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Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Analysis



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Impact of MGNREGA on the Livelihoods of Scheduled Tribes in Kokrajhar District: A Data-Driven Analysis

Abstract

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is a comprehensive program in India designed to provide job opportunities and enhance public infrastructure in rural areas. This research investigates MGNREGA's effects on the livelihoods of Scheduled Tribe (ST) communities in Kokrajhar District of Assam. By meticulously analyzing secondary data, the study aims to assess the program's success in creating employment for ST populations. The investigation covers various aspects, including the number of person-days generated, the percentage of households receiving 100 days of work. Additionally, the research seeks to identify challenges in implementing MGNREGA. The findings of this study have the potential to guide policymakers, government officials, and other relevant parties in improving the program's design and implementation.

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1. Introduction

Enacted in 2005, the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is a cornerstone of India's rural development policy. This comprehensive program guarantees a minimum of 100 days of yearly paid work to rural families willing to perform unskilled manual labor. MGNREGA serves as a vital support system for countless rural Indians, tackling unemployment issues while fostering asset development

in rural regions. MGNREGA aims not only to create jobs but also to bolster rural household security, establish lasting infrastructure for rural economic growth, and uplift disadvantaged groups. The program's structure incorporates principles of social inclusivity, gender parity, and ecological preservation, offering a comprehensive strategy for rural advancement. This research examines MGNREGA's effects on Scheduled Tribes (ST) livelihoods in Kokrajhar District, concentrating on job creation and resource allocation. Kokrajhar District's selection is crucial due to its significant ST population, enabling a thorough evaluation of the program's reach to marginalized communities. Examination of secondary data indicates a notable rise in workdays generated for ST households since MGNREGA's inception. This trend showcases the program's vital role in expanding job prospects for one of India's most vulnerable groups. The increase in workdays suggests not only improved work access but also potential growth in household earnings and overall economic stability within ST communities. Nevertheless, the study also uncovers inconsistencies in fund distribution and spending patterns. These discrepancies may arise from various factors, including bureaucratic holdups, administrative inefficiencies, and difficulties in implementing a large-scale program across diverse geographical and socio-economic landscapes. Such inconsistencies could impede the program's efficacy and restrict its potential impact on ST communities. The research findings highlight both successes and hurdles in MGNREGA implementation. While the program has effectively generated employment and contributed to rural asset creation, issues related to fund management and utilization point to areas needing improvement in program administration and execution. These insights provide valuable guidance for policymakers and program administrators, emphasizing the need for refined strategies to ensure more equitable and efficient distribution of job opportunities among ST communities in rural areas. Potential improvements may include streamlining administrative processes, enhancing transparency in fund allocation and use, and implementing more robust monitoring and evaluation systems. Moreover, the study underlines the importance of customizing development programs to meet the specific needs and circumstances of marginalized communities like the Scheduled Tribes. It suggests that while MGNREGA has made significant progress in addressing rural unemployment, there is room for further adaptation to maximize its impact on ST livelihoods. In summary, the objective of this study offers a nuanced understanding of MGNREGA's role in fostering employment and economic stability among ST communities in Kokrajhar District. By highlighting both achievements and areas for

improvement, it contributes to the ongoing discourse on rural development strategies in India and provides a foundation for evidence-based policy refinement.

1.1 Objectives of the Study

To achieve the main objective of the study, the present paper selects the following specific objectives.

1. To estimate the employment generation through Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act in Kokrajhar District of Assam
2. To examine the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act on employment generation of ST households in Kokrajhar District of Assam.

1.2 Methodology

This research primarily utilizes secondary data to pursue its objectives. The relevant secondary data were collected from various published sources, including the official website of MGNREGA, the official websites of the government of Assam, the Ministry of Rural Development, block development offices and Gram Panchayat, the Statistical Hand Book of Assam, journals, periodicals, and other related sources.

2. Literature Review

2.1 National Context

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act is widely regarded as one of India's most significant social welfare programs. It aims to provide at least 100 days of wage employment annually to rural households. Its impacts have been extensively documented across the country, focusing on poverty reduction, employment generation, and rural development. **1. Poverty Alleviation:** Research indicates that MGNREGA has contributed significantly to reducing rural poverty. According to Dutta et al. (2012), the program reduced poverty levels by 7–8% among participating households by offering a stable income source. This aligns with findings from Narayanan (2016), which highlighted the scheme's role in enhancing household consumption and reducing distress migration. **2. Rural Wage Increases:** MGNREGA has led to substantial increases in rural wage rates. Drèze and Khara (2017) reported that guaranteed employment under the scheme has established a

benchmark for minimum wages in rural areas, indirectly benefitting non-participants by improving local wage dynamics. **3. Employment and Gender Equity:** The program has successfully engaged marginalized groups, including Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), and women. Women's participation in MGNREGA often exceeds 50%, fostering financial inclusion and empowerment (Khera & Nayak, 2009). This gendered dimension is particularly noteworthy in states such as Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu, where women constitute the majority of the workforce in MGNREGA projects. **4. Infrastructure Development:** By emphasizing asset creation, MGNREGA has improved rural infrastructure, such as irrigation facilities, rural roads, and water conservation structures. According to Chopra (2014), these assets not only address immediate employment needs but also contribute to long-term agricultural productivity and resilience. **5. Climate Resilience:** Recent research has underscored MGNREGA's role in promoting climate resilience. Projects involving afforestation, watershed management, and soil conservation have had dual benefits of environmental protection and livelihood generation (Barrett et al., 2020). **6. Challenges and Criticisms:** Despite its achievements, MGNREGA faces challenges, including delays in wage payments, inadequate monitoring, and unequal implementation across states. For instance, Rajshekhar (2021) highlighted systemic issues such as low fund allocation and bureaucratic inefficiencies, particularly in low-performing states.

2.2 State-Level Insights

In Assam, the implementation of MGNREGA has been characterized by significant regional variability. Districts where the scheme was introduced during its initial phase, such as Barpeta, Dhemaji, and Dibrugarh, have consistently demonstrated higher employment days compared to districts where the rollout was delayed. This trend aligns with findings from Baruah et al. (2015), who observed that early implementation allows for better capacity-building, infrastructure setup, and community awareness, resulting in more effective program outcomes. However, the state has also faced challenges in ensuring equitable access to MGNREGA benefits. Studies by Sarma et al. (2018) indicate that geographical remoteness and administrative inefficiencies often limit the scheme's reach in hilly and tribal areas, particularly in districts like Kokrajhar and Karbi Anglong. Furthermore, delayed wage payments, insufficient awareness campaigns, and inadequate staffing have been identified as key impediments to achieving the scheme's full potential. Despite these challenges, MGNREGA has made notable contributions to rural development in Assam, particularly in creating irrigation infrastructure and promoting afforestation, which align with the state's

agricultural and environmental needs. Research highlights several challenges specific to ST populations: **1. Limited Awareness:** Awareness about the rights and entitlements under MGNREGA remains low among ST communities. A study by Banerjee and Saha (2016) in the northeastern states revealed that only 40% of ST households were aware of the program's provision for 100 days of guaranteed employment. **2. Bureaucratic Delays:** Administrative inefficiencies, such as delays in job card issuance and the approval of work applications, disproportionately affect ST populations. Tripathi and Biswas (2017) found that such delays were more pronounced in remote tribal areas, where connectivity and administrative presence are weaker. **3. Unequal Access to Benefits:** Inequitable access to MGNREGA benefits is a recurring issue. Studies by Xaxa (2014) and Jha et al. (2019) highlight that ST households often receive fewer person-days of employment than other groups due to discrimination and inadequate monitoring mechanisms. **4. Role of Customary Practices:** Cultural practices and traditional livelihoods in tribal areas may also impact participation in MGNREGA. For example, shifting cultivation or seasonal migration for labor often conflicts with the rigid timelines of MGNREGA work schedules, limiting ST involvement (Kumar et al., 2020). These challenges underscore the need for targeted interventions, such as awareness campaigns in tribal languages, grievance redressal mechanisms, and flexible work schedules tailored to local contexts.

3. Discussion

Table 1.1 represents the total person days generation as well as households achieved 100 days employment in Kokrajhar district from 2019 to 2024. This data provides insights into the implementation of the rural employment guarantee scheme in Kokrajhar district over a five-year period. The information on person days generated and households achieving 100 days of employment can be used to assess the effectiveness of the program in providing livelihood opportunities to rural residents. Analyzing these trends can help policymakers and administrators evaluate the scheme's impact and identify areas for improvement in employment generation and household participation.

Table 1: Person Days Generated in Kokrajhar District (2019-2024)¹

Year	Total Person Days	Achieved 100 Days
------	-------------------	-------------------

¹Source: www.nrega.nic.in

		(Households)
2019-2020	2387555	719
2020-2021	2394313	897
2021-2022	2238196	223
2022-2023	3628385	828
2023-2024	4454074	615

Figure 1 depicts total person days generated over the Years. A bar chart illustrating the annual trends in person-days generated from 2019-2024. The chart demonstrates significant increases in 2022-2023 and 2023-2024. Figure 1.b presents Households Achieving 100 Days of Employment: A line chart representing the number of households attaining 100 days of work for each year. The chart exhibits fluctuations in the number of households achieving 100 days of employment across the years.

