Subscription Rates

	Inland	**Overseas**
Individual	Rs. 100	$ 10
Institution	Rs. 200	$ 20

MANUSCRIPT SUBMISSION

There is no deadline to submit manuscripts. However, early submissions (preferably before 30th July of 2024) shall be eligible to be considered for the publication in the issue of same year.

- Manuscripts (research or review papers) and all editorial correspondence should be addressed to: dsss@uok.edu.in
- Articles (4,000–8,000 words) and Book Reviews (1,000–1,500 words) can be submitted.

Basic formatting of the manuscripts

- Affiliations with complete postal and email address of contributors must be provided along with their manuscript. If there are two or more authors, then corresponding author's name and address details must be specified clearly.
- Articles should be typed on one side of the paper, preferably A4 and double-spaced throughout (even for quotations, notes, references) accompanied by a soft copy (identical to the hard copy), preferably in MS Word.
- Articles must have an abstract of 100–150 words and 5–6 keywords.
- Book reviews must contain the name of author/editor and the book reviewed, place of publication and publisher, year of publication, number of pages, ISBN and the price.
- Artwork, figures, and other graphics, such as illustrations, pictures, and graphs, should be submitted in high quality and electronic formats to ensure optimal presentation in both print and online versions. Please adhere to the following guidelines for preparing your visuals:
- Figures, charts, and tables created in MS Word should be embedded in the main text, not placed at the end of the document.
- Files created in other programs (e.g., Excel, PowerPoint, or formats such as JPG, TIFF, EPS) should be submitted as separate files. Insert a placeholder note in the text, e.g., "[insert Figure 1.]".

In text citations (as per APA, 7th edition)

- (Marx, 1986, p. 50); (Joreskog & Sorborn, 2007, pp. 50–66); Shafi et al. (2007) [for three or more authors]; ('Study finds',

2007); (Anonymous, 1998); (Giddens, 1991, 2006, in press); (Giddens, 1996; Mead, 1999)

References

- Appadurai, A. (1997). *Modernity at large: Cultural dimensions of globalization*. London: University of Minnesota Press
- Baker, F. M., & Lightfoot, O. B. (1993). Psychiatric care of ethnic elders. In A. C. Gaw (Ed.), *Culture, ethnicity, and mental illness* (pp. 517-552). Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Press.
- Beck, U. (2007). Beyond class and nation: reframing social inequalities in a globalizing world 1. *The British journal of sociology*, *58*(4), 679-705.

Volume 12			2024

ARTICLES

BARRIERS AND DRIVERS OF OPEN ACCESS SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION: A REVIEW OF FACTORS INFLUENCING ITS ADOPTION

Mohammad Nazim[*]

Abstract
This article examines the factors driving the adoption of Open Access (OA) scholarly communication and the persistent challenges that hinder its universal adoption. Using a narrative review methodology, relevant academic literature was retrieved from databases such as Google Scholar, Web of Science, and Scopus, and analyzed to explore the evolution of diverse OA publishing models, and role of institutional policies, technological advancements, and researchers' motivations in promoting OA adoption. Based on the review, three key themes and eleven sub-themes were identified. Findings reveal that OA scholarly communication democratizes access to knowledge by enhancing research visibility and fostering collaboration. However, significant challenges persist, such as the financial burden of Article Processing Charges, the proliferation of predatory journals, and resistance from stakeholder's dependent on subscription revenues. The review also highlights policy-level interventions, including Plan S and transformative agreements, as effective in addressing some barriers. The article concludes that while OA has immense potential to transform scholarly communication, achieving its full benefits requires overcoming financial, quality, and policy standardization challenges to ensure equitable global access to knowledge.

Keywords

---

[*] Associate Professor, Department of Library & Information Science
Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh
Email: nazim76@gmail.com

Open Access Scholarly Communication, Open Access Publishing, Barriers and Drivers of Open Access Adoption, Gold Open Access, Green Open Access, Article Processing Charges

Introduction

Scholarly communication refers to the creation, evaluation, dissemination, and preservation of academic knowledge within and beyond the academic community (Borgman, 2007). Scholarly communication is defined as "the system through which research and other scholarly writings are created, evaluated for quality, disseminated to the scholarly community, and preserved for future use. The system includes both formal means of communication (such as publication in peer-reviewed journals), and informal channels, such as electronic listservs" (Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL), 2017). Historically, scholarly publishing was dominated by subscription-based models, where access to journals required institutional or individual subscriptions. While this model facilitated revenue generation for publishers and ensured peer-reviewed quality, it significantly restricted access for researchers and institutions unable to afford the high subscription costs. The traditional "paywall" publishing system created substantial disparities in knowledge access, particularly affecting individuals and organizations in low- and middle-income countries (Björk & Solomon, 2012).

Over the last two decades, the open access (OA) movement has emerged as a solution to these limitations, aiming to make scholarly outputs freely available to anyone with internet access. The transformation of scholarly communication from a traditional subscription-based model to OA has significantly altered the landscape of academic publishing, research dissemination, and knowledge sharing. Thus, OA scholarly communication has emerged as an alternative scholarly publishing system, aiming to enhance the dissemination of scientific research without cost or copyright restrictions. Its emergence has been driven by two critical factors:

1. The escalating costs of journal subscriptions, often referred to as the "serials crisis," and
2. The advent and widespread adoption of advanced information and communication technologies, which have

enabled efficient dissemination of scholarly content (Björk, 2004).

The transformation towards OA began with the Budapest Open Access Initiative (2001), which called for the removal of barriers to accessing academic literature. This initiative, launched by the Open Society Institute, aimed to eliminate the obstacles hindering access to scientific information. In the Budapest Declaration, OA is defined as "making scientific literature available online, freely and without restrictions." Since its inception, the OA movement has gained significant momentum, garnering support from policymakers, funding agencies, and academic institutions worldwide. Its scope extends to a wide range of scholarly outputs, including peer-reviewed journal articles, conference proceedings, theses, and other academic materials. The dissemination of these works is facilitated by digital platforms and governed by permissive copyright licenses that promote unrestricted sharing and reuse (Suber, 2012; Tennant et al., 2016).

OA publishing offers multiple routes tailored to diverse scholarly needs, including Gold, Green, Hybrid, Bronze, and Dimond OA. Gold OA involves publishing articles in OA journals, where authors are required to pay Article Processing Charges (APCs) to ensure free access for readers. Examples include journals indexed in the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) like PLOS ONE (Piwowar et al., 2018). Green OA enables authors to self-archive manuscripts in institutional or disciplinary repositories, such as arXiv or PubMed Central. However, access may be delayed due to embargo periods imposed by publishers (Harnad et al., 2008). Hybrid OAcombines traditional subscription-based publishing with optional OA for individual articles if authors pay APCs, while the rest of the content remains behind a paywall. This model is seen as a transitional phase towards fully OA publishing (Björk, 2017). Bronze OAoffers free access to articles published in subscription-based journals after a delay or embargo period but typically lacks clear licensing terms, limiting reuse (Laakso&Björk, 2013). Diamond OA provides free access without fees for authors or readers, relying on institutional or consortial funding and widely adopted by platforms like SciELO and Redalyc, especially in Latin America (Becerril-García &Aguado-López, 2019)

The transition to OA has been driven by the recognition of its benefits for research visibility, impact, and collaboration. Studies show that OA articles are downloaded and cited more frequently than subscription-based articles, enhancing their academic and societal impact (Piwowar et al., 2018). OA also fosters interdisciplinary and international collaboration by removing access barriers, which is particularly critical for addressing global challenges such as pandemics and climate change. The COVID-19 pandemic underscored the importance of OA as researchers, policymakers, and clinicians required immediate access to up-to-date scientific findings. Many publishers responded by temporarily making COVID-19-related articles freely accessible, demonstrating the potential of OA in accelerating scientific progress (Tennant et al., 2016).

Despite these benefits, the transition from subscription-based models to OA is not without challenges. The reliance on APCs for Gold OA has raised concerns about affordability, particularly for researchers from underfunded institutions or LMICs. The rise of predatory journals exploiting the OA model further complicates the landscape, as these journals lack rigorous peer review and undermines trust in OA publishing (Beall, 2016). Additionally, resistance from some stakeholders, including publishers reliant on subscription revenues, has slowed the pace of change. However, policy interventions such as Plan S, which mandates OA for publicly funded research, and the adoption of transformative agreements between libraries and publishers are accelerating the shift (Chan, Arunachalam &Kirsop, 2009).

Objective

This article critically examines the drivers and barriers influencing the adoption of OA scholarly communication. It reviews the evolution and development of OA, its growing prevalence, and its transformative impact on the scholarly publishing landscape. By analyzing factors that promote or hinder OA adoption, the article underscores its role in democratizing access to knowledge while addressing key challenges such as affordability, quality, and policy standardization. The aim is to provide an understanding of OA's

contributions to scholarly communication and to identify persistent barriers to its universal implementation.

Methods

This study adopts a narrative review methodology to analyze the factors driving and impeding the adoption of OA scholarly communication. Academic literature was systematically reviewed from various databases, including Google Scholar, Web of Science, and Scopus, to explore the emergence and development of OA and its diverse publishing models, such as Gold, Green, Hybrid, Bronze, and Diamond OA. Key themes—such as the influence of institutional policies, advancements in information and communication technologies, and researchers' motivations—were identified to understand the dynamics of OA adoption. Challenges, including APCs, predatory publishing practices, and resistance from key stakeholders, were also critically evaluated. The study incorporates insights from global initiatives, such as Plan S and transformative agreements, to assess the effectiveness of policy interventions in addressing these challenges and advancing the adoption of OA publishing.

Findings

Prevalence of OA publishing across disciplines and countries

The prevalence of OA publishing across disciplines and countries reflects a complex interplay of economic, cultural, and infrastructural factors, resulting in significant variations in adoption rates. Globally, OA publishing has seen remarkable growth, with over 50 percent of newly published articles now freely accessible through OA journals or repositories (Piwowar et al., 2018). However, this growth is unevenly distributed across disciplines. STEM fields, particularly biomedical sciences and physics, have emerged as pioneers in OA adoption. Repositories like PubMed Central and arXiv have facilitated OA publishing in these fields, driven by the need for rapid dissemination of research findings. This trend became particularly evident during public health crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, where OA enabled quick access to critical research for addressing global challenges (Tennant et al., 2016). Conversely, humanities and social sciences

lag behind, hindered by limited funding and smaller research budgets, which make APCs a significant barrier (Björk& Solomon, 2012b).

Geographic differences in OA prevalence further highlight disparities. High-income countries lead in OA adoption due to robust funding mechanisms, institutional mandates, and advanced digital infrastructures. In Europe, initiatives like Plan S require publicly funded research to be made openly accessible, driving widespread compliance. Scandinavian countries and the Netherlands have achieved near-universal OA adoption through transformative agreements with publishers (Schiltz, 2018). Similarly, North America has high OA prevalence, supported by mandates from funding agencies like the National Institutes of Health (NIH), which require researchers to deposit work in OA repositories.

In contrast, low- and middle-income countries face unique challenges in OA adoption but also exhibit innovative approaches. Limited funding often restricts participation in Gold OA, which requires APCs, but Green OA through institutional repositories provides an alternative. Latin America has emerged as a global leader in Diamond OA, a model that charges neither authors nor readers. Platforms like SciELO and Redalyc prioritize regional scholarship and multilingual dissemination, ensuring equitable access to knowledge (Becerril-García &Aguado-López, 2019). African countries are increasingly engaging in OA through initiatives such as the African Journals Online (AJOL) platform, designed to enhance the visibility of African research outputs.

India has shown significant progress in OA publishing, driven by government-backed repositories like Shodhganga, which houses theses and dissertations. Studies have revealed consistent growth in the proportion of OA publications from Indian universities, surpassing global averages in some cases. For example, Nazim (2021) noted that about 23 percent of publications from Indian academic institutions are openly accessible, with Green OA being the most prevalent route. India also contributes significantly to global OA literature through platforms like PubMed Central and the DOAJ, reflecting its growing engagement in OA initiatives (Das, 2015).

Factors influencing OA adoption

Increased research visibility and citations

OA publishing has significantly enhanced the visibility and citation rates of scholarly works by eliminating access barriers and ensuring global availability. Studies consistently demonstrate that OA articles receive higher citation counts than subscription-based publications. For example, Piwowar et al. (2018) reported an 18 percent citation advantage for OA articles, attributing this to their unrestricted accessibility and discoverability through platforms like PubMed Central and Google Scholar. This increased visibility facilitates the dissemination of research to diverse audiences, including researchers in resource-constrained regions, policymakers, and interdisciplinary scholars (Gargouri et al., 2010; Tennant et al., 2016).

Langham-Putrow, Bakker, and Riegelman (2021) systematically reviewed 134 studies to evaluate the OA citation advantage. They found that 47.8 percent of the studies confirmed the existence of this advantage, with variations across disciplines and OA models. STEM fields, particularly biomedical sciences, showed stronger correlations between OA status and increased citations due to the rapid dissemination of high-demand research findings. Gold OA, in particular, demonstrated the highest citation benefit, as articles in established OA journals are immediately accessible and widely circulated. Green OA also showed substantial citation gains, particularly when hosted on institutional or disciplinary repositories. However, Hybrid OA exhibited a less pronounced advantage due to its partial paywall model.

Further research corroborates these findings. Huang et al. (2024) highlighted that OA enhances citation diversity, with repositories offering broader citation sources than publisher-hosted platforms. Studies in specific fields, such as anatomy (Miller et al., 2020) and library and information science (Nazim & Ali, 2023), confirmed higher average citations for OA articles. For instance, OA anatomy papers received an average of 18.95 citations, compared to 15.14 for non-OA papers, underscoring the broader reach of OA publications.

Role of institutional policies

Policy support from governments and funding agencies is a key driver in the advancement and promotion of OA publishing, significantly influencing adoption rates. Initiatives such as the NIH Public Access Policy and Plan S in Europe have demonstrated the transformative potential of mandates requiring publicly funded research to be freely accessible. These policies have notably increased compliance among researchers, particularly in well-funded disciplines like biomedical sciences, where repositories such as PubMed Central have become central to research dissemination (Tennant et al., 2016; Azadbakht et al., 2023). Such frameworks not only enhance research accessibility but also foster global scholarly communication by setting standards for OA practices.

However, challenges persist in ensuring the equitable implementation of these policies worldwide. While high-income countries benefit from advanced infrastructure and funding mechanisms to support compliance, low- and middle-income countries often face significant barriers, including inadequate infrastructure and financial constraints. Additionally, APCs associated with Gold OA models can exclude underfunded researchers and institutions, further exacerbating global disparities (Azadbakht et al., 2023). Concerns about predatory OA journals and uneven enforcement of mandates also risk undermining trust and policy effectiveness (Beall, 2016).

To fully realize the potential of OA mandates, strategies must prioritize equitable funding mechanisms, strengthen repository infrastructure, and promote reputable OA journals. Addressing researcher resistance and raising awareness of OA benefits are equally critical. While policy support has made substantial progress, its success ultimately hinges on inclusive, adaptable, and globally aligned approaches to ensure the sustainability and accessibility of OA publishing.

Institutional incentives

Universities and research institutions are instrumental in promoting OA by providing financial support and creating institutional repositories. Many institutions offer to cover APCs for

researchers wishing to publish in Gold OA journals and include OA publications in tenure and promotion evaluations (Björk et al., 2014). This institutional support helps mitigate financial and career barriers that may discourage OA adoption.

However, institutional incentives are not universally available. A study by Dulle et al. (2010) highlights that while universities in developed countries offer substantial financial support for OA, many institutions, especially in LMICs, face financial constraints or lack of clear policies to encourage OA publishing. Furthermore, while institutional repositories are widely adopted for Green OA, their effectiveness is often limited by researchers' reluctance to deposit their work due to concerns about visibility or the continued dominance of traditional, high-impact journals (Piwowar et al., 2018). This discrepancy in institutional support reflects a significant barrier in achieving global equity in OA adoption.

Researchers' awareness and motivation

Researchers' awareness and motivation are crucial factors in the adoption of OA publishing, as evidenced by multiple studies. Intrinsic motivations, such as contributing to scientific knowledge and societal development, often drive researchers' publication efforts (Zain et al., 2011). Awareness of the benefits of OA, including increased visibility, accessibility, and impact of their work, further incentivizes researchers. OA articles generally receive more downloads and citations than subscription-based articles, making OA formats particularly attractive (Piwowar et al., 2018). Fields addressing global challenges, such as health or climate change, benefit significantly from the broader societal impact enabled by OA (Tennant et al., 2016).

However, extrinsic factors such as institutional mandates and funding requirements also play a pivotal role in shaping researchers' decisions. Policies promoting OA publishing often encourage compliance but do not fully address persistent barriers. Key challenges include APCs, which pose financial burdens, particularly for underfunded researchers and institutions (Schroter, Tite, & Smith, 2005). Additionally, researchers in disciplines emphasizing high-impact journals for career

advancement often perceive OA journals as less prestigious (Björk & Solomon, 2012b). Concerns about journal quality, including predatory publishing practices, further contribute to skepticism (Wakeling et al., 2019).

To enhance OA adoption, institutional and policy-level support is essential. Efforts should include educating researchers about OA benefits, subsidizing APCs, and aligning OA contributions with career advancement metrics (Lambovska & Yordanov, 2020). Addressing misconceptions about OA journal quality and fostering incentives for academic recognition can help bridge the gap between awareness and motivation. By aligning intrinsic and extrinsic motivators with robust institutional support, the adoption of OA publishing can be significantly advanced, contributing to equitable and widespread access to knowledge.

Technological advancements

Technological advancements have played a crucial role in facilitating OA adoption. Digital platforms and repositories have streamlined the submission, review, and dissemination processes for OA articles. Preprint servers such as arXiv and bioRxiv enable researchers to share their work quickly before formal peer review, accelerating the dissemination of scientific knowledge (Tennant et al., 2016). These platforms have become particularly important in fields such as physics, biology, and medicine, where early dissemination is critical for scientific progress.

However, technological challenges persist, particularly in LMICs, where the infrastructure necessary for participating in OA publishing may be lacking. Additionally, the exponential growth of OA content has led to information overload, making it difficult for researchers to navigate and identify high-quality research. The proliferation of low-quality OA journals and the rise of predatory publishers further complicate the situation, undermining the credibility of OA publishing (Beall, 2016). While technology has enabled the growth of OA, it has also created challenges related to content quality and access.

Global collaboration and equity

OA publishing fosters global collaboration by eliminating access barriers to research, which is essential for addressing complex,

global challenges like climate change and pandemics. By ensuring that research is freely accessible, OA allows researchers from different regions to collaborate without financial constraints. This is particularly significant for researchers in LMICs, where access to subscription-based journals is often prohibitively expensive (Tennant et al., 2016).

OA is also seen as a means to promote equity in research by ensuring that publicly funded knowledge is accessible to all, regardless of geographical location or financial resources (Tennant et al., 2016). However, the distribution of OA infrastructure and funding remains uneven, limiting participation from many regions. While platforms like SciELO and Redalyc have been instrumental in fostering OA in Latin America, other regions continue to be underrepresented in the global OA landscape (Becerril-García &Aguado-López, 2019). To achieve true global collaboration and equity, OA must be more inclusive and accessible to researchers in all regions.

Barriers to adoption of OA publishing
Financial barriers

One of the most prominent barriers to OA adoption is the financial burden associated with Article APCs, particularly for the Gold OA model. APCs, which are paid by authors to make their articles freely available, can be prohibitively expensive, especially for researchers from low- and middle-income countries. Björk and Solomon (2012) argue that while Diamond OA models, which do not require APCs, offer a solution, the implementation of such models is constrained by limited funding sources. The lack of institutional or governmental support for covering APCs further exacerbates this issue, making it difficult for researchers in developing and underdeveloped countries to participate in OA publishing. Consequently, the financial burden imposed by APCs remains a significant deterrent for researchers who might otherwise wish to adopt OA publishing.

Predatory publishing

The rise of predatory publishing represents another substantial barrier to the credibility of OA. Predatory journals exploit the OA

model by charging authors fees without providing proper editorial services or peer review. Beall's (2016) work on predatory publishers has highlighted the detrimental impact these journals have on the reputation of OA publishing. Researchers, particularly those in the early stages of their careers, may be vulnerable to these exploitative practices, which not only damage the quality of published research but also undermine trust in OA outlets. This concern over the reliability of OA journals, compounded by the proliferation of such predatory publishers, discourages researchers from submitting their work to OA journals. As a result, the presence of predatory publishing undermines the overall growth of OA by diminishing its perceived credibility.

Institutional resistance

Institutional resistance is another barrier to OA adoption, with many academic institutions hesitant to fully embrace OA publishing. A study by Dulle et al. (2010) reveals that while some universities, particularly in developed countries, have made significant strides in supporting OA, many institutions still lack clear policies to incentivize OA publishing. Concerns over the financial cost of APCs, as well as the preference for traditional subscription-based models of publishing, contribute to this resistance. Furthermore, researchers in these institutions may be reluctant to publish in OA journals due to concerns about career advancement, as high-impact, subscription-based journals continue to be the primary metric for academic success (Björk& Solomon, 2012). Therefore, institutional policies that do not support OA can act as significant barriers to its adoption, particularly in environments where publishing in traditional journals is prioritized.

Issues of quality and perceptions

The perceived lower quality of OA journals is a significant factor inhibiting broader adoption. OA journals are often seen as less rigorous or less prestigious than traditional, subscription-based journals, despite many OA outlets maintaining high standards of peer review. This perception is fueled by the presence of predatory journals and a lack of widely accepted quality control mechanisms

(Björk et al., 2014). As a result, researchers, particularly those in disciplines where journal prestige is critical for career progression, may be hesitant to publish in OA outlets. This concern is particularly prevalent among senior researchers and established academics, who view publishing in high-impact, traditional journals as more prestigious and more likely to advance their careers.

Lack of uniform policies

The lack of uniformity in OA policies across countries and institutions also creates a fragmented adoption landscape. While some countries, particularly in Europe, have adopted strong OA mandates, others lack policies or sufficient funding for OA initiatives (Chan, Kirsop& Arunachalam, 2005). Inconsistent policy enforcement means that researchers in certain regions may not have access to the same opportunities or resources to publish OA. Furthermore, in countries with weaker policy frameworks, researchers may not be incentivized to adopt OA publishing practices, which slows the global adoption of OA.

Conclusion

The paper highlights the transformative potential of OA in scholarly communication, emphasizing its ability to democratize access to knowledge, enhance research visibility, and foster global collaboration. The findings reveal that OA adoption is driven by factors such as institutional policies, funding agency mandates, and researchers' motivations for wider dissemination and societal impact. However, significant barriers persist, including the high cost of APCs, concerns over the quality of peer review in OA journals, and the proliferation of predatory publishing practices. Resistance from stakeholders reliant on subscription-based models further complicates the transition to OA.

The implications of these findings underscore the need for strategies to address these challenges. Institutions and policymakers must focus on reducing financial barriers through subsidized APCs and funding mechanisms, particularly for researchers in low- and middle-income countries. Efforts to promote reputable OA journals and enhance quality assurance

mechanisms are essential to build trust in OA publishing. The study recommends that global initiatives, such as Plan S and other national funding agencies, continue to enforce policies mandating OA for publicly funded research. Academic institutions should integrate OA contributions into evaluation metrics to incentivize researchers. Additionally, awareness campaigns and capacity-building programs are needed to educate researchers about OA benefits and practices. Addressing these issues holistically can ensure that OA achieves its goal of equitable, sustainable, and universal access to knowledge, ultimately advancing scientific progress and societal development.

References

- Association of College and Research Libraries. (2004). *Principles and strategies for the reform of scholarly communication.* Retrieved from https://www.ala.org/acrl/publications/whitepapersprinciples strategies
- Budapest Open Access Initiative. (2001). *Make research publicly available.* Retrieved from https://www.budapestopenaccessinitiative.org/
- Langham-Putrow, A., Bakker, C., &Riegelman, A. (2021). Is the open access citation advantage real? A systematic review of the citation of open access and subscription-based articles. *PLOS ONE, 16*(6), e0253129. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0253129
- Beall, J. (2016). Essential information about predatory publishers and journals. *International Higher Education, 86*, 2–3. https://doi.org/10.6017/ihe.2016.86.9358
- Chan, L., Kirsop, B., & Arunachalam, S. (2005). Open access archiving: The fast track to building research capacity in developing countries. *Science and Development Network,* 25.
- Chan, L., Arunachalam, S., &Kirsop, B. (2009). Open access: A giant leap towards bridging health inequities. *Bulletin of the World Health Organization, 87,* 631–635.
- Becerril-García, A., &Aguado López, E. (2019). The end of a centralized open access project and the beginning of a community-based sustainable infrastructure for Latin America. In *Proceedings of the 22nd International Conference on Electronic Publishing (ELPUB) 2018 (Revised Selected Papers)* (p. 41). OpenEditionPress. https://doi.org/10.4000/proceedings.elpub.2018.27

- Azadbakht, E., Radniecki, T., Schultz, T. A., & Shannon, A. (2023). Do open access mandates work? A systematized review of the literature on open access publishing rates. *Journal of Librarianship and Scholarly Communication, 11*(1). https://doi.org/10.31274/jlsc.15444
- Björk, B. C. (2017). Growth of hybrid open access, 2009–2016. *PeerJ, 5*, e3878. https://doi.org/10.7717/peerj.3878
- Björk, B. C., & Solomon, D. (2012a). The publishing delay in scholarly peer-reviewed journals. *Journal of Informetrics, 6*(4), 468–473. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.joi.2013.09.001
- Björk, B. C., Laakso, M., Welling, P., &Paetau, P. (2014). Anatomy of open access publishing: A study of longitudinal development and internal structure. *Journal of Informetrics, 8*(2), 276–287. https://doi.org/10.1186/1741-7015-10-124
- Björk, B. C. (2004). Open access to scientific publications—An analysis of the barriers to change? *Information Research, 9*(2). Retrieved from http://informationr.net/ir/9-2/paper170.html
- Björk, B. C., & Solomon, D. (2012b). Open access versus subscription journals: A comparison of scientific impact. *BMC Medicine, 10*, 73. https://doi.org/10.1186/1741-7015-10-73
- Borgman, C. L. (2007). *Scholarship in the digital age: Information, infrastructure, and the internet.* MIT Press. https://doi.org/10.7551/mitpress/7434.001.0001
- Das, A. K. (2015). *Open access to knowledge and information: Scholarly literature and digital library initiatives – The South Asian scenario.* Elsevier. Retrieved from http://hdl.handle.net/10150/106335
- Dulle, F. W., Minish-Majanja, M. K., & Cloete, L. M. (2010, August). Factors influencing the adoption of open access scholarly communication in Tanzanian public universities. In *World Library and Information Congress: 76th IFLA General Conference and Assembly* (pp. 10–15).
- Gargouri, Y., Hajjem, C., Larivière, V., Gingras, Y., Carr, L., Brody, T., &Harnad, S. (2010). Self-selected or mandated, open access increases citation impact for higher quality research. *PLOS ONE, 5*(10), e13636. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0013636
- Harnad, S., Brody, T., Vallières, F., Carr, L., Hitchcock, S., Gingras, Y., Oppenheim, C., Hajjem, C., &Hilf, E. R. (2008). The access/impact problem and the green and gold roads to open access: An update. *Serials Review, 34*(1), 36–40. https://doi.org/10.1080/00987913.2008.10765150

- Huang, C., Neylon, C., Montgomery, L., Hosking, R., Diprose, J. P., Handcock, R. N., & Wilson, K. (2024). Open access research outputs receive more diverse citations. *Scientometrics, 129*(2), 825–845. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11192-023-04894-0
- Laakso, M., & Björk, B. C. (2013). Delayed open access: An overlooked high-impact category of openly available scientific literature. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology, 64*(7), 1323–1329. https://doi.org/10.1002/asi.22856
- Lambovska, M., & Yordanov, K. (2020). Motivation of researchers to publish in high-quality journals: A theoretical framework. *TEM Journal, 9*(1), 188–197. https://doi.org/10.18421/TEM91-27
- Langham-Putrow, A., Bakker, C., &Riegelman, A. (2021). Is the open access citation advantage real? A systematic review of the citation of open access and subscription-based articles. *PLOS ONE, 16*(6), e0253129. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0253129
- Miller, G., Stoner, R. A., Boissaud-Cooke, M., Lim, J. H. C., Furness, H., Putt, O., & Lewis, T. (2020). Open access availability of anatomy papers presented at meetings of the American and British associations of clinical anatomists. *Clinical Anatomy, 34*(5), 660–667. https://doi.org/10.1002/ca.23580
- Nazim, M. (2021). Analysing open access uptake by academic and research institutions in India. *DESIDOC Journal of Library and Information Technology, 41*(2), 108–115. https://doi.org/10.14429/djlit.41.02.16324
- Nazim, M., & Ali, A. (2023). An investigation of open access availability of library and information science research. *DESIDOC Journal of Library and Information Technology, 43*(2). https://doi.org/10.14429/djlit.43.2.18580
- Piwowar, H. A., Priem, J., Larivière, V., Alperin, J. P., & Matthias, L. (2018). The state of OA: A large-scale analysis of the prevalence and impact of open access articles. *PLOS ONE, 13*(10), e0205083. https://doi.org/10.7717/peerj.4375
- Schiltz, M. (2018). Science without publication paywalls: cOAlition S for the realization of full and immediate Open Access. *PLOS Biology, 16*(9), e3000031. https://doi.org/10.3389/fnins.2018.00656
- Schroter, S., Tite, L., & Smith, R. (2005). Perceptions of open access publishing: Interviews with journal authors. *BMJ, 330*(7494), 756. https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.38359.695220.82

- Suber, P. (2012). *Open access*. MIT Press. Retrieved from http://library.oapen.org/handle/20.500.12657/26065
- Tennant, J. P., Waldner, F., Jacques, D. C., Masuzzo, P., Collister, L. B., & Hartgerink, C. H. (2016). The academic, economic and societal impacts of open access: An evidence-based review. *F1000 Research, 5*. https://doi.org/10.12688/f1000research.8460.3
- Wakeling, S., Creaser, C., Pinfield, S., Fry, J., Spezi, V., Willett, P., & Paramita, M. (2019). Motivations, understandings, and experiences of open-access mega-journal authors: Results of a large-scale survey. *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology, 70*(7), 754–768. https://doi.org/10.1002/asi.24154
- Zain, S. M., Ab-Rahman, M. S., Ihsan, A. K. A. M., Zahrim, A., Nor, M. J. M., Zain, M. F. M., & Ghopa, W. A. W. (2011). Motivation for research and publication: Experience as a researcher and an academic. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences, 18,* 213–219. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2011.05.030

Review Article

ENHANCING THE VISIBILITY OF RESEARCH USING OA MODELS TO SCHOLARLY CONTENT: ROLE OF GOVERNMENT AND FUNDING AGENCIES

Muzamil Mushtaq[*]
Nida Khan[†]

Abstract
"Our premise to knowledge is when it is freely open to use and judge by others, in return it cumulates, improves and helps refining the ideas". The human beings are perhaps at the highest pedestal of universe only because of their immense intellectual potential and high cognitive powers which give them an edge over other creatures in nature. The best of their abilities is to transfer systematically their ideas into next generation through research, innovation, scientific experimentation and observation, however the free flow of communication faces some barriers which hinder the effective use of the information being produced in the society. The most significant being the financial barriers in the form of subscription models of scholarly journals and periodicals which makes it difficult to transfer the requisite information. One of the well-crafted out framework emerged in the form of free access to scholarly content, known as open access(OA) which can be possible only by an effective policy at the national level followed by an operative mechanism of funding agencies in the country. India with its huge prospects in the field invests a lot of resources in generating newer research, but at the same time, spends hugely again to get access

[*] Department of Library & Information Science Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh
Email: naikoomuzamil@gmail.com
[†] Department of Library & Information Science Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh
Email: nida.amu71@gmail.com

of the same content produced by its own resources. The median pathway may be the viable option in the form of open access platforms that can make it happen to freely pass-on the useful scholarly information to researchers and scientists for furthering the growth and innovation in the country. The present short study will give an insight about the scenario of open access in the country and the policies of some of well-developed nations regarding open access and will suggest the role of government and the funding agencies in this direction to adopt a standard model of publishing the scholarly content through open access routes and platforms.

