

अभिनवधारा ABHINAVDHARA

विद्या प्रशस्यते लोकैः विद्या सर्वज्ञ गौरवा।
विद्यया लभते सर्वं विद्वान् सर्वज्ञ पूज्यते॥

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PREFACE

It is with great pleasure that we present Volume 4, Issue 1 of Abhinavdhara (ABHINAVDHARA): International Journal of Innovation in Indic Studies (IJIIS). As a peer-reviewed, open-access, biannual journal, Abhinavdhara is dedicated to promoting high-quality interdisciplinary research rooted in the rich intellectual traditions of India while fostering dialogue with contemporary global scholarship.

The present issue reflects the journal's commitment to advancing the study of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS), Sanskrit literature, philosophy, culture, social sciences, law, education, media studies, and emerging interdisciplinary perspectives. The contributions published in this volume demonstrate how classical Indian wisdom continues to inspire innovative research addressing present-day academic, social, ethical, legal, and technological challenges.

This issue brings together scholarly articles from researchers, academicians, and professionals representing diverse institutions and disciplines. The published papers explore a broad spectrum of themes, including Mahābhārata and Rāmāyaṇa studies, Advaita Vedānta, Sanskrit poetics, Indian philosophy, ontology, literary criticism, gender studies, social work, political participation, media and communication, cybersecurity, blockchain-based legal evidence, digital forensics, and public policy. Such diversity reflects the interdisciplinary nature of contemporary Indic Studies and highlights the continuing relevance of India's intellectual heritage in addressing global concerns.

All manuscripts included in this issue have undergone a rigorous Double-Blind Peer Review process, ensuring academic quality, originality, methodological soundness, and ethical integrity. The Editorial Board sincerely appreciates the valuable contributions of our reviewers, whose constructive evaluations have significantly strengthened the quality of this publication.

Abhinavdhara follows internationally accepted standards of scholarly publishing, including Open Access, Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0) License, COPE Publication Ethics, AI Publication Policy, Research Integrity, and a transparent editorial process. The journal encourages responsible, ethical, and innovative research that contributes meaningfully to the advancement of knowledge.

We express our heartfelt gratitude to all authors for entrusting us with their scholarly work, to our reviewers for their time and expertise, and to the members of the Editorial and Advisory Boards for their continuous guidance and support. We also acknowledge the encouragement platform further.



It is our sincere hope that the articles presented in this issue will serve as valuable academic resources for researchers, teachers, students, and policymakers, while inspiring further research in the fields of Indic Studies and interdisciplinary scholarship.

We welcome constructive suggestions and scholarly contributions for forthcoming issues as we continue our journey toward promoting excellence in research and preserving the enduring legacy of India's knowledge traditions.

With best wishes,

Editor-in-Chief,

1. Dr Supriya Sanju

Chief Editor Abhinavdhara Journal

Adjunct professor, Department of Indian Knowledge and Languages, Gurugram University

2. Dr. Rakesh Kumar Chaudhary

HOD - Amity School of Fine Arts | Amity University Haryana





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संस्कृतनाटकेषु प्रमुखनाटकीयतत्त्वानि

पूजा-यादवः

शोधच्छात्रा, संस्कृतप्राकृतभाषाविभागः

लखनऊविश्वविद्यालयः, लखनऊ

शोधसारः- भारतीयसाहित्ये संस्कृतनाटकम् अद्वितीयस्थानं लभते। भरतमुनेः नाट्यशास्त्रं नाट्यकलां वैज्ञानिकाधारं प्रयच्छति। संस्कृतनाटकं न केवलं मनोरञ्जनसाधकम् अपि तु समाजस्य संस्कृतेः धर्मस्य नीतेश्च मार्गदर्शकं वर्तते। शोधपत्रेऽस्मिन् संस्कृतनाटकस्य प्रमुखनाटकीयतत्त्वानि- कथा, पात्रं, रसः, भाषाशैली, अभिनयः, रङ्गमञ्चं प्रभृतीनि विवेचितानि।

प्रस्तावना- संस्कृतसाहित्यं भारतीयसंस्कृतेः प्राणाः सन्ति किञ्च तत्र नाटकप्रमुखविधाः वर्तन्ते। संस्कृतनाटकं न केवलं साहित्यिकरचना अपि तु सामाजिकस्य, धार्मिकस्य सांस्कृतिकचेतनायाः दर्पणमस्ति। शोधपत्रमिदं संस्कृतनाटकस्य नाटकीयतत्त्वानां विश्लेषणं प्रस्तौति। संस्कृतसाहित्ये काव्यापेक्षया नाटकस्य महत्त्वम् अधिकं वर्तते। काव्यानन्दात् वञ्चितव्यक्तिः नाटकस्य मनोहरम् अभिनयं दृष्ट्वा अलौकिकानन्दम् अनुभवति।

सर्वप्रथमं भरतमुनिना स्वकीयग्रन्थे नाट्यशास्त्रे षट् त्रिंशत् अध्यायेषु नाट्यशास्त्रस्य प्रामाणिकं तथा विस्तृतविवेचनं प्रस्तुतम्। नाट्यशास्त्रस्य महत्त्वं कथयन् तस्य कथनं यत् विश्वे यत् कानि अपि ज्ञानं, शिल्पं, विद्या, कला, योगः, कर्म च न सन्ति यत् नाटके न अन्तर्भवन्ति।

न तज्ज्ञानं न तच्छिल्पं न सा विद्या न सा कला।

नासौ योगो न तत्कर्म नाट्येऽस्मिन् यन्न दृश्यते।।¹



रूपकम्- संस्कृतस्य काव्यशास्त्रिभिः काव्यं भागद्वयेन विभक्तम्- 1) दृश्यं 2) श्रव्यञ्च

दृश्यश्रव्यत्वभेदेन पुनः काव्यं द्विधा मतम् ।

दृश्यं तत्राभिनेयं तद्रूपारोपात्तु रूपकम् ।ⁱⁱⁱ

दृश्यकाव्ये रूपकस्य तथा उपरूपकस्य ग्रहणं भवति, यतो हि तस्य अभिनयः क्रियते । काव्यकलायाम् अनुकरणवृत्तिं मूलकारणत्वेन अङ्गीकर्तुं शक्यते । यतो हि पाश्चात्यदार्शनिकेन अरस्तूना कला अनुकरणत्वेन स्वीकृता । नाटके अनुकरणं स्पष्टतया दृश्यते । आचार्यः धनञ्जयः नाट्यस्य संक्षिप्तलक्षणं कथयन् आह “अवस्थानुकृतिर्नाट्यमं रूपकं तत्समारोपात्”ⁱⁱⁱ अर्थात् अवस्थायाः अनुकरणमेव नाट्यं कथ्यते । यत्र काव्ये वर्णितस्य धीरोदात्तस्य, धीरोद्धतस्य, धीरललितस्य, धीरप्रशान्तस्य च प्रकृतेः नायकस्य आङ्गिकं, वाचिकम्, आहार्यं तथा सात्त्विकम् इति चतुर्भिः अभिनयैः अवस्थायाः अनुकरणं क्रियते तत् नाट्यम् । रूपकस्य दश भेदाः भवन्ति यत् आचार्यधनञ्जयानुसारम् अधोलिखितं वर्तते-

नाटकं सप्रकरणं भाणः प्रहसनं डिमः ।

व्यायोगसमवकारौ वीथ्यङ्केहामृगा इति ।^{iv}

नाटकम्- दशप्रकाररूपकेषु नाटकं रूपकस्य एकप्रकारं वर्तते । आचार्यः विश्वनाथः स्वकीयग्रन्थे साहित्यदर्पणे नाटकस्य परिभाषाम् अकथयत्-

नाटकं ख्यातवृत्तं स्यात् पञ्चसन्धिसमन्वितम् ।

विलासद्वर्यादिगुणवद्युक्तं नानाविभूतिभिः ।।

सुखदुःखसमुद्भूति नानारसनिरन्तरम् ।

पञ्चादिका दशपरास्तत्राङ्काः परिकीर्तिताः ।।

प्रख्यातवंशो राजर्षिर्धीरोदात्तः प्रतापवान् ।

दिव्योऽथ दिव्यादिव्यो वा गुणवान्नायको मतः ।।

एक एव भवेदङ्गी श्रृङ्गारो वीर एवं वा ।

अङ्गमन्ये रसाः सर्वे कार्यो निर्वहणेऽद्भुतः ।।^v



नाटकस्य तत्त्वानि- नाटके त्रीणि तत्त्वानि हि 1) विषयवस्तु, 2) नेता तथा 3) रसश्च । रूपके एकस्मात् अपरं भिन्नत्वेन प्रतपादयन्ति प्रमुखतत्त्वानि ।

1.विषयवस्तु- नाटकस्य विषयवस्तुनः तात्पर्यं तस्य नाटकस्य मूलविचारात्, कथानकात्, भावात्, उद्देश्यात् तथा सन्देशात् भवति । सरलशब्दैः एतत् वक्तुं शक्यते कस्यापि नाटकस्य विषयवस्तु तदेव भवति यस्य आधारेण सम्पूर्णं नाटकं रच्यते । आचार्यधनञ्जयानुसारं विषयवस्तु द्विविधं- 1) आधिकारिकं, 2) प्रासङ्गिकञ्च-

वस्तु नेता रसस्तेषां भेदकः वस्तु च द्विधा ।

तत्राधिकारिकं मुख्यमङ्गं प्रासङ्गिकं विदुः ।।^{vi}

आचार्यविश्वनाथानुसारं-

इदं पुनर्वस्तु बुधैर्द्विविधं परिकल्प्यते ।

आधिकारिकमेकं स्यात्प्रासङ्गिकमथापरम् ।।^{vii}

आधिकारिकं कथावस्तु- मुख्यं कथावस्तु आधिकारिकं कथावस्तु कथ्यते । अधिकारस्य अभिप्रायः फलस्य स्वामित्वाभिप्रायः । किञ्च अधिकारी फलस्य स्वामी उच्यते । “अधिकारः फले स्वाम्यधिकारी च तत्प्रभुः ।”^{viii} फलस्य भोक्तृद्वारा प्राप्तिपर्यन्तं निर्वाहितकथा आधिकारिकं कथावस्तु कथ्यते ।

प्रासङ्गिकं कथावस्तु- प्रासङ्गिकं कथावस्तु मुख्यकथावस्तुनः सहायिका भवति । या कथा अपरार्थं प्रयुज्यते किन्तु प्रसङ्गात् यस्य स्वयं फलमपि सिद्धं भवति तत् प्रासङ्गिकं वृत्तम् । “तत्राधिकारिकं मुख्यमङ्गं प्रासङ्गिकं विदुः” ।

2.नेता- नायकः नाम यः त्यागभावनया पूर्णः, महतः कार्यस्य कर्ता, कुलस्य महान्, बुद्धवैभवेन सम्पन्नः, रूपयौवनोत्साहसम्पत्त्या सम्पन्नः, निरन्तरम् उद्योगशीलः, जनतायाः स्नेहभाजनः, तेजस्वितायाः, चतुरातायाः सुशीलतायाः च निदर्शकः अस्ति ।

त्यागी कृती कुलीनः सुश्रीको रूपयौवनोत्साही ।

दक्षोऽनुरक्तलोकस्तेजोवैदग्ध्यशीलवान्नेता ।।^{ix}

नायकस्य अपि केचन भेदाः सन्ति । आचार्यः विश्वनाथः सर्वप्रथमं षोडश भेदान् प्रदर्शितवान्-



1) धीरोदात्तः, 2) धीरोद्धतः, 3) धीरललितः 4) धीरप्रशान्तश्च ।

धीरोदात्तो धीरोद्धतस्तथा धीरललितश्च ।
धीरप्रशान्त इत्ययमुक्तः प्रथमश्चतुर्भेदः ।।^x

एतेषां धीरोदात्तधीरोद्धतधीरललितधीरप्रशान्तानां चतुर्णां नायकानामपि प्रत्येकं दक्षिणधृष्टानुकूलशठभेदेन साकल्येन षोडश भेदाः ।

“एभिर्दक्षिणधृष्टानुकूलशठरूपिभिस्तु षोडशधा ।।”^{xi}

आचार्यभरतमुनिकृतनाट्यशास्त्रे नायकस्य चत्वारः भेदाः उक्ताः-

धीरोद्धतो धीरललिता धीरोदात्तास्तथैव च ।

धीरप्रशान्तकाश्चैव नायकाः परिकीर्तिताः ।।^{xii}

श्रीशिङ्गभूपालकृतरसार्णवसुधाकरानुसारं नायकस्य चत्वारः भेदाः तथा तेषाम् उपभेदाः वर्णिताः ।

नेता चतुर्विधोऽसौ धीरोदात्तश्च धीरललितश्च ।

धीरप्रशान्तनामा ततश्च धीरोद्धतः ख्यातः ।।^{xiii}

समस्तरसानां कृते सामान्यरूपेण एते नायकाः प्रोक्ताः । शृङ्गारदृष्ट्या आचार्येण त्रयः नायकभेदाः उक्ताः- 1) पतिः, 2) उपपतिः, 3) वैशिकश्च ।

“पतिश्चोपपतिश्च वैशिकश्चेति भेदतः ।।”^{xiv}

आचार्येण पतिवृत्त्यनुसारम् अनुकूलशठधृष्टदक्षिणभेदेन चत्वारः भेदाः ।

चतुर्धा सोऽपि कथितो वृत्त्या काव्यविचक्षणैः ।

अनुकूलः शठो धृष्टो दक्षिणश्चेति भेदतः ।।^{xv}

आचार्यधनञ्जयानुसारं नायकस्य चत्वारः भेदाः तथा तेषाम् उपभेदाः उक्ताः । “भेदैश्चतुर्धा ललितशान्तोदात्तोद्धतैरयम् ।।”



आचार्यधनञ्जयानुसारं यदा नायकः नवीन-(कनिष्ठा)नायिकां प्रति हतचित्तः भवति तदा स पूर्व-(ज्येष्ठ)नायिकां प्रति दक्षिणशठधृष्टानुकूलप्रकृत्यनुकूलः भवति । “स दक्षिणः शठो धृष्टः पूर्वा प्रत्यन्यया हतः ।”

आचार्यरामचन्द्रगुणचन्द्रकृतनाट्यदर्पणग्रन्थे अपि नायकस्य चत्वारः भेदाः उक्ताः-

उद्धतोदात्त-ललित-शान्ता धीरविशेषणाः ।

वर्ण्याः स्वभावाश्चत्वारो नेतृणां मध्यमोत्तमाः । ।^{xvi}

निष्कर्षतः नायकः चतुर्विध इति स्वीक्रियते- 1) धीरोदात्तः, 2) धीरोद्धतः, 3) धीरललितः, 4) धीरप्रशान्तश्च ।

3.रसः- विभावानुभावसात्त्विकभावव्यभिचारिभावैः यदा रत्यादिस्थायीभावः आस्वाद्ययोग्यः जायते तदा स रसः कथ्यते । शृङ्गारादयः अष्टौ रसाः तथा शान्तं स्वीकृत्य नव रसाः गृह्यन्ते । भावपदेन अष्टौ स्थायिनः, अष्टौ सात्त्विकाः तथा त्रयस्त्रिंशत् व्यभिचारिणः इति साकल्येन ऊनपञ्चाशत् भावाः स्वीक्रियन्ते ।

“विभावानुभावव्यभिचारिसंयोगाद्रसनिष्पत्तिः ।”^{xvii}

आचार्यः भरतमुनिः स्वकीयग्रन्थे नाट्यशास्त्रे केवलम् अष्टौ रसान् उल्लिखति-

शृङ्गारहास्यकरुणा रौद्रवीरभयानकाः ।

बीभत्साद्भुतसंज्ञौ चेत्यष्टौ नाट्ये रसाः स्मृताः । ।^{xviii}

शृङ्गारः, हास्यः, करुणः, रौद्रः, वीरः, भयानकः, बीभत्सः, अद्भुतश्च इति अष्टौ रसाः नाट्ये विधीयन्ते ।

आचार्यः शिङ्गभूपालः अपि स्वग्रन्थे रसार्णवसुधाकरे अष्टौ रसान् समर्थयति । स शान्तरसं रसश्रेणीषु न गणयति । “अष्टधा स च शृङ्गारहास्यवीराद्भुता अपि ।”^{xix}

आचार्यविश्वनाथानुसारं-

विभावेनानुभावेन व्यक्तः संचारिणा तथा ।

रसतामेति रत्यादिः स्थायी भावः सचेतसाम् । ।^{xx}



साहित्यदर्पणकारस्य एषा परिभाषा नाट्याचार्यभरतमुनेः रससूत्रस्य मनेरमा सरला विवृतिः वर्तते ।

“शान्तः शमस्थायिभावः उत्तमप्रकृतिर्मतः”^{xxi}

आचार्यरामचन्द्रगुणचन्द्रः स्वग्रन्थे नाट्यदर्पणे, आचार्यः मम्मटः स्वग्रन्थे काव्यप्रकाशे किञ्च आचार्यः धनञ्जयः स्वग्रन्थे दशरूपके एवं प्रकारेण रसपरिभाषां स्वीकुर्वन्तः नव रसान् समर्थयन्ति ।

एवं प्रकारेण रूपके एकः एव रसः मुख्यरूपेण अभिव्यक्तः आवश्यक । अपि च मुख्यतया अभिव्यक्तः रसः शृङ्गारः वीरः वा स्यात् । यः रसभावः अस्ति सोऽपि अभिव्यक्तः तिष्ठति । किन्तु मुख्यरूपेण नास्ति अपि तु अङ्गरूपेण (मुख्यरसस्य उपकारकरूपेण) एव । “एक एव भवेदङ्गी शृङ्गारो वीर एव वा ।” आचार्यः धनञ्जयः अपि मतमिदं समर्थयति । “एको रसोऽङ्गी कर्तव्यो वीरः शृङ्गार एव वा ।”^{xxii}

उपसंहारः- नाट्यविषयकाणां मूलतत्त्वानां निरूपणमेव अस्य शोधविषयस्य उद्देश्यम् । नाट्यस्य विवेच्यविषयाः तावत्- विषयवस्तु, नेता, रसः, भावः, अभिनयः, धर्मी, वृत्तिः, प्रवृत्तिः, सिद्धिः, स्वरः, गानं रङ्गमञ्चं च । यदा कस्मिंश्चिद् नाटके किमपि ऐतिहासिकं तथा पौराणिकं कथावस्तु लक्षणानुसारं कुलीनस्य तथा प्रख्यातवंशस्य शूरः, दृढः, तेजस्वी, शास्त्रज्ञाता, तथा धार्मिकः नेता, शृङ्गारवीररसयोः एकप्रधानरसत्वेन युक्ततया नाटकसाहित्यजगति स्वकीयम् एकं स्थानं प्राप्तुं शक्नोति किञ्च समाजे सहृदयजनेषु अनुकरणयोग्यं भवति ।

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ii साहित्यदर्पणः(6/1), आचार्यविश्वनाथप्रणीतः,(डा. सत्यव्रतसिंहस्य व्याख्या), चौखम्बाविद्याभवनप्रकाशनम्, वाराणसी- 221001

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- xiii रसार्णवसुधाकरः, श्रीशिङ्गभूपालविरचितः(व्याख्याकारः- डा. जमुनापाठकः), चौखम्बाविद्याभवनप्रकाशनम्,
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- xv तत्रैव, पृ.- 24
- xvi नाट्यदर्पणः, आचार्यरामचन्द्रगुणचन्द्रप्रणीतः, प्रकाशकः- हिन्दीविभागः, दिल्लीविश्वविद्यालयः, दिल्ली
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भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा के मूल्यों का वैश्विक योगदान

अर्पित कुमार

शोधच्छात्र संस्कृत तथा प्राकृत भाषा विभाग ,

लखनऊ विश्वविद्यालय, लखनऊ

शोधसार: वर्तमान वैश्विक परिदृश्य में जलवायु परिवर्तन, पारिस्थितिक असंतुलन और संसाधनों का अनियंत्रित दोहन मानवता के अस्तित्व के लिए गंभीर चुनौती बन गए हैं। यद्यपि संयुक्त राष्ट्र के 'सतत विकास लक्ष्य' इन समस्याओं के समाधान हेतु एक ढांचा प्रदान करते हैं, किंतु उनकी सफलता के लिए एक सुदृढ़ नैतिक और दार्शनिक आधार की आवश्यकता है। प्रस्तुत शोध पत्र 'भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा' के दार्शनिक स्तंभों और सतत विकास के बीच के अंतर्संबंधों का अन्वेषण करता है। यह शोध ईशावास्योपनिषद के 'तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथा', अथर्ववेद के 'पृथ्वी सूक्त' और भगवद्गीता के 'अपरिग्रह' जैसे सिद्धांतों के माध्यम से यह सिद्ध करता है कि भारतीय चिंतन में विकास की अवधारणा 'प्रकृति के विरुद्ध' नहीं, बल्कि 'प्रकृति के साथ' सह-अस्तित्व पर आधारित है। शोध पत्र में प्राचीन जल प्रबंधन, प्राकृतिक कृषि और 'वसुधैव कुटुंबकम्' की वैश्विक प्रासंगिकता का विश्लेषण किया गया है।

अंततः, यह शोध यह निष्कर्ष प्रस्तुत करता है कि भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा के मूल्य आधुनिक विज्ञान के पूरक बनकर एक संतुलित, न्यायपूर्ण और स्थायी वैश्विक भविष्य की नींव रख सकते हैं।



कीवर्ड्स - भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा, सतत विकास, श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता, ईशावास्योपनिषद, पारिस्थितिक नैतिकता, अपरिग्रह, वसुधैव कुटुंबकम्, पंचमहाभूत, जलवायु परिवर्तन।

प्रस्तावना

"ॐ पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात्पूर्णमुदच्यते। पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते ॥" (ईशावास्योपनिषद)

यह शांति मंत्र भारतीय दर्शन की उस शाश्वत दृष्टि को रेखांकित करता है जहाँ प्रकृति को एक 'पूर्ण' इकाई माना गया है। आधुनिक युग में जिसे हम 'सतत विकास' कहते हैं, उसका बीज भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा के इसी दार्शनिक चिंतन में निहित है। वर्तमान वैश्विक परिदृश्य में जलवायु परिवर्तन, जैव विविधता का हास और संसाधनों का अनियंत्रित दोहन मानवता के अस्तित्व के सम्मुख गंभीर प्रश्न खड़े कर रहे हैं। संयुक्त राष्ट्र के 17 सतत विकास लक्ष्यों (SDGs) की प्राप्ति के लिए आज विश्व समुदाय एक ऐसे प्रतिमान की खोज कर रहा है जो विकास और पर्यावरण के बीच संतुलन स्थापित कर सके। भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा का दार्शनिक आधार 'मनुष्य' को 'प्रकृति' का स्वामी नहीं, बल्कि उसका एक अभिन्न अंग मानता है। ईशावास्योपनिषद का प्रथम मंत्र ही जीवन शैली का वैश्विक सूत्र प्रदान करता है:-

"ईशावास्यमिदं सर्वं यत्किञ्च जगत्यां जगत्। तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथा मा गृधः कस्यस्विद्धनम् ॥"

अर्थात् इस जगत में जो कुछ भी है, वह ईश्वर द्वारा व्याप्त है। इसलिए संसाधनों का उपभोग 'त्याग' के भाव के साथ करना चाहिए और किसी दूसरे के धन (या प्रकृति के हिस्से) का लालच नहीं करना चाहिए। यह 'अपरिग्रह' और 'न्यूनतम उपभोग' का विचार आधुनिक उपभोक्तावादी संस्कृति का सबसे सटीक दार्शनिक विकल्प है। भारतीय दर्शन की एक और महत्वपूर्ण विशेषता 'वसुधैव कुटुंबकम्' (महोपनिषद) की भावना है, जो संपूर्ण विश्व को एक परिवार मानती है। यह दृष्टि विकास को केवल राष्ट्रीय सीमाओं तक सीमित नहीं रखती, बल्कि 'सबके कल्याण' की बात करती है। अथर्ववेद के पृथ्वी सूक्त में कहा गया है— **"माता भूमिः पुत्रोऽहं पृथिव्याः"** (भूमि मेरी माता है और मैं पृथ्वी का पुत्र हूँ)। यह भावनात्मक संबंध ही वह आधार है जिससे पारिस्थितिक चेतना का जन्म होता है।



इस शोध पत्र का उद्देश्य भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा के इन दार्शनिक मूल्यों का विश्लेषण करना और यह स्पष्ट करना है कि कैसे ये प्राचीन सिद्धांत आधुनिक वैश्विक विकास की नीतियों को एक नैतिक और स्थायी दिशा प्रदान कर सकते हैं। यह शोध इस परिकल्पना पर आधारित है कि सतत विकास की कुंजी केवल तकनीकी समाधानों में नहीं, बल्कि उन दार्शनिक मूल्यों में है जो प्रकृति के प्रति 'कृतज्ञता' और 'संयम' सिखाते हैं।

1. सतत विकास के दार्शनिक स्तंभ

भारतीय दर्शन में सतत विकास का अर्थ केवल भावी पीढ़ी के लिए संसाधनों का संचय मात्र नहीं है, बल्कि समस्त चराचर जगत के साथ सामंजस्य बिठाना है। इसके प्रमुख दार्शनिक स्तंभ निम्नलिखित हैं:-

- **पंचमहाभूत सिद्धांत-** भारतीय चिंतन के अनुसार, संपूर्ण सृष्टि और मानव शरीर पाँच मूलभूत तत्वों से निर्मित हैं— पृथ्वी, जल, अग्नि, वायु और आकाश। तैत्तिरीय उपनिषद में सृष्टि की उत्पत्ति का क्रम बताते हुए कहा गया है:- "तस्माद्वा एतस्मादात्मन आकाशः संभूतः। आकाशाद्वायुः। वायोरग्निः। अग्रेरापः। अद्भ्यः पृथ्वी॥" यह श्लोक दर्शाता है कि प्रत्येक तत्व दूसरे से जुड़ा है। यदि वायु प्रदूषित होती है, तो उसका प्रभाव अग्नि, जल और अंततः पृथ्वी पर पड़ेगा। भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा का यह स्तंभ सिखाता है कि इन पाँच तत्वों की शुद्धता बनाए रखना ही वास्तविक विकास है। आधुनिक विज्ञान जहाँ 'रिसोर्स मैनेजमेंट' की बात करता है, वहीं भारतीय दर्शन इन तत्वों को 'देवत्व' प्रदान कर उनके प्रति पूज्य भाव जागृत करता है, जिससे मनुष्य उनका दोहन करने के बजाय संरक्षण करना अपना धर्म समझने लगता है।
- **अपरिग्रह और संयमित उपभोग -** सतत विकास का दूसरा सबसे बड़ा शत्रु 'असीमित लालच' है। भारतीय दर्शन 'अपरिग्रह' पर बल देता है। श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता में भगवान कृष्ण कहते हैं:- "यज्ञशिष्टाशिनः सन्तो मुच्यन्ते सर्वकिल्बिषैः। भुञ्जते ते त्वघं पापा ये पचन्त्यात्मकारणात्॥" (3.13) अर्थात् जो केवल अपने लिए पकाते हैं (या केवल अपने स्वार्थ के लिए संसाधनों का उपयोग करते हैं), वे पाप का भक्षण करते हैं।



यह दर्शन 'चक्रीय अर्थव्यवस्था' का आध्यात्मिक आधार है, जहाँ उपभोग का उद्देश्य केवल जीवित रहना और लोक-कल्याण है, न कि विलासिता। यह विचार आधुनिक समाज को 'यूज़ एंड थ्रो' की संस्कृति से बाहर निकालकर 'सादा जीवन, उच्च विचार' की ओर प्रेरित करता है।

- **ऋत और धर्म:-** वैदिक दर्शन में 'ऋत' का अर्थ है— वह प्राकृतिक नियम जो संपूर्ण ब्रह्मांड को संचालित करता है। सूर्य का समय पर उगना, ऋतुओं का चक्र—यह सब ऋत के अधीन है। जब मनुष्य अपने विकास की अंधी दौड़ में इस 'ऋत' या प्राकृतिक व्यवस्था में हस्तक्षेप करता है, तो पारिस्थितिक असंतुलन पैदा होता है। अथर्ववेद में 'पृथ्वी सूक्त' के अंतर्गत प्रार्थना की गई है:-
"यत्ते भूमे विखनामि क्षिप्रं तदपि रोहतु। मा ते मर्म विमृग्वरि मा ते हृदयमर्पिपम् ॥"
अर्थात् "हे पृथ्वी माता! मैं तुझे जितना खोदूँ, तू उतनी ही शीघ्रता से पुनः भर जाए। मैं तेरे मर्मस्थल या हृदय को कभी क्षति न पहुँचाऊँ।" यह प्रार्थना सतत विकास की सर्वश्रेष्ठ परिभाषा है—प्रकृति से उतना ही लेना जितना वह पुनः उत्पन्न कर सके।
- **सह-अस्तित्व और सर्वोदय:-** भारतीय ज्ञान प्रणाली का दर्शन 'सर्वाइवल ऑफ द फिटिस्ट' (जो शक्तिशाली है वही बचेगा) में विश्वास नहीं करता, बल्कि यह 'सह-अस्तित्व' की बात करता है। भारतीय मनीषा मानती है कि वृक्षों, पशुओं और सूक्ष्म जीवों के बिना मानव का विकास असंभव है। यह 'पर्यावरण-केंद्रित' दृष्टिकोण है, न कि 'मानव केंद्रित'। जब हम 'सर्वजन सुखाय' की बात करते हैं, तो उसमें केवल मनुष्य ही नहीं, बल्कि संपूर्ण जैव-विविधता सम्मिलित होती है।

भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा के ये दार्शनिक स्तंभ यह स्पष्ट करते हैं कि सतत विकास की नींव भौतिक संपदा पर नहीं, बल्कि 'धर्म' और 'नैतिकता' पर टिकी है। जहाँ आधुनिक दृष्टिकोण बाहरी दुनिया को सुधारने की कोशिश करता है, वहीं भारतीय दर्शन मनुष्य के आंतरिक दृष्टिकोण को बदलने का आह्वान करता है, क्योंकि एक संयमित मन ही एक सुंदर पृथ्वी का निर्माण कर सकता है।

2. भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा के मूल्य और सतत विकास लक्ष्य

संयुक्त राष्ट्र द्वारा वर्ष 2015 में निर्धारित 'सतत विकास लक्ष्य' (Sustainable Development Goals - SDGs) वैश्विक शांति और समृद्धि का एक खाका पेश करते हैं।



यद्यपि ये लक्ष्य आधुनिक वैश्विक चुनौतियों की प्रतिक्रिया स्वरूप उपजे हैं, किंतु भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा के दार्शनिक मूल्यों में इनके बीज सदियों पहले बो दिए गए थे।

- **SDG 12 (जिम्मेदारी से उपभोग और उत्पादन) एवं 'अपरिग्रह'**- आधुनिक विश्व की सबसे बड़ी चुनौती संसाधनों का अत्यधिक दोहन है। संयुक्त राष्ट्र का लक्ष्य 12 'सतत उपभोग' पर बल देता है। भारतीय दर्शन का 'अपरिग्रह' और 'मितव्ययिता' का सिद्धांत इसका सशक्त समाधान है। श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता में कहा गया है:- "आपूर्यमाणमचलप्रतिष्ठं समुद्रमापः प्रविशन्ति यद्वत्। तद्वत्कामा यं प्रविशन्ति सर्वे स शान्तिमाप्नोति न कामकामी ॥" (2.70) अर्थात्, जैसे विभिन्न नदियाँ समुद्र में समाहित हो जाती हैं पर समुद्र विचलित नहीं होता, वैसे ही जिस व्यक्ति की इच्छाएँ उसमें विलीन हो जाती हैं, वही शांति पाता है। यह 'इच्छाओं के संयम' का वैश्विक दर्शन ही अनियंत्रित उत्पादन और उपभोग को रोककर धरती को बचा सकता है।
- **SDG 13 (जलवायु परिवर्तन) एवं 'माता भूमि:'**- जलवायु परिवर्तन आज एक वैश्विक आपातकाल है। भारतीय दर्शन में प्रकृति को 'जड़' नहीं बल्कि 'चेतन' और 'सजीव' माना गया है। अथर्ववेद का पृथ्वी सूक्त (12.1.12) में कहा गया है :- "माता भूमिः पुत्रोऽहं पृथिव्याः" (भूमि मेरी माता है और मैं पृथ्वी का पुत्र हूँ।) जब मनुष्य प्रकृति को 'संसाधन' के बजाय 'माता' मानता है, तो उसका शोषण करना नैतिक रूप से असंभव हो जाता है। यह 'पारिस्थितिक चेतना' ही जलवायु परिवर्तन के विरुद्ध सबसे प्रभावी वैश्विक हथियार है, जिसे भारत ने 'Mission LiFE' (Lifestyle for Environment) के माध्यम से विश्व के सामने रखा है।
- **SDG 14 और 15 (जल एवं थल पर जीवन) एवं 'अहिंसा' और 'दया'**- भारतीय दर्शन में जीव मात्र के प्रति करुणा का भाव निहित है। यजुर्वेद (36.17) की शांति पाठ की ऋचा समस्त वनस्पतियों और औषधियों की शांति की कामना करती है:- "पृथ्वी शान्तिरापः शान्तिरोषधयः शान्तिः। वनस्पतयः शान्तिर्विश्वे देवाः शान्तिर्ब्रह्म शान्तिः..." यह प्रार्थना केवल मनुष्यों के लिए नहीं, बल्कि संपूर्ण प्रकृति के लिए है। यह SDG 14 (जल के नीचे जीवन) और SDG 15 (भूमि पर जीवन) के संरक्षण हेतु एक आध्यात्मिक प्रतिबद्धता प्रदान करती है।



- **SDG 16 (शांति और न्याय) एवं 'वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम्'**- आज का विश्व भू-राजनीतिक संघर्षों से जूझ रहा है। महोपनिषद का श्लोक- "अयं निजः परो वेति गणना लघुचेतसाम्। उदारचरितानां तु वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम्॥" (यह मेरा है, वह पराया है—ऐसी सोच छोटे मन वालों की होती है। उदार चरित्र वालों के लिए तो संपूर्ण पृथ्वी ही एक परिवार है।) यह सूत्र वैश्विक नागरिकता का आधार है। यह केवल शांति ही नहीं, बल्कि न्यायपूर्ण वितरण और साझा विकास की नींव रखता है, जो सतत विकास के लिए आवश्यक है।
- **वैश्विक योगदान: G20 और 'One Earth, One Family, One Future'**- हाल के वर्षों में भारत ने अपने नेतृत्व के माध्यम से भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा के इन मूल्यों को वैश्विक नीतियों का हिस्सा बनाया है। G20 शिखर सम्मेलन का मूल मंत्र 'वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम्' ही था। यह इस बात का प्रमाण है कि भारतीय ज्ञान प्रणाली के मूल्य केवल प्राचीन ग्रंथ तक सीमित नहीं हैं, बल्कि वे 'Global South' की आवाज बनकर एक न्यायपूर्ण और सतत विश्व के निर्माण में मार्गदर्शक की भूमिका निभा रहे हैं।

3. व्यावहारिक अनुप्रयोग

भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा की विशेषता यह है कि इसमें सूक्ष्म दर्शन और स्थूल व्यवहार के बीच कोई अंतर नहीं है। सतत विकास के लक्ष्यों को प्राप्त करने हेतु निम्नलिखित व्यावहारिक अनुप्रयोग अत्यंत आवश्यक हैं:-

- **कृषि:-** आधुनिक रासायनिक खेती के दुष्परिणामों के बीच 'जैविक कृषि' एक संजीवनी के रूप में उभरी है। वैदिक परंपरा में भूमि को केवल 'फैक्ट्री' नहीं, बल्कि 'अन्नपूर्णा' माना गया है। ऋग्वेद में कृषि कर्म की महत्ता बताते हुए कहा गया है:- "अक्षैर्मा दीव्यः कृषिमित्कृषस्व वित्ते रमस्व बहु मन्यमानः।" (ऋग्वेद 10.71.13) (अर्थात्: जुआ मत खेलो, कृषि करो और उससे प्राप्त धन का सम्मान करते हुए आनंद प्राप्त करो।) भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा के अंतर्गत 'वृक्षायुर्वेद' जैसे ग्रंथों में बीजों के उपचार, जैविक खाद (जैसे पंचगव्य) और फसल चक्र का विस्तृत वर्णन मिलता है। यह पद्धति मिट्टी की उर्वरता को नष्ट किए बिना "विषाक्त मुक्त भोजन" सुनिश्चित करती है, जो सीधे तौर पर SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) और स्वास्थ्य से जुड़ी है।



- **जल संरक्षण:-** भारत की प्राचीन सभ्यताएँ जल के प्रति अत्यंत संवेदनशील थीं। ऋग्वेद में जल को 'दिव्य' और 'रोगों का नाशक' माना गया है:- "आपो हि ष्ठा मयोभुवस्ता न ऊर्जे दधातन । महे रणाय चक्षसे ॥" (ऋग्वेद 10.9.1) (अर्थात्: हे जल! आप सुख के प्रदाता हैं, हमें ऊर्जा और शक्ति प्रदान करें।) व्यावहारिक रूप में, भारत की बावड़ियाँ, कुंड, और तालाब जैसी प्रणालियाँ जल संचयन के अद्भुत उदाहरण हैं। राजस्थान की बावड़ियाँ या दक्षिण भारत के मंदिर-तालाब न केवल जल संग्रहण करते थे, बल्कि भू-जल स्तर को बनाए रखने का वैज्ञानिक तरीका भी थे। यह 'विकेंद्रीकृत जल प्रबंधन' आज के जल संकट का एकमात्र स्थायी समाधान है।
- **जीवनशैली:-** सतत विकास का केंद्र 'मानव जीवन शैली' है। आयुर्वेद केवल चिकित्सा पद्धति नहीं, बल्कि 'जीवन जीने की कला' है। यह हमें 'ऋतुचर्या' और 'दिनचर्या' के माध्यम से प्रकृति के साथ तालमेल बिठाना सिखाता है। "मितभुक्तं च हितभुक्तं च ऋतुभुक्तं च ।" (अर्थात्: कम खाएं, हितकारी खाएं और ऋतु के अनुसार खाएं।) यह सिद्धांत 'न्यूनतमवादी' जीवन शैली को बढ़ावा देता है। योग हमें शारीरिक और मानसिक रूप से संतुष्ट बनाता है, जिससे बाहरी संसाधनों पर हमारी निर्भरता कम होती है। जब मन 'संतोष' को प्राप्त कर लेता है, तो प्राकृतिक संसाधनों का अंधाधुंध उपभोग स्वतः रुक जाता है। यह जीवन शैली SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being) का आधार है।

4. वैश्विक योगदान और प्रासंगिकता

आज जब संपूर्ण विश्व 'जलवायु परिवर्तन' और 'पारिस्थितिक असंतुलन' के दौर से गुजर रहा है, तब भारतीय दर्शन के 'पारिस्थितिक-केंद्रित' विचार एक वैश्विक समाधान के रूप में उभर रहे हैं। पश्चिमी देशों का विकास मॉडल जहाँ 'प्रकृति पर विजय' पाने की महत्वाकांक्षा पर आधारित रहा है, वहीं भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा 'प्रकृति के साथ सह-अस्तित्व' का मार्ग प्रशस्त करता है।

- **वैश्विक पर्यावरण नीति में योगदान: 'मिशन लाइफ'-** भारत ने अंतरराष्ट्रीय मंचों पर 'Mission LiFE' (Lifestyle for Environment) के माध्यम से भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा के मूल्यों को वैश्विक नीति का हिस्सा बनाया है। यह मिशन इस उपनिषदीय सत्य पर आधारित है कि व्यक्तिगत व्यवहार में परिवर्तन ही वैश्विक परिवर्तन का आधार है। "यद् पिण्डे तद् ब्रह्माण्डे" (अर्थात्: जो



शरीर में है, वही ब्रह्मांड में है।) यह दर्शन विश्व को सिखाता है कि यदि हम अपनी जीवनशैली को संयमित करते हैं, तो उसका सकारात्मक प्रभाव वैश्विक पर्यावरण पर पड़ता है। यह विचार आज के 'सस्टेनेबल कंजम्पशन' के वैश्विक विमर्श का केंद्र बन गया है।

- **वैश्विक अर्थव्यवस्था और 'चक्रीय अर्थव्यवस्था'** - भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा का आर्थिक दर्शन 'संग्रह' के बजाय 'वितरण' और 'पुनर्चक्रण' पर आधारित है। भारतीय परंपरा में किसी भी वस्तु का अपव्यय (Wastage) वर्जित माना गया है। महाभारत के शांति पर्व में कहा गया है:- **"यथा मधु समादत्ते रक्षन् पुष्पाणि षट्पदः । तद्वदर्थान् मनुष्येभ्य आदद्यादविहिंसया ॥"** (अर्थात्: जैसे भँवरा फूलों को नुकसान पहुँचाए बिना उनसे रस ग्रहण करता है, वैसे ही मनुष्य को प्रकृति को क्षति पहुँचाए बिना उससे संसाधन लेने चाहिए।) यह 'भ्रमर-नीति' आज की चक्रीय अर्थव्यवस्था का प्राचीन संस्करण है, जो संसाधनों के निरंतर उपयोग और शून्य कचरा (Zero Waste) का समर्थन करता है।
- **वैश्विक शांति और 'वसुधैव कुटुंबकम्' का नेतृत्व-** सतत विकास तब तक संभव नहीं है जब तक विश्व में शांति न हो। संयुक्त राष्ट्र के SDG 16 (शांति, न्याय और मजबूत संस्थाएं) का सबसे प्रभावी आधार भारतीय दर्शन का 'वसुधैव कुटुंबकम्' है। G20 प्रेसीडेंसी: भारत ने G20 का मुख्य विषय 'One Earth, One Family, One Future' रखा, जो महोपनिषद का मूल मंत्र है। इसने विश्व को यह संदेश दिया कि सतत विकास केवल एक आर्थिक लक्ष्य नहीं, बल्कि एक वैश्विक परिवार की साझा जिम्मेदारी है।
- **जलवायु परिवर्तन और नैतिक उत्तरदायित्व-** भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा वैश्विक स्तर पर 'जलवायु परिवर्तन' का समर्थन करता है। यह तर्क देता है कि प्रकृति पर सबका समान अधिकार है और विकसित देशों का यह नैतिक उत्तरदायित्व है कि वे अपनी जीवनशैली को सुधारें। यजुर्वेद के इस मंत्र की प्रासंगिकता आज वैश्विक स्तर पर बढ़ गई है:- **"मधु वाता ऋतायते मधु क्षरन्ति सिन्धवः । माध्वीर्नः सत्त्वोषधीः ॥"** (अर्थात्: हवाएं हमारे लिए मधुर वा कल्याणकारी हों, नदियों में मधुर जल प्रवाहित हो और औषधियां हमारे लिए गुणकारी हों।) यह 'वैश्विक कल्याण' की भावना ही आज के अंतरराष्ट्रीय समझौतों (जैसे पेरिस समझौता) को एक नैतिक आधार प्रदान करती है।



वैश्विक संदर्भ में भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा की प्रासंगिकता इस बात में निहित है कि यह विकास को केवल 'GDP' के चश्मे से नहीं, बल्कि 'GNH' (Global Natural Harmony) के चश्मे से देखता है। भारत का योगदान केवल योग और आयुर्वेद तक सीमित नहीं है, बल्कि वह एक ऐसी "पारिस्थितिक नैतिकता" प्रदान कर रहा है, जिसके बिना 21वीं सदी का विकास अधूरा है।

