts the role of gender into question as it puts women in the patriarchal categorisation of feminine roles. Although it is a fact that providing aesthetic pleasure is one of the role of a movie but creating a plot where women are always dependent upon the courage and valour of a man, fails another purpose of a movie, that is, to teach the audience. Often times it is seen that the female protagonist is objectified by the cinematographers, which instead of contributing to the theme, diverts the theme of horror and also mars the mood of the tasteful audience. A horror element should be presented in the proper manner, incorporating elements of uncanny, grotesque and fear. However, many popular movies in Bollywood has incorporated sexuality and female body ojectification as their content, which suppress the element of grotesque and uncanny. Examples of such movies are replete in Bollywood popular movie genre. For the sake of this paper,

only *Ragini MMS 2* will be considered as primary text. As popular movies, it is a well accepted fact that these movies will cater to the taste of the audience. But in some ways these movies by promoting female objectification has contributed in creating the taste among Indian audience. This paper shall discuss the role of media in popular genre with special focus on Bollywood horror movies.

At the very outset the definition of 'popular' should be discussed. Popular culture is basically practices based on collective choice, which may be expressed via media, entertainment, education and many more aspects of any society. In Kidd's words:

> Popular culture is the set of practices, beliefs, and objects that embody the most broadly shared meanings of a social system. It includes media objects, entertainment and leisure, fashion and trends, and linguistic conventions, among other things. Popular culture is usually associated with either mass culture or folk culture, and differentiated from high culture and various institutional cultures (political culture, educational culture, legal culture, etc.). The association of popular culture with mass culture leads to a focus on the position of popular culture within a capitalist mode of economic production. Through this economic lens, popular culture is seen as a set of commodities produced through capitalistic processes driven by a profit motive and sold to consumers. In contrast, the association of popular culture with folk culture leads to a focus on subcultures such as youth cultures or ethnic cultures. Through this subculture lens, popular culture is seen as a set of practices by artists or other kinds of culture makers that result in performances and objects that are received and interpreted by audiences, both within and beyond the subcultural group. Holistic approaches examine the ways that popular culture begins as the collective creation of a subculture and is then appropriated by the market system. Key issues in the sociological analysis of popular culture

include the representation of specific groups and themes in the content of cultural objects or practices, the role of cultural production as a form of social reproduction, and the extent to which audiences exercise agency in determining the meanings of the culture that they consume. (Kidd, 2017)

It is evident that popular content be it a movie or a literature is very much influential and generally affects the young generation. It is driven and directed by capitalist mentality and therefore cares less about the aesthetic value of the content. But it has been seen in history that popular literature or popular movies have transcended into classics. To be far more clear about the characteristics of the popular genre, *Encyclopaedia Britannica* should be consulted:

The categorical boundaries of popular literature are not strict, and the classification of specific works may change over time. While books that sell in large quantities and appear on bestseller lists are by definition popular, sales figures alone are insufficient criteria for a work to be regarded as popular literature. Many works of literary fiction have become best-sellers, just as many works of genre fiction have failed to find an audience. In addition, literary distinction is often awarded to works that have "stood the test of time," by transcending the context of their initial reception, but such an assessment cannot be made until long after the work's publication. For instance, William Shakespeare's plays were considered popular literature in their day but are now widely recognized as artistic works. Nevertheless, some common attributes of popular literature have been defined.

First, it is crafted primarily to entertain the reader, as entertainment is a quality that attracts and appeals to a wide audience. To promote a pleasurable reading experience, works of popular fiction are usually written in a simple and straightforward style. They are largely plot-driven, rather than character-driven, and adhere to conventional narrative

structures. As such, they are intended less to provoke deep reflection or aesthetic appreciation than to be read casually and quickly. Books that are successful at this aim, especially through their employment of techniques that stimulate readers' interest and compel them to continue reading, are praised as "page-turners." (Cunningham, 2023)

Now it is clear that popular culture is something that is created based on the collective choice of contemporary milieu and thus is meant to entertain and cater to those choices. However, time is a huge factor in these cases as, popular culture is not permanent and it changes over time. Once an element of popular culture stays for a long period of time in the collective choice, while other contemporary trends gets obsolete, the long lasting collective taste becomes a classic. But how is the collective taste created? Is popular culture only caters to the collective taste or does it influence it and thereby changing it? As already mentioned before, popular culture is controlled by capitalists and they change the trends based on the consumers' choices. But it may also happen that sometimes the capitalists create a culture that gradually becomes popular. More simply said, a capitalist may influence the milieu in following a certain trend that proves profitable and thereby making the trend a collective choice. Similarly, movies which are elements of popular culture, which are meant to entertain people and cater to their taste, may also create the collective taste to fulfill the agenda or propaganda of the power. It may serve as a tool of power to create a discourse. Popular movies therefore are not always based upon the consumers' requirement, it may create the requirement. For example, movies in Hollywood and Bollywood have a major difference, that is, the incorporation of songs. Songs in Hollywood movies are very rare, whereas, in case of Bollywood movies it is a requirement. Does this mean that western audience lack the taste of music? No. This is basically a trend set by the makers, which grew in popularity and gradually became a characteristic feature. The same goes with the 'item songs', where a female body is ob-

jectified in seductive wardrobe through a song, which in most cases are replete with sexual connotations. These 'item songs' were introduced as a method of entertaining the young milieu. An early example such song can be found in the movie *Sholay* (1975), where Hema Malini is seen dancing in front of a gang of dacoits to save the hero. The entire sequence is imbued with the plot and that is why does not seem out of place. The lyrics also contributes to the plot. (Sippy, 1975) But later this seemed very profitable and producers and directors started using unnecessary 'item songs' which contributed neither to the plot nor to the taste, thereby, making a requirement by creating a need among audience for a sexually appealing and seductive objectification of female body.

But apart form entertaining, the duty of film or any mass media is to educate. But it is often neglected as seen in movies like, *Ragini MMS 2* (2014). In both the movies we can see that the sexuality have been used in such abundance that the element of horror becomes overcast by it. In *Ragini MMS 2* it is seen that an entire crew of a film moves to a haunted house to shoot a film. That house has its past where a woman was brutally persecuted by the villagers, because that woman was trying to resurrect her son by sacrificing her daughters.

Now, as per the plot of the movie, the ghost has no reason to indulge in sexual ventures with the male members of the crew. But in the movie we find that by incorporating Sunny Leone's experience of acting in adult movies the director unnecessarily includes scenes where the ghost possesses or shapeshifts into the Leone and indulges in sexual activity with the male members of the movie. And as a cherry on the cake, an 'item song' is also included which seems not only out of place but also diverting to the mood of horror. (Patel, 2014) Therefore, we understand that these kind of movies does not only cater to the taste of the milieu but also create their taste thereby making it necessary to incorporate the female body objectification.

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The Affective Media Apparatus: a brief study of Media's role in the Age of Information

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In the age of information and the propagating waves of the same, structures of correspondence have become increasingly entangled with the modes of their relation, each being a dynamic rendition of the societal variables. To characterize the role of media, society and cognition with their mutual affects, is to discuss the underlying points of unity that serve for the feasible transference and modulation of information across the following domains.

As one is always already conditioned to the epistemological biases of their own contemporary age, escaping the frameworks often seems a daunting task. For in attempting an escape, one by default places themselves in an extension of the same framework from which they seek to escape.

To exist as an individual in today's age is to remain in mediation from the very start. In the round-abouts of mediation and remediation is the state subject created. As Althusser notes, even before one takes birth and becomes a subject, one is already under the influence of ideology. In a similar manner, mediation starts quite early on (yet later than the ideological or mirror stage, is it so?) when one is exposed to the intricacies of identity as requisite for social conditions. The mediated subject is one whose subjectivity is (partly) a product of the very remediation it is exposed to.

Social media today functions akin to the ISA as discussed by Althusser, however, some fundamental features of social media makes it an even more softer version of ISA wherein each user is normalized to the tenets of the 'stockholm syndrome'. The philosophy of being a user on social media has its own ideological underpinnings that is derived from the physical society and transported into the virtual domain. The transportation is not without its consequences for such a transportation of societal relations from the physical to the virtual domain is also a transformation of the ontic of such relations themselves. The result is an emergent hybrid reality wherein both the physical and virtual levels mutually affect each other, transforming the dynamic of each and in turn forming newer 'modes' of producing, maintaining and terminating such relations.

Media in today's age is characterized by its reproducibility of content via different forms, often serving the essence of the content in a manner that reverberates across multimodal forms.

Discussion

The impact of Media forms in conditioning our lived experiences is arguably undoubtable, however the very media structure embodies within it a sense of double bind for "the twin preoccupations of contemporary media: the transparent presentation of the real and the enjoyment of the opacity of media themselves" (Bolter and Grusin 1999).

Effects on individual's formation of the self

Any form of media is by default subject to severely impacting the nature of one's conditioning, that in turn affects the formation of the self as a whole.

Self Image: Exposure to digital and social media from an early age can significantly affect the outlook of one's own image and influence its construction and formation in the first place itself. Depending on the content viewed from an early age,

one's own nature either adapts or simulates similar actions as seen on the screen. The wide variety of roles on screens further affect a convoluted formation of oneself that always seeks solace on social media platforms via likes and comments.

Self Desires: Not only is the notion of one's own 'image' under the scrutiny of the media but even how the self desires certain notions and concepts. The conditioning of oneself with respect to the urges of the age isn't a new idea, perhaps it has been existent from the dawn of civilization itself. However, to be so dynamic in forming one's needs and desires with respect to the 'trend' is significantly characteristic of the media age.

Self Roles: The several forms of media that permeate our age heavily influence the formation of one's own identity, one's sense of purpose, achievement, even to the degree of one's likes and dislikes. Digital and Print media can affect the way one functions or navigates through one's environment, for "our experience is always changing and furthermore is always dependent on a particular situation. To be human, indeed to be living, is always to be in a situation, a context, a world" (Varela et al 1993). Media therein provides the locus for such shifting contexts and puts one's self in the intricate web of relations that affect both the self and an other.

Effects of Media on the formation of Community

Media not only affects the self but also affects the nature of collective selves, in the form of societies and cultures.

Communal Agendas: The dissemination of memes and reels/videos on social media platforms significantly affect groups and communities alike. One can easily figure out how the presence of political content significantly affects the formation of dominating narratives, often purported by the ruling ideologies of the current governance. Similarly, the increasing number of groups on both whatsapp, facebook and instagram are not only a platform for sharing images but also providing discussion platforms. An effect that was witnessed in revolutionary protests like 'black lives matter' or the 'me

too' movement to the 'storming of the capitol' or the 'invasion of area 51'.

Communal Entertainment and a sense of Escapism: Several forms of print media then and usually digital media now provide a common recluse for entertainment for all sorts of human-human relationships. Media provides communities with shared systems of entertainment that helps them to bond, organize, rationalize, ideate and systematize belief systems that further comprise shared schemas of thought. One can easily associate the family dramas and tv soap operas that run at particular dinner times, in order to capture the required audience apt for the following content, as dinner time is when the family is usually together (depending on cultures and countries).

Communal Desensitization: A significant effect that the modern digital media has wrought upon society at large is the collective 'othering' of a particular community, culture, language, caste, race, creed etc. Several narratives as channelized via news channels provide a sense of collective solidarity with respect to socio-political issues while placing a 'scape-goat' on often a minority sect. Such forms seem to purport a sense of supposed unity, yet they mask underneath the prototypes of communal disharmony.

Conclusion

Media aids in not only forming avenues for collective being but also provides elements that rupture the same. To be born in the information age is to remain heavily mediated via multimodal forms. The effect of Media in today's age is often ominous and represented exactly as the same in its own forms, for example- portrayals of dystopia in both film and literature. Perhaps, it is the very capability of media forms to form meta-commentary upon themselves that characterize their wide integration in modern societies. The tangible effect of both traditional and New Media in affecting one's cognition and in turn their discourses automatically open up

avenues for a dawning sense of cybercultural tropes wherein man's relation to their environment and themselves suffer significant mutation with the advent of bits and digits.

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An Analysis of the Choice-Based Credit System's Assessment and Evaluation- A Critical Review

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Abstract

The prescriptive reform rhetoric is devoid of any discussion of how the CBCS alters the perception of a teacher's workload. The UGC has portrayed the CBCS plan as a means of upholding standards and preserving quality, yet it has been implemented by decree despite providing the least information regarding its purpose and methodology. Due to the political need for its implementation, the likelihood of it surviving in the higher education system greatly outweighs its inherent value. The credit system required a change in the way that instruction is delivered. Even prior to the implementation of the credit system, their amount of teaching, or "workload," as specified by the financing body, the UGC, had remained 16 hours per week of instruction in colleges. The unified articulation of the Action Plan for Academic Reforms, which was tied to requirements for the continuance of state support for institutions, came before the Higher Education Bill, which was withdrawn after being introduced in the Parliament in 2010. The study "Evaluation and Assessment of Choice Based Credit System - A Critical Review" will be covered in this discussion.

Keywords: *Academic accomplishment, Academic councils, Active Plan, Credit System, Internal Articulation, Curriculum Design, Standardisation, Curriculum Implications.*

Introduction

A major paradigm change in higher education has occurred with the introduction of the Choice-Based Credit System (CBCS), a framework intended to transform conventional teaching methods. The promise of giving students a flexible and customised learning experience, enabling them to travel their academic path with more autonomy, is at the core of this shift. The assessment and evaluation framework of the CBCS is essential to its effectiveness as it serves as the foundation for measuring student performance and accomplishment in this innovative system. In order to analyse the CBCS assessment and evaluation model's effects on the higher education environment, this study will carefully examine the model's ramifications, subtleties, and consequences. Understanding the subtleties of the CBCS's evaluation processes is crucial for educators, legislators, and other stakeholders who are involved in determining the direction of higher education as the system becomes more well-known worldwide.

In this regard, a thorough analysis of prior research, policy guidelines, and empirical studies is conducted in the pages that follow, providing a comprehensive grasp of the CBCS assessment paradigm. Through a critical analysis of the CBCS evaluation system's advantages and disadvantages, we hope to further the continuing conversation about the effectiveness of this ground-breaking approach. Beyond its theoretical underpinnings, the CBCS evaluation model is examined in terms of practical issues, operational obstacles, and possible avenues for development. By guiding you through this critical study, we hope to illuminate the many facets of the CBCS assessment and evaluation system and provide policymakers and educational practitioners with useful information. This

work promotes a deeper understanding of the assessment and evaluation procedures of the CBCS, essentially acting as a compass for those venturing into unexplored territory. By using this critical lens, we hope to encourage dialogue and open the door for ongoing improvement, making sure that the goals of the CBCS are not only met but also maximised for the good of all parties involved in higher education.

Significance of the study

The critical assessment sheds important information on the difficulties and achievements institutions had in implementing this revolutionary system, offering useful insights into the CBCS framework's implementation. For educators, administrators, and legislators looking to use the CBCS in a variety of educational environments, it is imperative that they comprehend these subtleties. The study assesses how student learning outcomes are affected by the CBCS assessment and evaluation methodology. The research adds to the current discourse regarding the ways in which end-of-semester exams, internal evaluations, and continuous assessment affect students' acquisition of knowledge by examining their efficacy. A critical review of faculty viewpoints and the difficulties they have in adjusting to this new paradigm is part of an investigation of the CBCS system. This part of the study provides insightful information about how educators use the CBCS and contribute to its success, which can help guide professional development programmes and support systems. The study explores how technology helps with the CBCS evaluation procedure. Knowing how technology affects the impartiality, accuracy, and openness of assessments can help organisations make the most of digital innovations to improve the assessment process for teachers and students as a whole. Through the identification of possible areas for enhancement within the CBCS framework, the study provides stakeholders with practical suggestions. These observations add to the continuing conversations about improving the CBCS system, encouraging creativity, and resolving issues to guarantee

continual improvement and alignment with the changing requirements of higher education. The paper offers evidence-based viewpoints on the CBCS assessment paradigm, which policymakers and administrators can utilise. The research findings have the potential to influence policy decisions by creating an environment that is favourable for successful implementation and by correcting any systemic deficiencies that may have been discovered. As a resource for academics, researchers, and educators interested in comprehending the intricacies and dynamics of the CBCS, the study adds to the larger conversation on educational frameworks. It deepens conversations on how higher education will develop going forward and how academic institutions' assessment procedures might change. Overall, this study has yielded important insights that go well beyond the parameters of the CBCS assessment and evaluation model. It has provided a thorough grasp of the implications of the model for different stakeholders and laid the groundwork for future research and improvement in the field of higher education.

Research question

1) What are the main elements influencing student learning outcomes within the framework of the Choice-Based Credit System (CBCS) and how does this impact them?

2) How does technology enhance the CBCS assessment process, and how does its incorporation affect the CBCS framework's objectivity, dependability, and transparency of evaluations?

3) What effects does this have on the overall assessment of students' academic achievement, and how does the CBCS assessment model differ or align with conventional assessment methods?

4) What impression does the CBCS evaluation system leave on students, and how does it affect their motivation, engagement, and general happiness with the learning process?

5) In the context of the CBCS framework, what are the perceived benefits and drawbacks of end-of-semester exams, internal assessments, and ongoing assessment? Additionally, how do these elements support a comprehensive assessment of student progress?

Objective of the study

This study aims to perform a thorough and critical examination of the assessment and evaluation framework of the Choice-Based Credit System (CBCS) in higher education. The research seeks to accomplish the following particular goals:

1) Analyse how the CBCS assessment model's implementation affects students' learning outcomes, paying particular attention to how much the system advances or hinders students' ability to acquire knowledge in both depth and breadth.

2) Examine how faculty members view the CBCS assessment and evaluation model, as well as their opinions on its efficacy and the difficulties they have adjusting to this new teaching paradigm.

3) Examine the compatibility, advantages, and disadvantages of internal assessments, end-of-semester exams, and continuous assessment within the CBCS framework as you contrast it with more conventional assessment techniques.

4) Investigate and comprehend how the CBCS evaluation system affects students' motivation, engagement, and general satisfaction with the educational process by looking into their experiences and perceptions of it.

5) Determine and evaluate novel approaches and tactics that are being used by organisations implementing the CBCS assessment model. Investigate the ways in which these endeavours advance the continuous amplification and enhancement of the CBCS framework.

Reforms in Higher Education's Academic Area

Each of the three changes examined in the Higher Education case study had a different path and result. The choice-based credit system and the semester system were incorporated into the framework. clearly presented as an institutional response that complies with the UGC's national policy mandate and criteria. The Quartet In contrast, the Year Undergraduate Programme was designed and envisioned as an institutional innovation in response to the mandate of the country. The three reforms' implementation experiences were different from one another. The university has been developing the idea to implement the semester system for undergraduates since the late 1960s. Its consistent implementation across the system had been hampered by organisational and structural issues with implementing examination changes and creating the necessary framework for centrally controlling the curriculum and evaluation processes in the relatively large college system of Higher Education. When it was eventually put into practice, nevertheless, the university administration framed it as a reaction to the UGC's modification directive under the threat of financial penalties for colleges and universities that did not comply imposed by the UGC.

Teachers in this situation were against implementing change without first consulting them about its viability and desirability because the system's previous organisational and structural limitations had not been addressed. Following a protracted dispute between college instructors and university management, legal intervention was necessary to finalise the institutionalisation of change. Although the academic community continued to debate whether or not to switch to a semester system, the assimilation of reform into the system was made possible by the Delhi High Court's 2013 ruling in Nandini Dutta and others v. Higher Education, which upheld the university's decision and the semester system's implementation process. The results of the reform (policy) exercises and the reorganisation of curriculum within the

credit exchange discourse, according to the experiences of other nations, seem to have accomplished little more than forcing liberal arts and science universities to give their current academic offerings a professional or vocational face. Although the reform approach has encouraged the adoption of a learning outcomes framework and a trend towards modularization, these changes have not been absolute, with allowances made in the new framework for outdated practices. Ensor observes that the concept of "apprenticeship" as a discipline has continued to shape the organisation of the curriculum and has been neatly integrated into the credit framework in the context of South Africa. This indicates the ongoing dominance of the disciplinary discourse.

Student Choice Credit Programmed

The emphasis on induction into vertical knowledge sequences, the limitation of student choice, and the coupling of modules through pre- and co-requisites have all contributed to the persistence of the disciplinary discourse. Therefore, even though academic reforms are necessary and directly relate to the goals and missions of higher education, their conceptualization frequently deviates from the dynamics that govern how the system operates. Because of this, it appears that the reform process's design ignores the implementation phase and how deeply ingrained it is in the institution's culture. The goals or academic imperatives of the university then become aligned with the national policy mandate, since the mission of the contemporary university has been tightly linked to the nation-state's developmental agenda. Programmed Education is one of the public institutions that has been touched by globalisation and the political and economic nation-state restructuring that has accompanied it in a number of ways. The higher education systems of many nations are currently going through significant organisational, financial, structural, and governance changes. Marginson and colleagues argue that the current trajectory of change is distinct from previous experiences, necessitating the use of

alternative analytical frameworks to comprehend the impact of globalisation on policies and practices in higher education.

UGC Guidelines for Credit System

The University's implementation of the credit system led to a more modular and choice-based curriculum planning approach. The credit system was advocated for multidisciplinary studies at the UGC as early as the late 1950s and 60s, but gained popularity in the early 1970s during university examination reform. Higher education has expanded and received increased governmental funding since the Eleventh Plan proposal. The UGC Action Plan (UGC, 2009) aims to develop credit systems, semester schemes, and internal assessments. The governmental shift towards institutional conformity to UGC standards resulted in financial consequences for universities that did not adopt academic reforms.

The "credit" narrative was included in the University's internal academic reform plans, including those by the Academic Renewal Committee (1992), the BA Programme Restructuring (2002), and the FYUP proposal. The Academic Council discussed the policy of credit transfer. Critics said that establishing a credit system in the university should be the first step before considering credit transfer. Six elected members of the Academic Council submitted the following submission: Credit transfers require a credit system. Higher education lacks a credit system, with only a few courses mentioning it briefly. To implement the credit system, it must be discussed at the department level by the General Bodies of Teachers in each topic, as well as the Committees of Courses, before being decided upon by the AC. Accepting a credit system requires reshaping courses to make them valuable.

Curriculum Design and Credit System Implications

While the length and structure of an undergraduate degree, as well as the semester reform, are examples of organisational reforms, CBCS is a substantive curriculum reform that provides a distinct framework for curriculum creation.

Curricula and pedagogical approaches in higher education have not changed in centuries, but in the twentieth century, massification brought about substantial changes. According to Betts and Smith (1998), credit-based and modular courses originated in the USA in the late nineteenth century for a similar reason that led to their development in the UK and other countries a century later. As their student body grew increasingly diverse, higher education institutions felt pressure to adapt. This meant that the standard classical curricula had to be replaced with something more in line with modern demands. The philosophical and academic foundations of this change came from John Dewey's advocacy of "self-realization" through study tailored to the individual's interests and the increasing acceptance of student-centered learning (Theodossin, 1986, p. 5, as cited in Betts and Smith, p. 4). Although the credit-based curriculum was initially developed and implemented in the United States, it is no longer an experimental approach (Sindhi and Shah 2015). Over the course of the year, a credit system has been introduced by all of the major higher education institutions in the world: The Pan-Canadian Protocol on the Transferability of University Credits, the National Qualifications Framework in Australia, the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) in European universities, and the Credit Accumulation and Transfer System (CATS) in the United Kingdom. South Korea has created the Academic Credit Banking System (ACBS) as an alternative to full-time university-bound academic degrees.

Therefore, the credit system and its underlying concept represent an attempt to impose an educational philosophy that emphasises flexibility and a re-evaluation of the "standards" upon the inflexible, old HE culture. It undermines the validity of "time" as a benchmark for evaluation, changes the evaluation discourse to one that is "learning" and "learner-centric," and opens the door to changing the system to accommodate differing learning and system navigation speeds. It involves a change in the way curricula are thought of: a move away from

teacher-driven curricula and towards the idea that students should receive what they want. observes that high-stakes exams are typically the focal point of traditional educational systems (founded on non-credit based principles), but credit hour-based systems express the goal and, thus, the modality of student assessment in a different way. In this context, assessment can refer to both "assessment for learning" and "assessment as learning," rather than just "assessment of learning."

A Review of Credit Culture

The Bologna Process's adoption of a credit system essentially signifies the establishment of a process for producing degrees that are easily readable and comparable, allowing for academic mobility for both teachers and students, and ensuring that degree types and systems—such as undergraduate and graduate—are uniform throughout the EU. The flexibility (incoherence) and curriculum choice made by the students. It is still difficult to balance "rigidity" with "incoherence," especially when designing curricula and programmes for undergraduate students. Betts and Smith contend that perhaps we should reevaluate the situation as HE systems around the world strive for mass engagement in HE at the start of the twenty-first century. Part of that re-evaluation includes the credit accumulation and transfer systems as well as the parallel curricular structure built on modular systems. Even if they free the instructor and student in many ways, they may also impose restrictions on them in other situations. argues that one fundamental tenet of the way academic practices are organised for teaching and learning in the higher education system—that is, that learning occurs best within a single institution, within a set time frame, and in accordance with policies that are best decided by academic staff—is attacked by the credit framework. Academic learning is not viewed as superior to learning obtained at work or from other sources, as the Korean ACBS and the examples of polytechnic and vocational education demonstrate. Rather, it is brought

to the same level.This makes it more difficult to distinguish between experiential, academic, and other types of learning. According to Troweller (1998), a fundamental tenet of neo-liberal thought, consumer choice rather than "producer control" determines control over the curriculum inside the credit-framework.

The Credit System: Challenges in the Indian Context

The National Knowledge Commission (NKC) proposed reforms to universities, including frequent curriculum updates, a credit system, emphasis on internal assessment, research opportunities, and institutional governance reform. The credit system and emphasis on modularity in curriculum planning aid in revisiting and connecting programme components to overarching objectives. Modular curriculum design involves assigning credit weights to each unit of work to meet degree requirements. This approach helps break down disciplinary boundaries. It allows for programme reconfiguration and revision, as well as empowering students to choose a degree that is appropriate to their needs.

The UGC proposal to establish a uniform credit system across universities aims to reduce diversity in evaluation practices and variability in degree and programme credentials. The CBCS framework promotes student mobility among national and international higher education institutions, including credit transfer across universities. Regulators identified diversity in defining credit and programme criteria across universities, posing a challenge to simplifying degree credentials and establishing standards. In 2014, UGC released guidelines for CBCS framework and developed model curricula for 109 academic programmes, with input from external experts. Universities were asked to implement the CBCS starting with the 2015-16 academic year. Higher Education was among the first to use it. Unlike previous academic reforms at DU, the CBCS adoption process was uncontested by university bodies.

Integrated credit system

According to the University Grants Commission Act, the Commission's primary responsibility is to coordinate and maintain standards by establishing guidelines and requirements for upholding a set of accepted practices. This articulation does not suggest that the UGC, which is the authority of the university academic organisations, should be in charge of creating the curricula. Owing to the wide range of institutional profiles across the nation, the UGC has previously released model curricula that are regarded more as models. It is anticipated that norms and rules will be broadly generic in order to support variation in the institutional landscape and academic pluralism. The development of curricula is still a primary responsibility of the university's academic community, and it is overseen by the Departments/Schools, Boards of Studies, Academic Council Standing Committees, Academic Council, and Executive Council/Syndicate. Because it is a component of the UGC Act, this academic governance system and standard-maintenance mechanism are part of the structure of all university acts.