Keywords

Open Access, National Policy on open access, Funding agencies, Budapest Open Access Initiative, Article Processing Charges (APCs), developed countries.

1. Introduction

The connotation between scientific and technological developments with the social and economic welfare of a nation has long been recognized in India. Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first prime minister, said, *"It is science alone that can solve the problems of hunger and poverty, of insanitation and illiteracy……Who indeed can ignore science today? We need it at every turn"* (Desai, 2016). For developing country like India, the infrastructure for Science and Technology is imperative and many studies provide sufficient evidence of fair development of the society with that of the research and innovation being conducted and implemented. In the era of Information Communication Technology (ICT), the technological advances have reached far ahead and the scientific research and its publication has been one of the greatest curiosities of all times and all communities from its generation through multiple research processes to its ultimate dissemination (UNESCO, 1982; Inter Academy Council, 2004). One of the well striking and impactful mode of accessibility of the scholarly communication which gives impulsive and ubiquitous access to research reports irrespective of barriers of cost and availability is commonly known as open access and the information as open access content. Open Access provides an interface for researchers to share their studies widely to diverse population, allows pervasive access to valuable information

irrespective of any financial barrier. It helps in transparency of research, and fosters active collaboration among researchers (American Chemical Society, 2024). It is in align with any country's scientific and technological advances that embracing open access as a feasible platform for publishing scholarly literature, can help promoting an inclusive research and academic environment which encourages innovation, knowledge sharing, quality research and creativity among the researchers and authors. However, the issue is with the misunderstanding of the basic scheme of Open access, where majority of the research which is being sponsored by the government grants and hence the general public must have the right to access such research, which is not the case in many publication modes used by researchers (Sankalp India Foundation, 2024). It seems very unfair to restrict access to such type of research and that is the reason that many nations across the globe have made it mandatory to publish the findings of publicly funded research in open access platforms.

Currently, there are many countries including India that advocate the open access model of publishing the scientific research and its free availability and accessibility all over the world. The concept of open access has emerged since Budapest Open Access Initiative which took place on 14th February, 2002. With the emerging publishing technologies, the concept got boosted and efforts are being made by various scholarly societies, academic communities and governments to make scholarly content Open and freely available to all. However, due to various reasons, the full potential of Open Access is not realised by the producers (scholars), publishers and readers (scholars and society at large) and the world is still disconnected in terms of sharing the scholarly research openly and freely. The most difficult task in the Open Access models is the availability and allocation of funds in any country and the link between funding and open access needs a proper policy and guideline at every stage. Today, granting agencies are moving towards requiring OA to the research outputs they fund, some tend to favor 'gold' or 'green' methods. Gold OA makes the content immediately accessible, but unsubsidized journals often charge author's article processing charges (APCs) paid out of grant funds. Green OA typically involves publication in

subscription journals and deposits a version in an OA repository that is often subject to a publisher embargo that delays access to the open version. It is being presumed that between 2014 and 2034, there will be a progression in funder policies that leads to a standard requirement of immediate OA to the research outputs they fund to ensure the greatest impact for their investments. This development will leave library publishers well-positioned to provide immediate OA outlets, including repository-based platforms, that can be both academically rigorous (peer-reviewed) and economically attractive at little or no cost to the author (Chadwell & Sutton, 2014). With growing commercial scholarly publications and increasing diversity in terms of availability of & accessibility to the information, we need to create a necessary framework for making Open Access Parent Agency in our country. For the free flow of information in India, it becomes necessary to remove the financial barrier. A case may be cited that of the funds disbursed by the DBT and DST, Govt. of India which are purely public funds. It is important that the information and knowledge generated from the use of these funds should be made publicly available as soon as possible, subject to Indian law and IP policies of respective funding agencies and institutions where the research work has been performed. The DBT and DST expect that the recipients of funds will publish their research in high quality, peer-reviewed journals.

2. Research Funders and their Policies for Open Access

Research funders have set up centralized funds for paying APCs and a new type of consortia based electronic subscription licenses including the payments of Article Processing Charges (APCs) has started to emerge. However, particularly important in the context of the policies of research funders encouraging or mandating open access, which are now becoming increasingly common. The SHERPA/Juliet service listed a total of 32 funders globally requiring OA publication, and 92 requiring OA archiving of publications. In the UK, policies have been introduced by government-funded agencies, such as Research Councils UK (RCUK) (RCUK, 2013) and the Higher Education Funding Councils for England (HEFCE, 2014), and charity funders, such as the

Wellcome Trust (Walport & Kiley, 2006) preferences and emphases, and, therefore, different implications for institutions in terms of administrative costs. RCUK, Wellcome, and the Charities Open Access Fund policies place an emphasis; Wellcome Trust, 2012, 2014). These policies allow for both Gold and Green OA but with different is on Gold OA and include the provision of block grants for institutions to pay for APCs (Johnson, R., Pinfield, S., & Fosci, M., 2016). As higher education institutions (HEIs) put in place some of the systems and processes to enable more of their publications to be openly available in such a way as to ensure compliance with these policies, understanding the cost implications of making research OA becomes paramount for HEIs. For governments and research funders, a better understanding of costs is important in order to inform future development of policy initiatives. The centralized funding scheme makes a break with the earlier practice of making APCs allowable costs in externally funded research grants. The new scheme was pioneered by Wellcome Trust and received considerable UK governmental support following the Finch report (Finch, 2012).In the budgets of research funding organizations like the UK research councils and the Austrian Science Fund (FWF), the money is separately budgeted for just APCs on a central level, and payment is more or less automatic. An additional advantage is that the transaction costs of handling APC payments are usually much lower, than in the allowable cost option (Bo-Christer Björk, 2017). In the last decade, and particularly since 2012, scholarly research publishing in the UK has been directed by a series of policies, mandates and statements intended to promote, influence, or restrain the overall move towards OA. Policies have been created by government bodies, funding agencies of all types, commercial publishers, scholarly societies and universities (Chris Awre, et. al., 2016). So, it seems that there needs a viable methodology to streamline the research pathway by designing a suitable policy at the national level with clear stake holders and their role established by the government and research institutes. This may be followed by an effective set of guidelines by the funders to make the movement more successful in the country.

3. OA Policies of Some Developed Nations

The fewer countries which have drafted the policies are briefly described as follows:

3.1 AUSTRALIA

There is an *Australian Research Council (ARC)* in Australia which is a Commonwealth entity within the Australian Government. The council proposed open access policy which took into effect from 1st January, 2013. It applies Open Access Policy to all Research Outputs which arising from ARC Funded Research and their Metadata. They further recommend that any Research Outputs arising from an ARC supported research Project must be made available on public domain (openly accessible) within a twelve (12) month period from the date of publication.

3.2 CANADA

The Tri-Agency of Canada provides funds through Canadian Institute of Health Research(CIHR), medical sciences and other health related standards and practices. The Tri-Agency open access policy on publication ensures that all research papers generated from CIHR funded projects are freely accessible through the Publisher's website or an online repository within 12 months of publication and deposit bioinformatics, atomic, and molecular coordinate data into the appropriate public database (e.g. gene sequences deposited in GenBank) immediately upon publication of research results. The objective of this policy is to improve access to the results of Agency-funded research, and to increase the dissemination and exchange of research results. All researchers, regardless of funding support, are encouraged to adhere to this policy.

3.3 NETHERLANDS

The Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO) is an independent directive body with a legally established mission and tasks. It highlights open access policies and states that research results paid by public funds should be freely accessible worldwide. This applies to both scientific publications and other forms of scientific output. In principle, it must be possible to share the

research data with others as well. In this way, valuable knowledge can be utilized by researchers, businesses and civil society organizations. NWO asks researchers to publish their research outputs in a completely Open Access journal (Golden Road) or to deposit the article in a centrally managed, findable database of the university or professional discipline (Green Road).

The State Secretary for Education, Culture and Science has set the policy with the objective that by 2018 60%, and by 2020 100% of scientific publications funded with public money must be Gold Open Access. Therefore, with the effect from 1 December 2015, NWO has tightened its granting conditions in the area of Open Access. They also recommended that publications emerging from research funded by NWO should be freely accessible to everybody as soon as they are published.

3.4 AUSTRIA

Austrian Science Fund (FWF) is Austria's central funding organization for basic research. The purpose of FWF is to support the ongoing development of Austrian science and basic research at a high international level. It ensures Open Access to publications through direct publication in an Open Access platform. The publisher should apply the highest level of the principles of HowOpenIsIt (a guide for evaluating open access). In any case, however, the publication has to be made available using the *Creative Commons Attribution CC-BY* license or an equivalent open license. Journals have to be listed in the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ). This Gold Open Access publishing may involve an article processing charge (APC) to the publisher. For the following publishers, publication costs are transferred directly by the FWF with no charge payable by the authors.

- American Chemical Society (ACS)
- BioMed Central (inkl. Chemistry Central, Springer Open)
- RSC Voucher
- Wiley-Blackwell (only Wiley Open Access journals)

Since 2014, the FWF together with the Austrian Academic Library Consortium (KEMÖ) negotiates Open Access deals with the following publishers:

- Institute of Physics (IoP)

- Taylor & Francis
- Springer Compact
- Frontiers
- Wiley (only Wiley Hybrid Open Access)

3.5 DENMARK

The Danish Council for Independent Research, the Danish National Research Foundation, the Danish Council for Strategic Research, the Danish National Advanced Technology Foundation and the Danish Council for Technology and Innovation adopted their joint Open Access policy. Research furthers knowledge and drives the intellectual, social and economic development. All the research council and foundation give their views and framed a policy for open access. Research councils and foundations want to establish Open Access as the standard in scientific publishing. The aim is to ensure that all scientific articles, the quality of which has been assured by peer review and which have been published in a scientific magazine, can be read and distributed without any financial, technical or legal restrictions. This policy means that published scientific articles which are the result of full or part financing by research council and foundations must be made freely available to everybody via Open Access. With this policy, research councils and foundations also want to make sure that the researchers will get a better foothold regarding copyright for their own articles. Also, research councils and foundations have adopted the Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge in the Sciences and Humanities, which is a milestone in the direction of Open Access.

4. Conclusion

The essence of academic and scientific research is its communication among other researchers and open access as an alternative mode of publication, can help transform, communicate and share research results to desired audience in best possible manner. It can help enhancing the visibility of research, enabling collaboration, and ensuring equitable access to knowledge. This alternative mode of publication provides various benefits, let alone many challenges also. As per Latha Jishnu (2023),an expert

committee of scientists on OA had suggested that the government of India should encourage the archiving of preprints, use of OA Journals, urged designing of OA policies and repositories for funding agencies, however at the same time, a special team of government is involved in negotiations with the global STM publishers on its One Nation One Subscription scheme (which has finally been now passed by the Union Cabinet as a Central Sector Scheme on 25th November 2024). The idea was to bring down the costs, said to be around Rs. 1,500 crores annually, through a common subscription model and one can expect the total amount spent for accessing majority of the publications. So,the way forward seems facilitating the OA movement strongly in the country and the answers to the questions of augmenting OA will be revealed in due course of time as to what comes out to be more significant for the government and to that of funding agencies in the country. As far as the study is concerned, it highly recommends suitable measures for government and funding agencies in the country to frame effective policies with provisions of APCs, designing of Institutional Repositories, and motivating the researchers to publish their research more in OA journals. It also presumes the implementation of such policies in universities, colleges and research institutes to improve the open access practices in India. We need to create more awareness on open access, infrastructure and capacity building, funding and policy mechanisms, encouragement for the open access, adoption of OA policies by different research institutes, celebrations of open access week in a more meaningful way.

References

- American Chemical Society (2024). *Open Access: Transforming the Visibility of Research in India.* Retrieved from https://axial.acs.org/publishing/open-access-transforming-the-visibility-of-research-in-india
- Bo-Christer Björk (2017). Growth of hybrid open access, 2009–2016. *PeerJ* 5:e3878. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.7717/peerj.3878
- Budapest Open Access Initiative. (2002). Retrieved from http://www.budapestopenaccessinitiative.org/
- Chadwell, Faye and Sutton, Shan C., (2014). The future of open access and library publishing. *New Library World* Vol.

115 (5/6), pp. 225-236. Retrieved from https://www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/pdfplus/10.1108/NLW-05-2014-0049

- Chris Awre, Andrew Beeken, Bev Jones, Paul Stainthorp, Graham Stone (2016). *Communicating the open access policy landscape.* DOI: http://doi.org/10.1629/uksg.308
- Desai, A. V. (2016). *Footloose scientists-The next frontier of liberalization.* Retrieved from https://www.telegraphindia.com/1161220/jsp/opinion/story_125602.jsp
- Finch, D. J. (2012). *Accessibility, sustainability, excellence: how to expand access to research publications.* Retrieved from https://www.acu.ac.uk/research-information-network/finchreport-final
- HEFCE (2014). *Research grants.* Retrieved from https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/*/http:/www.hefce.ac.uk/
- Inter Academy Council. (2004). *Inventing a better future.* Retrieved from http://www.interacademies.org/Publications/33347/34735/34902.aspx
- Johnson, R., Pinfield, S., &Fosci, M (2016). Business Process Costs of Implementing "Gold" and "Green" Open Access in Institutional and National Contexts. *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology*, 67(9), 2283–2295. Retrieved from https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1002/asi.23545
- Latha Jishnu (2023). *India has lost its way on open access. Down to earth.* Retrieved from: https://www.downtoearth.org.in/science-technology/india-has-lost-its-way-on-open-access-90028
- Sankalp India Foundation (2024). *Open Access - the way forward for scientific research.* Retrieved from https://www.sankalpindia.net/news/open-access-way-forward-scientific-research
- UNESCO. (2012). *Global Open Access Portal.* Retrieved from http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/portals-andplatforms/goap/
- Walport, M & Kiley, R (2006). Open access, UK PubMed Central and the Wellcome Trust. *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine,* Volume 99 (September). Retrieved from https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/014107680609900912

THE DYNAMICS OF PREDATORY PUBLISHING: AWARENESS, MOTIVATION, AND CONSEQUENCES

Chanchal Yadava[*]
Rupak Chakravarty[†]

Abstract

This article delves into the phenomenon of predatory publishing that exploits the open-access model wherein authors pay fees for publication. These predatory journals pretend to be legitimate academic publications, but they deceive authors by claiming to have proper publishing practices while actually lacking rigorous peer review and transparency. The lack of an author's ability to assess illegitimate journals or ignorance about predatory publishing practices results in a researcher sending their manuscript to such journals. Resources like Cabell's Blacklist, Think.Check.Submit., DOAJ, COPE, etc., empower researchers to distinguish reputable journals. These tools offer checklists, ethical guidelines, and metrics, helping authors make informed decisions and safeguard their work from predatory practices. This article provides authors with valuable insights into the prevalence of predatory journals, which poses a serious concern for the academic community.

Keywords

Predatory Journals, Hijacked Journals, Scholarly Communication, Predatory Publishing

---

[*] Department of Library and Information Science, Panjab University, Chandigarh, India
Email: chanchal.y@pu.ac.in

[†] Department of Library and Information Science, Panjab University, Chandigarh, India
Email: rupak2811@gmail.com

1. INTRODUCTION

The publishing industry occupies a pivotal position in shaping the dissemination of academic knowledge and plays an indispensable role in advancing scholarly progress (Jubb, 2012). Publishers fulfil their ethical responsibilities, essential for the health of scholarly communication, through a variety of functions. Some of the publishers' functions include managing scholarly records, editing, proofreading, typesetting, coordinating peer review, and more (Anderson, 2018). Publishers add direct value to researchers' work by offering these quality services. Over the past few decades, the publishing landscape has undergone rapid transformation, reflecting significant changes in how knowledge is produced, shared, and accessed. Journals, being integral components of scholarly publishing, bear the responsibility of upholding the highest standards of quality, transparency, and ethical practices (Nuland & Rogers, 2016). Although journal publishing remains a widely accepted standard within the scholarly community, academics face challenges due to economic, technological, and social changes in the academic publishing field (Padmalochanan, 2019). Lately, the emergence of predatory publishers, cloned journals, and predatory conferences has posed a serious threat to the integrity of scientific research. These predatory practices raise serious concerns about the reliability and credibility of scholarly knowledge within the academic community by violating accepted standards of publishing.

Predatory publishing is an unethical practice in which publishers exploit authors by charging fees for publication, bypassing the peer review process and other essential editorial/ publishing services. Some common forms of predatory publishing practices include falsely claiming to provide peer review, misrepresenting members of the journal's editorial board, and other violations of copyright or scholarly ethics. Numerous definitions of predatory journals have been the subject of discussion within scholarly discourse. Some of these definitions are reproduced herein:

- Beall (2012) has described predatory publishers as entities that "publish counterfeit journals to exploit the open-access model in which the author pays. These predatory publishers are dishonest and lack transparency. They aim

to dupe researchers, especially those inexperienced in scholarly communication."

- Grudniewicz et al. (2019) defined Predatory journals and publishers as "entities that prioritise self-interest at the expense of scholarship and are characterized by false or misleading information, deviation from best editorial and publication practices, a lack of transparency, and/or the use of aggressive and indiscriminate solicitation practices."

- Committee on Publication Ethics (2019), renowned organization dedicated to promoting best practices in the ethics of scholarly publishing, states "Predatory publishing is generally defined as for profit open-access journal publication of scholarly articles without the benefit of peer review by experts in the field or the usual editorial oversight of the journals in question."

The primary objective of predatory journals is profit, which is often achieved by deceiving authors to pay fees without providing genuine editorial services, thus prioritizing financial gain over trustworthy scientific contributions. Given that career advancement in academia is often contingent on publication, researchers may inadvertently submit their work to journals that promise to publish all submissions. These predatory journals attempt to attract new submissions through aggressive email advertising, cold calls, social media and promise guaranteed acceptance. In recent years, there has been a surge in research on predatory journals and their prevalence in scholarly literature, indicating a growing awareness of the issue. The study of Nagarkar and Khole (2023) showed a consistent growth in studies on predatory journals, particularly during the period from 2015 to 2019. The study by Shen & Bjorke (2015) revealed that the total number of active journals showed rapid growth, estimated at 1,800 journals in 2010 and expanding to around 8,000 journals in 2014. Some studies have explored the tactics and deceptive practices employed by predatory journals, which often involve email solicitation, misleading claims of academic legitimacy. Sureda-Negre et al. (2022) used content analysis to review 210 unsolicited emails sent by predatory journals. These emails fundamentally discussed the impact factors of the journals and

their inclusion in various databases, repositories, and indexes. Approximately 90% of the spam lacked personalization, suggesting indiscriminate sending. Sorokwoski et al. (2017) conducted a sting operation to understand the functioning of predatory journals compared to legitimate journals. The study by Cukier, et al. (2020) analysed checklists and revealed they were in English, designed to finish within five minutes, and consisted of an average of 11 items each. These checklists addressed six thematic categories: editorial & peer review process, journal operations, communication, APC, dissemination, indexing, and archiving.

2. AWARENESS AND MOTIVATION OF RESEARCHERS

Studies have analysed awareness, knowledge, attitude, and opinions of authors regarding predatory journals. A study by Kharumnuid and Deo (2022) shows that the majority of the researchers were acquainted with open-access journals (91%) and predatory journals (59%), but most (53.2%) participants found it difficult to discern between a predatory and a legitimate journal. Panjikaran and Mathew (2020) found that 43% of authors in LMICs (low-income and middle-income countries) and 26% of authors in HICs (high-income countries) lack awareness of predatory journals. Atiso et al. (2019) revealed that most of the researchers in the study were aware of predatory journals and often received solicitations from them. However, they lacked the necessary training or tools to determine the legitimacy of a journal, and many participants lacked complete knowledge of all the characteristics of predatory journals. AlRyalat et al. (2019) found that 93% of authors were unaware of the existence of predatory journals. However, following the introduction of a straightforward and comprehensive infographic about predatory publishing, the awareness dramatically increased from a mere 7% to an impressive 97.5%. The survey by Christopher and Young (2015) showed that only a few respondents were aware of the term "predatory journal (23%)," DOAJ (24%), or Beall's list (5%). When describing the term "predatory journal," some respondents completely misunderstood its meaning. Study of Nicholas et al. (2023) showed that while researchers were motivated to publish papers for professional advancement, they had not been enticed to

publish in predatory journals. ECRs also possessed a strong awareness of predatory journals and were vigilant about avoiding them, with almost a quarter of them perceiving an increase in questionable practices during the pandemic. The study by Barker et al. (2023) found that many respondents were of the opinion that studies published in predatory journals might still present legitimate research by genuine authors. In the study of Webber and Wiegand (2022), nearly all (86%) faculty members were aware of predatory publishing, with the primary sources being colleagues (67%) and literature within their respective fields of study (47%). The study by Wang et al. (2021) revealed that the majority of respondents (81.32%) were unaware and had never heard about predatory journals. Most students possessed minimal knowledge regarding predatory journals and often confused them with open-access journals.

Studies have analysed the reasons and motivations behind authors' submissions and publications in predatory journals, as well as the experiences of authors who have previously published in these journals. The findings of a study by Nejadghanbar et al. (2023) revealed that the majority of authors were from Asia, held a doctorate, and primarily chose PPJs for quick publication or to fulfil job or degree requirements. Additionally, they generally perceived PPJs as reputable and reported positive impacts on their studies or academic careers (75.12%). A qualitative analysis of interview data identified themes such as low information literacy, unrelenting publishing pressures, unawareness, failure to publish in top-reputed journals, and social identity threats. Kashyap et al. (2023) found three primary factors driving South Asian healthcare researchers to publish in predatory journals, i.e., lack of research support, pressure to publish, and pseudo benefits. Mertkan et al. (2022) revealed that publishing in journals with "questionable" publishing standards was not solely due to naivety or inexperience. Occasionally, authors deliberately select predatory journals to uphold their self-efficacy, often in reaction to rejections from more prestigious journals. Conlogue et al. (2022) revealed that those who had published more articles, had better knowledge of predatory publishing, and placed greater importance on research metrics and tenure were more inclined to publish in

these open-access journals. The survey by Elliott et al. (2022) revealed that the majority (83%) of respondents perceived predatory practices as a "serious problem' or a growing problem. The majority (87%) of respondents who had engaged in such activities cited unawareness and knowledge of predatory practices as their main reason. Other motivations included career advancement, opting for a cheaper, faster, and easier option, and receiving encouragement from peers. Alrawadieh et al. (2020) identified the primary motivations for publishing in predatory journals, which included a lack of awareness about the predatory nature of these journals, pressure to publish, the need for quick and easy publication for career advancement, intentional publishing to meet publication quotas, and high rejection rates from reputable journals. Bagues et al. (2019) found that evaluators with limited research backgrounds often struggle to accurately assess the quality of the journals where applicants have published their work, frequently giving credit to articles in questionable journals. Many authors who published in these journals were either misled by deceptive information or knowingly engaged in such practices with the expectation of receiving academic credit, as these journals are sometimes included in whitelists like Scopus. In the study by Cohen et al. (2019), only a handful of editors were generally aware of predatory journals; most authors were not. 30.1% of authors believed their work appeared in a predatory journal, and most of them expressed their intention to refrain from publishing in the same journal in the future. The study by Cobey et al. (2019) showed that the motivations for publishing in these journals were diverse and included factors such as pressure to publish, ease and speed of publication, and difficulties encountered when trying to publish in other reputable journals. Also, the majority of respondents reported a lack of institutional policies to guide them in avoiding publication in predatory journals. In Kurt's (2018) study, some respondents expressed a lack of knowledge about the journals' credibility at the time of publication, indicating that they would have made different decisions if informed. Some say they would have published in those journals if their institution did. The pressure to publish significantly influenced scholars' decision to

choose these fast-turnaround journals. Through qualitative research interviews, Shaghaei et al. (2018) discovered that experienced researchers from both developed and developing countries published in predatory journals for similar reasons: ease and speed of publication, the chance to publish work rejected elsewhere, and lack of awareness. The study by Pyne (2017) revealed that the majority of faculty members with research responsibilities had publications in "predatory journals."
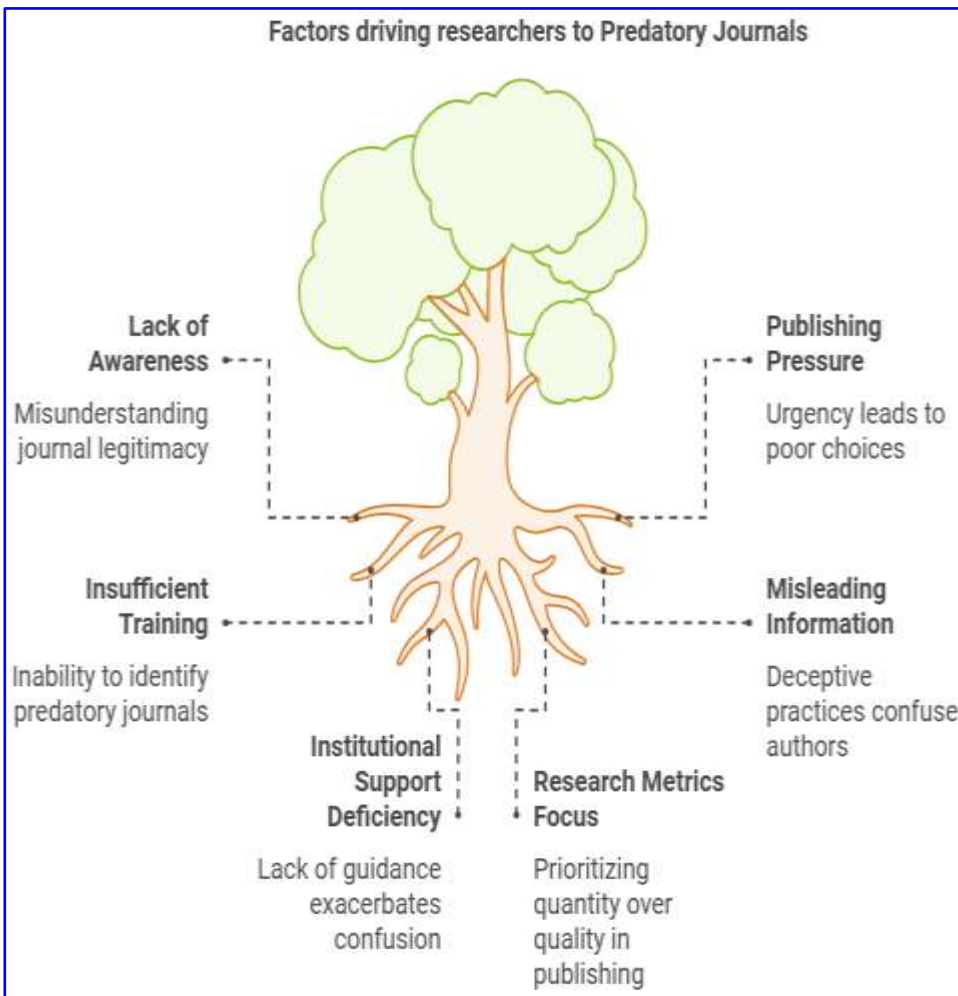

Figure 1: Factors driving researchers to predatory journals

3. INDIAN SCENARIO

In literature it has been noted that Predatory publishers exploit academics worldwide, especially in developing countries. It is

estimated that the output of papers from five major predatory publishers has increased threefold since 2013, reaching approximately 175,000 articles as noted by Priyadarshini (2018). Studies have shown that a notable share of corresponding authors in predatory journals come from India. The study by Demir (2018) showed that India, Turkey, and Nigeria had the highest number of researchers publishing in predatory journals. Also, editors from 53 nations serve as the editorial board for PFJs, with India boasting the highest number at 57.89%. Contact location data from IP/WHOIS, a tool for identifying IP address owners and related registration details, indicates that 62.0% of PFJs are located in India. Xia et al. (2015) revealed that individuals publishing in "predatory journals" were early-career researchers from developing' countries, often lacking a history of prior publications and citations. The concentration of authors in predatory journals was prominent in specific countries, notably India (725), Nigeria (80), and Pakistan (44). Frandsen (2017) found that South Asia dominated the geographical distribution of citing authors, with Southeast Asia and the Middle East following closely. According to Patwardhan and Thakur (2021), India leads in the number of predatory journals published, accounting for 64%, and 11% of authors publish in these journals. The proliferation of predatory publications originating from India is primarily attributed to the prioritization of the quantity of research publications over their quality as a measure of academic performance (Vaidyanathan, 2019). Patwardhan and Nagarkar (2021) contend that, in India, a significant factor which contributed to the rise of predatory publishers is the mandatory requirement for research publications in the appointment & promotion processes of faculty members in Indian HEIs, as mandated by the UGC.

