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THE PHENOMENAL RISE OF OTT PLATFORM

Concept Note

Traditional broadcast business is increasingly becoming unviable. The trend is apparent going by the fact that the cable universe has seen a wipeout of over 15 per cent in the last few years.

If we look at the current trend of #***Boycott*** going around we can safely say that the traditional form of entertainment has taken a severe blow. The viewership of the Hindi entertainment genre, according to industry experts, has dipped from 90 per cent to 65 per cent in the last one year. Similarly, the viewership of English entertainment channels has fallen from 30 per cent to less than 10 per cent. A large part of this dip in viewership, says Kaul (2021) has happened mostly in urban markets due to factors such as easy access to data and advent of OTT platforms. English content viewers, for instance, comprise around 5 per cent of TV viewing universe, and this segment has largely moved consuming entertainment on OTT platforms such as Netflix, Disney Hotstar, Voot, Sony Liv, Amazon Prime, Zee 5, At Balaji etc. to name a few and many more coming up. A couple of years ago, most broadcasters spent huge amounts of money promoting their TV shows, but today most of them are spending crores on promoting their original shows that are being streamed on their OTT platforms.

Over the Top (OTT) platforms is one such medium that has gained the limelight the most.

The pandemic forced people to stay indoors for fear of contracting the dreaded 'C' disease. In the absence of any kind of physical social networking, the only entertainment were these platforms such as Netflix, Disney Hotstar, Voot, Sony Liv, Amazon Prime, Zee 5, At Balaji etc and many more. People spend most of their time on these online streaming mediums which provided them with a very diverse and varied platter. There was something for everyone

be it a toddler when the mom was busy in terms of cartoons or edutainment for the school going kid. The teenagers and young adults are soiled for choices from a host of English and Hindi channels offering a multitude of genres. The elderly, the homemakers and office goers alike had choices of various genres like crime, comedy, action, drama, mystery, horror, romance, thriller, fantasy etc. not to mention the Balaji soaps that has had a whole generation of women hooked for seasons and years.

Current issue of the 'Liberal Studies' journal carries a discussion on the phenomenal rise of the OTT platforms and the impact it has had on the traditional entertainment industry. Darshan Trivedi Faculty at MICA, Ahmedabad talks about the evolution of new streaming platforms across the world. He emphasizes on how the ease of access of video content at home has given a boost to the consumption and increased the popularity. The top OTT platforms currently India enjoys a mix of Regional, National, and International OTT platforms. Some of the top players in the country are Disney+Hotstar, MX Player, Youtube, Jio Cinema, Hungama, Voot, Zee5, Alt Balaji, SonyLIV, Eros Now, Sun NXT, Ullu, Amazon Prime Video, Viu, Netflix, TVF, Hoichoi, Shemaroo, Mubi, and Manorama MAX. There are mainly three types of OTT platform models existing in the country. Advertising-Based Video on Demand (AVOD), Subscription Video-on-demand (SVOD), and Transactional Video on Demand (TVOD) platforms. AVOD is purely advertising-based, whereas SVOD is the subscription-based platform, whereas TVOD is more of a transaction or view-based platform, e.g., movie pay per view. He discusses about the lack of regulatory mechanism for the OTT platforms and stresses upon the need for modification in the IT rules. Given the drastic reduction in Internet charges and the amount of time consumed online the OTT platforms are set to explode for the Indian market.

Sunayan Bhattacharjee gives a detailed view of the OTT platforms and distinguishes among various types of services like ,Subscription-Based Video-on-Demand (SVoD) services, Advertisement-Supported Video on Demand (AVoD) services and Transactional Video on Demand (TVoD). Dr.Sunayan discusses about essential features the OTT platforms offer to the viewers like Flexibility, Convenient interface and easy navigability, novelty and personali-zation of content, monetization mechanisms like SVoD, AVoD, Pay Per View (PPV) and TVoD.

He opines on the various Essential attributes and OTT platform needs to have to remain an essential component of people's lives. Some of which are: Content in multiple languages, easy search options, the creation of user profiles which helps in personalizing the content for a specific consumer. The watchlist

helps consumers pick up what they want to watch. He then goes on to set a Global OTT context and provide a background into the digital forms of entertainment. The future trajectory of OTT industry in India as suggested by Sunayan with the advent of OTT would lay emphasis on the importance of mature localized and Organic content, possible consolidation of the highly fragmented industry that it is as of now, changes in the subscription patterns. He also feels that immersive technologies would be the key to move ahead and social media might become a dominant norm. Advertising strategy would have to be localized and the producers will have to make an effort to understand the audience for better market share.

Uma Shankar Pandey focuses on understanding the popularity of OTT platforms and how it has liberated the viewer from being forced to watch the same content as others in the family. The 24*7 availability frees from the anxiety of missing any programme and with recording facility available it makes viewing convenient. Many of the changes visible on the OTT platforms are a continuation of interaction between technology and content. The House of Cards by Netflix released on February 1, 2013 was a game changer of sorts. Netflix started as a mail-order DVD subscription service in 1999. This 100-million-dollar web series led to a series of firsts. It empowered the consumer like never before. Viewers were no longer bound by the limitations of the schedule imposed by the broadcasters. The fact that the OTT platforms were not targeting just the lowest common denominator was a fresh opportunity for the content creators as well. They were freed from the pressures of the television rating points. At the same time the channels (OTT platforms in this case), were freed from the demands of the volatile advertising industry. Viewers thronged to the OTT platforms since it provided content on demand without commercials. It was the psychology of control that was vital. The variety of devices on which content could be consumed, made TV viewing more private than ever before. The new technology empowered both the storytellers and the audience alike. The story tellers were not constrained by the commercial requirements of the erstwhile Box Office. They could lead their creative instincts to previously uncharted paths as in many cases they were not bound by regulations such as censor certifications. Another major convenience provided by the OTT platforms is that the consumers are not required to own content. Gone are the days of buying audio and video DVDs. The entire library is available to every subscriber at no extra cost. These days most audio devices either work with voice assistants or with Bluetooth. Uma Shankar Pandey sees the OTT platforms are here to stay and are poised for a bigger share in the times to come.

Shamali Gupta has written an interesting piece on the Buzzwords pertaining to the OTT platforms. She enlightens the readers on how Teens and members of Gen Z are using a slew of new slang terms, associated with these OTT platforms many of which are confusing to older generations. Like *bingeflix*-ing, or indulging in the act of binge-watching Netflix content.

For the new-age OTT users, 'Netflix and Chill' is a slang re-wording for romantic or sexual activity. *'Netflix & Nap?'* is the more than perfect term used by the individual who essentially just wants a lazy night in with their long time noteworthy other-half. *Spotify and side hug'* is a hilarious riff on Netflix and chill, meant as a way to turn down somebody you aren't romantically interested in. A self-assertive, smart aleck who believes that he has become an expert after watching one Netflix documentary on a particular subject is currently termed an '*Overnight flexpert'*. The Netflix buddy contributes by footing part of the bill, or you can just give them your Netflix password for free. *Phantom flixer* is anyone who uses your streaming service password even though they promised to use it once. Shamali goes on to discuss various other terms being used by the Gen Zee for various usages of OTT platform which makes this article quite an interesting read.

Dawn of New Content Platforms

Darshan Ashwin Trivedi*

Indian Entertainment Industry

India is a diverse country. The country represents geographical, religious, cultural, social, and language diversity. The most challenging part of this diversity is communication for many diverse individuals. The Indian entertainment industry is the right mix of traditional and emerging platforms. Indian consumers enjoy the content across media platforms like television, radio, films, digital platforms, cinema, out-of-home entertainment, and immersive platforms. From the content point of view, India offers the right mix of one of the world's oldest singing traditions to the most contemporary electronic dance music and from the mythologies to the latest drama narratives. For the 1.3 billion consumers living in the country and millions residing outside of the country, the Indian entertainment industry is thriving with opportunities.

With cinema acting as the content feeder for almost all the other media platforms, Indian entertainment content is widely accepted by consumers worldwide. Indian Entertainment industry was INR 1.61 trillion in 2021, which is expected to grow at a CAGR of 13% in the next two years. Television contributes the highest to the total revenue of the Indian media and entertainment industry (FICCI EY, 2022). The digital platforms have brought in a significant shift in the consumption patterns of Indian entertainment consumers. From the top-down linear distribution, the digital platforms have started offering horizontal communication, and that too in a non-linear fashion. The content consumers are now empowered and enjoy a content creator's role. This shift, in particular, has formed a league of new generation content creators and consumers.

Evolution of Streaming Platforms in the World

With the introduction of television, Audio-Visual content was gaining

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people's attention from across the world. The convenience of watching content at home paved the way for cable and satellite television and home video segments' growth. But something unusual happened in 2005. Three young individuals, Chad Hurley, Steve Chen, and Jawed Karim, who had met at PayPal, launched YouTube in 2005. Google eventually acquired YouTube to make crowdsourced digital video content available to the world. The acquisition bailed the owners out of the recurring debt from the running expenditure. This was the first instance of video streaming. Soon Netflix joined the bandwagon in 2007. The company that initially started as a home video distribution company, was later transformed into a streaming platform for films and then web series (Lamare, 2018).

Convenience to consume video content at home drove the consumption and popularity of Streaming Platforms or Over the Top (OTT) platforms. First, it spread in North America, and soon it caught up across the world. The content narratives started contributing to the idea of cultural globalization. Almost every country had its own OTT promise in a few years. Thus the OTT platforms became truly local also.

Indian OTT Platforms

The first experience of Streaming video or OTT platform for Indian audiences was YouTube. In 2021, the first Indian offering of streaming video was made available in the form of Ditto TV, which was launched by the Zee Digital Convergence Limited digital arm of ZEE (Zee Entertainment Enterprise limited). It was considered the path-breaking launch for Indian consumers. In 2016 the group launched another platform called OZEE. The OTT services of

the group were renamed ZEE5 in 2018. The group has the longest legacy of OTT platforms (Tiwari & Menezes, 2012).

Currently, India enjoys a mix of Regional, National, and International OTT platforms. Some of the top players in the country are Disney+Hotstar, MX Player, Youtube, Jio Cinema, Hungama, Voot, Zee5, Alt Balaji, SonyLIV, Eros Now, Sun NXT, Ullu, Amazon Prime Video, Viu, Netflix, TVF, Hoichoi, Shemaroo, Mubi, and Manorama MAX. India's advantage is the legacy of television companies in the country. Almost all of the active platforms in the country have a strong television or film play. Due to Covid19 Pandemic, people were forced to stay at home, which helped increase content consumption.

Indian consumers consume the OTT platforms for entertainment across genres. In 2021 there was a sharp increase in the paid subscriptions (From 31 million households to 40 million households) paying for 80 million video OTT subscriptions. The OTT platforms provide entertainment on the go. Considering the number of broadband internet subscribers in the country, which has over 783 million consumers in 2022 (TRAI, 2022), various OTT platforms were accessed through devices like smart TV, connected TV, laptops, tablets, and smartphones. India remains the highest contributor to the total video views.

Business models

There are mainly three types of OTT platform models existing in the country. Advertising-Based Video on Demand (AVOD), Subscription Video-on-demand (SVOD), and Transactional Video on Demand (TVOD) platforms. AVOD is purely advertising-based, whereas SVOD is the subscription-based platform, whereas TVOD is more of a transaction or view-based platform, e.g., movie pay per view.

India is predominantly an advertising-driven market. The majority of Indian consumers don't pay for their content. The current offerings for OTT platforms are subscription offerings, whereas a limited number of subscribers make the business more challenging for the OTT platforms. In the previous year, the highest consumed OTT players in the country were AVOD players.

OTT Platforms: Observations

Artificial intelligence and Machine learning are at the forefront of the growth of OTT platforms. While the platforms offer convenience, the suggestions are an integral part of the OTT platforms. Platforms invest a lot in data mining and creating their data takes to give consumers a better content experience.

The Indian platforms were quick in making the platforms localized for Indian languages. This would help the consumers who are low on the English language. This has been observed as one of the most critical aspects of the growth of the OTT segment.

The launch of Jio in 2016 has been responsible for the addition of new internet users, low data costs, and eventually the growth of the Indian OTT consumer base. Jio's launch made the internet available to ordinary people reasonably. Besides, Jio attracted new rural consumers, which added to the language consumption.

Indian OTT platforms are about language consumers. More consumers from rural and semi-urban areas have started consuming the OTT platforms in recent years. This has also facilitated a shift in producing homogeneous content in Indian languages. While the international companies are struggling to make their mark in OTT consumption, regional platforms like Hoichoi, Sun Nxt, ShemarooMe or Manorama MAX could see a sharp growth in the consumption patterns.

There was no specific framework for the content regulations on OTT platforms. The MIB recently notified the Information Technology (Guidelines for Intermediaries and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules 2021 (Rules). Besides the other recommendations in the guidelines that pertained to the restrictions of the freedom of speech and expression granted in the fundamental rights, a specific reference was given to age classifications like that in many western countries. The Information Technology Rules are expected to provide benchmarks on best practices in the OTT domain. Since OTT platforms essentially serve as personal media, edgy content has surfaced in recent years. Crime, violence, sex, and abusive languages are common themes on such OTT platforms. The IT Rules are expected to provide a benchmark for the best practices for such platforms.

Interactivity has been stealing the show of all entertainment content consumption and production. OTT has seen a few early experiments like Bandersnatch, where multiple options of the same narrative are explored. The OTT platforms are set to innovate more with metaverse, blockchain, cryptocurrency, NFT, etc. On the one hand, there is a need to experiment more with content; on the other hand, there is a need to explore newer and better ways to monetize for the future world.

OTT platforms offer many possibilities. From the consumers' viewpoint, they offer the most convenient ways of consuming content. Most of the existing TV networks are striving toward establishing their streaming promise. OTT

platforms are set to explode for the Indian market. Unlike television, OTT growth has taken place faster in India. India spends the highest amount of time-consuming content on the internet. The cost of the internet has come down drastically. The language promise of content will push Indian consumers towards heavy consumption of OTT platforms.

Whither OTT Platforms: Tracking the Future Trajectory of Entertainment with Special Reference to India

Sunayan Bhattacharjee*

OTT Platforms: The Universal Gamechanger in Entertainment

For a change, let's put the searchlight on the life of an average millennial or a member of the oft-repeated Generation Z. Prarthana is a 20-year-old English (Honours) student at a reputed college in South Delhi. She gets up on a fine summer morning, turns on her mobile internet and streams an episode of the immensely popular *Shark Tank India* (2021-22) while completing her daily dose of morning activities. She then comes to the dining table, layers her multigrain bread with jam and fixes a glass of orange juice. She does all these while listening to *Mea Culpa* by the German Musical Project *Enigma* on *iTunes* using her latest *Apple iPhone 13*. After breakfast, she readies her college bag and rushes out of her house at South Patel Nagar in West Delhi. She then hurries to the Patel Nagar Metro Station and catches a metro train to Rajiv Chowk. In the train, she watches an episode of the critically appreciated American television series *Breaking Bad* (2008-13) on *Netflix*. Prarthana had been binge-watching the exploits of the anti-hero Walter White from *Breaking Bad* the previous weekend. She was clearly enamoured and could not get enough of the series. At Rajiv Chowk, she boards another train on the Yellow Line. Her destination this time is Saket, where her college is located. However, during the second train journey, Prarthana logs out of *Netflix* and logs onto *Amazon Prime Video* so that she can complete Season 1 of *Paatal Lok* (2020). Needless to mention here that she absolutely loved the series and wanted to finish off the first season. After reaching college, she gets busy with her classes. During the lunchbreak, she

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and her best friend Ria together watch Christopher Nolan's science fiction thriller masterpiece *Tenet* (2020) on *Netflix*. They had planned it long back. Time was scarce, though. Since they had no class after lunch today, they could finish the movie. Prarthana starts for home at 5:00 pm and reaches at 6:30 pm. During the commutation, she watches Gordon Ramsay's culinary channel on *YouTube*. She has been watching him for the past year and loves the content. Once she reaches home, she freshens up, eats her evening snack and sits for her studies. At 10:00 pm, she wraps up her studies, takes her dinner and comes to bed. Before sleeping, she listens to a beautiful *Coke Studio* (2008-Current) number by Rahat Fateh Ali Khan.

Now, it would not require a rocket scientist or a philosopher to find out that one distinguishing trait in the life of young Prarthana – her consumption of online content over what is popularly known as OTT platforms. While the intensity, amount and mode might vary, this is more or less the story of every other Generation Z member. The scene is identical for the millennials as well. While the early millennials born in the 80s of the last century are primarily digital migrants, the ones born in the early and mid-90s are digital natives. Thus, it should not come as a surprise that the sheer consumption of popular and offbeat content on OTT platforms is increasing exponentially. In fact, traditional cable-based and satellite television channels and cinema halls have been badly hit by the surge of platforms like *Netflix*, *Disney+ Hotstar*, *Amazon Prime Video* and the likes.

However, before getting into the discourse that would encompass the incredible growth of the OTT platforms over the past half a decade and the trajectory that these platforms would ensue, it is critically important to get the basics clear. Unfortunately, a lot of discussions in India that center around the OTT platforms is not just confusing, they are ill-informed and jargonized as well. Therefore, let's attempt to decipher the concept that is OTT and analyze some of the accompanying trends that are set to transform the global entertainment landscape.

What Exactly Is an OTT Platform?

One of the most misunderstood and misused terms from the world of entertainment is OTT. Everyone uses the term without comprehending what it stands for. While the concept is relatively new and is just about a decade old, it has far-reaching implications on people's lives. Therefore, how can one simplify the concept and comprehend its crux?

To begin with, OTT stands for 'over-the-top'. So, when one talks about OTT, one generally means over-the-top media services. However, the moment

one mentions the word 'media', there is a strong chance of people confusing it with other media platforms and losing the point. Therefore, one would rather use the word 'content' in place of media.

To put in layman's language, an OTT platform beams content directly to consumers using data. Now, while this is understood, very few people are aware vis-à-vis the etymology of the concerned compound word. OTT is called so as it bypasses the traditional content routing mechanisms – cable, broadcast and satellite. Before the advent of the OTT platforms, specific broadcast companies distributed controlled content and therefore there was an absolute monopoly of the content aggregators and distributors. OTT services are by default open as they do no employ the services of proprietary equipment such as Set-Top Boxes (STBs). It is important to emphasize that OTT services are accessed using data-driven devices such as desktop computers, laptop computers, tablet computers, cellular telephones, digital media players and smart televisions.

Another defining trait of OTT platforms is the presence of streaming facility. One does not have to download the content to consume it. An audio or video can be played while it is there on the OTT server itself. While some OTT platforms provide the facility of downloading content, there are others that do not do so subject to copyright restrictions.

While OTT is essentially an umbrella term for many data-based content services, people equate it with Subscription-Based Video-on-Demand (SVoD) services. SVoD services provide easy and fast access to film and television content. Additionally, the larger SVoD services platforms are producing their original content thereby adding to the value of the services.

However, there is confusion between Subscription-Based Video-on-Demand (SVoD) services and Advertisement-Supported Video on Demand (AVoD) services. While SVoD is based on consumers paying a monthly subscription to gain access to the content, AVoD is free but makes consumers sit through advertisements. There is another category known as Transactional Video on Demand (TVoD). As opposed to SVoD, in TVoD, consumers buy content on a pay-per-view basic. There are again two sub-categories under TVoD – Electronic-Sell-Through (EST) and Download to Rent (DTR). In EST, consumers pay once in order to get permanent access to a piece of media content. In DTR, consumers pay a smaller amount to gain access to a piece of media content for a limited period of time. There is a fourth category known as Premium Video on Demand (PVoD). PVoD is also a category under TVoD. In PVoD, a consumer gets access to a piece of exclusive content sooner than what would have been the case otherwise. Usually, when films are released on OTT platforms, PVoD

services are offered. During the 2020 Global Covid-19 pandemic, multiple movies were released on OTT platforms in the form of PVoD services. This model has been tested otherwise as well.

Examples of SVoD include *Netflix*, *Amazon Prime Video*, *Hulu*, with new services coming from the likes of *Apple TV+*, *HBO Now* and *Disney+*. Examples of AVoD include *YouTube*, *Dailymotion* and *All 4*. Examples of TVoD include *iTunes*, *Sky Box Office* and *Amazon's Video Store*. It is important to note here that some of the above-mentioned OTT platforms are slowly but gradually adopting multiple business models. *Amazon Prime Video*, for instance, takes a fixed monthly subscription for giving consumers access to a specific library of content. However, it takes extra payments for showcasing new films and specific sporting events. With OTT platforms gaining significance, newer business models are likely to crop up.

It needs to be mentioned here that Internet Protocol Television (IPTV) and cable networks also offer video on demand. However, the same is controlled by tightly managed networks. Content offered by different OTT platforms either play after getting downloaded (as in the case of *iTunes*) or play even before the download ends, which is known as streaming (as in the case of *Netflix*, *Hulu*, *Disney+* and *Amazon Prime Video*).

OTT Platforms and Pre-Requisites

OTT platforms have not developed in a vacuum. Content consumption through the traditional platforms has slowly given way to OTT platforms. Initially, the content was the same while the platform was novel. However, with time, even the content beamed through OTT platforms transformed. This transformation has taken place through the creation and retention of certain unique OTT features. Some of these essential features are given below:

1. **Convenient Interface and Easy Navigability:** Subscribers should be able to browse through the content easily and find the desired content. A simple and responsive platform design is extremely important to make the platform popular. Interactivity should be given prominence while designing the platform.

2. **Discoverability of Content:** Novelty and personalization of content is of paramount importance for an OTT platform. An OTT platform should be able to cater to both the niche and mass markets.

3. **The Leeway to Monetize Content:** An OTT platform should find out ways to monetize the content being beamed. Some of the monetization mechanisms include SVoD, AVoD, Pay Per View (PPV) and TVoD. The OTT platform can also follow a hybrid model or a rental model.

4. **Analytics:** The content distributors should exactly know what is being sold in the market and what is not. The OTT platform should have a good idea about user journey and engagement, demographics, content engagement, viewership, content distribution across devices and platforms and its impact in different markets.

5. **Flexibility:** An OTT platform needs to be responsive to changing business needs. An OTT platform needs to be flexible for advertisers and marketers to change their advertising and marketing campaigns according to the needs and wants of the viewers. OTT platforms need to provide white labelling opportunities to content owners and content producers. In terms of content flexibility as well, OTT platforms need to be innovative in approach. With multiple OTT platforms flooding the markets, differentiation in content is of paramount importance.

OTT Platforms and Essential Attributes

OTT platforms have become essential components of people's lives. Even without one knowing it, it has been able to establish some niche attributes. It could be argued that these attributes constitute the very basis of the existence of OTT platforms. Let's discuss some of those attributes below:

1. **Content in Multiple Languages:** The monopoly of leading languages like English seems to be over with the advent of the OTT platforms. Both OTT platform operators and content producers as well as owners have understood the importance of regional languages. In order to enhance the demographic reach of media content, different languages from across the world are being used. *Netflix* has significantly added to its tally of subscribers by introducing programmes in regional and native languages. Currently *Netflix* offers programming in English, French, Spanish, German, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese, Mandarin, Arabic, Turkish, Polish, Thai, Romanian, Greek, Indonesian and Hindi. The list is increasing with each passing day.

2. **Search Option:** One of the key features of an OTT platform is the ability of a consumer to search content. Consumers can search content based on their choices. There is a filtration option for categories and genres so that consumers get what they want and not end up wasting time. The searchability factor also imparts a bit of customizability thereby giving the consumers a sense of ownership.

3. **The Presence of User Profiles:** On all OTT platforms, the consumers have the option of creating user profiles. The presence of user profiles helps in personalizing the content for a specific consumer. The screen for each unique user looks and feels different depending on various choices. The user profiles can also be used to make payments and keep a track of the viewing history. For example, on *Netflix*, one subscription account can be shared by multiple users.

4. **The Incorporation of Watchlists:** One of the primordial features of OTT platforms is the presence of watchlists. A watchlist helps consumers pick up what they want to watch. Consumer can also add their favourite content to the watchlist to be seen later. Also, a notification system ensures that consumers do not miss what they want to see.

5. **The Addition of Social Features:** Social media experience is an integral part of the OTT experience. Consumers are able to socially share what they have seen on a certain platform.

The Global OTT Context and Backgrounder

It is obvious that the history of OTT platforms cannot be older than the history of the internet. At the same time, the evolution of OTT platforms almost coincide with the evolution of *Netflix*, the undoubted OTT market leader and the oldest player in the sector. Cut to the 90s and the meaning of home entertainment was to rent first VHS (Video Home System) tapes and later DVDs

(Digital Versatile Discs) containing movies. *Blockbuster* was the leader in renting VHS tapes and DVDs for people to enjoy movies at their home. However, people had to visit their stores to get these VHS tapes and DVDs. In the year 1997, this is exactly where the newly founded *Netflix* pitched in. They started delivering DVDs by email and this concept completely disrupted the video renting industry. While the company both sold and rented DVDs in the first year of its inception, it stopped selling just after a year. Two years later in 1999, *Netflix* introduced a unique subscription model where subscribers had to dish out $15.95 per month and they were given the right to rent up to four movies at any given point in time. The subscription plan stipulated no compulsory return-by dates. Just a year later in 2000, the company completely removed the twin concepts of return-by dates and late fine for a monthly subscription price of $19.95. This subscription model was to become the primary differentiator in the market and *Netflix* continued increasing its market share. By 2007, *Netflix* had managed to become a major player in the sector and the average speed of internet had also increased significantly across the globe. No wonder that it started the video streaming services while retaining the video rental services. In 2010, *Netflix* started offering services in Canada and followed it up with launches in Latin America and the Caribbean. Interestingly, in 2010 itself, *Blockbuster*, the erstwhile leader in video rental services, downed shutters on its services despite its expansion to other sectors. It was only in 2016 that *Netflix* set shop in 130 more countries including India. As on date, the company provides streaming services to people belonging to more than 190 countries. However, what is infinitesimally more important was the entry of *Netflix* into the prestigious club of content producers. The company produced its first series in 2013 when the *House of Cards* (2013-2018) was unveiled for the audience. This was to become the most important step in the history of OTT platforms as most of the platforms have been thriving on original content ever since. In fact, the impact of the company has been such that OTT services have become synonymous with *Netflix*.

Now, it might be worthwhile to look at some hard numbers. According to a study done by the audience research start-up *Parrot Analytics* in 2021, *Netflix* is the leader by a distance and retains more than 50 per cent of the global market. *Amazon Prime Video* has a market share of approximately 12 per cent. *Hulu* and *Disney+* with about 6 per cent market share each are next in the fray. *Apple TV+*, *HBO Max* and *Paramount+* are the other three major OTT players with market shares of 4.7, 4.1 and 3.2 per cents respectively. Other small players together make up nearly 13.5 per cent of the market. Now, what is important to note is that *Netflix* accounted for more than 64 per cent of the global market even

until 2019. Therefore, it becomes clear that the other players are fast reducing the gap and are coming up big time. *Amazon Prime Video*, for instance, has almost been on a mission mode and has significantly increased its market share.

