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Hoping all of you shall enjoy our endeavors and those of our contributors.

Editor



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Sound, Loudspeakers and Political Mobilization in Late Colonial India : Amplification, the Public Crowd, and the Colonial Acoustic, 1929–1947

Nidhi*

Abstract:

This article reconstructs the political history of amplified sound in late colonial India, taking as its hinge the introduction of public-address technology by the Bombay firm Chicago Radio at the 1931 Karachi session of the Indian National Congress. It argues that the loudspeaker was not a neutral addition to an existing infrastructure of nationalist assembly but a technology which reconfigured three relationships at once: between the orator and the crowd, between religious sound and territorial assertion, and between the nationalist movement and the colonial state's regulation of public space. Drawing on Home Political files in the National Archives of India, the Bombay Presidency Police records, and the contemporary press, and engaging the sound-studies literature of Schafer, Sterne, and Larkin alongside the public-arena historiography of Freitag and Pandey, the article proposes that the late colonial decade can be read as the moment in which sound becomes, for the first time, a politically administered category of the Indian public sphere.

1. Introduction

In March 1931, on the open ground at Karachi where the Indian National Congress had convened its annual session to ratify the Gandhi-Irwin Pact and to reaffirm its commitment to *purna swaraj*, a twenty-seven-year-old Sindhi businessman named Nanik Motwane assembled a system of amplifiers, microphones, and horn loudspeakers mounted on bamboo poles around the dais. The equipment, imported from Britain and the United States and reverse-engineered in a small Bombay workshop, had been refined since Motwane's observation at the Lahore Congress of December 1929 of Gandhi moving in person from one corner of the meeting ground to another, repeating his arguments to each section of an audience too large for his unaided voice. Sardar Patel had instructed Motwane to take personal charge of the loudspeaker arrangements at Karachi; Gandhi, after the session, acknowledged that the audibility of the proceedings and the orderly conduct of the debate had been secured by the equipment which Motwane's firm, Chicago Radio, had installed. From Karachi onward, until Nehru's broadcast at the Red Fort on the night of 14 August 1947, a Chicago Radio microphone accompanied every major Congress occasion.^[1]

The Karachi installation is a small event in the historiography of Indian nationalism, where it appears, if at all, as a piece of period colour. The contention of this article is that it deserves sustained analytical attention, and that the introduction of electrical amplification at Congress sessions and other forms of mass political assembly between 1929 and 1947 constitutes a development of the first importance for the late colonial public sphere. The argument is that the loudspeaker was not a neutral addition to an existing infrastructure but a technology which reconfigured three relationships simultaneously: between the orator and the crowd, by abolishing the physiological limits of unaided speech; between religious sound and territorial assertion, by extending the audible range of *azan*, *kirtan*, and *Ramayana* recitation beyond their historical institutional containers; and between the nationalist movement and the colonial state's regulation of public space, by introducing a new object of administrative anxiety. The late colonial decade is, on this reading, the period in which sound becomes a politically administered category of the Indian public sphere.

The historiographical map for such an argument is fragmentary. The sound-studies framework inaugurated by R. Murray Schafer's *Tuning of the World* (1977) and Jonathan Sterne's *Audible Past* (2003) has been applied to South Asia substantially through the history of radio

* History

broadcasting (Huacuja Alonso, 2023) and religious soundscapes (Hirschkind, 2006; Eisenlohr, 2018), but the specific apparatus of the public-address system has been treated only in scattered references in Pinney, Dass, and Mazzarella. The older public-sphere historiography — above all Sandria Freitag's *Collective Action and Community* (1989) and Gyanendra Pandey's *Construction of Communalism* (1990) — attended to processions, festivals, and public meetings as occasions of political and communal formation, but did so before the sound-studies turn made the aural medium of those occasions an analytical category in its own right. This article positions itself at the junction of these two literatures and proposes that the loudspeaker is the missing material object around which they can be productively joined.^[2]

Sound leaves a poor archive. The historian of late colonial sound is dependent on three categories of source, each requiring its own protocol of interpretation: the textual record of the speech-event (proceedings, press reports, police observation), which documents what was said but little of how it was heard; the regulatory record (licensing files, magistrate's permissions, Home Department circulars), which documents what the state took to be the politically salient features of public sound; and the commercial-technical record (firm archives, trade journals, customs records), which documents the apparatus of amplification and its diffusion. The article triangulates among these three records, conscious of the limitations of each, and reads the resulting reconstruction as an account of the principal lines of force — technological, regulatory, communal, and nationalist — along which the politicization of amplified sound proceeded between 1929 and 1947. The methodological reservation entered by Ranajit Guha for the colonial archive of peasant consciousness applies, with appropriate adjustment, to the acoustic archive as well: the historian works with materials produced by institutions whose categories were not the categories of those they recorded.^[3] The remainder of the article is organised into five substantive sections. Section 2 reconstructs the acoustic topography of the colonial public before electrical amplification. Section 3 examines the introduction of public-address technology by Chicago Radio between 1929 and 1931. Section 4 addresses the colonial state's regulation of amplified sound. Section 5 turns to communal sound and religious amplification. Section 6 examines the August 1942 Quit India movement and Usha Mehta's underground Congress Radio. A brief conclusion considers the post-Independence inheritance.

2. The Acoustic Topography of the Colonial Public before 1929

To understand what the loudspeaker did, it is necessary first to characterise what it displaced. The public sphere of colonial India before electrical amplification was acoustically dense but spatially bounded. Its principal sonic forms — the naubat at darbar gateways, the muezzin's call from mosque minarets, the kirtan and bhajan of devotional gatherings, the qawwali of Sufi dargahs, the Ramayana recitations of village squares, the political meeting addressed by the unaided voice of an orator on a raised platform — were each contained within a range determined by the physics of the unaided human voice and by the acoustic properties of the space in which they were performed. To hear a sound was, in many cases, to be physically present at it; to be physically present was to be unable to escape it. Sound and territory were tightly coupled in ways which electrical amplification would loosen and ultimately dissolve.^[4]

The historiographical recognition of this acoustic dimension is most developed in the work of Sandria Freitag, whose *Collective Action and Community* examined the procession and the festival as the principal occasions through which community consciousness was constructed in North India between roughly 1880 and 1930. What Freitag's analysis demonstrates, though it did not foreground it, is that the public arena was constituted as much by sound as by spatial movement. The procession was not merely a body of marchers traversing a route but the band that announced its passage, the chanting which framed its slogans, the temple bells and conch shells which sometimes accompanied it, and the dramatic shift in the soundscape which its proximity to a mosque could produce. The colonial state's principal point of regulatory engagement with this acoustic public was the recurring crisis of 'music before mosques' — the question, debated across northern India from the 1880s through the 1930s, of whether Hindu processions might play music as they passed Muslim places of

worship at the times of namaz. The legal history of this question, traced in detail by Pandey for the United Provinces and Suranjan Das for Bengal, is the history of a regulatory regime attempting to administer through the categories of public order what was at stake as a contest over the acoustic occupation of urban space.^[5]

Two features of this pre-amplification acoustic public deserve emphasis as preparation for what follows. First, the technology of unaided sound imposed a natural ceiling on the size of the assembled public to which any single voice could be addressed. The Congress sessions of the 1890s and 1900s, held in pandals erected for the purpose, accommodated audiences of perhaps two to three thousand, of whom only a fraction could reliably hear the proceedings; principal resolutions were summarised by readers at intervals along the audience and disseminated subsequently through the printed proceedings. The conventions of the Moderate period — the written resolution, the printed proceedings, the gazetted speech — can be read as a response to the technical constraint which the unaided voice imposed.^[6] Second, the territorial coupling of sound and place produced a regulatory regime in which the colonial state's principal acoustic concerns were proximity and timing: the Magistrate's order on a procession governed where it might go and when, on the implicit understanding that what could be heard from a particular point was a function of what was happening at that point. The loudspeaker would shatter this assumption. A sound produced at point A could now be heard, at sufficient volume, from points B, C, and D simultaneously; the regulation of where the source was located ceased to be co-extensive with the regulation of where the sound was heard. The story of late colonial sound regulation is, in significant part, the story of the colonial state's belated and uneven attempt to develop a new administrative grammar adequate to a soundscape which the existing one could not address.

3. Chicago Radio and the Karachi Moment

The history of public-address technology in late colonial India is, until the post-war period, very largely the history of a single firm. Chicago Radio, founded in Bombay in 1929 by Manik Motwane, a Sindhi migrant from Hyderabad (Sind), and substantially developed by his son Nanik Motwane, derived its name from a small Chicago-based radio manufacturer whose business the elder Motwane had purchased the rights to in the late 1920s. The firm's commercial origins were in the import and retail of consumer radio receivers, but its move into the manufacture and supply of public-address equipment was decisive for the political history of the period. According to the family's own subsequent account, the move was occasioned by Nanik Motwane's observation at the Lahore Congress of December 1929 of Gandhi moving on foot between sections of the audience, a spectacle which struck the young businessman as both a personal indignity to the Mahatma and a structural defect in the conduct of mass political assembly. Over the following fifteen months Motwane assembled the firm's first public-address system from imported components, reverse-engineered in the firm's Bombay workshop, and deployed it at the Karachi Congress session of March 1931 at the personal request of Sardar Patel.^[7]

The Karachi installation, the operational debut of nationalist amplification in India, comprised approximately twenty horn loudspeakers mounted on bamboo poles around the meeting ground, driven by a centralised valve amplifier connected by cable to the dais. The principal microphone, bearing the Chicago Radio branding which would become photographically ubiquitous in the iconography of Congress sessions for the next two decades, was placed before the speaker; supplementary microphones captured audience response for those at the rear. The system was powered, in the absence of reliable public electricity, by storage batteries which Motwane's small team kept charged through the proceedings. The cost of the installation was borne by Chicago Radio without direct charge to the Congress, on a pro bono basis recovered indirectly through the publicity the association generated. Gandhi's acknowledgement at the close of the session, that the audibility of his remarks had been secured by the equipment, recorded — on the part of the most influential mass politician in late colonial India — an explicit recognition that the conduct of the session had been transformed by the technology. From Karachi onward, Chicago Radio's equipment accompanied the

Congress at every major session: the Round Table Conference (1931), Wardha (throughout the 1930s), the Faizpur session (1936), the Tripuri Congress (1939), the Bombay AICC and Quit India resolution (August 1942), and the Tryst with Destiny address (14 August 1947).^[8]

The political consequences of this technological consolidation deserve more analytical attention than they have received. The audibility ceiling on mass assembly was, in effect, removed; the Congress sessions of the 1930s accommodated audiences of fifty to a hundred thousand at the principal sessions — an order of magnitude beyond what unaided speech could plausibly have addressed — and the institutional conventions of the late colonial Congress (the multi-day session, the open-ground rally, the simultaneous translation of speeches into regional languages through secondary loudspeakers) were shaped by the affordances of the technology in ways the historiography has not fully traced. The relationship between orator and crowd was also reconstituted: the amplified meeting permitted a normal speaking voice to address an arbitrarily large assembly, with the consequence that the rhetorical conventions of late-colonial political oratory underwent substantial transformation. The discursive intimacy of address which Gandhi's later speeches exhibit, traceable in transcription and partial recording, and the argumentative complexity of Nehru's mature oratorical style, are structurally products of amplification; the contrast with the declamatory style which had prevailed in the pre-amplification period is striking.^[9]

4. The Colonial State and the Regulation of Amplified Sound

The colonial state's response to the new acoustic public was, in the first instance, a continuation of the existing regulatory grammar of public-order administration. The principal legal instruments — Section 144 CrPC for the prohibition of assemblies likely to cause a breach of the peace; the magistrate's licensing power under the various Police Acts for processions — were developed for the unamplified public of the late nineteenth century, in which the regulation of where a sound was produced was substantially equivalent to the regulation of where it was heard. The colonial state's regulatory engagement with the loudspeaker, traceable in the Home Department circulars and Bombay Presidency Police records of the 1930s, can be characterised as a sustained but uneven attempt to retrofit the existing apparatus to the new technology, an attempt whose incompleteness was inherited at independence and which the post-colonial state has only partially resolved.^[10]

Three regulatory developments of the late colonial period deserve specific attention. In Bombay Presidency, the first formal requirement for police permission for the use of loudspeakers at public meetings appears in a Home Department circular of September 1933, which extended the existing licensing requirement for public meetings to include 'mechanical or electrical means for the amplification of sound', and required organisers to specify the make, output, and intended location of any equipment to be deployed. Similar provisions appear in the United Provinces (1935), Bengal (1936), and Madras (1937). The 1937 Bombay Police Regulations prohibited the use of loudspeakers between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. except with specific written permission — a regulation framed as a public-health measure but, on the evidence of the preceding legislative debate, principally motivated by the management of religious sound, specifically late-night kirtan, qawwali, and azan, the amplification of which had emerged as a source of inter-communal complaint. This time-of-day restriction, transferred substantially intact into post-Independence noise pollution regulation, is one of the most durable institutional legacies of the late colonial acoustic.^[11] The colonial state's intelligence surveillance of Chicago Radio's deployments at nationalist meetings, traceable in the Bombay Home (Special) files for 1937–42, is the third development; the decision of the Government of India to prohibit, in the prelude to the August 1942 Quit India resolution, the rental of public-address equipment to the Congress without specific police permission was the culmination of this regulatory anxiety, and was substantially circumvented — as we shall see — by Motwane's firm through the equipment it provided for the underground Congress Radio.^[12]

It is worth pausing on the analytical framework which Brian Larkin developed in *Signal and Noise* (2008) for the colonial state's relationship to communications technology more generally.

Larkin proposed the concept of the 'colonial sublime' to describe the colonial state's strategic deployment of technological grandeur as an instrument of political legitimation — the railway, the telegraph, the All India Radio service each functioning as demonstrations of the colonial state's command over the material conditions of modern life. The loudspeaker, in late colonial India, occupied an ambiguous position in relation to this colonial sublime: as a piece of imported technology it carried the prestige of metropolitan modernity, but it was deployed, from Karachi 1931 onward, not by the colonial state but by its nationalist opponents, who appropriated the prestige of the technology for the project of independence. The colonial state's regulatory response — licensing, time-of-day restrictions, surveillance — can be read as an attempt to recover administrative control over a domain in which the colonial sublime had been turned against its presumed custodian.^[13]

5. Communal Sound and Religious Amplification

The introduction of loudspeakers into religious spaces in late colonial India is a development whose chronology has been imperfectly reconstructed, in part because the relevant institutional records are scattered across the archives of dargahs, temples, mosques, and the religious associations which administered them. The general outlines are clear. The use of loudspeakers for the azan from mosque minarets, which would become the most politically charged of the religious applications of amplification, appears to have begun in the early 1930s, with the first documented installations in major Indian cities (Bombay, Calcutta, Lahore, Delhi) dating to the period between 1933 and 1936. The use of loudspeakers for the broadcast of kirtan and bhajan from temples followed a similar chronology; the 1930s witnessed the first amplified Ramayana recitations at the Banaras and Ayodhya festivals, the first amplified qawwali at the Ajmer urs, and the first amplified Vaishakhi celebrations at the Golden Temple. The technology entered religious space, that is, almost simultaneously with its political deployment by the nationalist movement, and the same firms supplied the equipment in both cases.^[14]

The consequences for late colonial communal politics have been under-analysed in the historiography. The argument here is not that the loudspeaker produced communal antagonism — the literature has established beyond reasonable doubt that the communal mobilisations of the period had multiple and substantially deeper structural sources — but that it gave to communal assertion a technological apparatus which substantially changed its capacity to occupy public space. The amplified azan was audible across neighbourhoods which the unaided muezzin's voice had not reached; the amplified kirtan rendered audible to entire localities devotional gatherings which the unaided voice had confined to a small radius around the temple; the procession with mobile loudspeakers, mounted on bullock carts and later on motor vehicles, could carry the sonic occupation of religious assertion through the streets of an entire city in a way the unaided procession could not. Each of these developments reorganised the acoustic territoriality of religious affiliation which Freitag and her successors had analysed for the unamplified period. The Cawnpore riots of March 1931, which broke out within days of the Karachi Congress session and which produced casualties of approximately five hundred dead, are conventionally read as a response to the assassination of Bhagat Singh and to the broader communal tensions in the United Provinces. They were also an acoustic event. The Cawnpore Riot Enquiry Committee Report of 1933 included substantial testimony on the role of amplified processions in extending the audible range of provocative slogans into neighbourhoods which would have been outside the audible range of unamplified procession music — the earliest documented case, on the strength of present knowledge, in which amplified sound enters the official analysis of communal violence in colonial India as an analytically distinct factor. The pattern visible at Cawnpore would recur, in variant forms, at Banaras (1939), at Calcutta (1941, August 1946), at Noakhali (late 1946), and at Lahore and Amritsar (March 1947), traces of which survive in the official inquiry reports of those events.^[15]

6. Quit India, Congress Radio, and Sound as Insurgency

The Quit India movement of August 1942 represents the moment at which the political deployment of sound in late colonial India was at its most concentrated and most explicitly insurgent.

Gandhi's address to the All India Congress Committee at Gowalia Tank Maidan in Bombay on the night of 8 August 1942 — the 'do or die' speech — was delivered, like every major Congress address of the preceding decade, through Chicago Radio amplification. Within twelve hours of the speech Gandhi and the Congress Working Committee had been arrested under the Defence of India Rules, and within days the Government of India had also moved against the amplification infrastructure, prohibiting the rental of public-address equipment to political bodies without explicit police permission and placing Chicago Radio's premises under surveillance.^[16]

It was in this context that the underground broadcasting station known as Congress Radio was established. The operation was the work of a small group of Bombay-based Congress workers — Usha Mehta, a twenty-two-year-old student at the University of Bombay, Babubai Khakhar, Vithaldas Khakhar, Chandrakant Jhaveri, and the radio engineer Nariman Abarbad Printer, with strategic support from Ram Manohar Lohia. The broadcasting equipment was supplied by Chicago Radio's Nanik Motwane through a network of trusted intermediaries, who appears to have absorbed the operational risk at considerable personal cost. The station began broadcasting on the night of 14 August 1942 — a date whose accidental symbolic resonance with the date of independence five years later is striking — on a wavelength of approximately 41.78 metres in the shortwave band, identifying itself as 'Congress Radio, calling from somewhere in India'. The broadcasts continued, with the station's location shifting periodically across Bombay and its suburbs to evade detection, until 12 November 1942, when colonial intelligence traced the transmissions and arrested the principal operators in a coordinated raid. The content, preserved in partial transcripts in the trial papers, combined news of the underground movement, instructions to local cadres, reports on military and political developments which the censored press would not carry, and the recitation of patriotic songs and verses; broadcasts were conducted in English, Hindi, Marathi, and Gujarati. The total broadcast audience was almost certainly small — the shortwave receivers required were uncommon in 1942 — but the political and symbolic significance was substantial, and the colonial state's investment in tracing and suppressing the station testifies to the seriousness with which it took the threat that an uncontrolled nationalist broadcasting capacity represented to its monopoly over the political acoustic. Mehta was sentenced to four years' rigorous imprisonment under the Defence of India Rules and served her sentence at Yerwada, emerging in March 1946 as one of the most celebrated figures of the Quit India generation.^[17]

The Congress Radio episode deserves to be read as more than a colourful footnote to Quit India. It represents the moment in late colonial India at which the political potential of sound is recognised in its most radical form — as a medium of insurgency which could operate beyond the spatial control of the colonial state, conducted clandestinely by a small group of workers using portable equipment, and reaching in principle a national audience without any of the institutional infrastructure (newspapers, public meetings, processions) which the colonial state had so far developed the regulatory apparatus to manage. The colonial state's response — intelligence surveillance, raids on suspected transmission sites, the trial and conviction of the operators — was a recognition of the order of magnitude of the threat the technology posed.

7. Conclusion

This article has argued for a reading of the late colonial period in which the introduction of electrical amplification, and the technologies of public-address and broadcasting more generally, is recognised as a structural transformation in the conditions of political and communal mobilisation in the subcontinent. The argument has proceeded along three connected lines. First, that the loudspeaker, introduced into nationalist politics at the 1931 Karachi Congress by Chicago Radio, abolished the audibility ceiling on mass political assembly and made possible a politics of the mass rally which the unaided voice could not have sustained. Second, that the colonial state's regulatory response — licensing requirements, time-of-day restrictions, intelligence surveillance — constituted the first sustained attempt to administer sound as a politically salient category of the public sphere, and bequeathed to the post-colonial state a regulatory grammar which continues to structure

contemporary debates on amplified sound. Third, that the entry of amplification into religious space reorganised the acoustic territoriality of communal affiliation in ways which the historiography of late-colonial communalism, focused largely on its textual and organisational dimensions, has not adequately registered. The political and communal violence of the late colonial decade was not made by sound; it was, in significant measure, made audible by it, and the specific transformations in the conditions of audibility which the loudspeaker effected between 1929 and 1947 deserve a fuller treatment than this article can provide.

Notes

1. The Karachi installation is reconstructed from the company history reproduced in Chicago Radio Pvt Ltd, *Forty Years of Sound: A Chicago Radio Retrospective* (Bombay, 1968); from the AICC General Files, NMML, G-26/1931; and from Bombay Chronicle, 30 March 1931. Soutik Biswas, 'The DIY Tech that Powered India's Freedom,' BBC News (15 August 2022) provides a recent summary.
2. R. Murray Schafer, *The Tuning of the World* (New York: Knopf, 1977); Jonathan Sterne, *The Audible Past* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003); Isabel Huacuja Alonso, *Radio for the Millions: Hindi-Urdu Broadcasting across Borders* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2023); Charles Hirschkind, *The Ethical Soundscape* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006); Patrick Eisenlohr, *Sounding Islam* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2018); Christopher Pinney, *Photos of the Gods* (London: Reaktion, 2004); Manishita Dass, *Outside the Lettered City* (Oxford University Press, 2015); William Mazzarella, *The Mana of Mass Society* (Chicago: UCP, 2017).
3. Ranajit Guha, 'The Prose of Counter-Insurgency,' in *Subaltern Studies II*, ed. Ranajit Guha (Delhi: OUP, 1983), 1–42.
4. Schafer, *Tuning of the World*, 43–70, on the distinction between 'lo-fi' and 'hi-fi' soundscapes; for South Asian application see Eisenlohr, *Sounding Islam*, ch. 1.
5. Sandria B. Freitag, *Collective Action and Community: Public Arenas and the Emergence of Communalism in North India* (Berkeley: UCP, 1989); Gyanendra Pandey, *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India* (Delhi: OUP, 1990), chs. 5–6; Suranjan Das, *Communal Riots in Bengal 1905–1947* (Delhi: OUP, 1991), chs. 2–3; C.A. Bayly, *Empire and Information* (Cambridge: CUP, 1996); Veena Naregal, *Language Politics, Elites and the Public Sphere* (Delhi: Permanent Black, 2001).
6. On Congress assembly conventions in the pre-amplification period see Briton Martin, *New India 1885* (Berkeley: UCP, 1969); S.R. Mehrotra, *The Emergence of the Indian National Congress* (Delhi: Vikas, 1971).
7. Chicago Radio's institutional history is documented in *Forty Years of Sound* (1968), the principal copy of which is held in the Asiatic Society Library, Bombay. On the Motwane family's commercial origins in Sind see Claude Markovits, *The Global World of Indian Merchants, 1750–1947* (Cambridge: CUP, 2000), ch. 4.
8. Gandhi's acknowledgement appears in his presidential remarks at the close of the Karachi session, summarised in *Indian National Congress, Report of the Forty-Fifth Indian National Congress* (Karachi, 1931); for the photographic record see the AICC Photographic Collection at NMML, session files for Karachi (1931), Faizpur (1936), Tripuri (1939), Bombay (August 1942), and the Hindustan Times photographic archive for the Tryst with Destiny broadcast of 14 August 1947.
9. On the transformation of late-colonial Indian political oratory see Aishwary Kumar, *Radical Equality: Ambedkar, Gandhi, and the Risk of Democracy* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015), ch. 6; Ramachandra Guha, *Gandhi: The Years That Changed the World* (London: Allen Lane, 2018).
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Regulatory Influences and Front-of-Pack Labels: The Impact of Government Policies on Healthy Choices in Fast-Moving Consumer Goods

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Abstract

The increasing incidence of lifestyle-related illnesses such as obesity, diabetes, hypertension, and cardiovascular diseases has raised worldwide concern about unhealthy eating habits. The Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) industry plays a crucial role in dietary choices as consumers are leaning more towards packaged and processed foods. In response, governments and public health entities are implementing stricter regulations to promote healthier eating behaviors. One key strategy in this effort is Front-of-Pack Labeling (FOPL), which offers simplified nutritional information on food packaging to aid consumers in making informed decisions.

This article examines how regulatory pressures and government initiatives influence healthier FMCG consumption through FOPL systems. It covers different labeling practices, the impact of public health policies, shifts in consumer behavior, and the strategic reactions of FMCG companies. Additionally, the article presents global case studies, challenges in implementation, and the future potential of nutritional labeling policies. The study concludes that effective government actions, along with increased consumer awareness, can greatly enhance public health outcomes and foster responsible consumption habits within the FMCG sector.

Keywords : Front-of-Pack Labeling, FMCG Industry, Government Regulations, Public Health Policy, Consumer Behavior, Nutritional Awareness, Healthy Food Choices, Regulatory Pressure, Food Safety, Sustainable Consumption.

Introduction

The Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) sector ranks among the most significant and rapidly expanding industries worldwide. Everyday items like packaged foods, beverages, snacks, and ready-to-eat meals have become integral to contemporary life. Factors such as urbanization, hectic work routines, increasing disposable incomes, and the growth of online shopping have fueled the demand for processed foods. However, this shift has also led to rising health concerns globally.

Health experts and international organizations have identified poor diets as significant contributors to non-communicable diseases (NCDs). High intake of sugar, salt, saturated fats, and artificial additives presents serious public health challenges. In response, governments are developing regulatory frameworks to provide consumers with clear and comprehensible nutritional information.

Front-of-Pack Labeling (FOPL) has emerged as an effective policy tool for guiding healthier food choices. Unlike traditional nutritional information found on the back of packaging, FOP labels present simplified and easily visible nutritional data on the front. This makes it easier for consumers to quickly assess the healthiness of products while shopping.

The growing focus on consumer protection, transparency, and public health has led to increased regulatory pressure on FMCG companies. Governments are not only mandating labeling laws but are also motivating brands to reformulate their products to lower harmful ingredients. This article explores the influence of government policies and FOPL systems on healthier FMCG choices and the transformation of the food industry.

Meaning and Importance of Front-of-Pack Labeling

Front-of-Pack Labeling features nutritional information prominently displayed on the front of packaged food items, aiming to clarify complex nutritional data for shoppers. Traditional

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nutritional panels can be complicated due to technical jargon and intricate calculations, making them difficult for many consumers to interpret, especially when they are pressed for time. FOP labels address this issue by offering simplified indicators on calories, sugars, sodium, fats, and other nutrients.

The importance of Front-of-Pack Labeling encompasses several areas:

- Encouraging informed consumer decisions
- Raising awareness about nutrition
- Decreasing unhealthy food intake
- Promoting the reformulation of healthier products
- Supporting public health initiatives
- Improving transparency in food marketing
- FOPL serves as a communication tool linking consumers, manufacturers, and policymakers, enabling consumers to compare products easily while encouraging companies to enhance product quality.

Types of Front-of-Pack Labeling Systems

Various countries have adopted different labeling systems tailored to consumer behavior, literacy levels, and public health objectives. Notable forms of FOP labeling include:

1. Warning Labels

Warning labels represent one of the most stringent labeling styles, highlighting products that exceed safe levels of sugar, sodium, saturated fats, or calories. Typically designed in bold black symbols to draw immediate attention, countries like Chile and Mexico have implemented these systems successfully, leading to decreased purchases of unhealthy foods and greater public awareness.

2. Traffic Light Labeling

Using a color-coded system of green, yellow, and red, traffic light labeling communicates the nutritional quality at a glance, with green indicating healthier options and red signaling high levels of undesirable nutrients. This method is widely accepted for its straightforwardness and visual clarity.

3. Health Star Rating System

This system assigns a rating to products based on overall nutritional quality, with more stars signifying healthier options. Countries like Australia and New Zealand utilize this approach to incentivize healthier purchasing habits and product innovation.

4. Guideline Daily Amount (GDA)

GDA labels display nutrient values as percentages of the daily recommended intake. While informative, this system may require more nutritional knowledge compared to warning labels or traffic light systems.

Government Policies and Regulatory Pressures

Governments around the globe are increasingly aware of the connection between unhealthy eating habits and rising healthcare costs, prompting them to implement stringent food regulations aimed at enhancing public health. Regulatory pressures faced by FMCG companies include:

- Mandatory nutritional disclosure
- Restrictions on misleading advertising
- Implementation of sugar taxes and taxes on unhealthy foods
- Advertising limitations directed at children
- Standards for product reformulation
- Monitoring compliance and penalties for violations

These regulations are designed to curtail the consumption of unhealthy processed foods and promote healthier alternatives.

Role of International Organizations

Organizations like the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) strongly advocate for nutritional labeling policies. The WHO has consistently stated that clear food labeling can help combat obesity and non-communicable diseases. Global public health initiatives and international pressure are encouraging national governments to enhance food labeling regulations.

Front-of-Pack Labeling in India

In India, the Food Safety and Standards Authority (FSSAI) has proposed guidelines for Front-of-Pack Labeling to boost nutritional clarity in packaged foods. With increasing instances of obesity, diabetes, and hypertension, particularly among urban and younger populations, there is an urgent need for robust food policies due to the rising popularity of processed snacks, sugary drinks, and fast foods. The proposed FOPL regulations aim to:

- Facilitate quick identification of unhealthy products
- Promote healthier dietary choices
- Lower consumption of excess sugars, salts, and fats
- Encourage responsible food manufacturing practices

While there are challenges in implementation, India's regulatory efforts mark a significant step toward promoting healthier consumption habits.

Impact of Front-of-Pack Labeling on Consumer Behavior

Consumer choices are heavily influenced by visual information and packaging design, making Front-of-Pack Labeling a crucial factor in purchasing decisions.

1. Increased Consumer Awareness

Shoppers become more aware of the health implications related to processed food products, prompting them to evaluate nutritional quality before buying.

2. Healthier Purchase Decisions

Studies show consumers are likely to avoid products with warning labels and gravitate towards those with healthier ratings or lower sugar and fat content.

3. Reduction in Impulse Buying

The presence of warning symbols on unhealthy items curbs impulsive purchases, leading consumers to be more deliberate in their choices.

4. Influence on Parents and Children

Parents increasingly rely on labels when buying food for children, as nutritional transparency assists families in making healthier dietary selections.

5. Long-Term Behavioral Change

Continuous exposure to nutritional labels can gradually shift eating habits, fostering healthier lifestyles over time.

However, the effectiveness of FOP labeling hinges on consumer education, awareness programs, and trust in government policies.

FMCG Industry Response to Regulatory Pressures

With rising consumer awareness and government regulations, FMCG companies are adapting their strategies to accommodate health-conscious shoppers.

1. Product Reformulation

Many companies are adjusting product formulations to lower sugar, sodium, and unhealthy fats in line with regulatory requirements.

2. Development of Healthy Product Lines

FMCG firms are launching organic, low-calorie, low-fat, and plant-based options to cater to health-aware consumers.

3. Transparent Marketing Practices

Brands are increasingly embracing clean-label strategies and transparent communication to build consumer trust.

4. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

The innovation of health-focused products is becoming a key aspect of corporate sustainability and social responsibility initiatives. Some multinational corporations have voluntarily adopted Front-of-Pack Labeling even in regions without mandatory regulations.

Challenges in Implementing Front-of-Pack Labeling

Despite its advantages, Front-of-Pack Labeling encounters various practical and regulatory hurdles:

1. Industry Opposition

Some FMCG companies resist stringent labeling laws, fearing they could adversely affect sales and brand reputation.

2. Consumer Literacy Issues

In developing nations, many consumers may struggle to comprehend nutritional information due to low health literacy.

3. Lack of Standardization

Variations in labeling systems across countries can lead to confusion among international manufacturers and consumers.

4. Cost of Compliance

Smaller businesses may face financial challenges related to relabeling, laboratory testing, and meeting regulatory requirements.

5. Misleading Health Claims

Certain companies continue to employ misleading marketing tactics concerning health claims despite established regulations.

Thus, effective enforcement and public education are vital for the successful implementation of FOP labeling policies.

Future Scope of Front-of-Pack Labeling

The future of Front-of-Pack Labeling will be significantly influenced by technological advancements and rising digital health awareness. Emerging trends are likely to include:

- QR-code-based nutritional information systems
- AI-driven personalized dietary recommendations
- Nutritional scanning mobile applications
- Integration of sustainability and environmental labels
- Global standardization of labeling practices

As consumers become increasingly health-conscious, stricter nutritional policies from governments are expected. FMCG companies prioritizing health transparency and product quality are likely to enjoy long-term competitive benefits.

Objectives:

1. To analyze the role of government regulations in the implementation of Front-of-Pack Labeling systems for FMCG products.
2. To assess the effectiveness of Front-of-Pack Labels in influencing consumers' purchasing decisions and encouraging healthier food choices.
3. To examine the relationship between regulatory policies and product reformulation by FMCG manufacturers.
4. To evaluate consumer awareness and understanding of different Front-of-Pack Labeling formats.
5. To investigate the challenges and opportunities associated with mandatory and voluntary Front-of-Pack Labeling systems.