4. CONSEQUENCES OF PREDATORY PUBLISHING

Predatory publishing has caused harm by employing unethical practices, thereby contaminating knowledge within the publishing sector. According to Mathew et al. (2022), over the last few decades, predatory journals and their linked publishing houses have systematically undermined the credibility and trustworthiness of scientific output across the world. The

repercussions of predatory publishing extend to several negative consequences within the academic and scientific domain. A publication in a predatory journal cause wastage of resources and
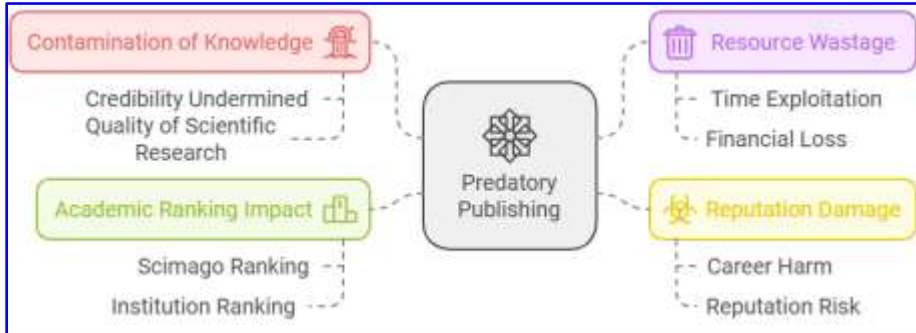
Figure 2 : Consequences of Predatory Publishing

funds (Sharma & Verma, 2018) in the academic community, exploiting both researchers' time and financial resources while diminishing the quality of scientific research. A publication in a predatory journal might harm the career and reputation of individual researchers listed on the article (Chen et al., 2023; Cook et al., 2023; Richtig et al., 2018). Forero et al. (2018) elucidate that engaging with predatory publications can have a negative impact on academic ranking of a country in systems like "Scimago's journal and country ranking".

5. INFERENCES DRAWN & CONCLUSION

Predatory publishing, involving unethical practices, has significantly contaminated scientific knowledge, undermining its credibility and trustworthiness, leading to negative consequences in the academic and scientific domain. Many authors lack awareness of predatory journals, and many lack the necessary training or tools to determine their legitimacy. Researchers struggle to distinguish between legitimate and predatory journals. Predatory journals draw the attention of authors through their deceptive measures, irrespective of their experience in publishing. Despite the motivation to publish for professional advancement, many researchers are not enticed to publish in predatory journals. The authors' motivation to publish in these journals is driven by rapid academic promotion, academic reward systems, pressure to publish, unawareness, lack of research proficiency, rejection from

Figure 3 Inferences

other reputed journals, lack of institutional policies to guide researchers in avoiding publication in predatory journals, easy and quick publication. The geographical distribution of predatory publishers, and authors shows that the phenomenon of predatory publishing affects the research community globally. The predatory publishing phenomena cannot be ignored in India, as it has appeared to be a serious issue within the country as well.

Figure 4 Inferences

When it comes to predatory publishing, as noted by Zhao (2014), academic library professionals are in a prime position to assist researchers/scholars in understanding and avoiding predatory practices. However, before they can do so effectively, library professionals themselves need to acquire a diverse set of knowledge related to information literacy, and scholarly publishing. Scholarly publishing and information literacy lies at the core of "scholarly publishing literacy". Library professionals, traditionally educators in information literacy within universities, now have to broaden their scope and incorporate aspects of scholarly publishing literacy into their roles. Beall (2013) emphasizes that library professionals should take the lead in acquiring skills in "scholarly publishing literacy." Also, international organizations such as COPE, OASPA, WAME, and UGC CARE at national level are striving to alert researchers about predatory publishing. Jeffrey Beall played a pivotal role in exposing predatory publishers by maintaining a list on his blog, Scholarly Open Access, from 2012 to 2017. In the aftermath of the removal of "Beall's List," various tools have emerged that aids

authors to distinguish legitimate journals from predatory ones. Several dedicated portals/services such as the website "Predatory Journals: A One Stop Shop of Predatory Journals," DOAJ to index legitimate open-access journals, Stop Predatory Practices, Think.Check.Submit and the Academic Journal Predatory Checking System, are actively engaged in disseminating information regarding predatory publishing practices. However, despite these efforts, researchers continue to fall prey to predatory publishers, except in certain cases wherein some authors may knowingly publish in these outlets to gain academic benefits. Therefore, the research community needs to be made more aware and sensitized. We need to equip researchers with the knowledge to identify and steer clear of predatory journals, enabling them to make more informed decisions and upholding the integrity of academic publishing.

REFERENCES

- AlRyalat, S. A., Farah, R. I., Shehadeh, B., Abukeshek, A., Aldabbas, L., Al-fawair, A., & Ababneh, O. (2019). Biomedical researchers and students knowledge about predatory journals. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 45(5), 102056. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2019.102056
- Anderson, K. (2018). Focusing on Value: 102 Things Journal Publishers Do. *The Scholarly Kitchen*. https://scholarlykitchen.sspnet.org/2018/02/06/focusing-value-102-things-journal-publishers-2018-update/
- Alrawadieh, Z. (2020). Publishing in predatory tourism and hospitality journals: Mapping the academic market and identifying response strategies. *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 20(1), 72–81. https://doi.org/10.1177/1467358418800121
- Atiso, K., Kammer, J., & Bossaller, J. (2019). Predatory publishing and the Ghana experience: A call to action for information professionals. *IFLA Journal*, 45(4), 277–288. https://doi.org/10.1177/0340035219868816
- Bagues, M., Sylos-Labini, M., &Zinovyeva, N. (2019). A walk on the wild side: 'Predatory' journals and information asymmetries in scientific evaluations. *Research Policy*, 48(2), 462–477. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.respol.2018.04.013

- Barker, T. H., Pollock, D., Stone, J. C., Klugar, M., Scott, A. M., Stern, C., Wiechula, R., Shamseer, L., Aromataris, E., Ross-White, A., & Munn, Z. (2023). How should we handle predatory journals in evidence synthesis? A descriptive survey-based cross-sectional study of evidence synthesis experts. *Research Synthesis Methods*, *14*(3), 370–381. https://doi.org/10.1002/jrsm.1613
- Beall, J. (2012). Predatory publishers are corrupting open access. *Nature*, 489(7415), Article 7415. https://doi.org/10.1038/489179a
- Beall, J. (2013). Predatory publishing is just one of the consequences of gold open access. *Learned Publishing*, 26(2), 79–84. https://doi.org/10.1087/20130203
- Chen, L.-X., Su, S.-W., Liao, C.-H., Wong, K.-S., & Yuan, S.-M. (2023). An open automation system for predatory journal detection. *Scientific Reports*, 13(1), Article 1. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-023-30176-z
- Christopher, M. M., & Young, K. M. (2015). Awareness of "Predatory" Open-Access Journals among Prospective Veterinary and Medical Authors Attending Scientific Writing Workshops. *Frontiers in Veterinary Science*, *2*. https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fvets.2015.00022
- Cobey, K. D., Grudniewicz, A., Lalu, M. M., Rice, D. B., Raffoul, H., & Moher, D. (2019). Knowledge and motivations of researchers publishing in presumed predatory journals: A survey. *BMJ Open*, *9*(3). https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2018-026516
- Cohen, A. J., Patino, G., Kamal, P., Ndoye, M., Tresh, A., Mena, J., Butler, C., Washington, S., &Breyer, B. N. (2019). Perspectives From Authors and Editors in the Biomedical Disciplines on Predatory Journals: Survey Study. *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, *21*(8). https://doi.org/10.2196/13769
- Conlogue, B. C., Gilman, N. V., & Holmes, L. M. (2022). Open access and predatory publishing: A survey of the publishing practices of academic pharmacists and nurses in the United States. *Journal of the Medical Library Association*, *110*(3). https://doi.org/10.5195/jmla.2022.1377
- Cook, F., Govender, R., & Brennan, P. A. (2023). Greetings from your predatory journal! What they are, why they are a problem, how to spot and avoid them. British Journal of

Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, 61(3), 245–247. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bjoms.2023.02.005

- Cukier, S., Helal, L., Rice, D. B., Pupkaite, J., Ahmadzai, N., Wilson, M., Skidmore, B., Lalu, M. M., & Moher, D. (2020). Checklists to detect potential predatory biomedical journals: A systematic review. *BMC Medicine*, 18(1), 104. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12916-020-01566-1

- Demir, S. B. (2018). Predatory journals: Who publishes in them and why? *Journal of Informetrics*, *12*(4), 1296–1311. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.joi.2018.10.008

- Elliott, T., Fazeen, B., Asrat, A., Cetto, A. M., Eriksson, S., Looi, L. M., & Negra, D. (2022). Perceptions on the prevalence and impact of predatory academic journals and conferences: A global survey of researchers. *Learned Publishing*, *35*(4), 516–528. https://doi.org/10.1002/leap.1458

- Forero, D. A., Oermann, M. H., Manca, A., Deriu, F., Mendieta-Zerón, H., Dadkhah, M., Bhad, R., Deshpande, S. N., Wang, W., & Cifuentes, M. P. (2018). Negative Effects of "Predatory" Journals on Global Health Research. *Annals of Global Health*, 84(4), 584–589. https://doi.org/10.29024/aogh.2389

- Frandsen, T. F. (2017). Are predatory journals undermining the credibility of science? A bibliometric analysis of citers. *Scientometrics*, *113*(3), 1513–1528. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11192-017-2520-x

- Grudniewicz, A., Moher, D., Cobey, K. D., Bryson, G. L., Cukier, S., Allen, K., Ardern, C., Balcom, L., Barros, T., Berger, M., Ciro, J. B., Cugusi, L., Donaldson, M. R., Egger, M., Graham, I. D., Hodgkinson, M., Khan, K. M., Mabizela, M., Manca, A., … Lalu, M. M. (2019). Predatory journals: No definition, no defence. *Nature*, *576*(7786), 210–212. https://doi.org/10.1038/d41586-019-03759-y

- Jubb, M. (2012). The scholarly ecosystem. In R. Campbell, E. Pentz, & I. Borthwick (Eds.), *Academic and Professional Publishing* (pp. 53–77). Chandos Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-1-84334-669-2.50003-2

- Kashyap, K., Islam, A. A., & Gielen, J. (2023). Why do healthcare researchers in South Asia publish in predatory journals? A scoping review. *Developing World Bioethics*, *24*(2), 54-65. https://doi.org/10.1111/dewb.12388

- Kharumnuid, S. A., & Singh Deo, P. (2022). "Researchers' perceptions and awareness of predatory publishing: A

survey". *Accountability in Research*, *31*(5), 479-496. https://doi.org/10.1080/08989621.2022.2145470

- Kurt, S. (2018). Why do authors publish in predatory journals? *Learned Publishing*, *31*(2), 141–147. https://doi.org/10.1002/leap.1150

- Mathew, R. P., Patel, V., & Low, G. (2022). Predatory Journals- The Power of the Predator Versus the Integrity of the Honest. Current Problems in Diagnostic Radiology, 51(5), 740–746. https://doi.org/10.1067/j.cpradiol.2021.07.005

- Mertkan, S., OnurkanAliusta, G., &Bayrakli, H. (2022). Pressured to publish: Stories of inexperienced researchers. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, *35*(3), 603–615. https://doi.org/10.1108/JOCM-08-2021-0239

- Nagarkar, S., & Khole, S. (2023). Predatory Journals: Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis of Literature Published between 2012 and 2021. Journal of Scholarly Publishing, 54(1), 80–102. https://doi.org/10.3138/jsp-2022-0005

- Nejadghanbar, H., Hu, G., &Babadi, M. J. (2023). Publishing in predatory language and linguistics journals: Authors' experiences and motivations. *Language Teaching*, *56*(3), 297–312. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444822000490

- Nicholas, D., Rodríguez-Bravo, B., Boukacem-Zeghmouri, C., Herman, E., Clark, D., Xu, J., Abrizah, A., ÅšwigoÅ„, M., Watkinson, A., Sims, D., Jamali, H. R., Tenopir, C., & Allard, S. (2023). Early career researchers and predatory journals during the Covid-19 pandemic. An international analysis. *Profesional de La Información / Information Professional*, *32*(1). https://doi.org/10.3145/epi.2023.ene.17

- Nuland, S. E., & Rogers, K. A. (2017). Academic nightmares: Predatory publishing. *Anatomical Sciences Education,* 10(4), 392–394. https://doi.org/10.1002/ase.1671

- Padmalochanan, P. (2019). Academics and the Field of Academic Publishing: Challenges and Approaches. *Publishing Research Quarterly*, *35*(1), 87–107. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12109-018-09628-2

- Panjikaran, L., & Mathew, A. (2020). Awareness of predatory publishing. *ESMO Open*, *5*(2). https://doi.org/10.1136/esmoopen-2020-000677

- *Predatory publishing.* (n.d.). COPE: Committee on Publication Ethics. Retrieved December 15, 2024, from https://publicationethics.org/guidance/discussion-document/predatory-publishing
- Pyne, D. (2017). The Rewards of Predatory Publications at a Small Business School. *Journal of Scholarly Publishing*, *48*(3), 137–160. https://doi.org/10.3138/jsp.48.3.137
- Richtig, G., Berger, M., Lange-Asschenfeldt, B., Aberer, W., &Richtig, E. (2018). Problems and challenges of predatory journals. Journal of the European Academy of Dermatology and Venereology, 32(9), 1441–1449. https://doi.org/10.1111/jdv.15039
- Shaghaei, N., Wien, C., Holck, J. P., Thiesen, A. L., Ellegaard, O., Vlachos, E., &Drachen, T. M. (2018). Being a deliberate prey of a predator: Researchers' thoughts after having published in predatory journal. *LIBER Quarterly: The Journal of the Association of European Research Libraries*, *28*(1). https://doi.org/10.18352/lq.10259
- Sharma, H., & Verma, S. (2018). Predatory journals: The rise of worthless biomedical science. Journal of Postgraduate Medicine, 64(4), 226–231. https://doi.org/10.4103/jpgm.JPGM_347_18
- Shen, C., & Björk, B.-C. (2015). 'Predatory' open access: A longitudinal study of article volumes and market characteristics. BMC Medicine, 13(1), 230. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12916-015-0469-2
- Sorokowski, P., Kulczycki, E., Sorokowska, A., &Pisanski, K. (2017). Predatory journals recruit fake editor. Nature, 543(7646), Article 7646. https://doi.org/10.1038/543481a
- Sureda-Negre, J., Calvo-Sastre, A., & Comas-Forgas, R. (2022). Predatory journals and publishers: Characteristics and impact of academic spam to researchers in educational sciences. Learned Publishing, 35(4), 441–447. https://doi.org/10.1002/leap.1450
- Wang, J., Xu, J., & Chen, D. (2021). Chinese PhD Students' Perceptions of Predatory Journals: A Survey Study. *Journal of Scholarly Publishing*, *52*(2), 88–106. https://doi.org/10.3138/jsp.52.2.02
- Webber, N., & Wiegand, S. (2022). A Multidisciplinary Study of Faculty Knowledge and Attitudes Regarding Predatory Publishing. *Journal of Librarianship and Scholarly Communication*, *10*(1). https://doi.org/10.31274/jlsc.13011

- Xia, J., Harmon, J. L., Connolly, K. G., Donnelly, R. M., Anderson, M. R., & Howard, H. A. (2015). Who publishes in "predatory" journals? *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology*, *66*(7), 1406–1417. https://doi.org/10.1002/asi.23265
- Zhao, L. (2014). Riding the Wave of Open Access: Providing Library Research Support for Scholarly Publishing Literacy. *Australian Academic & Research Libraries*, *45*(1), 3–18. https://doi.org/10.1080/00048623.2014.882873

THE GLASS CEILING IN GOVERNANCE: WOMEN'S QUEST FOR POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT IN KASHMIR'S HILL REGIONS

Ashok Bachhar[*]

Abstract

The political empowerment of women in Kashmir's hill regions remains a critical and under-explored area, characterized by significant socio-cultural and institutional barriers. This study aims to identify and analyze the factors impeding women's political participation and propose strategies for overcoming these challenges. Despite constitutional provisions promoting gender equality in governance, women's representation in political institutions in these regions is minimal. Patriarchal norms, educational disparities, economic dependency, and security concerns are major obstacles that restrict women's access to political roles. The unique socio-political context of Kashmir further exacerbates these challenges. This research addresses the gap in existing literature by focusing specifically on the hill regions of Kashmir, where traditional societal structures intersect to create a particularly adverse environment for women's political engagement. The objective is to provide a comprehensive understanding of the socio-cultural, economic, and political barriers faced by women and to suggest viable pathways for their empowerment. This study highlights the need for targeted educational reforms, economic empowerment programs, and the creation of safe political environments to foster women's participation. By addressing these gaps and proposing actionable strategies, this research contributes to the broader discourse on gender equality and political

* Research Scholar, Department of Philosophy, Jadavpur University, Kolkatta, West Bengal
Email: ashokbachhar.007@gmail.com

empowerment in such regions. The findings underscore the urgency of integrating gender perspectives into governance reforms to achieve inclusive and equitable political representation in Kashmir's hill regions.

Keywords

Economic dependency, Kashmir hill regions, Patriarchal norms, Political participation, Socio-cultural barriers and Women's political empowerment

Introduction

The quest for political empowerment among women in the hill regions of Kashmir represents a profound and multifaceted challenge, rooted in a complex interplay of historical, socio-cultural, economic, and political factors. Despite global advancements in gender equality movements and the proliferation of policies aimed at enhancing women's participation in governance, the women of Kashmir's hill regions continue to grapple with significant barriers that inhibit their full political engagement. This article seeks to explore these barriers comprehensively, offering insights into the unique socio-political landscape of Kashmir and proposing strategies to facilitate women's empowerment in this context. The historical context of women's political involvement in Kashmir is essential for understanding the current landscape. Traditionally, Kashmir's socio-political fabric has been heavily patriarchal, relegating women to roles within the private sphere. The onset of colonial rule and subsequent political developments in the Indian subcontinent did little to alter this patriarchal structure. Post-independence, Kashmir's distinctive political status under Article 370 of the Indian Constitution, which accorded the region special autonomy, shaped its governance differently from other Indian states. However, this autonomy did not translate into enhanced political agency for women, as deeply entrenched socio-cultural barriers persisted.

Socio-Cultural and Economic Barriers

In the hill regions of Kashmir, socio-cultural and economic barriers heavily influence and restrict women's participation in

public and political life. Patriarchal norms are deeply ingrained in these societies, enforcing strict gender roles that confine women primarily to domestic responsibilities. These norms dictate that women's primary duties are within the home, which significantly limits their opportunities for education and political engagement. As a result, women in these regions often face immense pressure to conform to traditional roles, discouraging any ambitions outside of household duties. The educational disparities in Kashmir further compound this issue. According to a 2019 report by the Ministry of Education, girls in rural Kashmir have significantly lower enrollment rates in primary and secondary education compared to boys. This gap in educational attainment is stark, with the literacy rate for women in rural areas lagging behind that of men by more than 20 percentage points. This lack of access to quality education directly impacts women's ability to participate effectively in political processes. Education is a crucial enabler of political awareness and activism, providing the knowledge and skills necessary for meaningful participation in governance. Without adequate education, women are less likely to be aware of their political rights or to have the confidence and capability to engage in political activities.

Economically, the situation for many women in Kashmir's hill regions is precarious. Traditional economic structures and limited employment opportunities often place women in a position of dependency on male family members. Data from a 2018 survey by the Jammu and Kashmir Rural Livelihoods Mission indicates that only 12 percent of women in these regions are employed outside the home, and even fewer hold positions that provide financial independence. This economic dependency restricts their autonomy and severely limits their capacity to engage in political activities, which often require not only time and mobility but also financial resources.

For example, political campaigns and participation in governance activities typically incur costs related to travel, communication, and sometimes even security. Women who lack financial independence are less able to bear these costs, thereby being effectively excluded from political participation. Moreover, economic dependency can also lead to a lack of confidence and a

feeling of disempowerment, further discouraging women from stepping into public roles. The intersection of these socio-cultural and economic barriers creates a formidable environment that is challenging for women to navigate. The pervasive patriarchal norms and economic dependencies reinforce each other, making it exceedingly difficult for women to break free from traditional roles and engage in public life. Women like Shaheena, a teacher from a small village in Baramulla, illustrate this struggle. Despite her passion for community service, Shaheena finds it challenging to participate in local governance due to financial constraints and societal expectations that she prioritize her domestic duties over public involvement. Addressing these barriers requires comprehensive strategies that target both the socio-cultural norms and the economic structures that perpetuate gender inequality. Efforts to improve educational access and quality for girls in rural areas are essential. Additionally, creating more economic opportunities for women through skill development, entrepreneurship programs, and access to credit can enhance their financial independence and empower them to participate more fully in political processes. The socio-cultural and economic barriers in Kashmir's hill regions significantly restrict women's political participation. Overcoming these challenges necessitates a multifaceted approach that addresses educational disparities, economic dependencies, and the deep-seated patriarchal norms that limit women's roles in public life. By creating an environment that supports and encourages women's engagement in all aspects of society, Kashmir can move towards greater gender equality and inclusive governance.

Institutional and Political Challenges

Institutional barriers within political parties and governance structures in Kashmir significantly impede the political empowerment of women. The political landscape in Kashmir is largely dominated by men, creating a challenging environment for women to ascend to leadership roles. Even when women are included in political parties, their positions often lack substantive power or decision-making authority. This tokenism perpetuates the marginalization of women's issues and discourages genuine

female political participation. One stark example of these institutional barriers is the composition of political party leadership. In major parties, leadership positions and key decision-making roles are overwhelmingly held by men. According to a 2017 report by the Jammu and Kashmir State Commission for Women, women constituted less than 10 percent of the leadership in major political parties. This underrepresentation is not merely a reflection of the gender dynamics within these parties but also a systemic issue where women's contributions are undervalued, and their perspectives are often overlooked.

The political environment in Kashmir presents challenges due to various socio-political factors, which have led women to face additional levels of harassment and social ostracism. Women activists are particularly vulnerable to gender-based violence, including sexual harassment and assault, which are used as tools to intimidate and silence them. For instance, women politicians have reported receiving threats not just to themselves but also to their families, making the cost of political engagement exceedingly high. In 2018, Asifa, a local political worker from the Baramulla district, faced continuous harassment and threats from both political opponents and extremist groups. These threats included physical violence and social ostracism, forcing her to reconsider her political career. Her case is not isolated but indicative of a broader trend where women who dare to enter the political arena are met with severe resistance and intimidation.

These security concerns are compounded by a lack of robust legal protections and enforcement mechanisms. Although laws exist to protect women from violence and harassment, their implementation is often weak, and the justice system can be slow and unresponsive. This lack of effective legal recourse further discourages women from participating in politics, as they feel unprotected and vulnerable. The institutional culture within political parties often marginalizes women's voices. Women are frequently relegated to roles that involve organizing and mobilizing support but are rarely involved in strategic decision-making. This relegation reinforces the perception that women's roles in politics are secondary and supportive rather than central and influential. This dynamic was evident during the 2014 Jammu and Kashmir

state elections, where only a handful of women candidates were fielded by major parties, and those who did run were often sidelined in the campaign process.

Addressing these institutional and political challenges requires comprehensive reforms. Political parties need to adopt internal policies that promote gender equality and create pathways for women to ascend to leadership roles. This includes setting quotas for women in leadership positions and ensuring their involvement in key decision-making processes. Additionally, there must be a concerted effort to improve security for women political activists, including stronger legal protections and enforcement mechanisms to prevent and address violence and harassment. Institutional and political challenges significantly hinder women's political empowerment in Kashmir. The male-dominated political parties, combined with a volatile and insecure environment, create formidable barriers for women aspiring to political roles. Addressing these challenges requires systemic changes within political parties, enhanced security measures, and robust legal protections to create a more inclusive and supportive political landscape for women.

Issues of wellbeing

The political environment in Kashmir presents significant challenges for political engagement, especially for women. Misri (2014) emphasizes that the pervasive conflict and instability in the region result in a perilous landscape that severely hinders women's participation in politics. Misri (2014) emphasizes that various socio-political factors create a landscape that severely hinders women's participation in politics. Women political activists face heightened risks of harassment and social ostracism, acting as powerful deterrents to their involvement in political activities. Women in Kashmir face unique and severe security threats that stem from gender-based violence and societal challenges. Various socio-political factors create an environment where political engagement becomes difficult and, at times, risky. Women activists are particularly vulnerable to harassment and discrimination, not only because of their political activities but

also due to societal norms that view their participation in public life as transgressive.

Harassment and intimidation are common tactics used to silence women who attempt to engage in politics. These can range from verbal abuse and threats to physical violence and even sexual assault. Such experiences are intended to dissuade women from stepping into the political arena, reinforcing the patriarchal belief that politics is not a suitable domain for women. The fear of these potential repercussions keeps many women from even attempting to participate in political processes, further entrenching gender inequalities in political representation.

Additionally, women who do become politically active often face social ostracism. In conservative and patriarchal societies, women who defy traditional roles by engaging in politics are frequently stigmatized and marginalized by their communities. This social backlash can be as damaging as physical violence, leading to isolation and a lack of support, both personally and professionally. The threat of being ostracized acts as a powerful psychological barrier, deterring many women from pursuing political ambitions. The intersection of violence, harassment, and social ostracism creates a formidable barrier to the political empowerment of women in Kashmir. The systemic nature of these issues means that solutions must be comprehensive and multifaceted. Addressing security concerns is paramount. There must be concerted efforts to enhance the safety and security of women political activists. This involves improving law enforcement capabilities, ensuring better protection for women, and creating legal frameworks that specifically address and penalize gender-based violence in the political sphere.

Furthermore, societal attitudes towards women in politics need to change. This requires long-term cultural and educational initiatives aimed at promoting gender equality and breaking down patriarchal norms. Empowering women through education and raising awareness about their rights and potential contributions to society can help shift public perceptions. Community leaders and influencers play a crucial role in this transformation, as their support can legitimize and normalize women's participation in politics. The volatile political environment in Kashmir,

characterized by violence and insecurity, poses substantial risks for women political activists. These issues of harassment and social ostracism, act as significant deterrents to women's political engagement. Addressing these issues requires a comprehensive approach that enhances security, enforces legal protections, and shifts societal attitudes towards gender equality. Only through such sustained and multifaceted efforts can the political landscape in Kashmir become more inclusive and equitable, enabling women to participate safely and effectively in governance.

Legal and Policy Framework

The legal and policy framework aimed at promoting gender equality in Kashmir's hill regions has faced significant challenges in its implementation. Despite the existence of constitutional provisions designed to enhance the political participation of women, their practical application has often been ineffective. The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments, introduced by the Government of India in 1992 and 1993 respectively, were landmark reforms intended to empower women by reserving seats for them in local governance bodies. These amendments were envisioned to create a more inclusive political landscape by ensuring that women have a voice in decision-making processes at the grassroots level.