It needs to be emphasized that the advent of the Covid-19 pandemic significantly transformed the global OTT market. The consumption of online content significantly increased with people being confined within their four walls. In fact, binge-watching almost became a global obsession during the worst days of the pandemic. Subject to restrictions imposed on the movie industry across multiple regions, OTT platforms were the only source of entertainment for people, who were already bogged down by the horrors of the novel Corona-virus. A few numbers might add colour to the already colourful OTT story.

According to *Fortune Business Insights*, in 2020, the size of the global OTT market was $38.77 billion. The figure jumped 13.9 per cent in 2020 to close at $44.54 billion in 2021. This jump was propelled by the unprecedented surge in demand for online entertainment content during the Covid-19 lockdown in 2020. According to current projections, the industry will grow to a size of $139 billion in 2028 at a CAGR (compound annual growth rate) of 17.7 per cent in the intervening period between 2021 and 2028. This takes into account the possibility that the world might go back to the pre-pandemic market scenario in the next couple of years.

While the numbers are quite revelatory, it is equally significant to look at the qualitative factors that are contributing to the phenomenal growth of the OTT industry. While digital divide is still a concern across many of the developing countries including India, it has definitely been on the wane over the past half a decade. Internet penetration, thus, has increased and contributed immensely to the popularity of the OTT platforms. The coming in of 5G technology has made the consumption of content easier. Smartphones becoming smarter with each passing day, the development of newer original content and the increased sales of smart televisions have all been adding to the growth. While the market in the developed countries will slowly move towards saturation, the developing world promises a new vista for the ever-expanding OTT operators. South Asian countries such as India, Bangladesh and Pakistan are believed to be biggest drivers of growth for the OTT players. It is important to remember that regional language content on OTT platforms is still at the nascent stage. In the next few years, this space is set to become the sunrise sector. The story, though, is still unfolding.

The Indian Entertainment Space and OTT Platforms

Before one talks about how different OTT platforms have positioned themselves in India, it is important to specify the current shape of the Media and Entertainment (M&E) industry in the country. According to a report jointly prepared by FICCI (*Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry*) and EY (*Ernst & Young*), the M&E industry stood at $19 billion in 2020. It was estimated that the industry would have grown to $23.7 billion in 2021. It is currently estimated that the industry would grow to $30.6 billion by 2023. The figures here clearly point out that the M&E industry in India is truly a sunrise sector.

Let's now understand the split of the Indian M&E market. In 2024, television would account for 40 per cent of the market share. While the rapidly declining print media would still hold onto 13 per cent, the briskly growing digital advertising would cough up 12 per cent. Cinema would more or less maintain its current market share at 9 per cent and the gaming and OTT industries would together make up 8 per cent. In terms of market share, OTT platforms in India are still trying to catch up. However, the growth rate has been phenomenal over the past five years and there is a large untapped market in the country that makes the sector an obvious goldmine.

Just so that one makes no mistake in terms of the potential for the growth of OTT platforms in India, one can look at the following pieces of demographics statistics. While more than 50 per cent of Indians are below the age of 25 years, more than 65 per cent are below the age of 35 years. Make no mistakes. A significant percentage of this young population is digital natives and hence their propensity to use OTT platforms is decidedly higher than the older lot. Therefore, OTT platforms in India are set for very exciting days ahead.

According to *RBSA Advisors*, which is an independent transaction advisory firm, and as reported by *Mint*, the Indian OTT industry might grow to $15 billion by 2030. While the video part of the industry would be $12.5 billion, audio market will be around $2.5 billion. In 2020, the size of the industry stood at $1.7 billion. This is indicative of the unbelievable potential of the nascent industry.

Disney+ Hotstar, the Indian arm of *Disney+*, currently has the largest market share with 41 per cent of the OTT subscriber base. It accounts for more than 45.9 million subscribers. While *Eros Now* is the second in the market with a marker share of 24 per cent, *Amazon Prime Video* is third in the list with 9 per cent viewership. *Netflix*, which has been making significant dents in the Indian

market, has the fourth position in the market with a base of 7 per cent. *ZEE5* and *ALTBalaji* have market shares of 4 per cent each. *SonyLIV* is not far behind with a viewership of 3 per cent. Each of *Apple TV+*, *YuppTV* and *Voot Select* has a market share of roughly 1 per cent each. However, the merger of *ZEE5* and *SonyLIV* is set to bring in a series of consolidatory steps in the Indian OTT sector. While *Netflix* is the largest player on a global basis, it is still trying to catch up with the market leaders in India. This is actually indicative of the uniqueness of the Indian consumers; whose tastes significantly vary from their western counterparts.

It is a reality that the Indian OTT market is still growing and evolving. However, the concept is as old in India as it is in other developed parts of the world. The first Indian OTT platform was launched as early as 2008, just a year after *Netflix* started its streaming services. *Reliance Entertainment* was futuristic enough to launch *BIGflix*. However, it was direct streaming and was not accessible via any mobile app. The first mobile app-based OTT platform was *nexGTv*. It provided both on-demand content and live television services. By 2013 and 2014, the *Indian Premier League* (IPL) had already become a major crowd puller. *nexGTv* tried to capture the popularity of IPL and livestreamed the same in both 2013 and 2014.

The current Indian market leader *Disney+ Hotstar*, which was then only *Hotstar* also tapped its market through the livestreaming of IPL matches in 2015. It was in 2013 that both *SonyLIV* and *DittoTV* was launched. *DittoTV* was later integrated into *ZEE5*. It used to stream programmes from major Indian General Entertainment Channels (GECs) such as *Zee*, *Star TV*, *Sony* and *Viacom*. In January 2016, *Netflix* introduced its services in India and there was no looking back from thereon.

One of the bigger OTT players in India is *Eros Now*. Owned initially by *Eros International* and now by *ErosSTX*, it has the maximum amount of content among Indian OTT platforms. It has over 12,000 films, 100 television shows and 1,00,000 songs and albums in its huge basket. As noted earlier, *Eros Now* has the second highest number of subscribers in India.

In a country like India, regional content is bound to draw a large number of viewers. Content producers do understand this and hence there is no shortage of OTT players in the regional language domain as well. Some of the biggest names in this area include *Hoichoi* that beams Bengali content, *Aha* streaming Telugu content, *Sun NXT* (content in multiple regional Indian languages including Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Kannada, Bengali and Marathi), *Oho*

Gujarati (its streaming language is there in the nomenclature itself), *Olly Plus* in Odia, *Koode* in Malayalam and *Planet Marathi* (again, the streaming language is there in the name). Some of the bigger global players like *Netflix* and *Amazon Prime Video* are also hobnobbing with content in regional Indian languages. However, they still have a long way to go.

Future Trajectory for the OTT Industry in India

Now that one understands the scope for the expansion of the Indian OTT market, it is critically important that one looks at some of the trends that are likely to define the future trajectory of the sector. While the sheer number of OTT subscribers was anyway growing at an exponential rate in India, the Covid-19 pandemic has further quickened the pace. It could be safely argued that OTT platforms have become an integral part of the lives of a significant number of Indians. In the given scenario, there will be a number of market disruptions and the market state will drastically change. One would do well to closely keep a tab on the following defining OTT trends:

1. **Enhanced Importance of Localized and Organic Content:** As the initial euphoria over easy content has given way to matured viewership, the emphasis will largely be on carefully curated and sensitively crafted local content. Viewers now seek OTT content that reflects local cultures, traditions, lifestyles and fashion statements. In countries where people do not speak English as their first language, the larger OTT players will have to depute skilled local teams to understand the demands of the viewers and deliver customized content. *Netflix*, for instance, has content in a plethora of regional languages. However, the amount of regional content is still very less. Therefore, a lot of consolidation would happen in this area in the next few years. The Indian market would offer unmatched opportunities for OTT operators to deliver content in multiple regional languages. Although there are local OTT players, they would never be able to match the national and global players in terms of technology. Therefore, pundits are predicting the bigger players to shift gears in India and change the game altogether.

2. **The Advent of 5G:** Although 5G data services are currently available only in a handful of countries, the technology is slowly going to be the global norm. This would significantly improve the OTT services and make streaming almost real-time. In a country like India, where digital divide is a real issue and internet speed could be a major impediment, 5G technology could go a long way in making the OTT services more affordable and easier to consume. According to promises made by the

Government of India (GoI), some of the major cities in the country would be connected with the 5G network by 2022 itself. 5G would enable live sports through OTT platforms a distinct possibility. With 5G, buffering, as it is notoriously known in India, is set to become a thing of the past.

3. **A Possible Consolidation of the Highly Fragmented Indian OTT Industry:** With *SonyLIV* and *ZEE5* set to become a single entity, there is a high possibility of the major players consolidating their operations in India. It cannot possibly be denied that there are far too many players in the market now. Such fragmentation does not augur well for any industry and the OTT sector is no exception. It would not be an exaggeration to note that OTT subscribers in India are confused. Subject to the multiplicity of OTT platforms, a single subscriber is ending up with multiple subscriptions. The industry does understand this enigma. Therefore, *Amazon Prime Video* is trying to accumulate content from multiple sources. So is the case with *Disney+ Hotstar*. An identical thing is happening in the regional OTT sector too. Thus, there is a high possibility that the next five years might see a number of consolidatory acts on the part of the existing Indian players. There is nothing better than a single OTT window for the subscribers.

4. **The Industry Will Move towards an Ideal Subscription Bundle:** Currently, it is an uphill task for any OTT content consumer to manage multiple subscriptions and streaming options. Many surveys have shown that subscribers currently are bugged with having to switch channels for consuming their favourite content. In the near future, all the OTT platforms might just come together to craft that perfect subscription bundle for the content consumers. Customized subscription bundles that cater to the individual alignments of consumers would be the best foot forward. However, for such a thing to happen, the existing OTT companies need to forge strategic partnerships.

5. **Overall OTT Content Will Become More Mature:** There has been a tectonic shift in tastes. What people used to savour back during the 80s and the 90s of the last century and even during the first two decades of the current century have become passé. Mindless entertainment without any apparent social relevance no longer amuses the average Indian content consumer, who is more educated and has a better grip over social realities. Therefore, Indian consumers want content that satiates their social sensibilities. Therefore, over the next few years, consumers are going to witness a significant improvement of entertainment

content streamed over the various OTT platforms. This trend is going to be visible in the regional sector as well.

6. **Immersive Technology Will be the Keyword Moving Ahead:** As 5G arrives, the world will witness the increased usage of immersive streaming technologies such as VR (Virtual Reality) and 4K video. The reception technology currently used at homes would also receive a facelift. Over the past one decade, the cost of technology integration has drastically reduced. Consequently, the common middle class Indian can buy advanced devices that they could not imagine sometime back. 360-degree live streaming, which is an absolutely novel concept, is expected to become a reality very soon. This technology modifies the image of how the ambience around a user looks.

7. **Social Viewing Like Social Media Might Become a Dominant Norm:** There are many consumers, who are used to the idea of group viewing of movies and sports. This predominantly familial and otherwise social act gives the leeway to discuss the proceedings along with watching it. However, subject to the nuclearization of families and the migration of family members to bigger cities for employment, people no longer can do that. However, thanks to innovative concepts such as *Netflix Teleparty* and *Amazon Prime Video*'s *Watch Party*, consumers can again enjoy watching movies and sports together. These concepts provide people the safety and comfort of their homes along with the fun of video chats while watching the same programme.

8. **Better Technologies and More Engaging Content Would Rule the Market:** The current OTT players would continue their quest for better technologies to improve the user interface. The process is expected to be a never-ending one. The fundamental idea, though, would be to ensure increased user engagement. Passive content consumption would become a thing of the past. A number of OTT players are indeed coming up with essentially progressive ideas to ensure that the users constantly remain engaged.

9. **Interactivity Will be Crucial:** In what is being popularly touted as OTT 2.0, interactivity would be the buzzword. Now, one might question as to how can one bring in interactivity in the process of pre-designed content consumption. However, that is what the primordial paradox is. While not tinkering with the creative freedom of the content producers, audience's perceptions and opinions will be used to create more engaging content. In the process, options such as user opinion polls, live chats and commentaries would be used. Notwithstanding, it

needs to be remembered that the entire process is still in the experimental state and no concrete way has been devised yet.

10. **Localized Advertising Strategy Will be the Main Driver of Growth:** With the OTT content primarily consumed from personal devices (computers, tablets, cellular telephones), advertisements will be further localized by tracking the IP (Internet Protocol) addresses of the users. While this is being done even now, the scale and intensity will significantly increase in the next few years. On the flip side though, there are ethical dilemmas. It is important to understand that privacy has been a matter of concern when it comes to different apps installed on people's smartphones. The constant tracking of IP addresses somehow compromises the privacy of an individual. That said though, the fact remains that not too many operators will be distracted by this dilemma.

Many OTT Platforms Will Embrace User-Generated Content

With the proliferation of Social Media, people have seen the inception of the fancy term 'prosumer'. While there has been a lot of hullaballoo about this largely misunderstood concept, it would suffice to say that a 'prosumer' is any person who is creating and consuming content on an interactive platform. By default, most people are prosumers. People post on various Social Media platforms and at the same time consume posts by others. User-Generated Content (UGC) is only a natural extension.

Let's now consider the case of Dolly, an educated 26-year-old woman from Dimapur in Nagaland in the northeastern fringes of the country. She loves making travel videos moving about various parts of the northeast. She is also a voracious consumer of *Netflix* and *Amazon Prime Video*. One fine day, she decides to send one of her travel documentaries that she made on the Loktak Lake in Manipur to *Netflix* and *Netflix* decides to host the content under their 'Nature and Ecology Documentaries' section after a stringent content review process. This is exactly what UGC is all about. As the world moves ahead, more and more OTT platforms will become the hosting places for UGC.

Now, one might ask the obvious question. Apart from quick publicity, what is the benefit for Dolly in the entire process? The answer is not that difficult to find. Once her content is hosted by *Netflix*, the company might or might not pay her for the content. However, this content becomes the basis on which Dolly gets paid work from other sources. As for *Netflix*, they get a prepared piece of content without a substantial investment. However, the most important part of the story has not been told yet. Such content pieces are highly desirable and

acceptable as far as the common user is concerned. There is a relatability factor involved and also people love to know about their own backyards.

OTT Platforms in India and Geographical Viewing Patterns

Mahatma Gandhi, popularly known as the 'Father of the Nation' once remarked that the soul of India lives in its villages. He could not have been more prophetic. While he made this remark more than a century back, the statement seems relevant even today. According to a report published by the *International Bank for Reconstruction and Development* (IBRD) 65.07 per cent of Indians live in rural areas. This figure accounts for roughly two-thirds of the Indian population. Thus, it is a given that no OTT platform can truly expand in the country without taking its rural folks into consideration. The current reality is also likewise. Users of OTT platforms in the rural belts have moved ahead of their urban counterparts. The *Broadband India Forum* reports that almost 65 per cent of all the video consumption comes from largely rural areas while villages account for only 40 per cent of the online connectivity numbers. This staggering data was collected in the month of April 2019. It is quite obvious that the figures have significantly increased over the past three years.

Another possible growth area for the OTT service providers are the Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities. On multiple occasions, it has been pointed that India has been witnessing significant growth in the Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities. There are specific OTT platforms such as *ShemarooMe* that has been consistently targeting the market in the rural areas, smaller towns and cities. The content is highly localized and the languages used are largely regional.

Ever since *Reliance Jio* made data an absolutely cheap and household commodity, the usage of OTT platforms has been on the constant rise. *Amazon Prime Video* has been constantly increasing their local share of content to tap the untapped market in India. While the coverage has increased significantly, it cannot be denied that digital divide continues to be a problem.

Content Strategy to be Followed by OTT Platforms in India

It has always been known that India is a country of glorious diversities. No wonder that this diversity has deep imprint on the content consumption pattern as well. Indeed, any content provider has the basic necessity to crack the business code in India. While the process is essentially difficult, there are some pointers that a OTT service provider can follow, which are given below:

1. **Knowing the Audience:** In very simple terms, the chances of running a successful OTT platform is way more when the service provider

knows its audience properly. There arises a necessity to dive deep into the viewing habits of the audience – find out what they watch, where they watch it and finally why they watch it. If one seeks to make a successful content plan for a OTT platform, it is critically important to clearly identify the content's target audience. In addition, it is a pre-requisite to figure out the buyer persona of the target audience.

2. **Producing Content and Developing an SEO Strategy:** In the contemporary world, the visibility of media content depends on its discoverability. Thus, doing Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is a primordial thing for any OTT platform to acquire traction and appear on top of search results. In order to enhance the traffic on the website, it is essential that the content appears high in search engines, especially *Google*. Therefore, one needs to have an in-depth knowledge about competitor performances and best practices as regards SEO. One needs to use relevant and right keywords for particular niches. Additionally, a video sitemap needs to be created, video metadata optimization needs to be accomplished, videos need to be tagged with appropriate keywords (title tags, video tags and description tags), thumbnails and snippets need to be created and links need to be built from other video websites.

3. **The Importance of Distribution Channels:** It is not just important to create engaging content, it is equally important to host it on a platform which is frequented by prospective viewers. One needs to find out the viewing habits of the prospective viewers. Do the prospective viewers binge watch or do they prefer short clips? Accordingly, the content distribution strategy needs to be decided. People always prefer when they can watch content on all different types of screens and devices.

4. **The Promotion of Content:** To start with, knowing the audience and producing amazing content just work fine. However, that is not all. The right content needs to be pushed to the right audience at the right time. While some content pieces are easy to promote, some others require real effort. OTT platforms, therefore, need solid marketing strategies to survive. Different types of channels and different types of content require different promotional strategies.

5. **Executing and Evaluating Content:** Once everything is done, it is important to produce the content with maximum caution and utmost precision. Producing content is a continuous process and requires an ongoing approach. Once the content is produced, a proper analysis needs to be made as regards its impact on the viewers. Depending on

how the viewers have taken a certain piece of content, future strategizing has to be done.

Conclusion

While the first decade of the new millennium belonged to television, the second decade marked a transformation in terms of how consumers use entertainment content. It can be safely said that the current decade will see the ascension of OTT platforms as the primary mode of content consumption. Audiences across the globe have become more mature than what they used to be even a couple of decades back. Cultural connections are making all the differences in terms of the content consumption trends. Content producers can no longer dump unilaterally produced content without considering the sensibilities of the consumers. Thus, there is a demand for relevant and quality entertainment content. This is not just true for the developed world, this is equally true for the developing countries and India cannot be expected to be an exception. Thus, almost a proxy war is on between the different OTT players in the fragmented Indian OTT market. Whichever company manages to understand the dominant pulse of the country will eventually become the market leader. While the scene is only going to heat up in the next few years, technology will remain the gamechanger. What has already been witnessed in the OTT space in the last five year has been nothing short of a revolution but the more interesting part is yet to happen. History, as they say, will remain the obvious testimony.

Normies complaining about the prices of OTT subscriptions.   Giga Chads using torrents/ telegram/illegal streaming sites.

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Why are OTT Platforms so popular?

Uma Shankar Pandey*

Over the top (OTT) platforms use internet protocols to distribute content. It literally refers to delivering content over the top of a platform. OTT delivers television, video and audio through the internet instead of conventional radio frequencies. For video content this distribution system was a logical technological progress from the earlier satellite beam, broadcast waves, cable wire and other such systems.

However, this alternative way of distributing content brought forth major changes in the way content is consumed and distributed. This meant the platforms didn't have to send the same show to everyone at the same time. The *liveness* and *immediacy* that was a necessary feature of television viewing was no longer a requirement. It freed the consumers from the constraints of fixed television schedules. If one missed a particular show on television it was gone. With the introduction of set top boxes and other recording equipment, one had the choice of recording programmes.

Recent scholarly work on media and technology has shown how non-human material technologies can impact the manner in which content is produced and disseminated. Most notably, the Actor Network Theory has emphasized the role of technological and other non-human actors (or actants) in enabling, restricting, shaping and even evolving newer formats of content. Printing press for example led to mass distribution of various printed content. The telegraph allowed content producers to source and distribute content across continent. Similarly, satellite technology had a major impact on the content industry. At the same time social actors impact the technological actants as well.

Many of the changes visible on the OTT platforms are a continuation of this interaction between technology and content. Most OTT platforms started

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with streaming content licensed from broadcasters and movie production houses. Viewers could watch a rerun of television shows at their convenience. These shows were hugely popular with the younger audience who could watch television shows of an earlier generation. It helped that the production quality of television shows of a decade back was as good as the contemporary ones. However, the market for this kind of content was limited. One drawback was that initially the current television series were not available on Netflix and other platforms and was exclusively meant for the television audience. However, later many OTT platforms allowed TV content for the OTT audience, at times a few hours before being telecast for the TV audience. One of the distinguishing features for viewers on the OTT platform was the freedom from television commercials.

The House of Cards by Netflix released on February 1, 2013 was a game changer of sorts. Netflix started as a mail-order DVD subscription service in 1999. This 100-million-dollar web series led to a series of firsts.

It was the first time a web streaming service was providing top notch original content using some of the most reputed talents in the industry. This venture was acclaimed movie director David Fincher's television debut. It also had Oscar-award winning actor Kevin Spacey playing the role of Frank Underwood, an ambitious Congressman in this political thriller. It created a huge buzz in the industry and went on to become hugely popular.

This became a sort of template for OTT platforms in the future as well. Top notch content exclusively created by the platforms by the best talent in the industry. The fact that the OTT platforms were not targeting just the lowest common denominator was a fresh opportunity for the content creators as well. They were freed from the pressures of the television rating points. At the same time the channels (OTT platforms in this case), were freed from the demands of the volatile advertising industry

The House of Cards introduced another first. The entire series was made available at one go. This decision did not go well with the television industry pundits. Many of them scoffed at the naivete of the Netflix producers who they thought knew little of the economics of the television industry and the experiment would not succeed. One episode per week generally meant a captive audience which the advertisers loved. However, this one distribution innovation turned out to be a game changer. For Netflix and other OTT platforms to follow, this became a template — releasing the entire series in a 'binge worthy pile'.

It empowered the consumer like never before. Viewers were no longer bound by the limitations of the schedule imposed by the broadcasters. This tyranny of

the schedule had led to the segmentation of the audience itself. There was the prime-time audience, the morning audience and the late-night audience for example. Channels had to arrange content according to these slots. This meant that the late-night audience had to wait for that particular slot to get content of their choice. Also, various channels had particular flagship programmes and genre of programmes based on their ideas of their audience.

OTT changed all this. The viewer could now watch his favourite show on the OTT platform at his convenience in one sitting. Binge Watching, soon caught up with the audiences worldwide. Netflix had this to say about the innovation: 'Imagine if books were always released one chapter per week, and were only briefly available to read at 8pm on Thursday. And then someone flipped a switch, suddenly allowing people to enjoy an entire book, all at their own pace.' Although this idea of providing entire series on DVDs existed even before, this idea could not take off due to technical constraints. At the same time this meant that the platforms were no longer dependent on advertisers.

In a way it was ironical since the advertisement industry which had subsidized media content over the years itself became the fall guy. Viewers thronged to the OTT platforms since it provided content on demand without commercials. Although many mainstream television channels started providing advertisement-free content for its premium viewers on OTT platforms for a fee, they did not pitch it as an area of priority. It is impossible for the television industry to survive without the support of commercials.

It also helped that the consumers did not have to pay anything extra to view the entire series at one go. They could even download the entire series at no extra cost. Apart from other things it was the psychology of control that was vital. Not only could consumers watch the programmes of their choice when they chose to watch it, they could watch it in a non-linear manner, pausing it when they wanted to and skipping up portions, they didn't find interesting. Most platforms also provided value-added services like information about the actors, plotlines and other interesting information about scenes.

Not only could people watch programmes at their own pace, they could even watch it on any device — Smart TVs, laptops, iPads and over smartphones. This phase coincided with technological developments in the hardware sector as well. Phones were now available with high speed 4G internet connections which allowed high definition content to be available on mobile phones at all times. Smart TV sets allowed one to access mobile applications on television screens.

This variety of devices on which content could be consumed, made TV viewing more private than ever before. This freed content producers from adhering only to 'family-oriented shows' meant for consumption with everyone else in the family. One could view premium, customized and even adult content in the privacy of one's phone. This concept of 'Television Everywhere' was an empowering innovation as well. The availability of content on laptops meant one could carry it to any part of their house. High quality content meant one could literally watch it anywhere. One could download videos and television programmes on their mobiles and watch it on flight for example.

Initially the OTT platforms were dependent on movie producers and television channels for content. Seventy percent of the content on the OTT platform was television while movies accounted for the remaining thirty percent. With the spectacular success of the House of Cards on Netflix, the platform owners found a goldmine in exclusive content produced and owned by them. A major advantage with creating content was that the OTT platforms were not tied down by the constraints of the broadcast industry. The had access to massive data about viewership details and which content was popular with the audience. They used this to their advantage drawing the best talents from the entertainment industry. Netflix, Prime Video, Disney + Hotstar and Zee5 could assemble the top actors and directors in the country and let them work on their vision. It was a boon for the entertainment industry as Netflix and other producers offered a lucrative revenue model for the content producers. This meant paying full production costs plus a percentage—called cost plus. The additional percentage was at times as high as 90 percent in the case of prestige projects, but closer to 25 percent for most other programmes. One immediate follow up was the massive surge in quality content available over web streaming. Indian series like Paatal Lok, Mirzapur, Scam 1992 went on to become popular with overseas audience as well. Several Indian shows including Sacred Games, Lust Stories—have been nominated for the International Emmys. In 2020, Delhi Crime was awarded an international Emmy.

The new technology empowered both the storytellers and the audience alike. The story tellers were not constrained by the commercial requirements of the erstwhile Box Office. They could lead their creative instincts to previously uncharted paths as in many cases they were not bound by regulations such as censor certifications. Although this has not been an unblemished affordance. Some of the content on these platforms have been rightly called out for profanities, vulgarities, violence and at times objectionable content. But largely it has provided audience with access to very high-quality content.

Another major convenience provided by the OTT platforms is that the consumers are not required to own content. Gone are the days of buying audio and video DVDs. The entire library is available to every subscriber at no extra cost. These days most audio devices either work with voice assistants or with Bluetooth. With high-quality music available on mobile applications one can directly play it on a Bluetooth enabled sound device. One does not require DVD or MP3 players anymore.

The OTT platforms have had a spectacular growth in India. According to latest available figures, one out of every three Indian consumes OTT content in some form.

The number of OTT subscribers in India have increased in number every year since the 2018. There was a massive growth of 13 percent from April 2020 to April 2021 driven by growth in Video OTTs. However, Audio OTTs have seen a drop in unique visitors since April 2020.