5. चुनौतियाँ और समाधान

भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा के दार्शनिक मूल्यों को आधुनिक सतत विकास के मॉडल में एकीकृत करना जितना आवश्यक है, उतना ही चुनौतीपूर्ण भी। इसके मार्ग में आने वाली प्रमुख चुनौतियाँ और उनके संभावित समाधान निम्नलिखित हैं:-

- **औपनिवेशिक मानसिकता और विश्वसनीयता का संकट:-** लंबे समय तक औपनिवेशिक शासन के कारण भारतीय ज्ञान को केवल 'अंधविश्वास' या 'पौराणिक कथा' मानकर उपेक्षित किया गया। आधुनिक शैक्षणिक जगत अक्सर प्राचीन सूत्रों को वैज्ञानिक प्रमाण के अभाव में स्वीकार नहीं करता। भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा के सिद्धांतों का 'प्रमाण-आधारित' शोध होना चाहिए। प्राचीन श्लोकों को आधुनिक विज्ञान की भाषा में डिकोड करने की आवश्यकता है। उदाहरण के लिए, पंचमहाभूतों की शुद्धि को 'एनवायर्नमेंटल इंजीनियरिंग' के मानकों के साथ जोड़कर प्रस्तुत किया जाना चाहिए।
- **व्यावहारिक अनुप्रयोग का अभाव:-** हम ग्रंथों में 'अपरिग्रह' और 'माता भूमि:' की चर्चा तो करते हैं, लेकिन वास्तविक जीवन और नीतियों में हम अब भी पश्चिमी 'उपभोक्तावादी मॉडल' का ही अनुसरण कर रहे हैं। भगवद्गीता का कर्मयोग यहाँ पथप्रदर्शक है:- "यद्यदाचरति श्रेष्ठस्तत्तदेवेतरो जनः। स यत्प्रमाणं कुरुते लोकस्तदनुवर्तते॥" (3.21) अर्थात् श्रेष्ठ पुरुष जैसा आचरण करते हैं, सामान्य जन वैसा ही अनुसरण करते हैं। नीति निर्माताओं और समाज के शीर्ष नेतृत्व को भारतीय ज्ञान प्रणाली आधारित जीवन शैली अपनाकर एक 'रोल मॉडल' पेश करना होगा।
- **आधुनिक शिक्षा प्रणाली से अलगाव:-** हमारी वर्तमान शिक्षा प्रणाली प्राचीन भारतीय दर्शन और आधुनिक विज्ञान को दो अलग-अलग ध्रुवों के रूप में देखती है। विद्यार्थियों को सतत विकास तो पढ़ाया जाता है, लेकिन उसका दार्शनिक आधार नहीं। नई शिक्षा नीति (NEP 2020) के तहत



भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा को पाठ्यक्रम का हिस्सा बनाना एक सराहनीय कदम है। विज्ञान और दर्शन का 'अंतःविषय अध्ययन' अनिवार्य किया जाना चाहिए, ताकि भविष्य के इंजीनियर और वैज्ञानिक पर्यावरणीय नैतिकता को समझ सकें।

- **तकनीकी और आर्थिक प्रतिस्पर्धा:-** वैश्विक बाजार की प्रतिस्पर्धा में 'त्वरित लाभ' की चाहत 'सतत विकास' पर हावी हो जाती है। प्राकृतिक संसाधनों का संरक्षण अक्सर आर्थिक विकास की गति को धीमा करने वाला माना जाता है। हमें 'अर्थ' और 'धर्म' के बीच संतुलन का भारतीय मॉडल पुनर्जीवित करना होगा। 'चक्रीय अर्थव्यवस्था' के लिए छोटे उद्योगों और स्वदेशी तकनीकों को बढ़ावा देना चाहिए, जो कम संसाधनों में अधिक परिणाम दे सकें।
- **भाषाई बाधा:-** भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा का अधिकांश मौलिक ज्ञान संस्कृत में है, जिससे आधुनिक शोधकर्ताओं की पहुंच वहां तक सीमित हो जाती है। संस्कृत के वैज्ञानिक ग्रंथों का सरल क्षेत्रीय और अंतरराष्ट्रीय भाषाओं में अनुवाद और डिजिटल लाइब्रेरी का निर्माण करना।

भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा के दार्शनिक आधार केवल अतीत की स्मृतियाँ नहीं हैं, बल्कि वे भविष्य के लिए अनिवार्य मार्गदर्शिका हैं। 'सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः' का भारतीय संकल्प ही सतत विकास का वास्तविक लक्ष्य है। यदि हम चुनौतियों को पहचानकर प्राचीन प्रज्ञा का आधुनिक नवाचार के साथ समन्वय कर सकें, तो न केवल भारत बल्कि संपूर्ण विश्व एक संतुलित और स्थायी भविष्य की ओर अग्रसर हो सकेगा। जैसा कि अथर्ववेद का संदेश है— "ओषधयः संवदन्ते सोमेन सह राज्ञा" (सभी औषधियाँ और वनस्पतियाँ आपस में संवाद करती हैं), वैसे ही आज प्रकृति और मनुष्य के बीच खोए हुए संवाद को पुनः स्थापित करने की आवश्यकता है।

निष्कर्ष

"भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा के मूल्यों का वैश्विक योगदान" विषय पर किए गए इस गहन विश्लेषण से यह स्पष्ट होता है कि भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा मात्र एक ऐतिहासिक धरोहर नहीं, बल्कि आधुनिक वैश्विक संकटों का एक जीवंत समाधान है। जहाँ पश्चिमी विकास मॉडल 'बाहरी समृद्धि' और 'उपभोग' पर केंद्रित रहा है,



वहीं भारतीय दर्शन 'आंतरिक संतोष' और 'प्रकृति के साथ तादात्म्य' को वास्तविक प्रगति का मापदंड मानता है। इस शोध के माध्यम से हम निम्नलिखित महत्वपूर्ण निष्कर्षों पर पहुँचते हैं:-

- भारतीय मनीषा ने हजारों वर्ष पूर्व यह समझ लिया था कि मनुष्य प्रकृति से पृथक कोई सत्ता नहीं है। यजुर्वेद के शांति पाठ की यह प्रार्थना— "वनस्पतयः शान्तिर्विश्वे देवाः शान्तिः" —केवल एक धार्मिक अनुष्ठान नहीं, बल्कि एक पारिस्थितिक प्रतिज्ञा है। यह निष्कर्ष निकलता है कि जब तक विकास की अवधारणा में 'चेतन प्रकृति' का समावेश नहीं होगा, तब तक कोई भी लक्ष्य 'सतत' नहीं हो सकता।
- उपनिषदों का 'तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथा' का सूत्र आज के 'क्लाइमेट चेंज' के दौर में सबसे बड़ी आवश्यकता है। शोध यह सिद्ध करता है कि संसाधनों का संयमित उपयोग ही भावी पीढ़ियों के अधिकारों की रक्षा करने का एकमात्र मार्ग है।
- भारत द्वारा G20 और अंतरराष्ट्रीय सौर गठबंधन जैसे मंचों पर 'वसुधैव कुटुंबकम्' और 'One Earth, One Family, One Future' के दर्शन को प्रस्तुत करना यह दर्शाता है कि भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा के मूल्य अब वैश्विक नीतियों का मार्गदर्शन करने में सक्षम हैं। यह दर्शन विश्व को 'प्रतिस्पर्धा' के स्थान पर 'सहयोग' की ओर ले जाता है।

अतः हमें एक ऐसे 'हाइब्रिड मॉडल' की आवश्यकता है जहाँ प्राचीन भारतीय जीवन-मूल्य और आधुनिक विज्ञान की तकनीकें एक साथ काम करें। प्राचीन जल प्रबंधन, जैविक कृषि और आयुर्वेद आधारित जीवनशैली को आधुनिक तकनीक के साथ जोड़कर ही हम SDG लक्ष्यों को समय सीमा के भीतर प्राप्त कर सकते हैं।

मानवता के उज्ज्वल भविष्य के लिए हमें पुनः उस वैदिक प्रार्थना की ओर लौटना होगा जो समस्त चराचर जगत के कल्याण की कामना करती है:-

"सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः सर्वे सन्तु निरामयाः । सर्वे भद्राणि पश्यन्तु मा कश्चिदुःखभाग्भवेत् ॥"



यह वैश्विक सुख और आरोग्य की कामना ही 'सतत विकास' का अंतिम लक्ष्य है। भारतीय ज्ञान परंपरा इस लक्ष्य की प्राप्ति हेतु न केवल एक दिशा प्रदान करती है, बल्कि एक स्पष्ट नैतिक धरातल भी निर्मित करती है।

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रघुवंश महाकाव्य में वर्णित आनंद प्राप्ति के उपाय

डॉ. ज्योति

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सारांश:

भारतीय साहित्यिक एवं दार्शनिक परंपरा में 'आनन्द' मानव जीवन के परम उद्देश्यों और जीवन-मूल्यों से संबद्ध एक महत्वपूर्ण अवधारणा है। महाकवि कालिदास द्वारा रचित *रघुवंश महाकाव्य* में राजधर्म, लोककल्याण, कर्तव्य, त्याग, संयम, प्रेम, परिवार, प्रकृति तथा आध्यात्मिक चेतना के माध्यम से आनन्दमय जीवन की व्यापक दृष्टि प्रस्तुत होती है। प्रस्तुत शोध-पत्र का उद्देश्य *रघुवंश* में वर्णित उन जीवन-मूल्यों एवं आचरण-पद्धतियों का विश्लेषण करना है, जिनके माध्यम से व्यक्ति स्थायी एवं सार्थक आनन्द की प्राप्ति कर सकता है। महाकाव्य के विभिन्न सर्गों में वर्णित रघुवंशी राजाओं के चरित्र, उनके कर्तव्यपरायण जीवन, प्रजावत्सलता, धर्मनिष्ठा, त्याग एवं आत्मसंयम का अध्ययन करते हुए यह स्पष्ट करने का प्रयास किया गया है कि कालिदास के लिए आनन्द केवल भौतिक सुख अथवा इन्द्रिय-तृप्ति तक सीमित नहीं है, बल्कि कर्तव्य, धर्म, लोकसेवा, प्रेम, त्याग और आत्मिक संतोष के समन्वय से उत्पन्न होने वाली जीवनगत अनुभूति है। *रघुवंश* में राजा और प्रजा के संबंध, पारिवारिक जीवन, दाम्पत्य प्रेम तथा प्रकृति के साथ मानव के सामंजस्य में भी आनन्द के विविध आयाम दृष्टिगत होते हैं। अध्ययन से यह निष्कर्ष प्राप्त होता है कि कालिदास की आनन्द-दृष्टि व्यक्ति के व्यक्तिगत सुख को सामाजिक एवं नैतिक उत्तरदायित्व से जोड़ती है। इस प्रकार *रघुवंश महाकाव्य* में प्रतिपादित आनन्द की अवधारणा समकालीन जीवन में संतुलन, नैतिकता, कर्तव्यबोध और लोककल्याण की प्रेरणा प्रदान करने में भी प्रासंगिक है।



Keywords / प्रमुख शब्द

रघुवंश, कालिदास, आनन्द, जीवन-मूल्य, राजधर्म, लोककल्याण, त्याग, आत्मसंयम, धर्म, भारतीय काव्यशास्त्र

संसार में समस्त प्राणियों का व्यवहार मन की वृत्तियों द्वारा संचालित होता है। मानव मन की मूलवृत्तियां काम, क्रोध, लोभ, मोह, मद एवं मत्सर अपनी प्रबल शक्तियों से संसार के प्रत्येक प्राणी को आच्छादित किए हुए हैं, कोई भी व्यक्ति मन की इन वृत्तियों से अछूता नहीं है। मन की यही मूलवृत्तियां वास्तव में उसके सुख व दुख की आधारशिला होती है। भारतीय मनोविज्ञान के अनुसार मन की सभी स्वच्छंद वृत्तियां अविद्या है, मनुष्य का संपूर्ण व्यवहार इन्हीं के द्वारा प्रभावित रहता है। गीता में भी क्रोध, कठोरता, दर्प, दम्भ, अज्ञान आदि को मन की आसुरी शक्तियां¹ बताया गया है जो मनुष्य के जीवन में दुख का विशेष कारण बनती हैं।

त्रिविधं नरकस्येदं, द्वारं नाशनमात्मनः।

कामः क्रोधस्तथा लोभः तस्मादेतत्त्रयं त्यजेत्॥ गीता, 16/21

मन की इन प्रवृत्तियों को नियंत्रित करने का एकमात्र उपाय है- शास्त्रोक्त कर्तव्याकर्तव्य की व्यवस्था तथा विधान को समझ कर आचरण करना।² प्रसिद्ध राजनीतिज्ञ और दार्शनिक अरस्तू के मतानुसार “कला और साहित्य के माध्यम से मनुष्य के मानसिक विकारों का उचित विरेचन हो जाता है, और यही स्थिति उसे सच्चे सुख और अपूर्व आनंद की अनुभूति कराती है।” काव्य के माध्यम से मनुष्य अत्यंत सरल, सहज और शीघ्र रूप से क्या करना है और क्या नहीं, इसका ज्ञान प्राप्त कर मन की प्रवृत्तियों को नियंत्रित करते हुए आनंद की प्राप्ति कर सकता है।

आचार्य मम्मट ने काव्यप्रकाश में काव्य प्रयोजनों की चर्चा करते हुए कहा है कि काव्य मानव के धर्म, अर्थ, काम, मोक्ष चारों पुरुषार्थों की सिद्धि कराने में सहायक, तत्काल दुख का नाश और आनंद की प्राप्ति कराने वाला कहा जाता है-

काव्यं यशसेऽर्थकृते व्यवहारविदे शिवेतरक्षतये।

¹ दम्भो दर्पोऽभिमानश्च, क्रोधः पारुष्यमेव च।

अज्ञानं चाभिजातस्य, पार्थ सम्पदमासुरीम्॥ गीता, 16/4

² यः शास्त्रविधिमुत्सृज्य, वर्तते कामकारतः।

न स सिद्धिमवाप्नोति, न सुखं न परां गतिम्॥

तस्माच्छास्त्रं प्रमाणं ते, कार्याकार्यव्यवस्थितौ।

ज्ञात्वा शास्त्रविधानोक्तं, कर्म कर्तुमिहार्हसि॥ गीता, 16/23-24



आचार्य भरत के अनुसार, नाटक (काव्य) का उद्देश्य दुःखार्त, श्रम व शोक से व्याकुल व्यक्तियों को सुख और शान्ति की प्राप्ति करना बताया है।⁴ वामन और भोज ने भी कीर्ति यश और प्रीति (आनंद) को काव्य का मुख्य प्रयोजन माना है।⁵ वस्तुतः काव्य मानव को जीवन के सभी क्षेत्रों के प्रति जागरूक बनाता है तथा परिस्थितियों से जूझने की शिक्षा व प्रेरणा प्रदान करता है। वस्तुतः जीवन के सभी पक्षों की समग्रता से सिद्धि करना ही काव्य का चरम लक्ष्य है।

रघुवंशमहाकाव्य महाकवि कालिदास विरचित ऐसी ही प्रौढ़ कृति है, जो न केवल अपने काव्यात्मक सौंदर्य के कारण सहृदयों को आकृष्ट करती है, अपितु इसमें निहित नैतिक और व्यवहारिक शिक्षाओं के कारण भी विशेष रूप से अनुकरणीय हैं। रघुवंशमहाकाव्य एक ओर श्रृंगार, वीर, करुण, हास्य, भयानक आदि रसों के माध्यम से मानवीय अनुभूतियों की चरम अभिव्यक्ति कर पाठक को शाश्वत आत्मिक आनंद की ओर उन्मुख करता है, वहीं दूसरी ओर रघुवंश के राजाओं—जैसे दिलीप, रघु, अज, दशरथ और श्रीराम आदि के आदर्श आचरण, संयम, त्याग, कर्तव्यनिष्ठा और धर्मपालन के उदाहरणों के माध्यम से जीवन जीने की एक व्यावहारिक दिशा प्रदान कर सुख और आनंद की अवस्था में पहुंचाता है।

आश्रम चतुष्टय का पालन पुरुष का सबसे बड़ा परमार्थ है। कालिदास ने रघुवंशी राजाओं के माध्यम से आदर्श आश्रम व्यवस्था का मार्ग प्रशस्त किया है, जो मनुष्य के जीवन को सुख और आनंद से युक्त करता है। सूर्यवंश में उत्पन्न सभी राजा ब्रह्मचर्य, गृहस्थ, वानप्रस्थ तथा संन्यास का शास्त्रोक्त रीति से पालन करते थे।

शैशवेऽभ्यस्तविद्यानां यौवने विषयैषिणाम् ।

वाङ्मनो मुनिवृत्तीनां योगेनान्ते तनुत्यजाम् ।। रघु.-1.8

³ काव्यप्रकाश, 1/2

⁴(क) धर्म्यं यशस्यं आयुष्यं हितं बुद्धिं विवर्धनम्।

लोको उपदेशजननम् नाट्यमेतद् भविष्यति॥ नाट्यशास्त्र, 1/113

(ख) दुःखार्तानां श्रमार्तानां शोकार्तानां तपस्विनाम्।

विश्रान्तिं जननं काले नाट्येतद् भविष्यति॥ नाट्यशास्त्र, 1/144

⁵ धर्मार्थं काम मोक्षेषु वैचक्षण्यं कलासु च।

करोति कीर्तिप्रीतिञ्च साधुकाव्य निबन्धनम्॥ काव्यालङ्कार, 1/2



मानव जीवन के प्रयोजन धर्म, अर्थ, काम और मोक्ष रूपी पुरुषार्थ चतुष्टय⁶ का पालन किस प्रकार करना चाहिए इसका भी अत्यंत व्यवहारिक और वैज्ञानिक परिचय कालिदास ने दिया है। रघुवंशी राजा चारों आश्रमों में विचरण करते हुए धर्मपूर्वक यज्ञ, दान के लिए धनसंग्रह⁷, तथा संतान उत्पन्न करने के लिए विवाह करते थे तथा अंत में योग के माध्यम से शरीर त्याग कर ब्रह्मानंद को प्राप्त करते थे।

कालिदास की मान्यता है कि गृहस्थ आश्रम का उद्देश्य केवल भोग-विलास नहीं, बल्कि संतानोत्पत्ति और पारिवारिक जीवन को सुखी बनाना है। गृहस्थ आश्रम में रहते हुए तपस्या करने से और ब्राह्मणों तथा दीनों को दान देने से जो पुण्य मिलता है, वह केवल परलोक में सुख देता है पर अच्छी सन्तान अपनी सेवा सुश्रुषा द्वारा इस लोक में तो सुख देती है। साथ ही तर्पण, पिण्डदान आदि द्वारा परलोक में भी सुख देती है।

लोकोत्तरसुखं पुण्यं तपोदानसमुद्भवम्।

संततिः शुद्धवंश्या हि परत्रेह च शर्मणे।। रघु.-1.69

कालिदास का मत है कि मनुष्य को अपनी आवश्यकताओं के अनुरूप और त्यागभाव से धन की इच्छा या संचय करना चाहिए, क्योंकि आवश्यकता से अधिक धन की लालसा, अग्नि में घी डालने के समान मनुष्य के दुःख को बढ़ाने का कार्य करती है। यदि रघुवंशी राजाओं की भांति मनुष्य भी धन का संचय कर समाज की भलाई में लगाये तो मनुष्य सूर्य की भांति तेज से युक्त हो सकता है तथा निरंतर आनंद का अनुभव कर सकता है, कालिदास ने राजा दिलीप⁸, रघु⁹, और अतिथि¹⁰ के माध्यम से दान और त्याग दोनों के अति महनीय उदहारण प्रस्तुत किया है।

कालिदास अतिथियों एवं पूजनीय प्राणियों के आदर और सत्कार को सभी ईप्सित फलों की प्राप्ति का प्रमुख साधन मानते हैं। पूजार्हों का उचित सत्कार व सेवा न करने के कारण राजा दिलीप को

⁶ त्रिविधः दुःखात्यन्तनिवृत्तिरत्यन्तपुरुषार्थः।- साङ्ख्यसूत्र

⁷ त्यागाय संभृतार्थानाम् सत्याय मितभाषिणाम्। रघु.-1.7

⁸ प्रजानामेव भूत्यर्थं स ताभ्यो बलिमग्रहीत्।

सहस्रगुणमुत्सृष्टुमादत्ते हि रसं रविः॥ रघु.-1.18

⁹ स विश्वजितमाजहे यज्ञं सर्वस्वदक्षिणम्।

आदानं हि विसर्गाय सतां वारिमुचामिव॥ रघु.-4.86

¹⁰ कोशेनाश्रयणीयत्वमिति तस्यार्थसंग्रहः।

अम्बुगर्भो हि जीमूतश्चातकैरमिनन्द्यते॥ रघु.-17.60



भी सन्तानप्राप्ति से सम्बंधित क्लेश सहना पड़ा,¹¹ इसके विपरीत मनुष्य यदि कर्तव्यनिष्ठ होकर उचित मार्ग का अनुसरण करें तो उसकी सभी अभिलाषायें पूर्ण होती हैं जिस प्रकार राजा दिलीप ने नंदिनी गाय की सेवा एवं रक्षा का जो प्रण लिया था, उसे अपने प्राणों से भी अधिक मानते हुए निर्वहन किया। अतः नंदिनी गाय ने उन पर प्रसन्न होकर उन्हें पुत्र रघु रूपी आनंद प्रदान किया।

ईप्सितं तदवज्ञानद्विद्धि सार्गलमात्मनः ।

प्रतिबध्नाति हि श्रेयः पूज्यपूजाव्यतिक्रमः ।। रघु.-1.79

कालिदास कहते हैं कि जिस प्रकार शीतलता पानी का गुण है उसी प्रकार मनुष्य का गुण भी दयालु एवं शांत रहना है। क्रोध और काम नित्य मनुष्य का स्वभाव नहीं रह सकते हैं। मनुष्य का स्वरूप सच्चिदानंद है, इसलिए उसे प्रयत्न पूर्वक अपने क्रोध, काम इत्यादि विकारों से दूर रहने की चेष्टा करनी चाहिए। मनुष्य जितना विनम्र और दयालु भाव को अपनाता है उतना ही मानसिक शांति का अनुभव करता है।

उष्णत्वमग्न्या तपसंप्रयोगात्छैत्यं हि यत्सा प्रकृतिर्जलस्य ।। रघु.-5.54

विनम्रता का आचरण मनुष्य की कीर्ति को बढ़ाता है। रघुवंशी राजाओं ने युद्ध में परास्त शत्रुओं के प्रति कठोरता का नहीं अपितु विनम्रता का भाव रखा तथा उन्हें पुनः शासन करने का अवसर प्रदान किया। जिससे उनकी कीर्ति और यश तो बढ़ा ही साथ ही शत्रु को भी मित्रता का मार्ग दर्शाने से भय का वातावरण नष्ट होकर सौहार्दपूर्ण वातावरण बना। जो मानव समाज की सुख, शांति और अध्यात्मिक विकास के लिए अत्यंत उपयोगी होता है।

निर्जितेषु तरसा तरस्विनाम् शत्रुषु प्रणतिरेव कीर्तये । रघु.-11.89

कालिदास का मानना है कि दूसरों की सहायता करने में जो मनःसंतोष मिलता है वह परमानंद है। राजा अज ने अच्छे राजा की भांति अपने बल, ज्ञान और धन का प्रयोग केवल अपने सुख हेतु नहीं अपितु दुखियों के भय को दूर करने, विद्वानों के सत्कार तथा प्रजा के पालन के लिए किया। मानों उनका धन ही परोपकार के लिए नहीं था अपितु उसके गुण भी परोपकार के लिए ही थे।

बलमार्तभयोपशान्तये विदुषां सत्कृतये बहुश्रुतम् ।

¹¹ प्रदक्षिणक्रियाहर्षायां तस्यां त्वं साधु नाचरः॥ रघु.-1.76



वसु तस्य विभोर्न केवलं गुणवत्तापि परप्रयोजना ।। रघु.-8.31

यदि अपनी प्रिय वस्तु के माध्यम से भी किसी का उपकार किया जा सकता है, तो मनुष्य को वह भी अविलंब करना चाहिए। जैसे राजा दशरथ ने बाल्यावस्था में ही राम को मुनिजनों की सहायता के लिए भेजते हुए जरा भी संकोच नहीं किया। यद्यपि अत्यंत प्रतीक्षा करने पर उन्हें पुत्र राम की प्राप्ति हुई थी तथापि उन्होंने अविलंब राम को मुनिजनों के साथ जाने की अनुमति दी क्योंकि जो आनंद याचिकाओं की इच्छा पूर्ण करने में है वह किसी अन्य में नहीं।

अप्यसुप्रर्णयानां रघोः कुले न व्यहन्यत कदाचिदर्थिता ।। रघु.-11.2

मनुष्य यदि दूसरों के कल्याण और सहायता में तत्पर रहता है, तो वह असंभव प्रतीत होने वाली दुर्लभ से दुर्लभ वस्तुओं को भी प्राप्त कर सकता है। ऐसे सत्कर्मों से उसे न केवल सांसारिक सुख की प्राप्ति होती है, बल्कि आध्यात्मिक आनंद भी मिलता है। जैसे राजा अज ने गंधर्वपुत्र सुदर्शन को श्राप से मुक्त किया, तो उसके प्रत्युपकार स्वरूप गंधर्व ने उन्हें 'सम्मोहन' नामक दुर्लभ अस्त्र प्रदान किया। सच्चा पराक्रम और मूल्य तभी है, जब उसका उपयोग दूसरों के हित में किया जाए।

प्रतिप्रियं चेद्भवतो न कुर्यां वृथा हि मे स्यात्स्वपदोपलब्धिः ।। रघु.-5.56

कालिदास संतोष व आनन्द की धुरी विश्वास को मानते हैं। क्योंकि अपने बन्धुजनों पर विश्वास के द्वारा व्यक्ति भय से मुक्त होता है उसे आगे बढ़ने व चुनौतियों का सामना करने में सहायता होती है। विश्वास मानसिक शांति प्रदान कर व्यक्ति को तनाव व चिन्ताओं से मुक्त करता है। जब राजा अज युद्ध में अपने शत्रुओं को परास्त कर देता है और इंदुमती के पास आता है तो इंदुमती का सारा डर भाग जाता है।

तस्या प्रतिद्वन्द्विभवाद्विषादात्सद्यो विमुक्तं मुखमाबभासे ।

निश्वासवाष्पापगमात्प्रपन्नः प्रसादमात्मीयमिवात्यदर्शः ।। रघु.-7.68

कालिदास मनुष्य के जीवन में मित्र और संगति का भी विशेष महत्व दर्शाते हैं उनका मानना है कि मित्र न तो अत्यधिक बलवान होना चाहिए और न ही अत्यधिक दुर्बल। जो मित्र बहुत दुर्बल होते हैं, वे किसी प्रकार की सहायता नहीं कर सकते और जो अत्यधिक बलवान होते हैं, वे अपने प्रभाव से मित्र को दबा सकते हैं या अपनी इच्छानुसार व्यवहार कर सकते हैं। इसलिए श्रेष्ठ यही है कि



मित्रता ऐसे लोगों से की जाए जो सामर्थ्य और स्थिति में समान हों, मध्यम शक्ति वाले मित्र ही सच्चे, स्थिर और सहायक सिद्ध होते।

हीनान्यनुपकर्तृणि प्रवृद्धानि विकुर्वते

तेन मध्यमशक्तिनि मित्राणि स्थापितान्यतः ।। रघु.-17.48

व्यक्ति के गुण सभी संपत्तियों का द्वार होते हैं,¹² कालिदास की मान्यता है कि यदि मनुष्य उदारता, संयम, शौर्य जैसे गुणों को अपने व्यक्तित्व में उतार ले तो संसार के सभी वैभव उसे प्राप्त हो सकते हैं। जिस प्रकार राजा अज ने अपने गुणों से पिता का हृदय जीतकर राज्य अथवा पृथ्वी पर शासन किया उसी प्रकार अपने शौर्य और पराक्रम से इंदुमती को भी प्राप्त किया। अज ने भोग की अभिलाषा से नहीं अपितु पृथ्वी की सेवा व पिता की आज्ञा को सर्वोपरि मानते हुए राज्यभार संभाला तथा अपने गुणों से सारी प्रजा और सम्पत्तियों का दिल जीत लिया।

तदुपस्थितमग्रहीदजः पितुराज्ञेति न भोगतृष्णया ।। रघु.-8.2

कालिदास का मत है कि सभी के प्रति समभाव और प्रेमपूर्ण आचरण द्वारा मनुष्य मानसिक संतोष की प्राप्ति कर सकता है, जो आनंद की प्राप्ति हेतु अत्यंत आवश्यक है। जिस प्रकार समुद्र सैकड़ों नदियों से समता का व्यवहार करता है वैसे ही राजा अज न किसी का बुरा चाहते थे और न किसी से वैर करते थे। वे प्रजा के प्रति प्रेमपूर्वक आचरण करते थे। वे न तो अत्यंत कठोर थे और न अत्यंत कोमल अपितु मध्यमार्ग से अपने शत्रु राजाओं को राजगद्दी से उतारे बिना ही उनको उसी प्रकार नम्र कर देते थे जिस प्रकार मध्यम गति से बढ़ने वाली वायु वृक्षों को उखाड़ती तो नहीं परन्तु झुका अवश्य देती है।

न खरो न च भूयसा मृदुः पवमानः पृथिवीरुहामिव ।

स पुरस्कृतमध्यमक्रमो नमयामास नृपाननुद्धरन् ।। रघु.-8.9

रघु ने अज को राज्य का शासन सौंप कर स्वर्ग के कभी नष्ट न होने वाले भोग पदार्थों की लालसा को भी त्याग दिया¹³ तथा दिलीप के वंशजों की भांति स्वयं भी वल्कल धारण कर आत्मज्ञान हेतु

¹² स्वयं प्रदुग्धेऽस्य गुणैरुपसृता वसूपमानस्य वसूनि मेदिनी॥ किरात.-1/18

¹³ अथ वीक्ष्य रघुः प्रतिष्ठितं प्रकृतिष्वात्मजमात्मवत्तया।
विषयेषु विनाशधर्मसु त्रिदिवस्थेष्वपि निःस्पृहोऽभवत्॥ रघु.- 8.10



वन में आश्रय लिया। रघुवंशी राजाओं की यह परंपरा रही थी कि वे युवावस्था बीतने के पहले ही मुनिवृत्ति धारण कर योगबल के माध्यम से देहत्याग के अनंतर निर्वाण रूपी मोक्ष की प्राप्ति कर लेते थे। कालिदास मोक्ष प्राप्ति को जीवन का चरम लक्ष्य मानते हैं तथा इस बात पर बल देते हैं कि ब्रह्मचर्य और गृहस्थ के कार्यों का भलीभांति निर्वहन कर मनुष्यों को मुनिवृत्ति, स्वाध्याय और योग द्वारा मोक्ष की प्राप्ति हेतु प्रयत्नरत होना चाहिए।¹⁴

युवावस्था तथा वृद्धावस्था में मनुष्य का व्यवहार कैसा होना चाहिए, इसका अत्यंत सुंदर वर्णन प्रस्तुत करते हुए कालिदास कहते हैं कि मनुष्य को राजा अज की भांति अपने कर्तव्यों का निर्वाह करते हुए तथा व्यवहार से लोक में दया, दान इत्यादि द्वारा ऐश्वर्य प्राप्त करते हुए अपनी युवावस्था व्यतीत करनी चाहिए और उसके पिता रघु की भांति वृद्धावस्था में योग साधना द्वारा चित्त एकाग्रता एवं कर्मों के बीजों को ज्ञान रूपी अग्नि में भस्म करते हुए संस्कार के नाश के लिए यत्न करना चाहिए।¹⁵ प्रजाजनों ने अज और रघु के रूप में मानों मूर्तिमान ऐश्वर्य और मोक्ष के दर्शन साथ साथ किये।

यतिपार्थिवलिङ्गधरिणौ ददृशाते रघुराघवौ जनैः ।

अपवर्गमहोदयार्थर्भुवयंशाविव धर्मयोगतौ । रघु.-8.16

सत्व, रजस, तमस इन तीनों गुणों को जीतकर स्थिर बुद्धि एवं दृढ़ चित्त होकर ज्ञान प्राप्ति करने से मनुष्य अपने मन को विचलित होने से रोक सकता है-

पणबन्धमुखान्गुणानजः षडुपायुङ्क्त समीक्ष्य तत्फलम् ।

रघुरप्यजयद्गुणत्रयं प्रकृतिस्थं समलोष्ठकाञ्चनः ।। रघु.-8.21

आलस्य मनुष्य का सबसे बड़ा शत्रु¹⁶ है। इस एकमात्र अवगुण में ही सभी विनाशों की परंपरा मानो निवास करती है क्योंकि इसके रहते मनुष्य अतुलनीय वैभव और संपत्ति को भी फूटे घड़े में से पानी के समान गवां देता है। कालिदास बताते हैं कि राजा अतिथि आलस्य का परित्याग कर सभी कार्यों को स्वयं अपने निरीक्षण में संपन्न करता था जिस कारण उसके शासनकाल में प्रजा और राज्य अत्यंत प्रसन्नता और समृद्धि को प्राप्त कर रहे थे।

¹⁴ योगेनान्ते तनुत्यजाम्। रघु.-1/8

¹⁵ इतरो दहने स्वकर्मणाम् ववृते ज्ञानमयेन वह्निना ॥ रघु.-8/20

¹⁶ आलस्यं हि मनुष्यस्य शरीरस्थो महान् रिपुः-। नीतिशतकम् -86



स धर्मस्थसखः शश्वदर्थिप्रत्यर्थिनां स्वयं

ददर्श संशयच्छेद्यान्व्यवहारानतन्द्रितः ।। रघु.-17/39

इसी प्रकार राजा दशरथ ने भी चक्रवर्ती हो जाने पर भी आलस्य को कभी अपने पास नहीं आने दिया क्योंकि वे जानते थे कि एक दोष भी सभी सम्पत्तियों का नाशक हो सकता है।

श्रियमवेक्ष्य स रन्ध्रचलामभूदनलसोऽनलसोमसमद्युतिः । रघु.-9.15

कालिदास इंदुमती की मृत्यु का उल्लेख करते हुए यह दर्शाते हैं कि मनुष्य के भाग्य पर किसी का वश नहीं होता। जो कुछ भी भाग्य में निर्धारित होता है, उसे टाल पाना असंभव है।¹⁷ यदि ईश्वर की इच्छा हो, तो विष भी अमृत में परिवर्तित हो सकता है और अमृत भी विष बन सकता है। जीवन और मृत्यु ईश्वर की इच्छा और भाग्य पर निर्भर हैं, न कि केवल कारणों और साधनों पर।

स्रगियं यदि जीवितापहा हृदये किं निहिता न हन्ति माम् ।

विषमप्यमृतं कचिद्भवेदमृतं वा विषमीश्वरेच्छया ।। रघु.-8.46

पञ्चतंत्र में भी ईश्वरेच्छा तथा भाग्य को अतीव बलशाली बताते हुए कहा गया है –

अरक्षितं तिष्ठति दैवरक्षितं सुरक्षितं दैवहतं विनश्यति ।

जीवत्यनाथोऽपि वने विसर्जितः कृत्प्रयत्नोऽपि गृहे विनश्यति ।।

वस्तुतः मनुष्य को अपने प्रारब्ध भोगने ही होते हैं,¹⁸ वह केवल कर्मों का समर्पण करके ही इस संसार के चक्र से मुक्त हो सकता है।

अज विलाप के सन्दर्भ में महाकवि कालिदास जीवन की वास्तविकता को बताते हुए कहते हैं कि यह संसार मरणशील है जिसने भी देह धारण किया है, उसका मरना स्वाभाविक है।¹⁹ मनुष्य को विपरीत परिस्थितियों में भी धैर्य रखना चाहिए। जिस प्रकार रघुवंशी राजा अज ने सुख की अवस्था में ऐश्वर्य का अभिमान न करते हुए आत्मज्ञान का परिचय दिया वैसे ही दुख के समय में भी धीरज धारण करके अध्यात्मज्ञान के प्रकाश से निराशा के अंधकार को दूर किया। कालिदास कहते हैं कि

¹⁷ यत्पूर्वं विधिना ललाटलिखितं तन्मार्जितुं कः क्षमः -नीतिशतकम् -93

¹⁸ नाभुक्तं क्षीयते कर्म, कल्पकोटिशतैरपि।

भोक्तव्यं, कृतं कर्म शुभाशुभम् ॥ (ब्रह्मवैवर्तपुराण, 17/37)

¹⁹ मरणं प्रकृतिः शरीरिणां विकृतिर्जीवितमुच्यते। रघु.-8.87



जब शरीर और आत्मा भी आपस में बिछुड़ने वाले माने गए हैं। तब पुत्र, स्त्री आदि बाहरी सम्बन्धों के बिछोह से मनुष्य को दुख नहीं करना चाहिए।

स्वशरीरशरीरिणावपि श्रुतसंयोग विपर्ययौ यदा।

विरहः किमिवानुतापयेद्बद्ध बाह्यैर्विषयैर्विपश्चितम्।। रघु.-8.89

कालिदास ने उपदेश दिया है कि शोक मनुष्य को अत्यंत जीर्ण-शीर्ण और कमजोर कर देता उन्होंने शोक को अग्नि के समान बताया है, जब अत्यधिक कठोर और मजबूत लोहा भी आग में तपाये जाने पिघल जाता है तो शोकरूपी अग्नि में जलकर तो प्राणधारियों की क्या दशा होगी।²⁰ इसलिए मनुष्य को विवेक का आश्रय लेते हुए अत्यंत शोक नहीं करना चाहिए। राजा अज ने इंदुमती के शोक में क्षय रोग हो जाने से अपने प्राणों को गंवा दिया। तथा राजा दशरथ ने पुत्र वियोग में शोकरूपी अग्नि में अपने प्राणों को भस्म कर दिया अतः प्रयत्नपूर्वक विवेकशील होते हुए मनुष्य को मोह तथा शोक का त्याग करना चाहिए। सांसारिक मोह छोड़कर तथा शोक से दूर रहते हुए मनुष्य आन्तरिक शान्ति का अनुभव करता है। यह आंतरिक शांति ही आत्म-साक्षात्कार करने का प्रथम सोपान है, जो परमानन्द की ओर प्रवृत्त करती है।

निगृह्यशोकं स्वयमेव धीमान्वर्णाश्रमावेक्षण जागरुकः। रघु.-14.85

भगवद्गीता में कहा गया है कि मनुष्य को सुख और दुःख दोनों को समभाव से ग्रहण करना चाहिए।²¹ कवि इसी भाव को प्रकट करते हुए कहते हैं कि जब श्रीराम को पिता की आज्ञा से वन जाना पड़ा, तब अयोध्यावासियों ने देखा कि वल्कल धारण करते समय उनके मुखमंडल पर वही स्थिरता, वही तेज था जो राज्याभिषेक के समय मंगल सूचक बहुमूल्य वस्त्राभूषण धारण करते समय था। सुख-दुःख दोनों परिस्थितियों में उनका मन और मुखमंडल समान भाव में स्थिर रहा।

दधतो मङ्गलक्षोमे वसानस्य च वल्कले।

ददृशुर्विस्मितास्तस्य मुखरागं समं जनाः।। रघु.-12.8

²⁰ अभितप्तमयोऽपि मादर्वं भजते कैव कथा शरीरिषु॥ रघु.-8.43

²¹ (क) सुखदुःखे समे कृत्वा लाभलाभौ जयाजयौ | गीता – 2/38

(ख) दुःखेष्वनुद्विगमनाः सुखेषु विगत स्पृहः।

वीतराग भय क्रोधः स्थित धीर्मुनिरुच्यते॥ गीता – 2/56



कुमारसंभव में भी कालिदास ऐसा ही प्रसंग पार्वती की तपस्या के समय पर प्रस्तुत करते हैं, जहाँ पार्वती भी राजमहल के बहुमूल्य वस्त्रों को छोड़कर वल्कल वस्त्रों को तथा सुख संपदा को त्याग कर वन में निवास को स्वीकार करते समय किंचित भी उद्विग्न नहीं थी।²²

त्याग और प्रतिज्ञा के प्रतीक केवल राम ही नहीं हैं, बल्कि उनके अनुज भरत भी इन गुणों की जीवंत मूर्ति हैं। जब माता कैकेयी ने राम को वनवास भेजकर भरत के लिए अयोध्या का राज्य माँगा, तब भरत ने न केवल उस राज्य को अस्वीकार किया, बल्कि उसे श्रीराम की अमूल्य धरोहर मानकर सच्चे सेवक की भाँति आनंद पूर्वक उसकी रक्षा की। तपस्वी जीवन अपनाकर राम की मर्यादा और वचनों की रक्षा करते हुए मानो वे अपनी माता के उस पाप का प्रायश्चित्त कर रहे हों।

दृढभक्तिरिति ज्येष्ठे राज्यतृष्णापराङ्मुख ।

मातुः पापस्य भरतः प्रायश्चित्तामिवाकरोत् ।। रघु.-12.19

संस्कृत काव्य में यौवन, रूप, और प्रभुता इन तीनों को विनाश की संपत्तियाँ²³ कहा गया है मनुष्य के मन और अहंकार को बढ़ाने में इन तीनों में से एक का होना ही पर्याप्त है पर जहाँ यह तीनों एक साथ उपस्थित हो तो वहाँ अनर्थ और दुखों की परंपरा का कहना ही क्या। विषय वासना और सुख भोग की कामनाएं अनंत कर्मों को उत्पन्न करती हैं जो युवावस्था में ही अत्यंत प्रबल होती हैं इसलिए युवावस्था में ही वासना और कामनाओं को त्याग करने का सर्वोत्तम समय कहा गया है। यदि व्यक्ति युवावस्था में ही इन्द्रिय निग्रह करते हुए समस्त विषयों के प्रपंच का त्याग कर सके तो निसंदेह सैकड़ों जन्मों में मिलने वाले परम लाभ अर्थात् मोक्ष के मार्ग को वह एक ही जीवन के थोड़े से समय में ही प्राप्त कर सकता है। सभी रघुवंशी राजाओं ने जितेन्द्रिय होकर समुन्द्र पर्यंत पृथ्वी पर चिरकाल तक शासन किया -

वयोरूपविभूतिनामेकैकं मदकारणम् ।

तानि तस्मिन् समस्तानि न तस्योत्सिषिचिमनः ।। रघु.-17.43

²² यथा प्रसिद्धैर्मधुरं शिरोरुहैर्जटाभिरप्येवम् अभूत्तदाननम्।

न षट्पदश्रेणिभिरेव पङ्कजं सशैवालासङ्गमपि प्रकाशते। कुमारसंभव-5.9

²³ क) यौवनं धनसंपत्तिः प्रभुत्वमविवेकिता

एकैकमप्यनर्थाय किमु यत्र चतुष्टयम् ॥ हितोपदेश

ख) गर्भेश्वरत्वमभिनवयौवनत्वमप्रतिरूपत्वममानुषशक्तत्वम् चेति महतीयम् खलु अनर्थपरंपरा सर्वा -शुकनासोपदेश



राजा अतिथि का वर्णन करते हुए कालिदास स्वयं भी यह स्वीकार करते हैं कि मनुष्य के दुखों का कारण बाहरी तत्व नहीं अपितु भीतरी तत्व है क्योंकि काम, क्रोध, लोभ, मोह, मद और मत्सर यह छह शत्रु सदैव आपके साथ विद्यमान रहते हैं सर्वप्रथम मनुष्य को उनको वशीभूत करना अत्यंत अनिवार्य है जो व्यक्ति इन षडरि को वशीभूत करते हुए आचरण करते हैं उस पर बाहरी शत्रु विजय प्राप्त नहीं कर सकते हैं

