
CRIMINALIZATION OF MARITAL RAPE: A STUDY OF LEGISLATIVE SILENCE AND JUDICIAL ACTIVISM

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Abstract

Marital rape—non-consensual sexual intercourse by a spouse—remains a legally sanctioned exception under Indian criminal law, despite being a severe violation of bodily autonomy and human dignity. This research critically examines the legal, constitutional, and social implications of the marital rape exception under Section 63 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, which exempts husbands from prosecution for rape committed against their wives. The legislative silence on this issue reflects not only patriarchal inertia but also a systematic disregard for the evolving standards of human rights and gender justice.

Through a doctrinal and comparative legal research methodology, the paper analyses statutory texts, judicial pronouncements, and feminist jurisprudence to assess the constitutionality of this exception. It studies landmark judgments such as *Independent Thought v. Union of India* and the Delhi High Court's split verdict in *RIT Foundation v. Union of India*, highlighting the judiciary's evolving approach towards marital rape. The study also explores the limitations of judicial activism in the absence of legislative intent and considers the role of the courts in upholding fundamental rights under Articles 14, 15, and 21 of the Indian Constitution.

Drawing on international legal developments, this research compares India's position with jurisdictions such as the United Kingdom, United States, South Africa, and Nepal—all of which have criminalized marital rape. The comparative analysis exposes the regressive nature of India's exception and the urgent need for reform in line with global human rights standards, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

The paper concludes that the marital rape exception is constitutionally indefensible and socially destructive, reinforcing gender inequality and legitimizing intimate partner violence. It argues that the criminalization of marital rape is not merely a legal reform but a moral and democratic imperative. To that end, the paper offers specific policy recommendations, including the repeal of Exception 2 to Section 63 BNS, gender-sensitive training for law enforcement, and legal recognition of sexual autonomy within marriage. This research aims to contribute to the growing call for transformative legal change that aligns Indian criminal law with constitutional morality and the rights of women to bodily integrity, dignity, and equality.

Keywords

Marital Rape, Judicial Activism, Criminal Law, Constitutional Rights, Gender Justice, Legal Reform, Patriarchy, Section 63 BNS

1. Introduction

Marital rape—non-consensual sex perpetrated by a husband against his wife—remains one of the most deeply entrenched and legally sanctioned forms of sexual violence in India. Despite growing advocacy and judicial acknowledgment of women's sexual autonomy, **Section 63 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023**, continues to provide an exception that effectively immunizes husbands from rape prosecution within the institution of marriage.

The law's refusal to recognize forced sex in marriage as a criminal offense rests on colonial constructs of implied consent and patriarchal notions of marital unity. However, in an age where individual autonomy and bodily integrity are constitutionally protected, this exception appears increasingly indefensible. The judiciary, particularly in recent years, has begun to challenge this legal anomaly, often stepping into the vacuum left by legislative inaction. This trend raises critical questions about the separation of powers, the role of courts in social reform, and the limits of judicial creativity.

The **central research question** that this paper seeks to answer is:

"To what extent can judicial activism compensate for legislative silence in the criminalization of marital rape, and what are the constitutional and comparative legal implications of such activism in the Indian context?"

Through an interdisciplinary lens—spanning legal analysis, feminist theory, and constitutional morality—this study critically assesses the existing legal framework, explores the judiciary's interventions, and argues for a rights-based reformation of criminal law.

2. Literature Review

The academic and judicial discourse surrounding marital rape in India reveals a persistent clash between evolving notions of

individual autonomy and a legal system entrenched in colonial-era constructs. This literature review highlights key scholarly contributions and legal commentaries that have critically addressed this discord.

2.1. Historical and Colonial Origins of the Marital Rape Exception

The marital rape exception in Indian law can be traced back to the colonial era and the influence of Sir Matthew Hale's 17th-century declaration that "by mutual matrimonial consent and contract the wife hath given herself up in this kind unto her husband, which she cannot retract." This doctrine formed the foundation for the common law immunity for marital rape, which was imported into the Indian Penal Code through Section 375, Exception 2 now section 63 of BNS.

Legal scholars such as **Upendra Baxi** and **Flavia Agnes** have highlighted how colonial morality and Victorian-era patriarchy have continued to shape Indian family law and criminal jurisprudence. Baxi critiques the colonial legacy of legal infantilization of women within marriage, while Agnes underscores the tension between personal law protections and universal human rights norms.

2.2. Contemporary Legal and Feminist Critique

Recent scholarship increasingly challenges the constitutional validity of the marital rape exception. Dr. Mrinal Satish, in his seminal work *Discretion, Discrimination and the Rule of Law*, argues that the legal system's emphasis on chastity and morality undermines the recognition of sexual violence as a rights violation. Similarly, Tarunabh Khaitan critiques the failure of Indian criminal law to evolve in light of the transformative nature of the Indian Constitution, particularly with respect to Articles 14, 15, and 21.

Feminist scholars have extensively critiqued the heteronormative and patriarchal assumptions

that underpin Indian rape laws. Archana Mishra, for instance, argues that the state's refusal to criminalize marital rape amounts to institutionalized gender discrimination and perpetuates the myth of conjugal consent.

2.3. Judicial Commentary and Legal Reform Efforts

Judicial observations in cases like *Independent Thought v. Union of India*, (2017) 10 SCC 800, where the Supreme Court read down the marital rape exception for minor wives, and the Delhi High Court's 2022 split verdict in *RIT Foundation v. Union of India* have reignited academic interest in judicial activism as a catalyst for reform. Justice Rajiv Shakhder's opinion in *RIT Foundation* offers a compelling constitutional critique of the exception clause, engaging with the principles of bodily autonomy, equality, and dignity.

Further, the **Justice Verma Committee Report (2013)** explicitly recommended the criminalization of marital rape, emphasizing that consent does not cease upon marriage. However, the legislature has failed to act upon this recommendation, leading to a vacuum in substantive legal reform.

2.4. Comparative International Perspectives

Globally, over 100 countries, including the UK, USA, South Africa, and Nepal, have criminalized marital rape either explicitly or through judicial interpretations. Comparative legal scholarship demonstrates how criminal justice systems worldwide are increasingly recognizing that marriage cannot be a defense to rape. **Rebecca Cook** and **CEDAW committee commentaries** have stressed that any legal distinction between married and unmarried women in the context of rape is incompatible with international human rights obligations.

3. Research Methodology

This study adopts a **qualitative and doctrinal legal research methodology**, supplemented by **comparative analysis** and elements of **feminist legal theory**. The research is structured to analyze legal texts, statutory frameworks,

case law, judicial opinions, and academic commentaries, with the objective of understanding the legislative and judicial responses to marital rape.

3.1. Research Design

- **Doctrinal Analysis:** Examining primary legal materials such as the Indian Penal Code (Section 375), relevant constitutional provisions (Articles 14, 15, 21), and case law.
- **Judicial Interpretation:** Studying key judgments like *Independent Thought v. Union of India* and *RIT Foundation v. Union of India*.
- **Comparative Study:** Analysing legal frameworks from jurisdictions that have criminalized marital rape (e.g., UK's Sexual Offences Act 2003, South Africa's Domestic Violence Act).
- **Feminist Legal Theory:** Applying feminist jurisprudential critiques to understand how patriarchal norms influence statutory interpretation and legislative inaction.

3.2. Sources of Data

- **Primary Sources:** Indian statutes, judgments of the Supreme Court and High Courts, parliamentary debates, Law Commission Reports, and international treaties.
- **Secondary Sources:** Scholarly articles, books, commentaries, feminist critiques, media reports, NGO submissions, and government committee reports (e.g., Justice Verma Committee Report, 2013).

3.3. Scope and Limitations

- **Scope:** The research is confined to the Indian legal context but uses comparative international examples to highlight global trends and normative standards.

- **Limitations:** The paper does not empirically survey victim experiences due to methodological constraints. Instead, it relies on documented studies, judicial observations, and published reports.

4. Legislative Silence and Its Constitutional Implications

4.1. The Marital Rape Exception in Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023

Section 63 of the Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), which defines rape, explicitly carves out an exception for marital rape under Exception 2:

“Sexual intercourse or sexual acts by a man with his own wife, the wife not being under fifteen years of age, is not rape.”

This statutory exception grants a blanket immunity to husbands, treating forced sexual intercourse within marriage as lawful, thereby subordinating women’s sexual autonomy to patriarchal marital norms. Although the age limit was raised to 18 by the Supreme Court in *Independent Thought v. Union of India* (2017), the core of the exemption persists.

4.2. Constitutional Incompatibility of the Exception Clause

The marital rape exception violates several fundamental rights guaranteed under Part III of the Constitution:

- **Article 14 (Right to Equality):** The exemption creates an unjustifiable classification between married and unmarried women, depriving the former of equal protection under rape law.
- **Article 15 (Prohibition of Discrimination):** It perpetuates gender-based discrimination by denying married women legal recourse for sexual violence.
- **Article 21 (Right to Life and Personal Liberty):** Judicial interpretations of Article 21 have expanded to include the right to dignity, bodily integrity, and

sexual autonomy—all of which are compromised by the exception.

In *Suchita Srivastava v. Chandigarh Administration* (2009) 9 SCC 1, the Supreme Court recognized reproductive and sexual autonomy as integral to Article 21. These interpretations render the marital rape exception incompatible with constitutional guarantees.

4.3. Legislative Apathy Despite Judicial and Expert Recommendations

Despite recommendations by bodies like the **Justice Verma Committee (2013)** and **Law Commission of India**, successive governments have refused to criminalize marital rape, citing cultural sensitivities, potential misuse, and the sanctity of marriage. Parliamentary debates have routinely invoked the notion of “family stability” to oppose reform, ignoring the fact that consent cannot be presumed from marriage.

This legislative silence reflects a broader discomfort with recognizing women’s autonomy within intimate relationships. As feminist legal scholars argue, the state’s refusal to intervene reinforces the private-public divide that historically excluded domestic violence and sexual abuse from the domain of public law.

5. Judicial Activism and the Role of the Courts

5.1. *Independent Thought v. Union of India* (2017)

In this landmark decision, the Supreme Court read down Exception 2 to exclude minor wives (below 18 years), holding that it violated the Constitution and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012. The Court emphasized that:

“Merely because a girl below 18 years of age is married, her husband can’t violate her bodily integrity and dignity through non-consensual sex.”

Although limited to minors, this decision laid the groundwork for constitutional scrutiny of the marital rape exception.

5.2. *RIT Foundation v. Union of India* (Delhi High Court, 2022)

In a deeply split verdict, Justice Rajiv Shakdher held Exception 2 unconstitutional, stating:

"A woman's right to say 'no' exists regardless of her marital status."

He applied the tests of arbitrariness under Article 14 and dignity under Article 21, stressing that marriage does not extinguish a woman's sexual agency. Conversely, Justice C. Hari Shankar upheld the exception, citing concerns over judicial overreach and parliamentary supremacy.

The split verdict revealed a judicial divide—while one judge embraced transformative constitutionalism, the other deferred to legislative wisdom, reflecting the contested terrain of judicial activism in India.

5.3. Role of the Supreme Court in Bridging the Gap

Following the Delhi High Court's split decision, the matter is now pending before the Supreme Court. In a society where legislative inertia persists, the judiciary emerges as the last resort to uphold constitutional values. The **Supreme Court's role as the guardian of fundamental rights**, as articulated in *Kesavananda Bharati* and *Maneka Gandhi*, authorizes it to strike down statutes that violate constitutional guarantees—even in sensitive areas like family law.

However, the Court must navigate the delicate balance between **judicial innovation** and **judicial overreach**, ensuring its rulings are grounded in both legal principle and constitutional morality.

6. Comparative Legal Analysis

6.1. United Kingdom

The United Kingdom abolished the marital rape exemption in *R v. R*, [1992] 1 AC 599, where the House of Lords held that a husband could be guilty of raping his wife. The Court emphasized that the common law fiction of irrevocable consent upon marriage was obsolete.

Parliament later codified this shift in the **Sexual Offences Act 2003**, which does not provide any exemption based on marital status.

6.2. United States

In the United States, all 50 states now recognize marital rape as a crime, though the severity of prosecution varies. Courts have repeatedly emphasized that **marriage cannot be a defense to rape**. In *People v. Liberta*, 64 N.Y.2d 152 (1984), the New York Court of Appeals declared that the marital rape exemption violated equal protection guarantees under the U.S. Constitution.

6.3. South Africa

South Africa criminalized marital rape through the **Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act, 2007**. The Constitutional Court in *S v. Masiya*, [2007] ZACC 9, recognized that sexual violence within marriage violates constitutional rights to dignity and bodily integrity.

6.4. Nepal and Other Jurisdictions

Nepal criminalized marital rape in 2002, following international pressure and domestic advocacy. Countries such as **Canada, Australia, and Brazil** have also abolished marital rape exceptions, aligning their laws with **international human rights treaties** like CEDAW and the ICCPR.

These jurisdictions demonstrate that **criminalization of marital rape is not merely a feminist demand**, but a global legal standard rooted in fundamental rights and democratic values.

7. Conclusion

The marital rape exception in Indian criminal law represents a glaring contradiction within the framework of a Constitution that champions equality, dignity, and individual autonomy. While societal narratives around marriage, morality, and family continue to shape legislative inaction, the judiciary has increasingly stepped

in to question the legitimacy of these outdated norms.

However, **judicial activism, while powerful, cannot replace comprehensive legislative reform.** The courts can interpret, expand, and critique the law, but the ultimate responsibility lies with the legislature to enact just, consistent, and constitutionally sound laws.

India must confront the uncomfortable truth that **marriage cannot be a license to rape**, and that denying legal protection to married women is a form of state-sanctioned violence.

8. Policy Recommendations

1. **Legislative Amendment to Section 63 BNS:** Repeal Exception 2 to ensure that the definition of rape is uniformly applicable, irrespective of marital status.
2. **Comprehensive Rehabilitation Framework:** Develop state-funded support services, including crisis centers and counseling, specifically for survivors of marital rape.
3. **Gender Sensitization of Police and Judiciary:** Implement training programs for law enforcement and judicial officers to understand the dynamics of intimate partner sexual violence.
4. **Codify Consent Standards:** Introduce provisions that clarify the meaning of consent, explicitly stating that marriage does not imply perpetual consent.
5. **Public Legal Education Campaigns:** Launch national awareness programs to challenge myths surrounding marital rape and promote a rights-based understanding of consent and bodily autonomy.
6. **International Compliance:** Align domestic laws with India's commitments under CEDAW, the ICCPR, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

- *Independent Thought v. Union of India*, (2017) 10 S.C.C. 800.
- *RIT Foundation v. Union of India*, 2022 SCC OnLine Del 1054.
- *R v. R*, [1992] 1 A.C. 599 (H.L.).
- *People v. Liberta*, 64 N.Y.2d 152 (1984).
- *S v. Masiya*, [2007] ZACC 9.
- *Suchita Srivastava v. Chandigarh Admin.*, (2009) 9 S.C.C. 1.
- Justice J.S. Verma Committee, *Report of the Committee on Amendments to Criminal Law* (Jan. 23, 2013).
- Upendra Baxi, *The State and the Human Rights Movement in India*, 18 IND. J. GENDER STUD. 1 (2011).
- Flavia Agnes, *Marriage, Sexuality and the Law*, 49 ECON. & POL. WKLY. 45 (2014).
- Mrinal Satish, *Discretion, Discrimination and the Rule of Law: Reforming Rape Sentencing in India* (Cambridge Univ. Press, 2016).
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9. References

FROM PROTOCOLS TO PRACTICE: THE INTERNATIONAL LEGAL RESPONSE TO HUMAN TRAFFICKING

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ABSTRACT

Human trafficking remains one of the most grievous human rights violations in the modern era, transcending borders and affecting millions worldwide. This paper undertakes a comprehensive analysis of the international legal framework established to combat human trafficking, tracing the evolution of global instruments and conventions that shape anti-trafficking responses today. Beginning with the 1904 International Agreement for the Suppression of the White Slave Traffic and culminating in the landmark 2000 UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (Palermo Protocol), the study examines how the international community has progressively recognized trafficking as a serious transnational crime and human rights issue.

The paper evaluates the binding and non-binding instruments under the United Nations, the International Labour Organization, and regional frameworks such as those developed by the European Union and South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation. It explores the key components of these instruments, including prevention strategies, victim protection, and prosecution mechanisms. Additionally, the study critiques the gaps in enforcement, state compliance, and victim-centric approaches, arguing for a more integrated, human-rights-based strategy that includes accountability, cross-border cooperation, and socio-legal reform.

By comparing legal obligations and best practices, this paper highlights the need for harmonization between international and domestic laws and emphasizes the importance of political will and institutional coordination. The study concludes that while significant progress has been made, human trafficking persists due to structural vulnerabilities, weak implementation, and lack of survivor-centric policies.

Keywords– Human Trafficking, Palermo Protocol, International Law, Victim Protection, Transnational Crime, UN Conventions, Legal Framework, SAARC Convention, Law Enforcement Cooperation

I. INTRODUCTION

Human trafficking, often regarded as a modern form of slavery, has emerged as a pressing global issue intricately tied to the economic, social, and demographic dynamics of both source and destination countries. Rooted in deep-seated human rights violations, the problem is exacerbated by widespread poverty, illiteracy, limited access to education, and economic resources. Historically, trafficking was primarily associated with the sex trade, but

recent years have revealed its broader scope. Victims are now trafficked for purposes ranging from forced labor and domestic servitude to begging, coerced marriages, adoption, organ harvesting, and even participation in illegal sports.

The impact of globalization has significantly altered the landscape of human trafficking. As nations opened up their economies and integrated into the global system, new opportunities for exploitation emerged. These

developments have fueled international concern, prompting legislative and institutional responses. One such effort was the adoption of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, which supplements the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (2000). This protocol offers a broader and more inclusive definition of trafficking, recognizing not just sexual exploitation but also forms of forced labor and child trafficking for domestic or hazardous industrial work.

Women and children, especially those from disadvantaged or marginalized communities, remain the most vulnerable to trafficking. The complexity and scale of the issue demand a comprehensive, multi-agency approach that involves cooperation among countries of origin, transit, and destination. Without genuine international collaboration, efforts to combat human trafficking will fall short⁵¹².

India, like many other developing nations, has faced the scourge of human trafficking for generations. However, the problem has intensified in the wake of globalization and industrial expansion. While these processes have facilitated economic growth and international engagement, they have also created new vulnerabilities. The most disadvantaged segments of society particularly women and children have been disproportionately affected. Increased mobility and communication have enabled criminal networks to expand their operations, often across national borders.

Sex trafficking, colloquially known as the "flesh trade," is the most recognized form of trafficking in India and has received considerable attention from the country's legal system. Nevertheless, this is just one facet of a much larger problem. Human trafficking is a lucrative crime, rooted in organized criminal networks that exploit people for financial gain. These

networks operate covertly, making it one of the most underreported crimes globally.

The organized nature of trafficking makes it extremely difficult to dismantle. It is, in essence, a crime against humanity violating victims' dignity, rights, and freedom⁵¹³. Victims often find themselves caught in complex webs of coercion, abuse, and manipulation, with little chance of escape.

II. PUSH AND PULL FACTORS DRIVING TRAFFICKING

The dynamics behind trafficking are influenced by both "push" and "pull" factors. Push factors are conditions that force individuals to leave their home countries such as poverty, unemployment, conflict, and lack of opportunity. Pull factors, on the other hand, are the perceived benefits that draw individuals toward more developed nations. These include better job opportunities, improved living standards, political stability, and economic security.

Statistical data increasingly suggests that push factors play a more significant role in driving human trafficking than pull factors. The desperation to escape poor living conditions, combined with the lure of a better future, makes individuals easy targets for traffickers who deceive them with false promises.

India attempted to address the issue more aggressively through the Immoral Trafficking Prevention Act (ITPA) Amendment Bill of 2006, which aimed to criminalize the clients of trafficked victims. This was a shift in focus from punishing the victims to holding consumers accountable. Unfortunately, due to a lack of consensus among lawmakers and civil society, the bill failed to pass.

Human trafficking is not just a domestic issue, but a global crisis that thrives on inequality, lack of enforcement, and international indifference. While various protocols and laws have been created to address this crime, much more

⁵¹² Draft Asian Development Bank Report for Regional Technical Assistance for Combating Trafficking in Women and Children in South Asia, Country Report of India, March 2000, p.4.

⁵¹³ Jyoti Sanghera, Trafficking of Women and Children in South Asia: Taking Stock and Moving ahead, UNICEF and Save the Children Alliance, 7, (1999).

remains to be done. A holistic strategy involving education, stronger law enforcement, international cooperation, and socioeconomic reforms is essential to dismantle the systems that allow trafficking to persist. Both national governments and international bodies must work together to protect the most vulnerable and bring justice to those who exploit them.

III. REGIONAL TRENDS

A. Asia and the Pacific

Southeast Asia remains one of the most severely affected regions in terms of human trafficking, with around 225,000 victims reportedly trafficked each year, as per the U.S. Department of State. A key factor fueling this crisis is the booming sex tourism industry, especially in countries like Thailand, Cambodia, and the Philippines, which attract tourists, including pedophiles, from developed nations like Europe, North America, Japan, and Australia. Japan has become a major destination for trafficked Asian women, with approximately 150,000 non-Japanese women involved in the sex trade—half from the Philippines and 40% from Thailand.