According to latest available figures by Comscore, the video OTT has about 45.6 crore unique viewers reaching almost 94 percent of consumers with access to Internet in India. The Audio OTT on the other hand had 10.9 crore unique listeners registering a slight drop.

At one end of the OTT market are traditional platforms like YouTube with 45 crore unique visitors and MX Player had 16.8 crore. At the other end are premium platforms like Disney + Hotstar with 14.4 crore unique viewers and Prime Video with 6.2 crore.

According to market experts, OTT platforms are poised for a regional shift in the coming days. The share of regional content is expected to increase to around 50 percent of OTT consumption from 30 percent in 2020. The OTT platforms have increased their investment in creating content massively. From Rs 1700 crore in April 2017, the OTT industry spent a humongous Rs 5500 crore in content production.

As original OTT content grows from 2,500 hours in 2021 to over 4,000 hours in 2024 at a much higher production cost than television content, the OTT market is poised for further growth. In recent times we have seen big budget movies having an exclusive OTT release. This trend may just increase. TV and film producers may also face a dearth of quality talent with many content creators moving away to OTT.

Buzzwords and the chill-pill: OTT offers us new phrases to mull over

Shamali Gupta*

In post-World War II America, it was bubblegum, Coca-Cola, denim jeans, and TV dinners. The 'idiot box' and 'couch potato' were terms that began to be used because the youngsters would plonk themselves on the couch before the television munching potato chips. If there's one thing that American culture was synonymous with, it's the culture of cool.

From 'cool' to 'chill' was not really such a long journey. Just as the journey from being a couch potato and watching the idiot box to binge watching web series on OTT platforms was not a long one! Just that generations transformed, mediums differed and content got rewritten in a different format and style. But it definitely turned out to be an interesting journey of metaphors and innuendos and of course the teens of Gen Z trying to outsmart the millennials by coining a set of smart words and phrases. And then this journey did not remain limited to America only, it became a globalized journey.

Many people have now started watching shows, movies, and web series on OTT platforms because of the diverse range of shows they have and the flexibility they provide to consume what they want. Over-The-Top content (OTT) is the distribution of audio, video, and other media over the Internet without the contribution of a multiple-system operator in the control or distribution of the content. Some of the most popular OTT Platforms besides Netflix are Amazon Prime, Disney + Hotstar, HBO Now, Zee5, MXPlayer, Voot and so many more.

Teens and members of Gen Z are using a slew of new slang terms, associated with these OTT platforms many of which are confusing to older generations.

Are you a big Netflix fan? Binging on we series, night after night and cribbing about the dark circles under the eyes and restlessness…then you are *bingeflix-*

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ing, or indulging in the act of binge-watching Netflix content. Did you ever use the words '*Netflix and chill'* to find your teen sniggering? In fact, if you overhear a teen say they're "going to Netflix and chill" with someone that may be cause for concern. There are deeper connotations than what meets the eye…

So let us start from the beginning of the 'Netflix and chill' saga. Netflix was registered on August 29, 1997 as a Video and DVD rental company. After the initial years, they crafted a popular and effective subscription-based service with no due dates or late fees and unlimited access to content. By 2007, Netflix went on to introduce a digital streaming service, and delivered unwaveringly to TVs, computers, and tablets through its Watch Now service. In the process, they became a popular service provider for the internet-users who wanted uninterrupted content.

We see the first acknowledged use of the phrase 'Netflix and Chill' around 2009, used in a tweet by a user 'NoFaceNina' who wrote: "I'm about to log onto Netflix and chill for the rest of the night." It's a tweet that imitates every other `at your face' social media post that guarantees the world is conversant of your every movement. On the other hand, it was also a post that points out to a righteous, wholesome society, where the phrase was innocuous, free of innuendo where the generation X really did look forward to sitting back and binge watching a bunch of movies or web series on a trot.

For the new-age OTT users, 'Netflix and Chill' is a slang re-wording for romantic or sexual activity. The original, innocent statement in a Tweet got converted into an invitation to turn on 'Netflix and Chill' and over time, progressed into a coded missive for one person visiting another's house to engage in sexual acts, in fact, one that youngsters are using to deceive their parents.

By April 2015, this terminology being added to the notorious Urban Dictionary, was the main turning point because the phrase became progressively rebellious, (just like its users), picking up hints of sexual implications. It took on a complete social media-fuelled semantic drift and Netflix was only too happy to be a part of this. In fact they started acquiring or producing content that matched this mood and image. By July 2015, Netflix embraced the meme culture that had given its company sexual undertones, by posting a GIF on their social pages from a comedic 'seduction' scene in Clueless, captioned 'Netflix and chill? No, really.' These memes went viral across social media especially on Instagram which was the new haunt of the youth.

If 'Netflix and chill' looks at the intimate angle to a relationship then '*Spotify and side hug*' is a hilarious riff on Netflix and chill, meant as a way to turn

down somebody you aren't romantically interested in. It portrays listening to the music-streaming service Spotify as a step down from Netflix and switches out the awkward contact of a side hug for any sexual activity. This phrase got recognition in the Urban Dictionary in 2019.

A self-assertive, smart aleck who believes that he has become an expert after watching one Netflix documentary on a particular subject is currently termed an '*Overnight flexpert*'.

'Netflix & Nap?' is the more than perfect term used by the individual who essentially just wants a lazy night in with their long time noteworthy other-half. This is for the extreme binge-watchers who have no time to take their eyes off the screen unless it's for a quick kiss. Then, after watching a season till late into the night, he will probably just pass out.

To add to the distress of women binge-watchers is '*Mansurfing*'. This term is often used for men who assume that the remote control device is their exclusive property and watch their favourite OTT Platform without considering the other's preferences.

Frequently, we hear teens requesting their friends to share hotspot. Have you heard of a '*Netflix buddy*'? Well, this Netflix buddy is that special someone you share your Netflix account with, especially when a couple of young friends wish to save money. The Netflix buddy contributes by footing part of the bill, or you can just give them your Netflix password for free. *Phantom flixer* is anyone who uses your streaming service password even though they promised to use it once.

Move over long-distance relationships. In recent times, '*Serial relationships*' are the in-thing where binge watchers are building a friendship over a TV series or web series.

And what do you call a person who doesn't give a show a chance after just five minutes of viewing? Fickle-minded is passé - *Netfickle* is the apt term to describe someone like this. And when someone keeps the 'chill' aside and binge watches, alone, with a pack of poptarts for company the slang used for this lonely soul is '*Netflix and poptarts*'.

There's a Netflix slang term for every type of binge watcher. And for those who procrastinate, with the help of Netflix we use the term '*netflastinate*'. If one finds youngsters who keep delaying in getting work done or in getting their assignments complete while watching movies on Netflix, they are 'netflastinating'.

Poets and writers have so often used the term 'creative block' when ideas just refuse to flow. On the other hand, when we hear netizens, saying '*Netflix block*' we know they are going through that feeling when they are persistently browsing through Netflix titles seeking for something to watch and an hour has passed but they are still unable to make up their mind. For netizens, this Netflix block, when they stare at the blank screen, scrolling through the list and are unable to choose a series or movie that seems suitable could certainly be as agonizing as 'to be or not to be'! The memes and joke going around say that this phenomenon can result in extreme depression.

And if the coming of age of Netflix gave us certain buzzwords, the Amazon viewers didn't want to be left behind. So they coined the phrase '*Amazon Prime and bedtime/wine/dine?*' it is a more sophisticated way of inviting a girl over to "wine and prime" if a 'guy' considers her to be girlfriend type. 'Amazon Prime & Bedtime?' also applies to those romantically involved partners who are shopaholics with an Amazon Prime account, who love spending a large part of the night planning their future purchases together, watching some web series or TV shows, and just perceiving where the night takes them.

Then there is '*Buzzfeed and proceed*' which is again a slang meaning almost the same. Only this time around, you intelligently invite your special friend over for a night of scrolling through Buzzfeed, fill the evening with quizzes, puppy videos, random listicles, and breaking news, and then spend some intimate moments together.

On the other hand, the term '*buzzfeeding*' denotes the act of hating anyone who isn't a Black, Hispanic, Asian, Mixed race – an act is mostly executed by Buzzfeed employees and their fan base in an effort to outcast the white male from modern society in the name of "equal rights".

The infamous "Netflix and Chill?" is quite done and dusted now. But netizens and OTT bhakts have found some alternative phrases to entice their Valentine to their humble abode they have a new slang – '*Hulu & Hang?*' So Hulu is yet another popular streaming library with unlimited DVR, which store Live TV recordings, movies and television series. If our modern Romeo wishes to hang out with his beloved trying to catch up on some Mindy Project and see where it leads – an absolutely rom-com weekend perhaps!

If the object of your affections is of a fancier breeding, then the viewer prefers HBO. HBO and HBO Max and HBO GO have a combined total of approximately 69.4 million paying subscribers globally. The term *HBO Go & Merlot?* Then is about getting the HBO service, pouring some expensive merlot, setting out some exotic candles, and really setting the mood.

When you have so many OTT services to choose from, '*Prime and prejudice*' is but natural. This labels the relationship between two people who have an argument over which streaming service is better.

Road rages happen when erring drivers are yelled at '*Rage against the screen*' happens when someone screams at the antagonists on screen.

In 2015, Viacom launched its own MTV-branded music and video streaming apps MTV Play and MTV Trax. Some particularly interesting shows on the channel *Teen Wolf, Faking It, Awkward, Finding Carter, and Are you the One?* Were streamed along with other popular content. *MTV & Are you Free?* was the phrase quickly coined which meant that if you haven't watched one of these shows yet, why not invite your Valentine over to binge watch one of them, cuddle up on the couch, and see if there's a connection?

When a show has a fantastic first episode but rapidly descends thereafter in popularity the phrase netizens use is '*One stream wonder'*. While, the agonizing

sensation of a dappled web connection disrupting the viewing of a favourite web series is referred to as the '*Boulevard of broken streams*'. The feeling you get when your favorite show on the OTT platform stands canceled has been termed by the netizens as '*Cancelitis*' (sounding almost like a deadly, disastrous disease). This may lead to '*Netflix and swill*', where the dejected viewer switches from a Netflix binge to traditional TV program.

Have you ever watched an episode of your favorite show while simultaneously texting your best friend every time something unbelievable happens so you discuss matters on text? You are then a '*Netflexter*'! Netflexting is when you and your friend are watching the same show at the same time in different locations and text each other your reactions to every single scene (to feel as though you are in this together).

'*Netflix Adultery*' is committed when a partner sneak-watches a few episodes on Netflix without the other partner, with whom one originally had an agreement of watching it together –it is a breach of faith that you cannot justify .It is also a totally legitimate reason for breakups these days. A Huffington Post report says, over 28 million Americans cheated on their partner...with Netflix! That's more than 51% of all people in America in a relationship. And this syndrome is catching up on many young Indians too, these days.

OTT platforms have ushered in a digital revolution in the media and entertainment industry to deliver the quality and diversified content. They are providing a momentum to covering the huge audiences across the world. In the process, immense alterations have come about in the English language that is being spoken the world over. 'Bro', 'dude' and 'buddy' cut across gender and age barriers. With the advent of numerous language shows, OTT has made the intersection of communication with precision stronger and more connectable.

Covid 19 actually acted as the power booster for OTT platforms across countries. Due to pandemic induced lockdowns, people were compelled to stay home. Many of employees from different organizations were permitted to work from the safety of their homes. Even the big screens were closed to avoid large gatherings.

Due to all these changes, people became habitual to the OTT platforms and the contents streamed by them. Pornography and nudity are common among these platforms as there was no regulatory control on them. Numerous cases has been filed in the Court for the content that threatens or disregards the sovereignty of India, promote terrorism and abuse against women and children, violence, or even crime. Little wonder then that the style or changes seen in

both English as well as local language used in the web series reflect the content, mindset and desires of the consumers of the OTT platforms.

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Urmi Satyan*

The Last Queen – A Hi-Story of Royal Love, Valor, Treachery and Cultural Colonization

Abstract

Every history tells a story of a certain time, place, action and people. Literarily speaking, a story is in the womb of history. It is easy to comprehend history through a story, not only because of the latter's submerged presence in the former but also because of its power of subjective connect. Simply put, a story of history connects the dots of time, place, action and person/people and a brilliant story teller ornaments this connect through a conducive narrative technique and transforms a reader of history into an ardent listener of a story. One such brilliant story teller is an Indo-American author, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni who dives deep into the pages of history and weaves a story of a century and a half old Indian history in her latest book The Last Queen. *The book gives candid panorama of then prevalent significant political events of the northwestern Indian subcontinent. The book also portrays the hegemony of royal masculine power and the energetic feminine involvement in socio-political affairs to upkeep social prestige and national pride.*

Keywords: *The Last Queen, history, hegemony of royal power, feminine involvement, social prestige, national pride.*

1. Introduction

The precise focus of the book is on the life-story of the forgotten Queen of Punjab – Maharani Jindan – a central link between the Punjabi Sikh community and the last Prince of Punjab, Maharaja Dalip Singh, her own son. Her assertive feminine nerve attracts Raja Ranjit Singh – the founder of the Sikh Empire, also known as the Lion of Punjab – to marry her. A daughter of a dog-trainer as she is, her wretched life was far distant from any royalty or regency. But once accorded with the royal identification, her political acumen and intellectual

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inquisitiveness impress her king-husband and the people of Punjab. Her potential worth earns her the honorable title of the Mai of Punjab. Her quickness to learn, adopt and execute is commended by the King, Rani Guddan – one of her co-wives and a few loyal servants. Her two and a half year's married life rewarded her with three major properties.1. royalty and repute, 2. some references and strategic advices by her king-husband and 3. a son, an heir to the throne of Punjab. She follows all three of them, gives tough fight to the adversities, protects the honor of her native land and culture, safeguards the royal heritage and resists strongly against cultural colonization – a strategy of the British to fleece India of its glory and expand the geo-political stronghold of the British Empire. Chitra's historical research as fictionalized and documented in the present book depicts the glory and collapse of Lahore due to the treachery of the inmates and the trickery of the British.

Rani Jindan's beauty and brashness, her fierce encounter with the British, her fight against cultural colonization and her ensuing emergence from a commoner to a Queen makes her "Mai Jindan" – Mother Jindan. It is captivating to find the fourfold narrative of Jindan's adolescent time in Gujaranwala, marriage to the King of Lahore, asylum in Nepal and death in England. Chitra's research exuberance and creative brilliance wins accolade as she presents the meta-narrative of the society, history, myths, and religion prevalent during the time.

The history is not unknown to us that the British arrived in India with a purpose to develop business ties. They founded the East India Company to facilitate commerce and trade between the East and the West. But in the process of laying the foundation stone of their mercantile company, they explored the flora and fauna of the East and got enchanted by its exotic richness and cultural glory. They got tempted and started transforming the nation of India into a colony by exploiting it of its wealth and culture. The British agenda is more clearly explained by the Supreme Court lawyer J. Sai Deepak[1] who quotes Raymond Murphy's four dimensional view of the British colonialism. These four dimensions are (1) development of science and technology (2) expansion of the capitalist economy (3) formation of executive government and (4) formation of the legal system to manage social conflicts. Sai Deepak adds two more dimensions and says that the British colonialism mainly targeted 1. To reject "any onto-epistemological system that worships nature…to impose Christianity upon the natives" and 2. To replace the "indigenous education system…with a Christian European model of education" (Deepak, p.66). Chitra's book succinctly captures these six dimensions and demonstrates the British agenda of cultural colonization.

The British agenda of colonialism was encouraged by the kings of the princely states who could not comprehend the furtive thieving operation of the British. Nevertheless, some princely states had vigilant and patriotic kings who fought against the British and protected the sovereignty of their states. The British bribed the morally fragile states and thus created internal divide within India. And thus the patriotic kings had to fight with inmates as well as outsiders. Mahaja Ranjit Singh is one such patriotic king who led the Khalsa army established by Guru Govind Singh[2] in 1699. Ranjit Singh's victory over Afghanistan and the subsequent capture of Koh-I-Noor (the world's largest diamond, also known as the Mountain of Light) made Punjab more powerful and glorious.

With this history as the main thread of the book, Chitra introduces Ranjit Singh's last queen, the real character of Rani Jindan whose first person narration lucidly chronicles how Punjab gains and loses her husband's hard earned fame and magnificence. Rani Jindan tells us how the divide and rule policy of the Brigadier general Henry Lawrence[3] (1806-1857) and the governor general Dalhousie[4] (1848-1856) get success in paralyzing the sovereignty of the state of Punjab. The unfortunate split between the Hindus and the Sikhs – which Ranjit Singh "worked so hard to prevent" (Chitra, p.229) puts a blow on India's national unity. Nevertheless, during her tenure as the Queen of Punjab, Jindan follows her husband's nationalistic path and dedicates her life to conserve the sovereignty of Punjab. She strongly resists from throwing guards against the British. It is really exciting to read about her rebellious nature throughout her eventful life.

2. Literature Review

The select book for the present paper gives an insight into the history of the prevalent time of the 18th century India. The book also shows how the Indian kings and queens dedicated their lives in protecting the sovereignty of India. Similar books are studied to understand the subject matter more microscopically. The Kindle Publication of the book *Royals and Rebels: The Rise and Fall of the Sikh Empire[6]* (2020) gives comprehensive account of Ranjit Singh's life of glory and valor. Priya's insightful book helps the researcher explore the historical underpinning of the prevalent time.

The 18th century India faced problems of conversion, banishment and cultural colonization by the British. In his book *India that is Bharat: Coloniality, Civilization and Constituition* (2021), the Indian Supreme Court lawyer J Sai Deepak explores how cultural colonization was the major focal point of British colonialism.

Harisingh Nalwa: The Champion of the Khalsaji[7] (2009) is a book that gives kaleidoscopic view of the life of Harisingh Nalwa, Ranjit Singh's brave warrior. The book also gives account of many other freedom fighters.

The Sikh Gurus' lives are studied through the academic texts books by National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT).

3. Methodology

In this paper the researcher undertakes the subject of India's royal and regent lives with reference to the book *The Last Queen* by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni. The study is exploratory as the researcher explores Rani Jindan's role in the Royal Political System and the State Administration. The study undertaken is also analytical as the researcher aims to analyse the female protagonist Jindan's life in the light of her ambience, challenges and future prospects.

4. Discussion: the major discussion of the present paper is divided into the following sub-points.

4.1 Jindan – A Born Queen

4.2 Jindan in the light of Connell's Power Relation

4.3 Jindan in the light of Connell's Productive Relation

4.4 Jindan in the light of Connell's Cathexis Relation

4.1 Jindan – A Born Queen

The most brutal face of poverty is experienced by Jindan from her early childhood. But her enthusiasm and energy wins her success in every of her expeditions. Her comradeship with her brother Jawahar starts from the childhood thieving missions held in the neighboring guava orchards and continues till the time of her becoming a queen in Lahore and he, a wazir. She is brought to Lahore by her alky and greedy father Manna – a dog trainer in Ranjit Singh's army. Manna wants to get rid of his parental responsibility by marrying off Jindan to any rich merchant. However, Jindan's accidental meeting with Ranjit Singh changes her destiny. Ranjit Singh is amazed to see an adolescent girl's vibrancy. It is fascinating to see her fearless romantic behavior. She never considers her poverty as an obstacle. Her act of offering jaggery to the King's mare Laila fetches her a rare chance to ride with the King. The King appreciates her courage and invites her to pay a secretive visit to the Banquet at the royal court arranged to welcome the Governor-General Bentinck[5]. When she is caught by Mai Nakkain – the eldest wife of Ranjit Singh, she fearlessly announces that she is a royal guest and not any intruder. At the age of 16, she unrestrictedly

expresses her love for Ranjit Singh and tells him that she would like to be with him – even as a concubine. Impressed by her qualities complementing the "makings of a great rani" (Chitra, p.104), the King promises to marry her, once she is 18. Her wish is fulfilled. She leaves Gujaranwala, her birth place and arrives in Lahore as the "Last Queen" of Ranjit Singh, her *Sarkar*. At the royal court Jindan hears snide remarks for her low-caste birth. However, she finds a friend and mentor in Rani Guddan – one of her co-wives.

Chitra draws our attention to the prevalent time in India when patriarchy was strongly rooted in the social structure. Connell[8] (2005) explains this social structure through a three-fold model of the gendered role of masculinity in a patriarchal society. The model studies a man's identity in his relations with (a) Power, (b) Production and (c) Cathexis. These three parameters get reflected in Ranjit Singh's masculine identity. His Power Relation is seen in his consciousness about the royal burden that engages him in the politics of the state affairs. Ranjit Singh's Production Relation is noticed in his strategic creation of armies and special task forces. The Production Relation is also seen in Ranjit Singh's mesmerizing treasury, social activities (like encouraging skilled and unskilled labor by organizing dog races) and engagements with socio-religious ceremonies, making huge charities and providing funds. One more, rather a major aspect of a man's identity is seen in his ability to procreate, especially sons as heirs of the throne. Connell explains the third dimension of the man's identity as his Cathexis Power – reflected through the natural human expressions of love, care, sympathy and guarding the moral conscience of himself, his kinsmen's and his nation's. Ranjit Singh's cathexis power is also reflected through his decision to keep distance from the extended kinsmen of his wives', respecting his wives' natural anger (in the case of Queen Mehtab) and augmenting Jindan as the future queen of Lahore-Punjab.

What is more wonderful to find is the ditto display of Connell's classification model of a man's masculine identity in that of Jindan's feminine valour.

4.2 Jindan in the light of Connell's Power Relation

As a warrior and a nationalist, Ranjit Singh's foremost concern is to safeguard Punjab from the British invasion and so he is always occupied in political and administrative matters. The newly wed Jindan meets her husband at unprecedented intervals. But when she meets, she tries to comprehend the political intricacies. He also explains to her the administrative policies of the state. The king, aware of his old age suggests her to confide in three people, in case of any exigency. The first is Fakir Azizuddin, the king's ambassador whom the king

employs as Jindan's advisor. The second person to confide in is Hari Singh Nalwa, the leader of the Khalsa Army. He is the

> "wide awake military man and the efficient administrator [who] clearly understood both the military and trade designs of the British. [on his] first hand assessment of the their military strength and firepower, he could clearly see that it would not take the British long to transform a foothold into a stranglehold[9]. (Khalsa, 2005, p. 152)

And the third recommendation is for Jung Bahadur, the Rana of Nepal.

Being a queen, Jindan visits the royal court often. She does not appreciate Ranjit Singh's over decency in receiving Lord William Bentinck – the first governor General of the British occupied India. She believes that Bentinck does not deserve a king's salutation. She courageously resists to give in when she is caught in the "zenana politics" (Chitra, p.117) mainly headed by the chief queen Mai Nakkain – her eldest co-wife who tries to poison her on the very first day of her marriage. Priya Atwal rightly says,

> Although she was evidently not always the most shrewd or mature politician (especially at the outset of her reign) – she made up for these weaknesses with her sheer determination and fierce commitment to maintaining the independence of her son's position as Maharajah (2020, p. 5)

Jindan's true trial as a maharani starts after her husband's death. When Kharak Singh, the King's eldest son inherits the throne of Lahore, she is the first to be removed from the city. Dhian Singh, the wazir to Kharak Singh transports Jindan with her son Dalip and Mangla, her loyal and diligent attendant to his brother Suchet's fort at Kangra Hills in Jammu. She also agrees as she wants to raise her son away from the deceitful family circle. After three months of her exile in Jammu, she receives a letter by Fakir Azizuddin mentioning a series of deaths and murders back in Lahore. The letter talks about a political turmoil in Lahore created due to the mysterious deaths/murders of Mai Nakkain, Naunihal and Chet Singh Bajwa (Kharak's son and *intimate* friend respectively). The letter also mentions that Kharak Singh loses power and so Sher Singh, one of her stepsons becomes the king in Lahore. But after Kharak Singh's death, Dhian requests Rani Jindan to return to Lahore with Dalip. Sher Singh finds Dalip as his competitor and so opens a fire on Jindan's fort. Naunihal's wife Chand Kaur gives birth to a still baby and later she is also found murdered.

Under the leadership of Sher Singh, the Khalsa army makes a remarkable victory at Ladakh but then Dhian, Sher Singh and his son Pratap get killed, to avenge the gruesome murder of Chand Kaur, under the orders of Ajit and Lehna

Singh Sandhawalia – the relatives of Chand Kaur. The internal family feud favors Jindan who wins the trust of Sandhawalias as she is the first to inform them about Chand Kaur's murder. Sandhawalia brothers search for Suchet (Dhian singh's brother), Hira (Dhian singh's son) and Rani Pathani (Dhian Singh's wife). Hira Singh meets Jindan and requests her for Dalip's quick coronations and her regency. Hira agrees to serve them as wazir. Hira then kills Ajit Singh and Lehna Singh. It is revealed afterwards that the British had bribed and sheltered Attar Singh Sandhawalia (Ajit and Lehna's kinsman) to infuriate Ajit and Lehna to kill Sher Singh. Suchet and Hira – the duo of uncle and nephew also split. Hira incites the Khalsa army and attacks Suchet and his army in a "private feud". It is true to note,

> Ranjit Singh's weak successors could not hold on to his legacy for long, but the soldiery did not surrender sovereignty of the Sikh kingdom without a do-or-die fight. The British engaged in two wars with the Sikhs, comprising over half-a-dozen battles and spread across three years. The reputation of the British suffered a great deal in the process. In these wars, the Sikhs faced Hindustani sipahees under the command of British officers. Eventually, the British needed to bribe the 'Sikh' leaders in order to overpower their opponents (Cunningham, 1915: 288-9). The hostilities ended in 1849, with the formal annexation of the Kingdom of the Sikhs to British India. (Atwal, 2020, p. 20)

Connell's Power Relation is seen in Jindan when she watches this bloodshed with a mixed feeling of dejection and "grim satisfaction" (Chitra, p. 239). Nevertheless, she gathers her mantle and transforms the dismal state of Punjab into the land of warriors by invoking the Khalsa army with the following words:

> You are the Khalsa, warriors of integrity, who are following in the footsteps of the Gurus – but perhaps only a Sikh can recognize that. You are the greatest fighting force in all of Hindustan, yet you were used shamefully by the wazir on the advice of that crooked Jalla [Hira's advisor]…You are the best defenders of your little maharaja…Jawahar and I thank you from our hearts (Chitra, p. 239).

4.3 Jindan in the light of Connell's Productive Relation

Her political acumen, courageous and skillful present wit and courteous behavior wins her the titles of "Mai Jindan", the "Mother of the Khalsa Army" and the "Mother of the Sikhs". She uses this trust to put an end to the duo of the wazir Hira Singh, and his advisor Pandit Jalla. She infuriates the Khalsa army to teach a lesson to Hira and Jalla who stop her from offering charity at

Gurudwara, the Sikh religious place. The Khalsa army kills Hira, Jalla and Sohan (Hira's son). But she is not happy with the killings as she tells her brother Jawahar, "The Khalsa army is a powerful beast. Now that I've unleashed it, will I be able to control it?" (Chitra, p.254).