अनित्याः शत्रवो बाह्या विप्रकृष्टाश्च ते यतः ।

अतः सोऽभ्यन्तरात्रित्यान् षट्पूर्वमजयद्रिपुनः ।। रघु.-17.45

कालिदास प्रकृति को सभी रोगों की औषधि मानते हैं। उनका मानना है कि प्रकृति का सान्निध्य मनुष्य को आत्मसाक्षात्कार की ओर ले जाता है। यदि मनुष्य अपनी इंद्रियों से प्रकृति का अनुभव करे, तो वह अपने शारीरिक और मानसिक विकारों से ऊपर उठकर आनंद की अनुभूति कर सकता है। जैसे राजा नल ने अपने पुत्र नभ को राज्य सौंपकर वृद्धावस्था में तप को आधार बनाया और क्षमा से युक्त होकर अत्यंत शांत भाव से वन में मृगों के साथ रहने लगे, ताकि वे पुनः इस संसार में आगमन न हो। प्रकृति के समीप रहने से मनुष्य आध्यात्मिक शांति और मोक्ष की ओर अग्रसर होता हुए सहज ही जन्म-मृत्यु के बंधन से मुक्ति पा सकता है।

क्षमां लम्भयित्वा क्षमयोपपन्नं वने तपः क्षान्तरश्चचार । रघु.-18.9

कालिदास ने आत्म-कल्याण के मार्ग में इंद्रियों की प्रबलता को प्रमुख शत्रु माना है। इंद्रियों की विषयों के साथ निरंतर संगति से आसक्ति उत्पन्न होती है, और आसक्ति से कामना उत्पन्न होती है, कामना से क्रोध उत्पन्न होता है, इस प्रकार सभी दुर्गुण इंद्रिय-आसक्ति से उत्पन्न होते हैं। और जो व्यक्ति इंद्रिय-तृप्ति में लिप्त रहता है, वह वासनाओं के द्वारा बहता रहता है। रघुवंशी राजा अग्निवर्ण इंद्रिय-विषयोपभोग में इतना लिप्त हो गये कि राज-काज के सभी कार्यों के प्रति विमुख हो गये।

एवमिन्द्रियसुखानि निर्विशन्, अन्यकार्यविमुखः स पार्थिवः । रघु.-19/47

विषयों के प्रति अत्यधिक आसक्ति तथा रात दिन भोगविलासता के कारण राजा अग्निवर्ण क्षयरोग से उसी प्रकार ग्रस्त हो गए, जिसप्रकार दक्ष के श्राप से चन्द्रमा को क्षय रोग हो गया, किन्तु इतना होने पर भी उन्होंने भोगविलास की वस्तुओं का त्याग नहीं किया। रोग के प्रभाव से दिन प्रतिदिन



दुर्बल होकर निस्संतान मृत्यु को प्राप्त हुए।²⁴ वास्तव में यदि इन्द्रियां विषयों में फंस जाती हैं तो उन्हें रोकना कठिन हो जाता है।

दृष्टदोषमपि तन्न सोऽत्यजत्सङ्गवस्तु भिषजामनाश्रवः।

स्वादुभिस्तु विषयैर्हतस्ततो दुखमिन्द्रियगणो निवार्यते।। रघु.-19/49

इसप्रकार कालिदास उपरोक्त नैतिक सद्गुणों और इन्द्रिय संयम को मानव-जीवन की सफलता तथा अध्यात्म-विज्ञान की ओर उन्मुख होने का कारण मानते हैं साथ ही रघुवंश में उत्पन्न अग्निवर्ण जैसे चरित के माध्यम से यह सन्देश भी देते हैं कि भोग विलासिता और विषयों के प्रति आसक्ति सभी गुणों का नाश कर अंततः विनाश का कारण बनते हैं। रघुवंशी राजाओं के उदार चरित्रों के माध्यम से महाकवि कालिदास ने अनेक रमणीय उपदेश प्रदान किए हैं कि कैसे व्यक्ति सदाचार, संयम, कर्तव्य-परायणता, परोपकार जैसे नैतिक गुणों से लौकिक तथा अलौकिक सभी प्रकार की संपत्तियां को आकर्षित करते हुए परमानंद को प्राप्त कर सकता है। रघुवंशमहाकाव्य का रसास्वादन कर मनुष्य सभी विषय-वासनाओं को भूलकर, काव्य के परम उद्देश्य "सद्यः परिनिवृत्तये" अर्थात् तत्कालिक मानसिक शांति और संतोष का प्रत्यक्ष अनुभव करते हुए कांतासम्मित उपदेश की भांति चिरस्थायी आनंदपूर्ण स्थिति को प्राप्त कर सकता है।

²⁴ आमयस्तु रतिरागसंभवो दक्षशाप इव चन्द्रमक्षिणोत्। रघु.-19/48



आधुनिक काव्यशास्त्रीय विमर्श में अलंकार सिद्धान्त का पुनर्मूल्यांकन एवं पुनर्प्रतिष्ठा

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शोधसार- भारतीय काव्यशास्त्र की दीर्घ परम्परा में अलंकार सिद्धान्त का अत्यन्त महत्वपूर्ण स्थान रहा है। काव्य की रमणीयता, चमत्कार एवं प्रभावोत्पादकता के प्रमुख साधन के रूप में अलंकारों की स्वीकृति प्राचीन काल से ही रही है। आचार्य भामह ने अलंकार को काव्य का अनिवार्य तत्त्व मानते हुए उसे काव्य-सौन्दर्य का मूल आधार स्वीकार किया, जबकि आचार्य दण्डी ने अलंकारों को काव्य की शोभा-वृद्धि करने वाला तत्त्व माना। यद्यपि परवर्ती काल में आनन्दवर्धन के ध्वनि सिद्धान्त तथा अभिनवगुप्त के रस-विमर्श के प्रभाव से अलंकार की स्वतन्त्र सत्ता कुछ सीमित दिखाई देने लगी, तथापि आधुनिक काव्यशास्त्रीय विमर्श में अलंकार को पुनः केवल बाह्य भूषण न मानकर काव्य की अन्तर्निहित रचनात्मक शक्ति के रूप में स्वीकार किया जा रहा है।

आधुनिक संस्कृत काव्यशास्त्र के प्रमुख चिन्तक आचार्य रेवाप्रसाद द्विवेदी एवं आचार्य राधावल्लभ त्रिपाठी ने भारतीय काव्यशास्त्रीय परम्परा को आधुनिक आलोचनात्मक दृष्टि से देखने का महत्वपूर्ण कार्य किया है।

इनके विचारों में काव्यशास्त्र केवल रूढ़ सिद्धान्तों का संग्रह नहीं, अपितु काव्यानुभूति, भाषा-सौन्दर्य एवं सृजनात्मक अभिव्यक्ति का विज्ञान है।



इस दृष्टि से अलंकार केवल शब्द एवं अर्थ की सज्जा नहीं, अपितु कवि की कल्पना, अनुभूति और अर्थ-निर्माण प्रक्रिया का मूल साधन है। प्रस्तुत शोध-पत्र में अलंकार सिद्धान्त की विकास-यात्रा का विवेचन करते हुए यह स्थापित करने का प्रयास किया गया है कि आधुनिक काव्यशास्त्रीय परिप्रेक्ष्य में अलंकार पुनः काव्यात्मा के रूप में प्रतिष्ठित होने की क्षमता रखता है।

कुंजी शब्द : अलंकार, काव्यात्मा, भारतीय काव्यशास्त्र, भामह, रेवाप्रसाद द्विवेदी, राधावल्लभ त्रिपाठी, आधुनिक आलोचना, काव्य-सौन्दर्य।

प्रस्तावना – भारतीय साहित्यिक चिन्तन परम्परा अत्यन्त समृद्ध एवं व्यापक रही है। भारतीय आचार्यों ने काव्य के स्वरूप, प्रयोजन, सौन्दर्य एवं प्रभाव को समझने के लिए अनेक सिद्धान्तों का प्रतिपादन किया। भारतीय काव्यशास्त्र का मूल प्रश्न रहा है कि काव्य की आत्मा क्या है? अथवा किसे काव्य का आत्मतत्त्व कहा जाए? अर्थात् काव्य का वास्तविक जीवन-तत्त्व क्या है? कौन-सा तत्व काव्य को सामान्य वाक्य से भिन्न बनाता है? इसी प्रश्न के समाधान के लिए भारतीय काव्यशास्त्र में विभिन्न सम्प्रदायों का उदय हुआ। किसी ने अलंकार को काव्य की आत्मा माना, किसी ने रीति को, किसी ने ध्वनि को, तो किसी ने रस को।¹

अलंकार सम्प्रदाय भारतीय काव्यशास्त्र की प्राचीनतम एवं प्रभावशाली परम्पराओं में से एक है। आचार्य भामह ने सर्वप्रथम व्यवस्थित रूप से अलंकार को काव्य की आत्मा के रूप में प्रतिष्ठित किया। उनके पश्चात् दण्डी, उद्भट, रुद्रट आदि आचार्यों ने अलंकार सिद्धान्त को विकसित किया। यद्यपि बाद के आचार्यों ने ध्वनि और रस को काव्य का प्रधान तत्त्व माना, लेकिन उन्होंने भी अलंकार की उपयोगिता को पूर्णतः अस्वीकार नहीं किया।

आधुनिक युग में पश्चिमी साहित्यिक सिद्धान्तों, भाषा-विज्ञान एवं नवीन आलोचनात्मक दृष्टियों के प्रभाव से काव्य के स्वरूप पर पुनर्विचार हुआ। इस प्रक्रिया में यह स्पष्ट हुआ कि अलंकार केवल पारम्परिक अर्थ में "आभूषण" नहीं है, अपितु वह भाषा की सृजनात्मक क्षमता को प्रकट करने वाला माध्यम है। प्रतीक, बिम्ब, मिथक, व्यंग्य और रूपक जैसी आधुनिक काव्य-अभिव्यक्तियाँ मूलतः अलंकारिक प्रक्रिया से सम्बद्ध हैं। इस संदर्भ में रेवाप्रसाद द्विवेदी एवं राधावल्लभ त्रिपाठी जैसे आधुनिक संस्कृत विद्वानों का योगदान विशेष रूप से महत्वपूर्ण है। इन्होंने संस्कृत काव्यशास्त्र को केवल ऐतिहासिक विषय न मानकर जीवन्त साहित्यिक चिन्तन के रूप में प्रस्तुत किया है। इनके अनुसार भारतीय काव्यशास्त्र की अवधारणाएँ

¹ विश्वनाथ, साहित्यदर्पण, सम्पादित संस्करण, वाराणसी: चौखम्बा संस्कृत संस्थान, भूमिका।



आज भी साहित्यिक मूल्यांकन में उपयोगी हैं। अतः वर्तमान शोध का उद्देश्य अलंकार सिद्धान्त को परम्परागत सीमाओं से मुक्त करके आधुनिक काव्यशास्त्रीय परिप्रेक्ष्य में पुनः स्थापित करना है।

काव्यात्मा की अवधारणा और भारतीय काव्यशास्त्र – भारतीय काव्यशास्त्र में "काव्यात्मा" की खोज एक दीर्घ बौद्धिक परम्परा का परिणाम है। विभिन्न आचार्यों ने अपने-अपने दृष्टिकोण से काव्य के मूल तत्त्व को समझाने का प्रयास किया। भरतमुनि ने नाट्यशास्त्र में रस को कला का परम प्रयोजन माना। उनके अनुसार– ‘विभावानुभावव्यभिचारिसंयोगाद्रसनिष्पत्तिः।’² रस सिद्धान्त ने भारतीय साहित्यिक चिन्तन को अत्यन्त प्रभावित किया। परन्तु अलंकारवादी आचार्यों ने यह प्रश्न उठाया कि काव्य की विशेषता केवल भावानुभूति नहीं, अपितु उसकी अभिव्यक्ति की विशिष्टता भी है। आचार्य भामह ने काव्य को अलंकार के आधार पर समझाया। उनके अनुसार अलंकार काव्य को सामान्य कथन से अलग करके सौन्दर्यपूर्ण बनाता है। उनका प्रसिद्ध कथन है कि ‘न कान्तमपि निर्भूषं विभाति वनितामुखम्।’³ अर्थात् जिस प्रकार आभूषण रहित स्त्री का मुख पूर्ण आकर्षक नहीं लगता, उसी प्रकार अलंकार रहित काव्य भी पूर्ण प्रभाव उत्पन्न नहीं करता। यहाँ भामह का आशय केवल बाहरी सजावट से नहीं है। उनके लिए अलंकार वह शक्ति है जो काव्य में चमत्कार और सौन्दर्य उत्पन्न करती है।

अलंकार केवल भूषण नहीं अपितु अभिव्यक्ति की शक्ति है। सामान्य रूप से अलंकार शब्द का अर्थ आभूषण लिया जाता है, किन्तु काव्यशास्त्रीय दृष्टि से इसका अर्थ अत्यन्त व्यापक है। अलंकार वह तत्त्व है जो शब्द और अर्थ में विशेष सौन्दर्य उत्पन्न करता है। आचार्य दण्डी ने *काव्यादर्श* में अलंकारों को काव्य की शोभा का कारण माना। उनके अनुसार काव्य में गुण और अलंकार दोनों मिलकर उसकी प्रभावशीलता को बढ़ाते हैं।⁴ आधुनिक दृष्टि से देखा जाए तो अलंकार कवि की कल्पनाशक्ति का परिणाम है। जब कवि किसी सामान्य वस्तु को नवीन दृष्टि से प्रस्तुत करता है, तब वहाँ अलंकार की सृष्टि होती है। उदाहरणार्थ ‘चन्द्रमिव मुखः’ यह केवल तुलना नहीं है, अपितु चन्द्रमा के माध्यम से मुख की सौन्दर्यात्मक अनुभूति को व्यक्त करने का प्रयास है। यहाँ उपमा अलंकार केवल सजावट नहीं, अपितु अनुभव को तीव्र करने का माध्यम है।

अलंकार सिद्धान्त की आधुनिक प्रासंगिकता - आधुनिक साहित्य में अलंकारों का स्वरूप परिवर्तित हुआ है। आधुनिक कवि परम्परागत अलंकारों का प्रयोग नवीन अर्थों में करता है। यथा – रूपक – प्रतीकात्मक अभिव्यक्ति, उपमा – नवीन बिम्ब निर्माण, उत्प्रेक्षा - कल्पना का विस्तार, विरोधाभास –

² नाट्यशास्त्रम्, 6.31

³ काव्यालंकार, 1.13

⁴ दण्डी, काव्यादर्श, प्रथम परिच्छेद



आधुनिक जीवन की जटिलताओं की अभिव्यक्ति। इस प्रकार आधुनिक कविता में भी अलंकार सक्रिय है, केवल उसका रूप परिवर्तित हुआ है। रेवाप्रसाद द्विवेदी जैसे विद्वानों ने इस तथ्य पर बल दिया है कि भारतीय काव्यशास्त्र को केवल प्राचीन ग्रन्थों की सीमा में नहीं बाँधा जा सकता। उसकी अवधारणाएँ आधुनिक साहित्यिक चिन्तन में भी उपयोगी हैं।⁵

भारतीय काव्यशास्त्र की विकास-परम्परा में अलंकार सिद्धान्त का स्थान अत्यन्त प्राचीन और महत्वपूर्ण है। काव्य की रमणीयता, प्रभावोत्पादकता तथा सौन्दर्य-वृद्धि के लिए अलंकारों का प्रयोग वैदिक साहित्य से ही दिखाई देता है। यद्यपि वेदों में "अलंकार" शब्द का व्यवस्थित काव्यशास्त्रीय प्रयोग नहीं मिलता, किन्तु उपमा, रूपक, अतिशयोक्ति आदि काव्यात्मक उपकरणों का प्रयोग व्यापक रूप से उपलब्ध है। ऋग्वेद के अनेक सूक्तों में प्राकृतिक शक्तियों का मानवीकरण, उपमा एवं रूपकात्मक अभिव्यक्ति दिखाई देती है। उदाहरणार्थ अग्नि को देवताओं और मनुष्यों के मध्य दूत के रूप में प्रस्तुत करना रूपकात्मक अभिव्यक्ति का उत्कृष्ट उदाहरण है। यथा - अग्नि के लिए रूपक प्रयोग -

अग्निमीळे पुरोहितं यज्ञस्य देवमृत्विजम्। होतारं रत्नधातमम् ॥⁶

यहाँ अग्नि को केवल भौतिक अग्नि नहीं माना गया है, वरन् उसे पुरोहित, ऋत्विज्, होता आदि के रूप में प्रस्तुत किया गया है। यहाँ अग्नि का मानवीकरण (Personification) तथा रूपकात्मक प्रयोग दिखाई देता है। अग्नि को यज्ञ के पुरोहित के रूप में कल्पित करना रूपक की आधारभूमि है। इसी प्रकार उषा (प्रभात) को मानवीकरण एवं रूपक देते हुए कहा गया है - उदु त्यं जातवेदसं देवं वहन्ति केतवः।⁷ उषा सूक्तों में प्रभात को एक सुन्दरी युवती के रूप में चित्रित किया गया है। उषा वस्त्र धारण करती है, आती है, संसार को जागृत करती है। यहाँ प्राकृतिक घटना का मानवीकरण हुआ है। उषा को नायिका के रूप में चित्रित करना संस्कृत काव्य में विकसित होने वाले रूपक एवं उत्प्रेक्षा की पूर्वभूमि है। इसी प्रकार सूर्य के लिए उपमा प्रयोग करते हुए कहा गया है - 'चित्रं देवानामुदगादनीकं चक्षुर्मित्रस्य वरुणस्याग्रेः।'⁸

यहाँ सूर्य को देवताओं के "नेत्र" के रूप में प्रस्तुत किया गया है। सूर्य = चक्षु (नेत्र) यह रूपकात्मक प्रयोग है, जिसमें सूर्य को विश्व-दृष्टि प्रदान करने वाले तत्व के रूप में देखा गया है। ऋग्वेद के अश्व सूक्त में अश्व का वर्णन केवल घोड़े के रूप में नहीं है, वरन् उसमें सूर्य एवं ब्रह्माण्डीय शक्ति का प्रतीकात्मक

⁵ रेवाप्रसाद द्विवेदी, संस्कृत काव्यशास्त्र की भूमिका, वाराणसी, संस्कृत विश्वविद्यालय प्रकाशन

⁶ ऋग्वेद 1.1.1

⁷ ऋग्वेद 1.48.2

⁸ ऋग्वेद 1.115.1



अर्थ भी निहित है।⁹ इस सूक्त में अश्व को तेज, गति और शक्ति का प्रतीक बनाया गया है। यह रूपकात्मक अभिव्यक्ति का श्रेष्ठ उदाहरण है। वृत्र-वध¹⁰ प्रसंग में इन्द्र को महान योद्धा, शक्ति और विजय के प्रतीक के रूप में चित्रित किया गया है। इन्द्र के लिए वृषभ (बल का प्रतीक), राजा, वीर जैसी उपमाओं का प्रयोग हुआ है। यहाँ उपमा और प्रतीकात्मक अभिव्यक्ति दोनों दिखाई देते हैं। ऋग्वेद में पृथ्वी और प्रकृति को माता के रूप में देखने की परम्परा वैदिक साहित्य में मिलती है।¹¹ यह रूपक आगे चलकर भारतीय साहित्य में अत्यन्त प्रभावशाली बना। धीरे-धीरे काव्य में प्रयुक्त इन सौन्दर्यात्मक उपकरणों का सैद्धान्तिक विवेचन प्रारम्भ हुआ और अलंकार सिद्धान्त का विकास हुआ। भारतीय काव्यशास्त्र में अलंकार सम्प्रदाय के प्रमुख आचार्यों में भामह, दण्डी, उद्भट, रुद्रट आदि का विशेष योगदान माना जाता है। इन आचार्यों ने अलंकार को काव्य की विशिष्टता का आधार माना और यह स्थापित किया कि काव्य केवल अर्थ-प्रकाशन नहीं है, अपितु विशिष्ट अभिव्यक्ति का माध्यम है।

भामह को अलंकार सम्प्रदाय का प्रथम व्यवस्थित आचार्य माना जाता है। उनकी प्रसिद्ध कृति "काव्यालंकार" भारतीय काव्यशास्त्र के इतिहास में अत्यन्त महत्वपूर्ण ग्रन्थ है। भामह ने काव्य की परिभाषा देते हुए कहा कि 'शब्दार्थौ सहितौ काव्यम्'।¹² अर्थात् शब्द और अर्थ का समन्वित रूप काव्य है। किन्तु केवल शब्द और अर्थ का संयोग ही पर्याप्त नहीं है; उसमें अलंकार के द्वारा उत्पन्न सौन्दर्य आवश्यक है। इसी कारण भामह ने अलंकार को काव्य की आत्मा के रूप में स्वीकार किया। उनका प्रसिद्ध उदाहरण "न कान्तमपि निर्भूषं विभाति वनितामुखम्।" यह स्पष्ट करता है कि अलंकार उनके लिए केवल बाहरी सजावट नहीं, अपितु काव्य के सौन्दर्य का मूल आधार है। भामह के यहाँ अलंकार का सम्बन्ध मुख्यतः काव्य-चमत्कार से है। वे मानते हैं कि साधारण कथन और काव्यात्मक कथन में अन्तर अलंकार के कारण उत्पन्न होता है। सामान्य रूप में कहा जाए तो सूर्य अस्त हो गया। इसी वाक्य को काव्यात्मक शैली में कहा जाए तो दिनकर पश्चिम दिशा की गोद में विश्राम करने चले गए। इस द्वितीय कथन में रूपकात्मकता और मानवीकरण के कारण सौन्दर्य उत्पन्न होता है।

आचार्य दण्डी की कृति "काव्यादर्श" अलंकार सिद्धान्त के विकास में दूसरा महत्वपूर्ण चरण है। दण्डी ने अलंकारों के साथ-साथ गुणों और दोषों का भी विवेचन किया। उनके अनुसार काव्य की शोभा अनेक तत्वों के समन्वय से उत्पन्न होती है। दण्डी ने कहा कि 'काव्यशोभाकरान् धर्मान् अलंकारान्

⁹ ऋग्वेद 1.163

¹⁰ ऋग्वेद 1.32

¹¹ ऋग्वेद 1.164.33

¹² काव्यालंकार, 1.16



प्रचक्षते।'¹³ अर्थात् काव्य की शोभा उत्पन्न करने वाले धर्मों को अलंकार कहा जाता है। दण्डी की विशेषता यह है कि उन्होंने अलंकार को व्यापक रूप प्रदान किया। उनके यहाँ अलंकार केवल शब्द-सौन्दर्य नहीं अपितु सम्पूर्ण काव्य-सौन्दर्य का साधन है। दण्डी ने स्वाभाविक सौन्दर्य और अलंकारिक सौन्दर्य दोनों को महत्व दिया। इस प्रकार उन्होंने अलंकार सिद्धान्त को अधिक विकसित रूप प्रदान किया।

इसी क्रम में उद्भट ने अलंकार सिद्धान्त को और अधिक विस्तार प्रदान किया। उन्होंने अलंकारों की संख्या बढ़ाई तथा उनके सूक्ष्म भेदों का विवेचन किया। उद्भट की दृष्टि में अलंकार काव्य में चमत्कार उत्पन्न करने वाला तत्व है। उनके विचारों में शब्दालंकार और अर्थालंकार दोनों का महत्व है। रुद्रट की कृति "काव्यालंकार" अलंकार परम्परा का महत्वपूर्ण ग्रन्थ है। रुद्रट ने अलंकारों का वैज्ञानिक वर्गीकरण प्रस्तुत किया। उन्होंने अलंकारों को केवल संख्या की दृष्टि से नहीं देखा, अपितु उनके प्रयोग और प्रभाव को भी महत्व दिया। रुद्रट के यहाँ अलंकार काव्य की रचनात्मक शक्ति है। 'अलंकारास्तु काव्यानां येषां शोभा प्रकाशते'¹⁴ के माध्यम से आचार्य रुद्रट ने अलंकार को काव्य की शोभा एवं चमत्कार का कारण स्वीकार किया। उनके अनुसार अलंकार काव्य की अभिव्यक्ति को विशिष्ट बनाकर उसमें सौन्दर्य और प्रभाव उत्पन्न करता है। उन्होंने शब्द एवं अर्थ के आधार पर अलंकारों का वैज्ञानिक वर्गीकरण प्रस्तुत किया।"

आचार्य आनन्दवर्धन द्वारा प्रतिपादित ध्वनि सिद्धान्त ने भारतीय काव्यशास्त्र में एक नया मोड़ उत्पन्न किया। उनकी प्रसिद्ध कृति "ध्वन्यालोक" की प्रथम कारिका में ही कहा गया कि - काव्यस्यात्मा ध्वनिरिति बुधैः यः समाम्नात पूर्वः¹⁵ अर्थात् ध्वनि काव्य की आत्मा है, जिसे पूर्व में ही विद्वानों ने कहा है। ध्वनि सिद्धान्त के प्रभाव से अलंकार का स्थान कुछ सीमित हुआ। अब यह माना जाने लगा कि केवल अलंकार से श्रेष्ठ काव्य की रचना नहीं हो सकती, उसमें गहन भाव और व्यंजना आवश्यक है। किन्तु यह ध्यान देने योग्य है कि आनन्दवर्धन ने भी अलंकारों को अस्वीकार नहीं किया। उन्होंने ध्वनि के अन्तर्गत अलंकारों की भूमिका स्वीकार की। अर्थात् अलंकार काव्य की आत्मा न सही, लेकिन उसकी अभिव्यक्ति का महत्वपूर्ण माध्यम अवश्य है।

अभिनवगुप्त ने रस सिद्धान्त को सर्वोच्च स्थान दिया। उनके अनुसार काव्य का परम उद्देश्य रसास्वादन है। किन्तु रस की अनुभूति भी भाषा और अभिव्यक्ति के माध्यम से ही सम्भव होती है। इस

¹³ काव्यादर्श, 2.1

¹⁴ काव्यालङ्कार, प्रथम परिच्छेद

¹⁵ ध्वन्यालोक 1.1



प्रक्रिया में अलंकार सहायक भूमिका निभाता है। इस प्रकार भारतीय काव्यशास्त्र में अलंकार कभी पूर्णतः अप्रासंगिक नहीं हुआ।

आचार्य मम्मट की कृति "काव्यप्रकाश" भारतीय काव्यशास्त्र का अत्यन्त प्रभावशाली ग्रन्थ है। मम्मट ने विभिन्न सिद्धान्तों का समन्वय प्रस्तुत किया। उनके अनुसार दोषरहित शब्द और अर्थ, गुणों से युक्त, अलंकारों से सुशोभित काव्य की श्रेष्ठता के आधार हैं।¹⁶ उन्होंने अलंकार को काव्य का अनिवार्य बाहरी तत्व नहीं माना, परन्तु उसकी उपयोगिता को स्वीकार किया।

आधुनिक आलोचना में अलंकार को नए दृष्टिकोण से देखा गया है। आधुनिक भाषाविज्ञान और साहित्य सिद्धान्तों ने यह स्पष्ट किया कि भाषा स्वयं रचनात्मक प्रक्रिया है। आधुनिक आलोचक मानते हैं कि प्रतीक अलंकार का विकसित रूप है। बिम्ब अलंकारिक चेतना का परिणाम है। रूपक आधुनिक साहित्य की मूल संरचना है। इस दृष्टि से अलंकार पुनः महत्वपूर्ण हो जाता है। रेवाप्रसाद द्विवेदी ने संस्कृत काव्यशास्त्र को आधुनिक परिप्रेक्ष्य में समझने का महत्वपूर्ण प्रयास किया। उनकी दृष्टि में काव्यशास्त्र केवल प्राचीन नियमों का संग्रह नहीं है, अपितु साहित्य को समझने की एक वैज्ञानिक पद्धति है। वे अलंकार को काव्य की अभिव्यक्ति-शक्ति से जोड़ते हैं। उनके अनुसार अलंकार भाषा में नवीनता उत्पन्न करता है। अर्थ की गहराई बढ़ाता है। कवि की कल्पना को मूर्त रूप देता है। इस प्रकार अलंकार केवल "भूषण" नहीं अपितु काव्य-सृजन की प्रक्रिया का अभिन्न अंग है। रेवाप्रसाद द्विवेदी ने संस्कृत काव्यशास्त्र को केवल ऐतिहासिक सिद्धान्तों का संग्रह न मानकर साहित्यिक अभिव्यक्ति के वैज्ञानिक अध्ययन की परम्परा के रूप में देखा है। उनके काव्यशास्त्रीय चिन्तन में अलंकार भाषा की सृजनात्मक शक्ति, अर्थ-विस्तार एवं काव्य-सौन्दर्य का प्रमुख साधन है।¹⁷

राधावल्लभ त्रिपाठी ने संस्कृत साहित्य और काव्यशास्त्र को आधुनिक आलोचनात्मक दृष्टि प्रदान की है। उनकी दृष्टि में संस्कृत काव्यशास्त्र एक जीवन्त परम्परा है, जो वर्तमान साहित्यिक विमर्श में भी उपयोगी है। वे मानते हैं कि भारतीय काव्यशास्त्र के सिद्धान्तों को केवल ऐतिहासिक दृष्टि से नहीं अपितु आधुनिक साहित्य की व्याख्या के साधन के रूप में भी देखा जाना चाहिए। अलंकार के संदर्भ में उनकी दृष्टि यह स्पष्ट करती है कि अलंकार काव्य की अर्थ-निर्माण प्रक्रिया में सक्रिय भूमिका निभाता है।¹⁸

¹⁶ तददोषौ शब्दार्थौ सगुणावनलङ्कृती पुनः क्वापि। काव्यप्रकाश, प्रथम उल्लास

¹⁷ रेवाप्रसाद द्विवेदी, संस्कृत काव्यशास्त्र का आलोचनात्मक इतिहास, वाराणसी : कालिदास संस्थान, 2018, अलंकार-सम्प्रदाय सम्बन्धी विवेचन।

¹⁸ राधावल्लभ त्रिपाठी, संस्कृत काव्यशास्त्र और काव्य परम्परा, नई दिल्ली



आधुनिक संस्कृत साहित्य एवं काव्यशास्त्र के क्षेत्र में आचार्य रेवाप्रसाद द्विवेदी का स्थान अत्यन्त महत्वपूर्ण है। उन्होंने संस्कृत काव्यशास्त्र को केवल प्राचीन ग्रन्थों एवं सिद्धान्तों का विषय न मानकर उसे आधुनिक साहित्यिक चिन्तन से जोड़ा। उनके अनुसार भारतीय काव्यशास्त्रीय परम्परा एक जीवित परम्परा है, जिसमें समय के अनुसार नवीन व्याख्याओं की सम्भावना विद्यमान है। संस्कृत काव्यशास्त्र की परम्परा में अलंकार को लेकर जो मतभेद दिखाई देते हैं, उनका समाधान द्विवेदी जी समन्वयात्मक दृष्टि से करते हैं। उनके अनुसार अलंकार को केवल "काव्य का आभूषण" मानना उसके वास्तविक स्वरूप को सीमित कर देना है। अलंकार वस्तुतः कवि की रचनात्मक चेतना का वह माध्यम है जिसके द्वारा सामान्य अनुभव सौन्दर्यात्मक अनुभूति में परिवर्तित हो जाता है।¹⁹ द्विवेदी जी की दृष्टि में काव्य की सार्थकता केवल विषय-वस्तु में नहीं होती, अपितु उसकी अभिव्यक्ति-पद्धति में भी होती है। यही अभिव्यक्ति-पद्धति अलंकारों के माध्यम से प्रभावशाली बनती है।

भारतीय काव्यशास्त्र में अलंकार की सामान्य परिभाषा काव्य की शोभा बढ़ाने वाले तत्व के रूप में की जाती है। किन्तु आधुनिक दृष्टि से यह प्रश्न महत्वपूर्ण है कि अलंकार केवल शोभा-वर्धक है अथवा अर्थ-सृजन का भी माध्यम है। रेवाप्रसाद द्विवेदी के अनुसार अलंकार अभिव्यक्ति की विशिष्टता है। कवि जब किसी अनुभूति को सामान्य भाषा से अलग विशेष ढंग से व्यक्त करता है, तब अलंकार की सृष्टि होती है। इसलिए अलंकार भाषा की रचनात्मक शक्ति का प्रतीक है। अलंकार कल्पना का सौन्दर्यात्मक रूप है। काव्य में कल्पना का अत्यन्त महत्व है। कवि अपनी कल्पना द्वारा सामान्य वस्तुओं में असाधारण सौन्दर्य देखता है। कालिदास के मेघदूत में मेघ को दूत के रूप में प्रस्तुत करना इसका श्रेष्ठ उदाहरण है। मेघ केवल जल से भरा बादल नहीं रह जाता, अपितु वह विरही यक्ष का संदेशवाहक बन जाता है।²⁰ यहाँ रूपकात्मक कल्पना के माध्यम से निर्जीव वस्तु में जीवन का संचार किया गया है। अलंकार केवल शब्दों की सजावट नहीं करता, अपितु अर्थ को गहन बनाता है। अर्थात् अलंकार अर्थ-गाम्भीर्य का साधन है। जैसे कहा जाए कि जीवन एक यात्रा है। यह रूपक केवल कथन नहीं है, अपितु जीवन के सम्पूर्ण दर्शन को एक छोटे वाक्य में व्यक्त कर देता है। अतः रूपक जैसे अलंकार आधुनिक दार्शनिक एवं साहित्यिक अभिव्यक्ति के प्रमुख साधन हैं।

भारतीय काव्यशास्त्र में सौन्दर्य की अवधारणा अत्यन्त व्यापक है। काव्य-सौन्दर्य केवल बाहरी आकर्षण नहीं, अपितु भाव, विचार और अभिव्यक्ति के समन्वय से उत्पन्न होता है। रेवाप्रसाद द्विवेदी की

¹⁹ रेवाप्रसाद द्विवेदी, संस्कृत काव्यशास्त्र की भूमिका, वाराणसी : सम्पूर्णानन्द संस्कृत विश्वविद्यालय प्रकाशन

²⁰ मेघदूत



दृष्टि में अलंकार इसी सौन्दर्यात्मक प्रक्रिया का महत्वपूर्ण अंग है। काव्य में सौन्दर्य तीन स्तरों पर दिखाई देता है –

1. **शब्द-सौन्दर्य** – जब ध्वनि, लय और शब्द-विन्यास से सौन्दर्य उत्पन्न होता है, वहाँ शब्दालंकारों की भूमिका होती है। जैसे – अनुप्रास, यमक, श्लेष
2. **अर्थ-सौन्दर्य** – जब नवीन अर्थ, कल्पना और भाव-गहनता उत्पन्न होती है, वहाँ अर्थालंकारों का महत्व होता है। जैसे – उपमा, रूपक, उत्प्रेक्षा, अतिशयोक्ति आदि।
3. **भाव-सौन्दर्य** – जब अलंकार भावों को अधिक प्रभावशाली बना देता है, तब वह काव्यानुभूति का माध्यम बन जाता है।

इस दृष्टि से अलंकार काव्य के बाह्य एवं आन्तरिक दोनों सौन्दर्य को प्रभावित करता है। भारतीय काव्यशास्त्र में एक महत्वपूर्ण प्रश्न यह रहा है कि काव्य की आत्मा अलंकार है अथवा ध्वनि। आनन्दवर्धन ने ध्वनि को काव्य की आत्मा माना किन्तु आधुनिक दृष्टि से दोनों सिद्धान्तों में विरोध स्थापित करना उचित नहीं है। रेवाप्रसाद द्विवेदी की दृष्टि में ध्वनि और अलंकार परस्पर विरोधी नहीं हैं। अनेक बार अलंकार ही ध्वनि को प्रभावी बनाता है। जैसे किसी कविता में प्रयुक्त रूपक केवल सौन्दर्य नहीं उत्पन्न करता, अपितु गहन व्यंजना को भी व्यक्त करता है। इस प्रकार अलंकार ध्वनि का साधन बन सकता है।

आधुनिक साहित्यिक सिद्धान्तों में भाषा को केवल सूचना देने का माध्यम नहीं माना जाता, अपितु उसे सृजनात्मक शक्ति के रूप में देखा जाता है। आधुनिक आलोचना के अनुसार भाषा का विचलन (**deviation**), प्रतीकात्मकता, बिम्ब निर्माण, बहुअर्थता आदि काव्य की प्रमुख विशेषताएँ हैं। ये सभी प्रक्रियाएँ मूलतः अलंकारिक चेतना से जुड़ी हुई हैं। इसलिए आधुनिक साहित्य में भी अलंकार की उपस्थिति स्पष्ट दिखाई देती है। रेवाप्रसाद द्विवेदी के विचारों के आधार पर अलंकार की पुनर्प्रतिष्ठा को निम्न रूप में समझा जा सकता है अलंकार काव्य की रचनात्मक शक्ति है। कवि जब नवीन दृष्टि से संसार को देखता है, तब अलंकार उत्पन्न होता है। अलंकार अर्थ-निर्माण करता है। यह केवल सजावट नहीं अपितु अर्थ को नवीन आयाम देता है। अलंकार परम्परा और आधुनिकता का सेतु है। प्राचीन संस्कृत काव्य से लेकर आधुनिक कविता तक अलंकार अपनी उपयोगिता बनाए हुए है। अलंकार कवि-प्रतिभा का प्रमाण है। श्रेष्ठ अलंकार वही है जो कृत्रिम न होकर सहज रूप से काव्य में उपस्थित हो। रेवाप्रसाद द्विवेदी का सबसे बड़ा योगदान यह है कि उन्होंने संस्कृत काव्यशास्त्र को संग्रहालय की वस्तु बनने से बचाया। उन्होंने यह सिद्ध किया कि भारतीय काव्यशास्त्रीय सिद्धान्त आज भी प्रासंगिक हैं। अलंकार आधुनिक साहित्य को समझने का प्रभावी उपकरण है। काव्य की आत्मा केवल किसी एक सिद्धान्त में सीमित नहीं की जा सकती। इस दृष्टि से उनका चिन्तन समन्वयवादी एवं आधुनिक है।



आधुनिक संस्कृत साहित्य एवं काव्यशास्त्रीय चिन्तन के क्षेत्र में आचार्य राधावल्लभ त्रिपाठी का नाम अत्यन्त सम्मान के साथ लिया जाता है। उन्होंने संस्कृत साहित्य, नाट्यशास्त्र, काव्यशास्त्र तथा भारतीय साहित्यिक परम्परा के अध्ययन को आधुनिक आलोचनात्मक दृष्टि प्रदान की है। उनका साहित्यिक चिन्तन परम्परा और आधुनिकता के मध्य एक सृजनात्मक संवाद स्थापित करता है। राधावल्लभ त्रिपाठी के अनुसार संस्कृत काव्यशास्त्र केवल प्राचीन आचार्यों द्वारा निर्मित नियमों का संग्रह नहीं है, अपितु वह भारतीय साहित्यिक चेतना का सैद्धान्तिक स्वरूप है। इसमें काव्य की अनुभूति, भाषा की शक्ति, सौन्दर्य-बोध और सृजनात्मक प्रक्रिया का विश्लेषण किया गया है।²¹ उनकी दृष्टि में भारतीय काव्यशास्त्र की विशेषता यह है कि उसने काव्य को केवल मनोरंजन का साधन नहीं माना, अपितु उसे मानव-अनुभूति के सूक्ष्मतम स्तरों की अभिव्यक्ति का माध्यम स्वीकार किया।

राधावल्लभ त्रिपाठी के साहित्यिक चिन्तन में काव्य और काव्यशास्त्र के मध्य गहरा सम्बन्ध दिखाई देता है। उनके अनुसार काव्यशास्त्र केवल काव्य के बाहरी स्वरूप का विश्लेषण नहीं करता, अपितु वह काव्य की आन्तरिक संरचना एवं सौन्दर्यात्मक प्रक्रिया को समझने का प्रयास करता है। काव्य की रचना में तीन प्रमुख तत्वों की भूमिका होती है –

1. कवि की प्रतिभा
2. भाषा की अभिव्यक्ति-शक्ति
3. सौन्दर्यात्मक अनुभूति

अलंकार इन तीनों को जोड़ने वाला माध्यम है। कवि की कल्पना जब भाषा के माध्यम से विशेष रूप ग्रहण करती है, तब अलंकार का जन्म होता है। इसलिए अलंकार केवल शब्दों की सजावट नहीं है, अपितु वह कवि की सृजनात्मक चेतना का परिणाम है। परम्परागत काव्यशास्त्र में अलंकार को मुख्यतः काव्य की शोभा बढ़ाने वाला तत्व माना गया। किन्तु आधुनिक अध्ययन में इसका क्षेत्र अधिक व्यापक हो गया है। उन्होंने अलंकार को ही काव्यजीवन माना है।²² यद्यपि आलंकारिकों के चिन्तन में भी अलंकार की व्यापक अवधारणा थी किन्तु उसके भूषण और वारण अर्थ से ही वे परिचित थे। अलंकार को पर्याप्ति

²¹ राधावल्लभ त्रिपाठी, संस्कृत काव्यशास्त्र और काव्य परम्परा, नई दिल्ली

²² अलङ्कारः काव्यजीवनम्। 2.1.1. अभिनवकाव्यालंकारसूत्र



अर्थ तक ले जाने वाले प्रथम आचार्य त्रिपाठी ही हैं। दण्डी²³ एवं धनञ्जय²⁴ ने भी अलंकार में नूतन सौन्दर्य देखने का प्रयास किया था।

राधावल्लभ त्रिपाठी की दृष्टि में संस्कृत काव्यशास्त्र की विभिन्न धाराएँ एक-दूसरे की विरोधी नहीं हैं, अपितु वे काव्य के अलग-अलग पक्षों को स्पष्ट करती हैं। इस दृष्टि से अलंकार अभिव्यक्ति का सौन्दर्य, रीति शैली का वैशिष्ट्य, ध्वनि व्यंजना की शक्ति, रस अनुभूति की चरम अवस्था तथा वक्रोक्ति → कथन की विशिष्टता ये सभी काव्य के विभिन्न आयाम हैं। अतः अलंकार को ध्वनि या रस के विरोध में नहीं देखा जाना चाहिए।

राधावल्लभ त्रिपाठी के साहित्यिक चिन्तन के आधार पर अलंकार की पुनर्प्रतिष्ठा की गयी है। उनके अनुसार अलंकार काव्य की जीवंत प्रक्रिया है। अलंकार किसी निश्चित समय की वस्तु नहीं है। यह प्रत्येक युग के साहित्य में नवीन रूपों में उपस्थित रहता है। अलंकार भाषा को रचनात्मक बनाता है। साहित्यिक भाषा सामान्य भाषा से इसलिए भिन्न होती है क्योंकि उसमें अर्थ की नवीन सम्भावनाएँ उत्पन्न होती हैं। अलंकार पाठक की अनुभूति को प्रभावित करता है। काव्य का उद्देश्य केवल सूचना देना नहीं, अपितु अनुभूति उत्पन्न करना है। अलंकार इस अनुभूति को तीव्र करता है। अलंकार परम्परा और आधुनिकता के बीच सेतु है।

आधुनिक साहित्यिक चिन्तन में यह धारणा विकसित हुई कि अलंकार केवल संस्कृत काव्यशास्त्र की पारम्परिक अवधारणा है और आधुनिक साहित्य में उसकी उपयोगिता सीमित है। किन्तु गम्भीर साहित्यिक विश्लेषण से यह स्पष्ट होता है कि आधुनिक कविता, कथा और नाटक में भी अलंकार अपनी परिवर्तित संरचना के साथ विद्यमान है। आधुनिक युग में साहित्य की भाषा सामान्य संप्रेषण की भाषा से भिन्न होती है। कवि जब किसी अनुभूति को नवीन रूप में प्रस्तुत करता है, तब भाषा में विशिष्टता उत्पन्न होती है। यही विशिष्टता अलंकार की मूल भूमि है। इस दृष्टि से अलंकार आधुनिक साहित्य में निम्न रूपों में दिखाई देता है –