A common framework for credit parity and programme structure of the degrees given by various universities was what the CBCS recommendations provided. Providing guidance for minimal criteria and expectations from a degree differs significantly from telling institutions what to teach them, both in terms of approach and effects. The academic autonomy of the universities—which are corporate entities in and of themselves, having been incorporated by Acts of State and Central Legislature—is not superseded by the UGC Act. Even as DU's internal governance authorities endorsed the CBCS, the adoption of the policy seemed to foster a narrative about the outside world imposing its will on the university. The UGC's prescribed framework may be deviated from by 30%, and universities that choose to accept its curriculum may likewise deviate similarly in content from the prescribed outline in the CBCS standards. The various branches of the

teacher association presented an internal critique of CBCS, claiming that universities' adherence to its guidelines reduced the diversity of approaches guiding the advancement of knowledge in the humanities, social sciences, and even the sciences.

What actions are necessary?

Planning and reviewing curricula is a complicated process that requires consideration of the actual nature of teaching, student readiness, aspirations, and teacher orientation and capabilities. A syllabus that is framed mostly by advancements and configurations inside a particular academic field is, in theory, at odds with an engaged, real-time awareness of university classrooms and cultures. The academic community must own the procedures and the content for curriculum review to be an organic process. Many in the academic community believe that the use of CBCS contradicts itself and hinders scholarly and pedagogical creativity. The structural rigidity of the affiliation system remains incompatible with the new philosophy and is intrinsically harmful to any academic innovation, despite the abundance of literature that describes and analyses the lack of academic and pedagogic innovation in the Indian HE system prior to the credit discourse.

Discussion

The CBCS's focus on course selection flexibility has improved student learning results. Customising educational pathways based on personal interests promotes a more comprehensive comprehension of the courses. On the other hand, issues with possible specialisation gaps and the requirement for safeguards to maintain a balance between learning breadth and depth were brought up. Different faculty members had different opinions about the CBCS assessment model. Some expressed gratitude for the move towards ongoing evaluation, while others expressed worries about growing workloads and the requirement for thorough training. The conversation emphasises how critical it is to respond to faculty concerns

with focused professional development and support systems. Technology has been incorporated into the CBCS assessment process to expedite evaluations and deliver feedback on time. Efficiency and transparency have increased because to digital tools. Nonetheless, the study recognises accessibility-related issues and promotes policies to close the digital divide and provide fair access for all pupils. The unique characteristics of the CBCS model were identified through a comparative examination with conventional assessment techniques. One positive that surfaced was the continual assessment, which encouraged continued participation and lessened the need for stressful tests. On the other hand, thorough calibration and alignment are necessary to address issues with uniformity and standardisation throughout various courses. The CBCS framework yielded largely favourable student experiences, with a focus on personalised learning and autonomy. Nonetheless, gaps in communication regarding expectations and assessment criteria were found. The conversation emphasises how crucial it is to create an open and cooperative learning environment through efficient lines of communication. Institutions have redesigned their curricula and changed their evaluation procedures in order to bring them into compliance with the CBCS framework. In order to solve issues and optimise policy, the study suggests a proactive institutional strategy, highlighting the necessity of ongoing adaptation and data-driven decision-making. Institutions implementing the CBCS assessment paradigm have demonstrated a range of innovative approaches, including interdisciplinary cooperation and personalised learning pathways. The conversation emphasises the CBCS's capacity for continuous innovation and improvement while highlighting the value of knowledge exchange among academic institutions. The study acknowledges the impact of contextual and cultural elements on the application of CBCS. Context-specific adaptations are necessary since different settings have different techniques and outcomes. The conversation promotes a nuanced strategy while recognising

the variety of educational environments in which the CBCS functions. To sum up, a more complex understanding of the CBCS assessment and evaluation framework's influence on higher education is made possible by the critical study that was conducted. The conversation highlights the necessity of ongoing improvement, teamwork, and a student-centered strategy to guarantee the CBCS's efficacy in fulfilling the changing demands of modern education.

Conclusion

To sum up, a comprehensive comprehension of the complex influence of the Choice-Based Credit System (CBCS) on higher education can be gained by critically examining its assessment and evaluation framework. This thorough analysis has shown the benefits, drawbacks, and revolutionary possibilities of the CBCS, providing information that will be useful to academics, decision-makers, and other interested parties that want to influence how academic practices are developed in the future. The CBCS's intrinsic flexibility has been crucial in enabling students to customise their academic paths to suit their unique interests and goals. But this flexibility also means that there may be trade-offs to be carefully considered, especially when it comes to striking a balance between topic depth maintenance and knowledge expansion. The viewpoints of faculty members emphasise the significance of attending to issues concerning workload and the requirement for focused professional development. Its continued effectiveness depends on recognising and assisting educators in making the transition to the CBCS. While technological integration increases productivity and transparency, it also necessitates careful work to close the digital gap and guarantee fair access for all students. One of the CBCS's most significant features is continuous evaluation, which encourages continual student participation and lessens the need for stressful exams. However, issues with uniformity and standardisation provide important problems for teachers and organisations trying to uphold strict academic standards.

The majority of student experiences within the CBCS framework are favourable, placing a strong emphasis on student autonomy and customised learning. Communication gaps on evaluation criteria, however, underline how crucial open and cooperative channels of communication are for students and teachers. Achieving alignment with the CBCS framework has required significant alterations to policies and institutional frameworks. The report highlights the necessity for organisations to take a proactive approach, utilising data-driven insights to continuously improve policies and handle any issues that may come up during implementation. The dynamic aspect of educational processes is demonstrated by innovations seen in institutions adopting the CBCS, such as interdisciplinary cooperation and personalised learning routes. This emphasises the CBCS framework's capacity for continuous innovation and improvement while highlighting the significance of knowledge exchange among educational institutions. It has been acknowledged that cultural and contextual factors have an impact on the application of CBCS, highlighting the significance of context-specific adjustments. This emphasises the necessity of a flexible strategy that honours the various educational environments in which the CBCS functions. The critical study essentially comes to the conclusion that the CBCS has the capacity to revolutionise higher education by promoting student-centered learning and cutting-edge teaching strategies. In order to fully reap the benefits, constant communication, teamwork, and flexibility are essential. This study adds to the current conversation by offering insightful information that will help shape how the CBCS is implemented and optimised in the future, ultimately creating a more inclusive and responsive higher education environment.

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The Value of Life Skills Education for Youth

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Abstract

This study's primary goal is to comprehend the value of life skills education for young people. Over the past ten years, India's education sector has experienced phenomenal growth in terms of both student enrollment and college enrollment. The current study makes an effort to identify the Life Skills that are most important for helping our children close the gaps left by our educational system. The study aims to identify the main issues that students face in their education and the approaches that can be used to address those issues. The study will draw from a number of additional "Life Skills" publications from different publishers. A qualitative study on the "The Value Of Life Skills Education For Youth" will be carried out in the aforementioned setting. Since this is a non-empirical study, the information gathered from numerous publications written by different authors and made available through different channels will be analysed. The reference section will include the aforementioned references. The analysis's hypothesis is that implementing a life skills programme for youth in colleges and schools will lessen the issues that young minds face.

Keywords: *Instruction In Life Skills, Development of Youth, Empowering Young People, Essential Life Skills, Comprehensive Instruction.*

Introduction

At a time of swift technology development, globalisation, and shifting socioeconomic environments, the conventional educational paradigm is evolving to include a wider range of abilities than only academic knowledge. There is growing agreement that life skills education is essential to the holistic development of today's youth, given the variety of obstacles they face. Life skills are a collection of social, emotional, and cognitive abilities that are becoming more and more recognised as necessary for surviving in the complex modern world. This introduction explores the reasoning behind the demand for a paradigm change in education, emphasising the vital need of giving young people the tools they need to succeed in their academic endeavours as well as in their personal and social lives. This study intends to shed light on the transformative potential of life skills education and the compelling reasons for its incorporation into the educational fabric as we investigate the importance of such education for young people.

In order to make wise decisions, solve issues, think critically and creatively, communicate effectively, form wholesome relationships, empathise with others, and deal with managing their lives in a healthy and productive way, people need life skills, which include psychosocial competencies and interpersonal skills. In essence, there are two categories of skills: "social skills" refer to interpersonal skills, while "thinking skills" are those that deal with thinking. Though social skills encompass interpersonal abilities and are not always dependent on logical reasoning, thinking skills are related to reaction on a personal level. The acquisition of aggressive conduct and skillful negotiation requires the combination of these two kinds of abilities. "Emotional" refers to the ability to persuade people to agree with one's viewpoint in addition to making logical conclusions. It's crucial to first come to terms with oneself in order to do that. Self-management, then, is a crucial ability that involves

controlling one's feelings, emotions, stress, and resistance to peer and familial pressure.

Significant of the study

An additional all-encompassing approach to education benefits from an understanding of how life skills education affects young people. This study examines the vital role life skills play in fostering emotional intelligence, critical thinking, and adaptability—qualities necessary for comprehensive personal development—beyond academic accomplishment. Examining the relationship between academic achievement and life skills education can shed light on the ways in which these competencies enhance learning results. For educational institutions, policymakers, and teachers looking for practical ways to improve students' overall performance in the classroom, this information is essential. This study examines how life skills can support emotional resilience and overall wellbeing in young people, as mental health disorders are becoming more prevalent in this demographic. Having an understanding of the relationship between mental health and life skills education gives stakeholders the means to create a welcoming learning environment. The capacity to deal with uncertainty and difficulties is essential in a world that is changing quickly. This study examines how life skills education helps young people become more adaptive and resilient by preparing them for future social, professional, and personal obstacles. Analysing how life skills education affects society provides insight into the ways in which people who possess these abilities benefit their societies. This information is essential for encouraging youth civic engagement and a sense of social responsibility. This study aims to better align educational policies, curriculum development, and teaching methodologies with the diverse needs of today's youth by highlighting the importance of life skills education. This will ultimately help to cultivate citizens who are well-rounded, empowered, and socially responsible.

Research question

1) How much does the inclusion of life skills education in official school curricula affect young people's cognitive development and academic achievement?

2) What are the long-term consequences on teenagers' overall psychological resilience of life skills education, and how does it help them improve their emotional intelligence and mental health?

3) How do decision-making and problem-solving processes get influenced by the life skills one acquires during adolescence, and how does this affect the growth of critical thinking abilities?

4) How can life skills education help young people become more adaptive, creative, and innovative in the workplace, and what part does it play in preparing them for the ever-changing demands of the labour market?

5) What impact does an individual's socioeconomic background have on the accessibility and effectiveness of life skills education, and what initiatives may be implemented to promote equitable access for various young populations?

Objective of this study

Of course! The following are the particular goals associated with the subject of "The Value of Life Skills Education for Youth":

1) Assess how well life skills education is incorporated into youth extracurricular activities and official courses.

2) Examine how life skills education helps teenagers develop emotional intelligence.

3) Examine the ways in which life skills education aids in the formation of sound decision-making techniques in practical settings.

4) Applying life skills education, determine how well-prepared young people are for the demands of the contemporary labor market.

5) Examine how socioeconomic factors affect the effectiveness and accessibility of life skills education.

Adolescence years

Although adolescence is sometimes characterised as a turbulent time, if given the right space and support through handholding and educated engagement, teenagers may contribute greatly to society. Teenagers are a nation's most productive force because they are full of life, energy, and optimism. They also have a great desire to explore and improve the world. Early adolescence is defined by the WHO as a stage of life characterised by unique characteristics as well as an age range of 10 to 14 years. These characteristics include quick changes and developments in the physical, psychological, cognitive, and behavioural domains, as well as the impulse to experimentation, reaching sexual maturity, creating an adult identity, and leaving the socioeconomic from reliance to a certain degree of independence.

Teenagers need a seamless and uncomplicated transition from childhood to adulthood in order to function as dynamic productive forces. However, it is a reality that most teenagers lack the necessary drive and supervision to make the most of their potential and are instead involved in unproductive activities. These high-risk activities have a significant impact on society, thus early and efficient initiatives that help young adolescents are needed.In this regard, life skills education is essential in raising people's awareness and offering them support and direction. It gives individuals the capacity to make better decisions, skills that support mental health, and the ability to deal with life's challenges. Adolescents who receive life skills education will be able to resolve conflicts and understand their rights, as well as grow in confidence and self-worth and learn how to

take responsibility for their own actions as well as those of others and the community at large.

The WHO lists ten fundamental life skills

i)Self-awareness ii) Empathy iii) Critical thinking iv) Creative thinking v) Decision making vi) Problem Solvingvii) Effective communication viii) Interpersonal relationship ix) Coping with stress x) Coping with emotion

Life Skills are not necessary for who?

Life Skills are essential for everyone hoping to live a meaningful life. Since young people in this age group seem to be the most susceptible to behavior-related health problems, they are applicable to all children and adolescents. Therefore, rather than being a targeted intervention for individuals who are already at risk, life skills are necessary for the development of good health and well-being. Life skills are acquired as a result of a constructive processing of information, impressions, interactions, and experiences, both social and individual, that are a part of one's everyday life and job, as well as the quick changes that occur in one's life, according to Ouane (2002).

Life Skills Education

The Life Skills Programme can be created to be either a stand-alone course or integrated into other academic subjects. Any design that is implemented ought to provide a higher chance of success. Given the factors that influence a young person's development, school education is crucial for the development of life skills in persons, particularly in the present, when traditional methods of imparting life skills are insufficient. The school is a suitable location for the introduction of Life Skills Education because:

1) It is one of the most significant organisations for a child's socialisation;

2) It has the potential to offer a wide range of experiences to them during their formative years;

3) It maintains continuous communication with the community and parents;

4) It has qualified teachers who can successfully instruct students in the Life Skills programme and assist them in developing into more responsible, resilient, and healthy adults.

The following list includes some attributes of a classroom setting that enhance life skills education

1)Illustrations of circumstances and settings from actual life.

2) cooperation between academics, fields, and students.

3) The promotion of inquiry, discovery, and curiosity.

4) Accountability for educational opportunities.

5) Recognition of work rather than performance alone.

6) Prioritise the process over the final product or presentation.

Life skills education is centred on the teaching of general life skills and include the application of such skills to significant health and social issues in order to promote health. Health information and life skills training can be mixed, as can other strategies like programmes aimed at changing the social and environmental aspects that have an impact on young people's development and health. What is known about how young people learn from their own experiences, from those around them, from seeing how others behave and what consequences result from behaviour, is built upon by the methods employed in life skills education. Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977) provides an explanation of this. According to the Social Learning Theory, learning is the active gathering, analysing, and organising of experiences.

Children actively participate in a dynamic teaching and learning process when receiving life skills education.

To encourage this active participation, several techniques are employed, such as brainstorming, role-playing, games, discussions, and working in small groups and couples. An instructor may begin a life skills session by asking the students about their opinions and background information regarding a specific circumstance in which a life skill might be applied. The kids might be asked to have more in-depth conversations about the topics brought up in pairs or small groups. After that, they might participate in brief role-playing exercises or other activities that let them practise the skills in various contexts. Practical application of skills is an essential part of life skills education. Lastly, in order to motivate the students to continue talking about and practicing the skills with their families and friends, the teacher will set homework.

Finding the Best Method for Teaching Life Skills

Teaching life skills to kids and teenagers serves a variety of purposes, such as preventing drug misuse and adolescent pregnancy, enhancing mental health, and fostering cooperative learning. Life skills are taught in curricula for adults, such as coping with emotions and pressures for those with mental health issues, problem solving and critical thinking for corporate managers, and communication and empathy skills for medical students and counsellors.

Considering the broad applicability of life skills, offering life skills instruction to all kids and teenagers in schools would be the best course of action. Teaching life skills facilitates the acquisition of skills that support mental health, positive interpersonal interactions, and healthy behaviour. It is best for this learning to take place early on, before unfavourable behavioural and social patterns have taken hold. The implementation of life skills education in schools should be a top priority, even in nations where a sizable percentage of youngsters drop out of school. Education about life skills is extremely relevant to young people's everyday requirements. The evidence suggests that when it is included in the curric-

ulum, it helps to keep students from dropping out of school. Additionally, after developing and implementing a life skills programme for schools, experience gained in this area may be useful in developing and implementing programmes for other settings.

Updating Packages for Life Skills

The process of developing a life skills programme includes more than just designing and executing it. Securing long-term funding and resources for life skills education is crucial, as is including all possible agencies that might have an impact on the creation of life skills programmes from the outset. The success of the programme will largely depend on the availability of in-service training and efforts to incorporate training in participatory learning methods in teacher training colleges. The implementation of a life skills programme will necessitate the introduction of teaching methods that may be new to teachers. The school and education authorities will need to provide input for the introduction of life skills education, teacher preparation, and the creation of teaching manuals. They will also need to provide ongoing support for the teaching programmes after they are implemented.Given the enormous potential benefits of life skills education, this expenditure is justified.

In addition to the effect on children's health, the school as an organisation might gain from this. Evaluations of life skills programmes, for instance, indicate that the techniques employed can enhance the rapport between teachers and students and that life skills instruction is linked to a decrease in the number of complaints of disruptive behaviour issues in the classroom. Additional benefits include increased school attendance, decreased bullying, fewer referrals to specialised support services, and enhanced parent-child bonds. A life skills course must demonstrate that it is worthy of the funds allotted to it. It is recommended that process and outcome evaluation studies be conducted, with the results disseminated to all

pertinent decision makers who may have an impact on the life skills program's future. Programmes with a continuous evaluation component provide for flexibility in responding to shifting priorities and are more likely to be adjusted and sustained over time.

Life Skills Are Essential for Preparing Ready for a Better Future

Humans have limitless potential, which shows in our capacity to do extraordinary feats like groundbreaking scientific discoveries, admirable charitable endeavours, remarkable accomplishments in a variety of professions, and so forth. Psychologists think that everyone has the potential to succeed. Our ability to realise and utilise our potential is aided by life skills. Sometimes obstacles brought on by inadequate life skills prevent us from achieving our objectives and aspirations, even with our greatest intentions and willpower. Unquestionably, life skills are essential since they help us not only reach our full potential but also lead fulfilling lives.

The essential skills that help teenagers acquire the ability needed to deal with life's realities are referred to as life skills education. People with life skills are able to change their behaviour, pick new things, and make wise selections. Children can learn how to respond appropriately to their health and well-being as well as how to gain a comprehensive awareness of the biological, psychological, and social variables that impact their development through life skills education. The purpose of the study is to evaluate the quality of life skill instruction among teenagers and identify the life skills that are most crucial for bridging academic gaps. The majority of teenagers (52%) have a mediocre degree of life skills. A well-known study indicates that 22% have low life skills and 25.7% have high ones. Students who receive life skill education learn how to make thoughtful, rational decisions about their lives. It enhances a person's capacity to fulfil social obligations and demands and supports them in navigating a range of

circumstances. Adolescents will benefit from training through life skills education in overcoming obstacles in life.

Conclusion

Thus, it is clear that more has to be done to support learners' education in a more thorough way by giving them access to the appropriate life skills education content and utilising the most practical teaching techniques for the adolescent demographic. This may help the young minds of today behave in a way that satisfies societal expectations.In summary, the path to youth empowerment extends beyond the confines of conventional schooling. Comprehensive life skills education plays a role that is more and more crucial as we navigate a time of complexity and rapid change. The discussion's observations highlight the all-encompassing influence that life skills have on young people. Education in life skills is not only an adjunct to academic knowledge; it is the foundation upon which people who are resilient, adaptive, and socially conscious are constructed.

Life skills education gives young people the abilities they need to succeed in the complex web of life, from developing critical thinking to building emotional intelligence, from accepting social responsibility to safely navigating the digital realm. We recognise that life skills education has the potential to create future leaders, inventors, and empathetic global citizens, and we support its inclusion in regular curriculum. Its transforming power is demonstrated by the success, resiliency, and personal development tales that are motivated by life skills. It is an investment in the future of society as a whole as well as in the individual, helping to create a world in which young people are not only academically capable but also have the abilities to deal with the challenges of a connected world. We are planting the seeds for a future where obstacles are overcome with inventiveness, hardships are handled with resiliency, and diversity is welcomed with empathy by raising a generation that is well-versed in life skills. Prioritis-

ing and incorporating life skills education is crucial for ensuring that young people are not just equipped for the future but also actively involved in creating a world that is more affluent, peaceful, and enlightened.

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Fake News, Disinformation, and Misinformation in Social Media: A Comprehensive Review

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Abstract

This research paper provides a comprehensive review of the phenomenon of fake news, disinformation, and misinformation in the context of social media. With the rapid growth and widespread adoption of social media platforms, the dissemination of false or misleading information has become a significant concern affecting individuals, communities, and societies at large. This paper aims to analyse the various dimensions of fake news, disinformation, and misinformation, including their definitions, characteristics, and consequences.Through an extensive review of scholarly literature and empirical studies, the paper examines the origins and drivers of fake news, disinformation, and misinformation, highlighting the role of social media platforms, algorithmic biases, and human cognitive biases. Additionally, it explores the social, political, and economic motivations behind the creation and dissemination of such content, along with the potential impacts on public opinion, trust, and democratic processes.

Furthermore, this review delves into the mechanisms and techniques employed in the production

and distribution of fake news, disinformation, and misinformation in social media ecosystems. It explores the role of user-generated content, malicious actors, and automated bots in amplifying and disseminating false information. The paper also investigates the challenges associated with identifying and combating fake news, disinformation, and misinformation, including the limitations of fact-checking, platform moderation, and regulatory frameworks.

Keywords: *fake news, disinformation, misinformation, social media, information disorder, algorithmic bias, cognitive bias, social impact, media literacy, fact-checking, regulation, digital media, trust, democratic processes.*

Introduction

In recent years, the proliferation of social media platforms has revolutionized the way information is disseminated and consumed, allowing individuals to connect, share, and engage with a vast network of users worldwide. While this unprecedented connectivity has undoubtedly brought numerous benefits, it has also given rise to a concerning phenomenon: the spread of fake news, disinformation, and misinformation. These deceptive forms of information pose a significant challenge to individuals, communities, and societies, as they undermine trust, distort public opinion, and disrupt democratic processes.

The purpose of this research paper is to provide a comprehensive review of fake news, disinformation, and misinformation in the context of social media. By examining the various dimensions of this phenomenon, including its definitions, characteristics, and consequences, this study seeks to shed light on the intricacies and complexities of information disorder in the digital age. Fake news, disinformation, and misinformation are not new concepts; they have long existed in different forms throughout history.

However, the advent of social media has amplified their reach and impact exponentially. Information can now spread rapidly and seamlessly across platforms, often without proper verification or accountability. Consequently, false or misleading narratives can quickly gain traction, influencing public discourse, shaping perceptions, and even swaying electoral outcomes.

This research paper aims to explore the mechanisms and techniques employed in the production and distribution of fake news, disinformation, and misinformation within social media ecosystems. It delves into the role of user-generated content, malicious actors, and automated bots in amplifying and spreading false narratives. Furthermore, it examines the challenges associated with identifying and countering these deceptive forms of information, including the limitations of fact-checking initiatives, platform moderation, and regulatory frameworks.

Literature Review

Fake news, disinformation, and misinformation are all terms that refer to the spread of false or misleading information (Lazer et al., 2018). Fake news is deliberately fabricated information that is designed to deceive people. Disinformation is false information that is spread with the intent to deceive. Misinformation is false information that is spread unintentionally.

Social media has become a major platform for the spread of fake news, disinformation, and misinformation (Shu et al., 2017). This is because social media platforms are designed to amplify information that is shared by users. This means that false information can spread quickly and easily on social media, even if it is not true.

The spread of fake news, disinformation, and misinformation can have a number of negative consequences (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017). It can undermine trust in institutions, it can lead to people making bad decisions,

and it can even incite violence. The spread of fake news, disinformation, and misinformation can have a number of negative consequences (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017). It can undermine trust in institutions, it can lead to people making bad decisions, and it can even incite violence.

In this literature review, I will discuss the research on fake news, disinformation, and misinformation in social media. I will discuss the different types of fake news, the factors that contribute to the spread of fake news, and the consequences of fake news. I will also discuss the efforts that are being made to combat the spread of fake news.

Types of Fake News

There are a number of different types of fake news. Some of the most common types of fake news include:

Political fake news: This type of fake news is designed to influence the outcome of an election or other political event.

Economic fake news: This type of fake news is designed to manipulate the stock market or other financial markets.

Healthcare fake news: This type of fake news is designed to spread misinformation about health and medical topics.

Scientific fake news: This type of fake news is designed to spread misinformation about scientific topics.

Social fake news: This type of fake news is designed to spread misinformation about social issues.

Factors that Contribute to the Spread of Fake News

There are a number of factors that contribute to the spread of fake news. Some of the most important factors include:

Social media algorithms: Social media algorithms are designed to amplify information that is shared by users. This means that false information can spread quickly and easily on social media, even if it is not true.

Confirmation bias: Confirmation bias is the tendency to seek out information that confirms our existing beliefs and to ignore information that contradicts our beliefs. This makes us more likely to believe fake news that confirms our existing beliefs. Confirmation bias: Confirmation bias is the tendency to seek out information that confirms our existing beliefs and to ignore information that contradicts our beliefs. This makes us more likely to believe fake news that confirms our existing beliefs.

Dunning-Kruger effect: The Dunning-Kruger effect is the tendency for people with low ability to overestimate their ability. This makes us more likely to believe fake news because we may not be able to recognize it as false.

Emotions: People are more likely to share fake news that elicits strong emotions, such as anger, fear, or excitement. This is because emotional information is more likely to be remembered and shared.

Lack of media literacy: People who are not media literate are more likely to believe fake news. Media literacy is the ability to critically evaluate information from the media.

Consequences of Fake News

The spread of fake news can have a number of negative consequences. Some of the most serious consequences include:

Undermining trust in institutions: Fake news can undermine trust in institutions, such as the government, the media, and the scientific community. This can make it more difficult for these institutions to function effectively.

Leading to bad decisions: Fake news can lead people to make bad decisions. For example, people who believe fake news about the dangers of vaccines may choose not to vaccinate their children, which could put their children at risk of serious diseases.

Inciting violence: Fake news can incite violence. For example, fake news about the Rohingya Muslim minority in Myanmar was used to justify violence against the Rohingya people.

Efforts to Combat the Spread of Fake News

There are a number of efforts being made to combat the spread of fake news. Some of the most important efforts include:

Fact-checking: Fact-checking organizations are working to identify and debunk fake news.

Education: Media literacy education is being used to teach people how to critically evaluate information from the media

Technology: Technology companies are working to develop tools to identify and remove fake news from their platforms.

Regulation: Some governments are considering regulating the spread of fake news.

Theoretical framework

Theory of reasoned action

Theory of Reasoned Action Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) proposed the theory of reasoned action. According to this theory, attitude towards behaviour is one of the important predictors of behavioral intention. Attitude is defined as 'an internal evaluation of an object such as branded product'. Lutz (1985) established that a consumer's attitude towards an advertisement affects the consumer's exposure, attention and reaction to a particular advertisement through a range of different cognitive processes(sama,2019)

Research objectives

To analyze the definitions and conceptual frameworks of fake news, disinformation, and misinformation in the context of social media.

To examine the characteristics and consequences of fake news, disinformation, and misinformation, including their impact on public opinion, trust, and democratic processes.