Jindan now fights strategically and emotionally. With the death of Hira, the seat of the wazir is vacant and Jindan takes the opportunity by proposing her brother Jawahar for the same. She also awards higher posts to experienced and loyal courtiers whom she knows since her husband's time. She prepares a team of her devoted attendants – Avatar and Mangla. She says, "My two main concerns are the British and Peshaura". (Chitra, p.256) (Peshaura is one of her stepsons and a competitor of Dalip for the throne of Punjab). Her brother Jawahar kills Peshaura but the Panches order Jawahar's capture and kill the later to avenge Peshauara's murder. This splits Jindan from the Panches, though not very openly. Her next point of faith is in Lal Singh, her ardent lover and Tej sigh, Lal Singh's warrior-friend. But both unite with the British and turn out to be traitors. Jindan's Khalsa army gets defeated at the Firozpur battle. Having seen the army demoralized, she reignites the flame of insult caused due to the defeat. She enrages and challenges their masculine power by throwing her under-petticoat to them and shouting at them saying, "give me your clothes and take mine. You remain in the place and rest. I'll ride to battle in your stead and die as a true Khalsa soldier should" (Chitra, p. 271). The army attacks with all powers but gets trapped between the flooded Sutlej and the British army. And resultantly lose. This shocks her and robs her of her hard earned repute and wealth. She is imprisoned by the British and not even allowed to come to Diwan-I-Aam. On the other side, the treacherous Gulab Singh Dogra (who came to eminence during Raja Ranjit Singh's time) is made the king of Jammu and Kashmir and Lal Singh is rewarded doubly with the positions of the commander-in-chief and wazir. Inspite of being defeated, she never loses her confidence or the self-nurtured moral courage. She happens to meet her erstwhile lover Lal Singh in the qila courtyard where she spits on his face and says, "I'm deeply ashamed that I ever loved a traitor like you. May you be cursed by the riches your British masters have tossed to you, wealth soaked in the blood of the Khalsa" (Chitra, p. 274).

4.4 Jindan in the light of Connell's Cathexis Relation

Jindan is full of vibrancy and challenges. Her love interest in Lal Singh catches fire of dispute. It incurred her an offensive title of "Messalina of Punjab" (Chitra, p.263). Eventually, Lal Singh's treachery to the Khalsa army puts an end to the relationship. She is radical in her societal perspectives. She does not

believe in following the "old customs" (Chitra, p.164) and is very vocal in trying her best to convince her co-wives not to perform satee after the death of Ranjit Singh.

She finds Punjab almost under the British control. Lawrence becomes the governor of Punjab, Dalip becomes a ward of the British government and Jindan is kept on a petty pension amount and also "strictly confined to zenana" (Chitra, p.274). She is further chained in the series of tragic confinements; first to Shekhupura Qila and then to Chunar fort. She is kept on "unbelievable meager" (Chitra, p. 280) financial allowance of twelve thousand rupees a year. Jindan is separated from her son and confined. Within a small span, the new Governor-General Dalhousie declares the durbar's treaty with the British as void and so, after the victory at Gujarat, Punjab is annexed from the sovereign India. It is within the ten years of the brave king Ranjit Singh's death, Punjab is almost looted.

Nevertheless, the British fails to rob Jindan of her courage and confidence. She escapes from the incarceration of the British. She is gutsy to write a taunting note to her warden saying,

"You put me in the cage and locked me up. You surrounded me with sentries. You thought you could keep Rani Jindan imprisoned. But look, I got out by magic from under your nose" (Chitra, p. 283).

Having escaped, Jindan finds Nepal as her next destination. She remembers Rana Jung Bahadur, the King of Nepal who was recommended by her husband, in case of any critical eventuality. Thus from Chunar Fort she reaches Nepal almost after one month's incognito life followed by a terrible journey on foot. Her self-respect and firm faith refrains her from begging for shelter at Jung Bahadur's court. But when she finds him humble with a respectful offering of a "house and an allowance suited to [her] position" (Chitra, p. 286) she agrees and thus "finds her sanctuary, a place to rest and recover, to watch from afar what the British are doing"…(Chitra, p.286). It is through her loyal spy Avtar that she comes to know that her son Dalip is under the control of the orientalist vision of the British. She also comes to know that at the age of sixteen, he has been sent to England and thus, is being systematically robbed of his native identity. She also notices that Indian Freedom movement has already started. It is the 1857 War of Independence. She notices how Raja Nahar Singh of Ballabhgarh is hanged by the British. She says it is shattering to hear of the bravery of Nana Saheb, Tantia Tope, Kunwar Singh, Bhakht Khan, Liyakat Ali, Mangal Pandey and also women warriors like Rani Lakshmi Bai of Jhansi and Begum Hazrat Mahal of Awadh who fought bravely against the British.

In the middle of the ongoing 1857 War of Independence, she receives a letter by her son about his visit to Calcutta and plan to see her. She leaves Nepal and goes to Calcutta to see her son. When she meets, she realizes how her son is colonized culturally. She accepts the condition of the British and agrees to leave India to live with her son in England with a view to "educate him about [the] lost glory [of India]" (Chitra, p.310). Jindan is shocked to see her son's cultural isolation. The British do not allow him to return to India and fix his pension of 25 thousand pound a year. Jindan finds this amount as very low in lieu of their Indian assets, illegally confiscated by the British. Dalip has already gifted the Koh-I-Noor – the sign of her husband's bravery – to Queen Victoria. She tells Dalip how sequentially the British have reduced her pension from 1,50,000 rupees to 48,000 and then to 12, 000. But in her heart she knows that Dalip is already caught up in the web of the "psychocultural marginality" (Deepak, 2021, p.73). She cautions him not to take any loan from them as that would be nothing but their strategy to push him more under their obligations. But her cautions don't work. Her advices and igniting suggestions to follow the path of his great father Raja Ranjit Singh make him more helpless. Weak and aged as she is, she reaches the last stage of her life. Yet, she counsels Dalip from her death bed and says,

> Reach deep within, my son. You may be surprised to by what you find there. You will not be alone in your quest for justice. Punjab is filled with men who long for your return. Contact your cousin, Thakur Singh. He will guide you. He will help you become a Sikh again, if you are willing. Who knows, perhaps you will fulfil the prophecy [to be the king of Hindustan] I told you about (Chitra, p.346).

With these final words, the Last Queen of Punjab dies in England. The British permit him to make a secured flying visit to India to flow his mother's ashes to the holy river Godavari in Maharashtra.

Conclusion

Thus, Chitra tells us the story of Jindan and Jindan tells us the *hi*story of Punjab. The narrative technique of Chitra is very impressive as she employs the first person narration and tells us the saga of the last queen of Punjab. The book captivates also because it chronicles the history of the time. The stray remarks of the socio-political realities induce the book with brief details on the subjects like – polygamy, opium, royal banquets, dog-races, practice of Satee, treachery, imprisonment, banishment and the Christian mission of systematic conversion of Hindus.

Chitra's narrative art encompasses the eloquent descriptions on the historical monuments like the Badshahi Qila, Shalimar, Sheesh Mahal and Naulakha Pavilion, now situated in Lahore, Pakistan. The Golden Temple situated in Amritsar, India is also a point of immense mention in the book as Ranjit Singh himself ornamented the entire sanctum of the temple with Gold. Chitra also tells us how the Sikh Gurus – Guru Arjan Dev[10] and Guru Tegh Bahadur[11] martyred themselves against the horrifying torturous force of Jahangir for conversion.

Chitra's candid straightforwardness is seen in her frequent use of code mixing. She uses the native words like gutka (184), danda-goli (263), latto (263), sohni, (18) qissa (308), vaid (246) and Panch (239). These native words add the natural beauty to her simple and lucid narrative style. The then live romance of Heer-Ranjha and Sohni-Mahiwal is also beautifully crafted into the book to provide allegorical reference to Jindan's own romantic connection with the King of Punjab. The sparse remarks of the words *Ye na thi hamari kismet* – a gazal by the great Urdu Shayar Mirza Gaalib reminds us of its presence in Hindi cinema too. The homo sexual relation of Kharak Singh and his *intimate* friend Chet Singh Bajwa also draws our attention towards the society of the time.

Thus, the author of *The Palace of Illusions* and *The Forest of Enchantments* revives one more forgotten page of history and compels her readers once again to adore the spirit of a Hindustani woman who possesses the invincible qualities of compassion, craftiness and confidence. Rani Jindan – the unsung fighter is introduced to us as a polite, proud and politically practical person. Chitra quotes and reiterates Chinua Achebe who rightfully believes "Until the lions have their own historians, the history of the hunt will always glorify the hunter". *The Last Queen,* emphatically vitalizes national pride and offers homage to the lions and lionesses of the 18th century Hindustan.

Note

Revival of history is significant as it connects the present generation to the roots of their past glory and inheritance. The British invasion had almost annexed India of its pride and honour. During his regime from 1780 to 1839 Ranjit Singh fought for the nation and held the British at bay. It is very unfortunate that recently his statue is vandalized in Lahore by some extremists, as reported in Indian Express. Ministry of External Affairs has also condemned this vandalization. The statue was unveiled in 2019 on his 180th Birth Anniversary[12].

Notes

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Should India Switch to Chain Base Method of GDP Estimation from Fixed Base Year Method

Abstract

India is growing at a fast rate in terms of macro performance of sectors and with the major shift in Indian economy from agriculture based economy to an economy with predominant service sector. The shift in composition and contribution of GDP brings forward an important concern regarding its computation methodology used and indicative sectoral shift. The purpose of this paper is to give rationale for India to switch the method of GDP measure from fixed base to chain based method and to interpret the impact of Chain based and fixed based method on GDP. By analysing the data using R software and a caselet we found that a chain based method of GDP estimation will be more appropriate than fixed base year method as it captures changes faster and relies heavily on current price information.

Keywords: Economic growth, Chain base index, Inflation, Nominal GDP, Real GDP.

Introduction

Accurate estimate of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is a necessity of any country as it is a mirror image of welfare of population and economic performance of that country. GDP is nothing but aggregate of consumer expenditure on goods and services, investment expenditures by businesses and households, government expenditure on goods and services and difference between imports and exports. For accurate analysis of economic activity, price component of GDP includes money value of all categories of services, goods produced and the quantity component includes the final output. Thus, current

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money value of GDP known as nominal GDP is basically price (time's) (quantity) representing the current value in monetary terms. The real GDP is an indicator of the aggregate demand for final output of goods and services.

Aggregated domestic product in gross terms is an extensive measure for overall economic output and function's as a scorecard of the country's economic health. The relevance of National Income accounting was as consequences of Great Depression and World War II, where the need arose for a tool to measure the country's overall development and growth. In 1937, first time the tool for measuring the country's overall welfare was developed and presented by Simon Kuznets known as Gross Domestic Product (GDP).(Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2000). The International Monetary Fund and The World Bank established in July 1944, Bretton Woods for the purpose of promoting worldwide economic growth through development and reconstruction and to prevent competitive devaluations of currencies, accepted GDP as a standardized tool for measuring the country's economic growth. (Sandra Kollen Ghizoni, 2013). In 1978, compilation of first estimates of GDP per capita of more than 100 countries was published in The Economic Journal, Britain. In December 1999, Gross Domestic Product was declared as a key indicator of economic performance in the 20th century by the Commerce Department of USA. In September 2006, China developed a new index known as "green GDP" that measures national economic output taking into consideration environmental factors emphasizing changing methodologies as current requirements. (John Talberth & Alok K. Bohara, 2006).

GDP can be a nominal GDP or real GDP.

Nominal GDP = Value of goods consumed and services availed are measured by taking the current prices or prevailing prices

Real GDP = Value of goods consumed and services availed are measured by taking the prices of established base year

For measuring GDP, when cost of goods consumed and services availed are measured by taking the current prices or prevailing prices, then that GDP is known as nominal GDP or GDP at current prices and when value of goods consumed and services availed are measured by taking the prices of established base year, then that GDP is known as Real GDP or GDP calculated at constant prices. The base year is a benchmark year and should not experience any abnormal events like flood, earthquake, drought etc. If any natural calamities occur in that year then monetary and fiscal measure are to be taken to minimize the impact on GDP.

While measuring GDP through fixed base year method, first the prices of a particular base year is used for valuing real production in each sector of the economy and then the values of sectoral base year is added to calculate overall real GDP and measuring through chain base method, the prices of the year immediately preceding the year is taken into consideration for estimating real GDP. Thus for the year 2020, the base year would be 2019, for 2019 it would be 2018, for 2018 it would be 2017 and so on.

Problem Statement

Gross domestic product (GDP) is an important parameter expressing the Mean standard of living. The GDP in India is expressed using fixed base method. But the shifting to chain-based method for estimation is becoming a requirement. (Charles Steindel, 1995). Firstly because of the Industrial revolution 4.0[1], where, in the industries the life of technology and skill has significantly shortened and becomes obsolete fast, dynamics of economic cooperation, sectoral contribution, inflationary impact would be better understood if the chain based method is used. (Dev S. Mahendra (2017). Secondly, the aggregate consumption expenditure is based on previous time periods aggregate income and not the base year consideration. This, when accounted for by the GDP deflator is considering subset of selected goods and services from the universal set. Even the consumer behavior has shifted to the use and throw, quick replacement of products, visual merchandise which the industries have responded to and have adopted the concept of consumer /customer is the King. The products have been engineered accordingly. Hence, it is now becoming relevant that "India should switch to Chain Base Method of GDP calculation from Fixed Base Year Method". (Suneja K., 2019)

Globally, US shifted to chain base method for GDP estimates way back in 1996 and shift resulted in significant changes in the numbers of GDP of the preceding year, indicating the better outcome produced by this method. After that t mot of the developed countries adopted chain base method for GDP estimates. Shifting to chain base method will allow India also to compare its economic growth with other countries of the world.

Hypothesis of the Study
- H01: There exists no significant affiliation between GDP at constant prices and inflation
- H02: There exists no significant link between GDP at current prices and inflation

Objectives of the Study

- To give rationale for India to switch the method of GDP measure from fixed base to chain based method as the impact of Industrial Revolution 4.0 is intensifying.
- To interpret the impact of Chain based and fixed based method on GDP using a caselet.

METHODOLOGY

Sample Selection: For selection of sample, Purposive sampling method[2] is used.

Sources of data: The data published by Government of India in economic Surveys is taken for study and is the primary source of this study. The macro data is taken for descriptive analysis and drawing inference for the year 2004-05, 2011-12 and 2019 for GDP, Inflation.

Period of the study: GDP at constant prices and inflation from year 2004-05 to 2011-12 has been taken for study.

Tools used in this study: To test statistically the relationship between economic growth and inflation, Tobit model[3] using R software has been applied. GDP is taken as independent variable and inflation is dependent variable. Correlation between real GDP and inflation has been calculated. GDP growth of an economy in real terms is measured as percentage change in GDP annually at constant prices based on 2004-05 prices and 2011-12 prices. Inflation is measured as percentage change in average consumer price index on annual basis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Understanding of benefits of Chain base method of GDP estimates over fixed base through caselet

One drawback with traditional method of estimating real GDP is that it does not consider the fluctuations in prices and every time takes base year prices for value all goods thus showing income comparisons across time. With the passage of time, there are goods such as electronic widget whose prices have decreased and quantities have increased but are given same weightage as valued by the base year prices and therefore acquire too much weight in subsequent years' GDP estimations. The goods don't require a high expenditure share but since valued at old prices, it would appear like an erroneously large share of GDP. If there were two goods 1 and 2 and P denotes price and Q denotes output.

The prices of the two goods in the base year and current year shall be depicted as 0 for base year and 1 for current year.

Suppose i denotes good (i=1,2) and j stands for year where j takes value depictions a 0 if it is base year and positive number for a year that comes later. Thus, the consumption expenditure in year j in the prices of year x, shall be Cjx. Nominal income in year 1 would be given by $C_{11} = q_{11}p_{11} + q_{21}p_{21}$. The real income in year 1 would be represented as $C_{10} = q_{11}p_{10} + q_{21}p_{20}$. The GDP deflator would be the ratio of Nominal GDP/ Real GDP * 100. Inflation is the price of good i, measured in year j and is defined as percentage change in prices. (Note that the sum of the weights equals unity.)

Let's discuss with a caselet given in table 1.

Table 1: Hypothetical year wise data of expenditure and price

Year	*Expenditure*		*Price*		*Quantity (Real)*	
	Electronic widget	*Buses*	*Electronic widget*	*Buses*	*Electronic widget*	*Buses*
1	1000	1060	1	₹ 1.00	1000	1060
2	1050	980	₹.80	₹ 1.05	1313	933
3	1030	1040	₹.60	₹ 1.10	1717	945
4	990	1000	₹.40	₹ 1.15	2475	870

Source: Compiled by author

In general, we calculate expenditure by multiplying price, quantity and real quantities. These are calculated dividing expenditure by price but same can't be applied with electronic widget as it's difficult to count up quantity in two different years. So we consider expenditure divided by price for calculating quantity and real investment comes to 2060 in year 1. In year 2, by valuing quantity at base year prices, real investment comes to 2246 and same way in third year comes to 2662 and 4th year 3345.

We can observe that investment in Electronic widget is representing 74% of real investment in year 4. However, this is unjustified as actual investment expenditure in Electronic widget is less than half of total investment expenditure. The reason behind this unreasonable high is valuation of Electronic widget on base prices though prices of Electronic widgets have been decreased continuously.

Here "investment deflator" is same as the GDP deflator which is calculated dividing nominal investment by real investment. In year 2, investment deflator comes 0.904, year 3, 0.778 and in year 4, 0.595.

We can solve this issue with real GDP by using chain based method of GDP. First, we will calculate real rate of growth of each electronic widget independently on yearly basis. Then to calculate average rate of growth, will assign weight to each electronic widget by using expenditure share of the current. Then, by applying this average growth rate to the preceding year's real GDP, will get real (cumulated) GDP in the current year. Under chain-weighting method of GDP, in year 2, investment deflator comes 0.893, year 3, 0.785 and in year 4, 0.640.

Descriptive analysis

Table 2: Descriptive statistics

Variables	GDP(2004-05)	GDP(2011-12)	GDP(Current price)	Inflation rate
Min.	4.47	3.09	12.56	4.25
Median	8.59	7.66	14.43	8.86
Mean	7.61	6.687	15.05	8.524
Max.	9.57	8.5	19.92	11.99

Source: Compiled by author

We can see in table 2 that average real GDP at 2004-05 base year price is 7.61, average real GDP at 2011-12 base year price is 6.687 and average nominal GDP or GDP at current year price is 15.05 and the difference between the real GDP and nominal GDP is approximately equal to average inflation.

Table 3: Correlation between variables

Variables	GDP(2004-05)	GDP(2011-12)	GDP(Current price)	Inflation rate
GDP(2004-05)	1	0.67	0.585	-0.467
GDP(2011-12)	0.671	1	0.701	-0.096
GDP(Current price)	0.585	0.701	1	0.226
Inflation rate	-0.467	-0.096	0.226	1

Source: Compiled by author.

Table 4: Summary of z and p values for estimated model

Variables	Estimate std.	Error	Z values	pr(>IZI)	p values
(Intercept):1	1.7548	4.3915	0.3995	0.6895	0.6959
(Intercept):2	0.5273	0.2541	2.075	0.0379	0.0583
GDP(2004-05)	-1.2182	0.4188	-2.9088	0.0036	0.0121
GDP(2011-12)	-0.1243	0.5284	-0.2352	0.814	0.8177
GDP(Current price)	1.1324	0.4064	2.7866	0.0053	0.1541
Log-likelihood: -16.1666 on 13 degrees of freedom					
LRT with two degrees of freedom is related with a p-value of 0.04877254					

Source: Compiled by author

As per data shown in table 3, Correlation is telling with change of one variable another variable also changes in arrange of -1 to 1. So, in this data

GDP 2011-12 and GDP current price are most correlated, here it is positively correlated, i.e. with increase in one of them other variable also increases explaining 70% of the change.

Tobit regression coefficients shown in table 4 are interpreted in the comparable manner to Ordinary Least Squares regression (OLS) regression coefficients;

- One unit increase in GDP 2004- 05, there is a (-1.22) point decrease in the predicted value of the Inflation rate.
- A one unit increase in GDP 2011- 12 is linked with a (-0.1243) unit decrease in the predicted value of Inflation rate.
- The terms for GDP at current price have a somewhat different interpretation. For a one unit increase in GDP current price is related with a (1.1324) unit increase in the predicted value of Inflation rate.
- The coefficient labeled as "(Intercept):1" is the intercept or constant for the model.
- The coefficient labeled as "(Intercept):2" is a subsidiary statistic. The exponentiation of this value, we get a statistic that is analogous to the square root of the residual variance in OLS regression. The value of (1.6943) can be compared to the standard deviation of Inflation rate which was (3.3825), a substantial reduction.

The final log likelihood of value -16.1666 is shown toward the bottom of the output and can be used in comparisons of nested models. We calculated the p-values for each of the coefficients in the model. The p-value for each coefficient was calculated using the z values and then displayed in a table with the coefficients. The coefficients for GDP in time period 2004- 05, GDP in time period 2011- 12 and GDP at current price are statistically significant.

We can test the significant level of program type overall by fitting a model without program in it and using a likelihood ratio test. The LRT with two degrees of freedom is linked with a p-value of 0.04877254, indicating that the overall effect of GDP current price is statistically significant.

Findings of the Study

With the fourth industrial revolution driving the economies and shortening of half lives of skills and technology, it becomes important to shift to chain base method as there is a significant relationship between GDP and inflation. As per the commerce ministry data, it is observed that service sector is contributing more than 50% to the GDP and has a very short half life for skills, obsolete in

technology and innovations, etc. Secondly, there is change in the behavior of the consumer wherein it has shifted to quick replacement of products, more influenced by automation, artificial intelligence, visual merchandise, e-commerce. Moreover and a significant correlation between the predicted and the observed values of inflation rate indicate that industries are responding to the cost minimization, economies of scale and consumer being impatient for present and future consumption. The weighted impact of the consumer consumption expenditure is the function of previous income not long drawn as we do it taking base year into consideration. The strengthening and acceptance of hypothesis brings forward that "India should switch to chain base method to get the correct price, time and value of outputs"

CONCLUSIONS & SUGGESTIONS

The merits and demerits of both fixed base and chain methods for measuring GDP have been researched for various nations for example United States, France,, UK, Netherlands, etc and depicted that the use of chain linked measures provided better GDP growth rates and with improved correctness compared to growth rates based on the fixed-base method. The major limitation of adopting the chain based method especially India would be the data capturing at Macro level, computational difficulty and fluctuation of relative prices globally due to changing scenario as result of Pandemic. Secondly, the developing nations lag in structural changes as compared to developed economies and price movements do not have a consistent trend. With increasing share of contribution of service sector in India's GDP, a chain based method of GDP estimation will be more appropriate than fixed base year method as it captures changes faster and reflect realities better and relies heavily on current price information. Most developed countries including US and Europe adopted this practise long back and such an index will make easier to compare India's growth with other countries. Statistical analysis also supported such change. The switching to chain base index is an important event for economic forecaster because it will totally change the way they used to make predictions. Although this switch will add considerable complexity to GDP estimation and abandon the easily defined level of GDP estimation, it will efficiently eliminate upward biases to growth in future and will give a more reliable picture of economic growth.

Indian can gradually shift from fixed base method to chain base method of GDP estimation. Initially time period can reduced from 10 years to 5 years, then 2 years and then annually. This lead to shift in GDP estimation from fixed base to chain base smoothly.

We propose further research and assessments for developing economies who have not adopted chain linked method and evaluate if these results can be generalized for other countries.

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Factors influencing Work Performance of Employees with special reference to Retail Sector

Abstract

Human Resource Management is one of the indispensable and flexible capacities in the management since it manages the most valuable asset of an organisation which is humans. The term performance appraisal alludes to the normal survey of an employee's work execution and his commitment towards an organization. Also called a yearly audit, execution survey or employee examination, an appraisal evaluation assesses a worker's ability, accomplishments and development in that department. Performance Management is an umbrella idea that collaborates and coverts comfortable business improvement systems along with innovation. Retail Area is one of the quickly developing enterprises after globalization and is giving a lot of freedom to both new and experience competitors. Retail organizations are known to manage employees' performance critically and use performance systems innovatively to give employees a view input on their work and to legitimize pay increments and rewards, just as end choices through performance appraisals. There are many factors that affect employees' performance which is then evaluated at the time of appraisal. This paper aims to study factors influencing performance of employees with special reference to Retail sector. The study concludes that there is significant impact of the factors; motivation, the rewards and recognition received at workplace and the working environment on employee performance

Keywords: *Human Resource Management, Performance Appraisal System, Retail Sector, Performance Management, Employee Performance, Motivation, Rewards and Recognition, Working Environment.*

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Introduction

Performance appraisal is a precise and intermittent process that surveys a singular employee's work performance and efficiency. It is important to see every employee's skills, capabilities and relative knowledge. It assists with rating the performance of employees and to assess their commitment towards the hierarchical objectives. Performance appraisal of employees is important to evaluate every worker's capacities, abilities and relative legitimacy and worth for the organisation. Performance appraisal of employees rates the employees on their work performance and their contribution towards achievement of organisational goals. The technique is important to quantify the performance of an employee to take a look at the advancement of the employee towards the planned objectives and points. The paper aims to study the factors influencing performance of an employee.

Performance appraisal helps to rate the presentation of the employees and assesses their commitment towards the association objectives. In the event that the course of performance appraisal is framed and appropriately organized, it assists the employees with understanding their jobs and provides guidance to the people performance. It assists with adjusting the singular exhibition to the organisation objectives and furthermore survey their performance.

Appraisal systems are an important performance management tool for any business, but they are crucial for the retail industry as it facilitates achieving multiple objectives. In today's era of cut-throat competition where customers mostly prefer shopping online, it's difficult to retain them. Performance of retail employees is a key to the success of the business as it plays a significant role in improving customer service, increasing operational efficiency, enhancing upselling and building the overall company reputation by providing the best service to customers building and achieving loyalty. Excellent customer service and experience can help retail businesses in escalating their profits. Customer loyalty in retail segment depend on the level of service given to them. Retail employees indirectly influence the sales from their interaction with the customers. So, meliorating customer service depends on employees. Sales staff of the company directly impacts the profit earned through their selling abilities. Also, retail employees like to work for the companies with motivating work environment where they know what is expected out of them and what they have to do. It's crucial for management to build a team of employees who are happily engaged, motivated and productive. Such employees are capable of providing exceptional customer service.