However, the effectiveness of these measures has been undermined by several factors. Ahmed (2017) highlights that the failure to enforce these provisions robustly has resulted in a gap between policy and practice. In many cases, the reserved seats for women in local governance bodies remain vacant or are filled by women who are mere figureheads with little actual power or influence. This lack of genuine political participation means that the intended benefits of the amendments are not fully realized, leaving women in these regions still marginalized and underrepresented in the political sphere. One of the primary reasons for this inadequate implementation is the lack of supportive mechanisms and infrastructure to ensure that women can actively participate in governance. There is often a significant gap in political awareness and education among women in these hill regions, which prevents them from taking full advantage of the

opportunities provided by the amendments. Without targeted efforts to educate and empower women, merely reserving seats is insufficient. Additionally, socio-cultural barriers and patriarchal norms further hinder women's participation. In many communities, traditional views about gender roles continue to restrict women's involvement in public life, and there is a lack of concerted efforts to challenge and change these perceptions. The political environment in Kashmir's hill regions affects women and their ability to engage in political processes, making it difficult for women to participate in governance actively. This situation is exacerbated by inadequate law enforcement and the absence of measures to protect women from violence and harassment, both of which are critical to enabling their political engagement.

To address these challenges, it is essential to strengthen the enforcement of constitutional provisions and to develop comprehensive strategies that go beyond mere legislative reforms. This includes implementing robust awareness campaigns to educate women about their rights and the opportunities available to them, as well as providing training and support to build their capacity for political leadership. Additionally, creating a safe and supportive environment for women's participation in politics is crucial. This involves not only enhancing security and law enforcement but also fostering a cultural shift towards gender equality through continuous advocacy and community engagement.

While the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments represent significant steps towards gender equality in local governance, their impact in Kashmir's hill regions has been limited by weak implementation and insufficient supportive measures. To achieve meaningful empowerment of women, it is necessary to address the socio-cultural, educational, and security barriers that impede their political participation. By doing so, these constitutional provisions can fulfill their potential to transform the political landscape and promote genuine gender equality in these regions.

Grassroots Initiatives and Success Stories

Grassroots initiatives are pivotal in promoting women's political empowerment in Kashmir's hill regions, providing a foundation for

sustainable change from within the community. These efforts often emerge from the recognition that top-down approaches alone are insufficient to address the deeply rooted socio-cultural and economic barriers women face. Grassroots movements and local organizations have demonstrated significant success in mobilizing women, advocating for their rights, and enhancing their capacities for political engagement.

Wani (2018) provides a compelling analysis of how local women's groups have been instrumental in advancing women's rights and political participation. These groups, often formed out of necessity and driven by local women, focus on building awareness, providing education, and creating support networks that empower women to step into public roles. By operating within the community, these initiatives are able to address specific local challenges and leverage existing social structures to foster change. One notable example is the work of women's self-help groups (SHGs) in rural Kashmir. These SHGs, supported by initiatives such as the Jammu and Kashmir Rural Livelihoods Mission, have not only provided economic opportunities for women but also created platforms for political education and activism. Women involved in these groups have reported increased confidence and awareness of their rights, leading to greater participation in local governance. The SHGs serve as training grounds where women can practice leadership and decision-making skills in a supportive environment, thus preparing them for larger political roles.

The success of these grassroots initiatives can be attributed to their community-centric approach. By engaging women directly in their own communities, these movements ensure that the empowerment process is culturally relevant and sustainable. The involvement of community leaders and local influencers in these initiatives also plays a crucial role in changing societal attitudes towards women's political participation. These leaders can help to challenge and shift the patriarchal norms that traditionally restrict women's roles, making it more acceptable for women to engage in public life.

Recent studies have further highlighted the impact of grassroots initiatives on women's political empowerment. For instance, a 2020 report by the Centre for Policy Research in New Delhi found

that women who participated in local governance through grassroots initiatives were more likely to continue their political engagement and influence local decision-making processes. The report also noted that these women often became role models within their communities, inspiring others to follow suit.

Grassroots initiatives also benefit from their flexibility and adaptability. Unlike larger, more bureaucratic organizations, grassroots groups can quickly respond to changing local needs and conditions. This adaptability was evident during the COVID-19 pandemic, where many women's groups pivoted their activities to include public health education and support, while still maintaining their focus on political empowerment. This dual role not only provided immediate relief but also reinforced the importance of women's leadership in crisis situations, further legitimizing their roles in broader political processes.

The success stories of grassroots initiatives underscore the importance of community involvement in fostering women's political empowerment. These stories provide valuable lessons for broader application, suggesting that empowering women from the ground up is a highly effective strategy. By building on the strengths of local women and addressing the specific challenges they face, grassroots movements create a ripple effect that extends beyond individual participants to the wider community, promoting a culture of inclusivity and equality. Grassroots initiatives have proven to be highly effective in promoting women's political empowerment in Kashmir's hill regions. Through community engagement, capacity building, and the creation of supportive networks, these initiatives have enabled women to overcome significant barriers and actively participate in political processes. The successes of these grassroots movements provide a model for broader efforts to achieve gender equality and inclusive governance, highlighting the transformative power of community-driven change.

Objectives and Significance of the Study
This study aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the barriers to women's political empowerment in Kashmir's hill regions and propose actionable strategies for overcoming these challenges. By examining the interplay of historical, socio-

cultural, economic, and political factors, the study seeks to shed light on the complexities that women face in their quest for political agency. The significance of this research lies in its focus on a region that has been largely underexplored in gender and governance studies, thereby contributing to a more nuanced understanding of the global struggle for gender equality in political representation.

The political empowerment of women in Kashmir's hill regions is not merely a matter of social justice; it is crucial for the broader democratization and development of the region. By addressing the socio-cultural, economic, and political barriers that hinder women's participation, this study aims to pave the way for a more inclusive and equitable political landscape. The insights and recommendations derived from this research hold the potential to inform policy interventions and grassroots initiatives, ultimately contributing to the realization of gender parity in governance in Kashmir and beyond.

Findings on Political Awareness Among Local Women

- **Constitutional Rights Awareness:** Most women (47 percent) are unaware of their constitutional rights and duties, with 17 percent neutral, 14 percent agreeing, and 15 percent disagreeing. The primary reason for this is the lack of political awareness and education.
- **Panchayati Raj Act 1989:** Awareness about the reservation for rural women in local elections under this act is low, with only 5 percent strongly agreeing, 15 percent agreeing, 23.3 percent neutral, 35.7 percent disagreeing, and 21 percent strongly disagreeing.
- **73rd Constitutional Amendment:** Awareness of this amendment is also limited, with 37 percent neutral, 26 percent disagreeing, 13 percent strongly disagreeing, 16 percent agreeing, and 8 percent strongly agreeing. Education levels and lack of awareness campaigns are contributing factors.
- **Block-Level Plans and Projects:** 29.7 percent of respondents are neutral, 20.7 percent disagree, 16.3 percent strongly disagree, 20.3 percent agree, and 13 percent strongly agree about awareness of local plans and projects. About 33 percent

are aware of rural development plans, indicating some progress towards education.

- **Child Development Programs:** Opinions are mixed, with 22.7 percent agreeing, 9 percent strongly agreeing, 21 percent disagreeing, 25 percent strongly disagreeing, and 22.3 percent neutral about awareness of child development programs.
- **NGOs/Institutions Support:** Awareness of organizations aiding rural women shows 22.3 percent agreeing, 10.3 percent strongly agreeing, 27 percent disagreeing, 12.7 percent strongly disagreeing, and 27.7 percent neutral.
- **Reservation Awareness (73rd and 74th Amendments):** Only 24 percent agree, 14 percent strongly agree, 20 percent disagree, and 18 percent strongly disagree about their awareness of these reservations.
- **Centrally Sponsored Schemes:** Awareness levels are mixed, with 25 percent agreeing, 8 percent strongly agreeing, 24 percent neutral, 29 percent disagreeing, and 14 percent strongly disagreeing.
- **Poverty Alleviation Programs:** Awareness among respondents is varied, with 23 percent agreeing, 14 percent strongly agreeing, 23 percent neutral, and 20 percent each disagreeing or strongly disagreeing.

Effective Measures for the Political Empowerment of Women in Kashmir

The political empowerment of women in Kashmir is essential for fostering gender equality and achieving sustainable development in the region. Despite various initiatives, the socio-political landscape of Kashmir remains deeply entrenched in patriarchal norms, which significantly hinder women's active participation in governance. To address these challenges, a comprehensive approach is required, encompassing educational, economic, legislative, and social reforms. Education is a cornerstone for empowerment; thus, expanding educational infrastructure, especially in remote areas, is crucial. This expansion should be coupled with scholarship programs to support girls from low-income families and integrate political literacy into school curricula to raise awareness about governance and political rights

from an early age. Furthermore, economic independence is closely linked to political empowerment. By offering vocational training, skill development programs, and providing access to credit and microfinance, women can gain the financial independence needed to engage actively in political processes. Establishing business incubators and support networks for women entrepreneurs can further bolster their economic status, thereby enhancing their ability to participate in governance.

Legislative and policy reforms play a pivotal role in ensuring women's political empowerment. It is imperative to enforce existing gender quotas in local governance bodies and review and amend any discriminatory laws that hinder women's political participation. Additionally, establishing mechanisms to monitor and evaluate the impact of these policies can ensure their effective implementation. Advocacy and awareness campaigns are also vital. Utilizing media platforms such as radio, television, and social media to highlight the successes of women in politics can help challenge prevailing gender stereotypes. Grassroots campaigns aimed at educating communities about the benefits of women's political participation can shift societal attitudes and norms. Promoting female role models in politics can serve as a powerful inspiration, motivating other women to pursue leadership roles.

Building robust support networks is another critical measure. Mentorship programs that pair aspiring female politicians with experienced mentors can provide the guidance and support necessary for their political journeys. Establishing local women's political groups and forums can create spaces for sharing experiences and strategies, fostering a sense of solidarity and empowerment. Collaborations with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) focusing on women's rights and political empowerment can amplify these efforts, providing additional resources and support.

Security concerns pose significant barriers to women's political participation. Strengthening law enforcement and improving community policing can enhance the security environment, making it safer for women to engage in political activities. Promoting peace building initiatives that involve women at all

levels can further contribute to a stable and secure environment, encouraging their participation.

The political empowerment of women in Kashmir requires a multi-faceted and sustained effort. By focusing on educational enhancements, economic support, legislative reforms, advocacy, building support networks, and addressing security concerns, Kashmir can move towards a more inclusive and equitable political landscape. This holistic approach will not only empower women but also contribute to the overall development and stability of the region. The stories of women who have overcome these challenges serve as a beacon of hope and a blueprint for future efforts, underscoring the transformative power of female participation in governance. Through these concerted efforts, the vision of gender-equal governance in Kashmir can be realized, paving the way for a more just and prosperous society.

Conclusion

The political empowerment of women in Kashmir's hill regions, particularly in rural areas like Poonch district, is a critical yet challenging journey. This study has provided valuable insights into the various dimensions of political awareness and participation among rural women, highlighting both progress and persistent obstacles. Despite significant efforts, the political awareness among rural women remains limited. The study revealed that a majority of women are unaware of their constitutional rights and responsibilities. This lack of awareness is primarily attributed to low levels of education and insufficient awareness campaigns. The findings indicate that 47 percent of the women strongly disagreed with being aware of their rights, which underscores a significant gap in political education. The analysis also showed a varied level of awareness about government plans and projects. While 33 percent of respondents were aware of local development plans, the majority remained neutral or unaware, indicating a need for better communication and implementation strategies at the grassroots level. Similarly, awareness about child development programs and the efforts of NGOs/organizations working to support rural women is mixed, further highlighting the necessity for more robust and inclusive outreach efforts. A

significant takeaway from this study is the transformative potential of education. The findings suggest that rural women are beginning to move towards education, which could serve as a foundational change agent for greater political participation. By enhancing educational opportunities and ensuring that women are well-informed about their rights and the political mechanisms available to them, a more engaged and empowered female populace can emerge. While the journey towards political empowerment for rural women in Kashmir's hill regions is fraught with challenges, it is also marked by a determined progression. Addressing the educational and economic barriers, coupled with effective policy implementation and awareness campaigns, can significantly enhance women's political participation. The stories of those who have overcome these obstacles serve as a beacon of hope and a blueprint for future efforts. Through sustained and multifaceted approaches, the vision of gender-equal governance in these regions can be realized, leading to comprehensive and equitable societal development.

References

- Bhat, R. A. (2015). Women in Kashmir: Struggle for empowerment. *Journal of Social Sciences, 9*(2), 113-126.
- Chatterji, A. P., & Bhan, M. (2011). *Kashmir: Writings on war and peace.* Penguin Books.
- Chowdhary, S., & Bourai, H. (2022). Political empowerment of women in Jammu and Kashmir: A study with special reference to rural women in Poonch district. *International Journal of Political Science and Governance, 4*(2), 143-148. https://doi.org/10.33545/26646021.2022.v4.i2b.189
- Embassies.gov.il. (n.d.). *Political empowerment of women.* https://embassies.gov.il/tbilisi/mashav/MASHAVCalendar/Pages/POLITICAL-EMPOWERMENT-OF-WOMEN.aspx
- Ghosh, I. (1956). *Women empowerment: The past, the present and the future.* Hindu.
- Government of India. (1992). *The Constitution (73rd Amendment) Act.*
- Government of India. (1993). *The Constitution (74th Amendment) Act.*
- Jabbar, S., & Jothiramalingam, T. (2017). Political participation of women in Jammu and Kashmir: An overview. *Social Science & Humanities International.*

- Mir, S. A. (2019). *Women, conflict and governance in Kashmir.* Palgrave Macmillan.
- Misri, F. (2014). Women in politics: Case studies from Kashmir. *Journal of Political Studies, 21*(1), 45-60.
- Mohiuddin, G. (2018). Women in Jammu and Kashmir: Political empowerment and participation. *International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts, 6*(1), 2178-2185.
- Nisha, M. A., & Vezhaventhan, D. (2018). Political empowerment and participation of women in India. *International Journal of Pure and Applied Mathematics, 120*(5), 4721-4736.
- Pandit, S. (2016). The role of women in peacebuilding in Kashmir. *South Asian Survey, 23*(1), 67-82.
- Rakesh, C. (2012). Women empowerment in India – Milestone and challenges. *Institute of Women Studies, Lucknow (U.P).*
- Sarwer, G. (2017). Women empowerment: Issues and challenges in Jammu and Kashmir. *International Journal of Social Relevance and Concern.*

Review Article

POPULISM, PERCEPTION, AND POLICY: WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION IN POLITICAL PARTY MANIFESTOS

Gautami Nair[*]
Reetwika Mallick[†]
Shruti Sinha[‡]

Abstract

Election Manifesto is generally considered as a published declaration which exhibits the intentions of the political parties to meet the aspirations and expectations of the voters. Our paper engages with manifestos as a populist tool in the broader canvas of electoral campaiging. Campaigns emphasise on image building, creating narratives and persuading the citizens to introduce discourses around "the elite" and "the people". In the recent decade, one such discourse is being created around women. As women voters have become a critical demographic, political parties have increasingly centered them in their manifestos through symbolic representation and image-building of the "Nari".

This paper critically assesses women's representation both "inside" and "outside" manifestos, moving beyond superficial narrative constructions to evaluate substantive policy inclusion. Through a detailed content analysis of the manifestos of three political parties, the study identifies areas where women's issues are addressed

---

* Postgraduate, Political Science, University of Delhi, New Delhi
  Email: nairgautami1699@gmail.com
† Visiting Researcher and Assistant Editor IMPRI; Postgraduate Political Science, University of Delhi, New Delhi
  Email: reetwikam@gmail.com
‡ Postgraduate, Political Science, University of Delhi, New Delhi
  Email: shruti.sinha1999@gmail.com

and highlights significant gaps where women still remain marginalized.

Keywords
Election manifesto, women, populism, policies, political parties

Introduction
Elections in India are often seen as a festival rather than merely a war of words or ideological contestations. On the day of voting, people feel special and empowered as the most important actors on the political stage of the country. They engage with the state, considering it their moral responsibility, which in turn reinforces their political consciousness. Soon after Independence, the world keenly observed the general elections, which were considered "the biggest gamble" that would determine the political course of the Indian subcontinent. Today, the Election Commission of India (ECI) proudly claims to have successfully conducted both general and state elections in the largest democracy in the world. Campaigns are a big part of this unique festival and play a significant role in this electoral process. Satirists, playwrights, and cartoonists have often depicted in their artworks the cacophony caused by election campaigns.

With the advent of digital media, elections are no longer unstructured and spontaneous events decided by a few top politicians from their respective parties. In today's media-saturated world, perceptions about leaders and policies are shaped by popular culture and mass media (Mazzoleni, 2007). Each political party is not only managed by a hierarchy of politicians based on their political experience but also by a separate, often invisible entity known as public relations (PR) personnel. PR acts to create public opinion, shape dialogue and discourse, and promise a form of democratic representation and agency (Cronin, 2018). Each aspect of the campaign is influenced by this entity, with manifestos being the most visible and concrete component. As a result of these symbols, images, and slogans have become central to electoral populism. Initially, only major political parties released their manifestos, but now every state and national party publishes a comprehensive document outlining ideological beliefs, social policies, and economic strategies.

One specific area that has recently gained attention is the focus on women's issues in party manifestos. Over the past decade, it has been observed that party manifestos have increasingly prioritized policies and programs related to women. In the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, women outnumbered men in voter turnout in nearly 19 of the 36 states and Union Territories (Jain, 2024). This increase in women's electoral participation has been lauded as a significant step towards greater inclusion in the democratic process. While this trend indicates a positive shift in women's engagement in electoral politics, it remains an anomaly when juxtaposed with other socio-economic indicators (Kumar, 2024). Despite their increased political participation, women continue to lag behind men in several critical developmental parameters, such as labour force participation and access to public healthcare. These disparities highlight the limitations of electoral participation as a sole indicator of women's empowerment. For a transformative impact on gender equality, it is essential to address the structural barriers that hinder women's full participation and representation in all spheres. Therefore, the current political enthusiasm around women's increased voter turnout needs to be critically examined against the backdrop of broader challenges that continue to impede gender equity.

Despite our concentrated effort, this paper focuses only on three political parties and analyzes their recent policies concerning women. There was a notable lack of party manifestos from state-level elections available in the digital domain. In this study, we conduct a broad analysis by examining some key policies impacting women in India. However, there is an intricate interplay of factors such as caste, culture, and socioeconomic status. These intersecting parameters indeed complicate the landscape, necessitating a more nuanced approach to understanding the underlying issues. However, our primary question remains- Has manifesto as a tool in populist electoral set up, which today is heavily invested in data and scientific research, genuinely carved out a space for women?

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative and analytical approach to examine the representation, inclusion, and marginalisation of women in political party manifestos. The study draws on secondary data review and content analysis of manifestos from the three political parties that secured the highest seat share in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections: the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP, 240), the Indian National Congress (INC, 99), and the Samajwadi Party (SP, 37).

The qualitative analysis includes a review of existing reports on the status of women in India to situate the broader socio-political context. This analysis provides an understanding of the challenges women face both outside and inside political structures, offering a background against which the party manifestos are evaluated. Reports from government sources, NGOs, and academic literature were reviewed to capture trends in women's health, education, and employment, which were also the key parameters addressed in the manifestos across political parties.

Thorough content analysis is done to classify the manifestos of the BJP, INC, and SP, focusing on women's inclusion, to assess the frequency and nature of women-centric policies, the language, and framing of women's issues. This analysis highlights patterns of inclusion and marginalisation of women across the political spectrum.

Finally, the findings from both the analyses are synthesised to provide a holistic understanding of the place of women in contemporary Indian political party manifestos and broader political discourse.

Literature review—Electoral Populism and Women

Manifestos are neither a new innovation in political studies nor a neglected tool in the sphere of electoral politics. However, it is an essentially understudied concept as a benchmark to assess accountability and transparency in policy formulation and implementation. The Election Commission of India's Model Code of Conduct (2019) defines a manifesto as 'a published document containing a declaration of the ideology, intentions, views, policies, and programmes of a political party,' allowing political parties to articulate their vision for the country or the state, presenting their

ideological stance on various issues. They outline the policies, reforms, and priorities the party intends to pursue if elected to power, providing voters with a clear understanding of the party's agenda. It offers insights into how each party identifies and addresses key issues in the arena of the economy, healthcare, education, national security, and social welfare. With the increasing importance of electoral campaigning in a spirited democracy, rigorous multilateral campaigning ranging from traditional media to social media platforms (Rovny, 2012), manifestos reckon with dynamic political landscape, changing voter expectation, and the growing complexity of governance.

In the words of Laver and Garry (2000), manifestos are 'strategic documents written by politically sophisticated party elites with many different objectives in mind'. Scholars have delineated functions of manifestos as a compilation of valid party positions, streamlining the campaign (Eder et al., 2017), rhetoric and communication and ex post pledge fulfilment (Muhammad, 2020). As the manifesto paves way for electoral mobilisation, it capitalises upon popular perceptions and constructs appealing narratives, giving an impression of being reflective of the aspirations of the people. Arguably manifestos are drafted by conducting surveys, consultations, and feedback sessions with various stakeholders, including party workers, civil society, identifying the pulse of the people.

It can be seen as a political strategy that focuses on the direct appeal to "the people" while denouncing "the elite." This aligns with the broader definitions of populism by Mudde and Kaltwasser (2017), who describe populism as a "thin-centred ideology" that separates society into two opposing groups: the pure people and the corrupt elite and argues that politics should be the expression of the *Volonte generale* (general will) of the people.

Indiscriminate offering of freebies such as, free laptops and cell phones, waivers to farm loans, reimbursement on educational loans are a common sight across party manifestos. Therefore, in the Indian context, populism is often associated with the 'indiscriminate use of public resources to give goods away to voters' (Chakrabarti & Bandyopadhyay, 2020). As a form of crowd appeasement politics, the immediate electoral gains are called out

against fiscal and policy imperatives in the long run (Decker, 2003), thereby having an inherently negative connotation.

Populist manifestos, while generally focused on the binary division between "the people" and "the elite," often embody deeply gendered expectations, which can significantly impact women's experiences. These manifestos typically appeal to a universal notion of "the people," but this assumed universality overlooks the distinct experiences and needs of women and other marginalised groups (Kantola and Lombardo, 2019). The gendered nature of populist politics is evident in how these manifestos address (or fail to address) issues related to gender inequality. While populism and feminism both conceptualise society in terms of dominant and subordinated groups, feminism highlights the dominance of men over women, calling attention to patriarchal structures (Kantola and Lombardo, 2019).

Therefore, while populist manifestos might appeal broadly to "the people," they often fail to engage with the complexities of gender inequality, thereby limiting their effectiveness in addressing the specific challenges faced by women. This can result in policies that, while popular among the general electorate, do not necessarily advance gender equality or address the unique experiences of women in society.

Women outside manifestos—Trends over the years

The concept of *Nari Shakti* has gained significant prominence in India, becoming a central theme in populist narratives that celebrate the strength and resilience of women. However, to move beyond symbolism and achieve meaningful progress, it is essential to conduct a comprehensive analysis revealing both the strides and challenges across various sectors that impact women's lives.

As per the All India Survey of Higher Education report (AISHE, 2022), Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) has increased to 28.5 in 2021-22 from 22.9 in 2014-15. The report further exhibited that female PhD enrolment has doubled in the last decade. However, despite this improved enrolment, digital marginalisation of women has remained an essential issue that needs to be addressed. Say, for instance, Smartphones have penetrated swiftly into the hinterland in India, but most girls did not own the devices and

used one that belonged to other members in their family (Annual Status of Education Report [ASER, 2023]). During the ASER survey, in rural districts close to 90 percent of the 14-18 age group reported having a smartphone at home and more than 90 percent reported being able to use such a device portraying ample access to digital devices. Disparity however, was observed between the girls and boys when their digital knowledge was examined critically. Only 25 percent of girls as opposed to 50 percent of boys were able to use Google Maps to track a nearby bus stand.

Apart from access to digital literacy, distance of educational institutions and transportation facilities remain another key factor especially in rural areas to determine women's education and her employment opportunities. Survey in Sitapur highlights that after class 10th, parents were unwilling to send their daughters to school because of the considerable distance and did not want to risk their safety while travelling (ASER, 2023). State of Working Report (SWR, 2023), also highlighted the importance of transport infrastructure in determining the number of women working outside the home. For 11-20kms women's dependence on public transport increases to 62 percent, whereas for me it is 40 percent. As per the Population census (2011) data, there is an interstate difference in women's travel pattern. States like Kerala, Maharashtra had nearly 60 percent employed women travelling more than 1.5 km to work as compared to states like Bihar and UP which is only 30 percent.

In terms of health, there has been some improvement in nutritional status, with stunting among children under 5 reducing from 38.4 percent to 35.5 percent (National Family Health Survey-5 [NFHS-5], 2022). Poshan Abhiyaan (2018) has led to a more integrated approach to tackling malnutrition, with increased community engagement and awareness. However, the same data shows that while there have been improvements, malnutrition, and anaemia among women remain persistent challenges. The burden of non-communicable diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, and cancers (especially breast and cervical cancer) has also increased among females. The prevalence of NCDs among women is 62 per 1,000, as compared to 36 per 1,000 men (Sharma, et al., 2020).

Other than nutrition, NFHS-5 reports a rise in institutional births to 88.6 percent and a decline in maternal mortality from 167 (2011-13) to 97 (2018-20) per 100,000 live births as per the NITI Aayog's health index (2021). This can be accredited to the Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakram (JSSK) under the National Health Mission, which provides for free delivery and postnatal care services to pregnant women (PIB, 2020). In this, Anganwadi workers (AWWs) have played a crucial role by increasing the uptake of maternal health services, and increasing awareness about antenatal care and institutional deliveries. Their regular interactions with pregnant women help in early identification of health risks, contributing to the reduction of maternal mortality rates. However, they continue to be recognised as volunteers and not employees (Madan, 2020). Consequently, in several states, these essential-care workers do not receive fixed monthly incomes and social security benefits, making it impossible to account for their economic contribution in the calculation of India's GDP. According to the Press Information Bureau (PIB) "the Government has enhanced the honorarium of AWWs at main - AWCs from Rs. 3,000/- to Rs. 4,500/- per month and AWWs at mini-AWCs from Rs. 2,250/- to Rs. 3,500/- per month, also introduced performance linked incentive of Rs. 250/- per month for AWHs and Rs. 500/- to AWWs" (PIB,2024).

In case of overall female labour force participation as per the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS, 2022), around 32.8 percent female of working age (25 years and above) were in the labour force in 2021-22 which was just 23.3 percent in 2017-18. SWR (2023) further expands this data, which noticed an unusual increase in female work force participation during the pandemic. The report noted this peculiar trend with rising employment of women during pandemic (60 percent) to be labelled under the self-employed category. There is a crowding-in of women in the self-employment sector as compared to casual or salaried workspace. One segment of this category includes Self Help Groups. Out of the Total SHG Bank linkage Programme, more than 80 percent of them belong exclusively to women (NABARD,2023). Other than SHGs, as per the PLFS (2022) data, self-employment has two

categories—those who are account workers or employers and those who are helpers in household enterprises. The latter type is basically unpaid work undertaken in one's own economic activities, and this has actually shown an increase. The unusual increment in female labour participation is just a distress led participation, especially in rural areas with a seasonal employment of employment based on a decreased household income (SWR, 2023, p.49).

Over here, we have done a broad study by taking some key policies impacting women in India. The focus of this section was to identify critical policy challenges that warrant our attention in the coming years. This brings us back to our original question as to how a populistic election manifesto falls low to address or make promises around this policy paralysis.

Women 'Inside' Manifestos—a Comprehensive Analysis

In the lead-up to the 2024 elections, India's major political parties have unveiled ambitious manifestos promising sweeping changes in digital education, transportation, healthcare, and employment. This section analyses the manifestos of the political parties within the populistic realm of engaging the women voters.

Figure 1

Number of times key terms were mentioned in each Party's Manifesto
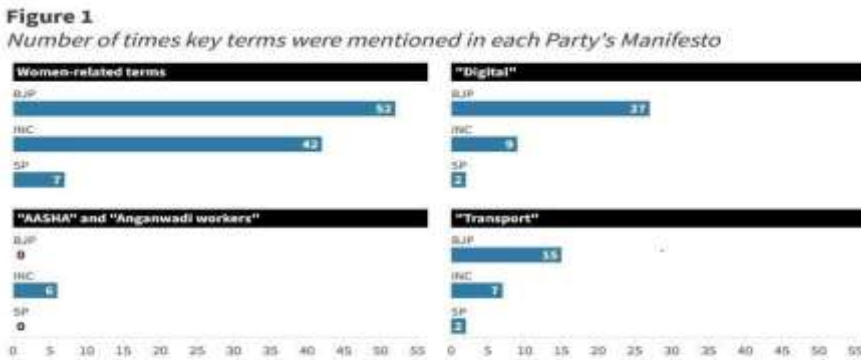
Source: 2024 Lok Sabha Election Manifestos of Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP), Indian National Congress (INC) and Samajwadi Party (SP)

Note.
- The two mentions of 'digital' in SP's manifesto were not in a women-related context.
- Out of the six mentions of AASHA and Anganwadi workers in INC's manifesto, five were regarding the former and one was regarding the latter.
- None of the mentions of 'transport' in BJP's manifesto were related to women.
- The two mentions of 'transport' in SP's manifesto were not in a women-related context.