To investigate the origins and drivers of fake news, disinformation, and misinformation in social media, including the role of social media platforms, algorithmic biases, and human cognitive biases.

To explore the mechanisms and techniques employed in the production and distribution of fake news, disinformation, and misinformation within social media ecosystems, including the role of user-generated content, malicious actors, and automated bots.

To identify the challenges associated with identifying and combating fake news, disinformation, and misinformation, such as the limitations of fact-checking initiatives, platform moderation, and regulatory frameworks.

To examine the efforts made by social media platforms, technology companies, governments, and civil society organizations to mitigate the spread of fake news, disinformation, and misinformation, including technological solutions, media literacy programs, and collaborative initiatives.

To provide a comprehensive review of the existing literature and empirical studies on fake news, disinformation, and misinformation in social media, synthesizing the main themes, findings, and debates.

To offer critical insights and recommendations for future research, policy, and practice in addressing the challenges posed by fake news, disinformation, and misinformation in social media

Problem statement

The proliferation of fake news, disinformation, and misinformation in social media has emerged as a significant

challenge, affecting individuals, communities, and societies. The rapid growth and widespread adoption of social media platforms have facilitated the rapid spread and amplification of false or misleading information, leading to the distortion of public opinion, erosion of trust, and disruption of democratic processes. Despite various efforts to address this issue, the complex nature of information disorder in social media ecosystems presents persistent challenges in identifying, combating, and mitigating the detrimental effects of fake news, disinformation, and misinformation. Therefore, there is a pressing need for a comprehensive review of the phenomenon to better understand its origins, drivers, mechanisms, and consequences, as well as to identify effective strategies and interventions to counteract its negative impacts.

History of Fake News and Its Impact on Society

Fake news, the dissemination of false or misleading information presented as factual, is not a recent phenomenon. Throughout history, misinformation and propaganda have been employed to manipulate public opinion, sway political landscapes, and shape societal narratives (Lasswell, 1927; Esser &Strömbäck, 2014). With the advent of modern technologies and the rise of digital media, the impact and reach of fake news have significantly expanded. This article explores the historical roots of fake news, highlighting its evolution over time and its profound impact on society.

Early Instances of Fake News

The origins of fake news can be traced back to ancient times. In ancient Rome, for example, political leaders would often spread fabricated stories or rumors to gain favor or discredit their adversaries. Similarly, during the medieval period, false accounts and rumors were disseminated to incite religious or ethnic tensions. The invention of the printing press in the 15th century further accelerated the spread of misinformation, with sensationalized pamphlets and news sheets being used to manipulate public opinion.

Propaganda and Fake News in the 20th Century

The 20th century witnessed the rise of state-sponsored propaganda, which utilized fake news to advance political agendas. Notable examples include Nazi Germany's dissemination of anti-Semitic propaganda and Soviet Union's control over information flow. The development of mass media, such as radio and television, further amplified the impact of fake news, as it could reach a broader audience with greater speed and influence.

Digital Era and the Proliferation of Fake News

The advent of the internet and social media platforms marked a significant turning point in the history of fake news. With the democratization of information dissemination, anyone could now create and share content without traditional gatekeepers. This led to a surge in the production and consumption of fake news. In recent years, social media platforms have faced criticism for their role in spreading false information, with viral hoaxes and fabricated stories gaining traction and shaping public discourse (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017).

Impact of Fake News on Society

The impact of fake news on society is far-reaching and multifaceted. It undermines public trust in traditional media and institutions, erodes democratic processes, and fuels social polarization. Studies have shown that exposure to fake news can lead to the formation of false beliefs, influencing individuals' political attitudes and behaviors. Moreover, fake news has been linked to real-world consequences, such as electoral interference, public health misinformation, and social unrest.

Combating Fake News

Efforts to combat fake news have been implemented at various levels. Fact-checking organizations have emerged to verify and debunk false information. Social media platforms

have introduced measures to flag and limit the spread of misleading content. Media literacy programs and critical thinking education have aimed to equip individuals with the skills necessary to navigate the information landscape effectively.

Findings

Interpretation of the Results

The results of the comprehensive review on fake news, disinformation, and misinformation in social media shed light on the complex and pervasive nature of the phenomenon. The interpretation of these findings reveals several key insights. Firstly, the historical roots of fake news highlight its longstanding presence in society, evolving from ancient times to the digital era. This demonstrates the enduring nature of misinformation and propaganda in shaping public opinion and societal narratives. Secondly, the impact of fake news on society is profound, encompassing the erosion of trust in traditional media, the manipulation of public opinion, and the disruption of democratic processes. The review underscores the harmful consequences of fake news, including the formation of false beliefs and the perpetuation of social polarization. Furthermore, the examination of efforts to combat fake news reveals the complexity of addressing the issue, with challenges arising from the speed of information dissemination, limitations of fact-checking, and the role of social media platforms.

Implications of the Findings:

The findings have important implications for various stakeholders, including policymakers, media organizations, social media platforms, and the general public. Firstly, policymakers need to develop regulatory frameworks that strike a balance between protecting freedom of speech and addressing the harmful impacts of fake news. Media organizations should invest in fact-checking initiatives and strengthen their role as trustworthy sources of information.

Social media platforms must take responsibility for content moderation, algorithmic transparency, and the prevention of the viral spread of false information. Additionally, the general public should be equipped with media literacy skills and critical thinking abilities to navigate the information landscape effectively.

Comparison with Previous Research

This comprehensive review contributes to the existing body of research on fake news, disinformation, and misinformation in social media by providing a holistic analysis of the historical roots, mechanisms, consequences, and mitigation strategies. The review builds upon previous studies that have examined specific aspects of the phenomenon, such as the role of social media platforms in information dissemination, the impact on political attitudes, and the effectiveness of fact-checking initiatives. By synthesizing and analyzing multiple dimensions of the issue, this review offers a comprehensive perspective on the topic, providing a foundation for future research and policy development.

Limitations of the Study

While this comprehensive review provides valuable insights, it is important to acknowledge its limitations. Firstly, the review relies on existing literature and may be subject to the biases and limitations of the selected sources. Furthermore, the rapidly evolving nature of social media and the information landscape poses challenges in capturing the most up-to-date developments. The review may also be constrained by language and geographical biases, as the focus is primarily on English-language publications and studies conducted in specific regions. Additionally, the review may not encompass every possible dimension of the topic, and certain aspects may have been overlooked or underrepresented.

Suggestions for Future Research

Building upon this comprehensive review, several

areas for future research can be identified. Firstly, further studies could explore the psychological and cognitive factors that contribute to the susceptibility of individuals to fake news. Understanding how misinformation is processed and perceived by different individuals can help develop targeted interventions. Secondly, more research is needed to investigate the role of algorithms and platform design in the spread and amplification of fake news. Analyzing the impact of personalized content and filter bubbles can shed light on the influence of social media platforms in shaping information consumption patterns. Additionally, comparative studies across different countries and cultural contexts can provide insights into the variations in fake news dynamics and their societal consequences.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this comprehensive review has examined the history, impact, and challenges surrounding fake news, disinformation, and misinformation in social media. The analysis of historical instances of fake news reveals its longstanding presence and manipulative tactics used to shape public opinion (Lasswell, 1927; Esser &Strömbäck, 2014). With the advent of digital technologies, the proliferation of fake news has intensified, posing significant consequences for individuals, societies, and democratic processes (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017).

The findings of this review highlight the detrimental effects of fake news on public trust in traditional media and institutions (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017). The manipulation of information dissemination in social media ecosystems has led to the formation of false beliefs, social polarization, and even real-world consequences such as electoral interference and public health misinformation. The impact of fake news extends beyond the digital realm and poses substantial challenges to the integrity of public discourse and informed decision-making (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017; Pennycook & Rand,

2018).

The comparison with previous research underscores the contribution of this comprehensive review in providing a holistic perspective on the topic. By synthesizing and analyzing multiple dimensions, including the historical, psychological, and technological aspects, this review offers a comprehensive understanding of the complex nature of fake news, disinformation, and misinformation in social media. It builds upon previous studies that have examined specific aspects of the phenomenon, thereby contributing to the existing body of knowledge (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017; Pennycook & Rand, 2018).

However, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of this study. The reliance on existing literature may introduce biases and overlook certain dimensions of the topic. The rapidly evolving nature of social media and the information landscape poses challenges in capturing the most up-to-date developments. Furthermore, language and geographical biases may have influenced the selection of sources, potentially limiting the generalizability of the findings.

To address these limitations, future research should delve deeper into the psychological factors underlying individuals' susceptibility to fake news. Investigating cognitive biases, information processing mechanisms, and the role of emotions can provide insights into the mechanisms through which misinformation is perceived and shared. Additionally, comparative studies across different cultural and regional contexts can shed light on the variations in fake news dynamics and their societal consequences, helping develop context-specific interventions (Pennycook & Rand, 2018; Guess et al., 2020).

In conclusion, this comprehensive review highlights the historical roots, pervasive impact, and ongoing challenges posed by fake news, disinformation, and misinformation in

social media. By understanding the origins, mechanisms, and consequences of this phenomenon, policymakers, media organizations, social media platforms, and individuals can work collectively to mitigate its negative effects, promote media literacy, and foster an information ecosystem based on trust, accuracy, and transparency.

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Portrayal of Transgender in Indian Cinema, with special reference to 'Taali', an Indian webseries- A critical review

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Abstract

The portrayal of transgender characters in Indian films has been a subject of ongoing discussion and evolution. Transgender are those people whose gender behaviour or identity do not match with their biological sex from the time of their birth. Traditionally, transgender individuals, often referred to as "Hijras" have been depicted in Indian cinema using stereotypes and exaggerated characteristics, which perpetuated stigma and misconceptions. In recent years, there has been a growing recognition and representation of gender fluidity in film. This shift is a response to the increasing demand for authentic and inclusive storytelling, as well as the efforts of marginalized communities to have their experiences represented on screen. Taali, is a web series, based on the true story of Gauri Sawant, who is a popular transgender activist from Mumbai and is known as the voice of the community . It tells her journey as a transgender and depicts all the incidents from the life of the transgender activist and the struggles she faced during her fight to get transgenders recognised as the third gender on all official documents in India. This

research will examine how the third gender is portrayed in Indian cinema and explain how there is a shift in opinion about transgender portrayal in Indian cinema and why including these gender and sexual minorities in media is important in today's culture.

Keywords- *Transgender, Hijras, stigma, gender fluidity.*

Introduction

Humans are innately social beings who consider interactions an integral part of their everyday lives. They hear the thoughts, opinions and ideals of others around them which, often shapes the way they think also aside from fellow citizenry, another element which does influence their thinking is media whether that's broadcast media, medium or various sorts of new media that keep emerging. Like other art forms cinema is both a neighbourhood of social reality and also a medium of portraying it. Films have subtle influence on society's way of thinking. Cinema has undoubtedly contributed tons to the queer movement in India. Sexual minority consists of all those people that fall into the categories of Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals and Transgenders. Projection of gender stereotypes in films forms society's perception of gender roles. The over-saturation of gender stereotypes within the films leads to the misrepresentation of gender roles which gets embedded within the human mind and is passed on from generation to generation as a suitable view. Homosexuality remains considered a taboo in India. Section 377 of the Indian legal code which criminalizes homosexuality was introduced by British in colonial India in 1861 and it still stands within the country's books. The community which has long been marginalized and bereft of their true identity and representation within the social and cultural gestalt of society deserves critical attention. The Transgender community in India faces tons of struggle in lifestyle from lack of acceptance in society to discrimination. The struggle is to seek out an area in

society where gender nonconformity isn't being condemned as abnormal. they're never portrayed as an accepted member of the society. They're majorly portrayed as outlandish characters who are only there within the movie even as comic quotient. Doubted, ostracized, stigmatized and criminalized for hundreds of years, the sexual minorities are now stepping out from the shadow of invisibility. In the case of NATIONAL LEGAL SERVICES AUTHORITY V. UNION OF INDIA, the Indian Supreme Court acknowledged transgender individuals as "third gender." The transgender rights movement gained prominence in India on April 15, 2014. It is a well-known truth that humans are sociable animals. Every community identifies people based on their "Identity". This identifying procedure begins from the moment of birth, a newborn's journey begins as either a girl or a boy. Not only has this been a significant factor, but so has sexual orientation in addition to recognize someone as a member of this civilized society.

Objective of Study

This paper's primary goal is to draw attention to the ways that Indian cinema portrays transgender and how it has been changed over the years .

1. To study how Indian cinema manipulates Indian viewers' cultural ideas in order to get them to accept the gender identity and expression of the LGBTQ population.

2. To study the transgender community's courageous and rebellious spirit.

3. To assess the transgender people's quality of life in todays world.

4. To study the struggle of transgender people and their strength portrayed in the film 'Taali'.

Review of literature:

1. Reengagement of Transgender persons: Challenges and Opportunities by Satish Chandra.

The book sheds light on a number of transgender people's experiences. The book, written by a number of authors, goes into great detail about the situation of transgender people in India. The author has emphasized that the primary cause of their precarious situation is society's discriminatory attitude towards them. The books also provide a detailed explanation of the various gender types and their duties. Since only male and female gender roles are typically valued in society, this will aid in the understanding that there is no such thing as good or evil, right or wrong when it comes to any gender. There has been extensive discussion about the denial of education and educational possibilities, along with recommendations for creating an inclusive educational system for transgender students. Furthermore, social media's function as one.

2. Psychosocial and Educational Problems of LGBTQ Community in India: Satish Chandra.

The researcher views the question of transgender marriages as a critical first step toward inclusivity.The book's discussion of an Indian marriage sheds light on the issues related to similar unions, and how a few courageous and committed couples made it public and demonstrate to the community that transgender persons have the same rights to a dignified existence. Transgender rights campaigner Akkai Padamshali's (a trans woman) marriage and Vasudev is motivating since Akkai was the first trans lady to be granted legal status. By she faced a lot to get a accommodation despite of knowing her rights. At last, she launched a fundraising effort on a web-based platform. The desire to have children was another problem. She couldn't conceive since she was transgender, and no adoption agency would be prepared for her to adopt a child and deliver it to a transgender lady and her spouse. Since the law says nothing,this is the largest obstacle for a

trans couple to adopt a kid in India about this matter. But the couple overcome that issue and adopted a baby boy ad they named him Avin. She believes that society will eventually come to accept us for who we are. In addition, she talks about her experience shopping for baby clothes, where the store owner gladly gave her the items knowing their situation. Savita, a transgender woman who married Prasannam, encountered hostility from the groom's family due to her gender identity. Sanjay Muhury and Shree Ghatak both had the same tale to tell. Shree was accepted by her in-laws as soon as she underwent a sex change procedure. Madhuri Sarode and Jay Nath Sharma elevated the occasion by being married in front of a sizable gathering of relatives and friends at a temple.

The goal was to convey to the community and society at large that transgender people have the same rights as everyone else as long as they know how to use them.

3. Me Laxmi Me Hijra: Laxmi Narayan Tripathi.

In India, there are both educated and uneducated transgender populations. Some of them have their families accept them for who they are, while some do not. Though they both have challenging lives, it's possible to argue that individuals who have received family acceptance have an advantage over those who do not. In her memoir "Me Laxmi me Hijra," well-known transgender campaigner and social activist Laxmi Narayan Tripathi shares her personal life. In her book, she describes her experiences as a transgender person. Even though she came from an educated family that supported her in her hijra ways, she was still able to understand the negative aspects of living as a hijra or transgender person in the mainstream. Her upbringing and education equipped her with the fortitude to stand up for her rights.

4. A life in Trans Activism: Revathi.

The researcher learned that transgender people's lives are essentially an ongoing struggle that they must wage every

day of their lives in order to survive after reading "A life in trans activism" written by trans woman Revathi. According to Revathi's account, she has dealt with everything—from friends and relatives to NGOs—the list is endless. No one could have even attempted to force her to leave her home, recognize what she was going through while imprisoned in a male body with a spirit that from a woman. Her transformation into a trans woman was a horrible trip that she took. underwent minimal post-operative care after surgery to become a trans woman, subsequently how she experienced constant bleeding from that private area in public due to her stitches coming undone during the train journey.

5. A Brief History of Transgender Issues: Prof. Stephen Whittle.

The utilization of various terminologies for transgender persons is revealed in the current investigation to be an extremely interesting fact. How and when this terminology came into existence is a crucial piece of information. The term "transvestite" first appeared around 1910, by a German sexologist. The Berlin Institute was the first to perform sex change surgery. Around 1971, we first learned the term "transsexual." Polygender is a term that originated in California. The Criminal Laws Act, which made homosexuality illegal in the UK, was passed in 1885. Ernest Boulton and Fred were detained for acting indecently in the first occurrence of public trial that was recorded in 1870. Due to these rules and their effects, individuals began to panic and seek medical treatment. Probably Krafft-Ebbing (1840–1902), a professor of psychiatry at Vienna, was the first sexologist to take a serious interest in the sexual desires of Trans people.

6. "Status of transgender in India": A review-Pinki Poonam Malik Krishna Duhan and N Pavithra

The current study highlights that in order to mainstream transgender people, the public must take the lead and that the government should simply act as a facilitator. Transgender

individuals experience high levels of stress and lack a support system as a result of being shunned by society. Due to this, they are forced to turn to drug or alcohol abuse, which may be very harmful to them, society, and other people because those who are under their influence may commit crimes. In order for transgender people to participate in community development on an equal basis with everyone else, they must be liberated from the stigma associated with their identity.

7. "Transgender and the Main Stream":

The research indicates that while most Indians are obsessed with the idea of gender dualism, they don't seem to want to acknowledge this community. The study addressed the drive for ration cards, passports, and voter identification cards spearheaded by transgender activist groups in Tamil Nadu. The only state that formally acknowledges this population as belonging to the third gender is Tamil Nadu. The state's Social Welfare Department established the Tamil Nadu Aravanigal Welfare Board in May 2008 with the goal of concentrating on issues related to education, sources of income, and spiritual security. The study primarily focuses on the fact that transgender persons in Tamil Nadu have begun to operate independent business with the assistance of the government and self-help groups. Previously, they faced numerous obstacles in the private sector of employment, primarily related to their gender identification. In addition to this, the government has actively and continuously fought to improve the lives of transgender persons in the fields of education and health.

8. "De-Identifying the Distressed in the Transgender Community Related to Their Identity Formation and Discrimination in India":

Though LGBTQAI is becoming more and more accepted around the world, especially in The present adoption of Western culture is significantly different in India, where the culture is varied and dispersed over rural, semi-urban, and

metropolitan areas. The transgender population in India continues to face marginalization and rejection because of their gender expression and professional decisions, even if transgender women are essential for the purpose of blessing births and weddings. As opposed to this they enjoy a higher status within the larger society, where they encounter discrimination in their little town. From a personal, social, and health standpoint, as well as from the variety of previous narratives provided by the respondents, it is evident that trans women face discrimination in the semi-urban environment due to their gender identity and expression. The majority of people experience further stigmatization and social rejection as a result of this widespread discrimination. This also limited their ability to publicly express who they were sexually. The irony is that, although though they live with us, they are not a part of us. The community accepts them only at designated events in order to uphold the traditional significance and accompanying beliefs.

Portrayal of Third gender or Hijras in Indian cinema.

An important part of cinematic representation has been the way hijra characters are portrayed in Indian films; these portrayals capture the nuanced social and cultural issues that surround the hijra population. The hijra inhabits a space that is not simply a "third gender" between men and women, but also a space that lies between identity and performance, myth and reality, and society's interior and outside. It is evident from watching these movies that how the hijra characters are portrayed mirrors how the story handles other oppressed communities. It is possible for a movie to have a theme that is inclusive of marginalized characters, including transgender people, and to show respect for them; it is also feasible for a movie to uphold the dominant culture and maintain transgender people as secondary characters with no agency. Sadashiv Amrapurkar plays Maharani, a eunuch/transgender figure, in the Mahesh Bhatt-directed film "Sadak". The difficulties Maharani and other hijra characters encounter in

society are examined in the movie. Although some prejudices have been pointed out in the representation, this was one of the first times in Bollywood history that a hijra character had a prominent role. "Tamanna," helmed by Mahesh Bhatt, is the moving tale of a eunuch, played by Paresh Rawal. The movie explores the protagonist's challenges as they try to accept themselves and deal with prejudice in society. In Indian cinema, "Tamanna" is regarded as one of the most subtle depictions of a hijra character. The first transgender person to be elected to public office in India, Shabnam Mausi, is the real-life subject of this Yogesh Bharadwaj-directed movie. Actor Ashutosh Rana plays the title role. Shabnam Mausi's journey, struggles, and struggle for social acceptability are all explored in the movie. Four short stories make up the anthology film "I Am," which was directed by Onir. "Abhimanyu," one of the segments, delves into the lives of a transsexual individual portrayed by Sanjay Suri. The film deftly tackles the difficulties the character faces, helping to forward a more complex portrayal of hijras in Indian cinema. Starring Akshay Kumar as a transgender character, "Laxmii" is directed by Raghava Lawrence. It is one of the popular Bollywood films that tries to address transgender issues, including the violence and discrimination experienced by hijra people, despite criticism for its casting and portrayal.

Two volumes featuring the proceedings of a symposium on transgender wellness organized by C. Subramanian and M. Surgitha were published in 2015 by Annamalai University in Chidambaram, Tamil Nadu. In a study, T. Balaji concentrated on depictions of violence against transgender individuals and proposed that the Indian government outlaw such depictions in accordance with the Cinematograph Act of 1952. This seems to be a reaction to a Tamil movie that Balaji purposefully chooses not to mention. Before the opening title of every Indian movie, a black-and-white card serves as a reminder that the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting certifies all movies. This government agency has the author-

ity to request that movies be edited or changed before they are released. "The government's hyper-sensitivity towards any reference to people's struggles, particularly in the cause of socialism," as noted by Mir, has been reflected in the censor board since the 1950s (212). Balaji's argument for the same censor board to ban anti-transgender violence in movies contrasts with Mir's assessment that government control stifles progressive messages. There is some doubt as to whether the government's decisions will advance the interests of the marginalized or rather serve to uphold the status quo. The potential to shock, upend the current quo, and reject the norm is what gives queer representation its power. There's a concern among many LGBT producers and viewers that these representations might become trite and standard. According to Ghosh, "[A]s the narrative logic of visibilizing the queer may, at times, run counter to the logic of sexual politics, looking at queer cinema may be particularly fraught" (20). Communities like the hijras could not accept being normalized in this narrative because marginalization is a part of queer history. The real employment of hijra actors is conspicuously absent from the positive representation of hijra characters, nevertheless. The transgender role in each of the aforementioned films was portrayed by a male actor dressed in costume. Due to the difficulty transgender actors have in finding employment, American media has been grappling with this problem as cisgender actors continue to play admirably nuanced portrayals of transgender characters. There's not much proof that hijras work as actors in the Hindi film industry. Yash Raj Films' youth-focused department did, however, develop a band named Six Pack Band for their internet video commercial with Brooke Bond tea bags (Gangal). The band's six hijras have done publicity at the Cannes Film Festival and have collaborated with A-listers like Sonu Nigam and Hrithik Roshan. There are movies in the Hindi film industry that dispel preconceptions and movies that uphold them. While some Hindi movies are frivolous and forgettable, others have significant substance. It would be a mistake for any investigation into

Hindi cinema to ignore the diversity and divergence of these works, as well as the enormous potential that Hindi filmmakers continue to explore. There is room in this world for the voiceless to be heard.

Portrayal of Transgender in "Taali"

Taali is an authentic and sincere endeavor to portray the politics and classism present in the transgender community.

In the beginning of Taali, we see Ganesh sitting in his school, with a pink hairband and long nails. His teacher is seen in the next scene asking her students what careers they would like to pursue. She makes the assumption that Ganesh, like his father, would likely want to work as an inspector. His peers gasp in shock as he stands up and declares, "I want to be a mother." Ganesh's trip from "Gaali to Taali" is portrayed in the series. Ever since she was a young child, Gauri Sawant had a desire to have children.

Once at home, we witness Ganesh, much to her mother's dismay, envisioning himself as a girl in front of a mirror. After witnessing Ganesh perform Lavani, his father makes him swear he will never again dance like a lady. You will undoubtedly be moved by the backstory of Gauri Sawant, also known as Ganesh, and his quest to comprehend what, how, and why he feels the way he does. He is gradually realizing that he is not at all like a boy. The web series chronicles Gauri's early years, the strain in her father-child connection, her early mother loss, her path of transition, and her longing to become a mother. It also demonstrates her struggle for legal rights. She desires that she and other transgender persons be accepted as citizens of this nation and treated with dignity. "Identity, survival, and equality" are the things Sushmita's character is fighting for in a scene where she is sitting in a lawyer's cabin. We witness Gauri's journey following sex-change surgery in a different sequence.

His mother, who died when he was still a child, was the only one who truly understood him. His father, or dada,

was unable to comprehend his predicament his sister's marriage. Without realizing his predicament, he persisted in making him act manly. He forced Ganesh to take unpleasant medications and other things, and he also took him to sex physicians. Sushmita Sen skillfully captures, without mocking, the difficulties faced by transsexual people. Taali also discusses the importance of employment, education, and social acceptance for the community. We don't hear much about Gauri's fight for the right to adopt children, but we can't help but grin at Sushmita Sen for being such a "bindaas" mother to her kids. A peek of Ganesh's sex reassignment operation to become Gauri is also shown to us. At this point, she begins advocating for transgender rights, which ultimately prompts her to seek the Indian Supreme Court for the recognition of third genders as legitimate citizens. Taali is an effective attempt to portray the life of transgender individuals. The show will force you to consider things, and you probably won't instantly roll up your car glasses the next time you see a transgender person at a stop sign. The director of "Taali," Ravi Jadhav, is a well-known Marathi film director. The national award-winning filmmaker has directed pictures like "Balgandharva," "Natarang," and "Balak-Palak" that deal with strange issues. Gender identity is a recurring theme in his works, which helped him direct "Taali" to the best of his abilities. It's not overly dramatic or preachy.

Conclusion:

As India's society develops, so do people's attitudes. Third-gender films portray, how film reflects society because of their creation and showing. Movement for acknowledgment of a Third Gender in society was accompanied by creation of a film about Third Gender. This is often noticed worldwide, e.g. in Spain following the legal recognition of the third gender category in 2003, showing the prominence of LGBT people in cinema production and viewership. Other third-gender films in other countries also exhibit a similar tendency in India. In India, too, we saw a similar trend. Ho-

mosexuality's legalisation in India has been a key factor in developing and exhibiting third-gender films. The problem was as prevalent in the movies as in real life.In this day and age, "Taali" is a highly significant movie. Eunuchs were not even recognized in the nation until 2014. Their existence was not substantiated by any legal documents. They were ineligible for government aid of any type, adoption, marriage, or driving. In the modern era, application forms always include a 'other' option in addition to the options for male and female. Only when Shreegauri Sawant filed a request for legal recognition with the Supreme Court did this occur. The transgender community's rights were recognized by the Supreme Court in 2014 as a "third gender." Gauri has made it possible for transgender persons to determine their gender identification and have dignified lives.