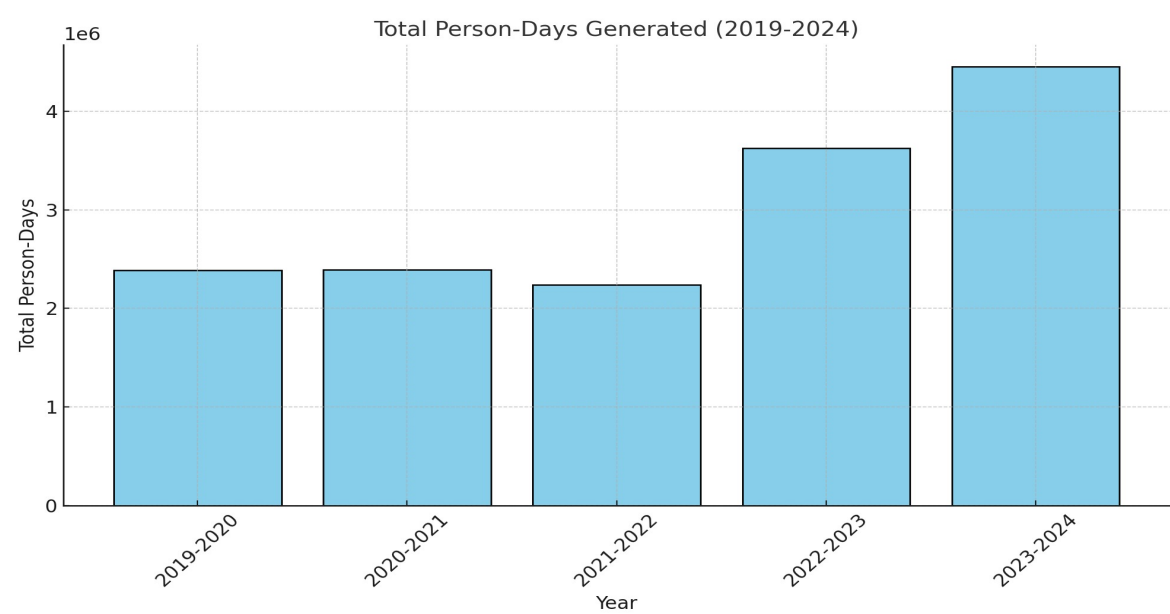


Figure 1: Total Person-Days Generated (2019-2024) (Computed by author)

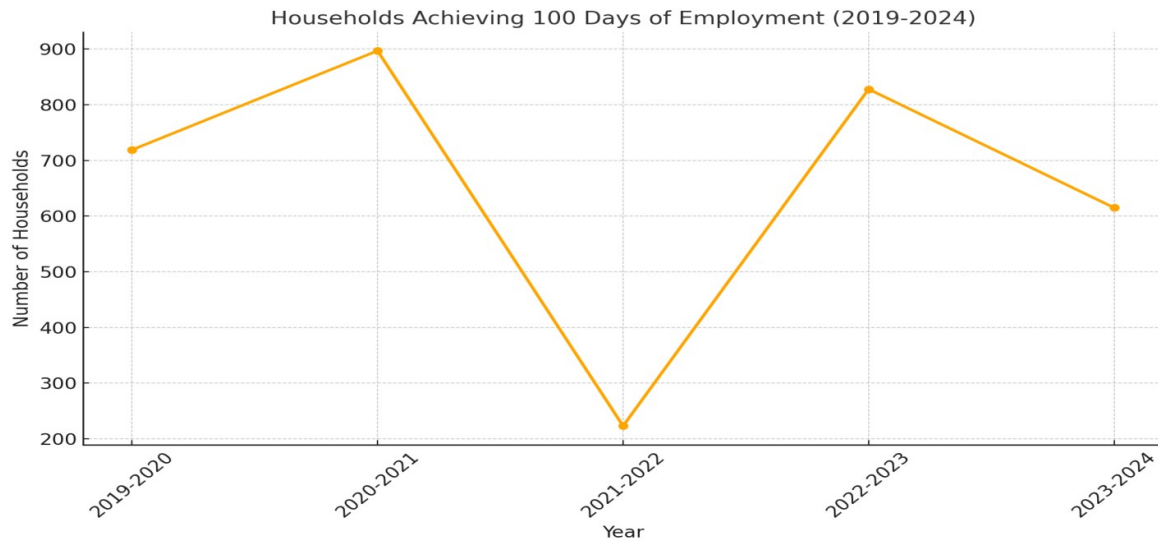


Figure 2: Households Achieving 100 Days of Employment (2019-2024) (Computed by author)

Table 1.2 illustrates the total person days generation and achieved 100 days employment in Kokrajhar district from 2019 to 2024. The data provides insights into the participation and performance of Scheduled Tribe (ST) households in MGNREGA from 2019–2024. Two key indicators are analyzed: Total Person-Days Generated for ST Households and ST Households Achieving 100 Days of Employment. The percentages in parentheses represent the proportion of total person-days and the share of ST households achieving 100 days of work compared to all households, respectively. The total person-days for ST households have consistently increased over the years, with the highest figure of 2,080,250 (46.70%) in 2023–2024. The percentage of person-days attributable to ST households has also risen, from 34.67% in 2019–2020 to 46.70% in 2023–2024, indicating enhanced inclusion and participation of ST populations in MGNREGA activities. The number of ST households achieving 100 days of work has fluctuated. Following a significant decrease in 2021–2022 (111 households, 49.78%), the figures recovered to 414 households in 2023–2024, with a notable share of 67.32%. This recovery suggests improved access to consistent employment for ST households in recent years.

Table 2: Person Days Generated for ST People in Kokrajhar District (2019-2024)²

Year	Total Person Days (ST)	Achieved 100 Days (ST Households)
2019-2020	827777 (34.67)	406 (56.46)
2020-2021	898460 (37.53)	476 (53.07)
2021-2022	906193 (40.49)	111 (49.78)
2022-2023	1413708 (38.96)	402 (48.55)
2023-2024	2080250 (46.70)	414 (67.32)

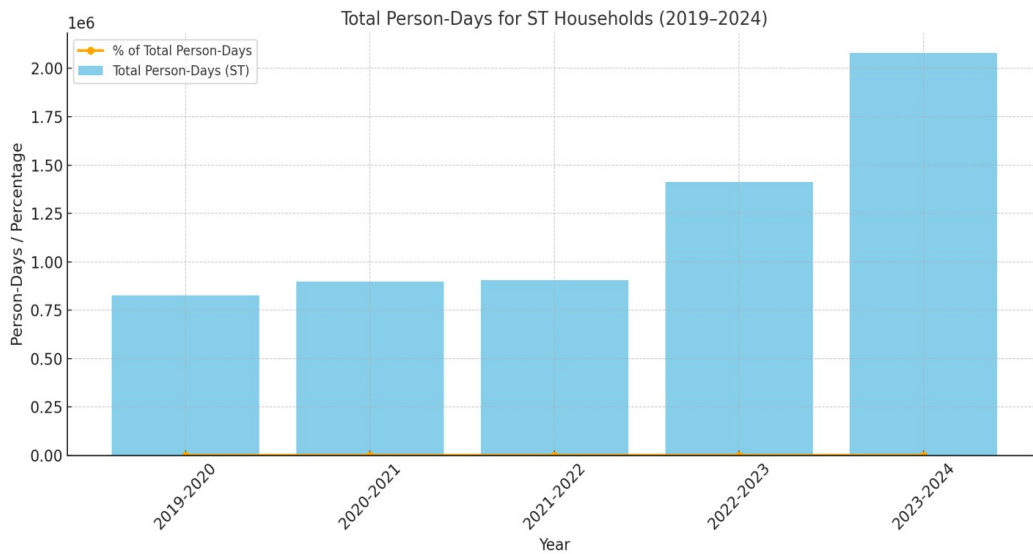


Figure 3: Person-Days for ST Households (2019-2024) (Computed by author)

²Sources: www.nrega.nic.in

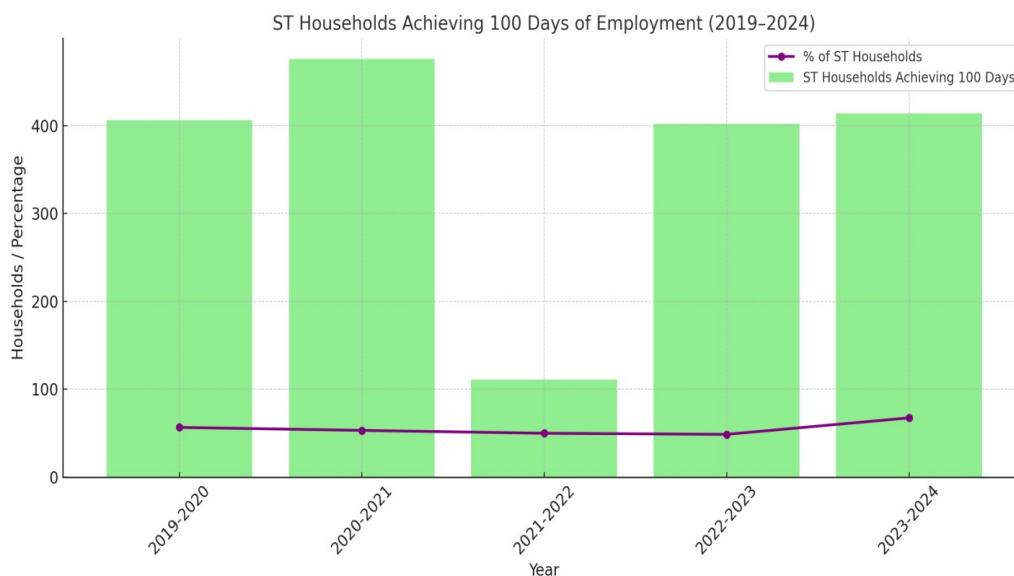


Figure 4: ST Households Achieving 100 Days of Employment (2019-2024) (Computed by Author)

Figure 1.c depicts Total Person-Days for ST Households (2019–2024). The blue bars represent the total person-days generated for ST households, demonstrating a consistent increase from 827,777 in 2019–2020 to 2,080,250 in 2023–2024. The orange line illustrates the percentage of total person-days attributed to ST households, which increased from 34.67% to 46.70%, indicating enhanced inclusion over time. Figure 1.d illustrates ST Households Achieving 100 Days of Employment (2019–2024). The green bars represent the number of ST households achieving 100 days of employment annually. Despite a decrease in 2021–2022 to 111 households, the figures recovered to 414 households in 2023–2024. The purple line depicts the percentage of ST households among all households achieving 100 days, increasing from 56.46% in 2019–2020 to 67.32% in 2023–2024, reflecting improved performance relative to other groups. These trends suggest that MGNREGA's reach and impact on ST populations in the region have strengthened in recent years, evidenced by increased participation and employment stability.

4. Conclusion

This research examines the impact of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) on the livelihoods of Scheduled Tribes (ST) in Kokrajhar District, Assam, India. By analyzing secondary data from 2019 to 2024, the study assesses

the program's success in creating employment for ST populations. The findings show a consistent increase in total person-days generated for ST households, from 827,777 in 2019-2020 to 2,080,250 in 2023-2024. The percentage of person-days attributable to ST households also rose from 34.67% to 46.70%, indicating enhanced inclusion and participation. However, the number of ST households achieving 100 days of employment fluctuated, with a notable recovery in recent years. The study highlights challenges such as limited awareness, bureaucratic delays, unequal access to benefits, and the impact of customary practices on ST participation in MGNREGA. The research emphasizes the need for targeted interventions and policy refinements to maximize the program's impact on ST livelihoods in Kokrajhar District.