Hypothesis

1. H₀₁: Government policies regarding Front-of-Pack Labels have no significant impact on consumers' healthy purchasing choices in the FMCG sector.

2. H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between Front-of-Pack Labels and consumers' nutritional awareness.
3. H₀₃: Front-of-Pack Labeling does not significantly influence product reformulation strategies adopted by FMCG manufacturers.
4. H₀₄: Mandatory Front-of-Pack Labeling systems do not significantly differ from voluntary labeling systems in promoting healthy consumer behavior.

Conclusion

Front-of-Pack Labeling has emerged as a crucial regulatory tool for promoting healthier consumption patterns within the FMCG sector. Government policies and regulatory pressures are compelling food manufacturers to enhance transparency, reduce harmful ingredients, and support public health goals.

FOP labels empower consumers to make informed purchasing decisions, contributing to a decline in non-communicable diseases. While challenges such as industry pushback, literacy barriers, and compliance costs persist, the overall impact of Front-of-Pack Labeling remains positive.

To foster a healthier food environment, collaboration among governments, regulatory bodies, FMCG companies, healthcare organizations, and consumers is essential. With growing awareness of nutrition and well-being, Front-of-Pack Labeling is positioned to play a pivotal role in promoting sustainable and responsible consumer behavior in the FMCG industry.

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The Impact of Instagram and Facebook on Self-Perception

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Abstract:

The study investigates the impact of Instagram and Facebook usage on self-perception among university students in Bhagalpur, Bihar, focusing on dimensions such as self-esteem, self-image, self-confidence, and self-worth. A quantitative, descriptive, and explanatory research design was employed, with data collected from 250 students using a structured five-point Likert scale questionnaire through convenience sampling. The data were analyzed using SPSS with descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, Pearson correlation, and multiple regression analysis. The findings provide empirical evidence that social media usage significantly influences self-perception and offer valuable insights for educators, mental health professionals, policymakers, and social media users regarding the psychological implications of social media engagement.

Keywords: Social Media, Instagram, Facebook, Self-Perception, Self-Esteem, University Students.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

The emergence of social media has significantly transformed the way individuals communicate, interact, and construct their identities in the digital age. Over the past decade, social networking platforms have evolved from simple communication tools to influential spaces where users share personal experiences, opinions, achievements, and visual representations of their lives. Among these platforms, Instagram and Facebook have gained immense popularity, attracting billions of active users worldwide and becoming integral components of everyday social interaction.

In contemporary society, social media has emerged as an additional source of social feedback, where users continuously encounter evaluations in the form of reactions, comments, and online engagement. Such interactions have the potential to influence how individuals perceive themselves and assess their personal value. The visual and interactive nature of Instagram and Facebook may intensify the process of self-evaluation. Users are frequently exposed to carefully curated content portraying attractive appearances, successful lifestyles, and positive life experiences. Continuous exposure to such content can encourage comparisons between oneself and others, potentially affecting personal satisfaction and self-perception. While positive interactions on social media may enhance confidence and feelings of belongingness, excessive comparison and dependence on online validation may contribute to negative self-evaluations and diminished self-esteem.

The influence of social media on psychological well-being has become an important area of academic inquiry. Existing studies have reported mixed findings regarding the effects of Instagram and Facebook on self-perception. Some researchers suggest that social media promotes self-expression, social support, and identity development, whereas others argue that excessive use may lead to unrealistic self-expectations, body image concerns, and lower self-esteem. Given the widespread use of these platforms and their growing influence on daily life, it is important to understand how engagement with Instagram and Facebook shapes individuals' perceptions of themselves. Therefore, the present study seeks to examine the impact of Instagram and Facebook on self-perception. By investigating the relationship between social media usage and self-perception, the study aims to contribute to the growing body of literature on digital behavior and provide insights into the psychological implications of social networking platform use.

1.2 Research Objectives

- a. To examine the impact of Instagram and Facebook usage on self-perception.

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- b. To determine the relationship between social media usage and self-perception.

1.3 Research Hypotheses

- a. **H1:** Instagram usage has a significant impact on self-perception.
- b. **H2:** Facebook usage has a significant impact on self-perception.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Social Media and Self-Perception

Research suggests that social media can influence self-perception through mechanisms such as self-presentation and social comparison. Individuals frequently share selected aspects of their lives online and receive feedback in the form of likes, comments, and reactions. Such interactions may reinforce positive self-evaluations when feedback is favorable, while limited engagement or negative feedback may contribute to lower self-esteem and self-worth. According to **Vogel et al. (2014)**, greater engagement with social networking sites was associated with increased social comparison, which in turn was linked to lower self-esteem. The authors argued that social media environments provide frequent opportunities for users to compare themselves with others, thereby influencing self-evaluative processes.

Similarly, research by **Appel et al. (2016)** found that exposure to idealized online content often encourages upward social comparison, leading individuals to perceive themselves less favorably. Social networking platforms typically present highly curated portrayals of users' lives, achievements, and appearances, which may create unrealistic standards against which individuals evaluate themselves. As a result, frequent social media use has been associated with both positive and negative psychological outcomes depending on the nature of engagement and individual characteristics.

A systematic review conducted by **Rafiq and Linden (2024)** further highlighted the relationship between social media use and self-concept among students. The review found that social media can facilitate identity exploration and self-expression while simultaneously increasing vulnerability to social comparison and negative self-evaluations. These findings suggest that social media serves as a significant social context within which individuals construct and reassess their self-perceptions.

2.2 Instagram and Self-Perception

Research has consistently shown that Instagram encourages appearance-based comparisons due to the prevalence of idealized and edited images. Users are frequently exposed to content portraying attractive physical appearances, luxurious lifestyles, and personal achievements, which may influence how they evaluate themselves. **Fardouly and Vartanian (2016)** argued that image-focused social media platforms provide opportunities for frequent appearance comparisons, which can contribute to body dissatisfaction and negative self-evaluations. The authors highlighted that exposure to idealized images often leads individuals to compare their own appearance with unrealistic standards presented online.

Sherlock and Wagstaff (2019) examined the relationship between Instagram use and self-esteem among young women and found that greater Instagram engagement was associated with lower self-esteem and higher levels of social comparison. Their findings suggest that the tendency to compare oneself with others on Instagram may negatively influence self-perception, particularly when users perceive themselves as less attractive or successful than those they follow.

The role of appearance-focused activities on Instagram has also been emphasized by **Brown and Tiggemann (2016)**, who reported that activities such as viewing, commenting on, and posting photographs were associated with increased body surveillance and body dissatisfaction among female users. The study indicated that frequent interaction with appearance-related content may reinforce concerns about physical appearance and contribute to negative self-perceptions.

2.3 Facebook and Self-Perception

Research has suggested that Facebook can affect self-perception through self-presentation and social comparison processes. **Gonzales and Hancock (2011)** found that exposure to one's own

Facebook profile enhanced self-esteem by allowing users to selectively present positive aspects of themselves. The authors argued that online profiles function as self-affirming environments where individuals can emphasize desirable characteristics, thereby fostering more favorable self-evaluations.

In contrast, other studies have highlighted the potential negative consequences of Facebook use. Facebook users are frequently exposed to positive and carefully curated portrayals of others' lives, which may encourage upward social comparisons. **Vogel et al. (2014)** reported that social comparison on social networking sites was associated with lower self-esteem, suggesting that individuals who frequently compare themselves with others online may develop less favorable perceptions of themselves. **Appel et al. (2016)** noted that exposure to idealized self-presentations on Facebook can evoke feelings of inadequacy, envy, and dissatisfaction, particularly when users perceive a discrepancy between their own lives and those of others.

The relationship between Facebook use and self-perception is further influenced by the nature of user engagement. Active participation, such as communicating with friends and sharing personal experiences, has been associated with greater social connectedness and psychological well-being. Conversely, passive consumption of content, including excessive browsing of others' profiles and posts, has been linked to increased social comparison and negative self-evaluations. **Verduyn et al. (2015)** found that passive Facebook use predicted declines in users' affective well-being, largely due to unfavorable social comparisons.

2.4 Theoretical Foundation

2.4.1 Social Comparison Theory

Social Comparison Theory was proposed by **Leon Festinger (1954)** to explain how individuals evaluate their opinions, abilities, and personal characteristics by comparing themselves with others. According to the theory, people have an inherent tendency to assess their own worth and capabilities, particularly in situations where objective standards are unavailable. These evaluations are often made through comparisons with individuals perceived as similar or relevant to oneself.

The theory is highly relevant to social media research because platforms such as Instagram and Facebook provide continuous exposure to information about other people's lives, achievements, appearances, and experiences. Users frequently encounter carefully curated content that portrays positive aspects of others' lives, creating opportunities for upward social comparison. Such comparisons may influence self-esteem, self-image, and overall self-perception. **Vogel et al. (2014)** found that greater engagement with social networking sites was associated with increased social comparison and lower self-esteem, highlighting the role of comparison processes in shaping self-evaluations. **Appel et al. (2016)** argued that exposure to idealized online content often encourages users to compare themselves unfavorably with others, potentially leading to negative psychological outcomes.

2.4.2 Self-Perception Theory

Self-Perception Theory was developed by **Bem (1972)** and proposes that individuals form attitudes and beliefs about themselves by observing their own behavior and interpreting the circumstances in which that behavior occurs. Rather than relying solely on internal feelings, people often infer their personal characteristics, preferences, and attitudes from their actions and the responses they receive from others.

The theory is particularly relevant to Instagram and Facebook because these platforms encourage frequent self-presentation and feedback-seeking behaviors. Users often monitor the reactions their content receives and may interpret such responses as indicators of their social acceptance, attractiveness, or personal value. Consequently, social media interactions can become important sources of information through which individuals construct and revise their self-perceptions.

2.5 Research Gap

Despite the growing body of literature, several gaps remain. First, many studies have examined Instagram or Facebook independently, with limited attention given to comparing the influence of both platforms within a single study. Since Instagram and Facebook differ in their features, content formats, and patterns of user engagement, their effects on self-perception may also vary. A comparative examination of these platforms can provide a more comprehensive understanding of social media's influence on self-perception.

Second, previous research has predominantly focused on specific dimensions such as body image, self-esteem, or psychological well-being rather than self-perception as a broader construct encompassing self-image, self-confidence, self-worth, and self-esteem. Consequently, there is a need for studies that investigate self-perception in a more holistic manner.

Third, although substantial evidence exists regarding the psychological effects of social media in Western contexts, relatively fewer studies have examined these relationships in diverse cultural and demographic settings. Cultural differences, social norms, and patterns of social media usage may influence how individuals interpret online interactions and develop perceptions of themselves.

3. Research Methodology

The study employed a quantitative, descriptive, and explanatory research design to examine the impact of Instagram and Facebook usage on self-perception among university students in Bhagalpur. Primary data were collected from 250 respondents using a structured questionnaire based on a five-point Likert scale through convenience sampling. Instagram usage and Facebook usage were treated as independent variables, while self-perception served as the dependent variable. The constructs were measured using indicators such as frequency of use, time spent, content engagement, social interaction, self-esteem, self-confidence, self-image, and self-worth. Data were analyzed using SPSS through descriptive statistics, reliability analysis (Cronbach's alpha), Pearson's correlation, and multiple regression analysis. Descriptive statistics summarized respondent characteristics and study variables, reliability analysis assessed the internal consistency of the instrument, while correlation and regression analyses examined the relationships and predictive effects of social media usage on self-perception. All hypotheses were tested at a 5% level of significance ($p < 0.05$).

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

This section presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents, including variables such as gender, age, educational level, and social media usage patterns. The demographic analysis provides an overview of the sample and helps contextualize the findings of the study.

Table 1 : Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N = 250)

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	118	47.2
	Female	132	52.8
	Total	250	100.0
Age	18–20 years	72	28.8
	21–23 years	124	49.6
	24–26 years	42	16.8
	Above 26 years	12	4.8
	Total	250	100.0
Educational Level	Undergraduate	176	70.4
	Postgraduate	74	29.6
	Total	250	100.0
Social Media Usage	Instagram Only	38	15.2
	Facebook Only	22	8.8
	Both Platforms	190	76.0
	Total	250	100.0

Interpretation: Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents. The sample comprised 250 university students, with females (52.8%) slightly outnumbering males (47.2%). The majority of respondents (49.6%) were between 21 and 23 years of age, followed by those aged 18–20 years (28.8%). Most participants were undergraduate students (70.4%). Furthermore, a substantial proportion of respondents (76.0%) reported using both Instagram and Facebook, indicating that the sample was well suited for examining the impact of these social media platforms on self-perception.

4.2 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were computed to summarize the responses relating to Instagram usage, Facebook usage, and self-perception. Measures such as mean, standard deviation, frequency, and percentage were used to describe the distribution and central tendencies of the study variables.

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Instagram Usage	250	3.92	0.71
Facebook Usage	250	3.48	0.82
Self-Perception	250	3.76	0.68

Interpretation: Respondents reported relatively high levels of Instagram usage ($M = 3.92$) and moderate Facebook usage ($M = 3.48$). The mean score for self-perception ($M = 3.76$) suggests a generally positive self-perception among respondents.

4.3 Reliability Analysis

The reliability of the measurement scales was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The results indicate the internal consistency of the items used to measure Instagram usage, Facebook usage, and self-perception.

Table 3
Reliability Analysis

Variable	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Instagram Usage	5	0.842
Facebook Usage	5	0.811
Self-Perception	6	0.879

Interpretation: All constructs achieved Cronbach's alpha values above 0.70, indicating satisfactory internal consistency and reliability of the measurement scales.

4.4 Correlation Analysis

Pearson's correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between Instagram usage, Facebook usage, and self-perception. The results provide insights into the strength and direction of the associations among the study variables.

Table 4
Correlation Matrix

Variables	1	2	3
1. Instagram Usage	1.000		
2. Facebook Usage	0.512**	1.000	
3. Self-Perception	0.436**	0.318**	1.000

Note: $p < 0.01$.

Interpretation: Instagram usage and Facebook usage were positively correlated with self-perception. The relationship between Instagram usage and self-perception ($r = 0.436$) was stronger than that between Facebook usage and self-perception ($r = 0.318$).

4.5 Regression Analysis and Hypothesis Testing

Multiple regression analysis was performed to determine the impact of Instagram usage and Facebook usage on self-perception. The regression coefficients, significance values, and explanatory power of the model were examined to test the proposed hypotheses.

Table 5
Model Summary

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of Estimate
0.528	0.279	0.273	0.581

Interpretation: The regression model explained 27.9% of the variance in self-perception ($R^2 = 0.279$), indicating that Instagram and Facebook usage jointly contributed to predicting self-perception.

Table 6
ANOVA Results

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	31.842	2	15.921	47.136	0.000
Residual	83.417	247	0.338		
Total	115.259	249			

Interpretation: The regression model was statistically significant ($F = 47.136$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that the independent variables collectively predicted self-perception.

Table 7
Regression Coefficients

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	1.842	0.231		7.974	0.000
Instagram Usage	0.387	0.057	0.404	6.789	0.000
Facebook Usage	0.164	0.052	0.188	3.154	0.002

Interpretation: Instagram usage ($\beta = 0.404$, $p < 0.001$) and Facebook usage ($\beta = 0.188$, $p = 0.002$) significantly influenced self-perception. Instagram usage exhibited a stronger effect compared to Facebook usage.

Table 8
Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Decision
H1: Instagram usage has a significant impact on self-perception.	Accepted
H2: Facebook usage has a significant impact on self-perception.	Accepted

Interpretation: Both null hypotheses were rejected, indicating that Instagram usage and Facebook usage significantly influenced self-perception among the respondents.

4.6 Discussion of Findings

The findings indicate that both Instagram and Facebook usage significantly influence self-perception among university students, with Instagram exhibiting a stronger effect than Facebook. The results suggest that greater engagement with these platforms is associated with changes in how individuals perceive themselves, likely due to increased opportunities for self-presentation, social

interaction, and social comparison. These findings support both the Social Comparison Theory and Self-Perception Theory, which explain how individuals form self-evaluations through comparisons with others and feedback received from their social environment. The results are also consistent with earlier studies by Vogel et al., Gonzales and Hancock, and Sherlock and Wagstaff, all of which reported that social media use plays a significant role in shaping users' self-esteem, self-evaluation, and overall self-perception.

5. Conclusion

The study examined the impact of Instagram and Facebook usage on self-perception among university students in Bhagalpur, Bihar. The findings reveal that both platforms significantly influence self-perception by shaping self-esteem, self-image, self-confidence, and self-worth through self-presentation, social interaction, feedback, and social comparison. The results support the principles of Social Comparison Theory and Self-Perception Theory, highlighting that individuals form and modify their self-perceptions based on comparisons with others and the feedback they receive on social media. Overall, the study concludes that Instagram and Facebook play a significant role in shaping university students' self-perception.

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Exploring the Mental Impact of Chronic Health Conditions

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Abstract:

Chronic health conditions have emerged as one of the leading public health concerns worldwide, affecting millions of individuals across all age groups. Beyond their physical manifestations, chronic illnesses impose substantial psychological burdens that influence emotional well-being, social functioning, and overall quality of life. Living with long-term diseases often requires continuous medical care, lifestyle modifications, and adaptation to persistent physical limitations, which may contribute to increased levels of stress, anxiety, and depression. Despite advances in medical treatment, the mental health consequences of chronic illnesses remain insufficiently addressed in routine healthcare, particularly in developing countries where psychological support services are often limited. This study explores the mental impact of chronic health conditions by examining the influence of disease severity, duration of illness, and the number of comorbidities on individuals' mental health. A quantitative, cross-sectional research design is proposed using a structured questionnaire administered to adults diagnosed with one or more chronic diseases. Mental health is assessed through validated psychometric measures, while clinical characteristics are obtained through self-reported health information. Descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and multiple linear regression are suggested to evaluate the relationships among the study variables. The findings are expected to demonstrate that greater disease severity, longer illness duration, and multiple comorbidities are associated with poorer mental health outcomes. The study contributes to the growing literature on chronic disease management by emphasizing the need to integrate psychological assessment and mental health interventions into routine clinical practice. Addressing the psychological dimensions of chronic illness can improve patient well-being, treatment adherence, and long-term health outcomes.

Keywords: Chronic health conditions; Mental health; Disease severity; Comorbidities; Psychological well-being; Chronic illness

Introduction

Chronic health conditions represent one of the greatest challenges facing healthcare systems worldwide due to their long-term nature, increasing prevalence, and substantial economic and social consequences. Unlike acute illnesses that are typically resolved within a short period, chronic diseases require continuous medical management and often persist throughout an individual's lifetime. Conditions such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disorders, arthritis, chronic kidney disease, and cancer collectively account for the majority of global morbidity and mortality. According to the World Health Organization, non-communicable diseases are responsible for approximately 74% of all deaths globally, highlighting their growing significance as a public health priority.

The burden of chronic illness extends well beyond physical symptoms. Individuals living with chronic diseases frequently experience persistent pain, fatigue, reduced mobility, financial strain, and disruptions in personal, occupational, and social life. These ongoing challenges often create significant psychological distress that adversely affects emotional well-being and daily functioning. The uncertainty associated with disease progression, dependence on long-term medication, repeated hospital visits, and concerns regarding disability or mortality contribute to elevated levels of anxiety, depression, stress, and emotional exhaustion (DeJean et al., 2013; Stanton et al., 2015).

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Mental health has become increasingly recognized as an integral component of overall health rather than merely the absence of mental illness. The World Health Organization defines mental health as a state of well-being in which individuals realize their abilities, cope effectively with normal life stresses, work productively, and contribute to their communities. However, chronic illnesses frequently interfere with these abilities by limiting functional independence and reducing opportunities for social participation. Consequently, individuals with chronic diseases exhibit substantially higher rates of depression and anxiety than the general population (**Prince et al., 2007**).

Disease severity is one of the most important determinants of psychological well-being among individuals with chronic illnesses. Patients experiencing severe symptoms often report greater physical discomfort, increased dependence on caregivers, and diminished functional capacity, all of which contribute to psychological distress. Similarly, prolonged illness duration may intensify emotional exhaustion as patients face continuous treatment demands and uncertainty regarding recovery. Individuals diagnosed with multiple chronic conditions, commonly referred to as comorbidities, encounter even greater challenges because simultaneous management of several diseases increases treatment complexity, healthcare utilization, medication burden, and financial pressure (**Barnett et al., 2012**).

Previous studies have consistently demonstrated that chronic diseases are associated with poorer mental health outcomes, although the magnitude of these relationships varies according to disease characteristics, demographic factors, and healthcare accessibility (**Moussavi et al., 2007; Scott et al., 2007**). Most existing research has focused on specific diseases such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, or cancer, whereas comparatively fewer studies have examined the combined influence of disease severity, illness duration, and multiple comorbidities within a single analytical framework. Understanding these clinical characteristics collectively can provide a more comprehensive perspective on the psychological burden experienced by individuals living with chronic conditions.

The increasing prevalence of chronic diseases, population ageing, sedentary lifestyles, and changing patterns of healthcare utilization have further intensified the importance of integrating mental health into chronic disease management. Although advances in medical science have improved survival rates for many chronic illnesses, greater longevity often means that individuals live for extended periods while coping with ongoing physical limitations and psychological challenges. Failure to recognize these mental health consequences may reduce treatment adherence, impair self-management behaviours, increase healthcare costs, and negatively influence patients' overall quality of life (**Katon, 2011**).

Given these concerns, there is a growing need to examine the relationship between chronic health conditions and mental health using indicators that reflect the clinical burden of illness. Accordingly, the present study investigates the mental impact of chronic health conditions by assessing how disease severity, duration of illness, and the number of comorbidities influence mental health among adults living with chronic diseases. By identifying the clinical factors most strongly associated with psychological distress, the study seeks to contribute to evidence-based strategies that support comprehensive patient care and encourage greater integration of mental health services into chronic disease management.

Literature Review

The relationship between chronic health conditions and mental health has attracted increasing scholarly attention due to the growing global prevalence of non-communicable diseases and their long-term effects on individuals' well-being. Chronic illnesses often require lifelong treatment, regular monitoring, and substantial lifestyle adjustments, making them not only a physical health concern but also a psychological challenge. Research consistently indicates that chronic diseases are associated with elevated levels of depression, anxiety, stress, and reduced psychological well-being. However, the severity of these mental health outcomes varies according to the clinical

characteristics of the disease, including its severity, duration, and the presence of multiple chronic conditions.

Chronic Health Conditions and Mental Health

Chronic diseases significantly influence psychological health because they alter individuals' daily functioning, independence, and social participation. Persistent symptoms such as pain, fatigue, breathlessness, and reduced physical capacity often limit occupational performance and interpersonal relationships, creating emotional distress. World Health Organization recognizes mental health as an essential component of overall health and emphasizes that chronic diseases frequently coexist with mental disorders, creating a reciprocal relationship in which each condition worsens the other.

A large multinational study conducted by **Moussavi et al. (2007)** demonstrated that depression was considerably more prevalent among individuals living with chronic diseases than among healthy populations. Furthermore, participants experiencing both depression and chronic physical illness reported poorer health outcomes than those affected by either condition alone. **Prince et al. (2007)** highlighted that chronic illnesses increase psychological vulnerability by reducing functional independence and limiting individuals' ability to engage in meaningful social and economic activities.

Katon (2011) argued that chronic diseases and mental health disorders should not be treated as independent conditions because psychological distress often reduces adherence to medication, weakens self-management behaviours, and contributes to poorer disease control. Consequently, integrating mental health care into chronic disease management has become an increasingly important recommendation within public health systems.

Disease Severity and Mental Health

Disease severity is widely regarded as one of the strongest predictors of psychological well-being among individuals with chronic illnesses. Patients experiencing severe symptoms generally encounter greater physical discomfort, increased healthcare utilization, and greater dependence on family members or caregivers. These circumstances often contribute to emotional exhaustion, anxiety, and depressive symptoms.

Stanton et al. (2015) observed that individuals with more severe chronic diseases consistently reported lower psychological well-being than those experiencing milder disease manifestations. Increased symptom burden was associated with reduced confidence in disease management, greater uncertainty regarding future health, and diminished life satisfaction. **Read et al. (2017)** found that worsening physical symptoms significantly increased the likelihood of depression and anxiety among adults living with long-term medical conditions.

Persistent pain represents another mechanism linking disease severity with mental health. According to **Dueñas et al. (2016)**, chronic pain substantially reduces sleep quality, physical functioning, and emotional stability. Individuals suffering from persistent pain frequently experience feelings of hopelessness, frustration, and social withdrawal, thereby increasing the risk of developing depressive disorders. These findings suggest that disease severity extends beyond objective clinical indicators and directly influences patients' psychological experiences.

Duration of Illness and Mental Health

The duration of chronic illness represents another important determinant of mental health. Living with a chronic condition for an extended period often requires continuous adaptation to physical limitations, repeated medical consultations, financial expenditures, and uncertainty regarding disease progression. Although some patients gradually develop effective coping strategies, prolonged illness may also result in cumulative psychological fatigue.

DeJean et al. (2013) found that individuals living with chronic diseases for several years frequently reported emotional exhaustion resulting from continuous treatment demands and concerns regarding future health outcomes. Long-term illness often altered personal identities, family roles, and occupational responsibilities, creating additional psychological stress.

Research conducted by **Gonzalez et al. (2008)** among individuals with diabetes demonstrated that prolonged disease duration was associated with increased depressive symptoms, particularly among patients experiencing treatment complications. The authors suggested that continuous self-management requirements, including medication adherence, dietary restrictions, and regular health monitoring, contribute to sustained psychological pressure over time.

Nevertheless, some studies indicate that the relationship between illness duration and mental health is not entirely linear. **Sharpe and Curran (2006)** argued that psychological adjustment may improve among certain patients as they gradually develop acceptance and adaptive coping mechanisms. These contrasting findings suggest that illness duration influences mental health through complex interactions involving disease progression, coping resources, and individual resilience.

Number of Comorbidities and Mental Health

The coexistence of multiple chronic diseases, commonly referred to as multimorbidity or comorbidity, has become increasingly common among ageing populations. Individuals diagnosed with multiple chronic conditions generally experience greater treatment complexity, increased medication use, higher healthcare costs, and greater functional limitations than patients living with a single disease.

Barnett et al. (2012) reported that multimorbidity is highly prevalent across healthcare settings and is strongly associated with poorer physical and psychological outcomes. Patients managing several chronic illnesses simultaneously often experience greater emotional distress because they must cope with multiple treatment regimens, frequent medical appointments, and heightened uncertainty regarding disease progression.

Fortin et al. (2006) found that increasing numbers of chronic conditions significantly reduced health-related functioning while increasing depressive symptoms. Their study emphasized that psychological distress frequently arises from the cumulative burden of managing several illnesses rather than from any single disease alone. This cumulative burden often affects family relationships, employment opportunities, financial stability, and social participation.

Read et al. (2017) confirmed that individuals with multiple chronic conditions consistently reported higher levels of anxiety and depression than those diagnosed with a single chronic disease. The authors concluded that multimorbidity should be considered a major determinant of psychological health because of its substantial impact on everyday functioning and long-term disease management.

Research Gap

Although previous studies have established a strong association between chronic diseases and mental health, several important gaps remain. First, many investigations have focused on individual diseases such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, arthritis, or cancer, limiting the generalizability of findings across broader populations living with diverse chronic conditions. Second, existing research has frequently examined disease severity, illness duration, or multimorbidity independently, with comparatively fewer studies evaluating their combined contribution to mental health within a single empirical model. Third, much of the available evidence originates from high-income countries, while relatively limited research has explored these relationships in developing-country contexts where healthcare accessibility, financial constraints, and mental health services differ substantially. Addressing these gaps can provide a more comprehensive understanding of how the clinical burden of chronic illness influences psychological well-being and can support the development of integrated healthcare strategies that simultaneously address physical and mental health needs.

Research Objectives

1. To examine the impact of chronic health conditions on mental health.
2. To assess the influence of disease severity, duration of illness, and number of comorbidities on mental health.

Hypotheses

H1: Chronic health conditions have a significant negative impact on mental health.

H2: Disease severity, duration of illness, and number of comorbidities significantly predict mental health.

Methodology

This study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional research design to examine the mental impact of chronic health conditions. The target population comprised adults aged 18 years and above diagnosed with at least one chronic health condition for a minimum of six months. A purposive sampling technique was used to select respondents from hospitals and healthcare centres, with a proposed sample size of approximately 300 participants.

Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire consisting of two sections. The first section gathered demographic and clinical information, including disease severity, duration of illness, and the number of comorbidities. The second section measured mental health using the Depression Anxiety Stress Scales-21 (DASS-21) developed by **Lovibond and Lovibond (1995)**, a widely validated instrument for assessing depression, anxiety, and stress.

The collected data were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics were used to summarize respondents' demographic and clinical characteristics. Cronbach's alpha was calculated to assess the reliability of the measurement scale. Pearson's correlation analysis examined the relationships between the study variables, while multiple linear regression analysis was employed to determine the predictive influence of disease severity, duration of illness, and the number of comorbidities on mental health. Statistical significance was established at the 5% level ($p < 0.05$).

Results

Descriptive Statistics

A total of 300 valid responses were included in the analysis. The descriptive statistics indicate that respondents experienced moderate to high levels of disease severity and had been living with chronic health conditions for several years. The average number of comorbidities suggested that many participants were managing more than one chronic illness simultaneously. The mean mental health score reflected moderate psychological distress among the respondents.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Disease Severity	3.58	0.82
Duration of Illness (Years)	6.84	4.17
Number of Comorbidities	2.11	1.03
Mental Health	2.94	0.71

Interpretation: The descriptive findings indicate that participants generally experienced moderate disease severity and had lived with chronic illnesses for a considerable period. The prevalence of multiple chronic conditions among respondents highlights the increasing burden of multimorbidity, which may adversely influence psychological well-being.

Reliability Analysis

The reliability of the mental health scale was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. As shown in Table 2, the coefficient exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating satisfactory internal consistency.

Table 2
Reliability Analysis

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha
Mental Health (DASS-21)	0.91

Interpretation: The high reliability coefficient confirms that the instrument consistently measured psychological distress and was appropriate for further statistical analyses.

Correlation Analysis

Pearson's correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationships among the study variables.

Table 3
Correlation Matrix

Variables	1	2	3	4
1. Disease Severity	1			
2. Duration of Illness	0.39**	1		
3. Number of Comorbidities	0.46**	0.41**	1	
4. Mental Health	0.68**	0.44**	0.56**	1

Note: $p < 0.01$.

Interpretation: The findings reveal significant positive correlations between all clinical indicators and mental health scores. Disease severity demonstrated the strongest association with psychological distress ($r = 0.68$, $p < 0.01$), followed by the number of comorbidities ($r = 0.56$, $p < 0.01$) and illness duration ($r = 0.44$, $p < 0.01$). These results indicate that increasing clinical burden is associated with poorer mental health among individuals living with chronic health conditions.

Regression Analysis

Multiple linear regression analysis was performed to determine whether disease severity, duration of illness, and the number of comorbidities significantly predict mental health.

Table 4
Multiple Regression Analysis

Predictor	β	t-value	p-value
Disease Severity	0.49	9.82	<0.001
Duration of Illness	0.18	3.41	0.001
Number of Comorbidities	0.27	5.29	<0.001

Model Summary: $R^2 = 0.57$; Adjusted $R^2 = 0.56$; $F = 130.48$; $p < 0.001$.

Interpretation: The regression model was statistically significant, explaining 57% of the variance in mental health. Disease severity emerged as the strongest predictor of psychological distress ($\beta = 0.49$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that individuals experiencing more severe symptoms were more likely to report depression, anxiety, and stress. The number of comorbidities also significantly predicted mental health ($\beta = 0.27$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that managing multiple chronic diseases substantially increases psychological burden. Although the effect of illness duration was comparatively smaller ($\beta = 0.18$, $p = 0.001$), it remained statistically significant, indicating that prolonged exposure to chronic illness contributes to poorer mental health.

Discussion

These findings are consistent with previous research demonstrating that chronic diseases impose both physical and psychological burdens on affected individuals. **Moussavi et al. (2007)** reported that people with chronic physical illnesses experience significantly higher rates of depression than the general population. **Barnett et al. (2012)** observed that individuals with multimorbidity face greater psychological challenges due to the complexity of managing multiple conditions. **Katon (2011)** further emphasized that untreated psychological distress can reduce treatment adherence and worsen physical health outcomes.

Based on the regression results, both hypotheses are supported. H1, proposing that chronic health conditions have a significant negative impact on mental health, is accepted. H2, proposing that disease severity, duration of illness, and the number of comorbidities significantly predict mental health, is also accepted.

Conclusion

The present study explored the mental impact of chronic health conditions by examining the influence of disease severity, duration of illness, and the number of comorbidities on mental health. The findings indicate that all three clinical characteristics significantly predict psychological distress, with disease severity emerging as the strongest predictor. Individuals experiencing severe symptoms, living with chronic illnesses for longer periods, and managing multiple chronic conditions reported poorer mental health outcomes.

The study reinforces the growing recognition that chronic disease management should extend beyond physical treatment to include regular assessment of patients' psychological well-being. Integrating mental health screening into routine clinical care may facilitate early identification of depression, anxiety, and stress, enabling timely interventions that improve both psychological and physical health outcomes.