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Glimpsing Beyond Sight: The Vision of the Beyond Sight Foundation through the Lens of the Blind

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Abstract

The notion of conveying visual information through static images might initially appear paradoxical when considering individuals with visual impairments. However, it is indeed feasible. To challenge the prevailing dichotomous thinking patterns that tend to associate concepts primarily with visual representations, Partho Bhowmick, the founder of the Beyond Sight Foundation, has undertaken the remarkable endeavour of training a team of visually impaired individuals as proficient photographers. In 2004, Partho Bhowmick encountered a photography magazine from a vendor in Mumbai. Within its pages, he came across an article featuring Evgen Bavčar, an acclaimed blind photographer based in Paris, renowned for his exceptional work. Inspired by Bavčar's artistic accomplishments, Partho embarked on a mission to impart photography skills to visually impaired individuals across India. Following nearly two years of meticulous independent research on the intersection of art and blindness, Partho Bhowmick established "Blind With Camera" in February 2006, initially enrolling a single visually impaired student in Mumbai. Subsequently, this pioneering initiative

has cultivated and expanded, extending its reach to more than 1,500 visually impaired individuals both within India and abroad. A substantial number of these individuals have not only developed the capability to independently capture photographs but have also assumed roles as trainers, and a select few have even undertaken commissioned photography assignments. "Blind With Camera" stands as a groundbreaking initiative, marking its distinction as the first of its kind in India. It has extended its footprint globally, with branches established in the United Kingdom, Singapore, Malaysia, and Greece. Since 2009, it has functioned as an integral project under the aegis of the Beyond Sight Foundation. This article serves a dual purpose: it endeavours to chronicle the diverse range of successful projects undertaken by the organization and simultaneously challenges conventional notions concerning human capabilities. In doing so, it seeks to dismantle the barriers that often impede individuals in their pursuit of exploration.

Keywords: *Photography, Blind, Beyond Sight Foundation, Discourse, Art.*

Eyes are physically natural lenses, but culturally taught

(Oliveira 12)

The phenomenon encapsulated by Glauce Oliveira's insightful statement, "The eyes are 'physically natural lenses, but culturally taught'" , constitutes a fascinating intersection of biology and culture, inviting profound exploration. This research article delves into the intricate relationship between our biological visual apparatus and the cultural context in which it operates. While our eyes function as universal natural lenses, capturing and refracting light to form images, it is the cultural teachings and norms that act as potent filters, significantly influencing how we perceive and interpret visual

stimuli. This interplay between our physical eyes and cultural upbringing permeates various facets of human existence, including aesthetics, symbolism, spatial awareness, and artistic expression. By unpacking this phenomenon, we aim to shed light on the profound impact of culture on our visual experiences and deepen our understanding of the complex dynamics between biology and society in shaping human perception.

The intersection of blindness and visual art constitutes a captivating and multifaceted realm within the broader domain of artistic expression. This dynamic juxtaposition challenges conventional assumptions about the intrinsic connection between sight and visual creativity, offering a profound exploration of the human capacity to transcend physical limitations. Blindness, characterized by the absence or impairment of visual perception, invites a reevaluation of the fundamental relationship between the sensory, cognitive, and emotional dimensions of human experience. Visual art, traditionally considered a primarily sight-dependent medium, confronts its own boundaries as artists with visual impairments engage with materials, forms, and ideas to convey their unique perspectives on the world. This scholarly inquiry embarks on a comprehensive examination of the intricate interplay between blindness and visual art, encompassing historical and contemporary perspectives, the creative processes of blind artists, the sensory dimensions of their work, and the transformative potential of this intersection to expand the horizons of artistic expression and human understanding. Through this exploration, we aim to illuminate the profound capacity of art to transcend physical constraints and offer new avenues for perceiving, experiencing, and appreciating the world, while concurrently challenging normative paradigms of artistic production and reception. Blind visual artists like John Bramblitt, Esref Armagan, Sargy Mann, and Lisa Fittipaldi have left an indelible mark on the art world by subverting established norms and redefining the

boundaries of artistic expression. Through their exceptional creativity and resilience, they challenge the conventional belief that visual art relies solely on the sense of sight. John Bramblitt's textured paintings, Esref Armagan's three-dimensional works, Sargy Mann's memory-driven art, and Lisa Fittipaldi's tactile compositions collectively underscore the profound potential of art to transcend physical limitations. They invite viewers to experience art on a multisensory level and encourage a reevaluation of the traditional paradigms of artistic production and appreciation, proving that creativity knows no bounds, even in the absence of sight.

Another stalwart in this domain of visual art is Evgen Bavčar, a Slovenian photographer and writer who is widely acclaimed for his remarkable work in the field of visual arts. What makes Bavčar's photography particularly exceptional is that he has been blind since birth. Born in 1946 in Slovenia, he lost his sight due to a medical accident shortly after his birth. Despite this profound visual impairment, Bavčar has not allowed his disability to hinder his artistic expression. Bavčar's work primarily revolves around black-and-white photography, and his images often convey a strong sense of tactile and sensory perception. He has an uncanny ability to capture the essence of his subjects through touch, sound, and memory, offering viewers a unique perspective on the world. His photographs explore themes of blindness, sensory experience, and the boundaries of human perception. Bavčar's work challenges conventional notions of photography as a purely visual medium and invites viewers to engage with images on a more profound and multisensory level. In addition to his photography, Bavčar is also an accomplished writer and philosopher, and his writings often delve into the philosophical and existential aspects of blindness and human existence. He has published several books, including In Praise of the Blind and What Is a Blind Photographer? Throughout his career, Evgen Bavčar has received numerous awards and accolades for his pioneering contributions to the

world of photography and art. His work continues to inspire and provoke contemplation on the complex relationship between perception, disability, and artistic expression. In an article penned by Douglas McCulloh titled Shot in the Dark: Blindness and the Zero Point of Photography, McCulloh recounts his encounters with Evgen Bavčar, highlighting Bavčar's minimalistic approach to photography. Bavčar, McCulloh notes, carried with him only three essentials: a flat rectangular package, a compact digital camera, and a vivid mental image stored within his private gallery of thoughts. For Bavčar, these were the sole requisites, as he drew upon the emotions in his heart and the soundscapes in his mind to create art. Bavčar's approach to art, he asserted, was more deeply rooted in conceptualization compared to many other artists.

Fig.1: Evgen Bavčar, the blind photographer

Fig.2: Image captured by Evgen Bavčar

Evgen Bavčar has been a source of immense inspiration for many people, Partho Bhowmick, is one such person, whose encounter with the former in Mumbai, led to the establishment of Beyond Sight Foundation, the pioneer of blind photography in India.

Beyond Sight Foundation: Genesis and Evolution

In the early months of 2006, Partho Bhowmick initiated the Blind With Camera project in Mumbai, inspired by his encounter with the accomplished blind photographer Evgen Bavcar, who resided in Paris. This endeavor followed years of dedicated research into the intersection of blindness and visual art. Through the photographic workshops organized by the Blind With Camera project, individuals with visual impairments were empowered to harness their non-visual senses for capturing images. The fundamental goal of this initiative was to demonstrate that the creation of photographs transcends the realm of visual perception and can be as successfully crafted within the mind as through the eyes. Over the course of time, the efforts of the Blind With Camera project coalesced into the Beyond Sight exhibition, which embarked on a journey across India and various international destinations. The Beyond Sight exhibition embodies the essence of inclusivity, offering a diverse array of features designed to facilitate access and enjoyment for visitors with visual impairments. It encompasses tactile images for touch, Braille footnotes, large-format prints, visual aids, and guided descriptive tours, collectively enriching the experience and enabling visually impaired individuals to engage meaningfully with the exhibited photographs.

Fig. 3: The Logo of Beyond Sight Foundation

The works stemming from this project have found a platform in esteemed venues such as NCPA Mumbai, Karnataka Chitrakala Parishath Bangalore, India Habitat Centre New Delhi, Academy of Fine Arts Kolkata, Kala Ghoda Art Festival Mumbai, and Kala Academy Panjim Goa. Additionally, the project's genesis and development have been presented and discussed at prestigious institutions like IIT Mumbai, IIM Ahmedabad, and the Azim Premji Foundation in Bangalore. Notably, in November 2010, the project's creations were exhibited at the DaDa International Disability Art Festival in Liverpool, the Nehru Center in London, and several other cities across the United Kingdom. The Blind With Camera project stands as a pioneering initiative in India, representing a trailblazing endeavor. In 2009, recognizing the project's transformative potential, the Beyond Sight Foundation came into existence. This foundation was established with the aim of extending and deepening the societal impact of art education, artistic practices, and ensuring equitable access to art for individuals with visual impairments.

Art created by individuals with visual impairments embarks on a transformative journey, unlocking their latent potential for creative expression, stimulating emotions and intellect, and nurturing the development of their personalities. This creative process, demanding acute focus of the mind, heightened senses, discernment, insightfulness, and intuitive prowess, also serves as a crucible for cultivating vital social and workplace skills. These encompass problem-solving acumen, unwavering perseverance, adaptability, collaborative aptitude, and adept time management, collectively rendering visually impaired individuals socially adept and more employable. Beyond these tangible benefits, engagement in the arts can yield financial gains and offer avenues for participation in community-based art activities. Moreover, the ripple effect extends to inspire peer groups to explore artistic pursuits. Increased access to art and culture enriches

the visually impaired community, with exhibitions, festivals, discussion forums, and sensitization workshops serving as conduits that bring sighted and visually impaired individuals onto an equitable platform, fostering direct dialogue. This exposure grants the general public new perspectives and insights, rectifying misconceptions about visual impairment and disability at large. Consequently, it bridges the divide between "us" and "them," fostering increased tolerance and inclusivity within society.

The Exemplars:

Pranav Lal's journey into the world of photography is a testament to his remarkable ingenuity and determination despite the challenges he faces. Born blind and with limited dexterity in his left hand, Pranav embarked on a unique photographic odyssey in 2010 when he participated in a pinhole camera workshop facilitated by Blind With Camera in Goa. During the workshop, Pranav harnessed the innovative "Seeing With Sound" technology, a transformative approach to visual perception. Equipped with goggles fitted with a camera or a mobile camera, he utilized specialized 'Voice' software. This technology worked by translating the visual information captured by the camera into auditory output, creating a distinctive, somewhat robotic sound. What sets Pranav apart is his exceptional ability to mentally decode this auditory output, transforming it into vivid mental images. In his mind's eye, he crafts detailed visual interpretations of the objects and scenes before the camera. Remarkably, Pranav achieves an impressive accuracy rate of 60% in his visual interpretations, a testament to his honed sensory perception and cognitive abilities. This innovative approach to photography, guided by Pranav's unique adaptations, underscores the profound potential of technology to transcend physical limitations. Through his work, Pranav not only challenges conventional notions of visual art but also demonstrates the remarkable power of human adaptability and creativity in the face of adversity. His journey serves as an inspirational testament

to the indomitable spirit of individuals with disabilities and their capacity to redefine what is possible in the realm of visual expression.

In 2019, Bhavesh Patel, who has been blind since birth and received photography training through the Blind With Camera program since 2010, was commissioned to capture images using an OPPO mobile phone. He embarked on this unique endeavor guided by audio cues, delving into the realm of photography to unveil truths that extend beyond the limitations of human vision. This marked his second significant milestone in his photographic journey, following his earlier achievement of photographing Katrina Kaif for the LUX Perfume Portrait campaign in 2015. It is noteworthy that Bhavesh received compensation in line with industry standards, underscoring the importance of recognizing and valuing the contributions of artists with disabilities while upholding their dignity.

Photography as a Medium of Mediation: Challenging Conceptions of Blindness, Visibility, and Invisibility

This research article thus delves into the multifaceted role of photography as a medium that not only represents and crystallizes moments in space but also challenges preconceived notions of blindness, visibility, and invisibility within our lived reality. Photography encapsulates not only what occurred but also what was possible to capture from reality. In this regard, a photograph is inherently shaped by the perspective of the photographer during its creation and by the interpretation of the viewer during its observation. These perspectives are socially constructed and involve all five senses, reflecting a vision of the social world that is historically contingent. The primary objective of this article is to contest prevailing conceptions, particularly those related to blindness, visibility, and invisibility, using photography as a means of mediation. Photography, within this context, becomes a vehicle for expressing sensory experiences and invoking a

sense of urgency in both its creators and viewers. It operates as a visual sign, akin to other cultural and artistic languages, deriving its meaning through its intricate relationship with other individuals and perspectives. It not only reflects the ways in which people perceive and interact with the world but also opens avenues for diverse perspectives and senses to emerge. As Susan Sontag astutely observes, photography serves as evidence of the myriad ways in which individuals experience and perceive the world. It beckons viewers to engage with what is seen and often overlooked, shedding light on aspects of reality that may elude conventional perception. In this manner, photography extends the boundaries of our visual understanding, homing in on facets of reality that might remain obscured in a conventional sense or are readily isolated. Hence, photography is deeply embedded in the process of signification and, within the context of this study, is regarded as a form of language. It operates as a dialogical and discursive means of expression created by individuals occupying specific social positions and engaging in a dialogue with the context in which their photographs are created and interpreted.

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Competition, Consumerism and Convergence in Digital Media.

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Abstract:

Digital media can be defined as any type of media that can be designed, retrieved and disseminated by means of digital platform like the internet. It includes various forms like social media, websites, online videos, podcasts, and more. Digital media has transformed the manner in which people absorb information and connect with the world. Digital media has transformed the way in which people utilize and take on the content. This paper will be focussing on the concepts of Digital media, competition, convergence and consumerism. In this paper the concepts of consumerism, convergence and competition in digital media will be discussed in detail. Since these factors play a pivotal role in shaping any industry and also has a major impact in the way media consume data.

Keywords: *Digital media, competition, convergence, consumerism, electronic devices.*

Introduction:

Digital media can be defined as any type of media that take help of electronic devices for the purpose of distribution. Electronic devices are used to create, modify or view digital media on various platforms. The various forms in which dig-

ital media is consumed are multimedia, articles, audiobooks, animation, advertisements, videos, podcasts, digital art etc. This all started in the second half of the 20th century, when digital media started to expand its space in different spheres of industries and business models. There are three ways in which we categorise digital media, they are Owned Media, Paid Media and Earned Media. Digital media is extensively used in many industries for sharing data and information. Industries that use digital media include Healthcare industry, Entertainment industry, e-Commerce industry, Marketing and Advertising industry, NGOs, Publishing industry etc.

Competition in the field of digital media:

There is a lot of competition in the digital media space as different companies who are selling similar products or services are in constant need of attention from the prospective consumers. The companies selling different products and services can flourish in the market when they can earn substantial amount of revenue or profit. To gain customers the business houses or companies who are selling various commodities have to constantly upgrade their offerings as well as customer support. So, it can be deduced from this, that from this competition in the market the various companies are constantly on the edge as well as this also acts as a motivational tool to upgrade their products and services. So, it can be said that with more competition the consumers are benefitted with an array of different choices than before and now they can also avail media experiences that are curated to fulfil personalised needs. With the inception of social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, YouTube, and Instagram the business houses are constantly seeking customer attention as well as engagement. They are constantly competing with each other to retain their customers.

Media Convergence:

Media Convergence can be defined as merging of the various types of mass media which include Print Media,

New Media, Broadcast Media as well as Traditional Media along with the internet. So, it can be said that this results in the amalgamation of the 3C's, that is Computing, Content and Communication. This is because all the three C' s is consolidated through technology. The most popular example of media convergence is our new age mobile phones popularly known as Smartphone. This Smartphone blends together different types of media, such as print media which comprises of various apps, e-books etc, new media which includes the internet and broadcast media which include radio, musical applications and streaming websites etc. into a single device which has the ability to perform various tasks for instance, making calls to clicking photographs to recording videos, playing games and so on. The other examples of media convergence include tablets, online radio which converge radio with internet, E- books which include convergence of digital technology with various paper backs, News Websites and Apps etc.

There are various advantages of Media Convergence. The following are some of the advantages:

a)   The rapid speed with which news is available is due to the media convergence between new media and traditional media.

b)   The cost of digital marketing has decreased significantly with the convergence between new media and traditional media.

c)   This media convergence has helped the audience to become content creators on social media platforms.

d)   The audience has also the power to become a content creator by sharing memes, posts etc on social platforms.

Media convergence can be broadly divided into three types:

Technological Convergence: Technological convergence takes place when new technologies overtake the previous

technologies due to better upgradation and capacity to do the same work in better way. The examples of Technological convergence are new media and career in Digital media.

Economic Convergence: Economic convergence takes place when big companies amalgamate both old and new media for selling their products or the rights of the products. The examples Economic convergence are Broadcast media and Advertising Media.

Cultural Convergence: Cultural convergence refers to adopting each other's cultures and becoming more similar. The examples of Cultural Convergence are Multimedia and Animation and MBA in Media Management.

So, this can be said that this media convergence has given us the ability to access and consume a varied range of topics or materials on a single device and thereby erasing the boundaries between various media channels.

Media Convergence has been advantageous for small companies as well as large companies because it facilitates expeditious ease of access and handiness of large amount of information and data at the touch of one's smartphone screen. Media convergence has also made communication better thus making our society more globalised though it has resulted in our unhealthy addiction to our devices too.

Consumerism in Digital Media:

Consumerism plays a very paramount part in the landscape of digital media. The reason behind it, is, the consumers are constantly inundated with advertisements on various media platforms along with some targeted marketing drives that are devised to tempt the consumers to buy products or book services. Digital media has become more impactful for the purpose of advertisements as it can efficiently reach the prospective audience with more precision. When the consumers search for certain things on

various digital platforms the data is collected and thereby the companies tailor their advertisements according to the prospective buyers' need and predilection. This makes the advertising experience of the consumers more personalized and deeply engaging. Apart from this consumerism in digital media landscape is much more than conventional advertising. The influencers on social media platform can totally alter the demands for a particular product and hence they have totally changed the manner in which most of the brands hitting the consumers. The influencers who have many subscribers and loyal fan base can easily influence customer opinion and thereby their preferences and behaviour. They generally endorse and recommend products those are sponsored by various companies and this in turn influence the purchase preferences of the consumers. Due to plethora of content and platforms that are accessible the buyers now have a variety of choices to explore. The consumers now have the power to select their own media experiences and choose those brands that coordinate with their inclinations and standards. This is the reason behind making personalised and targeted marketing by the companies to capture buyers' attention.

It is a fact that consumerism, convergence and competition have played a major role in shaping and altering the landscape of digital media. But it is also true that it has imposed many threats on the privacy of the general public. In other words, it is a fact that competition, consumerism and communication in digital media landscape has raised doubts on the ethics, privacy and effect these have on the society. Targeted advertisement is done by collecting personal data which has raised concern among the masses about the privacy and ethics of various digital platforms. Moreover, it can be seen that the constant exposure to various kinds of advertisements give rise to the tendency to buy things that are not even required and thereby leads to a culture of consumerism and materialism.

Conclusion:

The key factors that influence the digital media landscape are competition, convergence, and consumerism. Also, it can be seen that digital media, competition, convergence and consumerism are all inter-linked with one another in the present media landscape. Due to the aggressive competition among the various companies, impact of consumerism and convergence among the various media forms, digital media have powerfully impacted on the manner the consumers absorb data and immerse with digital content. The digital reorganization has changed the manner in which we absorb and interrelate with different forms of media thereby creating a thoroughly competitive environment where various business houses, companies and industries attempt to deliver the most premier consumer experiences. It is very interesting to watch how the aforementioned factors play a vital role in the transformation of the digital world. These factors have also benefitted the consumers wherein, they are invited to participate on the various media platforms to comment or text such as on Twitter. The audience is also allowed to create blogs on various media platforms, this gives them the opportunity to be heard and the best part is that, this facility that is provided to them is absolutely free of cost.

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Can the Woman Age? Gendered Age is min the Media Image of the Aging Female Body and Coming of Middle-Age in Mieko Kawakami's Breasts and Eggs.

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Abstract

The present paper looks at the prevalence of ageism over the media image of the female body, not only advanced by an absence of older women from advertisements for the beauty and anti- aging industry, but also defined by a lack of representation of women's changes in the body through age. As Naomi Wolf calls it the Beauty Myth, underlying deeply embedded within the image of the perfected woman, this paper seeks to foreground what a coming of middle age looks like for the aging female body amidst the media images of youth particularly in Mieko Kawakami's novel Breasts and Eggs. Tracing the different ways in which the predominance of the image of the perfected female body, generates greater anxiety and body dissatisfaction amongst the middle-aged woman, the paper looks at the ways in which a preoccupation with preserving youth over the female body, continues to alienate the middle-aged woman from their changing bodily experience across age, as seen in Haruki Murakami's short story collection *Men Without Women* and Junichiro Tanizaki's novel *The Key*.

Keywords: *Digital Media, Advertising, Anti-Aging, Ageism, Middle-Age, Women*

Our experiences with the body, predominate our sense of agency as subjects within the larger social, political and economic structures of which we form a part. As argued by Juliana Alzate (2020) those of our identities as embodied subjects, prevail over our experience of the world and the society, and even so, a significantly large portion of the embodied human experience, remains fairly invisible, in line with that of the female body along with the female experience of sexuality, in a societal culture deeply rooted in predominant White, Heteronormative, Capitalist and Patriarchal structure, the collective experiences of the woman remains sidelined, objectified as the flesh to be ogled at or worshipped, the female experience of the body, gets defined by an inherent alienation, experienced from youth to old age. Trapped within predominant structures, the woman's body is cut, glossed, packaged, and delivered across the realm of the digital media and advertisement industry, which in accordance with the predominant patriarchal structures, transmits the images of what Naomi Wolf calls out as the "perfected women." (Wolf, 2002) Embedded within an aspirational ideology, which seeks to transmit liability over the individual women, to meet the demands of the body they were always meant to be. The proliferation of the new media image of the female body subsumed within what Naomi Wolf identifies as the *Beauty Myth*, is further heralded by a growing incidence of a preoccupation with preserving youth, especially over the female body.

Further, the image of youth typifies what Kathryn Bayer (2005) describes as the presence of ageism, which prevails in the realm of the digital image like that of the print. Growing research in line with the predominance of ageism in the media and advertising industry reveals a significant phenomenon concerning middle-ageism, which translates into a form of discrimination in terms of ageism that targets those in the middle years, leading to a growing demand of 'anti-aging,' procedures. A preoccupation with preserving the youth or a

youthful appearance in the female body, thus comes to define the social and cultural conforming behavior that propel women towards the extreme measures of self-preservation. The female body then, is represented devoid of its signs of aging as animal specimens in bottled cases, preserved in their youth and the young body. The symbol of the breasts, then becomes a significant factor in line with the anxiety and obsession over age, amidst, the increased images of the young women, whose body exists as cut-outs; the older woman, finds it difficult to meet the standards of the beauty myth, experiencing an alienation with their own body.

Mieko Kawakami, in her seminal work, titled *Chichi to Ran or Breasts and Eggs*, explores the contemporary female experience of the uncanniness associated with the female body, and the subsuming alienation between the middle-aged woman's body and her experienced desire, under the dominant purview of the ageist beauty myth. Natsuko, one of the titular characters in the novel, contends with this growing experience of alienation with her own body, and the image of the woman she aspires to be:

> …I never became the woman I imagined. And what was I expecting? The kind of body that you see in girly magazines. A body that fit the mold of what people describe as "sexy." A body that provokes sexual fantasy. A source of desire. I guess I could say that I expected my body would have some sort of value. I thought all women grew up to have that kind of body, but that's not how things played out. (Kawakami, 2021, p.55)

Consequently, the confluence of the element of youth with fertility, further heralds a preoccupation with the preservation of the woman's body in youth, signified by a social, cultural and medical obsession over breasts and eggs, which sidelines women's preoccupation and struggles with the female reproductive organs.

Literature Review

Juliana Alzate (2020) in "Embodiment and Violence in Mieko's *Chichi To Ran*," discusses the different ways in which the breast as a symbol gets commodified in a patriarchal, capitalist society, which propagates the color and size of the breasts amidst Euro-American ideals, meant to forward a virginal, youthful image on the part of the woman's body, following which bleaching and cosmetic industries reproduce insecurities amongst middle-aged women, to buy chemical products hailing to lead them towards the body that alludes to greater desirability and satisfaction on their parts. Alzate further, clarifies the ways in which in a larger capitalist society, the norm about firmness of breasts, defines the ways in which, the female body is expected to be 'made easy,' to be measured and handled, as a solid object. In the novel, *Breast and Eggs*, the women are found to be preoccupied with toning their breasts in line with Euro- American ideals, reflecting the larger anxiety surrounding the aging woman's body and the sagginess, meant to render her body as undesirable, the growing ageism gets reflected in the anti-aging products heralded by the cosmetic and advertising industry portraying the image of youth, to be aspired to. In the novel, Natsuko's sister, Makiko contends with the procedures that can render her nipples more youthful after the change in her body post-pregnancy and breastfeeding her daughter:

> It appeared that the preoccupation, or shame, or insatiable curiosity that drove Makiko to fixate on her breasts was about more than size alone. Color was a major factor. I tried to imagine Makiko getting out of the bath, whatever time that was for her, and heading over to the fridge to grab two small bottles of medicine, which she proceeded to apply to her own nipples, making them burn and itch like hell. (Kawakami, 2021, p.55)

Further, Laura Miller (2006) in "Mammary Mania," discusses the different ways in which contemporary Japanese body

Aesthetics have been determined by the rise in the Euro-American beauty ideals within media, defined by an increased attention over the breasts, leading to a rise in nipple bleaching, in contemporary Japan. The color of a woman's nipples have been noted to define her sexuality, with a lighter pink shade showcasing 'innocence and youth,' followed by an increase in the selling of skin-lightening creams for topical use, the preoccupation with a youthful bust, that never sags, reflects a new cultural anxiety or a certain 'mammary mania,' that becomes representative of the different ways in which the beauty myth permeates across the cosmetic and advertising industry. Moreover, as defined in *The Beauty Myth*, "cosmetic companies rarely feature women older than 25." (Wolf, 2002) The absence of the older woman from the public realm and the dominant images heralded by media typifies a prevailing ageism as seen in the anti-aging beauty industry, and over here, clarifying media, in line with Harvette Gray's (2002) definition, as being composed of both written and digital technologies that transmit information, and which transmit the beauty myth in line with ageist ideals.

Makiko's obsession with her breasts and Natsuko's eventual preoccupation with her 'fertility,' as someone nearing middle-age in *Breasts and Eggs,* also define the absence of representation of middle-aged women's diverse experiences with their body, in "Gender relations and Anti-Aging Ads" Toni Calasanti (2007) argues about the different ways in which an age discrimination is promoted by marketing discourse that hides physical signs of aging, which also exemplifies one of the many ways in which, there is an absence of older women from the public discourse surrounding cosmetic and anti-aging products. The cultural ideology surrounding youth from a gendered dimension propels the female body to be devoid of any signs of aging, to the benefit of the anti-aging industry which advertises products that forestall or reverse signs of aging, consequently, the ageism surrounding our culture, has been excessively embedded so much so that the

ageist nomenclature surrounding anti-aging, such as those in advertisements relating to getting the "breasts of your dreams," (Kawakami, 2021) seem to be a part of the normative experience.

If in contrast to the dominance of ageist imagery surrounding the female body, in particular the obsession over women's breasts, the social-and cultural milieu within which such advertisements are advanced, would instead focus on the diverse experiences of the female body over age, then it could lead to a radical reimagining not only of beauty and desirability but also women's actual lived embodied experiences. Naomi Wolf in *The Beauty Myth* contends for a "female liberation which is inherently connected to the female beauty," (Wolf, 2002) in line with which the advertisement and anti-aging industry predominantly transmit censored information about the body, while in place of which, the female liberation in line with the embodied experience would prevail if the imagery instead focused on women's bodies through different ages, examining changes after birth and breast-feeding as integral to women's bodies.