Education and Digital Divide

The manifesto of BJP, 'Modi ki Guarantee 2024', promises promotion of digital education. The 'Nyay Patra', manifesto of INC

on the other hand, assured to provide access to digital equipment like mobile phones to school students of classes IX to XII along with free and unlimited Internet on college and school campuses to increase accessibility and connectivity for students. SP's 'Janta ka Maang Patra', on the lines of INC, promises to provide free laptops to youth, making easier accessibility of digital devices. For internet accessibility, SP has mapped Aata-Data scheme, under which, every ration card-holder family will be given 500 rupees worth of free data to bridge the digital divide. In terms of education, in order to ensure equal enrolment ratio, the manifesto by SP, promised free girl child education named 'kg to pg free education'.

It is evident that political parties often make ambitious claims, such as providing free education or free internet access, without thoroughly analysing past data and existing reports. The school enrolment ratio has already improved significantly. Moreover, they have focussed on increasing the accessibility of digital devices and internet access, in terms of mobile phones, laptops and free data. However, according to a press release by Press Information Bureau (PIB) as of December 2022, the tele-density of India reached 84.67 percent. The data available, thereby, portrays wide availability of digital gadgets and internet accessibility to the people of India.

However, manifestos remain silent about digital marginalisation and dropout ratio of women after 10th standard. Girls with lower levels of functional literacy often cannot make optimum use of smartphones.

Manifestos don't address the increasing non-traditional threats against women. According to the NCRB data of 2022, published in 2023, the number of cyber-crime cases registered have risen from 50035 in 2020 to 65893 in 2022. Women have become more vulnerable to cyber-crimes, due to lack of digital literacy being available to them (ASER rural survey). A staggering 5780 incidences of women centric cyber-crimes were registered in 2022. The constant rise in cyber-crimes, with a staggering digital divide, highlights the need to focus on lack of accessibility to digital

education and opportunities, rather than providing freebies in terms of digital devices and internet.

Transport and communication-

The BJP manifesto mentions improving transportation of the country by creating unified transport system, by integrating multi-modal transport facilities, to ensure ease of mobility of both passengers and cargo through waterways, railways, and roadways. The Samajwadi party has targeted the improvement of quality of roads, by assuring to ensure pothole free roads for enhancing road safety. The INC on the other hand has emphasised upon improving the residence facility for women, ensuring that they do not have to travel long distances for education or employment. INC aimed to establish one Government Community College in every tehsil/taluk for students completing Class XII. These community colleges will offer a broad range of degrees/diplomas suitable for jobs in the service industry (e.g. hospitality, tourism, digital marketing, paramedical, paralegal, etc.) and for jobs in the manufacturing industry that require basic technical skill. Establishing sufficient night shelters for migrant women workers and doubling the number of working women hostels in the country, with at least one Savitribai Phule Hostel in each district, the INC envisioned. Our analysis shows that transport and safety in public spaces is requisite to women's empowerment. However, only INC's manifesto has sparingly made a reference to it.

Health and Nutrition-

In terms of health of women specifically, the manifesto of Samajwadi Party, Janata ka Maangpatra, HumaraAdhikaar, remains silent. The promises made although had a passing mention of better healthcare facilities to be provided under social and economic rights, women's health was totally absent from the manifesto. The Nyay Patra (INC Manifesto) intended to rapidly reduce the incidence of stunting and wasting to address malnutrition by expanding the mid-day meal scheme up to Class XII. Anaemia prevails among the majority of both pregnant and non-pregnant Indian women, according to the NFHS-5 report (PIB, 2022). Despite the need for specific attention towards women's

health, the party manifesto of INC has considered health as a generic sector where improvement is required.Whereas Modi ki Guarantee 2024 has mentioned no strategy or program to be adopted regarding their aim to reduce anaemia, breast cancer, cervical cancer, and osteoporosis, and to launch campaigns to eliminate cervical cancer. With respect to maternal health INC promises that maternity benefits will be available to all women, and that all employers will be required to grant paid maternity leave to their employees. The BJP manifesto highlights its achievement of increasing paid maternity leave from 12 to 26 weeks, making no further claims

Anganwadi and ASHA-

Only the INC manifesto mentions frontline workers such as ASHAs and AWWs.The Nyay Patra mentions that the contribution of the Central government to frontline health workers (such as ASHAs, AWWs, Mid-Day Meal cooks, etc.) will be doubled. To reduce the burden of work, the INC manifesto has promised to appoint a second ASHA in villages with a population of over 2,500. Additionally, the manifesto of INC aims to double the number of AWWs and create an additional 14 lakh jobs.

These workers play multiple roles, from pre- and postnatal maternal health care to early childhood education, which require full-time responsibility. Despite their significant contributions, they are still considered volunteers and do not receive adequate social benefits. They have been demanding formal recognition, but none of the manifestos have provided a comprehensive plan to formalize the care sector in the country.

Employment

In India, more than 50 percent Self Help Groups are owned by females. Manifestos have also declared SHG to be the quintessential key to women empowerment. For strengthening SHGs, INC aimed to substantially increase the amount of institutional credit that is extended to women. In particular, enhancing the credit extended to Self Help Groups by banks, NBFCs and Micro Finance Institutions ensuring that banks offer low-interest loans to SHGs.

BJP envisioned moving beyond 1 crore, *Lakhpati didi* to 3 crore lakhpati didis. Empowering SHG in service sector like - IT, healthcare, education, retail, and tourism and enhancing market access for SHGs through initiatives like *one district one product*, FPO, Ekta mall, ONDC, GEM forms a core strategy for empowering SHG in BJP's manifesto.

The concept of 'women's empowerment' has often been reduced to poverty alleviation strategies like forming Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and promoting microcredit entrepreneurship only (Batliwala, 2007). Our above analysis already suggested that improvement of female labour force participation is lopsided.

A significant proportion of women are either self-employed or engaged in the agricultural sector—both of which often serve as fallback options during times of household income decline. Employment opportunities for women continue to be heavily influenced by gender norms, societal expectations, and family dynamics. However, manifestos have not addressed these specific concerns.

The above-mentioned Party Manifestos exhibit all the characteristics of being a populistic tool. Promises which mostly include freebies for instance, a monthly pension of 3000 rupees to women below poverty line (SP manifesto) are not based on scientific analysis. A specific budget, or a timeline for completion of the proposed targets, is also not mentioned. All the manifestos have mentioned schemes or financial assistance which are not financially viable. There seems to be constant competition among parties to outdo each other's imprudent bids.

Conclusion

The focus of a populist manifesto on a generalised "people" can lead to the marginalisation of women's specific needs and concerns. Populist promises may propagate traditional gender roles, reinforcing stereotypes that place women in subordinated positions. Moreover, the policies proposed may not adequately address issues like gender-based violence, economic inequality, or reproductive rights, as these issues do not always align with the populist narrative of the people vs. the elite.

Populism in India, while often seen as a threat to democracy, can also serve as a powerful tool for democratic engagement, particularly by mobilizing marginalized groups, including women. As argued by Laclau and Mouffe (1985), populism's potential as an emancipatory force, lies in its ability to challenge the limitations of liberal democracy.

However, populist political practices carry a paradoxical risk: while it democratizes power by engaging the public, it can simultaneously erode democratic processes by fostering short-term, emotion-driven politics (Chakrabarti & Bandyopadhyay, 2020). Manifestos frequently exhibit the same paradoxes. While they try to capture attention by focusing on the needs of the masses, the promises they make are often short-term in nature, designed primarily to win elections rather than foster long-term governance and development. This reliance on immediate, emotion-driven appeal can lead to irresponsible fiscal practices, as manifestos often include promises that are fiscally unsustainable or politically expedient but lack a well-thought-out, long-term vision. Hence, the need for seeking accountability becomes imperative, wherein the manifesto not merely remains a tool for pre-election vote mobilisation but also forms the basis for informed decision-making.

The experiences of party manifestos demonstrate that, despite their inclusionary rhetoric, these parties often reproduce informal patriarchal institutions that marginalize women's concerns. To ensure democratic electoral processes are a force for gender equality in India, political parties must move beyond symbolic representation and address the structural barriers that limit substantive representation and participation of women. Party manifestos should commit to gender parity in leadership, transparent decision-making, and the inclusion of feminist perspectives. Only by genuinely engaging with feminist politics can manifestos transform into vehicles for a more inclusive and egalitarian democracy, ensuring that women are empowered as leaders and decision-makers.

References

- Press Information Bureau. (2022). *Anaemia Mukt Bharat.* <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1795421

#:~:text=The%20prevalence%20of%20anaemia%20among%20six%20groups%20as,%2815-49%20years%29%20and%2067.1percent%20in%20children%20%286-59%20months%29.>

- Batliwala, S. (2007). Taking the power out of empowerment: An experimental account. *Development in Practice, 17*(4-5), 557-565. https://doi.org/10.1080/09614520701469559
- Bharatiya Janata Party. (2024). *Modi ki guarantee: BJP manifesto 2024.* https://www.bjp.org
- Centre for Sustainable Employment, Azim Premji University. (2023). *State of working India: Social identities and labour market outcomes.* https://cse.azimpremjiuniversity.edu.in/state-of-working-india/
- Chakrabarti, K., & Bandhopadhyay, K. K. (2020). Populism in contemporary Indian politics. In K. B. Chen & T. C. Fan (Eds.), *Populism in Asian democracies* (pp. 97-120). Brill. https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004444461_007
- Cronin, A. (2018). *Public relations capitalism: Promotional culture, publics, and commercial democracy.* Palgrave Macmillan.
- Decker, F. (2003). The populist challenge to liberal democracy. *Internationale Politik und Gesellschaft, 3,* 47-59.
- Eder, N., Jenny, M., & Müller, W. C. (2017). Manifesto functions: How party candidates view and use their party's central policy document. *Electoral Studies, 45,* 75-87. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.electstud.2016.11.011
- Mazzoleni, G. (2003). The media and the growth of neo-populism in contemporary democracies. In G. Mazzoleni, J. Stewart, & B. Horsfield (Eds.), *The media and neo-populism: A contemporary comparative analysis* (pp. 3-20).
- Indian National Congress. (2024). *Nyay Patra: Congress manifesto 2024.* https://manifesto.inc.in/Congress-Manifesto-English-2024-Dyoxp_4E.pdf
- Jain, B. (2024, June 7). 65.8% turnout in 2024 LS polls; Women beat men in 19 of 36 states/UTs. *The Times of India.* https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/65-8-turnout-in-2024-ls-polls-women-beat-men-in-19-of-36-states/uts/articleshow/110777159.cms
- Kantola, J., & Lombardo, E. (2019). Populism and feminist politics: The cases of Finland and Spain. *European Journal of Political Research, 58*(4), 1108-1128. https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6765.12333

- Kumar, S. (2024). Building friendship and solidarity: How the gender gap in voting was closed. *Observer Research Foundation.* https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/building-on-friendships-and-solidarity-how-the-gender-gap-in-voting-was-closed
- Laclau, E., & Mouffe, C. (1985). *Hegemony and socialist strategy: Towards a radical democratic politics.* Verso.
- Laver, M., & Garry, J. (2000). Estimating policy positions from political texts. *American Journal of Political Science, 44*(3), 619-634. https://doi.org/10.2307/2669268
- Madan, A. (2020). Need to revisit Anganwadi workers. *Observer Research Foundation.*https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/need-to-revisit-anganwadi-workers-66370
- Ministry of Education. (2021). *All India Survey on Higher Education 2021-22.*https://s3waas.gov.in/Education_All_India_Survey_2021-22_Cover.cdr
- Ministry of Education. (2022). *All India Survey on Higher Education 2021-2022.*https://cdnbbsr.s3waas.gov.in/s392049debbe566ca5782a3045cf300a3c/uploads/2024/02/20240719952688509.pdf
- Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. (2021). *National Family Health Survey-5: Compendium of fact sheets India and 14 states/UTs (Phase 2).* https://data.gov.in/catalog/national-family-health-survey-nfhs-5
- Ministry of Home Affairs. (2022). *Crime in India 2022.* National Crime Records Bureau. https://ncrb.gov.in/sites/default/files/CrimeinIndia2022Book1.pdf
- Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation. (2022). *Periodic Labour Force Survey 2021-2022.*https://mospi.gov.in/PLFS-July-2021-June-2022
- Mudde, C., & Kaltwasser, C. R. (2017). *Populism: A very short introduction.* Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/actrade/9780190234874.001.0001
- Muhammad, I. (2020). Election manifesto as a unit of analysis in research. *ResearchGate.*https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.23419.54567

- National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development. (2023). *Status of microfinance in India 2022-23.*https://www.nabard.org/auth/writereaddata/tender/status-of-microfinance-in-india-2022-23.pdf
- Niti Aayog. (2020). *Healthy states progressive India: Report on the ranks of states and union territories.*https://www.niti.gov.in/sites/default/files/2021-12/NITI-WB_Health_Index_Report_24-12-21.pdf
- Pratham. (2023). *Annual Status of Education Report (Rural) 2023: Beyond basics.* https://asercentre.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/ASER-2023-Report-1.pdf
- Press Information Bureau. (2020). Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakaram. *Press Information Bureau.*https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1606211
- Press Information Bureau. (2022). Year end review 2022: Ministry of Communications. *Press Information Bureau.*https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2003433
- Press Information Bureau. (2024). Honorarium of AWWs at main-AWCs enhanced from Rs. 3000/- to Rs. 4500/-. *Press Information Bureau.* https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=2003433
- Rovny, J. (2012). Who emphasizes and who blurs? Party strategies in multidimensional competition. *European Union Politics, 13*(2), 269-292. https://doi.org/10.1177/1465116511435822
- Samajwadi Party. (2024). *Janata ka maang patra: Humara adhikar.* https://www.samajwadiparty.in
- Sharma, S. K., Vishwakarma, D., & Puri, P. (2020). Gender disparities in the burden of non-communicable diseases in India: Evidence from a cross-sectional study. *Clinical Epidemiology and Global Health, 8*(2), 544-549. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cegh.2019.09.008

Research Article

EDUCATIONAL ASPIRATIONS AMONG MUSLIM GIRLS: A CASE STUDY FROM NIZAMUDDIN AREA OF NEW DELHI

Asma[*]

Abstract

This study aims to explore the educational aspirations of Muslim girls in the Nizamuddin area of New Delhi, an ethnically and socioeconomically distinct Muslim community. Drawing on Fuller's (2009) classification of students into low, middle, and high aspirers, this research investigates how these aspirations are shaped by a complex interplay of familial, societal, and institutional factors, including cultural norms, patriarchal influences, and economic constraints. Utilizing a combination of interviews, surveys, and case studies, the study classifies Muslim girls into three categories based on their educational ambitions: low aspirers, middle aspirers, and high aspirers. The low aspirers, characterized by a lack of educational ambition, often view schooling as irrelevant to their futures, reflecting the impact of poverty, cultural conservatism, and limited educational opportunities. Middle aspirers, though they pursue vocational education, are often limited in their prospects by traditional gender roles, societal expectations, and restrictive community norms. High aspirers demonstrate a strong desire for higher education, yet face systemic barriers, including limited access to resources, societal pressure, security concerns, and discrimination. The study highlights the socio-economic challenges and cultural dynamics that constrain the educational progress of Muslim girls in this region, providing insights into the barriers and opportunities for enhancing their educational aspirations.

[*] S.R.F Scholar, Department of Education, Kumaun University Nainital, S.S.J. Campus Almora, Uttarakhand 263601
Email: ashu198855@gmail.com

Keywords

Muslim girls, educational aspirations, educational backwardness, low socioeconomic status

Introduction

Education serves as a catalyst for societal, economic, and intellectual development. In the contemporary world, however, this catalyst is under siege due to the forces of globalization. The repercussions of this phenomenon are further exacerbated by the rise of materialism and careerism, which often prioritize economic success over intellectual enrichment, resulting in a society where materialistic values overshadow academic and intellectual pursuits (Asma & Farooq, 2017).

The word *aspiration* can be defined as the hope or ambition to achieve something, and in the context of education, it refers to the goal of attaining a certain level of academic achievement. However, the educational aspirations of different students vary significantly across communities and gender groups. To understand why this variation exists, it is crucial to examine the environments in which these groups live. An individual's aspirations are often shaped by their surroundings, with the surrounding environment exerting significant influence over the development of aspirations. Various theoretical frameworks, such as social-cognitive and social-cognitive-ecological theories (Farmer, 1985; Bandura et al., 2001; Guerra & Huesmann, 2004), help to identify the factors that affect adolescents' educational attainment and career development.

Aspirations serve as motivational tools for achieving higher accomplishments (Sherwood, 1998). They play a critical role in determining what individuals can achieve, as they guide their efforts towards specific educational or career objectives (Kao & Thompson, 2003; MacBrayne, 1987).

Educational aspirations are influenced by a variety of factors, including family background, socioeconomic status, and the individual's living environment (Stewart et al., 2007). Research has shown that children of educated parents or those from better economic backgrounds tend to hold higher educational aspirations (Marjoribanks, 2005; MacBrayne, 1987). Additionally, urban areas often provide better educational opportunities, which can lead to higher aspirations in students (Haller & Virkler, 1993; Akande,

1987). Conversely, deprived groups, including the economically disadvantaged and youth from poorer backgrounds, tend to have lower aspirations, a phenomenon also observed in the case of Muslim girls in India (St Clair & Benjamin, 2011; Wrench et al., 2012; Quaglia & Cobb, 1996).

The study conducted by Bisht (1972) found that factors such as family size, educational facilities, recreational resources, parental education, and family income significantly influence the educational aspirations of students. Similarly, Vaidya (2006) reported a positive correlation between socioeconomic status and educational aspirations among higher secondary students.

Fuller's study, "Sociology, Gender, and Educational Aspirations: Girls and Their Ambitions" (2009), offers further insight into the gendered aspects of educational aspirations. Using case studies, observations, and interviews, Fuller categorized girls into three groups based on their aspirations: Low Aspirers, Middle Aspirers, and High Aspirers.

- **Low Aspirers** were girls who intended to leave school at the end of compulsory education, viewing schooling as largely irrelevant to their future.
- **Middle Aspirers** were those who intended to pursue vocational training after compulsory education but did not plan to continue onto higher education.
- **High Aspirers** were girls who aimed to attend university after finishing school.

This classification provides a framework for understanding the diverse educational goals within different groups of girls, highlighting how various factors such as family influence, socioeconomic conditions, and community attitudes can shape their aspirations. These insights are crucial for designing policies and interventions that can support the educational ambitions of Muslim girls and empower them to overcome the barriers they face.

Morphology of Indian Muslim Society and Educational Aspirations of Girls

A human being, much like a flower, thrives only when nurtured in a conducive environment—fertile soil, moderate sunlight, adequate

water, and regular care. In the Indian context, the educational aspirations of Muslim girls, however, are often constrained by the socio-cultural environment shaped by patriarchy within the community. These patriarchal structures significantly influence the educational, personal, and overall growth of Muslim girls, thereby affecting the socio-economic trajectory of the community at large (Shaban, 2016). Studies have consistently shown that due to the prevailing son-centric caregiving culture, male adolescents tend to possess higher educational aspirations compared to their female counterparts (Jajpreet, 2011; Verma and Ghadially, 1985).

A comprehensive survey conducted by the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai (May–November 2009), which covered 3,818 Muslim households and a total of 22,581 individuals, revealed striking findings. Among the 2,734 Muslim girls interviewed, a significant 62 percent reported having no clear aspirations, while an additional 9.3 percent expressed having no aspirations at all. Consequently, 71.3 percent of Muslim girls were found to lack clarity about their future career paths. In comparison, 62.4 percent of boys in the same survey (54.6 percent with unclear aspirations and 7.8 percent with no aspirations) also demonstrated a lack of clarity regarding their future professions. These findings underscore the significant dearth of educational aspirations within the Muslim community as a whole (Shaban, 2016).

During the survey, many parents expressed reluctance in sending their daughters to schools or colleges, primarily due to concerns over safety and societal pressures. The Muslim community, already burdened by both internal and external challenges, finds itself caught between competing forces. These challenges, which stem from both exogenous and endogenous factors, act as significant obstacles to the fulfillment of educational aspirations among Muslim girls.

Exogenic Factors:

Exogenic factors refer to the external challenges that the Muslim community faces. Historically, successive governments have failed to adequately address the needs of this community. The Sachar Committee Report (2006), appointed by the UPA Government led

by Dr. Manmohan Singh, highlighted the dire socio-economic condition of Muslims, particularly in terms of their access to basic infrastructure and services. The report revealed that Muslims lag behind in nearly every sector, including education, with inadequate educational infrastructure in many areas. Additionally, the Kunds Committee (2013) highlighted the alarming underachievement in the educational attainment of Muslim girls.

In a recent report by NitiAayog, 11 of the 20 poorest districts in India were identified as Muslim-majority areas, further illustrating the dire socio-economic conditions faced by these communities. The sense of insecurity fostered by political narratives—often stoked for electoral gains—has also contributed to a climate of fear and distrust within the community.

While there are several government schemes designed to address the issues faced by Muslim communities, they are often perceived as insufficient. These measures are likened to offering "a banana to a hungry elephant" or "ants to the mouth of a bear," signifying their ineffectiveness in truly uplifting the community. Furthermore, the rise of Islamophobia, fueled by misconceptions and prejudices against Islam, has adversely affected Muslim girls, particularly those who observe religious practices such as wearing the hijab. Many girls shared personal experiences during the survey, recounting how they were subjected to rude comments and discrimination due to their religious attire. As one respondent, Rubina, stated, "*When I wear the hijab, people pass rude comments that make me feel painful.*"

Endogenic Factors:

Endogenic factors are those that stem from within the community itself. These factors include deeply entrenched socio-economic conditions, cultural rigidity, and gender norms that significantly shape the educational aspirations of Muslim girls. One of the most prominent barriers is the low socio-economic status of many Muslim families, which affects the choice of academic streams and career aspirations. The survey revealed that many Muslim girls had to change their academic subjects due to financial constraints, as they could not afford the associated costs.

Additionally, there exists a cultural belief that pursuing higher education, particularly in co-educational institutions, tarnishes the family's honor. Some families strongly oppose the idea of their daughters attending universities, as they view it as a violation of traditional gender roles and community values. During the survey, several girls also reported being restricted from accessing social networking sites, while their male counterparts were free to use them without restraint.

The community's resistance to progressive ideas is often fuelled by religious leaders, whose influence over local populations remains substantial. These religious preachers, generally conservative in their approach, lack a broader, more sustainable vision and often adhere to a rigid interpretation of religious texts. This narrow outlook, compounded by their unquestioned authority within the community, creates an atmosphere of resistance to change. As one survey participant, a research student from JamiaMilliaIslamia, New Delhi, stated, "Our society has complex disorders of different types, and therefore, it needs various and effective antidotes for remedy."

Within the context of these internal struggles, the Muslim community in India can be likened to a "frozen" entity, walled off from progressive thought. The rigidity of these mental barriers is reinforced by the perception that external cultural influences—particularly those perceived as Western or modern—threaten the community's traditional values. This phenomenon is particularly evident in areas such as Nizamuddin, Delhi, where NGOs like the Aga Khan Foundation, which work towards the upliftment of Muslim youth, face considerable resistance. Many locals, influenced by conservative views, accused these organizations of promoting "false values" and aligning with foreign interests, leading them to discourage the community from engaging with such initiatives, particularly with regard to educating girls.

The educational aspirations of Muslim girls in India are shaped by a complex web of exogenic and endogenic factors. Externally, the community faces systemic neglect, political insecurity, and societal prejudice, which stifle educational opportunities. Internally, socio-economic challenges, cultural rigidity, and gender norms perpetuate a cycle of educational deprivation. These

barriers create a fractured environment where the aspirations of Muslim girls often remain unrealized, constrained by a combination of external pressures and internal resistance. To truly address these issues, a multi-faceted approach is needed—one that not only provides access to education but also challenges the entrenched societal norms that inhibit the full realization of Muslim girls' potential.

Observations on the Educational Aspirations of Muslim Girls
In the course of our study, I have observed the Muslim community in the Nizamuddin area through a layered lens, categorizing it into three distinct social strata. These layers reflect varying degrees of access to education, socio-economic conditions, and community attitudes towards progress.

The Nucleus: At the core of the community lies a highly conservative segment, predominantly shaped by patriarchal structures. This group is largely illiterate, with minimal awareness of government initiatives or programs aimed at social upliftment. The socio-economic status of these individuals is severely constrained, and their livelihoods often depend on informal, and at times illicit, activities. These activities consume the little financial resources they possess, and their children, particularly girls, are often caught in the cycle of poverty and child labor. Despite these overwhelming challenges, the girls in this group exhibit constructive aspirations, albeit stifled by poverty and the lack of opportunities. Their daily struggle to meet basic needs often overshadows any academic ambitions they may harbor.

Intermediate Layer: Moving outward, we encounter the intermediate layer, where there is a marked difference in mindset. This group is somewhat more aware of the significance of education, with many members having attained primary or middle school education, and a few reaching the level of higher education. However, they remain heavily influenced by religious preachers, often adopting their views without critically engaging with the issues at hand. Education in this group tends to focus on memorizing religious texts, rather than understanding them in a

broader context. The economic activities of this layer are primarily centeredaround small businesses or traditional industries.

A defining characteristic of this layer is the prevailing sentiment of "us versus them," with a strong sense of community identity that reinforces a distinct separation from the broader society. This group is caught between two worlds—one that advocates for modernization and another that clings to traditional values. While some members are beginning to embrace the idea of progress, including the importance of educating girls, they remain conflicted between conservatism and modernity. The influence of national and international media has played a crucial role in shifting their perceptions, but their hesitancy to fully embrace change remains palpable.

The Upper Layer: At the outermost layer of the community are those who have actively engaged with modernization. This group is characterized by higher levels of education and a deep understanding of governmental programs aimed at socio-economic development. They are well-informed, progressive, and often take advantage of the opportunities provided by these programs. Importantly, they have largely accepted the notion of social engineering and development.

However, despite their relative success, this group has shown a lack of support for the less privileged segments of the community. They tend to separate themselves from the struggles of the nucleus and intermediate layers, sometimes using the community's vote bank as leverage during elections, but without meaningful efforts to address the systemic issues faced by the disadvantaged groups. Their progressive stance, while commendable, often remains isolated from the broader community, preventing a more collective approach to overcoming the challenges that hinder the educational aspirations of Muslim girls.

In conclusion, the educational aspirations of Muslim girls in Nizamuddin are shaped by deeply entrenched socio-cultural and economic factors. While there are signs of progress, particularly in the upper layers, the overwhelming challenges faced by the lower and intermediate layers of society continue to undermine the

realization of these aspirations. To foster a more inclusive educational environment, it is essential to bridge the gap between these layers and ensure that all segments of the community are provided equal access to opportunities for growth and development.

Attitudes of Muslim Girls towards Educational Aspiration

The poignant words of Meira Kumar, former Speaker of the Lok Sabha, capture the essence of the struggle faced by Muslim girls in their educational journey: *"I have the wings to fly and the open skies too, but then why this compulsion not to fly*? As if the iron of rusted conventions has been nailed to the soul, so the wings can flutter but not fly"* (Meira Kumar, 2016). This metaphor underscores the tension between innate potential and the constraints imposed by societal and cultural norms.

Recent developments in the Muslim community reveal a notable shift in the educational landscape, particularly concerning Muslim girls. There has been a steady rise in the enrollment of Muslim girls in schools, with some regions witnessing a higher enrollment rate for girls than boys. However, this progress is marred by the weak connection of education in Urdu-medium schools to state and market structures. As a result, aspirations among these girls often remain stunted, as Abdul Shaban (2016) observes, noting that a significant proportion of students from this community harbor either unclear or non-existent educational aspirations. This gap in educational ambition further jeopardizes the already marginal socio-economic standing of the Muslim community.

In my own experience speaking with Muslim girls from the Nizamuddin area, I encountered significant barriers in initiating direct communication. Initially, it was challenging to engage with the girls, as cultural norms and community dynamics posed hurdles. However, through indirect channels of contact, such as reaching out to their parents, I was able to establish a rapport and initiate conversations with these young girls. What became apparent during these discussions was the high level of educational aspiration that many of them held. These girls expressed a keen desire to pursue education and build futures beyond the limitations of their current circumstances. Yet, despite

these aspirations, a myriad of problems—rooted in socio-economic hardships, patriarchal control, and cultural constraints—significantly hindered their progress.

The aspirations of Muslim girls in this context appear to be a reflection of the wider influence of national and international media, as well as the burgeoning presence of social networks. These external forces emphasize the value of education and the potential it holds for individual and communal empowerment. Nevertheless, the educational dreams of many Muslim girls remain suppressed beneath the weight of masculine dominance and the narrow traditionalism that often prevails in their communities. While the wings to soar are present, they are constrained by a deeply ingrained set of social conventions that discourage their full realization.

There is a marked potential among Muslim girls for educational advancement, their aspirations remain submerged under the complex interplay of societal, cultural, and economic barriers. The need for comprehensive change in both mindset and infrastructural support is essential to enable these girls to fully realize their academic potential and to transform their aspirations into tangible achievements.

Study Area Description

The study was conducted in the Nizamuddin Muslim area of New Delhi, one of the most prominent Muslim-dominated neighbourhoods in the city. This area holds significant cultural, historical, and religious importance, both nationally and internationally. It is home to the revered shrine of Sufi Saint Hazrat NizamuddinAulia, the headquarters (Markaz) of Tablighi Jamaat, and the iconic tomb of Humayun.

The specific focus of the study was on Boali Gate Nizamuddin, located at GPS coordinates Lat. 28.5925N and Long. 77.24153E, an area commonly referred to as Nizamuddin Basti by local residents.