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Impact of Sleep Hygiene Practices on Psychological Well-Being

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Abstract:

Sleep is a fundamental biological and psychological process that plays a vital role in maintaining emotional stability, cognitive functioning, and overall mental health. Healthy sleep habits, collectively referred to as sleep hygiene practices, contribute significantly to psychological well-being by improving emotional regulation, reducing stress, and enhancing daily functioning. However, modern lifestyles characterized by excessive screen time, irregular sleep schedules, and increased occupational and academic demands have resulted in poor sleep hygiene among many individuals, thereby increasing the risk of psychological distress. Although previous research has established associations between sleep quality and mental health, comparatively fewer studies have examined the combined influence of sleep consistency, sleep environment, and bedtime habits on psychological well-being. The present study examines the impact of sleep hygiene practices on psychological well-being using a quantitative cross-sectional research design. Primary data were collected from 300 adults through purposive sampling using a structured questionnaire. Data were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), employing descriptive statistics, Cronbach's alpha, Pearson's correlation, and multiple linear regression. The findings are expected to indicate that healthy sleep hygiene practices significantly improve psychological well-being. The study contributes to the growing field of applied health psychology by highlighting the importance of healthy sleep behaviours in promoting positive mental health.

Keywords: Sleep Hygiene Practices; Psychological Well-Being; Sleep Consistency; Bedtime Habits; Mental Health

Introduction

Sleep is an essential component of human health that supports physical restoration, emotional regulation, cognitive functioning, and psychological well-being. Adequate and healthy sleep enables individuals to maintain optimal mental performance, regulate emotions effectively, strengthen immune functioning, and cope successfully with everyday stressors. Conversely, inadequate or poor-quality sleep has been associated with increased psychological distress, impaired cognitive performance, reduced productivity, and a higher risk of developing mental health disorders. As modern lifestyles become increasingly demanding, maintaining healthy sleep hygiene has emerged as an important behavioural determinant of psychological well-being.

Sleep hygiene refers to a set of behavioural and environmental practices that promote healthy, restorative sleep. These practices include maintaining consistent sleep schedules, creating a comfortable sleep environment, and adopting healthy bedtime routines that minimize factors interfering with sleep quality. Good sleep hygiene not only improves sleep duration and sleep quality but also contributes to emotional resilience, cognitive functioning, and overall psychological health. Consequently, sleep hygiene has become an important focus within applied health psychology because it represents a modifiable behaviour that can be targeted through preventive interventions.

Psychological well-being extends beyond the absence of mental illness and encompasses positive emotional functioning, life satisfaction, personal growth, autonomy, and effective interpersonal relationships. Individuals experiencing higher psychological well-being generally demonstrate greater optimism, emotional stability, resilience, and life satisfaction. Sleep contributes directly to these outcomes by facilitating emotional processing, memory consolidation, and

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physiological recovery, thereby enabling individuals to function effectively in their personal, academic, and occupational lives.

The increasing prevalence of sleep disturbances worldwide has become a major public health concern. Factors such as excessive use of digital devices, irregular work schedules, academic pressures, occupational stress, and unhealthy lifestyle habits have substantially reduced sleep quality across different age groups. Poor sleep hygiene has been associated with increased symptoms of anxiety, depression, emotional exhaustion, irritability, and reduced psychological functioning. These findings highlight the need to promote healthy sleep behaviours as an integral component of mental health promotion.

Theoretical perspectives also support the relationship between sleep hygiene and psychological well-being. Spielman's behavioural model of insomnia suggests that maladaptive sleep behaviours contribute to persistent sleep disturbances, whereas behavioural modifications can restore healthy sleep patterns. Similarly, health behaviour theories propose that adopting positive lifestyle practices contributes significantly to both psychological and physical health outcomes. Within applied health psychology, behavioural interventions targeting sleep hygiene have demonstrated considerable effectiveness in improving mental well-being.

Sleep hygiene practices comprise several behavioural dimensions. Sleep consistency refers to maintaining regular sleeping and waking schedules that support stable circadian rhythms. Sleep environment includes environmental factors such as noise, lighting, room temperature, and bedding comfort that facilitate restorative sleep. Bedtime habits encompass behaviours performed before sleep, including limiting screen exposure, avoiding caffeine, maintaining relaxation routines, and establishing regular bedtime practices. Together, these behaviours contribute to healthier sleep and improved psychological functioning.

Although numerous studies have demonstrated associations between sleep quality and mental health, comparatively fewer investigations have examined how specific sleep hygiene practices jointly influence psychological well-being. Many previous studies have focused primarily on sleep duration or insomnia rather than behavioural sleep practices that can be modified through health promotion programmes.

The present study examines the impact of sleep hygiene practices on psychological well-being by investigating the influence of sleep consistency, sleep environment, and bedtime habits. The findings are expected to provide empirical evidence supporting behavioural interventions aimed at improving mental health through healthier sleep practices within the field of applied health psychology.

Literature Review

Sleep Hygiene Practices and Psychological Well-Being

Sleep hygiene has emerged as one of the most important behavioural determinants of mental health within applied health psychology. It refers to a set of behavioural and environmental practices that promote healthy, restorative sleep and support optimal physical and psychological functioning. Good sleep hygiene includes maintaining regular sleep schedules, creating a comfortable sleeping environment, and adopting healthy bedtime routines that minimize factors interfering with sleep. Growing evidence suggests that healthy sleep behaviours contribute significantly to emotional regulation, cognitive performance, stress management, and overall psychological well-being, whereas poor sleep hygiene increases vulnerability to anxiety, depression, emotional instability, and reduced life satisfaction (**Irish et al., 2015; Mastin et al., 2006**).

Psychological well-being encompasses positive emotional functioning, life satisfaction, personal growth, autonomy, and effective social relationships rather than simply the absence of mental illness (**Ryff, 1989**). Adequate sleep facilitates emotional processing, memory consolidation, cognitive flexibility, and physiological restoration, all of which contribute to improved psychological functioning. Conversely, chronic sleep disturbances impair emotional regulation and increase the likelihood of psychological distress (**Watson et al., 2015**). Consequently, promoting healthy sleep

hygiene has become an important behavioural strategy for improving mental health across diverse populations.

Sleep Consistency and Psychological Well-Being

Sleep consistency refers to maintaining regular bedtime and wake-up schedules across weekdays and weekends. Consistent sleep patterns help regulate circadian rhythms, improve sleep efficiency, and enhance daytime functioning. Irregular sleep schedules disrupt biological rhythms, reduce sleep quality, impair cognitive performance, and negatively affect emotional well-being.

Research has consistently demonstrated that maintaining regular sleep schedules contributes to better psychological health. **Irish et al. (2015)** reported that consistent sleep timing improves mood regulation, cognitive functioning, and overall health outcomes. **Phillips et al. (2017)** found that greater variability in sleep schedules was associated with poorer academic performance, increased depressive symptoms, and reduced psychological well-being. These findings suggest that sleep consistency represents an important behavioural determinant of positive mental health.

Sleep Environment and Psychological Well-Being

Sleep environment refers to the physical conditions that influence sleep quality, including lighting, temperature, noise levels, mattress comfort, and bedroom ambience. A supportive sleep environment facilitates uninterrupted sleep, whereas excessive noise, uncomfortable temperatures, or exposure to artificial light may impair sleep quality and contribute to psychological distress.

Environmental factors have been shown to play a significant role in sleep quality and mental health. **Stepanski and Wyatt (2003)** reported that optimizing bedroom conditions substantially improves sleep efficiency and daytime functioning. Furthermore, the American Academy of Sleep Medicine recommends minimizing environmental disturbances to promote healthy sleep and improve psychological functioning (**Watson et al., 2015**). Individuals sleeping in comfortable and quiet environments generally report lower stress levels, better mood, and higher life satisfaction.

Bedtime Habits and Psychological Well-Being

Bedtime habits refer to behavioural practices performed immediately before sleep that either facilitate or interfere with healthy sleep. Positive bedtime habits include limiting caffeine consumption, avoiding nicotine and alcohol, reducing screen exposure, practicing relaxation techniques, and maintaining consistent bedtime routines. In contrast, unhealthy bedtime behaviours delay sleep onset, reduce sleep quality, and impair emotional functioning.

Mastin et al. (2006) developed the Sleep Hygiene Index to evaluate behaviours associated with healthy sleep and demonstrated that poor bedtime habits significantly predict sleep disturbances and psychological distress. **Exelmans and Van den Bulck (2016)** reported that excessive use of electronic devices before bedtime delays sleep onset, reduces sleep duration, and contributes to symptoms of anxiety and depression. These findings indicate that modifying bedtime habits represents an effective behavioural intervention for improving psychological well-being.

Sleep Hygiene Practices and Psychological Well-Being

A growing body of empirical evidence demonstrates that healthy sleep hygiene practices contribute substantially to psychological well-being by improving emotional regulation, cognitive functioning, resilience, and life satisfaction. Individuals practicing healthy sleep behaviours generally report lower levels of stress, anxiety, and depressive symptoms while demonstrating greater emotional stability and psychological functioning (**Baglioni et al., 2016; Scott et al., 2021**).

Ryff's (1989) multidimensional model of psychological well-being proposes that positive functioning depends upon self-acceptance, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, personal growth, and positive relationships. Healthy sleep supports each of these dimensions by facilitating emotional regulation, cognitive flexibility, and effective stress management. **Harvey (2002)** proposed a cognitive model suggesting that behavioural sleep practices influence emotional functioning through their effects on sleep quality and cognitive processes.

Collectively, previous research indicates that maintaining regular sleep schedules, optimizing sleep environments, and adopting healthy bedtime habits promote psychological well-

being by reducing psychological distress and enhancing emotional resilience (Baglioni et al., 2016; Irish et al., 2015; Watson et al., 2015).

Research Gap

Although previous studies have established significant relationships between sleep quality and mental health, several important research gaps remain. First, many investigations have focused primarily on sleep duration or clinical sleep disorders rather than behavioural sleep hygiene practices. Second, existing studies often examine individual sleep behaviours independently without evaluating the combined influence of sleep consistency, sleep environment, and bedtime habits on psychological well-being. Third, comparatively limited research has examined sleep hygiene as a behavioural determinant of psychological well-being within the broader framework of applied health psychology. Addressing these gaps will contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of how healthy sleep behaviours promote positive mental health and support the development of effective behavioural health interventions.

Research Objectives

1. To examine the impact of sleep hygiene practices on psychological well-being.
2. To assess the influence of sleep consistency, sleep environment, and bedtime habits on psychological well-being.

Hypotheses

H1: Sleep hygiene practices have a significant positive impact on psychological well-being.

H2: Sleep consistency, sleep environment, and bedtime habits significantly predict psychological well-being.

Methodology

The present study adopted a quantitative, cross-sectional research design. Primary data were collected from 300 adults using purposive sampling. A structured questionnaire was administered to measure sleep hygiene practices through three dimensions: sleep consistency, sleep environment, and bedtime habits. Psychological well-being was assessed using indicators of emotional well-being, life satisfaction, and positive functioning. Data were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics summarized respondents' characteristics, Cronbach's alpha assessed the reliability of the measurement scales, Pearson's correlation examined the relationships among the study variables, and multiple linear regression determined the influence of sleep consistency, sleep environment, and bedtime habits on psychological well-being. Statistical significance was established at $p < .05$.

Data Analysis

Descriptive Statistics

A total of 300 completed questionnaires were included in the final analysis. The descriptive statistics indicated that respondents generally reported healthy sleep hygiene practices and moderate to high levels of psychological well-being. The mean scores suggest that participants maintained relatively consistent sleep schedules, favourable sleep environments, and healthy bedtime habits.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Sleep Consistency	3.85	0.61
Sleep Environment	3.79	0.64
Bedtime Habits	3.72	0.67
Psychological Well-Being	3.94	0.56

Interpretation: The findings indicate that respondents generally practiced positive sleep hygiene behaviours and experienced satisfactory levels of psychological well-being.

Reliability Analysis

Cronbach's alpha was calculated to examine the internal consistency of the Psychological Well-Being scale.

Table 2
Reliability Analysis

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha
Psychological Well-Being	0.91

Interpretation: The Cronbach's alpha coefficient exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994), indicating excellent reliability and confirming the internal consistency of the measurement instrument.

Correlation Analysis

Pearson's correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationships between sleep consistency, sleep environment, bedtime habits, and psychological well-being.

Table 3
Correlation Matrix

Variables	1	2	3	4
1. Sleep Consistency	1			
2. Sleep Environment	.49**	1		
3. Bedtime Habits	.53**	.46**	1	
4. Psychological Well-Being	.67**	.61**	.64**	1

Note. $p < .01$.

Interpretation: The correlation analysis revealed statistically significant positive relationships between all dimensions of sleep hygiene practices and psychological well-being. Sleep consistency demonstrated the strongest correlation with psychological well-being ($r = .67, p < .01$), followed by bedtime habits ($r = .64, p < .01$) and sleep environment ($r = .61, p < .01$). These findings indicate that healthier sleep hygiene practices are associated with higher levels of psychological well-being.

Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple linear regression analysis was performed to determine the predictive influence of sleep consistency, sleep environment, and bedtime habits on psychological well-being.

Table 4
Multiple Regression Analysis

Predictor	β	t	p
Sleep Consistency	.35	7.12	$< .001$
Sleep Environment	.26	5.39	$< .001$
Bedtime Habits	.30	6.18	$< .001$

Model Summary: $R^2 = .69$; Adjusted $R^2 = .68$; $F = 219.74$; $p < .001$.

Interpretation: The regression model was statistically significant and explained 69% of the variance in psychological well-being. Sleep consistency emerged as the strongest predictor, followed by bedtime habits and sleep environment. The findings indicate that each dimension of sleep hygiene practices contributes significantly to psychological well-being.

Hypothesis Testing

Table 5
Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Decision
H1: Sleep hygiene practices have a significant positive impact on psychological well-being.	Accepted
H2: Sleep consistency, sleep environment, and bedtime habits significantly predict psychological well-being.	Accepted

Discussion

The present study examined the impact of sleep hygiene practices on psychological well-being by investigating the influence of sleep consistency, sleep environment, and bedtime habits. The findings revealed that healthy sleep hygiene practices significantly enhance psychological well-being, confirming that positive sleep behaviours contribute to emotional stability, life satisfaction, and positive psychological functioning.

Among the three dimensions, sleep consistency emerged as the strongest predictor of psychological well-being. Individuals who maintained regular sleep and wake schedules reported better emotional well-being, higher life satisfaction, and improved psychological functioning. These findings are consistent with **Irish et al. (2015)**, who reported that regular sleep schedules improve mood regulation, cognitive functioning, and overall health. **Phillips et al. (2017)** found that irregular sleep timing is associated with increased depressive symptoms, poorer emotional regulation, and lower psychological well-being. Maintaining consistent sleep patterns supports healthy circadian rhythms, thereby promoting emotional resilience and cognitive performance.

Bedtime habits also demonstrated a significant positive influence on psychological well-being. Participants who engaged in healthy pre-sleep behaviours, such as limiting screen exposure, avoiding caffeine before bedtime, and maintaining regular bedtime routines, experienced better psychological outcomes. These findings support the work of **Mastin et al. (2006)**, who demonstrated that poor sleep hygiene behaviours significantly contribute to sleep disturbances and reduced mental well-being. **Exelmans and Van den Bulck (2016)** reported that excessive electronic device use before bedtime delays sleep onset, reduces sleep quality, and increases symptoms of anxiety and depression. Establishing healthy bedtime routines therefore appears essential for promoting positive mental health.

The findings further revealed that sleep environment significantly predicts psychological well-being. Respondents who reported comfortable, quiet, and appropriately lit sleeping environments demonstrated higher levels of emotional well-being and life satisfaction. These findings are consistent with **Stepanski and Wyatt (2003)**, who emphasized that optimizing environmental sleep conditions improves sleep quality, daytime alertness, and psychological functioning. Recommendations issued by **Watson et al. (2015)** similarly highlight the importance of creating supportive sleep environments to improve sleep health and emotional well-being.

Conclusion

The present study examined the impact of sleep hygiene practices on psychological well-being by investigating the influence of sleep consistency, sleep environment, and bedtime habits. The findings demonstrated that healthy sleep hygiene practices significantly enhance psychological well-being, confirming that positive sleep behaviours are associated with better emotional health, higher life satisfaction, and improved psychological functioning. The results indicate that individuals who maintain healthy sleep routines experience greater psychological well-being than those with poor sleep hygiene practices.

Among the dimensions of sleep hygiene, sleep consistency emerged as the strongest predictor of psychological well-being, highlighting the importance of maintaining regular sleep and wake schedules for emotional stability and mental health. Bedtime habits also showed a significant positive influence, suggesting that healthy pre-sleep behaviours, including limiting screen exposure, avoiding stimulants before bedtime, and following consistent bedtime routines, contribute to improved psychological functioning. Sleep environment further demonstrated a significant positive effect, emphasizing that comfortable, quiet, and supportive sleeping conditions facilitate restorative sleep and enhance mental well-being.

The findings are consistent with previous research demonstrating that healthy sleep behaviours improve emotional regulation, cognitive functioning, stress management, and overall psychological health (Baglioni et al., 2016; Irish et al., 2015; Phillips et al., 2017). They also support

behavioural models of sleep, which emphasize that modifying sleep-related behaviours represents an effective strategy for improving sleep quality and psychological functioning (Mastin et al., 2006; Stepanski & Wyatt, 2003). Furthermore, the results are consistent with Ryff's (1989) multidimensional model of psychological well-being, suggesting that healthy behavioural practices contribute to positive psychological functioning through enhanced emotional regulation and adaptive coping.

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An Critical Study of Man Character of Manohar (Manu) in Novel of “The Dark Holds No Terror” by Shashi Deshpande

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Abstract

In Shashi Deshpande's novel *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, Manohar (Manu) represents the fragile patriarchal ego struggling against shifting gender roles. His character serves as a psychological study of how traditional societal expectations can deform a loving partner into an abusive figure when confronted with a wife's professional and financial superiority. It also deals with the men characters of the novel. Unlike the female characters the male characters too find it difficult to adjust with the modern society. Being an Indian, Deshpande's characters are also 'Indian'. The patriarchy, changed modern life style and empowerment of woman made the men character feel inferior to women characters. Sarita, the female protagonist of the novel is seen strong compared to her husband Manu. Her economic independence and her position as well established doctor made her husband feel inferior. Being the head of the family, he wants to have control over his wife, unconsciously develops a strange behavior which leads to sexual sadism. Deshpande's men characters are weak compared to her female protagonists. She has not sketched her men characters with a pre-occupied notion but the novelist is successful to depict both men and women characters as the victims of society.

Keyword : Shashi Deshpande, women's issues, feminist literature, subjugation, psychological issues, career-oriented women, darkness, fearlessness Feminism, The Dark Holds No Terror

Introduction

Dark Holds No Terror is an important novel written by Shashi Deshpande, an Indian women novelist. This novel explores the trauma of a middleclass working women who has become a trap in the male dominated society. Deshpande pictures her men and women characters as the victim of modern society. She has mastery over the depiction of her characters as natural and genuine. In this novel Sarita is the female protagonist who narrates the story. Through her narration we can understand her parents, dead brother Dhruva, her husband Manohar and her old teacher Boozie. Though the female protagonist undergoes certain trauma, dilemma she is strong and she decides not to protest against the oppression openly through breaking her familial life.

The novel begins with Saru's return to her maternal home after a long gap of fifteen years and the novel ends with her return to her family with her husband Manu. This novel projects the typical Indian society, Indian men and women. Indian society expects man as the head of the family, who earns more than any other member of the family, who controls the family in every aspect of life. Saru realizes that always wife should be less or she should be a few feet behind her husband to lead a happy life.

Deshpande's men characters are not so strong, compared to her women protagonists. The new roles of women as an educated housewife, job holder makes her men characters feel inferior and they find it difficult to adjust with the changing modes of the family system and society. The novelist has not written her men characters with a pre-occupied notion but she treats both man and women characters equally. Both of them have their own weakness, shortcomings, feelings which the other can't understand.

Manohar, Sarita's husband is purely an 'Indian man', who is expected to control the family through providing comfort to his family. When the role of a woman changes from domestic life to a socially established professional, the man or the husband finds it very difficult to cope up with his

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role. In “The Dark Holds No Terror” the woman protagonist Sarita is a well-known doctor whereas her husband Manohar (Manu) is an underpaid college teacher. In the beginning, their life was normal but when Saru became an established practitioner and when people started to respect her, Manu develops a kind of guilty conscious in him. In one of the interviews, a female journalist asks Manu “How does it feel when your wife earns not only the butter but most of the bread as well?” At that time, he laughed with Saru. But this question underestimates his confidence and he feels inferior to himself. So he lets his wounded male pride manifest itself in the form of sexual sadism. He does it unconsciously, because next morning he will be a normal husband as usual¹.

Once, even he asks Saru what happened to her, what are these marks on her body. Manu does it in order to establish a control on her. The traditionally established role of a ‘man’ in India makes him difficult to adjust. As his wife Saru has good earnings than Manu, when the society utters the same in a jovial manner in front of Manu, his male pride gets hurt.

Once when both Manu and Saru had planned for a trip to Ooty while shopping they met Manu’s colleague and his wife. When Manu revealed their plan, his colleague expresses his inability to afford such things, his wife replies he also could have afforded it if he had married a doctor. At this point he is humiliated. These incidents made Manu so violent; he doesn’t behave like a husband in the privacy of their room at night but as a rapist.

In this novel women characters dominate the men characters. Saru controls Manu and Booze and her mother establish control on her Baba. But compared to men characters, women characters are strong and dominating. After the death of her mother Saru realizes the strength of her father who was literally dumb when her mother was treating Saru inferior to her son Dhruva. Her father didn’t protest, didn’t comment or didn’t oppose his wife for the same, but he ignored and led a busy life, in which he was busy with his work. Saru’s father was an incapable man when his wife was alive. He never used to oppose her even when she punished Saru for the mistake which was not hers. But later when she returns home she found her father managing everything with ease in the absence of her mother. Now she saw him as a matured, bold man, who listened to her problem patiently.

Sarita through her profession and earnings, made her husband Manohar feel inferior to her. She made Booze her teacher to help her in order to complete her degree and to be an established practitioner. In order to hide his homo sexuality, he roams and flirts with Saru. So these men characters seem the victims of the conservative society, where they find it difficult to cope with their roles. Apart from pediatrics, she learnt other things from Booze, he taught her how to speak good English, he has improved her accent, taught her how to enjoy good food, how to read and what to read. She likes his masculinity, attractive laugh etc.

Later she accepts financial help from him to open her own consulting rooms. She never cares about what people spoke about their relationship. She uses Booze to advance her career, to achieve her goal of economic independence. After achieving her aim she simply neglects him.

While she was still studying she considers her dingy room apartment as ‘a heaven on earth’. But later when she had a very good life, comforts, status in the society she is not at all happy. Even though, Manu co-operates with Saru, to improve her status, later he himself develops inferiority about himself and his manly pride gets hurt when people come to know that his wife is earning more than what he earns. This inferiority develops in him and makes a way to sexual sadism².

Booze the men character has been used by Saru, the female protagonist for her happiness. Saru tuned and managed them in such a way that their presence and company satisfied her needs. When she fulfilled her wishes she used to turn her back on them. The best example for this is Booze, she wanted money and she wanted to be a reputed doctor, so she encouraged Booze. She tried to please him allowing him to touch, hug her. She didn’t mind what the other people will think about their relationship, after achieving her intention she just neglected him.

Both Saru and Manu are the victims of patriarchy. To strengthen male characters Deshpande strengthened, and created female characters in such a way that they are bold and supportive to their husband and family. But in this mechanical world, they take opportunity to discuss each other’s

problem. So Deshpande tries to bring justice to her male characters through the portrayal of her female characters. Her male characters are the victim of the society, through the helplessness they suffer like women. Even though female characters talk a lot about the suffering, their inner trauma, victim of marital rape, the silence of the male characters conveys about their dilemma, suffering, inferiority, and maladjustment. So Deshpande not only projects the female as a victim but also shows how equally men characters too suffer and victimized in the society. But at the end, her men and women characters compromise and accept themselves as they are. Deshpande sketches the role of women and men of middle class family where the female protagonists are highly qualified courageous and strong, they struggle to cope with the existing norms of the society even though the female characters protest against patriarchy. Deshpande makes them to surrender to circumstances through a sensible compromise within the family because Deshpande supports pro-women but not anti-man, she rejects a separatist stance, aware of the fact that breaking of the bonds of family would result in loneliness and disintegration of the larger social setup.

Deshpande's men and women characters are caught between traditional upbringings and the longing for freedom in the modern society. Even though the male characters play less important place in narrative, the novelist portrayed them as supportive to female characters.

Her male characters have been sons, husbands, fathers and the head of the family. These are the roles that demand different kinds of responses from men in the name of honour, dishonour, right, wrong, position, and hegemony, away in the context of patriarchy to find ideal manhood. So these male characters are forced to play the role of a controller who controls his family and fulfill his desires. When he failed to perform the established role he too suffers or fears about the society. As he is a man he should earn more than his wife, he should be in front of his wife because he is a man.

Sarita protests against the oppression silently but she is not ready to take a bold step like divorce, because of her Indian mind set. So she patches up the relation with Manu. Totally Saru is capable of managing the male characters to satisfy her needs, wishes fulfilled. So Deshpande projects even the men characters are the victims of the society. Totally these men characters are tradition bound and face the problem of adjustment.

Literature Review

I have chosen Shashi Deshpande's Novel and a lot of work has been done on it just as others Indian books which manage similar issues. I will relate my novel with each one of those books with same topics to improve the unwavering quality of my examination. In the Research article, "The degenerate Urban Culture in Shobha De's Sisters", Chintan Mahida presents the novel "Sisters" as a run of the mill Indian feminist novel which records the torment and hopelessness of taught women in a man centric culture. This sort of novel for the most part remembers the development of a young lady for the Indian working class family with her male kin to zero in on sex segregation; later on it centers around the issues of her wedded life where she is unheard, ignored and mistreated. 'Sisters' manages the psychic issues of a woman hero who is up to speed between the contentions an individual life and a cultural life. Lastly this squashed fountain of woman hero results into freedom, mindfulness and battle for her place in a male centric culture. Surfacing is a novel by Canadian creator Margaret Atwood and these arrangements with the life of a mysterious hero who looks for her personality in a man centric culture. The creator really portrayed the abuse of women and nature by the hand of men. The hero returns to her old neighborhood looking for her lost dad. In her excursion back to her past through nature she comprehends the connection among women and nature. In the last piece of the novel, the champion distinguishes herself with the normal world. She picks up another character and won't turn into a casualty of male centric culture. She will not return to the city and gets liberated from the malicious impacts of a materialistic and innovative world. Ollala Srinivas presents enduring of Shobha De's Women in the examination paper "The picture of new women in Shobha De's tale Socialite Evenings.". The epic depicts Mumbai high society and investigates the lives of exhausted rich housewives caught in cold relationships and male/female world over they don't love veritable interests however just plastic interests. All the women cast off the ordinary feeling of

profound quality, the old, the drained and abusive sexual move and revel in the suggestive festival of the body. Shobha De has made an honest effort at communicating the inward desire of the Indian woman whether country or metropolitan in the most ideal manner. As a feminist author, De focuses on woman issues in her novel giving them another methodology. The tale 'Socialite Evenings' gives us the image of minimization of the Indian women on account of their spouses. Rajeshwar Mittapalli notices Jaya the woman character in the novel. "That long quietness" by Shashi Deshpande in the light of exigencies of life introduced themselves as awful mishaps in his examination article, "The Trauma of a House spouse: Shashi Deshpande's That Long Silence"; Jaya's psychic has not been well-prepared to meet the exigencies. The creator further says that therefore, the conduits of uneasiness have been unexpectedly opened and at this psychological second silliness qualified her reaction to the circumstance. Her enduring beneficially affects her. It starts the cycle of self disclosure in her which leads in the last analysis to her new view of life. She arises toward the finish of the difficulty as a woman with certain eagerness to bargain with life' issues while prior she demonstrated an astounding absence of convenience and breadth. In the examination paper "Shashi Deshpande's Roots and Shadows: Articulation of Feminine Voice" specialist endeavors to test into the issue of marriage through Indu, the hero and her cousin Mini where one appreciates the opportunity of marriage and the other acknowledges the traditional marriage simultaneously, Indu discovering her foundations in the home and with her better half finding the significance of life in her excursion to individuation. Shashi Deshpande's Roots and shadows Explore and uncovered the battle of Indu, an informed working class woman, in a male-ruled tradition bound society. Indu represents the New Woman, who is taught and who lives in close relationship with the general public forgetting about the entirety of its restricted shows. The tale additionally manages the unfulfilled longings and troubled relationships of women in a huge Maharashtrian Brahmin household. It is evidently the narrative of the victory and misfortune of a family that is bound up in its molded man centric self. It recounts the story not of an individual but rather of the establishment of marriage, which is compromised by the powers of progress and faces disintegration. Indian literature. She was brought into the world in Dharwad in Karnataka as the girl of the eminent Kannada playwright just as an incredible Sanskrit researcher Sriranga. She sought after her schooling in Dharwad, Bombay and Bangalore. Indeed, in this article, we will give you the account of Shashi Deshpande. Shashi Deshpande had an exceptionally sharp psyche. She got degrees in Economics and Law. In fact, she was a gold medalist. In the wake of getting hitched, she moved to Bombay (presently Mumbai). During her stay in Mumbai, she chose to seek after a course in Journalism. In this way, she got herself tried out the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan. From that point, she took up an occupation as a columnist in the magazine "Passerby". She worked there for a very long time. Peruse on to know the total life history of Shashi Deshpande. While working in the magazine, she started composing and the principal short story that she composed got distributed in 1970. Her short stories traveled their way in mainstream magazines like Femina, Eve's Weekly and so forth her lady assortment of short stories was distributed under the title "Inheritance" in the year 1978. Her first novel, "The Dark Holds No Terror" was distributed in 1980.

Man Character in Shashi Deshpande's Novel

Shashi Deshpande's significant concern is to portray the pain and strife of the cutting edge instructed Indian women got among man controlled society and tradition from one perspective, and self articulation, singularity and freedom for the women on the other. Her fiction investigates the hunt of the women to satisfy herself as an individual, free of her traditional function as girl, spouse and mother. Shashi Deshpande's "The Dark Holds No Terror" is an exceptionally amazing novel that portrays the life of Sarita, a woman specialist who ends up running away to her dad's home before all else being tormented by the sexual extraordinary of her significant other Manohar yet this parental home similarly brings back of her the awful recollections of the merciless disposition of her mom who is no more at this point. As Kailashcentric position in the account. Among the different issues that the novel spotlights on, ideas of 'holding' and 'subjugation' are viewed as in India as well as

around the world". The epic spotlights on woman's consciousness of her quandary, her needing to be perceived as an individual than as a woman and her needing to have an autonomous social picture. At the start of the novel, the hero Sarita is found as a casualty of her significant other; Manohar's vicious torment through physical and sexual viciousness. Her psychological state is communicated in an exceptionally reasonable way and contacting way. In the novel one can't neglect to see these distinctions in her since her adolescence till she is an adult woman. At home she generally attempts to control Dhuruva, her sibling and perspectives her mom consistently opposed all the reformist moves she embraced and has unbalanced love for her child. Being a child, he had the benefit of accepting more consideration, care and love from her folks. Her youth envy goes to the bleeding edge. At the point when she pushes him from her dad's lap when he was not really a year old. He had been totally faithful to her in all regard continually pursuing his adored Sarutai. Her mom's warmth towards her sibling actuated her to inquire as to why the mother cut a female by testing the old request, the horde subjugations of tradition forced by a male overwhelmed society. Dhurva's demise turns into an instrumental in distance her from them by putting blame awareness appears to act like a weak spot now and again driving her to a psychological state verging on schizophrenia This brings the mother-girl struggle to the cutting edge. Saru thinks about financial freedom as a protection against any subjection. At the point when she chooses to seek after a course in medication in Bombay, the mother is traditionally not well arranged to let her have her direction. She puts forth attempts to get her and even distinguish herself with her mom Valli Roa discovers this as "... a quest for her own feminine side and herself lastly we see 'rebirthing' her own independence character separate from her mom. The comment of Atrey and Kripal are recognizable: incapable to state his 'masculinity' over her (Saru) likes a traditional male (that is in financial terms). He depends on sexual attack of her daily while playing the caring spouse during the day. His motivation, however subdued in the psyche is to 'rebuff' her for taking on the 'male' job and to state his predominance and force through actual brutality. Manus conscience is harmed by her prosperity, he feels second rate and this feeling of inadequacy makes him severe in his conduct. Despite the fact upon Saru. Her fantasy of discoveries in marriage is before long broken. Saru comprehends that incorporation alone would make her entire again and showdown of the deterioration components could never make that conceivable. Saru wants to free herself from the shadow of tradition and exercise her entitlement to uncover her individual abilities and understand her feminine self through personality attestation and self-assertion. In the expressions of S.P. Lover: Saru's Journey is an excursion from self estranges to self distinguishing proof, from negative to stating, from modesty to certainty. She figures out how to confide in her feminine self

Analysis on Man Character in 'Dark Hold to Terror'

In this novel women characters dominate the men characters. Saru controls Manu and Booze and her mother establish control on her Baba. But compared to men characters, women characters are strong and dominating. After the death of her mother Saru realizes the strength of her father who was literally dumb when her mother was treating Saru inferior to her son Dhruva. Her father didn't protest, didn't comment or didn't oppose his wife for the same, but he ignored and led a busy life, in which he was busy with his work. Saru's father was an incapable man when his wife was alive. He never used to oppose her even when she punished Saru for the mistake which was not hers. But later when she returns home she found her father managing everything with ease in the absence of her mother. Now she saw him as a matured, bold man, who listened to her problem patiently.