Methodology

In line with the image of the woman as a construct, in some of the popular literary works by male authors one finds the representation of the female embodied experience and the female sexuality, under the dominant purview of the patriarchal, heteronormative gaze, that either deifies or despises the female body as an 'essence,' in the midst of which the woman's exploration and acknowledgement of her own sexuality across youth and middle-age remains invisible.

Haruki Murakami regarded as one of the most influential and significant contemporary writers not only in terms of the Japanese literary tradition but also the contemporary literary scene, additionally, more of his popular works like the *Norwegian Wood* have been critiqued by feminist literary critics as representing a deeply patriarchal construct of the

woman, subsuming the female figure as a medium for the male protagonist to either self-transcendence or a gradual demise. Murakami's short story collection, *Men Without Women*, explores the dynamic between the men and women interlaced through these stories and the prevailing alienation experienced by the men in the figure of the women.

In the story titled, "An Independent Organ," the identity of the fifty-two year old is told through the eyes of another male onlooker who vows to create a "clear portrait," (Murakami, 2017) of Dr Tokai, whose profession as a cosmetic surgeon further foregrounds an integral aspect to the creation of the image of the young woman, which much like the predominant anti- aging and advertising industry, hails to the preservation of desirability over the female body, in one such scenes in the short story, Dr Tokai proclaims, to the significance of the alterability of appearances, for "as long as there wasn't some major flaw that aroused his professional interest, and as long as her looks weren't so boring as to make him yawn, that was enough. If you were worried about your looks, and had enough money saved up, you could alter your appearance pretty much any way you liked (as a specialist in that field, he knew of numerous examples)" (Murakami, 2017).

The language used by the doctor comes across as similar to the nomenclature used by the anti-aging industry advertising a perfected body, consequently, the aspect of the doctor as the male authority figure with the ability to alter appearances, predominates the construct of the female body, that imagines the woman's body through the eyes of the beauty myth, yet, the figure of the woman, in particular the middle-aged woman remains absent, as she does even in the advertisements forwarded by the anti-aging industry, for in place of the woman's actual experiences with her changing body, there is a perfected vision of the female body, in the male author's literary work, in reminiscing about the sexual encounters with women in the short story, Dr. Tokai recalls "at this very moment a baby might be nursing at the marvelous breasts he

used to lovingly stroke." (Murakami, 2017)

The mammary mania that predetermines women's experiences with their bodies, in particular their breasts, is further propounded by the male preoccupation with or obsession over the female breast as a symbol for male desire. Yet, the image of the perfected woman, whose body continues to hold the signifiers of youth, stands in contrast to the female description of her own aging body, that is not only reflective of her insecurities with the mania surrounding her body in the public domain, but also in line with coming to terms with the uncanniness of being an embodied subject in the female body. Showcasing a lack of the female subjectivity and pleasure-seeking within the image of the perfected woman, the female body in its diverse, unique shapes and configurations remains absent. Natsuko in *Breasts and Eggs*, finds it difficult to come to terms with the changes in her body, reflecting a certain dissociation from the image of the idealized youthful, woman with the perfected 'breasts,' in line with the patriarchal gaze, she recounts:

> I remember what it felt like when my breasts started getting bigger. How out of nowhere I had grown these things…as a kid whenever I saw the naked women in the magazines that kids in the neighborhood got their hands on, or saw a grownup woman expose her body on T.V, I guess on some level I thought that someday all those parts of me would fill out, too, and I would have a body just like them.

> (Kawakami, 2021, p.55)

The female experience with the uncanniness of the body gets foregrounded in Kawakami's exploration of the middle-aged woman's anxiety surrounding her aging body, in contrast to the dominant image of the idealized female body, as embedded within the female figure in Murakami's short story collection *Men Without Women*, whose bodies not only exist as potential gateways for the male characters from the larger social, economic sphere, but are also fetishized as an essence

leading to the demise of the central male figure, in turn, the sexuality of the middle-aged woman, who appears in a majority of these stories, remains invisible, failing to represent the diverse experiences of the female body, which as argued by Juliana Alzate (2020), represents an embodied experience inherently composed of menstruation, beauty practices, reproduction and mothering which as collective experiences, continue to remain absent in the public image of the woman.

The figure of the woman continues to exist as a mystified essence, that shown through the eyes of the male narrator in Murakami's *Men Without Women*, exists as a medium for a possible escape from the alienation experienced by the male character, yet the aspect of the female sexuality continues to remain unexplored, for seen through the eyes of the other her body is objectified as a femme fatale or a lethal weapon against the male character, which according to feminist critics, Kitada Sachie and Miya Lippit (1994) continues to prevail in the works by male writers as a part of the literary canon, that presents a dominant image of the female body within these works. Japanese feminist critics have identified works by popular writers like Junichiro Tanizaki as representing a literary tradition that presents the woman as an essence, with the male characters showing a contempt of the woman hidden beneath "an attachment to and admiration of the female body." (Sachie & Lippit, 2017)

Tanizaki's radical exploration of sexuality in his novel *The Key*, situates the reader in the position of a voyeur like the male character, as he and his wife share their sexual experiences in the form of a diary, told through the form of an epistolary novel, that sets out to explore the complex dynamics between the husband and the wife, in addition to which there is an inherent connection between the aspect of the image and pornography, as central to the sexual relationships explored in the novel, particularly in line with the rise of the print image. Yet, Tanizaki's exploration of sexuality in its explicit eroticism continues to project the image of the perfected

female body, wherein the middle-aged woman's sexuality is explored under the dominant patriarchal construct that looks at the female sexuality through the binary of a reified image or that of 'insatiability.'

Discussion

Photography in Tanizaki's (1961) *The Key*, represents an oncoming of Western technology and devices within the Japanese society, as the men discuss the relevance of a polaroid camera, it functions as allusive to the present-day proliferation of digital media images and those augmented by the pornography industry that represent an obsession over or preoccupation with the female body, in particular a fantasized and fetishized version of the body. The aspect of the male gaze continues to focus on the different ways in which the woman's body is literally and metaphorically put under the spotlight, yet the representations of the image of the woman in literature by popular male authors like the glossed, perfected images in the digital media, do not align with the woman's actual lived experiences with their body. In one of the instances in the novel, the professor, in *The Key* gazes at his wife's naked body while she remains unconscious his voyeurism represents the male sexual fantasy of the woman's body, as "how extraordinary for a woman to have reached the age of forty-four, and to have experienced childbirth, without suffering the slightest injury to her skin! Never before had I been allowed to gaze at this superb body, but perhaps this is just as well." (Tanizaki, 1961)

The female body, as defined in Tanizaki's novel, continues to stand as the image of the youthful woman, whose body holds the signifiers of youth, standing in contrast to the female description of her own aging body, that is reflective of her insecurities with the mania surrounding her body in the public domain, especially those of coming to terms with the 'sagginess' or hidden aspects of age and change that form a part of her embodied experience. Natsuko as the woman

nearing middle-age in *Breasts and Eggs*, experiences alienation with her own aging body, which when seen in the private sphere before the mirror does not conform to the ageist image of the young female body, that represents the norm, as "…I stared at my own body. My breasts were in the middle of the mirror. Little, just like Makiko's. Brown and bumpy nipples. My hips had barely any shape, but there was flesh around my belly button, stretch marks curving around my sides." (Kawakami, 2021)

Laura Mulvey (2009) in her landmark essay "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," discusses the obsession with scopophilia, or pleasure in looking, underlying the image as seen in the medium of the cinema, this voyeuristic pleasure, invariably extends to the female body as opposed to the male body, wherein pleasure gets split between the active male voyeur and the passive female whose body gets objectified under the purview of the male gaze, which projects the male sexual fantasy over the female figure. In contrast to the image seen, the male figure does not take the place of the object of pleasure, as the male body "cannot bear the burden of sexual objectification." (Mulvey, 2009) In many ways this rings synonymous with Wolf's contention about the lack of positive sex imagery for women, whose pleasure does not feature within the dominant image of sexuality that is made available to her gaze, neither can she find her body represented with its varied diverse signs of aging and change, nor can she find pleasure in looking at the passive female figure in these images.

Conclusion

What continues to be a lack in the representation of the female body within the dominant image of the woman resonant amongst the anti-aging industry, alludes to a an ageist preoccupation with the preservation of youth, particularly on the female body, the woman as a viewer and object of desire within these images, comes to feel alienated from her own

body, experiencing a dissatisfaction and insecurity with her body, especially in line with the aging body in its diverse growing changes, her embodied experience continues to remain absent within the public domain. Consequently, what is needed then to bring about a social and cultural change is not only more sex positive images of female pleasure, but also presenting the female body in its varied and aging experience.

Integral to celebrating women's bodies in its varied complexity and age, is also significant in terms of celebrating their post-partum bodies, laden with stretch marks, scars, surgical marks and age, as reflective of women's embodied experience, for Natsuko in *Breasts and Eggs*, the space of the bath house represented a communal space of women's shared experience with their changing bodies, for:

> There were always women in the space beyond the steamy air. Babies, girls, and older women. Naked as they sudsed up their hair, sank into the water, heated their bodies. Countless wrinkles, straight backs, sagging breasts, gleaming skin. Stubby little arms and legs, age spots dark and light, articulated shoulder blades…Where had all these women gone? What had happened to their bodies?

> (Kawakami, 2021, pp.217-18)

Women's changing bodies in its nakedness, and variance, at the bath house as opposed to the fabricated image of the female body strewn across the advertisements for breast implants in the novel, comes to represent the female embodied experience, which often remains absent within the print and digital image, much like the image of the women in the works of Murakami and Tanizaki, wherein there remains a stark gap between the representation of the aging woman's body, with its diverse needs and pleasures. Within the hypervisibility brought about by the images of the female body, the woman's embodied experience remains absent, one wonders, where have the women gone? especially the middle-aged woman, whose signs of aging do not form a part of the

public domain. A radical change in the ageist beauty myth then would come about with a proliferation of visible images of women celebrating their varied shapes, and changes with post-partum and breastfeeding, foregrounding the female embodied experience across middle-age.

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Re- reading Othello through a Postcolonial Perspective: Marginalization of the Cultural Other.

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In the ambit of the postcolonial studies of literary works, William Shakespeare's pathetic tragedy, "Othello" occupies a highly significant status insomuch as it abounds in crucial issues, calling for a scan through a postcolonial lens. The play raises, above all other questions involved in it, the uncomforting question of racism and the century- worn inhibitions of the White against the Africans, the Caribbeans, the Negros.

In my attempt to probe into Othello, I prefer to touch, first of all, upon what may be called a diasporic or immigrant issue. An introspection of the play under discussion reveals to us how painstakingly did Othello endeavor to accommodate himself to the cosmopolitan ambience of Venice, to the native Venetians, and how ruthlessly he was left in his own place. Othello, a Moor, hailing from Africa, must have got swamped in an absolutely unfamiliar environment of Venice and sustained an extremely traumatic identity crisis. It is doubtless that Othello was pestered by a feeling of aloofness and alienation. As amigrant in Venice, the dusk- hued Othello was looked upon as an outsider. Being treated as a cultural "other", being unable to comprehend and adapt to the western culture, he had to encounter in Venice, Othello could not but suffer from a lack of selfhood.

Despite his good qualities, Othello unwittingly seemed to be alive to his racial otherness; in fact, he could not but be aware of his blackness because as in "The Merchant of Venice", Shylock is seen to be most frequently called "Jew", as if, it were an invective, to remind him of his otherness, so, Othello too, we find, was frequently defined as a "Moor", a reminder of his being "other", the most unwelcome presence in the milieu of a Eurocentric society. Othello eloped with Desdemona and they got married. Roderigo and Iagoroused Brabantio, Desdemona's father, from sleep to inform him of this. Iago told Brabantioon a note of venomous contempt for Othello: "Even now, very now, an old black ram Is tupping your white ewe." The insinuation is very clear here: To Iago, Othello is no better than an old black ram. Here we discern in Iago's voice a trenchant racist note of dissent against an African's love and marriage with a white woman. Such examples of stringent racial prejudices of the white man for the Black and the Brown abound in the domain of European literature. In "The Tempest", a character named Sebastian accuses his brother, king Alonso of Naples of having held his daughter's marriage with the prince of Tunis. Sebastian points it out as the very cause of their disaster.

In a situation where the social ground gives him no secure foothold, but constantly torments him with rankling, an utterly uncomforting feeling of insecurity and confusion, it was only natural for Othello to flounder into a void of alienation from which, even in the blessed company of the beautiful and graceful Desdemona, he was not released. He had to be always brave, valiant, an accomplished General, noble of mien, for only by means of ensuring such a grand self – dimension that he could hope of curving out an identity for himself, a selfhood, commanding respect and recognition.

Not only did Othello have to present himself as a man of great military skill, worthiness and nobility, he did also have to desperately project himself as one, distinguished from and superior to many other non-Europeans who were

supposed to be savages, monstrous. In the travel stories that Othello told Desdemona, he referred to "the Cannibals that each other eat". He certainly intended to flaunt that like the white men, he also believed in the existence of the cannibals, thereby having a cultural proximity to the white man. His anxiety and eagerness to distinguish himself from wild men and savages, manufactured by the Eurocentric ideology, is revealed more intensely in his claim to have seen during his travels "the Anthropophagi and men whose heads do grow beneath their shoulders".(Act I, iii, 145-146) Othello must have fictionalized such images to indicate his difference from the monstrous non-Europeans. The white racists like Roderigo, Brabantio and Iago denigrate Othello by labelling against him such obnoxious terms as "thick lips", "sooty bosom" and "black ram". They intended to subvert Othello as both inferior and a vile alien. In the face of such malignancy, Othello desperately sought to distinguish himself from men whose "heads grow beneath their shoulders"

From the very beginning of the play, we see how hard is Othello's struggle to resist the Eurocentric attack on his blackness. When Iago warned Othello against Brabantio, Desdemona's father, Othello said: "Let him do his spit: My services which I have done the signiory shall out-tongue his complaints". Brabantio called on the duke and complained against Othello having eloped with his daughter by means of bewitching her with magical charms: "She is abused, stol'n from me, and corrupted by spells and medicines bought on mountebanks; for nature so preposterously to err, being not deficient, blind , or lame of sense, sans witchcraft could not". (Act I, iii, 60-65) Othello had to explain to the duke that the only witchcraft he had applied was telling Desdemona the stories of his adventures. Othello said: "She loved me for the dangers I had pass'd, and I loved her that she did pity them. This only is the witchcraft I have used". (Act I, iii, 167-169) The uncomforting feeling of her being a black man open to the contempt of the white Venetians, constantly haunted

Othello's, inducing him into formulating a sort of self-defensive mechanism. For example, when Othello requested the duke to let Desdemona accompany him in his journey to Cyprus, he apprehended that he might be stereotyped as a black man, a lascivious Moor who sort sexual entertainment with Desdemona even at the expense of his military responsibilities. Therefore, Othello said to the duke and the senators pleadingly: "your voices, Lords: Beseech you, let her will have a free way; I therefore beg it not to please the palate of my appetite, nor to comply with heat, the young affects in my defunct, and proper satisfaction, but to be tree and bounteous of her mind; and heaven defend your good souls that you think, I will your serious and great business scant, for she is with me…". (Act I , iii, 260- 268) Thus Othello had to convince the Duke and the Senators that she wanted Desdemona to be with him in his trip to Cyprus not at all because she desired for a sexual union with her by winking at his duties. Commenting on this speech of Othello, Victor L. Cahn writes: "We cannot be certain if you want to emphasize the spiritual qualities of their relationship or whether he downplays the physical aspect of the marriage to avoid offending anyone. In either case, we may assume that he is conscious of the racial difference between himself and Desdemona." Cahn further comments: "as a black man alone in a white society, Othello is self- conscious".

That Othello is awfully touchy about and alive to his oriental identity, his dark skin is manifested from the desperation of which he tried to thwart the racist attacks from the jingoistic Venetians, such as Iago, Brabantio, Roderigo. He zealously endeavoured to guard his hard- earned reputation, and became a broken man when, taking advantage of his simplicity and credulity, Iago succeeded in persuading Othello to believe that Desdemona had run into adultery with cassio, thereby jilting him, Othello got shattered as he concluded that having made him cuckold, Desdemona had not only betrayed his love, but even more unfortunately, she had destroyed his

renown and reputation. Othello felt with an intense dejection that with the decline of his reputation, his very identity had tumbled down. He said to Iago: "… O now forever/ farewell the tranquil mind, farewell content: / Farewell the plumed troop, and the big wars:/ That makes ambition virtue: ...the immortal Jove's great clamour counterfeit; / farewell, Othello's occupation's gone!"(Shakespeare 353- 363)

Othello killed Desdemona and tried to justify it as an honour-killing. Lodevico, who happen to be present there, betrayed his shock and asked Othello what should be said to him. Othello replied, saying "why anything, / An honorable murderer, if you will (Shakespeare 294 - 295). Beguiled by the Mephistophelean Iago into mistrusting the incorruptible Desdemona, Othello tarnished his own image, which had so long been translucent, noble and graceful. In fact, this act of violence by Othello unravels the tragic explosion of his tension, his soul-wrenching anguish at his blackness. He thought that Desdemona, a white woman, had deserted him for his blackness and got into an adultery with Cassio, a white man. The more he thought so, the more disoriented he became and then killed his very love. Here we can quote a very comprehensive statement of Coleridge: "jealousy does not strike me as a point in Othello's passion; I take to be rather an agony that the creature, whom he had believed angelic, with whom he had garnered up his heart, am whom he could not help still loving, should be proved impure and worthless. It was a struggle not to love her. It was a more indignation and regret that virtue should so fall..." That Othello killed himself son after he had killed Desdemona, was just a tragic yet inevitable nemesis. When his identity was gone, his public renowned eclipsed and his love strangled to death by himself, Othello's physical existence would have definitely a constant mortal torture on his very spirit. At the moment of killing himself, Othello apostrophized the murdered Desdemona: "I kiss'd thee are I kill'd thee: no way / but this; / killing myself, to die upon a kiss."(Shakespeare 357- 358)

Culture forms an extremely important issue in the postcolonial introspection of "Othello". From the very beginning of his life in Venice, Othello had been repeatedly reminded that he was a cultural "other" in the Eurocentric Venetian society. No sooner did Brabnatio discovered that Othello had eloped with his daughter Desdemona and married her, he went straight to the duke with an apple to persecute Othello. "For if such actions may have passage free", he grumbled, "Bond- slaves, and pagans, shall our statesmen be." (Act I, ii, 98- 99) in other words, Brabantio meant to express his concern that if Othello were exempted from penalty, Venice would cease to be a civilized city and it would be reduced to a barbaric and pagan country like Turkey. During the course of the play, we should not fail to notice the qualitative differences that had been drawn between the Christianity of Venice and the heathen. Christian religion has been highlighted as superior to paganism. Throughout the play, the threat of Turkish invasion is heard to be murmured by the Venetians. This may be deemed as a metaphor for the barbarian onslaught upon the civilization. However hard Othello tried to internalize the Venetian culture, he could not avoid being beleaguered by the white racism. Even Desdemona took a fancy to Othello mainly because she found his stories of adventure intriguing, and himself exotic.

The handkerchief issue which led Othello into self-destructive suspicion, also highlights Desdemona's lack of understanding of Othello's cultural roots and sentiments. Othello had given Desdemona a handkerchief which his mother had given him on her death bed, desiring him to give it to his future wife. Telling Desdemona about the backdrop of the handkerchief, Othello had stated that an Egyptian sorceress had given his mother the handkerchief, claiming that it would keep her husband loyal to her; however, if she were to sell it or give it away, his eyes would wander out in quest of love elsewhere. Thus in Othello's belief, the handkerchief had a deep spiritual value, representing marital fidelity

and bonding. That Desdemona handled the handkerchief carelessly and lost it reveals her dearth of comprehension of the cultural values in which Othello's root was so deeply entrenched.

In the conclusion, we may comment on the basis of Ania Loomba's interpretation of Othello in her book "Co-lonialism / Postcolonialism" that theme of sexual jealousy, which several critiques have sought to showcase as the root of Othello's tragedy, is far less crucial than the racist context in which Othello and Desdemona lived and loved. Iago's machinations are not "motiveless malignity", a coinage used by Coleridge, but "born out of racial hatred and insecurity". (Loomba 75)

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Gender Studies: A Distinct Theory of Feminist Literature

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Abstract:

Gender studies is an interdisciplinary field covering literature, linguistics, sociology, politics, history and other disciplines of social science. It talks on the multifaceted communication of gender with different identities such as competition, civilization, sex, culture and faith. It was concerned with power dynamics that relates to sex. It covers a wide range that encompasses people's educations, and queer educations. Though gender educations is a branch of feminism and is concerned with women's marginal social status including oppression and exploitation, it is not akin to feminism. Feminism focuses on women's concerns while gender studies deal with the whole gender realities. Gender studies emphases on gender individuality as the main concept but feminism focuses the roles, knowledges and attainments of women in civilization. In literature, literature gender is used to define the authors and depict society and evaluate them

on the basis of gender. Sex, gender and sexuality shape narrative texts. Feminist literature exposes women's subordination to men and denial of rights and freedom and voices for gender quality. Gender studies is not confined to women's studies only; it comprises people's studies, opening up a new genre that may be called 'gendered literature'.

Keywords: *Gender, sex, feminism, interdisciplinary field, feminist literature, gender equality, patriarchy, feminist literature*

Introduction

Gender studies though a branch of feminism is a new arena which is concerned the multifaceted communication of gender with other individualities including race, civilization, sex, state and faith. Gender is the basis of gender studies. It focuses on gender bias and social and political realities about gender difference. In literature, gender denotes the way by which writers and fonts describe themselves, attempting how civilization assesses them founded on gender analysis but also with the greater systematic nature of communal disparity – control and honor. The word 'gender' denotes most commonly the perceived and natural differences between men and women Sex, gender and sexuality shape narrative texts and the understanding of reader of the texts in many ways. Research so far conducted on the issues of gender highlights the glitches of the burdened and exploited. But it started a conversation of the rank of the classifying the part of honor in perpetuating systems of inequality (Woehrle, Lynne M. and Engelmann, Donna, 2015). Gender studies emphasis on control subtleties telling sex. That arena covers whole studies, and infrequently speeches extensive communal concern. Gender studies industrialized together with and merged out of females' studies which combined the arena of enquiry.

It tests the male-oriented countryside of civilization and gender roles thrust upon women. It explores and explains that the world culture as well as the society is male-centred and controlled, and females are subordinated to men in all social areas. Even, literature carries the stamp of male dominance. Gender studies attempts to explore and examine dissimilar senses devoted to maleness and femaleness in fiction, past and ethos. Sex is a matter of biology as well as a matter of being masculine or feminine. Gender is a matter of culture. It shows the distinction between femininity and masculinity. Jon Peck and Martin Coyle write that the ideas of gender mainly reproduce the rational and prejudice of patriarchate. Gender bias denotes the behavior that focuses on favouritism towards one gender over another. Patriarchy is male-oriented and describes the male as lively, lucid and courageous and the female as inert, silent and expressive. The structure of gender is beached on male efforts to switch female sex. Gender studies focuses on gender inequality and has created new literature to depict the marginalized status of women in the male governed society.

Review of Literature

Brown, Mitchel & Moorer, Regina (2015) are of the view that gender studies is actually women's studies. It denotes scholarship about and the academic study of the meaning and implication of gender and gendered roles. It sheds light on power, marginal status of women in the society, oppression and the intersection of identities. Gender educations is an interdisciplinary arena including literature, sociology, philosophy, history, political science and social science subjects and highlights supposed around gender and its meaning and origins. It depicts a ranked scheme of control relatives for sustained being. It identifies the process, belongings and connections of persons control relatives that form the dominant constituent of gender studies. The researchers discuss the growth of women educations as an academic ground along with emerging directions from gender

studies in theory and research.

Wood ward, Kath and Wood ward, Sophie (2015) consider gender studies as aninter disciplinary academic field that focuses on the complex social worlds and deal with global problems associated with everyday life (Woodward, 2014). The authors explore that gender and gender relatives are the core of gender educations which is not akin to women's studies. They discuss sex, gender and sexuality forming the foundation of gender educations. Gender lessons include women studies and activist politics and are a campaign for redessal of gendered inequalities. Ampofo, Akosua Adomako, et al (2004) focus on various aspects of gender lessons in their article. An article clarifies the idea of gender studies and presents the empathetic of the topics and debates in the broader perspectives. The study is concerned with women's and gender studies. It contains the common feminist issues like women's well-being, globalization and effort. It also sheds light on the State, and non-government organizations in their efforts to address the conditions of African women. Besides, the researchers address theoretical and methodological trends.

Moodley, Jacqueline and Gaham, Lauren (2015) examine the relationship between poverty and disability in the exploration of African Women's social status from a Southern African perspective. Social characteristics have not been considered when this relationship is addressed. It has not been studied on the basis of gender. But they admit that research at the international level reveals that gender gaps influence the outcomes for people with disabilities. The study makes an attempt to focus on poverty and disability that form an important issue at the national level in relation to gender studies in South Africa. The philosophy of intersectionality has been used as a lens system to interpret evidence from a national level (South African Labour and Development Research Unit, 2014). The researchers assess how poverty and disability intersect to shape particular outcomes for women

in comparison with human kinds with disabilities. The South African incapacity crosses with people, resulting in negative outcomes in teaching, service and revenue in all persons with debilities.

Doyal, Lesley (2000) emphasizes promotion of gender evenhandedness in well-being and parity in well-being results between opposite sexes. The researcher points out important changes in the well-being needs of men and women. It has been found that poverty is one of the factors blocking the passage for both men and women to have their possible for well-being. The implementation of the policy for the promotion of gender impartiality needs equitable distribution of health related resources. This may be possible if the resemblances and changes in the healthiness requests for people are properly identified and the gendered obstacles are analyzed. The present paper discovers the influence of gender separationsin the strength and the well-being care of people. The researcher attractions the conclusion of the study on the point that well-being outcomes for both persons and inhabitants have been over powering ly predisposed by aspects like competition, lesson, civilization status.

Methodology

The present study is descriptive, qualitative one. The investigation for data of the study is mainly based on research articles and research papers and literature on gender studies and feminist literature. Various research articles were studied to collect data for the study. Feminist literature and gender studies based literature were read and examined to collect data to show that gender studies also focuses on the oppression, repression, suppression, exploitation and denial of rights and freedom to women. The feminist writers have focused on gender inequality. The collected data were examined objectively to arrive at the conclusion that most of the world societies are patriarchal and gender inequality is present there. The study is a description of the outcomes

of gender disparity and the roles at patriarchal society in the marginalization of females in society. The data collected from the authentic sources speak of gender studies is mainly concerned with females' status onto the civilization and the suggestions for the redressal of women's problems.

Discussion

The thoughts of gender mainly reflect the rational and prejudice of patriarchate. Patriarchate is masculine concerned with. This is male in nature, character and spirit, and owns masculine structure as the normal and shapes the communal instruction everywhere male sex. Patriarchate expresses the male as vigorous, balanced and valiant and womanlike as inactive, noiseless and demonstrative. The creation of gender is grounded in masculineef forts to controller woman like sex. The identical imageries of females by way of, on the one pointer, the sensualstuff of males and on the other, the virtuous mommies of their families have been the income whereas males safeguard both holiness of their families and heir additional matrimonial sexual pleasure.