1. प्रतीकात्मकता
2. बिम्ब विधान

²³ यच्च सन्ध्यङ्गवृत्त्यङ्गलक्षणाद्यागमान्तरे।
व्यावर्णितमिदं चेष्टमलङ्कारतयैव नः॥ काव्यादर्श, 2.367

²⁴ षट्त्रिंशद् भूषणादि सामदीन्येकविंशतिः।
लक्षणसन्ध्यन्तराङ्गानि सालङ्कारेषु तेषु च॥ दशरूपक 4.84



3. रूपकात्मक अभिव्यक्ति
4. व्यंग्यार्थ
5. विरोधाभासी अभिव्यक्ति

अतः आधुनिक साहित्य में अलंकार समाप्त नहीं हुआ है, अपितु उसने नवीन रूप ग्रहण किया है। आधुनिक संस्कृत काव्यशास्त्र के क्षेत्र में रेवाप्रसाद द्विवेदी एवं राधावल्लभ त्रिपाठी दोनों ने भारतीय काव्यशास्त्र को नवीन दृष्टि प्रदान की है। रेवाप्रसाद द्विवेदी अलंकार को काव्यशास्त्र को जीवित परम्परा मानते हैं। अलंकार को अभिव्यक्ति की शक्ति के रूप में देखते हैं। परम्परागत सिद्धान्तों की आधुनिक उपयोगिता पर बल देते हैं। अलंकार को केवल बाह्य सजावट नहीं मानते। राधावल्लभ संस्कृत काव्यशास्त्र को व्यापक साहित्यिक परम्परा के रूप में देखते हैं। अलंकार को भाषा और अर्थ के सौन्दर्य से जोड़ते हैं। भारतीय काव्यशास्त्र के समन्वयवादी स्वरूप को महत्व देते हैं। आधुनिक साहित्यिक आलोचना में इसकी उपयोगिता स्वीकार करते हैं।

इस प्रकार दोनों विद्वानों की दृष्टि में अलंकार काव्य की रचनात्मक प्रक्रिया का महत्वपूर्ण अंग है। भारतीय काव्यशास्त्र की परम्परा में अलंकार सिद्धान्त का स्थान अत्यन्त महत्वपूर्ण रहा है। यद्यपि समय-समय पर ध्वनि, रस और अन्य सिद्धान्तों के प्रभाव से अलंकार की प्रधानता पर प्रश्न उठे, तथापि उसकी उपयोगिता कभी समाप्त नहीं हुई। आचार्य भामह ने जिस अलंकार को काव्य की आत्मा के रूप में प्रतिष्ठित किया था, उसका आधुनिक पुनर्पाठ यह स्पष्ट करता है कि अलंकार केवल बाहरी सजावट नहीं है। वह कवि की कल्पना, भाषा की रचनात्मकता और अर्थ की गहनता का माध्यम है। रेवाप्रसाद द्विवेदी और राधावल्लभ त्रिपाठी जैसे आधुनिक विद्वानों ने यह सिद्ध किया कि भारतीय काव्यशास्त्रीय सिद्धान्त आज भी साहित्यिक अध्ययन के लिए प्रासंगिक हैं। इनके विचारों के आधार पर कहा जा सकता है कि आधुनिक काव्यशास्त्र में अलंकार पुनः काव्य की रचनात्मक आत्मा के रूप में प्रतिष्ठित होने की क्षमता रखता है। निष्कर्षतः कहा जा सकता है कि अलंकार काव्य का केवल भूषण नहीं, अपितु उसकी अभिव्यक्ति-शक्ति, सौन्दर्य-चेतना और अर्थ-विस्तार का मूल आधार है। वर्तमान समय में रेवा प्रसाद द्विवेदी एवं राधावल्लभ त्रिपाठी जैसे काव्यशास्त्रियों द्वारा पुनः अलंकार को काव्यात्मा के रूप में स्थापित करने का श्लाघनीय प्रयास किया गया है।

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महाभारत में वर्णित पृथ्वी-कम्पन : प्राचीन भारतीय दृष्टि और आधुनिक विज्ञान के आलोक में

मयङ्क मणि त्रिपाठी

शोधच्छात्र

संस्कृत पालि, प्राकृत एवं प्राच्य भाषा विभाग

इलाहाबाद विश्वविद्यालय प्रयागराज

सारांश –

महाभारत भारतीय ज्ञान- परम्परा का एक विश्वकोषीय ग्रन्थ माना जाता है, जिसमें मानव जीवन के विविध आयामों के साथ-साथ प्राकृतिक घटनाओं का भी अत्यन्त सूक्ष्म एवं यथार्थ चित्रण उपलब्ध होता है । भूकम्प (पृथ्वी का कम्प) से सम्बन्धित वर्णन महाभारत के विभिन्न पर्वों में परिलक्षित होता है । इस ग्रन्थ में पृथिवी का कम्पित होना, पर्वतों का विचलन होना, दिशाओं का विक्षुब्ध होना, उल्कापात, मेघगर्जन तथा अन्य प्राकृतिक घटनाओं का समवेत उल्लेख प्राप्त होता है । विभिन्न स्थानों पर इन्हें अपशकुन अथवा दैवी सङ्केत माना गया है, किन्तु आधुनिक वैज्ञानिक दृष्टि से इनका पुनर्पाठ प्राचीन भारतीय पर्यावरणीय चेतना, आपदा को उद्घाटित कर सकता है । इसी सन्दर्भ में महाभारत में वर्णित पृथ्वी के कम्पन सम्बन्धी प्रसङ्गों का क्रमबद्ध वर्णन करना नितान्त आवश्यक है । प्रस्तुत शोधपत्र का उद्देश्य महाभारत में वर्णित पृथ्वी के कम्पन से सम्बन्धित प्रसङ्गों का वर्णन विविध आधारों पर विश्लेषित किया जाएगा, जिसमें उसकी तुलना आधुनिक भूकम्प- विज्ञान, भारतीय भूगर्भीय अवधारणाओं तथा प्राचीन भारतीय ज्योतिष ग्रन्थों जैसे- बृहत्संहिता एवं अद्भुतसागर में प्रतिपादित भूकम्प सम्बन्धी सिद्धान्तों से तो किया ही जाएगा, साथ ही यह भी स्पष्ट किया जाएगा कि महाभारत के प्राकृतिक वर्णनों का वैज्ञानिक आधार किस सीमा तक परस्पर सम्बद्ध है । इस प्रकार महाभारत में वर्णित कम्पनों का भारतीय ज्ञान- परम्परा और आधुनिक भूकम्प- विज्ञान के मध्य अन्तः विषयी संवाद स्थापित करते हुए महाभारत में निहित भू-वैज्ञानिक सङ्केतों के पुनर्मूल्याङ्कन की दिशा में एक महत्वपूर्ण योगदान प्रदान करेगा ।



कूट शब्द –

महाभारत, पृथ्वी-कम्पन, भूकम्प, भू-विज्ञान, वैज्ञानिक दृष्टिकोण ।

भूमिका-

भारतीय ज्ञान- परम्परा में महाभारत का स्थान न केवल एक महाकाव्य अथवा ऐतिहासिक काव्य के रूप में वर्णित है, अपितु धर्म, दर्शन, राजनीति, ज्योतिष, पर्यावरण तथा प्राकृतिक घटनाओं के ज्ञान- कोष के रूप में स्वीकार किया गया है । महर्षि वेदव्यास जी द्वारा विरचित यह ग्रन्थ तत्कालीन भारतीय समाज के सांस्कृतिक, नैतिक एवं बौद्धिक जीवन का एक विस्तृत दर्पण है, महाभारत में ऐसे अनेकों वर्णन प्राप्त होते हैं जिनमें प्रकृति के असामान्य परिवर्तनों जैसे पृथ्वी का कम्पन, पर्वतों का हिलना, उल्कापात, आकाशीय गर्जना, प्रचण्ड वायु, धूल व आंधी इत्यादि का उल्लेख प्राप्त होता है, इन घटनाओं का वर्णन प्रायः महत्वपूर्ण ऐतिहासिक अथवा सामाजिक परिवर्तनों के पूर्व सङ्केत के रूप में किया गया है ।

विभिन्न प्रकार के प्राकृतिक घटनाओं को दैवी- उत्पात, अपशकुन इत्यादि के सूचक के रूप में माना जाता है । किन्तु आधुनिक वैज्ञानिक दृष्टिकोण के अनुसार ऐसे वर्णनों का पुनर्पाठ उनके प्राकृतिक एवं भौतिक सन्दर्भों में भी किया जाए । विशेषतः पृथ्वी के कम्पन सम्बन्धी वर्णनों का अध्ययन करने में । जिसके माध्यम से यह समझने में सहायक हो सकता है कि प्राचीन भारतीय मनीषियों ने प्रकृति के असामान्य व्यवहार का किस प्रकार अवलोकन किया और उसे किस भाषा तथा प्रतीक चिन्हों में अभिव्यक्त किया । यद्यपि महाभारत का उद्देश्य भूकम्प- विज्ञान का प्रतिपादन करना नहीं है, फिर भी उसमें निहित वर्णन प्राकृतिक घटनाओं के ऐतिहासिक एवं सांस्कृतिक साक्ष्य के रूप में महत्वपूर्ण हैं ।

क्योंकि यह शोधपत्र विश्लेषणात्मक, व्याख्यात्मक तथा तुलनात्मक अनुसन्धान पद्धति पर आधारित है । इसका उद्देश्य महाभारत में वर्णित पृथ्वी कम्पन से सम्बन्धी प्रसङ्गों की वैज्ञानिक व्याख्या प्रस्तुत करना ही नहीं अपितु यह स्पष्ट करना है कि इन वर्णनों में निहित प्राकृतिक अवलोकन आधुनिक विज्ञान के साथ किस सीमा तक संवाद स्थापित कर सकते हैं । इस प्रकार यह विषय भारतीय ज्ञान- परम्परा और भूविज्ञान के मध्य सेतु स्थापित करने का प्रयास करेगा तथा संस्कृत वाङ्मय में निहित प्राकृतिक विज्ञान सम्बन्धी अवधारणाओं के पुनर्मूल्याङ्कन की दिशा में एक महत्वपूर्ण योगदान प्रदान करेगा । भूकम्प से सम्बन्धित वर्णन वृहत्संहिता एवं अद्भुतसागर में प्राप्त होते हैं –

क्षितिकम्पमाहरेके बृहदन्तर्जलनिवासिसत्त्वकृतम् ।



Abhinavdhara

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भूभारखिन्नदिग्गजविश्रामसमुद्भवं चान्ये ।।¹

कोई ऋषि कहते हैं कि जल में निवास करने वाले महान् प्राणियों के बल प्रयोग से भूकम्प होता है । किसी अन्य का मत है कि भूभार से थककर दिग्गजों के विश्राम करने के कारण भूकम्प होता है ।

चलयति पवनः शतद्वयं शतमनलो दशयोजनान्वितम् ।

सलिलपतिरशीतिसंयुतं कुलिशधरोऽभ्यधिकं च षष्टितः ।²

वायुमण्डल में भूकम्प होने से 200 योजन अग्नि मण्डल में भूकम्प होने से 10 योजन वारुण मण्डल में भूकम्प होने से 180 योजन तथा इन्द्र मण्डल में भूकम्प होने से 60 से अधिक योजन पर्यन्त पृथिवी कम्पित होती है ।

अर्णवस्योपरि पृथिवी सशैलवनकानना ।

स्थिता तन्मध्यसत्त्वाश्च संक्षोभाच्चालयन्ति ताम् ।।³

समुद्र के ऊपर पर्वत- वन- कानन आदि से युक्त यह पृथ्वी स्थित है तथा समुद्र के भीतर बड़े-बड़े प्राणी विद्यमान हैं । जिनके उथल-पुथल द्वारा प्रायः भूकम्प होता है ।

महाभारत में वर्णित भूमि-कम्पन सम्बन्धी तथ्यों का अध्ययन साहित्यिक, सांस्कृतिक तथा वैज्ञानिक—तीनों दृष्टियों से अत्यन्त महत्त्वपूर्ण है । अतः उसका विस्तृत वर्णन करना नितान्त आवश्यक है । महाभारत के विभिन्न पर्वों में प्राप्त पृथ्वी के कम्पन का वर्णन निम्नलिखित है –

तत् कबन्धं पपातास्य विस्फुरद् धरणीतले ।

सपर्वतवनद्वीपां दैत्यस्याकम्पयन् महीम् ।।⁴

चक्र से कटा हुआ दानव का महान् मस्तक पर्वत के शिखर सा प्रतीत होता था, वह आकाश में उछल-उछलकर अत्यन्त भयङ्कर गर्जना करने लगा । किन्तु उस दैत्य का वह धड़ पृथिवी पर गिर पड़ा और पर्वत, वन तथा द्वीपों सहित समूची पृथ्वी को कम्पायमान करता हुआ तड़फडाने लगा ।

¹ बृहत्संहिता 32/1

² बृहत्संहिता 32 / 31

³ अद्भुतसागर भूमिकम्पाद्भुतावर्त

⁴ महाभारत आदिपर्व 19/8



आधुनिक भूकम्प-विज्ञान के अनुसार यहाँ प्रयुक्त "अकम्पयन् महीम्" पद इस बात का द्योतक है कि अत्यधिक ऊर्जा के आकस्मिक मुक्त होने के कारण पृथ्वी की सतह पर व्यापक कम्पन उत्पन्न हो सकता है। यद्यपि यह वर्णन पौराणिक आख्यान के रूप में प्रस्तुत किया गया है, तथापि इसके पीछे निहित प्राकृतिक सिद्धान्त आधुनिक भूकम्प विज्ञान (Seismology) के अनेक सिद्धान्तों से साम्य रखते हैं।

भूविज्ञान के अनुसार जब किसी स्थान पर अत्यधिक ऊर्जा अचानक मुक्त होती है, तब वह भूकम्पीय तरङ्गों (Seismic Waves) के रूप में चारों ओर प्रसारित होती है। यही तरङ्गें पृथ्वी की सतह को कम्पित करती हैं। महाभारत में दैत्य के विशाल शरीर के पृथ्वी पर गिरने से उत्पन्न कम्पन को इसी प्रकार की ऊर्जा-उत्सर्जन की प्रतीकात्मक अभिव्यक्ति माना जा सकता है। आधुनिक विज्ञान यह स्वीकार करता है कि अत्यन्त विशाल वस्तुओं के पृथ्वी से टकराने, पर्वतों में बड़े भूस्खलन (Large Landslides), ज्वालामुखीय विस्फोट अथवा उल्कापिण्ड के पृथ्वी पर गिरने से स्थानीय अथवा क्षेत्रीय स्तर पर भूकम्पीय तरङ्गें उत्पन्न हो सकती हैं।

उपरोक्त श्लोक में "सपर्वतवनद्वीपाम्" शब्द विशेष ध्यान देने योग्य है। इसका आशय यह है कि कम्पन का प्रभाव केवल एक स्थान तक सीमित नहीं रहा, अपितु पर्वतों, वनों और द्वीपों तक अनुभव किया गया। आधुनिक भूकम्प विज्ञान यह वर्णन करता है कि भूकम्पीय तरङ्गें पृथ्वी की विभिन्न भू-संरचनाओं से होकर गुजरती हैं तथा विभिन्न प्रकार की चट्टानों एवं स्थलरूपों में उनका प्रभाव अलग-अलग रूपों में अनुभव किया जाता है। इस प्रकार महाभारत का यह वर्णन पृथिवी में कम्पन के व्यापक प्रसार की अवधारणा को सङ्केतित करता है।

ततो मही प्रविचलिता सकानना,

महाद्रिपाताभिहता समन्ततः ।

परस्परं भृशमभिगर्जतां मुहुः,

रणाजिरे भृशमभिसम्प्रवर्तिते ।⁵

उस समय एक दूसरे को लक्ष्य करके बार-बार जोर-जोर से गरजने वाले देवताओं और असुरों के उसे समराङ्गण में सभी और भयङ्कर मारपीट मच रही थी बड़े-बड़े पर्वतों के हिलने के कारण आहत हुई वन सहित समस्त भूमि का कांपने लगी।

⁵ महाभारत आदिपर्व 19/27



तेजसा निर्दहेल्लोकान् कम्पयेद् धरणीं पदा ।

संक्षिपेच्च महामेरुं तूर्णमावर्तयेद् दिशः ।।⁶

वह अपने तेज से सम्पूर्ण लोगों को भस्म कर सकते हैं पैर के आघात से पृथ्वी को कंपा सकते हैं विशाल मेरुपर्वत को छोटा बना सकते हैं और सम्पूर्ण दिशाओं में तुरन्त उलटफेर कर सकते हैं ।

अभ्यघ्नन् भारतांश्चैव सपत्नानां बलानि च ।

चालयन् वसुधां चेमां बलेन चतुरङ्गिणा ।।

अभ्यतात् तं च पाञ्चाल्यो विजित्य तरसा महीम् ।

अक्षौहिणीभिर्दशभिः स एनं समरेऽजयत् ।।⁷

शत्रुओं की सेनाएं भरतवंशी योद्धाओं का नाश करने लगीं । पाञ्चाल नरेश ने इस पृथिवी को कम्पित करते हुए चतुरङ्गिणी सेना के साथ संवरण पर आक्रमण किया और उनकी समस्त भूमि वेगपूर्वक जीतकर 10 अक्षौहिणी सेनाओं द्वारा संवरण को भी युद्ध में परास्त कर दिया ।

तयोर्वेगेन महता पृथिवी समकम्पत ।

पादपांश्च महाकायांश्चूर्णयामासतुस्तदा ।।⁸

उन दोनों(भीमसेन व राक्षस) के महान् वेग से धरती जोर जोर से कांपने लगी । उन दोनों ने उस समय बड़े-बड़े वृक्षों के भी टुकड़े-टुकड़े कर डाले । वैज्ञानिक दृष्टि पर प्रकाश डालें तो जब दो अत्यधिक बलवान् वस्तुएँ अथवा शरीर अत्यधिक वेग से परस्पर टकराते हैं, तब उत्पन्न ऊर्जा का एक भाग भूमि में संचारित होता है। यह ऊर्जा यांत्रिक तरङ्गों (Mechanical Waves) के रूप में फैलती है, जिससे स्थानीय स्तर पर भूमि में कम्पन अनुभव होता है। आधुनिक भूकम्प-विज्ञान में भी किसी विस्फोट, भारी वस्तु के गिरने अथवा तीव्र टक्कर से इस प्रकार के कम्पन महसूस किए जाते हैं। इस प्रकार यह कहा जा सकता है कि हमारे प्राचीन ऋषि- मुनियों द्वारा किया गया वर्णन वर्तमान वैज्ञानिकों के लिए एक आधार सिद्ध हो रहा है ।

⁶ महाभारत आदिपर्व 71/36

⁷ महाभारत आदिपर्व 94/37,38

⁸ महाभारत आदिपर्व 162/24



हस्तिनां च निनादेन कम्पयन् वसुधामिमाम् ।⁹

जुझारु बाजे, श्रेष्ठ मृदङ्ग आदि की ध्वनि, रथ के पहियों की घर्घराहट और हाथियों की गर्जना से वे इस पृथिवी को कंपाते हुए आगे बढ़ रहे थे । आधुनिक भूकम्प विज्ञान (Seismology) के अनुसार जब अत्यधिक संख्या में भारी वस्तुएँ—जैसे हाथी, रथ अथवा आधुनिक सन्दर्भ में टैंक, सैन्य वाहन और रेलगाड़ियाँ—एक साथ गति करती हैं, तो उनके भार और गतिशील बल के कारण भूमि में निम्न-आवृत्ति वाली कम्पन तरङ्गें उत्पन्न होती हैं। इन तरङ्गों को Ground Vibrations कहा जाता है। यदि भूमि अपेक्षाकृत मुलायम अथवा अवसादी हो, तो इन कम्पनों की तीव्रता अधिक अनुभव होती है।

इसी प्रकार अत्यधिक तीव्र ध्वनि तथा हजारों सैनिकों, रथों और हाथियों की संयुक्त गति से उत्पन्न कम्पन स्थानीय स्तर पर भूमि को हिलता हुआ अनुभव करा सकते हैं। आधुनिक सैन्य अभ्यासों, भारी वाहनों की चलने तथा विस्फोटों के समय भी ऐसी कम्पनें भूकम्प जैसी अनुभूति उत्पन्न करती हैं, यद्यपि वे विवर्तनिक (Tectonic) भूकम्प नहीं होतीं। अतः महाभारत का यह वर्णन युद्धभूमि में उत्पन्न यांत्रिक एवं ध्वनिक कम्पन का अत्यन्त यथार्थ चित्रण माना जा सकता है।

रत्नभारमुपादाय ययौ सह निशाचरैः ।

इन्द्रप्रस्थं विवेशाथ कम्पयन्निव मेदिनीम् ।¹⁰

रत्नों का वह भारी भार साथ लिए निशाचरों के साथ सहदेव ने इन्द्रप्रस्थ नगर में प्रवेश किया । उस समय वे पैरों की धमक से समस्त पृथ्वी को कम्पित करते हुए से चल रहे थे ।

सिंहनादेन महता योधानां गर्जितेन च ।

रथनेमिनिनादैश्च कम्पयन् वसुधामिमाम् ।¹¹

⁹ महाभारत सभापर्व 27/6

¹⁰ महाभारत सभापर्व 31/77

¹¹ महाभारत सभापर्व 32/3



वह अपने सैनिकों के महान् सिंहनाद, गर्जना तथा रथ के पहियों की घर्घराहट की तुमुल ध्वनि से इस पृथिवी को कम्पायमान करते हुए जा रहे थे ।

एवं तेषु नराग्रयेषु निर्यत्सु गजसान्ध्यात् ।

अनभ्रे विद्युतश्चासन् भूमिश्च समकम्पत् ।¹²

हस्तिनापुर से उन नरश्रेष्ठ पाण्डवों के निकलते ही बिना बादल के बिजली गिरने लगी, और पृथ्वी भी कांप उठी ।

आधुनिक भूकम्प विज्ञान के अनुसार पृथ्वी का कम्पन पृथ्वी की विवर्तनिक प्लेटों की गति, भ्रंश के सक्रिय होने अथवा शैलों में संचित तनाव के अचानक मुक्त होने से उत्पन्न होता है। इस ऊर्जा के मुक्त होने पर भूकम्पीय तरङ्गें (Seismic Waves) चारों ओर फैलती हैं, जिससे भूमि कम्पित होती है। श्लोक में “भूमिश्च समकम्पत्” का उल्लेख यह दर्शाता है कि उस समय भूमि के असामान्य कम्पन को अत्यन्त महत्वपूर्ण प्राकृतिक घटना माना जाता था। ‘अनभ्रे विद्युतः’ का उल्लेख आधुनिक विज्ञान में कई प्राकृतिक घटनाओं से जोड़ा जा सकता है—Earthquake Lights (EQL): कुछ बड़े भूकम्पों के पहले या दौरान आकाश में असामान्य प्रकाश या विद्युत-ज्योति दिखाई देने की घटनाएँ दर्ज की गई हैं। माना जाता है कि शैलों पर अत्यधिक तनाव के कारण विद्युत आवेश उत्पन्न होकर वायुमण्डल में प्रकाशीय प्रभाव उत्पन्न कर सकता है। जिसके कारण पृथ्वी कम्पित हो जाती है ।

वेदिकामाश्रिताभिश्च समाक्रान्तान्यनेकशः ।

प्रचलन्तीव भारेण योषिदिभर्भवानन्युत ।¹³

छतों की सड़क की ओर वाले भाग पर बैठी हुई झुंड की झुंड स्त्रियों के भार से मानो हस्तिनापुर के वे सारे भवन कम्पायमान से हो रहे थे ।

निर्घाताः पृथिवीकम्पा गजबृंहितनिः स्वनाः ।

आसंश्च सर्वयोधानां पातयन्तो मनांस्युत ।।¹⁴

¹² महाभारत सभापर्व 80/28

¹³ महाभारत उद्योगपर्व 94/26

¹⁴ महाभारत उद्योग पर्व 156/29



हाथियों के चिगघाड़ने के साथ ही बिजली की गड़गड़ाहट के समान भयङ्कर शब्द होने लगे । पृथिवी डोलने लगी । इन सब उत्पातों ने प्रकट होकर समस्त योद्धाओं के मानसिक उत्साह को दबा दिया । श्लोक में पृथ्वी के डोलने (कम्पन) का स्पष्ट वर्णन है, आधुनिक विज्ञान के अनुसार पृथ्वी का यह कम्पन भ्रंश (Fault) पर संचित तनाव के अचानक मुक्त होने से उत्पन्न भूकम्पीय तरङ्गों के कारण होता है। अनेक वैज्ञानिक अध्ययनों में यह पाया गया है कि हाथी, कुत्ते, पक्षी तथा अन्य जीव भूकम्प से पूर्व उत्पन्न निम्न-आवृत्ति तरङ्गों अथवा सूक्ष्म कम्पन को मनुष्यों से पहले अनुभव कर सकते हैं, इस कारण उनका व्यवहार असामान्य हो सकता है। यद्यपि यह भूकम्प की निश्चित भविष्यवाणी का प्रमाण नहीं माना जा सकता, फिर भी इस विषय पर वर्तमान वैज्ञानिकों का कार्य चल रहा है, इतना अवश्य है कि हमारे पौराणिक ग्रन्थों में पृथ्वी के कम्पन के विषय में किया गया वर्णन आज भी वैज्ञानिकों के लिए प्रासङ्गिक है ।

विष्वक्वाताश्च वान्त्युग्रा रजोनाप्युपशाम्यति ।

अभीक्षणं कम्पते भूमिरर्कं राहुरुपैति च ।।¹⁵

चारों ओर भयङ्कर आंधी चल रही है, धूल का उड़ना शान्त नहीं हो रहा है, धरती बारम्बार कांप रही है, तथा राहु सूर्य के निकट जा रहा है ।

अथ संनह्यमानेषु सैन्येषु भरतर्षभ ।

निष्प्रभोऽभ्युद्ययौ सूर्यः सघोषं भूश्चाल च ।।¹⁶

भरतभूषण ! जब उभय- पक्ष की सेनाएं युद्ध के लिए पूर्णतयः तैयार हो ग्रीन, उस समय सूर्य की प्रभा फीकी पड़ गई और भारी आवाज के साथ धरती कांपने लगी ।

नदतस्तस्य शब्देन पृथिवी सागराम्बरा,

सपर्वतवना राजंश्चाल सुभृशं तदा ।

अन्तरिक्षं दिशश्चैव सर्वाश्च प्रदिशस्तथा ।।¹⁷

¹⁵ महाभारत भीष्मपर्व 3/11

¹⁶ महाभारत भीष्मपर्व 19/40

¹⁷ महाभारत भीष्मपर्व 91/3



नरेश्वर ! उस राक्षस की गर्जना से समुद्र, आकाश, पर्वत व वनों सहित यह समस्त पृथिवी जोर-जोर से हिलने लगी । अन्तरिक्ष, दिशाएं तथा समस्त कोणों के प्रदेश भी कांपने लगे ।

आधुनिक विज्ञान के अनुसार अत्यधिक तीव्र ध्वनि एवं निम्न-आवृत्ति तरङ्गें अपने आसपास के वातावरण में कम्पन उत्पन्न कर सकती हैं, यदि ध्वनि का स्रोत अत्यन्त शक्तिशाली हो, तो वायु-दाब में तीव्र परिवर्तन होता है, जिससे भवन, वृक्ष तथा अन्य संरचनाएं कम्पन अनुभव कर सकती हैं। ज्वालामुखीय विस्फोट, विशाल उल्कापिण्ड का विस्फोट अथवा परमाणु विस्फोट जैसी घटनाओं में ऐसी निम्न-आवृत्ति तरङ्गें उत्पन्न होती हैं, जिन्हें सैकड़ों किलोमीटर दूर तक अनुभव किया जा सकता है।

वैज्ञानिकों के अनुसार पृथ्वी का वास्तविक कम्पन विवर्तनिक प्लेटों के परस्पर खिसकने, भ्रंश (Fault) के सक्रिय होने अथवा ज्वालामुखीय गतिविधियों के कारण उत्पन्न होने वाली भूकम्पीय तरङ्गों से होता है। यद्यपि किसी जीव या राक्षस की गर्जना से सम्पूर्ण पृथ्वी का हिलना भौतिक रूप से सम्भव नहीं है, तथापि महाभारतकार ने उस गर्जना की भयावहता एवं व्यापक प्रभाव को व्यक्त करने के लिए उसे पृथ्वी-कम्पन के रूपक के रूप में प्रस्तुत किया। उपरोक्त श्लोक में “अन्तरिक्षं दिशश्चैव” का उल्लेख यह भी सङ्केत करता है कि प्राचीन भारतीय मनीषियों ने तीव्र प्राकृतिक घटनाओं के प्रभाव को केवल भूमि तक सीमित न मानकर वायुमण्डल एवं समग्र पर्यावरण पर पड़ने वाले प्रभाव के रूप में देखा था। आधुनिक भू-विज्ञान भी स्वीकार करता है कि बड़े भूकम्पों के समय वायुमण्डलीय दाब, निम्न-आवृत्ति ध्वनि तथा आयनमण्डलीय विक्षोभ जैसी घटनाएँ देखी जा सकती हैं।

ततः प्रयाते सहसा भारद्वाजे महारथे,

आर्तनादेन घोरेण वसुधा समकम्पत ।।¹⁸

तदनन्तर सहसा महारथी द्रोणाचार्य आगे बढ़े फिर भयङ्कर आर्तनाद के साथ सम्पूर्ण पृथिवी कांप उठी ।

पाण्डवास्तु जयं लब्ध्वा सिंहनादान् प्रचक्रिरे ।

सिंहनादेन महता समकम्पत मेदिनी ।।¹⁹

¹⁸ महाभारत द्रोणपर्व 7/33

¹⁹ महाभारत द्रोणपर्व 8/36



पाण्डव विजय प्राप्तकर सिंहनाद करने लगे उनके उस महान सिंहनाद से सम्पूर्ण पृथिवी कांप उठी ।

तेषां शैलोपमैः कायैर्निपतद्भिः समन्ततः

आहता सहसा भूमिश्चकम्पे च ननाद च ।²⁰

उनके पर्वताकार शरीरों के गिरने से सभी ओर से आहत हुई भूमि सहसा कांपने और आर्तनाद करने लगी ।

प्राकम्पतेव पृथिवी तस्मिन् वीरावसादने ।

निर्वर्तता बलौघेन महता भारपीडिता ।²¹

वीरों का विनाश करने वाले उस युद्ध में लौटते हुए विशाल सैनिक समूह के महान् भार से पीड़ित होकर यह पृथिवी कांपने लगी ।

तस्य नादेन महता कम्पितेयं वसुन्धरा ।

सपर्वतवना राजन् सपादपजलाशया ।²²

राजन् ! उसके महान् सिंहनाद से वृक्षों, जलाशयों, पर्वतों और वनों सहित यह सम्पूर्ण पृथिवी कांप उठी । यदि वैज्ञानिक दृष्टि से इसका वर्णन करें तो कह सकते हैं कि श्लोक में “महता नादेन” (अत्यन्त प्रबल ध्वनि) को पृथ्वी के कम्पन का कारण बताया गया है । आधुनिक विज्ञान के अनुसार ध्वनि एक यांत्रिक तरङ्ग है, जो माध्यम में कम्पन उत्पन्न करके आगे बढ़ती है । यदि ध्वनि की तीव्रता अत्यधिक हो, तो वह आसपास की वस्तुओं में कम्पन उत्पन्न कर सकती है । यद्यपि सामान्य परिस्थितियों में मनुष्य या पशु के सिंहनाद से सम्पूर्ण पृथ्वी नहीं काँप सकती, किन्तु अत्यधिक ऊर्जा वाले ध्वनि स्रोत—जैसे विशाल विस्फोट, ज्वालामुखीय उद्गार, सुपरसोनिक विस्फोट या अत्यन्त शक्तिशाली गर्जना—स्थानीय स्तर पर भूमि, वृक्षों तथा जलाशयों में कम्पन उत्पन्न कर सकते हैं । इस प्रकार की तरङ्गें भूकम्पीय तरङ्गों तथा वायु-दाब तरङ्गों के रूप में ऊर्जा का संचार करती हैं ।

महाभारत के इस वर्णन में पर्वत, वन, वृक्ष तथा जलाशयों सहित पृथ्वी का कांपना इस तथ्य की ओर सङ्केत करता है, कि प्रबल ऊर्जा का प्रभाव केवल भूमि तक सीमित नहीं रहता, अपितु सम्पूर्ण पर्यावरण, वनस्पति, जल तथा

²⁰ महाभारत द्रोणपर्व 20/49

²¹ महाभारत द्रोणपर्व 31/14

²² महाभारत द्रोणपर्व 109/18



पर्वतीय क्षेत्रों पर भी पड़ता है। आधुनिक भूकम्प- विज्ञान भी बताता है कि भूकम्प आने पर भूमि के साथ-साथ वृक्ष, पर्वत, जलाशय तथा भवन सभी समान रूप से कम्पन का अनुभव करते हैं। इस प्रकार कहा जा सकता है कि हमारे पौराणिक ग्रन्थों में भूकम्प के विषय में किया गया वर्णन वर्तमान वैज्ञानिकों के लिए एक आधार प्रतीत हो रहा है।

सशब्दमभवद् व्योम ज्वालामालाकुलं भृशम् ।

चचाल च मही कृत्स्ना सपर्वतवनद्रुमा ।²³

सम्पूर्ण आकाश आग की प्रचण्ड ज्वालाओं से व्याप्त हो उठा और वहां जोर-जोर से शब्द होने लगा, पर्वत, वन व वृक्षों के सहित सम्पूर्ण पृथिवी कांपने लगी ।

तमात्तकार्मुकं दृष्ट्वा ब्रह्मचारिणमव्यक्तम् ।

विव्यथे पृथिवी देवी पर्वताश्च चकम्पिरे ।²⁴

उन ब्रह्मचारी व अविनाशी रुद्र को हाथ में धनुष उठाए देख पृथिवी देवी को बड़ी व्यथा हुई और पर्वत भी कांपने लगे ।

यदि वैज्ञानिक दृष्टि से विश्लेषण करें तो कह सकते हैं कि पर्वतों का कांपना इस तथ्य की ओर सङ्केत करता है कि यदि पृथ्वी के भीतर संचित तनाव (tectonic stress) अचानक मुक्त हो जाए, तो उत्पन्न भूकम्पीय तरङ्गें पर्वतीय क्षेत्रों तक पहुंचकर उन्हें भी कम्पित कर सकती हैं। वास्तव में पर्वत भी पृथ्वी की विवर्तनिक प्लेटों का ही भाग हैं और वे भूकम्प के समय कम्पन का अनुभव करते हैं।

निरुद्धं गगनं सर्वं शुभ्रं मेघैः समन्ततः ।

मही प्रचलिता चासीत् तस्य सत्येन कर्मणा ।।²⁵

सम्पूर्ण शुभ्र आकाश सभी ओर से मेघों द्वारा आच्छादित हो गया, उनके सत्य कर्म के प्रभाव से पृथिवी कांपने लगी ।

आपश्चुक्षुभिरे चैव चकम्पे च वसुन्धरा ।

²³ महाभारत सौप्तिकपर्व 14/10

²⁴ महाभारत सौप्तिकपर्व 18/9

²⁵ महाभारत अनुशासनपर्व 32/27



समुद्र आदि का जल क्षुब्ध हो गया, पृथिवी कांपने लगी, पर्वत पिघलने लगे और आकाश सभी ओर से फटने सा लगा ।

आधुनिक भूवैज्ञानिकों के अनुसार प्रस्तुत श्लोक का पहला पद ‘आपश्चक्षुभिरे’ (जल क्षुब्ध हो गया) यह वैज्ञानिक दृष्टि से महत्वपूर्ण है। शक्तिशाली भूकम्पों के समय नदियों, झीलों तथा समुद्रों के जल में तीव्र हलचल उत्पन्न होती है। यदि भूकम्प का केन्द्र समुद्र के भीतर हो, तो समुद्र तल के विस्थापन से सुनामी जैसी विशाल जल-तरङ्गें उत्पन्न हो सकती हैं। अतः जल का क्षुब्ध होना भूकम्प का स्वाभाविक परिणाम है। ‘व्यद्रवन् गिरयश्चापि’ का अर्थ पर्वतों का पिघलना न होकर भूगर्भीय दृष्टि से पर्वतीय चट्टानों का टूटना, दरारें पड़ना, भूस्खलन या शिलाओं का खिसकना भी हो सकता है। बड़े भूकम्पों में पर्वतीय क्षेत्रों में ऐसे दृश्य सामान्यतः देखे जाते हैं। इसी प्रकार ‘द्यौः पफाल च सर्वशः’ का आशय आकाश का वास्तव में फटना नहीं है, अपितु भीषण गर्जना, धूल से ढंके हुए बादल, बिजली की चमक अथवा वायुमण्डलीय असामान्य परिस्थितियों से उत्पन्न उस दृश्य से हो सकता है, जिससे ऐसा प्रतीत होता है कि आकाश विदीर्ण हो गया हो। इस प्रकार महाभारत का यह वर्णन प्राकृतिक आपदा के समग्र प्रभाव का ऐसा चित्र प्रस्तुत करता है, जिसका आधुनिक भू-विज्ञान से उल्लेखनीय साम्य दिखाई देता है।

निष्कर्ष –

वैदिक वाङ्मय में ऋषियों की वाणी को अन्तिम और प्रमाणिक सत्य के रूप में स्वीकार किया गया है। जिस तथ्य की पुष्टि वैदिक ऋचाओं द्वारा हो जाती है, उसकी प्रामाणिकता के लिए किसी अन्य प्रमाण की आवश्यकता शेष नहीं रहती। यद्यपि प्राचीन साहित्य में भूकम्प को आधुनिक अर्थों में न तो किसी पृथक् विज्ञान के रूप में और न ही किसी प्राकृतिक आपदा के रूप में वर्गीकृत किया गया है, तथापि यह स्पष्ट है कि हमारे ऋषि-मुनि पृथ्वी के कम्पन तथा उससे सम्बन्धित विनाशकारी प्रभावों के स्वरूप से भली-भांति परिचित थे। इसी ज्ञान के आधार पर उन्होंने भूमि के कम्पन के विविध कारणों का उल्लेख विभिन्न प्रतीकों के माध्यम से किया है। वैदिक ऋचाओं में कहीं इसे इन्द्र के प्रहार, कहीं मरुतों के वेग, कहीं अग्नि की तीव्रता और कहीं वायु के प्रकोप से सम्बद्ध बताया गया है। यह वर्णन वस्तुतः प्रकृति की शक्तियों और ऊर्जा के परस्पर प्रभाव का सूक्ष्म विश्लेषण है। वर्तमान समय में जब भूकम्प- विज्ञान निरन्तर नए आयामों

²⁶ महाभारत अनुशासनपर्व 160/15



की खोज कर रहा है, उसी समय वैदिक ज्ञान के पुनरीक्षण की आवश्यकता और भी बढ़ जाती है। नाद, कम्पन और ऊर्जा से सम्बन्धित वैदिक अवधारणाएँ आधुनिक विज्ञान को पृथ्वी की गतिशीलता को समझने के लिए एक समग्र और समन्वित दृष्टिकोण प्रदान कर सकती हैं। अतः भूकम्प- विज्ञान की दृष्टि से वैदिक ऋचाओं का गहन विमर्श एवं अध्ययन आज न केवल अपेक्षित है, अपितु अनिवार्य भी है।

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The Historical Development of Advaita Vedānta Philosophy

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Abstract

Advaita Vedānta is a big idea in Indian philosophy. It says that everything is one, and that one true thing is called Brahman. The world we see and experience every day is considered to be an illusion, or *māyā*. This present study looks at how this idea of Advaita Vedānta developed over time. It examines important ancient books like the Upanishads and the Brahma Sutras, and also the writings of important thinkers like Śaṅkara. By comparing Advaita Vedānta with other philosophies, the study shows how the school of thought was formed, how it branched out, and how it competed with other schools of thought. The roots of Advaita lie in the *Upaniṣadic* scriptures, with early *Vedāntic* synthesis by *Bādarāyaṇa* in the *Brahma Sūtras*. *Śaṅkara* (8th century CE) systematized Advaita through rigorous commentary, solidifying its metaphysical and epistemological foundations. Post-*Śaṅkara* developments led to two major interpretive schools: the *Bhāmatī* and Vivaraṇa traditions. *Advaitins* further refined logic and responded to critiques from dualist and theistic schools. In the 19th–20th centuries, Advaita *Vedānta* saw a revival, notably through figures like Swami Vivekananda, integrating modern scientific and nationalistic thought.

The enduring relevance of Advaita *Vedānta* lies in its philosophical depth and adaptability. From ancient metaphysical inquiry to modern spiritual discourse, *Advaita* continues to influence global religious and philosophical thought. This historical overview highlights its resilience and ongoing evolution in the face of intellectual and socio-political change.

Key words- *Advaita, Śaṅkara, māyā, Vedānta, Brahman, jñāna, Indian philosophy*

Introduction

Advaita Vedānta, which literally means "non-dual end of the Vedas," is commonly held to be the most far-reaching and philosophically subtle school of *Vedānta* in Indian intellectual tradition. It teaches the basic teaching of non-duality namely that the ultimate reality is lord *Brahman*—pure, infinite, unchanging consciousness—and the empirical world, with its diversity and seeming dualities, is a creation of *māyā*, or illusion. In Advaita's view, the personal self is not finally distinct from *Brahman*; instead, through knowledge, one comes to see their fundamental oneness with the Absolute.

Advaita Vedānta has its roots deep in the ancient Vedic and Upaniṣadic literature, where initial meditations on the nature of the self and ultimate reality were first formulated. These philosophical ideas were subsequently synthesized and systematized by *Bādarāyaṇa* in the *Brahma Sūtras*, the first attempt at codifying *Vedāntic* thought. Yet *Ādi Śaṅkara*, during the 8th century CE, clearly founded *Advaita* as a consistent and disciplined school of philosophy in his commentaries on the *Upaniṣads*, *Bhagavad Gītā*, and *Brahma Sūtras*. He stressed the illusory character of the world and the non-dual nature of reality.

In the post-Śaṅkara period, Advaita Vedānta evolved through a rich tradition of scholastic inquiry and commentary. The establishment of the Bhāmatī and Vivaraṇa traditions marked important commentarial developments within the school, each advancing distinctive interpretations of key Advaitic doctrines. Concurrently, Advaitin philosophers participated in sustained polemical and dialectical engagements with competing philosophical systems, particularly Viśiṣṭādvaita, Dvaita, Buddhism, and Nyāya, contributing to the systematic articulation and consolidation of Advaita metaphysics and epistemology. In the contemporary world, especially in the 19th and 20th centuries, *Advaita Vedānta* witnessed a resurgence due to colonialism, the emergence of science, as well as nationalist movements, with Swami Vivekananda and Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan being the leaders responsible for disseminating its philosophy both within India as well as internationally.