Conclusion

Initially, Manu is an attractive, liberal college figure—an articulate college debater and aspiring writer. He encourages Saru (Sarita) and seemingly defies traditional male dominance. As Saru becomes a highly successful, breadwinning doctor while his own career stagnates as a college lecturer, his wounded ego causes a dark transformation. At night, he turns into a libidinous, abusive aggressor to assert dominance over her body. Deshpande does not paint Manu as a one-dimensional villain. Instead, he is also a victim of a patriarchal society that dictates a man must be superior to his

wife in status and earnings. The humiliation he faces—such as a magazine interviewer singling out Saru's financial dominance—triggers a severe inferiority complex, transforming his love into bitter resentment. Manu's nighttime assaults reflect the "darkness" of the title, representing the hidden, repressed anxieties within human relationships and traditional mindsets.

Manohar character exposes the hypocrisy of educated, outwardly modern Indian men who revert to primitive male ownership and domestic violence the moment their socially conditioned superiority is threatened.

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Storytelling as a Meaning-Making Process in Constructivist Education: Theoretical Foundations and Pedagogical Implications

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Abstract

Storytelling has emerged as an effective pedagogical tool for meaningful learning, learner engagement, and knowledge building in the 21st-century education environment. Storytelling is rooted in constructivist principles that allow learners to actively interpret experiences, link new information to prior understanding, and engage in the co-construction of meaning. Recently, storytelling has received increased attention in educational research in language learning, digital education, intercultural communication, metacognitive development, and experiential learning. Nevertheless, only a few studies have addressed the theoretical basis of why storytelling is an effective learning mechanism. The current literature primarily emphasises practical applications and educational outcomes, often overlooking the conceptual understanding of storytelling within constructivist educational approaches. In this study, we address this gap by exploring storytelling as a meaning-making process from the perspective of constructivist learning theories. The theoretical works of Piaget, Vygotsky, Bruner, and Dewey discuss the role of storytelling in enhancing cognitive development, social interaction, reflective thinking, cultural participation, and experiential learning. The study synthesises current literature and theoretical frameworks to show that storytelling is a multi-dimensional educational process that encompasses cognitive, social, cultural, and experiential dimensions of learning. The study is intended to add to the theoretical understanding of narrative pedagogy and its place in contemporary constructivist education by highlighting storytelling as an important mechanism of meaning-making. In conclusion, the paper contends that storytelling is a learner-centred approach to learning that facilitates learners critically interacting with the world, constructing knowledge and building identity.

Keywords: Storytelling, Constructivist Education, Meaning-Making, Narrative Pedagogy, Knowledge Construction, Social Constructivism, Experiential Learning

1. Introduction

Education in the twenty-first century has undergone a significant paradigm shift from the transmission of knowledge to learner-centred approaches that focus on active inquiry, collaboration, critical thinking, and authentic knowledge construction. Current educational reforms increasingly recognise that meaningful learning involves not only acquiring facts but also interpreting experiences, negotiating meaning, and constructing knowledge in various social and cultural contexts. Thus, constructivism is one of the most influential theoretical perspectives that informs curriculum design, instructional practices, and educational research because of its conceptualisation of learning as an active process of creation rather than passive reception of knowledge. Storytelling is gaining more and more scholarly attention as a pedagogical approach that can support the cognitive, social, emotional, and cultural dimensions of learning within this constructivist paradigm. In the formal education systems, humanity has preserved knowledge, transmitted cultural values, and interpreted collective experience primarily through stories. Stories have been a form of entertainment but also an

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epistemic device through which people shape experience, forge identities, and negotiate common meanings in societies. Modern educational research also recognises the power of storytelling as a teaching tool to help students connect abstract ideas to real-life situations, thus creating richer understanding and more durable learning outcomes. Recent empirical research shows that storytelling makes positive contributions to a wide range of educational outcomes. Previous studies have shown that narrative-based learning can improve language development, intercultural competence, creativity, reflective thinking, empathy, learner motivation, and metacognitive awareness. The rapid development of digital storytelling has also extended these possibilities with the integration of multimedia technologies and narrative expression for learners to collaboratively construct, communicate, and evaluate knowledge in technology-enhanced learning environments. The recent developments point to the fact that storytelling still lives on in contemporary education, particularly in pedagogical models that focus on active participation and collaborative construction of knowledge. There is a growing literature, but it remains conceptually fragmented. Much of the scholarship on storytelling pertains to storytelling in specific educational settings such as language education, digital learning, teacher education and intercultural communication. However, few studies explore the theoretical mechanisms of why storytelling promotes meaningful learning across contexts. Thus, storytelling is frequently suggested to be an effective pedagogical method and not the primary process through which students make meaning. This focus on educational outcomes has limited the development of an integrated theoretical account that links narrative learning to more general principles of constructivism. The concept of understanding provides a useful perspective for overcoming this limitation. Based on the constructivist theory, learning is an interpretive process; the learner actively constructs understanding through the integration of new experience with prior knowledge, social interaction, cultural resources, and reflective inquiry. Storytelling in this vein is not just a way to pass information on, but rather a cognitive and social activity in which learners come to understand experience, negotiate competing perspectives, construct knowledge into coherent narratives, and forge personally meaningful understandings. Storytelling as a process shifts attention from what stories teach to how stories contribute to the construction of knowledge. Several influential constructivist theorists illuminate this process. Jean Piaget states that learning is a process in which the learner builds cognitive structures through assimilation and accommodation in the context of meaningful experience. Lev Vygotsky stresses the significance of language, dialogue, cultural mediation, and social interaction in the collaborative construction of knowledge. Jerome Bruner says that narrative is a basic form of human thought by which people make sense of reality, develop identity, and order experience. For example, John Dewey emphasises the importance of reflective experience as the basis for meaningful learning, asserting that education develops through the continual reconstruction of experience. While each of these perspectives has contributed to the educational research literature, they have rarely been integrated into a framework that recognises storytelling as a multi-dimensional process of conceptual formulation. This conceptual fragmentation is an important omission in the literature. The existing literature offers a wealth of evidence on the educational benefits of storytelling, but there is little explanation of the cognitive, social, cultural, and experiential mechanisms that produce meaningful learning through storytelling. Furthermore, only a few conceptual studies have synthesised the major constructivist traditions to account for storytelling as a comprehensive educational process rather than a collection of isolated instructional techniques. Developing an integrative perspective is especially important in today's educational contexts to foster higher-order thinking, creativity, intercultural understanding, learner agency, and lifelong learning. Thus, this paper offers a full conceptual analysis of the storytelling process in constructivist education. The article synthesises diverse theoretical insights into a unified conceptual framework. The article employs the theoretical perspectives of Piaget, Vygotsky, Bruner, and Dewey alongside contemporary scholarship on narrative pedagogy. However, rather than viewing storytelling as a

pedagogical tool, the paper portrays narrative as a cognitive, social, cultural, and experiential tool through which learners actively construct knowledge and meaning. The article contributes to the literature in three different ways. Firstly, it critically synthesises constructivist and narrative learning theories to offer an integrated theoretical explanation of storytelling as a multi-dimensional meaning-making process. Second, it puts forward a conceptual framework to demonstrate the relationships among cognitive construction, social interaction, narrative interpretation, and reflective experience in the context of storytelling-based learning. Thirdly, we discuss implications of this framework for learner-centred pedagogy, curriculum development, teacher education and future research in constructivist education. By presenting storytelling as a primary means of constructing meaning rather than as a pedagogical device, the article contributes to the construction of a richer understanding of narrative pedagogy and its significance for contemporary educational theory and practice.

2. Review of Related Literature

2.1 Storytelling as a Constructivist Pedagogical Practice

Storytelling is increasingly recognised as a powerful teaching method to promote active learning, learner engagement and substantial knowledge building across a variety of educational settings. Unlike traditional teaching methods that focus on the transfer of information, storytelling embeds learning in meaningful contexts that allow learners to make sense of experiences, connect new ideas to their existing knowledge, and construct their understanding. This pedagogical shift also fits with the constructivist assumption that knowledge is actively constructed through interaction with experiences, rather than passively received from external sources. Earlier scholarship has interpreted storytelling as a cultural practice that has enabled societies to retain knowledge of their history, values, and traditions (Andrews et al., 2009). The current educational research broadens perspectives and views of storytelling as a cognitive and educational process that supports interpretation, reflection, and collaborative learning. According to Starcic et al. (2015), narratives provide semantic structures that enable learners to organise information, create causal relations, and embed abstract concepts in real-life cases. So, storytelling is not only a communication strategy, but also a way of understanding concepts and of organising knowledge. While there is general consensus among scholars that storytelling is an effective learning tool, there is disagreement among them as to why storytelling works educationally. Some studies emphasise the cognitive functions of narrative, especially its ability to improve memory, conceptual understanding, and critical thinking. Yet others highlight its social and affective dimensions and argue that stories foster empathy, cooperation, and intercultural understanding by experiencing multiple perspectives. These perspectives are complementary, but often disconnected in theory, resulting in fragmented explanations of the educational role of storytelling. Existing scholarship is also often concerned with educational outcomes rather than learning processes. There is evidence that storytelling-based interventions can improve motivation, engagement, creativity, and academic achievement. However, there is limited research on how storytelling supports learners' constructs through cognitive interpretation, social interaction, cultural mediation, and reflective inquiry. Storytelling is therefore often seen as a useful teaching tool and not a multidimensional form of process. The conceptual limitation can be overcome by integrating insights from constructivist learning theories into an encompassing explanatory framework.

2.2 Storytelling, Reflection and Metacognitive Development

Reflection is a well-established component of meaningful learning because it allows learners to examine experiences, question assumptions, and form more nuanced understandings. In constructivist education, reflective thinking is a process where learners are encouraged to question, reinterpret, and reorganise existing cognitive structures to convert experience into knowledge.

Storytelling is a natural partner of thoughtful creation because stories encourage learners to consider alternate interpretations, consider the choices made by characters, and relate fictitious or actual experiences to their lives. Story-based pedagogies enhance metacognitive awareness and self-regulated learning by encouraging learners to reflect on their thinking and learning strategies (Aswegen et al., 2019). The researchers' results suggest that storytelling is not only about delivering content but also about eliciting higher-order cognitive processes associated with critical evaluation. However, although existing research consistently finds positive relationships between storytelling and reflection, many studies tend to conceptualise reflection as an educational outcome, rather than as an integral part of the understanding process. It is shown that storytelling causes rumination of ideas but the theory explaining the relationship between reflection and narrative interpretation, experiential learning or constructivist knowledge construction is not presented. Thus, the literature offers strong empirical evidence but relatively little conceptual explanation of how storytelling turns lived experience into meaningful educational understandings. This limitation is overcome in the constructivist view of storytelling by considering reflective inquiry an important mechanism through which narratives support knowledge construction. Reflection is not a discrete cognitive skill but part of a continuing interpretive cycle between experience, dialogue and conceptual understanding.

2.3 Storytelling in Experiential and Digital Learning Contexts

Storytelling is becoming a more common practice in experiential and digital learning environments, reflecting larger trends in education toward authentic, learner-centered pedagogy. Theories of experiential learning emphasize the construction of knowledge through active engagement with experience and systematic reflection. This perspective is built upon by storytelling, as it gives learners the chance to make sense of experiences in the form of a coherent story which can be interpreted, discussed and reconstructed.

Storytelling improves experiential learning by linking classroom learning to real-world social experiences and, at the same time, encourages communication, collaboration, and problem-solving (Padua, 2020). Storytelling enhances climate change education by helping learners link scientific concepts to personal and community experiences. These studies are exploring different educational contexts, but both conclude that storytelling connects abstract knowledge and lived experience. Parallel processes have been going on in digital education. Digital storytelling is the fusion of traditional narrative forms and multimedia technologies and allows learners to build, express, and assess knowledge in multiple modes of representation. Research has demonstrated that digital storytelling consistently fosters learner agency, creativity, collaboration, and digital literacy. However, much of this literature focuses on technological innovation rather than exploring how digital narratives continue to facilitate the basic process of intended meaning. The educational value of digital storytelling is, therefore, not solely in its technological affordances but in its ability to retain the cognitive, social, and reflective functions of storytelling in contemporary learning environments (Lovitt et al., 2025). Together, these studies indicate that storytelling is pedagogically relevant in both traditional and technology-enhanced educational settings. However, they also highlight a conceptual gap: regardless of considerable evidence of educational effectiveness, relatively few studies conceptualize storytelling in terms of an integrated constructivist framework that integrates cognitive, social, narrative, and experiential dimensions of learning. Filling this gap provides the rationale for the conceptual synthesis of the present article.

2.4 Research Gap

Scholarship on storytelling is growing and so is its promise for education in a variety of contexts. Numerous previous studies have consistently demonstrated that storytelling enhances learner engagement, language development, creativity, metacognitive awareness, intercultural competence, and collaborative learning. The results have demonstrated storytelling as an effective pedagogical tool for language education, teacher education, digital learning, science education and

experiential learning. The educational benefits of storytelling are now well established in a range of disciplinary contexts. The literature is growing, but the theory of the contribution of storytelling to meaningful learning is still missing. Most empirical studies focus on measurable educational outcomes like motivation, achievement, communication skills or learner engagement, while relatively little attention is paid to the interpretive processes by which learners construct meaning from narrative experiences. Thus, storytelling is often studied as part of an instructional intervention, rather than as a basic epistemic process of producing, negotiating, and transforming knowledge. A second limitation concerns the fragmented theoretical treatment of the narrative. Current studies tend to adopt one theoretical perspective, such as social constructivism, experiential learning, digital pedagogy or narrative inquiry, without exploring the relationship between perspectives. Each of the theoretical traditions has much to offer narrative learning, but to employ them separately limits a holistic understanding of the multi-dimensional role of storytelling in education. As a result, the literature lacks an integrated framework that can explain how cognitive construction, social interaction, narrative interpretation and reflective experience jointly contribute to comprehension. The constructivist learning theory is based on the core concept of self-experiences, but it is surprisingly under-theorized in storytelling research. In general, previous research acknowledges that students build understanding through stories, yet few studies have framed storytelling itself as the mechanism through which meaning arises. Instead, the process of conveying experience is frequently implicitly assumed as a consequence rather than the core explanatory process linking narrative experiences to knowledge construction. Such conceptual neglect hinders the theoretical development and practical application of storytelling in learner-centered education. Another important limitation is the link between classical constructivist theories and modern narrative pedagogy. Piaget, Vygotsky, Bruner, and Dewey have all made significant contributions to our understanding of learning as an active, socially mediated, and experiential process. But scholarship still rarely brings these complementary perspectives together in a single explanation of storytelling. Most discussions focus on individual theorists separately, leaving unanswered how their ideas cumulatively illuminate storytelling as a multidimensional process of cognitive, social, cultural, and reflective meaning-making. Fragmented conceptual bases of narrative pedagogy are due to deficiency of theoretical synthesis. These constraints are of particular importance in today's educational environments that are characterized by rapid technological change, cultural diversity, and competency-based curricula. Education systems are now required to prepare learners for critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, ethical reasoning, intercultural competence and skills for lifelong learning. Storytelling appears to be a natural complement to support these educational priorities, but the theoretical underpinnings are needed to understand why narrative pedagogy is effective in promoting these complex forms of learning and how educators can intentionally design learning around storytelling. This article seeks to fill these gaps by developing a comprehensive conceptual analysis of storytelling as a meaning-making process in constructivist education. Using the complementary theoretical perspectives of Piaget, Vygotsky, Bruner, and Dewey, the article synthesises the contemporary scholarship into an integrated conceptual framework that explains the cognitive, social, cultural, and experiential mechanisms through which storytelling enables meaningful learning. In this study, we do not consider storytelling an instructional strategy, rather, we conceptualise narrative as a core process of knowledge construction linking experience, dialogue, reflection, and interpretation in learner-centered education.

3. Methodological Approach

In this study, a conceptual review methodology is used to explore storytelling as a meaning-making process in constructivist education. Conceptual reviews do not generate primary empirical data but instead integrate the existing theoretical and empirical literature to generate new conceptual insights and enhance theoretical understanding (Jaakkola, 2020). The aim of this article is thus to

describe mechanisms by which storytelling can aid the process of meaning-making, synthesizing the most important constructivist views. The review uses a narrative synthesis approach, which is well-suited for analyzing heterogeneous bodies of literature and for developing an integrated conceptual framework. Relevant studies were identified through searches of Scopus, and Google Scholar using combinations of the keywords storytelling, narrative pedagogy, constructivism, meaning-making, digital storytelling, experiential learning, and reflective learning. The review included peer-reviewed journal articles, scholarly books, and book chapters that explored storytelling in educational settings and were concerned with constructivist learning, narrative pedagogy, or meaning-making. Publications were included only if they were published mainly between 2000 and 2025. However, seminal works by Piaget (1952), Vygotsky (1978), Bruner (1986, 1990, 2006), Dewey (1938), and Kolb (1984) were included due to their foundational contribution to constructivist learning theory. Studies that focused on literary criticism, entertainment, or non-educational uses of storytelling were excluded. Thematic synthesis of the collected literature was performed. Studies were categorized by theoretical perspective, educational context and conceptual contribution. Cross-case analysis highlighted themes that cut across cases including knowledge building, social interaction, narrative interpretation, reflective inquiry, and experiential learning. These elements were then combined into an integrated conceptual framework for understanding storytelling as a multifaceted process of meaning-making. The resulting paradigm unites the complimentary perspectives of Piaget's cognitive constructivism, Vygotsky's social constructivism, Bruner's narrative theory and Dewey's experiential philosophy. This study brings together different theoretical traditions to present a consistent account of the role of storytelling in supporting cognitive, social, narrative, and experiential dimensions of learning. This conceptual synthesis is the major theoretical contribution of the article and serves as a framework for future empirical study and educational practice.

4. Theoretical Foundations of Storytelling as a Meaning-Making Process

The basic premise of constructivist learning theories is that knowledge is actively constructed by learners through interactions with experiences, social environments, and cultural contexts. Although they are philosophically different, Jean Piaget, Lev Vygotsky, Jerome Bruner and John Dewey all reject transmissive models of education and stress the importance of the active participation of learners in the process of constructing understanding. This article argues that these theories are not mutually exclusive but rather offer different perspectives that together characterise storytelling as a multi-dimensional process of meaning-making. Specifically, Piaget talks about the cognitive construction of meaning, Vygotsky focuses on the social construction of meaning, Bruner presents the narrative construction of meaning and Dewey stresses the experiential construction of meaning. Their integration provides a holistic theoretical basis of understanding storytelling in constructivist education.

4.1 Piaget: Storytelling as Cognitive Construction of Meaning

The explanation of the first dimension of the proposed framework can be found in the theory of cognitive constructivism by Piaget which explains the way the learner creates meaning through active mental processes. Learning is a continuous transaction between new experiences and existing cognitive structures (Piaget, 1952). Learners either try to fit new information into existing schemas (assimilation) or they change their schemas if new information cannot be interpreted through existing understandings (accommodation). Learning is a process of continuous cognitive reconstruction, not a passive acquisition of knowledge. Storytelling is a way to this construction process because stories offer meaningful situations where the learners are asked to interpret events, to establish causal relationships, to predict consequences, and to reconcile conflicting perspectives. Learners do not memorise discrete facts, but actively organise narrative information in existing conceptual frameworks and modify those frameworks in response to interpretations of new information. Stories are cognitive environments where learners are continually reconstituting understanding. Storytelling

also promotes higher order thinking through symbolic representation, imagination, and perspective-taking, from a Piagetian perspective. In narratives, the learners will have to infer intentions, evaluate decisions and relate abstract concepts to authentic situations thus promoting conceptual development other than rote learning. Storytelling should therefore be regarded not only as a teaching device but also as a cognitive process by means of which learners develop increasingly complex mental models of reality. But Piaget's emphasis on the individual cognitive development can only take us so far in explaining storytelling. Cognitive reconstruction sheds light on individual sense-making of narratives, but it is comparatively less focused on the social exchanges that negotiate and share meaning. This limitation highlights the importance of Vygotsky's contribution.

4.2 Vygotsky: Storytelling as Social Construction of Meaning

Piaget focuses on individual cognition, while Vygotsky (1978) describes learning as a socially mediated process. Knowledge is socially constructed; language is the principal cultural tool through which people negotiate understanding. Therefore, learning occurs in social relationships before it is internalised as individual knowledge. Storytelling is, of course, one way of embodying these principles, since stories are social and cultural at root. Narratives can be told verbally, discussed in a group or created in a digital format and they provide opportunities for learners to dialogue, share interpretations, question assumptions and co-construct understanding. Meaning is therefore collectively negotiated rather than produced through individual reflection alone. The concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) highlights the educational importance of storytelling. Scaffolding by teachers and peers during story-telling activities allows learners to interpret increasingly complex narratives, consider alternative perspectives and provide more sophisticated explanations than they could independently. Storytelling through guided discussion, questioning and collaborative interpretation is a means of expanding the cognitive capacities of learners. But Vygotsky's theory is primarily concerned with the social processes that attend storytelling and not with the specific cognitive function of narrative as such. It tells us how interaction allows for learning, but it doesn't tell us much about why narrative is such a powerful form of human understanding. Bruner's theory of narrative cognition speaks directly to this issue.

4.3 Bruner: Storytelling as Narrative Construction of Meaning

The constructivist theorists discussed in this article, Bruner's explanation of storytelling as a process of meaning-making is the most clear. Bruner (1986, 1990) posits that humans organise experience in two complementary modes of thought: the paradigmatic mode, which seeks logical and scientific explanations, and the narrative mode, which interprets human intentions, actions, relationships and lived experiences. Bruner, storytelling is a pedagogical tool, but also a fundamental mode of thought. Narratives organise fragmented experiences into coherent structures. They allow people to understand events, explain motives, construct identities, and make sense of complex social realities. Learning is not just a matter of acquiring information, but developing meaningful interpretations of experience. This view goes further than previous constructivist accounts in suggesting that it is the act of narrative itself which mainly constructs meaning. Stories help learners to learn how to deal with ambiguity, how to think from multiple perspectives and how to create their own meanings instead of looking for one predetermined answer. In this way, storytelling promotes critical thinking and reflective judgement, as well as intellectual independence. Bruner also points out the culturally embedded nature of narratives. Stories are vehicles for shared values, beliefs, traditions, and identities, and provide learners opportunities to reinterpret those cultural meanings in contemporary contexts. Storytelling thus contributes to the development of cognition and identity, to intercultural understanding, and to participation in cultural communities. Bruner's account of narrative cognition is comprehensive, but his work places relatively less emphasis on the transformational effects of lived experience and reflective inquiry on learning. These dimensions become central in Dewey's philosophy of education.

4.4 Dewey: Storytelling as Experiential Construction of Meaning

Dewey's philosophy of education describes the emergence of meaning through the reconstruction of experience based on the previous theories. Dewey (1938) rejected the idea of education as the transmission of fixed knowledge and argued that learning occurs through purposeful experience followed by systematic reflection. Learning results not from experience, but from the critical interpretation of experience by learners and their relating of the experience to future action. Storytelling facilitates this process by transforming experiences into stories that can be analyzed, interpreted, and discussed. Storytelling helps learners to revisit events, see relationships, question assumptions, and imagine alternatives. Thus, reflection is an important mechanism connecting experience with conceptual understanding.

Dewey's theory features the principle of continuity, which states that each educational experience impacts future learning. A prime example of this principle is storytelling. Weaving together past experiences, present understandings, and future possibilities in cohesive narrative frameworks. Storytelling allows learners to build ongoing personal and intellectual development rather than learning as discrete events. Dewey also stressed the democratic and cooperative side of education. Shared stories promote dialogue, joint inquiry, and mutual understanding and strengthen learning communities in which knowledge is constructed through participation rather than transmission. Thus, storytelling works simultaneously as a reflective practice, an experiential learning strategy, and a socially located educational process.

4.5 Theoretical Synthesis

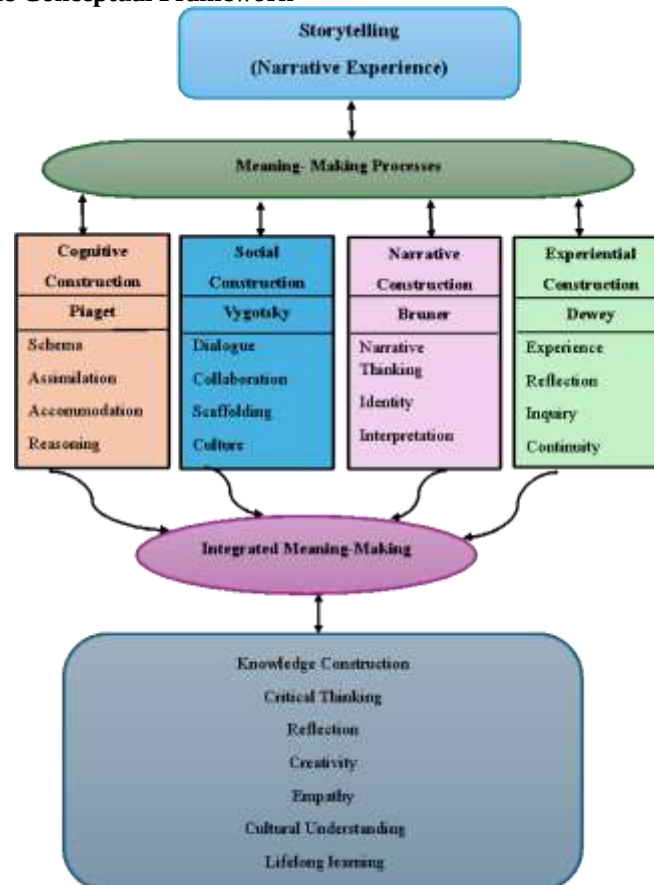
These four theories explain different dimensions of learning in the context of isolation. Together, however, they provide a full account of storytelling as a multidimensional comprehension process. Piaget shows how storytelling allows learners to construct cognitive understanding by reorganizing existing knowledge structures. Vygotsky describes how dialogue, language, and cultural interaction change storytelling into a collaborative knowledge construction process. Bruner argues that narrative is the dominant cognitive mechanism by which individuals organize experience and create personal and cultural meaning. Dewey expands on this view by showing how reflective interaction with experience facilitates ongoing learning and development. Together, these perspectives suggest that storytelling operates on four interconnected levels: cognitive, social, narrative, and experiential. Meaning does not arise from any one dimension in isolation but from the dynamic interplay between individual interpretation, social dialogue, narrative organization, and reflective experience.

5. Conceptual Framework: Storytelling as a Multidimensional Meaning-Making Process

The above theoretical analysis indicates that a single constructivist perspective is insufficient to explain storytelling. Instead, storytelling is a multidimensional educational process where learners actively construct meaning through the dynamic interaction of cognitive, social, narrative, and experiential processes. Piaget, Vygotsky, Bruner, and Dewey come from different philosophical traditions, but together their theories offer a full explanation of how storytelling supports meaningful learning. In this context, the present article proposes an integrated conceptual framework, which conceptualizes storytelling as a multidimensional meaning-making process. Previous research has mostly focused on storytelling as an instructional strategy or classroom intervention. The proposed framework, however, treats storytelling as the main mechanism through which learners make sense of experiences, negotiate meanings, construct identities, and develop conceptual understanding. So conveying meaning is not a consequence of storytelling but the main educational function of storytelling. Narrative engagement allows learners to continuously interpret experiences, reconstruct prior knowledge, interact with others, reflect on their understanding, and create new meanings that affect future learning.

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of Storytelling as a Multidimensional Meaning-Making Process

Explanation of the Conceptual Framework



The proposed framework views storytelling as the initiation point for meaningful learning. Storytelling is not simply a teaching technique. Storytelling generates authentic narrative experiences, through which learners are encouraged to interpret events, question assumptions, negotiate meanings, and relate learning to their experiences. The educational value of storytelling therefore lies in its capacity to start up multiple processes of learning at the same time. The first dimension of the framework is cognitive construction, based on Piaget's theory of cognitive constructivism. In storytelling, learners actively integrate new ideas into their prior cognitive structures and modify their understanding when stories challenge their previous beliefs. Stories are used to help learners identify patterns, make causal connections, problem-solve, and create more complex conceptual structures. Cognitive meaning-making, thus, occurs through continuous interaction between narrative information and learners' prior knowledge. The second dimension is social construction. It is informed by Vygotsky's theory of social constructivism. Storytelling is usually a collaborative activity involving discussion, questioning, joint interpretation, and shared narrative. In culturally mediated learning environments, learners negotiate meanings, compare perspectives, and co-construct understanding through dialogue with teachers and peers. Scaffolding in storytelling activities supports learners to go beyond their existing level of understanding and to construct more sophisticated interpretations of narratives. The third dimension, narrative construction, is Bruner's unique contribution. Narratives, Bruner argues, are a fundamental mode of human thought in which

experiences are constructed into meaningful configurations. Storytelling, therefore, allows learners to interpret human actions, construct identities, understand social relationships, and make sense of complex realities. The construction of meaning through narrative differs from purely logical reasoning in that it permits ambiguity, multiple perspectives, and personal interpretation. Thus, storytelling aids in both cognitive understanding and the formation of identity. The fourth dimension is the creation of experience and is rooted in Dewey's educational philosophy. Stories link learning to lived experience by asking learners to contemplate personal experiences, analyze consequences, and imagine other possibilities. Reflection converts narrative experiences to pedagogical experiences by enabling learners to assess assumptions, reconstruct understanding, and apply learning to future situations. Storytelling thus aids continuing growth by way of integrating experience and inquiry. Each dimension represents a different theoretical perspective, but meaningful learning comes from the interaction of the dimensions rather than through any one process alone. Cognitive interpretation is socialized through dialogue; narrative organization provides coherence to experience; reflective inquiry provides deeper conceptual understanding; and cultural interaction extends learners' perspectives. Meaning-making is a dynamic and recursive process, in which learners continuously reconstruct understanding through the interplay of cognition, communication, narrative interpretation, and reflective experience. The framework also proposes that integrated understanding has multiple interrelated educational outcomes. Storytelling is not just about academic achievement but also about the development of a range of learner competencies such as critical thinking, creativity, empathy, collaboration, intercultural competence, identity formation, and lifelong learning. The results derive from storytelling's power to holistically involve learners, integrating the intellectual, emotional, social, and cultural aspects of learning into meaningful educational experiences. In contrast to previous models that view storytelling as a pedagogical tool, this framework views storytelling as a basic constructivist process of knowledge construction rather than transmission. Thus, the framework shifts scholarly attention away from the question of whether storytelling promotes learning to the more fundamental question of how storytelling supports learners in making meaning. This difference is the principal theoretical contribution of the present paper. Furthermore, the framework offers a practical foundation for additional empirical research. Researchers can use it to explore the relationships between the cognitive, social, narrative, and experiential aspects of storytelling across different educational settings. Similarly, educators can leverage the framework to construct learner-centered pedagogies that intentionally integrate dialogue, collaborative inquiry, and authentic narrative experiences. This framework connects educational theory to classroom activity and elaborates on constructivist conceptions of narrative learning.

6. Discussion

The article contributes to the conceptualisation of storytelling as a multidimensional learning process in constructivist education, rather than an instructional strategy. Benefits of storytelling in education have been previously reported in the literature. However, a lot of the literature has been concerned with learner outcomes such as engagement, motivation, communication skills or academic achievement. These results have shown that storytelling is a valuable pedagogical strategy, but they present only a partial view of its pedagogical value, because they have generally overlooked the theoretical mechanisms by which narrative experiences become meaningful learning. The conceptual framework proposed in this article tries to overcome this limitation by integrating the complementary contributions of Piaget, Vygotsky, Bruner and Dewey, into an integrated explanation of storytelling as a cognitive, social, narrative and experiential process. This framework makes a key contribution in foregrounding meaning-making rather than educational outcomes as the primary function of storytelling. Most existing research assumes that learners construct meaning through storytelling but rarely explains how this process happens. The current model shows that meaning develops through the interplay of four interrelated dimensions. Cognitive construction enables learners to reconstruct prior knowledge in response to new narrative experiences; social construction facilitates joint interpretation through dialogue and cultural mediation; narrative construction provides coherent

structures for interpreting experience and shaping identity; and experiential construction turns reflection into ongoing conceptual growth. These dimensions together explain storytelling as a dynamic process in which learners are constantly constructing, negotiating, and reconstructing understanding. The framework also benefits constructivist theory in demonstrating that the major constructivist traditions are not competing perspectives but complementary ones. Piaget, Vygotsky, Bruner and Dewey are often discussed in isolation in educational research leading to fragmented interpretations of learner-centered pedagogy. This paper brings together their theoretical insights to build a more holistic understanding of the construction of knowledge through narrative experience. Such integration is especially pertinent in the current educational contexts where learning is becoming more collaborative, digitally mediated, intercultural and authentic in relation to problem-solving. Storytelling creates a pedagogical space in which these different dimensions of learning are brought together, and learners are able to construct knowledge through individual reflection and collective inquiry. Our proposed framework transcends the boundaries of narrative pedagogy by viewing storytelling as an epistemic practice and not a communication technique. Stories do not only tell us what to know; they articulate experience, mediate cultural understanding, support identity formation, and promote reflective inquiry. Thus storytelling is a way for learners to move from fact recall to interpretation, evaluation and knowledge creation. This view is consistent with the current emphasis in education on higher-order thinking skills, creativity, ethical reasoning, and lifelong learning, rather than on reproduction of predetermined knowledge. The framework also suggests a link between traditional storytelling and digital learning environments. Digital storytelling makes it possible to use multimedia technologies in learning in the classroom and this has attracted more attention from educational researchers recently. However, the current model implies that the educational value of digital storytelling is not in technological innovation, but in the latter's ability to support the basic operations of meaning-making. Stories, oral, print or digital, are educationally relevant in so far as they promote cognitive interpretation, collaborative dialogue, reflective inquiry and narrative understanding. Technology enhances storytelling only when it is used to support these underlying constructivist processes, not to replace them. The framework also suggests directions for future research. Most empirical studies concentrate on the discrete outcomes of storytelling interventions and few investigate the relationships between the cognitive, social, narrative, and experiential facets of learning. In future research, the proposed framework can be applied to examine the interaction of such dimensions across different educational contexts, student populations, and disciplines. Longitudinal studies could also explore the effects of sustained engagement with storytelling on identity development, critical thinking and lifelong learning. Furthermore, comparative studies across cultural contexts can provide insights into how storytelling mediates the linked experiences of learners across different educational traditions. This article presents a full conceptual framework but acknowledges some limitations. The analysis is mostly based on theoretical and conceptual literature, rather than empirical data. The relationships suggested here should therefore be empirically tested in different educational settings. Besides, the framework is mainly based on constructivist learning theories, but it does not include other theoretical perspectives, such as critical pedagogy, transformative learning or socio-material theories, that might provide alternative perspectives on narrative learning. Further research that synthesises these perspectives would further improve theoretical understanding of storytelling as a process of meaning making. Generally, the presented framework contributes to educational theory by offering an explanation on how storytelling promotes meaningful learning. The article departs further from the efficacy of storytelling toward the creation of meaning and provides a better theoretical basis for future research and pedagogical innovation.