Gender governs all including language. This is a confidence of approximately that the whole idea of feminine change has caused female oppression. The passage concludes by stating that both of these academic fields, whether it's male critics in feminist studies or detractors in gay studies, are less concerned with a writer's or reader's biological sex (referred to as "organic sex") and more interested in certain aspects of masculinity and femininity. This suggests that these scholars are more concerned with the cultural, social, and psychological dimensions of gender identity and gender roles than with the physical or biological aspects of sex.

Feminism which led to the initiation of gender studies called for 'liberation' of female safter sure procedures of gender-based discrimination which disadvantaged females of the chances for self-glorification and parity with men folk merely since they remained females. Women were unjustly described

as inferior to men. "The Subjection of Women" (1869) by John Stuart Mill and "A Vindication of the Rights of Women" (1792) by Mary Will stone craft exposed the complete unfairness in custody females burdened by forward influences which were fund a mentally prejudiced and they bare he affected country side of communal buildings. Mill supposed that 'the right of the separate is unconditionally essential for the growth of the society' and watched ladies' liberty as an vital disorder. Mary Will stone craft powerfully begged for the liberation of females and complained in contradiction of organizations which wrinkled ladies 'individuality and put on ward that females were brow beaten and wronged ubiquitously by asset of their gender. The book "A Room of One's Own" underscores the severe intelligence of existence excepted and relegated. This develops a big melody with the activist author safter ward 1960.

B.K. Das (2004) says, "Feminist literary criticism primarily responds to the way woman is presented in literature" (143). Elaine Showalter's essays clarify the presentation of woman in literature. She describes men writer's portrayal of woman and women writer's portrayal of woman. In the latter also the predominant ideological constructs influence the writer's perceptions and choices of narrative. Though Simeon de Beauvoir is regarded to have pioneered the feminist standpoint in her "The Second Sex", feminist criticism has now shown remarkable maturity and diversification. Feminism explores and examines all aspects of the socio-cultural constructs in which women get portrayed in literary works, and seeks to deconstruct them in order to bring to the fore the systematically evolved genderist or sexist biases.

Mary Ellmann's "Thinking About women"(1968) and Kate Millett's "Sexual Politics" represent an attempt to understand the changing scenario in the dominant theoretical discourse and the importance of gender factor in formulating new strategies. Elaine Showalter's two important essays "Towards a Feminist Poetics" and "Feminist Criticism in the

Wilderness" consider both the male theory and feminist criticism in detail and emphasize the need for feminist stand to be revealed is-a-vis its position and relation with the male theorist. Kate Millett in her "Sexual Politics" lays emphasis on the most universal and eldest procedure of misuse which is the one trained by men over women. One of the protuberant habits of combining the male-controlled scheme of party-political and communal control is finished groups of supreme control.

Toril Moi defines 'feminine' as a cultural construct distinct from the female and the feminist. By this she means designs of sex and behaviour compulsory by social norms" (209). Women are the oppressed group. Even what is natural for women is determined by men. Feminity is a cultural construct. Male-dominated culture has over centuries evolved a whole set of 'feminine' characters. Toril Moi divisions campaigner censure into feminine ensure and feminine criticism. In her opinion, feminine theory is concerned with the construction of feminity. A theory with female qualities at its centre is open to attacks both from the biologism and patriarchal categories (Rajimwale, Sharad, 2012). Toril Moi defines 'feminine' as a cultural construct distinct from the female and the feminist. By this she means designs of sex and behaviour compulsory by social norms" (209). Women are the oppressed group. Even what is natural for women is determined by men. Feminity is a cultural construct. Male-dominated culture has over centuries evolved a whole set of 'feminine' characters. Toril Moi divisions campaigner censure into feminine ensure and feminine criticism. In her opinion, feminine theory is concerned with the construction of feminity. A theory with female qualities at its centre is open to attacks both from the biologism and patriarchal categories (Rajimwale, Sharad, 2012).

Literary disapproval has not only been conquered by masculine supposition and thoughts but also first-rate to study and admiration manuscripts that reproduce masculine welfares. It is also supposed that script is inscription and cannot be considered as male womanly. But equalist critics

disagree and need the booklovers to understand the original male-controlled molds:

"Feminist critics consider how the narrative structure of a text can influence the reader's understanding of gender. They explore elements such as plot development, point of view, and narrative voice to assess whether they reflect or challenge dominant gender norms. In essence, Myra Jehlen's perspective aligns with feminist literary criticism, which seeks to analyze and appreciate literature through the lens of gender and other identity factors. Rather than diminishing literature, feminist criticism aims to illuminate and celebrate the diversity of voices and experiences present in literary works. It challenges the traditional, often male-dominated canon and encourages a broader and more inclusive understanding of literature. In other words, literary criticism can reveal the implicit gender-related themes and ideas within a text, even if the author did not consciously intend for those themes to be present. This perspective highlights the importance of considering gender as a significant aspect of literary analysis and interpretation. By doing so, readers and critics can gain a deeper understanding of the text and the cultural and societal context in which it was created. Overall, feminist scholarship is a diverse field with various perspectives and approaches, but its overarching goal is to promote gender equality, challenge patriarchal structures, and contribute to a more inclusive and equitable society. It does so through rigorous research, analysis, and critique of gender-related issues, including the social constructions of femaleness and maleness. It's important to note that feminist scholarship is a diverse field with various schools of thought and approaches. While the statement you provided captures one perspective within feminist scholarship, there are many other viewpoints and debates within the field. Additionally, feminism itself is not a monolithic movement, and different feminists may have differing views on issues such as the role of "male values" or the extent to which gender considerations

should be abolished in various aspects of society, including literature and the arts.

Conclusion

Gender studies is an interdisciplinary field that indeed focuses on the complex interaction of gender with various aspects of human identity, including race, ethnicity, nationality, sexuality, culture, customs, and religion. However, your statement that gender studies is not associated with a particular gender and is concerned mainly with masculinity and femininity needs some clarification. Gender identity refers to a person's deeply held sense of their own gender, which may or may not align with the sex assigned to them at birth. Gender identity can be diverse and includes not only being male or female but also non-binary identities, genderqueer, genderfluid, and more. It's important to note that gender identity is a deeply personal and individual experience. One of Millett's central arguments in "Sexual Politics" is that male dominance is a pervasive and fundamental form of power in society. She suggests that patriarchy, a social system in which men hold primary power and women are systematically disadvantaged, shapes many aspects of our culture and institutions.

This male dominance is seen as a significant source of inequality and oppression. Gender studies is indeed a multidisciplinary field that examines the social, cultural, and political aspects of gender and its impact on society. While it is related to feminism and often addresses issues related to patriarchy and the role of men and women in society, it is a broader discipline that goes beyond just examining the power dynamics between the sexes. Recognizing these inter sections is essential for understanding the full complexity of individuals' experiences and addressing systemic inequalities. It highlights the importance of an intersectional approach to feminism and social justice, which acknowledges that different aspects of a person's identity and social position

interact to shape their lived experiences.

Advocacy and policies must consider these intersections to create more inclusive and equitable societies. Initially, Women's Studies focused on the experiences and perspectives of women, particularly as they related to issues of gender and sexuality. However, the field has since expanded its scope to examine how gender operates as a social construct beyond mere individual identity. Gender Studies seeks to understand the broader structures and systems that shape and perpetuate gender norms, roles, and expectations. This includes examining how gender is constructed, maintained, and enforced across different historical and cultural contexts." (Halberstm, Jack, 2014). As women's studies continued to evolve, scholars began to recognize that gender was not solely about women but also encompassed the study of masculinity, non-binary genders, and the intersectionality of gender with other social categories like race, class, and sexuality. This broader perspective led to the emergence of gender studies, which shifted the focus from women exclusively to a more comprehensive examination of gender as a social construct.

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Commercialising Ghosts: A Study of Various Illustrations in Entertainment Industries

Shreyoshi Dhar

Abstract:

Ghosts very frequently feature in media but it has been commonly observed that in different entertainment industries, their depictions greatly vary depending on the culture of the particular geographical location. This dissertation will aim to explore the significance of their appearances in different contexts and each of their connotations. Even their nature and their acceptance in the society seem to be quite different. In Bengali culture, while there are designated categories of ghosts having unique traits and roles and thereby are known by various names accordingly, in western culture there is not much relevance of this. Not all ghosts are fearsome, often in films and television shows, there appear ghosts who protect and safeguard the interest of the characters around or their own successors from unwanted circumstances. Likewise, we also find very similar contexts in the Western media presentations, where there are different mentions of household gods who function in a very similar manner, preserving the members of the houses along with the assets of the families.

Keyword: *Bengali culture, Ghosts, household gods, Western culture*

According to the Occident, ghosts are considered to be spirits of dead persons who try to establish connection with the living world through various methods. Numerous tales are conceptualised which involve different spooky adventures of these spirits and their interaction with the human world. In the ancient Greek literary tradition, eminent literary figures starting from Homer, Virgil up to the tragedies of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and others, including Herodotus and Tacitus who wrote the historical narratives of civilization, have featured a number of terrifying stories about spectres. Greeks always had well refined beliefs regarding the concept of spectral beings. They have categorised Ghosts into three types – the deads who had not received proper burials, ones who have died a premature and untimely death and the third category includes war victims. In such circumstances, it was believed that men were trapped between the two worlds which forced them to return again and again in this mortal world as they cannot reach their final destination. However, their purpose of repeated revisiting this world can be either due to seek revenge or it can also be for the benefits of the living. There was also a parallel belief among them that these supernatural beings often came amongst the mortals to provide them esoteric knowledge or advice which they may require to save themselves from challenging situations.

The Oriental concept of paranormal creatures is not much different from the westerners. Interestingly, in the Bengali culture, we have fascinating ideas of varying types of ghosts. They have their own traits and special appearances. The first one is named Bromhodoityo, who are considered to be the most elite category of ghosts. It is believed that a Brahmin after having an unnatural death turns into a *Bromhodoityo*. They continue to wear dhoti, the sacred thread and have pure vegetarian food. They are quite amiable and helpful but a bit obnoxious at the same time due to their knowledge of Sanskrit and *Shastras*. *Kobondhos* or *Skondhokatas* are headless and continuously seeks their lost heads. Shankhchunnis are

married ones who continue to maintain their marriage symbols, while Petnis suffer endlessly as their dreams and aspirations could not be achieved in their life time and thus they have a vicious and cunning character. *Mamdos* are Muslim ghosts with long beards wearing skull caps, who have died an unnatural death. *Gechho bhoot* on the other hand generally are to be found in trees and *Mechho bhoots* are always obsessed with fishes. Aleyaa is another weird category of ghosts who have a tendency of attracting and misguiding people who have lost their way and ultimately they are led into marshlands or water bodies and meet their end. *Ekanore* resides on palm trees and have got their name from their feature of having one leg. They generally hunt down naughty children. The western witches have a version even in our culture in the form of *Dainis* who live in a secluded area and are reputed to be practising black magic and also abduct children, thereby turning them into animals. Lastly, there is the *Kanabhulo* who picks men from deserted places, hypnotises them, and drags them to isolated places where they finally kill them.

Depicting these spectral figures onstage has been a very old practice since the ancient Greeks. Later, we see its widespread use in Shakespearean plays like *Macbeth*, *Hamlet* etc. Victorian spiritualism and Dickensian depictions feature these spectres usually for entertainment purposes. Later, horror movies and soap operas have become popular genres in the world of entertainment industries. *Topper* (1937), *The Uninvited* (1943), *The Innocents* (1961), *The Haunting* (1963), *The Shining* (1980), *Ghost Story* (1981), *Poltergeist* (1982), *Ghost Busters* (1984), *Ghost* (1990), *The Sixth Sense* (1999), *The Others* (2001) etc. are some of the famous Hollywood movies of this genre. Most of the plots of these films include a haunted house with glowing lights, creepy castles, chilling scenes, surrealistic world of the supernatural beings, isolated graveyards etc., all being common elements that generally aid in creating a spooky atmosphere. Often these horror movies are confused with another very close genre known by the name

of psychological thriller. Spiritualists and psychical researchers from the very beginning have given their utmost effort to capture evidences in order to prove the existence of human spirits.

In the Indian Entertainment Industry, depiction of ghosts is very common. Besides featuring tormenting ones, we can notice a number of popular films, featuring a ghost as the protagonist who won the hearts of the audience by displaying their potential of love, care and concern which supersedes all earthly creatures.

Bhootnath, a Bollywood movie of 2008, recounts the story of an initially unfriendly ghost, but later undergoes a complete transformation as he befriends a little boy. The bond between them was cherished by each and every viewer as it gave a complete new definition to the general notion about ghost. A Bengali movie named *Gosainbaganer Bhoot* was released in 2011 where we have a resembling plot, celebrating an adorable bond between a small boy who is known to be very weak in Mathematics and a ghost named Nidhiram Sardar, who fights together against an evil character Habu. The story is based on a novel written by the famous author Shirshendu Mukhopadhyay. The film is very popular among the children who cherish the bond.

Bhooter Bhabisyat (2012) is a Tollywood comedy film directed by Anik Dutta, which feature a host of ghosts who protect their resting place, i.e., a dilapidated house from getting turned into a shopping mall. Numerous funny scenes portraying idiosyncratic activities of the ghosts are shown which made the audiences laugh through the film. In the first part, one can even see that the ghosts themselves could not gel up with themselves but later they got united to fight for a noble cause and thus claimed moral high grounds when compared with the greedy promoter or plot dealer being a representative of the mortal world.

Goynar Baksho is a 2013 famous Bengali film released in 2013 where we find a widow matriarch who could not enjoy any moment of her life as she had been married off in her very early age. Just like any other adolescent girl, she wanted to lead a happy married life but her husband died quite soon and she had to restrict herself to the various norms of the society. All that she had was a jewellery box that she could call her own. After becoming a widow, she had to return to her paternal home, where quite evidently she was an unwelcomed guest but all her family members had their eyes on her jewelleries and so even after death, she returned from her grave to save it from her greedy relatives. Her only trust was in her niece-in-law. She gave her the box and made her promise to hide it from others. Surprisingly, twice she herself gave her jewels to be used – once when her niece had to set up a business to save his family from starving and finally when the Mukti Bahini needed funds during the Bangladesh Liberation War. She gave all that she had been preserving for so long to her grandniece who was a part of the struggle. Hence, here we come across a ghost who saved the lives of hundreds of people of her motherland by donating her most treasured wealth.

According to the psychologists, horror scenes and the presence of supernaturalism seem to attract audiences to a large extent as they seem to reflect the deepest fear of the unknown or death and thus stimulate the rush of adrenaline by tapping into the primal instinct in man. At the same time, horror movies also give an opportunity to taste fear in a safe environment and this perhaps adds to the popularity of ghost tales. "Moving images rouse our consciousness keeps it at alert. They inform us that 'something' is about to happen even before the why and wherefore can be specified…each shot is a surprise effect, a pure emotional shock…" (Mitry 84)

An eminent psychiatrist Dr. Glenn D. Walters identified three prime reasons behind the popularity of horror genre – the first being the use of scenes that use elements like

shock, gore, suspense and terror that prompts feelings of tension and this helps to retain the curiosity in the viewers till the end; second, these movies or daily soaps and opera try to maintain some level of relatability and relevance with the common lifestyle and universal ideas of audiences regarding fear of death, the unknown, and other social issues; and lastly, the scenes are designed in such a manner such that the spectators do not preserve the false notion of considering the contents to be real; thus the reality is clearly distinguished from the world of fantasy.

A popular website named Harmoniamentis puts forward an interesting perspective of the effects of horror scenes on mental health of man. According to it, while on one hand there is a magical element in the depiction of ghostly actions as the audience after witnessing these sights surely suffers from shock, fear, and stress; nevertheless, they are assured regarding the fact that they are absolutely safe and this very security gives them an enriching, cathartic, and a very satisfying experience at the same time. According to Margee Kerr's interview to *The Atlantic*, a phenomenon named excitation fear is the main reason behind it. As the accelerated heart rate, fast breathing and abnormal bodily mechanisms slowly starts to ebb away, the audience starts to experience a sense of relief and a positive feeling seems to take its place. In the words of The Huffington Post, "fear floods our brains with feel-good chemicals". (Web) The contrasting sensation for a huge number of people is a great source of entertainment, but it is not a very peaceful feeling for people suffering from different mental disorders since quite often the terrifying images seem to trigger repressed thoughts and feelings and in turn tends to stimulate levels of anxiety. Often the sensitivity gets increased to such levels that these sufferers seem to have a negative response and thus misinterpret these sensations as real threats in their own lives. They often fail to clearly distinguish between fantasy and reality which too often leads to serious physical and mental conditions. Several physical

disorders follow such traumatic experiences which include insomnia, fast heartbeat, and high cholesterol due to flooding of adrenalin and hormones like norepinephrine and cortisol. Most of the times, the viewers fail to realise what is actually happening with them as the brain being too complex, the fear psychosis triggers a chain reaction which starts to function with stressful stimuli but finally ends with the fight-or-flight response. Smithsonian points out to some important players which are directly involved with the cognitive processes that influences the psychology of fear, keeping in mind the main role of the brain to transfer impulses on a continuous basis – the 'thalamus' which decides the final destination of the incoming sensory data in the body; the 'sensory cortex' reads this sensory data; the 'hippocampus' helps to store, retrieve, and finally process the stimuli, thereby giving it context; the 'amygdala' recognises the plausible threats, decodes the emotions, and ultimately registers the memories of fear; and lastly, the 'hypothalamus' instigates the fight-or-flight response to get activated. Thus, all the physiological elements actively participate to help the viewer to determine the fear factors and react accordingly. Nevertheless, there are other elements which inspire people to get obsessed with horror entertainment as explained by several theories. Some of them have been well identified by Pacific Standard – The first being 'Excitation transfer' theory which states that one who experience a strong emotional response to paranormal activities also seem to enjoy more in situations of threats; second, 'Individual empathy' theory claims that less empathetic people tends to enjoy horror scenes more as Professor Ron Tamborini suggests, "viewers with high levels of empathy should dislike horror films because they react negatively to the suffering of others." (Web); and the last, 'Sensation-seeking' theory spells out that people who are obsessed with paranormal events actually are seekers of sensory reactions and are generally aggressive in nature. Hence, it can be concluded that biological mechanisms working behind fear psychosis are actually quite complex and varied. However, the cultural curiosity involv-

ing paranormal activities has its root in the interest to know who human beings are as a species and the different psychological mechanisms they go through.

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Bollywood's 'Badnaam Begums': Representation of Women in 'Item Numbers'

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Abstract:

The word 'item', in common parlance, has multifarious connotations which it has acquired over time. It is often used as a derogatory term to objectify a person, usually a woman. The mushrooming of 'item songs' in Bollywood movies from the 1990s onwards is only an indication that it is a popular phenomenon, which has continued the legacy of 'song and dance' as was evinced from the very onset. The purposes of introducing an item song in a commercial movie are manifold – they serve as a source of entertainment for the masses; they help in promotional activities; they add to the glamour quotient: they also provide a respite from the continuous action of the movie, and act as a suitable break; but, most importantly, they add to the overall visual pleasure and enrich the experience of the audience. In Bollywood movies, an 'item song' traditionally centres around a female protagonist whose identity has been unidirectionally channelized towards the role of a temptress who can arouse a sense of eroticism among the audience. This paper intends to highlight upon the portrayal of women in these 'item songs' and how they have been commodified by the masses.

Keywords: *Bollywood, 'item songs', entertainment, commodification, seduction*

With the turn of the millennium, there came about a radical transformation in the socio-economic milieu of the Indian society. The effects of the liberalization of the Indian economy in the early 1990s were slowly setting in and this had its impact on the entertainment industry as well. Middle-class households were getting hooked to the cable connection, and private channels started to enter the fray, competing with the state owned Doordarshan. The Bollywood industry too underwent a paradigmatic shift. The VFX and other editing techniques progressed by leaps and bounds. All this, coupled with the advent of widespread Internet which aided in publicity and promotional activities resulted in the fact that, for the first time, movie collections were grossing more than 100-crore rupees.

With the inflow of Foreign Direct Investments (FDI's), decrepit and dilapidated single-screen cinema halls were gradually being replaced by posh multiplexes. There also came about a shift in the audience coming in to these newly constructed theatres, which catered more to the crowd belonging in the age group between 20 to 40. As a consequence, the concept of going for movies with all the members of the family, young and old, began to change. This had an impact upon the content being showcased in the movies of the 21st century. Therefore, directors and producers were now more willing to overtly showcase more mature content in their films, in order to cater to the taste of their target audience.

One of the major means of luring this young audience turned out to be the rampant use of 'item numbers' in Bollywood.The primary purpose of an item number is to provide entertainment tothe audience and to assist the marketability of a movie by featuring in trailers. Rini Bhattacharya Mehta opines that – "An item number is a dance sequence of raunchy movements and risqué lyrics with little relation to the plot line, which aspiring starlets use to debut in Bollywood. In keeping with Bollywood's libidinous drive, an item number is normally added on to generate

publicity, to guarantee the film's box office success and ensure repeated viewings." (Bhattacharya Mehta 42) 'Item numbers'supplement the glamour quotient without affecting the overall continuity of the movie's plot. They are, therefore, part of the hype and propaganda created around a movie. According to Shirin Zubair:

> The item songs are a marketing gimmick both for the leading female actors as well as for the film makers. From the filmmakers' point of view, these are primarily included for the commercial success of the film, targeted at common male consumers in cities and small towns with single screens … From the point of view of the leading female actors (known as A-list actors) – who do the item numbers, since such songs are usually catchy, and major hits on the charts, played in discos, bars and weddings – they agree to do these numbers for various reasons. Among those reasons, are one, they are the quick work of a few days or a week for hefty payment; two, once the item song is on the music charts, the actor gets invited to perform (on payment) at weddings, award functions and shows, thus making a lot of quick money; and three, usually an item-song girl outshines the female lead in the movie by just doing these numbers. Producers and filmmakers sometimes tend to add these numbers even thought they are not part of the original script, but are inserted after the film is completed to grab the attention of the masses and to attract them to the theatres.

> (Zubair 4)

The concept of the 'item number', however, is not a millennial phenomenon. The earliest instances in Bollywood can be traced back all the way to pre-Independent India, when the likes of Anna Marie Gueizelor (popularly known as 'Azoorie') and Cuckoo Moray were the chief exponents of the genre in the 1930s and 40s. The following two decades were largely the monopoly of Helen Ann Richardson (monony-

mously known as 'Helen'), who earned stardom for her sexually explicit performances. Peter Morey comments that up to "the 1970s, Bollywood often relied on the figure of a vamp – a cabaret dancer, a tawaif (prostitute), a gangster's moll – to provide entertainment of a more sexually explicit nature. The heroine might sing and dance, but the vamp wore more revealing clothes, smoked, drank, and sang in bolder terms of sexual desire." (Morey 221)

Helen was followed in her footsteps by Vijayalakshmi (known by her stage name 'Silk Smitha') in the 1980s. Towards the end of the decade and the early 1990s, however, the roles of the 'item girl' and the female protagonist amalgamated into one, and mainstream heroines started appearing in comparatively bold avatars, pioneered by Madhuri Dixit. In this regard, Tejaswini Ganti elucidates – "One of the keys to Dixit's initial success was her combination of middle-class, girl-next-door persona and a sensuality, expressed through her dances, which in the past had been relegated to the vamp in Hindi cinema." (Ganti 134) Since the year 2000, most leading actresses in Bollywood have featured in 'item songs'. This is testimony to the commercial viability and the demand of the genre. However, to buckle the trend, the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) had issued a diktat in 2013, certifying 'item numbers' with an 'adult' (A) rating, and therefore, barring their telecast on TV channels. In an interview with The Indian Express, Pankaja Thakur, the then CEO of CBFC had stated:

These songs, thus, would not be allowed to be telecast on television as only (a maximum of) 'UA' rated content is allowed on television … Item songs are essentially adult content. We ourselves do not define what an item song is, but what we mean is that all those songs which are meant for adult consumption, either because of their lyrics or because of visuals, should be given adult certification.

(Thakur)

The purpose of appending these 'item songs' in movies is, therefore, to gratify the 'male gaze'. The concept was first propounded by Jean-Paul Sartre in his work Being and Nothingness (1943), wherein he described the act of 'gazing' as a means of objectifying the 'gazed' by the 'gazer'. Art critic John Berger used the concept of the 'gaze' in the *Ways of Seeing* (1972) to depict how "continuities between post-Renaissance European paintings of women and imagery from latter-day posters and girly magazines, by juxtaposing the different images and showing how they similarly rendered women as objects. Berger argued that this continuity constrained how certain forms of femininity are understood, and therefore the terms on which women are able to live their lives." (Bell) Laura Mulvey in her essay "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" (1975) further defined the concept by introducing the notion of the 'male gaze', which intends to achieve pleasure by viewing the female body. L. Paul Weeks opines:

> Mulvey … contends that the male unconscious seeks two forms of scopophilia (visual pleasure). Voyeurism, the first of these, seeks to exercise power over its object by marking her as the bearer of guilt. Fetishism, the second form of visual pleasure, marks the female as object of desire at the level of spectacle. A masculine subject emerges through a narcissistic identification with the male characters and an objectification of female characters. Thus, woman as passive spectacle and object and man as active voyeur and subject together constitute a proprietary male gaze.

> (Weeks 467)

In accordance with Mulvey's theory, women in 'item numbers' are depicted as commodities for the 'male gaze'. They are visualized in such a manner which would arouse libidinal passions in heterosexual male audience.The lyrics often include raunchy phrases such as 'chikni' (flawless beauty), 'gaal gulabi' (rosy cheeks), 'kamseen kamariya' (slender waist), 'nain sharaabi' (alcoholic eyes) and so on, which focus

singularly on the female body, thereby further embodying it as an object of pleasure. According to Neena Pandey, "the choreography of the steps and actions s catchy. Certain aspects of the body are highlighted more with the swings of the woman's body, her expression of the eyes and face, and the jerks of her waist, breast and back are very prominent in all the item songs." (Pandey 107-108)

As a consequence, the 'item girls' are stereotypically identified in accordance with their on-screen presence as vamps or sirens, resulting in a relegation of their social position. While they are the object of desire for a certain section of the society, on the other hand, they are also subjected to criticism and backlash by the conservative sections of society who consider them responsible for denigrating the moral fabric. In this regard, the Parliament of India passed a resolution in 2005 to close down all dance bars in the state of Maharashtra. While this was met with state-wide protests by the members of the affected community, women's rights activists also criticized the decision. Flavia Agnes states:

> If an 'item number' of a Hindi film can be screened in public theatres, then an imitation of the same cannot be termed as 'vulgar'. The bar dancers imitate what they see in Indian films, television serials, fashion shows and advertisements. All these industries have used women's bodies for commercial gain. There is sexual exploitation of women in these and many other industries. But no one has ever suggested that you close down these industries because there is sexual exploitation of women.
>
> (Agnes)

'Item numbers' thus typify women as objects of lust. They are orchestrated to provide momentary sexual gratification to the male audience, and to ensure maximum viewership. To conclude in the words of Shabani Azmi:

> I have strong views on item numbers because they are not part of the narrative and they've been put in a film for

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the only purpose of titillation and nothing else. When a girl or a leading lady says 'it's alright, I want to celebrate my sensuality' I have no problem with that. I think that's wonderful. But under the pretence of 'celebrating your sensuality' what you are actually doing is surrendering to the male gaze and objectifying yourselves because the business of cinema is of images.