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International Adoption in the Humanitarian Discourse: An Indian Perspective

Abstract

The process of adopting a child from another nation is referred to as transnational adoption, sometimes called international adoption. It entails establishing a parent-child bond between two people who are typically not connected by blood or marriage. International adoption made its way into Indian society in the late 1960s in the form of humanitarian intervention by Christian missionaries of Belgium which culminated into the first wave of international adoptions from India. Problem of overpopulation rather than the impact of colonialism and capitalism present in the newly decolonized countries such as India was used to provide an interventionist cure to the problem of poverty gripping India and other Third World countries by the Western European countries, the United States, Australia etc. Humanitarian intervention in newly decolonized countries like India took the form of international adoption. However, the cross-border transfer of children, seemingly quiet, private and humanitarian, can be traced to the cold war geopolitics whose legacy continues in the 21st century geopolitical framework, represented by monetary rather than territorial influence. The political economy of international adoption that dominates the geopolitical framework of the developed countries in the post-cold war era rests on the supply of children of developing countries like India, as valuable resources or privileged migrants catering to the demands of childless or infertile couples under the garb of humanitarian intervention; lifting orphans out of the clutches of poverty. This paper shall try to explore and analyse the trajectory of geopolitics international adoptions from India under the guise of humanitarian intervention by the developed countries.

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1. Introduction

Adoption refers to the process of establishing a relationship between parents and child through legal process and not by virtue of birth. It was in the era of 1950s that the relation of international adoptions backed by a broader background of geopolitics was seen. The letters from American spouses to the American representatives from Korea signified how egotistical tendencies gave way to humanitarian ambitions along with American attitude of entitlement and cultural superiority which further highlighted both American and Korean preference of Korean children for adoption reflecting each other's geopolitical objectives (Kim, 2021). Whether it was South Korea's interests to spread its blood in the western world or the USA's carefully calculated foreign policy to keep South Korea under its influence is not to be ignored if not said with conviction. In India, children are often being forcefully alienated from their birthplace under humanitarian grounds and as saviour from poverty. In order to simplify the process of adoption the Government of India constituted Centre Adoption Resource Agency (CARA) in 1986. The constitution of CARA increased transparency in international adoption, especially the assignment of a scrutinizing committee to assist the courts in assessing if a child had been given sufficient opportunity to find Indian foster parents. This led to significant rise in domestic adoption and fall in international adoption (Saras et al).

According to the official data by CARA, out of 4009 adoptions in India in 2023-24, 449 were for international adoption. It is true that every child has a right to family life and when it comes to international adoption India has been a desired destination for availability of monetarily cheap adoption facilities. The Indian government has recently passed the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Amendment Act, 2021. It gives the authority of issuing orders related to adoption to the District Magistrate (DM) and not a judicial body like the courts, which ultimately means that the competency of the authority in this case is questionable. So, the question remains whether India is knowingly participating in the process of neo-colonialism so as to lessen demand on the country's welfare resources and economic burden because the adoptees are mostly picked up from shelter homes or is it a broader question of geopolitics that once was applied by the USA in South Korea.

2. Understanding Humanitarianism

As the word suggests, humanitarianism essentially is associated with respect for the lives and dignity of human beings out of moral or altruistic reasons and involves saving humans from

suffering and pain. Further, humanitarianism refers to organizations and governments' efforts to alleviate suffering after natural disasters and aid populations during war or civil turmoil. (Douzinas 2007: 5). Humanitarianism is recognized as an acceptable type of moral concern in current international discourse, allowing it to serve as a point of reference and negotiation for a diverse variety of factors, including NGOs, social movements, companies, nations, and military forces. (Redfield 2015: 452).

According to Talal Asad, the term humanitarianism and its accompanying conceptions and practices especially "emerged in the nineteenth century with the consolidation of the European nation states, the expansion of European colonial empires, and the global development of capitalism. (Asad cited in Edmonds and Johnston 2016: 2).

India has continued to embark upon the colonial legacy of humanitarian missions and has been proactive in humanitarian efforts and assistance to alleviate sufferings throughout the world that now it has become a component of its soft power (Meier 2011). In the past India has been involved in political humanitarian actions in China in 1938 by sending a medical mission to China to help the wounded during the second Sino- Japanese war, intervened during the large-scale civil war in Sri Lanka in the 1990s and in recent years it has actively participated in medical humanitarianism and providing relief during natural disasters here and there.

The rights of the children are well respected by India both in official documents (Article 24 of the Indian Constitution prohibits child labour, Article 21-A mandates the compulsory education of children from 6-14 years and gives it the status of Fundamental right of a child under the right to life) to international bodies (signatory to The Hague Convention for the rights of the Child). This automatically establishes the fact that the right to live in a peaceful environment (family) cushioned by care and nurture is also the right of a child. This also means an orphan brought into the house of her adoptive parents should eventually find herself home in the comforting love of her new parents which has been reiterated in the Child Rights Convention and The Hague Convention on Inter country Adoption.

Locating International Adoption in the Humanitarian Discourse: An Indian Perspective

UNICEF and many other organisations support the retaining of unparented children in their home country and not being in institutional care but also promote the strengthening of institutions as alternative to international adoption through financial and social support of poor parents, domestic adoption etc. (Bartholet, 2010). While

adoption today is considered as a humanitarian initiative, its roots can be traced to the 1870s to 1960s when Britishers transferred orphans from colonies as a part of social reform (Murdoch, 2006), inter country adoption (ICA) can be located to Second World War when Korean children were transferred to USA to save them from the perils of war (Kim, 2021), during the USA- Vietnam war of 1970s in 'Operation Babylift', Cold War in Operation Pedro Pan in Cuba etc. It was believed that a child undergoes a lot of trauma post losing his parents and gets thrown into the gallows of poverty and hence the child stood waiting to be rescued and placed in a new home. According to Cheney, the misidentification of orphaned children as a category for humanitarian interventions reached a crucial stage in the 1990s during the AIDS pandemic in Sub-Saharan Africa. The concept of rescue of orphans is ultimately considered to be based on voluntarism and universal kindness.

The experience of India under British colonialism brought significant changes in the administrative, political, cultural and economic system. Many laws designed by Britishers continue to function in the Indian system even now. Adoption has existed in India since the ancient times as depicted in the epics the Ramayana and the Mahabharata but question on adoption became contested in the 'Doctrine of Lapse' initiated by James Broun Ramsay, the first Marquess of Dalhousie in 1834 and popularised by Lord Dalhousie from 1848 to 1857. Even before 1834, in 1824, the Rani of Kittur, was deprived of her adopted son by the East India company, after the death of her husband. Before the advent of the East India Company, India allowed adoption of boys by Kings in the princely states as their legal heir. The doctrine of lapse negated this policy and gave the English rulers power to veto the succession of an adopted heir and subsequently annex the kingdom. This is how the kingdom of Satara, Jaitpur, Jhansi, Nagpur, Udaipur etc. were forcefully annexed and went on to be a driving factor for the revolt of 1857. Study of each of these kingdoms reveals the underlying imperialist intentions of the Britishers in India- to expand its kingdom of influence so as to increase its revenue and political supremacy.

It must be mentioned that once adoption in India was considered a social stigma, people questioned the purity of blood of the unknown child and adoption agencies were considered to be driven by money mindset. Subsequently in India adoption laws have been put into practice mainly to protect children and the processes got further boost after India signed the Hague Convention of 1993 that specified the rights of the child. International adoption

is allowed in India governed under the Juvenile Justice Act as well as Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act that are both regulated by the Adoption Regulation of 2021 by CARA. But in India,

absence of uniform laws and caste related stigma and prejudice restricted domestic adoption and promoted international adoption. International adoption made its way into India during the 1960s when Belgium Christian missionaries first came to India.

In the era of post colonialism, colonisation appears as a crucial ordering mechanism of the contemporary state system characterised by concentration of power relations seen from the redrawing of boundaries between the normal and the strange or the unacceptable which has implications for the identity of a state (Epstein, 2014). According to Epstein there is a shift from the 'norms' to the dynamic 'normalisation'. India's identity as a state that justifies international adoption for humanitarianism for children in need and care is also one such feature in the post-colonial system.

India passed the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children Act) in 2006 in which adoption was defined as the process through which the adopted child is permanently separated from the biological parents and becomes the legitimate child of the adoptive parents and is entitled to all the rights, privileges and responsibilities associated with a parent-child relation. This act also introduced the expression '**child in need of care and protection**' which has been used in recent times by countries in the first world as the reason for adopting a child from a third world country like India for humanistic reasons. But, it is through 'technologies of intimacy' including legislation, transportation, financial sponsorships etc. that paternalistic tendencies developed between the USA and South Korea and facilitated transfer of children for adoption from South Korea to USA (Kim, 2021) and the amendment brought in the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Amendment Act, 2015 questions the intent of the Indian government whether this legislation is a catalyst to facilitate transfer of Indian children to address its increasing pressure on welfare policies by the poor. The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Amendment Bill, 2021 states that instead of the court, the district magistrate (including additional district magistrate) will perform such duties. The competency of the district magistrate in decisions as sensitive as adoption of a child itself is a matter of questionable intention of the government. In the 2012 conference in Addis Ababa, the African Child Policy Forum (ACPE), mentioned in its report 'The New Frontier for Inter-country Adoption' that ICA is 'modern day imperialism' which allows dominant and developed cultures to strip a developing country from its most precious resource, its children. India is a young country with a high demographic dividend, hence depriving it from its Human Resource curtails its trajectory for human capital formation and economic growth and benefits the foreign country. According to Kristen

and Stephen, a large number of orphanages are formed throughout the world to protect children amidst different types of global crises as a mark of humanitarianism. These agencies

also promote international adoption to address so-called 'orphan crises' by promoting international adoption albeit repercussions like cost inefficiency and unsustainability. The countries in the western world are involved in adoption of children from the developing world which is directly associated with the international market and flow of international capital, which eventually leads to an 'orphan industrial complex'. Whereas the military industrial complex is fuelled by the geopolitics of fear, the orphan industrial complex draws on the political economy of love as the need to help in the Global South (Malkki, 2015). Hence, India becomes that attractive destination for the Global North to showcase their Christian love for orphans as authorised by the Bible (Matthew 25:40). This has led to many orphanages receiving foreign capital from global north that eventually culminates into institutionalisation of orphanages which is considered detrimental for a child's emotional, social physical development as recognised by UNICEF. Institutions like schools, churches, even tourism (orphan tourism) has boomed as a result.