Within the sex industry, there's a troubling racial hierarchy. Japanese and Western women working independently and earning well are at the top, while women from Southeast Asia and bonded white slaves from Eastern Europe are subjected to harsher conditions. Cross-border trafficking is rampant, particularly in the Mekong sub-region, covering parts of Thailand, Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, and China's southern Yunnan province. For instance, Vietnamese women are sent to China and Cambodia, and women from Myanmar are trafficked into Thailand.

Various methods are employed in trafficking, including local influence, sales by family members, false job promises, debt bondage, kidnapping, forged documents, bribery, and various means of transportation such as buses, trains, and boats. Victims from countries like China, Myanmar, the Philippines, Cambodia,

and Vietnam are also trafficked to Western countries, the Middle East, and Australia.

In South Asia, approximately 150,000 individuals are trafficked yearly. India and Sri Lanka have become hotspots for sex tourism, while Nepal and Bangladesh serve primarily as source countries. Between 5,000 to 10,000 Nepalese girls are trafficked to India annually, and up to 200,000 Nepalese women are believed to be working in the Indian sex trade. Bangladesh also sees around 15,000 women and children trafficked each year, many of whom end up in Pakistan and the UAE.

India plays a triple role in this crisis—it acts as a source, a transit hub, and a destination for trafficking. Victims often come from neighboring countries such as Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Pakistan. Meanwhile, Australia is known as a source country for sex tourists, with destinations including the Philippines, Thailand, and Sri Lanka⁵¹⁴. In response, Australia has begun revising its laws and increasing public awareness to reduce its involvement in trafficking⁵¹⁵.

B. Europe and the Middle East

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and former Soviet states have overtaken Asia as primary source regions for trafficking victims heading to Western Europe. Russia and Ukraine lead in terms of numbers, contributing significantly to the estimated 175,000 women trafficked annually. The region's economic instability post-1991 allowed organized crime groups from Russia, Albania, Estonia, and elsewhere to capitalize on trafficking for profit. Russian gangs have also extended their influence to prostitution rings in Israel and the United States⁵¹⁶.

Conflict zones like Bosnia and Kosovo further intensified trafficking, especially as traffickers preyed on displaced women. Albanian criminal

⁵¹⁴ Coalition Against Trafficking in Women – Asia Pacific, www.catw-ap.org (last visited on February 15, 2025)

⁵¹⁵ Maria Moscaritolo, "Australia takes aim at Asian sex slave trade", Reuters, 26, (1998).

⁵¹⁶ Global Survival Network, An Expose of the Trafficking Women for Prostitution from the Newly Independent States, Washington, D.C., 1998, pp.5-10.

networks, for instance, smuggled thousands of Kosovo women to Italy for sexual exploitation. Most victims from Eastern Europe are sent to countries such as Germany, France, Switzerland, Italy, the Netherlands, Greece, and England. Others are trafficked to the Middle East (notably Israel and Saudi Arabia), the Far East (Japan and Thailand), and North America. Western Europe also receives victims from other continents, including Africa (Ghana, Nigeria, Morocco), Latin America (Brazil, Colombia, Dominican Republic), and Southeast Asia (Philippines and Thailand)⁵¹⁷.

In the Middle East, most trafficking victims are women and children brought in from Asia specifically from Bangladesh, Thailand, Indonesia, and the Philippines. These individuals are often forced into prostitution, domestic work, or exploited as child camel jockeys. Israel alone receives between several hundred and 2,000 women each year from former Soviet states through organized criminal networks⁵¹⁸.

C. Africa, Latin America, and North America

Africa sees approximately 50,000 trafficking victims annually, though data is limited. Major contributors include economic hardships, civil conflicts in countries like Sudan and Rwanda, and weak governance. Child labor trafficking is prevalent in countries like Togo, Benin, Somalia, and Nigeria. Victims are trafficked within Africa to nations like South Africa, Nigeria, and Ghana—and abroad, particularly to Europe and the Middle East.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, over 100,000 women and children are trafficked for sexual exploitation each year. The situation is dire for children, with the Organization of American States reporting over two million victims of child sex exploitation across the region. Popular destinations for sex tourism,

which exacerbate trafficking, include Brazil⁵¹⁹, the Dominican Republic, Mexico, and Costa Rica. Brazil faces one of the worst child prostitution crises globally. Around 50,000 Dominican women have reportedly been trafficked overseas, mainly to the U.S. and Europe. Many Latin American countries, especially Mexico and Central America, serve as transit zones for trafficking into North America⁵²⁰.

In the United States, between 45,000 and 50,000 women and children are trafficked annually, largely from Southeast Asia⁵²¹ and the former Soviet Union. Victims are typically forced into the sex industry or domestic servitude. Additionally, the U.S. and Canada are frequent destinations for trafficked children adopted illegally, with Mexico being the main source. American and European men are also significant contributors to global sex tourism, particularly in regions like South and Southeast Asia and Central America. Some travel agencies are known to facilitate organized sex tourism, promoting exploitation under the guise of leisure.

IV. INTERNATIONAL LEGAL INSTRUMENTS TO COMBAT TRAFFICKING

A number of international legal instruments and protocols have been developed over the years to address the global crisis of human trafficking, particularly involving women and children. Two major conventions in this area are the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), adopted in 1979, and the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, also known as the Palermo Protocol. This protocol, a supplement to the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (2000), is

⁵¹⁷ Europe National Dates, Trafficking of Women to the European Union: Characteristics, Trends and Policy Issues, European Conference on Trafficking in Women, June, 1996, IOM, 7 May, 1996.

⁵¹⁸ Michael Specter, "Trafficker's New Cargo: Naïve Slavic Women", New York Times, 11 January, 1998.

⁵¹⁹ Social Security Network, "Brazil Spends \$1.7 Million Helping Child Prostitutes", Reuters, 12 June 1998.

⁵²⁰ Testimony of Frank E. Loy, Under Secretary of State for Global Affairs, before the sub-committee on Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, Senate Foreign Relation Committee, 22 February, 2000 in Francis T. Miko, Trafficking in Women and Children: The US and International Response, Congressional Research Service Report, The Library of Congress, May 2000.

⁵²¹ available at: www.catwinternational.org/fb/costarica.html (last visited on March 15, 2025)

considered the most comprehensive international effort to counter trafficking.

Under Article 5 of the Palermo Protocol, all forms of trafficking including attempts and participation in trafficking networks are criminalized. The protocol outlines specific protections for victims, including preventative measures, victim support, and cooperation between countries for safe repatriation. However, it lacks provisions for victim immunity from prosecution, which means trafficked individuals might still be punished for crimes they were forced into like prostitution or using fake documents. Moreover, although it suggests victim assistance, the measures are optional, often leading to inadequate protection and reintegration support for victims.

A. Historical International Legal Instruments

Efforts to combat trafficking date back to the early 20th century. Key treaties include:

- International Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Women and Children (1921, revised 1947): This treaty banned the enticement of women or girls for immoral acts abroad.
- Slavery Convention (1926)⁵²²: Encouraged the elimination of all forms of slavery and forced labour, defining slavery as control over a person for exploitative purposes.
- ILO Forced Labour Convention (1930): Called for the swift end of forced or compulsory labour in all forms⁵²³.
- Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Women of Full Age (1933): Required countries to take legal action against those engaged in the trafficking of adult women.
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948): Prohibited slavery and the slave

trade under Article 4. It also emphasized freedom of movement (Article 13) and the right to nationality (Article 15)⁵²⁴.

- UN Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and Exploitation of Prostitution (1949): A comprehensive agreement incorporating earlier treaties. It criminalized activities like brothel keeping and procuring people for prostitution regardless of their consent or age, and encouraged repatriation and rehabilitation. However, its scope was limited to prostitution.
- ILO Abolition of Forced Labour Convention (1957)⁵²⁵: Obligated states to eliminate forced labour used for political, economic, disciplinary, or discriminatory purposes.
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966): Article 8 bans slavery and forced labour. Article 24 focuses on child rights.
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966): Article 10 mandates states to protect children from exploitation and to set legal minimum ages for employment.
- Minimum Age Convention (1973): Prohibited child labour, especially in dangerous occupations, and aimed to protect children's rights in the workforce.

B. Modern Conventions Addressing Women and Children

- CEDAW (1979): Article 6 obligates countries to enact laws and measures to eliminate all forms of trafficking in women.
- UN Convention Against Torture (1984): Prohibits returning individuals to countries where they may face torture and provides for victim compensation.

⁵²² Slavery Convention, 212 U.N.T.S. 17, entered into force Mar. 9, 1927, amended Convention entered into force Jul. 7, 1955.

⁵²³ ILO Convention No. 29 concerning forced or Compulsory Labour (1930) International Labour Conventions and Recommendations Vol. I, pp. 115-124, Article 2.

⁵²⁴ GA Res. 217 (III), GAOR, 3rd Sess, official Records, Part I, Resolutions, p.71.

⁵²⁵ Convention (No 105) concerning the Abolition of Forced Labour, adopted on Jun. 25, 1957 by the General Conference of the International Labour Organisation, entered into force Jan. 17, 1959.

- UN Trafficking Protocol (2000): This protocol offers a standardized definition of trafficking and calls for international cooperation in prevention, victim assistance, and legal action. It includes articles on privacy protection (Art. 6), safe repatriation (Art. 8), and stronger border control (Art. 11 & 12). However, it does not guarantee immunity to victims for crimes committed under coercion, nor does it focus adequately on post-return reintegration. Many victims face prolonged detention or lack of resources, discouraging them from testifying against traffickers.
- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography⁵²⁶ (2002): Strengthens international protection standards for children against sexual exploitation.
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)⁵²⁷: Adopted by more than 190 countries, this landmark agreement recognizes children as individuals entitled to their own set of rights and freedoms. It outlines four core principles: non-discrimination, the best interests of the child, right to life and development, and respect for children's views.

Key articles related to trafficking and exploitation include:

- Article 1: Defines a child as anyone under 18 years of age.
- Article 19: Calls on states to protect children from all forms of physical and emotional abuse.
- Articles 32, 34, and 36: Require protection against child labour, sexual exploitation, and all other forms of abuse or harmful treatment.

Additionally, the Convention stresses the protection of vulnerable groups such as immigrant and refugee children and mandates states to take steps to prevent trafficking, kidnapping, and smuggling of children.

V. INTERNATIONAL MECHANISMS AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING

A. United Nations Efforts

The United Nations plays a vital role in tackling human trafficking, especially when it affects women and children. It offers guidance to national governments on legal reform and better law enforcement strategies. The UN also works to eliminate the root causes of trafficking, such as poverty and gender inequality, and supports the recovery and reintegration of victims. Various UN agencies are involved in collaborative efforts to improve data collection, understand global trafficking trends, and strengthen international cooperation.

- a) UNIFEM⁵²⁸, now merged into UN Women, focuses on empowering women and defending their rights. It supports innovative programs at both national and regional levels, with a strong emphasis on research and advocacy aimed at reducing the vulnerability of women and girls to trafficking.
- b) UNESCO promotes human rights through its global standards and conventions. It works alongside non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and regularly conducts research and conferences on trafficking and modern forms of slavery⁵²⁹.
- c) UNICEF sees child trafficking as a serious violation of human rights. It runs national and regional initiatives to prevent trafficking, often working in partnership with other UN agencies and NGOs. UNICEF is especially active in places like

⁵²⁶ Focal Point on Sexual Exploitation of Children, NGO Group for the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Issue No. 5, April 2000, pp 13-14.

⁵²⁷ Convention on the Rights of the Child, UN.DOC A/RES/44/25, entered into force Sep. 2, 1990.

⁵²⁸ available at: <http://www.unifem.undp.org> (last visited on February 09, 2025)

⁵²⁹ available at: <http://www.unesco.org> (last visited on April 01, 2025)

West Africa, collaborating with NGOs to protect children⁵³⁰.

- d) UNDP tackles trafficking through its work on gender issues and the HIV/AIDS epidemic. In regions like South and Southeast Asia, it promotes cross-border cooperation and implements projects aimed at reducing vulnerability through economic and social development. In Europe, trafficking is addressed as part of UNDP's⁵³¹ broader gender-focused initiatives.

The UN Commission on Human Rights, under the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), has appointed Special Rapporteurs who report on different human rights concerns. Relevant to trafficking are rapporteurs focusing on violence against women, migrant rights, and child exploitation. A Special Rapporteur specifically on human trafficking has also been appointed to collect information, issue recommendations, and collaborate with other UN experts to ensure the rights of victims are protected.

Additionally, the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice⁵³² has examined trafficking in relation to the abuse of migrants. In 1997, it played a key role in formulating a UN resolution that outlined international strategies for responding to violence against women, emphasizing fair legal treatment, victim support services, healthcare access, and justice system reforms.

B. Inter-Governmental Organizations

i. International Labour Organization (ILO) : The ILO considers trafficking to be a severe abuse of human rights, often tied to forced labour, child exploitation, and mistreatment of migrant workers. It urges international collaboration to combat trafficking and seeks to improve global labour conditions, especially for women and

disadvantaged communities. The ILO emphasizes that gender inequality is a major cause of trafficking and supports initiatives that ensure access to safe and decent work as a way to prevent exploitation.

The ILO's International Programme for the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) implements efforts in regions such as South Asia, Southeast Asia, Africa, and Latin America. These projects aim to protect children from trafficking and forced labour by improving law enforcement, expanding access to education, and building stronger social support systems.

ii. International Organization for Migration (IOM): The IOM handles trafficking as part of its broader work on irregular migration. Its activities include public education campaigns, research projects, and building the capacity of institutions to respond effectively to trafficking. The IOM also provides direct assistance to victims through its Global Assistance Program, which ensures safe return and offers reintegration support.

The IOM's approach focuses on:

- Prevention: Raising awareness and educating at-risk individuals about trafficking so they can make informed choices.
- Protection: Ensuring trafficked individuals are treated as victims, not criminals or undocumented migrants, and that they receive proper care and legal support⁵³³.

IOM strongly believes that preventing trafficking requires addressing root problems like poverty, limited economic opportunities, gender discrimination, and political instability.

C. Regional Response: SAARC Convention

The SAARC Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children draws heavily from earlier global treaties such as:

⁵³⁰ available at: <http://www.unicef.org> (last visited on February 05, 2025)

⁵³¹ Participating countries are Thailand, Vietnam, Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos and China (Yunnan Province).

⁵³² Resolution 52/86 on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Measures to Eliminate Violence against Women.

⁵³³ International Services for Human Rights, Women Rights in the UN, Geneva, 1995, p.35.

- The 1949 Convention on trafficking and exploitation,
- CEDAW (1979),
- The ICCPR (1966), and
- The Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989).

Within South Asia, India is both a country of transit and destination. There is also considerable internal trafficking and trafficking to the Gulf States and to Southeast Asia. As in the case of Nepal and Bangladesh, no reliable statistical data are available on the number of women and minors in the various red light areas of Indian cities, much less on the victims of trafficking. According to informal sources, it is estimated that cross-border trafficking represents about 10 per cent of the coerced migrants. It is generally estimated that 2.17 per cent are Bangladeshi and 2.6 per cent are from Nepal. Inter-State trafficking, therefore, could comprise as high as 89 per cent of trafficked victims⁵³⁴. Given this dimension, addressing internal as well as cross-border trafficking issues is essential to any strategic approach at the national level.

Estimates of the number of Nepalese girls and young women lured or abducted to India for sexual exploitation each year range from 5,000 to 10,000. The total number of Nepalese working as prostitutes in India range from 40,000 to 200,000. India also receives women and children from Bangladesh, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and Pakistan and sends them to Europe and Middle East. Therefore, trafficking has assumed a gigantic proportion in India and calls for a comprehensive and concerted effort on behalf of all the South Asian countries to counter the menace.

However, since the UN Trafficking Protocol (2000) was still under discussion during the creation of the SAARC Convention, the latter did not incorporate its more modern and victim-

friendly provisions. As a result, the SAARC Convention reflects outdated international standards that many now consider inadequate for addressing today's complex trafficking issues.

For trafficking to be effectively eliminated, it's essential to protect the human rights of the victims. Trafficking is both a cause and consequence of human rights violations. When governments fail to ensure women's social and economic rights, conditions become ripe for trafficking to flourish. In turn, women caught in trafficking suffer further abuses, such as:

- Denial of freedom and security,
- Debt bondage and forced labour,
- Physical and sexual violence,
- Inhuman and degrading treatment

Therefore, any meaningful anti-trafficking strategy must begin and end with protecting the rights and dignity of the victims. This means putting their needs and safety first, ensuring legal protection, and offering long-term support for rehabilitation and reintegration.

VI. ADDRESSING HUMAN TRAFFICKING THROUGH A HUMAN RIGHTS LENS

Human trafficking, especially involving women and children, is a form of modern slavery and a serious violation of human dignity and rights. Tackling this complex issue demands a comprehensive and collaborative approach, rooted in human rights. While laws and conventions are essential, legal responses alone are insufficient unless they are paired with efforts to address the root causes of trafficking such as poverty, gender inequality, unemployment, and lack of education.

One major challenge in combating trafficking is that most perpetrators are non-state actors, while international human rights law and anti-trafficking treaties often lack consistency, clarity, and effective enforcement mechanisms. For example, the 1949 Convention focused narrowly on prostitution, treating it as immoral, and failed to address trafficking for other forms

⁵³⁴ Asian Development Bank, Draft Report on India for Regional Technical Assistance for Combating Trafficking of Women and Children in South Asia, Manila, March 2002.

of exploitation. It also lacked provisions for monitoring compliance and ignored the broader rights of victims, resulting in limited global adoption.

In contrast, the 2000 UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, marked progress by establishing a widely accepted definition of trafficking. However, its protective measures remain optional, and it does not provide clear guidelines for identifying victims. This ambiguity can lead to victims being misclassified under other frameworks, such as those for smuggling, which may deny them necessary protections.⁵³⁵

At the regional level, the SAARC Convention has attempted to address trafficking in South Asia, but its limited definition of trafficking focused solely on prostitution excludes other exploitative practices. It also fails to differentiate between adults and children or between consensual and forced movement, potentially restricting women's autonomy and rights.⁵³⁶

Despite these shortcomings, recent developments show a gradual shift toward a human rights-based approach. The international human rights community must take a leading role in ensuring that trafficking is not treated only as a crime or migration issue but recognized as a multidimensional human rights violation. This requires active engagement from governments, NGOs, civil society, international organizations, and survivors themselves.

Ultimately, the State bears the responsibility to uphold and protect the rights of its citizens. This includes:

- Preventing human rights abuses.
- Investigating violations.

- Prosecuting perpetrators.
- Providing justice and reparations to victims.

Human rights standards emphasize the following obligations of States towards trafficked persons:

- Non-Discrimination: Equal treatment in all legal and policy contexts.
- Safety and Protection: Safeguarding victims regardless of immigration status.
- Access to Justice: Ensuring victim protection during legal proceedings.
- Legal Remedies: Enabling victims to seek compensation and support in doing so.
- Resident Status: Granting temporary visas and considering asylum when needed.
- Healthcare and Social Services: Offering necessary support for recovery.
- Safe Return: Facilitating voluntary, safe repatriation and reintegration.
- Recovery Support: Providing medical, psychological, legal, and social aid.
- State Cooperation: Collaborating with other nations to uphold these standards.

VII. CONCLUSION & SUGGESTIONS

Human trafficking is a complex transnational crime and a grave violation of human rights that transcends borders and jurisdictions. The international legal framework, developed through numerous conventions, protocols, and treaties—such as the UN Trafficking Protocol (Palermo Protocol), CEDAW, and ILO Conventions—has played a crucial role in shaping global standards for prevention, protection, and prosecution. These instruments collectively emphasize the need for comprehensive legal, social, and institutional responses, grounded in victim-centric approaches and international cooperation.

⁵³⁵ Jyoti Sanghera, Trafficking of Women and Children in South Asia: Taking Stock, a project sponsored by UNICEF and Save the Children Alliance, Delhi, 1999.p7.

⁵³⁶ Position Paper on the Draft SAARC Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution submitted by the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, Radhika Coomaraswamy.

Despite these advancements, implementation gaps, resource constraints, lack of victim identification mechanisms, and weak law enforcement continue to hinder progress. Addressing these challenges requires not only legal alignment with international norms but also strong political will, grassroots participation, and regional cooperation.

SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Strengthen Domestic Legislation:** Countries must harmonize their national laws with international obligations to ensure clarity in definitions, penal provisions, and victim rights. Comprehensive anti-trafficking legislation should be victim-centered and address all forms of trafficking.
2. **Enhance International Cooperation:** Cross-border collaboration in intelligence sharing, joint investigations, and extradition is essential. Bilateral and multilateral agreements should be actively implemented to dismantle transnational trafficking networks.
3. **Focus on Victim Protection and Rehabilitation:** Mechanisms for timely victim identification, legal aid, shelter, medical care, and rehabilitation must be institutionalized. Psychological support and social reintegration programs should be prioritized over criminalization or deportation.
4. **Training and Capacity Building:** Continuous training programs for law enforcement officers, prosecutors, and judiciary should be mandated to sensitize them about victim-friendly procedures and trafficking indicators.
5. **Public Awareness and Community Engagement:** Preventive strategies should include awareness campaigns targeting vulnerable communities. Civil society and NGOs must be empowered to assist in outreach, victim support, and policy advocacy.

6. **Monitoring and Accountability:** Establish national and regional monitoring bodies to oversee implementation of anti-trafficking laws. Regular reporting, audits, and data collection should be institutionalized to track trends and effectiveness.
7. **Address Root Causes:** Poverty, inequality, gender-based violence, lack of education, and migration vulnerabilities must be addressed through inclusive socio-economic development policies to prevent trafficking at its source.