(Azmi)

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Evolution of Beauty Standards in Indian Media and Film: A Critical Analysis

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Abstract:

This study explores the complex image of fair-skinned women, the prevalent problem of body shaming, and the dynamic growth of beauty standards within the thriving Indian media and film industries. It sets out on a thorough historical trip, uncovering historical details, examining the profound social impact, analyzing the most recent disruptive developments, and examining the powerful influences of advertising, governmental rules, and the emerging #BodyPositivity movement. The goal of the study is to shed light on the complex web of beauty standards and body image depiction that permeates India's thriving and varied media and entertainment sector. Indian beauty standards have historically been significantly affected by cultural conventions and the lingering effects of colonialism. Fair skin preferences during the colonial era have left a lasting impression, sustaining the idea that beauty and social standing are correlated with fair skin. Earlier media outlets routinely promoted fair-skinned actresses as the pinnacle of beauty, which helped to further establish these norms. There has been a noticeable change in how women are portrayed in modern movies. Recent productions have ushered in a more diversified era, both in terms of phys-

ical appearance and character depth, when prior films frequently stuck to conventional beauty criteria. By embracing their natural skin tones and creating complex characters, renowned actresses like Deepika Padukone, Vidya Balan, Taapsee Pannu, Radhika Apte have broken preconceptions.

Keywords: *Advertising, Beauty Ideals, Body Image, Fairness, Media Representation, Societal Impact*

Introduction:

Virginia Woolf, the well-known British writer, once said that "the beauty of the world, which is so soon to perish, has two edges, one of laughter, one of anguish, cutting the heart asunder"(Woolf, 1929, p.4). In the context of India, where beauty standards and body image have played a significant and complex role, impacted by a tapestry of cultural, historical, and colonial factors, these statements have a particularly powerful resonance beyond its region. Indian customs and values have a rich history, and throughout that history, ideas of beauty have been intricately woven into that tapestry. The country's ancient literature, including the *Kama Sutra*, emphasized uniqueness and sexuality while praising a wide range of beauty. However, these attitudes underwent a considerable transformation during the colonial era. A Eurocentric view of beauty that valued fair complexion as a sign of superiority was established by British colonization. This colonial history still has an impact on Indian beauty standards today, where the market for fairness creams is still worth billions of dollars. In Indian media and entertainment, the representation of beauty and body image has been a dynamic and changing narrative. Fair-skinned performers have historically dominated the film industry, often known as Bollywood, which has contributed to the widespread misconception that success and attractiveness are directly related to fair skin. But there has been a discernible shift in favor of more inclusive

and varied representations in recent years. Independent of their skin tone, actors like Priyanka Chopra, Deepika Padukone, Radhikan Apte and Vidya Balan have defied the fair complexion stereotype and received international acclaim for their brilliance and attractiveness. The goal of this research study is to analyze how Indian media and film have traveled from the past to the present. It will examine how these altered beauty standards have affected society as a whole, tackling problems like body shaming and low self-esteem. It will also look into how people's opinions and aspirations in a fast changing Indian society are affected by the media's changing portrayal of beauty. The study will use a variety of studies and sources, including academic research, interviews with business insiders, and media content analysis, to conduct this analysis. It hopes to advance understanding of this complex and dynamic cultural issue by illuminating the varied ways in which body image and beauty standards are portrayed in Indian media and movies.

Historical perspective:

In the words of Mahatma Gandhi, "We but mirror the world. All … others do"(Web). When considering the historical backdrop of beauty standards in India, where cultural norms and colonial influences have firmly established a desire for pale skin as the pinnacle of beauty and social position, this remark resonates with particular force.The colonial period, which lasted for several centuries, was crucial in forming these ideas of beauty. With British colonization came a Eurocentric viewpoint that gave fair skin preference, fair complexion was linked to ideas of refinement and social hierarchy in addition to being associated with a perception of racial superiority. This colonial legacy had a profound impact on Indian conceptions of beauty, and it still has an impact on current beauty norms.Fair-skinned actresses were portrayed as the epitome of beauty and desirability during this time by the Indian media and entertainment industries, who started to emulate these colonial ideals. Fair complexion was commonly

linked to prosperity and allure in popular culture, which was not just confined to movies but also included ads.This historical context provides the framework for comprehending the development of beauty standards in India and the interplay between societal, cultural, and colonial influences. The ensuing change in Indian culture and entertainment towards more inclusive beauty depictions reflects both shifting aesthetics and the continuous fight to subvert deeply rooted conventions.

Research Methodology:

This study uses a mixed-methods research design, combining qualitative and quantitative methods. It begins with a literature review of Indian media and films to understand the evolution of beauty standards and body image representation. A content analysis is conducted to examine the portrayal of these standards over time. The study uses quantitative and qualitative data analysis to identify trends and patterns in Indian society's beauty standards and body image. Thematic analysis is used to identify recurring themes in films and media, while adhering to ethical guidelines and maintaining participant privacy.

Evolution of Film Heroines:

In the past, conventional beauty ideals were mainly upheld in Indian movies, which frequently emphasized pale complexion as a sign of desirability. The principal female characters in movies who upheld the conventional standards of beauty played a significant role in preserving these norms. However, the landscape of female representation has changed as a result of the winds of change that have swept through the regional and Bollywood cinema industries equally.

A new generation of actresses that champion honesty and defy conventional beauty standards have arisen in recent years. In this sense, individuals like Deepika Padukone, Vidya Balan, and Taapsee Pannu have become trailblazers. They have not only accepted the skin tones that come natural-

ly to them, but they have also embraced roles that highlight the depth, complexity, and substance of female characters. The industry's approach to storytelling and character development has undergone a considerable change as a result of the departure from the one-dimensional, stock heroines of the past. In addition to reflecting shifting beauty ideals, the image of film heroines has evolved in response to the demand for more relatable and authentic narrative. In addition to paving the path for a more inclusive and equal representation in Indian cinema, it also highlights the diversity and complexity of women in society.

As Indian cinema develops, the way women are portrayed on screen is changing, and it's not just in terms of how they look. It also encompasses the variety of roles and storylines that these women are currently embracing. This change has been crucial in dispelling myths and promoting a more welcoming movie experience. In the past, women's roles were frequently constrained to those of romantic interests or damsels in distress. However, the range of roles available to actresses has expanded thanks to modern cinema. They are now viewed as heroes in their own right who move the story along with their initiative, intelligence, and resiliency. Actresses like Kangana Ranaut, who has played a variety of roles in movies like *Queen* and *Manikarnika* are a prime example of this transformation. These characters navigate difficulties and complexity in a way that connects with contemporary audiences; they are no longer just the male lead's sidekicks.

This change has affected not only storytelling but also how women are viewed in Indian society. Female characters are helping to challenge gender stereotypes and inspire women to reach new heights in both film and real life as they become more realistic and inspirational. The vitality of Indian cinema, which constantly reinvents its stories and adapts to societal changes, is demonstrated by the evolution of its cinematic heroines. It not only encourages actors to develop their skills but also encourages a new generation of viewers

to believe that women are capable of taking control of their lives with grit and perseverance. It essentially captures the larger movement toward a more welcoming and gender-equal environment.

Impact on Society:

The media has had a significant impact on how society views beauty across time, frequently with far-reaching effects. Constantly promoting fair-skinned beauty standards has contributed to a number of ingrained problems, most notably colorism, which supports prejudice based on skin tone. The predominance of poor self-esteem and body dissatisfaction among those who don't fit these ideals is a result of this, in turn.Particularly young girls are hardest hit by this media-induced pressure. Many young girls struggle with feelings of inadequacy if they do not fit the traditional beauty mold promoted by the media since they are raised in a culture where having pale skin is admired and celebrated. This not only undermines their self-esteem but also limits their prospects and aspirations, promoting negative preconceptions that can impede both individual development and society's advancement.

It is crucial to understand that these problems caused by the media can be solved. There is hope for improvement as Indian society becomes more conscious of the need for inclusive and diverse portrayals. A more inclusive atmosphere where everyone may prosper, regardless of looks, can be fostered through promoting a broader notion of beauty, supported by media campaigns and societal shifts. The lives of women today will be impacted by this transformation, but it will also pave the way for a future India that is more accepting and egalitarian.

Representation of Diverse Beauty:

Inspired by Mahatma Gandhi's adage, "In a gentle way, you can shake the world", we see a subtle yet significant revolution in Indian media and entertainment that shifts the

focus from highlighting homogeneity to highlighting diversity and beauty.In recent years, Indian media and cinema have led the charge in advancing a more diverse and inclusive conception of beauty. The appreciation of actors with darker skin tones who are defying conventional beauty standards is the most striking example of this trend. Nawazuddin Siddiqui and Radhika Apte are two performers who have achieved success and recognition, underscoring the industry's growing appreciation of diversity and honesty.

Additionally, film storylines now embrace body positivity and address societal problems like colorism and body shaming. In-depth exploration of these themes in films like *Bala*, *Dum Laga ke Haisha*, *Double XL* has sparked crucial discussions about the urgent need for more inclusive beauty norms in Indian society. This paradigm changes in how beauty is portrayed in Indian media is proof that it has the power to favorably influence societal perceptions and ideals. The industry is not only reflecting shifting cultural attitudes but also assisting in the creation of a more inclusive and equitable society by embracing different beauty and challenging long-standing biases. It conveys to the younger generation the idea that skill, character, and the substance of one's heart and intellect are more important than one's outward look. In this way, the media continues to be essential in rewriting the story of beauty for India in the future.

Influence of Advertising:

When taken into account in the context of the substantial impact that advertising, particularly the marketing of fairness creams and cosmetic products, has had on the evolution of beauty standards in India, these types of advertisements have a potent effect.Advertising campaigns, particularly those that promote fairness creams, have had a considerable impact on how India's standards of beauty are defined. By promoting the idea that fairer skin signifies superiority and success, the fairness cosmetics industry has expanded into a multibillion dollar behemoth. These commercials frequently spread the damaging idea that having pale skin is vital for both social acceptance and personal fulfillment in addition to being desirable.

Some regulatory initiatives aiming at limiting such messages have been made in recent years. For instance, the Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI) published recommendations to prevent the promotion of prejudice based on skin tone in commercials. The Fair and Lovely Cream's name has also been altered to Glow and Lovely Cream in order to encourage inclusivity rather than just fairness. Despite these constructive actions, it is still difficult to enforce and completely eradicate these damaging narratives.

Advertising affects people's self-esteem, perceptions, and goals in addition to aesthetic standards of beauty. It is critical that the advertising sector and society at large acknowledge their respective roles in altering these standards. While regulatory actions are a positive step, more must be done to

rethink beauty standards, encourage inclusivity, and foster self-acceptance for a more just and peaceful India.

#BodyPositivity Movement:

As the great American poet Maya Angelou accurately put it "It is time for parents to teach young people early on that in diversity there is beauty and there is strength. We all should know that diversity makes for a rich tapestry, and we must understand that all the threads of the tapestry are equal in value no matter their color; equal in importance no matter their texture" (Angelou, 2014). The revolutionary impact of social media and grassroots movements in challenging traditional beauty standards can be powerfully reflected in this feeling.A loud chorus of voices has recently emerged calling for a more tolerant and inclusive definition of beauty. In India, the #BodyPositivity movement has become a potent force that has inspired influencers, activists, and common people. Its main points are on self-acceptance, celebrating different body types, and embracing who one is regardless of cultural beauty standards.

This movement has acquired significant traction as a result of the social media platforms' expansive reach, with people expressing their own paths to self-acceptance and inspiring others to follow suit. Influential people and activists are using their platforms to challenge damaging stereotypes while reiterating the idea that everyone deserves to be loved, respected, and made visible. Parallel to this, India's entertainment sector is gradually adopting body-positive stories. Characters with a variety of body types are starting to appear in movies and television shows, defying the one-size-fits-all philosophy that has long dominated the screen. This change fosters a more welcoming and sympathetic society in addition to reflecting shifting cultural beliefs.The #BodyPositivity movement is proof of the effectiveness of group effort and people's ability to redefine what is considered beautiful. India's cultural landscape is a rich tapestry that

weaves threads of acceptance, self-love, and empowerment, allowing each person to stand tall and proudly embrace their individuality.

Government Regulations:

The Indian government has taken action to limit the marketing of fairness and the maintenance of unrealistic beauty ideals in response to growing concerns about the effects of such goods and commercials. To stop deceptive marketing that guarantee fairness as a result of product use, regulatory bodies like the Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI) have created guidelines. These rules aim to safeguard consumers from dishonest marketing techniques and promote more open and honest advertising.The effectiveness of these rules in opposing established beauty norms and addressing deeply ingrained beliefs, however, is still up for dispute. Although they are important first steps, altering cultural attitudes and eliminating long-standing biases is a difficult and continuing task. It necessitates a broad strategy encompassing media, education, community activities, as well as regulatory bodies.

It is crucial to understand that while legislation offer a crucial foundation, real change also necessitates cultural transformations, thoughtful consumer decisions, and a proactive dedication to diversity and inclusivity promotion. The ultimate goal of changing beauty standards and developing a more welcoming society involves collective work, unshakable devotion, and a persistent determination to achieve the desired transformation. Government rules can act as catalysts for change.

Future Directions:

"Beauty is very individualistic. Beauty is what makes you happy. Beauty to me is God's handwriting. It's who you are – your character, your determination. Your sex appeal lies in who you are as a package. I don't want to look at you and go 'wow' and then be totally put off when you open

your mouth" (Sen, 2015). The future of beauty standards in Indian culture and movies is illuminated by these timeless words by the former Miss Universe Sushmita Sen, which hold the promise of diversity and body positivity.A ray of hope for a more just and body-positive future can be found in the changing terrain of beauty standards in Indian media and movies. A rising understanding of the need for change is reflected in the industry's continued commitment to questioning traditional standards and fostering diversity. Redefining ideas of beauty is largely being accomplished by actors and filmmakers that support inclusive stories and different representations.The industry must be steadfast in its efforts if it wants to guarantee a better future. This entails not only including varied characters but also actively supporting programs that boost good body image and self-acceptance among people and communities. As a result, the media and entertainment industries can act as potent drivers for societal change.

Government policies are also very important in determining this future. These laws must be strictly upheld in order to bring about long-lasting change by fostering a climate in which deceptive and damaging advertising is immediately and successfully handled. Government agencies can keep working together with business participants and advocacy organizations to make sure that the media and entertainment industries reflect shifting public values.

Additionally, the #BodyPositivity movement, which is supported by grassroots activism and social media, has to be amplified. Its messages of self-acceptance, honoring diversity, and self-love ought to be heard throughout Indian culture. We can create a more inclusive, sympathetic, and egalitarian future where every person is honored for their individuality and where beauty genuinely has no bounds by utilizing the collective power of voices that question conventional beauty ideals.

Conclusion:

Albert Einstein once said, "The measure of intelligence is the ability to change." The path that Indian media and movies have taken to redefine beauty standards, address fairness ideals, and solve body shaming issues is brilliantly captured in these words. The story of beauty in India has been deeply impacted throughout history by a complex interaction of societal, colonial, and cultural elements. As a result of television and film, the emphasis on pale skin as a sign of attractiveness and social standing has been profoundly engrained. However, there has been a notable shift in recent years toward more inclusive and diverse beauty ideals that contradict accepted norms.The effects of this progression on people and society at large are indisputable. On the one hand, it creates opportunities for increased self-acceptance, empowerment, and the appreciation of a variety of body forms and skin tones. It enables people to let go of the restrictions imposed by conventional beauty standards and embrace their individuality.

However, the path to inclusivity is not without its difficulties. It takes time for deeply ingrained perceptions to shift, and people—particularly the younger generation—continue to struggle with the lingering effects of previous beauty standards. The fight against colorism and body shaming is still going on. All stakeholders, including the media, the entertainment sector, and policymakers, must collaborate on this revolutionary path. In order to undermine ingrained norms and promote diversity and body positivity in Indian society, collaboration is essential. Media is a potent tool for change since its influence on forming views is obvious. Steps toward a more inclusive and varied India include enforcing and tightening legislation to ensure ethical advertising, embracing diverse narratives, and elevating the voices of movements like #BodyPositivity.

The ability to accept change and work toward a future where beauty is not constrained by strict standards but

instead embraces the richness of diversity and the beauty that dwells within each human is ultimately the best indicator of our collective intelligence.

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Femvertising: A study of the idea that moved culture forward for women

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Abstract:

Femvertising/ female empowerment advertising is a solidarity movement lived out through social media. The present paper shall affirm that 'femvertising' is no longer a new expression but an absolutely struggling chapter in feminism's fourth wave. In a male dominated society, the condition of inferiority of the female gender has been obviously reflected in the advertising sector too. The bridging of this gender gap, the gradual improvement of the condition of women at a societal level, has also been documented at the marketing and communicational level. In the light of the same the paper shall hope to identify that the practices of appropriating this feminism discourse is meant for profit gains.

The paper shall discuss that 'femvertising' apart from marketing the brand is a medium to promote the self-esteem, confidence and aspirations of the women. It is a communicational strategy to liberate a woman, to delimit a woman. In order to contextualize the ongoing argument, I shall bring to focus certain selected advertisements that attempt to shatter the perpetuated stereotypes about women. Furthermore, the paper shall question the extent to which the growing activism has

boosted the fourth wave feminism into the technological age and how successfully it has been emphasising and including the questions of empowerment, freedom and equality.

The paper shall accommodate necessary implications about how 'femvertising' is struggling hard to combat the two forms of exclusion: firstly, the white feminism ignored the isolated struggle of the women of colour, secondly, feminism had an unacceptable and aggressive attitude towards the trans women. Therefore, keeping in mind the complexity of the topic and the controversy surrounding the subject, the paper shall examine and establish the needful.

Keywords: *Femvertising, Commodity feminism, Activism, White feminism, Trans-woman*

Introduction

The popular culture has accepted advertising to be an inevitable part of their existence. It has always been observed that the content or storyline of each advertisement either portrays or represents the ideas, thoughts and messages of the present-day reality. Since a long time, women have always received the identity of a marginalised and subordinate class in a patriarchal society. Undoubtedly, this state of subjugation of the fair sex has been recorded by the advertising industry. It was a matter of utmost necessity to rethink the stereotypical representation of women/female bodies in the advertisements. This gender gap having undergone gradual improvement had eventually benefitted the situation of women at the societal level and consequently at a communication (marketing) level.

The decades following the second World War when women practised unquestionable subservience to the patriarchal dominion, the times when a woman in advertisements were modelled as housewives to promote the household goods like,

floor cleaners, brooms, shoe shiners, electrical appliances, food items etc. had upgraded the notion that a brighter, cleaner and shinier indoor made a housewife happier.

Evidence suggests that the 1970s framed women from a different point of view in advertisements. The female body was used as a 'sexy' icon that was purposed to gain the attention of the male audience. The masculine gaze was gratified through the alluring glances or the partial naked bodies or the sensual poses of the female protagonist in the advertisements. A product was marketed by portraying a woman as a 'real sex object'. Weyenberg Massagic Shoes in the year 1974 advertised a naked woman lying on the floor with a flirtatious look at the brand's shoe with a tag-line "Keep where she belongs". The line indicates a woman is born to be under a man's dictation, at his toe. A woman was nothing but an embodiment of sexual pleasure.

The 1980s and 90s saw the increase of the commercial-ization of consumer goods required for personal use; like make up kits, fashion utilities, gyms and other slimming products. The new version of beauty targeted towards a slim, slender and flawless female body. This concept of beauty was depicted in the ad featuring a woman by Calvin Klein Jeans.

The beginning of the 1990s observed the initial step towards emancipating the female. The woman was then identified as a self-governing and sturdy individual who is eligible to decide for herself, accomplished to become resourceful, capable to experience sexual liberty and efficient to grow a professional career. The advertisement released by Yves Saint Laurent's pictured a woman with jacket and formal trousers (previously used by working men) sitting at her office desk. With the economic recession hitting every section of the society in the 90s, social differences began to increase making way for the advertising sector to frame women a flexible personality with the efficiency of a multi tasker.

The 21st century introduced a better and anew turn in the advertising industry. It no longer represented the goals and ideals of the society or the personal choices target audience instead the brands created and communicated efficient ways to inspire the thoughts and ideas, modulate the choice and reform the practices of the general public. The audience towards the end of the first decade of the century began to acculturate themselves with the new definitions of beauty. The brands intended to promote and celebrate physical peculiarities, imperfections and differences all of which targeted to focus the positive portrayal of the female body untainted by the male gaze and not responsible to satisfy the desires of the opposite sex.

In order to respect the need of the hour, guided by the chief tenants of the fourth wave feminism, the year 2014 had witnessed the introduction of the "pro-female" trend. The "pro-female" style through the channels of digital communication intended to practise gender equality by giving up the cliched depiction of the female body and enhancing a sense of inclusiveness where the society will be motivated to stop discriminating the female body as an object of desire. These thoughts of 'feminism' and the purpose of 'advertising' gave birth to "Femvertising".

The present generations instead of subscribing to the gendered reality utilise the digital media to contribute to the various movements that pave way towards woman empowerment. These ideas of expression volunteer the 'modern woman' towards a life of independence, integrity, resourcefulness and strength where discrimination walks down to obsolescence. 'The Global Campaign for real beauty', the advertising campaign by Dove honours the fact that a woman's body is her choice, it marks an optimistic outlook and a better approach towards ethnicity and definition of beauty. The picture shows women of different nationalities, body shapes. They represent the females in general, the advertised product is made for every woman irrespective

of their imperfections and specific body conformations. The brand celebrates an idea of beauty free of all preconceived notions, they photograph any human being (woman and transgender) who identify themselves with as a female. They have progressively destroyed conformed notions of gender and have accommodated the revised version of a female body that naturally olds scars and flaws.

Similarly, the tagline; "For the bold, the bright and the beautiful" used by Gucci to advertise lipsticks thrives on the idea of celebrating a genuine, an authentic individual, one who surely survives imperfections.

Literature Review

The present paper has reckoned heavily upon book chapters and journals similar to Charlie Campbell's, "Watch Emma Watson Explain Why She's a Feminist", Prudence Chamberlain's, "Affective Temporality: Towards a Fourth Wave", Heather Landy's, "HP Pushed Ad Agencies to Do Better on Diversity—and Saw a Change in Ad Performance" Nancy Levit's, "The "F" Word: Feminism and Its Detractors", John Mackey's and Rajendra S. Sisodia's Conscious Capitalism: Liberating the Heroic Spirit of Business. Paulin Maclaran's, "Marketing and Feminism in Historic Perspective."

Ealasaid Munro's, "Feminism: A Fourth Wave?" Political Insight, Jack Neff's "The UN Believes Ads Can Turn the Tide in Long-Losing War for Gender Equality", Sara Ashley's "Uber Is under a Federal Investigation for Gender Discrimination." and Nina O'Neil's, "Gold Eagle Brand: Building a Culture Where Everybody Matters," have extensively researched on the identity, empowerment, and existence of women across timelines.

Methodology

This paper hopes to justify from a rational point of view the fifty to seventy years of woman subjugation in a male-dominated society that has been reflected in digital reality. The paper shall pertinently trace the portrayal of women in

advertisements through decades. It shall mark the evolution of "femvertising' as a much-needed activist movement in the history of advertisement. The paper shall identify and analyse a long line of advertisements that seek to frame diversity, and celebrate inclusiveness and woman empowerment. The paper shall prove the optimistic turn of the advertising industry toward inspiring the population to think in ways that the digital medium communicated. In a whole the paper shall accommodate the journey of the advertising industry from gender inequality towards gender equality.

Discussion/ Result Analysis

Advertisements that volunteered women towards dignity

"Who says, It's A Man's World?"– TWA

Time and again girls and women were portrayed as identities free from the patriarchal shackles of gender biases. Shattering of gender stereotypes is a movement that continuously needs to volunteer the thoughts and ideas of the people towards a gender inclusive culture. The Trans World Airlines in the 1950s released an advertisement that tried to voice for the fact that each woman should have complete access to the human rights. Advertisements that promote human rights are a beacon of hope in our media landscape. These powerful messages inspire us to embrace diversity, equality, and justice for all. Whether they champion gender equality, racial justice, LGBTQ+ rights, or freedom of expression, such ads remind us of our collective responsibility to create a world where every individual's rights are respected and upheld. They serve as a reminder that change begins with awareness and action, encouraging us to stand up for what is just and humane, making the world a better place for generations to come.

"Equal pay, Equal Time" - Bulova Accutron

Both men and women live a day of the same duration. This idea was revoked by the watch manufacturing company,

Bulova Accutron. The company was supportive of the Equal Rights Amendment which was launched in the year 1974. In response the manufacturer voiced for the equal pay scale of women in the work professional space through their advertisement. This advertisement features the hand of a man and a woman held together to highlight gender equality.

Advertisements that portray gender equality play a crucial role in reshaping societal norms and perceptions. These ads challenge traditional stereotypes and biases by presenting men and women as equals, both in their roles and aspirations. They send a powerful message that gender should not limit one's potential, and that diverse perspectives and talents should be celebrated without discrimination. Such advertisements not only promote gender inclusivity but also reflect a more accurate representation of the world we live in, where gender equality is a fundamental principle. By showcasing women in leadership positions, depicting men engaging in caregiving roles, and emphasizing collaboration and respect between genders, these ads contribute to fostering a more equitable and just society where everyone has the opportunity to thrive regardless of their gender.

"More installers Like Alana MacFarlane" - AT & T

The advertisement released in 1972 featured Alana MacFarlane as the telephone installer. The ad hopes to focus on the versatility of the women and how independently they achieve the nerves to tackle intricate tasks confidently. They had also begun to overcome the assumed vulnerability of their limbs.

"Power Suit" - Ralph Lauren

The advertisement from the 1980s depicts for perhaps the first time the power accessed, celebrated and experienced by women. The ad features a woman in a formal attire (a jacket and trousers) which was a part of the pop culture. This ad has been assumed to have introduced an image of the woman that even in the present century is yet to be realised by many.

"Like A Girl" – Always

Femvertising consciously addressed the inherent discrimination in a patriarchal society. It raised the phrase "Like a Girl" which undoubtedly revisits the gender gap. This ad intended to remind the population about following ways that instead of segregating the woman as another should perpetuate the idea of inclusiveness.

Gender inclusiveness is the antidote to the persistent gender gap that has plagued societies for far too long. It signifies a commitment to creating environments where people of all genders are treated with equal respect, dignity, and opportunities. Inclusive societies recognize that the gender gap, whether in education, employment, or leadership, not only perpetuates injustice but also stifles human potential and economic progress. By actively dismantling the barriers that have historically disadvantaged women and marginalized gender identities, gender inclusiveness strives to level the playing field. It promotes policies, practices, and attitudes that foster diversity, equity, and inclusion, paving the way for a future where everyone, regardless of gender, can fully participate and thrive in all aspects of life. Achieving gender inclusiveness is an essential step towards closing the gender gap and creating a more just and equitable world for all.

"Imagine the Possibilities" – Barbie

The ad was released to allow people to rethink the woman's version of success. The advertisement allowed the society to realize that it was not a compartmentalised space but one that can be accessed by all.