Vedas and Upaniṣadas

The roots of Advaita Vedānta can be traced to the Ṛgveda and find their fullest expression in the Upaniṣads, especially in statements such as “*Ekam sad viprā bahudhā vadanti*”. Truth is one, sages call it by various names – *Ṛgveda*ⁱ. The Upaniṣads elaborate this mystical unity through expressions like “*Sarvam khalvidam Brahma*”ⁱⁱⁱ. All this is indeed *Brahman* –The early Upaniṣadic seers did not present a systematic philosophy but a vision of spiritual unity realized through contemplation and direct insight. These intuitive realizations would become the metaphysical axioms of *Advaita Vedānta*. The emphasis was not on ritual but on Self-realization *Atma-jñāna*, that gradually set *Vedānta* apart from the earlier *karma-kāṇḍa* of the Vedasⁱⁱⁱ

The Upaniṣads form the scriptural foundation of Advaita. Several Mahāvākyas (great sayings)



succinctly express its central doctrine:

- Tat Tvam Asi - *That Thou Art*^{iv}
- Aham Brahmasmi - *I am Brahman*^v
- Prajnānam Brahma- *Consciousness is Brahman*^{vi}
- Ayam Ātmā Brahma -*This Self is Brahman*^{vii}

The distinction between the empirical--*vyāvahārika* and the absolute -- *pāramārthika* levels of truth is already implicit in these texts. For instance, while the world appears pluralistic and dynamic, the *Upaniṣads* declare that this is a veil over the one indivisible reality—*Brahman*^{viii}

Bādarāyaṇa,

The first attempt to systemize the philosophical vision of the *Upaniṣads* was made by *Bādarāyaṇa*, through the *Brahma Sūtras*. These aphorisms are terse and cryptic, demanding interpretative commentary. Nevertheless, the *Brahma Sūtras* attributed to the development of diverse Vedāntic traditions, including Advaita, Viśiṣṭādvaita, and Dvaita Vedānta^{ix}. This ancient text, also known as the *Vedānta Sūtras*, is a systematic and aphoristic treatise that synthesizes and explains the teachings of the *Upaniṣads*. Its primary goal is to establish the ultimate reality, *Brahman*, as the sole and supreme truth and to provide a logical framework for understanding the relationship between *Brahman*, the individual soul, and the material world.

The text is structured into four chapters, each addressing a specific aspect of this profound philosophy. The first chapter, "*Samānvaya*" or "harmony," seeks to harmonize the various and sometimes seemingly contradictory statements found in the *Upaniṣads*. It meticulously demonstrates that all these texts, regardless of their superficial differences, ultimately point to the same ultimate reality: *Brahman*. *Badarayana* meticulously analyzes various *Upaniṣadic* passages to prove that *Brahman* is the origin, sustenance, and dissolution of the entire universe. This chapter firmly establishes *Brahman* as the intelligent and material cause of the cosmos, rejecting any alternative theories of creation.

The second chapter, "*Avirodha*" or "non-contradiction," defends the philosophy of the *Brahma Sūtras* against rival philosophical schools. *Badarayana* engages in a rigorous debate with other systems of thought, such as *Samkhya*, *Vaisheshika*, *Buddhism* and *Jainism*, demonstrating the logical inconsistencies and shortcomings of their doctrines. He artfully refutes their arguments and reinforces the supremacy of the *Upaniṣadic* teachings. This chapter is a masterpiece of philosophical polemics, showcasing the intellectual depth and logical precision of the *Vedantic* tradition.

The Third chapter, "*Sadhana*" or "the means," is dedicated to the practical aspects of spiritual practice and the path to liberation. It outlines the various disciplines and virtues necessary for a spiritual seeker to attain the knowledge of *Brahman*. This chapter discusses topics such as the importance of renunciation, the role of meditation, and the significance of devotion. It also delves into the nature of the individual soul, its journey through different states of existence,



and the ultimate goal of merging with *Brahman*. *Badarayana* explains that through a combination of ethical conduct, self-control, and intense spiritual practice, one can transcend the limitations of the ego and realize true identity as *Brahman*.

The fourth and final chapter, "*Phala*" or "the fruit," describes the state of liberation and the ultimate destiny of the realized soul. It paints a vivid picture of the blissful and eternal state of a person who has attained the knowledge of *Brahman*. This chapter discusses the different types of liberation, the state of a liberated person while still alive - *Jivanmukta*, and the ultimate destination of the soul after the death of the physical body. It concludes by affirming that the knowledge of *Brahman* is the only means to transcend the cycle of birth and death and attain the ultimate state of eternal bliss.

In short, *Badarayana's Brahma Sutras* is a small but detailed masterpiece that systematically arranges and interprets the central principles of the *Upanishads*. It is a work of profound philosophical and spiritual meaning, offering a rational and potent system for comprehending the nature of existence, the means to freedom, and the definitive goal of human existence. Its aphoristic form and deep wisdom have stimulated numerous commentaries and remain a source of profound study and reflection for those learning *Vedanta*.

One of the earliest interpreters of *Vedānta* was *Bhartṛprapañca*, whose views are only known through *Śaṅkara's* refutations. *Bhartṛprapañca* offered a *realistic pluralism*, arguing for the reality of multiplicity alongside *Brahman*^x. His position was considered contradictory to the core non-dualistic insight of the *Upanishads*.

Another important pre-*Śaṅkara* Vedāntin was *Gauḍapāda*, the teacher of *Śaṅkara's* teacher *Govindapāda*. *Gauḍapāda's* *Māṇḍūkya Kārikā* is a foundational *Advaita* text that incorporates Buddhist terminology like *ajāti-vāda* (non-origination), asserting that the world has no real beginning and is a mere appearance.^{xi} Despite the similarity to *Mahāyāna* Buddhism, *Gauḍapāda* firmly anchors his doctrine in the *Upanishads* and maintains the self's absolute reality.^{xii}

Adi Shankaracharya: 788 - 820 CE

Ācārya *Śaṅkara's* authoritative exposition on the *Brahma Sūtras*, known as the *Śāṅkarabhāṣya*, serves as a influential contribution to the shaping of *Advaita Vedānta*. Written in the 8th century CE, this interpretative masterpiece engages systematically with the dense and terse aphorisms of *Bādarāyaṇa*, who aimed to bring together the divergent philosophical insights of the *Upanishads* into a coherent doctrinal system. Due to the highly compact and ambiguous nature of the *Brahma Sūtras*, they necessitate detailed commentary, and *Śaṅkara's bhāṣya* provided both a profound philosophical framework and a methodological lens that would steer Indian metaphysical discourse for generations to come^{xiii}

Śaṅkara's philosophical orientation is anchored in the conviction that *Brahman*—the highest truth—is singular -*advaita*, devoid of attributes -*nirguṇa*, and fundamentally identical with the



inner self -*ātman* of all beings. He asserts that the manifest universe possesses only a dependent or apparent reality- *mithyā*; it lacks independent existence and ultimately rests upon Brahman, the one ultimate reality. According to *Śaṅkara*, liberation is not the acquisition of something external or new, but rather the eradication of *avidyā* -ignorance, which obscures the essential unity between the self and Brahman. The renowned Upaniṣadic declaration-” *tat tvam asi*” captures this non-dual realization and is regarded by *Śaṅkara* as the core message of Vedāntic scripture^{xiv}.

Śaṅkara's hermeneutic approach is characterized by precision and structural clarity. He makes use of the classical *Adhikaraṇa* technique, where each *sūtra* or collection of *sūtras* is analyzed through a systematic inquiry encompassing: definition of a doubt, articulation of counter-arguments -*pūrvapakṣa*, and demonstration of the winning point of view - *siddhānta*. His interpretations are backed by three authoritative sources: *śruti* (revealed texts), *tarka* (logical reasoning), and *anubhava* (direct experience)^{xv}. Additionally, *Śaṅkara* employs the instructional method of *adhyāropa-apavāda* - initial superimposition followed by withdrawal or negation. This pedagogical strategy involves first explaining concepts using accessible, empirical terms and then retracting these preliminary notions to guide the student toward the non-dual truth.

A fundamental doctrine of *Śaṅkara*'s Advaita Vedānta is the identity of the individual self (*Jīva*) and Brahman (*Jīva-Brahma aikya*). According to *Śaṅkara*, the apparent distinction between the two arises from *Avidyā* (ignorance), which is beginningless and projects a sense of duality upon the essentially non-dual reality. While he does not reject the empirical existence of the world, he regards it as *mithyā*—neither absolutely real nor absolutely unreal. The world appears real at the empirical level but loses its independent reality upon the realization of Brahman, much like a dream that vanishes upon awakening. This appearance of multiplicity is explained through the concept of *māyā*, the power responsible for superimposing diversity upon the undivided Brahman. However, *māyā* does not possess independent existence; it is dependent upon Brahman and functions solely as a veil that conceals the ultimate truth of non-duality.

Śaṅkara also voices strong criticism of the ritualism endorsed by the *Mīmāṃsā* school. While the *Mīmāṃsakas* validate Vedic rituals as eternal and effective in securing heavenly rewards or liberation, *Śaṅkara* refutes this stance by arguing that ritual action cannot dispel *avidyā*. Since action presupposes duality implying a division between subject and object it is inherently limited in leading to the realization of non-dual truth. Instead, *Śaṅkara* prioritizes knowledge that emerges from deep inquiry and scriptural contemplation as the exclusive path to liberation. He also refutes the Sāṅkhya view that posits two independent realities—*puruṣa* and *prakṛti*—insisting instead that all plurality is just an apparent and not ultimately real.

It was hardly a passive explication that *Śaṅkara* produced. His *bhāṣya* is instead a living, critical philosophical treatise. He confronts rival readings directly and methodically takes them apart with a mix of scriptural and logical force. His clear argument and well-organized system came to general acclaim among *Advaitins* but also elicited vigorous counterarguments from



theistic *Vedāntins* such as *Rāmānuja* and *Madhva*. These philosophers wrote their own explanations of the *Brahma Sūtras*, rejecting overtly Śaṅkara's idea of nirguṇa Brahman as the supreme principle.

Śaṅkarabhāṣya has made a profound and lasting imprint upon Indian philosophy. It provided the structure for later Advaitic thinkers including *Sureśvara*, *Padmapāda*, *Vācaspati Miśra*, and *Vidyāranya*, affecting not merely metaphysical investigation but also epistemological, moral, and religious thought. Even today, *Swami Vivekananda* and *Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan* among others have borrowed heavily from *Śaṅkara's Advaita* to develop a spiritually compelling philosophy for modern India.

In short, *Śaṅkara's* commentary on the *Brahma Sūtras* is more than mere exegesis, but a revolutionary philosophical work. It combines rigorous argument, scriptural orthodoxy, and spiritual maturity to present a vision of existence based on non-dualism. By doing so, it set the stage for an intellectual current that still dominates Indian philosophy and also for its reception abroad.

Post-Śaṅkara Advaitins

After Śaṅkara, the tradition saw the rise of sub-schools and deeper analysis. Scholars split into two primary interpretive lineages: the Bhāmatī school and the Vivaraṇa school.

Sureśvara - 8th–9th century CE

Sureśvara authored key works such as- *Naishkarmya Siddhi* and the *Vārtikas* on *Śaṅkara's Brhadāranyaka* and *Taittirīya Upaniṣad Bhāṣyas*. Formerly known as *Maṇḍana Miśra*, a Mīmāṃsaka scholar became a direct disciple of *Śaṅkara*. He firmly held that knowledge alone without ritual action or formal renunciation is the immediate cause of liberation (*mokṣa*). While accepting the importance of karma and knowledge as preparatory disciplines, he emphasized that knowledge alone can truly liberator. *Sureśvara* opposed emerging ritualistic or dualistic interpretations and articulated *Śaṅkara's Advaita* in a style marked by clarity and intellectual rigor^{xvi}.

Padmapāda -9th century CE

Padmapada, one of the earliest *Śaṅkara's* disciples, wrote *Pañcapadikā*, a commentary on the first part of *Śaṅkara's Brahma Sūtra Bhāṣya*. He came up with the famous theory of *adhyasa* (superimposition) which attributes one of the properties of one of the entities to the other, like mistaking a rope for a snake. *Padmapada's* view of *māyā*, the *māyā* of *Brahman*, a kind of illusion, differs from believing it as an illusion. He thought it was a dependent power of *Brahman*, and therefore, not wholly unintelligible, but functional and real on the level where it appears. This perspective shaped the *Vivaraṇa* school's emphasis on universal ignorance as a cosmic principle^{xvii}.



Vācaspati Miśra - 9th century CE

Vācaspati Miśra, the renowned author of the *Bhāmatī*, an influential commentary on Śaṅkara's *Brahma Sūtra Bhāṣya*, made significant contributions to Advaita Vedānta while also engaging deeply with the philosophical traditions of Nyāya, Sāṃkhya, Mīmāṃsā, and Yoga. He is regarded as the founder of the Bhāmatī school of Advaita. In his interpretation, *avidyā* (ignorance) is conceived as an individual phenomenon associated with the *jīva*, rather than as a universal principle. Although beginningless, it is ultimately removable through true knowledge. Vācaspati acknowledged the importance of preparatory disciplines, including mental purification and ritual practices, as aids to spiritual progress; nevertheless, he maintained that liberation (*mokṣa*) is attained solely through *jñāna* (knowledge). In contrast to the Vivaraṇa tradition, which locates ignorance at a more universal level, the Bhāmatī school attributes it to the individual self. While remaining fundamentally faithful to Śaṅkara's non-dualistic framework, Vācaspati Miśra introduced several subtle yet significant modifications in both method and metaphysical interpretation^{xviii}.

Prakāśātman - 11th century CE

Prakāśātman Parts a commentary on Padmapāda's work, and it was crucial in shaping the doctrine of the Vivaraṇa school. He was a vigorous proponent of the doctrine of *mūlāvidyā* or "root ignorance" as the reason behind bondage and the manifestation of the cosmos. His epistemological position was closer to Śaṅkara's idealism but if the case of the ontology of ignorance was emphasized as real in the empirical world^{xix}. He defined the difference between direct -Aparokṣa and indirect knowledge, and in doing so, systematized *Vivaraṇa* thought and impacted scholars such as *Amalānanda* and *Vidyāranya*.

Madhusūdana Sarasvatī -16th century CE

Madhusūdana Sarasvatī, is one of the important figures in later Advaita, authored *Advaita Siddhi*, *Siddhāntabindu*, and a Gītā commentary titled *Bhagavad-Gītā-Gudhārtha-Dīpikā*. His *Advaita Siddhi* responded to the dualist criticisms of Vyāsātīrtha in *Nyāyāmṛta*, defending non-duality through rigorous dialectical argument. He is renowned for his integration of *bhakti* (devotion) with Advaita, his focus on the worship of Kṛṣṇa - an innovation at a time of strong sectarian divides. His works appealed to both rational thinkers and devotional practitioners, offering a rare conjunction of emotional depth and philosophical sophistication^{xx}.

Engagement with Rival Philosophies

Advaita did not evolve in isolation. It constantly responded to competing traditions:

- **Pūrva Mīmāṃsā** upheld the eternality of Vedic ritual and denied metaphysical speculation. Śaṅkara criticized its overemphasis on rituals without inner realization.
- **Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika** argued for realism, atomism, and the reality of external objects. Advaitins refuted these using **sublation theory** - *Apavāda*.



- Sāṅkhya and Yoga traditions maintain a dualistic distinction between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*, Advaita Vedānta adopts many of their analyses of the mind and the process of liberation while rejecting their ontological dualism. Instead, it upholds the doctrine of non-duality, according to which Brahman alone constitutes the ultimate reality.
- **Buddhism**, especially **Madhyamaka**, had profound impact. *Gauḍapāda* adopted the *ajāti-vāda*, and Śāṅkara engaged with Buddhist idealism critically, accusing them of *nihilism*^{xxi}.

Modern Revival and Influence

In the 19th and 20th centuries, Advaita Vedānta underwent a revival amid colonialism, modern science, and nationalism.

- *Swami Vivekānanda*, disciple of *Sri Ramakrishna*, reinterpreted Advaita as a rational, universal philosophy, asserting the divinity of the soul and the unity of religions.
- *Ramana Maharshi* advocated a direct path to self-realization through *self-inquiry*, bypassing scriptural study and ritual.
- *Swami Sivananda*, and *Swami Chinmayananda*, established institutions that taught Advaita globally, combining traditional methods - *śravaṇa*, *manana*, *nididhyāsana* with modern pedagogy^{xxii}.

Today, *Advaita* influences spiritual movements worldwide, including non-duality teachings in the West, comparative religion, and consciousness studies. *Advaita Vedānta* is not merely a philosophical doctrine but a profound path of self-realization and metaphysical insight. From its origins in the Upaniṣadic quest for truth, through Śāṅkara's brilliant synthesis, to its ongoing global relevance, *Advaita* remains an enduring system of thought. It represents the Indian genius for unity in diversity, offering a vision of ultimate reality that transcends name, form, and doctrine.

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ⁱ Ṛgveda 1.164.46.

ⁱⁱ Chāndogya Upaniṣad 3.14.1.

ⁱⁱⁱ Hiriyanna, *Essentials of Indian Philosophy*, p. 34.

^{iv} Chāndogya Upaniṣad 6.8.7

^v Bṛhadāranyaka Upaniṣad 1.4.10



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- ^{vi} *Aitareya Upaniṣad* 3.3
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Weaving the Indian Ethos: Fantasy, Irony, and Nostalgia as Markers of Indianness in the Selective Short Stories of Manoj Das

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Abstract

Manoj Das is a one of the finest bilingual short story writers of the Indian subcontinent, who has been awarded with the Sahitya Akademi Fellowship, the top honor at Sahitya Akademi for “Immortals of Literature”.

This paper explores the postcolonial concept of Indianness in the selected short stories of Manoj Das- fantasy, irony, satire and nostalgia as narrative elements in which Das brings an Indian sensibility; storytelling technique that puts this Indian sensibility into the ostentatious version of basic elements; and how these elements convey the sublimity of the short story form in Indian context? Taking a post-colonial perspective based on Bhabha's theory of cultural hybridity (1994), Said's theory of representation (1978), and Ashcroft et al.'s theory of post-colonial reclamation (2002), the study discusses in detail six poems by the two authors, namely: “The Submerged Valley,” “The Crocodile's Lady,” “Farewell to a Ghost,” “The Bridge in the Moonlit Night,” “The Crocodile's Lady,” and “A Tiger at Twilight.”

Das can be seen as a guardian of Indian narrative art as the analysis reveals his exploration of the Indian psyche in Das's fantasy, his un-cynical social examination in his irony, and the modernity's pressure with respect to his nostalgia to the past.

Keywords: Indianness; Manoj Das; Fantasy and Myth; Irony and Satire; Nostalgia; Narrative Technique; Postcolonial Literature; Indian Short Story.



Research Objectives

This study looks at the ways in which 'fantasy,' 'irony,' 'satire' and 'nostalgia' operate as a ambassador of 'Indianness' in selected short stories of Manoj Das and also examines the style of telling the story (frame narration, magic realism, symbolic characterisation) through which the imaginative world is created. It balances both these aspects to investigate how they collectively bring to life the sublimity of the genre of short story in India and addresses issues of social life in rural India, in particular, and narrative itself.

Introduction

Manoj Das is an unmatched one among the story-tellers of Modern India who is equipped with writing in both Odia and English language with the same dexterity. Many have compared him with Saki, O. Henry and Hardy, but Das's 'Indianness' (A. Nayak 199) or writing from a purely Indian point of view places him in a class of his own.

Das' fiction is of a realistic, mystical and satirical nature and the ominous ghost and omens seamlessly coexist with the realism of detail that resonates with Bhabha's hybrid cultural space of tradition and modernity (Bhabha 2). In this study the general overview of the Indian English short story tradition (which has been treated by many others including Mukherjee who discusses the colonial origins of the Indian short story) will not be attempted.

The tales discussed come mostly from *The Submerged Valley and Other Stories*, *The Crocodile's Lady and Other Stories*, *Mystery of the Missing Cap and Other Stories*, and *The Bridge in the Moonlight Night and Other Stories*, as well as from various other works, such as *Farewell to a Ghost*, *A Tiger at Twilight*, and the autobiographical *Chasing the Rainbow*, in which the village, the ghost story, and the ironic aside are the grammar of Indian experience.

Theoretical Framework

Das' stories are approached through the theories of Bhabha, Said and Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, as mediated constructions of Indian cultural identity as performed within the gaze of the coloniser not as an opposition to it. Das' ambivalence or postmodern control of the rational and the supernatural can be discerned through Bhabha's cultural hybridity, in which faith and reason do not go to war with each other, but simply live side by side, impotent harmonies (Bhabha 2, 37).

Das' references to feeling nostalgic for the village life could be interpreted as a postcolonial cultural reclamation where the indigenous way of life is valued in the fiction, rather than being dismissed as an effect of colonialism and urbanising modernity (Ashcroft et al. 27). Said's account of representation (Said 7) helps to describe why Das' satire is directed against the feudal/bureaucratic institutions of the rural community; it does so for the purpose of anchors for the paper's thesis on the intersecting strategies of cultural self-representation (fantasy, irony, nostalgia).

Research Methodology

Instead of all of Das' literature, the method is qualitative and involves both thematic and stylistic analysis as well as close reading of Das' six stories. The secondary sources are Das' scholarship (A. Nayak; S. Nayak; Ratti; Dash; Parida; Behura and Misra), postcolonial theories of Bhabha/Said/Ashcroft, post colonial theory of Griffiths and Tiffin, and Mukherjee's Indian English Literary tradition.



This method shifts from plot summary and toward an account of how the narrative options—plot, character, plot discontinuities, et al.—add up to a cultural claim on writing in English about India: Theme and technique are considered together, and cannot be separated.

Manoj Das As A Storyteller

But Manoj Das is not only a narrator of story; rather he is one who speaks the word of the human life and beliefs. His storytelling style owes itself to the oral tradition that has its roots in India where one tells/tells oneself a story (Ratti 21).

Clarity and Restraint of Language

Das's prose is parsimonious: There are plain, incomplete stories with clear implications that come as natural a part of his Indian sensibility in a non-Indian language as the loose, lingering melody that imbues his fables and illustrated tales with fanciful glamour. His friend (one of his earliest admirers) claimed that the novelty of his description was due to his exact imagination of Indian situations that a native English writer would not have been able to produce (qtd. in A. Nayak 201).

Blending of Realism and Fantasy

Ghosts, curses and inexplicable coincidences are commonplace throughout Das' tales, and serve as a metaphor of the world of rural India's frontiers of the visible and the invisible. He has been noted for his ability to spread "humanizing the non-human" (qtd. in Ratti 22) inseparably linked to his lifelong association with Sri Aurobindo's philosophy, and that of the Mother, who saw the visible world as a single layer of interpenetrating planes of consciousness (Ratti 20; S. Nayak 611-12).

Use of Satire and Irony

Das's narrative voice reveals social folly and at the same time lacks chillness for the very characters it mocks, as a naïve observer's simple reactions highlight the absurdity of both the village's hierarchy and that of the bureaucracy (A. Nayak 197).

Nostalgia and the Pastoral Vision

Das' writing is somewhat autobiographical, and it is evident that Das had an abiding sense of love for Odishan village life that was in no way denied by his activity elsewhere, but it is also clear that his was not a world where he didn't encounter poverty or a vulnerability to disaster that required him to move away.

Analysis Of Selected Short Stories

The Submerged Valley

Das' film, *The Submerged Valley*, is about a village that has been flooded with the construction of a dam, whose temple is sporadically revealed by the fluctuations of water in the dam reservoir. Das imagines the rural and Abolkara, a half-wild young man is believed to have been sitting on that submerged rock throughout the inundation, a denial of reason over myth, was key to the Dasian imagery of the rural.

Farewell to a Ghost

The compelling title piece of *Farewell to a Ghost* (Das) pivot on a rural community's long standing but arbitrary and unverifiable faith in a ghost which is thought to live in the local mountains, and



which no one is quite sure if it's leaving—or staying (and which is in fact never actually seen or named). An early reader, likewise, used the term collective make believe, different from self-deception, to illustrate the villagers' devotion and how it could improve their community's life even if none of them has ever witnessed the spirit (Parida).

The Bridge in the Moonlit Night

Both narrators of “The Bridge in the Moonlit Night” (Das, Bridge) are placed in a frame if trust can be placed in anyone, as the first narrates an event that was related to him years ago. There is sufficient ambiguity left for the events to be interpreted as either supernatural, coincidental or embellished; the characters are symbolic, given the themes of chance, fate and memory within the story.

The Crocodile's Lady

Das, Crocodile's Lady is the story of a woman widowed at the tender age of seven, who, after being mysteriously gone for 10 years, returns, and is said to have married a crocodile. They lap up her story into a cocooned collective narrative, instead of investigation into the truth, and it moves in the direction of Das's fantasy, a process of collective appropriation and re racontation, and appears to dramatize the clash between rationality and faith, which is ubiquitous in Das' fiction.

The Mystery of the Missing Cap

The title story (Das, Mystery) is set on the red arm of a visiting Minister's cap getting stolen by a monkey, causing the host to panic as to how to hide it. Declared in a humorous way, the comedy reveals as much as it does about host and guest seeking out their own versions of the truth to make sense of the situation, and about the forces of anxious status enacting official provincial existence – funny enough to be noticed as critique, but not so much as to be beyond sympathy.

A Tiger at Twilight

The negotiation between the known and unknown, in Das's “A Tiger at Twilight” (Tiger), the tiger as a figure of psychological fear as well as literal terror, mediates a character's private anxieties by embodying a single external threat, that of the animal – a lithographic performance of negotiation between the known and unknown.

Major Themes In The Stories Of Manoj Das

Fantasy and Myth

Das's fiction is often, though not always, a fantasy, and doesn't necessarily make a claim to being escapist. Spirits and invisible forces are presented not as objects for the dismissal of the past as ‘superstition’ but as a proper mode of knowledge in practice that is as much as anything else psychological and spiritual as it is sociological.

Irony and Satire

Where Indian fantasy is the spiritual undercurrent of Indian life, Indian irony and Indian satire view the social surface of Indian life, but do not cynicism or moralize. Das's structural irony frequently defers to the end of a story and what he criticizes are any unquestioned authority in the social sphere.

Nostalgia and the Pastoral Imagination



Das' nostalgia is one of the motifs that is not merely retreat into sentiment. There are characters who yearn for a changing village, but the yearning is complex enough so that it can be examined and the reader attuned to the things this longing is hiding – poverty and stratification, the vulnerability to disaster – as well as the things it clearly shows.

Humanism

Absolute to all three is a set of circumstances, and Das' characters, no matter how idiotic, are proved to be as much a product of circumstance as of personal shortcomings; a humanism that carries out the narrative laughter, instead of withholding it, specifically from the ones those characters are trying to expose (A. Nayak 197).

Narrative Technique

Das's frame narration and retrospective structure abandon impersonal realism, resembling oral narration, even if this is a tale of reportage, stories told and recollected get embellished along the way.

Related but briefly introduced is another Indian conception of what can be termed magic realism: "a naturalistic story line dotted with turns of the supernatural and detailed in an equally naturalistic manner as the natural events" (Ratti 21) (derived from Indian and Odishan folk belief).

Das also utilises a third key technique, symbolic characterisation: Das's characters are not only psychologically believable but also “allegorically charged” and expressive of a social position, with the allegory implying that there is no “universal” character or position (Dash 163).

Discussion

As a whole, they make a point to argue the relevance of Das fiction beyond the narrowly defined Das criticism to suggest that the genre of the Indian short story is capable of a sublimity other than the western realist or modernist short story. There is no meaning prior to another in a Das story: a tale about hauntings and horror can also be read as a social criticism and as a spiritual parable, and so on.

Das's fiction is located in the "gaps between" colonial rationality and native belief, "is in the interstitial space between reason and belief, logic and culture, rationality and tradition holder and held" (Bhabha 2). Through Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin's cultural reclamation, his nostalgia expresses the necessity of remembering something when the modern world is working on erasures (Ashcroft et al. 27); through Said, his satire demonstrates the lack of legitimacy of structures of authority which a village community is expected to honour (Said 7).

Original Contribution of The Study

Das' mysticism or rural realism or his narrativizing have been subjects of study on their own. This paper sets out, then, by using close reading, as a replicable model to use with other bilingual writers of Indian English, to look at the three as one inter-woven argument of Indianness'—fantasy, irony, and nostalgia.



Conclusion

This paper has suggested that the usage of frame narration, magic realism and symbolic characterisation allows the Indianness to emerge in Manoj Das' selective short stories in the interaction of fantasy and myth, irony and satire and in a critically aware nostalgia attitude. The fantasy would have been implausible without the oral frame; the satire would have been chilling without the humanist characterisation; the nostalgia would have been underdeveloped without an ironic awareness of what the remembered village also harboured: the proof of its own greatness – and not by following western formal innovations, but by enriching itself in a distinctly Indian way of storytelling.

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Hospitality as Dharma in the Kapota-Śākunika Ākhyāna of the Mahābhārata: An Ethical Reflection

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Abstract: This article studies the ethical interpretation of the *Kapota-Śākunika ākhyāna*, the story of the doves and the fowler as narrated by Bhīṣma to Yudhiṣṭhira in the *Āpaddharmānuśāsanaparvan* of the *Śāntiparvan* in the *Mahābhārata*. The narrative is not presented as a moral fable but emphasis is laid on the distinction made by the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* between *śreyas* (the good) and *preyas* (the pleasurable), as reflected in the concept of *atithi-dharma*—the ethics of hospitality. The article focuses on the female dove’s courageous advice on *dharma* of the doves, the male dove’s act of *svadharma* in form of self-sacrifice, and the fowler’s transformation through witnessing (*darśana*) rather than instruction (*upadeśa*). It illustrates that the episode promotes a non-transactional understanding of *dharma*—hospitality provided regardless of the guest’s status or situation—based on the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*’s teaching *atithidevo bhava*. The discussion concludes with a brief reflection on the episode’s significance within the broader *ākhyāna* tradition of Indian Knowledge Systems and its relevance to contemporary debates.

Keywords: *dharma, āpaddharma, atithi-dharma, śreyas-preyas, svadharma, transformation, kapota-śākunika akhyāna, Śāntiparvan, Indian Knowledge Systems.*

Introduction

The *Śāntiparvan* section of the *Mahābhārata*¹ features many instructive passages on kingship and governance. Within this context, a brief story about two doves and a fowler appears. It occupies only six chapters (143-148) of the *Āpaddharmānuśāsanaparvan* of *Śāntiparvan*, yet it holds

¹ All the Sanskrit verses and their translation are taken from—Dutt, M.N. (2001). *Mahābhārata: Sanskrit Text with English Translation*, Vol.VII. Since the article is based on the story from a sub-*parvan* of a *parvan* thus the format of reference is—(*Śāntiparvan, Āpaddharmānuśāsanaparvan, Chapter.Verse*).

profound moral significance. Bhīṣma narrates it to Yudhiṣṭhira in direct response to a particular question—what merit does one gain from protecting a being who seeks refuge—a *śaraṇāgata*?² The question is timely and relevant. Yudhiṣṭhira, who rules a kingdom born from the destruction of his relatives, needs to understand how a ruler should treat those who come to him in need with no prior claim. Bhīṣma’s answer is not a mere rule. His instruction emerges in the form of a fable which demonstrates how *dharma* can be most effectively conveyed through storytelling when reasoning alone may not be the only way of teaching *dharma*.

The story raises a challenging question about the ethics of reciprocity—does hospitality (*ātithya*) depend on the guest’s moral character, or must it be extended unconditionally, even to enemies? It is observed that a female dove is caught and caged by the fowler who traps her. She lies helpless under her tree during a storm and must decide how to respond to him. Her decision, together with her husband’s extraordinary action afterwards, illustrates this article’s explanation of the *śreyas-preyas* distinction—the choice between the pleasurable and the good—through the story or *ākhyāna* of the birds. The article contends that the *Kapota-Śākunika* episode promotes a form of *dharma* that is non-transactional, i.e. *atithi-dharma*, as shown in this story, which asks not whether the guest deserves care but only whether they are in need. This idea frames the epic’s broader themes, emphasising endless casuistry over the desert, and celebrates unconditional goodness and authentic ethical action filled with virtues over vices.

The following discussion situates the episode within its narrative context in the *Āpaddharmānuśāsanaparvan* and identifies it as a moral category within the epic’s broader concept of *dharma*. It also examines two key ethical frameworks i.e. the female dove’s rejection of *preyas* and the male dove’s fulfilment of *svadharma* through self-sacrifice. Finally, it explores the episode’s core argument about the essence of *dharma* and briefly discusses its role in the wider *ākhyāna* tradition and its relevance in the contemporary Indian ethic of *atithidevo bhava*.

² *pitāmaha mahāprājña sarvaśāstraviśārada | śaraṇaṁ pālayānasya yo dharmas taṁ vadasva me||*

“O grandfather, O you of great wisdom, O you who are master of scriptures, tell me what the merit is of one who supports a person seeking his protection.”

(*Śāntiparvan*, *Āpaddharmānuśāsanaparvan*, 143.1)



***Dharma in a situation of Distress: The Āpaddharmānuśāsanaparvan*³**

In the *Mahābhārata*, *dharma* is a layered concept rather than a fixed rule. The epic distinguishes between *sāmānya dharma*, the universal conduct applicable to everyone regardless of social status, and *svadharma* or *viśeṣa dharma*, the specific duty assigned to an individual based on birth, caste or situation. Much of the epic demonstrates how these layers can come into conflict. The *Āpaddharmānuśāsanaparvan* introduces an even stricter set of conflicting situations and *dharma*, called *āpaddharma*, which applies in extreme or crisis situations when normal rules become inadequate or contradictory. Adam Bowles, in his detailed study of this section of the *Śāntiparvan*, explains that *āpaddharma* refers to special rules made for exceptional circumstances (Bowles, 2007). The key moral point is that under normal conditions, the goals of *śreyas* (self-realisation) and *preyas* (pleasure) often align, or their differences are minor. But in times of hardship such as hunger, danger, grief—they part ways and the choice between them becomes crucial.

The setting of the *Kapota-Śākunika ākhyāna* enacts this condition with precision. Every figure in the story is in distress *āpad*. The fowler, drenched, frozen, and lost in the forest after a storm, is as vulnerable in that moment as any suppliant (*Śāntiparvan*, *Āpaddharmānuśāsanaparvan*, 143. 25–27). The female dove lies caged, entirely at his mercy. The male dove, watching his captured wife from above, is helpless to alter her condition by any power of his own. No character in this story occupies a position of comfort from which virtue could be performed at no cost. This is the condition under which Bhīṣma chooses to answer Yudhiṣṭhira’s question about supporting a suppliant (*Śāntiparvan*, *Āpaddharmānuśāsanaparvan*, 43.1)—not through a possibility of ease, but through one in which every actor already suffers or is in distress, and the one further asked to give/help/be hospitable is the one with the least to spare.

Dharma that only expects the comfortable to be generous is fragile and vulnerable to collapse when circumstances change. By illustrating hospitality amid shared crisis, the *Āpaddharmānuśāsanaparvan* emphasises a deeper truth, i.e. that *dharma* must be practised both

³ For a detailed understanding *Āpaddharma*, the English renderings of the *Śāntiparvan* verses from M. N. Dutt’s (2001) translation of the *Mahābhārata* is undertaken as well as details have been verified from the literal and interpretive methodologies as adopted by Fitzgerald’s translation of the *Śāntiparvan*, (Fitzgerald, Trans. & Ed., 2004) and Bowles’s close study of the *Āpaddharmaparvan* (Bowles, 2007).



towards the deprived and also to those who cause suffering. This essential concept sets the episode apart from a mere sentimental birds' fable and raises it to a true ethical lesson.

Why Bhīṣma, even as he rests on his bed of arrows, chooses to speak about doves rather than kings is significant here. Here there is a story within the story that highlights the many elements harmoniously. Bhīṣma here is a humble teacher, patiently awaiting his death, and Yudhiṣṭhira is a recently crowned king who is confronted with questions of justice and violence. The lesson on unconditional hospitality, offered by a dying man to a remorseful king, resonates deeply with their circumstances of *āpad*. The main message of the *Āpaddharmānuśāsanaparvan* emphasises that a ruler's real test of *rāja-dharma*, i.e. understanding about governance, lies not only in the treatment of allies but also in the treatment of those he has least alignment with. The story of the doves vividly exemplifies this crucial aspect of royal responsibility.

A Brief account of the Narrative

Bhīṣma shares a story about a fowler (*śākunika*), a man who has dedicated his life to killing and selling birds. He is described as cruel and without kin (*Śāntiparvan*, *Āpaddharmānuśāsanaparvan*, 143.10-12). When caught in a forest storm, he finds an injured female dove and cages her, even though he's trembling from the cold himself—highlighting a habitual cruelty that persists even amid his own suffering (*Śāntiparvan*, *Āpaddharmānuśāsanaparvan*, 143.26–27). Tired, he finds shelter under a tree, not knowing that it is the home of the dove's mate, and falls asleep after praying to the forest spirits for protection (*Śāntiparvan*, *Āpaddharmānuśāsanaparvan*, 143.31–33).

The male dove, unaware that his wife is the fowler's prisoner, mourns her absence throughout the night, expressing deep affection in words that brim with affection and tenderness (*Śāntiparvan*, *Āpaddharmānuśāsanaparvan*, 144. 4–11). His mourning reveals a very strong bond between the doves before any ethical considerations/interpretations are introduced in the fable. It is this grieving husband whom the caged wife then addresses. Instead of requesting freedom for herself or seeking revenge from the fowler, she advises him to watch over the stranger sleeping below and reminds him that birds exist to satisfy others' hunger. She emphasises that a guest at one's door, regardless of who he/she is, owes a duty of hospitality (*Śāntiparvan*, *Āpaddharmānuśāsanaparvan*, 145.6–11). This establishes the story's moral universe.



The male dove obeys the female dove's moral guidance. He gently sparks a fire from dry leaves to warm the cold fowler. When the fowler asks for food, the dove feels helpless, as birds do not hoard food. He then gracefully circles the fire three times and enters it, offering his own body as a sacrifice. He becomes the food for the fowler (*Śāntiparvan, Āpaddharmānuśāsanaparvan*, 146.16–17,23). Filled with remorse, the fowler questions his actions (*Śāntiparvanparvan, Āpaddharmānuśāsanaparvan*, 146.24). Later, he vows to follow the righteous example set by the doves (*Śāntiparvan, Āpaddharmānuśāsanaparvan*, 147. 8–9). He releases the female dove. But she, mourning her mate, is unwilling to survive without him; thus, she follows him into the flames (*Śāntiparvan, Āpaddharmānuśāsanaparvan*, 148. 8–9). Deeply moved by the dedicated affection and sense of duty of doves, the fowler abandons his profession. He undergoes the path of penance in the hope of attaining (like the doves), a place among the virtuous in the world beyond.

4. Choice of *Śreyas* over *Preyas*: The Female Dove's *Dharma*

The core message of this episode isn't just about the self-sacrificing male dove, but more about the caged female dove who remains imprisoned until the very end. Of all the characters, she's the only one who, through her speech, explains that retribution is neither ethically understandable nor justified, and that any harm to the fowler would not pass the test of fairness on the part of the birds' *dharma*. She's the one who's hurt, and her captor's actions are not justified. Amidst this distress, she cries out for a sense of duty. What she truly longs for isn't revenge—it's kindness and acceptance towards the one (Fowler) who caused her pain, because he too was in distress (in the biting cold and dampness).

This point is worth considering because it directly reflects the distinction the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* (1.2.1-2) makes between *śreyas* and *preyas*. In that text, Yama explains to Naciketas that everyone faces both the preferable (*preyas*) and the good (*śreyas*) options. The wise individual, after evaluating both, chooses *śreyas* over *preyas*, whereas the ignorant, motivated by *yogakṣema*—worldly gain and security—opts for *preyas*:

*anyacchreya'nyadutaiva preyaste ubhe nānārthe puruṣaṁ sinītaḥ |
tayoḥ śreya ādadānasya sādurbhavati hīyate'rthādya u preyo vṛñīte ||*

“(Death said) One is good while another is pleasant. These two, serving different ends, bind men; happiness comes to him who, of these, chooses the good; whoso chooses the pleasant forfeits the true end.”(*Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, 1.2.1)



śreyaśca preyaśca manuṣyametaṣtau samparītya vivinakti dhīraḥ |
śreya hi dhīro'bhipreyaso vṛṇīte preyo mando yogakṣemādvṛṇīte ||
“Both the good and the pleasant approach the mortal; the intelligent man examines and distinguishes them; for, the intelligent man prefers the good to the pleasant; the ignorant man chooses the pleasant for the sake of his body.” (*Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, 1.2.1)⁴

Within the story’s context, *preyas* goes beyond simple pleasure. It encompasses anything that offers immediate satisfaction to the self, including the desire for revenge (if the female dove had harboured it against the fowler). Revenge against an oppressor (the fowler in the story) can be interpreted as a form of *preyas*. Actions rooted in *preyas* can be understood psychologically and may appear as justified, reactive responses. Such responses also provide immediate mental relief for oneself rather than attaining the broader ethical good (*śreyaś*).

The reasoning of the female dove, as explained in the text, takes quite a different approach. She gently reminds her husband that they are pigeons, the creatures with an innate knowledge of themselves, and therefore must follow the path set out for them by the *dharma* of doves (*Śāntiparvan*, *Āpaddharmānuśāsanaparvan*, 145.9).⁵ Her words are not based on mere feelings but on *svadharma*—i.e. the obligations that the very nature of birds as beings calls them to uphold and adhere to no matter how they might feel about the guest who is before them. She even makes a strong comparison that neglecting a suppliant in need is as serious as killing a brahmin or a cow (*Śāntiparvan*, *Āpaddharmānuśāsanaparvan*, 145. 8)⁶, which stands as one of the most severe acts in the moral domain of the *Mahābhārata*. This isn’t a gentle suggestion, but it’s

⁴ For textual understanding of *Upaniṣads* even Radhakrishnan, S. (Ed. & Trans.). (1953). *The principal Upaniṣads* is used.

⁵ *yāsmākaṁ vihitā vṛttih kāpotī jātīdharmataḥ |
sā nyāyyātmavatā nityaṁ tvadvidhenābhivartitum ||*

“You are endowed with knowledge of the self. You should follow the course which has been ordained for us as pigeons on account of our birth.”

(*Śāntiparvan*, *Āpaddharmānuśāsanaparvan*, 145.9)

⁶ *yo hi kaś cid dvijaṁ hanyād gāṁ vā lokasya mātaram |
śaraṇāgataṁ ca yo hanyāt tulyaṁ teṣāṁ ca pātakaṁ ||*

“The sin that a person commits by killing a Brahmana or that mother of the world, viz. a cow, is equal to what one commits by allowing a suppliant to die”

(*Śāntiparvan*, *Āpaddharmānuśāsanaparvan*, 145.8)



the female dove guiding her husband towards a higher ethical ideal. She is pointing towards a more challenging good (*śreyas*), using the firm and serious words that the birds are to be hospitable:

śaraṇāgatasya kartavyam ātithyam iha yatnataḥ |
pañcayajñapravṛttena gr̥hasthena viśeṣataḥ ||

“One should with diligence do the duties of hospitality towards a person who seeks shelter. Indeed, one is particularly bound to do so if he leads the life of a householder that consists of five sacrifices.”

(*Śāntiparvan, Āpaddharmānuśāsanaparvan*, 146.6)

The female dove, reminding the husband of his duty of hospitality despite being in distress, makes this a heartfelt moral and ethical moment, rather than merely an admirable one, while showcasing how the *Mahābhārata* empowers her to choose differently and shows her opting for *śreyas* over *preyas*. She makes this choice from within her captivity, without any promise that virtue will be rewarded or even recognised.

At that moment of her ethical decision-making (asking the male dove to be hospitable to serve the very fowler who has harmed her), she couldn't have known that the fowler would be reformed by her choice of actions. Her choosing of *śreyas* isn't justified by its eventual outcome (holding no utilitarian value), but it simply precedes and doesn't depend on the outcome. This idea resonates with Bimal Krishna Matilal's exploration of moral reasoning in the *Mahābhārata* while highlighting the epic's oft-spoken message that sometimes right action must be chosen without the reassurance of a guaranteed good outcome (Matilal, 2002).

This comparison shows how the female dove's decision stands out within the epic's broader ethical themes. While many women in the epic suffer injuries inflicted by others, exercising limited choices, the *Mahābhārata* also reminds us that responding to such injuries (of hues) isn't always simple. The central theme of the text illustrates how difficult decisions can be, especially when wounds impact broader policies. When we see it this way, the dove's choice isn't that easy at all. It is a sincere example of making a tough decision with clarity—without the compromises that often complicate similar choices for the male and female protagonists in the epic. Free from the political chaos that makes human decisions in the *Mahābhārata* so complex and variegated, the story of the doves focuses on the core issue of moral dilemmas and presents it without the noise



of conflicting loyalties. What the Dove fable handles with ease, the various humans of the epic are able to do only with great trouble and tribulations.