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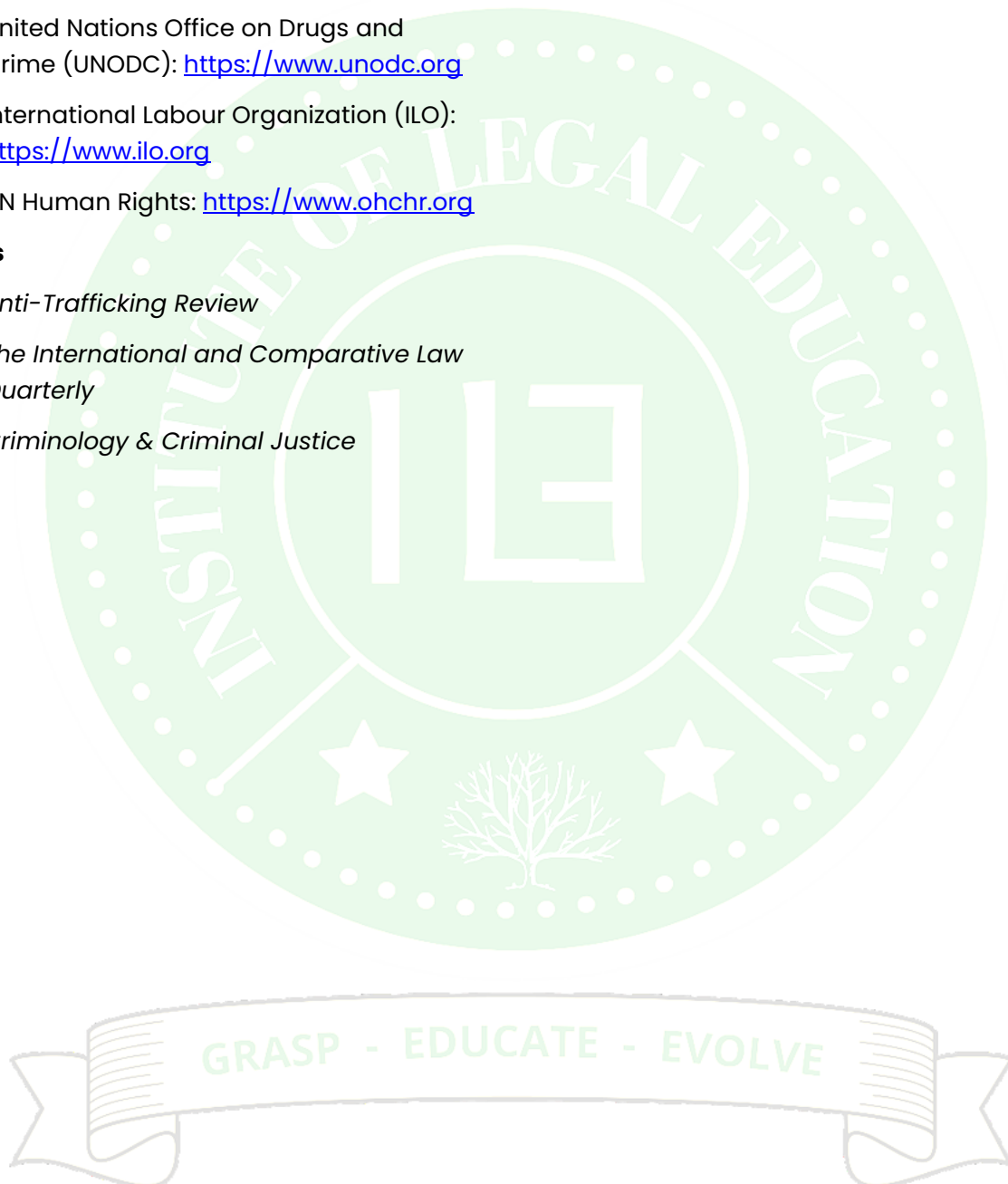
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FROM STEREOTYPES TO OPPORTUNITIES: THE ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY IN REDEFINING GENDER NORMS

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Abstract

Gender and technology go hand in hand because gender dynamics are shaped by technology. Technology can also change the power dynamics in our society so that women have more equality since it gives them access to previously untapped options for organization and involvement. It is also necessary to address the gendered attitudes of men and women on the societal construction of female subordination and gender inequity.

The application of conceptual knowledge towards the fulfillment of real-world objectives is what is known as technology, the most powerful word in the modern world, especially when done in a repeatable fashion. Technology makes it possible for anyone to participate in the political, social, and economic spheres regardless of gender, caste, sex, or race, and it also gives everyone access to an infinite amount of information and knowledge. It gives everyone the chance to follow their passions and advocate for themselves.

It is critical to confront online abuse and use technology to advance positive social change. Collaboration between national governments, tech corporations, feminist and digital rights groups, gender-based violence service providers, researchers, and most crucially, survivors is necessary to prevent and address technology-facilitated gender-based violence. Prioritizing inclusivity and diversity is crucial while creating AI technology.

In this technologically advanced world, women must seize their possibilities and stand on their own feet.

Keywords – Technology, Gender Equality, Discrimination, women, Dynamics, Information, technological Sectors, social and economic development

Introduction –

“Access to technology and science is for everyone, regardless of origin and gender”.

– Birgit Hoffmann

The term technology is very wide, and everyone has their understanding and definition regarding the term technology.

The word technology has its origin from the Greek word as it is derived from the Greek word techne and logos. The term techne means art and craft and the term logos means word and

speech.⁵³⁷In earlier times the term technology is used to denote art and craft. Still, with the changing scenario of the world and society, the term technology is used for innovation and new creations that take place in the world.

According to the black laws dictionary the term technology means information, application of design, utilization of services, and organizing

⁵³⁷ Sarah K. White, Women in tech statistics: The hard truths of an uphill battle, CIO, (8, March 2024), <https://www.cio.com/article/201905/women-in-tech-statistics-the-hard-truths-of-an-uphill-battle.html>

human activities.⁵³⁸ So, in simpler terms, technology is the use of scientific knowledge for poetical purposes and the knowledge that is important for particular industries and in our daily lives. Technology includes everything from computers to medicines to mobile phones to refrigerators and washing machines everything is technology.

Gender, on the other hand, refers to the socially created traits of men, women, boys, and girls. These traits essentially include the behaviors and conventions that are connected to being a woman, a man, a boy, or a girl, as well as their interactions with one another. It is crucial to realize that gender is a social construct that differs from civilization to society and can evolve in response to shifting societal norms and perspectives.

We must first comprehend how gender and technology interact to comprehend how technology is altering gender norms.

Technology is always seen as a male thing males have the more abilities and capabilities to use technology wisely and females are seen as the passive beneficiaries of technology. Technology is always associated with men by society and they believe that computers have also been appropriated as male machines.

So, the relationship between gender and technology is complex and it is influenced by several factors like historical contributions, socio-cultural context, Patriarchal modernization, and many more.

Research problem–

1. Does technological advancement lead to gender equality?
2. Does online harassment and cyberbullying make technology a less secure and safe place for women?
3. Is there a need for more strong laws for online harassment or not?

⁵³⁸ Alka Jain, Breaking Barriers: How Technology is Empowering Women in the Workforce, Livemint.com, (7 March 2023, 06:31 pm), <https://www.livemint.com/news/india/how-technology-is-opening-various-routes-for-gender-equality-in-2023-11678172114057.html>

4. Does technology act as a Facilitator of Peace and Gender Equality?

Scope –

1. To deal with the concept of technology and gender equality.
2. To deal with social stigma and the changes in the educational system that lead to an increase in women's participation in the field of technology.
3. Concept of the digital revolution and data of various countries showing women's participation in the technological sector.
4. Concept of legal framework and policy interventions
5. Brighter and darker side of the technology and evaluate gender equality and technological advancement
6. To conclude with proper recommendations on the question does technology lead to gender equality and lead to an increase in women's participation in the technological-driven sectors?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY –

The researchers have adopted a doctrinal method for the collection of data. It includes books, articles, various law journals, and the internet. All the data and materials were collected and arranged in systematic order.

Development of technology and gender equality –

Development of technology is a process of creation, invention, and using new ways of new technical means to increase productivity and ease mental labour.

In the development of technology here come the five stages of the development of technology and the status of gender equality in these five stages are –

1. **Gender segregation** – In earlier times society was divided into two aspects one is where males dominated the society they earned for the family, they were

educated and they knew how to use technology. On the other hand, women were seen as a liability in society and they only used to do the household chores and take care of the child. Women are not educated and they don't have the knowledge and skills to use the technology wisely. So there exists a huge gender disparity in society.

2. **Compliance** – In the 1840s Ada Lovelace was considered the first computer programmer and the founder of scientific computing, then comes Annie Easley the first woman to create hybrid car batteries⁵³⁹ another example of women empowerment is Sister Mary Kenneth Keller a computer scientist who established the first computer science department at a catholic women's college. So, during the period of the 1840s women started entering the world of technology the ratio was very low but it was important for raising the bar high for women.
3. **Gender Equity** – In the years 1903 and 1911 Marie Curie became the first woman to win the Nobel Prize in two different scientific fields – physics and chemistry respectively. Till now she remains the only woman to win the Nobel prize in two different fields.⁵⁴⁰ Her discoveries laid down the foundation for the advancements in medical treatments and also became an inspiration for future generations of female scientists.
4. **Gender equality** – After the prominent examples that were set by the women in the early times society started accepting the fact that women also have the skills and abilities to use technology wisely and they are not less than men in using and handling the technology. But still

there exist certain loopholes in society like lack of education, psychological aspects, and many more. The ratio of women working in the technological sector is still very low and there is a need to increase that ratio by way of empowering the women.

5. **More sustainable ports** – Each stage is impacted by both internal and external pressures. While drag forces slow or impede efforts and may result in a return to a previous stage of the framework, push forces assist ports in reducing gender segregation and moving toward sustainability. For ports and other male-oriented industries to become more sustainable, gender equality is a must.

Social stigma and technology –

It's been ages since men and women were discriminated against in every aspect. Every time Women in society have to fight for their rights and this same goes in the field of technology where women have to work hard to make their space in the technological industry as well the fight is still going on today also the ratio of women is still very less in the field of the technological sector due to the social stigmas that still played a huge role in shaping our society.

It is important to see young girls and women to see as a user of technology. Women are rarely seen as innovators and creators in the field of technology, society has this notion that technology is less used by women and it is not relevant to their needs.

But society needs to understand that technology is for everyone and it should not be divided based on gender. It has been observed that Only 25% of people in the least developed nations are online, despite 76% of them having access to mobile broadband signals. Additionally, men are 52% more likely than women to be online out of those 25%. Therefore, infrastructure by

⁵³⁹ Era Dabla-Norris, Kalpana Kochhar, Women, Technology, and the Future of Work, IMF blog, (November 16, 2018) <https://www.imf.org/en/Blogs/Articles/2018/11/16/blog-Women-Technology-the-Future-of-Work>

⁵⁴⁰ Maria Lehtman, The importance of role models for women in technology, Orange business, (March 05, 2024), <https://www.orange-business.com/en/blogs/importance-role-models-women-technology>

itself is insufficient to give women genuine access.⁵⁴¹

Affordability, digital literacy, privacy, safety, content, relevance, ownership, tool knowledge, agency, and even electricity availability are other important considerations.

Every country in the world needs a commitment to include gender equality in the digital system of the country so that more opportunities are open to women so they can stand on their own and have a position and status in society.

Women and men rarely gain equality from innovation and technology. In addition to impeding efforts to empower women and attain gender equality, this gender gap inhibits women from becoming both developers and users of technology that meets their requirements. So, to make both gender equal in the field of technology the government needs to make various decisions that result in the equal position of men and women in society.

Changes in the education system and women's participation in technology –

If you educate a man, you are only able to educate an individual, but, if you educate a woman, you educate the whole family. Women empowerment means the empowerment of all.

– Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru

Technical education plays an important role in the human resource development of any country as it helps in creating skilled and creative manpower that results in an increase in the productivity of a country's economic and infrastructural development and improved quality of life. Technical education is an essential instrument in making remarkable contributions to the economic growth of developing countries.

⁵⁴¹ Julian Stodd, Gender in Technology: Feature or Culture?, LinkedIn, (August 20, 2014), <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/20140820140317-21972475-gender-in-technology-feature-or-culture>

According to data Women currently comprise around 35% of the tech workforce. In comparison to the early 2000s, when women made up just 9%, this represents a tremendous gain. Certain changes come when education is provided equally to both genders and it is not discriminated against based on caste, creed, sex, and any other factors.

In India, women now account for 34% of the IT workforce, with most of them being under 30. Indeed, the rapid growth of the Indian IT workforce has been greatly fuelled by its young, and the gender parity rate among STEM (The term STEM stands for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) graduates in the nation is currently close to 50:50.

With 30% female participation, the IT industry has the largest percentage of women in the workforce, per a survey by the CFA Institute. With a female participation rate of 22.4% in the fiscal year 2021–2022, financial services companies came in second.⁵⁴²

The ratio is still low as compared to men but various technological advancements and various schemes related to education that was put forth by the government led to the increase in the women workforce in the field of technology and slowly– slowly the disparity in society between the men and women will come to end and technology can no longer be a subject of digital divide because technology cannot discriminate anyone based on gender.

Digital Revolution –

Every part of employment is affected by the digital revolution in terms of social, economic, and political developments in the world. The connection between gender and technology has the potential to be mutually shaped by the digital revolution. To discover opportunities, the

⁵⁴² Sohini Bhattacharya, Why we aren't closing the gender gap at work, idronline.org, (June 28, 2018), https://idronline.org/close-the-gender-gap-at-work/?qclid=Cj0KCQjwmlCoBhDxARIsABXkXIKIGR6nJ33Y93dkOTofdfN9OmukF9sboeTU45iDrAwgOSFsN5z_K6laAu-wEALw_wcB&qad_source=1&qclid=CjwKCAjw-JG5BhBZEiwAt7JR6y_bzUX2zhdw3Bmu8svoJmRM0_6iXYkj5HYPr8UMeW3sCx4PFJzELxoC690QAvD_BwE

digital revolution primarily concentrates on three areas: employment, social welfare and services, and education.

The digital revolution has empowered women to actively contribute to the advancement of gender equality. In the past, women were limited to staying at home and raising their children as housewives; they also lacked the means to follow their dreams, which was hindered by a lack of confidence in their ability to pursue their goals in life or their careers.

The advent of the digital revolution has given women a great deal of strength and confidence to strive towards their goals. Technology has given them access to a variety of platforms where they may work, learn new skills, and operate in the same capacities that men do in society—that is, to make money and follow any job they want.

The digital revolution offers everyone, regardless of gender or other social stigmas created by society, the opportunity to work from home, work in the IT industry, or use technology to demonstrate one's skills to others. It can also give gender equality a new lease on life by enabling individuals to work towards new gender equality milestones and providing equal opportunities for all.

Industrialized nations have tried several schemes in the past few decades to encourage more diversity in the technological sectors within higher education. The effective examples provided by US universities Carnegie Mellon and Harvey Mudd are particularly notable since they have increased the proportion of female students enrolling in their computer science departments.⁵⁴³

Talking about India, so India's massive infrastructure push is also having a major impact on the lives of the people in urban and rural areas. Indian women are enjoying

increased access to the Internet which leads to women grates participation in the fields of business and politics. The digital revolution comes as a changing milestone that leads to women's empowerment and access technology to by way of enhancing their skills and abilities.

Countries showing data on women's participation in the field of technology –

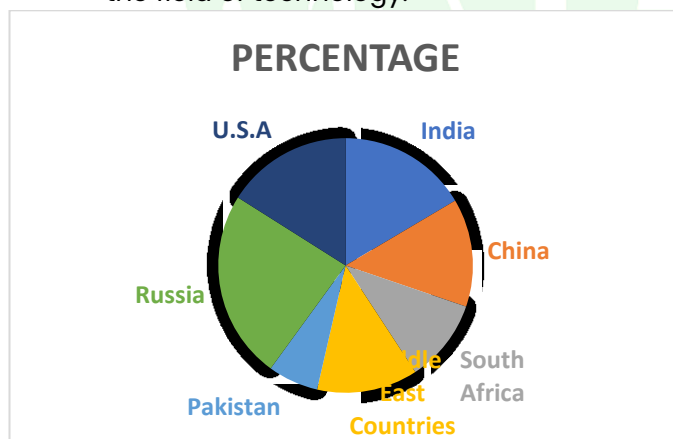
1. **India** – The participation rate was 23.3% in 2017–18 and 37.3% in 2022–2023. Women now make up 36% of the Indian IT workforce, up from 30% in 2012–2013. In the IT-BPM industry, women comprise over 25% of managers and over 51% of entry-level employees.
2. **China** – The proportion of women S&T workers in disciplines including science, engineering, agriculture, and medicine is comparatively low across all nations. China's proportion was higher than that of other wealthy countries, even though it was less than 30%.
3. **South Africa** – women hold around only 23% of jobs in the technological fields the ratio is still very low due to lack of infrastructure, lack of proper education facilities, and many other social and economic factors.⁵⁴⁴
4. **Middle Eastern countries**– Being aware of the growing and significant role that women play in Middle Eastern science, research, and innovation. UNESCO recently released a report titled Cracking the Code: Girls' and Women's Education in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM), which states that women make up 57% of graduates in STEM fields in the Arab world and 61% of university STEM graduates in the United Arab Emirates. But the workforce is still 28%.
5. **Pakistan** – In Pakistan women represent 14% of the IT workforce and 13% of IT

⁵⁴³ Pravallika Dannana, Digital technologies: a powerful tool for advancing gender equality, Times of India, (February 20, 2023, 23:19 IST), <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/readersblog/voicing-out-my-opinion/digital-technologies-a-powerful-tool-for-advancing-gender-equality-50735/>

⁵⁴⁴ Soniya Agrawal, Women in STEM: The growing numbers, challenges and whether it translates into jobs, The Print, (July 23, 2021, 07:30 am), <https://theprint.in/india/education/women-in-stem-the-growing-numbers-challenges-and-whether-it-translates-into-jobs/700564/>

managers. The ratio in Pakistan is still very low and the main reason behind this is the economic and social aspects of the country. Women are still fighting for their rights in Pakistan as they are not getting the proper education facilities today.

6. **Russia**– 55.28% of women are working in the technological sector in Russia. Some claim that Russian females perceive STEM more favourably and that their enthusiasm for the subject lasts longer. Some claim that Eastern European women are more likely to stand up for themselves and be strong in the face of rejection—qualities that are frequently required in a setting where men predominate.
7. **U.S.A** – In USA the women's participation in the fields of technology is still very low. In the United States, 35% of STEM workers are women. So, there is a need to provide more opportunities for women in the field of technology.



Legal framework and policy interventions –

The governments of different nations provide different legal frameworks and policies for the beneficial advancement of technology and its effects on gender dynamics. The policies and legal framework are

1. **Equal opportunity laws:** these laws seek to protect women from discrimination based on their gender in the technology sector and to grant equal access to all. They also embrace

the idea that women should be empowered to pursue their goals on their own, without the assistance or support of males. France, Sweden, and Iceland are a few examples.

2. **Gender Pay Gap Reporting:** This is a great initiative by some governments, requiring companies to report their gender pay gaps and providing transparency to all. It also encourages countries to address wage disparities so that opportunities are equal for all people, regardless of gender, for the sake of goodwill and social enhancement. Several nations have systems in place for reporting gender wage gaps, including Belgium, Canada, Finland, France, Spain, and Sweden.
3. **STEM education initiatives:** To boost the number of girls pursuing STEM careers, several nations, including the US, Canada, Germany, and many others, fund programs to support STEM education for girls.⁵⁴⁵ STEM is an acronym for mathematics, science, technology, and engineering. Their primary goal is to educate women so that they may become an asset to their country by gaining new information and skills.
4. **Anti-harassment laws:** The governments of nations like Israel, the Netherlands, and Norway are working to put laws into place that address cyberbullying and online harassment, making the internet a safer place for everyone to use. This gives everyone a safer way to access technology and showcase their skills to the world.

Legal Framework for technology and	Countries having a

⁵⁴⁵ Jai Nigeria, 5 ways to advance gender equality through technology and Innovation, Ja-nigeria.org, (March 8 2023), https://ja-nigeria.org/2023/03/08/5-ways-to-advance-gender-equality-through-technology-and-innovation/?gad_source=1&gclid=CjwKCAjw-JG5BhBZEiwAt7JR63asJO9S2T69yb5OHJck7dNSbl0VSvYnql7U0OY2M78lk1CHh5ywBoCUjAQAvD_BwE#more-5071

gender equality	legal framework
Equal opportunities law	Belgium, France, Denmark, Latvia, Luxembourg, Sweden, Iceland, Canada, Portugal, Ireland, Greece, Spain Germany, Netherlands, UK, U.S.A, Japan, China, India, Saudi Arabia, Nigeria, Qatar
Gender pay gap reporting	Belgium, Canada, Finland, France, Spain, and Sweden.
STEM education initiatives	Australia, United Kingdom, United States of America, New Zealand, India
Anti-harassment laws	Israel, the Netherlands, Norway, UAE, UK, US, Canada

According to the World Economic Forum report of 2023, only 14 countries are there in the world that provide equal opportunities law that are mentioned above in the table. These laws cover freedom of movement, freedom of work, right to have equal pay for equal work, marriage rights, child-rearing rights, right to business ownership, asset management, and pension were taken into account. Many nations, including the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United Arab Emirates, have established laws about cybercrimes, including Cyber harassment to protect the victims.