There are multiple methods that businesses are using to appraise their employees. Using right appraisal methods, companies can motivate productivity levels of their employees. The most often used performance appraisal method is 360 degree feedback method where the employee feedback is taken from employee's circle of peers, managers and customers. The popular method that gives employee an opportunity to improve his performance is assessment centre method. This method aids the employee to know how he is assessed by others which is done through various in basket exercises. Managing performance and maintaining productivity levels of retail employees is a daunting challenge. Management needs to implement innovative methods and effective strategies to keep their employees motivated and satisfied but for this the factors affecting their satisfaction levels needs to be studied.

Literature Review

The research that started way back in 1996 depicted that organisations are strategically linking the performance appraisal systems with the success of an organisation. This is creating a new performance based culture at workplaces and hence the management is keener towards the performance management at organisations.[1] In same context, in 1992, Locket opinionated that performance management is checking the competence of an employee that defines the loyalty and objective orientation approach of the individual.[2] This supports the employee in achieving the common objectives of the firm and the individual and facilitates the objective orientation.[3] Certain authors believe that the trust of a manger elevates when they know that the employee understands the importance of objective orientation and is working to meet it in time.[4] To add to it, performance management systems works and motivates employees' work efficiency and effectiveness both[5] while Arora & Arora concluded that the main objective of the evaluation system is to identify the performance discrepancy.[6] In 2006, Armstrong found that performance system creates a culture where every employee working individually or working in a team knows and takes the responsibility of overall growth and development of the business results.[7]. On the other hand, Stebler et al in 2001 studied performance management system in a number of different organizations and discovered that many of their performance management system had multiple objectives and multiple contents.[8]

Some authors opinionated that performance appraisals are usually related to the required skills and abilities in employees which are crucial for fulfilling the organisational objectives. The appraisal system also takes into account the crucial HR functions like training need analysis, fulfilling key result areas i.e. KRA's, targeting objectives which impacts succession planning considering

the competencies of employees. For overall effectiveness, a sound system of employee appraisal is what is required. Few researchers claimed that for the performance appraisal system to be effective it should be linked with performance dependent pay, incentive based compensation, peer reviewed methods, bonuses based on team performances and efforts for seeking personal development.[9] Training given in an organisation complements an employee's productivity by leveraging his overall performance. It teaches efficient use of resources, lesser mistakes, accidents and overall lesser absenteeism which thereby positively affects the labour turnover by improving and managing the overall performance of employees.[10] Michael et al. in 2000 revealed that training results overall performance develops the ability base and enhances the level of competence which facilitates in developing climate for learning which additionally helps self-managed learning practices like training and mentoring[11]. Rolf outlines a number of the consequences of inadequate training as poor planning abilities and decision-making abilities, which in turn will impair the employer's earnings and fulfilment. Suitable training like knowledge and capabilities required to advantage competency can develop managers in any respect levels to manage exchange in business enterprise and commercial enterprise surroundings.[12] Huang cite that well educated and trained staff is crucial to the protection of an enterprise company's competitive benefit in an international economic system.[13]

But, Bermanet al. in 2001 argues that training effectiveness is limited because of insufficient switch of gaining knowledge of from training surroundings to workplace environment and additionally argue that training isn't sufficient in enhancing overall performance.[14] According to Mobley, if the supervisor takes employee performance seriously, the satisfaction from the employees' side will be more leading to higher retention.[15] A firms policies relating to human resource management greatly affects its overall performance.[16] Lee and Corey in 1995 stated that it takes various steps in reaching the final product to people.[17]

Application of practices that can improvise employee performance thereby greatly affect the skill sets of the working people as well. The confidence in skills affect the performance and motivate employees to stay back with the organisation thereby enhancing their work capacity.[18] Recognition and acknowledgement for the work done at the organisation is the second highest factor that impacts the employee performance.[19] Resources like the work area, inventory, capacity and outlet, stakeholders like consumers and people working in the organisation also impacts the performance of employees. Literature review reveals that performance appraisal is particularly vital in retail sector as this labour intensive sector is dependent on performance of its employees for the overall productivity. The factors that affect the performance of employees as

revealed by literature is the degree of motivation to work and the rewards and the recognition provided to the employee.

Research Methodology

This study revolves around performance appraisal in retail sector and so the research focuses to find the factors influencing employee performance and to study satisfaction of employees from performance appraisal system. The study applies a quantitative approach of data collection following descriptive research method. For registering the responses of the sample, a well-structured question-naire is prepared. The sample size of 390 is selected. The data collection is primary following convenience sampling method. It contains questions on demographic details of employees to gain an idea about the sample through gender and age.
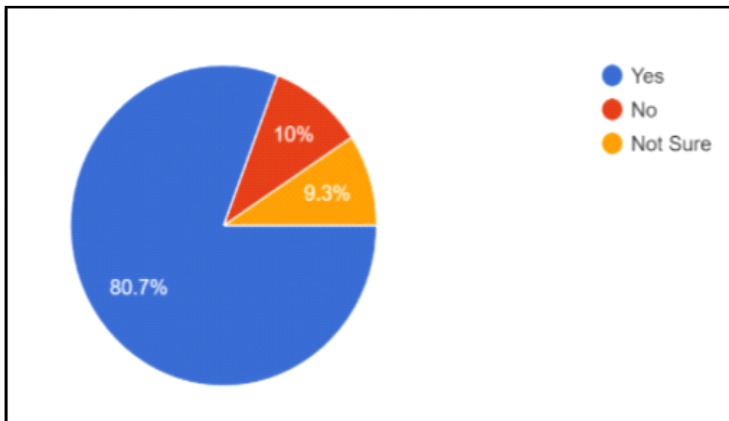

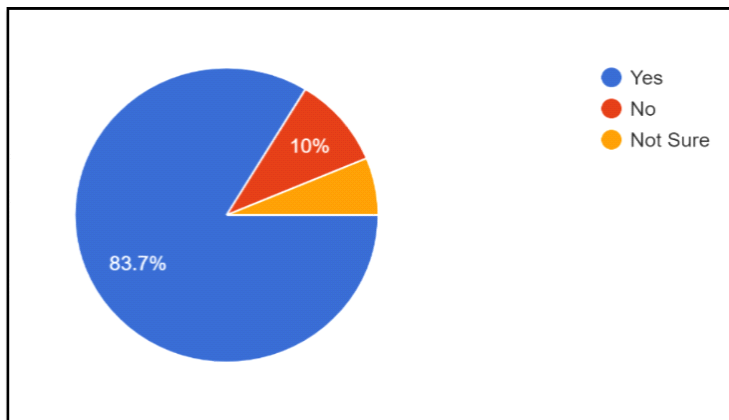**Fig. 1: Motivation and Work Performance.**

Fig. 2: Reward & Recognition and Work Performance.

Around 80% respondents in fig: 1 agreed that motivation at workplace affects their work performance and encourage them to perform to their best. According to fig: 2, around 84% of sample elements responded positively towards rewards and recognitions being one of the factors responsible for their superior performance at workplace.
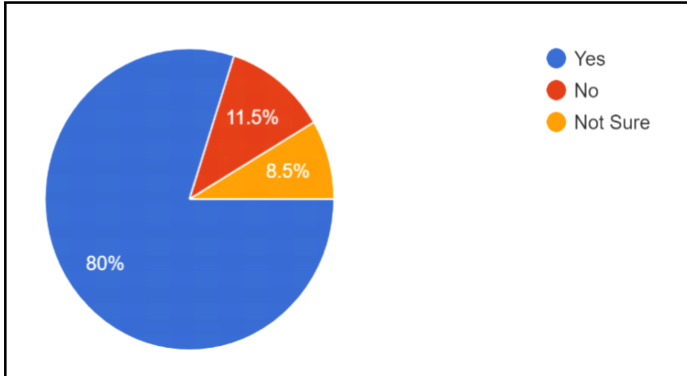
Fig: 3 Working Environment and Work Performance

As per fig 3, environment created at premises also affect the work performance of employees; agreed 80% of the respondents.

The study also aim to understand satisfaction of employees from the performance appraisal system at their organisation. On being asked whether the performance appraisal system at their workplace gives a proper assessment of their contribution towards the organisation, fig 4 shows around 84% agreed and they believe that the system is at place and properly evaluates their contribution and degree of work.

Fig: 4 Performance Appraisal and Contribution Assessment

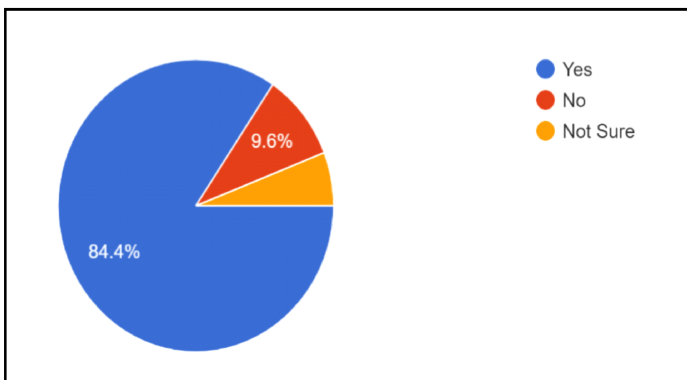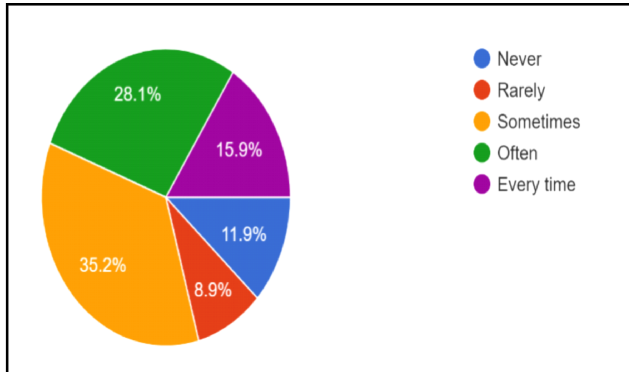**Fig: 5 Performance Appraisal and Expectations**

In line with this, fig 5 depicts that around 79% respondents think positively that the performance appraisal system matches to their expectations of evaluating the contribution and performance at workplace.

Also, majority of the respondents feels that their organisation provide opportunity of promotion for high performing employees where human resource policies and procedures are an important factor that guide their performance.

Hypothesis Testing

Three hypothesis are framed to answer the objectives of this research which are:

Ho1: There is no impact of motivation on performance of employees

Ho2: There is no impact of rewards and recognition on performance of employees

Ho3: There is no impact of working environment on performance of employees

To test the above hypothesis, non-parametric association test is applied:

Sr. No.	Hypothesis Framework	Sig value	Hypothesis Accepted
1.	H_{o1} – There is no impact of motivation on performance of employees	0.036	Alternate Hypothesis
2.	H_{o2} - There is no impact of rewards and recognition on performance of employees	0.013	Alternate Hypothesis
3.	H_{o3} - There is no impact of working environment on performance of employees	0.018	Alternate Hypothesis

Conclusion

Organizations should evaluate their employees often through utilized goals, accomplishments, organization objectives, time management and efficiency for performance as it would lead to increase in employee's productivity. The study

concludes that the employees are observed as happy with the atmosphere of their workplace. The employees believe that motivation at the workplace enhances their efficiency and boosts them to perform even better. Frequent rewards and recognitions; tangible or intangible, again work as a catalyst which activates them to give their best at the workplace. Employees can also be motivated by providing them with tangible tools like money, holidays, sponsored vacations and gift vouchers. Even intangible motivation through verbal or written appreciation, acknowledgement of effort in group meetings and proving them with good working environment can motivate employees.

The study revealed that the system utilized by retail sector companies assesses the contribution of their employees effectively and matches the expectations that employees have with the system. The system satisfaction is high and well accepted by the retail employees as the conduct of the system matches their expectations and it gives right opportunity for promotion to deserving talent. Scope of performance appraisal is always wide and the system applied by an organisation helps in increasing the level of efficiency of every individual employee and thereby accomplishing the organizational effectiveness. The method of implementation and process of performance appraisal maybe different but the factors; as concluded by the study that influence productivity of employees working in retail sector are : motivation, the rewards and recognition received at workplace and the working environment. Testing results confirms that there is significant impact of all the factors on employee performance.

Managerial Implications

For gaining higher performance of employees, certain employer interventions need to be set up by the employer. The organizations should zero in on having different preparing programs for their employee. The employee and employer can upgrade their relationship by leading week by week seminars and meetings. The correspondence ought to be to such an extent that there don't happen any obstructions. The performance improvement plans ought to be coordinated and ought to be the need of association just as people. The improvement in employee's performance ought to be estimated after finish of preparing programs. The employees need to be compensated just and just dependent on their work and execution. Psychological and future focussed methods are few innovative methods which are used to determine the employees' hidden potential. The complaints framework ought to be screen by the experts in a periodical way, with the goal that there will be no contentions in the association and it will run as expected and will have positive work culture.

Innovative ways like number of positive feedback cards received by an employee from customer service can be used as a crucial factor in appraisal system. Performance by results (PBR) system can be used to incentivize sales staff. Efforts of sales employee can be recognized by rewarding them through awards or shields or certificates via best performer, best sales manager or star performer and many more such categories. Employees should be given clear roles and targets to help them reach to their goals. Degree of motivation, a qualitative concept, can be used I performance appraisal system through employee feedback and customer surveys. The management can establish performance based culture to acknowledge the employee contribution in achieving organisational goals. Work environment can be created by defining an employees' profile, setting SMART goals and maximizing employees' strength to optimize performance goals. This will fill the performance gap of employees boosting their morale and maximizing their overall productivity.

This study is useful for managers who desire to enhance their employees' performance and researchers who might desire to initiate research in the field of performance appraisal, employee's performance and organizational effectiveness.

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Neelam Kshatriya*
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Gig workers in India: Emerging Opportunities in the New Economy

Abstract

India off-late has been witnessing a fundamental reorientation in its work culture. Fourth Industrial revolution and the presence of a multi- generational workforce with varied requirements have been a catalyst to the same.

On one hand, concept of virtual reality, flexi-time, flexi-workspace and flexi staffing became a reality for few, while on the other many industries were not doing well. A transition was observed. Many jobs in delivery, home services, food & beverages, e-commerce emerged which were temporary in nature-contractual or part time and apt for freelancers and people looking for short term assignments. These employees called gig workers have become a part of developing India and are contributing in an immense manner to the gig economy.

Interestingly both the unskilled and skilled workers together sought relief in the gig economy. Be it rural or urban- Indians have been all introduced to the platforms which offer gig jobs like Amazon, Flipkart, Uber, Ola, and Urban Company.

The objectives of this research is to understand the gig workers and gig economy, the benefits it offers to employee/employer, its contribution to Indian economy and the role of gig employment platforms. The researchers further try to understand the issues faced by gig workers and their possible solutions.

Keywords: *Gig workers, Gig economy, Gig employment platforms, opportunities, challenges, flextime, contractual*

Introduction

India has been combating the Covid-19 pandemic's effects. The pandemic resulted in 113.6 million people losing their jobs between March and April 2020(CMIE data) in India. However, despite the crisis situation and several difficulties, the temp staffing market completed the fiscal year 2021 with more

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than 1.03 million new employees across a range of industries in addition to a modest growth rate of 3.6% in March 2020. This growth rate indicates that temporary staffing will remain as India's main source of new jobs for some time to come. (Staffing Report Indian-Staffing-Federation-Staffing-Employment-Trends-Report-2021-1).

India is the fifth largest country globally when it comes to flexi-staffing.US, China, Brazil and Japan being the first four. (India Staffing Federation report 2019). By 2025, India's GDP is on track to reach $5 trillion in value. By acting as a link between income and unemployment, the gig economy will play a crucial role in achieving this objective. Increased control over how one wants to work-be it better work-life balance, being one's own boss or choosing to work for projects one feels passionate about - Gig economy has the potential to make all these things possible. Also, young people (Gen Y and Gen Z) are found to be averse to the concept of being stuck in jobs for long hours at a set pay structure. Human Resource professionals need to leverage on this platform of Gig economy to manage their talent portfolio optimally.

This study is an effort to understand gig economy and gig workers in India. To understand growth of various (Electronically) gig employment platforms in India. The researchers have also tried to understand the issues faced by gig workers and possible solutions to overcome the same.

The gig economy was created as a result of the growth of tech-enabled platforms and the need for more flexible employment options. When compared to traditional businesses, digital platforms grow up faster and at a cheaper cost. The young people (Gen Y and Gen Z) are averse to the concept of being stuck in jobs for long hours at a set pay structure. Gig Economy has been a source of relief which has found them an alternative as well as sustainable working platform. This also gave huge respite to desperate job seekers and the already working unsatisfied full-time employee.

Literature Review

Donovan, S. A., et al (2016) opined that workers' willingness to participate in the gig economy, according to some assessments, demonstrates that gig labor is a good arrangement. Indeed, gig jobs may offer advantages over regular occupations in terms of ease of finding work and greater flexibility in terms of choosing jobs and hours. The gig economy may promote bridge employment (e.g., temporary work between career jobs or between full-time work and retirement) or give income opportunities when traditional full-time, full-year employment is not possible.

Based on secondary characteristics, Watson, G. P. (2021) defines five groups of gig workers: gig goods providers, gig service providers, gig data providers, traditional gig workers, and agency gig workers. Depending on resource constraints and job expectations that gig workers must meet, comparisons of their profiles were made.

Bajwa, U. et al. (2018) in their study categorized vulnerabilities of gig worker as occupational vulnerabilities, precarity, and platform-based vulnerabilities. They found that these vulnerabilities jeopardized the right to health of gig workers.

To better understand how technology might inspire non-traditional employees in firms, Jabagi, N., Croteau, et al. (2019) carried out a study. Their proposed theory provides fresh perspective on how gig-organizations can use readily accessible social media technologies to motivate platform workers in the absence of human supervision and assistance.

Highlights by Indian Staffing Federation on Flexi Staffing Industry 2021

1. An average of 4% of students in India take flexi jobs each year.

2. With a considerable increase of +21% YoY, flexi workers with high levels of education—including graduates and above—made up 68% of the workforce.

3. Due to the large increase in demand for IT-skilled employment in 2021 over 2020, the proportion of flexi workers with medium and low education levels was lower.

4. High education correlated with highly skilled employment, as seen by the strong growth of +11% YoY.

5. In 2021, about 24% of flexi jobs were held by people with secondary education, and 8% were held by people with below secondary education.

6. About 39% of employed flex workers in 2021 had medium skills, while 21% had poor skills.

7. Since 2015, 1.2 million more employees have joined the flexible workforce, and over the following three years, an additional 1.53 million will do so.

8. By 2021, there will be 6.1 million flex workers in India. By 2021, the top five industries for flexi-workforce employment would be logistics, banking, financial services, and insurance (BFSI), IT/ITeS, retail, and government. Together, these industries would employ more than 55% of the overall workforce.

9. The Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) for flexi staff space was 16.3% in 2018 and is projected to increase to 22.7 percent from 2018 to 2021.
10. While there is a high demand for gig workers among blue-collar jobs in India, there is also a growing market for gig workers in positions such as project-specific consultants, salesmen, web designers, content writers, and software engineers.
11. It is estimated that more than 15 million freelance workers are engaged in projects related to different fields of the gig economy.
12. According to a report by the consulting firm BCG, the gig economy in India has the potential to create up to 90 million employment in non-farm industries and 1.25 percent to the GDP over the 'long term'.
13. Compared to non-gig workers, gig workers are generally younger and less educated. They often work fewer hours per day; 61% of gig workers work less than eight hours a day, compared to 11% of non-gig workers.

The researchers studied existing literature from various sources to understand the problem and seek solutions. The objectives were refined as follows:

Objectives of the Study

To understand gig workers and gig economy

To understand contribution of gig economy and the role of gig employment platforms.

To study the benefits, it offers to the employee/employer.

To understand the issues faced by gig workers and the possible solutions.

Research Methodology

To understand gig economy, gig workers, its contribution, benefits and issues, the researchers conducted a study from secondary sources such as from journals, websites and newspaper articles. The secondary data was analyzed which led to the discussions and findings.

I. Introduction- Gig economy & gig workers

According to SHRM (2016), the gig economy includes online platform workers, self-employed individuals, on-call workers, freelancers, and temporary contractual workers who are referred to as gig workers. It is also referred to as contingent work, sharing economy, agile talent, non-traditional work relation-ships, or alternate forms of employment. An individual participating in a work

arrangement known as a "gig" makes money from ventures that fall outside the usual employer-employee relationship. Gig workers can be paid in a number of different ways, such as a predetermined fee set at the beginning of the contract, time and effort, the actual amount of work accomplished, the quality of the result, or a combination of these.

They are adaptable enough to work with different employers at the same time. The gig economy turns out to be a win-win situation for businesses that can control their costs since flexi-workforce can be changed, as well as gig workers who have the freedom to select the organizations and projects they want to be connected with.

2. Contribution to Indian economy and the role of gig employment platforms

Gig Economy has touched young India and its job aspirants across varied sectors like home services, food & beverages, technology and e-commerce. According to an ASSOCHAM estimate, India has 15 million freelancing or gig workers. The Boston Consulting Group and Michael & Susan Dell Foundation in their report stated the high potential of gig economy. The non-farm economy can support 90 million employment, generating more than $250 billion in work and adding 1.25 percent to India's GDP.

To evaluate the potential of gig economy in Indian setup, the available work opportunities and the competencies of gig workers needs to be matched. According to The Fairwork India 2021 ratings, working conditions in 11 digital labor platforms were evaluated on five global parameters of fair work. The platforms were Flipkart, Urban Company, BigBasket, Swiggy, Zomato, Amazon, Dunzo, Pharm Easy, Ola, Porter, and Uber. The highest ratings were given to Flipkart followed by Urban Company and BigBasket.

A global market for freelance work delivered digitally that was created by the internet is expanding quickly. The first economic indicator to offer an online gig economy equivalent of traditional labour market statistics is the Online Labour Index (OLI). By tracking the volume of projects and tasks across platforms in real time, it measures the supply and demand of online freelancing across nations and occupations.

The skills that various nations are bringing to the market is shown by the online worker supplement of Labour Index. For instance, writing and translation are the top two occupational categories in the United States, whereas software development and technology are the top two occupations on the Indian subcontinent.

India, which employs 24 percent of all employees online, is the greatest overall source of labour, according to the data, followed by Bangladesh (16 percent) and the United States (12 per cent).

3. Benefits that gig jobs offer

The digital labor platform provided by gig economy is helping the gig workers to strike better work life balance and quality of work life. Better financial planning can be done since gig jobs are linked to the number of order requests completed.

The gig economy's digital labour platform assists gig workers in achieving a better work-life balance and work-life quality. As gig employment is based on the amount of order requests fulfilled, better financial planning is possible.

Making extra Income: Workers can plan their finances and personal life better. One can put in additional hours for more pay and can also take time off if weekly earning target gets completed.

Balancing career and family needs: Women workforce is increasingly entering the workforce. Gig economy has been proving to be a boon for them. The primary work of a woman has always been of a caregiver. The combination of household responsibilities and a full-time employment presents its own set of difficulties. Gig employment have resulted in a rise in the number of women entering the workforce due to their flexible working hours. The Economic Survey stated that female's labor workforce participation between 15-59 years of age grew from 25.3 per cent in 2017-18 to 26.5 per cent in 2018-19.

Only source of Income: Students are resorting to gig economy to fund for their active expenses.

Autonomy and control: Part time work opportunities are coming with autonomy and better self-control on how a gigster wants to operate.

The working culture is undergoing a fundamental shift in the way in which talent was being managed till date.

4. Issues of gig economy/gig workers

Talent management- Talent management is term coined for and focuses on full time employees. The entire talent portfolio comprises of HR policies, processes and philosophies that are meant for managing both internal and external partnerships. However, the contingent workforce of gig economy does not get treated at par with the internal employees. It needs a complete paradigm shift to change the mindset of the organizations on the way they can manage the

contingent workforce thereby focusing on Talent portfolio management vis a vis talent management which was the focus till date.

Job structure- The gig economy is increasingly looking for significant organizational changes.There are high expectations for gig workers who are confident that the gig economy will provide them with an increasing number of project opportunities which is a shift from the traditional job structure and hence helps them to explore the jobs on contractual basis. While organization culture needs to undergo significant changes to adjust to the increasingly mobile generation of workers.

Diversified Leadership Skills - Right from identification of key skills to survival in the current world comprising of increased volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity (VUCA), diversified leadership skills, enhanced expertise and agility to handle the gig workers with its broad talent portfolio is the need of the hour.

Change in mindset of employer – The management has to accept the gig workers as employees and trust them as they would their full-time employees. Gig workers contribution has to be acknowledged as well as their potential is to be realized. This would happen only when the employers bring a change in attitude and brings in appropriate changes for their welfare.

5. Suggested Solutions

The economic system needs to adjust to the demands of the new world in this competitive era. The organizational culture, its programs, processes, and policies have all been originally designed for a full-time employee and now the same needs to be adjusted to a new working world of a gigster who is a free agent or a freelancer and this is not going to be easy.

The researchers suggest the following solutions which will help reduce the challenges that gig workers face:

Right Leadership- Leading in this new era of gig economy is certainly posing new challenges. More coaching and training programs will help.

Regulatory Changes- Lack of essential work benefits within gig economy are being felt spoken aloud. In the future, gig workers should also be entitled to benefits including provident funds, group insurance, health benefits, and numerous social security benefits that are presently available to workers in the formal sector. In September 2020, the Social Security Code bill was introduced in Parliament. When fully implemented, this bill will provide gig workers with an additional degree of security. This would make the gig workers eligible for

social security benefits under the unorganized worker category. It would give then the most sought-after health and insurance benefits. Gig workers would also be paid a contribution of 1-5 percent of an aggregator's turnover. A Social Security Fund will be established to provide death and disability insurance as well as old-age benefits. ISF report also substantiates the fact that the increased number to temporary workers would seek a formalization of the workforce.

Remuneration and Add on benefits: Many individual platforms have already taken steps to give the essential benefits to their employees. The commissions that Urban Company charges employees have been cut, and up to two no-penalty cancellations are now permitted.

Working conditions: It is imperative for the employers employing gig workers to provide suitable working conditions. High productivity is expected of gig workers while their working conditions may not be very promising.

Skills upgradation for inclusive growth - Vocational training will help the gig workers learn basic skills required to work in organizations. Special efforts by Training & Development team will help the gig workers hone technical skills and soft skills which will help them build competency and be more effective at their workplace.

6. Conclusion

India with the sheer size of its population comprising of a multi-generational workforce has huge potential for the growth of the freelance economy. According to a research by Boston Consultancy Group (BCG) published in March 2021, India's gig economy has the potential to support up to 90 million employment, or around 30% of all non-farm occupations, with the potential to add up to 1.25 per cent to India's GDP.

The potential is huge, platforms too are available however the grass root work on implementable actionable steps is what we need to work on. Laws and right regulatory framework need to be implemented for fair implementation of the welfare policies for the temp workforce.