***Svadharma* as the Foundation of Male Dove's Self-Sacrifice**

In the narrative, the female dove exemplifies renunciation by forgiving even the fowler who confined her and by refraining from the path of *preyas*, i.e., seeking revenge or seeing herself as a victim. The roles of husband and wife are markedly contrasting—while the female dove demonstrates restraint, the male dove exhibits excessive generosity and compassion that surpass ordinary hospitality. His sense of duty is never reluctant but warmly adhered to without any questioning. When asked for warmth (*Śāntiparvan, Āpaddharmānuśāsanaparvan*, 146.9), he provides fire. When further asked for food (*Śāntiparvan, Āpaddharmānuśāsanaparvan*, 146.15) and unable to supply any (*Śāntiparvan, Āpaddharmānuśāsanaparvan*, 146.16), he does not simply admit his incapacity but instead offers his own body. The text describes him circling the fire three times with a smile before entering it:

tataḥ satyapratijño vai sa pakṣī prahasann iva |
tam agniṁ triḥ parikramya praviveśa mahīpate ||
“Having thus made up his mind, the great bird with a smiling face, thrice went around that fire and then entered its flames”
(*Śāntiparvan, Āpaddharmānuśāsanaparvan*, 146.23)

Reflecting on the above act highlights that the male dove's action is not merely heroism but also a way of following *svadharma* as *āpaddharma*, blurring the distinction between *śreyas* and *preyas*. The *Śāntiparvan*, where Bhīṣma's broader teaching to Yudhiṣṭhira on *svadharma* often emphasises on the difficulty of defining duty's proper boundaries, illustrates this. One way to interpret the male dove's act is not as excess but as *svadharma* free from doubts rooted in fear, self-interest, or desire. His wife told him that birds exist to serve others' hunger (*Śāntiparvan, Āpaddharmānuśāsanaparvan*, 145.6) and the male does not merely perform a symbolic or partial act of service but executes it fully. Because the logic she presented is taken seriously by him, and once basic hospitality in the form of shelter and warmth is provided, no other conclusion than self-sacrifice as the *āpaddharma* is left. This interpretation is backed by a verse from the *Bhagavadgītā*, part of the *Mahābhārata*'s moral structure, where Kṛṣṇa addresses Arjuna:



*śreyān svadharmo viguṇaḥ paradharmāt svanuṣṭhitāt |
svadharme nidhanaṁ śreyaḥ paradharmo bhayāvahaḥ ||*

“Better is one’s own dharma, though imperfectly performed, than the dharma of another well performed. Death in the discharge of one’s own duty is better; the duty of another is fraught with fear.”

(*Bhagavadgītā* 3.35, 18.47)

This demonstrates that the male dove’s act of self-sacrifice reflects and justifies the principle of *svadharma* from the *Bhagavadgītā*. The dove has not abandoned his specific duty as a host—a duty his wife described as the *dharma* of the doves. Therefore, his action rooted in *svadharma* highlights that duty cannot be replaced by any alternative virtue.

Atithidevo Bhava as dharma

In summary, the actions of the two doves support the article’s central ethical insight that *atithi-dharma*, as depicted here, is inherently non-transactional. It does not depend on the guest’s moral character, past actions or current threat level. The fowler is not portrayed as a neutral outsider, arriving with good intentions at the moment of hospitality. He is actively the captor of the dove and the cause of the female dove’s suffering. The story does not undermine this fact or set conditions for providing hospitality to the fowler. Instead, the fowler receives the honour as due to the guest, despite his cruel treatment of the female dove—which is the highlight of the story’s core message. The *Śikṣāvallī* of the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* instructs the departing student:

mātr̥devo bhava, pitṛdevo bhava, ācāryadevo bhava, atithidevo bhava |

“Let your mother be a god to you, let your father be a god to you, let your teacher be a god to you, let your guest be a god to you.”

(*Taittirīya Upaniṣad, Śikṣāvallī*, 1.11.2)

This injunction’s structure is worth highlighting here because it shows how the guest is placed on the same plane as family and teachers. These relationships aren’t based on choice or merit. We don’t choose our parents based on who’s most deserving to be ours. The duty/obligation/responsibility to care for them is natural and without judgement about their worth. By placing the guest in this company of distinguished relations, it emphasises that hospitality is a kind of unconditional regard which is given regardless of the personal qualities of an individual.



The *Kapota-Śākunika ākhyāna* can be read as this *Upaniṣadic* principle dramatised under the most adversarial (*āpad*) conditions. If hospitality is owed even to one's captor, then the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*'s injunction is not a sentiment reserved for convenient occasions but is a genuine ethical demand of all times. The male dove's own words to the fowler make this logic explicit, wherein hospitality is due even to an enemy who arrives at one's house, for the tree does not withdraw its shade even from the one who comes to cut it down (*Śāntiparvan, Āpaddharmānuśāsanaparvan*, 146 5). Being good in this context stands as a necessity.

Gurcharan Das, surveying the *Mahābhārata*'s broader treatment of *dharma*, calls the epic's stubborn insistence that being good is difficult precisely because it so often asks more of a person than fairness alone would require (Das, 2009). The doves may not have been fair to the fowler, in the sense of giving him what his conduct has earned.⁷ He is given in accordance with his need/requirement, which determines the moral worth of the episode. It is worth adding, briefly, that this same non-transactional logic underlies the episode's quieter ecological suggestion — that the forest-dwelling creature, unlike the human being who hoards and accumulates, gives according to present need alone (*Śāntiparvan, Āpaddharmānuśāsanaparvan*, 146, 16–17).⁸ This is a point that the narrative raises not as sentiment about nature but as a further instance of *dharma* practised without calculation of return.

7. The Transformation of the Fowler through Reflection

A final ethical query addressed in this write-up concerns not the doves but the fowler, who seems to have undergone a deep inner transformation. The doves' self-sacrificing acts to uphold the ethics of hospitality are virtuous, but a remarkable change in the fowler's attitude and actions after witnessing the sacrifice manifests a new approach that leads him to regret and repent for what he

⁷ The doves could have been cruel to the fowler as that's what he was towards the female dove. Believing in principle of dharma they maintained calm, kindness and generosity.

⁸ *na me 'sti vibhavo yena nāśayāmi tava kṣudhām |*
utpannena hi jīvāmo vayaṁ nityaṁ vanaukasah ||

"I have nothing in store by which you may satisfy your hunger. We dwellers of the forest always live upon what we get every day."

(*Śāntiparvan, Āpaddharmānuśāsanaparvan*, 146.16)

saṁcayo nāsti cāsmākaṁ munīnām iva kānane |

ity uktvā sa tadā tatra vivaraṇavadano 'bhavat ||

"Like the ascetics of the forest we never amass for the morrow!—Having said so, the bird's face grew pale"

(*Śāntiparvan, Āpaddharmānuśāsanaparvan*, 146.17)



had done (*Śāntiparvan, Āpaddharmānuśāsanaparvan*,146.24-25).⁹ This inner transformation prevents him from reverting to his old self as a fowler, with cruelty and insensitivity ingrained in him.

This mode of moral learning through the process of witnessing or *darśana*, rather than instruction or *upadeśa*, is a distinguishing feature, with roots deep in the Indian pedagogical and interpretive tradition. In keeping with this logic, the *ākhyāna* itself, the narrated example, is treated as a legitimate and often superior vehicle for transmitting *dharma* alongside direct perception. This story, added to the *āpaddharma* section, shows that when Bhīṣma is asked a direct question by Yudhiṣṭhira about the merit of supporting a suppliant, he does not answer by stating a rule but instead presents a story. His choice is no coincidence, and he may well be aware that a rule is contestable and can be set aside, whereas a narrative example, as absorbed by the fowler himself, can work on Yudhiṣṭhira differently. The entire moral vocabulary of the fowler is grounded in his perceptual and experiential learning, as he himself says that he is taught by the pigeon's example; he will practise righteousness henceforth, for righteousness is the greatest refuge (*Śāntiparvan, Āpaddharmānuśāsanaparvan*,147.8–9).¹⁰

There's an interesting point to consider about the overall teaching style of this episode, which is quite different from just the fowler's personal change. Bhīṣma doesn't directly answer Yudhiṣṭhira's question about the duties of a suppliant with a strict definition or a list. Instead by

⁹ *agnimadhyam praviṣṭam taṁ lubdho dṛṣṭvātha pakṣiṇam |
cintayām āsa manasā kim idaṁ nu kṛtaṁ mayā ||*
“Seeing the bird enter the fire, the fowler began to think and asked himself—what have I done?”
(*Śāntiparvan, Āpaddharmānuśāsanaparvan*,146.24)
*aho mama nṛśaṁsasya garhitasya svakarmanā |
adharmāḥ sumahān ghorā bhaviṣyati na saṁśayaḥ ||*
Alas dreadful will be the sin, the outcome of my own acts. I am highly ruthless and blameable.”
(*Śāntiparvan, Āpaddharmānuśāsanaparvan*,146.25)

¹⁰ *upavāsair bahuvividhaiś cariṣye pāralaukikam |
aho dehapradānena darśitātithipūjanā ||*
“I shall by various sorts of fasts, practise such vows as will take me to the other world. Alas by giving up his body, the pigeon has shown how a guest should be adored.”
(*Śāntiparvan, Āpaddharmānuśāsanaparvan*,147.8)
*tasmād dharmam cariṣyāmi dharmo hi paramā gatiḥ |
dṛṣṭo hi dharmo dharmiṣṭhair yādṛśo vihagottame ||*
“Taught by his example, I shall hereafter practise righteousness. Righteousness is the greatest refuge. Indeed I shall practise the righteousness shown by the virtuous pigeon, that foremost of all winged creatures.”
(*Śāntiparvan, Āpaddharmānuśāsanaparvan*,147.9)



sharing a story he lets Yudhiṣhira, like the fowler in the story, arrive at the principle by following the reasoning of the doves, rather than being given the answer outright. Arvind Sharma's research highlights how this storytelling approach is common across the *dharmaśāstra* and *itihāsa* traditions, emphasising on moral lessons through stories rather than just rules (Sharma, 2000). Similarly, Nicholas Sutton points out that the *Mahābhārata* often explores its most important ethical ideas through stories instead of direct statements, which allows the teachings to naturally emerge from the narrative (Sutton, 2000). The *Kapota-Śākunika* story exemplifies this teaching method of sharing about *dharma* through stories to a king, so he can pass on the same lessons to his people in the kingdom in the same way.

This narrative asks us to explore *dharma*'s connection to the non-human world. Instead of a traditional human sage, the teacher here is a bird—one that teaches through death rather than life. This storytelling approach changes the usual hierarchy in the epic, where humans teach through words and animals present lessons through their actions as observed from a distance. In this case, the doves become the true moral guide, while the human observer is more of a passive witness who is transformed through the experience. Alf Hiltebeitel's insightful view of the *Mahābhārata* as a continuous lesson on the importance of *dharma* fits perfectly with this story (Hiltebeitel, 2001). It's literally an educational moment designed for a fowler, who receives no other kind of guidance.

Conclusion: *Atithidevo Bhava* and Relevance in Time

The *Kapota-Śākunika* story continues to live on, even centuries after it was first narrated. Its core principle of hospitality still resonates in Indian homes, temples, and community gatherings with a message of *Atithidevo Bhava*. Offering hospitality isn't just a polite gesture, but an essential duty, as portrayed in the *Āpaddharmānuśāsanaparvan*, when doves don't honour a visitor who is kind and conscientious. Instead, they honour their captor with cruelty in him while emphasising that true *dharma* is tested not by how easily it's obeyed when circumstances are convenient, but by whether *dharma* is upheld when the temptation to give it away is stronger. The test of *dharma* is toughest in situations of crisis (*āpad*).



This idea as presented in the article through the story goes far beyond the simple act of welcoming someone into our home, as suggested by the phrase *Atithidevo Bhava*. Today, we often reflect on this saying in broader contexts—especially while talking about how we treat displaced or troubled individuals, or handling the everyday responsibilities of institutions that are asked to show kindness, even when those they help may not seem to deserve it. The story itself offers a meaningful perspective that it's not about sentimentality or emotions. It indeed is about the brave choice of the female dove to keep the value of *śreyas* over *preyas*, even while being caged by the fowler. Similarly, it is also about the male dove's unwavering adherence to his *svadharma*, facing the troubled situation rather than just focusing on evading it. In this way, the story encourages us to look inward, question ourselves, and reflect on whether our hospitality is simply a feeling or if it's guided by the true ethic of kindness—like a tree that provides shade even to the person who cuts it. Is hospitality just a means, or is it an end in itself? The story reminds us that it's an end and it is our *dharma* to be hospitable to everyone in need, even when we feel they may not deserve it.

On revisiting the context which Bhīṣma sets for this story, one finds—a dying warrior offering guidance to a grieving king on how to lead a kingdom built on loss; it's a lesson in governance. The unique point is that this lesson in statecraft comes through the gentle image of two small birds. This subtle choice of Bhīṣma highlights the *ākhyāna* tradition, reminding us that the deepest truths of *dharma* are often conveyed better through stories rather than strict commands. It also reflects a timeless message that a society which teaches its children to see guests at the door as beings to be honoured, rather than judged, is quietly honouring the *ākhyāna* tradition of the *Mahābhārata* and the Indian narrative structuring of the ancient texts. The story, nestled in a forest storm, continues to inspire us even today as that's part of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS).

The *Kapota-Śākunika ākhyāna* is not merely a simplistic curiosity within Indian Knowledge Systems. Instead, it gracefully exemplifies how these systems have operated—showing that *dharma* is often conveyed, communicated, explained and understood more through storytelling, such as *itihāsa* and *ākhyāna*, rather than through strict rules. This narrative approach carries the full depth of ethical teachings, making it a powerful reflection of the tradition. Thus, engaging with this story in its own honest language, on its own terms—rather than viewing it as simple folklore—serves as a gentle act of respect for Indian Knowledge Systems, which root the ethics



and ethos of India that we are today. In fact, it might be the most genuine guidance the doves' own example offers us: the *dharma* of hospitality.

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The Thirty-Six Tattvas: An Ontological Framework for Non-Dual Reality

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Abstract

Every philosophy that insists reality is fundamentally one eventually has to answer a question: why, then, does the world look so insistently like many things? Kashmir Shaivism, developed in its classical philosophical form by Utpaladeva and Abhinavagupta, gives one of the more ambitious answers to that question. Rather than dissolving the world into illusion, as Advaita Vedānta does, or splitting reality into two irreducible kinds of being, as classical Sāṃkhya does, the tradition builds a detailed map of exactly how an undivided consciousness comes to experience itself as bound, embodied, and surrounded by objects — without ever actually ceasing to be that same undivided consciousness. This map is the doctrine of the thirty-six tattvas. This paper follows that doctrine from its historical origins in ninth-century Kashmir, through its threefold architecture, to the philosophical concepts — freedom (svātantrya), self-luminosity (prakāśa-vimarśa), and real manifestation (ābhāsavāda) — that let the tradition claim, against its two chief rivals, that oneness and multiplicity need not be traded off against each other.

Keywords: Kashmir Shaivism, Pratyabhijñā, Tattva, Spanda, Abhinavagupta, Utpaladeva, Non-Dualism

The Problem of Unity and Multiplicity



Abhinavdhara

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Say reality is one, and you immediately owe an explanation of why it doesn't feel that way. This is not a minor housekeeping issue for a philosophical system; it is close to the central test any monism has to pass. Indian philosophy has produced two influential ways of passing it, and they turn out to be almost exact opposites of one another. Advaita Vedānta, as Śaṅkara presents it, keeps reality strictly one by demoting the world of everyday experience to something less than fully real — useful, workable, but ultimately a kind of superimposition that correct knowledge dissolves. Classical Sāṃkhya takes the opposite route: it keeps the world entirely real, but only by refusing to make reality one thing in the first place. Puruṣa, pure witnessing consciousness, and prakṛti, the active principle behind mind and matter, are held apart as two eternally distinct kinds of being. The world's reality is bought, in other words, at the price of reality's unity.

Kashmir Shaivism, and the Pratyabhijñā school in particular, tries for something more difficult than either move: to keep both commitments intact at once. Reality, on this view, really is one, and that one reality is consciousness — so far, this agrees with Advaita. But the tradition flatly refuses to treat the manifest world as a mistake awaiting correction. Instead it argues that the whole differentiated universe, right down to its most concrete and physical details, is a genuine act of self-expression by that one consciousness — an exercise of what the tradition calls svātantrya, its own absolute freedom to appear as many while remaining, in its essential nature, one. Working out precisely how this happens, in careful, non-arbitrary stages, is the job the thirty-six tattvas are built to do.

It's worth saying plainly that popular accounts of this scheme tend to flatten it into a list — thirty-six labelled rungs on a ladder, memorized rather than understood. That misses the point of the exercise. Read with any care, the tattva sequence is an argument: a graduated account of self-limitation (saṅkoca), in which each tattva marks a further degree of contraction that consciousness undergoes while never, even at its grossest and most material extreme, ceasing to be what it always was. What follows traces that argument from its historical roots to its philosophical payoff.

Historical Background



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It helps to start with the twenty-five categories, the Kashmir Shaiva philosophers inherited before they added anything of their own. Classical Sāṃkhya, systematized in Īśvarakṛṣṇa's *Sāṃkhyakārikā*, explains experience through prakṛti's unfolding into intellect, ego-sense, mind, the five subtle elements, the five gross elements, and the ten organs of sense and action. Standing entirely outside this unfolding sits puruṣa — inactive, uninvolved, simply present as witness. Īśvarakṛṣṇa's own image for the relationship has stuck for two thousand years: prakṛti behaves like a dancing girl who performs before an audience and then withdraws once she has been seen, purely for the sake of the one who watched her. It's a vivid picture, but it creates a real philosophical headache. If puruṣa truly never acts and prakṛti is truly without consciousness, it becomes hard to say what bondage or liberation could possibly mean to puruṣa — on Sāṃkhya's own strict terms, nobody is ever really bound and nobody is ever really freed; only nature transmigrates, is bound, and is released, never the self.

The Śaiva Āgamas — the Tantric scriptural corpus Kashmir inherited and helped shape — had already been working with Sāṃkhya's twenty-five categories for centuries by the time the distinctively Kashmiri schools emerged, but they treated that scheme as covering only the lower, "impure" layer of reality. What was missing was any account of what stands above puruṣa and prakṛti altogether: the nature of Śiva as ultimate reality, and the specific process by which that reality narrows itself down into the bound individual soul Sāṃkhya simply takes for granted as its starting point. This is the gap the eleven additional tattvas were built to close.

The distinctly Kashmiri part of the story runs through two schools traceable to named authors rather than anonymous scripture. According to Kṣemarāja, the Doctrine of Vibration, or Spanda, begins with an ascetic named Vasugupta, who in the early ninth century dreamed that an important teaching lay hidden on a mountain near Kashmir; going to the spot, he is said to have found the *Śiva Sūtra* inscribed on rock. Whatever one makes of the story, the *Śiva Sūtra* really is the earliest datable text of what we now call Kashmir Shaivism, followed soon after by the *Spanda-kārikā*, traditionally linked to Vasugupta's disciple Kallāṭa, which introduces the idea that ultimate reality is not a static, changeless ground but a living pulsation — the throb (spanda) of consciousness continually recognizing and reflecting on itself.

Running alongside Spanda, and eventually folded into it, is the Pratyabhijñā school proper, founded by Somānanda toward the end of the ninth century in his *Śivadṛṣṭi* and given its



rigorous philosophical shape by his student Utpaladeva in the *Īśvarapratyabhijñākārikā*. Utpaladeva's central claim, from which the school takes its name, is that liberation is nothing but recognition (pratyabhijñā) — a decisive, irreversible seeing-through of one's authentic identity as Śiva, currently hidden by ignorance and the accumulated weight of past action. He illustrates this with an image that has stayed in the tradition ever since: a young woman, promised in marriage to a man she has never met, comes to love him simply from hearing of his qualities; when the two finally meet, she does not fall in love for the first time, she recognizes, in the stranger before her, the man she already loved. On this reading, liberation adds nothing new to the soul. It is only the collapse of a mistaken sense that Śiva was ever a stranger.

It fell to Abhinavagupta, writing across the late tenth and early eleventh centuries, to draw together the ritual inheritance of the Trika Āgamas, the practical yogic teachings of the Spanda school, and Pratyabhijñā's philosophical rigor into one comprehensive system, most fully in his sprawling *Tantrāloka*. It is in this synthesis, and in the shorter manual his disciple Kṣemarāja later wrote, the *Pratyabhijñāhṛdayam*, that the thirty-six-tattva scheme reaches its classical, most systematic form, functioning as the shared metaphysical backbone beneath both traditions' otherwise distinct emphases.

The number thirty-six, and the names of the eleven added tattvas, were not the exclusive property of the non-dual schools. The dualist Śaiva Siddhānta, also well established in Kashmir before its centre of gravity shifted south, worked with essentially the same list but read it inside a framework that kept Śiva (pati), the bound soul (paśu), and the bonds themselves (pāśa) permanently distinct, never finally collapsing into one even at the moment of release. The lesson here is worth holding onto: the bare list of thirty-six names settles nothing by itself. Everything depends on what account is given of how the higher tattvas relate to the lower ones — an identity that is simply recognized, on Abhinavagupta's reading, or a closeness between beings that remain, however intimately joined, genuinely other, on the Siddhāntin's.

The Structure of the Thirty-Six Tattvas



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The tattvas fall into three tiers, distinguished by degree of purity (śuddhi) — a technical term here, not a matter of ritual cleanliness, but of how clearly the underlying unity of "I" and "this" still shows through at each stage of experience.

The Five Pure Tattvas: Śiva, Śakti, Sadāśiva, Īśvara, Śuddhavidyā

Śiva tattva names the Absolute simply as light (prakāśa) — the bare fact of awareness, before any object, any content, any qualification whatsoever has entered the picture. Śakti tattva names that very same reality considered as reflective self-awareness (vimarśa), its own capacity to know itself as itself. The tradition insists these are not two separate things standing in any relation of dependency; Kṣemarāja's own formulation, as Jaideva Singh says it, is that Śiva-Śakti tattva is not, strictly speaking, an emanation (ābhāsa) at all, but the very seed from which every later emanation unfolds. Light and its own self-luminosity are simply two names for a single fact.

From this undivided ground come three further tattvas, marking the first stirrings of what will eventually become the subject-object split, though the underlying sense of identity has not yet been lost. In Sadāśiva tattva — also called Sadākhya, "the affirmation of being," since the experience here is essentially "I am" — will (icchā) predominates. The cognition can be phrased as "I am this," but as Jaideva Singh puts it, the "this" here remains only a hazy, indistinct experience; the weight falls almost entirely on the "I." In Īśvara tattva the balance shifts: this-consciousness (idaṃvimarśa) becomes noticeably clearer and more defined, though it is still felt as continuous with the "I" rather than opposed to it. Śuddhavidyā tattva, the fifth, is where "I" and "this" finally sit in equilibrium — both recognized with equal clarity, and both recognized as pointing to the same underlying reality. This is the last point in the whole sequence where unity-in-difference is directly experienced as such. Everything after this describes a further narrowing of that recognition.

The Seven Middle Tattvas: Māyā, the Five Kañcukas, and Puruṣa

The sixth tattva, Māyā, is the real hinge of the system, and it's worth being precise about what the word does and doesn't mean here. Advaita's māyā functions as a principle whose products are ultimately unreal — Somānanda himself, in fact, already classes Advaita among the "bhrāntivādins," those who take the world to be illusion, and argues against them directly.



Māyā in the Kashmir Shaiva scheme means something different: a real power belonging to consciousness itself, the specific capacity by which an undivided reality presents itself as though divided. It doesn't conjure anything out of nothing. It differentiates what remains, at bottom, undivided.

Out of Māyā unfold five further contractions, the *kañcukas* or "cloaks" — the tradition's own image is of a king dressing down in ordinary clothes to pass, for a while, as a commoner. *Kālā* narrows the Absolute's universal creative power into a merely finite capacity to act. *Vidyā* narrows omniscience into partial, patchy knowledge. *Rāga* narrows the Absolute's inherent completeness into desire — the felt sense that something, somewhere, is missing. *Kāla* narrows eternity into sequential time. *Niyati* narrows unrestricted causal freedom into determination by particular circumstance, place, and cause. The twelfth *tattva*, *Puruṣa*, names what results from this whole sequence of contractions: consciousness that has now, for all practical purposes, become an individual subject — the very *puruṣa Sāṃkhya* philosophy takes as its unquestioned starting point.

This middle tier earns the label "pure-impure" precisely because it's transitional. Something of the higher unity survives, since it is still one consciousness undergoing these limitations rather than being replaced by something foreign to it — and yet every specific mark of finitude that will define ordinary embodied life gets introduced here for the first time.

The Twenty-Four Lower Tattvas Inherited from Sāṃkhya

The remaining *tattvas*, thirteen through thirty-six, track the *Sāṃkhya* school closely, now reframed as the field of experience available to the already-contracted *Puruṣa*. *Prakṛti* unfolds into *Buddhi*, *Ahaṃkāra*, and *Manas*; the five organs of sensory cognition and the five organs of action follow; then the five subtle elements; and finally the five gross elements — earth, water, fire, air, and space — where manifestation reaches its most concrete, most externalized point.

What changes here isn't the content of this lower field but its status. *Sāṃkhya* treats *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* as two permanently distinct kinds of being; the Kashmir Shaiva reading insists the entire lower field, subject and object alike, is a single, continuous unfolding of the very same consciousness that was, at the level of the pure *tattvas*, entirely undivided. Even the grossest



element, earth, is on this account no less an expression of Śiva than Śiva tattva itself — it is simply consciousness appearing at the furthest possible extreme of its own self-contraction.

The Philosophical Argument

All of this rests, philosophically, on one carefully worked-out idea: *svātantrya*, absolute freedom. For Utpaladeva and Abhinavagupta, consciousness is defined above all by this freedom — not the mere absence of external constraint, but a positive, creative capacity to appear however it chooses, including in forms that experience themselves, from the inside, as bound, partial, and cut off from consciousness altogether. On this account, the descent through the *tattvas* isn't a fall and certainly isn't a corruption. It's *svātantrya* doing exactly what makes it what it is. A reality incapable of limiting itself, able only ever to appear as itself and nothing else, would be for this tradition the lesser reality, not the greater — because it would lack precisely the autonomous power that makes something divine in the first place.

This is the work the term *ābhāsavāda*, the doctrine of manifestation, does. Every finite object and every finite subject, the *Pratyabhijñā* philosophers hold, is a genuine *ābhāsa* — a real shining-forth — of the one consciousness. The distinction from Advaita here is easy to blur, so it's worth being exact about it. For Advaita, manifestation is an appearing-to-be standing in for genuine being: the underlying unity seems to be a multiplicity, and those who don't see through the seeming mistake it for the whole of reality. For the *Pratyabhijñā*, manifestation isn't a semblance masking something more authentic behind it — it is the very form the absolute takes in becoming manifest. The everyday world isn't a screen of appearances set against an absolute that only stays authentic by remaining forever unmanifest. Kṣemarāja himself, describing the Vedāntin's opposing position with evident distance from it, sums it up as treating Brahman as essentially whatever the world happens not to be — a formula the *Pratyabhijñā* rejects outright, since on their account nothing that shines forth, however humble, ever stands genuinely apart from the light that makes it visible in the first place.

This has a real consequence for what liberation is supposed to mean. If the world were a mistake, liberation would have to mean correcting the mistake, seeing past the world to whatever lies behind it. But if the world is a real self-disclosure of consciousness, liberation can only be recognition — *pratyabhijñā*, in exactly Utpaladeva's sense — not the erasure of



"this," but the collapse of the false sense that "this" was ever separate from "I." Nothing in the tattva sequence needs to be undone for liberation to happen. What changes is only whether the sequence is finally recognized for what it always was.

Against Sāṃkhya the argument runs a little differently. As already noted, Sāṃkhya's dualism struggles to explain what bondage or liberation could mean to an inactive, isolated puruṣa. By treating the whole Sāṃkhya universe of puruṣa and prakṛti as itself internal to a single self-limiting consciousness, the Shaiva scheme sidesteps the need to explain how two independent principles ever got into relationship with each other in the first place — there was never more than one reality to begin with. The apparent duality of subject and object doesn't disappear, but it gets relocated: no longer a duality between two kinds of being, but a duality internal to the activity of a single being. Measured purely by economy of assumptions, that's a lighter metaphysical commitment than Sāṃkhya's.

What this paper has tried to show is that it's entirely coherent to hold that reality is one and that the differentiated world is fully, not just provisionally, real — provided one has a workable account, which the Pratyabhijñā philosophers believed they had, of how oneness can express itself as multiplicity without actually dividing.

If consciousness is genuinely free and unconditioned, it's fair to ask why it should limit itself at all, and why the specific graduated sequence of contractions should take exactly the form thirty-six tattvas describe rather than some other number or order. Abhinavagupta's answer — that self-limitation simply is an expression of freedom and needs no further justification — is coherent as far as it goes, but it doesn't, by itself, explain the particular count and ordering of the categories, which owes at least as much to the inherited Sāṃkhya framework and centuries of prior Āgamic classification as to any strict derivation from first principles. This isn't a fatal problem, and the tradition itself kept the philosophical argument for self-limitation separate from the historical contingency of the received list — but it's worth flagging as the point where the tattva scheme works more as a systematized description organized around a genuine insight than as a piece of strict logical deduction.

Conclusion



Abhinavdhara

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The thirty-six tattvas amount to one of Indian philosophy's more sustained attempts to hold unity and plurality together without asking either one to give way. Tracing a graduated path from the undifferentiated light of Śiva tattva down to the density of the five gross elements, the Pratyabhijñā philosophers offer an answer to the problem of the one and the many that neither Advaita's world-negating strategy nor Sāṃkhya's substance dualism quite manages: multiplicity is real, they argue, but it is nowhere other than consciousness exercising its own freedom to appear as itself under conditions of increasing self-limitation. What began, historically, as a synthesis of Āgamic ritual categories, Spanda's doctrine of vibration, and Utpaladeva's philosophy of recognition became, in Abhinavagupta's hands, a comprehensive answer to a problem that has never really gone out of date: how the one becomes, without ever ceasing to be one, the many.

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Negotiating Caste and Gender: A study of Karukku and the grip of Change

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Abstract:

The Indian caste system in the 20th century had rigid hierarchy that caused social inequality, intense marginalization and violence against lower castes, especially towards Dalits (formerly “untouchables”). This paper examines the intersectionality in caste and gender in the literary work, *Karukku* by Bama and *The Grip of Change* by P.Sivakami. It speaks about how Dalit women experienced discrimination not only by caste but also because of gender and patriarchy. The aim of this paper is to show how the two authors Bama and P.Sivakami with their incredible literary works *Karukku* and *The Grip of Change* represented resistance, identity and a way to explain difficult livelihood of Dalit women. *Karukku* an autobiographical work from lived experiences of Bama, it illustrates marginalization and gender prejudice which are so depicted realistically, while P.Sivakami a prominent writer and the former member of Indian administrative service who strongly identifies herself as Dalit feminist, writes a fictional novel *The Grip of Change*. The authors are critical of the Dalit movement and Dalit patriarchy. This text demonstrates double marginalization, caste based violence and internal patriarchy. These

narratives are not mere reflections into the past but lived experiences and present sociological base. This study argues that, both works demonstrate the double marginalization faced by Dalit women but they differ in presenting resistance.

Key words: Dalit, feminist, patriarchy, intersectionality, marginalization

Introduction:

In the Vedic period Indian society was divided into different communities namely the Brahmins(priests), Kshatriyas(warriors), Vaishyas(merchants) and Shudras, (servants) placing out each community for certain task ensuring coordination and harmony. But soon that turned into hierarchy which resulted in oppression of lower castes. The community much affected by this was the Dalits (untouchables).

This paper throws lights on the authors who were brave enough to speak out injustice and prejudice towards the Dalit women. The Dalit literature articulates the struggle faced by Dalit women by upper caste and within their own community due to gender and patriarchy. The two writers who worked on this theme exposed double discrimination and marginalization on Dalit women. A significant contribution to Dalit writing in India, Bama weaves many narratives together to explore the social inequities compounded above all by poverty suffered by Dalit women.

P.Sivakami critiques both the Dalit movement and Dalit patriarchy, and yet does not become traitor because of her participation in the search for solution. Her novel became an expression of Dalit youth-eager and working for change.

They articulate Tamil Dalit feminism by exposing double discrimination on Dalit women from upper castes and within their own community. *Karukku* by Bama is an autobiographical work rooted in personal experience and emotional introversion, *The Grip of Change* an English translation of *Pazhaiyana kazhithalun*, the first full length novel by P.Sivakami, an important Tamil writer, presents a fictional narrative that exposes systemic inequalities and power struggles. The translation also features *Asiriyar kurippu*, the sequel in which P.Sivkami revisits her first work with the character Thanganam, she showed challenging lives of Dalit women who navigate through marked by discrimination, poverty and patriarchy with determination, courage and resilience. Both texts reveal that Dalit women are not merely passive victims but active agents who resist and redefine their



identities within oppressive framework.

ABOUT THE NOVELS AND AUTHORS

Dalit literature in India emerging strongly from late 19th century anti- caste movement by famous figures like:

Jyotirao Phule: He was an Indian Social activist, and an anti-caste social reformer. His works were around ‘Untouchability’, caste system and showed efforts in educating women and uplifting oppressed caste communities. One of his prominent works ‘Gulamgiri’ (slavery) published in 1873 critiques the Indian caste system, Upper caste dominance and social injustice.

Baby kamble: Baby Kondiba Kamble also known as Babytai Kamble was an Indian Dalit activist, feminist and writer. She belongs to the Mahar community, the largest dalit community in Maharashtra. She was influenced by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar a prominent national leader. Her autobiography *Jina Amucha*, meaning ‘Our Life’ in Marathi is regarded as the first autobiography by a Dalit woman in Marathi. This work of hers provides a detail account of the lives of Mahars in Maharashtra with extreme poverty, caste discrimination, social customs and superstitions.

Gogu Shyamala: An important writer, philosopher and editor from Peddemul village. Her works, including *Father May Be an Elephant and Mother Only A Small Basket, But...* which is important in Telangana Dalit literature. This was part of her work on a project named Dalit Woman Biography. This story tells about a young girl growing up in poverty and social discrimination, her daily struggles of survival and deep-rooted caste inequality.

Bama Faustina Soosairaj: A Tamil Dalit feminist, teacher and novelist. Her autobiographical work *Karukku* 1992 chronicles the joys and sorrows experienced by Dalit Christian women in Tamil Nadu. She subsequently wrote two more novels, *Sangati* and *Vanmam*. Bama through the act of writing, prominently contributes not only transgressing caste boundaries, she also demolishes the conventional exclusions of language and genre.

P.Sivakami: A former Indian Administrative Services officer, activist and Dalit feminist writer predominately writing in Tamil. Apart from being one of the most prominent Dalit novelists in India, having written six novels and more than sixty short stories. She has also



constantly voiced her opinions on contemporary social and political issues.

In India, Dalit literature became famous whereas Dalit women literature is still not recognized. Dalit literature explains Dalit women status in India and in the same community. Dalit community women are oppressed and subjugated in doubly, first by patriarchy in their caste and then systemic violence and discrimination by upper caste class of Indian society. In *Karukku*, Bama exaggerates on two aspects caste and gender discrimination, until her 3rd standard schooling she was not aware of untouchability.

The scene where a man offers her food by holding a packet at the distance (to avoid polluting it) young Bama realizes caste based humiliation for the first time.

“Are we not human too?” (Karukku p.no.25-27)

Children from Dalit community face discrimination everywhere. Bama has a bitter experience of when she was accused of stealing a coconut and everyone turned a deaf ear to her protest, even the priest, whom she appeals for help is not above caste prejudices and tells her that,

” After all, you’re from Cheri you must have done it” (Bama Karukku 19)

Bama’s brother advised her to study hard to. He says:

“Because we are born into the Paray jati, we are never given any honor or dignity or respect. We stripped of all that. But if we study and make progress, we can throw away these indignities. So study with care, learn all you can.” (Bama 18)

Despite all, she finds education as the sole means to overcome caste discrimination and the way to progress. She completed B.ed degree but same kind of discrimination continued.

The lines stated above tells us about experiences of Bama, how at an innocent age she had gone through humiliating situations how everyone including the priest did not believe her as she belonged to a lower caste. She believed education could change their situation, but soon realized it could not alone completely erase the deep-rooted discrimination.

The two types of oppression faced by Dalit women are by upper caste systems, and men in their own society, these oppressions are not only coterminous but mutually reinforcing. The reason upper caste is able to maintain their supremacy is through the exploitation of Dalit women. Dalit women are subjected to upper caste abuse and to domestic violence of patriarchal institution within their community itself. Dalit women handled domestic work in the household as well as agricultural labour in upper caste fields and come back home to start second shift of



labour while the men relax, this serves as an evidence of a societal structure that wrings the greatest labour out of individuals at its intersection of caste and gender slavery. Men of the household take the decision behalf of them, upper caste men in the society command and control them, the church talks about them defining their spiritual worth using ideals of purity influenced by brahmanical beliefs. In this context Bama act of writing is a bold act of her usage of the right to speak. *Karukku* serves as the voice for the voiceless.

P.Shivakami through the character of Thangaman showcased the toughest situation of Dalit women in society: she writes:

The rare beauty and honesty of the narrative arises from its body-centricity. Thangam's body bears testimony to the difficulties faced by Dalit women. (The Grip of Change pg.no:194)

Thangam's body treated as easily available body for sexual exploitation by upper caste people (Paranjothi udayar) she is exploited as a widow, as no male protection exacerbating her vulnerability, brothers of her late husband tried to take advantage as well. Thangam faces marginalization from social structure (caste) and gender.

But at last Kathamuthu raised his voice against sexual exploitation, gave her shelter and then he tried to take Thangam's body to satisfy his male desire. She said,

'You're like a brother to me...a brother' she groaned (The Grip of Change pg.no93) .

It is not always upper caste exploiting the lower caste. A lower caste might exploit his own community people. In the novel we see men like Kathamuthu taking advantage of vulnerable women. The novel presents overall texture of corruption that exists at all level.

These words highlight the harsh realities faced by Dalit women who take up all humiliation and endure exploitation while the oppressors maintain their social status and power. In the novel, Thangam a childless widow faces many challenges by the upper caste and in her caste. Kathamuthu has an affair with Nagamani an upper caste widow then married her to save social status where as Pranjothi an upper caste man just used Thangam as his mistress. The author uses this contrast to showcase the patriarchal mindset among people.

'Ungrateful whore! Even if she was hurt, she was hurt by the hand adorned with gold! A parachi could have never dreamt of being touched by a man like me! My touch was a boon granted for penance performed in her earlier births! And then the dirty bitch betrays me! How can I face the world with my name thus polluted?' (The grip of change pg.no - 31)



The above passage reveals the mindset of the upper caste people and how they criticized the Dalit women even though they are at fault, they consider themselves to be superior and failed to recognize their wrongdoings.

A few days later, Thangam's land dispute case was taken to court. (The grip of change pg.no-87)

Thangam's courage doesn't end there; she also pushes Kathamuthu to pursue court hearings. P.Shivakami with this novel explores the vulnerability of Dalit women and their battles against oppression. Through the character of Thangam's shown the women strength and resist the violence upon her. It's a bold step for Thangam to file case against Paranjothi Udayar. Paranjothi never expected such a decisive action.

Critical analysis:

Karukku and The grip of change serve as a study on intersectionality of caste and gender. Their writings show that oppression can't be understood solely through one lens for a long time, Indian literature ignored the Dalits or represented them inaccurately. Bama and P.Sivakami through their writings questioned traditional literature and shared to the world the difficult lives of Dalit women.

These texts not just hold literary importance but are also powerful means as social critiques that encourage readers to think about justice and equality.

Conclusion:

Karukku and The grip of change are prominent works in Dalit women literature, earlier Dalit literature focused only on men literature. Bama and P.Sivakami showcased the discrimination faced by Dalit women not only by caste but also even on gender, their works portray the real struggle faced by Dalit women because of caste and gender intersectionality and marginalization outside and inside their own community. Both novels show struggles, pain, justice and courage to overcome the difficulties from their pathetic situations.

Bama in her novel shared personal life, childhood, studies, growth and discrimination in a society as a Dalit while Sivakami determined social struggles of the Dalit women and fights against oppression. Here Bama and P.Sivakami narrative approaches are different. Bama with her own life experience showed struggle, hierarchy, inner strength, self-awareness and identity.



P.Sivakami's work is about political and social approaches in society, conflict in gender and caste on Dalit women oppression and discrimination. Bama's approach is more personal and reflective while Sivakami approach is more direct and focused on social action even then both the writers explored resistance and changes in possible ways

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The Role of Social Media in Shaping Public Opinion: A Systematic Review

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Abstract

Social media has influenced how communication, information, and opinions are developed and shared for political, social, cultural, and public health topics. With the rise of digital platforms in the media, it has become increasingly important to grasp how digital platforms are impacting public opinion. In this study, the literature is reviewed systematically, and existing literature is examined to reveal the mechanism through which social media has affected public opinions and to recognize the opportunities and challenges of social media. All sources of information used in the review have been accessed from the major academic databases: peer-reviewed journal articles, books, policy documents and reports. The results suggest that social media can influence the public opinion by agenda setting, framing, user engagement and algorithm curating of information. As a means to encourage civic engagement, public awareness, and democratic engagement, it also gives a boost to misinformation, echo chambers, and political polarization. The study finds that improving the benefits of social media use calls for increased digital literacy, ethical communication practices, transparent management of the platforms and effective policy interventions.

Keywords: *Social Media, Public Opinion, Digital communication, Agenda-setting, Framing, Misinformation, Political communication, Systematic Review.*

Introduction

Information and communication technologies have undergone massive change and revolutionized how communication is upended, how information is accessed and how people engage in public discourse. Social media is one of the most significant communication technologies of the twenty-first century among these technological advances. Social media platforms like Facebook, X (formerly known as Twitter), Instagram, YouTube, WhatsApp, LinkedIn, and TikTok have transformed how information is shared, allowing users to quickly communicate, engage with each other, and create content.



Unlike standard mass media, which primarily deliver information through institutional gatekeepers, social media empowers people to produce, share and engage in their own discussions about content, thus changing the communication and public discourse landscape.

Public opinion is the sum of the attitudes, beliefs, perceptions, and preferences of people on a public matter. It is a critical component in democratic societies where it impacts political decision making, public policy, social behaviours, and civic engagement. In the past, newspapers, radio and television were the main sources of public opinion. But with the development of digital technologies and internet access, everything has changed. Social media are today an important arena in which people get information, share opinions, discuss political matters and engage in conversations that influence collective perceptions.

The rise of social media has changed the way communication is done, making it a multi-directional and participatory process. Citizens are not just passive receivers of information, but active generators of information, sharing personal experiences and influencing the discussion through commentaries, re-posts, hashtags, videos and live interactions. The participatory nature has opened up space for citizens' engagement, social mobilization, public awareness raising campaigns and citizen journalism. Social media has been key in allowing citizens to share information quickly and easily across geographical and cultural contexts, whether it is during an election, a natural disaster, a public health emergency, an environmental movement or a humanitarian crisis.

Meanwhile, the impact of social media goes beyond information sharing to shaping and reshaping public opinion. Algorithmic systems, tailored news feeds, and user engagement dynamics are now impacting the content's visibility on digital platforms. These mechanisms shape which issues are brought to the public's agenda and the public's image of political, social, economic, and cultural events. Thus, social media is an important space in which public discourses are constructed, fought over, and reinforced. These platforms have speeded up and expanded the reach of information, increasing their ability to shape individual opinions and collective decision-making.