3. Geopolitics of Humanitarianism and International adoption in India

The child is the epitome of moral compassion especially an orphan whose vulnerability to the world extols universal attention and security. The adoption of children from orphanages and homes run by various Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) has been in place since long. India, seen as a country plagued by poverty and discrimination is considered a place

for humanitarian intervention to rescue children and give them a better future. Various safeguards and laws exist in the Indian political discourse for the betterment of children starting from Article 15 Clause (3) of the Indian Constitution that enables the state to make special provisions for children, Article 24 that strictly prohibits the employment of children in hazardous factories to the Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act (HAMA) of 1956. When it comes to ICA, landmark judgments have been declared in the *Rasiklal Chhaganlal Mehta Vs State* in 1981. The section 9(4) in the judgment read that the adoptive parents must fulfil the requirements of law of adoptions in their country and must have the requisite permission to adopt from the appropriate authority thereby ensuring that the child would not suffer in immigration and obtaining nationality in the adoptive parents' country. (Ibid). *Laxmikant Pandey Vs Union of India* in 1984, led to the passing of The Juvenile Justice Act, 1986 to bring uniformity in the Children Act and later formation of CARA that mediated

international adoptions.

The understanding of geopolitics of humanitarianism involves bypassing the principles of humanitarianism namely neutrality, impartiality and universality as the concept of humanitarianism is based on moral responsibility of saving strangers is not based on the geopolitical or historical context of international law (Moore, 2012). Martti Koskenniemi stated that the international 'legal argument proceeds by establishing a system of conceptual differentiations and using it in order to justify whatever doctrine, position or rule (that is, whatever argument) one needs to justify'. Hence study of scope and capacity of international actors becomes important. According to Bellamy, the term 'humanitarian' is linked to activities as diverse as the pursuit of universal human rights, the prosecution of those guilty of offending the "conscience of mankind", the delivery of emergency aid for human subsistence, and the use of military force in a variety of circumstances' (Bellamy, 2003).

The geopolitics of transnational adoption or moving children from one country to the other mainly from the global north to the global south is based on cultural construction of child, children, kin and how global restructuring of society impacts the livelihoods of children (Wichelen, 2015a). The humanistic pity as shown toward the child is often masked under humanitarianism when the underlying motive is to cut the child from her kin because of a superior construction of the institutions of family and childhood of which the global north believe themselves to be in a higher position to understand. Probably this is why transnational adoptees have been found to have grown up seeking to establish their connection with

their birth nation so as to explore their identities only to be caught up in both the worlds (Ahluwalia, 2007). In the process the child-objects become individualised and singularised that culminate them into subjects with agency and into western, liberal subjects where nurture prevails over nature (Wichelen 2015 b) and children are often used to depoliticise highly political contexts as seen in the case of USA and South Korea (cited in Bornstein 2011). Again, the South Korean policy for advocating adoption of its kids to the USA

was also a means to regulate mixed blood population and thus involved selection of which existence was legitimate to save (Kim, 2009) which in hindsight looks like the strategy used by Hitler in Germany to prevent intermixing of German blood with the Jews.

Historically, India inherited the characteristics of economic dependence and lack of social cohesion which made it vulnerable to internal dissension and external interference (Ayooob, 2004). This external influence can be seen in the eagerness of the Global North in

theadoption related issues. Whether it was South Korea's interests to spread its blood in the western world or the USA's carefully calculated foreign policy based on geopolitics to keep South Korea under its influence is not to be ignored if not said with conviction. As discussed in the previous section, the Doctrine of Lapse gave the colonial masters access to unlimited resources in the annexed kingdoms. It also not only gave the Britishers the financial strength to fight wars in India and abroad but also highlighted the geopolitical importance of India by virtue of its location and resources. This also envisages the policy of intervention into the third world as an excuse of humanitarian compassion and reflects the geographical aspect of the geopolitics of the third world especially for a country like India. Modern day Inter-Country Adoption (ICA) practices are meant to serve as a corrective to disastrous social and political upheavals in sending countries as seen in the opening up of ICA around the fall of Communist regimes from China to Romania (Cheney, 2014). The easy and cheap facilities provided by India and the NGOs become one of the factors determining the geopolitics of ICA.

According to Wichelen when it comes to child adoption, geography matters in assessing which child body deserves what kind of moral concern. The presence of a geopolitical factor in this kind of equation is related to the question of access to human resources (the children) given the fact that India is a young country with a high democratic dividend that would benefit the adopting country in actuality. This is driven by a less altruistic and more geopolitical agenda of pursuing neo-colonial supremacy and power in the world. In other words, the transnational movement of children underlines the gross inequality that exists between the global north and south. Often the adopted children are not actually orphans but had living parents who abandoned them. This is a question of domestic regulation that has to be strengthened by the Indian government to take strict action against such parents and not a question that requires international adoption of these children, unless the Indian government considers these children as liability and seeks to benefit economically from the foreign country. This can also be a careful diplomatic strategy of the government to pursue ICA for maintaining relations with a particular country.

4. Conclusion

In the post-colonial countries like India, South Korea, Vietnam, etc. the western hegemonic discourses and practices continue to manifest in intercountry or international adoption practices. However, the humanitarian motivations have often shifted from altruism to acculturation

nandcolour-blindpracticesbytheadoptiveparentstowardstheadoptedchildren, thereby contesting notions around the ideal of a multicultural family. For India, which stood against imperialism, the vicious cycle of 'white saviourism', culminating into the well to do families from the Global North adopting children from Global South reflects the broader geopolitics of humanitarianism premised upon unequal power relations between the countries of Global North and Global South.

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ROLE OF MUSLIM WOMEN IN THE ANTI-PARTITION MOVEMENT OF INDIA

Abstract

The role of Muslim women in the anti-Partition movement of India is a remarkable yet underexplored chapter of Indian history. These women contributed significantly, balancing traditional responsibilities with a courageous stand against the division of their homeland. This paper examines their participation through direct action, intellectual contributions, and organizational leadership. Drawing on historical accounts, letters, and memoirs, this research highlights the socio-political challenges they faced and their enduring legacy in India's independence struggle. The analysis underscores their influence in uniting diverse communities against divisive forces.

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1. Introduction

The partition of India in 1947, which led to the creation of the independent nations of India and Pakistan, was one of the most significant and traumatic events in the history of the Indian subcontinent. This division, grounded in religious and communal lines, displaced millions and led to widespread violence and suffering. While much of the historical discourse on partition focuses on the roles of prominent male leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, and Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the contributions of women—particularly Muslim women—remain largely overlooked. Within this larger historical framework, the involvement of Muslim women in opposing partition offers a unique perspective that bridges gender, religion, and nationalism.

Muslim women's participation in the anti-Partition movement was not an isolated phenomenon but part of a broader engagement with India's freedom struggle. Historically, Muslim women had begun asserting themselves in public and political spaces during the late

19th and early 20th centuries, particularly through reform movements like the Aligarh Movement and later the Khilafat Movement. These earlier moments of political consciousness and activism laid the foundation for their more pronounced involvement in the anti-Partition movement. Women who had already been engaged in community and national issues found their voices amplified in the critical years leading up to independence.

Partition posed unique challenges to women. On one hand, it threatened their social fabric and the communal harmony they often played a key role in nurturing. On the other, the very idea of partition was seen by many as a patriarchal imposition that ignored women's perspectives and lived realities. Muslim women opposed partition not only because of their personal stakes but also due to their broader commitment to an inclusive vision of India. For them, the anti-Partition movement was as much about resisting communalism as it was about advocating for women's agency in the shaping of the nation.

Several factors shaped Muslim women's activism against partition. First, the very notion of dividing the nation on religious grounds was antithetical to the syncretic cultural traditions that many Muslim women were raised in. India had long been a melting pot of cultures and religions, and many Muslim women activists saw partition as a threat to this pluralistic ethos. Second, the practical consequences of partition—displacement, violence, and the tearing apart of families and communities—loomed large in their opposition. Women, who were often the primary caregivers and custodians of familial and community harmony, foresaw the devastation that partition would bring to their social roles and responsibilities.

Despite these motivations, Muslim women's participation in the anti-Partition movement was fraught with challenges. In many cases, they had to navigate deeply patriarchal social structures that limited their public presence and political engagement. Furthermore, their identity as Muslim women placed them in a particularly precarious position during a time of heightened communal tension. They were often caught between the expectations of their religious community and their broader nationalist commitments. Nonetheless, these women demonstrated remarkable resilience, leveraging their unique positions within both the Muslim community and the nationalist movement to articulate their opposition to partition.

Prominent Muslim women leaders such as Bi Amma (Abadi Begum), Begum Rokeya, and Dr. Zakira Sultana played a pivotal role in challenging communal narratives and fostering interfaith solidarity. Their efforts went beyond political rhetoric; they actively worked to mobilize communities, engage in dialogue, and resist the communal violence that was becoming increasingly prevalent. These women used a variety of platforms, including educational institutions, women's organizations, and even informal community gatherings, to spread their message of unity and resistance.

One of the defining characteristics of Muslim women's activism in the anti-Partition movement was its intersectional nature. These women were not only fighting against partition but also challenging the broader structures of gender inequality and communalism. For them, the anti-Partition movement was a means to assert their agency and redefine their roles in a rapidly changing society. By participating in political discussions, organizing protests, and contributing to intellectual debates, they carved out spaces for themselves in a domain traditionally dominated by men.

Their efforts were not confined to elite circles. Many Muslim women activists reached out to grassroots communities, where they played a crucial role in countering divisive propaganda and fostering communal harmony. This grassroots engagement was particularly significant, as it demonstrated their ability to connect with a diverse range of people and address their concerns in a relatable and impactful manner.

In addition to their direct activism, Muslim women also contributed intellectually to the anti-Partition movement. Through essays, speeches, and public debates, they articulated a vision of India that was inclusive and harmonious. They argued that partition would not only divide the nation but also undermine the social and cultural fabric that had sustained India for centuries. Their writings and speeches remain a testament to their intellectual depth and political acumen.