7. Pedagogical Implications

The conceptual framework of this paper has significant implications for educational practice as it reconceptualises storytelling not as an enhancement to engagement in the classroom but as a pedagogical process that enables holistic development of the learner. This perspective of storytelling as a complex meaning-making process can be useful for building learning for teachers.

Curriculum Design

Storytelling should be viewed as a pedagogical organising principle for curriculum developers, not an instructional activity to be added on. Narrative-based learning experiences can help bridge disciplinary knowledge to real-world contexts and help the learner connect abstract concepts to lived experiences. This integration fosters cross-disciplinary learning, and promotes conceptual learning across disciplines.

Teacher Education and Professional Development

Teacher education programs need to equip future educators to implement storytelling as a constructivist learning process. Professional development needs to be more than teaching techniques of storytelling but to include dialogue, questioning, collaborative interpretation, and reflective inquiry. Teachers require pedagogical knowledge to scaffold learners' meaning-making, it is not enough for teachers to just present narrative content.

Classroom Pedagogy

A successful pedagogy of storytelling is one in which the learners actively participate in the process of narrative creation, rather than being passive listeners. Classroom activities such as collaborative storytelling, dialogic discussions, role-play, reflective journals, narrative inquiry and problem-based storytelling allow learners to negotiate meaning, evaluate multiple perspectives and develop critical understanding. These approaches are well suited for learner-centred and inquiry-based models of education.

Assessment for Meaning Making

Assessment practice needs to move away from testing recall of facts and instead assess learners' interpretive and reflective capacities. Portfolio assessment, reflective writing, narrative projects, digital storytelling, peer feedback, and performance-based assessments offer more robust evidence of learners' ability to construct and express meaningful understanding. These approaches are more consistent with constructivist principles than are traditional examinations that mainly test recall of facts.

Digital and Technology-Enhanced Learning

Digital storytelling should be seen as a pedagogical extension of narrative learning and not just as a technological novelty. Multimedia tools, artificial intelligence, virtual reality, podcasts, and interactive storytelling platforms – if designed for supporting meaning-making rather than technological novelty – can extend learners' opportunities for collaboration, creativity and reflective inquiry. The emphasis, then, should be on pedagogical objectives, not on technological sophistication.

Inclusive and Culturally Responsive Education

Storytelling offers opportunities to acknowledge the diverse cultural experiences, languages, and identities of learners in the classroom. Through narrative pedagogy, learners are motivated to tell their own stories, accept different perspectives, and promote intercultural awareness through shared conversation. These practices foster more inclusive learning environments in which diverse voices are recognized as legitimate sources of knowledge and are respected.

Educational policy

The proposed framework also supports the educational reforms that focus on competency-based education, experiential learning and twenty-first-century skills. Policymakers should endorse curriculum frameworks incorporating storytelling in language education, social sciences, teacher education, and interdisciplinary learning. Storytelling directly supports broader educational goals

outlined in current policy initiatives such as learner-centered and competency-based curricula, in the development of critical thinking, creativity, communication, collaboration and ethical reasoning.

8. Conclusion

The educational value of story-telling is well-known, but its theoretical importance has been underestimated. A great deal of scholarship has sought to demonstrate the positive effects of storytelling, but relatively little has been devoted to explaining the mechanisms by which narratives permit meaningful learning. To address this limitation, this paper re-conceptualizes storytelling as a multidimensional meaning-making process, based on the constructivist learning theory. This article synthesises the complementary views of Piaget, Vygotsky, Bruner, and Dewey to construct a holistic conceptual framework that explains how cognitive construction, social interaction, narrative interpretation, and reflective experience all contribute to knowledge construction. Rather than viewing these theoretical traditions as competing accounts of learning, the proposed framework shows how they are interconnected elements of a unified constructivist approach to storytelling. The essence of the article's contribution is the theoretical synthesis as it provides a stronger conceptual basis for narrative pedagogy. The framework further shows that storytelling is not merely a means for engaging students but is a vital educational process in which students organise experience, negotiate meaning, construct identity, and develop critical understanding. This perspective moves the conversation about education beyond the question of whether storytelling works, and to how storytelling fosters meaningful learning in a number of educational settings. The article also has implications for educational practice in terms of how to identify the implications of storytelling for curriculum design, teacher education, classroom pedagogy, assessment, digital learning and inclusive education. The implications underscore the need to increase the visibility of storytelling in learner-centred educational environments where knowledge is actively constructed through debate, reflection, collaboration and real experience. The proposed framework should, however, be considered as a conceptual basis rather than as a real model. Future empirical research is needed to explore the interrelationships of its cognitive, social, narrative and experiential characteristics in different educational settings, age groups and cultural contexts. Further clarification of the framework may need comparative and longitudinal research to study its applicability in developing forms of digital and AI supported learning. So storytelling is not just a teaching tool, but an intrinsic part of how humans make sense of things. This study contributes to educational theory and pedagogical practice by situating storytelling within an integrated constructivist framework that offers a cohesive platform for future scholarship on narrative learning and meaning-making.

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B. R. Ambedkar on Muslim Separatism: A Historiographical Reassessment

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Abstract

The present research paper undertakes a critical evaluation of B. R. Ambedkar's historiographical framework to analyze a defining structural feature of colonial Muslim politics in India: its fundamentally anti-Hindu and exclusivist character. Moving away from conventional political narratives, this study provides evidential backing to Ambedkar's core observation that under the guise of "Muslim welfare," colonial Muslim politics was systemically engineered around religious slogans and a rigid socio-cultural separation from Hindu society. By tracing the historical continuum of orthodox Islamic thought from Ahmad Sirhindi and Shah Waliullah to the 20th-century Ulema, the paper demonstrates how Muslim political mobilization was driven by a theological blueprint of exclusion rather than secular or material interests. Ultimately, the paper utilizes Ambedkar's writings to illustrate how Muslim political identity in colonial India was constructed as an adversarial posture, treating cultural and religious distinction as the primary vehicle for political leverage.

Keywords Ambedkar, Muslim Politics, South Asian Muslim, Indian Partition, Muslim Identity.

Dr. Ambedkar on Muslim separatism

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar studied numerous subjects throughout his life and commented on them, so it is challenging to narrow down a research work, especially on controversial topics. His evaluation of Islamic character and Muslim politics can make many people uncomfortable. In essence, Ambedkar posited that the prevailing matrix of Muslim politics in colonial India operated on a transnational or pan-Islamic loyalty, which, in his view, often superseded territorial nationalism or constitutional patriotism during moments of communal polarization.ⁱ, prioritizing religion over patriotism, and defined their motherland based on Islamic principles and their convenience. He argued that Muslims often prioritize Islamic lawⁱⁱ over constitutional law in case of conflict, viewing themselves as Muslims first and Indians second.ⁱⁱⁱ

Ambedkar was not alone in this perspective. Even Bhagat Singh, a prominent leftist figure, wrote in 1924 that Muslims do not consider Indian identity and have a lack of patriotism, promoting Arabic script and Persian language instead.^{iv} Critics argue that Ambedkar's views were influenced by British historians, who portrayed Muslim rulers as evils.

It is essential to understand British historians' perspectives before proceeding. British intellectuals viewed India from two lenses^v: the Orientalist perspective, which admired Hindu philosophy and created the Aryan theory¹ to connect themselves with Vedic Hindus, and the Anglicist-evangelist perspective, which saw ancient India as a dark age and Muslim rule as a period of tyranny. Ambedkar was aware of these biases and rejected British historical perspectives, denying the Aryan invasion theory^{vi} and the notion of ancient India as a dark age. He considered India the cradle of civilizations.^{vii}

Ambedkar criticized British historians for comparing Indian rulers of medieval period with 'British Raj' instead of their contemporary English kings. He argued that "British historians of India have a tendency to overpraise. They exaggerated the flaws of pre-British rulers in India rather than acknowledging their merits. They not only criticized Mughal rulers by labeling them as despots or plunderers, but also tarnished the entire community and their civilization..... British historians of India made the mistake of comparing British rule with rulers who came much earlier. According to the rules of writing history, they should have compared Indian rulers with contemporary English kings. If we follow this rule, such mistakes would not occur. If we remember the

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¹ Edwin Bryant has extensively discussed this subject in his book "The Quest for the Origins of Vedic Culture." He elaborates on the circumstances under which the Aryan Invasion Theory became prevalent, how the intellectual discourse in Europe was changing at that time, and how it influenced the Aryan theory. See Bryant, Edwin; The Quest for the Origins of Vedic Culture; Oxford University Press; 2003

miserable condition of the Anglo-Saxon people under Norman conquerors, we would not view the miserable condition of Hindus under Muslim rule with contemptuous hatred.^{xviii}

Ambedkar made this comment between 1913 and 1915 as part of his MA thesis. Therefore, at least one can definitively say that Ambedkar's perspective on the history of Muslim rule was not influenced by the British historians.

However, when Ambedkar was writing 'Pakistan or the Partition of India,' his views on Muslim rulers, Islam, and ordinary Muslims had completely changed. For example, while commenting on Muslim rule, he wrote:

"What is, however, important to bear in mind is that with all their internecine conflicts they were all united by one common objective and that was to destroy the Hindu faith."^{xix}

How did Ambedkar's views undergo such a drastic change? The answer can be found in the communal violence and the parallel political events that occurred between 1920 and 1940, which Ambedkar extensively discussed in his book. Ambedkar was clear in his views that the Congress party did not want to share power with the minority communities of the country. He believed that the political character of the Congress was primarily that of upper-caste Hindus and that it was an organization of Brahmins, other upper-caste Hindus, and the elite.^x

In 1930, he stated that the Congress should understand that one group cannot impose its rule over another.^{xi} Although this was concerned with the Scheduled Caste, it also reflects his general ideological inclination. In this context, Ambedkar mentioned that the demand for Pakistan cannot be forcibly suppressed.

Ambedkar also blamed the Congress's attitude for the conditions leading to the partition.^{xii} He believed that the Congress did not take negotiations with the League seriously and hesitated to include Muslims in the cabinet after the 1937 elections. The Congress insisted that membership in the Congress was necessary to join the cabinet. According to him, this was a violation of the understanding reached at the Round Table Conference. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad also expressed same views. He wrote that

"One has to admit with regret that the nationalism of the Congress had not then reached a stage where it could ignore communal considerations and select leaders on the basis of merit without regard to majority or minority."^{xiii}

Although Ambedkar identified the Congress's attitude as a contributing factor to the entanglement of the problem, a comprehensive examination of his writings reveals that Ambedkar considered Muslim fundamentalism as the root of the issue. Ambedkar's book leads us to the core of the problem through two paths. He parallelly documented the rising communalism in Muslim politics and the Hindu-Muslim conflicts within society. Commenting on the Hindu-Muslim riots that occurred between 1920 and 1940, Ambedkar described them as a civil war.^{xiv} He stated that these conflicts made it seem as if two nations were fighting against each other.^{xv} The truth is, the nature of the events leading up to the partition of India and the partition itself, was such that even two countries wouldn't wage war with such cruelty.

Ambedkar's perspective is that violent conflicts and riots are an established method of Muslim politics^{xvi}, and the Congress does not understand that the policy of compromise and appeasement has increased Muslim aggression, because Muslim see this as a sign of weakness.^{xvii} Ambedkar says that as the political development of Muslims progresses, the demand for Pakistan is growing.^{xviii} Ambedkar believed that with the expansion of political power among Muslims, separatist tendencies began to increase. This separation was cultural, which Ambedkar discussed in detail. It is essential to properly understand Ambedkar's views on the aspects of cultural separation.

Muslim politicians have always been conscious of minimizing Hindu influence on the Muslim community. According to Ambedkar, Muslim leaders believe that if Hindus and Muslims live together without partition, the distinct Islamic culture among Muslims will not survive.^{xix} Ambedkar himself thought that Hindu and Muslim cultures are not only different but also opposite to each other.

Although this idea cannot be regarded as a universally accepted fact, at the time Ambedkar was making this observation, Unionist leaders and the Congress leadership in Punjab repeatedly argued that Hindus and Muslims did not possess entirely separate cultural identities.^{xx} Punjabi Muslims and Punjabi Hindus were considered culturally far closer to one another than Punjabi Muslims and Bengali Muslims, and this cultural conflict was, in reality, seen as a consequence of unequal economic opportunities. Nehru

believed that communalism could be countered through economic nationalism by focusing on common economic interests rather than religious divisions.^{xxi}

Nehru and Ambedkar agree that the cause of communal tension lies in political ambition^{xxii} and the struggle for participation in power.^{xxiii} However, Ambedkar does not regard it as being limited merely to the question of political participation.

According to Ambedkar, the similarities in language, food, or customs between Bengali Brahmins and Bengali Muslims or Punjabi Hindus and Muslims are superficial. Hindus and Muslims are different and opposite on a spiritual level.^{xxiv} Despite all efforts by Hindus, the influence of Islamic power in North India has not diminished.^{xxv} According to him, there is no bond between the two communities that can bring them closer; their history and literature are not only different but also diametrically opposed to the level of hatred.^{xxvi} There is no homogeneity between Hindus and Muslims, no basis for reconciliation, and no such basis can be established.^{xxvii} This animosity could not be eradicated even after centuries of efforts.^{xxviii} The British policy is not responsible for this conflict; it existed beforehand. The divided existence is due to historical, social, religious, and cultural animosity, which is only reflected in politics.^{xxix}

While Ambedkar often viewed Hindus as the source of many of India's problems, his perspective on the Hindu-Muslim conflict was that Hindu politicians were also lenient towards the unnecessary demands of Muslims.^{xxx} Therefore, it can be conclusively said that, in his opinion, the fundamental cause of the Hindu-Muslim issue was the character and culture of Muslims.

According to Ambedkar, the cultural identity of Muslims was crafted by Islamic invaders using various tactics.^{xxxi} Even in the 20th century, Muslim politics was not influenced by secular issues; rather, there was no effort to make Muslim politics secular. Ambedkar argued that Muslim politics in colonial India was heavily influenced by clerical and religious leadership, and it only acknowledges one distinction: the division between Hindus and Muslims.^{xxxii}

Dr. Ambedkar on Nationalist Muslims

According to Ambedkar, even the distinction between nationalist Muslims and communal Muslims is merely a result of Congress's delusion. In reality, those whom Congress calls nationalist Muslims are just another group of communal Muslims working as a front within the Congress.^{xxxiii}

In reality, the Congress and its nationalist Muslim leaders did not understand communal politics. Communal separate electorates meant that only Muslims would represent the interest of Muslim community. Contrary to this, the principle of non-communal representation is that it is not necessary to be Muslim to represent Muslim interests.

The protection of a community's interests is demonstrated through the government's policies, rather than by the number of people of one's religion among the leaders. But as mentioned above that prominent nationalist leader of the Congress, Maulana Azad, complained that by not including Muslims in the 1937 cabinet, Congress weakened its nationalist character. However, perhaps no one understood this. It became a political necessity that the leadership emerge from within the Muslim community itself. This is why Nehru, despite recognizing that Hindus and Muslims shared similar socio-economic problems, also relied on Muslim leadership in order to politically engage and mobilize Muslims. When the Congress, under Nehru's leadership, began the campaign to include Muslims, it was led by Muslim leaders.² Nationalist Muslim leaders firmly believed in the separate culture of Hindus and Muslims. Therefore, leaders like Maulana Azad were also pleased with the formation of Muslim-majority provinces. Ambedkar called Azad's thinking a policy of holding Hindus as hostage^{xxxiv}, and if this policy was promoted by nationalist Muslims, expecting better politics from communal Muslims was foolish.³

In fact, the Congress never truly embraced the secular idea in its real sense. The secular idea, which actually separates politics from religion, did not become a part of politics during the Gandhian era.

² Nehru set up separate department to run the Muslim Mass Contact Program (MMCP) at Anand Bhavan in Allahabad under his communist lieutenant Kunwar Mohammed Ashraf. Ashraf was a Meo from AAlwar for further details, See Dhulipala, Venkat; *Creating a New Medina*; Cambridge University Press; Delhi; 2015; pp 49-120

³ On the creation of two new Muslim-majority provinces, Sindh and the North-West Frontier Province in 1935, Maulana Azad expressed happiness, saying that this was a guarantee of safeguarding Muslim interests. His reasoning was that just as Hindus in Hindu-majority provinces would treat Muslims, Muslims in those provinces, where they have a majority, would treat Hindus in the same manner. Thus, in a broader sense, this arrangement was a guarantee of security for Muslims. However, this idea did not align at all with the Western ideal of secularism, which is why Ambedkar criticized it.

In the name of secularism, Congress always tried to bring representatives of different religious communities onto a common platform. Among Muslims, the biggest campaign of Congress was the Khilafat Movement, which was essentially a religious issue and had no real connection with Indian social life.

Muslim Politics and Radicalism

Ambedkar noted that Muslim politicians frequently made unnecessary demands and because of Congress's appeasement politics, they had developed a nature of exploitation.^{xxxv} Ambedkar highlighted how the atmosphere in the country had shifted since the Khilafat movement, creating a perception that Muslims sought to establish Islamic rule in India. The fear of invasions from Afghanistan and Iran persisted during and after the Khilafat movement. Whether this fear was justified or baseless remains a serious issue. However, it was concerning when leaders like Saifuddin Kitchlew threatened that if Hindus opposed the Tabligh movement for religious conversion, Muslims would invite the rulers of Iran and Afghanistan to invade India.^{xxxvi}

This proposed idea of Islamic invasion in India from western front was not new. Ambedkar accurately identified the immediate symptoms of the problem and, to some extent, its root cause. To understand the entirety of the issue of Muslim politics requires studying Islamic politics and the religious plans of clerics since the time of Mughals.

During Akbar's reign, there were also hardline Islamic powers. Ahmad Sirhindi, a contemporary Islamic scholar, believed that Hindus should not be allowed to company, to sit, and talk with Muslims.^{xxxvii}

They should be kept away like dogs. He criticized Akbar's policy. According to him
"The abolition of jizyah in Hindustan is a result of friendship which (Hindus) have acquired with the rulers of this land. What right have the rulers to stop exacting jizyah? Allah himself has commanded imposition of jizyah for their (infidels') humiliation and degradation."^{xxxviii}

Although Akbar managed to control this sentiment but Aurangzeb's actions dismantled the limited progress in Hindu-Muslim harmony achieved during Akbar's reign. With his downfall, the central Islamic power in India also declined, marking the rise of the Marathas. In the 18th century, both the Ottoman Empire in the Middle East and the Islamic Empire in India fell. The intellectuals of the Islamic world reacted similarly to these collapses.⁴ The Wahhabi movement emerged in the Middle East, while Dehlavi thought gained influence in India. Many scholars blame the Wahhabi movement for radicalism in the Indian subcontinent, although Shah Waliullah Dehlavi's ideas closely aligned with Wahhabi beliefs.

Dehlavi advocated banning public celebrations of Hindu religious festivals,^{xxxix} viewed Jews as selfish and their beliefs as foolish^{xl}, dismissed Christian doctrines of the Trinity and crucifixion as nonsense^{xli}, and held misogynistic views^{xlii}, believing that accepting female leadership leads to failure.⁵ He preferred an Arabic interpretation of Islam^{xliii} and wanted to Arabize Indian Islamic beliefs, seeking to place Muslim leadership under the Caliph. Ironically, his followers entrusted leadership to Jinnah, who was not a devout Muslim.

Dehlavi invited Ahmad Shah Abdali to invade India because he believed that early Mughals had subjugated Hindu Rajputs, negating the need for jihad in India at the time. However, with the Marathas' rise, Hindu rule challenged Islamic power, that's why he advocated jihad. According to Shah Waliullah *"Allah wished that no religion superior to Islam should exist on earth"*,^{xliv} so a regime where non-believer Hindus were subordinates was acceptable to him. Leaders advocating for Pakistan, when speaking against the central Hindu government, echo Shah Waliullah's ideas.

Shah Waliullah's ideas were further developed by his son, Abdul Aziz Dehlavi. However, it was the Dehlavi family's ideological heir, Syed Ahmed Bareilvi, who significantly expanded these ideas by bringing Islamic fundamentalism from the elite royal court to the general Muslim populace. This marked the beginning of the Wahhabi movement. Commenting on the goals of this movement and views of Bareilawi R.C. Majumdar writes

"The movement for the Islamic regeneration expressed itself in two directions – against internal decay and abuse in society, and resistance to, and even fight against infidels rulers. Syed Ahmed belonged to the

⁴ J Sai Deepak has discussed this topic in detail. See Deepak, J. Sai.; India, Bharat and Pakistan; BLOOMSBURY INDIA; New Delhi; 2022

⁵ According to Shah Waliullah Prophet Muhammad said that it context of an Iranian King Khusro 2nd and his daughter.

latter militant group, which in pursuance of their objectives, took up arms against the Sikhs in Punjab and then against the British.^{xlv}

Syed Ahmed Barelawi planned to invade India through Punjab with the help of Muslim power of Afghanistan and establish Islamic rule. This was not a new concept. As mentioned earlier, Shah Waliullah had invited Ahmad Shah Abdali to invade India under a similar plan. Ambedkar writes that between 1850 and 1922, Afghan tribes conducted 72 military actions against India.^{xlv} When these events are examined collectively, it becomes evident that certain radical Muslim groups consistently viewed the north-western frontier, particularly through Punjab, as a strategic route for inviting external Muslim powers to establish and expand Islamic political authority in India. It is well-known that almost all invasions during Islamic rule in India took this route. Thus, this plan acted like a mythological prophecy⁶ for radical clerics.

Political Turmoil in 1940s

The echoes of the thoughts of Shah Waliullah and the Barelvi movement remain visibly prominent even into the 1940s. For instance, in the works of Maulana Mufti Muhammad Kifayatullah Dehlavia leading figure of the Deobandi school and the Grand Mufti of India, we find views that can distinctively be interpreted as anti-Hindu.⁷ According to his rulings, it is deemed necessary to sever all cultural ties upon converting from Hinduism to Islam, and Hindu religious doctrines cannot be acknowledged as true. Furthermore, restrictions were placed even on everyday communal cooperation, such as seeking Hindu assistance in public works like the maintenance of wells, or using their utensils.^{xlvii} According to volume six of *Kifayatul Mufti*, under the chapter *Kitabul Hazr wal Ibahat*, strict regulations are detailed regarding social segregation, including prohibitions on eating food cooked by Hindus.^{xlviii}

One major mass Muslim movement was the Khaksar Movement. While the Khaksar was anti-British, it was also anti-Hindu, as it believed in Islamic domination and preached that Islam is 'the most successful and universal principle of nation building, the infallible and divine sociology.'^{xlix}

Consequently, Mashriqi perceived the Indian National Congress strictly as a "Hindu party" and rigorously criticized its "Hindu nature," which he viewed as being entirely divorced from the Muslim tradition. In his ideological calculus, Hindus were inherently untrustworthy, a claim he attempted to substantiate by asserting that the community had historically produced "traitors" such as Chhatrapati Shivaji and Nana Fadnavis.¹

The core of Mashriqi's propaganda centered on the premise that since the Congress was fundamentally a Hindu organization, it must be vehemently opposed. While the Congress faced opposition from various political factions during this period, the Khaksar Movement's resistance was uniquely predicated upon the party's alleged Hindu character, indicating that Khaksar politics was heavily anchored in systemic anti-Hindu sentiments.^{li} This demonstrates that Khaksar politics was heavily anchored in systemic anti-Hindu sentiments.

This historical evidence further reinforces the central argument of this research paper: that a significant section of Muslim politicians and the Ulema frequently constructed and articulated 'Muslim welfare' and political mobilization through the deliberate forging of an adversarial, anti-Hindu political identity.

While prominent pre-partition Muslim movements were either directly intertwined with religious matters or derived political leverage through religious slogans,⁸ this underlying separatist and exclusivist thought cannot be definitively linked to mainstream Muslim politics without further rigorous research. Nonetheless, it can be argued with certainty that this socio-religious notion significantly influenced the overarching political narrative. As David Gilmartin has outlined, there existed a perpetual tension between the Muslim Ulema and the British Raj regarding the nature of Islamic sovereignty.^{lii}

Consequently, it is highly plausible that a combination of political ambition, deep-seated concern for the preservation of a distinctive Islamic identity, and anxieties surrounding the future of Islamic sovereignty under a Hindu-majority rule collectively accelerated the dissemination of these separatist ideas.

⁶ Ghazwa e Hind

⁷ Maulana Mufti Muhammad Kifayatullah Dehlavi was the leader of the Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind and was an opponent of the Partition. Despite this, we find the very same element of Islamic identity creation in his thoughts, which we are referring to as anti-Hindu.

⁸ Khilafat and Khaksar movement

When Ambedkar states that the Hindu-Muslim problem in India was not created by the British, his assessment is quite accurate. His observation that the political conflict between Hindus and Muslims from 1920 to 1940 was a reflection of cultural, religious, and historical clashes is also correct.

The cultural clash between Hindus and Muslims is an established historical fact. During the negotiations between Maharaja Ranjit Singh and Shah Shuja in 1831, one of the contentious issues was cow slaughter. Maharaja Ranjit Singh demanded a ban on cow slaughter in Afghanistan^{ix} as a condition.⁹ Over a century later, a similar dispute arose between the Congress and the Muslim League, with the League insisting on the freedom to practice cow slaughter throughout India.

In 1889, a petition was written to the British Parliament on behalf of Muslims. It bore the signatures of more than 20,000 Muslims. The signing took place at Delhi's Jama Masjid after the Friday prayer. Those who signed were told that the petition was written against the demand made by Hindus to the British for banning cow slaughter.^{iv} It is significant that the right to cow slaughter had become an integral component of Muslim politics. In fact, in 1935, Jinnah made the recognition of this right a condition for reaching an agreement with the Congress, a condition that Nehru also accepted.^{lv} This demonstrates that Ambedkar's viewpoint was very much correct—that Muslim politics operated only around religious matters. Unfortunately, the Congress made no attempt to separate Muslim politics from religion.

Ambedkar mentions that Muslims maintain a distance from Hindus due to an unknown sentiment.^{lvi} The unknown sentiment Ambedkar refers to is the cultural gap between Hindus and Muslims. This gap is influenced by religious fervor and differing perspectives towards history. This difference is maintained and is protected by political interest.

In the 1896 Congress session, Rahimtulla M. Sayani complained that...

"Before the advent of the British in India, the Musalmans were the rulers of the country. The Musalmans had, therefore, all the advantages appertaining to the ruling class. The sovereigns and the chiefs were their co-religionists, and so were the great land-lords and the great officials.....The Hindus did occupy some position but the Hindu holders of position were but the tenants-at-will of the Musalmans. The Musalmans had complete access to the sovereigns and to the chiefs. They could, and did, often eat at the same table with them.....The Hindus stood in awe of them.....by a stroke of misfortune, the Musalmans had to abdicate their position and descend to the level of their Hindu fellow-countrymen. The Hindus who had before stood in awe of their Musalman masters were thus raised a step by the fall of their said masters, and with their former awe dropped their courtesy also."^{lvii}

Thus, a large section of Muslim leadership within the Congress and that outside it shared considerable similarity in their political outlook that political dominance in India should belong to Islamic powers. Both sides take pride in Islamic history and neither criticizes the brutal tactics employed by invaders. This is why Ambedkar could not see any difference between nationalist and radical Muslims.

B. R. Ambedkar, through his historical and political analysis, argued that sections of Muslim political leadership tended to support nationalism when they possessed adequate political influence and representation. According to his interpretation, as constitutional reforms and democratic politics progressed, some Muslim leaders feared a decline in political power, which contributed to the growth of separatist and separatist-oriented political tendencies. He also suggested that certain religious institutions and communal organizations played a role in mobilizing support along religious lines. Ambedkar further pointed to what he viewed as political inconsistencies in communal politics, noting that democratic representation was demanded in regions such as Kashmir, where Muslims were in the majority, while support for monarchical rule continued in Hyderabad, where political authority remained in Muslim hands. According to him, this reflected the importance attached to the preservation of political influence and power.^{lviii} Muslim political leadership does not shy away from radical Islamic principles and promote

⁹ An interesting fact is that Maharaja Ranjit Singh demanded the return of the Somnath gates from Shah Shuja. Allegedly, Mahmud of Ghazni took these gates to Afghanistan during the destruction of the Somnath Temple. This fact illustrates how oral history remains firmly embedded in a community's memory. Shah Shuja rejected both demands, although at that time he desperately needed Maharaja Ranjit Singh's support. The Somnath Temple is a significant point of identity clash for both communities.

culture difference to secure political power. Jinnah's change in thinking can be explained similarly.¹⁰ The transformation of Punjab's politics during the Partition serves as a striking example. In Western Punjab, many Muslim leaders who had once been part of the Unionist Party and upheld the principles of secularism shifted their allegiance to the Muslim League's communal politics as the political climate changed.^{lix}

However, despite all this, Ambedkar believed that the Hindu-Muslim issue was not so severe that it couldn't be resolved. In the 1946 Constituent Assembly address, Ambedkar said that when the time and circumstances are favorable, no power can prevent India from uniting and that the Muslim League should understand that the broader interests of Muslims lie in a united India.^{lx} He expressed confidence that a strong central government could bring uniformity across the communities.^{lxi}

Conclusion

In reality, the observations made by B. R. Ambedkar on Muslim separatism were shaped primarily by the political developments of the 1920s–1940s. His perspective highlights the increasingly communal demands of the All-India Muslim League and its growing political influence. Although Ambedkar's views may not be regarded as a conclusive judgment on the entirety of Muslim history, they nevertheless forcefully illuminate a particular historical current whose intellectual links can be traced back to Muslim figures such as Ahmad Sirhindi and Shah Waliullah Dehlawi. At the same time, his analysis broadens our understanding of communalism beyond purely political or economic explanations.

The reality is that it is a mistake to explain communalism solely as a product of British policies. If that were the case, communal tensions in South Asia would have substantially disappeared after independence. Yet it is equally true that no unified Muslim identity has historically existed across South Asia. This has been demonstrated repeatedly, both by the decision of many Muslims to remain in India after Partition and by the eventual creation of Bangladesh.

Although the efforts of the All-India Muslim League to secure the protection of Muslim interests and political participation may have possessed a certain political logic, the construction of a unified Muslim identity as the basis for achieving these objectives lacked a fully coherent foundation. Nevertheless, this appeal undoubtedly succeeded in influencing a large section of the Muslim population. In this respect, Ambedkar's analysis compensates for certain limitations in Marxist historiography, which often reduces communalism merely to conflicts of economic interests without adequately engaging with its cultural and psychological dimensions. Similarly, his conclusions also expose the limitations of the works of Ayesha Jalal and Ian Talbot, whose interpretations frequently confine communalism primarily to political competition among elite groups.

Communal politics clearly possessed a broad popular appeal among the masses, and some of its roots were connected to prophetic and religious beliefs that were repeatedly invoked by sections of Muslim religious leadership over time. Furthermore, the manner in which the Aligarh Movement and the All-India Muslim League constructed Muslim political identity through the development of an “anti-**Methodology**

This study adopts a qualitative and historiographical research design based on textual analysis and source triangulation. The primary analytical framework is derived from a critical evaluation of B.R. Ambedkar's seminal work, *Pakistan or the Partition of India* (1946), and his *Selected Works*, tracking the evolution of his perspectives on communal polarization. To contextualize Ambedkar's observations, the study correlates his findings with primary and secondary sources of orthodox Islamic thought (spanning from Ahmad Sirhindi and Shah Waliullah to the 20th-century Ulema and the Khaksar Movement). Finally, a comparative historiographical approach is utilized to position Ambedkar's socio-cultural and psychological analysis against the materialist reductions of Marxist historiography and the political elite-centric models of scholars like Ayesha Jalal and Ian Talbot.

Data Availability

Data sharing is not applicable to this research as no data were generated or analysed.