Research Methodology

Selection of the Study Area: Nizamuddin was selected as the study area using purposive sampling. The primary reason for this

selection is its status as a predominantly Muslim area in New Delhi, providing a representative context for the research on Muslim girls' educational aspirations.

Sample: The study sample consisted of 49 Muslim girls from higher secondary schools in Nizamuddin Basti. These participants were chosen using a convenience sampling technique, ensuring accessibility and relevance to the study's objectives.

Data Collection: Data was collected through structured interviews using a questionnaire, allowing the researcher to gather detailed insights into the educational experiences and aspirations of the respondents.

Barriers to Mainstream Education for Muslim Girls: Societal and Institutional Challenges

- **Unawareness about the Importance of Education**: Many Muslim families, especially in rural or conservative areas, remain unaware of the long-term benefits of education for girls. This lack of awareness contributes to a lack of motivation to send girls to school, thus limiting their opportunities for advancement.

- **Societal Bias towards Boys**: A deeply ingrained societal mindset prioritizes boys over girls when it comes to education. This bias is reinforced by the belief that males are the primary breadwinners and thus deserve greater access to education. As a result, girls are often seen as secondary to boys in the educational sphere.

- **Gender Discrimination**: The discrimination between boys and girls is particularly evident in the context of familial roles. The male members of the family are often perceived as the future providers, and as such, their educational needs are prioritized, leaving girls to take on domestic responsibilities instead of pursuing education.

- **Generational Decision-Making**: In many Muslim families, the head of the household, often the father, makes critical decisions regarding education. These decisions are frequently influenced by long-standing traditional cultural norms, which limit the educational aspirations of girls. The perpetuation of

these practices from one generation to the next ensures that these limitations remain entrenched.

- **Lack of Government Support and Safety Measures**: Many parents refrain from sending their daughters to school due to concerns about safety. The absence of adequate facilities and protective measures, such as separate toilets, safe transportation, and gender-sensitive teachers, makes girls more vulnerable to harassment and exploitation.

- **Household Responsibilities**: In many cases, girls are expected to assist with household chores, which further restricts their time and energy for academic pursuits. As a result, their educational aspirations are often sidelined in favor of familial duties.

- **Challenges in Academic Competition**: Although some Muslim families are committed to providing education, the competitive nature of the education system, combined with inadequate resources, makes it difficult for girls to excel. Additionally, many families focus solely on academic education, neglecting the importance of vocational training, which could better equip girls for a diverse range of opportunities.

- **Interfaith Marriages**: The prevalence of interfaith marriages within certain Muslim communities can further complicate the educational aspirations of girls. Parents may become more cautious about allowing their daughters to pursue education, fearing societal or familial backlash.

- **Commercialization of Private Education**: The rising cost of private education has made it less accessible to Muslim families, especially those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. In contrast, municipal schools often suffer from poor standards, further discouraging families from pursuing formal education for their daughters. Additionally, many families prioritize marriage over education for their daughters, reinforcing traditional gender roles.

- **Economic Constraints**: The ongoing economic crisis has made it difficult for many families to afford the high fees associated with quality education. As a result, the focus shifts to more immediate concerns, such as securing a

marriage for their daughters, rather than investing in their academic and professional futures.

- **Neglected Nutritional Needs**: Girls' nutritional needs are often overlooked in favor of boys', who are seen as the future providers. This lack of attention to their physical well-being further hinders their educational performance and long-term development.

- **Early Socialization for Marriage**: From a young age, girls are often socialized to see marriage as their primary goal, while boys are encouraged to focus on education and career development. This gendered approach to upbringing significantly limits girls' aspirations and opportunities for self-empowerment.

- **Limited Importance Given to Girls' Education**: In many Muslim households, education for girls is perceived as less significant than for boys. This belief reflects broader societal attitudes that undervalue the educational potential of girls and women.

- **Lack of Emotional and Motivational Support**: Even when girls perform well academically, they often lack the emotional and motivational support from their families. This is due to limited awareness among parents about the significance of nurturing their daughters' educational ambitions and providing encouragement.

- **Language Barriers**: Urdu, which is widely spoken in Muslim households, poses a significant barrier to education, especially in environments where English is the dominant language. The prevalence of English in colleges, universities, and even commercial spaces such as shopping malls and cinemas creates a language divide, leaving Muslim girls at a disadvantage when it comes to communication and self-expression.

- **Cultural and Dress Codes**: The traditional attire worn by many Muslim girls, including the hijab, salwar kameez, and dupatta, often makes them feel less accepted in modern, westernized environments. This lack of acceptance, combined with societal pressures to conform to western standards of

beauty and dress, can result in a diminished sense of self-worth and lower confidence among Muslim girls.

Findings of the Study

- The study revealed that a significant number of girls come from families with low economic status. These girls expressed a desire to attend colleges and universities but noted that their home circumstances make it difficult for them to pursue such aspirations.
- It was found that the sense of insecurity among the parents of these girls is a major barrier to their educational aspirations. This concern was also highlighted by non-Muslim girls; for instance, Princy, a non-Muslim girl, mentioned that she wants to pursue a PhD, but her parents are unsupportive due to security concerns.
- The study also highlighted that girls are not rewarded for their academic achievements at school. In contrast, the same families tend to appreciate and reward the boys with gifts. This gender bias led to a lack of motivation among the girls, adversely affecting their educational goals.
- According to the findings, 90 percent of the girls do not have a separate study space at home.
- A significant number of Muslim girls reported that their family members do not check or assist with their homework after school.
- The responsibility of taking care of siblings has also diverted many girls from their educational pursuits. Many have dropped out of school and are now helping their mothers with household chores.

Analysis of Findings and Discussion:

The first finding of the study highlights that many girls come from families with low economic status. These girls expressed a strong desire to attend higher educational institutions, but their socio-economic backgrounds create significant barriers. This situation is reflective of the broader trend in many underprivileged communities where economic hardship often limits access to quality education. In India, poverty remains a significant factor in

determining educational outcomes, particularly for girls. Without sufficient financial resources, these girls struggle to afford tuition fees, transportation, and other costs associated with higher education. In rural areas, where most families depend on agriculture or manual labor, the priority often shifts to meeting daily needs rather than investing in a girl's education. This is especially true for Muslim communities in certain regions, where socio-economic conditions remain underdeveloped.

The second finding reveals that insecurity among parents, particularly related to safety concerns, is another major barrier. The study notes that not only Muslim girls but also non-Muslim girls like Princy feel unsupported in their educational aspirations due to these fears. This reflects a broader societal concern where parents, especially in conservative or conflict-prone areas, may view sending girls to school or pursuing higher education as unsafe. The increasing incidence of gender-based violence and the perception of unsafe environments for girls in public spaces are factors contributing to this insecurity. This insecurity is often exacerbated, leading to increased restrictions on girls' mobility and educational aspirations.

The third finding addresses gender bias in the family, where girls are not rewarded for their academic achievements, but boys receive praise and material rewards. This prejudice highlights the persistent gender inequality that many Muslim girls face, both within their households and in society at large. While some progress has been made in terms of girls' education, gender discrimination remains a critical issue. In many households, there is a belief that girls are less capable of achieving academic success than boys or that their primary role should be within the home. This not only demotivates girls but also hinders their educational growth, as seen in the study, where boys are often praised for their academic performance while girls' achievements go unnoticed. This reflects a wider patriarchal mindset that continues to limit girls' opportunities.

The fourth finding, that 90 percent of girls do not have a separate study space at home, is indicative of the lack of adequate infrastructure and support for girls' education in many households. In rural and underprivileged communities, it is

common for multiple family members to share cramped living spaces. This lack of personal space significantly affects girls' ability to focus on their studies, contributing to lower academic performance and dropping out. In many households, the space for studying is often occupied by other daily chores or shared with other family members. This is especially true for Muslim girls, who face compounded challenges of limited resources, societal expectations, and gendered domestic responsibilities.

The fifth finding, where many Muslim girls report that their family members do not assist with or check their homework, underscores the lack of support for girls' education. In many families, the focus on girls' domestic duties or the financial burden of the household limits the attention given to their academic progress. In families where educational attainment is not a priority, especially in economically disadvantaged communities, the lack of parental involvement in academics can result in poor academic outcomes. This issue is particularly acute among Muslim families in marginalized communities, where the struggle to meet basic needs can overshadow the importance of education.

Finally, the responsibility of caring for siblings has forced many girls to abandon their educational pursuits. This reflects the traditional gender roles that often place the burden of household chores and care giving solely on girls. As the study mentions, many girls are now helping their mothers in the kitchen, foregoing their academic ambitions. This situation is especially prominent in rural areas, where gendered division of labour is deeply entrenched. The role of women as primary caregivers is reinforced by societal norms, and it often leads to girls' education being deprioritized in favour of family responsibilities. This issue is exacerbated by the lack of support systems such as after-school programs, affordable childcare, or community-based initiatives that could alleviate this burden.

Conclusion

The study presents a multifaceted view of the challenges faced by Muslim girls in pursuing education. These challenges are not only the result of socio-economic factors but also deeply rooted cultural and societal norms that perpetuate gender inequality. While the

government has implemented various initiatives aimed at improving education for girls, significant gaps remain in the realization of these goals. There is a need for targeted interventions, including community-based programs that address gender bias, provide financial support, and ensure the safety of girls in educational spaces. Moreover, the involvement of parents, especially fathers, in supporting girls' education is crucial in changing entrenched attitudes. The government should adopt a holistic approach that engages not only the girls themselves but also their families and communities to foster an environment conducive to education and development.

References:

- Abdul, S. (2016). Muslim girls in Urdu medium schools of Maharashtra: Progress, retention, and aspirations. *Economic & Political Weekly, 51*(25).
- Asma, & Farooq, A. (2017). Indian higher education is lagging behind: Quality issues and reasons. *Indian Journal of Adult Education, 78*(2), 61–67.
- Bisht, G. S. (1972). A study of the level of educational aspirations in relation to socio-economic condition and educational attainment. In *The Second Survey of Educational Research (1972–1978)* (pp. 135–141). Baroda: Society for Educational Research and Development.
- Farmer, H. S. (1985). Model of career and achievement motivation for women and men. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 32*, 363–390.
- Fuller, C. (2009). *Sociology, gender and educational aspiration: Girls and their ambitions.* London: Continuum International Publishing Group.
- Haller, E., & Virkler, S. (1993). Another look at rural-nonrural differences in students' educational aspirations. *Journal of Research in Rural Education, 9*(3), 170–178.
- Huesmann, L. R. (1998). The role of social information processing and cognitive schema in the acquisition and maintenance of habitual aggressive behavior. In R. G. Geen & E. Donnerstein (Eds.), *Human aggression: Theories, research and implications for social policy* (pp. 73–109). San Diego: Academic Press.
- Kao, G., & Thompson, J. (2003). Racial and ethnic stratification in educational achievement and attainment. In

K. S. Cook & J. Hagan (Eds.), *Annual Review of Sociology, 29*, 417–442.

- Kaur, J. (2011). Effect of gender and home environment on the educational aspirations of Indian adolescents. *Journal of Social and Psychological Sciences.*
- MacBrayne, P. (1987). Educational and occupational aspirations of rural youth: A review of literature. *Research in Rural Education, 4*(3), 135–141.
- Marjoribanks, K. (2005). Family background, adolescents' educational aspirations, and Australian young adults' educational attainment. *International Education Journal, 6*(1), 104–112.
- NITI Aayog. (2018). Aspirational districts baseline ranking: March 2018. Retrieved from http://niti.gov.in/writereaddata/files/document_publication/AspirationalDistrictsBaselineRankingMarch2018.pdf
- Quaglia, R., & Cobb, C. (1996). Toward a theory of student aspirations. *Journal of Research in Rural Education, 12*(3), 127–132.
- Sherwood, R. (1989). A conceptual framework for the study of aspirations. *Research in Rural Education, 6*(2), 61–66.
- St. Clair, R., & Benjamin, A. (2011). Performing desires: The dilemma of aspirations and educational attainment. *British Educational Research Journal, 37*(3), 501–517.
- Stewart, E. B., Stewart, E. A., & Simons, R. (2007). The effect of neighborhood context on the college aspirations of African American adolescents. *American Educational Research Journal, 44*, 896–919.
- Vaidya, S. A. (2006). A study of educational aspiration of higher secondary students in relation to different variables (Ph.D. dissertation). Gujarat University.
- Verma, R. K., & Ghadially, R. (1985). Mothers' sex-role attitudes and demands for independence training in boys and girls. *Indian Journal of Social Work.* 46(1), 105–111.

Review Article

RURAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEMES IN THE INDIAN HIMALAYAN REGION: PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES

G. C. S. Negi[*]

Abstract
Rural development in the Indian Himalayan region (IHR) has always been a challenge due to inherent constraints of inhospitable terrain, remoteness, fragility of ecosystem, and economic poverty of people thereby adding complexity in making policies and strategies for development planning. This paper presents a synthesis of 46 major Central Sector Schemes/ Programmes of Govt. of India pertaining to livelihood and rural development, environmental protection and farmers' welfare those are implemented in the 12 IHR States through various Departments / Agencies. The State Governments also have over three dozen schemes/ programmes and projects for various sectors of rural development and farmers' welfare encompassing even the recent sectors such as climate change, disaster management, organic farming, biodiversity conservation, solar and bio-energy, protected cultivation, etc. with special emphasis on women participation, weaker sections and BPL families. However, there is still a need to value women's role in policy making processes enabling convergence of Central and State Govt. schemes in development. Also, the potential of S&T needs to be optimally utilized to overcome the development constraints along with understanding the operational, political and bureaucratic infrastructure and provisioning of appropriate

---

* Formerly Scientist-G & Head, Centre for Socio-economic Development, G.B. Pant National Institute of Himalayan Environment, Kosi-Katarmal, Almora
Email: negigcs@gmail.com

institutional and delivery mechanisms to enhance rural income. To address economic poverty of people of the Himalaya, appropriate policies need to be brought out to restore balance between economic interest and ecological imperatives and realize the goal of sustainable development in the ecologically fragile IHR.

Keywords
Rural development, Natural resource management, Central and State Sector Schemes, Indian Himalayan villages

Introduction
In India people live mostly in the villages; thus rural development is synonymous with the development of the people living in rural areas. Village development encompasses infrastructure creation, sustainable livelihoods, and decentralized governance. It is concerned with putting more efforts and investments for raising efficiency per person. Therefore, education, information, training, research, and application of research are within the scope of rural development. Mountains, with their inherent constraints of remoteness, sensitive ecosystem, and marginality, pose unique challenges to rural development (Jodha et al. 1992). In this context setting up village cluster- level support to strengthen governance, transforming regular programmes by adopting a saturation approach has been suggested (Tambe et al. 2012). There is a need to further expand capacities and economic opportunities in rural areas by prioritizing self-employment sector, by expanding non-farm rural economy, youth training and placement, strengthening democratic institutions to ensure rapid and inclusive growth of the rural economy that would reduce poverty and improve the quality of life of the rural poor. Globally, mountains are regarded as distinct development areas and present specific challenges for formulation of policies, strategies and planning processes for sustainable development (Action Plan for Himalaya, 1992). Existing sectoral policies for natural resource management in the mountains are found to be less- functional and unsuitable. Gulati & Gupta (2003) in the Himalayan state H.P. pointed out that the existing policies hardly address the key issues of sustainable mountain development and even there are

inter and intra policy conflicts. Through integrated resource management the critical linkages between mountain highlands and lowlands can be addressed to achieve sustainable development (Singh, 2006).

Rural development - The Himalayan context

The fragile mountain ecosystems are globally recognized as water towers, sources of hydro-power, repository of rich biological diversity, centres of culture and indigenous knowledge, tourist destinations, indicators of climate change and providers of ecosystem goods and services (G- SHE, 2017). The ecologically fragile Indian Himalayan Region (IHR) spread across 10 States fully; Assam and West Bengal partially, and two Union Territories J&K and Ladakh, and characterized by diverse demographic, economic, environmental, social and political systems. According to 2011 census, about 79 percent population (of the total 51 million population) of the IHR is rural. It has been realized that despite the importance of mountains in sustainable development context, the specific challenges of development in mountains are inadequately reflected in National Policies (Mountain Agenda, 2002). The sectoral development models applicable for plains are implemented also in the mountains. Consequently, development activities in Himalayas lack coherence causing degradation of environment, poor biological productivity, deforestation, soil erosion, landslides, flood and other natural hazards, socio-economic disparity, poverty and malnutrition, out-migration, loss of bio- diversity and cultural heritage, erosion of indigenous knowledge systems and depletion of life support systems making the region and its people more vulnerable to climate change impacts thus requires specific mountain focus in policies and programmes to address these issues of ecological and economic marginalization (Swaminathan, 1991; Anonymous, 1992). The Ministry of Rural Development, GoI also emphasizes on (a) investing in regenerating natural resources, (b) mobilizing and developing the capacities of community institutions for sustainable utilization of natural resources, and (c) aggregating 'small initiatives' to improve natural capital for integrated rural development in Himalayan mountains. To address the sustainable

development issues of IHR, various Task Forces / Working Groups / Committees were constituted from time to time by Government of India (Sharma et al. 2015). Prominent among them were: (i) National Commission on Development of Backward Classes (1981); (ii) Task Force for the Study of Eco-development in the Himalayan Region (1982); (iii) Working Group on Hill Area Development Programme (1985); (iv) Expert Group on National Policy on Integrated Development of Himalaya (1993); (v) High Level Commission on Transforming the North-eastern Region (1997); (vi) Task Force on the Mountain Ecosystems (2006); (vii) Task Force to look into problems of hill states and hill areas (2010); (viii) Working Group on improvement and development of transport infrastructure in the north-east (2012); and (ix) Committee to study development in hill states focusing on infrastructure, livelihood and human development (2013). Recently in 2017, NITI Aayog constituted Five Working Groups for Sustainable Development of IHR: (1) Inventory and Revival of Springs for Water Security, (2) Sustainable Tourism, (3) Shifting Cultivation, (4) Strengthening Skill & Entrepreneurship, and (5) Data/Information for Informed Decision Making. On the basis of the Thematic Reports/ Recommendations of these Working Groups, NITI Aayog constituted 'Himalayan State Regional Council' for Sustainable Development in IHR that will also monitor the implementation of action points for Central Ministries, institutions and across the Himalayan States. In the IHR context it is noticeable that during various Five Year Plans (FYPs) desired targets or goals were still to met fully. Learning (based on the monitoring indicators of FYPs) such as: (i) A realization of consideration of the peculiarities of hilly terrain and hill societies in policy formulation / planning process; (ii) An appreciation of values of hills in the maintenance of ecological balance having long-term economic values; (iii) Preference to development programmes relying more on indigenous/local resources; (iv) Emphasis on the area specific development programmes compatible to ecological and social specificities; (v) Need for hastening the process of technology transfer; (vi) Importance of long-term studies for ecological and economic changes; and (vii) Relevance of natural resource management programme

implementation in ecological units instead of administrative units (Sharma et al. 2015). Protection of interests of indigenous population, therefore, must assume the focus as well as priority for interventions aimed for sustainable development in the IHR. Government Policies & Programmes on Mountain Development: Government of India is committed to raising the living standards of its citizens and ensuring inclusive growth for all – "Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas Sabka Vishwas" as a guiding principle that consists of five considerations: Indian economy has high rate of growth but major development challenges; pockets of under-development need rapid improvement; inclusive growth; sustaining 8 percent or higher GDP growth; and meet SDG commitments. To enable optimum utilization of their potential, 'Transformation of Aspirational Districts' programme has been started by Government of India with a focus on Health & Nutrition, Education, Agriculture & Water Resources, Financial Inclusion & Skill Development, and Basic Infrastructure, thereby effectively transform these districts based on 49 key performance indicators. The broad contours of the programme are Convergence (of Central & State Schemes), Collaboration (of Central, State level 'Prabhari' Officers & District Collectors), and competition among districts driven by a mass movement. With States as the main drivers, this program focuses on the strength of each district, identify low-hanging fruits for immediate improvement, measure progress, and rank districts. Central Government Schemes (CSS) are broadly divided into two categories, i.e. Central Sector Schemes and Centrally Sponsored Schemes. Major CSS running in India and in the IHR states focusing on rural development, farmers' welfare and natural resources management with salient features compiled from various sources are given in Table 1. Most of these schemes running in the IHR States target almost every sector of rural development and livelihood support, viz., agriculture/horticulture (15 nos.), livelihood/employment generation/ capacity building (15), forestry/biodiversity/medicinal plants (8), livestock and fisheries (4), water (2) and clean technology (1). In these schemes special emphasis has been placed on rural upliftment, women participation and capacity building, weaker sections and BPL families. Information about the CSS pertaining to its objectives,

beneficiary target groups and funding pattern and other details can be obtained from National Institute of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj in each State under MoRD and "Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana". Other than the CSS, the State Governments have over 100 schemes/programmes and projects for various sectors of rural development and farmers welfare and many of them are state-specific and encompass recent subjects such as climate change, disaster management, organic farming, biodiversity conservation, solar and bio-energy, polyhouses and protected cultivation, medicinal and aromatic plants, mushroom, etc. other than the erstwhile routine subjects such as agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry etc. (Table 2).

Table 1:
Central Sector Schemes/Programmes / Projects of livelihood enhancement,   rural development, natural resource management and farmers welfare in IHR

S. No.	Name of the scheme / Brief description / Ministry / Deptt.	J & K	HP	Uttarakhand	Sikkim	Nagaland	Tripura	AP	Meghalaya	Manipur	Mizoram	Assam Hills	WB Hills
1.	National Livelihood Mission- Ajeevika *(Ministry of Rural Development).*	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-
2.	Biodiversity Conservation and Rural Livelihood Improvement Project- *(MoEF&CC)*	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-
3.	Integrated Scheme on Agricultural Co-operation *(Department of Agriculture, Co-operation and Farmer's Welfare)*	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-
4.	Clean Technology & Waste Minimisation - *(MoEF&CC)*	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-

5.	Dairy Entrepreneurship Development Scheme- *(Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries)*	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-
6.	Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana- *(MoRD)*	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
7.	Environmental Education Training Scheme - *(MoEF&CC)*	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	X	X	-
8.	MSME Cluster Development Programme- Infrastructure Development & Capacity Building –*(Ministry of Small & Medium Enterprises)*	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
9.	Intensification of Forest Management- *(MoEF&CC)*	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
10.	Integrated Scheme on Agricultural Marketing- *(Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperation)*	x	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
11.	Joint Forest Management- *(MoEF&CC)*	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
12.	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural employment Guarantee Act (2005); MGNREGA - *(MoRD)*	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
14.	Marketing Assistance of NTFP and MFP Products- 'Van Dhan Vikas Karyakram' *(Ministry of Tribal Affairs)*	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-

15.	National Small Industries Corporation Ltd. Marketing Assistance Scheme - *(Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises)*	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-
16.	Minor Forest Produce (MFP) marketing through MSP and Development of Value Chain for MFP- *(Ministry of Tribal Affairs)*	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-
16.	Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture- *(Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperation)*	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
17.	Multi-Sectoral Development Programme- *(Ministry of Minority Affairs)*	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
18.	National Livestock Mission - *(Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries)*	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-
19.	Dairy Development Programme- (*Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries)*	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-
20.	National Food Security Mission- (*Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperation)*	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
21.	National Mission on Sustainable Agriculture - (*Ministry of Agriculture and*	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

	Farmers Welfare)(a) Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana*;* (b) Management of Soil Health and Soil Health Card Schemes; (c) Rainfed Area Development; (d) Per Drop More Crop- Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayi Yojana*;* (e) Sub-Mission on Agroforestry												
22.	National Mission on Agricultural Extension and Technology - *(Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperation)*	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
23.	National Fisheries Development Board- *(Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries)*	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
24.	National AYUSH Mission- *(Ministry of AYUSH)*	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
25.	National Medicinal Plants Board- *(Ministry of AYUSH)*	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
26.	National Water Mission -*(Ministry of Water Resources)*	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	X	X	-
27.	National Mission on Oilseeds & Oil Palm- (*Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperation)*	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
28.	National Mission on Himalayan Studies (NMHS)- Central Sector- Grant-in-Aid Scheme *(Mountain*	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

	Division, MoEF&CC)												
29.	National Service Scheme- *(Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports)*	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
30.	National e-Governance Plan in Agriculture *(Deptt. of Agriculture, Cooperation & Farmers' Welfare)*	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
31.	Organic Farming in North East Region- *(Ministry of Development of NE Region)*	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-
32.	Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana/Weather Based Crop Insurance Scheme *(Department of Agriculture, Cooperation & Farmers' Welfare)*	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
33.	Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana- *(Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperation)*	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
34.	Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana- *(Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperation & Ministry of Water Resources)*	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
35.	Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme- *(Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises)*	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
36.	Trade Related Entrepreneurship Assistance for Women- *(Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises)*	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-

37.	Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights Authority, India *(Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare)*	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
38.	Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana- *(Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperation)*	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
39.	Sub Mission on Seed and Planting Material *(Department of Agriculture, Cooperation & Farmers' Welfare)*	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
40.	Sub-Mission on Plant Protection and Plant Quarantine *(Directorate of Plant Protection, Quarantine and Storage)*	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-
41.	Sub-Mission on Agricultural Mechanization *(District Agriculture Officer of Concerned State Governments)*	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-
42.	S&T Programme for Socio-Economic Development- *(Ministry of Science & Technology)*	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-
43.	Nai Roshni-Scheme for Leadership Development of Minority Women- *(Ministry of Minority Affairs)*	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	X	X	X
44.	Special Central Assistance to Scheduled Castes *(Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment)*	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	X	X	-
45	Support to	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

.	Training & Employment- *(Ministry of Women & Child Development)*												
46.	Capacity Building and Technical Assistance of North Eastern Region Youth - *(Ministry of Development of NE Region)*	-	-	-	-	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-
47.	Upgrading the Skills and Training in Traditional Arts/Crafts for Development (USTTAD)- *(Ministry of Minority Affairs)*	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-
48.	Village Entrepreneurship Start-up Programme- *(MoRD)*	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-

Table 2:
State Government schemes/programmes/projects on rural development and farmers' welfare in the IHR states.

Name of Scheme / Department	Focus area/activities
Arunachal Pradesh	
Horticulture Garden Scheme (Horticulture Department)	Diversified agriculture and allied livelihoods, livestock and horticulture.
Living Heritage (Village Tourism including eco-tourism) (Tourism Department)	Local artists, artisans, traditional art and establish Culture Village and Tourism Haat.
Development of Rural Tourism (Tourism Department)	Construction of eco-friendly tourist huts.
Assam	
Mukhya Mantri Matsya Bikash Achoni (Fisheries Department)	Construct pond for fishery to promote diversified agriculture, livestock and horticulture.
Mukhyamantri Karma Jyoti Achoni (Industries Department)	Modern tools/ machineries & yarn given to artisans / trained personnel and grants to SHGs for self-employment.
Kalpataru Scheme (Industries Department)	Financial support for employment generation in Agriculture to BPL people.
Mukhya Mantri Mohila Samridhi Achoni (Handloom and Textile Department)	Training/capacity building of Producer Group/Women SHGs/Producers to adopt modern weaving techniques.