The legacy of these women in the anti-Partition movement is multifaceted. While their immediate contributions were instrumental in shaping resistance to partition, their broader impact lies in the example they set for future generations of women. They demonstrated that Muslim women, often perceived as marginalized within both their religious and national contexts, could be powerful agents of change. Their activism continues to inspire contemporary movements for gender equality, communal harmony, and social justice in India.

In summary, the anti-Partition movement in India was not solely a male-driven endeavor. Muslim women played a critical role in opposing the division of the country, challenging both communalism and patriarchy in the process. Their participation reflects a unique blend of political engagement, intellectual contribution, and grassroots activism. This paper seeks to shed light on their contributions, exploring the motivations, strategies, and legacies of these remarkable women in a pivotal moment of Indian history. By doing so, it aims to fill a significant gap in the historiography of India's independence movement and the partition era.

2. Survey of Literature

The contributions of Muslim women to the anti-Partition movement have often been overshadowed by broader narratives of India's freedom struggle. However, thematic examination of the existing literature highlights key areas of focus: the historical background of Muslim women's activism, their roles in the nationalist and anti-Partition movements, and the socio-cultural dimensions of their resistance.

Scholarship exploring Muslim women's political participation often roots their activism in earlier reformist movements. Gail Minault's *The Khilafat Movement: Religious Symbolism and Political Mobilization in India* (1982) emphasizes how the Khilafat Movement served as a precursor to Muslim women's later political engagement. Minault argues that the movement's call for Islamic solidarity provided women a platform to engage in political activism while maintaining cultural and religious identities. This early mobilization paved the way for their participation in the anti-Partition movement. Similarly, Azmi's *Muslim Women in India's Freedom Struggle* (2010) highlights how women's involvement in socio-political reform movements like the Aligarh Movement laid a foundation for their political consciousness.

Many studies explore the broader contributions of women to India's nationalist movement, with occasional mentions of Muslim women. Pandey's *Remembering Partition* (2001) provides a general analysis of the gendered experience of partition but touches only briefly on the political activism of Muslim women. It situates their involvement within the broader spectrum of women's resistance to communal violence and displacement. However, this perspective is often limited, treating their contributions as secondary to those of male leaders.

The specific role of Muslim women in opposing partition has received scant attention in literature. While books like Mody's *The Last Decade Before Partition* (2015) analyze the anti-Partition sentiment within Muslim communities, they largely focus on male leaders and political organizations like the All-India Muslim League. The absence of women's voices in such works underscores the need for more focused studies. The limited references to women primarily highlight their roles in fostering communal harmony and supporting male-led initiatives, rather than recognizing them as leaders in their own right.

Some works delve into the socio-cultural aspects of women's activism. For instance, narratives from memoirs and oral histories, such as those documented by the National Archives of India, reveal how Muslim women navigated societal restrictions to engage in activism. These sources highlight their dual struggle—against both partition and the patriarchal norms of their communities. Such accounts provide a nuanced understanding of their motivations and strategies, emphasizing their ability to use familial and cultural networks to counter communal divisions.

Although there is a growing recognition of women's contributions to the freedom struggle, most studies fail to specifically address Muslim women's anti-Partition activism. Existing literature often homogenizes their experiences, neglecting the diversity of their roles and the intersectional challenges they faced. This thematic survey underscores the need for a comprehensive analysis of their contributions to both the anti-Partition and broader nationalist movements. By addressing these thematic strands, this study aims to fill a significant gap in the historiography of India's partition and independence.

Objectives

The primary objectives of this research are:

1. To investigate the socio-political role of Muslim women in the anti-Partition movement.
2. To highlight the strategies employed by these women in their activism.
3. To analyze the intersection of gender, religion, and nationalism in their contributions.
4. To document their enduring influence on contemporary Indian socio-political thought.

Sources

The study is based on Archival materials, including letters, newspapers, and pamphlets from the 1930s and 1940s. Memoirs and autobiographies of prominent Muslim women activists were used along with secondary sources, such as historical analyses and journal articles and oral histories collected from descendants and communities influenced by these women.

3. Data and Methodology

This qualitative study employs a historical analysis framework. Primary and secondary sources were analyzed to construct a nuanced narrative. Key methodologies include: **Content Analysis** of Examining speeches, writings, and publications of activists, **Thematic Analysis** identifying recurring themes such as resistance, community mobilization, and advocacy and **Comparative Analysis methodologies were used** comparing their roles with those of other women in India's freedom struggle.

4. Contributions of Muslim Women in Anti Partition Movement

The contributions of Muslim women to the anti-Partition movement represent a multifaceted and often overlooked dimension of India's independence struggle. This section analyzes their activism by exploring key themes: political engagement, intellectual contributions, grassroots mobilization, challenges faced, and their enduring legacy. These themes emerge from archival data, personal memoirs, speeches, and oral histories, highlighting the diverse and impactful roles played by Muslim women in resisting partition.

1) Political Engagement and Leadership

Muslim women's political activism during the anti-Partition movement was not incidental but a continuation of their earlier involvement in nationalist and reformist movements. Leaders such as Bi Amma (Abadi Begum), the mother of prominent Khilafat leaders Maulana Mohammad Ali and Shaukat Ali, were instrumental in mobilizing Muslim communities against colonial rule and, later, partition. Bi Amma's speeches and public appearances challenged patriarchal norms, as she spoke to mixed-gender audiences, urging unity and resistance to divisive ideologies.

Another notable figure was Dr. Zakira Sultana, who emerged as a strong voice against partition during the 1940s. She used her position in educational and women's organizations to highlight the dangers of communal division, often emphasizing the shared cultural heritage of Hindus and Muslims in her writings and speeches. Women like her exemplified how political engagement was not limited to the elite but extended to middle-class and grassroots activists who leveraged local networks for collective action.

Their leadership roles extended to organizing protests, leading prayer meetings for peace, and representing women in nationalist forums. While these efforts often intersected with broader nationalist movements, Muslim women articulated a distinct anti-Partition perspective that emphasized the socio-cultural repercussions of dividing the nation along religious lines.

2) Intellectual Contributions

The intellectual resistance to partition by Muslim women is evident in their essays, pamphlets, and public discourse. Prominent writers like Begum Rokeya had earlier set the tone for women's engagement in socio-political issues, advocating for education and social reform. While Rokeya's activism predated the partition debate, her ideas on communal harmony and the role of women in society influenced subsequent generations of activists.

In the 1940s, women like Hamida Khatun and Sughra Begum wrote extensively in regional and national publications, critiquing the communal politics that fueled partition. Their arguments were rooted in historical and cultural analyses, presenting India as a unified civilization where religious communities coexisted for centuries. This intellectual stance was

not just academic but deeply personal, as many women feared the partition would fracture their families, communities, and identities.

The writings and speeches of these women often emphasized education as a tool for resisting communalism. They believed that literacy and awareness would empower individuals to challenge divisive ideologies. These intellectual contributions extended beyond theory, shaping the strategies and rhetoric of the broader anti-Partition movement.

3) Grassroots Mobilization

Muslim women's grassroots activism was one of the most impactful aspects of their involvement in the anti-Partition movement. Women mobilized support in their local communities, organizing peace committees, interfaith dialogues, and campaigns against communal violence. These efforts were particularly significant in regions like Punjab and Bengal, which bore the brunt of communal tensions.

Grassroots activists like Amna Khatun in Bengal worked tirelessly to counter the divisive propaganda spread by communal organizations. By engaging with rural and urban populations, these women addressed local grievances while promoting the broader message of unity. They often used culturally resonant symbols and narratives to foster solidarity, such as emphasizing shared festivals, folklore, and traditions.

The role of grassroots mobilization was particularly vital in maintaining communal harmony during volatile periods. Women acted as intermediaries between warring communities, leveraging their positions as caregivers and nurturers to broker peace. In doing so, they not only resisted partition but also mitigated the immediate impacts of communal violence on vulnerable populations.

5. Challenges

The challenges faced by Muslim women in the anti-Partition movement were multifaceted, stemming from societal, communal, and political dynamics.

1) Patriarchal Constraints

Muslim women operated within a patriarchal framework that often restricted their public roles. While some families supported women's activism, others discouraged or outright opposed it, citing traditional norms and fears of societal backlash. Activists like Bi Amma and Dr. Zakira Sultana often had to justify their involvement in public life, balancing their activism with traditional expectations of womanhood.

2) Communal Pressures

As Muslim women, activists faced additional scrutiny from within their own communities. During a time when communal identities were being sharply politicized, their anti-Partition stance was sometimes viewed as a betrayal of Muslim interests. Women who advocated for a united India often had to contend with accusations of being anti-Muslim or overly influenced by Hindu nationalist ideologies.

3) Personal Risks and Limited Representation:

The volatile political climate of the 1940s exposed women activists to personal risks, including threats, harassment, and violence. Despite these dangers, many Muslim women continued their activism, demonstrating remarkable courage and resilience.

Muslim women often found themselves marginalized within the broader nationalist movement, where leadership positions were predominantly held by men. This lack of representation sometimes hindered their ability to influence policy decisions, forcing them to rely on informal networks and grassroots strategies to make their voices heard.

4) Legacy and Impact

The legacy of Muslim women's anti-Partition activism is both profound and enduring. While their immediate contributions were instrumental in challenging the narrative of communal division, their broader impact lies in the example they set for future generations of women activists. The courage and resilience displayed by these women have inspired feminist movements in India and beyond. Their activism demonstrated that women could challenge not only gender norms but also broader structures of oppression, such as communalism and colonialism.

After independence, many Muslim women continued their efforts to promote communal harmony and rebuild fractured communities. Their experiences during the anti-Partition movement informed their post-independence work, which often focused on education, social reform, and peacebuilding. By resisting partition, Muslim women sought to preserve the pluralistic cultural heritage of India. Their activism emphasized the interconnectedness of religious and cultural communities, a message that remains relevant in contemporary debates on nationalism and identity.

When compared to the roles of Hindu and Sikh women in the nationalist movement, the contributions of Muslim women offer unique insights. While all women activists faced gender-based challenges, Muslim women also had to navigate the complexities of communal identity and minority status. This intersectional experience shaped their activism, making it both distinct and deeply impactful.