Sides of technology –

As we all know there are two sides to a coin, so in the same way technology also has two sides one is a positive side and the other one is a negative side. Technology is an important aspect of development, creation, innovation and to promote gender equality but on the other hand, technology will give rise to various

kinds of crimes like cyberbullying, online harassment, and many more. So, let's see the brighter and darker side of the technology.

The brighter side of technology – technology, gender, and development

Technology can help advance gender parity and make the market more equitable and fairer for everybody. Gender equality is the most crucial component of development, and equality is the idea of employing technology to accomplish progress. Let's examine a few ways in which gender, technology, and development are intertwined.

- 1. Technology for social change:** Gender equality, as we all know, is about giving everyone, male or female, equal rights and opportunities, and technology has enabled everyone to advance in their fields of interest. According to a report, there was a noticeable increase in the gender gap in internet usage from 11 to 12 percent between 2013 and 2016, with an estimated 250 million fewer women using the internet than males.⁵⁴⁶
- 2. Breaking down barriers:** Women may now have access to new avenues for business, work, and education thanks to technology. However, it's also critical to acknowledge that women still face significant obstacles in breaking down social barriers because males still hold a majority in several areas today. To overcome these barriers, women must take advantage of opportunities presented by the shifting demands of society.
- 3. Closing the gender gap –** encouraging more women to pursue careers in technology is the only way to bridge this gap. The World Economic Forum claims

⁵⁴⁶ Jyoti Thakur, Persisting gender gap in STEM jobs, Deccan Herald, (March 09, 2024, 00:47 IST), <https://www.deccanherald.com/opinion/persisting-gender-gap-in-stem-jobs-2928872>

that women's underrepresentation in emerging roles is the biggest obstacle keeping the gender gap from shrinking. For instance, just 14% of professionals work in cloud computing. It's critical to realize that women should take a stance and fight for their rights to carve out a place for themselves in an industry that many would consider to be dominated by males if they choose to pursue careers in such fields. Henderson asserts that. "They are balancing being a mother, a leader, and a technology expert. It was a pleasure to have the opportunity to witness that these things were achievable as a junior officer. Furthermore, women have the right to enable these things in the technological realm.

4. Women's contribution to technology –

There is a significant gender disparity in the amount of creative collaboration between men and women. The bulk of innovators in the EU (2013–2016) collaborated in all-male teams (47%), with 33% of teams consisting solely of a single male inventor. Gender-balanced teams made up just 5% of the total, but teams made up exclusively of women made up 0.7% and 1.6% of the teams, respectively (European Commission, 2019). Since 2005, the compound annual growth of teams with equal gender representation has only been 0.7%.⁵⁴⁷

Shiv Kumar Yadav Vs. State of Delhi (2016) –

This case revolves around the role of forensic evidence. In this Supreme Court established the role of the accused in the crime by way of DNA profiling which depicts the power of forensic technology in delivering justice.

K.S. Puttaswamy Vs. Union of India (2017) –

This is a landmark case that addresses the issue of privacy in the context of technology. In this case, the Supreme Court held that the right

to privacy under Article 21 is a fundamental right. This judgment has highlighted the importance of privacy in the field of technology which ensures that privacy rights are not compromised.

The constitutionality of the Aadhaar program, which collected biometric information from Indian citizens, was at issue in the K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India case. The petitioners contended that people's right to privacy was infringed by the statutory obligation of collecting biometric data.

The darker side of technology – Online Harassment and gender-based violence

Online harassment and gender-based violence are significant drawbacks and vulnerabilities in the age of technology that come along with more alternatives and possibilities due to technological advancements.

Approximately 736 million women worldwide, or almost one in three, have experienced violence at some point in their lives. Intimate relationship abuse is the most common type of violence against women worldwide, impacting over 641 million victims.

However, this issue extends beyond personal connections and affects a variety of settings, including internet forums. Recent years have seen a sharp increase in online violence against women and girls, which poses serious risks to their safety and well-being.

Defamation and misinformation (67%), hate speech (65%), impersonation (63%), hacking and stalking (63%), video and image-based abuse (58%), doxing (55%), violent threats (52%), unwanted images or sexually explicit content (43%), and astroturfing (a coordinated effort to concurrently share damaging content across platforms) were the most common forms of violence reported.⁵⁴⁸

Online harassment has been shown to have a severe negative impact on women's mental

⁵⁴⁷ Sunaina Kumar, The female workforce in India: Emerging trends and insights, orfoonline.org, (March 07, 2024), <https://www.orfoonline.org/expert-speak/the-female-workforce-in-india-emerging-trends-and-insights>

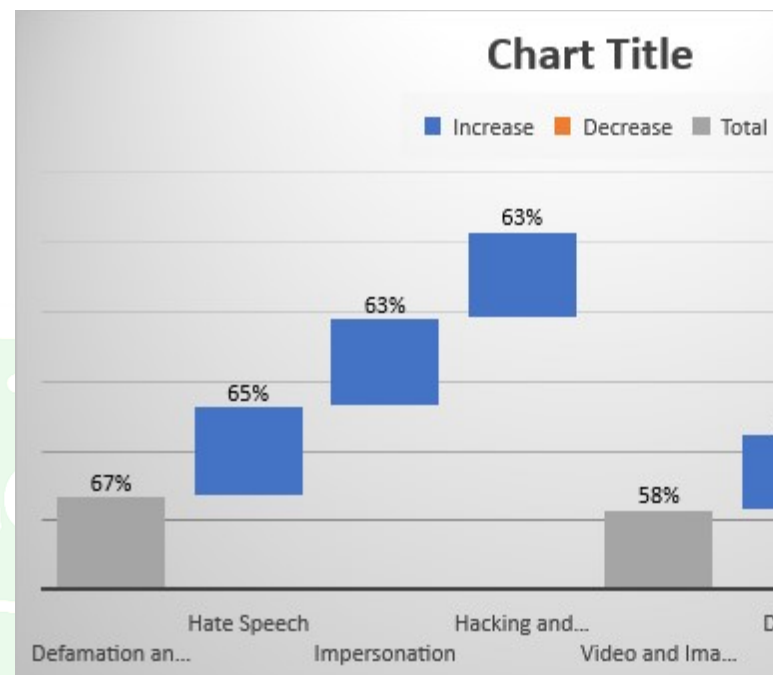
⁵⁴⁸ Rob Sobers, 157 Cybersecurity Statistics and Trends, Varonis, (September 13, 2024), <https://www.varonis.com/blog/cybersecurity-statistics>

health, which lowers their visibility in society and politics. It is regarded as a barrier to reaching the goals of sustainable development and gender equality.

It is critical to confront online abuse and use technology to advance positive social change. Collaboration between national governments, tech corporations, feminist and digital rights groups, gender-based violence service providers, researchers, and most crucially, survivors is necessary to prevent and address technology-facilitated gender-based violence. Prioritizing inclusivity and diversity is crucial while creating AI technology.

Hareesh Vs. State of Kerala - To get in touch with the victim and take advantage of her sexually, the applicant made a phony Facebook profile and shared the victim's altered, pornographic photos online along with her telephone number. The applicant then filed an anticipatory bail motion for arrest in connection with offenses punishable under Sections 67 and 67E of the IT Act and Section 354(D) of the IPC. The Kerala High Court rejected the motion for anticipatory bail, stating that it would not be appropriate for the court to impede the investigation and that the applicant's involvement in the offenses was confirmed by the evidence on file.

Jitender Singh Grewal v. The State of West Bengal - The accused made a fictitious Facebook account in the victim's name and posted pornographic images to it. The accused submitted a bail application after being charged under Sections 354A/354D/500/509/507 of the IPC and Section 67A of the IT Act.⁵⁴⁹ The accused's bail plea was denied by the trial court, and the Calcutta High Court maintained the lower court's ruling.



Gender equality and technological advancement-

There are several facets to the subject of whether or not technological advancement fosters gender equality, so let's examine this with the aid of certain studies that often provide information in this regard. For example, 2017 research on women's digital literacy in Indonesia demonstrates that educating women in digital media creation and sharing can reduce gender disparity while increasing prospects for professional and economic advancement, such as online banking.

In terms of media, communication, banking, content production, etc., technology links women to the outside world. It also helps women become more financially independent, opening up new business prospects for both themselves and their families.

Malala Yousafzai is one instance of a woman utilizing modern technologies to promote gender equality. Malala, a Pakistani education activist, advocated for girls' education on social media by using her platform. She advocated for girls' rights to an education by using her platform to share her experiences and tales. Malala has been able to take the lead in the worldwide movement for gender equality because of her story and activism.

⁵⁴⁹ Ashwin, Landmark Cyber Law cases in India, Enhelion, (March 01, 2021), <https://enhelion.com/blogs/2021/03/01/landmark-cyber-law-cases-in-india/>

Nneka Ekechukwu is another example of a woman utilizing digital technology to promote gender equality. She Leads Africa is a digital platform for African women entrepreneurs, founded by Nneka. Through She Leads Africa, women may now access markets, networks, and resources that were either unaffordable or unavailable to them before. Nneka has made it possible for hundreds of women to get the tools they need to launch their own companies and achieve financial independence through She Leads Africa.

Governments and other organizations have also made significant contributions to the advancement of gender equality through the use of digital technology, which gives women access to a variety of platforms, knowledge, and expertise that they need to succeed in their respective fields.

Suggestions –

1. The government should launch various schemes and educational programs that lead to an increase in women's participation in the technological sectors.
2. More strict laws should be made for cyber-bullying and online harassment which would make the internet a safer and more secure place for law.
3. Men and women should be treated equally in the technological sector and every other field and there should be equal pay for both of them according to their skills and abilities

Conclusion–

Today's discussion covered the many facets of technology and how it affects gender dynamics in a modern culture dominated by males. In this technologically advanced world, women must seize their possibilities and stand on their own two feet.

To address the reality of girls, it is imperative that digital goods and services are built with and for them. Digital goods, solutions, and content are often made with the "default" user in

mind, meaning that they may not take into account things like girls' digital literacy levels, devices available to them, connectivity and data constraints, or information that appeals to and is relevant to them.

REGULATORY FRAMEWORK FOR ACQUISITIONS

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Abstract

This document provides a comparative overview of the regulatory frameworks governing acquisitions in India, the United States, and the European Union. It examines the legal and institutional structures that regulate mergers and acquisitions, including the roles played by the Competition Commission of India ("CCI"), the Securities and Exchange Board of India ("SEBI"), the U.S. Federal Trade Commission ("FTC"), the Department of Justice ("DOJ"), and the European Commission. Key elements discussed include notification thresholds, review procedures, enforcement mechanisms, and the underlying legal principles that shape antitrust and securities regulation in each jurisdiction. Through a cross-jurisdictional analysis, the paper offers insights into the convergence and divergence of regulatory practices, equipping stakeholders with a broader understanding of global compliance requirements in cross-border transactions.

I. Introduction

M&A is considered a tool that serves essential purposes in helping companies expand their business operations, restructure, enhance market share, gain a competitive edge and achieve strategic business growth. The transactions enable organisations to increase their market presence and deliver scale benefits along with superior competitive performance. M&A transactions are subjected to extensive legal scrutiny as well as regulatory oversight because they lead to considerable economic effects and financial consequences, thus requiring adherence to corporate governance standards, antitrust laws and investor protection guidelines.⁵⁵⁰ Acquisitions can occur in various forms, through mergers, demergers and takeovers, which require separate legal frameworks based on the nature of these combinations for managing stakeholder impacts.

A. Mergers

A merger is the process of combining two or more companies into a single company, usually done in order to improve operational efficiency and increase financial growth and market expansion. Mergers can be categorised based on their strategic objectives:

- **Horizontal mergers** occur when companies combine with their competitors in the same industry which aims to minimise competition to enhance market control. The merger of **Vodafone-Idea** is an example of a horizontal merger that sought to generate a stronger telecommunications competitor in the market through the same.⁵⁵¹
- **Vertical mergers** combine companies that are in the same supply chain to achieve streamlined operations and greater efficiency. **Amazon** established its position in the market when it bought

⁵⁵⁰ Kayode Akinsola, "Corporate Governance Challenges in Tech M&A: Board Oversight and Shareholder Rights" 5 Indian J. Legal Rev. 106 (2025).

⁵⁵¹ Muskan Prakash Lalwani, "An Analytical Study on Merger of Vodafone & Idea" 33 MBA Project Report (G.S. College of Commerce & Economics, Nagpur, 2022).

Whole Foods, enabling its supply chain integration process.⁵⁵²

- **Conglomerate mergers** occur through the combination of companies with different business operations in unrelated industries. It is usually done for the pursuit of diversified business activities. An example of this is the acquisition **of Corus Steel by the Tata Group**, where the company expanded its presence worldwide in steel manufacturing.⁵⁵³

The Companies Act, 2013, governs mergers in India through various mandates such as shareholder approval, creditor approval and authorisation from regulatory bodies, including the National Company Law Tribunal (“NCLT”) and the Competition Commission of India (“CCI”). Under U.S. laws, mergers need to comply with the Hart-Scott-Rodino Antitrust Improvements Act (“HSR Act”)⁵⁵⁴, which mandates companies to submit pre-merger notifications to both the Federal Trade Commission (“FTC”) and the Department of Justice (“DOJ”).⁵⁵⁵ The EU Merger Regulation oversees EU mergers to protect market competition levels.

B. Demergers

A demerger occurs when companies separate various business divisions into new independent companies. Companies conduct demergers to split their business into separate entities for multiple reasons, such as shareholder value maximisation, operational efficiency enhancement, as well as legal compliance obligations. A notable example is the **demerger of Reliance Industries**, which led to the existence of **Jio Platforms**, which further enabled their digital business to receive foreign

investments independently.⁵⁵⁶ Indian companies benefit from the legal structure of the Companies Act, 2013, which safeguards shareholder and creditor assets during demergers. A demerger falls under the jurisdiction of the Income Tax Act, 1961⁵⁵⁷, by which it receives tax-neutral status under particular conditions.

C. Takeovers

A takeover refers to the acquisition of control over a target company by another entity. Takeovers can be classified as:

- **Friendly takeovers**, where the target firm voluntarily agrees to the acquisition, such as **Walmart's acquisition of Flipkart** in India.⁵⁵⁸
- **Hostile takeovers**, when an acquirer side-steps the target company's management and directly engages with the shareholders. **Larsen & Toubro's hostile takeover of Mindtree** is an example of a target undertaking whose promoters were opposed to the takeover, but it was carried out.⁵⁵⁹

India's takeovers are governed by the SEBI (Substantial Acquisition of Shares and Takeovers) Regulations, 2011 (“**Takeover Code**”)⁵⁶⁰, which ensure transparency, protect investors and ensure shareholders are treated fairly.

II. Importance of Legal and Regulatory Compliance in Acquisitions

M&A businesses have significant consequences for the companies, employees, shareholders, and consumers. Acquisitions carried out without regulatory oversight could result in monopoly

⁵⁵² Nitasha Tiku, “Ready for a Monopoly Fight? Amazon and Whole Foods Isn't It” 25 Wired (June 20, 2017), available at: <https://www.wired.com/story/amazon-whole-foods-monopoly-antitrust/>

⁵⁵³ Harvard Business Publishing, “Tata Steel: The Acquisition of Corus” W17293-PDF-ENG (Harvard Business Publishing, 2016).

⁵⁵⁴ Hart-Scott-Rodino Antitrust Improvements Act of 1976, 15 U.S.C.

⁵⁵⁵ Federal Trade Commission, “Premerger Notification and the Merger Review Process,” available at: <https://www.ftc.gov/advice-guidance/competition-guidance/guide-antitrust-laws/mergers/premerger-notification-merger-review-process>

⁵⁵⁶ Aniruddha Jain, “Demerger of Financial Services Arm of Reliance Industries ahead of Telecommunication & Retail Arm” 24 M&A Critique (Dec. 14, 2022), available at: <https://mnacritique.mergersindia.com/reliance-industries-demerger-financial-services/>.

⁵⁵⁷ Income Tax Act, 1961 (No. 43 of 1961).

⁵⁵⁸ Kashish Tandon, “Walmart-backed Flipkart to Shift Base Back to India from Singapore,” Reuters, Apr. 22, 2025.

⁵⁵⁹ Vishal Vyas, “L&T Attempts Hostile Takeover of Mindtree” 24 M&A Critique 1 (Apr. 12, 2019), available at: <https://mnacritique.mergersindia.com/l-and-t-hostile-takeover-mindtree/>

⁵⁶⁰ SEBI (Substantial Acquisition of Shares and Takeovers) Regulations, 2011.

prices, financial malpractices and suppression of shareholder rights. By coming up with regulatory frameworks, fair and transparent transactions are ensured, as well as the legal compliance of transactions.

In India, regulatory compliance in M&A transactions is enforced through a single framework but through a plethora of legislations. Under Part III of the Companies Act, 2013, the foundations of the corporate restructuring legal framework have been established by defining the process of merger, demerger, and compromise with the creditors. The CCI enforces the Competition Act, 2002, to check anti-competitive practices through mergers. In 2018, the CCI blocked the merger of **Lafarge and Holcim** in India on the grounds that the move would have created a dominant market position in the cement industry.⁵⁶¹ Further, the SEBI Takeover Code requires disclosure and transparency in listing company acquisitions, protecting minority shareholders.

In the United States, for example, it is unlawful for mergers and takeovers to be anti-competitive as provided by the Clayton Act⁵⁶² or the Sherman Antitrust Act⁵⁶³. If there is a possible harm to competition, the Federal Trade Commission can block such transactions, as seen in several high-profile deals, such as the one between **AT&T and T-Mobile**.⁵⁶⁴ Similarly, in the European Union, the EU Merger Regulation maintains that when acquiring companies, market competition should be in no way distorted. The European Commission famously blocked the **Siemens-Alstom merger**, claiming

that it would have created a monopoly in the rail transportation sector.⁵⁶⁵

The statutory disclosure requirements are a vital aspect of regulatory compliance in acquisitions. Strict disclosure norms are applied to public companies to reveal to investors the critical information in the transaction. Companies are required to make such disclosures on acquisition plans, source of funding and the impact on shareholders in India, under the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015 ("**SEBI LODR Regulations**")⁵⁶⁶. The U.S. Securities Exchange Act, 1934 also requires, for example, that acquirers file Schedule 13D with the SEC upon acquiring 5% or more of a company's shares, disclosing their intentions, as well as the financial arrangements.

The regulatory structure overseeing acquisitions is crucial to maintain market integrity, safeguarding investors, and promoting fair competition. India, the United States, and the European Union have developed comprehensive legal mechanisms to regulate mergers, demergers, and takeovers, ensuring that transactions align with corporate governance principles and antitrust policies. As M&A activities continue to grow in complexity, regulatory frameworks must evolve to address emerging challenges such as digital economy mergers, ESG compliance, and cross-border regulatory coordination.

III. Key Regulatory Bodies and Legislations

Stringent regulatory oversight is exercised on M&A transactions to protect transparency, fairness, and compliance with the principles of corporate governance. In all jurisdictions, regulatory bodies participate in examining M&A deals to prevent monopolistic practices and maintain investor rights and the financial stability of a country. M&A transactions are also

⁵⁶¹ John Handoll, Shweta Shroff Chopra & Aparna Mehra, "India: CCI Keeps its Focus Fixed on Remedies that are Acceptable at Home" 5 Global Competition Review – Merger Remedies Guide 1 (5th edn., 2023), available at: <https://globalcompetitionreview.com/guide/the-guide-merger-remedies/fifth-edition/article/india-cci-keeps-its-focus-fixed-remedies-are-acceptable-home>.

⁵⁶² Clayton Antitrust Act of 1914, 15 U.S.C.

⁵⁶³ Sherman Antitrust Act of 1890, 15 U.S.C.

⁵⁶⁴ Zeke Miller, "Justice Department Moves to Block AT&T, T-Mobile Merger," *Wired*, Aug. 31, 2011, available at: <https://www.wired.com/2011/08/justice-department-moves-to-block-attt-mobile-merger/>

⁵⁶⁵ "Brussels Blocks Rail Merger Between France's Alstom and Germany's Siemens," *Euronews*, Feb. 6, 2019, available at: <https://www.euronews.com/2019/02/06/brussels-blocks-rail-merger-between-france-s-alstom-and-germany-s-siemens>

⁵⁶⁶ SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015.

regulated according to each country's own regulatory authorities and legislation to ensure that every transaction is in accordance with national and international economic policies. There are various regulatory bodies and relevant legislative rules in India, the United States, the European Union, as well as other major jurisdictions which can affect global M&A transactions.

A. India

India has a well-established M&A regulatory framework enforced by a number of regulatory authorities and legislative enactments. Acquisitions are governed by various laws of the key regulatory bodies as follows:

1. Securities and Exchange Board of India

M&A transactions are governed by the Securities and Exchange Board of India amongst listed companies. Key regulations that exercise SEBI's regulatory oversight mainly are in the case of the public offer through SEBI (Issue of Capital and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2009 ("**SEBI ICDR Regulations**")⁵⁶⁷, SEBI (Listing Obligations & Disclosures Regulations) Regulations, and in the case of the private (offered) issue, SEBI's oversight is through Sections 30 & 31 of the Securities and Exchange Board of India Act, 1992 ("**SEBI Act**")⁵⁶⁸.