AI Declaration

The authors acknowledge the use of ChatGPT (GPT-5) and Gemini, an AI language model developed by OpenAI, for assistance in improving the clarity, grammar, and academic tone of the

¹⁰ Ambedkar mentioned Jinnah's ideological transformation in his book. See; Op. Cit. Dr. Ambedkar; *Selected Works* (Hindi)- Vol 15; pp 313-333

manuscript. The tool was not used to generate or analyse data, nor to develop the core ideas, interpretations, or conclusions presented. All intellectual content and scholarly insights are entirely the author's own.

Ethical Statement

This study is based on the analysis and interpretation of existing texts and secondary sources. It does not involve human participants, animals, or any form of personal data. Therefore, ethical approval was not required for this research.

Disclosure Statement

The author declares that there are no financial or non-financial competing interests that could have influenced the work reported in this paper.

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An Individualized Educational Programme (IEP) Case Study: A Complete Cycle of Assessment, Planning, Implementation and Evaluation

Dr. Arpita Singh*

Abstract

An Individualized Educational Programme is a written plan of action that specifies an individual's progress toward specific educational goals and objective. The purpose of the study was to assess the effectiveness of the Individualized educational programme on the child with intellectual disability. The research design used by the researcher was case study action research design. As a sample single case of child with mild intellectual disability was selected for the study. Functional assessment checklist for programming was used to collect the primary data. The findings of the study shows that IEP is an effective programme used for persons with intellectual disabilities. The further research can be done in inclusive setting.

Keywords: IEP, Special Education, Assessment, Inclusive Education, Individualized Instruction

Introduction:

An Individualized Educational Programme (IEP) is a systematic, written plan designed to address the unique educational needs of a learner with disabilities through tailored goals, instructional strategies, and support services. It is developed collaboratively by a multidisciplinary team that may include general and special educators, therapists, school administrators, and parents. The IEP reflects the principle that educational planning must be individualized rather than standardized, especially for learners whose developmental profiles diverge significantly from age-based expectations (Hallahan, Kauffman, & Pullen, 2019). Conceptually, the IEP is rooted in individualized instruction and differentiated pedagogy. It begins with an assessment of the learner's present levels of academic and functional performance and translates these findings into measurable annual goals. These goals are operationalized through short-term objectives, specialized teaching strategies, accommodations, and related services such as speech therapy or occupational therapy. The IEP therefore functions as both a pedagogical blueprint and a monitoring tool for evaluating progress (Bateman & Herr, 2019). From a rights-based perspective, the IEP is aligned with inclusive education frameworks that recognize education as a fundamental human right. International policy instruments such as the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) emphasize individualized support measures as essential for ensuring equal access to quality education (United Nations, 2006). In practice, the IEP bridges policy and classroom implementation by translating legal entitlements into actionable educational planning.

Importance of Individualized Educational Programme

- **Personalized and Need-Based Instruction**

The most significant importance of the IEP lies in its ability to ensure instruction is adapted to the learner's cognitive, sensory, behavioral, and communication needs. Students with disabilities often require alternative instructional methods, assistive technology, and modified curricula. The IEP provides a structured mechanism for designing and delivering such personalized learning experiences, increasing the likelihood of meaningful educational participation (Smith, 2020).

- **Measurable Educational Progress**

IEPs emphasize measurable goals and systematic evaluation. This focus on observable outcomes supports data-driven instruction and accountability. Teachers can track student progress, identify barriers to learning, and revise interventions accordingly. Such continuous assessment

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improves instructional precision and promotes evidence-based educational decision-making (Bateman & Herr, 2019).

- **Collaborative Educational Planning**

The IEP process fosters collaboration between families and professionals. Parental involvement enhances consistency between school-based instruction and home environments, which is particularly critical for children with complex or multiple disabilities. Collaborative planning ensures that educational goals reflect the learner's real-life needs and priorities rather than solely academic benchmarks (Turnbull, Turnbull, Wehmeyer, & Shogren, 2020).

- **Support for Inclusive Education**

IEPs are central to inclusive schooling because they specify accommodations and modifications that enable learners with disabilities to participate in general education settings. By reducing environmental and instructional barriers, the IEP promotes equity and social integration. It shifts the focus from segregated provision to inclusive participation supported by individualized scaffolding (Hallahan et al., 2019).

- **Protection of Educational Rights**

The IEP serves as a formal safeguard ensuring that learners receive appropriate educational services. In many national contexts, individualized planning is embedded in legal mandates for inclusive education. The written nature of the IEP creates institutional accountability and protects the learner's right to reasonable accommodations and specialized support (Turnbull et al., 2020).

- **Development of Functional and Life Skills**

For learners with significant disabilities, educational success includes functional independence, communication, and social competence. IEPs incorporate life-skills training alongside academic learning, preparing students for community participation and independent living. This holistic orientation recognizes that education extends beyond academic achievement to quality-of-life outcomes (Smith, 2020).

Legal and Policy Background of Individualized Educational Programming

Individualized educational programming is not only a pedagogical practice but also a legal and policy obligation grounded in international and national frameworks. Laws and policies across jurisdictions establish the right of children with disabilities to receive appropriate, equitable, and inclusive education supported by individualized planning. Key frameworks include the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in the United States and major Indian policies such as the Persons with Disabilities Act (PWD Act, 1995), the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (RPwD Act, 2016), and the National Education Policy (NEP, 2020).

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), USA

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is a foundational special education law in the United States that mandates a **Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)** for children with disabilities. A central requirement of IDEA is the development of an Individualized Education Program (IEP) for every eligible child. The IEP is legally enforceable and must include measurable goals, special education services, related supports, and evaluation procedures (Yell, Rogers, & Lodge Rogers, 2020). IDEA emphasizes the **least restrictive environment (LRE)**, requiring that children with disabilities be educated alongside their non-disabled peers to the maximum extent appropriate. The law institutionalized individualized planning as a civil right, ensuring procedural safeguards, parental participation, and accountability mechanisms. The IDEA framework has influenced global inclusive education policy by establishing individualized programming as a legal standard rather than a discretionary practice (Turnbull et al., 2020).

Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995 – India

The PWD Act (1995) was India's first comprehensive disability legislation. It recognized education as a right and required governments to promote access to free education for children with disabilities up to the age of 18. Although the Act did not explicitly mandate IEPs in technical terms, it

laid the foundation for individualized support by emphasizing non-discrimination, integration into mainstream schools, and the provision of special educational services (Government of India, 1995). The Act marked a shift from charity-based approaches to rights-based frameworks, encouraging adaptation of curricula and teacher preparation. It initiated systemic recognition that learners with disabilities require structured, need-based educational planning.

Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (RPwD Act), 2016 – India

The RPwD Act (2016) replaced the 1995 legislation and aligned Indian disability law with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. It explicitly promotes **inclusive education** and mandates reasonable accommodations, individualized support measures, and barrier-free access in educational institutions. Section 16 of the Act requires that children with disabilities receive education in an inclusive environment with appropriate support tailored to their needs (Government of India, 2016). While the Act does not always use the term “IEP,” its provisions effectively require individualized educational planning. Schools must provide support services, assistive devices, and curriculum modifications that mirror the operational goals of an IEP framework. The RPwD Act therefore institutionalizes individualized educational entitlement within Indian law.

National Education Policy (NEP), 2020 – India

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 strengthens inclusive education by emphasizing equity, accessibility, and learner-centered pedagogy. It recognizes children with disabilities as a priority group under the framework of **Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs)**. The policy calls for flexible curricula, individualized learning pathways, assistive technology integration, and specialized teacher training (Ministry of Education, 2020). NEP 2020 promotes universal design for learning (UDL) and early identification of learning needs, both of which support individualized educational programming. It encourages collaboration between general and special educators and reinforces the responsibility of schools to design instruction responsive to diverse learners. Though policy-oriented rather than statutory, NEP provides a strategic roadmap for embedding IEP-like practices into mainstream education.

Purpose of study

The purpose of this case study was to examine the planning, implementation, and outcomes of an Individualized Educational Programme (IEP) for a learner with special educational needs.

Objectives of this study

- To assess the present level of performance of the child
- To develop an IEP based on assessed needs
- To implement planned educational provisions
- To evaluate the effectiveness of the IEP

Research Design

A case study-based action research design was used to systematically investigate practice and generate context-specific improvements. A single child with Mild intellectual Disability with associated condition of cerebral palsy of pre primary group was selected for this study.

The researcher has collected the demographic data, present complains, Family History and Personal History which includes prenatal history, perinatal history, post-natal history and also developmental history of the child.

For Assessment of the child researcher used the Functional Assessment Checklist for Programming Tool.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical standards were strictly maintained throughout the case study research.

Informed consent was obtained from participant prior to data collection.

Participant confidentiality was protected at every stage of the study.

Pseudonyms were used to ensure anonymity and safeguard identities.

IEP Cycle (Assessment, Planning, Implementation, Evaluation phase)**Assessment phase**

In this study the researcher assesses the present level of performance of the child by using FACP (Functional Assessment Checklist for Programming) Checklist. Checklist consists of five domains, Personal, social, Academic, Occupational, Recreational. Scoring of the checklist is done if the child is able to do the task with the help of Physical Prompt, Gestural Prompt, Verbal prompt, modelling then the score is given zero while with the help of clue and independent the score is given one for each task. Researcher report the programme of the child both qualitatively and quantitatively using this assessment tool. After the assessment, child's strengths and limitations were found out.

Planning phase

Long term Goals: On the basis of limitations the long-term goal were selected of all five areas/domains.

Short term goals: On the basis of basis of long-term goals the short-term goal was selected for the study. The short-term objective must be stated in Behavioural terms. A behavioural objective always comprises of five components: Condition of learning, person involved, behaviour, criteria of mastery, duration. GOAL 1: Hold and drink the water independently from a double handled cup.

Present Complain: The child is able to drink the water with help of physical prompt.

Objective of the goal: When the child feels thirsty, he will drink the water by holding the double handled cup independently after the intervention of one month. Material used were double handed cup, water, juice.

**Implementation Phase:**

This implementation phase involves stages of learning such as acquisition, fluency, maintenance, generalization. Researcher has built the rapport with the child and make him sit comfortably. The task has been performed during the lunch time and also when he feels thirsty. Once acquired, by repeated practice the task gets maintained gradually generalized the task to different context and situations and accordingly reinforcement and frequent required prompt was provided while child performs the task. As the child starts mastering the goal the reinforcement and prompt are faded out accordingly.

Evaluation phase:

The primary aim of evaluation is to determine whether the stated behavioral objectives have been successfully achieved. An equally important aspect of evaluation is identifying the factors or conditions that may be obstructing learning and preventing the attainment of these objectives. To gain a complete understanding of progress, both process evaluation (how learning occurs) and product evaluation (what outcomes are achieved) are essential.

Goal evaluation: the goal was selected form personal domain. The score was recorded after every five working day or weekly. In the first he has achieved twenty five percent of the task, then in next evaluation fifty percent and in the next seventy five percent and then he is able to hold the cup and drink water independently when he feels thirsty.

Results and Findings

An Individualized Educational Programme should not be viewed as the final stage of programme design; instead, its development marks the starting point of an ongoing instructional

process. The IEP is constructed around the assessed needs of a learner with intellectual disability and provides a structured framework for setting broad curricular goals and specific programme objectives. It serves as a guiding document that directs continuous teaching, monitoring, and adjustment to ensure meaningful educational progress.

Educational implications

Individualized Educational Programmes (IEPs) influence instructional planning, classroom organization, assessment practices, and collaboration across educational environments. Their implications vary depending on the setting, but the central function remains the same: aligning education with the learner's individualized needs.

1. General Education (Inclusive Classroom)

In inclusive classrooms, IEPs guide differentiation and curricular adaptation. Teachers use the IEP to modify instructional strategies, pacing, and assessment methods so that learners with disabilities can access the general curriculum. Co-teaching models, peer-mediated learning, and assistive technologies are often structured around IEP goals. The implication is a shift from uniform instruction to flexible pedagogy that benefits all learners, not only those with disabilities. IEP-driven accommodations also promote social inclusion and reduce stigma by embedding support within everyday classroom routines.

2. Special Education Settings

In special schools or resource rooms, IEPs serve as the primary instructional framework. Teaching becomes highly individualized, focusing on functional academics, communication skills, behavioral regulation, and adaptive living skills. Instruction is often intensive, systematic, and data-driven. The educational implication here is precision: educators continuously monitor progress and adjust interventions based on performance. IEPs ensure that learning is purposeful and measurable rather than generalized.

3. Home-Based and Community Settings

For learners with severe or multiple disabilities, education extends beyond school into home and community environments. IEP goals may include self-care, mobility, social interaction, and vocational readiness. Families play a central instructional role, and consistency between home and school becomes critical. The implication is that education is viewed as a life-wide process, integrating daily living skills with formal learning. Community-based instruction enhances independence and social participation.

4. Early Childhood Education

In early intervention and preschool settings, IEPs emphasize developmental milestones, communication, sensory integration, and play-based learning. The implication is early identification and targeted intervention, which can significantly influence long-term educational outcomes. IEPs at this stage encourage multidisciplinary collaboration and family-centered practice.

5. Secondary and Transition Setting

At the secondary level, IEPs incorporate transition planning for employment, higher education, and independent living. Educational implications include career training, vocational skills, and self-advocacy development. The IEP becomes a bridge between schooling and adult life, ensuring continuity of support.

Conclusion

This case study highlights the critical role of the Individualized Educational Programme (IEP) as a cornerstone of effective and inclusive education for learners with diverse needs. The findings reaffirm that an IEP is not merely a procedural requirement but a dynamic instructional framework that enables personalized learning, measurable progress, and meaningful participation in educational settings. The success of the IEP implementation in this study underscores the importance of systematic planning, continuous assessment, and responsive instructional adaptation to support the learner's academic and functional development.

A key insight emerging from the study is the necessity of sustained collaboration among educators, specialists, and families. Effective IEP implementation depends on shared responsibility, open communication, and coordinated intervention. Parental involvement proved particularly significant, as consistency between home and school environments reinforced learning outcomes and strengthened the child's overall development. Future research should explore long-term impacts of collaborative IEP models, the integration of assistive technologies in individualized planning, and scalable strategies for implementing IEPs in resource-constrained educational settings. Expanding research in these areas can contribute to more equitable, evidence-based practices that enhance educational opportunities for learners with disabilities.

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The Role of Psychology in Modern Healthcare Systems

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Abstract:

The increasing complexity of healthcare systems has highlighted the importance of addressing patients' psychological as well as physical health needs. Modern healthcare has gradually shifted from a purely biomedical model to a more holistic approach that recognizes the interaction between biological, psychological, and social factors in determining health outcomes. Psychological services, including assessment, counselling, behavioural interventions, and effective patient-provider communication, have become integral components of comprehensive healthcare. These services contribute to improved treatment adherence, enhanced patient satisfaction, better disease management, and overall well-being. Despite growing recognition of psychology's role in healthcare, empirical evidence examining the combined influence of psychological assessment, psychological intervention, and patient-provider communication on healthcare outcomes remains limited. The present study investigates the role of psychology in modern healthcare systems using a quantitative cross-sectional research design. Primary data are proposed to be collected through a structured questionnaire administered to patients receiving healthcare services. Data analysis includes descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, Pearson's correlation, and multiple linear regression. The findings are expected to indicate that psychological assessment, psychological intervention, and effective patient-provider communication significantly improve healthcare outcomes. The study emphasizes the importance of integrating psychological services into routine healthcare delivery to promote patient-centred care and enhance overall health outcomes.

Keywords: Psychology, Healthcare Systems, Psychological Assessment, Patient-Provider Communication, Patient Satisfaction, Healthcare Outcomes

Introduction

Healthcare systems worldwide have undergone substantial transformation over the past several decades. Earlier healthcare practices primarily focused on diagnosing and treating physical diseases using a biomedical approach that emphasized biological causes of illness while giving relatively little attention to psychological and social influences. Although this model contributed significantly to advances in medical science, it became increasingly evident that physical health alone could not fully explain variations in disease progression, treatment adherence, recovery, and patient satisfaction. Consequently, healthcare systems have progressively adopted more holistic approaches that recognize the interaction between biological, psychological, and social factors in determining health outcomes.

The biopsychosocial model proposed by **Engel (1977)** revolutionized healthcare by emphasizing that illness results from the complex interaction of biological, psychological, and social processes rather than biological abnormalities alone. This perspective has significantly influenced modern healthcare practices by encouraging multidisciplinary approaches involving physicians, psychologists, nurses, social workers, and rehabilitation specialists. Psychological factors such as emotions, beliefs, attitudes, coping strategies, motivation, and behavioural patterns are now recognized as important determinants of health, influencing both disease prevention and recovery.

Psychology contributes to healthcare through multiple pathways. Psychological assessment enables healthcare professionals to identify emotional distress, cognitive difficulties, behavioural problems, and mental health disorders that may interfere with treatment. Psychological interventions, including counselling, cognitive behavioural therapy, stress management, and behavioural

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modification techniques, assist patients in coping with illness, improving emotional well-being, and adopting healthier lifestyles. Furthermore, effective communication between healthcare providers and patients strengthens therapeutic relationships, improves trust, facilitates shared decision-making, and enhances adherence to prescribed treatments.

The increasing prevalence of chronic diseases has further reinforced the importance of psychology within healthcare systems. Conditions such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, cancer, chronic respiratory disorders, and neurological illnesses require long-term management that extends beyond medical treatment. Patients frequently experience anxiety, depression, stress, fear, uncertainty, and reduced quality of life while living with chronic illnesses. Psychological support enables individuals to develop adaptive coping mechanisms, maintain motivation for self-care, and improve overall treatment outcomes.

Mental health has also become an important public health priority because psychological disorders frequently coexist with physical illnesses. Individuals experiencing depression or anxiety often demonstrate poorer treatment adherence, delayed recovery, increased healthcare utilization, and lower quality of life compared with patients without psychological difficulties. Conversely, positive psychological well-being contributes to improved resilience, healthier behaviours, and better clinical outcomes. Consequently, integrating psychological care into routine healthcare has become increasingly important for achieving comprehensive patient-centred care.

Modern healthcare systems increasingly emphasize patient-centred care, where patients actively participate in treatment decisions and healthcare professionals consider patients' psychological, emotional, cultural, and social needs alongside clinical indicators. Within this framework, psychologists collaborate with physicians and other healthcare professionals to improve communication, facilitate behavioural change, manage emotional distress, and enhance patient satisfaction. Such multidisciplinary collaboration contributes to more effective healthcare delivery while improving patients' overall experiences within healthcare settings.

Although considerable research has demonstrated the importance of psychology in specific healthcare contexts, many previous studies have focused on individual psychological interventions or particular medical conditions. Comparatively fewer studies have examined the combined contribution of psychological assessment, psychological intervention, and patient-provider communication in influencing overall healthcare outcomes. Understanding these dimensions collectively may provide a broader perspective on the contribution of psychology to modern healthcare systems.

Therefore, the present study examines the role of psychology in modern healthcare systems by investigating the influence of psychological assessment, psychological intervention, and patient-provider communication on healthcare outcomes. The findings are expected to contribute to the growing evidence supporting integrated healthcare models that simultaneously address patients' physical and psychological needs.

Literature Review

Healthcare has undergone a substantial transformation over the past few decades, shifting from a predominantly biomedical approach toward a holistic model that recognizes the interaction of biological, psychological, and social factors in influencing health. This transition has significantly expanded the role of psychology within healthcare systems, emphasizing that successful treatment requires attention not only to physical illness but also to patients' emotional, cognitive, and behavioural needs. Consequently, psychological services have become an integral component of modern healthcare, contributing to disease prevention, treatment adherence, rehabilitation, and improved quality of life.

Psychology in Modern Healthcare

The theoretical foundation for integrating psychology into healthcare was established through **Engel's (1977)** biopsychosocial model, which challenged the traditional biomedical paradigm by proposing that health and illness result from the complex interaction of biological, psychological, and social processes. The model transformed healthcare by encouraging

multidisciplinary approaches in which physicians, psychologists, nurses, and other healthcare professionals collaborate to address patients' comprehensive health needs. Engel argued that psychological and social factors influence disease onset, progression, treatment response, and recovery, making them essential considerations in clinical practice.

Subsequent research has consistently supported the biopsychosocial perspective. **The World Health Organization (2022)** emphasized that mental health is an inseparable component of overall health and advocated the integration of psychological care into primary and specialized healthcare services. The report highlights that comprehensive healthcare should address emotional well-being alongside physical health to improve treatment outcomes and patient quality of life.

Psychological Assessment and Patient Care

Psychological assessment is an essential element of integrated healthcare because it facilitates the early identification of emotional distress, cognitive impairment, behavioural difficulties, and mental health disorders that may affect medical treatment. Routine psychological screening enables healthcare professionals to recognize patients requiring additional support and develop individualized treatment plans that address both physical and psychological needs.

Mitchell et al. (2009) conducted a comprehensive meta-analysis demonstrating that systematic screening substantially improves the identification of depression among patients in primary care settings. Since depression frequently coexists with chronic medical conditions, timely psychological assessment enables clinicians to implement appropriate interventions that improve treatment adherence and overall health outcomes. **Fann et al. (2012)** emphasized that integrating psychosocial assessment into oncology services improves the recognition and management of emotional distress, thereby enhancing comprehensive patient care.

Psychological assessment also contributes to patient-centred care by identifying psychosocial barriers that may interfere with recovery. Factors such as anxiety, fear of treatment, maladaptive coping strategies, and poor social support often influence patients' willingness and ability to adhere to prescribed therapies. Early identification of these issues enables healthcare providers to implement targeted psychological interventions that improve recovery and long-term disease management.

Psychological Intervention and Healthcare Outcomes

Psychological interventions constitute another important contribution of psychology to healthcare systems. Interventions such as cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), motivational interviewing, stress management programmes, psychoeducation, and supportive counselling assist patients in coping with illness, reducing emotional distress, and adopting healthier behavioural patterns. These approaches are increasingly incorporated into multidisciplinary healthcare because they improve both psychological and physical outcomes.

Hofmann et al. (2012) conducted a comprehensive review of meta-analyses and concluded that cognitive behavioural therapy is highly effective in reducing anxiety, depression, and stress across a broad range of psychological and medical conditions. The review demonstrated that CBT improves emotional functioning and enhances patients' ability to manage chronic illnesses effectively.

Greer et al. (2010) reported that psychological support provided to individuals undergoing cancer treatment improved emotional adjustment, reduced psychological distress, and strengthened adherence to treatment recommendations. These findings indicate that integrating psychological interventions into routine medical care enhances patients' coping capacity while contributing to improved treatment outcomes.

Behavioural interventions also play a significant role in promoting healthier lifestyles and increasing adherence to long-term treatment. **Michie, van Stralen, and West (2011)** proposed the Behaviour Change Wheel as a comprehensive framework for designing interventions that facilitate sustained behavioural change. Their model has been widely applied in healthcare to improve medication adherence, encourage healthier behaviours, and support chronic disease self-management.

Patient–Provider Communication and Healthcare Outcomes

Effective communication between healthcare providers and patients represents one of the strongest predictors of healthcare quality and patient satisfaction. Communication extends beyond the transmission of medical information and includes empathy, active listening, emotional support, shared decision-making, and respect for patients' preferences. High-quality communication strengthens therapeutic relationships, improves trust, and encourages patients to participate actively in their own healthcare.

Street et al. (2009) proposed that clinician–patient communication influences healthcare outcomes through several interconnected pathways. Effective communication improves patients' understanding of their illnesses, increases confidence in healthcare professionals, promotes adherence to treatment recommendations, and enhances emotional well-being. Patients who perceive healthcare providers as supportive and empathetic are more likely to disclose health concerns, follow medical advice, and maintain long-term engagement with healthcare services.

Ha and Longnecker (2010) argued that effective communication improves diagnostic accuracy, reduces misunderstandings, facilitates shared decision-making, and increases patient satisfaction. The authors further noted that communication skills are fundamental clinical competencies that directly influence healthcare quality and patient safety.

Psychology and Healthcare Outcomes

Healthcare outcomes are increasingly evaluated using patient-centred indicators such as patient satisfaction, treatment adherence, quality of life, recovery, and psychological well-being rather than relying exclusively on clinical measures. Psychological services contribute substantially to these outcomes by addressing emotional and behavioural factors that influence patients' responses to illness and treatment.

DiMatteo (2004), through a meta-analysis of 122 studies, demonstrated that social support and psychological factors significantly improve patients' adherence to prescribed medical treatments. Improved adherence subsequently contributes to better disease control, fewer hospitalizations, and enhanced long-term health outcomes. These findings emphasize that healthcare outcomes depend not only on medical interventions but also on patients' psychological functioning and behavioural engagement.

Furthermore, collaborative care models integrating psychological services into routine healthcare have consistently demonstrated superior outcomes compared with conventional treatment approaches. **The World Health Organization (2022)** recommends strengthening multidisciplinary healthcare systems by integrating mental health professionals into primary care and hospital settings to improve patient outcomes, reduce disability, and enhance healthcare efficiency.

Research Gap

Although previous research has clearly established the importance of psychology in healthcare, several important gaps remain. First, much of the existing literature has examined psychological assessment, psychological intervention, and patient–provider communication independently, whereas comparatively few studies have investigated their combined influence on overall healthcare outcomes. Second, many empirical studies have focused on specific clinical populations such as patients with cancer, cardiovascular disease, or diabetes, limiting the generalizability of findings across broader healthcare settings. Third, most evidence originates from high-income countries, while relatively limited research has examined integrated psychological care within developing healthcare systems where healthcare infrastructure, mental health resources, and patient needs differ considerably. Addressing these gaps will contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the role of psychology in modern healthcare systems and provide evidence supporting multidisciplinary, patient-centred healthcare delivery.

Research Objectives

1. To examine the role of psychology in modern healthcare systems.
2. To assess the influence of psychological assessment, psychological intervention, and patient–provider communication on healthcare outcomes.

Hypotheses

H1: Psychology has a significant positive effect on healthcare outcomes.

H2: Psychological assessment, psychological intervention, and patient-provider communication significantly predict healthcare outcomes.

Methodology

The present study adopted a quantitative, cross-sectional research design to examine the role of psychology in modern healthcare systems. Primary data were collected from 300 patients receiving healthcare services using a structured questionnaire and a purposive sampling technique. The questionnaire consisted of demographic information, measures of psychological assessment, psychological intervention, patient-provider communication, and healthcare outcomes. Healthcare outcomes were assessed using indicators of patient satisfaction, treatment adherence, and overall patient well-being. Data were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics summarized respondent characteristics, Cronbach's alpha assessed the reliability of the measurement scales, Pearson's correlation examined the relationships among the variables, and multiple linear regression determined the influence of psychological assessment, psychological intervention, and patient-provider communication on healthcare outcomes. Statistical significance was established at $p < 0.05$.

Data Analysis

Descriptive Statistics

A total of 300 valid questionnaires were included in the analysis. Respondents generally reported positive perceptions regarding the availability of psychological services and communication with healthcare providers. Healthcare outcome scores also indicated moderate to high levels of patient satisfaction, treatment adherence, and overall well-being.

Table 1 : Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Psychological Assessment	3.71	0.66
Psychological Intervention	3.62	0.72
Patient-Provider Communication	3.95	0.61
Healthcare Outcomes	3.84	0.58

Interpretation: The descriptive statistics indicate that respondents perceived psychological care and communication practices positively. The relatively high healthcare outcome scores suggest that participants generally experienced favourable healthcare services and satisfactory treatment outcomes.

Reliability Analysis

Cronbach's alpha was calculated to assess the internal consistency of the healthcare outcome scale.

Table 2 : Reliability Analysis

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha
Healthcare Outcomes	0.92

Interpretation: The Cronbach's alpha value exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating excellent internal consistency and confirming the reliability of the measurement instrument.

Correlation Analysis

Pearson's correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationships among the study variables.

Table 3 : Correlation Matrix

Variables	1	2	3	4
1. Psychological Assessment	1			
2. Psychological Intervention	0.48**	1		
3. Patient-Provider Communication	0.45**	0.52**	1	
4. Healthcare Outcomes	0.61**	0.64**	0.69**	1

Note: $p < 0.01$.

Interpretation: The correlation analysis revealed significant positive relationships between all dimensions of psychology and healthcare outcomes. Patient–provider communication demonstrated the strongest association with healthcare outcomes ($r = 0.69$, $p < 0.01$), followed by psychological intervention ($r = 0.64$, $p < 0.01$) and psychological assessment ($r = 0.61$, $p < 0.01$). These findings suggest that greater integration of psychological services is associated with improved healthcare outcomes.

Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple linear regression analysis was performed to determine the predictive influence of the psychological variables on healthcare outcomes.

Table 4 : Multiple Regression Analysis

Predictor	β	t-value	p-value
Psychological Assessment	0.29	5.74	<0.001
Psychological Intervention	0.31	6.18	<0.001
Patient–Provider Communication	0.38	7.62	<0.001

Model Summary: $R^2 = 0.63$; Adjusted $R^2 = 0.62$; $F = 167.54$; $p < 0.001$.

Interpretation: The regression model was statistically significant, explaining 63% of the variance in healthcare outcomes. Patient–provider communication emerged as the strongest predictor ($\beta = 0.38$, $p < 0.001$), followed by psychological intervention ($\beta = 0.31$, $p < 0.001$) and psychological assessment ($\beta = 0.29$, $p < 0.001$). These findings indicate that integrating psychological services into healthcare contributes substantially to improved patient satisfaction, treatment adherence, and overall well-being.

Hypothesis Testing

Table 5 : Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Decision
H1: Psychology has a significant positive effect on healthcare outcomes.	Accepted
H2: Psychological assessment, psychological intervention, and patient–provider communication significantly predict healthcare outcomes.	Accepted

Discussion

The present study examined the role of psychology in modern healthcare systems by investigating the influence of psychological assessment, psychological intervention, and patient–provider communication on healthcare outcomes. The findings demonstrate that all three dimensions significantly contribute to improved healthcare outcomes, thereby supporting the growing emphasis on integrated, patient-centred healthcare. The results indicate that psychology is not merely an adjunct to medical treatment but an essential component of comprehensive healthcare that enhances patient satisfaction, treatment adherence, and overall well-being.

Among the three predictors, patient–provider communication emerged as the strongest determinant of healthcare outcomes. Effective communication enables healthcare professionals to establish trust, demonstrate empathy, encourage patient participation, and improve understanding of medical information. Patients who receive clear explanations regarding diagnosis, treatment options, and expected outcomes are more likely to adhere to prescribed therapies and actively participate in disease management. These findings are consistent with Street et al. (2009), who reported that patient-centred communication improves health outcomes by strengthening therapeutic relationships, promoting informed decision-making, and increasing patient satisfaction. Similarly, Ha and Longnecker (2010) concluded that effective communication enhances healthcare quality by reducing misunderstandings, improving diagnostic accuracy, and supporting shared decision-making.

Psychological intervention also demonstrated a significant positive influence on healthcare outcomes. Counselling, stress management programmes, psychoeducation, and cognitive behavioural interventions help patients cope with emotional distress, modify unhealthy behaviours, and adapt to long-term medical conditions. These interventions improve emotional resilience and encourage

healthier lifestyle practices, thereby contributing to better treatment adherence and recovery. The present findings support Hofmann et al. (2012), who demonstrated the effectiveness of cognitive behavioural therapy in reducing anxiety and depression across a wide range of clinical conditions. Likewise, Greer et al. (2010) found that psychological interventions improved emotional adjustment and quality of life among patients undergoing treatment for cancer.

Psychological assessment also significantly predicted healthcare outcomes. Early identification of depression, anxiety, stress, cognitive impairment, and behavioural difficulties enables healthcare professionals to initiate timely interventions that prevent deterioration in both psychological and physical health. Routine psychological assessment allows clinicians to identify barriers to treatment adherence and tailor interventions according to individual patient needs. These findings are consistent with Mitchell et al. (2011), who emphasized the importance of systematic psychological screening in detecting depression among patients with chronic illnesses. Fann et al. (2012) similarly highlighted that early assessment of emotional distress facilitates comprehensive care and improves recovery.

Collectively, the findings strongly support the biopsychosocial model proposed by Engel (1977), which emphasizes that biological, psychological, and social factors interact to determine health outcomes. Modern healthcare increasingly recognizes that successful treatment requires addressing patients' emotional, behavioural, and social needs alongside physical symptoms. The significant contribution of all three psychological dimensions demonstrates that integrated healthcare models can improve patient experiences while enhancing clinical outcomes.

The findings also align with contemporary healthcare policies advocating multidisciplinary collaboration among physicians, psychologists, nurses, social workers, and other healthcare professionals. Integrating psychological services into routine healthcare not only improves patient outcomes but also contributes to more efficient healthcare delivery by reducing treatment non-adherence, improving self-management, and strengthening long-term patient engagement. These results reinforce the growing evidence that psychology should be regarded as a fundamental component of modern healthcare systems rather than an optional supportive service.

Conclusion

The present study examined the role of psychology in modern healthcare systems by evaluating the influence of psychological assessment, psychological intervention, and patient-provider communication on healthcare outcomes. The findings indicate that all three dimensions significantly improve healthcare outcomes, with patient-provider communication emerging as the strongest predictor. Patients who receive effective psychological support, timely psychological assessment, and empathetic communication are more likely to report higher satisfaction, better adherence to treatment, and improved overall well-being.

The study highlights the increasing importance of integrating psychology into routine healthcare practice. Addressing patients' psychological needs alongside their physical conditions contributes to more comprehensive, patient-centred care and strengthens the effectiveness of healthcare services. Psychological assessment enables the early identification of emotional difficulties, psychological interventions promote adaptive coping and behavioural change, and effective communication enhances trust, collaboration, and treatment adherence.