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Pradeep Kumar Gautam*

Artificial Intelligence, from Narrow to Broad to Artificial Consciousness: Some Issues and Concerns

Abstract

This paper will revisit the conceptions about the future of the human trajectory in today's age of exceptionally rapid sientific and technological developments like that of Artificial Intelligence (AI). The paper will map and analyse some thinking and trends in AI from its present narrow understanding to the futuristic broad AI and then the possibility of Artificial Consciousness. The concern is that machines should not manage human agency in the larger strategic choices in the use of force in this new and almost unknown future in the nature and character of war. With a critical methodology of using wisdom of the past, more so from Indic traditions, the global family can foresee and enjoy a better and peaceful future.

The relation of sciences to humanities may be stated roughly to be one of means to ends. In our enthusiasm for the means, we should not overlook the ends. The concepts of right and wrong do not belong to the sphere of science; yet it is in on the study of the ideas centring around these concepts that human action and happiness ultimately depend.   **- S. Radhakrishnan[1]**

Key Words: *Artificial Intelligence, Power politics, human values, cyber.*

Introduction

S. Radhakrishnan's captures the core argument: 'The means may be sciences but ends are humanities…The concepts of right and wrong do not belong to the sphere of science'. The scholar, diplomat, philosopher and soon to be the President of India penned this preface in 1948. Recall that the Second World War had ended three years earlier and the author must have begun his book well before 1948 – witness to the events of the horrors of war unfolding.

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In this emerging field of science and technology, it is Artificial Intelligence and its recently sown seeds that need to be understood to visualise its impact.

In India, AI has been declared as general-purpose technology (GPT).[2] All societies and countries are making use of it in varying degrees. AI is now embedded in many day -to- day use technologies. Two categories of AI need to be taken into account- 'Narrow AI which is still to expand'[3] and its further development as Broad AI or Artificial General Intelligence that exhibits human intelligence.[4] Tasks with a singular aim like 'checking the weather, being able to play chess, or analyzing raw data to write journalistic reports' are Narrow AI.[5] Some other examples of narrow AI being Google Assistant, Google Translate, Siri and other natural language processing tools.[6]

The present scope of implementation AI is on 'narrow AI' with the concept of meaningful human control (MHC) specially in military weapon systems called Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems (LAWS). Three level of control of weapons have been identified: 1. Human -in-the loop or human control of robot, 2. Human -on-the loop where human can override the robots, and 3. Human-out-of the loop, wherein robots select target and deliver force without any human input.[7] The third level of human-out-of the loop is the key concern.

Narrow AI and machine learning applications in healthcare, medical diagnostic, finance and retail, manufacturing and so in is growing. But its future development with environmental and social impact assessment is most uncertain and difficult. This assessment is very difficult as it may not be possible to test, examine and validate in advance the outputs generated by self- learning AI. This paper will address the main issue as it relates to a broad AI with keeping in mind Radhakrishnan's counsel at quote above that is: 'In our enthusiasm for the means we should not overlook the ends.'

There is need to understand what ends are propelling the means and importantly the agency to establish and reflect on both means and ends. It may well be that ends in the future are decided by AI and not humans. The is the concern. But what sort of instrument or plan will negate an AI induced disaster when it creeps, virus like, into the larger issue of technology driven political violence and the use of force as 'war'? No firm conclusion can be arrived at. However, it is safe to work on a precautionary principle based on good science and philosophy. Thus, human agency is very important. Machines should not manage us. Thus, with a critical methodology of using wisdom of the past we can foresee and enjoy a better future.

This paper will revisit the conceptions about the future of the human trajectory in today's age of exceptionally rapid scientific and technological

developments like that of AI. The paper will map and analyse some thinking and trends in AI with some reflections on war as an institution and the UN; Just War, the Military and AI, Ethics in an age of AI; Ethics and Indian Military; International Negotiations; The Need to Philosophise and Listen to Great Minds; Being Mindful of Errors, Biases and Unintended Consequences; and Conclusion with the aim that this preliminary step will set the stage and facilitate shaping of the global discourse and norms from Indic ethical traditions.

War as an Institution and the UN

Has the human conscious evolved for a peaceful world? Not as yet. It needs to be realised that over so many thousands of years of progress of human civilisation, human nature and emotions have not changed. Use of force and political violence still exists and now having at its disposal weapons being built and even delegated to be used by AI.

War, till nineteenth and mid twentieth century was a recognised as diplomatic practice to resolve a dispute. Declaration of war was then the norm. Now we have the UN charter. A remarkable document. In the charter, Chapter 1, Article 2(4) on principles prohibits threat or use of force. Article 2(7) prohibits intervention by UN. Use of force is under Chapter 7 and Article 51 is on use of force in self-defence. But this is not the norm any longer as the case of Russian invasion of Ukraine from February 24, 2022 indicates. It has sent shock waves to the international order. It shows that although under the United Nations (UN) Charter use of force has restrictions but war is surviving all the same. Now war is also waged by hybrid means or by proxy or in cyber domain with AI on the ascend. Due to complications of international law and its compliance cost of belligerent conduct, now war is rarely declared.[8] Thus making conflict resolution and termination even more complex However, the moral and ethical principles of just war tradition have survived and cannot be wished away.

Just War

In brief, Just War is about the morality of war. It offers criteria for judging whether a war is just and whether it is fought by just means. The crux of the argument is that political violence such as a just war gives weightage to both power politics and ethics. Just War tradition 'recognizes politics and the reality of power alongside ethics.'[9] It recognises 'imperfections of the human world.'[10] It is a framework that is simultaneously both ethical and political. It means that theoretically it is a balance of the two.

Today humanity has moved beyond nuclear weapons. There are digital technologies and cyber and lethal autonomous weapons systems, robots and so

on which can be used as a virtual video game to kill without human consciousness as a regulating agency. In the cyber domain kinetic effects can be created which may have serious consequences to life and property and my not be *jus in bello*. AI autonomous cyber weapons are on the horizon including capability to automated hacking back features.[11] Even for cyber war the Geneva Convention (being of 1949 vintage) is silent[12], although there is a Tallinn Manual 2.0 a document of NATO.[13]

The Military and AI

As war as an institution of statecraft has survived, all militaries need to make use of AI, else they will be outgunned with ease. In the present development of narrow AI, AI has its own unique advantages like in missile and air defence, swarming technologies, mine clearance by robots, unmanned platform to save human life or complicated medical mechanical procedures/diagnostic, and other process related functions including space travel or driverless cars or other similar technologies. In air defence technologies AI is already functional as the decision and reaction time in that scene is faster than human capability. The future of war, it is argued correctly by SP Kochar will be in a duality, that is, time has contracted and space has expanded. [14] In the case of aerospace power, Sukhchain Singh has made convincing arguments for military to keep a close watch to retain advantage. [15] Scholars now see the development as Artificial Intelligence – Revolution in Military Affairs (AI-RMA) that 'reflects novel strategic and operational challenges, particularly in the deployment of automated and autonomous systems and human-machine teaming, that propel new questions and debates ranging from future military budget priorities to issues of AI governance and ethics. Ultimately, the ramifications of the AI-RMA marks new opportunities and risks for international cooperation by exposing limitations of established paradigms in the ways and means of using force.' [16]

There is also an ongoing AI arms race. For example, in the case of the Chinese and the Americans, 'The People's Liberation Army (PLA) seeks not only to equal but also to overtake the US military through seizing the initiative in the ongoing Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA). Chinese military leaders believe the form of warfare is changing from today's 'informatised' (信息化) warfare to future 'intelligentised' (智能化) warfare.'[17]

The case of Russian Federation and the AI Arms race is not surprising. In its prestigious journal *Military Though* in English, one a gets good sense of thinking. Galkin et-all in their latest article on AI [18] survey the international scene and quote the head of the military, General V.V. Gerasimov's vision:

Analysis of forecasts of the possible nature of future wars shows that major changes in the forms and methods of the use of armed forces will be determined less by geopolitics (aspects of the international environment, competition for natural resources, climate change, and so forth) than by scientific and technical progress both in developing new weapons and materiel (W&M) and in improving the principles of troop and weapons control.[19]

They also cite the Russian Federation President's speech at the 'Russia Looking Toward the Future' open lesson on September 1, 2017, which assessed the importance of artificial intelligence: 'Whoever becomes the leader in this field will own the world.'[20]

Picking up an apt aphorism from American *Artificial Intelligence Strategy* that 'AI will change society and, ultimately, the character of war,' they list out some important applications for the Russian military. These applications range from nuclear weapons, anti -missile and air defence, control system of robotics and reconnaissance, AI algorithms in cyber operations, military logistics, instructional training aids and virtual reality, smart munition, biometric identification for security. The key of these system is efficiency of communication lines. All these are still part of a narrow AI. The AI for nuclear weapons appears to be the most risk prone, more so those on rapid launch on warning including against those from the Global Strike. As a mirror image of American thinking and basing their study on investigation performed by the US based RAND Corporation the authors give the two opinions. The first is 'which stresses the danger of using AI to make strategic military decisions due to AI-enabled systems' lack of critical thinking and susceptibility to adversarial actions.' The second mirror image in American thinking they point out is 'an opposite view also exists in American expert circles. These experts propose to create an American analog, based on AI principles, to the Soviet system of automatic response to a nuclear attack, called the "Dead Hand" in Western terminology. They suppose that such a system would dissuade a potential adversary (Russia or China) from a preemptive use of nuclear weapons for fear of certain retaliation.' [21]

The most complex and unresolved risk is when authors state that 'The question of the future total or partial transfer of authority to use strategic weapons, for example, nuclear ones, to systems with AI is currently under discussion.'[22] This comes under broad AI.

What needs to be noted is that there is a total absence of ethical or moral aspects. India at present cannot fault America, Russia or China in not factoring

Dharma, as in present state it is not a universal doctrine and is understood as an Indic theology. There is thus an urgent need of discussion at the world level as well before AI advances rapidly and making the present state of art AI obsolete shortly.

In India, at the level of Ministry of Defence, a High-Level Defence A Council has been set up for strategic direction for transformation to AI applications which also includes ethics.[23] Ethics has a unique role. This paper's core argument is about humane ethics. Let us reflect on it from what India is pursuing.

Ethics in an Age of AI

As scientific knowledge accelerates AI technology and applications, it needs the operating system or software of ethics. Ethics is a human social phenomenon and is part and parcel of humanities.

Ethics is being given its due importance. One such is report is *The* Global *AI Agenda* by MIT. The report has focused on ethic to point out that 'There are many examples of algorithms producing unintended consequences… According to Karen Hao, senior AI reporter at MIT Technology Review, few experts working in organizations know how to uphold ethics while developing an actual AI model. "The technology community," she says, can no longer deny [that inattention to ethics in AI model development] is a problem, and that it needs to be addressed early in any model's development.'[24]

Importantly in the case of India, in accordance with its civilisational ethos and strategic culture, ethics in AI is the top priority concern. The National Institution of Transformation of India (NITI) Ayog has done a remarkable job by publishing the document of its series on responsibility or AI for all. The Vice Chairman in his foreword in the first part of this approach document writes:

> Building further on the National Strategy on AI, this approach paper, the first part of the strategy titled "Towards Responsible AI for All", aims to establish broad ethics principles for design, development and deployment of AI in India – drawing on similar global initiatives but grounded in the Indian legal and regulatory context. The second part of the strategy which will be released shortly explores means of operationalization of principles across the public sector, private sector and academia. [25]

The second part of this document deals broadly with operationalisation of principles for responsible AI. The seven principles being: safety and reliability, equality, inclusivity and no-discrimination, privacy and security, transparency, accountability, and protection and reinforcement of positive human values.[26] A Centre for Ethics and Technology has also been proposed for formulation of

guidelines. No mention of defence technology is made. However, AI is dual use and there is now growing literature of matters pertaining to defence. On which we focus – more so on the ethical dimension as it relates to the military.

Ethics was also a key issue at the conclave on AI brainstormed by the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM) in 2021. One aim was 'to examine the areas across industries where the AI continuum could be applicable, as well as a robust AI policy framework that needs to touch upon the social, economic, and ethical considerations of a well-governed society. These efforts will foster a balanced environment in India for innovation and leadership in AI.'[27]

Overall picture across nations is that nothing it seems is final on ethics as only broad questions are posed begging for a right answer. But the progress on dual use AI continues rapidly more so in this unique military domain and no nation can ignore it due to the powerful conception of national interests or reason for the state. Yet the key in a normative rule based international order is ethics which first and foremost concerns the military, the instrument of legitimate political violence.

Ethics and Indian Military

For the Indian military there is enough literature to first understand the basic technology and then to see the pros and cons of AI and importantly LAWS (Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems) with the need of 'ethics' as a regulator. It is remarkable that inclusion of ethics coming from the pen of serving authors or those who have recently retired and are following the trends. For example, retired Lt General RS Panwar has made a good summary and a realistic assessment to argue for its innovative and rapid development in India with ethics in mind. [28] Keeping the ethical and legal aspects in mind for its future growth, another serving military officer has recommended the use of LAWS in defensive operations and in inhospitable terrain in mountainous regions on the borders. [29]

In the maritime domain much work needs to be done with foresight and imagination. A serving naval officer from the legal community foresees a great risk to argues that although AI has advantages, 'the wiser option is to regulate it before it becomes an uncontrolled disaster.' He has also reflected on the unresolved maritime aspect of command responsibility, viz., 'Complexities in application of maritime laws are further aggravated by operation of LAWS in maritime domain. Thus, seeking accountability in case of commission of unlawful acts alongside or in addition to the conventional weapons with LAWS is a vexed question in maritime or any other domain.'[30]

In his book meant for defence policy makers, Brigadier Asish Chhibbar provides a good update on the current discourse and the regulatory framework of ethics. His arguments need to be quoted at length:

> **Ethical AI**: There is a growing concern within the AI community that use of AI should be strictly for the greater good of mankind as it is a powerful tool and a double-edged weapon capable of causing immense harm and destruction. The UNESCO has raised a red flag on numerous ethical issues concerning use of AI like video surveillance, facial recognition, behaviour prediction (terrorist and criminal behaviour profiling), racial profiling and one's sexual orientation… It voiced its concerns during the high-level dialogue at the World Summit of Information Society (WSIS) 2019 on April 10, 2019 and stressed that emerging technologies need to be developed with a respect for universal ethical principles and fundamental human rights. Post a series of meetings, the Extended Working Group on Ethics of AI of the World Commission on the Ethics of Scientific Knowledge and Technology (COMEST) gave its recommendation to UNESCO, with regard to the necessity of a standard- setting instrument regarding the ethics of AI…. Institutions like IEEE have enumerated their own code of ethics along with technology giants like Google, Facebook and Microsoft. The Future of Life Institute is a non-profit organisation founded by MIT cosmologist Max Tegmark, Skype co-founder Jaan Tallin and Deep Mind researcher Viktoriya Karakovnahas. The institute has come out with an elaborate AI code of ethics known as Asilomar AI Principles which have been endorsed by famous personalities like Elon Musk and Stephen Hawking.[31]

The core issue is of ethics and its conception, acceptance, adherence, and operationalisation in the emerging Janus-faced AI. AI has many attributes and advantages for human kind in its entry in the fourth industrial revolution, provided AI remains under human control and protects and reinforces positive ethical human values. This is the greatest political challenge. AI has given a new and dangerous meaning to the understanding of power and has ignored ethics. The truth is that one cannot code morality into algorithm. It is important to understand and listen to some more voices and warnings by great minds and philosophers in this regard. But before that there is a need to see the status of international negotiations.

International Negotiations

At the international level, states /government of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) have established an open-ended Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on emerging technologies

in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems (LAWS). The GGE has no formal mandate to negotiate a multinational treaty. Since 2014 diplomats have meet frequently at the CCW at Geneva to establish a working definition for autonomous weapons, but nothing concrete has emerged. [32] Report of the 2019 session of the Group of Governmental Experts on Emerging Technologies in the Area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems considered the following agenda items:

> 5 (a) An exploration of the potential challenges posed by emerging technologies in the area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems to International Humanitarian Law; 5 (b) Characterization of the systems under consideration in order to promote a common understanding on concepts and characteristics relevant to the objectives and purposes of the Convention; 5 (c) Further consideration of the human element in the use of lethal force; aspects of human-machine interaction in the development, deployment and use of emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems; 5 (d) Review of potential military applications of related technologies in the context of the Group's work; 5 (e) Possible options for addressing the humanitarian and international security challenges posed by emerging technologies in the area of lethal autonomous weapons systems in the context of the objectives and purposes of the Convention without prejudging policy outcomes and taking into account past, present and future proposals.[33]

This subject is an urgent matter which is being debated at Geneva and elsewhere. Worse is that even definition of AI or what is autonomous is not agreed upon. But it needs to be realised that any progress in international negotiations is slow and takes a long time to mature due to varied national interests and power politics. Rather, this play of power politics by nations has been demonstrated at its worst in climate change negotiations, where worthwhile urgent action has stalled in spite of many meetings, treaties and agreements.

In the case of AI, much of the research and development for military use may be a national secret. AI is developing rapidly and competitively underlined by geopolitics. Using the argument of national interests, it is unlikely that there will be any worthwhile and timely outcome to keep AI under international legal /ethical scrutiny, transparency and control. This slowness in outcome will be outmatched by rapid technological developments.

The Indian representative Amandeep Singh Gill, India's Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the CD and chair of GGE on the CCW on emerging technologies related to lethal autonomous weapon systems wrote an import opinion piece in a newspaper in 2017. In that he compared the *Sudarshna Chakra*

of Krishna from the epic Mahabharata as the poet's imagination of lethal autonomous weapon. The weapon as Gill mentions, was never used due to Krishna's wisdom. Gill made a very good case for self-reflection. Quoting Alan Turing, the father of AI, who had connected thinking machines compelling humans to think deeply about their own 'faults, frailties and foibles', Gill welcomes that fact that AI challenges us to learn new ways about ourselves as individual, nations and societies - all now globally interconnected.[34]

Gill, as a civil servant and diplomat has explained the issue remarkably well. May be those not knowledgeable about Indic philosophy as in the epics may not get the essential message and risk of AI. Let us examine some great minds and thought leaders.

The Need to Philosophise and Listen to Great Minds

The human agency or human in and on the loop is vital as in use of force future decision making may be based on AI which may go haywire by initial human programming and later self-learning by machines or human-out-of the loop. But human- kind needs to be in control and not robots or machines, more so in the domain of future of broad AI. Some philosophers, scientists, and scholars have given their considered views including some on consciousness.

The Dalai Lama

This reality of human psychology over centuries has been explained very well by the Tibetan Buddhist philosopher, His Holiness the Dalai Lama now in exile in India. He argues that emotional and inner self- control is not taught in schools and thus as science and technology advances and accelerates, the human emotional control progresses very slowly. It has not kept pace to develop and advance in parallel. It is probably not much different and underdeveloped to what it was thousands of years ago. Hence the mismatch, strife and violence. [35] Although he did not mention AI, but the message has implicit warnings on how AI may outgrow due to lack of emotional and inner self-control in the human mind thus perpetuating the negative aspects.

Stephen Hawking

Late Stephen Hawking, the renowned and celebrated theoretical physicist while inaugurating the Leverhume Centre for the Future of Intelligent in 2016 cautioned that while AI has power to eradicate poverty and disease, it also can hasten end of human civilisation by dangers such as powerful weapons or 'new ways for the few to oppress the many.' [36] In his book released posthumously *Brief Answers to the Big Questions* (2018) in a chapter 'Will Artificial Intelligence Outsmart Us?' Hawking argues:

Everything is central to what it means to be human. Everything that civilisation has to offer is a product of human intelligence…DNA passes the blueprint of life between generations. computers can, in principle, emulate human intelligence, or even better. If computers continue to obey Moore's Law, doubling their speed and memory capacity every eighteen months, the result is that computes are likely to overtake humans in intelligence at some point in the next hundred years. When an artificial intelligence (AI) becomes better than human at AI design, so that it can recursively improve itself without human help, we may face an intelligence explosion that ultimately results in machines whose intelligence exceeds ours by more than ours exceeds that of snails. When that happens, we will need to ensure that the computes have goals aligned with ours. It's tempting to dismiss the notion of highly intelligence machines as mere science fiction, but this would be a mistake, and potentially our worst mistake ever.[37]

In short, this great human mind of Hawking sees a disaster yet to happen like the end of the human civilisation.

Yuval Harrari

Another philosopher of history and futurologist having very imaginative ideas is Yuval Noah Harari from Israel[38] who thinks maybe everything is algorithm. In a concluding chapter titled 'The Data Religion' from his book *Homo Deus: A Brief History of Tomorrow (*2015) he writes: 'Dataism is entrenched in computer science and biology…Dataism…threatens to do to the Homo Sapiens what Homo Sapiens has done to all other animals.' [39]. In other words, he is also concerned on the impact of this on humans. Harari for ease of understanding lists three interlinked processes:

1. Science is converging on an all -encompassing dogma, which says that organism are algorithms, and life is data processing.
2. Intelligence is decoupled from consciousness.
3. Non-conscious but highly intelligent algorithms may soon know us better than we know ourselves.[40]

These three processes raise three key questions and Harari states them:

1   Are organisms really just algorithms, and is life just data processing?
2. What's more valuable-intelligence or consciousness?
3. What will happen to society, politics and daily life when non-conscious but highly intelligent algorithms know us better than we know ourselves?

Harari is also pondering on AI and its unintended consequences on humans.

Stuart Russell

The well-known scholar and educator of AI, Stuart Russell in his *Human Compatible: Artificial Intelligence and the Problem of Control* (2019) [41], tells us that thus far in AI attempts are successful to ape many aspects of human cognition like learning, knowing, remembering, reasoning, planning, deciding, and so on. He warns the need for AI to be under human control as 'we may find ourselves gradually enfeebled as we entrust more and more of our knowledge and skills to machines'.[42]

Russell is very candid about consciousness to say: 'In areas of consciousness, we really do know nothing, so I'm going to say nothing.'[43]

There is only reflection on consciousness where Russell touches upon the moral aspect: 'The presence or absence of consciousness- actual subjective experience- certainly makes a difference in our moral considerations for machines. If ever we gain enough understanding to design conscious machines, or to detect that we have done so, we would face many important moral issues for which we are largely unprepared.'[44]

Note that Russell is more concerned by the moral issue of consciousness and how unprepared we are today.

Christopher Coker

The process of machine in human mind- control is growing exponentially. Technological processes should not shape our free will. Christopher Coker from the London School of Economics and Political Science notes what we now take as granted and routine:

Today, thanks to digital technology, we are enhancing our agency further by empowering machines to manage us. Internet search engines, for example, now 'manage' us by reading our thoughts, directing us to what they think we might find more interesting (e.g., where to go on holiday next). They even read our moods and try to cheer us up; they filter through what we read and select Web sites that they think we will find more interesting.[45]

Coker is also concerned with the consciousness problem as:

We still don't know when or whether machines will attain consciousness because we still don't know what consciousness is. Integrated information theory (IIT) postulates that consciousness is the way information feels when processed in certain complex ways. In other words, it is an 'emergent phenomenon' whose complex behaviour emerges from many simple interactions. In similar terms, physicists and chemists have found that atoms

behave in different ways depending on the patterns in which they are arranged. The key difference between a solid, liquid and gas, for example, lies not in the types of atoms but in their arrangement. Boiling or freezing a liquid simply rearranges them.[46]

Steven Weinberg

Steven Weinberg, the Nobel Prize - winning physicist in To *Explain the World: The Discovery of Modern Science*, (2015)[47] although not referring to artificial intelligence makes a very important contribution on intellectual resources and consciousness:

> We may instead run out of intellectual resources- humans may not be smart enough to understand the really fundamental laws of physics. Or we may encounter phenomena that in principle cannot be brought into a unified framework for all sciences. For instance, although we may well come to understand the process of the brain responsible for consciousness, it is hard to see how we will ever describe conscious feelings themselves in physical terms.[48]

Weinberg is correct to say that 'it is hard to see how we will ever describe conscious feelings themselves in physical terms.' However, the quest to understand consciences in only growing.

There are a number of research projects internationally trying to understand consciousness and intelligence in human, animal and AI with responsible development of AI. To the best of my knowledge none exist or originate from India. The hope is that, to keep robots under control it is best not to tinkle with consciousness without adequate checks and balances.

Kaifu-Lee

Kaifu-Lee is the author of an important work titled AI *Superpower: China, Silicon Valley and New World Order* (2018). Perceptively, in a 28 September 2018 interview he stated that "artificial intelligence will never be capable of creativity and empathy." What this means that the human agency so necessary will be absent in AI with serious consequences.

Thomas Fuchs

Thomas Fuchs is Karl Jaspers Professor of Philosophy and Psychiatry, and head of the department of Phenomenological Psychopathology at Heidelberg University, Germany. In his latest book *In Defense of the Human Being*: *Foundational Questions of an Embodied Anthropology* (2021) he makes a case

for defence of human kind's self-determined existence and to be aware that these new technologies are only a means to which we must not submit. In a recent interview Fuchs warns that human beings 'with progress of AI and digitisation of the life world' are tending to become increasingly a product of data and algorithms and 'we conceive ourselves in the image of the machines'.[49] Fuchs acknowledges the many positive possibilities of the digital technologies but senses a great lurking danger. And like the other philosophers and scientists warns us about the political and cultural ramifications of digital technologies and data- driven mode to say 'one of their main dangers is that …We will be increasingly willing to get rid of the burden of our own responsibility and hand it over to machines and their algorithms. In this way, international IT companies on the one hand, and authoritarian regimes on the other, are increasingly taking control of our lives.'[50] The point made is that responsibility is not a technical category and cannot be passed on to AI systems.

UC Jha

Wing Commander UC Jha (Retd.) is one of the leading legal scholars from India on subjects such as military law, international humanitarian law and human rights laws. In his book *Killer Robots: Lethal Autonomous Weapon System Legal. Ethical and Moral Challenges (*2016)[51] he discusses both the advantages and disadvantages from moral and ethical perspective. In the Preface, he hopes that his work ' will be successful if it contributes to a better understanding of the consequences of development of LAWS and hence, the need for a pre-emptive ban because once such weapons are inducted, the States would be unwilling to discard them.'[52] Based on his research and understanding of how nations behave in self-interest of power politics and the need for meaningful human control, Jha concludes that no matter how good, LAWS are after all without a conscious and faculty of human judgement . He puts forth a draft protocol to CCW to prohibit the development, transfer and the use of LAWS.[53]

Interestingly, it has been suggested that some aspects of Indic philosophy in the *Yoga - Sutra* can also be made use of in AI. Some scholars have even tried to figure out if there is a putative relationship of AI with Indian philosophy of Sankhya and Yoga which is now examined.