- **SEBI (Substantial Acquisition of Shares and Takeovers) Regulations, 2011:** These regulations promote transparency in acquiring shares and control of listed companies. It has disclosure requirements for acquirers at certain holding levels (5%, 25% and above). It also stipulates that the gain of significant control over a listed company must be accompanied by an open offer to the minority shareholders.
- **SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements), 2015:** The regulations related to continuous disclosure

requirements of listed entities provide for the timely dissemination of material information, including M&A-related matters, to investors and regulators.

The **Mindtree-L&T hostile takeover** case provides a good example of how SEBI has ensured adherence to the provisions of the Takeover Code's open offer requirements and protected the interests of minority shareholders.

2. The Competition Commission of India

The Competition Act, 2002, is enforced by the Competition Commission of India, which directs and enforces the Competition Act, 2002, by preventing monopolistic mergers and acquisitions which are anti-competitive in nature. According to Sections 5 and 6 of the Competition Act, those companies engaged in M&A transactions that are above the mentioned financial thresholds are mandated to acquire prior clearance from CCI to avoid market dominance or restrict fair competition.

For example, the CCI blocked the **Sun Pharma-Ranbaxy merger** in 2014 due to concerns about the possibility of market concentration in the pharmaceutical sector. It mandated on divestment of various assets in order to facilitate the merger.⁵⁶⁹

3. Reserve Bank of India ("RBI") legislation and the Foreign Exchange Management Act ("FEMA")⁵⁷⁰

The Reserve Bank of India is responsible for governing cross-border M&A transactions for which foreign direct investment ("**FDI**") as well as external commercial borrowings ("**ECB**") are involved. Foreign investment in an Indian company is governed by the Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999, which restricts foreign acquirers' sectoral caps, pricing guidelines, and foreign acquisition reporting requirements.

⁵⁶⁷ SEBI (Issue of Capital and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2009.

⁵⁶⁸ Securities and Exchange Board of India Act, 1992 (No. 15 of 1992).

⁵⁶⁹ Aman Shah & Zeba Siddiqui, "CCI Clears Sun Pharma-Ranbaxy Deal," *Reuters*, Dec. 9, 2014, available at: <https://www.reuters.com/article/business/cci-clears-sun-pharma-ranbaxy-deal-idUSKBN0JM1AX/>

⁵⁷⁰ Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999 (No. 42 of 1999).

When the **Walmart-Flipkart deal** took place, the FEMA regulations formed the basis of how the deal was to be structured to ensure compliance with FDI in the e-commerce sector.⁵⁷¹

4. Companies Act, 2013

The procedures for mergers, demergers and acquisitions are mentioned under the Companies Act, 2013, the foundation corporate law statute in India. The corporate restructuring processes covered by Sections 230-232 include shareholder approvals, court sanctions and creditor protections. To the extent of regulatory compliance for M&A transactions, the Companies Act mandates fair valuation and due diligence to protect stakeholders' rights.

Under this Act, an example of compliance would be when **HDFC Ltd merged with HDFC Bank**, the NCLT and shareholders were both required to approve the transaction as per the Companies Act provisions.⁵⁷²

B. United States

There is a well-developed M&A regulatory framework in the United States, enforced by multiple agencies in order to maintain transparency, safeguard investors and establish fair competition. The primary regulatory bodies include:

1. Securities and Exchange Commission

The Securities Exchange Act, 1934 places a mandate of rules over disclosure requirements in M&A transactions by way of the Securities and Exchange Commission. Under the 5% shareholding threshold, if a set acquirer crosses it in a company, the acquisition details have to be reported by the acquirer through the filing of Schedule 13D, disclosing the transaction details,

fund sources, and the acquirer's intention around the target.

In 2022, the **acquisition of Twitter by Elon Musk** was closely scrutinised by the SEC with an eye to the financing arrangements and disclosures related to shareholder impact.⁵⁷³

2. Federal Trade Commission and Department of Justice

U.S. antitrust laws, primarily the Clayton Act, 1914, and the Sherman Act, 1890 are enforced by the FTC and DOJ in order to prevent anticompetitive mergers. Under the Hart-Scott-Rodino Antitrust Improvements Act, companies are mandated to report to the FTC by way of a notification before the merger is completed for transactions exceeding the specified monetary thresholds.

The FTC, for instance, stopped **NVIDIA's bid to buy ARM Holdings** because of anti-competitive concerns in the semiconductor market.⁵⁷⁴

C. European Union

The EU Merger Regulation ("EUMR") regulates M&A activities in the EU, and such activities are regulated by the European Commission in the European Union. Companies which bring together two turnovers exceeding specified thresholds must notify the Commission of such cross-border mergers. The aim of the EUMR is to stop mergers that curb fair competition from existing in the European market.

For example, the European Commission prevented the **merger of Siemens with Alstom**, which could have led to monopolistic conditions in the railway sector.⁵⁷⁵

Furthermore, each EU member state has its own national competition authority like the UK's

⁵⁷¹ Ansh Mishra, "Analysis of the Walmart-Flipkart Deal," A.K. Legal & Associates, June 20, 2023, available at: <https://aklegal.in/analysis-of-the-walmart-flipkart-deal/>

⁵⁷² HDFC Bank Limited, "Disclosure under Regulations 30, 42 and 60 of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015," June 30, 2023, available at: <https://www.bseindia.com/xml-data/corpfiling/AttachHis/384c800e-eb59-46d2-9d08-b336b53b66bc.pdf>.

⁵⁷³ Cadwalader Wickersham & Taft LLP, "SEC Brings Suit Against Elon Musk for Failure to Report Twitter Ownership," *Lexology*, Jan. 30, 2025, available at: <https://www.lexology.com/library/detail.aspx?q=69b77d4e-f52e-4866-974b-4049925d00a0>

⁵⁷⁴ Joseph M. Rancour, Maria Raptis & Steven C. Sunshine, "FTC Sues To Block \$40 Billion Nvidia Acquisition of Arm," *Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP*, Dec. 20, 2021, available at: <https://www.skadden.com/insights/publications/2021/12/ftc-sues-to-block-40-billion-nvidia-acquisition>

⁵⁷⁵ Konstantinos Efstathiou, "The Alstom-Siemens Merger and the Need for European Champions," *Bruegel*, Mar. 11, 2019, available at: <https://www.bruegel.org/blog-post/alstom-siemens-merger-and-need-european-champions>

Competition and Markets Authority (“CMA”), which intervened in deals such as the **Microsoft-Activision Blizzard merger**⁵⁷⁶, insisting on structural changes to prevent unfair competition.

D. Other Acts and Regulations Regulating M&A in Foreign Jurisdictions

Governments across different countries have created M&A frameworks to safeguard market fairness and protect investors. Some key regulations include:

- **China’s Anti-Monopoly Law (“AML”)** lets the State Administration for Market Regulation examine mergers to prevent market dominance. The Chinese government denied permission for the Qualcomm-NXP merger because it violated competition laws.
- **Japan’s Fair Trade Commission (“JFTC”)** oversees acquisitions through the Anti-Monopoly Act, which requires notification when companies over certain thresholds merge.
- Australia oversees M&A transactions through the Competition and Consumer Act 2010, which is regulated by the **Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (“ACCC”)**, to preserve consumer interests.

IV. Disclosure Requirements in Acquisitions

Mergers and acquisitions have various disclosure requirements, which fundamentally enable the transparency, safeguarding of investor interests, and the stability of the market due to such transactions. Across all jurisdictions, regulatory frameworks require strict disclosures that are aimed at curbing fraudulent transactions, insider trading and information asymmetry. In India, disclosure obligations are mentioned in the SEBI (Substantial Acquisition of Shares and Takeovers) Regulations, 2011 and SEBI (Listing Obligations of Disclosure

Requirements) Regulations, 2015 for acquiring entities. In the United States, disclosure requirements pursuant to material corporate actions as per the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 stipulate that investors are provided with comprehensive and timely information. In the European Union, the Transparency Directive and Competition Regulations define the guidelines for the disclosure of M&A deals to curb anti-competitive practices.

A. India

SEBI (Substantial Acquisition of Shares and Takeovers) Regulations, 2011

Under the SEBI (Substantial Acquisition of Shares and Takeovers) Regulations, 2011, there are comprehensive norms of disclosure for entities acquiring a significant stake in a listed company. This regulation also includes the key disclosure requirements such as:

- **Initial Disclosure:** When acquiring 5% or more of voting rights in a listed company, the acquirer must disclose their shareholding to the company and stock exchanges within two working days.
- **Continual Disclosure:** Acquirers who have over 25% of a company’s voting rights and further purchase 2% or more shares, over and above the initial purchase, must report the same.
- **Open Offer Disclosures:** Following the 25% mark, an acquirer has to make an open offer to the public shareholders, revealing the agreement of financing, intention to acquire and the financial aspect of the entity.

A good example of disclosure compliance through the Takeover Code is **Adani Group’s takeover of NDTV**, which required the investor making the takeover to disclose all its indirect acquisitions, including the convertible warrants acquired by them.⁵⁷⁷

⁵⁷⁶ Competition and Markets Authority, “Microsoft / Activision Deal Prevented to Protect Innovation and Choice in Cloud Gaming,” GOV.UK, Apr. 26, 2023, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/microsoft-activision-deal-prevented-to-protect-innovation-and-choice-in-cloud-gaming>

⁵⁷⁷ Nishchal Joshipura, Khyati Dalal, Aishwarya Rao, Akash Kumar, Aarathi Das & Sach Chabria, Adani’s Hostile Takeover of NDTV, M&A Lab, Nishith Desai Associates, May 2023, available at:

SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015

The SEBI (LODR) Regulations, 2015, impose ongoing disclosure obligations on listed companies undergoing acquisitions. The LODR ensures that investors are kept informed about material events that may impact stock prices and investment decisions.

Key disclosure provisions under LODR include:

- **Material Event Disclosure:** Listed companies must disclose any material acquisition, demerger, sale, or restructuring event to stock exchanges within 24 hours.
- **Quarterly and Annual Reporting:** Companies must publish financial statements reflecting M&A transactions, providing details on asset transfers, valuation, and liabilities.
- **Shareholder Notification:** Shareholders must be informed of acquisition-related decisions through public announcements and regulatory filings.

An example of LODR compliance is the **HDFC-HDFC Bank merger**, where both entities made continuous disclosures through stock exchanges, detailing regulatory approvals, shareholding structure changes, and expected financial impact.⁵⁷⁸

B. United States

Securities Exchange Act of 1934

In the United States, the **Securities Exchange Act of 1934** imposes stringent disclosure requirements on public companies engaged in M&A deals. The **Securities and Exchange Commission** enforces these regulations, ensuring that material details are communicated to the investors timely.

Key disclosure obligations include:

- **Schedule 13D Filings:** Any entity acquiring more than 5% of a company's shares must file Schedule 13D with the SEC, disclosing the acquirer's identity, purpose of acquisition, funding details, and future plans.
- **Form 8-K Disclosure:** Companies must file Form 8-K with the SEC within four business days of a significant acquisition, detailing financial statements, material agreements, and expected business impact.
- **Proxy Statements (Schedule 14A):** If an acquisition involves shareholder voting, companies must provide comprehensive proxy statements outlining merger terms, financial implications, and risks.

A high-profile example of SEC disclosure enforcement was seen in the **Elon Musk-Twitter acquisition**, where the SEC closely scrutinised Musk's delayed 13D filings and public statements regarding funding sources and takeover intentions.⁵⁷⁹

C. European Union

Transparency Directive and Competition Regulations

The European Union mandates extensive disclosure requirements through the **Transparency Directive** and the **EU Merger Regulation**, ensuring that M&A transactions do not distort market competition or mislead investors.

Key disclosure norms include:

- **Major Shareholding Disclosure:** Investors acquiring 5% or more voting rights in an EU-listed company must notify the company and the relevant financial regulatory authority.
- **Public Announcement Requirements:** Companies involved in M&A transactions must disclose transaction details

https://nishithdesai.com/fileadmin/user_upload/pdfs/Research_Papers/M%26A_Lab_Adanis-Hostile-Takeover-of-NDTV.pdf.

⁵⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁹ Ibid.

through stock exchange filings, investor presentations, and public notices.

- **European Commission Merger Notification:** Companies exceeding prescribed turnover thresholds must notify the European Commission, which evaluates the deal's impact on market competition.

A landmark example of EU disclosure enforcement was the *Siemens-Alstom merger*, where the European Commission blocked the transaction after reviewing competitive impact disclosures and stakeholder objections.⁵⁸⁰

V. Material Facts, Financial Statements, and Shareholder Notifications

Regulatory frameworks across jurisdictions have established the importance of material facts, financial statements, and shareholder notifications to safeguard investor interests and enhance transparency.

1. Material Facts Disclosure

Companies must reveal all material facts that affect the transaction to the public, such as:⁵⁸¹

- Nature and structure of the deal (merger, acquisition, or demerger).
- Changes in shareholding and impact of voting rights.
- Regulatory approvals are required.
- Potential conflicts of interest or governance issues.

2. Financial Statements

An acquiring company needs to give financial reports that disclose:

- Pro-forma financial statements that show the financial impact post-acquisition.
- Valuation reports that detail the acquisition price and asset valuation.
- Audited financials of the target company are reviewed to ensure

details about financial debts and performance.

3. Shareholder Notifications

M&A transactions require shareholders to approve the transaction through the following:

- General meeting notices with detailed summaries of the transaction.
- Voting rights disclosures showing the structural changes to the shareholding.
- Offer letters in case of any open offers or tender offers.

Companies must correctly share disclosures under M&A transactions to maintain market integrity, investor protection, and fulfil regulatory standards. Under the Takeover Code and LODR, SEBI makes listed Indian companies report all details about acquiring shares and corporate governance changes. Under US laws, the Securities Exchange Act requires the Securities and Exchange Commission to supervise detailed reports, including Schedule 13D and Form 8-K, and proxy statements to keep investors well-informed of corporate developments. In response to concerns, European Union laws protect investors by preventing companies from buying competitors, which reduces fair competition or misleads shareholders.

VI. Comparative Overview

The regulatory landscape governing mergers and acquisitions transactions varies significantly across various jurisdictions, representing different legal systems and market configurations, and policy objectives. While India, the United States, and the European Union share a common goal of ensuring transparency, investor protection, and fair competition, the mechanisms they employ to achieve these objectives differ.

Disclosure requirements, in particular, show key similarities and distinctions across these jurisdictions, primarily in areas such as threshold limits for disclosures, reporting

⁵⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁸¹ Ayush Verma, "What Are the Types of Disclosure Obligations under the Takeover Code," iPleaders, Oct. 21, 2020, available at: <https://blog.iplayers.in/types-disclosure-obligations-takeover-code/>

mechanisms, open offer obligations, and shareholder rights. This section provides a comparative analysis of the disclosure requirements in M&A transactions across India, the US, and the EU, highlighting regulatory frameworks, enforcement mechanisms, and procedural variations.

A. Disclosure Thresholds and Reporting Obligations

Disclosure obligations in M&A transactions are primarily triggered when an acquirer crosses specific shareholding thresholds in a target company. Each jurisdiction mandates different reporting thresholds to ensure market participants are informed of significant changes in corporate control.

- **India:** Under the SEBI (Substantial Acquisition of Shares and Takeovers) Regulations, 2011, acquirers must disclose their shareholding when they acquire 5% or more of a listed company's shares. Any subsequent acquisition of 2% or more must also be disclosed. When an acquirer crosses the 25% shareholding threshold, it must initiate a compulsory open offer to minority shareholders, ensuring fair exit opportunities. The SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015 also require immediate disclosures of material acquisitions to stock exchanges.⁵⁸²
- **United States:** The Securities Exchange Act of 1934, enforced by the Securities and Exchange Commission, mandates that any investor acquiring 5% or more of a company's voting shares file Schedule 13D within 10 days, detailing the purpose of the acquisition and future endeavours. If the acquirer intends to

passively invest without taking control, they may file Schedule 13G, which has fewer disclosure obligations.⁵⁸³

- **European Union:** Under the EU Transparency Directive, investors acquiring 5% or more of a listed company's shares must notify both the target company and the national financial regulatory authority. Additional disclosures are required at 10%, 15%, 20%, 25%, 30%, 50%, and 75% thresholds, ensuring increased transparency.⁵⁸⁴

A major similarity across these jurisdictions is the 5% initial disclosure requirement, which acts as an early detection system for market participants. However, the EU adopts a more stringent tiered disclosure system, requiring additional notifications at multiple thresholds. India's mandatory open offer at 25% is a significant protective mechanism not present in US regulations, which rely more on market-based disclosures through SEC filings.

B. Open Offer and Minority Shareholder Protection

The role of open offer requirements is vital in protecting the minority shareholders from forced takeovers, and in allowing the minority shareholders an opportunity that is fair to them for exiting, when there occurs a substantial change in control.

- **India:** Pursuant to the Takeover Code, if an acquirer has a stake sufficient enough in a listed company i.e. more than 25%, the acquirer shall make an open offer to buy an additional 26% stake in a listed company from the public shareholders at a price not lower

⁵⁸² Nishith Desai Associates, *Public M&As in India: Takeover Code Dissected*, M&A Lab, Aug. 2013, available at: https://www.nishithdesai.com/fileadmin/user_upload/pdfs/Ma%20Lab/Takeover%20Code%20Dissected.pdf.

⁵⁸³ U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, "Exchange Act Sections 13(d) and 13(g) and Regulation 13D-G Beneficial Ownership Reporting," Compliance and Disclosure Interpretations, Feb. 11, 2025, available at: <https://www.sec.gov/rules-regulations/staff-guidance/compliance-disclosure-interpretations/exchange-act-sections-13d-13g-regulation-13d-g-beneficial-ownership-reporting>

⁵⁸⁴ European Commission, "Transparency Requirements for Listed Companies," available at: https://finance.ec.europa.eu/capital-markets-union-and-financial-markets/company-reporting-and-auditing/company-reporting/transparency-requirements-listed-companies_en.

than the highest transaction price by the acquirer in the 52-week period preceding the offer by the acquirer. By doing so, minority shareholders will not be disadvantaged by privately negotiated control transfers.⁵⁸⁵

- **United States:** There are no mandatory open offer requirements. Instead, the SEC disclosure norms, proxy voting mechanisms, and securities fraud laws provide means for safeguarding shareholder rights. Here, the emphasis of the SEC is on information symmetry rather than on stipulation of buyout offers.⁵⁸⁶
- **European Union:** Under European Union Directive 2004/25/EC on Takeover Bids, any investor that acquires 30% or more of a listed company shall initiate an open offer for the remainder of the shares at an equitable price that is that the national regulators fix.⁵⁸⁷

In this aspect, the US is very different from India or the EU, by not stipulating a compulsory open offer. According to the Indian model, the shareholders of the minority are protected and have an exit route available. While the EU has a hybrid approach, with open offers, it leaves pricing to national regulators.

C. Material Disclosures and Financial Reporting

All three jurisdictions require material disclosures and financial reporting requirements and are aimed at promoting M&A transaction transparency. The scope and enforcement, however, vary.

- **India:** SEBI LODR Regulations state that listed companies shall disclose important M&A events within 24 hours to the stock exchanges. Each financial report has to include valuation, funding structure and what it means for the shareholders.⁵⁸⁸

- **United States:** There is a requirement that companies file Form 8-K for acquisitions within four business days, pursuant to the SEC. Further, in case of a transaction that involves voting of the shareholders, acquirers submit detailed proxy statements (Schedule 14A). The US also requires much more disclosure about the earnings impacts, forecasts, and management changes.⁵⁸⁹
- **European Union:** As per the Transparency Directive and Merger Regulation, M&A transactions have to be disclosed publicly, which includes business impact assessments, competition-related issues, and financial reports in which the deal is taking place. A transaction exceeding turnover thresholds must have received approval from the European Commission and, in essence, obtain their assent before being completed.⁵⁹⁰

The US has the most extensive financial disclosure system that involves abundant documentation in earnings, projections and board decisions. India has event-based disclosures, and it pays close attention to the timely dissemination of information. The EU's financial reporting is integrated with its antitrust oversight, the making of which is distinctly competition-focused.

D. Regulatory Oversight and Enforcement Mechanisms

M&A is subject to a regulated framework that differs between jurisdictions, where the enforcement and oversight level varies:

- **India:** SEBI enforces disclosure compliance in India through periodic audits and penalties for non-compliance. The CCI reviews whether acquisitions result in a rise in market concentration, ensuring the fairness of competition.

⁵⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁰ Ibid.

- **United States:** SEC Enforcement in the U.S. involves civil penalties, lawsuits and criminal sanctions. For example, the Federal Trade Commission and the Department of Justice scrutinise M&A transactions for anticompetitive concerns and pull the deals that present a threat to market competition.
- **European Union:** The European Commission uses thorough inspections to decide if large mergers can proceed, conducting economic analysis before approving a transaction. The EU holds companies responsible by charging heavy penalties for submitting misleading information.

VII. Comparative Summary Table

Aspect	India (SEBI)	US (SEC)	EU (European Commission)
Initial Disclosure Threshold	5%	5%	5%, 10%, 15%, etc.
Open Offer Requirement	Mandatory at 25%	Not required	Mandatory at 30%
Financial Disclosure Timeline	24 hours	4 business days	Before transaction approval
Regulatory Scrutiny	Post-transaction	Post-transaction	Pre-transaction
Antitrust Review	CCI review	FTC/DOJ review	European Commission
Shareholder Rights	Mandatory buyout	SEC proxy voting	Regulator-determined

Table A: Comparative Table highlighting the different disclosure requirements across three jurisdictions.