Additionally, the strategies employed by Muslim women—such as emphasizing education, grassroots mobilization, and cultural unity—offer valuable lessons for contemporary social and political movements. Their ability to work across religious and social boundaries highlights the potential of inclusive activism in addressing divisive issues.

6. Conclusion

The contributions of Muslim women to the anti-Partition movement highlight the intersectionality of their struggle. As women, they navigated patriarchal constraints; as Muslims, they resisted the communalization of their identities; and as Indians, they fought to preserve the unity and pluralistic ethos of their nation. Their activism was not merely reactive but deeply rooted in a vision for a unified and harmonious India.

By opposing partition, these women challenged the divisive ideologies that sought to fracture India along religious lines. Their resistance was driven by a recognition of the human cost of partition—displacement, violence, and the tearing apart of families and communities. They understood that the division of the nation would not only undermine its social fabric but also perpetuate cycles of mistrust and conflict between communities.

The broader implications of their activism are significant. Muslim women's participation in the anti-Partition movement demonstrates the transformative potential of inclusive and intersectional approaches to social and political activism. By leveraging their unique

positions within their families, communities, and the nationalist movement, they were able to build bridges and foster solidarity across religious and social divides.

In the context of contemporary India, their legacy remains relevant. The issues of communalism, gender inequality, and social fragmentation that they sought to address continue to challenge the nation. Their example serves as a reminder of the importance of unity, dialogue, and collective action in confronting divisive forces.

This study also underscores the need to revisit and reframe the historiography of India's freedom struggle and partition. By centering the experiences and contributions of Muslim women, we gain a more nuanced and inclusive understanding of this critical period in history. Their stories challenge the dominant narratives that often marginalize women's roles, offering instead a richer and more balanced account of India's past.

In conclusion, Muslim women played a pivotal role in the anti-Partition movement, combining political engagement, intellectual advocacy, and grassroots activism to resist the division of their homeland. Their contributions, though often overlooked, were instrumental in shaping the discourse and strategies of the broader nationalist movement. By documenting and analyzing their activism, this study seeks to honor their legacy and ensure that their voices are remembered as an integral part of India's journey to independence.

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2. Oral Histories from the National Archives of India

Collection of oral interviews from Muslim women activists, recorded post-independence, detailing their experiences and contributions during the anti-Partition movement.

3. Partition Narratives

First-person accounts compiled in works like *Oral History Project: Women and Partition* by The Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, detailing grassroots activism.

4. Contemporary Articles and Essays in Urdu Publications

Contributions by Hamida Khatun, Sughra Begum, and others in periodicals like *Al-Hilal* and *Tehzib-e-Niswan*, highlighting their intellectual stance against partition.

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A Note on Optimization methodology for Non-linear Function under Heuristic Approach

Abstract

In the optimization problems, there are good numbers of theories to justify the optimality of a function for both linear and nonlinear. However, in practical approach, establishing convexity and concavity for a non-linear function with more than three variables is a herculean task and in those cases we usually consider the heuristic approach. Although the optimum of a function may not exist in the assumed search boundaries and we usually stuck with maximum or minimum value of the function. In this note we propose a methodology to address optimization problem with more than three variables using heuristic approach.

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1. Introduction

In the field of computational mathematics, optimization is a active area in both pure and applied mathematics. The application of optimization can be observed in the area of inventory control (Bhattacharjee & Sen, 2021a, 2021b), lot sizing (Wu et al. 2012), scheduling (Tamara et al. 2017) etc. The optimization of functions with single one and two variable function is attainable through analytical approach. However, for a non-linear function with large number of variables and implicit expression of partial derivatives, the analytical approach seems to be a bit tedious and sometime impossible to approach. In such cases various solution procedures and methodologies are proposed to obtain a suitable optimal solution for the function. Some of the solution procedures follow heuristic approaches where the function is optimized through two or more different algorithms and a comprehensive analysis is made to justify the optimality of the solution. Although there are certain situations where we stuck with maximum or minimum value of the function only, they need not be optimal; such situation arises when there is no critical point in the search boundary.

In this note, an effort has been given to propose an optimization methodology for higher dimensional nonlinear function using heuristic approach.

2. Methodology

Let $D \subset \mathbb{R}^n$ be a search domain of the function f defined on D . Let $f \in C^2$ – function of n variables $x = (x_1, x_2, \dots, x_n)$. In order to obtain an optimal value of f the following steps are proposed,

1. We define the function, $G(x) = \sum_{1 \leq k \leq n} |f_{xk}(x)|$ for all $x \in D$
2. It is clear that function G is the finite sum of positive real number therefore, $\min G = 0$
3. Obtain the value of $x = \alpha$ for which G is minimum and consequently $f_{xk}(\alpha) = 0$ for all $1 \leq k \leq n$. Therefore $x = \alpha$ is a critical point of the function f
4. Let $B \subseteq D$ be the new search domain centered at $x = \alpha$
5. Define the function $h(x) = f(x) - f(\alpha)$ for all $x \in B$
6. Now there are three possibilities
 - If $\min h > 0$ then the function f has a global minimum at $x = \alpha$
 - If $\max h < 0$ then the function f has a global maximum at $x = \alpha$
 - If neither of the above exists then the function has neither maximum nor minimum value

Note 1: In the above stated methodology Step 3 and Step 6 can be performed using any heuristic technique and algorithms. Thus, the optimization of f can be established using heuristic approach and Statistical verification is not mandatory for this approach as we are not finding whether the sequence of global best converges or not, rather we are applying the definition of maximum and minimum to justify the optimization.

Note 2: Step 1-3 can be computed manually if it is possible to express the variables explicitly and in that case one can directly begin from Step 4. Otherwise, for implicit expression of partial derivatives f_{xk} one can apply the method from Step 1.

Note 3: It is possible that the critical point obtained using Step 3 is not suitable for the study purpose in that case one can change either the search domain D or input the fresh parameters of the function whichever is applicable for the problem.

3. Conclusion

This is a note to provide a methodology to solve an optimization problem through heuristic approach. So, far the author's best knowledge this methodology of heuristic approach is not proposed to solve optimization problems. In this approach two functions are defined using the given function. First function is defined to obtain critical points, however, if the variables can be expressed explicitly in terms of parameters and other variables from the expression of partial derivatives then one can directly start from Step 4. The proposed methodology is a soft computing approach to optimization problems with large number of variables. The present note can be extended to analyse some optimization problem.

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A Call to Action: Conserving Global Biodiversity Hotspots

Abstract

Biodiversity hotspots, characterized by high levels of endemism and significant habitat loss, are critical regions for preserving global biodiversity and the ecosystem services that support human well-being. The increasing rate of biodiversity loss, exacerbated by human activities, has led to a sixth mass extinction event, emphasizing the urgency of focusing conservation efforts on these hotspots. The concept of biodiversity hotspots, introduced by Norman Myers in 1988, has evolved to include 35 regions that collectively harbor over 50% of the world's vascular plant species and a significant portion of terrestrial vertebrates within just 2.3% of the Earth's land area. These hotspots provide essential ecosystem services, such as water purification, climate regulation, and the provision of raw materials and medicinal resources. The loss of biodiversity in these areas can lead to severe ecological and economic consequences, disproportionately affecting the 2.08 billion people living in these regions who heavily rely on ecosystem services for their livelihoods. Effective conservation strategies for biodiversity hotspots require a multifaceted approach, including the establishment and management of protected areas, habitat restoration, and climate change mitigation. As the world faces escalating environmental challenges, enhanced funding, research, and political commitment are imperative to ensure the survival of these critical areas and the future of life on Earth.

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1. Introduction

The increasing rate of global biodiversity loss, driven by human activities such as habitat destruction, climate change, and the spread of invasive species, has become a critical issue.

The increasing rate of global biodiversity loss, exacerbated by human activities such as habitat destruction, climate change, and invasive species, has initiated a sixth mass extinction event on Earth. This crisis demands that conservation efforts focus on the most critical regions—biodiversity hotspots. These areas, characterized by high levels of endemism and significant habitat loss, are essential for preserving global biodiversity and the ecosystem services upon which humanity depends (Mittermeier et al., 2011). Addressing biodiversity loss is crucial because it threatens the stability of ecosystems and the essential services they provide to humanity. Previous studies have identified biodiversity hotspots as regions with high levels of endemism and significant habitat loss, making them vital for conservation efforts. Despite the recognition of biodiversity hotspots, there is limited understanding of the specific mechanisms driving species loss in these critical areas. By focusing on biodiversity hotspots, this research aims to provide insights that can inform more effective conservation strategies.

1.2 Research Question

What are the primary factors contributing to biodiversity loss in identified hotspots, and how can conservation efforts be optimized in these regions?

1.3 Objective

The objective of this study is to analyze the key drivers of biodiversity loss in hotspots and propose targeted conservation measures.

1.4 Research Method

A comprehensive literature review was conducted to identify existing research and gaps in the study of biodiversity hotspots. A mixed-methods approach was utilized, combining quantitative data analysis with qualitative field observations. Data were collected through remote sensing technologies to assess habitat changes. Collected data were analyzed using thematic coding for qualitative data and statistical software for quantitative data. Descriptive and inferential statistical analyses were performed to determine the significance of observed patterns and correlations.

2.Results and Discussion

2.1 The Role of Biodiversity Hotspots

Biodiversity hotspots are defined by their irreplaceability and vulnerability. Irreplaceability refers to the unique species confined to these regions, while vulnerability indicates the imminent threat to their ecosystems. These criteria ensure that conservation resources are allocated to areas where they can have the most significant impact (Mittermeier et al., 2011).