Patanjali *Yoga Sutra*

Edwin F. Bryant, from the Department of Religion, Rutgers University, USA in *The Yoga Sutra of Patanjali* (2009) [54] interestingly makes a mention of AI by referring to articles by Paul Schweitzer[55] and Gerald James Larson[56] of 1980/90s vintage. Schweitzer suggests:

The research programmes of cognitive science and AI are based on a computational paradigm, in which it is assumed that cognitive phenomena, both natural and artificial, are founded on computational procedures instantiated in physical systems. The material view of mind endorsed by the Sankhya-Yoga analysis is in principle quite compatible with this paradigm, since it is conceivable that the cognitive activities of manas-buddhi can best be described in computational terms. Manas-buddhi is an unconscious mechanism which manipulates the various representational structures involved in perception, cognition, and language, and from a late 20th century perspective, these manipulations can perhaps most plausibly be characterized as computational.

In this respect there is a very strong resemblance between the activities of the cognitive organ of mind, and the syntactic manipulations carried out by a computer. Given a sufficiently sophisticated robot, viz. one which could perform 'autonomously' in a rich and complex behavioral environment, and thereby pass some suitably rigorous version of the Turing test, there would be many theoretical considerations in favor of attributing mentality to such an artifact. From an abstract perspective, there does not seem to be a significant difference between the mechanical activities of manas-buddhi and the computational procedures of an 'artificially intelligent' system. This indicates that the Sankhya-Yoga position enjoys a very close fit with modern functionalist accounts of mind.[57]

It is remarkable that a linguist could link his expertise and imagination with AI. Basing on the lead provided by Schweitzer and Larson's understanding based on the material phenomenon of the philosophies, Byrant makes a conjecture:

In Sankhya and Yoga, thought feeling, emotion, memory. etc., are material or physical ingredients of the empirical world. As an aside, Yoga has curious overlap with modern reductive materialism, which holds that the internal world of thought and feeling is ultimately reducible to neurological brain functioning and other purely material phenomena as well as with computational procedures of "artificial intelligence." It thereby offers an unexpected overlap with modern functionalist accounts of mind that merit further exploration (avoiding some of the pitfalls in the Cartesian view in this regard, while simultaneously, unlike Artificial Intelligence, retaining consciousness itself as independent of cognition).[58]

Bryant is not a computer scientists and algorithm writer of AI. He is a Professor of Hindu Religion and Philosophy, who mentions AI in passing, when

AI was still in the realm of science fiction. He has only suggested some literature and a link that may be explored from the ancient schools of Indian philosophy for AI. No further work on this has come to notice. It could be that this may never be possible. But one can never be very sure. It is hoped that Indian scholars well versed in Indian philosophy and AI take a proactive initiative to understand the relation if any and if so, then ensure that it is not misused.

From the views seen above, we cannot be sure how AI develops in the future and goes to the next step of broad AI and then artificial consciousness. What will be the nature and character of war and use of force in the near future when AI leads to artificial consciousnesses? It is clearly a danger to humanity. At present the global ethical concern is focussed on narrow artificial intelligence and not on artificial consciousness which is step further from broad AI.

So, what is of concern is in the unfolding uncertainty in the character of war? Relating with the machine dependent and machine learnt character of war with the future of AI has induced uncertainties in unimaginable disruption and violence. It is worthwhile to examine some aspects of which we are aware today and which must be under human control by corrective action like errors, biases, and unintended consequences.

Being Mindful of Errors, Biases and Unintended Consequences

It is received wisdom or cliché to say that that once war begins (or when the balloon goes up) then shots are fired in 'anger'. But in digital domain and AI so far there is no 'anger' or human emotion.

Biases have always existed. In a conventional computer programme today, the algorithm is made by first designing desired outputs. So, if a bias is detected, it can be corrected by correction to the programme. But in AI and machine learning we are not sure of the outputs being biased. If AI designers have a conscious or subconscious bias then the biases may be written in the algorithms to reproduce further outputs without human oversight – a situation worse than anger. In other words, a status quo bias.[59] There is a proliferation of literature on biases like the case of racism against data scientist Timnit Gorbu of being a black and who in the American based Google noticed AI spreading racism and had raised her voice.[60]

For a much broader and problematic cognitive bias, take the example of the academic discipline of International Relations (IR). The discipline of IR directly deals with war, peace and security. Using cognitive and behavioural insights from social psychology it has been shown that the most dominant paradigm is informed by the American approach to IR in the academia.[61] With

this bias which is focused on realism and power politics as the champion paradigm there is a resistance of gatekeeping to restrict contribution by non-western sources such as the Indic traditions which is normative with the final aim of prosperity of all the world or *lokasamgraha*. While this paper is not nit-picking on IR, the example is only to show how biases can be formed and firmed.

Biases can also grow and get hardwired out of exposure to media as the young mature and grow on it as a new nutrient or intellectual diet. Today more human conversation and interaction is on line than off line. This has seen a spike due the ongoing pandemic. The author Ruchir Sharma explains in a TV show that the bulk of humanity of young humans or generation Z and the Millennials are mostly in the virtual/digital world now. The trend is that news is read no more in the morning newspapers nor watched on TV, but by using social media having fake news, alternative fact and post truths. We are already in the business of programming machines to lie. One example is that 'an algorithm on Facebook began to lie independently of its programme, by observing the behaviour of its human users.'[62] In other words this is an age of weaponised social media and ontological biases. The inertia is so powerful that cyber space and AI is expanding and advancing rapidly unregulated, faster than we can retain our rich and ethical wisdom. Surely decisions on political violence and use of force cannot be outsourced to AI/Robots and this is the arena where Indic traditions are most relevant (covered later). History of science warns us to tread with care and foresight. Bereft of common-sense AI is prone to errors and biases with disastrous unintended consequences. This should not be allowed to happen.

As to errors, the ongoing pandemic like situation from 2020 to 2022 was foreseen by Sir Martin Rees in his Our *Final Hour* (2005): 'that a biological incident …as 'bio(error)' will claim one million lives by 2020'.[63] Unintended consequences also now haunt mankind. Who could have imagined the climate crisis we now face when two centuries ago the industrial revolution had begun and will end the Holocene to usher in the Anthropocene? Later the invention of polymers and plastic saved many forests from being felled and gave a gift of durable synthetic material and with it, the single use and other plastic. Today both climate change and plastic marine litter including in other waterbodies are real threats. Plastic traces are now found in human blood.

What this implies is that conceiving a broad AI solution for national security strategy domain written as an inspirational algorithm by technocrats needs to be treated with care. How do we ensure avoidance of human errors and biases?

In a recent book Brigadier Ashish Chhibbar points out the issues of biases in data and algorithms:

> An insufficient quantity of data or a data set which has been collected with an introduced bias (intentional or unintentional) towards a particular gender, race, religion, society, country, etc. may result in skewed AI results could cause serious real world problems…..AI based results are greatly influenced by the training data set and the ability of the algorithm to capture the essence of a given problem and thereafter convert it into machine understandable mathematical solutions, a small error or bias in either the data collection and annotation or algorithm can lead to compounded errors over a period of time. It is feared that some of the AI systems developed in haste were more or less based on the efforts of only mathematicians and computer scientists with little, or no contribution, from other relevant professionals.[64]

To reinforce the above, rapid unchecked advances in surveillance, disinformation and cybercrimes are the new disruptions. It has been argued that 'India must be wary of the impact of digital technologies on its social fabric – perhaps the most critical national security imperative of all…(and)social order will also be exacerbated by technologies such as AI that will 'encode' existing biases and inequities into societies.'[65]

With unregulated AI in the use of force, cyber or even genetic engineering, humankind would will get into deep trouble. And worse, we have no means of testing and controlling all AI generated outputs. Who decides and decides what is a grey zone? It is the biggest challenge to the future of war and its character and with that of humanity itself.

The choice is on the ends so desired. Are ends desired consequentialist with narrow national aims, or deontological with virtue ethics or *dharma* for international peace and security as enshrined in our constitution? May be natural intelligence and consciousness will provide the right solution that we seek, but surely not just AI or artificial consciousness.

This demand that AI design and testing needs to be a multidisciplinary with joint human resource of scientists and social scientist. In Sanskrit the *gyan* or wisdom of humanities which is the ends needs to be tied with the means of *vigyan* (science). To reiterate Radhakrishnan: 'The relation of sciences to humanities may be stated roughly to be one of means to ends.' In other words, even if means are science or AI, the ends must be humane.

It will be unrealistic to wish way wars and use of AI in the present state of development of human civilization. But this spirit for peace is very much alive.

We can take the nuclear example. India is a nuclear weapon armed state and yet it propagates for a total disarmament. It will be in enlightened self- interact to treat AI in the same way but with some more caution.

Conclusion

In conclusion what is the challenge for policy makers, the military, legal fraternity, educators, intellectuals, scientists and social scientists in dealing with AI and war, and the self-destruct capacity of AI? A summary of some ideas is offered.

(1) India claims to be a civilization with the concept of *Vasudeva Kutumbukam* (the world is one family) and *lokasamgraha* (prosperity of all the world) with an aspiration to be a *Vishwa guru* (teacher of the world). Empty rhetoric and speeches will not get this grand design. Thus, scholars of law, humanities and social science need to take the lead to map what is going on and what may happen in the near future as it pertains to cyber space, network centric warfare, nano technology, genetics, 3D printing, internet of things and the unseen elephant in the room - AI.

(2) Ethics, and international humanitarian laws of war are the two factors that need a fresh approach to the emerging weaponization of AI and may be artificial consciousness.

Ancient Indic traditions can augment this discourse pertaining to laws of armed conflicts if not eliminate war as yet. As India re-emerges as a great power of not only military and economic strength but a power with powerful concepts and ideas from its civilisational tradition, it can contribute to ensure that the institutions of war do not get transferred to the domain of broad AI with unintended consequences of an artificial consciousness of machines without human oversight. It is very much possible that if done with finesse and sincerity, other cultures and nations will accept these as the new norms. Why this is important is that Indic traditions have inbuilt concepts of just war. The use of force is best regulated by the concept of *dharma* as part of human conscience by evoking the moral argument. Kautilya's *Arthashastra* and subsequent secular texts of *niti* on political science, statecraft, warcraft and diplomacy has the four methods - *sama- dana- bheda- danda* or conciliation, gifts, rupture and force. The use of force (*danda*) is always the last resort and it has to be regulated by human concept of dharma or ethics which no AI can sense or be programmed with. There is a greater need and an opportunity for India to use its ancient traditional wisdom in shaping the future discourse and customary rule creation as 'According to the International Court of Justice (ICJ), for a rule to be

customary rule, it is of primary importance that it should be of a fundamentally norm- creating character, such that it could form the basis of a general rule of law.'[66] In terms of rapid advance in AI, Indian heritage in the use of force needs to shape global discourse . Surely it will be impossible for AI to know what is *dharma,* virtue and ethics. The crux is that application of force or *danda* has to be legitimate and in contemporary understanding, it cannot be outsourced to artificial intelligence and robots. To that end tinkering with artificial consciousness needs to be approached with due care. Even if ancient Indian philosophical traditions have a chance of being made into something artificial, in no case should it be misused. This responsibility of overwatch needs to be with policy makers, scientists, scholars and intellectuals.

(3) Aim is to ensure that ends remain aligned with human goals and not goals set by machines. As to human goals, they should be informed by ethical and moral arguments. Educators and policy makers need to be made aware of the Janus-faced AI including bias of data and algorithms. AI is now part of the New Education Policy of 2020. Education should now include checks and balances so that the AI knowledge and applications remain in human control aligned with human values. The military likewise needs to differentiate between training and education. Training, as part of the syllabus of science and military technology, must include the nuts and bolts of narrow AI software, hardware and technology. For education of the military, emphasis must be on what human values and laws are expected to be nurtured as command responsibility and the future trajectory of broad AI. Ultimately, the human faculty to discriminate the right and wrong must be supreme and not the artificial faculty of AI.

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Dowry Demand in West Bengal: A Socio-Legal and Historical Analysis

Abstract

India, especially North and Eastern India is highly patriarchal since it is characterized by misogyny, hegemonic and toxic masculinity among men along with submissive attitude towards women. The manifestation of such patriarchal ideology followed by subverted attitude towards Indian women has resulted in increasing crimes against women like dowry and domestic violence. Women in India are also socialized to conform to the traits of femininity by being docile, subverted and emotionally dependent upon he male members of the family both before and more after marriage, i.e, husband. The socially constructed notion of marriage exists where the bride is socially expected to serve her husband as 'Pati Parmeshwar' (next to God) both physically and mentally, even at the cost of paying dowry and being subjected to domestic abuse by him and in-laws. It is against this backdrop that the present research explores and understands the socio-economic background of the victims of dowry followed by the demand of dowry from the husband and in-laws of West Bengal. Methodologically, the present study was based on empirical research and analytical method where 59 samples were selected from 6 districts of West Bengal based on Purposive sampling involving qualitative and quantitative data. The findings reveal that women in West Bengal who were subjected to dowry and domestic violence were mostly from the young age group belonging to Hindu community without any income and early marriage. It also reveals that majority of parents of brides had also complied and fulfilled the demands of dowry due to which these brides

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faced domestic violence and marital conflict. Furthermore, the findings also revealed the loopholes in Dowry Prohibition Act of 1961 followed by its improper implementation, so that such cases of dowry and domestic violence curtails down in Indian society.

Key Words*: Dowry, toxic masculinity, femininity, Domestic violence.*

Introduction

The social menace of the dowry system is a matter of serious concern of not only historians and sociologists but also legal analysts. We live in a patriarchal society which has mostly been characterized by misogyny, hegemonic/ toxic masculinity among men, and submissive attitude towards women—— all of which leads to increasing crimes like dowry and domestic violence against women. The problem of dowry has been such a social menace that the birth of a girl child in Indian society is regarded as burdensome. Women in India are socially constructed to conform to the notion of femininity which also includes being docile, subverted and emotionally dependent upon the male members of the family-father, husband and son.[1]

Dowry can be defined as a practice and social menace where any property or valuable security or gifts (either in cash or kind) is given by the bride's party or her parents to the bridegroom and his family at the time of marriage or after marriage. Such social menace of dowry is also caused by *'toxic masculinity'* which refers to the exaggerated masculine traits of hegemonic masculinity which normalizes and accepts the domination of men over women.[2] Such toxic nature of masculinity in men often develops misogyny, emotional stoicism and patriarchal ideology which gets manifested through domestic abuse against women. To top it all, toxic masculinity in Indian men also has increased such dowry cases leading to a rampant rise in domestic abuse (physical and mental torture) of married women. Dowry initiated as a process and practice of gifting to the bride for her to maintain her financial independence after marriage. For her to be free and be able to buy, take or give anything that she desires from that money until and unless she gets comfortable enough to ask for it from her husband or new family members.[3]

Historical roots of Dowry in India

Svadharmatyāgino nyatra dāravad dāsatā matā//
(*trans*. slavery is held to be like wifehood)'

Brahmanical text *Nâradasmr iti* equates wifehood to slavery evoking that independence ruins women, even those born into noble family.[4] Similarly medieval law digests saw lower castes or the sudras and wives as equals. These

tendencies among the ancient and medieval times in Indian society indicates the persistent relevance of caste and gender and the place to wives in families.[5]

The literature on the evolution of Indian culture reveals that though the writers (mostly law givers like Manu, Narada, Brihaspati etc) pretended to record their revered admiration for the woman particularly as mother, wife and daughter yet in actual practice women have always been suppressed and exploited. Manu in fact insisted that women should be restricted within the household but she must constantly worship her husband as God.[6] In the male dominated society, woman should be supposedly weak and has always been kept in subjugation by her husband because by this very nature.

The dowry and its consequences on women in Indian society is a well-known phenomenon and are much discussed, speculated and re-iterated. Some historians have pointed out the glorious status, which women in India enjoyed during ancient times, while many challenges the very concept of 'status', which tends to focus on only the economic and political spaces women gained in particular social structures. Therefore, there is a need to investigate its roots and how it came to have persisted in India even in the 21st century. Like Varna (caste) and Brahmanism through texts and prescriptions and religious attitudes of dominant people, the institute of dowry (in South India it is called as *stridhan*, and in North India it is considered as a gift or *dahej)* has also instantaneously sustained the social-economic lives of people. The worst impact it has is on the women. The British in the colonial times imposed patriarchy through brahmanical ideas of strict law and order over customary local practices of various groups. Consequently, this strengthened the patriarchal values that devalued women and saw her only as procreator.[7] It facilitated to subdue women and provided judicial consents to many patriarchal practices, marriages being the most vital. M N Srinivas writes, 'the attempt to equate the huge sums of cash, jewelry, clothing, furniture and gadgetry, demanded of the bride's kin by the groom's to '*dakshina*' is only an attempt to legitimize a modern monstrosity by linking it up with an ancient and respected custom, a common enough and hoary Indian device.'[8]

The *Dharmasastras* gives a glimpse of the image of women (particularly as wife) evolved over time. While in previous traditions she was mentioned as *stri, jāya, patni, dampati*,[9] and *Kumṭumbinī*[10], these terms were later replaced by bhārya, from the root bhr, which literally means someone or something that has to be supported and maintained.[11] Whereas the terms for the husband are bhartr (opposite of bharya, the one who supports and maintained), Svāmi (owner) and sometimes nâtha (lord). The use of these terms associated with overlordship,

ownership and superior position implied the increasing characterization of the women as dependents. These terms also ensures the man as husbands to be dominant in families and on whom the women as wives were dependent.

A quicker expression of the ancient and medieval Sanskrit texts particularly the *Manusmriti* prescribes the duties and role of women in society to strengthen the caste system. Women's kinship position determined her status, and the accessibility to the secular legal system. She, as daughter had to be dependent on her father, on her husband after marriage and son if the husband dies and in old age. The women should never be set free is the most important concerns of the lawmakers.[12] These experiences add a new aspect to the growing literature on women's struggle. It also tries to establish a much-needed linkage between the study of dowry and of women's resistance to the expectation of the society. Since in India mostly societies are patriarchal, the restriction on women and the dowry have been simultaneously developed.

Dowry has been known to be practiced ever since the inception of the institution of marriage. In common practice dowry meant movable property that the women as bride brings to her matrimonial home at the time of marriage. Dowry was seen as a status symbol and a prestige issue in old times. Dowry is viewed as a token of parental love and affection for the daughter and also as a gift to the newly wedded couples, expressed at the time of their marriage. Interestingly it is argued that this gift is given as a compensation (popualry called the *Kanyadan, literary means a girl is given away*) to the girl when she leaves her paternal home and joins the new family. As per ancient custom, this *Kanyadan* was followed by another ritual called the *Vardakshina* (which was a nominal amount given to the *Var*/groom) promised unilaterally by the bride's father as per his financial condition called the *yathashakti*. Even though it did not comprise of any element of mandatoriness or motive of extracting money or gifts from bride's parents, the system consequently became part of the marriage ceremonies. The sanctity of this system was retained until the beginning of the 18th century. Subsequently when British occupied India and matierialism and commercialisation became prominent, there was a rapid increase of market and demand for money. As such the concept of *Vardakshina* also became more and more complex and gave way to the commercialization of marriage institution. The resultant effect was the emergence of dowry as a major social evil in the Indian society and the devil of dowry emerged as a major social evil in the Indian society. The practice of dowry became commercial transaction where monetary considerations were prioritised. It emerged as a mean to assist a newly-wed couple to start their life together with ease. In course of time this voluntary ritual transformed into a matter of compulsion and right for the family of the

bridegroom. Nowadays, dowry is being demanded not only at the time of marriage but even after years of it.

Literature Review

The victimization of India women initiates since their birth where the birth of a daughter is unwelcomed than a son, especially in villages that still kill girl child as soon as they take birth. When a son is born, kua poojan is done. But when a girl is born that puja isn't done. Indian women are domesticized to abide by the socially constructed notion of femininity by being subdued, soft spoken, not raising her voice either in the family or against any atrocities in society, to be emotionally dependent upon the male members of family.[13]

In India, family is regarded as one of the most important social institutions and the prima facie for married women. Marriage is also regarded as a social alliance between two families rather than two individuals. It is also regarded as a sacrament and an obligation for most married women due to whom Indian parents find it obligatory to perform the duty of their daughter's marriage at the cost of paying high amount of dowry to the bride groom's family. This is true not only of lower class but also of middle-class Indian women.[14]

A social undesirability of educating women continues to persist in Indian families which increase violent crimes like dowry in India. The socially constructed notion of marriage is where the bride is expected to serve her husband both physically and emotionally in order to ensure his husband and in-laws' well-being and happiness. Due to such notion, married women (including working women) are subjected to social evils like dowry, domestic abuse like physical and mental torture.[15] However, the pressure for dowry is not only due to the patriarchal ideology of the Indian parents but also due to their obsession with wealth which is rising every day.[16]

Objectives

1. To understand Socio-Demographic Background of Victims of Dowry

2. To understand the demand of dowry

Methodology: This study was based on empirical research combined with an analytical method. 59 samples were selected from 6 districts[17] of West Bengal on the basis of purposive sampling. Data was analyzed using both the qualitative and quantitative data.

Data Analysis

A. Distribution of Respondents on the basis of Socio-Demographic Background

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents on the Basis of Age.

Age	No.	Percentage
18-27	31	52.54%
28-37	22	37.28%
38-47	4	6.78%
48-59	2	3.38%

Table-1 shows the distribution of respondents on the basis of their age. It has been observed that 52.54% of women are from the age group of 18-27 years, 37.28% are from 28-27 years, 6.78% are from 38-47 years and 3.38% are from 48-59 years.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents on the Basis of Religion.

Religion	No.	Percentage
Hindu	38	64.40%
Muslim	21	35.59%

Table 2 shows the distribution of respondents on the basis of religious affiliation. 64% belongs to the Hindu community and 35.59% are from the Muslim community. Data reveals that most of the respondents are from the Hindu community.

As the data was collected from the victims found in the office of the Protection Officer under The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005, in the above mentioned 6 districts, the researcher coincidentally found during the course of the interview, victims belonging to only the Hindu and Muslim communities, coming from the towns and villages of the district. It can be assumed that the reason behind such is that the population is dominated by only these two communities.

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents on the Basis of the present status.

Present status	No	Percentage
Home Maker	47	81.03%
Professional	10	17.24%
Student	02	1.78%

Table 3 shows the distribution of respondents on the basis of the present status. Data shows that 81% are homemakers, 17% are professionally involved and 2% are students.

Table 4: Distribution of Respondents on the Basis of Marital Status.

Marital status	No	Percentage
Married	20	33.89%
Divorcee	03	5.08%
Separated	34	57.62%
Widow	02	3.38

Table 4 shows the distribution of respondents on the basis of marital status. 34% are married, 6% are divorced, 58% are separated and 3% are widows.

Table 5: Distribution of Respondents on the Basis of Educational Qualification.

Educational Qualification	No	Percentage
Illiterate	3	5.08%
Primary	15	28.81%
Secondary	17	32.20%
Higher Secondary	12	20.33%
Graduation	8	13.55%
Post Graduation	2	3.39%
Professional	2	3.39%

Table 5 shows the distribution of respondents on the basis of educational qualifications. Data reveals that 5% of respondents are illiterate, 28% are having primary level education, 32% have a secondary educational qualification, 20% have higher secondary, 14% have graduation, 3% have post-graduation and 3% have professional i.e., IT training, nursing training qualification.

Table 6: Distribution of Respondents on the Basis of Income.

Income	No	Percentage
No Income	47	79.69%
Less than 5000/-	4	6.77%
5001-15,000/-	3	5.08%
15,001-25,000/-	2	3.38%
25,001-35,000/-	1	1.69%

Table 6 shows the distribution of respondents on the basis of income. Most of the respondents, i.e., 80% do not have any income, 7% have less than Rs. 5000/-, 3% have Rs. 5,000-15,000/- and 3% have Rs. 15,000-25,000/- income.

Table 7: Distribution of Respondents on the Basis of Type of Family.

Type of family	No	Percentage
Nuclear	42	71.18%
Joint	17	28.81%

Table 7 shows the distribution of respondents on the basis of types of family. Data shows that 71% are from nuclear families and 29% are from a joint family background.

Table 8: Distribution of Respondents on the Basis of Duration of Marriage.

Duration of Marriage	No	Percentage
1-5 years	16	27.11%
6-10 years	15	25.42%
11-15 years	11	18.64%
16-20 years	10	16.74%
21-25 years	5	8.47%
26-30 years	2	3.38%

Table 8 shows the distribution of respondents on the basis of the duration of the marriage. Data reveals that most of the respondents were married for 1-5 years. The duration of marriage was in between 6-10 years among 25.42% of respondents, the duration was 11-15 years for 18.64%, 16-20 years for 16.74% and more than 20 years for 11% of respondents.

Table 9: Distribution of Respondents on the Basis of their age during Marriage.

Age during Marriage	No	Percentage
15-20	25	42.37%
21-26	19	32.20%
27-32	12	20.33%
33-38	3	5.08%

Table 9 shows the distribution of respondents on the basis of age at marriage. The data shows that in case of 42% cases the age at marriage was between 15-20 years, in case of 32% cases the age was 21-26 years, in case of 20% cases the age was 27-32 and in case of 5% cases the age was 33-38 years age.

Table 10: Distribution of Respondents on the Basis of nature of Marriage.

Nature of Marriage	No	Percentage
Arranged	46	77.96%
Love	9	15.25%
Love cum Arranged	3	6.77%
Forced	1	1.69%

Table 10 shows the distribution of respondents on the basis of the nature of marriage. It has been observed that 77.96% of women have arranged marriage, 15% had a love marriage, 7% had love cum arranged marriage and 2% had forced marriage by their families.

Table11: Distribution of Respondents on the Basis of No of Children.

No of Children	No	Percentage
0	12	20.33%
1	29	49.15%
2	14	23.72%
3	4	6.77%

Table 11 shows the distribution of respondents on the basis of their number of children. It has been found that 49% of women have 01 children, 24% have 02 children and 20% have no children and 7 % have 3 children. Data reveals that most women have 01 children.

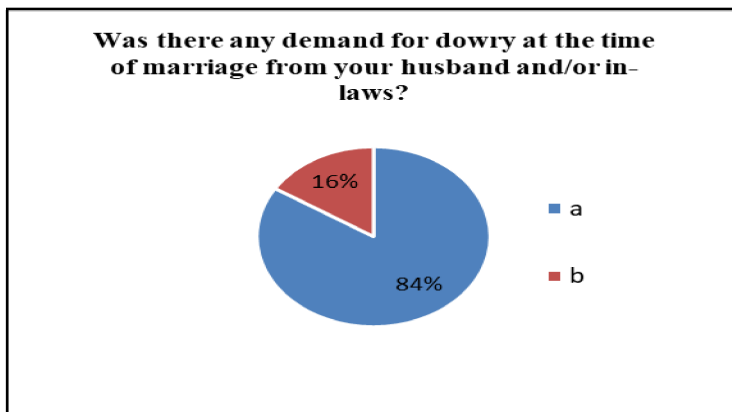## Distribution of Respondents on the basis of Demand of Dowry

Figure 1: Understanding demand of dowry.