Despite having similar objectives, these three jurisdictions enforce their business disclosure rules differently because of unique local interests. India favours minority shareholders by requiring open offers to shareholders during events and fast disclosure regulations. US market transparency relies on private actors who monitor companies through SEC disclosures and lawsuits. Before deal completion, the EU mandates firms to obtain government approval and face economic scrutiny for transactions.

VIII. Conclusion

The regulatory frameworks for acquisitions across India, the United States, and the European Union reflect both shared objectives and jurisdiction-specific nuances. All three regions aim to maintain fair competition,

protect consumer welfare, and uphold market integrity, but the mechanisms and thresholds they use differ substantially. India's regulatory ecosystem, led by the CCI and SEBI, emphasizes procedural transparency and growing antitrust scrutiny as its markets mature. The United States, with its dual-agency model involving the FTC and DOJ, adopts a more litigation-driven approach, placing significant emphasis on economic analysis and market structure. In contrast, the European Union follows a centralized and structured procedure through the European Commission, marked by extensive pre-notification consultations and a strong tradition of public interest considerations.

For businesses engaging in domestic or cross-border acquisitions, it is imperative to recognize these regulatory differences and prepare for varying compliance timelines, documentation standards, and investigative intensities. Effective legal and strategic planning,

combined with jurisdiction-specific expertise, can significantly reduce the risk of delays or enforcement actions. As regulatory authorities continue to evolve their approaches in response to digital markets and global consolidation trends, staying updated on policy changes and enforcement precedents is no longer optional—it is a critical aspect of responsible and forward-thinking corporate governance. Ultimately, navigating these regulatory landscapes successfully requires not just legal knowledge but also a holistic understanding of geopolitical, economic, and market dynamics.

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PATENT-COMPETITION INTERFACE IN INDIA

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Abstract:

This article explores the complex interplay between patent rights and competition law in India, focusing on how the legal system navigates conflicts between intellectual property protection and the preservation of market competition. Anchored in the Competition Act, 2002 and the Patents Act, 1970 (as amended post-TRIPS), the article analyses how regulatory and judicial frameworks respond to alleged abuses of patent rights particularly in high-stakes sectors such as telecommunications, pharmaceuticals, and agriculture. Key case studies, including Ericsson v. Micromax and Monsanto v. CCI, illustrate the evolving jurisprudence on standard essential patents (SEPs), FRAND obligations, and the jurisdictional overlap between the Competition Commission of India (CCI) and civil courts. The article critically evaluates the divergent views of single and division benches of the Delhi High Court on whether competition law can scrutinize patent-related conduct, especially excessive pricing and discriminatory licensing. It concludes by emphasizing the need for clearer statutory demarcation, procedural efficiency, and harmonization with global practices to ensure that innovation incentives do not result in market exclusion or consumer harm.

I. Overview of the Indian Legal Framework

India has a distinct approach to regulating the interface between patents and competition law, balancing intellectual property (IP) rights with market competition. The legal framework governing this relationship is primarily based on:

- a) **The Competition Act, 2002** – India's primary antitrust legislation, which regulates anti-competitive agreements, abuse of dominant position, and mergers and acquisitions that may harm competition.
- b) **The Patents Act, 1970** (as amended by the TRIPS⁵⁹¹-compliant 2005 Amendment) – Governs patent rights in India, setting the conditions for

patentability, compulsory licensing, and patent misuse.

- c) **Decisions by the Competition Commission of India (CCI)** – The CCI plays an active role in ensuring that patents are not used to distort market competition, particularly in sectors like pharmaceuticals, telecommunications, and digital technology.

II. The Competition Act, 2002

The Competition Act, 2002 replaced the earlier Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices (MRTP) Act, 1969, marking a significant shift towards a pro-competition regulatory environment. The Act is structured around three core areas:

A.) Regulation of Anti-Competitive Agreements (Section 3)

1. Prohibits anti-competitive agreements, including collusive

⁵⁹¹ Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS), 1869 U.N.T.S. 299 (1994).

price-fixing, bid-rigging, and exclusive supply agreements. These include both horizontal and vertical agreements.

2. Section 3(5) provides an exception for IPRs, allowing patent holders to impose reasonable restrictions to protect their rights. However, abusive practices (such as excessive pricing or refusal to license) can still be challenged under this section.
3. Examples of Anti-Competitive Conduct in Patent Licensing:
 - i) **Patent Pooling:** Situations where dominant companies collectively license patents in a way that restricts market entry.
 - ii) **Exclusive Licensing Agreements:** Restricting competitors from developing similar technologies.
 - iii) **Tying Arrangements:** When a patent holder forces buyers to purchase an additional product alongside the patented product.

B.) *Prohibition of Abuse of Dominance (Section 4)*

1. Prevents dominant firms from exploiting their market position, including through unfair pricing, discriminatory licensing, or excessive patent royalties.
2. Section 4(2) specifically mentions that dominant firms cannot impose unfair or discriminatory pricing on consumers, which applies to patent licensing fees as well.
3. Relevant CCI Cases include, **Ericsson v. Micromax** wherein the CCI investigated Ericsson's

SEP licensing practices, examining whether **excessive** royalty fees constituted an abuse of dominance. **Roche v. Cipla (2009)** was another landmark case which addressed the impact of patent rights on generic drug market access, balancing IP protection with public health consideration

C.) *Regulation of Mergers and Acquisitions (Sections 5 & 6)*

1. Ensures that patent acquisitions do not create monopolistic market structures.
2. Sections 5 and 6 grant the CCI power to assess mergers where patent-heavy industries might be impacted. Pharmaceutical Sector Mergers: CCI actively scrutinizes mergers where patent portfolios may give rise to monopolistic market control. Telecommunications and SEP Holdings: Mergers that consolidate SEPs may be investigated for restricting competition.

III. *The Patents Act, 1970 (Post-TRIPS Amendments)*

India's Patents Act, 1970, as amended in 2005 to comply with the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS), incorporates key provisions to balance patent rights with public interest.

a) Criteria for Patentability: An invention must be novel, involve an inventive step, and be capable of industrial application. Section 3(d) – Prevents ever greening (extending patent life through minor modifications), ensuring patents promote genuine innovation rather than restrict market competition. Section 83 and 84 create a mandate for Compulsory Working Requirements which mandates that a patent must be worked in India and should not be used to block competition. This is crucial for sectors like pharmaceuticals, where companies holding patents cannot restrict affordable generic alternatives.

b) Compulsory Licensing (Section 84 & Section 92) – This enables the government to issue compulsory licenses if a patented product is not available at a reasonable price, is not sufficiently worked in India, or is required for public health. Types of Compulsory Licensing:

Public Health Emergency (Section 92): Can be invoked in cases like pandemics and Non-Availability (Section 84): If a patented product is not accessible to the public at fair pricing.

c) Revocation of Patents (Section 66 & 85) – Allows for the revocation of patents on public interest grounds, preventing monopolistic exploitation of patents. This was seen in the landmark judgement of *Novartis v. Union of India*⁵⁹², where Novartis' patent for the cancer drug Glivec was rejected under Section 3(d), and ensuring affordability of essential medicines. The impact of Revocation Provisions is essential in curbing anti-competitive uses of patents which consequently is essential in maintaining affordable drug prices in India.

IV. Case Study

a) Telefonaktiebolaget LM Ericsson (Publ) v. Competition Commission of India & Another (2016)⁵⁹³

1. Background & CCI's Order

Telefonaktiebolaget LM Ericsson (Ericsson), a Swedish telecommunications giant, held several Standard Essential Patents (SEPs) related to mobile communication technologies. These patents were crucial for manufacturers to produce mobile handsets that complied with industry standards.

The dispute arose when Micromax Informatics Limited, an Indian mobile handset manufacturer, filed a complaint with the Competition Commission of India (CCI), alleging that Ericsson engaged in anti-competitive practices by:

- i) Charging excessive royalties based on the price of the end device rather than the value of the patented technology.
- ii) Discriminatory licensing terms, demanding different

⁵⁹² (2013) 6 SCC 1.

⁵⁹³ Case No. 26(1)/2014 (CCI 2016).

royalties from different manufacturers.

- iii) Coercive patent licensing, forcing licensees into agreements under non-FRAND (Fair, Reasonable, and Non-Discriminatory) terms.
- iv) Threatening injunctions against licensees who sought to negotiate lower royalty rates.

The CCI took cognizance of these allegations and ordered a detailed investigation under Section 26(1) of the Competition Act, 2002, suspecting an abuse of dominance under Section 4.

The CCI emphasized the role of FRAND terms in preventing patent hold-up and royalty stacking, which can hinder fair access to essential technologies.

It dismissed Ericsson's objection to its jurisdiction by stating that the dispute raised substantial competition law concerns, falling squarely within the Commission's authority.

The relevant market was defined as the licensing of SEPs for GSM-compliant mobile communication devices in India. Ericsson was considered *prima facie* dominant in this market, given its ownership of nearly 400 GSM-related patents and the lack of viable alternatives for manufacturers like Micromax.

The CCI found a *prima facie* case of abuse of dominance, noting that Ericsson's royalty model based on the end-product's sale price rather than the actual value of the patented technology was excessive and potentially discriminatory. As a result, the

Commission directed the Director General to initiate a formal investigation.

2. Ericsson's Writ Petition

Ericsson challenged the CCI's jurisdiction by filing a writ petition before the Delhi High Court (W.P. (C) 464/2014 & 1006/2014), arguing that:

- i) The CCI lacked jurisdiction over patent matters, which should be adjudicated exclusively under the Patents Act, 1970.
- ii) The Competition Act should not override the Patents Act, as the latter is a special law governing patent rights.
- iii) FRAND disputes should be resolved contractually rather than through competition law enforcement.
- iv) Seeking injunctions for SEP infringement is a legitimate exercise of patent rights, not an anti-competitive practice.

3. Key Issues

- i) Does the CCI have jurisdiction to investigate patent holders for anti-competitive conduct?
- ii) Does the Competition Act, 2002, override the Patents Act, 1970?
- iii) Do SEP holders have obligations under competition law beyond the Patents Act?
- iv) Are excessive patent royalties and discriminatory licensing practices a form of abuse of dominance under Section 4 of the Competition Act?
- v) Can a patent holder use injunctions as a negotiation tactic without violating competition law?

4. Court's Analysis and Findings

The Delhi High Court's decision in *Ericsson v. Micromax* represents a pivotal moment in the evolution of India's interface between patent law and competition law, especially in the context of Standard Essential Patents (SEPs) and Fair, Reasonable and Non-Discriminatory (FRAND) licensing obligations.

One of the central issues before the Court was whether there existed an irreconcilable inconsistency between the remedies available under the Patent Act, 1970, and those under the Competition Act, 2002.

Ericsson contended that disputes concerning SEPs and licensing should fall solely within the domain of the Patent Act, particularly through the mechanism of compulsory licensing.

The Court, however, firmly rejected this argument, holding that both legislative frameworks serve complementary but distinct functions. The Patent Act provides relief in personam, such as compulsory licenses, while the Competition Act offers in rem remedies, including penalties and cease-and-desist orders under Section 27.

Accordingly, the Court ruled that the existence of patent rights does not shield a SEP holder from competition law scrutiny, and that the Competition Commission of India (CCI) was competent to investigate claims of abuse of dominance.

Another significant issue considered by the Court was whether Ericsson's conduct demanding royalties based on the end-product price and seeking injunctions constituted a prima facie abuse of dominance.

In rejecting Ericsson's claim that it was merely exercising its legitimate patent rights, the Court drew upon global jurisprudence from the United States and European Union, particularly *Rambus Inc. (FTC, 2006)*⁵⁹⁴, *Motorola v. Apple*⁵⁹⁵, and *Huawei v. ZTE*⁵⁹⁶. These decisions established that SEP holders who fail to adhere to FRAND commitments, seek aggressive injunctions, or suppress disclosure during standard-setting processes may, in fact, abuse their dominant positions. Applying this reasoning, the Delhi High Court observed that Ericsson's approach had the potential to pressure implementers like Micromax into accepting unfair and one-sided licensing terms, thereby distorting market conditions and ultimately harming consumers through increased downstream prices.

The Court further acknowledged that a licensee or implementer is entitled to simultaneously engage in FRAND negotiations, pursue an antitrust complaint, and challenge the validity of the patents in civil proceedings. This recognition reinforces the rights of implementers to contest anti-competitive licensing practices without being estopped from defending themselves on patent law grounds.

In dismissing all jurisdictional objections raised by Ericsson, the Court validated the authority of the CCI to investigate the SEP holder's conduct under the Competition Act, even in the presence of parallel patent infringement suits. This decision not only reaffirmed the applicability of competition law to SEP licensing disputes but also

⁵⁹⁴ 522 F.3d 456 (D.C. Cir. 2008).

⁵⁹⁵ 757 F.3d 1286 (Fed. Cir. 2014).

⁵⁹⁶ Ibid

established foundational jurisprudence for future antitrust oversight of technology markets in India.

5. Conclusion

The *Ericsson v. CCI* case is a landmark ruling at the intersection of patent rights and competition law in India. It established that:

1. Patent rights are subject to competition law oversight.
2. SEP holders must comply with FRAND obligations, ensuring non-discriminatory licensing.
3. CCI has the jurisdiction to investigate abusive patent licensing practices.

This case strengthened the regulatory framework governing SEPs in India, ensuring that patent holders do not misuse their dominant position. Going forward, the balance between innovation incentives and market competition will continue to evolve under India's competition and patent laws.

b) *Monsanto Holdings Private Limited & Ors vs. Competition Commission of India & Ors (Single Judge Bench)*⁵⁹⁷

1. Background

In 2016, several Indian cotton seed manufacturers, including Nuziveedu Seeds Ltd., filed information with the Competition Commission of India (CCI) against Mahyco Monsanto Biotech (India) Ltd. (MMBL), a joint venture between Monsanto Holdings Pvt. Ltd. and Mahyco. The informants alleged that MMBL abused its dominant position by imposing unfair and discriminatory conditions in sub-license agreements for Bt cotton technology, charging

exorbitant trait fees, and engaging in practices that restricted competition and innovation in the cotton seed market. The CCI, finding a prima facie case, ordered an investigation under Section 26(1) of the Competition Act, 2002. Monsanto challenged this order before the Delhi High Court, arguing that the matter pertained to patent rights and should fall under the jurisdiction of the Controller of Patents, not the CCI.

2. Monsanto's Writ Petition

Monsanto challenged the CCI's jurisdiction by filing a writ petition before the Delhi High Court, asserting that:

- i) **Patent Rights Take Precedence** – Monsanto argued that its licensing terms and trait fees were an inherent part of its patent rights under the Patents Act, 1970, and should not be subject to scrutiny under the Competition Act.
- ii) **CCI's Overreach** – Monsanto claimed that the CCI lacked jurisdiction over issues related to patent licensing, as such matters were governed exclusively by the Patents Act.
- iii) **Freedom of Contract** – Monsanto contended that its agreements with seed companies were voluntarily entered into and reflected standard industry practices, negating the claim of anti-competitive behaviour.

3. Key Issues

- i) Does the CCI have jurisdiction to investigate patent holders for anti-competitive conduct?
- ii) Does the Patents Act override the Competition Act in

⁵⁹⁷ W.P. (C) - 1776/2016.

matters related to patent licensing

- iii) Do Monsanto's licensing terms and trait fees amount to an abuse of dominance under Section 4 of the Competition Act?
- iv) Can excessive royalties in patent licensing be challenged under competition law?
- v) Does the refusal to license technology to certain entities constitute an anti-competitive practice?

4. Court's Analysis and Findings

- i) CCI's Jurisdiction over Patent Licensing: The Delhi High Court ruled that the CCI has the authority to investigate licensing practices of patent holders, even if they involve intellectual property rights. The court observed that patent rights, while granting exclusivity, do not provide blanket immunity from competition law oversight.
- ii) Coexistence of Patent Rights and Competition Law: The court held that the Patents Act and Competition Act operate in separate but overlapping domains. While the Patents Act governs the grant and enforcement of patent rights, the Competition Act ensures that these rights are not exercised in a manner detrimental to market competition. The exercise of patent rights must align with fair market practices to prevent monopolistic control over essential technologies.
- iii) Abuse of Dominance in Licensing Agreements: The

court noted that if a patent holder imposes unfair or discriminatory terms, it could amount to an abuse of dominance under Section 4 of the Competition Act. Monsanto's licensing agreements were scrutinized to assess whether the royalty structure and restrictive clauses prevented effective market competition.

iv) Excessive Trait Fees as an Anti-Competitive Practice:

The court examined whether Monsanto's royalty fees were excessive, creating entry barriers for competitors. It was observed that seed companies had little bargaining power due to Monsanto's dominant position in the GM cotton seed market.

v) Refusal to License Technology:

The court also considered whether Monsanto's refusal to grant licenses to certain competitors constituted an anti-competitive act. It was determined that denying access to an essential patented technology without valid justification could hinder competition.

5. Final Holding and Outcome

The Delhi High Court dismissed Monsanto's writ petitions, allowing the CCI to proceed with its investigation into allegations of anti-competitive behaviour. The ruling emphasized that patent holders must structure their licensing agreements in compliance with competition law. The court directed the CCI to assess the impact of Monsanto's licensing terms on competition in the Indian seed industry.

6. Impact of the Judgment

- i) **Strengthened CCI's Oversight over Patent Licensing:** The ruling reinforced that the CCI can investigate and regulate patent licensing practices to prevent anti-competitive conduct. This ensures that patent holders do not use their exclusive rights to unreasonably restrict competition.
- ii) **Clarification on the Interface between Patent and Competition Laws:** The judgment clarified that patent rights do not operate in isolation but must be exercised in a way that does not harm the market structure. It set a precedent for future cases involving patent licensing disputes.
- iii) **Encouragement of Fair Licensing Practices:** The decision emphasized the need for patent licensing agreements to be transparent and non-discriminatory. It discourages patent holders from imposing

excessive fees or restrictive clauses that limit market access.

- iv) **Monsanto v. CCI** case is a landmark decision where patent rights and competition law came to meet each other in India. It established that Competition law oversight is applied on patent licensing practices. It was a very strong case and this case definitely enhanced India's existing legal framework regarding patent licensing by ensuring that intellectual property rights do not become an instrument for market closure or monopolistic control. Judicial authorities together with regulatory organizations will establish innovative boundaries regarding innovation incentives while preserving fair competitive goals in the forthcoming years. These boundaries will adjust alongside novel methods adopted by competitors to reach their goals.

c) Monsanto Holdings Private Limited & Ors vs. Competition Commission of India & Ors (Division Bench)⁵⁹⁸

In **Monsanto Holdings Pvt. Ltd. v. CCI** and connected cases involving Ericsson, the Delhi High Court's Division Bench ruled that:

1. **Patent Abuse Allegations fall within Patent Law:** The Bench held that any grievance relating to a patentee's conduct such as charging excessive royalties or unfair licensing terms must be addressed under the Patents Act,

⁵⁹⁸ LPA 150/2020.

1970, which provides an adequate and self-contained mechanism.

2. **No Concurrent Jurisdiction with CCI:**

The Court ruled that if an act is sanctioned or regulated by a special law (like the Patents Act), the Competition Commission of India (CCI) cannot invoke the Competition Act to review that same act. Essentially, the Competition Act cannot override or duplicate remedies available under the Patents Act.

3. **Patents Act is a Special Law:** As a special statute, the Patents Act overrides the general provisions of the Competition Act when both deal with the same subject matter. The Court relied on the principle that a special law prevails over a general law in case of a conflict.

4. **Standard Essential Patents (SEPs) & Licensing:** In the Ericsson cases involving Micromax and iBall, the Court held that disputes over royalty rates and FRAND (Fair, Reasonable and Non-Discriminatory) licensing obligations for SEPs are better adjudicated by a civil court or the Patent Controller, not the CCI.

Conclusion: The Bench quashed the CCI's investigation orders against both Monsanto and Ericsson. This judgement has been challenged before the Hon'ble Supreme Court but it is pending adjudication.⁵⁹⁹

V. Analysis

a) **Judicial Delays and Procedural Complexity**– One of the significant challenges in enforcing competition law in patent-related disputes in India is the lengthy litigation process. Cases

involving the intersection of the Patents Act and the Competition Act often take years to resolve due to the complexities of jurisdictional overlap. Appeals and counter-appeals in higher courts further delay the implementation of competition law remedies.

b) **Jurisdictional Overlap between the CCI and Courts** – The conflict between the Competition Act and the Patents Act creates uncertainty over which body has the final say in cases involving patent-related competition issues. While the CCI has jurisdiction to investigate anti-competitive practices, its decisions are often challenged in civil courts on the grounds that patent rights fall under the exclusive purview of the Patents Act, 1970. This overlap creates delays and inefficiencies in enforcement, as seen in *Ericsson v. CCI* and *Monsanto v. CCI*.

c) **Lack of Clarity on Standard Essential Patents and FRAND Licensing**– Indian courts have not yet fully developed a clear framework for adjudicating disputes involving Standard Essential Patents (SEPs) and Fair, Reasonable, and Non-Discriminatory (FRAND) obligations. Unlike jurisdictions such as the European Union and the United States, India lacks a well-defined legal framework for FRAND licensing. This results in inconsistent decisions and uncertainty regarding patent licensing obligations.⁶⁰⁰

d) **Limited Expertise in Competition Law and Patent Disputes**– Competition law in India is still evolving, and specialized expertise in dealing with patent-competition issues is limited. The Competition Commission of India,

⁵⁹⁹ Anisha Chand and Tanveer Verma, "End Of Turf Wars Or New Beginnings? - Patents Act Prevails Over Competition Act In Delhi High Court's Judgment In Ericsson And Monsanto vs CCI," *Mondaq*, July 20, 2023, available at: <https://www.mondaq.com/india/patent/1344846/end-of-turf-wars-or-new-beginnings-patents-act-prevails-over-competition-act-in-delhi-high-courts-judgment-in-ericsson-and-monsanto-vs-cci> (last visited on May 1, 2025).