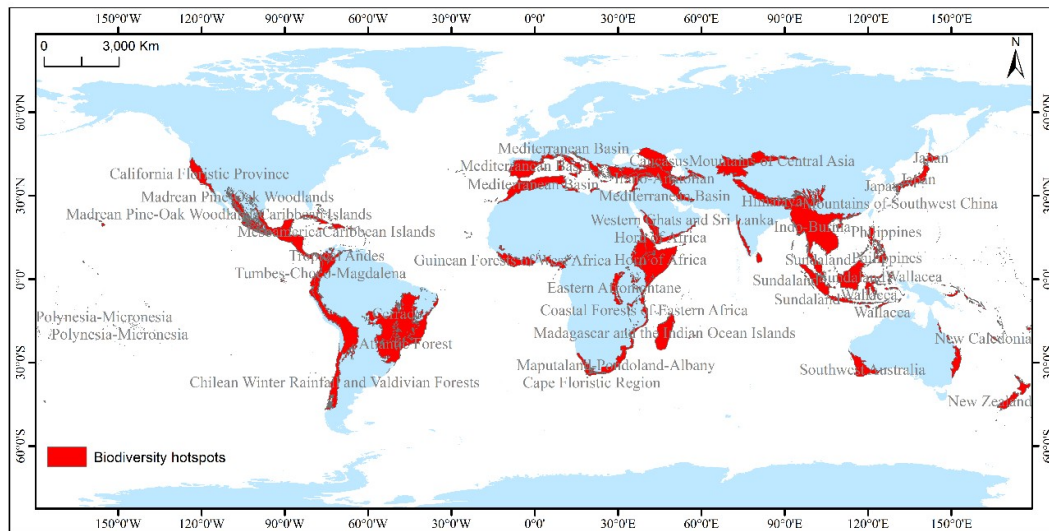


Figure 1. Biodiversity hotspot regions of the world

2.2 Historical Development of the Hotspot Concept

The concept of biodiversity hotspots was introduced by Norman Myers in 1988. Myers initially identified ten tropical forest hotspots based on extraordinary plant endemism and high levels of habitat loss. This list was expanded in 1990 to include 18 hotspots, incorporating regions with Mediterranean-type ecosystems. Conservation International adopted the hotspots concept in 1989, establishing quantitative criteria to identify these areas: regions must contain at least 1,500 endemic vascular plants and have lost more than 70% of their original habitat (Myers, 1988; Myers, 1990; Myers et al., 2000). Over the years, the list of hotspots has been refined and expanded, culminating in the identification of 35 hotspots, including newly recognized areas such as the Forests of East Australia. These regions collectively harbor over 50% of the world's vascular plant species and a significant portion of terrestrial vertebrates, all within just 2.3% of the Earth's land area (Mittermeier et al., 2011).

2.3 Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services

Biodiversity hotspots are not only reservoirs of species richness but also provide critical ecosystem services that support human well-being. These services include water purification, climate regulation, and the provision of raw materials and medicinal resources. The loss of biodiversity in these areas can lead to severe ecological and economic consequences, highlighting the urgent need for their conservation (Costanza et al., 2008; Das & Vincent, 2009).

2.4 Social and Economic Context

The biodiversity hotspots are home to approximately 2.08 billion people, representing 31.8% of the global population. These regions often face higher rates of poverty and malnutrition, making local communities heavily reliant on ecosystem services for their livelihoods. The intersection of biodiversity loss and human poverty underscores the importance of integrating conservation efforts with sustainable development initiatives (Cincotta et al., 2000; Turner et al., 2007).

2.5 Conservation Strategies

Effective conservation of biodiversity hotspots requires a multifaceted approach, including the establishment and management of protected areas, habitat restoration, and climate change mitigation. Protected areas remain the cornerstone of conservation efforts, but their effectiveness depends on proper management and enforcement. Additionally, strategies must consider the impacts of climate change, which may necessitate the creation of ecological corridors to facilitate species migration (Bruner et al., 2001; Turner et al., 2010).

3. Conclusion

The preservation of biodiversity hotspots is crucial for maintaining global biodiversity and the myriad benefits it provides to humanity. These regions represent the most significant opportunities for conservation investment, offering the potential to avert substantial species extinctions and safeguard essential ecosystem services. As the world faces escalating environmental challenges, the importance of conserving biodiversity hotspots cannot be overstated. Enhanced funding, research, and political commitment are imperative to ensure the survival of these critical areas and the future of life on Earth (Mittermeier et al., 2011).

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গল্পকার নরেন্দ্রনাথ মিরের গরল্ল (মনর্ বামিত) অথ বননমতক স্বমনবর নারী : একটি মরেষনাত্মক সীক্ষা

Abstract

The role participation and characteristic of the view point of women's space with a particular mention of the author like Narendra Nath Mitra his creation and his feministic outlook with a particular reference of his short stories will be attempted. The approach primarily will be feministic.

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মানুষের বাঁচার একমাত্র উপায় হলো অর্থনৈতিক স্বনির্ভরতা। অর্থনৈতিক পরিবেশ মানুষের চিন্তা-ভাবনা, আচার-আচরণ ও ব্যক্তিত্বকে বদলে দিচ্ছে। নরেন্দ্রনাথ মিত্র বহুগল্পের নারী চরিত্রকে অর্থনৈতিক স্বনির্ভর করে অঙ্কন করেছেন। যেখানে নারীকে প্রতিনিয়ত সংঘর্ষের মধ্য দিয়ে নিজের বিকাশের পথে, অগ্রগতির পথে এগিয়ে যেতে হয়েছে। ফলস্বরূপ তারা অর্জন করেছে আত্মসচেতনতা, অর্থনৈতিক স্বাধীনতা, শ্রেণিগত অবস্থার পরিবর্তন এবং শিক্ষা।

অর্থনৈতিক পরিবেশের সাথে সাথে রক্ষণশীল সমাজে দেখা দিল জাতিভেদ প্রথা। কিন্তু নরেন্দ্রনাথ মিত্রের সৃষ্ট নারী চরিত্র তা উপেক্ষা করে জীবনে এগিয়ে যাচ্ছে।

তাঁর সৃষ্টি বিবাহবাসর এর নায়িকা চাকরি করে এবং ভালোবেসে অন্যত্র বিয়ে করে নিলে তাকে বাধা দেওয়া কারোর পক্ষেই সম্ভব হচ্ছে না। সমাজ হয়তো প্রসন্নতার সঙ্গে তা মেনে নিতে পারছে না কিন্তু অস্বীকার করার ও কোন চেষ্টা সেখানে নেই। অর্থনৈতিক স্বাধীনতা যে ব্যক্তি স্বাধীনতার সঙ্গে কতখানি অন্বিত এই গল্পটিতে তার ইঙ্গিত আছে।

অর্থনৈতিক স্বাবলম্বী নারীকে অনেকখানি স্বাধীনতা দেয় বলে তাদের বাইরে বেরোনোর সুযোগ ঘটে। কিন্তু সমাজে এবং পরিবারে নারীর অবস্থা এমনি জটিল। নারীরা আত্ম প্রতিষ্ঠার ক্ষেত্রে এমনি দুর্বল যে অনেক সময় দেখা যায় তাদের উপার্জনকে স্বীকার করা হচ্ছে শুধু পারিবারিক প্রয়োজনের দিক থেকে। নরেন্দ্রনাথের নারীচরিত্র তা উপেক্ষা করে ও স্বাবলম্বী হতে পেরেছে। তা লক্ষ্য করা যায় হেডমিস্ট্রেস (১৩৫৭) গল্পের সুপ্রীতি চরিত্রে –

“স্বামীর কথা শুনে সুপ্রীতি অবশ্য বেত তুলল না, কিন্তু মুখখানাকে আরও কঠিন, গলার স্বরটিকে আরও রুক্ষ করে তুলল, 39; তোমার সব ই ঠাট্টা, না? স্কুলের পরীক্ষাটা বুঝি আর পরীক্ষা নয়? কোন রকম দায়িত্ব তার নেই? শুধু চোখ বুজে নম্বর বসিয়ে গেলেই হল, তাই বুঝি ভাব তুমি?।

রীতিমত হেড মিস্ট্রেস সুলভ ধমক। এর উত্তরে শৈলেন হাসতে পারত, অন্যদিন হাসলেও, কিন্তু আজ আর তার হাসি পেল না। তার বদলে মিন্টুই হেসে উঠল, কি মজা। বাবাকে বকো মা, আরো বকো আমাকে নতুন জুতো কিনে দিলে না। কেবল বলে দেব দেব, কোন দিন দেয় না।।

সুপ্রীতি মেয়েকে ধমক দিল 39; এই চুপ। তারপর স্বামীর দিকে চেয়ে বলল, এইতো কাল রাত থেকে বলছি, ক খানা খাতা দেখে দাও। কাজ কর্ম তো নেই। অফিস থেকে এসে চুপচাপ বসে বসেই তো সন্ধ্যা থেকে রাত দশটা অবধি কাটিয়ে দিলেন। আজ ও সকাল থেকে বসে আছ তো আছ ই। কেন দু খানা খাতা দেখলে, নম্বর গুলি টোটাল দিলে কি জাত যায়।”

সুপ্রীতির স্বামী শৈলেন তাকে ভালোবাসে কিন্তু ঘর সংসারের কাজ সেরে ও সুপ্রীতি স্কুলের হেডমিস্ট্রেসের এ কাজ করে যাচ্ছে। তাতে শৈলেন বিমত প্রকাশ করলে সুপ্রীতি তা উপেক্ষা করে এগিয়ে যাচ্ছে। অর্থনৈতিক এ স্বাধীনতার সাথে সাথে অনেক সময় নারীদের মধ্যে শিক্ষার ভাব জেগে ওঠে। আর শিক্ষা গ্রহণ করার ফলে তাদের মধ্যে লেখিকা সত্তার জন্ম নেয়। তা ফুটে উঠেছে 39; উত্তরণ 39; গল্পে। গল্পে পিতার না ছাপা গল্প নিজের নামে ছাপাতে গিয়ে কল্যাণীর মনে জাগে নিজস্ব আত্মপ্রকাশের আকাঙ্ক্ষা।

অর্থনৈতিক স্বাবলম্বী নারীর আত্মসচেতনতার উত্তরণ ঘটে 39; অবতরণিকা (১৩৫৬) এবং সেতার (১৩৫২) গল্পদ্বয়ে। অবতরণিকায় সংসারের প্রয়োজনে বাধ্য হয়ে চাকরি নিয়েছিল আরতি। কিন্তু সংসারে তার অনুপস্থিতি তার স্বামী সুব্রতকে ক্ষুব্ধ করে। ক্রমে আরতির চাকরি সংসারের পক্ষে অতি প্রয়োজনীয় হয়ে দাঁড়ায় কারণ আরতির স্বামী সুব্রত বেকার। ধীরে ধীরে আরতি ও অর্জন করে আত্মস্বাভাব্য বুঝতে শেখে আত্মমর্যাদার মূল্য। তাই একদিন সে সহকর্মিনীর প্রতি মালিকের অন্যায়ে প্রতিবাদে রুখে ওঠে। 39; সেতার 39; গল্পে নীলিমা সেতারের মাধ্যমে গান শিখে টিউশনি করে টাকা রোজগার করে সেই আয়ের দ্বারা আত্ম প্রতিষ্ঠার সাথে সাথে অসুস্থ স্বামীকে ও সেরে তোলে। শুধু তাই নয় নীলিমার কাছে আমন্ত্রণ আসে বাইরের জলসায় গান গাওয়ার।