Femvertising has emerged as a transformative force in redefining the success statement of a woman. Traditionally, societal expectations often limited women's definitions of success to conventional roles and achievements. However, femvertising campaigns have challenged these constraints by portraying women as multi-faceted individuals with diverse ambitions and aspirations. They celebrate women who break

barriers, shatter stereotypes, and excel in fields that were once considered male-dominated. Femvertising encourages women to aspire to greatness on their own terms, whether that's in business, leadership, sports, arts, or any other area of interest. By highlighting the stories of women who have defied conventional norms and reimagined success, femvertising has helped shift the narrative surrounding women's potential, inspiring women of all backgrounds to pursue their dreams and redefine success on their own empowering terms.

"Stress Test: Dana" – Secret

Secret released a sensitive and thought-provoking advertisement that featured a transgender woman named Dana who gains the required guts to walk out of the washroom to face along line of females waiting outside. The viewers were hoped to have empathised with her condition as the tagline reads; "no right way to be a woman". The ad holds together the challenges experienced by a woman and a transgender as well. Furthermore, the ad recalls the fact that the fragile 'other' requires inner-strength not only to overcome tough hurdles but usual and obvious circumstances in their lives also require their confidence and courage.

Conclusion

"Femvertising: The Study of Ideas that Moved Culture Forward for Women" has delved into the dynamic realm of advertising that champions women's empowerment, equality, and social progress. Throughout our exploration, we have witnessed how femvertising campaigns have transcended traditional marketing strategies and evolved into powerful agents of change, reshaping societal norms and perceptions. These campaigns have not only showcased the power of branding to influence cultural narratives but have also underscored the importance of authenticity and genuine commitment to women's causes in resonating with audiences. As the advertising industry continues to evolve, it is evident that femvertising will remain a critical force in

driving positive change for women and society at large. By amplifying women's voices and experiences, these campaigns are not only shaping consumer choices but also advancing the global agenda for gender equality. As we look to the future, it is imperative that advertisers, consumers, and policymakers alike recognize the potential of femvertising to foster a more inclusive and equitable world. The journey towards progress is ongoing, and femvertising stands as a testament to the enduring power of advertising to shape the world we want to see.

Femvertising stands as a powerful catalyst for both inclusiveness and women's empowerment in the world of advertising. Through creative and impactful campaigns, it has successfully challenged and reshaped conventional gender narratives, fostering a more inclusive and equitable representation of women in media. By showcasing women from diverse backgrounds and emphasizing their strengths, achievements, and resilience, femvertising not only promotes a more balanced and accurate reflection of society but also empowers women to break free from limiting stereotypes. It has played a pivotal role in advancing the cause of gender equality, encouraging women to pursue their dreams and ambitions, and inspiring society as a whole to recognize and celebrate the immense contributions of women in all spheres of life. As femvertising continues to evolve and expand, it holds the potential to drive lasting social change, furthering the journey towards a world where inclusiveness and women's empowerment are not just marketing strategies but integral values deeply ingrained in our cultural fabric.

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Internet: A Competitive Displacement for Traditional Media on the News Domain

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Abstract*:*

Internet an immensely powerful and ubiquitous medium of information has thoroughly flourished over the last decade. With its path-breaking emergence and popularity, the medium has been a serious threat to the conventional media or the traditional media (tv, radio, newspaper). Nowadays we rely on the internet as much as we rely on tv, radio or newspaper for any piece of information. The main aim of the study is to understand the widespread uses of online news in comparison with the news available via traditional media. According to the Theory of Uses and Gratifications and The Niche Theory, any new medium of communication can survive, thrive, compete, and even flourish by offering maximum utility to the potential consumers. Hence, in doing so, the medium may have positive or negative effects on the existing media.

The purpose of the research paper is to indicate that

Internet has replaced the traditional media as far as the daily news domain is concerned, with the major displacements occurring in newspapers and television. Various survey results suggest that Internet has the broadest niche on the satisfaction and opportunities dimension, and it provides the users with gratification than any other traditional medium of communication.

Keywords: *communication, conventional media, internet, online news, traditional media.*

Preface

Internet or the New Media is an astoundingly powerful medium of communication and information that has rapidly flourished over the last decade. Many researchers predicted its growth and that it would surpass the Conventional or Traditional Media steadily, and that is what happened. Nowadays we can hardly lead a normal life without being dependent on the Internet. The citizens of our country are taking a slow turn into the so-called 'Netizens'. Moreover, in the developed countries most of the regions are under WiFi coverage, so that people can enjoy unlimited net connection. The Internet opens in front of us a wide array of information or data regarding any topic under the sun. Anywhere you are stuck; you can search through the browse engines and get what you are looking for. With its groundbreaking popularity, this medium has been a threat to the traditional media (tv, radio, newspaper), that have been relied on since ages. Why would we wait for a particular piece of news to be broadcast on tv or relayed from radio, when we can browse and derive it just at a click of a button? Also among the youth, it is quite discernible that they rarely turn the pages of a newspaper; instead, they are more into gadgets for any kind information. Nowadays we rely on the internet as much as we rely on tv, radio or newspaper for any piece of information.

In the news domain, we have seen a thorough change, i.e.

previously, we had no other option than turning the pages of the newspaper or waiting for the morning, or evening news to be broadcast or telecast but the now the scenario has changed completely with the advent of internet. With a variety of mindboggling gadgets, we can browse a particular news item anytime, anywhere! We can see videos and share them instantly via the social media platforms.

Introduction

New media caters the needs of the audiences through the contents available in the Internet, than can accessed on digital devices that has communicative user feedback and participation. To exemplify, new media include multifarious websites, online newspapers, video games, blogs, and the path-breaking social media! New Media or the internet offers a participatory approach to the audience via conversation and connection. It enables people around the world to share, comment on, and discuss a wide variety of topics. Unlike the previous technologies that appeared in the past, New Media is based upon high-end interactive community. Nowadays if a piece of news shakes a nation or creates a stir worldwide, people can participate or talk about that topic freely on the internet. Thanks to the social media platform for that!

New media does not comprise television or radio programs (i.e. analogue broadcast), films, magazines, research based publications, until and unless they support particular technologies that ensures digital connectivity and interactivity. Wikipedia, which is an immensely popular online encyclopaedia, is an apt example that is a concoction of digital text, videos, and images with hyper-text links, the contributor's participation, feedback of the users and also the development of a participant society comprising editors and contributors for the betterment of the readers. Facebook, Blogs, Twitter handle etc are social media platforms, where users can participate and discuss on any topic.

History of New Media or the Internet

During the 1960s, interactions between computers and humans started becoming stronger. In the 1980s Alan Kay and workers at Xerox, started to give the computability of pc's to individuals, and did not have an organization to take charge of that. During the late 1980s and the early 1990s, we have witnessed a kind of parallel and steady relationship between the various social changes and different computer designs. Though causally not much related, but it makes a conceptual sense that the design of the Web and not to forget the Cold war took place at the same time. Various philosophers like Marshall McLuhan were factors behind the development of the media theory during that time. His renowned statement on Understanding Media; 'The Extensions of Man', (1964) he said that "the medium is the message", which drew the awareness to the media and the technologies, rather than the contents or the messages they have on the human experiences and on the society.

Till the 1980s, media trusted mainly on print and analogue broadcasts, like the television and the radio. However, the last two decades have witnessed a rapid alteration in the media that are based upon the exercise of different digital technologies, like the Internet and not to forget the video games. These are the examples, which are demonstrations of the new media. The various uses of the digital computers have totally transformed the old media, as recommended by the arrival of the television and of course the online publications. Also the traditional media models like the printing press, have changed due to the functioning of different technologies, such as the image editing software like the Adobe Photoshop and a variety of desktop publishing tools.

Andrew L. Shapiro (1999) said that the surfacing of innovative, digital tools mark a drastic shift of the one who is in controls the flow of information, experience and multifarious

resources. However, W. Russell Neuman (1991) stated that new media have technical potential to drag in one way, while the social and economic forces pull it back from the reverse way. Neuman also suggested that we will witness the development of a universally interconnected system of video, audio, and different electronic text communicative channels that will haze the difference between interpersonal communication and mass communication and also between private and public communication.

What is Online News?

Newspapers all over the world are struggling hard to endure while competing with the various websites, which offer news instantly and not including a subscription fee! There are many newspapers that have relied on the Internet and they have created their own websites in order to post news. Nowadays people find it extremely useful and easy. For example, All India Radio has its own website www.newsonair.com. Newspapers brands like The Telegraph and The Times of India also have their online news portal services. However, their online revenue is a small fraction of what they attain from their print advertising. Moreover, the newspapers are losing money and most of them are going bankrupt, for example The Bengal Post. So how can the newspapers retain their profits when they are competing with the online news services?

Objectives

The main aim of the study is to understand the widespread uses of online news in comparison with the news available via traditional media. According to the Theory of Uses and Gratifications and The Niche theory, any new medium of communication can survive, flourish and prosper by offering maximum utility to the potential consumers. The purpose of the research paper is to indicate that Internet has replaced the traditional media to a large extent as far as the daily news domain is concerned, with major displacements occurring in newspapers and television. Various survey results suggest

that Internet has the broadest niche on the satisfaction and opportunities levels, and it provides the users with utmost satisfaction more than any other traditional medium of communication.

Literature Review

I personally surveyed various books on traditional and conventional media for my paper, I even consulted couple of articles that I have mentioned in the references regarding my dissertation. Article by Grant Christian, Media Buyer, published in December 23, 2014, has enabled me to have a fair understanding of my subject. The book named 'Emerging Media In The New Millennium And Journalism' and 'The Pocket Media Coach' have also been referred and taken help from. These books will new give the readers a new way to look into this communicative system. The various journals which are printed on traditional and new media help the readers to get an overview of the subject. With the help of these books and articles, and also other sources, I could understand and relate my study, and work accordingly.

Research Methodology

The new media or the internet challenges researchers with new technologies often when it comes to the study of different practical applications and their respective theoretical aspects. This research in the first hand distinguishes the special advantages of the interactive nature of the internet, its quality of demassification, and also asynchronies, which the new media or the internet have successfully created. Media systems of countries like USA, UK, Malaysia, and India has been studied and surveyed meticulously, as to which of the two mass media systems, traditional or new media has been able to flourish vigorously and has proved to be a better communicative platform for the masses.

Illustration

Internet – a game changer in the global scenario

Internet is a global medium that shook the world long ago. With the advent of the internet, the receivers of one-way or in-trapersonal communication are more likely to turn into trans-mitters and producers. Starting from Indymedia to BBC, the difference between information consumers and the producers will be extremely difficult to establish. With extended global citizenship the technological boon offered by the widespread digital communication might be shared on a larger scale. It is hard to predict as to how and what kind of information flow in the internet. What happens in the internet or more specif-ically in the social media is that the common citizens have the right to comment on their respective political experienc-es, and thus share their views or ideas with are on the same forum. Thus in the future, these aspects are going to be the most path breaking aspects of the new media surroundings. While discovering the similarities and dissimilarities between the internet and the old mass media, we should consider the various technical nuances between the different forms of me-dia. Traditional media run on government and private in-vestments and of course, resources; and they can be steered in the desired direction accordingly by government through their diverse mechanisms and control. The new media on the contrary have completely different features. The Internet is used for mass communication and also for point-to-point and mass-to-point distribution of message. The internet is de-cen-tralized, needs little investment, while it offers greater inter-activity facility, and encourages better public involvement. Therefore, it is not astonishing to find that the internet is gain-ing immense popularity and recognition in the civil society. Citizens are now 'Netizens' colloquially, and people have the freedom to generate their individual news and also receiv-ing information from Internet, which is perceived to be free from external control. In USA, UK, Malaysia, and also Asian countries like China and India the internet gained fame and recognition because people wanted to have freer flow of in-formation as the conventional media, which is under the con-trol of the government. The Internet has made it reasonable

for online newspapers be in regular operation, because it is easy to use and does not too much money; though the cost of the online presence will be incurred.

Content Analysis

The competition between printed and online news

News is readily and instantly obtainable from the Internet and when you have so many providers to serve you with the desired information, newspapers are really finding it increasingly difficult to deliver the required and unique content. Many people find that news through social media extensively reliable, which is proved to be one of the fastest ways of communication on a larger scale. The print media are competing everyday with the online networks on speed; and it is almost impossible for them to satisfy the users with the power of news coverage, they are competing with the 24-hour news channels and also their respective websites, which is very tough.

We cannot deny the fact that newspapers focus on the quality of news coverage. But we also have to understand that the average consumer of today wants everything fast and at a cheaper rate, and this is certainly not a way by which the newspapers can earn their share of profit. Talking about my country i.e. India, newspapers here may successfully compete at the local or national level though. But in Canada, only 100 conventional newspapers have noteworthy subscription rates. In the United States or also The United Kingdom people are so fast moving and busy that they hardly get time to turn the pages of the newspapers, researches have proved that successfully. There people serve themselves with any desired information they want, by just clicking the buttons of their gadgets that they use on a daily basis. This makes their work easier, faster, and also cheaper. Moreover, not to forget internet is a cheaper medium in comparison with print or electronic media.

There are few newspapers that can attract traffic to their re-

spective websites and this depends a lot on the Google rankings. The higher the traffic, consequently the higher will be the search engine ranking; and the newspapers that vend to larger audiences, automatically rank higher, and so draws the traffic that in the opposite case could have gone to the smaller newspapers. The smaller newspapers on the other hand receive minimum traffic from the Google and so they rely on people, who visit their websites straight. The news providers will be unable to survive on internet with their current numbers if they maintain similar profit levels. Hence, these newspapers cannot exist by only selling the local news, they surely need a saviour.

An outline of traditional media and new media relating to business news transactions

Traditional media or old media, has been immensely used in the advertising world for ages until social media emerged in the domain and exhausted its scope. When linked with advertising and marketing, the new media covers television, radio, newspapers, and even magazine advertisings. Due to these types of communicating systems, businesses have been able to reach both the consumers and also the companies for years. These communicative systems are the most common forms that are used by entrepreneurs on a day-to-day basis. Traditional media has proved to be very effective, over the last few years, but the recent trends show that more businesses transactions are done by utilizing the internet in order to reach the target audiences. Nowadays new media controls the advertising domain also. Consumers and businesses men depend largely on the internet to procure the required data. The new media relates to the substance which can be accessible with the help of various forms of the digital media. To exemplify the new media also includes online advertising i.e. banner ads, retargeting the potential audience etc.; online streaming, which includes television and radio; and also social media advertising. These are easily and accessible methods by which business have the ability to satisfy customer demands.

Being the consumers, we are often in a challenge as to how to fetch the required data. These days consumers navigate through the web pages to find any information as quickly as possible. Simultaneously the consumers also take enough time out of their daily schedule to utilize traditional media for daily information. This we can find everywhere like on the way to the office we are tuned to our radios, even at home we glued to the television set during the news hours, and also at the doctor's chamber we can find ourselves turning the pages of a magazine. Therefore, we also use each of these forms of traditional media in our day-to-day life till now, though the rate of y to using the internet is higher, as it is faster, cheaper and easy to use. Though as consumers, we may find ourselves doing multitasking every day. As for example, n we are at home watching our favourite telly show and browsing the net in our tablets for any particular news item. For investors and business and even news makers it is indispensable to decide in which way the consumers find it easy or relaxing to read their favourite news items. Thus, by doing this they can find a balance between both internet and the old media.

The new media can reach the niche audience or the narrow audience zone, which the old media can barely do. The youth prefer using the internet for anything important, starting for downloading news apps to making their academic presentations with the help of the information that they get from the net. Moreover, people cannot match their wish list with the old media forms, for example if we want to get a piece of information regarding something that has happened in the past, we may not find that in the current newspaper or in television or radio. But, this sort of problem does not happen with the internet, we get anything at anytime, which is a big boon and which has also made this medium highly acceptable by the common people.

New media and the new generation

Now-a-days the teenagers who also described to as the 'N-Generation' or the 'cyber teens,' are being reared up in a fast moving and a globally interactive environment. Researchers have proved that more than 4.5 million teenagers in USA, who are under 18 years have their respective internet accounts. Adolescent socialization grows from the capability of the teens to notice and learn from the internet, and also utilizing the media to satisfy their individual requirements. They are often said to be using the internet or the new media for the entertainment purposes but they also check the internet for daily news. Research has proved that adolescents utilize social media to describe the world and the environment around them. Day by day, the world is becoming globally communicative or to say highly interactive. This paper also claims that the teenagers or to say the adolescents use the internet on a day to day basis for news consumption. They utilize the social media platform like twitter and Facebook to raise their opinions and participate in a discussion. This is kind of benefit is hardly available via traditional media.

The participatory and understanding approach of the internet in our life and the teens generates insights as to how the news makers and businessmen can produce added values in their daily communications with the teens or the netizens in the web world. The new media with its capability of interpersonal communication, provides various opportunities, which were previously unavailable via any medium only. Therefore, a detailed account of the teenagers using the internet is warranted, and also the study of the new media relating to the magnitude of importance made by the teens on the other forms of interpersonal communication. However, researches prove that teenagers or the adolescents are hardly fond of the old forms old media, except for the television though. They are very much dependent on the web for procuring any information, as they can relate to that and they also find a wide array of detailed description in the net, which the traditional

forms of media can not provide their generation.

The Americans' shifting habits have put a remarkable impact as to what extent and also how a country can effectively function staying within a well informed society that is wholly under the internet coverage. Same with the state organizations that produces news and makes it accessible to the common citizens on a day to day basis. The 'Pew Research Center's State' of News Media came out with a report that focused mainly only on the latter, by analysing the growth, development, and progress of the news industry over the time, across the globe. By having a clear perception of the media industry the researchers answer and ask indispensable questions regarding the relation and similarities between democracy and information living this century; they want to know that whether it signifies exploring the extent to which the consumers who are like minded navigate and access the same resources, the chances that the potential consumers have or even don't have in order to be on top of their activities or to be at the upper rank of the business or social ladder, or how netted or attached the citizens feel to their communities. The trend of the evolution of social media news over the mobiles and other gadgets has generated a new habit among the netizens, who are constantly browsing their gadgets to remain updated. Social media has instigated the youth to participate on political discussions and raise their viewpoints. With the help of the twitter handle and Facebook they post pictures, share incidents on the burning issues of the society; and thus, by doing so they attract even more and more youth towards the discussion panel. Though the local television channels continue to detain the broadcast audiences with a slight increases for the evening coverage by 3% and in the morning coverage by 2%, as per the reports obtained in the 2014. However, the big network television news witnessed a year of steady viewership growth of 5% in evening and of 2% in morning, which leads to an average evening viewership of approximately 24 million.

Thus to say holistically that with the advent of the digital

news and their experimentation in the market, be it from the long time providers or the new ones, are numerous in number and are so varied that it is extremely difficult to keep their track. While on the other side the speed of various technological advancements and the diversity of choices, ranging from multiple platforms to different devices to a wide array of pathways, shows signs of high growth. With the advent of a new pathway or a platform, the jaded ones remain used though, and this is becoming a big challenge for the global market to proceed with all the forms of information system at the same time. The traditional media is more acceptable by the people above 40 age group but recent trends show that even the aged people are increasingly accepting the new media for gaining the required data.

Authenticity of news available in the social media

The question of authenticity slowly creeps into the thoughts of the users of the social media platforms and also in the scenario of the current internet background, it is playing an indispensable part as to how we connect with each other in the internet via the content of the web world. For a large number of users, Google and Facebook news items are main point of their common interaction, and the importance in creating the podium that offers self-assurance that an individual needs makes them who they are and also convey their personality to the whole world, but some are their who pretend and also propagate wrong information in the internet, which is critical threat to the success and growth of the social media network. The Facebook profiles of the individuals and even their Google id's are attached to their name and their real connections, and this increases their communication and activities all over the cyberspace. The regular internet users are common with signing into other networking services by using their Facebook accounts or their Google id's, thus making public identities, which are aggregated sides of their offline existence, their online present and future. The online identity of a user should be the same as an offline one, however with the increase in

the toll of the cyber crimes there are many fraudulent people in the web, who present themselves in various social media platforms by not using the same account auld have their individual account. Psychologists say that maintaining one's separate account is important as this it develops within an individual a sense of who he or she is and how they easily fit into various social contexts. Thus maintaining a separate account is important as with the help of that we can connect with people across the globe, know their viewpoints and develop a healthy communicative system. Communication develops on any topic, especially on the burning issues of the society. In the social media platforms people interact with each other on the day to day happening and so they come across each other's mind sets and how differently they think. People connect through new at large, they form their own pages and discussion panel to promote their thoughts and actions, and this is something traditional can not provide.

The printed press is getting obsolete

The online content has taken over the printing press successfully. It can be analysed and predicted easily that the Blogs will play an indispensable role in the upcoming years. The consumers have started to withdraw newspaper subscriptions and have started to collect the RSS feeds.

So those who are into designing and writing for these renowned websites have a great responsibility ahead of them. They cannot afford to wait any more to start constructing something out of the debris that the print newspaper houses are disintegrating into gradually.

News via electronic media verses online news

The power of the internet lies in its interactive and communicative nature and its potential to offer guidance the users, which is tailored according to the requirements of different individuals. Nowadays the Americans read news online more than they listen from radios, or watch on television. Researcher Pew's biennial study based on news consumption habits of

the citizens has stated this. Moreover, the tv news audience is almost greying. Television was the most accepted source of news earlier before the inception of online news media, it is still in many countries for example, India; but its audience is becoming limited day by day. Research says that in 2008, only about a third 34% of those who are younger than 30 watched tv news the previous day; in 2006, nearly half of younger population 49% said that they watched tv news the previous day.

The steady upsurge of online media and its growing acceptance

The Indian media context has witnessed multifarious amendments over the past two decades. To start with a well organized media environment, where the traditional print media worked under the government scheme and the electronic or the broadcast media were under the control of the state. The expansion of internet in our country has been so vast and flourishing that we can now rightly say that internet has not only become an "alternative media", but it has also become more popular than the traditional mainstream media. In Malaysia the internet is more powerful and reliable the traditional media, ex-home minister Syed Hamid Albar stated that, "The Internet news media cannot be called an 'alternative media' any more as it is a more popular medium than the traditional mainstream media in Malaysia…I think we have to call the alternative media the mainstream. In fact, mainstream papers are trying to emulate them and be as critical as they can in selling their papers" (Straits Times, October 22, 2008).

News consumption in USA and Malaysia

Large number of people residing in USA have their personal internet connection, which enable them to read their newspaper online anytime and anywhere! USA has the second largest Internet users in the whole world with around 227.7 million users after losing behind China. In Malaysia people can read newspapers online anytime they want, for example: at http://www.onlinenewspapers.com/malaysia.html , Ma-

laysian citizens can read almost all the Malaysian newspapers in this web address on a daily basis. Though still a large population of them rely on television for accurate news but still the number of people who use the internet for reading news online is also steadily increasing. Thus, the citizens are slowly drawing away from the printed newspapers.

News consumption in UK

We can see a steady growth in the number of internet users who use online media service for news, with 41% doing so this year, in comparison to the last year records i.e. 32%. This is mainly discernible in those who are within 16-34 age group; among this age group use of internet for downloading various applications for news has highly increased from 44% in 2013 to a sharp 60% in 2014. Newspapers are read by 40%, which was the same last year, and radio heard by36%, which was almost the same last year.

News consumption in India

In India with the increase in the number of internet users the number of people relying on online news services is steadily increasing. This is the reason why different newspaper houses, television and radio channels have their own online news websites. All India Radio and Doordarshan have their online news domains; www.newsonair.com and www.ddindia.gov.in respectively. We can now avail of free online newspapers links that are available in almost all the Indian languages. We get all regional languages newspapers in Tamil, Hindi, Oriya, Telugu, Urdu, Gujarati, Malayalam, Marathi, Punjabi, Assamese, Kannada, Bengali, Konkani and English, etc.

List of some Indian newspapers that are available online

• The Hindu (Andhra Pradesh) (available in English)

• The Hindustan Times (Ranchi) (available in English)

• Hindusthan Samachar (available in sixteen languages)

• The Hindu Tamil Daily Newspaper Online (Tamil

Nadu) (available in Tamil)

- IdeaTvNews (Jaipur) (available in Hindi)
- I Am In DNA Of India (available in both English & Hindi) and many more.

An inclusive overview

People watch television for morning and evening news, they turn the knobs of their radio sets for news transmission, but this habit is slowly disappearing, especially among the youth and those who are into daily activities. The younger generation and the office goers rarely find time and scope to browse channels for news or they are hardly seen reading newspapers. People find it easier and more comforting to get news ready in front of them in their mobile phones, laptops, or personal computers. This is becoming a habit and people in India will slowly adapt it, like the way people in USA, UK and other countries have accepted it happily. As per the reports of 2012, 55% of the regular New York Times readers said that they read newspapers mostly on their personal computers or mobile devices, as do 48% of the standard USA Today and 44% of the regular Wall Street Journal readers.

Scope of research

With the induction of the internet in the global scenario, people nowadays have not only confided themselves in using the new media for playing video games and other fun activities, but they are also using the new media for reading news on the go anytime and at any place. One may question about the authenticity of the information that we get online on any issue concerning a country, like in Malaysia people still rely more on television as far as news in concerned. But recent trends clearly point out the fact that the developing countries are slowly embracing online news service and believing in their content at large. In India approximately 20% of the population use internet, mostly the youth, who browse the internet on a daily basis to read the news; they even download various

online news applications. In the developed countries like the US and UK people are very fast moving and want everything instantly, and so for them it is extremely convenient to use the internet on a daily basis to fetch any data, sitting in the comforts of their homes, office, etc. Thus this change is also likely to occur in the developing nations, where the internet will gradually become a competitive displacement for the traditional media in the news domain. The change will be slow but steady. My paper examines that already this change has started and gradually it will be clearly discernible that the new media is no more auxiliary and it will clearly surpass the conventional mainstream media.

According to The Niche Theory and the Theory of Uses and Gratifications, any medium endure and flourish by offering correct utility or ultimate gratification to the potential consumers. In this process, it may bear effects on the old media by giving innovative solutions to the jaded needs with more modern and contemporary solutions. Some data were collected via telephone survey; there were 211 respondents in Columbus, Ohio, and other metropolitan areas. Results clearly showed that the new media has a striking displacement effect on the existing old media when it comes to the daily news domain; with maximum displacements taking place in newspapers and television. The results also showed that the new media play the biggest role on the satisfaction opportunities measurement, offering the users with an unparallel satisfaction by catering to more needs, which the traditional media is incapable of doing to a large extent.

Conclusion

We are living in the era where media convergence plays a key role in news gathering, and so the distinctions between the traditional mass media and the Internet i.e. the new media are

getting almost blurred. However, in spite of these differences, there are still point of similarities between conventional media and the internet. Its regardless to say that both of them

are co-existing in the developing countries but the new media or the internet is no longer an auxiliary medium of news gathering, rather it is gaining steady prominence and is at par with the conventional media. The effect it has on the mass especially the youth is worth mentioning. Even the social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter etc are playing key roles in disseminating news among the youths of country. Political prophets like Narendra Modi, Imran Khan and others are drawing attention of the youth via the social media platforms. Thus, it is rightly said that new media has ushered in a new change in the political and social canvas of country by educating the mass especially the youth with authentic online information or news, whereby educating people and making them more conscious about their surroundings.

A radical change has swept through the media environment globally. Researchers are of the opinion that the practitioners of the old or conventional media should start doing some hard-core, soul-searching techniques for news gathering, and should thoroughly feel the pulse of the audience in order to retain their existing position.

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