While there are numerous benefits of social media, there are also many concerns. The spread and dissemination of misinformation, disinformation, manipulated content and unverified news has become one of the biggest concerns and challenges for governments, media and civil society, as well as for the media. The spread and dissemination of misinformation, disinformation, manipulated content and unverified news has become one of the biggest concerns and challenges for governments, media and civil society, as well as for the media. An algorithm-driven personalisation can lead to filter bubbles, echo chambers and higher social and political polarisation if it presents information primarily in line with the user's previous information, ideas and attitudes. Moreover, digital ethics and privacy concerns, online harassment and waning trust in traditional media have fueled debates about the broader social impacts of social media communication. The developments reflect the need to have a comprehensive understanding of social media opportunities and the challenges in terms of public opinion.

In the last decade, the media and communication studies, political science, sociology, psychology, public health, and information science fields have all taken a closer look at the connection between social media and public opinion. Various research areas have been explored such as political communication, electoral behaviour, digital activism, crisis



communication, health communication, misinformation and public engagement. While these studies have contributed to a relevant understanding of this issue, the results are found in multiple disciplines, geographical areas and research settings. Consequently, it is necessary to integrate and summarize the existing knowledge to grasp how social media affects public opinion and what the effects of this influence are for the present-day society.

In this context, the present study aims at exploring how social media contributes to the public opinion on the basis of abstracting the available scientific evidence. It emphasizes processes by which social media shapes public perceptions, impact of digital platforms in political, social, cultural and public health settings, and opportunities and challenges of online communication. The study draws on existing studies to present an overall picture of the dynamic between social media and public opinion, and suggest future research, policy and responsible communication in the digital era.

This study is also of special importance because social media is an essential tool for the entire life of individuals, shaping their perceptions of reality, their involvement in public affairs, and their roles in democracy. Research and study, policy formulation, communication practitioners, education, and digital media platform providers all need to have a sense of its impact on shaping public opinion to ensure informed public opinion and responsible use of digital media platforms.

Review of Literature

Social media has gained widespread scholarly focus in the fields of communication studies, political science, sociology, and psychology as well as information science. The impact of digital platforms on public opinion, political participation, social movements, health communication and information dissemination have been explored. The current body of literature illustrates the way social media has revolutionized communication: it allows for interactive involvement with others, it has created opportunities for decentralized information production, and it has created opportunities for real-time communication with others. Meanwhile, issues of misinformation, polarization, algorithm bias and lack of trust with traditional media are now front and center of current research.

The definitions of social media by Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) is one of the first works that provided an understanding of the communication aspect of the digital. The work of Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) provided an understanding of the digital communication aspect by defining social media as Internet-based applications that are based on Web 2.0 technologies and enable the creation and exchange of user-generated content. They said social media is a different type of media from traditional media as it inspires active participation instead of just information-gathering. Their ideas have become the basis for further studies of digital communication and public engagement.

The role of media on shaping public opinion has always been explained by Agenda-Setting Theory (McCombs and Shaw, 1972). This theory holds that the media does not always set the agenda for the thoughts of the people, but it definitely sets the agenda for people's thoughts since it involves giving importance to issues rather than other issues. The concept of agenda-setting was first introduced in the field of traditional news media, but modern researchers have suggested that it is still applicable in digital media, which include trends, hashtags, and viral



content. Social media has made the agenda setting process more expansive for users, influencers and online communities, who can then make an active contribution to the issues that are brought into the public discourse.

In addition to agenda-setting, Entman (1993) introduced Framing Theory, which argued that media has an impact on public perception by focusing on and emphasizing specific aspects of the reality. Framing has not been limited to journalists, it is also a term for political actors, organizations, influencers, and even ordinary users that present events in different ways in the process of digital communication. How political conflicts, public health crises, environmental issues and social movements are packaged on social media platforms shapes how these are interpreted and how opinions are formed.

The use of social media has also been explored using the Uses and Gratifications Theory proposed by Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch (1973). This attitude is one that takes the view that people choose media to meet informational, social, entertainment and psychological requirements. Social media users are content producers and consumers, whereas traditional audiences are consumers. The dual role has helped to open up more avenues for civic engagement, public discussion, and knowledge sharing, as well as exposure to misinformation and opinion-based content.

Castells (2012) stated that the communication structure has been changed by digital networks and has become what he calls a "network society". Castells believes the transition from the centralized control of media institutions to the decentralized control of digital networks, in which individuals participate in the creation of public narratives, has taken place. Social media can be used to coordinate protests, raise money and funds and shape political conversations, and it gives citizens a wider range of avenues to do so than traditional media outlets. His work emphasizes the linkage of digital communication and modern-day social movements.

There are several studies that have shown how social media has made a positive impact on the level of democratic participation and civic engagement. According to Gil de Zúñiga, Jung and Valenzuela (2012), users of social networking sites who are exposed to political information tend to be more knowledgeable, more politically active and more likely to engage in political discussion. In the same vein, Boulianne (2015) synthesised findings from a number of studies in a meta-analysis and found that the use of social media was found to be positively correlated with civic and political engagement with society, especially in the younger generations. The results indicate that digital platforms offer new possibilities for citizens' participation in democratic processes and decision-making.

Social media played a significant role in some social movements in particular. Research assessing the phenomena of Arab Spring, Black Lives Matter and #MeToo indicates that digital spaces enable a quick mobilization, awareness and collective action. According to Tufekci (2017), social media makes it easier to participate in social movements, thereby creating opportunities to organise in a decentralised way, and empowers movements to grow and build momentum quickly. She also points out that digital mobilization does not always ensure the sustainability of the organisation or change in policy.

Yet, there is a great deal of literature available on the negative effects of social media. Misinformation and disinformation is one of the most talked about topics. Vosoughi, Roy and Aral (2018) examined millions of tweets and discovered misinformation actually travels much



faster and further than factual information. They conclude that the structure of social media can contribute to the spread of misinformation at a rapid pace, which can be problematic for informed public opinion and democratic governance.

The term filter bubble, coined by Pariser (2011), is closely related to misinformation. He claims that the algorithmic curation of users' information feeds them content aligned with their interests and beliefs, due to their selective exposure. He states that because of selective exposure, users are being presented with information that is aligned with their interests and beliefs. Algorithmic personalisation can reinforce the views already held by individuals, and limit the chance of citizens for well-balanced public debate. Likewise, Sunstein (2017) points out that digital communication can promote polarization by fostering communication among like-minded groups. This "echo chamber" reinforces ideas, and discourages the consideration of opposing viewpoints.

The pandemic COVID-19 further revealed the good and bad of social media as a communication channel. During the pandemic, Cinelli et al. (2020) found that social media helped spread the health information in a timely fashion but also contributed to the rapid dissemination of misinformation and conspiracy theories. The authors highlight the importance of co-ordinating between Governments, health institutions, media, and digital platforms to stop misinformation and foster public trust in effective public communication.

The rise of algorithms has also been the subject of research into how they are influencing public opinion. Algorithmic recommendation systems can affect the visibility of online content by relying on the engagement of the user rather than on the significance of the content or on the factual accuracy of the content. This process affects the daily information environment that users experience and thus has an effect on opinions. Article 127 of the International Bill of Rights on Information and Communications Technologies states that algorithmic governance, as it has been called, is an essential element of the comprehension of today's communication, since the access to information and public discourse is increasingly mediated by automated systems.

Research objectives

- To conduct a systematic review of literature about the influence of social media on public opinion.
- To explore the key mechanisms by which social media shapes public opinion: the setting of the agenda, framing, user engagement and algorithmic content delivery.
- To make a critical analysis of the role that social media plays in public opinion in political, social, cultural and public health areas after reading published research.
- To recognize opportunities and challenges of social media such as civic involvement, misinformation, echo chambers and polarisation.
- To summarise the important findings of previous research and make recommendations for further research, policy and ethical use of social media.

Research Methodology

The type of research in this study is systematic review research because it aims to analyze the role of social media in leading public opinion. A systematic review is a method of identifying,



evaluating and synthesizing the existing research on a given topic in a systematic and transparent way. A systematic review is different from a usual narrative review, because it is based on predetermined criteria for the selection, screening and analysis of the relevant literature, which increases the reliability, transparency and repeatability of the results. This is a study based on secondary data and not primary from the respondents.

Research Design

The study uses qualitative systematic review design that summarizes the evidence from published scholarly work. This review is designed to synthesize the results of the previous research to gain insight into the effect of social media on the public opinion and its underlying mechanisms, as well as opportunities and challenges.

Data Sources

Data used for the study is purely secondary data. The literature consulted included the following items:

- Peer-reviewed journal articles
- Academic books and book chapters
- Conference proceedings
- Government publications
- Articles from international organizations such as UNESCO, WHO, OECD, etc.
- Reports from reputable research institutes.
- The literature was obtained from key academic databases such as:
- Scopus
- Web of Science
- Google Scholar
- SpringerLink
- Taylor & Francis Online
- Sage Journals
- Wiley Online Library
- JSTOR
- ScienceDirect
- Search Strategy

Comprehensive literature search was performed with combinations of the following keywords:

- "Social Media"
- "Public Opinion"
- "Digital Communication"
- "Political Communication"
- "Social Media Influence"
- "Agenda Setting"
- "Framing"
- "Algorithmic Communication"
- "Misinformation"
- "Echo Chambers"
- "Digital Democracy"



- Boolean operators (AND, OR, NOT) were used to narrow the results of the search.

Examples include:

Search the term: Social Media AND Public Opinion

The results included "Social Media" and "Political Communication".

Digital Media" AND "Opinion Formation"

"Social Media" AND "Misinformation"

Inclusion Criteria

the studies reviewed, only those that fit the following criteria were included Published in peer-reviewed journals.

Written in English.

Interested in the connection between social media and public opinion.

Between years 2015 and 2025 (or any other period selected by the researcher).

Incorporated empirical, theoretical or review studies relevant to the research objectives.

Exclusion Criteria

The following studies were not included:

Duplicate publications.

Editorials, news, blogs, opinion papers, and articles in magazines or journals.

Research that does not fall under the rubric of social media or public opinion.

Non-English publications.

Studies with insufficient methodological information.

Study Selection Process

The study selection was done according to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines. Four stages made up the selection process:

Identification of records from academic databases.

De-duplication of records.

Relevance screening of title and abstract.

Full-text evaluation, according to the inclusion and exclusion criteria.



Final review included only those studies that satisfied all criteria.

Data Extraction

A data extraction sheet was used to extract the relevant information from each of the studies selected. The following information was obtained:

- Author(s)
- Year of publication
- This is a country or study context question.
- Research objectives
- Research methodology
- The characteristics of the sample (if applicable).
- Major findings
- Conclusions
- Limitations
- This standard extraction process allowed uniformity of all the studies included.

Data Analysis

- Thematic analysis was used to analyse the collected literature. The results of the selected studies were compiled into the main themes which corresponded to the research objectives. The themes included:
- Social network and public opinion shaping. How does public opinion get shaped through social media.
- Agenda-setting and framing
- Engaging users and being influential through algorithms.
- Political communication and civic participation.
- Public health communication
- Misinformation and fake news
- Echo Chambers and Polarization
- Ethical concerns and directions for future work
- The thematic approach helped to identify similarities, differences, patterns and gaps in the current literature.

Quality Assessment

Studies published in well-known and reputable peer-reviewed journals and well-known academic publishers were included to ensure the credibility of the review. The methodological quality of each study was assessed based on:

Clarity of research aims and goals

The suitability of the research design used. The suitability of the research design adopted.

Data collection methods

Analytical rigor

Validity of conclusions



The studies excluded from the review did not have enough methodological transparency.

Ethical Considerations

The study is based on secondary data available on the public domain and does not include human subjects, personal data, or confidential data. Therefore, no formal ethical approval was necessary. Academic integrity and the prevention of plagiarism have been achieved by correctly referencing and citing all sources used.

Results and Analysis

1. Social Media as a Platform for Public Opinion Formation

The literature examined above suggests that social media has changed how public opinion is formed, allowing for the spread of information to be more rapid and for interactive communication to be possible. Social media have distinctive features unlike traditional media, which have one-way communication. Social media are different from traditional media, which mostly have a one-way communication approach. It has made citizen participation in issues of politics, governance, health, education, environment and social justice easier.

The majority of studies concurred that platforms like Facebook, X (formerly known as Twitter), YouTube, Instagram and WhatsApp have emerged as key sources of news and information, particularly for younger audiences. These platforms are accessible and immediate, giving citizens more avenues to access information from various sources, which enhances their opportunities for engaging in public discourse. But scientists add that lack of editorial oversight also means there is a proliferation of false or misleading information.

2. Explain how social media influences public opinion

There are several mechanisms identified in the literature that might affect public opinion through the use of social media.

Agenda-Setting

The use of traditional media has a significant impact on shaping public agendas, while social media have become a growing force in shaping which issues will gain public traction, according to many studies. Hashtags that go viral, posts from influencers, videos that become popular, and online campaigns can sway global and national conversation. The agenda does not actually "set" by the institution, but is created by the users themselves through sharing, commenting and amplifying selected issues.

Framing

The reviewed studies suggest that framing is still an effective opinion formation tool in digital settings. Events get talked about in different ways depending on the point of view of the political leader, journalist, organisation, influencer, or average user. Election, conflict, economic, public health, and environmental framing can have a significant impact on audience perceptions and feelings.



User Engagement

Features that allow audience participation like likes, shares, comments, live streaming, and hashtags promote engagement. Higher engagement has been found consistently to improve the visibility of the messages and the power of specific messages to shape public opinion. The content created by the users has emerged as one of the key sources of information, sometimes even in direct competition with journalism.

Algorithmic Content Dissemination

One of the most important results has to do with the importance of platform algorithms. Content recommendation systems are not based on its journalistic relevance, but rather on user behaviour and engagement. Users thus have the opportunity to see the same content time after time, which allows existing attitudes to be reinforced and shapes opinion in the process. Algorithmic personalization is cited as one of the characteristics of digital communication in several studies.

3. Impact in Political, Social, Cultural and Public Health Environments

Political Communication

Political communication has been consistently cited as the area of literature that is most widely studied. Social media is rapidly gaining importance as a tool for election campaigns, political debate, citizen engagement, and policy discussions. The use of digital platforms is growing in political parties to directly engage with citizens while in citizens' use of social media, they assess politicians and join in with public debates.

But political misinformation, coordinated disinformation campaigns and online propaganda can also shape the democratic process by affecting voter perception and political trust, the researchers warn.

Social & Cultural Contexts.

The literature has shown that social media has helped increase awareness of social problems, such as the issues of gender equality, protecting the environment, racial issues, and human rights, etc. Digital activism has helped marginalised communities raise their concerns and mobilise collective action. Hashtag- and online driven social movements have helped raise public awareness and promote civic engagement.

However, cultural nuances affect the perception and reaction of users to social media content. Research has shown that society, politics and culture influence information consumption and public opinion formation.

Public Health Communication

A study conducted since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic has emphasized the role of social media in health communication. Health messages, vaccination information, and emergency updates were shared via digital platforms by governments, health organisations and medical practitioners. Social media has helped to disseminate public health messages, but it



has also helped to facilitate the spread of misinformation about treatments, vaccines, and prevention, making it difficult to communicate public health messages effectively.

4. Opportunities and Challenges of Social Media

The presented studies reveal a few opportunities of social media.

Opportunities

Better citizens' involvement in democracy.

Easy access to information.

Increased community involvement in social and political debates.

Quick dissemination of emergency information.

Growth of citizen journalism.

Greater visibility of the voices of the marginalised.

Enhanced links between civil society organisations.

These findings reveal that social media has brought communication into the realm of a more democratic system, one that facilitates access to information and the sharing of information amongst the public.

Challenges

However, the literature suggests that there are some considerable drawbacks.

Inflation is the most common issue, with misinformation and disinformation in second place. It is consistently believed that false information spreads faster than verified information as it is more engaging to the user.

One of the other issues is the creation of echo chambers and filter bubbles. Personalized algorithms present users with similar perspectives over time, thus shape the ideological diversity and the reinforcement of the user's beliefs. This helps to create polarization and stifle positive public discussion.

Also, privacy issues, cyberbullying and hate speech, online harassment, and loss of trust in traditional media are recurring themes in the reviewed studies. These challenges call for better digital governance, media literacy and accountability on the part of platform providers, scholars say.

The NHANES study yielded this information. This information was obtained from the NHANES study.

The overall results indicate that social media has revolutionized how the public communicates and has influenced public opinion. In contrast with traditional media, digital media allows



participatory communication whereby citizens are involved in the production and dissemination of information.

According to the review, social media at the same time serves as a platform for democratic involvement and a source of risks related to information. Digital communication helps to raise awareness, increase civic engagement, and engage in collective action, but it can also help spread misinformation, polarizing messages, and algorithmic bias.

Overall, it is noted in the articles that the impact of social media cannot be viewed just from the technological lens. Instead, opinion formation is a process in which the technological design, communication practices, political situations, media literacy and user behavior interact.

Overall Analysis

According to the systematic review, in today's society, social media has emerged as one of the most significant factors shaping public opinion. The findings indicate that digital platforms have created more opportunities for citizens to take part in processes, increased access to information and improved public participation in several areas. In parallel, it is well established in the literature that misinformation, algorithmic personalisation, echo chambers and political polarization pose risks.

The review also highlights some areas of research that need to be addressed. There is a substantial amount of literature available on the individual platforms and specific national contexts but comparatively less literature available on comparative/ cross-cultural studies. In addition, AI, generative content and algorithmic governance are rapidly evolving, and their potential impact on public opinion and democratic communication over the long term is worthy of continued research.

In conclusion, the results stress that the benefits of social media should be maximized while minimizing the risks involved, only by collaborating amongst civil society, educators, media organisations, the providers of digital platforms and the governments of these platforms. To build an informed and inclusive digital public sphere, digital literacy, a sense of ethics in online communication, transparency of platforms regarding their content, and evidence-based regulatory frameworks will be crucial.

Conclusion

Social media has become one of the most powerful communication mediums in the digital era, completely changing how information is generated, shared and received. The current systematic review aimed to review the literature on social media's effect on public opinion and to synthesize the literature from social science, public health, politics, and culture. The review shows how social media can transform from a one-way communication from traditional media towards a two-way communication where people play an active role in the public discussion.

The results suggest that social media shapes the public opinion process in several ways, such as via agenda-setting, framing, engagement, and algorithmic content distribution. Digital platforms have opened up new avenues for civic engagement, political participation, public awareness, and social mobilisation opportunities by helping to facilitate the flow of information at scale and communications between governments, institutions, organisations, and citizens.



Social media platforms have also enabled marginalised groups to express themselves and to act together; hence it has contributed to a deepening of democracy and empowerment of social inclusion.

The review also outlines some of the issues emerging as a consequence of the unprecedented power of social media. The fact that misinformation and disinformation spread like wildfire, the development of echo chambers and filter bubbles, growing political polarization, hate speech online, privacy and algorithmic transparency issues are among the many challenges for informed public opinion and democratic discourse. Research indicates that by promoting information access, social media also fails to ensure the accuracy, credibility and diversity of the information being disseminated. Algorithmic recommendations, engagement-based content and information environments are ever more shaping users' perceptions.

The review also shows that the effect of social media on public opinion varies from one society to another. The interpretation and reaction to on-line information varies greatly depending on cultural context, political systems, digital literacy, media policy, and technological access. Thus, how to measure public opinion in the digital age needs to be approached from an interdisciplinary perspective incorporating elements of communication studies, political science, sociology, psychology and information technology.

The systematic review is a valuable addition to the media and communication research field, as it offers a detailed and comprehensive analysis on the role of social media in the public opinion of the people. It links together findings from different studies, and presents the potential importance and the complexity of digital communication. The review also emphasises the need for improved transparency of algorithms for platforms and for the development of digital governance, media and information literacy and ethical aspects of communication in online space, ensuring that social media will have a positive influence on democratic societies.

Future research should focus on the influence of AI and algorithmic governance on opinion formation, the influence of new digital platforms on public discourse in a long-term perspective, and comparative cross-cultural studies. Prevention, promotion of responsible communications and digital citizenship are also going to be critical to addressing future challenges of the digital information landscape.

In conclusion, social media has become a crucial medium for communication in the current times and is an effective tool for public opinion. It provides unprecedented opportunities for involvement, public and democratic participation, and awareness, but also demands the responsible governance of platforms, evidence-based public policies, ethical communication practices, and user digital literacy to be able to promote informed public discourse. This requires coordination among governments, professionals of the media, technology companies, educators, scholars and citizens to ensure that social media can be effectively used to foster balanced and responsible digital communication space for promoting constructive dialogue, informed decision making and inclusive democratic participation.



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Digital Forensics and Blockchain-Based Evidence in Criminal Trials

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Abstract

It highlights a research gap: while the technology to trace and preserve blockchain evidence has matured quickly, the legal rules for admitting such evidence, especially the certification requirements under Indian law and the hearsay debate under the American Federal Rules of Evidence, have not kept pace. Using a doctrinal and analytical method, the study examines recent judgments, including the Bitcoin Fog and Sterlingov prosecution in the United States and the evolving Section 63 framework under India's Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023. The discussion is supported by simple charts showing the growth of blockchain-related evidentiary disputes and a comparison between traditional and blockchain-based chain of custody. The paper finds that blockchain can strengthen the integrity of digital evidence, but it cannot replace the human and procedural safeguards, such as expert testimony, certification, and cross-examination, that criminal law demands. It ends with practical recommendations for lawmakers, judges, and forensic examiners, and calls for clearer, technology-neutral rules that let genuine blockchain evidence in front of courts without lowering the standard of proof beyond reasonable doubt.

Keywords: Digital Forensics; Blockchain Evidence; Chain of Custody; Admissibility; Criminal Trials; Electronic Evidence



1. Introduction

Crime today rarely happens without leaving some kind of digital trace. A phone's location history, a WhatsApp message, a CCTV recording, or a cryptocurrency transfer can often tell investigators more about what happened than a traditional eyewitness. Digital forensics is the branch of forensic science that deals with recovering, preserving, and presenting this kind of electronic material so that it can be used safely in a court of law. Over the last decade, a new layer has been added to this picture: blockchain technology. Originally built to support Bitcoin, blockchain is a shared, tamper-resistant ledger that records transactions in a way that is very hard to alter quietly. Because of this property, investigators and technology companies have started using blockchain both as a tool to trace criminal activity, particularly cryptocurrency crime, and as a method to protect the integrity of other digital evidence, such as CCTV footage or forensic images, by recording their digital fingerprints on a public or private ledger.

This shift raises a simple but important question: can evidence that is created, stored, or verified through blockchain be trusted and admitted in a criminal trial the same way a signed document or a fingerprint report would be? Criminal trials carry serious consequences, including loss of liberty, so the rules of evidence are strict about how material is collected, preserved, and proved. Blockchain's promise of tamper-resistance is attractive, but it does not automatically satisfy the legal tests of relevance, authenticity, and reliability that most legal systems demand.

This paper studies the intersection of digital forensics and blockchain-based evidence specifically inside criminal trials. It looks at how the law in the United States and India, two systems that have both dealt with high-profile digital and cryptocurrency cases, has responded to blockchain evidence. The paper is written in plain language so that it is useful to law students, practising lawyers, forensic examiners, and policymakers, not only to specialist technologists.

The importance of this topic goes beyond academic curiosity. Police forces around the world are already using blockchain analytics to freeze and trace stolen cryptocurrency, and some courts are being asked, sometimes for the first time, to decide whether a printout of a blockchain transaction or an expert's tracing report can be trusted the same way a bank statement or a call detail record would be. If courts get this wrong in either direction, by trusting unreliable technology too easily



or by rejecting genuinely reliable evidence out of unfamiliarity, real harm follows: either innocent people may be wrongly convicted on shaky technical evidence, or guilty people may escape justice because a court refused to look at proof that was, in fact, sound. Getting the legal treatment of blockchain evidence right is therefore not a side issue for technology lawyers alone; it sits at the heart of a fair and effective criminal justice system in the digital age.

2. Historical Development

Digital forensics as a discipline began in the 1980s and 1990s, when law enforcement agencies started recovering data from floppy disks and early personal computers involved in fraud and hacking cases. The field grew quickly after the year 2000, driven by the spread of the internet, mobile phones, and email, which meant that almost every crime, even purely physical ones, left behind some digital footprint. Many countries responded by amending their evidence laws to deal with this new kind of proof. India, for example, added Section 65B to the Indian Evidence Act, 1872 through the Information Technology Act, 2000, to allow computer-generated records to be admitted as evidence, subject to a certificate confirming how the record was produced.

Blockchain entered the picture much later. The technology was first described in the 2008 Bitcoin white paper as a way to let strangers transact online without needing a bank or other trusted middleman. For the first several years, blockchain was mostly discussed in the context of financial regulation and cryptocurrency crime, such as the Silk Road darknet marketplace case in the United States, which first showed investigators that blockchain transactions, although pseudonymous, could actually be traced back to real people using specialised analytics software.

From around 2017 onwards, two separate but related developments took shape. First, law enforcement agencies and private companies built blockchain analytics tools, such as Chainalysis Reactor and TRM Labs, to help trace illicit cryptocurrency flows and connect wallet addresses to real identities. These tools have since been used and tested in major prosecutions, including the Bitcoin Fog money-laundering case decided in the United States District Court for the District of Columbia. Second, legal scholars and some governments began exploring blockchain not just as a subject of investigation but as a tool for protecting evidence itself, for example by hashing digital



files such as CCTV footage or forensic disk images and recording the hash value on a blockchain so that any later tampering can be detected. China's Supreme People's Court has been especially active here, issuing guidance in 2018 and again in 2022 that encourages the use of blockchain in its internet courts and judicial case management systems.

In India, the transition from the Indian Evidence Act, 1872 to the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023, which came into force on 1 July 2024, is the most recent milestone. The new law widened the definition of an electronic record to cover data stored on communication devices and networks, and it retained a certification requirement, now placed in Section 63, that closely follows the older Section 65B. Indian courts, most importantly the Supreme Court in *Arjun Panditrao Khotkar v. Kailash Kishanrao Gorantyal* (2020), have gone back and forth on how strictly this certificate requirement should be enforced, and that debate continues to affect how blockchain-based records would be treated if produced in an Indian criminal trial today.

3. Key Terms and Definitions

A few terms recur throughout this paper and are explained here in simple language before the discussion goes further.

- Digital forensics: The scientific process of identifying, collecting, preserving, and analysing data stored on computers, phones, or networks so that it can be presented as evidence.
- Chain of custody: The documented history of who handled a piece of evidence, when, and how, from the moment it was collected until it is produced in court. Any gap in this chain can be used to challenge the evidence.
- Blockchain: A distributed, shared record book (ledger) maintained by many computers at once, where new entries are added in blocks that are cryptographically linked to earlier blocks, making silent alteration very difficult.



- Hash value: A short, fixed-length string of characters generated from a file or piece of data using a mathematical function. Even a tiny change in the original file produces a completely different hash, so hashes are used to prove that a file has not been altered.
- Blockchain analytics: Software, such as Chainalysis Reactor, that studies patterns of transactions on a public blockchain to group addresses together and link them to real-world individuals or organisations.
- Admissibility: The legal question of whether a court will allow a particular piece of evidence to be considered at all, based on rules such as relevance, authenticity, and reliability.
- Hearsay: An out-of-court statement offered to prove the truth of what it asserts. Many legal systems restrict hearsay evidence unless it fits within a recognised exception, and this debate is important for blockchain records.
- Section 63, Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023 (India): The current Indian provision governing the admissibility of electronic records, requiring a certificate to accompany such evidence, similar to the earlier Section 65B of the Indian Evidence Act.

4. Literature Review

Recent academic writing on this subject can be grouped into three broad streams. The first stream studies how blockchain analytics is treated as expert evidence in criminal trials, mainly in the United States. Commentary on the Sterlingov prosecution, connected to the Bitcoin Fog mixing service, explains how the trial court applied the Daubert standard under Federal Rule of Evidence 702 to decide that testimony based on Chainalysis Reactor software was reliable enough to go before the jury, even though the defence argued that the software had not been peer reviewed and had no known error rate. Commentators note that this software evidence was not the only proof in the case; it worked alongside more traditional evidence such as online forum posts and IP address analysis, which suggests that blockchain analytics is best understood as one part of a wider evidentiary picture rather than a stand-alone silver bullet.



The second stream of literature looks at whether blockchain records themselves count as hearsay and how they fit within existing rules of evidence in the United States. Scholars are divided. One view is that blockchain records do not fit comfortably into existing hearsay exceptions and that evidence rules should be specifically amended to deal with them. A competing view argues that the cryptographic security and consensus-based verification built into blockchain already reduce the traditional concerns that hearsay rules are designed to address, so new rules may not be strictly necessary, only clearer guidance. This literature also tracks how individual American states such as Vermont, Arizona, Ohio, and Illinois have passed laws that give blockchain records a presumption of authenticity, while noting that the lack of a uniform federal approach creates inconsistent practice across the country.

The third stream is centred on India and on comparative and international criminal law. Indian legal writing in 2025 and 2026 consistently points to the same structural problem: the certification requirement under Section 63 of the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023, which was designed for records generated on a single computer controlled by one identifiable person, does not fit well with a blockchain, where data is spread across many independent nodes with no single custodian. Writers have suggested reforms such as a government-run digital evidence registry, wider recognition of hash values as sufficient proof of authenticity, and specially trained expert witnesses to explain distributed ledger technology to judges. Recent commentary also flags a practical bottleneck: very few government-notified digital evidence examiners exist under Section 79A of the Information Technology Act, and courts, including the Madras High Court, have directly asked the government to notify more such experts. Comparable work in international criminal law and post-conflict prosecutions looks at how blockchain-based chain-of-custody systems could help preserve evidence, such as open-source material documenting war crimes, that is collected outside formal state institutions, while cautioning that blockchain guarantees only that a record has not been altered after it was entered, not that the original content was truthful or was captured correctly in the first place.

Taken together, this body of work shows a field that is moving quickly on the technical and investigative side, with real prosecutions already relying on blockchain analytics, but moving



much more slowly on the legal and procedural side, where basic questions about certification, hearsay, and expert qualification remain unsettled in most jurisdictions, including India.

A smaller but growing fourth stream looks at judicial infrastructure rather than individual cases. Writers studying China's internet courts describe how the Supreme People's Court has pushed for blockchain to be built directly into court case-management systems, allowing judges to check the integrity of filed documents automatically rather than relying on a party's certificate. Similar proposals for a purpose-built, multi-stakeholder blockchain architecture for judicial case management, in which separate ledgers serve the judiciary, the prosecution, and the defence and are coordinated through a shared meta-ledger, show that some engineers and scholars are now thinking about blockchain as a piece of court infrastructure, not just as a source of contested evidence. This infrastructure-focused literature is still largely separate from the case-law-focused literature on admissibility, and this paper treats the connection between the two as part of the research gap described in the next section.

5. Research Gaps

Based on the review above, this paper identifies four specific gaps that existing research has not fully addressed.

- Certification mismatch: Indian evidence law still assumes a single, identifiable custodian of an electronic device, which does not match how a decentralized blockchain actually works, and there is limited concrete guidance on how a Section 63 certificate should be completed for blockchain-anchored evidence.
- Reliability testing beyond one jurisdiction: Much of the detailed judicial reasoning on the reliability of blockchain analytics software comes from a small number of American federal court decisions; there is far less published judicial reasoning from India, the United Kingdom, or other common law jurisdictions on the same question.
- Distinguishing tracing tools from custody tools: Existing literature often discusses blockchain analytics, used to trace criminals, and blockchain-based evidence preservation,



used to protect the integrity of other evidence, as if they were the same issue, even though they raise different legal questions and need to be examined separately.

- Human and institutional capacity: There is limited research on whether police, forensic labs, and trial judges in developing countries currently have the training and the notified expert examiners needed to handle blockchain evidence competently, as opposed to research that focuses only on what the law should say in theory.

6. Objectives

- To trace the historical development of digital forensics and blockchain-based evidence and to explain the key technical and legal terms involved.
- To review recent literature, statutes, and case law from the United States and India on the admissibility of blockchain and digital forensic evidence in criminal trials.
- To identify the main legal and practical gaps that prevent the smooth use of blockchain evidence in criminal proceedings.
- To analyse how courts have actually applied existing evidentiary standards, such as the Daubert test and Section 63 of the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023, to blockchain-related evidence.
- To offer practical, implementable recommendations for lawmakers, judges, and forensic practitioners.

7. Scope and Limitations

This paper focuses on the use of digital forensic and blockchain-based evidence specifically inside criminal trials. It draws mainly on the legal systems of the United States and India, using illustrative material from China and the European Union where relevant, because these jurisdictions currently generate the largest volume of published case law and academic commentary on this subject. The paper deals with two related but distinct uses of blockchain: first,



as an investigative tool used to trace cryptocurrency transactions, and second, as a method to preserve the integrity of other digital evidence through hashing and timestamping.

The paper does not attempt an exhaustive country-by-country survey of every jurisdiction's evidence law, nor does it provide a deep technical tutorial on how blockchain consensus algorithms work internally; only the level of technical detail needed to understand the legal discussion is included. The charts presented later in the paper are conceptual and illustrative, built to visualise trends and relationships described in secondary literature, and should not be read as official government or court statistics. Because blockchain-related case law is still developing quickly, the analysis reflects the position as understood up to mid-2026, and readers should check for more recent judgments before relying on this paper for practical legal advice.

8. Materials and Methods

This is a doctrinal and analytical legal study rather than an empirical one. The material used includes primary legal sources, such as the Indian Evidence Act, 1872, the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023, the United States Federal Rules of Evidence, and reported judgments including *Arjun Panditrao Khotkar v. Kailash Kishanrao Gorantyal* (2020) and the *Sterlingov* prosecution connected to the Bitcoin Fog case in the United States District Court for the District of Columbia (2024). Secondary material includes recent peer-reviewed articles, law firm client alerts, and specialist legal commentary published between 2024 and 2026, gathered through targeted searches of legal databases and journal repositories.

The method follows four steps. First, relevant statutes and judgments were identified and read in full or in extract to understand the legal test being applied. Second, secondary academic and professional commentary was reviewed to understand how scholars and practitioners interpret these developments. Third, the material was organised thematically into the sections of this paper, comparing the American approach, built around the Daubert reliability test and the hearsay debate, with the Indian approach, built around the Section 63 certification requirement. Fourth, two simple illustrative charts and one workflow diagram were prepared using Python's matplotlib library to



visually summarise the trends and comparisons discussed in the text, based on patterns described in the literature rather than on any single official dataset.

9. Results and Discussion

The material reviewed for this paper shows a consistent pattern: blockchain evidence is becoming more common in criminal proceedings, but courts are handling it using existing evidentiary tools rather than creating entirely new ones. Figure 1 below presents an illustrative trend, based on patterns reported in recent legal commentary, showing how disputes over blockchain-specific evidence have grown at a faster relative rate than general digital evidence disputes since blockchain analytics tools became mainstream around 2017.

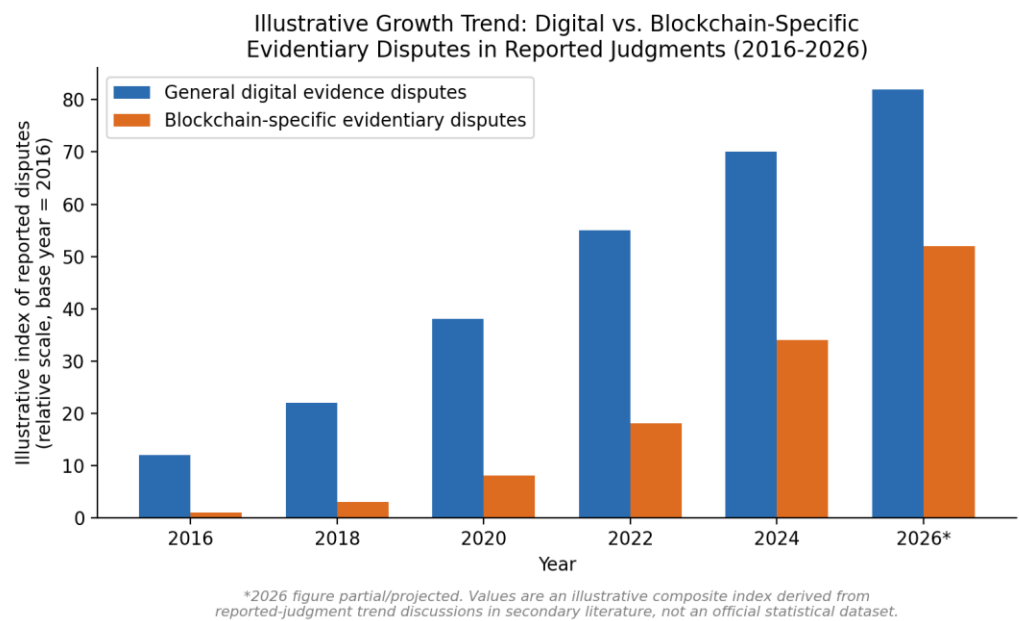


Figure 1: Illustrative growth trend of general digital evidence disputes compared with blockchain-specific evidentiary disputes in reported judgments, 2016-2026. Values represent a composite illustrative index, not an official count.

The clearest example of how courts are applying existing rules to blockchain evidence is the Sterlingov prosecution in the United States. Before the trial began, the court had to decide whether an expert could testify using Chainalysis Reactor, a proprietary tool that traces Bitcoin transactions



by grouping addresses that appear to belong to the same entity. Applying the four Daubert factors, namely whether the method has been tested, subjected to peer review, has a known error rate, and is accepted in the relevant field, the court allowed the testimony, while also noting that this software evidence was supported by other, more conventional evidence such as materials found with the defendant and online forum activity. This shows an important pattern: American courts are not treating blockchain analytics as automatically reliable, but they are also not shutting it out; they are asking the same reliability questions they would ask of any other scientific or technical evidence.

A second, related pattern concerns the debate on whether blockchain records amount to hearsay. Some commentators argue that because blockchain entries are made and verified by a network of independent computers rather than by a single person making an out-of-court assertion, they may not fit the traditional definition of hearsay at all. Others are more cautious and argue that new, specific rules are still needed. A small number of American states, including Vermont, Arizona, Ohio, and Illinois, have passed laws that give blockchain records a degree of legal recognition, but this has created uneven practice, since most states and the federal system have no such specific rule.

Turning to India, the picture is different but related. Figure 2 compares traditional, paper-based chain-of-custody practices with a blockchain-based approach across six practical attributes that matter in a criminal trial.



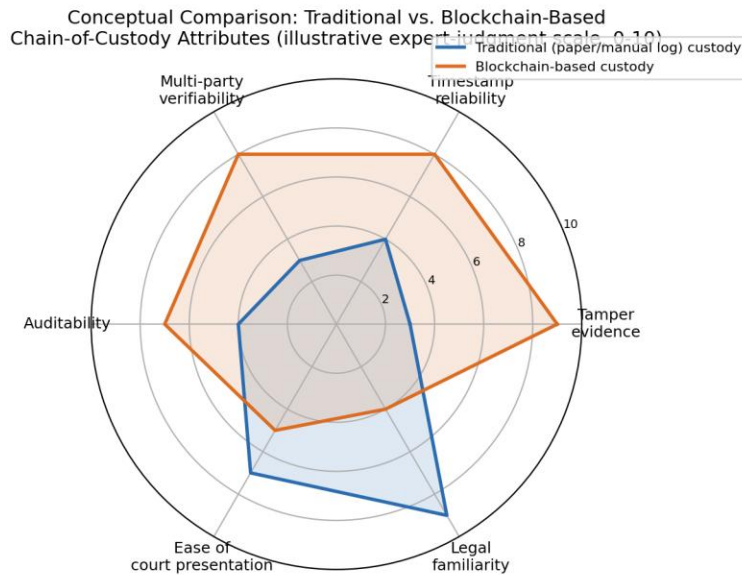


Figure 2: Conceptual comparison of traditional versus blockchain-based chain-of-custody attributes, on an illustrative 0-10 expert-judgment scale derived from themes discussed in the literature.

As Figure 2 suggests, blockchain-based custody scores well on tamper evidence, timestamp reliability, and multi-party verifiability, since altering a blockchain record after the fact requires overturning many independently held copies at once. However, it scores lower on ease of court presentation and legal familiarity, mainly because judges, lawyers, and even forensic examiners in most Indian courts are still more comfortable with paper certificates and conventional hash-based hard-disk imaging than with distributed ledger concepts. This gap matters because Section 63 of the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023, like the Section 65B it replaced, was written with a single, identifiable computer and a single responsible official in mind, whereas a public blockchain has no single custodian who can sign such a certificate in the traditional sense. The Supreme Court's decision in *Arjun Panditrao Khotkar v. Kailash Kishanrao Gorantyal* (2020) reaffirmed that this certificate is mandatory unless the original device itself is produced in court, a rule that



becomes difficult to apply cleanly when the underlying record is spread across a decentralised network rather than sitting on one identifiable machine.

Figure 3 draws together the practical workflow that this paper's review suggests is emerging in practice, showing how a piece of digital evidence typically moves from seizure through hashing, ledger entry, forensic analysis, and finally into the courtroom, where it must still satisfy conventional legal tests of chain of custody and admissibility.

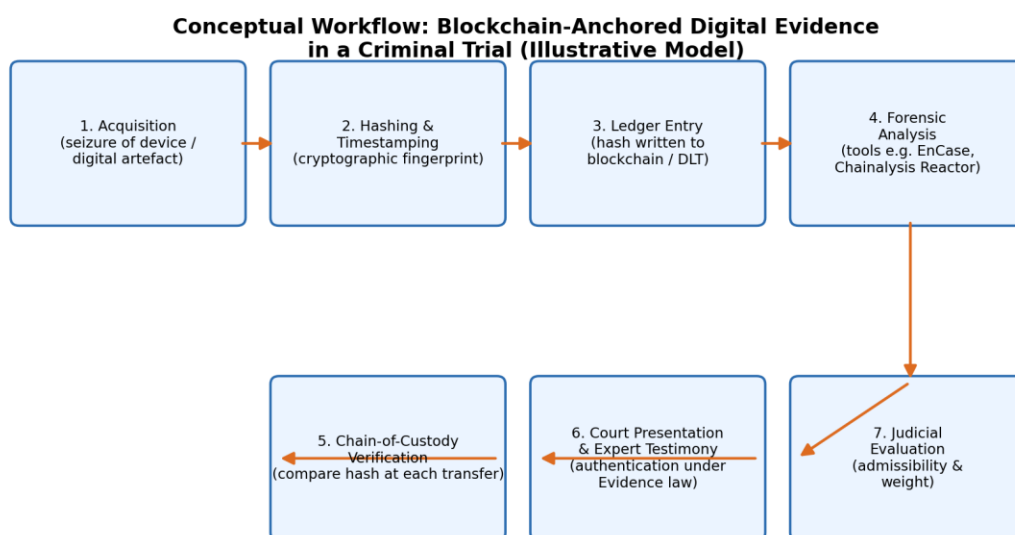


Figure 3: Conceptual workflow showing how blockchain-anchored digital evidence typically moves from seizure to judicial evaluation in a criminal trial.

This workflow highlights a point that runs through both the American and the Indian material: blockchain is best understood as reinforcing, rather than replacing, the traditional steps of evidence handling. It can strengthen step two (hashing and timestamping) and step three (ledger entry) by making later tampering easier to detect, but steps one, four, five, six, and seven, namely lawful seizure, competent forensic analysis, verified custody, skilled courtroom presentation, and independent judicial evaluation, still depend entirely on trained people and sound procedure, not on the technology itself. India's shortage of government-notified digital evidence examiners under



Section 79A of the Information Technology Act, a gap that the Madras High Court has specifically flagged, illustrates this limitation clearly: even excellent blockchain technology cannot compensate for a shortage of qualified experts able to explain it convincingly to a trial court.