অধিকার প্রতিষ্ঠার অন্যতম সোপান অর্থনৈতিক স্বনির্ভরতা। সেজন্যই মেয়েদের চাকরি করা প্রসঙ্গটি তাঁর গল্পে ঘুরে ফিরে এসেছে এবং কখনো তিনি সেই

অর্থনৈতিক চাপে নারীকে পরাজিত হতে দেখেন আবার কখন ও জয়ী হতে দেখেন। কুমারী শুল্লা (১৩৪৯) গল্পে দেখতে পেয়েছি একটি তুচ্ছ কারণে স্বামী প্রশান্ত শুল্লাকে ছেড়ে দেয়। শুল্লা কিন্তু নিজের রুচি স্বাতন্ত্র্য কিছুতেই বিসর্জন দেয় না, চাকরি নিয়ে অন্যত্র চলে যায়। রবীন্দ্রনাথ নারীর বিদ্রোহকে মূর্ত করে অঙ্কন করেছেন অনেক গল্পে। তাঁর স্ত্রীরপত্র এবং পয়লা নম্বর গল্পে নারীকে সংসার ত্যাগিনী করে অঙ্কন করলে ও রমণী কিভাবে নিজের ভরণপোষণ চালাতো তার কোন উল্লেখ নেই।

নরেন্দ্রনাথের অনেক গল্পে নারীরা পুরুষের সহযোগিতা ছাড়া ও আত্মপ্রতিষ্ঠা ও সার্থকতা অর্জন করতে পেরেছে তা লক্ষ্য করা যায় স্রোতস্বতী গল্পে। গল্পে চিত্রা পুরুষের কামনার বলি হতে পেরে ঘর ছাড়ে। বিবাহিতা চিত্রা অন্য পুরুষকে গ্রহণ করে তাকে ভালবাসার দায়িত্ব ঘোষণা করে। অন্যত্র দেখতে পেয়েছি নিজস্ব অর্থনৈতিক স্বাধীনতার জোরে রমণী তার পছন্দ মত ব্যক্তিকে বিবাহ করেছে। পিতামাতার শাসন মানবার কোন প্রয়োজন হচ্ছেনা তার। স্বাধিকার গল্পে লক্ষ্য করা যায় বীথিকা পিতামাতার অমতে নিজের পছন্দের পাত্রকে (অসবর্ন) বিবাহ করেছে। তেমনি সুতপা গল্পে অত্যন্ত সাধারণ গ্র্যাজুয়েট রেলওয়েতে অল্প মাইনে চাকরি করা ছেলে ভাড়াটে বাড়িতে থাকে। সংসারে বিধবা মা আর একটি অনুঢ়া বোন। এমন ছেলেকে তার পিতা মানতে চান না। অবশেষে সুতপা বাড়ি থেকে চলে যায়। বিদ্রোহিনী কন্যার কাছে পিতা পরাস্ত হন।

অর্থনৈতিক স্বাধীনতা প্রসঙ্গটি নরেন্দ্রনাথের গল্পে অসামান্য সার্থকতা অর্জন রেছে। পুরুষের প্রতি নির্ভরতা কেটে যাবার সঙ্গে সঙ্গে স্বাধীন ব্যক্তি মানুষ রূপে নারীরা নিজেকে ভাবতে পেরেছে। তা নরেন্দ্রনাথের সুদ গল্পে একান্নবতী পরিবারে বিধবা নারীর কণ্ঠে উচ্চারিত হয়েছে –

“সেদিন আর নেই মশাই। দেওর ভাসুর
বিধবা ভাই বউকে পুষবে, সেদিন আর
নেই। এখন যার যার তার তার। আজ
কালকার মেয়েরা যে নিজের পায়ে দাঁড়াবার
চেষ্টা করে খুব ভালো মশাই, খুব ভালো,
আমি খুব পছন্দ করি।” ২

অপরদিকে রূপলাগি (১৩৬০) গল্পে রমা স্বাধীনভাবে থাকতে চায়। কোন প্রচলিত কারণে নয়। সে শুধু তার সামাজিক ও মানসিক স্বাতন্ত্র্যকে ধরে রাখতে চায় বলেই নির্জের উপার্জনে একা থাকতে চায়। অন্যান্যনয়ন গল্পে নারী নিজেকে স্বার্থক মানুষ ভাবার জন্য কর্মজীবনে সার্থকতার কথা ভাবে। দরিদ্র স্বামীর ঘরের স্ত্রী হয়ে বাঁচার লড়াইয়ে নিজেকে জড়িত করেছে। শুধু তাই নয় নিজের চেষ্টায় সেলাইয়ের কাজ শিখে ক্লাবের ছেলেদের বলাতে টেবিল ক্লথ সেলাই করে দিয়ে টাকা পেলে তাতে অনিমা আর নীরদের আর্থিক অনটন দূর হচ্ছে। তা স্পষ্ট রূপ পেয়েছে 'কাঠ গোলাপ (১৩৫৬) গল্পে। কাজের সাথে সাথে অনিমা গানের মাস্টারি এবং সেলাইয়ের মাস্টারির জন্য ও ইন্টারভিউ দেয়। নরেন্দ্রনাথ মিত্রের গল্পে নারীরা বিভিন্নভাবে স্বাবলম্বী হতে পেরেছে। তেমনি অপর একটি গল্প 'অভিনেত্রী (১৩৫৭) সেখানে বাঁচার লড়াইয়ে লড়তে হয়েছে মালতী আর লাভণ্যকে।

নরেন্দ্রনাথ মিত্রের অনেক গল্পে যুদ্ধ-বিধ্বস্তের সময়ে সাধারণ মানুষের জীবন যাত্রা কন্টকাকীর্ণ। শুধু তাই নয় অভাব অনটন মানুষের প্রাত্যাহিক জীবন যাপনে ভয়াবহ রূপ ধারণ করে। আর সে সময় পুরুষের সহযোগিতা ছাড়া নারীদের মধ্যে

বাঁচার তীব্র আকাঙ্ক্ষা জন্মেছে। তা ফুটে উঠেছে পুনশ্চ গল্পে। জৈনুদ্দিনের প্রথমা স্ত্রী থাকা সত্ত্বে ও ফতেমাকে ভালবেসে পুনরায় বিয়ে করে। কিন্তু দেশে অরাজকতার ফলে পারিবারিক জীবন যাপন অসম্ভব হয়ে উঠলে জৈনুদ্দিন ফতেমাকে ত্যাগ করে। ফতেমা জীবনে হাল ছাড়ে নি নিজেকে সামলে নিয়ে পুনরায় নতুন জীবনের আকাঙ্ক্ষায় দেহজীবিনীর কাজ নিয়েছে।

তদ্রূপ রসভাস গল্পে ও দেখতে পেয়েছি যে নারী চরিত্র পদ্যমণি একদিন সন্তানকে বাঁচাবার জন্য হাত পেতে ভিক্ষে চাইতে অস্বীকার করে। আজ অভাব অনটনের দায়ে পড়ে নিজেকে বাঁচাবার জন্য চাল চালানোর ব্যবসা করে। নরেন্দ্রনাথ মিত্র সমাজের নিম্নবিত্ত ও মধ্যবিত্ত শ্রেণীর রূপকার। তাঁর অনেক রচনাতে নিম্নবিত্ত শ্রেণীর রীরা পরিবারের জন্য উপার্জনের পথে পা বাড়িয়েছে। নারী শুধু সন্তান ধারণ ও গৃহকর্মেই ব্যস্ত থাকবে, তাই নরেন্দ্রনাথের সৃষ্ট নারী চরিত্ররা উপেক্ষা করেছে। স্বনির্ভরতা মানুষকে ব্যস্ত করে তোলে। পতির চরণে নারীর সূহান অথবা সংসার সুখের হয় রমণীর গুণে - যুগ যুগ বাহিত এ ভাবনার ব্যতিক্রম অধিকাংশ পুরুষই মেনে নিতে পারে না। কাজেই দশভূজা নারী সংসার সন্তান স্বামীর প্রতি কর্তব্য কর্মে অবিচল কবে সেটা তো বলাই বাহুল্য। স্বাবলম্বী বা স্বনির্ভরশীল নারীর উপার্জনের প্রতি স্বামী বা বারের দখল থাকলেও তার নিষ্ঠায় ত্রুটি থাকতে পারেনি। তা তার সৃষ্ট নারী চরিত্রে উল্লেখিত হয়েছে।

মানব সমাজের অন্যতম অবলম্বন হলো অর্থনীতি। আর নরেন্দ্রনাথ মিত্রের নারী চরিত্ররা সমাজের বিভিন্ন দিক দিয়ে অর্থনৈতিক ভাবে স্বাবলম্বী, কখনও নিজেকে পুরুষের থেকে হয় মনে করেনি। কোনো নারী শিক্ষা ক্ষেত্রে, কেউবা হাতের কাজে, আবার কোনো নারী সমাজের বিভিন্ন দিক দিয়ে স্বাবলম্বী। আর এই দৃষ্টিভঙ্গিতে তাঁর সৃষ্ট নারী চরিত্ররা যে পাঠকের দৃষ্টি আকর্ষণ করতে সক্ষম হয়েছে তা নিঃসংশয়েই বলা যায়।

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- ২। মিত্র, নরেন্দ্রনাথ, গল্পমালা-৪, অভিজিৎ মিত্র (সম্পা.), 'সুদ' , আনন্দ, প্রথম সংস্করণ, জানুয়ারি ১৯৯৪, পৃষ্ঠা. ২৮১

সহায়ক গ্রন্থ:-

- ১। প্রামানিক, ডঃ সঞ্জয়, 'নরেন্দ্রনাথ মিত্র এবং বাংলা ছোট গল্প' , পুস্তক বিপনি, ১ম প্রকাশ জুলাই ২০০৪।
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