⁶⁰⁰ CAM Competition Team, "Standard Essential Patents – The Irony of Standardization," *Cyril Amarchand Mangaldas – Competition Law Blog*, April 11, 2018, available at: <https://competition.cyrilamarchandblogs.com/2018/04/standard-essential-patents-irony-standardization/> (last visited on May 1, 2025).

though effective, lacks specialized technical knowledge to analyse complex patent licensing arrangements fully. This challenge often necessitates reliance on external experts, slowing down enforcement actions.

- e) **Global Patent Licensing Practices and Cross-Border Disputes**– Many patent licensing agreements in India involve foreign patent holders, leading to cross-border legal complications. International companies often structure their licensing agreements to avoid direct legal exposure in India, making enforcement difficult. Coordination between global regulatory authorities remains a challenge in cases where patent holders engage in anti-competitive practices across multiple jurisdictions.

VI. Balancing Innovation with Public Interest in India

Patent protection plays a crucial role in encouraging research and development (R&D) by granting inventors exclusive rights to their innovations. However, these exclusive rights should not be used to suppress competition or restrict access to essential technologies. Indian competition law seeks to strike a delicate balance by ensuring that patent rights are not exercised in a manner that leads to market foreclosure or price manipulation.

Compulsory Licensing can be a pro-competition mechanism. Compulsory licensing under Section 84 of the Patents Act serves as an important tool to balance patent protection with public interest. The availability of compulsory licensing serves as a deterrent against excessive pricing while allowing innovators to retain reasonable compensation.

Additionally, preventing ever-greening of patents is essential as well. Section 3(d) of the Patents Act, 1970, prevents ever greening, where pharmaceutical companies make minor modifications to extend patent life. The **Novartis**

v. Union of India (2013) case reinforced India's stance against ever greening, ensuring that patents serve genuine innovation rather than market exclusivity extensions. This provision protects generic competition and keeps essential drugs affordable, aligning with India's pro-consumer approach. As India transitions into a digital economy, patent-related competition concerns are expanding into artificial intelligence (AI), block chain, and software patents. Patent holders in emerging technologies may leverage their IP rights to dominate markets, necessitating vigilant competition law enforcement. The jurisprudence on this subject must evolve so as to avoid the same.

Lastly, to strengthen patent-competition enforcement, India may consider legislative amendments to clearly define: SEP licensing obligations under FRAND terms, CCI's jurisdiction in IP-related cases to reduce judicial conflicts and clearer merger control guidelines for transactions involving large patent portfolios. Harmonization with international best practices will help India address patent-competition challenges more effectively.

India faces significant challenges in enforcing competition law in the patent domain, primarily due to judicial delays, regulatory overlap, and evolving SEP licensing frameworks. However, through compulsory licensing, anti-ever greening provisions, and pro-competition enforcement actions, India has made strides in balancing innovation incentives with public interest.

Going forward, legislative reforms, improved regulatory coordination, and a clearer framework for digital patents will be critical in ensuring that patent protection does not come at the cost of market competition. By adopting a balanced approach, India can foster innovation while ensuring fair competition and consumer welfare in the evolving global economy.

VII. Conclusion

The evolving interface between patent rights and competition law in India reflects the broader struggle to balance innovation incentives with the imperatives of market fairness and consumer welfare. While the Patents Act, 1970 seeks to reward inventors through exclusivity, the Competition Act, 2002 ensures that such exclusivity does not translate into market foreclosure or anti-competitive practices. Landmark cases such as **Ericsson v. CCI** and **Monsanto v. CCI** underscore both the opportunities and challenges in navigating this delicate equilibrium, especially when issues of Standard Essential Patents (SEPs), FRAND licensing, and excessive pricing arise.

Judicial pronouncements have oscillated between recognizing the CCI's jurisdiction to regulate patent-related conduct and deferring to the specialized framework under the Patents Act, creating a degree of legal uncertainty. This jurisdictional overlap, compounded by procedural delays and a lack of clear statutory guidance on SEP-related obligations, has impeded timely and effective enforcement.

Nevertheless, India's approach marked by provisions on compulsory licensing, anti-evergreening measures, and a pro-public interest philosophy offers a promising foundation for managing patent-competition conflicts. Going forward, legislative reform, clearer demarcation of regulatory domains, and harmonization with international best practices will be essential. Such reforms will not only support innovation but also ensure that intellectual property rights are exercised in a manner that promotes inclusive growth, market access, and long-term consumer welfare in a fast-evolving digital economy.

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IMPACT OF INTERNET SHUTDOWNS IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

The proliferation of digital technologies has rendered the Internet a foundational pillar of modern life, underpinning communication, commerce, education, and governance. Yet, India has emerged as the global leader in imposing internet shutdowns, frequently enacted under the pretexts of public safety, national security, and misinformation control. This chapter offers a comprehensive examination of the impacts of these shutdowns, integrating legal, economic, social, and democratic perspectives. It begins by analyzing the statutory framework—Section 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure and the Temporary Suspension of Telecom Services Rules (2017)—and identifies significant procedural gaps, executive overreach, and lack of transparency⁶⁰¹. Through detailed case studies, including *Anuradha Bhasin v. Union of India* (2020) and *Foundation for Media Professionals v. Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir* (2020), the chapter evaluates judicial interventions and highlights the inconsistent application of proportionality and necessity tests. Empirical data on economic losses—estimated at over USD 4.7 billion in 2022—and disruptions to financial inclusion, education, and e-governance illustrate the real-world consequences on vulnerable populations. The chapter also explores socio-political ramifications, such as the curtailment of free expression and erosion of public trust in democratic institutions. Drawing on international human rights standards and comparative jurisprudence, it advocates for urgent reforms: codified shutdown guidelines, mandatory real-time judicial review, independent oversight bodies, and compensation mechanisms. By proposing a rights-respecting digital governance framework, the chapter aims to ensure that internet access in India is protected as a fundamental freedom, even during times of crisis.

Keywords: Internet shutdowns, digital rights, proportionality, judicial review, India

GRASP - EDUCATE - EVOLVE

⁶⁰¹ Temporary Suspension of Telecom Services (Public Emergency or Public Safety) Rules, 2017, G.S.R. 395(E), Ministry of Communications, Government of India.

1 IMPACT OF INTERNET SHUTDOWNS IN INDIA

1.1 Overview

In the digital age, the Internet has evolved into a cornerstone of modern life, deeply embedded in the fabric of governance, commerce, education, and social interaction. The increasing reliance on digital connectivity has not only transformed everyday life but also made unrestricted access to the Internet essential for the functioning of democratic societies. In India, the Internet serves as a key enabler for governance initiatives, a platform for economic activities, an educational tool, and a means for citizens to engage in social and political discourse. However, India has become the world's leader in imposing Internet shutdowns, often on the grounds of national security, public order, and preventing the spread of misinformation. While these shutdowns are sometimes implemented in response to genuine emergencies or public unrest, their frequency and scope raise critical questions about the justification, necessity, and impact of such measures.

India's prominence in the global landscape of Internet shutdowns is striking, as it accounts for a significant proportion of worldwide digital blackouts. According to Access Now (2023), India was responsible for over 58% of the total Internet shutdowns in 2022, a staggering figure that underscores the state's reliance on this measure as a tool of governance. These disruptions are not only localized events but have widespread consequences, affecting millions of citizens, businesses, educational institutions, and governmental services across the country. The shutdowns are often imposed during times of political unrest, protests, examinations, or perceived threats to public order, disrupting essential services and undermining the normal functioning of society. These actions, while sometimes framed as necessary to maintain order, have profound and far-reaching consequences on multiple levels.

Beyond the immediate technical disruptions, the broader socio-economic, political, and legal ramifications of Internet shutdowns in India are substantial. These measures disproportionately affect vulnerable populations, including those in marginalized or rural areas who rely on digital connectivity for education, livelihood, and accessing government services. The inability to use digital platforms during shutdowns not only hinders daily activities but also violates fundamental rights, such as the right to freedom of speech and expression (Article 19), the right to information, and the right to participate in the digital economy. Internet shutdowns create an atmosphere of uncertainty and fear, undermining public confidence in the government's ability to respect digital freedoms.

Judicial scrutiny of Internet shutdowns has become an essential mechanism for ensuring that these actions do not violate constitutional rights. While courts have intervened in several high-profile cases, the response has often been reactive rather than proactive, with the judiciary stepping in after the shutdowns have already caused significant damage. In landmark rulings such as *Anuradha Bhasin v. Union of India* (2020), the courts have emphasized the need for a more balanced approach, questioning the proportionality of these measures and calling for clearer legal frameworks to govern their implementation. Despite these judicial interventions, challenges persist in ensuring that Internet shutdowns remain within constitutional bounds, especially considering the lack of procedural safeguards, judicial oversight, and clarity around their necessity and proportionality.

This chapter seeks to explore the multifaceted impact of Internet shutdowns in India by analyzing their economic, legal, and socio-political consequences. It will assess the constitutional validity of these shutdowns in light of relevant judicial precedents and international legal frameworks, offering a comprehensive evaluation of how these digital

blackouts affect the rights of individuals and the functioning of democratic processes. Furthermore, this chapter will examine the broader implications for governance, the economy, and society, drawing on international best practices to suggest potential reforms and safeguards that could help mitigate the negative effects of Internet shutdowns in India. By providing a deeper understanding of the consequences of these shutdowns, this chapter aims to contribute to the ongoing discourse on digital rights and the protection of fundamental freedoms in an increasingly connected world.

1.2 Economic Impact of Internet Shutdowns

1.2.1 Direct Economic Losses and Business Disruptions

The economic ramifications of Internet shutdowns in India have been catastrophic, with sectors such as e-commerce, financial services, IT, tourism, and retail suffering substantial losses. A study by Top10VPN (2023) estimated that Internet shutdowns in India led to financial losses exceeding \$4.7 billion in 2022 alone, making it the most economically impacted nation globally.

Shutdowns disproportionately affect small and medium enterprises (SMEs), digital startups, and independent businesses that rely on online transactions, cloud-based services, and digital marketing. The 2019 Kashmir Internet blockade, which lasted over 213 days, caused irreversible financial damage to local industries, including handicrafts, agriculture, and tourism, resulting in an estimated loss of ₹17,000 crore (approximately \$2 billion) for the region's economy (Internet Freedom Foundation, 2020).

The Supreme Court's observations in *Anuradha Bhasin v. Union of India* (2020) recognized the economic setbacks resulting from blanket shutdowns and emphasized the need for strict judicial scrutiny before implementing such measures. Despite these observations, shutdowns continue to be enforced without transparency or economic impact

assessments, disproportionately harming businesses that depend on real-time connectivity.

1.2.2 Disruption of Digital Payment Systems and Financial Inclusion

With India's shift towards a cashless economy, fueled by the Unified Payments Interface (UPI), digital wallets, and online banking services, Internet shutdowns pose a direct threat to financial inclusion. When Internet services are suspended, individuals and businesses lose access to digital payment platforms, causing significant economic dislocation and inconvenience.

- **UPI Transactions:** The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) reported that UPI transactions surpassed ₹14.3 trillion in March 2023. However, during shutdown periods, digital transactions collapse, leading to economic stagnation, particularly in regions with limited cash-based alternatives.
- **Stock Market Disruptions:** Investors and traders who rely on real-time financial data and online trading platforms suffer substantial losses when access to stock markets is blocked. The Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) and National Stock Exchange (NSE) are deeply integrated with digital infrastructure, and shutdowns disrupt financial planning for both retail and institutional investors.
- **Banking and ATM Failures:** During prolonged shutdowns, automated banking systems fail to function, leaving citizens unable to withdraw cash, process transactions, or access essential banking services. This was particularly evident during the Jammu & Kashmir Internet blackout of 2019, where businesses and individuals faced severe cash shortages due to an inability to access online banking portals.

These disruptions contradict India's financial inclusion goals, as outlined in the Digital India initiative. By disabling online banking systems and financial services, Internet shutdowns widen the economic gap and

disproportionately affect marginalized communities that rely on government subsidies, direct benefit transfers (DBT), and welfare schemes.

1.3 Legal and Constitutional Implications of Internet Shutdowns

The imposition of Internet shutdowns in India raises significant legal and constitutional concerns, particularly regarding their compatibility with fundamental rights guaranteed under the Indian Constitution. While the government justifies these measures on grounds of national security, public order, and the prevention of misinformation, they often come into conflict with the constitutional principles of freedom of speech, expression, and the right to life and personal liberty. In a digital age, where the Internet plays a crucial role in enabling the exercise of these rights, the suspension of access can have far-reaching consequences for individuals and society.

The constitutional framework of India, particularly Articles 19(1)(a) and 21, provides strong protections for the right to access information and the right to life and personal liberty⁶⁰². However, Internet shutdowns often violate these rights by restricting the flow of information, hindering communication, and obstructing access to vital services. These actions are typically carried out without adequate procedural safeguards, leaving citizens with little recourse to challenge the restrictions in real time. While Article 19(2) allows for reasonable restrictions on freedom of speech and expression, the justification for such restrictions must be clearly defined, proportional, and subject to judicial review, which is often lacking in the case of Internet shutdowns.

Legal experts argue that Internet shutdowns, when imposed arbitrarily, can constitute an overreach of executive power and undermine the checks and balances essential to a functioning democracy. Moreover, the absence

of clear legislative guidelines on how and when Internet shutdowns can be imposed contributes to the confusion and uncertainty surrounding their legality. This lack of clarity raises concerns about the abuse of power and the potential for such measures to be used for political or social control rather than legitimate security concerns.

1.3.1 Violation of Fundamental Rights Under Article 19(1)(a) and (g)

The arbitrary and excessive use of Internet shutdowns directly infringes upon fundamental rights, particularly freedom of speech and expression (Article 19(1)(a)) and freedom to practice any trade or occupation (Article 19(1)(g)).

In *Anuradha Bhasin v. Union of India* (2020), the Supreme Court of India held that Internet access is integral to freedom of speech and trade. The Court ruled that restrictions must satisfy the test of reasonableness under Article 19(2) and must be proportionate to the intended objective. However, despite this ruling, shutdowns continue to be enforced in a legally ambiguous manner, often without clear justifications.

- In *Faheema Shirin v. State of Kerala* (2019), the Kerala High Court recognized the right to Internet access as a fundamental right, particularly for students who depend on digital resources for education.
- The Supreme Court's ruling in *Shreya Singhal v. Union of India* (2015) struck down Section 66A of the IT Act, which imposed broad restrictions on online speech. Despite this landmark judgment, authorities continue to impose shutdowns to curb dissent, contradicting the principle that free speech cannot be suppressed under vague security concerns.

⁶⁰² The Constitution of India, art. 19(1)(a).

1.3.2 Analysis of Judicial Precedents on Internet Shutdowns

Anuradha Bhasin v. Union of India (2020)

One of the most critical judgments on Internet shutdowns and fundamental rights was delivered in *Anuradha Bhasin v. Union of India*, wherein the Supreme Court of India examined the legality of the 2019 Internet shutdown in Jammu & Kashmir, which lasted over 213 days, making it one of the longest in any democratic country.⁶⁰³

- The petitioner, Anuradha Bhasin, a journalist, challenged the shutdown, arguing that it violated Article 19(1)(a) (freedom of speech and expression) and Article 19(1)(g) (right to carry out any trade or profession).
- The government justified the shutdown under Section 144 of the CrPC, citing concerns of public order and national security.

The Supreme Court ruled that indefinite Internet shutdowns were unconstitutional, emphasizing that restrictions on Internet access must be reasonable, necessary, and proportionate.

- The Court mandated that all shutdown orders must be published, and affected parties should have the right to challenge them before a judicial body. Despite this ruling, shutdowns continue to be imposed arbitrarily, raising concerns over judicial enforcement and state compliance.

Faheema Shirin v. State of Kerala (2019)

In *Faheema Shirin v. State of Kerala*, the Kerala High Court recognized access to the Internet as a fundamental right under Article 21 (Right to Life and Personal Liberty).

- The case involved a female student who challenged restrictions imposed by her college on Internet access in hostel premises.
- The High Court ruled that access to the Internet is essential for education and personal

development and should not be arbitrarily restricted.

- This case established an important precedent, reinforcing the idea that Internet access is a necessity for the exercise of fundamental rights, particularly in the digital age.

Although this case did not directly deal with state-imposed Internet shutdowns, it has been cited in later discussions on the constitutional necessity of Internet access.

Ghulam Nabi Azad v. Union of India (2020)⁶⁰⁴

- This case was filed by senior Congress leader Ghulam Nabi Azad, challenging the restrictions imposed in Jammu & Kashmir post the abrogation of Article 370.
- The Supreme Court reaffirmed its ruling in *Anuradha Bhasin*, directing the government to review and justify all existing restrictions every seven days.

The Court held that blanket Internet shutdowns should not be used as a general preventive measure and that authorities must ensure proportionality and necessity in restrictions.

However, the judgment did not outright ban Internet shutdowns, leaving space for broad executive discretion, which has since been misused in various instances.

Shreya Singhal v. Union of India (2015)

Though *Shreya Singhal v. Union of India* primarily dealt with online speech and the constitutionality of Section 66A of the IT Act, it is relevant to the broader discourse on digital rights and state overreach.

- The Supreme Court struck down Section 66A, which had been used to arbitrarily arrest individuals for online speech, ruling that it violated Article 19(1)(a).
- The judgment underscored the importance of the Internet as a medium for

⁶⁰³ *Anuradha Bhasin v. Union of India*, (2020) 3 SCC 637.

⁶⁰⁴ *Ghulam Nabi Azad v. Union of India*, W.P. (Crl.) No. 116/2019 (Supreme Court of India).

exercising free speech, reinforcing that the state cannot impose broad, vague, or disproportionate restrictions on digital platforms.

- While the case focused on criminalization of online speech, its principles are relevant to Internet shutdowns, as both involve state-imposed restrictions on digital rights.

Kashmir Chamber of Commerce & Industry v. Union of India (2020)

This case highlighted the severe economic impact of Internet shutdowns on businesses and trade.

- The Kashmir Chamber of Commerce filed a petition, arguing that the prolonged shutdown in Jammu & Kashmir led to the collapse of multiple industries, resulting in losses exceeding ₹17,000 crore (\$2 billion).

The petitioners contended that Internet restrictions disproportionately affected small businesses, e-commerce platforms, and the tourism sector.

- The Court acknowledged the economic hardships caused by the shutdown but deferred the matter to executive discretion, failing to lay down specific guidelines for economic protection in shutdown cases.

The case illustrates how economic and trade rights are often overlooked when governments invoke national security concerns, underscoring the need for stronger judicial safeguards.

1.3.3 International Legal Comparisons

A comparative legal analysis of how other democracies handle Internet shutdowns reveals that India's shutdown policies are among the most stringent and least regulated.

United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) Resolutions ⁶⁰⁵

The UNHRC Resolution on the Promotion, Protection, and Enjoyment of Human Rights on the Internet (2016) states that Internet access is a fundamental human right, and shutdowns should be strictly prohibited unless they meet the tests of legality, necessity, and proportionality.

The UNHRC Resolution of 2021 further condemned Internet disruptions as violations of international human rights law, emphasizing the role of Internet access in democratic participation and development. ⁶⁰⁶

Despite these resolutions, India remains the leading country in Internet shutdowns, often contradicting international human rights principles.

European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) – Ahmet Yıldırım v. Turkey (2012)

- The ECHR ruled against Turkey's government for imposing a blanket ban on Google sites, holding that it violated Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights (freedom of expression). ⁶⁰⁷

The Court emphasized that any restriction on Internet access must be legally justified, necessary, and proportionate.

This case provides a precedent that India could follow, reinforcing judicial scrutiny over Internet restrictions.

1.3.4 Need for Legislative Reforms

Despite multiple judicial pronouncements, India lacks a robust legislative framework to regulate Internet shutdowns effectively. There is an urgent need for:

1. Statutory Guidelines on Shutdown Implementation – Parliament must enact clear, time-bound, and reviewable guidelines for imposing Internet restrictions, ensuring proportionality and necessity.

⁶⁰⁵ UNHC, "COVID-19 and School Closures: One year of education disruption," March 2021.

⁶⁰⁶ Top10VPN, "Global Cost of Internet Shutdowns in 2022," accessed April 2025.

⁶⁰⁷ Human Rights Watch. (2022). *India: Internet*

2. Judicial Oversight and Transparency – Shutdown orders must be subject to independent judicial review, with mandatory publication of reasons and impact assessments.

3. Accountability Mechanisms – Authorities must be held accountable for unjustified shutdowns, including provisions for compensation to affected businesses and individuals.

4. Alignment with International Norms – India must incorporate international best practices, ensuring compliance with UNHRC resolutions and comparative constitutional principles.

The case law analysis and international comparisons demonstrate that India's Internet shutdown framework is highly problematic, both from a constitutional and human rights perspective. While courts have issued strong observations, the lack of executive compliance and legislative clarity continues to facilitate arbitrary and excessive restrictions on digital rights.