It is also worth noting what blockchain evidence cannot do. A hash value recorded on a ledger proves only that a specific file has not changed since the hash was taken; it says nothing about whether the camera that recorded a video was working correctly, whether the person who took the first hash captured the right file, or whether the file was genuine in the first place. This distinction, between integrity after capture and truthfulness of the original content, is emphasised repeatedly in the international criminal law literature reviewed for this paper, particularly in discussions of open-source evidence used in post-conflict prosecutions, where material is often collected by non-government actors before it ever reaches a court. The same caution applies with equal force inside an ordinary domestic criminal trial: a prosecutor who proves that a video file's hash has not changed since it was seized still has to independently prove where the video came from, who recorded it, and that it has not been edited before that first hash was taken.

10. Findings

- Blockchain analytics tools, such as Chainalysis Reactor, are increasingly accepted as reliable expert evidence in American courts when tested against the Daubert standard, but they are rarely, if ever, treated as the sole basis for a conviction.
- There is no single, settled answer to whether blockchain records count as hearsay under American evidence law; the position currently depends on the specific type of record and, in some states, on specific legislation.
- India's certification requirement under Section 63 of the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023, remains structurally difficult to apply to decentralised blockchain records, since it was designed around a single identifiable custodian.
- Blockchain strengthens the technical integrity of evidence, particularly against silent tampering, but does not by itself establish that the original content was true, accurate, or properly captured.



- A shortage of trained experts and notified digital evidence examiners, especially in India, is a practical bottleneck that is at least as significant as any gap in the written law.
- Courts across jurisdictions are, in practice, adapting existing evidentiary frameworks, such as Daubert and Section 63/65B certification, to blockchain evidence rather than waiting for entirely new legislation, which suggests that targeted reform, not wholesale rewriting of evidence law, is the more realistic path forward.

11. Recommendations

- Lawmakers in India should consider amending Section 63 of the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023, to recognise a properly generated and independently verifiable hash value as sufficient proof of authenticity for blockchain-anchored records, reducing over-reliance on a single-custodian certificate.
- Governments should notify more digital evidence examiners under Section 79A of the Information Technology Act, so that every district, not just major cities, has access to a qualified expert who can explain blockchain evidence to a trial court.
- Judicial academies in India and similar training bodies elsewhere should run regular, practical training programmes for judges and public prosecutors on how blockchain technology works and how to question expert witnesses about it.
- Where possible, courts should treat blockchain analytics as one part of a larger body of evidence, consistent with the approach seen in the Sterlingov prosecution, rather than allowing a conviction to rest on blockchain tracing alone.
- Legislators in the United States could look at the more detailed state-level rules from Vermont, Arizona, Ohio, and Illinois as a starting point for a clearer, more uniform federal approach to blockchain record authentication.
- A neutral, government-backed digital evidence registry, as suggested in recent Indian legal commentary, could help standardise how blockchain and other electronic evidence certificates are issued and checked, reducing inconsistent practice across courts.



12. Conclusion

Blockchain technology offers a genuinely useful tool for both tracing criminal activity and protecting the integrity of digital evidence, and courts in the United States have already shown that existing rules of evidence, such as the Daubert reliability test, are flexible enough to accommodate it. At the same time, this paper's review shows that the legal and institutional side of the story has not caught up with the technology, particularly in India, where the certification requirement under Section 63 of the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023, was written for a world of single computers and identifiable custodians, not decentralised ledgers. Blockchain cannot replace the basic safeguards of criminal procedure, including lawful seizure, a documented chain of custody, competent expert testimony, and a fair opportunity for the defence to challenge the evidence. What blockchain can do is make some of these safeguards easier to prove and harder to fake, provided that lawmakers, judges, and forensic professionals are given clear rules and proper training to use it well. With targeted, technology-neutral reforms of the kind recommended in this paper, digital forensics and blockchain-based evidence can be brought fully and fairly into the criminal trial process, without lowering the standard of proof that protects every accused person's right to a fair trial.

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Role of Social Work in Strengthening Women's Political Participation in Bihar: Study reference to West Champaran, East Champaran and Muzaffarpur

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Abstract

Gender equality and democratic governance require women's political participation. The reservation of 50 percent for women in the Panchayati Raj Institutions has made women visible in Bihar but socio-cultural, economic, and institutional barriers remain in the way of women's meaningful participation in the political decision-making process. The present study focuses on the role of social work in strengthening political participation of women in West Champaran, East Champaran and Muzaffarpur districts of Bihar. The study follows the qualitative research design, semi-structured interviews and document analysis as data collection techniques and thematic analysis as a data analysis. The results show how important social work practices such as political awareness, leadership development, community mobilization, advocacy and capacity building are in building confidence, leadership and participation of women in local governance. The study concludes that the reservation has resulted in better political representation for women in Bihar, but the social work effort and support from NGOs, SHG, government etc. is important to achieve political empowerment and to develop grassroots democracy in Bihar.



Keywords: *Women's Political Participation, Social Work, Bihar, Panchayati Raj Institutions, Women's Empowerment, Local Governance.*

Introduction

Political participation is an integral part of democratic governance, which gives citizens the chance to participate in the decision-making process and influence governance. Women's engagement in politics has been shown to be a good indicator of gender equality, inclusive governance and sustainable development. Although the Constitution provides for equal opportunities for women and several policy measures have been implemented, women remain highly marginalized in India's political arena due to the practice of patriarchy in society, access to education and economic resources, political violence, and the lack of institutional support. Women's participation and leadership in political processes and decision-making is particularly witnessed in certain rural areas where socio-cultural barriers limit women participation in politics.

In Bihar, there have been significant efforts to improve women's representation in the political sphere, with the introduction of the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) scheme of 50 percent reservation for women. The policy has considerably enhanced women's numerical representation in local governance, allowing thousands of women to sit on elected office. Just having more reps does not necessarily translate to more participation or decision-making authority. A number of the women representatives elected are still having problems such as proxy leadership, limited awareness of the political matters, lack of leadership skills, mobility and awareness of governance and public administration. Therefore, for the role of women in politics to be strengthened, there is need for continuous and sustained social, institutional and capacity development efforts which go beyond electoral reservation.

Social work is an important part of the values of social justice, gender equality, community empowerment and democratic participation. Social workers engage with communities in order to organize, advocate, build capacity, develop leadership and raise awareness on women's rights for their active engagement in political and governance processes. Social workers collaborate with different agencies, NGOs, SHGs and CBOs and support their efforts to boost women's confidence and empower their capacities in political participation, such as leadership,



awareness of law and capacity in decision making. These interventions help to strengthen democratic institutions and lead towards inclusive and participatory governance.

The present study is restricted to three different socio-economic and political background districts of West Champaran, East Champaran and Muzaffarpur in Bihar. Due to the implementation of reservation policies, more women have been seen at the local governance level in these districts and social welfare programmes, SHGs and civil society organisations are also actively involved. Such an analysis of these districts could provide some enlightenment to the effects of social work interventions on the political consciousness of women, political leadership by women, representation of women in the Panchayat Raj Institutions and the decision-making process of the community.

The study aims to explore the current status of women's political participation, the reasons behind their political non-participation, the role of social work interventions in empowering the political participation and recommendations for policy and practice to strengthen the political empowerment of women in Bihar. The results will inform the areas of social work, gender studies, political science and public policy with evidence-based information and insights on how to facilitate inclusive governance and strengthen women's leadership at the grassroots.

Review of Literature

Political participation among women has grown into a major field of study in the areas of political science, gender studies and social work. There is available literature indicating that although there has been an improvement in the representation of women in political institutions in terms of numbers, their meaningful involvement in political institutions is still constrained by socio-cultural, economic and institutional factors.

Nussbaum (2000) Women and human development: The capabilities approach suggests that empowerment goes beyond political rights to the areas of education, agency, leadership and public life. Her focus is on the need to foster individual capacities through social institutions that enable them to participate in politics.



Agarwal (2001) Participatory exclusions, community forestry, and gender: An analysis for South Asia and a conceptual framework note that the lack of resources, patriarchal power dynamics, and decision-making authority are factors that can affect women's participation in local governance. The study shows that in addition to institutional representation, substantive political empowerment must be guaranteed through a broader social and economic context.

Cornwall and Goetz (2005) Democratizing democracy: Feminist perspectives posit that the more women are in the political institutions the more gender sensitive the governance becomes is not a given. They highlight the need for capacity building, leadership development and institutional support to allow women representatives to have independent powers and influence on public policy.

Research on the impact of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act shows that the reservation has led to a significant rise in women's representation in the Panchayati Raj Institutions in India. But some elected women representatives still experience difficulties like proxy representation, lack of training, limited political skill and opposition from the traditional power structures as reported by researchers like Datta and Sen (2019).

UN Women (2021) Women's full and effective participation and decision-making in public life found that community mobilization, leadership training, legal awareness, and collective action can positively impact women's confidence and involvement in community governance. The report singles out the role of Self-Help Groups (SHGs), civil society organizations and grassroot institutions as key portals to strengthen women's political leadership.

Midgley (2014) Social development: Theory and practice points to the roles of community organization, advocacy, empowerment, and participatory development as key elements of fostering democratic involvement for the "marginalized. Social workers act as information facilitators, build capacity of community leaders and help women to effectively access governance institutions.

The implementation of the “50 percent reservation” policy for women in Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) has shown significant impact on representation of women in local governance in Bihar. Empirical data, however, indicates that many women representatives still suffer drawbacks like low literacy, socio-cultural limitations and financial dependence, which



impact their autonomy in decision making, among other issues. Past studies also show that, in certain districts of Bihar, Self Help Groups, government capacity building programmes and non-governmental organizations have helped to enhance women's political consciousness and leadership abilities.

While there has been a lot of research in the field of women's political representation and the effect of reservation policy, fewer studies have specifically focused on social work interventions strengthening women's participation in political process in Bihar. Furthermore, there is limited empirical study that comparatively analyses the roles of NGOs, SHGs, CBOs and social workers in enabling women political leadership in districts like West Champaran, East Champaran, Muzaffarpur. The current research aims to fill in this void by exploring the impact of social work interventions on women's political participation and leadership at the grassroot level and by offering recommendations for improving democratic governance that is inclusive.

Objectives of the Study

To review the status and level of involvement of women in political arena in Bihar.

To understand the socio-cultural, economic and institutional factors affecting women's political engagement in Bihar.

To understand the part of social work interventions such as NGOs, Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and community organisations in raising the awareness of women and their political leadership and participation.

To suggest the strategies and policy recommendations for enhancing women's political participation and leadership in Bihar from the social work perspective.

Research Methodology

Research Design

The study used qualitative descriptive research design to know the role of social work to deepen political participation of women in Bihar. A qualitative method was deemed suitable to provide



in-depth insight into women's experiences, perceptions, difficulties and impact of social work interventions on women's political participation.

Study Area

The study was carried out in Bihar in the districts of West Champaran, East Champaran and Muzaffarpur. The selected districts were purposively chosen because of the variety of socio-political contexts, involvement of active Panchayati Raj Institutions and government programmes as well as non-governmental organizations in the field of women empowerment and community development.

Research Approach

A qualitative research approach was used to have in-depth information about women's political participation and role of SW interventions. The methodology allowed the researcher to uncover participants lived experience, views and the socio-cultural contexts that shape their political participation.

Participants

The participants included:

Elected as women representatives in Panchayati Raj Institutions.

- Women members of Self-Help Groups (SHGs).

Social workers and those from non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

- Government officials from Panchayati Raj Institutions and women empowerment programmes.

Participants were chosen because of their direct involvement in or experience with women's political participation and/or community development efforts.

Sampling Technique

The purposive sampling technique was used to select participants who have information-rich characteristics, and who can provide meaningful information to the research problem. Sample



size was based on the concept of data saturation where data collection was continued until themes and information became saturated.

Sources of Data

Primary and secondary data sources were used to develop the study.

Semi-structured in-depth interviews with elected women representatives, social workers, NGO staff and government officials were conducted to gather primary data.

Secondary data were gathered from books, peer-reviewed journal articles, government reports, policy documents, official publications and available national and international literature on women's political participation in social work.

Data Collection Methods

The following data were gathered with the help of:

- Semi-structured interviews
- Key informant interviews

Reporting and documentation of analysis of government reports, policy documents and published literature.

Observations in the field

The semi-structured interview method enabled the participants to express their opinions in their own way and with the topics being kept within the framework of the study goals.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was used to analyse the collected qualitative data. The transcripts of interviews were scrutinized, coded and tabulated in the meaningful themes and sub-themes. These themes were then expanded by considering the study objectives and literature to understand the role of social work towards empowering women in political participation in Bihar.

The extent to which the study was accepted as reliable. Reliability of the Study.



In order to provide trustworthiness of the results, the study adhered to the principles of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Triangulation of interview data with documentary evidence combined with extended interaction with participants helped to enhance credibility. The research process was documented in detail, which contributed to dependability, and an audit trail and reflective notes helped to strengthen confirmability.

Ethical Considerations

All three ethical principles were respected during this study. Prior to data collection informed consent was obtained from all participants. The participation was voluntary, and confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents were assured. The information gathered was only for academic research and the participants were told that they could drop out of the study at any time and without consequences.

Results and Analysis

The qualitative analysis showed that though women have been more represented as political leaders after the introduction of the 50 per cent reservation policy in Panchayat Raj Institutions, political participation remains affected due to several socio-cultural, economic, educational and institutional barriers. The results revealed social work interventions as a key factor in enhancing the leadership potentials, political awareness, confidence and decision-making power of women for better involvement in democratic governance.

This analysis shows that reservation policies have had a substantial impact on women's access to local governance. More and more women are running for elections and taking up the roles of Mukhiya, Ward Members and Panchayat Samiti members, respondents noted. This greater representation has helped to bring women into the fore of local political institutions and into community development and decision-making. Participants always indicated however that political representation does not necessarily mean effective participation. The newly elected women representatives were initially reluctant to speak in public, attend Gram Sabha meetings, communicate with government officials and know how to arrange administrative processes. These difficulties were more pronounced among those who had not had much education and had not much previous experience in public affairs. However, it was observed that over time, as women become involved in Panchayati Raj activities, their confidence, communication



skills and leadership became stronger, facilitating them to be more involved in governance and community development forums.

The research also found some factors that affect the political participation of women. One of the most prominent obstacles to women's autonomous political participation was patriarchy-based social norms. Women have less opportunity to devote adequate time to public affairs due to political influence of males and domestic duties and gender roles, many participants explained. Again, the economic dependence of women also limited their engagement, especially in electoral campaigns when economic resources influenced women's effective contestation of elections. Another important variable affecting political participation was found to be educational level. The more educated women felt more confident about understanding government policies, engaging in public discourse and making independent decisions. Respondents, on the other hand, reported that low literacy levels hindered women's access to administrative processes and government programmes. Some participants also cited poor mobility, lack of political consciousness and lack of information, and gender-based discrimination as ongoing issues for women's involvement in local governance. However, these constraints, family support, community encouragement and involvement in Self-Help Groups had a positive impact on women's confidence and desire to participate in politics.

The study reveals that the role of social work is one of the most significant factors in enhancing women's political participation in a transformative manner. The participants in all categories consistently identified social work as an important tool for enhancing women's political empowerment. Social workers were identified to be instrumental in mobilizing communities, delivering political education, leadership development, legal awareness, and advocacy; supporting women to be more empowered in democratic processes, through community mobilization, linkage and collaboration with institutions. Social workers reached out to women, raising awareness about their rights as enshrined in the constitution, showcasing the Panchayati Raj Institutions, the electoral process, and government welfare programmes, and promoting their capacity-building through awareness campaigns, community meetings, training programmes, and workshops. Such interventions helped in improving the participation of women in Gram Sabha meetings, helped them to speak up confidently, to keep a check on the



local development programmes and to contribute in the decision-making process of the community.

Leadership development was one of the strengths of the social work practice. The creators of the training programmes, from both social workers and NGOs and the government, highlighted the significant boost in the confidence of women in public speaking, in preparing development proposals, in running local programmes, and in dealing with administrative officials. These programmes also empowered women by enhancing their negotiation, conflict resolution and governance process skills. This led to the gradual change of many women representatives from symbolic political involvement to real leadership in Panchayati Raj Institutions.

The study also underscores the fact that Self-Help Groups (SHGs) are equally important as political empowerment forum. The social workers actively engaged with the SHGs to promote women's collective involvement in the community development process. SHG meetings drove women to talk about social issues, share their experiences, build leadership skills and get an introduction to governance processes. The participants noted that more women who actively involved in SHGs contest in local elections, attend Gram Sabha meetings, and confidently involved in public decision making. Not only did the SHGs help to empower their members economically, but they also served as vital platforms for political awareness, social mobilization, and the establishment of community leadership.

Advocacy and rights-based work were also important aspects of social workers' work. Social workers have been mentioned by respondents as often assisting women in accessing government welfare schemes, in understanding legal provisions concerning gender equality and in solving discrimination and social exclusion issues. Social workers served as mediators between communities and government bodies, improving women's ability to access public services and holding public officials accountable and transparent. Participants also underscored the importance of ongoing mentoring following elections over training programmes which occurred on a one-off basis. The newly elected representatives of the women were often found to need continuous support in financial management, development planning, implementation of government schemes, keeping of the record books, and co-ordinating with government departments. Social workers were found to be very helpful mentors, which helped the women representatives to carry out their duties effectively and independently.



The results also show that when there is effective cooperation between the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), government departments, NGOs, educational institutions, and community-based organizations, it boosts women's political engagement. Institutionalisation of regular leadership development programmes, political education campaigns, legal literacy initiatives, governance training and institutional mentoring to enhance long-term political involvement of women were recommended. Respondents also suggested that the role of social workers should be extended such that they participate in the community and assist Elected Women Representatives, enhance the strength of SHTGs, and inculcate democratic values at grassroots level. It was also agreed that greater participation of male family members, leaders and political parties in the gender sensitization programmes is imperative to reduce resistance from the male side and creating conducive environment for women leadership.

In sum, the results showed that constitutional reservation has proven to be effective in raising the share of women in local governance, but sustainable political empowerment calls for a sustained process of social support, institutional development, and social work interventions. Social work also plays an important role in raising political awareness and enhancing women's confidence, leadership, decision-making power, civic participation and voice. Social work is a catalyst for women's political empowerment and inclusive governance which is achieved through community organisation, advocacy, leadership development, rights-based education and institutional networking. Thus, it is concluded that professional social work can effectively contribute to women's political empowerment programmes in order to enhance the grass root democracy, gender responsive governance and women's leadership in Bihar. Finally, policy efforts in the future should include social workers as a stakeholder in the quest for increased women's political participation and ensure that women representatives elected to office can effectively participate in local governance and sustainable community development, thereby exercising their constitutional rights.

Conclusion

The study of the present work focused on the contribution of social work to empower the political participation of women in Bihar districts, especially the districts of West Champaran, East Champaran and Muzaffarpur. The results have shown that while the provisions of the Constitution and the 50 percent reservation in the Panchayati Raj Institutions have resulted in



a significant increase in political representation of women, their meaningful participation in democratic governance remains influenced by socio-cultural, economic, education and institutional factors. Reservation has provided women with opportunities to access political institutions, but for them to participate effectively, continuous capacity building, leadership development, institutional support and an enabling social environment is needed.

It reveals the potential of social work to contribute to a broader understanding of women's political empowerment, as well as to formal political representation. Social workers are important in improving women's confidence and political knowledge and skills as they build their capacity through community organisation, political education, leadership training, advocating on their behalf, raising awareness of women's rights and capacity building programmes. These interventions allow women the opportunity to vote, as well as actively participate in governance, public debate, policy development and community development.

The results also show that the contributions, roles and effectiveness of NGOs and SHGs in enhancing women's political participation are complementary. NGOs are used for political awareness, governance training, legal literacy, and institutional networking whereas SHGs are used as a grassroots platform to facilitate collective learning, building of youth leadership and mobilisation of communities. The multi-sectoral initiatives of social workers, NGOs, Government and Panchayati Raj Institutions ensures an enabling environment for women's effective exercise of political rights and increased confidence in local governance.

While all these positive trends are welcome, there are still a number of areas that limit women's substantive political participation. There are still a number of restrictions on women's autonomous political leadership, such as patriarchal social norms, low level of education, economic dependability, lack of political consciousness, limited mobility, and limited institutional support. These structural problems will need consistent interventions through social development, gender equality, participation of the community and democratic governance.

Hence the study calls for a better understanding that augmenting women's political participation will not be possible through constitutional reservation or electoral reforms alone. The need for sustainable political empowerment implies that there is a need for continuous



social work interventions to build the capacities, leadership and participation of women in political processes, as well as change the attitude of the community towards women's leadership. Incorporation of professional social work to the governance and political empowerment programmes can play a significant role in enhancing grassroots democracy, inclusive decision making and gender responsive governance in Bihar.

Policy Implications

The study suggests the institutional systems that can encourage women's political leadership should be strengthened by conducting regular leadership development programmes, training in governance, political education and legal literacy. Increasing inter-departmental cooperation, strengthening the cooperation with the Panchayat Raj Institutions, the NGOs, the schools and social work groups should be encouraged to provide continuous mentoring and technical assistance to the elected women representatives. To further strengthen women's role in democratic processes, a greater role for Self-Help Groups as platforms for civic engagement and leadership development can be achieved. Furthermore, gender sensitization training with families, community leaders and political parties is crucial to lessen patriarchal barriers and create an environment that is conducive to the political empowerment of women.

To conclude, “women's political participation” is not simply about their electoral representation but it is also a key aspect of social justice, democratic governance and sustainable development. Social work, focused on empowerment, participation, human rights and social transformation, is well placed to enhance women's political agency. Social work plays a significant role in bridging the gap between communities, civil society and governance institutions and thus helps to build a more inclusive, participatory and equitable democratic society in Bihar.

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Cybersecurity Risks in UPI Transactions: Legal Issues and Regulatory Responses

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Abstract

The Unified Payments Interface (UPI) has reshaped retail payments in India, processing over eighteen billion transactions every month and contributing to more than four-fifths of the country's digital payment volume. This rapid adoption, however, has been accompanied by a parallel rise in cyber-enabled financial fraud, ranging from phishing and SIM-swap attacks to fake QR codes and social engineering scams. This paper examines the cybersecurity risks associated with UPI transactions and the legal and regulatory framework that has developed in response, including the Information Technology Act 2000, the Reserve Bank of India's customer liability circular of 2017, the Digital Personal Data Protection Act 2023, and the Integrated Ombudsman Scheme. Using a doctrinal and analytical method supported by secondary data drawn from RBI annual reports, Parliament responses, NCRB trends and recent judicial decisions, the paper finds that while the zero-liability framework offers strong protection on paper, weak enforcement, low awareness, and slow grievance redressal continue to leave a large share of victims uncompensated. The paper concludes with recommendations for strengthening real-time fraud detection, harmonizing banking and criminal law remedies, and improving victim-centric reporting mechanisms.

Keywords: UPI fraud, cybersecurity law, digital payments, RBI regulation, zero liability

1. Introduction

The Unified Payments Interface, developed by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) and launched in 2016, allows instant transfer of money between bank accounts using a mobile phone. It has become the backbone of India's digital payments ecosystem, valued for its convenience, interoperability across banks, and absence of transaction charges for ordinary users. The scale of adoption is striking: UPI volumes crossed 185 billion transactions in the financial year 2024-25, a rise of nearly 42 per cent over the previous year.

This scale, however, has created a correspondingly large attack surface for cybercriminals. Fraudsters exploit the trust users place in instant payment systems through phishing links, fake customer care numbers, malicious QR codes, screen-sharing applications and SIM-swap techniques. Because UPI transactions are typically irreversible once authenticated, victims often have very little time to act before funds are moved out of reach through a chain of mule accounts. This combination of speed, scale and irreversibility makes UPI fraud a distinct legal and regulatory challenge, sitting at the intersection of banking law, cybercrime law, consumer protection law and data protection law.

This paper studies the nature of cybersecurity risks in UPI transactions, traces the legal and regulatory response in India, and evaluates how effectively the existing framework protects consumers, drawing on recent statistics and case law.

2. Historical Developments

The legal response to UPI-related cybersecurity risk has evolved in stages rather than through a single comprehensive statute.

- 2000 - The Information Technology Act, 2000 created India's first general framework for electronic transactions, digital signatures and cyber offences, later amended in 2008 to widen the scope of cybercrime provisions and introduce Section 43A on protection of sensitive personal data.



- 2016 - NPCI launched UPI, building on the Immediate Payment Service (IMPS) infrastructure and the Aadhaar-enabled payment ecosystem, rapidly expanding the digital payment footprint, particularly after the 2016 demonetisation drive.
- 2017 - The RBI issued its circular on "Customer Protection - Limiting Liability of Customers in Unauthorised Electronic Banking Transactions" (6 July 2017), introducing the zero-liability, limited-liability and full-liability framework that still governs UPI fraud disputes today.
- 2019-2021 - The Consumer Protection Act, 2019 and the RBI's Integrated Ombudsman Scheme, 2021 strengthened the redressal architecture available to digital payment users.
- 2023 - The Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 introduced obligations on data fiduciaries, including banks and payment apps, to secure personal data and report breaches, indirectly strengthening UPI cybersecurity governance.
- 2024-2026 - In response to a sharp rise in fraud volumes, RBI and NPCI introduced the Central Payment Fraud Information Registry (CPFIR), MuleHunter.AI, mandatory cooling periods for new payees and SIM changes, and proposals for a Digital Payments Intelligence Platform for real-time, network-wide fraud signal sharing.

This trajectory shows a shift from a purely facilitative regulatory posture in the early UPI years towards an increasingly protective and risk-based approach as fraud volumes grew.

3. Key Terms

- Unified Payments Interface (UPI): A real-time payment system enabling inter-bank fund transfers through a mobile application using a Virtual Payment Address (VPA).
- Phishing: A deceptive practice of sending fraudulent communications, typically through SMS, email or messaging apps, designed to trick a user into revealing confidential banking credentials.
- SIM Swap Fraud: A technique by which a fraudster obtains a duplicate SIM card linked to a victim's registered mobile number to intercept one-time passwords (OTPs).



- **Mule Account:** A bank account used by fraudsters, often opened in the name of an unsuspecting or complicit individual, to receive and quickly route away stolen funds.
- **Zero Liability:** The RBI rule under which a customer bears no financial loss for an unauthorised transaction reported within three working days, provided the loss did not arise from the customer's own negligence.
- **Social Engineering:** Psychological manipulation of a victim into voluntarily disclosing sensitive information or performing an action, such as approving a UPI collect request, that benefits the fraudster.

4. Literature Review

Existing commentary on UPI security and law can be grouped into three broad strands. The first strand consists of regulatory and government reports. The RBI's Annual Report for FY2024-25 records 13,516 digital payment fraud cases, accounting for 56.5 per cent of all reported banking frauds, with cumulative losses of about Rs 520 crore, while Parliament responses placed by the Finance Ministry show that domestic UPI fraud incidents rose by 85 per cent in FY2023-24 over the previous year. These official sources establish the scale of the problem but offer limited legal analysis.

The second strand is legal-practitioner commentary analyzing bank liability under the 2017 RBI circular, the Information Technology Act and the Consumer Protection Act. This literature generally agrees that liability turns on whether the bank or the customer was negligent, and that courts and consumer forums have increasingly placed a duty of care on banks to maintain secure systems and respond promptly to fraud complaints, while still penalizing customers who share OTPs or UPI PINs.

The third strand consists of survey-based and industry studies. A Local Circles survey of over 32,000 UPI users found that one in five households had experienced UPI fraud at least once in the preceding three years, and that 51 per cent of victims never filed any formal complaint, suggesting that official fraud statistics significantly understate the real scale of the problem. Industry trend reports similarly note that fraud tactics have shifted from simple phishing links towards more



sophisticated methods such as QR code swapping, fake UPI collect requests and deepfake voice phishing.

Taken together, this literature documents the scale of UPI fraud and the broad contours of bank liability, but pays comparatively little attention to how criminal law, banking regulation and data protection law interact in practice, or to why a large share of victims remains unprotected despite a formally strong zero-liability framework. This paper attempts to address that gap.

5. Research Gaps

- Limited integration of banking regulation, criminal law and data protection law in a single analytical framework specific to UPI.
- Sparse academic analysis of recent judicial and consumer forum decisions specifically dealing with UPI (as opposed to card or net-banking) fraud.
- Insufficient examination of why over half of UPI fraud victims do not pursue formal complaints despite the existence of the zero-liability rule.
- Limited assessment of the effectiveness of newer technological interventions such as MuleHunter.AI and the proposed Digital Payments Intelligence Platform.

6. Objectives of the Study

- To identify and classify the principal cybersecurity risks affecting UPI transactions in India.
- To examine the legal and regulatory framework governing UPI fraud, including statutory provisions, RBI circulars and recent case law.
- To assess the effectiveness of existing grievance redressal and liability allocation mechanisms using recent data.
- To recommend measures for strengthening the legal and regulatory response to UPI-related cyber fraud.



7. Scope and Limitations

The scope of this paper is confined to the Indian legal and regulatory framework governing UPI transactions, with particular focus on developments between 2017 and 2026. It addresses civil and regulatory liability questions, along with relevant criminal law provisions, but does not extend to a comparative study of payment systems in other jurisdictions, nor to the technical architecture of UPI's payment-switching infrastructure beyond what is necessary to understand the legal issues.

The study relies on secondary data, including RBI publications, Parliament responses, NCRB-based estimates and reported judicial decisions, rather than primary empirical research such as victim surveys conducted by the author. Some statistics, particularly state-wise and year-wise fraud projections, are drawn from third-party analyses of government data and may be subject to revision once complete official figures are published. The paper also does not cover purely technical cybersecurity solutions, such as cryptographic protocol design, except where they intersect with legal or regulatory obligations.

8. Materials and Methods

This study adopts a doctrinal and analytical research method. Primary legal sources examined include the Information Technology Act, 2000 (as amended), the Reserve Bank of India's 2017 circular on customer liability, the Consumer Protection Act, 2019, the RBI Integrated Ombudsman Scheme, 2021, and the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023. Secondary sources include RBI Annual Reports for FY2024-25, responses furnished by the Ministry of Finance to the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha, NCRB-linked fraud trend analyses, NPCI statistical releases, and a recent industry survey on UPI fraud experience. Case law was identified through review of recent reported decisions of the Supreme Court of India, High Courts and Consumer Disputes Redressal Commissions dealing with unauthorized electronic transactions and bank liability. Data on fraud volumes and values were compiled into comparative tables and charts to illustrate trends over the period FY2022 to FY2026.

9. Results and Discussion



9.1 Scale and Trend of UPI Fraud

Reported UPI fraud rose sharply between FY2022 and FY2024, before showing early signs of moderation. Figure 1 sets out the value of UPI fraud reported in each financial year. The amount involved increased nearly fivefold between FY2022 and FY2024, reaching Rs 1,087 crore on 13.42 lakh reported incidents, the highest level recorded since UPI became mainstream. In FY2025, the reported amount declined to Rs 981 crore across 12.64 lakh incidents, and provisional data for FY2026 (up to November) shows Rs 805 crore across 10.64 lakh incidents, suggesting that recent regulatory and technological interventions may be having some restraining effect, even as absolute volumes remain high.

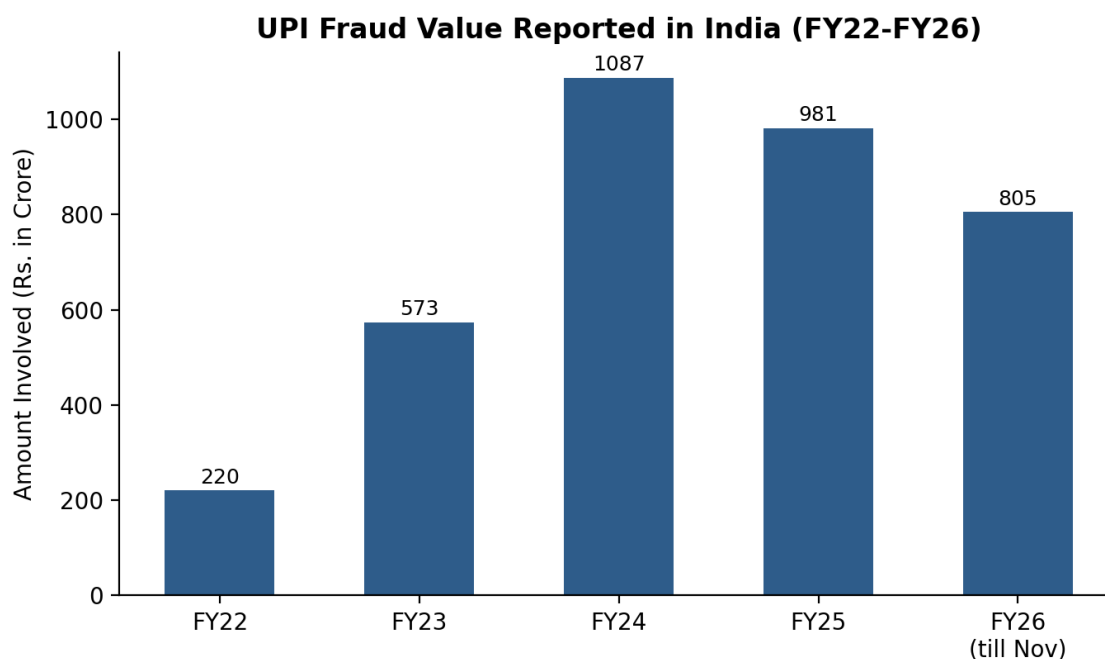


Figure 1: Value of UPI Fraud Reported in India, FY2022-FY2026 (Rs. in Crore). Source: Compiled from Finance Ministry responses to Parliament and RBI Annual Report data.

9.2 Geographic Concentration of Fraud

Fraud incidence is not evenly distributed across the country. Technology-dense states with high UPI penetration report a disproportionate share of cases. Figure 2 shows that Maharashtra, Karnataka and the Delhi-NCR region together account for over half of reported cases nationally,



broadly correlating with transaction volume, urban smartphone penetration and the concentration of technology-sector employees who are frequently targeted through professional-sounding social engineering scripts. Tier-2 cities show comparatively lower reported numbers, though this likely reflects weaker cyber-infrastructure and under-reporting rather than a genuinely lower incidence of fraud.

State-wise Share of UPI Fraud Cases (2025, NCRB Trend Estimates)

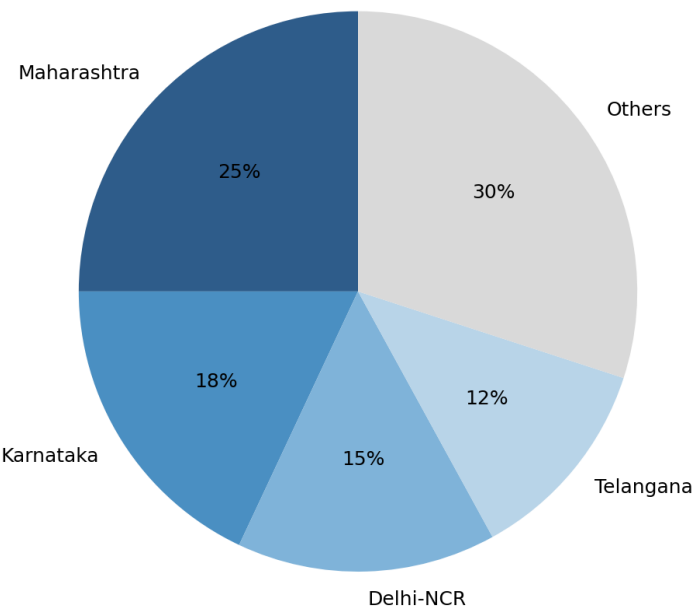


Figure 2: State-wise Share of UPI Fraud Cases, 2025 (NCRB-linked Trend Estimates). Source: Compiled from NCRB-based fraud trend analyses.

9.3 Grievance Redressal Performance

The zero-liability framework is only as effective as the speed and reliability of the redressal mechanism behind it. According to data placed before Parliament, only 22 per cent of fraud complaints were acted upon within seven days during April-September 2025, although the figure rose to 92 per cent within thirty days. More strikingly, only about 6 per cent of fraud chargebacks were actually recovered, underlining the limited value of post-facto remedies once funds have

moved through a chain of mule accounts. This is compounded by a significant reporting gap: the LocalCircles survey found that 51 per cent of UPI fraud victims never filed any formal complaint with their bank, the police or a regulator, meaning that official figures substantially understate the true scale of victimisation.

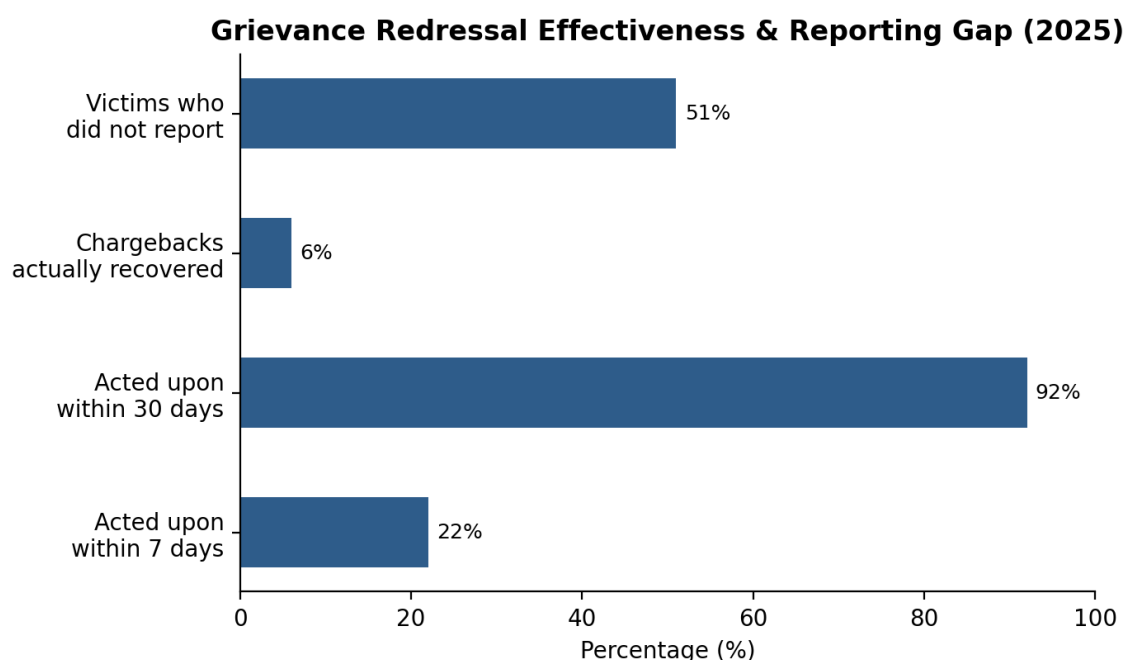


Figure 3: Grievance Redressal Effectiveness and Reporting Gap in UPI Fraud Cases, 2025.
Source: Compiled from Parliament responses and LocalCircles survey data.

9.4 Judicial and Regulatory Trends

Recent decisions illustrate how courts and forums are applying the 2017 RBI circular. In a Special Leave Petition dismissed by the Supreme Court on 3 January 2025, the Court upheld concurrent findings that disputed bank transactions were unauthorised and fraudulent, and that no negligence could be attributed to the customer, applying clauses 8 and 9 of the RBI circular dated 6 July 2017 to affirm the customer's entitlement to relief. This reflects a broader trend in which appellate courts decline to interfere with factual findings on customer negligence once lower forums have carefully examined the evidence.



At the same time, forums have consistently held that voluntary disclosure of a UPI PIN or OTP amounts to contributory negligence that can defeat a zero-liability claim, as seen in disputes where banks successfully resisted refund claims after establishing that the customer had shared sensitive credentials with a fraudster posing as a bank official. Conversely, several District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commissions have ruled in favour of complainants where banks could not demonstrate that they had implemented adequate security measures or had responded to fraud complaints with reasonable promptness, reaffirming that banks owe a heightened duty of care as custodians of public money. Read together, these decisions show that liability outcomes are highly fact-sensitive, turning on rapid reporting, the presence or absence of credential-sharing, and the adequacy of the bank's own security and response systems.

9.5 Regulatory and Technological Responses

In response to rising fraud, regulators have layered technological and procedural safeguards onto the existing legal framework. These include device binding and two-factor PIN authentication, mandatory cooling periods for first-time payees and SIM changes, the Central Payment Fraud Information Registry for centralized fraud reporting, MuleHunter.AI for identifying mule accounts using AI and machine learning, dedicated banking-sector internet domains to curb phishing, and the proposed Digital Payments Intelligence Platform for real-time, network-level sharing of suspicious transaction data across banks and fintech companies. NPCI has also tightened application programming interface usage, capping high-frequency balance-enquiry and account-look-up requests that fraudsters had exploited for reconnaissance.

10. Findings

- UPI fraud value rose nearly fivefold between FY2022 and FY2024, before moderating in FY2025 and FY2026, suggesting that recent regulatory interventions are beginning to have a measurable effect, even though absolute volumes remain a serious concern.
- Fraud is geographically concentrated in technologically advanced, high-UPI-penetration states, indicating that awareness campaigns need to be targeted rather than uniform across the country.



- The formal zero-liability framework is undermined in practice by slow redressal, with a large share of complaints unresolved within seven days and very low chargeback recovery rates.
- Significant under-reporting, with about half of victims never filing a formal complaint, means that official statistics substantially understate the true prevalence of UPI fraud.
- Courts and consumer forums apply a fact-sensitive negligence standard, generally protecting customers who report promptly and did not share credentials, while denying relief where credential-sharing is established.
- Newer technological tools such as MuleHunter.AI and the proposed Digital Payments Intelligence Platform represent a shift towards proactive, network-level fraud prevention, but remain at an early stage of deployment.

11. Recommendations

- Simplify and unify the fraud-reporting process into a single-click mechanism linking the bank, NPCI, the National Cybercrime Reporting Portal and the RBI Ombudsman, reducing the friction that currently discourages victims from complaining.
- Mandate stricter time-bound action on initial fraud complaints, with clear escalation triggers, given that only 22 per cent of complaints are currently acted upon within seven days.
- Expand real-time, network-wide fraud-signal sharing under the proposed Digital Payments Intelligence Platform to all scheduled banks and major fintech players, not merely a pilot group.
- Strengthen mule-account detection and the speed of account freezing, since fund recovery falls sharply once money passes through multiple mule accounts.
- Conduct targeted, vernacular cybersecurity awareness campaigns in both high-fraud metropolitan regions and under-served Tier-2 and rural areas, addressing the very different risk profiles in each.



- Clarify, through updated RBI guidance, the evidentiary standard for establishing customer negligence in UPI PIN and OTP disclosure cases, to reduce inconsistency across consumer forums.
- Align obligations under the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 with RBI cybersecurity directions to ensure consistent breach-reporting and data-security standards across banks and third-party UPI applications.

12. Conclusion

UPI has delivered enormous gains in financial inclusion and payment convenience, but its scale and speed have also made it an attractive target for increasingly sophisticated cybercriminals. India's legal and regulatory response, anchored in the Information Technology Act, the RBI's 2017 liability circular, consumer protection law and more recent data protection legislation, provides a reasonably comprehensive framework on paper. The evidence examined in this paper, however, shows a persistent gap between the formal strength of the zero-liability rule and its practical delivery: redressal remains slow, recovery rates are low, and a large share of victims never come forward at all. Closing this gap will require not new legislation so much as better enforcement, faster and more unified grievance redressal, wider deployment of real-time fraud-detection technology, and sustained public awareness, so that the legal protections already on the books translate into real outcomes for ordinary UPI users.

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