Craftsman Training Schemes (Labour and Employment Department)	Training to artisans on craftsmanship.
Mukhyamantri Axom Nirmal Aru Seuj Abhiyan (Panchayat & Rural Devp. Department)	(i) Providing toilets in each household and public institutions; and (ii) solid and liquid waste management.
Jammu & Kashmir	
Development of Horticulture in Dry Lands & Hilly Areas (Agriculture Department)	Promote diversified agriculture, livestock and horticulture in dry lands and hilly areas.
Development of Rare & Minor Fruits Including Berries (Agriculture Department)	Subsidy given for introducing rare and minor fruits.
Subsidy on Plant Protection Machinery (Agriculture Production Department)	50 percent subsidy is provided for plant protection machinery for spraying insecticides/ pesticides.
Development of Demonstration Plots (Agriculture Production Department)	Full support for demonstration of model plots for one year (saplings, fencing, agricultural inputs, etc).
Mini Sheep Farm Scheme (Animal & Sheep Husbandry Department)	Credit linked Mini Sheep Farms (50 Ewes and 2 Rams) for unemployed youth.
Development of Apiculture (Agriculture Production Department)	50 percent subsidy given for a bee colony.
Development of Mushroom Scheme (Agriculture Production Department)	Good quality seeds, compost, trainings and exposure visits for mushroom cultivation.
Handicrafts Training (Handlooms Training Industries & Commerce Department)	Training artisans, preferably women, in Kashmiri handicraft and weaving through handlooms.
State/District Plan (PHE, Irrigation & Flood Control Department)	Watershed management (traditional water bodies, irrigation, drainages, flood protection, etc).
Silvi Pastures and Fodder Development (Forest Department)	Develop forest degraded land into pasture.
Rehabilitation of Degraded Forests (Forest Department)	Plantation in degraded forests.
Village Wood Lot (Forest Department)	Trees are planted in community land.
Himachal Pradesh	
Kisan Bagwaan Samridhi Yojana (Agriculture Department)	Cash crops/precision farming (Polyhouses) through micro-irrigation etc.
Scheme for Soil Testing (Agriculture Department)	Free soil testing and Soil Health Cards to farmers.
Crop Diversification Project (Agriculture Department)	Facilities of irrigation, farm access roads, marketing, post-harvest, organic farming etc.
Horticulture Development Project (Horticulture Department)	50 percent subsidy to SC/ST/BPLs for planting of orchards; for small farmers (25 percent subsidy) and marginal farmers (33.3 percent subsidy).
Plants Protection Programme (Horticulture Department)	Provide fungicide, insecticides and equipment on 50 percent subsidy for small and marginal farmers and 30

	percent subsidy for big farmers.
Training Programme for SCs/STs/OBCs for self employment (Rural Development Department)	Assistance for tools /sewing machines to trained people (BPL family) for Rs. 1500/-.
Skill Development Allowance (Labour and Employment Department)	Upgrade skill of physically handicaped unemployed youth for 24 months.
Self-Employment to Women (Women & Child Development Department)	Grant provided for self-employment to women with income <Rs. 35000/yr.
Village Tourism including eco-tourism (Tourism Department)	Home Stay Scheme in rural and offbeat areas.
Maharishi Valmiki Sampooran Swachhata Puruskar (Rural Development Department)	A competition based State level award of ₹ 10.00 lakh; Rs. 5 lakh at Division level, at District level Rs. 3 lakh and at Block level Rs. 1 lakh to cleanest Gram Panchayat.
Bio-gas (Rural Development Department)	Construction of Bio-gas units in villages.
Mukhya Mantri Adarsh Gram Yojana (Social Justice and Empowerment Department)	Integrated development (road, water, sanitation and street lights, etc.). of selected villages with > 40 percent SC/ST population.
Manipur	
North Eastern Council Fund for Resource Mobilisation Scheme (Agriculture, Horticulture, Veterinary and Animal Husbandry Department)	Employment and income generating programmes for improving socio-economic conditions of OBCs & minorities.
Promotion of Fisheries Activities through competition on fish fair cum fish crop (Fisheries Department)	Awards to motivate fish farmers and farmers with highest records of production.
State share to NEC programme for Horticulture Development Activities (Agriculture, Horticulture, Veterinary and Animal Husbandry Department)	Grants for revival of orchard, amelioration of acid soil of horticulture crops and production of quality and nucleus potato seeds.
Economic Development Programme (Commerce and Industries Department)	Enhancing skill of individual/ family by training on crafts, embroidery, carpentry, tailoring, etc.,
National Afforestation Scheme, National Service Scheme (Forests & Environment Department)	Tree plantation in homestead, schools and public institutions through NSS.
Biodiversity Conservation Programme (Forests and Environment & DST)	Plantation in river basin and reserve forest, protection and cleanliness of State Rivers.
State Medicinal Plants (Department of Forests & Env.)	Plantation / conservation of medicinal plants.
Mission on Climate Change and Adaptation (Directorate of Environment)	Project implementation at community, national and trans-boundary level vulnerable to climate change.

Disaster Management (Directorate of Disaster Management Authority)	Funds institutes/ universities for publications/ training & capacity building/ assistance to disaster victims etc.
Renewable Energy for Rural Applications (Renewable Energy Development Agency)	Promotes family biogas plants, improved cook stoves and solar cookers.
Meghalaya	
Intensive Arts and Culture Development Programme (Arts and Culture Department)	Promote indigenous folk and tribal arts in music, dance and drama.
Agriculture Academic Studies (Agriculture Department)	Financial assistance to B.Sc. (Agri/Horti) students selected on merit on reservation seats in Universities.
State Rice Mission (Agriculture Department)	Increase productivity of rice using modern science and extension of technologies.
Tea Development (Horticulture Department)	Plantation of tea at experimental/commercial scale by free seedling distribution/subsidy.
Tuber Crops Development - Potato, Tapioca, Colocasia (Horticulture Department)	Enhance potato production by distribution of HYV seeds, chemicals and equipments on 50 percent subsidy.
Vegetable Development Scheme (Horticulture Department)	Providing high yielding/ hybrid crop seeds; garden tools at 50 percent subsidy. 100 percent assistance for organic cultivation and trellis.
Organic Manure (Agriculture Department)	Encourage farmers for use of eco-friendly, non-toxic humus and organic fertilisers viz., Azotobacter, Azospirillium, Rhizobium, etc.
Plant Protection Including IPM (Agriculture Department)	Subsidy (50 percent) on plant protection equipments. Free distribution of IPM equipments for trapping pests.
Floriculture Development Scheme (Horticulture Department)	Subsidy for floriculture and planting materials and other inputs.
Grants in Aid (Commerce & Industries Department)	Grant to pass out trainees to set up their own unit by providing basic tools, equipments and working capital.
Plantation Development (Arecanut, Cashewnut, Coconut) (Horticulture Department)	Subsidy (33-50 percent) provided to farmers for planting materials, polypipes and water tank.
Fruit Development (Temperate or Citrus Fruits) (Horticulture Department)	Improved fruit planting materials, garden tools, implements at 50 percent subsidy.
Organic Manures Including Vermicompost and Compost Pit (Horticulture Department)	Subsidy to farmers to adopt vermiculture, vermicompost and organic manure.
Seed Farms (Agriculture Department)	Production of high quality crop seeds, horticultural seedlings for distribution to cultivators.
Scheme for Self-Help Group/ Cooperative Society (Animal	Financial assistance for livestock equipments and feed to registered SHGs

Husbandry and Veterinary Department)	/ cooperative societies.
Rural Cluster Approach for Poultry and Piggery Devp. (Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Department)	Assistance to farmers for poultry and piggery.
Educated Unemployed Youth Scheme (Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Department)	Financial assistance for cattle, goat, poultry, feed and equipments to educated unemployed youth.
General Scheme (Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Department)	Financial assistance for livestock (cattle, goat, poultry, feed /equipments) or poultry to agricultural labourer/small and marginal farmers.
Pine Needles Briquetting Project (Meghalaya State Rural Livelihoods Society)	Pine needles (bought at Rs. 2/kg) are balled for converting it into fuel briquettes.
Meghalaya State Aquaculture Mission (Fisheries Department)	This mission includes 6 mini missions-Viz., productivity, infrastructure development, indigenous and endemic species conservation, fisheries, capacity building, media campaigns and documentation.
IBDLP- Apiculture Mission (Meghalaya Basin Development Authority)	Upscale apiculture as an organised industrial enterprise.
Master Craftsman (Commerce & Industries Department)	Stipend to village youth for training on master crafts, handloom and handicraft.
Placement Linked Skill Training Programme (Meghalaya State Skill Development Society)	Skilling of youth in self-security, hospitality, sewing, welding, automobile, electrician, etc.
Chief Minister's Rural Development Fund (Community & Rural Development Department)	Creation of wage employment on socially and economically useful public assets.
Meghalaya Tourism Development and Investment Promotion Scheme (Meghalaya Tourism Department)	Incentives (30 percent) of project cost for home stays/ resorts.
Clean and Green Award (State Rural Employment Society, Community & Rural Development Department)	Raising environmental standards, health and quality of life of rural communities.
State Plan Scheme by Social Forestry Division (Forestry Department)	Forestry, Environment & Ecology, Afforestation of Critically degraded Catchment Areas.
IBDLP-Natural Resource Management (Meghalaya Basin Development Authority)	Harnessing of natural resources for sustainable livelihood through nurseries, seed bank, water management.
Soil & Water Conservation Schemes in General Areas (Soil & Water Conservation)	Reduce soil erosion, land degradation, water conservation, afforestation, cash/ horticulture crops, etc.
Mizoram	
Support for Extension, Innovation &	Promote better farming practices and

Awareness Through Research Organisation & Training (Horticulture Department/ NEC)	livelihood support.
Pilot Project for Development of Horticulture & Floriculture Crops (Horticulture Department/ NEC)	Promoting diversified agriculture, livestock and horticulture.
Diversification of Agronomical Crops (Agriculture Department/ NEC)	Promote better farming practices and livelihood support.
Nagaland	
Nagaland Bee and Honey Mission (Department of Agriculture)	Focuses on (i) Research; (ii) Apiculture Development; and (iii) Industry and Marketing.
Nagaland Handloom and Handicraft Development Corporation Ltd. (Industry and Commerce Department)	Organising exhibition, Festival Fairs, Craft Bazaar, Handloom Expo for artisans and weavers to promote products and marketing skills.
Grant-in-Aid to Village Development Boards (Rural Development Department)	Develop infrastructure and income generation activities for women and youth.
Nagaland Bamboo Development Agency (Agriculture Department)	Promotion of bamboo based industries for local traditional bamboo craft & design and value addition for generating income.
Sikkim	
Total Literacy Mission (Human Resource Dev.)	Special training module for computer literacy.
Sikkim Organic Mission (Food Security & Agriculture Development)	Organic farming support for creation of composting /vermi-composting units; Integrated nutrient management / Bio-fertiliser/ EM technology; Integrated pest management; soil testing laboratory and Organic certification.
Tripura	
Tripura Bamboo Mission (Industries & Commerce Department)	Livelihoods enhancement of rural poor through Bamboo value addition.
Tripura Rural Livelihood Mission (Department of Rural Development)	Development of Producer Organisations or Clusters.
Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (Department of Agriculture)	Promoting diversified agricultural and allied livelihoods, including livestock and horticulture.
USTTAD (Upgrading the Skills and Training in Traditional Arts/Crafts for Development) (Welfare of Minorities Department)	Conserve traditional arts/crafts and building capacity of traditional artisans and craftsmen.
Tripura Rural Livelihood Mission (Rural Development Department)	Formation of SHGs for promotion of Micro-Enterprise.
Livelihoods of Women Through SHGs (Ministry of DoNER)	Federating women SHG and Producers Group.
Accelerated Irrigation Benefit & Flood Management Programme (Department of Agriculture)	Supports major, medium and minor irrigation projects, flood management and restoration of water bodies.
Clean Technology & Waste Minimisation Strategies (Department	Industrial pollution abatement through clean technology and preventive

of Forests)	strategies.
Uttarakhand	
Indira Mahila Samekit Vikas Yojana (Women Empowerment and Child Development)	Assistance is provided for: (i) Drudgery reduction; (ii) Empowerment of women; (iii) Job employment skills; (iv) Women specific infrastructure and technologies; (v) Legal literacy and awareness; Women rights; (vi) Health and education of girls and women; (vii) Women entrepreneurship; (viii) Support to women SHGs.
Bee Keeping (Sericulture Department)	Support for bee keeping, collection and processing of honey, etc.
Garden Rejuvenation Scheme (Horticulture Department)	Support for rejuvenating of orchards and plantations.
Scheme of Fruit Plants Plantation (Horticulture Department)	Supports fruit plantations and nursery raising.
Mukhya Mantri Sanrchhit Udyan Vikash Yojana (Horticulture Department)	Promotes diversified agriculture, livestock and horticulture, polyhouses to create nursery.
Horticulture Insurance Scheme (Horticulture Department)	Supports insurance coverage of failure of notified crop due to natural calamities, pests & diseases.
Spice Mega Park Scheme (Horticulture Department)	Mega parks are constructed to boost production and quality of spices.
Medicinal and Aromatic (MAP) Development (Uttarakhand State Medicinal Plant Board)	Support in the form of 50 percent subsidy to the growers for mass cultivation of 26 MAP species.
CM Jadi Buti Yojana (Herbal and Aromatic Plants)	Financial assistance for cultivation of medicinal plants.
Distribution of Water Pump, Sprinkler Set, etc. (Agriculture Department)	Subsidy for procurement of farm machineries, etc.
Seed Production Programme / Core Village Scheme (Agriculture Department)	Supports production and cultivation of selective seeds.
Establishment of Poly House / Mechanisation (Agriculture Department)	Subsidy is provided for poly house for raising horticulture seedlings, floriculture, etc.
Construction of Agri. Input Stores (Agriculture Department)	Supports entrepreneurs for setting up farm machinery store, seed, fertilizer, etc.
Post-Harvest Management (Horticulture Department)	Technical assistance for post harvest management of food grains.
Scheme of Power Machine (Tractor /Power Tiller) (Horticulture Department)	Farm machineries to farmers / farmers group.
Uttarakhand Decentralized Watershed Development Project – Gramya Yojana (Directorate of Watershed Management)	Focuses on: (i) watershed and natural resource management; (ii) increasing productivity on arable lands; (iii) agribusiness development and alternative livelihoods.
Integrated Livelihood Support Project (Directorate of Watershed	Watershed management for food security and livelihood enhancement.

Management)	
Construction/ Renovation of Canals (Irrigation & Flood Control Department)	Construction of canals/ water channels for irrigation.
Drought Prone Area Programme (Rural Development Department)	Minimise the negative effects of drought on production of crops and livestock.
Integrated Wasteland Development Projects (Rural Development Department)	Wasteland development by afforestation and plantation of timber wood, bamboo, etc.
Plantation in Reserve & Civil Soyam Forest (Forestry & Wildlife Department)	Plantation for regeneration of forest.
Plantation of Bamboo Species, Biofuel Species (Forestry & Wildlife Department)	Bamboo plantation in the fallow and waste land.
Catchment Area Conservation and Management Plan (Water Supply & Sanitation Department)	(i) Rejuvenation of natural water sources; (ii) Rain water harvesting; (iii) Plantation of broad leaf species.
Bio-Energy (Non-Conventional Energy Department)	Biogas Plants with capacity ranging 2- 4 Cum are installed.
Solar Energy (Non-Conventional Energy Department)	(1) Solar Photovoltaic (i) Solar lantern; (ii) LED based solar street lights/home lights; (iii) Solar power plant. (2) Solar Thermal (i) Solar water heater; (ii) Solar cooker; and (iii) Solar steam cooking systems.
Establishment of Ayush Gram (Department of Medical Health and Family welfare)	Ayush Gram establishment for cultivation of medicinal plants for traditional health care system.
Organic finger millet production Programme (Agriculture Department)	Supports construction of agriculture stores and cultivation of organic finger millets.
West Bengal(Darjeeling)	
Free Crop Insurance Scheme (Bangla Shashya Bima) (Government of West Bengal)	Government will pay full premium for selected crops (aman paddy, aus paddy, jute and maize) to farmers in 15 districts.
SHAHY (Department of Panchayats & Rural Devp.)	Targets people not covered under poverty alleviation and social security programmes.

Constraints / Limitations in Implementation of the Schemes & Recommendations:

In spite of a vast spectrum of schemes /programmes /projects on rural development and famers welfare in the IHR the desirable outcomes are always debated. Understandably, there could be various constraints specific to one scheme or the other that makes an area of further investigation. In the Himalayan mountain context it has been argued that constraints such as: easy access of institutional finance, enabling credit guidelines and also the

existing laws and policies are not women-friendly to negotiate their roles in households, communities, and market (Resurrección et al. 2019). This is because men out- migrate in large numbers leaving women to manage agriculture, marketing or public institutions. This results in undervaluation of the role of women in most policy making processes. In this context, the MGNERGA scheme has become a community-led social movement with large participation of women thereby increasing their purchase power to uplift their living standard, health care and education of their children (Tambe et al. 2012). Skill and capacity of the rural people in executing these schemes is another limitation. The 2018 Report of NITI Aayog emphasizes that skill and entrepreneurship development in the IHR needs to focus on supporting emerging priority sectors and suitably empower the Skill India Mission and ensure convergence of Central and State Government schemes/programmes (Anonymous, 2018). There is also a need to incentivize investments in skill and entrepreneurship development by public, private and development organizations, with particular focus on enhancing capacities of vulnerable groups (Anonymous, 2018). While examining the environmental implications of its schemes, the Ministry of Rural Development recommended measuring and tracking, incentives and capacity building of stakeholders. For example, it has been reported that in Uttarakhand (Rawat et al. 2010) the potential of S&T has not been adequately harnessed to overcome the development constraints emphasizing the need for establishment of technology resource centres for management of locally available bio-resources through people's participation. Singh (1987) pointed out that the implementation of poverty alleviation programmes suffer from a multitude of problems due to lack of infrastructure avoiding benefits to the poorest section up to the desired level. Murari (1988), suggests that all development programmes should be initiated after adequate understanding of the social, political and operational aspects. Another study on "Doubling of Farmer's Income by 2022" found that it is not the absence of government sponsored schemes, rather the absence of appropriate information about the schemes and institutional delivery mechanism and capacity of stakeholders behind the success of the programmes

(Negi et al. 2022). It can be concluded that there is a need to evolve new paradigm to restore balance between economic interest and ecological imperatives with due regards to socio-ecological considerations to achieve sustainable development in the ecologically fragile IHR (Singh, 2006).

References:

- Anonymous (1992). *Action Plan for Himalaya. Himavikas Occasional Publication No. 2.* G. B. Pant Institute of Himalayan Environment and Development, Kosi-Katarmal, Almora.
- Anonymous (2018). *Contributing to Sustainable Development in the Indian Himalayan Region.* Report of NITI Aayog, Government of India.
- Compendium of Missions/Schemes (2018), *Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers Welfare*, Government of India <www.agricorp.nic.in>
- Gulati, A.K. and H.K. Gupta (2003). *An Analysis of Policy Framework for Mountain Development in the Northwest Himalayas, India.* Paper submitted to XII World Forestry Congress, 2003. Qubec, Canada.
- Jodha, N.S., M. Banskota & T. Pratap (Eds.), (1992). *Strategies for the Sustainable Development of Mountain Agriculture: An Overview.* Oxford & IBH Publ. Ltd. New Delhi.
- Mountain Agenda (2002). *Mountain of the World Sustainable Development in Mountain Areas, The Need for Adequate Policies and Instruments*, SDC, Switzerland, 55 p.
- Murari (1988). *On the quality of Indian consumption, Ahmedabad* <https://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/9697/6/06_chapter percent201.pdf>
- Negi, G.C.S., H. Pant, S. Punetha, D.S. Bisht, S.C. Arya, D.S. Chauhan, P. Ghosh & Deepa Bisht. 2022. *Doubling Farmer's Income in a Village Cluster of Uttarakhand.* G.B. Pant National Institute of Himalayan Environment, Kosi-Katarmal, Almora.100 p.
- Rawat, L. S., R. K. Maikhuri, V.S. Negi, A. Bahuguna, K.S. Rao, S.K. Agarwal & K.G. Saxena (2010). Managing natural resources with eco-friendly technologies for sustainable rural development: a case of Garhwal Himalaya. *Int. J. Sust. Dev. & World Ecol.* 17(5): 423-430.
- Resurrección B.P. et al. (2019) In the Shadows of the Himalayan Mountains: Persistent Gender and Social

Exclusion in Development. In: Wester P., Mishra A., Mukherji A., Shrestha A. (eds) *The Hindu Kush Himalaya Assessment*. Springer, Cham.

- Sharma, S., Joshi, R., Joshi, R., Rawal, R.S. and Dhyani, P.P. (2015). *Progression in Developmental Planning for the IHR (Synthesis of Changing Perspectives through Five Year Plans and Recommendations of Task Forces/Workgroups).* G.B. Pant Institute of Himalayan Environment and Development, Kosi-Katarmal, Almora. pp. 35.
- Singh, S. (1987). *Poverty and Social Change: With a Reappraisal*, New Delhi, Orient Longmans.
- Singh, J.S. (2006). Sustainable development in the Indian Himalayan region: Linking ecological and economic concerns. *Current Science* 90 (6): 784-788.
- Swaminathan, M.S. (1991). *Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant Memorial Lecture I*: G.B. Pant Institute of Himalayan Environment and Development, Kosi-Katarmal, Almora.
- Tambe, S.,M. L. Arrawatia & A.K. Ganeriwala (2012). Managing Rural Development in the Mountain State of Sikkim, India. *Mountain Research and Development*, 32(2):242-252.

RESERVATION POLICIES IN J&K: TRACING THE GENESIS AND EVOLUTION

Ishfaq Ahmad[*]
Tabasum Firdous[†]

Abstract

This research paper gives a detailed analysis of the genesis and evolution of reservation policies in India, tracing its origin from the British Raj era to current times. It analyses the constitutional provisions and amendments that laid the foundation for reservations for Scheduled Tribes, Scheduled Castes, and Other Backward Classes in education, employment, and political representation. This paper comprehensively analyses the role of various commissions and committees appointed to advice on reservation policies and the evolving criteria for identifying backwardness. With a specially focussing on the evolution of reservation policies of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir, it discusses the constitutional provisions, subsequent orders, and the efforts of the state government through the Reservation Act of 2004 and Reservation Rules of 2005 to provide legal backing for affirmative action measures. The paper also highlights the commissions and committees appointed in Jammu and Kashmir to examine reservation policies, evaluating the challenges in devising objective frameworks for identifying beneficiaries while balancing social justice and administrative efficiency.

[*] Research Scholar Centre of Central Asian Studies University of Kashmir
  Email: **ishfaqdar13@gamil.com**
[†] Director, Centre of Central Asian Studies, University of Kashmir
  Email: **tfdm2@yahoo.com**

Keywords
Reservation Policies, Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe, British Raj, OBCs.

Introduction
Affirmative action refers to government policies promoting employment opportunities for marginalised groups in society. These policies are designed to counteract the negative effects of historical injustices and discrimination faced by minorities and depressed groups and to ensure fair representation of these depressed groups in public institutions. Discrimination persists as a pervasive societal issue, impacting access to assets, employment, education, and political participation across diverse economic and political systems (Ferreira & Walton, 2005). To address inequalities in representation and correct the marginalisation of minority groups, different countries have implemented various compensatory policies, including reservation, affirmative action, and equal opportunity measures (Gryphon, 2005; Hickey et al., 2014).

Modern affirmative action policies trace their origin to the 1950s-60s civil rights movement in the United States (Deshpande, 2005; Weisskopf, 2004). The landmark Civil Rights Act legislation in 1964 outlawed discriminatory practices under equal protection principles and provided the initial legal base for the affirmative action (Faingold, 2022). What began specifically as restorative efforts to uplift African Americans expanded over time to promote equity across wider demographics who suffer comparable disenfranchisement to others (Deshpande, 2005)

The implementation of affirmative action often involves targeted recruitment programs, preferential treatment for those who are socially, and politically marginalised, and, in some cases, the use of quotas. However, opponents of affirmative action argue that this approach is based on collectivism and can lead to a different form of discrimination. They assert that the Indian reservation system which is based on quota system disregards the importance of merit, denying qualified applicants certain benefits wholly based on their social group membership (Kumar, 1992, pp. 290-91)). Similarly, in India, Reservation policies aimed at promoting equality, and social justice have always been an integral part of

constitution of India. These reservation policies seek to empower marginalised communities who are facing historical exclusion and marginalisation and try to addresses structural inequalities ingrained in the Indian society. Thus, the research paper uses the descriptive approach and offers a comprehensive analysis of the genesis, evolution, and key developments in shaping the reservation policies in India, andit also focuses on the evolution of reservation policies inthe erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir.

Tracing the Evolution of Quota-Based Affirmative Action in India

Indian society has deep-rooted structural inequalities arising from its diversity of races, cultures, religions, regions, and castes, resulting in a hierarchical social system where people's positions and rights are determined by his or her birth. This hierarchy has persisted in the unequal allocation of social positions, goods, and rights, historically denying basic rights like education, civil liberties, and religious freedom to many groups (Akerlof, 1976).

The concept of guaranteed socio-political representation for communities in India dates back to the British Raj in the late 19th century (Copland, 2005). While all castes faced some sort of discrimination in the form of inequality, yet Scheduled Castes (SCs) were the most among the depressed castes who are severely affected, historically denied the rights related to property ownership, business, education, and civil/cultural liberties (Das, 2000). The Indian constitution has passed different landmark Acts, and Commissions which has shaped India's complex framework of reservation system, including the Morley-Minto Reforms of 1909, which introduced separate electorates and quotas for minority groups, and the Government of India Act of 1919, which recognised the political existence of excluded and marginalised depressed classes of Indian society (Jensenius, 2015).

The MacDonald's Communal Award of 1932 and the subsequent Poona Pact marked the start of affirmative action policies in British India aimed at balancing compensatory justice while maintaining the fabric of national integration. However, the extent of reservations and the duration they would apply lacked consensus or empirical benchmarks among the leaders, setting arbitrary quotas based on immediate political calculations rather

than substantive social and economic indicators (Galanter, 1984; Biswas, 2021).

The debates and deliberations between Gandhi and Ambedkar over separate or joint electorates for Dalits created differing perspectives on the path to social justice. Ambedkar envisioned the reservation policy as a means to uplift and emancipate Dalits, seeking to transform the hierarchical structure of Indian society and restore equal rights and justice for the marginalised Dalits in opposed to Gandhi's cherished ideology of Varna Sharma, which Ambedkar thought as the main force behind the Dalit exploitation (Ambedkar& Rodrigues, 2002).

The principle of communal representation by providing separate electorates and reserved seats for the Depressed Classes was included in the Government of India Act of 1935, which replaced the term "Depressed Classes" with "Scheduled Castes" (SCs) and "backward tribes" with "Scheduled Tribes" (STs) (Anand, 1980; Annual Report, 2009-2010). After independence, the Indian Constitution enshrined quotas and affirmative action policies for SCs, STs, and Other Backward Classes (OBCs) (Sheth, 1987).

Reform Measures and Evolution of Reservation Policy

The reservation or the policy of affirmative action in India is one of the most important features of the nation's ongoing struggle to rectify historical injustices and create a society based on democratic ideals, equality. Based on social justice and affirmative action ideals, the policy has undergone tremendous changes and evolution since its inception.

The Indian government from time to time has appointed various commissions to examine and analyse the issues pertaining to the reservation system for Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), and Other Backward Classes (OBCs). One of the initial efforts was the Kaka Kalelkar Commission (First Backward Class Commission), appointed in 1953,which aimed to identify criteria for socially and educationally backward classes and examine, analyse their socioeconomic conditions (Somanaboina, 2021). The commission established four main criteria for social backwardness: degraded status, lack of education, underrepresentation in civil services and secondary/tertiary

sectors, and lower caste membership. It identified 2399 backward castes/communities and recommended extensive measures for their upliftment, including reservation of seats in educational institutions and government services. However, the commission's approach of using caste as the primary criterion for backwardness was largelycriticised for potentially reinforcing caste divisions and discrimination, leading to the rejection of its recommendations by the central government (Pasricha, 2006).

In 1978, the government appointed the Second Backward Class Commission, known as the Mandal Commission, to evaluate the current situation of backward classes and recommend steps for their advancement. The Mandal Commission developed eleven criteria under three social, educational, and economic categories to determine backwardness and identified 3743 OBC castes (Kaur & Suri, 2009). The commission advocated for positive discrimination aligned with socialist principles, arguing that equal treatment of unequals perpetuates inequality. It recommended 27 percent reservation in recruitment, promotions, and university selections for OBCs, along with intensive educational programs and measures to promote their participation in business and land reforms. The Mandal Commission's recommendations reflected a compensatory discrimination approach based on Ambedkarite/social justice ideologies, aiming to enable OBC access to power, not just jobs. However, implementing these recommendations sparked nationwide protests and controversy, although they were eventually implemented between 1990-2006 (Mathur, 2004).

To address the issues of Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs), the Government of India established the Commission for SCs and STs in 1978 under Article 338 of the constitution. This commission was responsible for ensuring the implementation of the safeguards and protections provided to SCs and STs, investigating matters related to these safeguards, and reviewing the implementation of the Protection of Civil Rights Act of 1955 (Sharma,2002). In 1987, the Commission for SCs and STs was renamed the National Commission for SCs and STs, delineating its role as a national advisory body for policy and development levels related to SCs and STs. The statutory National Commission for

SCs and STs was created in 1992 after the 65th Constitutional Amendment, with functions including investigating and monitoring the implementation of safeguards for SCs and STs, inquiring into complaints of deprivation of rights, and advising on their socio-economic development planning (Shinde,2005).

Furthermore, the National Commission for Backward Classes was constituted in 1993 under the National Commission for Backward Classes Act to examine requests for the inclusion or exclusion of classes in the backward class lists and advise the central government accordingly. The commission has the powers of a civil court in summoning and enforcing the attendance of any person from any part of India for examination (Verma, 2011).

Affirmative Action and Constitutional Provisions

The Indian constitution enshrined the principles of equality, liberty, and fraternity, aiming to create an egalitarian society with social, economic, and political justice for all citizens. However, recognising the historical and traditional disadvantages faced by certain sections of the population, the constitution adopted a two-pronged strategy – guaranteeing equality before the law and equal protection of the law and empowering the state to make special provisions for the advancement of Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), Other Backward Classes (OBCs), and minorities(Chander et al., 2017).

Various constitutional articles were incorporated to address this objective, such as Article 15(4), allowing the state to make special provisions for the socially and educationally backward classes, SCs, and STs; Article 16(4), enabling reservation in state services for inadequately represented backward classes; and Article 46 mandating the promotion of educational and economic interests of weaker sections, especially SCs and STs. Furthermore, Articles 330 and 332 provided for reserving seats in the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies for SCs and STs, respectively.

To ensure the effective implementation of these provisions, the constitution also established mechanisms such as the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (Article 338A) to investigate, monitor, and evaluate the constitutional safeguards for STs, and Article 340, which mandated the appointment of a commission to

examine the conditions and difficulties faced by backward classes and recommend measures for their advancement.These constitutional provisions and subsequent amendments reflect the state's commitment to addressing the long-standing inequalities and promoting the upliftment of marginalised communities through affirmative action measures like reservations. However, implementing these provisions has been a subject of ongoing debates and controversies, reflecting the complex interplay of social, economic, and political factors in the pursuit of an equitable and inclusive society (Rana, 2008).