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        ANSWER DESCRIPTION BOX
  a.   Yes, I faced dowry demand
  b.   No, there was no dowry demand
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From Fig. 1 it appears that 84% of married women were subjected to dowry demands. It is interesting to note that apart from majority of the Hindu respondents who stated that they faced demand for dowry, almost all the Muslim

respondents also answered that their family had to pay dowry on demand from the groom's side, despite the fact that the concept of dowry does not exist in Islam. It is not clear to the researchers as to why these Muslim families are practicing dowry, when dowry has no existence in their religion.

Around 16% of victims stated that they did not face dowry demands. The researchers are doubtful as to the formers understanding of dowry demand. Nowadays, dowry might not be demanded in an aggressive manner by the groom's family, but done in a subtle way. In this way the bride's family end up giving the 'gifts' asked from them, not realising that they are paying dowry. This can be the reason behind these victims who stated that they had not paid dowry. Although it can also be that truly dowry was not demanded from them, which justifies their answer.
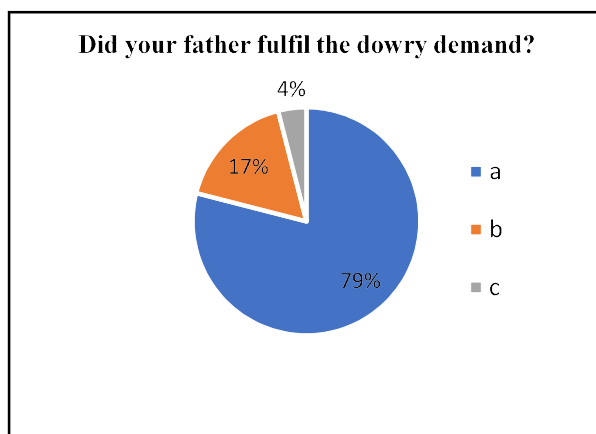

Figure 2: Fulfilment of Dowry demands.

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              Answer Description Box

a-    Yes, my father fulfilled the demand
b-    No, my father did not fulfilled the demand
c-    My father partially fulfilled the demand
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Fig. 2 shows that 79% of respondents had paid the dowry that was demanded from them. Sec. 3 of the Dowry Prohibition Act penalises both the parties that gives and takes dowry. But this provision acts as a double-edged sword for the family of the bride, who on one hand are coerced to pay dowry to get their daughters married and also are penalised by the law. It is when the bride's family approaches the law to report any incident of dowry demand at a later stage of the marriage of their daughter, they face penalty for initially paying

dowry. It is this fear that prevents them from seeking the aid of law, forcing them along with the victim, to silently tolerate the harassment.
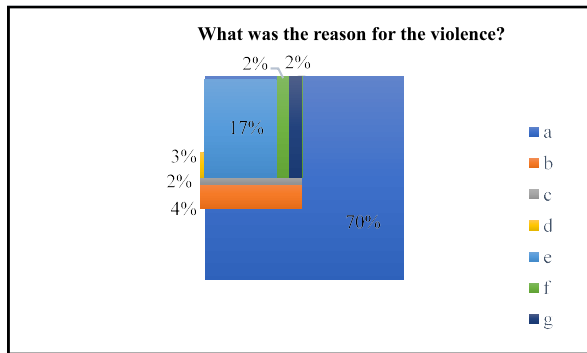

Figure 3: Violence and Dowry.

ANSWER DESCRIPTION BOX

a. Dowry
b. Alcoholism
c. Incompatibility
d. Ego
e. Extra-marital affair
f. Unsatisfied sexual relation
g. Interference of relatives

From figure 3, it is appalling to note that the evil of dowry still plays a major role in marital conflicts. Correlating with Figures1 and 2, it is evident that as most marriages are contracted over a demand and fulfilment of dowry, the demand for such never stops and is inevitable that it ends in violence once such demand starts to encounter either resistance or dissatisfaction in fulfilment.

The husband having a relationship outside the marriage is the next major reason for violence between married couples as around 17% of victims have identified the extra-marital affair of the husband to be the cause behind the violence.

During the course of the interview with the victims of domestic violence, most of the victims who knew about the affairs of their husbands, revealed that in most cases such affair was already existing before the marriage and interestingly none of the husbands refused a sexual relationship with their wives despite the fact that the husband was already in a relationship with another

women. Most of the interviewees had small child/children from their marriage and they stated that although very early into the marriage they had come to know about such affairs of their husbands, they could not leave the marriage due to social pressures.

The other factors which also play a role in marital abuse are alcoholism wherein around 4% of the victims have identified it to be the cause of the violence. Consumption of alcohol and alcohol addiction of the husband has always been cited to be a contributory cause behind domestic violence against the wife.[1] It is for this reason that the Bihar government had imposed a total ban on alcohol resulting in the reduction of the number of cases of domestic violence against the wife.[2]

Around 2% of victims have attributed the interference from the relatives to be the cause of the violence, 2% identified incompatibility and ego tussles between the couple to be the cause of violence and 2% attributed unsatisfactory sexual relationships to be the cause behind the violence committed on them.

It is thought-provoking to note that relating to all these factors of dispute, the husband plays a dominant role, i.e., be it the alcohol addiction of the husband or him getting manipulated due to the interference of his relatives or his sense of sexual dissatisfaction, it is always he who is the propagator of violence.

Critical analysis of the Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961 – Recently, in the case of *State of Madhya Pradesh v. Jogindra*[3] the Supreme Court held that the definition of 'dowry' should be expanded so as to include any demand made on a woman relating to any property or valuable security. In the concerned case five months pregnant women having a less than four years of married life, was driven to commit suicide due to constant harassment and cruelty perpetrated by the husband & father-in-law when their persistent demand for money for the construction of a house, were unable to be met by the victim her relatives were unable to give.

In the case of *Rajinder Singh v. State of Punjab*[4] the Dowry Prohibition Act was divided into several parts for a clearer understanding of the provision relation to the definition of dowry. As per Sec. 2 of the Act, dowry means any property or valuable security, the word 'any' must mean the demand for property and valuable security of 'any' kind and nature, so it must also include the demand for construction of a house.

The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961, is a short piece of legislation with the aim to prohibit the evil of dowry taking and giving, from the Indian society. It is for this reason that not only demanding dowry but the giving of the same will

also incur criminal liability as per Sec 3 of the Act and also Sec. 498A of the IPC, if such demand culminates into cruelty or harassment of the victim women. The Dowry Prohibition Act was subsequently amended in 1984 and 1986. It is interesting to note that as per Sec. 3 (2), gifts that are given to the parties to the marriage without any demands for them to be made, will not be considered as dowry. Such presents being given to the bride or the groom will be considered to be of customary nature and it is also mentioned that the value of the gifts should not be exorbitant.

In a country which has festered the evil of dowry practice for decades, where its women have been suffering and losing their lives due to the said evil, one wonders as to how far the practice of giving gifts in relation to marriage be at all allowed? The expectation of getting presents from the side of the bride's family will itself be detrimental for the bride as if such expectation is not met then it is the bride who will have to suffer the torment meted out to her. Again, in the event the presents are not as per the financial status of the giver of such presents, the same ill treatment shall be meted out on the bride as there would be an expectation from the groom's side that presents given, will be of a certain valuation. In both the above circumstances, dowry is not demanded, yet by allowing in the Act, the giving of presents, there will be a practice of a subtle way of demanding or expecting dowry from the bride's side. On analysing Sec. 3 (1) regarding imposing punishing for taking and giving dowry, the punishment which is imposed is that of five years with fifteen thousand rupees as fine or the valuation of the dowry; yet the court can reduce the sentence to less than five years, the reasons for doing such has to be stated in the judgement. This proviso regarding reducing the sentence, must be amended as a strict adherence to a five years sentence for both the side, i.e., those who are giving and those who are taking dowry, will instil some fear in the public regarding the transaction of dowry. Similarly, Sec.4 of the Act provides punishment for demanding dowry and the term of imprisonment is six years which may extend to two years with ten thousand rupees as fine, yet the proviso states that for special reasons to be recorded in the judgement, the court may reduce the sentence of imprisonment to less than six months. It is argued that when the country is reeling with increasing number of dowry related cases, such provisos which relaxes the term of imprisonment must be amended from the Act.

Personal Solutions

From the above-mentioned data and the Dowry Prohibition Act, 1962, it appears that as dowry plays a major role behind the perpetration of domestic violence against women, so a strict policy on dowry prohibition, is the need of

the hour. Legislation alone, will not be able to bring about any social change, unless people become aware and conscious of the evil consequence of dowry and by internalising such consciousness, they regulate their behaviour. As far as the intervention of the law on dowry is concerned, the government must see to the strict implementation of the Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961, by appointing adequate Dowry Prohibition Officers in each district according to the population of the district and also implement periodic monitoring of the implementation of the Act and the performance of the Dowry Prohibition Officer. Moreover, in every school, the syllabus of the subject of Social Science must contain contents on dowry problem in India which will result in consciousness raising among the young minds of both the sexes which might result in curbing the problem among the future generation.

Although the data collected does not contain any information on the increase or decrease in the harassment for dowry or the reasons behind such increase or decrease, yet it can be assumed that the harassment has increased over time as all these victims were found in the office of the Protection Officer, where they had come to file applications seeking relief under The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005, citing the commission of domestic violence against them. It can also be assumed that due to the failure of payment of the dowry demanded, these women faced abuse and hence they decided to seek the aid of the law.

The empirical study conducted by the researcher, in 10 districts of West Bengal, helped in understanding the position of the victims, coming from different backgrounds, regarding a common problem they suffer from i.e., harassment for dowry. It is through this empirical research that the magnitude of the dowry problem in the State was revealed, as a huge percentage of the interviewed women i.e., 70%, had attributed dowry to be the reason behind their abuse. The researcher is thankful to the Indian Council of Social Science Research which financially helped the researcher in conducting the empirical work in the above named 10 districts of West Bengal which formed the basis for this research article.

Conclusion

This paper has been an attempt to understand the trajectories of the Dowry in West Bengal and socio-demographic background and the nature of dowry demands were understood by analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data from 59 respondents of 6 districts of West Bengal. Data reveals that most of the women are from the young adult age group, most of the respondents belongs to the Hindu community, most of them are homemakers, having primary level

education, most of the respondents do not have any income and the form of marriage was arranged marriage and duration of marriage for most of the respondents is 1-5 years. Data also reveals that around 84% of married women had faced dowry demands at the time of marriage. It appears that the majority of the parents of the brides, on facing dowry demands, had complied and fulfilled the demand. The women have to face different violence after marriage. The malicious dowry plays a significant role in marital conflicts. Above mentioned data is apparent that as most marriages are constricted over demand and fulfilment of dowry, the demand for such never stops and is predictable that it ends in violence once such demand starts to come across either confrontation or disappointment in accomplishment.

Since dowry is a social menace, so it is essential to understand and analyze the origin of the problem. Since gender socialization plays a significant role in the social construction of hegemonic masculinity and patriarchal ideology, it is the responsibility of the parents to impede this practice for their daughters. Further, media as an agency of socialization need to initiate awareness program portraying dowry and domestic violence as social evil along with the negative impact of the practice on women's life. It is only then the patriarchal mindset of men will change and such violent crimes against Indian women will curtail down, if not impeded completely.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Notes

1. Salim, "Dowry, Its Causes and Consequences: A Sociological Study of Dowry Harassment and Death Cases in Aligarh District of UP", May 2017, p. 1.
2. Legg, "Want to know about Toxic Masculinity?", June 21, 2020.
3. Salim, n. 1.
4. Nāradasmrti 2.13.30 and 2.5.37. Elsewhere, the smrti adds that women, slaves and other retainers are always dependent (2.1.29-30). Lariviere, R. The Nāradasmrti, 2nd rev. ed. Delhi, 2003.

5. Donald R. Davis, Jr. Slaves and Slavery in the Smrticandrikā, Indian Economic and Social Historical Review, 2020; 1-28; also Gerda Lerner's argument that the oppression of women provided the model for slavery. The analogy rests on the factors like one should only marry a woman or possess a slave of equal or lower varna status (Brahmins excepted), and both are then subject to the legal control of their husband or master. Lerner, 'Women and Slavery' Slavery and Abolition: A Journal of Slave and Post-Slave Studies 4, no. 3 (1983) 173-98.

6. Oliverelle, Patrick, Manu's Code of Law: A Critical Edition and Translation of the Manava-Dharmasastra, 4, 147-149.

7. Kumkum Roy, ed, Beyond the Women's Question: Reconstructing Gender Identities in Early, Primus, 2017 Introduction ix.

8. M N Srinivasan, Social Change in Modern India Orient Blackswan, 1984: 13.

9. The word dampati highlights the complementarity between the husband and the wife. Originating from the word dam meaning 'house', it denotes the husband and wife as joint masters of their house.

10. kutumbim (from the male kutumbin, which denotes one who takes care of everything) means the wife of the householder and the mother of the whole family.

11. The etymology of these words and the frequency of their use is significant. It is important to nate that the popularity of some and the declining use of others indicate a change in the conceptualization of the role of the women in the families.

12. For example, Yajnavalkya Smriti states, rakse kanyāmpitā vinnāmpatih putrās tu vārdhake| abhāve jñātayas tesāmna svātantryamkvacit striyāh || Yāj 1.85 (Trans.) The father should guard a maiden, the husband a married woman, and the sons a woman in old age. In their absence, the relatives (guard a women), women can never be independent.

13. Ibid, note 1, p. 3.

14. Ibid, note 1, p. 4.

15. Ibid, note 1, p. 4.

16. Ibid, note 1, p. 4.

17. https://www.legalserviceindia.com/legal/article-2669-drinking-and-domestic-violence.html (last visited on 28th May, 2022).

18. https://www.svri.org/blog/has-alcohol-prohibition-in-bihar-india-resulted-in-less-vaw ((last visited on 28th May, 2022).

20. 2022 SCC Online Sc 33.

21. (2015) 6 SCC 477.

Book Reviews

Devapriya Sanyal, *Gendered Modernity and Indian Cinema: The Women in Satyajit Ray's films,* **(Routledge Contemporary South Asia Series, 2021), Price: 3,879 (kindle edition), 11,340 (Hardcover) Pages: 123.**

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According to the words of Akira Kurosawa, the first Japanese film director to win international acclaim (Britannica, 2022), **"Not to have seen the cinema of Ray means existing in the world without seeing the sun or the moon".**

Satyajit Ray is undoubtedly one of the most critically acclaimed film directors, not only in India but the world over. His oeuvre has been subject to several studies time and again, including articles, research papers, and other academic publications. It appears as if almost every element in his films (including his cinematography, editing, lighting techniques, and approach to filmmaking a combination of the Western influence and his Indian roots) has been meticulously dissected and examined by many writers, researchers, and scholars, in the country and internationally. Which brings us to the question, "What more can be said about Ray which hasn't been said already?"

Devapriya Sanyal, in her book, Gendered Modernity and Indian Cinema: The Women in Satyajit Ray's films (2021), answers precisely this question along with another, "What possibly more can be studied in terms of women's representation in cinema that hasn't already been done?" Answering both the questions, the author, through her book, demonstrates that it is quite a lot.

Taking a look at the cover page, one can access several things. Instead of resorting to a cover with graphics or pictures that may have seemed more appealing in the most typical sense, the author has decided to keep it simple and allowed the title of the book in a clean, legible font to catch the eye of the

reader. As for the design of the cover page is concerned, the title of the book (in black) is placed on a stark white background that breaks the otherwise warm tone of the repeated patterned design both up and down. The pattern looks similar to the ones found on old fashioned South Asian ledgers, which were used to write accounts. Perhaps the author wants us to know that she, too is about to involve us in an account of the women portrayed in Satyajit Ray's cinema. The design also points toward Bengali sensibilities (Bengalis are not known to be fond of excess designs or embellishments. They like to keep things elegant without too many elements) that speak volumes regarding the seriousness of the subject matter and the individual at the central subject of the book.

Cinema contains in its garb several apparent and hidden meanings, and every time one watches a film, plenty of meanings and messages become pronounced. The same can be stated in the case of Ray's cinema as well. Sanyal, a Postdoctoral fellow at the Centre for Women's Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, India, and the Indian Council of Social Science Research (as per the book), has come up with another take on Ray examining the role women played in his cinema, particularly in the context of the creation of national culture after India became independent. from his first, i.e. The Apu Trilogy up until his last film, Agantuk (1991), what socio-economic and artistic factors prompted his depiction of women and how his films anticipated and prophecised the different waves of feminism which were to come later on.

With the introduction of inheritance and divorce laws during Jawaharlal Nehru's tenure as Prime Minister of India in the 1950s, gender concerns were emphasised and addressed. In her 123-pages book, Sanyal analyses cinematic texts with a focus on female characters, employing feminist film theory and portrayal and scrutinising the socio-political and economic conditions of the period – both significant to the creation and setting of the period of Ray's cinema.

Prior to laying her ideas on Ray's representations of women, the author first underlines the background within which Ray acquired different kinds of understanding that led him to represent women the way he did in his films. For this, she explores Ray as a person, his upbringing, influences, artistic stimuli and the time and events amidst which he found his calling as a filmmaker. "There is a suggestion in his writing that "India" came to Ray later since he had been more quickly drawn to Hollywood films and Western music." Furthermore, the author takes us through the journey of toils, troubles and tribulations Ray has had to go through before his first film saw the light of the day and how his limitations inspired him to bring about several new innovative filmmaking techniques and practices.

One thing that is firmly established through this book is how Ray presented women's sensibilities and their responses to various circumstances on the silver screen. One must not have any preconceived notions that Ray has made extraordinary efforts to ensure fair and absolutely relevant portrayals of the female characters. In the author's words, "his portrayal of women is not identifiable as "concern for gender issues" in today's parlance." According to the author, "...his films are exercises in storytelling that draw from human experience rather than promote viewpoints, which was the way of Indian cinema." However, compared to his contemporaries and counterparts, he has been fairer to them in his representations and depicted them as living, breathing, fleshed-out individuals than mere love interests, doting mothers and other insignificant stereotypes or stock characters. The women in his cinema have been equipped with an agency as opposed to the mainstream commercial cinema, where they are glorified as damsels-in-distress, as well as the arthouse films where while women's issues are certainly given the spotlight and inludes a lot of lament at patriarchy, but women have been depicted as victims of their situations, rather than at least putting up a fight to gain emancipation for themselves.

After putting in place, a well-defined context amidst which the subject matter is being analysed in the book, the author, through carefully picked examples from various films of Ray and, scrupulously inspects and evaluates the female characters, their actions, their roles and how they responded to their situations. Moreover, the analysis is not in isolation. The author, in fact, keeps in mind the year of the decade when the film was made and how the cinematic rendition of the story worked out as per the director's perception.

The author's approach to the book is similar to that of a researcher's to scholarly material in the way that she does not state something absolute willy nilly but systematically addresses the topic, goes over the background and context and then dissecting and interpreting each aspect one by one, eventually comes to a conclusion. This process of dealing with the topic and writing gives its readers the impression and the assurance that they are in safe hands and are not being taken on a sudden roller-coaster sway in a biased direction. Also, as one would find in scholarly research papers, the author uses references and quotes from experts who already have established statements and theories in the said domain. This helps the author to build upon her arguments even better. What is even commendable is that despite taking a rather academic approach to dealing with her subject, the author maintains to make her book appear equally engaging and intriguing even to non-academicians, or people who are not exactly film scholars, as she unravels her subject matter by and by.

Another factor that draws one towards the book while reading it is that way the author has been able to refrain from fawning over the legend that Ray is, also ensuring that her approach at all times was purely objective and analytical.

The author, after having put together all the pieces that explain the treatment of female characters in his films, concludes that regardless of the screen space given to female characters in his films, or how active or passive they were in the story, Ray's image of women has a huge impact on our understanding of how modern India grew during and after the Nehru era, and that is what this book wants us to find out.

This book is recommended for academicians, scholars and students of Film Studies, especially in World Cinema, Indian and Bengali cinema. Also, avid and voracious bibliophiles of reading material on cinema, Satyajit Ray or feminism and films will appreciate the strong writing and in-depth analysis put forth by the author.

Indra Nooyi, *My Life in Full: Work, Family, and Our Future.* **(Hachette India, 2021), Price: 448, Pages: 344.**

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The book under review is an autobiography written by Mrs. Indra Krishnamurthy Nooyi (1955-), former chairperson and chief executive officer of PepsiCo. Nooyi is one of the world's leading business visionaries and one of the only women of color and immigrant background to ever serve as CEO of a Fortune fifty company. She is a recipient of the Padma Bhushan (April 2007), India's third-highest civilian honor, and the U.S. State Department's Outstanding American by Choice award. Her achievements in the corporate world established her as a role model for future entrepreneurs. She has been living in the USA for more than four decades with her husband, Raj Nooyi, and two daughters, Preetha and Tara. She truly epitomizes the Indian diaspora across the globe. After taking retirement from PepsiCo, Nooyi is working as a member of the board of directors at Amazon.

In her autobiography, bursting with grace, grit, and good humor, Nooyi offers an overview of her journey from a business management student to a global business leader. She was the first generation of her family who migrated to the USA in the 1970s. The book depicts her training and work experiences at various companies in India and the USA, the role and importance of family in her life, and the significance of working women contributing to the economy. The book gives an insight into the events that shaped her life, from growing up in a South Indian family in Madras (Chennai Since 1996), India, to her career as an employee who soon reached the most senior executive posts of the U.S. multinational corporation.

As the book progresses, the reader comes across various phases of the author's life in chronological order. The book provides an account of Indra's

journey as a student, daughter, wife, mother, and successful businesswoman who worked hard and built a support structure not only for herself but for all the working man and woman who seeks work-life balance in their lives. The choices made by the author and depicting them from her childhood to the present day show the reader that it is not always easy for a woman to find a work-life balance, especially for working women. In the book's first part, "*Growing Up*," Nooyi discusses her life journey, starting with her childhood memories and early education in the 1960s at her ancestral house in Madras, India, and later at the Yale School of Management USA. The author talks about various childhood incidents and memories that still make her nostalgic about her ancestral home in Madras (now Chennai). Her journey as a management student started in August 1974 at the Indian Institute of Management Calcutta (now Kolkata), where she completed her Master's in Business Management. The second chapter of the book *'Finding My Footing'* elaborates on Nooyi's journey after completing the Master's degree in Public and Private Business management at newly established Yale University's business school in the 1980s. It was her second master's degree, but it was entirely different from IIM Calcutta. She wanted a job at Boston Consulting Group (BCG). One of the best strategy consulting firms in the U.S., she got the coveted offer after six or seven tough interviews.

Her second year at Yale was full of looking ahead and the emerging reality of her life, marriage, and working. As Nooyi was aware that her journey was started, and like many other immigrants, her 'American dream' began with fear, awe, and loneliness. She knows that she came to a country where people were more interested in what we had to say than how we looked or acted. Her journey is not an immigrant story of hardship that shifted to America to escape poverty, persecution, or war. Even today, she feels connected to everyone who streams into the USA and works hard for a more prosperous life for themselves and their family.

In the third part, '*The PepsiCo Years*,' Nooyi discusses her tenure at PepsiCo. She joined PepsiCo in 1994 and worked as a chairperson and CEO of PepsiCo from 2006 to 2018. As one of the world's most appreciated business executives, Nooyi transformed PepsiCo with a unique vision, a vigorous pursuit of peculiarity, and a deep sense of diligence for more than twelve years. As a chairperson, she made some tough decisions, such as selling restaurant businesses across the country and acquiring new food and beverages businesses worldwide. In her leadership, the company showed immense growth in productivity and reduced water and the use of plastic by following strict environmental measures. Every incident in Nooyi's career as a business strategist, CEO, and chairperson of PepsiCo brought a new change in her life. According to her:

"Female leaders have much tougher than male leaders because the world of power is designed for men. Women are always breaking ground as they navigate the upper reaches of business, government, or finance. We have to demonstrate our gravitas in a world where authority and brilliance, to many people, still look like an older gentleman. And we have to absorb dozens of the simple, little slights that show women are not yet fully embraced". (Nooyi, 197)

Apart from her professional career, Nooyi talks about the importance of family in her life. Throughout the book, the author has discussed the significance of all her relationships with her parents, colleagues, mentors, and friends who helped her. She believed that family is fundamental to our lives on this planet from the very beginning. It is both foundation and the force that has propelled every human being. She learned the importance of family from her parents, husband, and mentors, who always supported her. Her proudest achievement is the family that she created in the U.S. with her husband, in-laws, and daughters.

In the fourth and concluding chapter, *'Looking Ahead,'* Nooyi discusses her plans after leaving PepsiCo in 2019. She advises her readers, especially aspiring businesswomen. She emphasized the role of women entrepreneurs who can make a difference by contributing to the world economy. The author has nicely explained the role of working women and how they contribute to the economy and well-being of society as she writes,

"Many women in today's workplace have extraordinary skill, intelligence, ambition, creativity, determination, and good cheer. We must recognize that supporting families—and the role that women, in particular, play both in paid work and at home as mothers and caregivers— is essential for all of us. That is evident in every culture. Fundamental change in integrating work and family is not going to happen without the support of men, especially those in power, helping drive the discussion and helping implement the solutions. As the global order responds to what we learned during the Covid-19 pandemic, we have arrived at a unique moment for change."(Nooyi, 299)

The book's structure consists of four chapters, a foreword, photographs, and acknowledgments to the people who make this book possible. The narrative structure of the book is very straightforward. Each chapter of the book is written in minute details about the author's personal and professional life. The book revolves around three major themes: Work, Family, and the Future of the 21st-century business environment. By writing a detailed memoir, Nooyi tried to reach her readers in an informative way by providing suggestions and life lessons from her own experiences working with business groups worldwide. It would be better if the book's narrative could be written in a literary way as it seems,

more technical and statistical. At some point, the readers of other disciplines will feel that the book is a management lesson rather than an autobiography.

The book gives an insight into Nooyi's personal and professional life in detail. Her autobiography is a quick, fascinating read with uncommon frankness and generosity. The author is honest about her privilege and regrets, never sugar-coating her failures or giving herself undue credit for her successes. Authoritative and grounded in lived experience, it is a book about an extraordinary leader's life revolving around the relationships, responsibilities, and corporate culture of late 1990s America. The book is not only an inspiration for business students but also an insightful read to other discipline students who are aspiring to make a career in the field of business management. It is a book that brings Nooyi's story, from her early years in India, surrounded by love and high expectations, to her determined efforts to succeed in the corporate world. It provides an inside look at PepsiCo and Nooyi's thinking as she drove the iconic American company toward success. She is one of the few Indian women working abroad who carved her way, which gives the reader an unforgettable experience of reading an inspirational journey of her life from the Indian corporate sector to the global corporate culture of America.

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