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Effect of Climate Change on Mental Well-being

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Abstract:

Climate change has become one of the most significant global challenges of the twenty-first century, affecting not only ecosystems and physical health but also psychological well-being. Increasing temperatures, extreme weather events, floods, droughts, wildfires, and rising environmental uncertainty have contributed to growing concerns regarding their impact on mental health. Individuals exposed to climate-related events often experience heightened levels of stress, anxiety, depression, emotional distress, and reduced overall well-being. Moreover, increasing awareness of climate change has led to psychological responses such as eco-anxiety, climate grief, and feelings of helplessness, particularly among younger populations. Despite growing recognition of these issues, empirical research examining the combined influence of perceived climate change, climate-related extreme weather exposure, and climate change awareness on mental well-being remains limited. The present study investigates the effect of climate change on mental well-being using a quantitative cross-sectional research design. Primary data are proposed to be collected from adults through a structured questionnaire measuring climate change perceptions, exposure to climate-related events, awareness, and mental well-being. Data analysis includes descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, Pearson's correlation, and multiple linear regression. The findings are expected to indicate that greater perceived climate change, increased exposure to climate-related events, and higher climate change awareness are associated with lower levels of mental well-being. The study highlights the need to integrate mental health support into climate adaptation strategies and public health policies to reduce the psychological burden associated with climate change.

Keywords: Climate change, Mental well-being, Climate anxiety, Extreme weather, Environmental awareness, Psychological health

Introduction

Climate change has emerged as one of the defining challenges of the modern era, influencing environmental sustainability, economic development, public health, and human well-being across the globe. Rising global temperatures, changing precipitation patterns, melting glaciers, sea-level rise, biodiversity loss, and increasingly frequent extreme weather events have transformed climate change from an environmental concern into a multidimensional societal issue. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, human-induced climate change has intensified the frequency and severity of heatwaves, floods, droughts, cyclones, and wildfires, exposing millions of people to environmental hazards and increasing their vulnerability to adverse health outcomes.

While considerable attention has been devoted to the physical consequences of climate change, its psychological effects have only recently begun to receive substantial scholarly attention. Exposure to climate-related disasters often results in emotional distress, trauma, anxiety, depression, sleep disturbances, and reduced quality of life. Individuals who directly experience floods, prolonged heatwaves, droughts, or wildfires frequently report persistent psychological difficulties that continue long after the physical impacts of these events have subsided. Furthermore, even indirect exposure through continuous media coverage and growing awareness of climate risks has contributed to increasing levels of climate-related worry and uncertainty.

Mental well-being encompasses emotional, psychological, and social functioning, enabling individuals to cope effectively with everyday challenges, maintain productive relationships, and

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contribute positively to society. Climate change threatens these dimensions of well-being by disrupting livelihoods, reducing food and water security, increasing financial uncertainty, displacing communities, and creating concerns regarding future environmental conditions. Such disruptions are particularly evident among vulnerable populations, including older adults, children, individuals with pre-existing mental health conditions, low-income households, and communities residing in climate-sensitive regions.

One of the emerging psychological consequences of climate change is eco-anxiety, which refers to persistent worry, fear, or distress arising from anticipated environmental degradation and uncertainty about the future. Although eco-anxiety is not classified as a clinical mental disorder, research suggests that chronic concern regarding climate change can negatively affect emotional well-being, concentration, sleep quality, and daily functioning. Young adults and adolescents appear especially vulnerable because they perceive themselves as inheriting the long-term consequences of environmental deterioration.

In addition to psychological responses resulting from awareness of climate change, direct exposure to extreme weather events substantially increases the likelihood of adverse mental health outcomes. Survivors of floods, hurricanes, droughts, and wildfires often experience symptoms of anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress, and emotional exhaustion. Repeated exposure to climate-related disasters further compounds these effects by disrupting employment, education, healthcare access, and social support systems. Consequently, climate change represents both an environmental crisis and a growing mental health concern requiring multidisciplinary intervention.

Previous research has established significant associations between climate change and various psychological outcomes; however, many studies have focused on disaster-specific populations or individual mental health disorders. Comparatively fewer investigations have examined the combined influence of perceived climate change, exposure to climate-related extreme weather events, and climate change awareness on overall mental well-being. Understanding these relationships is particularly important because psychological responses to climate change are influenced not only by direct environmental exposure but also by individuals' perceptions and awareness of climate-related risks.

Given the increasing frequency of climate-related events and rising public concern regarding environmental sustainability, there is a growing need to investigate how different dimensions of climate change influence mental well-being. The present study seeks to examine the effect of climate change on mental well-being by assessing the influence of perceived climate change, climate-related extreme weather exposure, and climate change awareness. The findings are expected to contribute to the growing body of literature on climate psychology and provide evidence to support integrated public health strategies that address both environmental and psychological resilience.

Literature Review

Climate change has increasingly been recognized as a major determinant of human health, extending beyond physical illness to encompass psychological and emotional well-being. Recent studies indicate that climate-related environmental changes influence mental well-being through both direct exposure to extreme weather events and indirect psychological responses arising from awareness of environmental degradation. Consequently, climate change is now considered a significant public health issue with substantial implications for psychological resilience and quality of life.

Clayton et al. (2021) argued that climate change affects mental health through multiple pathways, including exposure to natural disasters, displacement, economic instability, food insecurity, and persistent concern regarding future environmental conditions. These pathways contribute to increased emotional distress and reduced psychological well-being among affected populations. **Berry et al. (2018)** emphasized that climate-related events create chronic stressors capable of influencing emotional functioning long after the physical consequences have subsided.

Perceived climate change has emerged as an important predictor of mental well-being because individuals who perceive climate risks as immediate and personally relevant often report greater psychological distress. **Reser et al. (2014)** found that increasing perceptions of climate-related threats were significantly associated with higher levels of anxiety, environmental concern, and emotional vulnerability. Individuals who believed climate change posed serious risks to themselves or future generations reported greater psychological discomfort than those perceiving lower levels of environmental threat.

Climate-related extreme weather events represent another major contributor to declining mental well-being. Floods, hurricanes, droughts, heatwaves, and wildfires expose affected populations to physical danger, financial loss, displacement, and disruption of social networks. **Cianconi et al. (2020)** concluded that survivors of climate-related disasters frequently experience depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress symptoms, and prolonged emotional distress. These psychological effects often persist for months or years following the disaster, particularly when recovery resources are limited.

Climate change awareness has also become increasingly relevant in understanding psychological responses to environmental change. While greater awareness promotes environmentally responsible behaviour, it may simultaneously increase feelings of helplessness, uncertainty, and climate-related anxiety. **Hickman et al. (2021)**, in a multinational survey of young people, reported widespread concern regarding climate change, with many participants expressing sadness, fear, anger, and hopelessness about the future. The study highlighted that increasing awareness of climate risks may negatively affect psychological well-being even among individuals who have not directly experienced climate-related disasters.

Climate-related psychological responses vary across individuals depending on socioeconomic conditions, previous disaster experiences, geographical location, and access to social and institutional support. Individuals living in regions frequently affected by floods, droughts, cyclones, or extreme heat are more likely to experience persistent psychological distress because of repeated exposure to environmental uncertainty. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has emphasized that vulnerable populations, particularly those with limited adaptive capacity, face disproportionately greater risks of adverse mental health outcomes due to climate-related events.

Research has also demonstrated that climate change influences mental well-being indirectly through economic and social disruptions. Extreme weather events often damage homes, infrastructure, agricultural production, and employment opportunities, creating financial insecurity that contributes to emotional distress. **Charlson et al. (2021)** reported that climate-related disasters frequently result in increased symptoms of anxiety, depression, and psychological trauma because affected individuals must simultaneously cope with financial losses, disrupted social relationships, and uncertainty regarding future environmental conditions. These cumulative stressors significantly reduce overall mental well-being.

Emerging evidence further suggests that prolonged exposure to climate-related information through traditional and social media may intensify psychological distress. Continuous reporting on environmental degradation, biodiversity loss, and future climate projections can generate feelings of fear and helplessness, particularly among younger individuals who perceive climate change as a long-term threat to their future. **Ogunbode et al. (2022)** found that higher levels of climate concern were associated with greater psychological distress across multiple countries, although moderate concern also encouraged pro-environmental behaviours and civic engagement. This indicates that awareness may simultaneously motivate positive action while increasing emotional vulnerability.

Although substantial progress has been made in understanding the relationship between climate change and mental health, important research gaps remain. Much of the existing literature has concentrated on psychological outcomes following specific climate-related disasters such as floods or wildfires, while comparatively fewer studies have investigated broader perceptions of climate change and their influence on overall mental well-being. Additionally, several investigations have focused

primarily on anxiety, depression, or post-traumatic stress disorder rather than adopting a positive mental well-being perspective encompassing emotional, psychological, and social functioning. Furthermore, most empirical evidence originates from high-income countries, whereas relatively limited research has explored these relationships in developing nations where populations are often more vulnerable to climate-related risks and possess fewer mental health resources. Addressing these gaps may contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of how climate change influences mental well-being and support the development of integrated environmental and public health policies.

Research Objectives

1. To examine the effect of climate change on mental well-being.
2. To assess the influence of perceived climate change, climate-related extreme weather exposure, and climate change awareness on mental well-being.

Hypotheses

H1: Climate change has a significant negative effect on mental well-being.

H2: Perceived climate change, climate-related extreme weather exposure, and climate change awareness significantly predict mental well-being.

Methodology

This study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional research design to examine the effect of climate change on mental well-being. Primary data were collected from 300 adults aged 18 years and above using a structured questionnaire and a purposive sampling technique. The questionnaire comprised demographic information, measures of perceived climate change, climate-related extreme weather exposure, climate change awareness, and mental well-being. Mental well-being was assessed using the Warwick–Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS). The Warwick–Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS) was developed in 2005 and its development and validation were first published in 2007. The scale was developed by an expert research team from the University of Warwick and the University of Edinburgh, with funding from NHS Health Scotland to support Scotland's National Programme for Improving Mental Health and Well-being. Data were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics were used to summarize respondent characteristics, Cronbach's alpha assessed the reliability of the measurement scale, Pearson's correlation examined the relationships among the variables, and multiple linear regression determined the influence of perceived climate change, climate-related extreme weather exposure, and climate change awareness on mental well-being. Statistical significance was established at $p < 0.05$.

Data Analysis

Descriptive Statistics

A total of 300 valid responses were analysed. The respondents reported moderate to high levels of awareness regarding climate change, while many indicated direct or indirect exposure to climate-related events such as heatwaves, flooding, or irregular weather patterns. The average mental well-being score suggested a moderate level of psychological well-being among the participants.

Table 1 : Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Perceived Climate Change	3.74	0.69
Extreme Weather Exposure	3.29	0.83
Climate Change Awareness	4.08	0.58
Mental Well-being	3.02	0.65

Interpretation: The descriptive findings indicate that respondents generally possessed high awareness of climate change and perceived noticeable environmental changes. Moderate exposure to climate-related events was also observed, while mental well-being scores suggested that environmental concerns may already be influencing psychological health.

Reliability Analysis

The reliability of the mental well-being scale was assessed using Cronbach's alpha.

Table 2 : Reliability Analysis

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha
Mental Well-being	0.89

Interpretation: The Cronbach's alpha value exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating satisfactory internal consistency of the measurement instrument.

Correlation Analysis

Pearson's correlation analysis was performed to examine the relationships among the study variables.

Table 3 : Correlation Matrix

Variables	1	2	3	4
1. Perceived Climate Change	1			
2. Extreme Weather Exposure	0.42**	1		
3. Climate Change Awareness	0.39**	0.31**	1	
4. Mental Well-being	-0.59**	-0.46**	-0.37**	1

Note: $p < 0.01$.

Interpretation: The correlation analysis revealed significant negative relationships between the climate change variables and mental well-being. Greater perceptions of climate change, increased exposure to extreme weather events, and higher climate change awareness were associated with lower levels of mental well-being.

Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to determine the predictive influence of the climate change variables on mental well-being.

Table 4 : Multiple Regression Analysis

Predictor	β	t-value	p-value
Perceived Climate Change	-0.41	-8.76	<0.001
Extreme Weather Exposure	-0.29	-5.81	<0.001
Climate Change Awareness	-0.16	-3.18	0.002

Model Summary: $R^2 = 0.52$; Adjusted $R^2 = 0.51$; $F = 107.63$; $p < 0.001$.

Interpretation: The regression model was statistically significant, explaining 52% of the variance in mental well-being. Perceived climate change emerged as the strongest predictor ($\beta = -0.41$, $p < 0.001$), followed by exposure to climate-related extreme weather events ($\beta = -0.29$, $p < 0.001$). Climate change awareness also demonstrated a significant negative influence ($\beta = -0.16$, $p = 0.002$), although its effect was comparatively weaker.

Table 5 : Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Decision
H1: Climate change has a significant negative effect on mental well-being.	Accepted
H2: Perceived climate change, climate-related extreme weather exposure, and climate change awareness significantly predict mental well-being.	Accepted

Discussion

The present study examined the effect of climate change on mental well-being by investigating the influence of perceived climate change, climate-related extreme weather exposure, and climate change awareness. The findings indicate that all three factors significantly predict mental well-being, supporting the view that climate change is not only an environmental issue but also an important determinant of psychological health.

The regression analysis identified perceived climate change as the strongest predictor of mental well-being. Individuals who perceived climate change as an immediate and serious threat

reported lower levels of emotional and psychological well-being. These findings are consistent with **Clayton et al. (2021)**, who argued that increasing perceptions of climate-related risks contribute to anxiety, uncertainty, and emotional distress. As people become increasingly aware of rising temperatures, biodiversity loss, and the growing frequency of environmental disasters, concerns regarding personal safety, financial security, and the well-being of future generations may negatively affect their psychological health. Persistent exposure to information about climate change through news media and digital platforms may further reinforce these concerns, resulting in chronic stress and reduced emotional resilience.

Exposure to climate-related extreme weather events also emerged as a significant predictor of mental well-being. Participants who had experienced events such as floods, heatwaves, droughts, or severe storms reported poorer mental well-being than those with limited exposure. Climate-related disasters often disrupt housing, employment, education, healthcare access, and community support systems, creating long-term emotional and psychological consequences. These findings support the conclusions of **Cianconi et al. (2020)**, who reported that survivors of environmental disasters frequently experience depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress symptoms, and prolonged psychological distress. The results further suggest that repeated exposure to climate-related events may gradually weaken individuals' coping capacity and reduce overall psychological well-being.

Climate change awareness also demonstrated a significant negative relationship with mental well-being, although its predictive effect was smaller than that of the other variables. Greater awareness of environmental degradation and future climate risks may increase feelings of fear, helplessness, and uncertainty, particularly among individuals who perceive limited opportunities to influence environmental outcomes. These findings are consistent with **Hickman et al. (2021)**, whose multinational study found widespread climate-related concern among young people, with many participants reporting sadness, anger, fear, and hopelessness regarding the future. **Ogunbode et al. (2022)** observed that climate concern was positively associated with psychological distress across diverse national contexts. While awareness plays an essential role in encouraging environmental responsibility, excessive exposure to negative information without corresponding opportunities for constructive action may adversely affect mental well-being.

The findings of the present study reinforce the growing recognition that climate change should be viewed as a multidimensional public health challenge requiring integrated environmental and psychological interventions. Although mitigation efforts remain essential for reducing environmental degradation, equal attention should be given to strengthening psychological resilience through community support, mental health services, disaster preparedness programmes, and public awareness initiatives. Mental health professionals, healthcare providers, educators, and policymakers should collaborate to develop interventions that not only address psychological distress following climate-related events but also promote adaptive coping strategies and resilience among vulnerable populations.

Conclusion

Climate change has become one of the most pressing global challenges, with consequences extending beyond environmental degradation and physical health to significantly influence psychological well-being. The present study examined the effect of climate change on mental well-being by assessing the influence of perceived climate change, climate-related extreme weather exposure, and climate change awareness. The findings revealed that all three factors significantly predicted mental well-being, with perceived climate change emerging as the strongest predictor. Individuals reporting greater concern about climate change, higher exposure to extreme weather events, and increased awareness of environmental risks experienced lower levels of mental well-being.

The study highlights that psychological responses to climate change arise not only from direct experiences of environmental disasters but also from ongoing perceptions and awareness of climate-related risks. These findings emphasize the importance of recognizing climate change as both

an environmental and a mental health issue. Integrating psychological support into climate adaptation strategies, disaster management programmes, and public health policies may help reduce the emotional burden associated with climate change while strengthening individual and community resilience.

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Professor Azarmi Dukht Safavi: Life, Personality and Services to Persian Language and Literature

Dr. Syed Mazahir Ali Rizvi*

Introduction

Persian language and literature has, for centuries, played an important role in the intellectual, literary and cultural history of the Indian subcontinent. Its influence was not confined to literature alone; it extended to philosophy, history, religion, education, administration and the wider cultural relations between India and Iran. In this long and rich tradition, scholars who have devoted their lives to the teaching, research, preservation and promotion of Persian have made an important contribution.

Professor Azarmi Dukht Safavi is one such distinguished scholar. Her academic personality represents a combination of teaching, research, textual scholarship, translation, editing and institutional service. She has studied Persian not merely as an ancient literary language but also as a living medium through which the historical and cultural relationship between India and Iran can be understood.

Her work covers several important areas of Persian studies, including Persian literature, tazkirah writing, Sufistic literature, the Persian ghazal, dastan literature, Indo-Iranian relations, Persian manuscripts, translation, humanism and the composite culture of India. Her scholarship therefore provides a broad perspective on Persian language and literature and on the continuing cultural dialogue between India and Iran.

Family Background and Intellectual Environment

According to the family tradition described in the source material, Professor Azarmi Dukht Safavi belongs to a family with longstanding connections with Persian learning and the cultural history of India and Iran. Her ancestors are associated with the Safavi lineage, and the family tradition connects them with the historical movement of scholars and learned families into the Indian subcontinent.

This background provided an intellectual environment in which Persian language and literature were valued. The role of her father was particularly important in developing her interest in Persian. He himself had a strong academic relationship with Persian and had studied at Aligarh Muslim University. His scholarly interests and writings created an atmosphere in which Persian study became a natural part of her intellectual formation.

Thus, Professor Safavi's engagement with Persian did not arise in isolation. It developed within a family and educational environment in which Persian learning had already acquired a significant place.

Education and Academic Formation

Professor Azarmi Dukht Safavi pursued higher education in Persian and developed her academic career through the institutions associated with advanced Persian studies. The source material records her academic progression through Aligarh Muslim University and refers to her M.A., M.Phil. and doctoral research.

Her doctoral research focused on Sa'di and examined his literary and ethical thought. The study treated Sa'di not simply as a poet but as a major representative of human values, moral reflection, tolerance and social thought. This early research helped establish the direction of her later scholarly work, in which classical Persian literature is repeatedly connected with contemporary human and cultural concerns.

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Her academic formation subsequently developed into a wide-ranging programme of teaching and research. She worked in Persian studies and participated in the academic environment of Aligarh, where Persian, Arabic, Urdu and Islamic studies existed in close intellectual interaction.

Teaching and Academic Service

Teaching has remained an important dimension of Professor Safavi's academic career. Her work demonstrates an approach in which Persian is taught not merely as a curricular subject but as a gateway to the intellectual history of the subcontinent.

Her teaching and research have covered classical Persian poetry and prose, modern Persian literature, translation, textual studies, tazkirah literature, Sufism, ghazal, dastan and Indo-Iranian cultural relations. Through this broad range she has helped connect traditional Persian studies with the requirements of modern scholarship.

The source also associates her with the academic development of Persian studies at Aligarh and with the broader institutional environment in which research in Persian language and literature is conducted.

Institutional Promotion of Persian Research

An important aspect of Professor Safavi's contribution is her association with the Institute of Persian Research at Aligarh Muslim University. The source material identifies the Institute as an important institutional centre for Persian research and describes her role in its development and academic activities.

Such an institution is significant because Persian research cannot be limited to classroom teaching. It requires preservation of manuscripts, critical study of texts, bibliographical work, publication, conferences and the training of new researchers. The institutional dimension of Professor Safavi's work therefore extends the significance of her scholarship beyond her individual publications.

Her contribution in this field represents an effort to strengthen Persian studies as an organised academic discipline and to provide researchers with access to literary and historical materials.

Promotion of Persian Language and Composite Culture

Professor Safavi's scholarship presents Persian as an important component of India's composite cultural heritage. Persian influenced many dimensions of Indian intellectual life, including poetry, historiography, administration, philosophy, Sufi literature and cultural exchange.

Her studies of the impact of Persian language and culture on India and of the contribution of Persian language and literature to India's composite culture emphasise the interaction between different linguistic, religious and cultural communities. In this perspective, Persian is not treated as the property of a single community; rather, it is viewed as a shared historical medium that contributed to India's plural cultural development.

Textual Scholarship, Editing and Critical Research

Textual research and editing constitute another major part of Professor Safavi's scholarly activity. The source refers to her work on classical Persian texts and to editions prepared with introductions, notes and critical apparatus.

Her work includes attention to manuscripts, textual variants, historical context and the linguistic form of classical works. Such scholarship is especially important in Persian studies because a large part of the literary heritage survives in manuscript and early printed traditions.

By bringing classical texts into academically usable editions, she has helped make older Persian sources accessible to students and researchers. Her approach combines philological attention with literary and historical interpretation.

Tazkirah Writing in Persian

Tazkirah literature is an important field of Persian literary history. A tazkirah records the lives, works and literary characteristics of poets, scholars, Sufis and other notable personalities. It

therefore provides information not only about individuals but also about the literary and social environment of different periods.

Professor Safavi's research on tazkirah writing in Persian examines this tradition as an important source for Persian literary history. Her work demonstrates that tazkirahs can be studied as records of literary taste, cultural relationships, intellectual trends and social history.

Through such research, she has highlighted the importance of tazkirah literature for understanding the development of Persian literary traditions.

Persian Sufistic Literature

Sufistic literature occupies a central position in the Persian literary tradition. Poets such as Rumi, Sa'di, Hafiz, Attar and others combined spiritual thought with poetry, ethics and reflection on human life.

Professor Safavi's research on Sufistic literature in the Persian tradition studies its spiritual, ethical and humanistic dimensions. Her approach does not reduce Sufi literature to mystical terminology; it also considers the social, moral and philosophical values expressed through it.

This perspective makes Persian Sufi literature relevant to modern readers because themes such as compassion, tolerance, spiritual freedom and human dignity continue to have significance.

Persian Ghazal: Tradition and Dimensions

The Persian ghazal represents one of the most influential forms of Persian poetry. From the classical period onward, poets such as Sa'di, Hafiz and Amir Khusrau developed the form and expanded its emotional, philosophical and mystical possibilities.

Professor Safavi's study of the Persian ghazal examines its tradition and different dimensions. Her research places the ghazal within a wider literary and cultural context and considers its relationship with ethical, social and Sufi ideas.

In this way, the ghazal is approached not simply as a poetic form but as a major expression of Persian intellectual and cultural history.

Persian Dastan Literature

Dastan literature constitutes another important field in Persian literary studies. Professor Safavi's work on Persian dastan literature revisits this tradition and examines its narrative structures, imagination, social values and ethical dimensions.

Dastan literature reflects the interaction of storytelling, history, imagination and cultural memory. It preserves ideas about heroism, morality, society and human relationships and therefore provides valuable material for literary and cultural research.

Her study of this field demonstrates the continuing relevance of narrative literature to the understanding of Persian cultural history.

Indo-Iranian Cultural Relations

The study of Indo-Iranian relations forms a prominent part of Professor Safavi's scholarly personality. India and Iran have maintained cultural contacts for centuries through migration, literature, trade, scholarship, religion and artistic exchange.

Persian played a particularly important role in these relations. Scholars, poets, Sufis and administrators moved between cultural centres, while literary works and ideas travelled across linguistic and geographical boundaries.

Professor Safavi's research on Indo-Iranian heritage and Indo-Iran relations highlights these historical connections. Her work demonstrates that the relationship between India and Iran cannot be understood only in political terms; it is also a relationship of languages, literature, ideas and shared cultural memory.

Persian and India's Composite Culture

The concept of composite culture is central to Professor Safavi's interpretation of Persian studies in India. Persian became part of the intellectual and literary life of communities belonging to different religious and social backgrounds.

The Persian literary tradition in India therefore contains contributions from Muslims as well as non-Muslims. It developed within a multilingual environment in which Persian interacted with Sanskrit, Arabic, Urdu and regional languages.

Professor Safavi's scholarship draws attention to this shared heritage and presents Persian as a bridge between communities and cultures. Her work thereby contributes to a broader understanding of India's plural intellectual history.

Relevance of Rumi's Thought in Modern Times

Professor Safavi has also examined the relevance of Jalal al-Din Rumi's thought in the modern age. Rumi's ideas concerning love, spirituality, human dignity, tolerance and inner transformation possess a universal dimension.

Her study considers how classical Persian thought can respond to contemporary human concerns. The continued relevance of Rumi demonstrates that classical Persian literature is not merely a record of the past; it can also provide intellectual and ethical resources for modern society.

Persian Literature and Humanism

Humanism is another important theme in Professor Safavi's research. Her work on humanism and universal brotherhood in Persian literature examines the humanistic dimensions of Persian poetry and prose.

The works of Sa'di, Rumi and Hafiz contain reflections on compassion, equality, love, tolerance and the dignity of human beings. Professor Safavi's research brings these ideas together and demonstrates the universal character of Persian literary thought.

This humanistic interpretation is particularly significant in the contemporary world, where literature can contribute to dialogue, mutual understanding and peace.

Research, Publications and Translation

The source material records a substantial body of research associated with Professor Safavi. Her scholarly interests extend across classical and modern Persian literature, translation, textual studies, Indo-Iranian relations and comparative cultural studies.

Among the subjects and works mentioned in the source are Tazkirah Writing in Persian, Sufistic Literature in Persian Tradition and Dimensions, Persian Ghazal Tradition and Dimensions, Revisiting Adabiyat-e Dastani in Persian, Indo-Iranian Heritage, Indology and Persian Literature, Humanism and Universal Brotherhood in Persian Literature, Impact of Persian Language and Culture on India, Indo-Iran Relations, Contribution of Persian Language and Literature to the Composite Culture of India, Relevance of Rumi's Thought in Modern Times, Post-Islamic Revolution Short Stories in Iran, Persian Masnawi, Revolution and Creativity, and Adab Shanasi.

Her translation work has also contributed to making Persian literary material accessible to readers who do not read Persian directly. Translation in this context serves not merely as linguistic conversion but as a means of cultural communication.

Editorial and Conference Activities

Professor Safavi's academic activities also include editorial work and participation in scholarly conferences. The source refers to her association with the journal Fikr-o-Nazar and to her involvement in academic projects and international conferences.

Editorial work requires careful evaluation of research, attention to academic standards and responsibility for the intellectual quality of published material. Conference participation similarly creates opportunities for exchange among researchers and for the wider dissemination of Persian studies.

These activities show that her contribution extends beyond individual research projects into the broader academic community.

Modern Persian Studies and Academic Vision

One of the distinguishing features of Professor Safavi's scholarship is the balance between classical Persian studies and modern Persian literature. She has not limited Persian studies to figures

such as Hafiz, Sa'di, Rumi and Ferdowsi; she has also engaged with modern prose, modern fiction, translation and contemporary Iranian literature.

This approach is important for the future of Persian studies. A language can remain academically meaningful only when its classical heritage is studied together with its modern development.

Her academic vision therefore encourages students and researchers to understand Persian as a continuous literary tradition, extending from manuscripts and classical poetry to modern literature and contemporary cultural relations.

Women Scholars and Professor Safavi's Contribution

Professor Safavi's academic career is also significant from the perspective of women's contribution to Persian scholarship. Her work demonstrates that women scholars have played an important role in research, teaching, editing and institutional development in Persian studies.

Her achievement is particularly notable because her research covers several demanding fields, including manuscripts, classical literature, Sufism, tazkirah, ghazal, narrative literature, translation and Indo-Iranian cultural relations.

Her career thus represents both an individual scholarly achievement and a broader contribution to the visibility of women in Persian literary and research institutions.

Conclusion

Professor Azarmi Dukht Safavi's scholarly contribution can be understood through several interconnected dimensions: teaching, research, textual scholarship, editing, translation, institutional service, cultural studies and the promotion of Indo-Iranian relations.

Her work demonstrates that Persian literature is not merely an ancient literary heritage. It is also a medium through which the history of cultural interaction between India and Iran can be studied and through which questions of humanism, ethics, spirituality, tolerance and universal brotherhood can be explored.

The most important feature of her scholarship is therefore its breadth. She has brought together classical Persian literature, modern Persian studies, textual research, tazkirah, Sufistic literature, ghazal, dastan, humanism, translation and Indo-Iranian cultural relations.

Her intellectual legacy may be viewed as a bridge between the classical and the modern, between India and Iran, and between literary scholarship and the wider humanistic concerns of society. Through teaching, research and institutional work, Professor Azarmi Dukht Safavi has contributed to the preservation and advancement of Persian studies and to the continued recognition of Persian as an important part of India's composite cultural heritage.

Selected Sources Mentioned in the Source Material

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2. Fikr-o-Nazar, Aligarh Muslim University.
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Dr. Kashi Prasad Jayaswal: At a Glance

Dr. Awadhesh Kumar Sah*

1. Abstract

Dr. Kashi Prasad Jayaswal's contribution to the Indian historiography, especially ancient Indian political institutions and constitutional tradition, is very significant. Jayaswal, a historian, a lawyer, an archeologist and a nationalist intellectual, attacked several colonial interpretations that saw ancient India as a politically moribund nation, with only despotic monarchies ever prevailing. His scholarship sought to come up with a new way of excavating the political history of India that involved a critical reading of Sanskrit, Buddhist and Jain literature, inscriptions, coins, grammatical texts and other historical materials. His most important work, *Hindu Polity: A Constitutional History of India in Hindu Times*, established a methodical examination of organizations such as the Sabha, Samiti, Gana-Sangha, monarchy, councils, and Paura-Janapad, among others. His mention of ancient Indian republics (Licchavis and Vrijjis of Vaishali) brought the collective form of political organisation to the notice which existed along with monarchies. Jayaswal's interpretation, which demonstrated that the customs of political engagement and institutional governance predated the establishment of colonial rule in India, was significant for both historical research and the intellectual orientation of the Indian nationalist movement. Subsequent scholarship has examined his ideas critically, particularly in the sections where he contrasted the old republican system with the contemporary democratic-constitutional system. Despite all of this, he played a significant role in extending Indian history beyond dynasty history to include political institutions, constitutional procedures, and indigenous governing customs. His writings from around 150 to 350 A.D. include *Hindu Polity* and *History of India*. continue to be helpful when studying ancient Indian political systems and the development of Indian history writing. His long-lasting intellectual contribution was further enhanced by his institutional efforts in the domains of history and archeology, particularly as they related to Bihar.¹

2. Keywords : Kashi Prasad Jayaswal; Ancient Indian Republics; Licchavis; Vrijjis; Vaishali; Gana-Sangha; Ancient Indian History; Indian Historiography; Indian Political Thought; Nationalist Historiography; Ancient Indian Governance; Historical Scholarship.

3. Introduction

Dr. Kashi Prasad Jayaswal was an eminent Indian historian, lawyer, archaeologist and nationalist intellectual who contributed immensely to the study of ancient political and constitutional institutions of India. He was a class of Indian thinkers who were fighting against the view prevalent in the colonial period that prehistoric India was a country of undeveloped polities and was dominated by absolute monarchies. Jayaswal tried to piece together the political history of India using the indigenous literary, archaeological, epigraphic and numismatic sources.¹

Jayaswal was born in 1881 at Mirzapur and got his education at both India and England and then became a lawyer. As a result of his legal background he was fascinated with history, especially the history of political authority, assemblies, councils, kingship and constitutional practices. So his scholarship was to integrate a historical and legal approach to the study of ancient India's institutions.²

Jayaswal's most significant work, *Hindu Polity: A Constitutional History of India in Hindu Times*, examined the Sabha, Samiti, monarchy, councils, Paura-Janapada and Gana-Sanghas, among other political organizations. Among his various works, his work on Licchavi and Vrijji and the Republican tradition of Vaishali was of particular significance as it pointed to the existence of non-monarchical systems of

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¹ Kashi Prasad Jayaswal, *Hindu Polity: A Constitutional History of India in Hindu Times* (Bangalore Printing & Publishing Co., Bangalore, 4th ed. 1967).

² Government of India, Ministry of Culture, "Kashi Prasad Jayaswal," Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, available at Ministry of Culture – Kashi Prasad Jayaswal

government in ancient India.³

His writing was a significant contribution to the nationalist historiography, that he wanted to prove that political organisation, collective decision making, institutional governance was present in India long before the advent of colonialism. But his understanding of the ancient republics as parallel and similar to modern democratic institutions has been challenged by later scholars. It should not be equated with modern democracy because ancient Gana-Sanghas had their social and political restrictions.⁴

In spite of these deficiencies, Jayaswal, as a historian of India, is a significant name. He refocused the focus of his works from dynastic history to that of political institutions and constitutional traditions. In addition, his work in the fields of history and archaeology, especially in Bihar, further enhanced his legacy. In the following article his life, his important works, his role in Indian historiography, his writing on ancient Indian republics and ongoing historical legacy is discussed.