Reservation Policies in Jammu and Kashmir

Since independence, various human development indicators in the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir have improved substantially. However, the benefits of economic development have not been equally shared among all communities and social groups. Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), and Other Backward Classes (OBCs) constitute the weaker sections of society and continue to lag behind on most human development indicators. The government has undertaken various policy and programmatic efforts to analyse the condition of these disadvantaged groups and address their social, economic, and educational marginalisation. Reservation policies enacted since independence aim to redress inequality, injustice, and discrimination against weaker sections of society by providing quotas in public sector jobs, education, and political representation.

In Jammu and Kashmir, reservation criteria are based on caste, geographic region, or profession. Considering their economic deprivation and social exclusion, the entire Scheduled Caste population has been classified as a reserved category. Similarly, some communities have been identified as Scheduled Tribes, while others are categorised based on traditional occupations like cobblers, barbers, and carpenters. Another reserved category termed as "Residents of Backward Areas" includes people living in regions bordering the Line of Actual Control. The Constitution of Jammu and Kashmir mandates special care for socially and educationally backward groups under Sections 13 and 23 to

promote their welfare, education, culture, and protection from injustice (Javaid, 2013).

The Constitutional Provisions for the Protection and Development of Various Marginalised Communities of Erstwhile State of Jammu and Kashmir

The Constitution of India applied to the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir with certain exceptions and modifications as provided in Article 370 and the Constitution Order of 1954. Jammu and Kashmir was the only erstwhile state of India that had its own separate Constitution (Bhat, 2017). The Constitutional provisions relating to safeguards for the protection and development of Other Backward People and Dalits of the erstwhile state were as follows:

Section 13 mandated that the state establish a social order of society to promote the welfare of the people, consistent with the ideals and objectives of the freedom movement envisaged in New Kashmir and preserving the Socialist order of society. Section 19, Clause (a) guaranteed that the state made effective provisions for securing all permanent residents equal opportunities irrespective of gender, including the right to work with payment for labour in accordance with its quantity and quality, subject to a basic minimum and maximum wage established by law.

Section 22 guaranteed that the state endeavoured to secure all women the right to equal pay for equal work and the right to full equality in all social, educational, political, and legal matters. Section 23 ensured that the state guaranteed the depressed and underprivileged sections of society special care in promoting their educational, material, and cultural interests, and protection against social injustice.

Furthermore, Section 50 stated that the state's Legislative Council consisted of thirty-six members, with the Governor empowered to nominate eight members, out of which not more than three were persons belonging to any socially and economically backward classes in the state. Section 139 provided that no person was ineligible for inclusion in the electoral roll based on religion, race, caste, or sex (Anand, 2001).

In pursuance of these Constitutional provisions, the erstwhile state government promulgated various laws for the protection of the interests of Dalits to prevent them from economic and socio-political exploitation. The founding members of the constitution were aware of the plight of depressed classes and the need for the removal of caste disparities and practices of exploitation, so they incorporated several provisions against exploitation and other criminal offences based on sex, caste, and religion (Manzoor, 2008).

The Constitution (Jammu and Kashmir) Scheduled Castes Order, (1956), issued by the President in consultation with the Sadar-i-Riyasat of Jammu and Kashmir, specified 13 castes deemed as Scheduled Castes in the erstwhile state for constitutional purposes, excluding non-Hindus and non-Sikhs. Similarly, the Constitution (Jammu and Kashmir) Scheduled Tribes Order, 1989, issued by the President in consultation with the Governor, specified 12 communities designated as Scheduled Tribes in the erstwhile state.

Additionally, the Union Government incorporated 23 Backward Classes from Jammu and Kashmir into the central Other Backward Classes list, formalising the process of identifying and listing Scheduled Tribes and Backward Classes in the erstwhile state as per constitutional provisions.

These constitutional provisions and subsequent orders reflected the erstwhile state's efforts to address the issues faced by marginalised communities, including Dalits, Scheduled Tribes, and Other Backward Classes. The provisions aimed to promote their welfare, educational, and cultural interests and protect them from social injustice and exploitation. However, the implementation and effectiveness of these measures remained a subject of ongoing discussions and debates within the complex socio-political landscape of the erstwhile state.

Reform Measures and Evolution of Reservation Policy

The state of Jammu and Kashmir has witnessed the appointment of several commissions and committees to examine and address issues related to the reservation policy for backward classes. One of the earliest efforts was the Glancy Commission, formed in 1931

by Maharaja Hari Singh, which recommended standardised job requirements, leading to the establishment of a Recruitment Rule Committee in 1938 for selecting qualified candidates. However, the state government struggled to devise definite criteria for identifying and categorising backward classes, and the reservation policy remained contentious, leading to judicial intervention and the subsequent appointment of three backward class commissions (Mathur, 2004).

In 1967, the Gajendragadkar Commission of Inquiry was established to evaluate development programs and examine recruitment policies. The commission found a disproportionate allocation of development funds due to a failure to grasp the nature of backwardness. It recommended a set of criteria for identifying backward classes based on economic backwardness, occupation, region of residence, educational indicators, and caste in the case of Hindus. Although this framework presented an early attempt at a rigorous and evidence-based approach, the subsequent identification of backward classes remained subjective and contentious (Gajendragadkar, 1967).

The Jammu and Kashmir Scheduled Castes and Backward Classes Reservation Rules of (1970) and the Jammu and Kashmir Scheduled Castes and Backward Classes Reservation of Appointments by Promotion Rules of (1970) provided for reservation in employment and promotions for Scheduled Castes and Backward Classes. However, these rules faced legal challenges before the Supreme Court of India, which pointed out certain defects and directed the state government not to enforce them until the deficiencies were addressed. In response, the state government constituted the Wazir Committee in 1969, which categorised Backward Classes into six broad groups based on traditional occupations, social castes, cultivators, pensioners, areas adjacent to the ceasefire line, and underdeveloped pockets. Despite laying down reservation quotas, the subjective classification criteria persisted, highlighting the need for rigorous and transparent frameworks. Recognising the need for a comprehensive review, the state cabinet constituted the Justice A.S. Anand Committee in 1976. The committee's terms of reference were expanded to examine the criteria for social,

educational, and economic backwardness, identify backward classes, categorise them, and recommend safeguards for their balanced development. The committee supported preferential representation for backward classes in government services while considering administrative efficiency and minimum job standards (Mathur, 2004). It prepared a list of backward classes, including weak and underprivileged sections, residents of backward areas, bad pockets, and regions within 8 kilometres of the Line of Actual Control.

Justice Anand Committee submitted its report to the government in September 1977, and on the recommendations of the Justice A. S. Anand Committee, a notificationdated 3-7-1982 was issued by the government to provide the following reservations:

Recommendation for reservation of Justice Anand Committee

S.NO	COMMUNITY	PERCENTAGE
01	SCs	08
02	Socially and Educationally Backward Classes	33
03	Weak and Under-Privileged Classes	06
04	Gujjar &Bakerwals	04
05	Other Social Castes	02
06	Residents of Backward Areas	27
07	District Leh	02
08	District Kargil	02
09	Other Backward areas, excluding Leh and Kargil	20
10	Areas near the Actual Line of Control	03
11	Children of Freedom Fighters	02
12	Children of Permanent Residents Defense Personnel	03
13	Candidates possessing outstanding proficiency in sports	03

Source: Government Notification vide SRO No. 272

Mandal Commission Recommendations with regard to Jammu and Kashmir

At the national level, with a view to determine and investigate the conditions of socially and educationally backward classes in India

as per Article 340 of the Constitution on 1st January 1979, under a Presidential order, a commission known as the Second Backward Class Commission known as Mandal Commission was appointed under the chairmanship of B. P. Mandal to verify the conditions of socially and educationally backward classes. The Commission commenced its functioning on 21-3-1979 and completed its works on 12th December 1980. Moreover, this commission identified 63 castes/ communities as socially and educationally backward classes in the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir and recommended 27 percent reservation for these castes in Jammu and Kashmir State on the basis of social and educational backwardness. The Mandal Commission had not recommended any reservation for residents of backward areas adjoining the Actual Line of Control in the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir or any other part of India.

The Jammu and Kashmir Reservation Act, 2004

The erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir enacted the (Reservation Act of 2004) to provide legal provisions for reservation in appointments and admissions in professional institutions for members of Scheduled Tribes, Scheduled Castes, and Socially and Educationally Backward Classes. The Act defined key terms such as "backward areas" and "areas adjoining the actual line of control," which were declared by the government from time to time.

Chapter II of the Act dealt with reservation provisions through direct recruitment in appointments. Section 3 mandated that vacancies notified by the government be reserved for Scheduled Tribes, Scheduled Castes (not exceeding the limit based on their population proportion), and socially and Educationally Backward Classes. The total percentage of reservations was capped at 50 percent, with the government having the discretion to exclude certain services and posts requiring the highest levels of intelligence, skill, and excellence.

Chapter III provided for reservation in government service promotions, with Section 6 reserving posts notified by the government in any service, category, grade, or class carrying a pay scale not exceeding that of the post of Deputy Secretary to the

government. Section 19 allowed candidates belonging to multiple categories to claim the benefit of reservation in one category of their choice, either for appointments, promotions, or admissions in professional institutions.

The Reservation Act of 2004 was a significant step by the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir to provide legal backing for affirmative action measures and ensure the representation of marginalised communities in government services and educational institutions. However, the implementation and effectiveness of these provisions remained subject to ongoing debates and evaluations as the state navigated the complex dynamics of social justice, merit, and administrative efficiency.

The Jammu and Kashmir Reservation Rules 2005

Consequently, in the exercise of the powers conferred by the Jammu and Kashmir Reservation Act, section 23 of 2004 and section 22 of the Jammu and Kashmir 1998 Disabilities Act, and all other relevant provisions of the law on this behalf, the erstwhile state government framed the Jammu and Kashmir Reservation Rules 2005 73. Rule 4 provides for reservation in direct recruitment in each category, class, and grade in favour of permanent residents of the state belonging to any of the below-mentioned categories, which shall, as nearly as possible, constitute the percentage of available vacancies shown against each:

Reservation in Appointment by Direct Recruitment

S.NO	COMMUNITY	PERCENTAGE
01	Scheduled Castes	08
02	Scheduled Tribes	10
03	Socially and Educationally Backward Classes	25
04	Residents living in the areas adjoining the Line of Actual Control	03
05	Weak and Under Privileged Classes (Social Castes)	02
06	Residents belonged to Backward Areas	20
07	Ex-Servicemen	06
08	Physically Disabled persons	03

Reservation in Education

Rule 13 of the Jammu and Kashmir Reservation Rules 2005 stipulates that seats in professional institution courses must be reserved for members of Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs) and Socially and Educationally Backward Classes. The percentage of total available seats reserved per course should be approximately the percentages shown in the Table for each respective category.

Reservation in Educational Institutions

S. NO.	COMMUNITY	PERCENTAGE
01	Scheduled Castes	08
02	Scheduled Tribe	10
03	Gujjars and Bakarwals	06
04	Residents of LehDistrict	02
05	Residents of KargilDistrict	02
06	Other than (01,02,03 and above)	01
07	Socially and Educationally Backward Classes	25
08	Residents living areas adjoining the Line of Actual Control	03
09	(Social Castes) Weak and Under Privileged Classes	02
10	Residents belonged to Backward Areas	20

Rule 14 provides for other reservations. It provides that in addition to the reservations specified in Rule 13, the below-mentioned reservations are also made in favour of the following categories of the permanent residents of the erstwhile state to the extent shown against each:

Other Reservations in Educational/Professional Institutions

S.NO	COMMUNITY	PERCENTAGE
01	Children of Defence Personal	03
02	Children of Para Military Forces	01
03	Candidates Having Outstanding Proficiency in Sports	02

In this context, it is significant to note that the report of the Backward Classes Commission submitted in the year 2005-06 recommended for enhancement of the reservation quota of social castes from 2 percent to 27 percent as per the judgment of the Supreme Court on the Mandal Report.

Conclusion

From the above discussion, thus it can be concluded that Reservation is a measure initiated in India after independence for the emancipation of socially deprived and economically backward people of the nation who are known as Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Other Backward Classes. The discussion mainly centered on Reservation. This chapter traced the complex background of issues faced by the depressed classes and analysed the efforts of the social reformers and the Government of India from the colonial period till the present time. Similarly, the constitution of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir has also made special provisions for the proper representation of the Scheduled Castes people by providing reservation of seats in the State Legislative Assembly. Section 49, Part IV of the erstwhile state constitution declares that there shall be reserved seats in the Legislative Assembly for the Scheduled Castes. Thus, the state policy regarding reservation in Jammu and Kashmir seems discretionary as the reservation is provided on the basis of geographical location along with caste or community basis.

References:
- Akerlof, G. (1976). The economics of caste and of the rat race and other woeful tales. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 90(4), 599–617. https://doi.org/10.2307/1885324
- Ambedkar, B. R., & Rodrigues, V. (2002). *The essential writings of BR Ambedkar*. Oxford University Press.
- Anand, A. S. (2001). Accession of Jammu and Kashmir State–Historical & Legal Perspective. *Journal of the Indian Law Institute*, 43(4), 455-468.
- Bhat, J. A. (2013). Assessment, evolution and the politics of reservation in Jammu and Kashmir. *The Anthropos*, 2(1), 68-80.

- Biswas, S. (2021). Did the Poona Pact Disenfranchise the 'Depressed Classes'? An Analysis of the 1936–1937 and 1945–1946 Provincial Elections. *Studies in Indian Politics*, 9(2), 239–253.
- Chander, R., &Thappa, S. (2017). The constitution of India and social justice: An analysis. Constitution,. *International Journal of Advanced Research and Development*. 2(6)
- Copland, I. (2005). *State, community and neighbourhood in princely North India, c. 1900-1950*. Palgrave.
- Das, B. (2000). Moments in a History of Reservations. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 3831–3834.
- Deshpande, A. (2005). *Equity & development: World Development Report 2006 background papers*. Revised: January 2005. Affirmative action in India and the United States.
- Faingold, E. D. (2022). Language rights in the United States Constitution and the Civil Rights Act of 1964. *Language and Identity*, 447.
- Ferreira, F. H. G., & Walton, M. (Eds.). (2005). World Development Report 2006: *Equity and development* (Vol. 28). World Bank Publications.
- Gajendragadkar, P.B. (1967). *Jammu and Kashmir Enquiry Commission Report*. Ranbir Government Press, Jammu.
- Galanter, M. (1984). *Competing equalities: Law and the backward classes in India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Government Notification vide SRO No. 272
- Gryphon, M. (2005). The affirmative action myth. *Policy analysis*, Cato Institute's Center for Educational Freedom, No. 540
- Hickey, S., Bukenya, B., & Sen, K. (2014). *The politics of inclusive development: Interrogating the evidence* (p. 416). Oxford University Press.
- Jensenius, F. R. (2015). Mired in reservations: The path-dependent history of electoral quotas in India. *The Journal of Asian Studies,* 74(1), 85–105.
- Kaur, H., & Suri, R. K. (2009). *Reservation in India: Recent Perspectives in Higher Education*. Pentagon Press.
- Kumar, R. (1992). The troubled history of affirmative action. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 15(2), 290–291.
- Lovell, P. A. (1974). Affirmative action: Implications for the workplace. *Human Resource Management Review*, 9(3), 235-237.

- Manzoor, F. (2008). *The constitutional system of Jammu and Kashmir.* Srinagar Kashmir: Gulshan Books.
- Mathur, M. L. (2004). *Encyclopedia of backward castes.* Kalpaz Publications.
- Pasricha, S. (2006). *Caste-Based Reservation in India: Constitutional Safeguards, Gandhi's Views, Ambedkar's Views, Mandal Commission Report, Caste Reservation in Theory and Practice.* Deep & Deep Publications.
- Rana, M. S. (2008). *Reservations in India: myths and realities.* Concept Publishing Company.
- Rule 13, *the Jammu and Kashmir Schedule Caste and Backward Classes Reservation Rules* 1970.
- Rule 13, *the Jammu and Kashmir Schedule Caste and Backward Classes Reservation Rules* 1970
- Sharma, R. (2002). Social Conflict and Social Assimilation: Constitution, Politics and Administration in India. Indian *Journal of Public Administration*, 48(4), 617–634.
- Sheth, D. L. (1987). Reservations policy revisited. Economic and Political Weekly, 1957-1962.
- Shinde, P. K. (Ed.). (2005). *Dalit and Human Rights* (3 Vols.). Isha Books.
- Somanaboina, S. (2021). The other backward classes: Pre- and post-Mandal India. In *The Routledge Handbook of the Other Backward Classes in India* (pp. 215-253). Routledge India.
- *THE CONSTITUTION (JAMMU AND KASHMIR) SCHEDULED CASTES ORDER*, 1956. Published with the Ministry of Law, Notification. No. S.R.O. 3135A, dated the 22nd December, 1956, Gazette of India, Extraordinary, 1956, Part II, Section 3, page 2686A.
- *The Jammu and Kashmir Reservation Act*, (20O4). Retrieved from: <https://socialwelfarekashmir.jk.gov.in/pdf/Act_Reservation.pdf>
- *THE JAMMU AND KASHMIR RESERVATION RULES*, 2005 Social Welfare Department Notification SRO-294 dated 21st October, 2005.
- Verma, V. (2011). Conceptualising social exclusion: New rhetoric or transformative politics*? Economic and Political Weekly*, pp. 89–97.
- Weisskopf, T. E. (2004). *Affirmative action in the United States and India:* A comparative perspective. Routledge.

Research Article

IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF THE INSPIRE MANAK SCHEME IN JAMMU AND KASHMIR

Sajad Ahmad Mir[*]

Abstract

This study explores how the INSPIRE (Innovation in Science Pursuit for Inspired Research) MANAK Scheme encourages creativity and scientific curiosity among Jammu and Kashmiri school-children. Through an assessment of student engagement, innovations, and achievements at the district, state, and national levels, this report evaluates the scheme's impact by emphasizing important initiatives and their socioeconomic effects. The study, which focuses on 2021–2022, emphasizes how the program supports scientific temper and meets societal requirements while highlighting how it aligns with the New Education Policy 2020.

Keywords

MANAK Scheme, Jammu and Kashmir, school, education

1. Introduction

In order to find, support, and highlight grassroots inventions made by schoolchildren, the Department of Science and Technology (DST) and the National Innovation Foundation (NIF) launched the **INSPIRE Awards - MANAK** (Million Minds Augmenting National Aspirations and Knowledge) program. The program encourages ideas from children in grades 6–10, with a focus on underserved regions, and is in line with India's larger

* State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT), Bemina, Srinagar, J&K-190010
Email: sajadphysics@gmail.com

goals of promoting scientific temper and innovation under the NEP 2020.

The program has become a shining example for young talent in Jammu and Kashmir, an area characterized by distinct geological and sociopolitical obstacles. This study examines how well it stimulates scientific thought and how it might be used to solve local problems.

This paper examines the scheme's impact on local youth and its ability to improve socioeconomic development in Jammu and Kashmir throughout its implementation in 2021–2022. The program helps pupils tackle real-world problems by encouraging creativity, which advances the larger objective of national self-reliance.

2. Methodology

Using a qualitative methodology, the study examines primary data from competitions at the district, state, and national levels, bolstered by secondary data from publications and official documents. Participation rates, the caliber of innovations, and their applicability to society are examples of key performance metrics.

2.1 Data Collection

Official documents, project documentation, and competition reports from SCERT and related nodal officers in Jammu and Kashmir are used in the study. To obtain qualitative information, a few interviews with participants, instructors, and nodal officials were carried out.

2.2 Analysis

To identify trends in innovation, projects were grouped according to their areas of interest, such as technology, healthcare, and the environment. Trends in participation were examined by school type, location, and gender.

Karnataka is the top-performing state with 41 selections, followed closely by Maharashtra (39) and Andhra Pradesh (38), according to data on State/UT-wise awardees in the 1st to 9th National Level Exhibition and Project Competitions (NLEPC) of the INSPIRE-

Awards MANAK from 2009-10 to 2022-23. Despite having only ten selections, Jammu & Kashmir is a region with enormous potential and is becoming more and more visible in national scientific innovation venues such as the INSPIRE Awards-MANAK. This demonstrates the area's developing expertise and innovative approaches to problem-solving (see Fig.1).
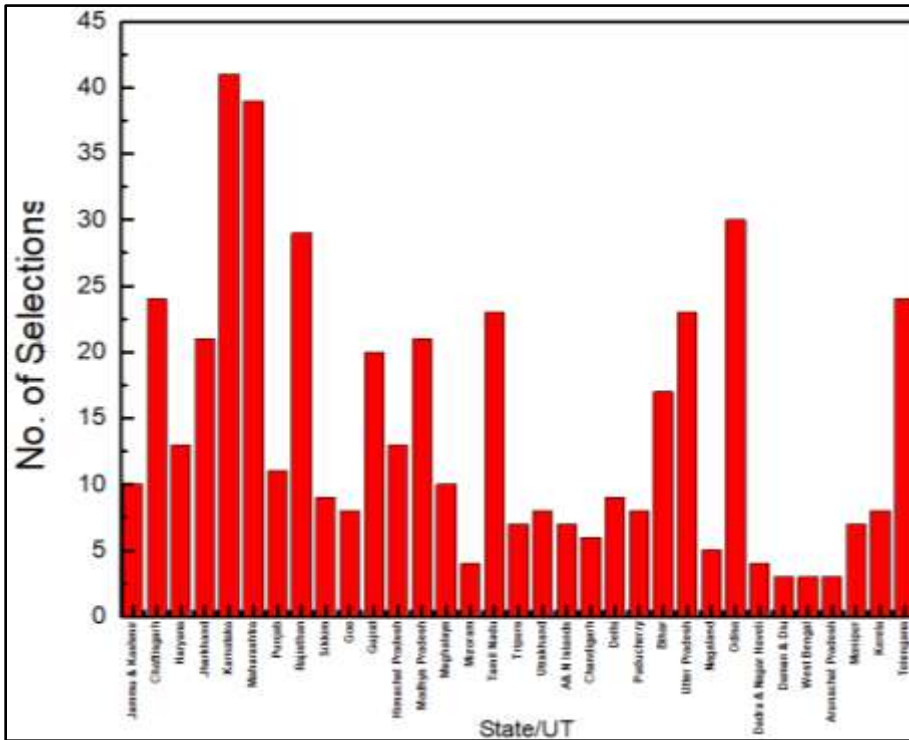

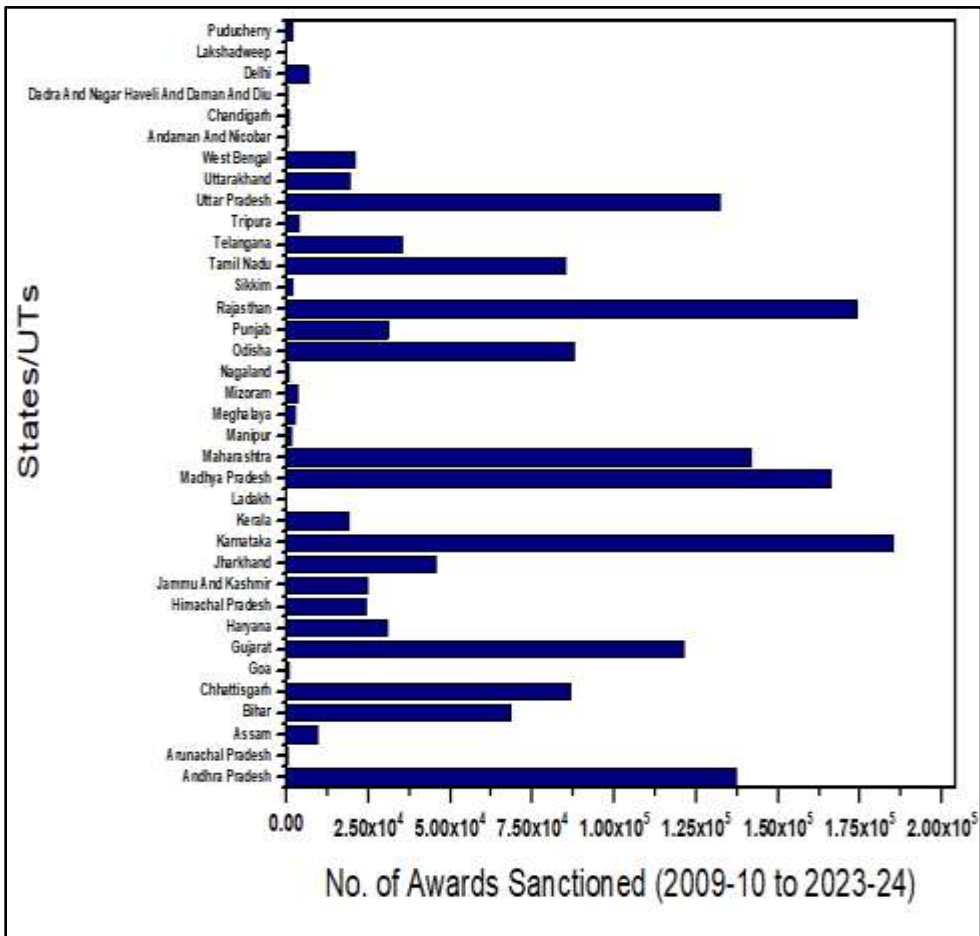**Fig.1.**
State/UT-wise awardees in the 1st to 9th National Level Exhibition and Project Competitions (NLEPC) of the INSPIRE-Awards MANAK from 2009-10 to 2022-23

Furthermore, for the past 14 years, Jammu and Kashmir's performance in the INSPIRE MANAK Scheme has been up to par. With 24,906 schools included in the program, Jammu and Kashmir shows a significant influence on scientific temperament at the local level. Despite having fewer schools than states like Maharashtra (141,763) and Karnataka (185,211), Jammu and Kashmir has received a sizable portion of NLEPC awards. This

demonstrates how effectively the region fosters creativity in each school and how well the INSPIRE MANAK initiative fits in with regional teaching methods (see Fig. 2).

The program has built a strong basis in J&K by encouraging students' scientific curiosity and inventiveness, guaranteeing efficient use of the resources at hand. The region is well-positioned to enhance its contribution to national innovation by cultivating talent at the grassroots level if sustained efforts are made to keep up this pace.

Fig.2.:
State/UT-wise awardees in the 1st to 9th National Level Exhibition and Project Competitions (NLEPC) of the INSPIRE-Awards MANAK

3. Findings
3.1 Participation Trends
About 1,000 student entries were submitted in Jammu and Kashmir's District Level Exhibition and Project Competition (DLEPC) between 2021 and 2022; 95 of these concepts advanced to the State Level (SLEPC). At the National Level (NLEPC), 17 of these students represented UT. This indicates a consistent increase in involvement, which is indicative of growing interest and awareness among instructors and students.

3.2 Diversity of Projects
The projects displayed ingenuity, addressing regional challenges such as accessibility, safety, and sustainability:

- **Smart Electric Pole**: A solution to prevent electrocution, showcasing practical safety applications.
- **Self-Tea Pouring Samovar**: Merging tradition with modernity by automating a Kashmiri cultural artifact.
- **Adjustable Patient-Friendly Toilet**: Improving accessibility for individuals with disabilities, particularly relevant to the elderly population.

3.3 Social and Economic Impact
Projects like the **Hydraulic Bridge Blocker** and **Wonder Liquid (Ink Remover)** demonstrate scalability and potential for commercialization. Moreover, the focus on cost-effective and environmentally friendly solutions aligns with regional needs.

3.4 Alignment with NEP 2020
The scheme's emphasis on creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving is in line with the NEP's goals. It fosters early exposure to scientific methods, positioning students as problem solvers rather than passive learners.

4. Discussion
4.1 Catalyzing Grassroots Innovation
By giving students a chance to interact with real-world problems, the INSPIRE MANAK Scheme has fostered an innovative and inquisitive culture. Students are further empowered to turn their

ideas into workable solutions by the mentorship and financing (₹10,000 via DBT).

4.2 Challenges
- **Geographical Barriers**: Many rural schools face logistical challenges in participating.
- **Awareness Gaps**: Some schools remain unaware of the scheme or lack trained personnel to guide students effectively.

4.3 Opportunities
By utilizing digital platforms, the plan can reach a wider audience. Furthermore, establishing regional incubators for exceptional ventures might help close the gap between conception and execution.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations
Jammu and Kashmir has benefited greatly from the INSPIRE MANAK Scheme, which has fostered a new generation of creative thinkers. Students in the area have shown resiliency, inventiveness, and a dedication to making significant contributions via their projects.In addition to addressing regional issues, regional projects support national objectives for technical advancement and sustainable development. The program's capacity to spur innovation will be further strengthened as it develops and becomes more in line with grassroots demands and national goals.

Recommendations
- **Capacity Building**: Regular training workshops for teachers to mentor students effectively.
- **Infrastructure Support**: Establishing district-level hubs for prototyping and testing.
- **Recognition and Scaling**: Facilitating partnerships with industries to scale viable projects.
- **Digital Platforms**: Leveraging technology for remote participation and idea sharing.

Acknowledgements

References
- S. A. Mir. (2023). *The Art of Innovations INSPIRE MANAK Pioneering the Future World,* 1st ed. Srinagar: Dream book Publishing
- INSPIRE Awards – MANAK 2021-22 Annual Report, SCERT Kashmir.
- *National Education Policy.* (2020). Ministry of Education, Government of India.