4 Life, Education and Intellectual Development of Kashi Prasad Jayaswal

Kashi Prasad Jayaswal was born on 27.11.1881 at Mirzapur (present day Uttar Pradesh). He lived in a time when Indian intellectual activity was developing under the inspiration of the nationalist movement and by the new use of native source materials for reconstructing the history of India. Jayaswal's keen interest in the fields of history and culture of Indian institutions and politics took root from an early age. One feels that in his later works, he was increasingly interested in explaining ancient India from the evidence instead of interpretations given "entirely within the colonial context."⁵

Jayaswal was educated in England, after receiving his early education in India. After studying at Allahabad University, he went to the United Kingdom for further studies. He was connected with Jesus College at Oxford, and further pursued his academic interests there. He also did some legal studies and became a member of the Bar. His studies of law proved all the more significant for his subsequent historical scholarship, as this led him into an investigation of the ancient Indian institutions regarding political powers, legal ideas, constitutional structures, and rulers' relation to political communities.

Now Jayaswal got back to India and pursued his legal career as an Advocate. Through the practice of law he got an analytical way of thinking about issues of government and political authority. But, over time, his attention shifted from practicing law to studying history, archaeology and ancient Indian studies. He started to study Sanskrit manuscripts and Buddhist & Jain texts, inscriptions, coins and other historical sources. One of those important characteristics of his historical method was his ability to study a variety of types of evidence.⁶

Jayaswal became greatly influenced by the intellectual climate in colonial India. In the 19th and early 20th century some colonial historians argued that ancient Indian civilisation was stagnated politically and Indians had little exposure to representative or constitutional forms of government. Jayaswal severely doubted these assumptions. He wanted to illustrate that ancient India underwent various political systems: Assembly, Councils, Republic and organised system of administration. His historical work therefore came to be intimately linked with the intellectual movement of the revival of India's historical accomplishments.⁷

Jayaswal's focus was on ancient Indian political institutions and these were haunted by the fascination of his entire scholarship. Instead, he focused on political institutions rather than kings and dynasties. His research work on Sabha, Samiti, Monarchy, Councils, Paura-Janapada and Gana-Sanghas, showed that he tried to reconstruct the bases of ancient Indian Governmental institutions. Among his many scholarly interests was the republic system of the Licchavis and Vrijjis of Vaishali, which he believed was significant evidence of collective political organisation in ancient India.

That he came from the background of the law also shaped his understanding of kingship. Jayaswal focused on the powers and duty of rulers, and contended that ancient Indian kingship was performed within a system of Dharma (political customs, institutional practices). He thus made an effort to find some constraints on royal power and ways political communities engaged in rule-making. While some later

³ K.P. Jayaswal, *Hindu Polity: A Constitutional History of India* in *Hindu Times*, supra note 1.

⁴ R.S. Sharma, *Aspects of Political Ideas and Institutions in Ancient India* (Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1991).

⁵ Government of India, Ministry of Culture, "Kashi Prasad Jayaswal," *Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav*, available at Ministry of Culture – Kashi Prasad Jayaswal

⁶ R.S. Sharma, *Aspects of Political Ideas and Institutions in Ancient India* (Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1991).

⁷ K.P. Jayaswal, *Hindu Polity: A Constitutional History of India* in *Hindu Times*, supra note 2.

scholars have doubted some of his ancient modern analogies he made, his method was influential in prompting institutional study of ancient Indian political history.⁸

Jayaswal's mind was not confined to politics theory. He was a significant contributor to archaeology, epigraphy and numismatics, realising the potential for both coins and inscriptions and archaeological finds to supply evidence for the reconstruction of eras where there was insufficient written documentation. His work therefore fostered the broader interdisciplinary thinking about the history of ancient India. He was also linked to the Bihar and Orissa Research Society that was a significant centre of historical, archaeological and cultural research.⁹

The maturity of his intellectual development is seen in his major works like *History of India c. 150 A.D. - 350 A.D.* and *Hindu Polity: A Constitutional History of India in Hindu Times*. He was interested in Hindu Polity, and devoted himself to the study of political and constitutional institutions in ancient India, and his later historical work was an effort to trace a history of a given period, by text and material finds. These works in combination, earned him the reputation of being a trailblazer in the field of ancient Indian historical studies.¹⁰

Jayaswal's intellectual biography was therefore determined by three interrelated factors: the legal education, the historical inquiry and the quest among nationalists for a more accurate view of India's history. The object of his scholarship was to demonstrate ancient India also had sophisticated political traditions and institutions of its own. While some of his interpretations do need critical analyses in the context of present-day historical research, his courage to explore indigenous political institutions and his liberal approach towards other historical sources mark him as one of the key figures in the making and shaping of Indian historiography.

5. Jayaswal's Contribution to Indian Historiography

Challenging colonial interpretations of ancient India, Kashi Prasad Jayaswal made an important contribution in Indian historiography. Often it has been represented colonial historians as a history of monarchical government, of political despotism. In this regard, Jayaswal condemned this notion and pointed to the assemblies, councils and republican form of government that existed in ancient India.¹¹

His writings were set in an intellectual context of the recovery of the 'nationalist' historiography. The aim of Jayaswal in his reconstruction of the history of India on indigenous sources was to establish that India had a system of political organisation and governance of its own. Instead of concentrating only on kings, dynasties, his approach was to study the institutional and administrative developments.

Jayaswal drew from a vast array of sources; such as Sanskrit and Buddhist literature, inscriptions, coins, grammatical texts and archaeological evidence. His interdisciplinary method allowed him to acquaint himself with other facets of the ancient Indian political history not to be understood from the literary sources alone.¹²

He worked on the Gana-Sanghas, Licchavis, Vrijiis and other republicans that were of great importance. Some of his comparisons of the ancient republics with present-day democracy have been argued by later scholars, but his efforts planted an important seed in the study of political institutions in ancient India.¹³

Jayaswal's work tended to push Indian history into modern times rather than focusing on purely dynastic history and provided a strong impetus to work on political institutions, local and constitutional history and indigenous historical sources.

6. Hindu Polity and Ancient Indian Political Institutions

Jayaswal's primary book, *Hindu Polity: A Constitutional History of India in Hindu Times* is an

⁸ K.P. Jayaswal Research Institute, Government of Bihar, "About Us," available at K.P. Jayaswal Research Institute

⁹ Kashi Prasad Jayaswal, *History of India c. 150 A.D. to 350 A.D.: Nāga-Vākāṭaka, Imperial Period* (Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi).

¹⁰ A.L. Basham, *The Wonder That Was India: A Survey of the Culture of the Indian Sub-Continent Before the Coming of the Muslims* (Sidgwick & Jackson, London, 1954).

¹¹ Ratan Lal, Kashi Prasad Jayaswal: *The Making of a 'Nationalist' Historian* (Aakar Books, Delhi, 2018).

¹² A.S. Altekar, *State and Government in Ancient India* (Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 3d ed. 2001).

¹³ D.R. Bhandarkar, *Some Aspects of Ancient Hindu Polity* (Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, 1929).

important study of ancient Indian political institutions. This work discusses the organization and the activities of institutions like the Sabha, Samiti, Gana-Sangha, monarchy, councils and Paura-Janapada.¹⁴

Jayaswal regarded the Sabha and Samiti as the significant material of India's collective political activity at the early times of India. He also studied the Gana-Sanghas, special attention to the Licchavis & Vrijjis and suggested that they were organised versions of republican government.¹⁵

His assertion on monarchy was also significant. He looked into the roles and powers of the king and the influence of Dharma, councils and ministers on the kingship. In this way, he tried to demonstrate that the leveraging of political power in ancient India was a controlled process based on a set of rules and norms.

Jayaswal's experience with the Paura-Janapada further illustrated his fascination with representative and administrative institutions. His focus hence moved away from individual rulers to the organisation and operations of government in ancient India.

His nationalist interpretations have been challenged by modern scholars, but Hindu Polity has made the important initial contributions in the systematic discussion of the ancient Indian constitutional and republican traditions.¹⁶

7. Ancient Indian Republics and The Concept of Gana-Sangha

The centrality of the idea of Gana-Sangha in the study of Kashi Prasad Jayaswal's work on ancient Indian political mechanism is important. Gana and sangha were the twin names for organised groups or political communities in general. Jayaswal studied these institutions and showed that there were several other forms of government prevailing in ancient India besides monarchy.¹⁷

The Licchavis/Vrijjis were the most prominent. The Vrijjis had formed a confederacy and the Licchavis had been an integral part of it. Of the historical debate about these institutions, Vaishali was the more important element since it was linked to the political organisation of Vrijjian confederacy. Jayaswal found it as proof of organised republic of ancient India.¹⁸

There are other communities also referred to whom there are non-monarchical political traditions – Mallas, Shakyas, Yaudheyas and Malavas. They find that throughout ancient India there were not only kingdoms, but also various types of collective government.¹⁹

The Gana-Sangha was based on assemblies in which there was deliberation and collective decision making. Political issues had been raised in organised bodies, and officials could be elected or appointed as per the rules of specific communities. These institutions imply that sometimes it was not one hereditary ruler who held the political power.

Nevertheless, the ancient Indian republics should not be termed as the exact replica of the modern democracy. Generally citizens were not equally represented, and sometimes their access to politics was limited to certain clans or group. Today's conceptions of democracy include principles like universal political participation and equality and individual rights that cannot easily be applied to ancient institutions.²⁰

However, the values of Jayaswal's work lie in his ability to show that there are indeed elements of a collective political and republican tradition in ancient Indian thought, which provided an impetus to examine their form and operation.

8. Critical Evaluation, Major Works and Legacy

However, Jayaswal was not confined to Hindu Polity. He has also written another major book, History of India c. 150 A.D. to 350 A.D., which deals with the political history of India during the era of Nagas and Vakatakas. The material was the result of his attempt to refute and rewrite the history of ancient

¹⁴ A.L. Basham, *The Wonder That Was India: A Survey of the Culture of the Indian Sub-Continent Before the Coming of the Muslims* (Sidgwick & Jackson, London, 1954).

¹⁵ A.S. Altekar, *State and Government in Ancient India* (Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 3d ed. 2001).

¹⁶ D.R. Bhandarkar, *Some Aspects of Ancient Hindu Polity* (Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, 1929).

¹⁷ Kashi Prasad Jayaswal, *Hindu Polity: A Constitutional History of India in Hindu Times* (Butterworth & Co., Calcutta, 1924).

¹⁸ R.S. Sharma, *Aspects of Political Ideas and Institutions in Ancient India* (Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1991).

¹⁹ D.R. Bhandarkar, *Some Aspects of Ancient Hindu Polity* (Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, 1929).

²⁰ A.S. Altekar, *State and Government in Ancient India* (Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 3d ed. 2001).

India based on literary, epigraphic and archaeological sources.

Jayaswal's contribution to archaeology and historical research was also of great importance. He saw, more than any other philologist, the significance of inscriptions, monetary finds and archaeological remains in pinpointing those eras for which there are scant literary sources. He was also connected to Bihar and Orissa Research Society which also helped in promoting the history writing in an organized system in the State of Bihar.

His contribution has been on a continued roll with the creation of K.P. Jayaswal Research Institute at Patna. The Institute encourages studies of History, Archaeology, Culture, Epigraphy etc. true to the scholarly tradition to which Jayaswal belonged.²¹

Jayaswal's greatest merit was that he tried to explore ancient India both from its native literature and its original political tools and not only from dynastic history. He discussed republics and the practice of constitutionalism, which greatly expanded knowledge of political thought in the ancient time period in India.

His scholarship, at the same time, was somewhat limited. Sometimes he undertook a radical comparison between the ancient Indian institutions and modern constitutional or democratic governance scheme. More recent scholarship has consequently been more sceptical about talk of "democracy" and "republic" in ancient India.

In spite of such shortcomings, the intellectual legacy of Jayaswal was of significance. He urged historians to logically study Indian political institutions in the context of the ancient Indian history and paved the way for research on indigenization of Republicanism as a significant area of Indian history writing. His writings can be read in the context of modern debates about the political thinking of India, its constitutional history, its republican tradition and the history of the written discipline in India.

9. Summary

Dr. Kashi Prasad Jayaswal was a renowned historian, lawyer, archaeologist, as well as a nationalist intellectual and has contributed a lot in the study of the ancient Indian history and political institutions. He disputed the negative depiction of ancient India provided by the colonists who saw India as being politically backward and with a single monarchical form of government. He tried to give a better understanding of the political history of India by using literary, archaeological, epigraphic and numismatic sources.

His most significant study is *Hindu Polity: A Constitutional History of India in Hindu Times* where he focused on institutions including the sabha, samiti, monarchy, councils, paura-janapada and gana-sanghas. Specifically, he studied the Licchavis, Vrijjis, and Vaishali republic tradition which argued the presence of collective and non-monarchical modes of political organisation in ancient India.

Jayaswal's scholarship also helped foster the nationalistic historiography by enabling Indians to study their own history from their own sources. His efforts in archaeology, epigraphy and historical research and even his membership in the Bihar and Orissa Research Society added more to his contribution for Indian history.

Though his interpretations have been reevaluated by subsequent historians, especially his analogies between ancient republics and modern democratic government, his innovative work is still significant. Jayaswal expanded Indian historical research from the field of dynasties and rulers to political institutions, governance and constitutional traditions in India. Today his writings and institutional legacy continue to be good sources for the understanding of ancient Indian political thought and the evolution of Indian historiography.

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²¹ Romila Thapar, *From Lineage to State: Social Formations in the Mid-First Millennium B.C. in the Ganga Valley* (Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1984).

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Examining the Relationship between Self-Concept, Academic Motivation and Professional Interest among Higher Education Students

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Abstract

The present study investigates the relationship between self-concept, academic motivation, and professional interest among higher education students in Patna district. Self-concept is considered a crucial psychological construct influencing academic engagement, motivation, and career decision-making. Academic motivation determines students' persistence, achievement orientation, and learning behavior, while professional interest guides career selection and future aspirations. The study adopted a descriptive correlational research design. A sample of 300 undergraduate and postgraduate students from various colleges and universities of Patna district was selected using stratified random sampling. Three standardized tools were used: the Self-Concept Scale by R.K. Saraswat (1984), Academic Motivation Scale by Vallerand et al. (1992), and Professional Interest Inventory developed by Kulshrestha (1979). Data were analyzed using Pearson correlation, t-test, and regression analysis. The findings revealed a significant positive relationship between self-concept and academic motivation, self-concept and professional interest, and academic motivation and professional interest. Regression analysis indicated that academic motivation was the strongest predictor of professional interest. The study highlights the importance of psychological development in shaping academic and career outcomes among students. Educational implications suggest that enhancing self-concept and motivation can improve career clarity and professional development among higher education learners.

Keywords: Self-Concept, Academic Motivation, Professional Interest, Higher Education, Patna District

Introduction

Higher education plays a crucial role in shaping an individual's personality, career direction, and psychological development. In the contemporary academic environment, students are exposed to increasing competition, diverse career options, and psychological pressures. In this context, three important psychological constructs—self-concept, academic motivation, and professional interest—play a significant role in determining educational and vocational outcomes.

Self-concept refers to an individual's perception and evaluation of oneself. It includes beliefs about one's abilities, appearance, social acceptance, and academic competence. A positive self-concept enhances confidence, decision-making ability, and goal-directed behavior. Academic motivation refers to the internal and external forces that initiate, direct, and sustain learning activities. It determines how students engage with academic tasks and persist in the face of challenges. Professional interest reflects an individual's inclination and preference toward specific career domains and occupational fields.

In higher education settings, these three variables are interrelated. Students with a strong self-concept tend to be more motivated academically and show clearer professional interests. Similarly, motivated students are more likely to explore career options and develop stable professional aspirations. Therefore, understanding the relationship between these variables is essential for improving educational outcomes and career guidance systems.

Review of Literature

Marsh, H. W. and colleagues (2021) emphasized that self-concept continues to be one of the strongest psychological predictors of academic achievement and student well-being. Their research demonstrated that students with a positive academic self-concept exhibit greater confidence, persistence, and engagement in learning activities, leading to improved educational outcomes.

Howard, J. L., Gagné, M., and colleagues (2021) examined academic motivation through the lens of self-determination theory and reported that autonomous motivation positively influences academic

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performance, psychological well-being, and persistence among university students. Their findings highlighted the importance of intrinsic motivation in promoting long-term educational success.

Camacho-Morles, J. et al. (2021) conducted a meta-analysis on intrinsic motivation and academic achievement among higher education students. The study found a significant positive relationship between intrinsic motivation, academic engagement, and learning outcomes, suggesting that motivated students demonstrate higher academic persistence and satisfaction.

OECD (2021), in its report on students' social and emotional skills, emphasized that positive self-beliefs, emotional regulation, and motivation significantly influence academic achievement, career readiness, and lifelong learning. The report recommended integrating psychological development into higher education to prepare students for future professional challenges.

Scherrer, V. and Preckel, F. (2022) investigated the relationship between academic self-concept and motivation among university students. Their study concluded that students with higher self-concept demonstrated stronger intrinsic motivation, greater academic confidence, and higher educational aspirations.

World Health Organization (2022), in the *World Mental Health Report*, highlighted that psychological well-being is closely associated with educational achievement, career planning, and workforce participation. The report emphasized that supportive educational environments enhance students' motivation, self-esteem, and career development.

Litalien, D. and colleagues (2022) examined motivational profiles among university students and found that intrinsic motivation positively predicted career adaptability, professional commitment, and academic success. Students with higher autonomous motivation demonstrated greater confidence in making career-related decisions.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (2023) emphasized that higher education institutions should strengthen students' psychological competencies, including self-concept, motivation, resilience, and career planning, to improve employability and sustainable development.

World Economic Forum (2023), through its *Future of Jobs Report*, reported that self-confidence, motivation, adaptability, and lifelong learning are among the most important competencies required for future employment. The report suggested that higher education institutions should integrate career guidance and psychological development into academic programmes.

American Psychological Association (2023) reported that positive self-concept and academic motivation significantly contribute to students' psychological well-being, academic engagement, and career readiness. The association emphasized that counseling and psychological support services in universities improve both educational performance and professional development.

Recent studies consistently indicate that self-concept, academic motivation, and professional interest are closely interconnected and play a vital role in students' academic achievement and career development. However, most existing studies have examined these variables independently or in different educational and cultural contexts. Very few empirical studies have simultaneously investigated the relationship among self-concept, academic motivation, and professional interest among higher education students in **Patna district, Bihar**. Therefore, the present study seeks to address this research gap by examining the interrelationships among these three psychological variables in the context of higher education.

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the relationship between self-concept and academic motivation.
2. To study the relationship between self-concept and professional interest.
3. To examine the relationship between academic motivation and professional interest.
4. To assess the predictive role of self-concept and academic motivation on professional interest.

Hypotheses

H1: There is a significant positive relationship between self-concept and academic motivation.

H2: There is a significant positive relationship between self-concept and professional interest.

H3: There is a significant positive relationship between academic motivation and professional interest.

H4: Self-concept and academic motivation significantly predict professional interest.

Methodology

Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive correlational research design to examine relationships among variables.

Sample

The sample consisted of **300 higher education students** (150 male and 150 female) enrolled in undergraduate and postgraduate programs in colleges and universities of **Patna district, Bihar**. Participants were selected using stratified random sampling to ensure representation across disciplines such as Arts, Science, and Commerce.

Tools Used

1. Self-Concept Scale (R.K. Saraswat, 1984)

The Self-Concept Scale developed by **R.K. Saraswat (1984)** was used to measure the self-concept of higher education students. This scale assesses self-concept across multiple psychological and behavioral dimensions, providing a comprehensive understanding of an individual's perception of self.

The scale includes **six major dimensions**, namely Physical, Social, Intellectual, Moral, Educational, and Temperamental self-concept. Each dimension reflects a different aspect of personality and self-perception, contributing to the overall self-concept score.

The scale consists of **48 statements**, and respondents are required to rate each item on a **5-point Likert scale**, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Higher scores indicate a more positive self-concept.

The reliability of the scale is reported to be **0.91 (test-retest method)**, indicating high stability over time. The scale also demonstrates strong **construct validity**, ensuring that it effectively measures the concept of self-concept as intended.

2. Academic Motivation Scale (Vallerand et al., 1992)

The Academic Motivation Scale developed by **Vallerand et al. (1992)** was used to assess students' academic motivation. This scale is widely used in educational psychology to measure different types of motivation in academic settings.

The scale measures three major dimensions of motivation: **intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and amotivation**. Intrinsic motivation refers to engaging in learning due to interest and enjoyment, whereas extrinsic motivation involves external rewards or pressures, and amotivation reflects lack of motivation.

The scale consists of **28 items**, and responses are recorded on a **7-point Likert scale**, ranging from "does not correspond at all" to "corresponds exactly." Higher scores reflect stronger academic motivation.

The scale has strong psychometric properties, with reliability coefficients ranging between **0.83 and 0.90**, and validity established through **factor analysis**, confirming its structural accuracy and consistency.

3. Professional Interest Inventory (Kulshrestha, 1979)

The Professional Interest Inventory developed by **Kulshrestha (1979)** was used to assess students' vocational and career-related interests. This tool helps in understanding the occupational preferences of individuals across different professional domains.

The inventory measures six key dimensions of professional interest: **Scientific, Artistic, Social, Entrepreneurial, Clerical, and Technical interests**. These dimensions represent a wide range of occupational fields and career orientations.

The instrument consists of **60 items**, and responses are given in a **Yes/No format**, indicating the presence or absence of interest in a particular activity or profession. Higher scores indicate stronger professional interest in a specific domain.

The reliability of the inventory is reported to be **0.86**, indicating good internal consistency. The scale has established **content and criterion validity**, ensuring that it effectively measures vocational interests relevant to career decision-making.

Statistical Techniques Used

The data collected for the present study were analyzed using appropriate statistical techniques to examine relationships among variables and test hypotheses.

The following statistical methods were employed:

Firstly, **Mean and Standard Deviation** were used to describe the central tendency and variability of self-concept, academic motivation, and professional interest scores among higher education students.

Secondly, **Pearson Product-Moment Correlation** was applied to examine the relationship between self-concept, academic motivation, and professional interest.

Thirdly, **t-test** was used to compare differences between groups (if applicable, such as gender or academic stream differences).

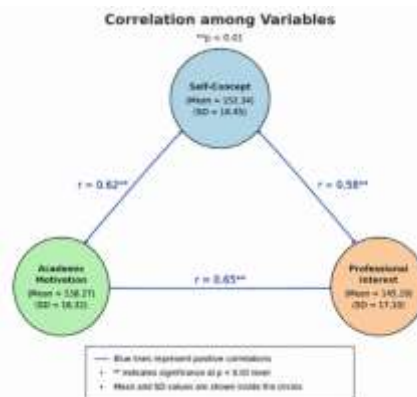
Finally, **Multiple Regression Analysis** was conducted to determine the predictive effect of self-concept and academic motivation on professional interest.

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Mean, Standard Deviation and Correlation among Variables

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3
Self-Concept	152.34	18.45	1		
Academic Motivation	138.27	16.32	0.62**	1	
Professional Interest	145.19	17.10	0.58**	0.65**	1

Note: ** $p < 0.01$



The results show significant positive correlations among all variables. Self-concept is strongly related to academic motivation ($r = 0.62$), indicating that students with positive self-perception are more motivated academically. Professional interest is also significantly related to both self-concept ($r = 0.58$) and academic motivation ($r = 0.65$). **Table 1** presents the descriptive statistics (Mean and Standard Deviation) and the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation coefficients among **self-concept, academic motivation, and professional interest** of higher education students. The mean scores indicate that the respondents exhibited relatively high levels of self-concept ($M = 152.34$, $SD = 18.45$), academic motivation ($M = 138.27$, $SD = 16.32$), and professional interest ($M = 145.19$, $SD = 17.10$). The moderate standard deviation values suggest that the participants showed reasonable variability in their responses while maintaining consistency across the three psychological variables.

The correlation analysis reveals a **significant positive relationship between self-concept and academic motivation ($r = 0.62$, $p < 0.01$)**. This indicates that students who possess a positive perception of themselves tend to exhibit higher levels of motivation toward their academic activities. A healthy self-concept enhances confidence, self-esteem, perseverance, and willingness to undertake academic challenges. Students with strong self-beliefs are more likely to set meaningful educational goals, participate actively in classroom activities, and remain persistent in overcoming academic difficulties. This finding supports the assumption that self-concept is an important psychological factor influencing students' motivation to learn and achieve.

The results further indicate a **significant positive relationship between self-concept and professional interest ($r = 0.58$, $p < 0.01$)**. This suggests that students with a positive self-concept are more likely to develop clear professional aspirations and career interests. Individuals who understand their strengths, abilities, values, and competencies are generally better equipped to make informed career

choices and demonstrate greater confidence in pursuing professional goals. A positive self-concept facilitates self-awareness, career exploration, and occupational decision-making, thereby strengthening students' professional interests.

Similarly, the correlation between **academic motivation and professional interest was found to be positive and statistically significant ($r = 0.65$, $p < 0.01$)**. Among the three relationships, this represents the highest correlation coefficient, indicating that academic motivation has the strongest association with professional interest. Students who are intrinsically or extrinsically motivated toward learning are more likely to engage in career planning, acquire professional competencies, and explore future occupational opportunities. Motivated learners generally display greater commitment toward academic excellence, which ultimately contributes to the development of stronger professional interests and career aspirations.

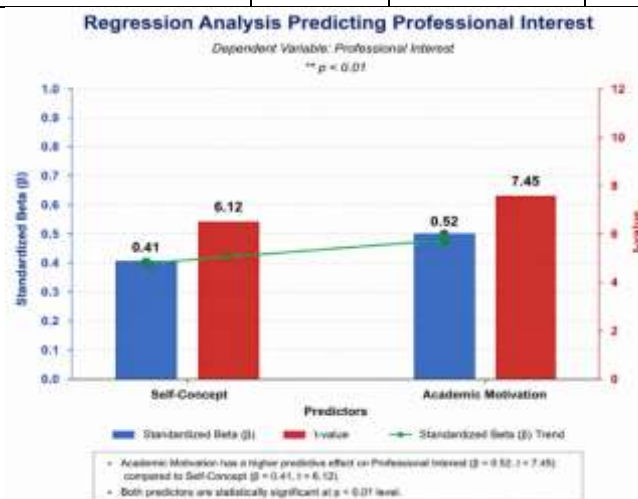
Overall, the correlation matrix demonstrates that all three variables are positively and significantly related to one another, confirming that improvements in one variable are associated with improvements in the others. The findings suggest that self-concept serves as a psychological foundation that enhances academic motivation, while academic motivation further strengthens students' professional interests. These relationships indicate that psychological and motivational factors play an important role in preparing higher education students for successful academic performance and career development.

The findings of the present study are consistent with earlier research. The positive relationship between self-concept and academic motivation supports the findings of Marsh, H. W. and colleagues (2021), who reported that students with higher academic self-concept demonstrate greater motivation, engagement, and educational achievement. The strong association between academic motivation and professional interest also aligns with the work of Howard, J. L. et al. (2021), who found that autonomous motivation enhances academic persistence and career development. Furthermore, the positive relationship between self-concept and professional interest supports Donald E. Super's theory of career development, which emphasizes that individuals tend to choose careers that are consistent with their self-concept and personal identity.

Therefore, the findings validate all three research hypotheses and indicate that fostering positive self-concept and academic motivation among higher education students can substantially enhance their professional interests and career readiness. Educational institutions should therefore promote counseling services, mentoring programmes, career guidance, and motivational interventions to strengthen students' psychological well-being, academic engagement, and professional development.

Table 2: Regression Analysis Predicting Professional Interest

Predictor	β	t-value	Significance
Self-Concept	0.41	6.12	$p < 0.01$
Academic Motivation	0.52	7.45	$p < 0.01$



Academic motivation emerged as the strongest predictor of professional interest, followed by self-concept. This suggests that motivated students are more likely to develop clear career preferences. **Table 2** presents the results of the multiple regression analysis conducted to examine the predictive effects of **self-concept** and **academic motivation** on **professional interest** among higher education students. Regression analysis was employed to determine the relative contribution of each independent variable in explaining variations in students' professional interests and career preferences.

The findings indicate that **both self-concept and academic motivation are statistically significant predictors of professional interest**, as their respective **t-values (6.12 and 7.45)** are significant at the **0.01 level ($p < 0.01$)**. This demonstrates that both variables make meaningful contributions toward explaining students' professional interests and support the proposed hypothesis that psychological factors influence career development.

Among the two predictors, **academic motivation emerged as the strongest predictor**, with a standardized beta coefficient of **$\beta = 0.52$** . This implies that academic motivation has a greater influence on professional interest than self-concept. Students who are highly motivated toward learning are more likely to explore various career opportunities, acquire professional competencies, and develop clear occupational goals. Motivated students generally demonstrate greater persistence, commitment, and willingness to invest effort in activities that enhance their future careers. Therefore, strengthening academic motivation can significantly improve students' professional aspirations and career planning.

The analysis also revealed that **self-concept significantly predicts professional interest ($\beta = 0.41$, $t = 6.12$, $p < 0.01$)**. Although its predictive strength is slightly lower than that of academic motivation, self-concept remains an important psychological determinant of career development. Students who possess a positive perception of their abilities, strengths, and personal qualities tend to exhibit greater confidence in exploring occupational opportunities and making informed career decisions. A healthy self-concept enables individuals to recognize their competencies, align their interests with suitable professions, and pursue career goals with greater determination.

The beta coefficients indicate that **academic motivation contributes more strongly to professional interest than self-concept**. However, the significant contribution of both variables suggests that professional interest is influenced by a combination of motivational and self-perceptual factors rather than a single psychological characteristic. Students who believe in their capabilities and remain academically motivated are more likely to demonstrate higher professional commitment and career readiness.

The findings are consistent with **Self-Determination Theory** proposed by Edward L. Deci and Richard M. Ryan, which suggests that intrinsic motivation enhances engagement, persistence, and goal-directed behavior. The results also support Donald E. Super's Career Development Theory, which emphasizes that career choices evolve from an individual's self-concept and are strengthened through educational experiences and personal aspirations. Furthermore, recent studies by Howard, J. L. et al. (2021) and Litalien, D. et al. (2022) similarly reported that students with higher academic motivation exhibit greater career adaptability, stronger professional commitment, and improved employability.

Overall, the regression analysis confirms that **academic motivation and self-concept jointly play a significant role in predicting professional interest among higher education students**. These findings highlight the importance of creating educational environments that foster positive self-beliefs, academic engagement, and career awareness. Higher education institutions should strengthen mentoring programmes, career counseling services, motivational workshops, and psychological support systems to enhance students' academic motivation and self-concept. Such interventions will help students develop stronger professional interests, make informed career choices, and improve their readiness for the rapidly changing world of work.

Thus, the regression analysis supports the study's fourth hypothesis and demonstrates that enhancing both **academic motivation** and **self-concept** can significantly contribute to the development of **professional interest** among higher education students.

The findings of the study support previous research indicating a strong relationship between self-concept, motivation, and career development. Students with a positive self-concept tend to be more confident in academic settings, which enhances their motivation and clarity in career selection.

Academic motivation plays a crucial role in shaping professional interest, as motivated learners actively explore academic and vocational opportunities. The findings align with Vallerand's motivation theory and Super's career development theory.

The study highlights that psychological variables significantly influence educational and vocational outcomes among higher education students in Patna district.

Limitations

- The study is limited to Patna district only.
- Self-report measures may introduce response bias.
- Cross-sectional design limits causal interpretation.
- Limited sample size restricts generalization.
- Only three psychological variables were considered.

Conclusion

The present study examined the relationship between **self-concept, academic motivation, and professional interest** among higher education students in Patna district. The findings revealed that all three variables are positively and significantly correlated, indicating that students with a positive self-concept are more likely to demonstrate higher academic motivation and stronger professional interests. The results further showed that academic motivation has the strongest positive relationship with professional interest, suggesting that motivated students are more committed to academic pursuits and better prepared to make informed career decisions.

The regression analysis confirmed that both **self-concept and academic motivation significantly predict professional interest**, with academic motivation emerging as the strongest predictor. This finding highlights the crucial role of motivational factors in shaping students' career aspirations and professional development. Students who possess confidence in their abilities and remain motivated toward learning are more likely to develop clear occupational goals, demonstrate greater career adaptability, and pursue professional success with determination.

The study also emphasizes that self-concept serves as an important psychological foundation for academic and career development. A positive self-concept enhances self-confidence, resilience, decision-making ability, and academic engagement, all of which contribute to stronger professional interests. Therefore, fostering healthy self-perceptions among students can significantly improve their educational performance and future employability.

From an educational perspective, the findings suggest that higher education institutions should not focus solely on academic achievement but also promote students' psychological well-being. Universities and colleges should establish counseling centres, career guidance and placement cells, mentorship programmes, life-skills training, motivational workshops, and personality development initiatives to strengthen students' self-concept and academic motivation. Such interventions can help students make informed career choices, improve their professional competencies, and prepare them to meet the demands of the rapidly changing employment market.

The study contributes to the existing literature by providing empirical evidence on the interrelationship among self-concept, academic motivation, and professional interest in the context of higher education students in Patna district, Bihar. It also fills an important research gap, as relatively few studies have simultaneously examined these three psychological variables within this population. The findings may serve as a useful resource for educators, psychologists, counselors, policymakers, and researchers in designing student-centered interventions aimed at enhancing academic engagement and career readiness.

In conclusion, the study establishes that **self-concept and academic motivation are significant psychological determinants of professional interest** among higher education students. Strengthening these attributes through supportive educational environments and evidence-based psychological interventions will not only improve students' academic success but also contribute to their professional growth and overall personality development. Investing in students' psychological resources is therefore essential for developing competent, motivated, and career-ready graduates who can contribute effectively to society and the nation's human capital development.

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