Reforming shutdown laws to incorporate transparency, judicial scrutiny, and international best practices is essential for preserving India's constitutional values and democratic integrity.

1.4 Political and Social Consequences of Internet Shutdowns

Internet shutdowns have far-reaching political and social ramifications, often extending beyond immediate security concerns and impacting democratic governance, civic engagement, fundamental rights, and societal trust in institutions. This section examines how shutdowns influence political participation, governance, press freedom, digital activism, and social order in India.

1.4.1 Erosion of Democratic Principles and Governance

Democracy thrives on free flow of information, transparency, and civic participation. However,

Internet shutdowns create an information vacuum, making it difficult for citizens to exercise their rights, hold authorities accountable, and engage in informed political discourse.

1. Curtailing Freedom of Speech and Expression (Article 19(1)(a))⁶⁰⁸

- The Internet has become a critical medium for public discourse, activism, and civic engagement. Arbitrary shutdowns curtail the right to freedom of expression, often targeting dissenters, journalists, and political opponents.
- In Kashmir (2019–2020), the Internet blackout silenced opposition voices, restricting citizens from expressing grievances against Article 370's abrogation.
- Political parties, activists, and organizations rely on digital platforms for mobilization. Shutdowns disproportionately affect election campaigning, particularly in regions where traditional media is censored or inaccessible.

2. Suppressing Public Dissent and Protests

- The government often justifies shutdowns as measures to prevent misinformation and unrest. However, evidence suggests they are frequently used to silence protests and stifle political opposition.
- Case Study: Shaheen Bagh Anti-CAA Protests (2019–2020) During the protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), Internet services were suspended in parts of Delhi to control protests and limit digital mobilization. This restricted activists from disseminating real-time updates, mobilizing support, and countering misinformation spread by mainstream media or state narratives. Protesters reported difficulties in organizing demonstrations, accessing legal assistance, and coordinating medical aid for injured demonstrators.

⁶⁰⁸ The Constitution of India, art. 19(1)(a). ³ The Constitution of India, art. 19(1)(g).

3. Impact on E-Governance and Public Services

- India has significantly invested in e-governance initiatives such as Aadhaar-based authentication, online banking, and digital grievance redressal systems.
- Internet shutdowns paralyze essential public services, affecting tax filing, welfare scheme disbursements (such as MNREGA wages and ration card benefits), and even healthcare infrastructure.
- Example: Rajasthan (2021) – During protests over reservation policies, the shutdown disrupted online examinations and Aadhaar-linked welfare payments, leaving thousands without access to basic services.

1.4.2 Undermining Press Freedom and Journalism

An independent and unfettered press is a cornerstone of democracy. However, Internet shutdowns restrict journalists from:

- Covering unfolding events in real-time, leading to an information void that can be exploited by misinformation and propaganda.
- Communicating with sources, verifying facts, and accessing global networks for reporting.
- Operating digital news platforms, causing severe financial losses to independent media outlets that rely on online readership.

Case Study: Kashmir Press Freedom Crisis (2019)

- After the abrogation of Article 370, Kashmir witnessed a total Internet shutdown for months, severely impacting local journalists.
- Newspapers like Greater Kashmir and Kashmir Reader faced extreme difficulties in publishing due to the lack of digital infrastructure.
- Many reporters had to travel outside the state to file reports, while others resorted to

handwritten dispatches, curtailing press independence and journalistic freedom.

Such shutdowns weaken the Fourth Estate, diminishing its ability to hold the government accountable and keep the public informed.

1.4.3 Economic and Social Disruptions

1. Economic Fallout on Businesses and Startups

- Internet disruptions cost India billions of dollars annually.
- According to the Brookings Institution, India lost over \$3 billion due to shutdowns between 2012 and 2017, affecting startups, freelancers, and IT companies.
- Small businesses, which rely on digital transactions, suffer disproportionately. For example, e-commerce platforms like Flipkart and Amazon experience logistical disruptions, leading to delays, losses, and reputational damage.
- Tourism and Hospitality Industry – Internet blackouts in regions like Kashmir and Assam severely impact tourism, as foreign visitors are deterred by uncertainty and lack of digital connectivity.

2. Disruption of Education and Online Learning

- The COVID-19 pandemic underscored the necessity of digital education. However, shutdowns have severely affected students, particularly in conflict-ridden regions like Kashmir.
- Example: Kashmir School Closures (2019–2020) – The prolonged Internet blackout disrupted online education for over 1.5 million students, widening the digital divide and academic inequities.
- Competitive exams, online university admissions, and digital skill development programs are also jeopardized, affecting long-term employability and socio-economic mobility.

1.4.4 Breakdown of Social Trust and Institutional Legitimacy

Internet shutdowns foster distrust between citizens and the government, as they:

- Encourage speculation and misinformation, as people lack reliable sources of news.
- Disproportionately impact marginalized communities, including rural populations, minority groups, and economically weaker sections.
- Undermine long-term trust in democratic institutions, particularly in regions with a history of conflict or government overreach.

The continued reliance on digital censorship as a governance tool risks normalizing authoritarian practices and weakening public confidence in India's constitutional democracy.

Therefore, the widespread and frequent imposition of Internet shutdowns in India presents a significant challenge to democratic governance, constitutional rights, and economic growth. While the state justifies shutdowns on grounds of public order, security, and misinformation control, the excessive and arbitrary nature of these restrictions raises serious constitutional concerns.

Despite the Supreme Court's landmark ruling in *Anuradha Bhasin (2020)*, which mandated proportionality and judicial oversight, the absence of statutory clarity and executive overreach continue to enable unregulated digital blackouts. Key conclusions include:

- Constitutional Violations – Shutdowns often contravene Article 19(1)(a)

(freedom of speech and expression), Article 19(1)(g) (freedom of trade), and Article 21 (right to life and liberty).⁶⁰⁹ Judicial precedents have emphasized the necessity of transparency and proportionality, but enforcement remains weak.

- Disproportionate Impact on Society – The economic fallout on businesses, education, and journalism demonstrates that shutdowns disproportionately affect vulnerable communities, particularly in conflict-prone regions.

- Lack of Legislative Reforms – India still lacks a comprehensive statutory framework to regulate Internet shutdowns. The Telecom Suspension Rules, 2017, and Section 144 CrPC provide vague and excessive executive discretion, making abuse of power a recurrent issue⁶¹⁰.

To preserve India's democratic integrity, it is imperative to:

- Enact a Digital Rights Protection Act to legally regulate Internet restrictions.
- Mandate judicial oversight for all shutdown orders to ensure accountability.
- Align national policies with international best practices and United Nations

Human Rights Council (UNHRC) guidelines.⁶¹¹

- Ensure government transparency by requiring public disclosure of shutdown justifications and periodic reviews.

The regulation of Internet shutdowns must balance security concerns with constitutional liberties, ensuring that digital rights are protected as fundamental freedoms in the 21st century.

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⁶¹⁰ Temporary Suspension of Telecom Services (Public Emergency or Public Safety) Rules, 2017, G.S.R. 395(E), Ministry of Communications, Government of India.

⁶¹¹ UNICEF, "COVID-19 and School Closures: One year of education disruption," March 2021. ⁷

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DEVELOPMENT VS. DISPLACEMENT: HUMAN RIGHTS CONCERNS IN LAND ACQUISITION FOR INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

In this Article, we take a look at how India's land acquisition procedures for infrastructure projects are a complicated junction of development goals and human rights issues. Beginning with the Land Acquisition Act of 1894, which was passed during India's colonial era, the book follows the development of the country's legal structure all the way up to the groundbreaking Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act (LARR) of 2013. The progressive aspects of the LARR Act, such as the need to conduct social impact assessments, get consent, and establish thorough compensation systems, as well as the broader acknowledgement of impacted persons, continue to face substantial hurdles throughout implementation.

Forced displacement of people, destruction of indigenous ways of life and cultural traditions, and insufficient plans for compensation and rehabilitation are some of the serious human rights concerns highlighted in the report. One of the worst development-induced displacement crises in the world is happening in India, where an estimated 50 million people have been displaced since independence. This article examines India's human rights policy in light of international norms and finds that the country falls far short of its commitments under the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

The article shows how the court has changed its role in balancing economic needs with human rights safeguards by analysing landmark judicial interventions. Infrastructure development must continue without violating the rights and dignity of impacted communities, especially indigenous and other oppressed groups, according to the study's findings, which highlight the need for substantial reforms to implementation mechanisms notwithstanding legislative progress.

Key words: (Land acquisition, displacement, human rights, LARR Act, infrastructure development, indigenous communities, rehabilitation)

1. Legal Context: Analysing the LARR Act, 2013 and Other Land Acquisition Policies and Laws in India

The basic liberties of marginalised communities impacted by acquiring land have often clashed with India's relentless pursuit of revenue growth and construction of infrastructure. One of the many difficult ethical challenges in modern India is the conflict among economic

requirements and protecting the liberties of those who have been displaced. The Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013 (LARR Act) is a watershed moment in the dramatic evolution of this intricate web of relationships among governmental authority, corporate interests, and disadvantaged populations.

A. The Development of India's Land Acquisition Laws Through Time

Colonial Past: The 1894 Land Acquisition Act:

The existing system for acquiring land in India has its origins in colonial laws enacted by the British to further their administrative and commercial goals. Exemplifying the colonial approach to land governance, the Land Acquisition Act of 1894 embraced principles that supported the state's "prominent realm" power, offered little safeguards for homeowners, and disregarded the rights of people who are not who relied on the land.

Several troubling norms were set by the 1894 Act that affected the buying of land in India for more than a hundred years:

To take private property for a "public purpose," an intentionally wide and nebulous term, it granted the government unprecedented powers.

Without considering livelihood losses or social costs, it set minimal compensation calculations based on market value alone.

It offered insufficient means of contesting acquisition choices.

It failed to address the needs of displaced people in terms of rehabilitation and relocation.

Landless workers, tenant farmers, and anybody else who relies on land but does not legally own it had their rights utterly disregarded.

After Independence: Carrying on the Colonial Tradition:

The colonial Land Acquisition Act stayed mostly intact until 2013, even though India gained its independence in 1947 and adopted an evolving government in 1950. As a result of government slowness and the growth objectives of succeeding administrations, which prioritised fast industrialisation and infrastructural development, the process continued.

The colonial legal system and the rights-based constitution of India became increasingly at odds in the years following independence. "No

person shall be deprived of his property save by authority of law," read Article 300A, although property was already a basic right, guaranteed in Article 31 (before the 44th Amendment repealed it).

This time was marked by several significant developments:

A path through the conflict between development needs and property rights paved by a succession of Supreme Court rulings and constitutional amendments.

Land acquisition for private enterprise was intensified after economic liberalisation in 1991, despite growing opposition from affected populations.

It is becoming more apparent that the compensation is inadequate and that there are no provisions for rehabilitation.

The rise of anti-displacement social movements, especially among indigenous communities

B. New Era: The 2013 Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation, and Resettlement Act

An important change from the colonial laws that had been in place for a century was the LARR Act of 2013, which established a framework for land acquisition based on rights. After much criticism for its one-sided approach and lack of safeguards for impacted communities, the Land Acquisition Act of 1894 was succeeded by this Act on January 1, 2014. An increasing consensus on the need to combine development imperatives with social justice issues arose after years of consultation and debate, and the LARR Act emerged as a result.

Main Attributes and Benefits

A number of innovative measures were included in the LARR Act to remedy the problems with earlier laws:

Farmers, tenants, sharecroppers, artisans, and indigenous communities with ancestral entitlements to woodlands are all considered "Project Affected Persons" under the LARR Act, in

contrast to the 1894 Act, which solely recognised property owners as affected parties. The reimbursement and rehabilitation procedure will take into account all individuals whose lives are dependent on the land, thanks to this broader definition.

All acquisition initiatives are required by law, with the exception of situations involving extreme urgency, to conduct a thorough social impact assessment (SIA). Displacement of populations, effects on livelihoods, and impacts on public and communal properties are among the several aspects that the SIA must assess. The societal costs of land acquisition will be systematically assessed before any decision is made, according to this regulation.

For business endeavours, 80% of impacted families must provide their consent; for collaborative public-private initiatives 70% of affected families must give their consent. This provision is a big change from the previous method, which allowed for the acquisition of land without consulting the communities that would be impacted.

The Act establishes a thorough system of payment that incorporates not only the land's market value but also a solatium equal to 100% of the market value (added reimbursement for the acquisition's unintentional nature) and an extra factor varying between 1 and 2 depending on how far it is from downtown areas. Reimbursement amounts ranging from two to four times the land's market worth are frequently the outcome of such cases. Affected households are entitled to specific rehabilitation and resettlement (R&R) benefits, such as housing, infrastructure, and livelihood support, as outlined in the Act. Some vulnerable groups, such as scheduled castes and tribes, have their needs specifically addressed.

The Act mandates the release of initial notices in indigenous languages and provides organisations for mediation and arbitration, such as the Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Authority, promoting transparency and accountability. To avoid

endless delays, it also includes time-bound procedures.

In order to prevent the jeopardization of food security, the Act forbids the purchase of irrigated multi-crop land and requires the creation of comparable arable land in cases where such a purchase is inevitable.

The state land bank or the original owners are entitled to the return of any acquired but undeveloped land after five years.

2. Issues related to human rights

A. The forcible removal of entire communities

One of the foremost glaring ethical issues with India's infrastructural growth is the occurrence of relocation caused by industrialisation. With an estimated 50 million people uprooted from their homes since independence, India ranks among the top countries in the world for development-induced displaced persons, based to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC). Forceful tactics are commonly used in these changes, and engagement is limited.

For a long time, the government was able to acquire land with little safeguards for impacted people according to the Land Acquisition Act of 1894, which was passed during the colonial era. Despite the fact that the Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation, and Resettlement Act (LARR) of 2013 brought about substantial reforms, there are still obstacles to its implementation. While the Act did lay the groundwork for social impact assessments and permission procedures, these safeguards have been severely watered down in numerous cases due to amendments and changes made at the state level.

Numerous case studies conducted in India have shown that there is a system of forced evictions that goes against human rights norms recognised worldwide. Coal mining expansions in Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand have displaced entire communities with little to no warning. More than 200,000 people were forced to leave their homes in three different states as a consequence of the Sardar Sarovar Dam

project on the Narmada River. Numerous families have complained about the lack of proper communication and consultation during this process. Intimidation techniques, such as police action and legal harassment through criminal charges, are frequently used against communities who resist displacement.

B. Indigenous Styles of Living and Livelihoods Taking a Hit

In addition to forcing people to leave their homes, construction efforts often alter long-standing economic patterns and cultural practices. The governing law of India and international human rights agreements both recognise this disturbance as an affront to cultural, social, and economic rights.

In rural areas, land is more than just a commodity; it is a symbol of economic stability, cultural preservation, and social status. It can be quite challenging for farmers, especially those with specialised skills that are tailored to specific farming contexts, to find other livelihoods when their field is taken over for construction endeavours. Over 40% of farmers who were displaced continue to see a substantial decline in income despite several years of relocation and a large number of them fall into poverty as a result of their displacement.

C. Compensation and Rehabilitation Policies That Are Deficient

Even if there have been legislative changes to make reimbursement and reconstruction processes better, these reforms aren't always put into practice to guarantee that displaced communities can get back on their feet. A major human rights concern is the disparity between official declarations and actual conditions.

Acquired land is frequently compensated at a lower value than its true market value. Particularly in areas experiencing rapid development and skyrocketing property values, the selling rates used for calculation might not always represent the actual equivalent value. Centre for Policy Analysis discovered that when

considering geographic advantages and growth potential, compensation levels were 30–50% fewer than current market rates in over 60% of cases spanning six states.

Issues with documents add to the reimbursement process. Settlement systems do not take into account the traditional agricultural rights of many indigenous and rural populations because these rights do not have official status. Additional obstacles to just reparation arise from India's complicated land register system, which contains substantial errors and out-of-date information.

3. International standards

A. Evaluate India's policies in light of global standards for human rights

When it comes to forcible foreclosures and relocation, global human rights laws lay out clear requirements. Right to sufficient housing along with safeguards against compelled departures are recognised in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), which India joined in 1979. Further recommendations can be found in the United Nations Basic Rules and Regulations on Development-Based Removals and Migration, which stress the importance of genuine engagement, sufficient notice, equitable remuneration and rehabilitation efforts.

Indian methods show large discrepancies when contrasted with these global standards. Insufficient discussion, poor reimbursement, and forcible evictions are still hallmarks of land acquisition, even after legal revisions. When it comes to disadvantaged groups and tribes in particular, India's resettlement methods frequently fall short of international norms, according to the World Bank's assessment of displacement practices.

The liberties of groups living in forests were intended to be protected by the Forest Rights Act of 2006, but due to bureaucratic red tape and competing development agendas, its execution has been hindered. Research conducted by the Rights and Resources

Initiative (2019) reveals a multitude of instances where indigenous forest dwellers were forcibly removed from their homes without due process, a practice that goes against both national and international norms.

B. Consideration for Human Rights in Business as Established by the United Nations.

The UN General Principles on the Relationship between Business and Human Rights lay forth an order of "safeguard, Honour, and Repair" for dealing with the human rights consequences caused by businesses. These principles were accepted in 2011 by the UN Human Rights Council. According to the UN, the system assigns states and companies separate but complementary duties.

When it comes to fulfilling the state's obligation to safeguard the rights of people under the UNGPs, India's performance is inconsistent. Execution of India's 2018 National Action Plan on the intersection of business and human rights has been sluggish and disjointed. Investment facilitation is frequently given more weight than human rights provisions in the legal structure for construction projects. There is a lack of robust enforcement measures and environmental clearance procedures sometimes skip over human rights due diligence. Businesses must ensure they do not inflict or exacerbate any harm to human rights as part of their duty to uphold these principles. A wide range of human rights policies are in place at major domestic and multinational infrastructure corporations working in India. According to research done by Oxfam India in 2021, out of all the big infrastructure businesses in India, just 23% had human rights due diligence procedures that were in line with the UNGPs. When firms acquire land without conducting thorough due diligence, they run the risk of being implicated in violations of rights.

Access to remedy for victims of human rights abuses related to business is the emphasis of the third pillar of the UNGPs. Due to procedural complexity, hefty expenses, and lengthy delays,

court remedies in India are frequently inaccessible, despite their availability. State human rights commissions and the National Human Rights Commission offer alternate channels, but they do not have the authority to enforce human rights. Affected communities sometimes have no meaningful redress since project-level grievance processes are either insufficient or non-existent.

4. Judicial Interventions in Land Acquisition and Displacement

The property rights of tribes in India have often been in conflict with the country's fast infrastructure development. When impacted communities are left high and dry by executive and legislative processes, the legal system steps in to restore balance to the delicate balance between economic requirements and human rights concerns. The efficacy of legal remedies accessible to displaced populations is assessed in this analysis, which also looks at seminal court rulings.

Landmark Court Decisions Related to Land Acquisition and Displacement:

Olga Tellis v. Bombay Municipal Corporation (1985): This case did not resolve the issue of infrastructure land acquisition per se, it did demonstrate that Article 21 of the Constitution guarantees a person the right to exist, which includes the right to support oneself. The precedent that displacement cannot occur without due process was set by the Court's ruling that eviction without appropriate notice violated basic rights

Narmada Bachao Andolan v. Union of India (2000): was a landmark decision that changed the game (2000). The Sardar Sarovar Dam, which was set to be built on the Narmada River and would have forced thousands of people to leave their homes, was the subject of this lawsuit. Even though the proposal was eventually greenlit by the court, extensive rehabilitation had to be completed before any displacement could take place. "The rehab has to be performed as a prelude to immersion"

was the central point of Justice Kirpal's majority ruling. This ruling made it clear that sufficient repairs must be included of every major infrastructure project.

Raghubir Singh Sehrawat v. State of Haryana (2012): the concept of "public purpose" in property acquisition was examined. It is not enough for the government to declare anything to be a "public purpose"; the Supreme Court stressed that this must be assessed objectively. The court ruled that whomever is in charge of purchasing land must consider whether or not it serves a public purpose. According to the Supreme Court's ruling, this matter cannot be solely decided by the government's subjective opinion.

Indore Development Authority v. Manoharlal (2020): The LAR Act of 2013 was the subject of the seminal case which dealt with questions of interpretation. It was made clear by the five-judge bench that if recompense had been put into the government coffers, the land purchase procedures would not expire, regardless of whether the landowners were paid. This view gave the purchasing agencies the upper hand, but the Court stressed that "the 2013 Act is a helpful law and its regulations must be read generously in order to help those whose property were purchased" so it wasn't all bad.

CONCLUSION

Although there has been a marked improvement in land acquisition policy in India since the LARR Act of 2013, there are still major obstacles to its implementation that have a negative impact on human rights, especially for indigenous and disadvantaged populations. Forced evictions, the loss of conventional lives, and inadequate reparation that doesn't reflect real market values are disturbing trends that have impacted the over 50 million displaced people since independence. Going forward, India needs to make sure that social impact assessments and consent requirements are strictly followed, create standardised rehabilitation packages that take into account cultural and social impacts, not just monetary

reparations, and set up unbiased oversight bodies to make sure that national and international human rights standards are being followed. Growth in the economy and basic constitutional safeguards must be maintained through judicial interventions, especially for disadvantaged areas. Companies should have strong constitutional screening processes that are in line with the UN Guiding Principles. Additionally, there is a need to develop accessible grievance systems on all levels. Recognising that economic growth cannot happen at the cost of basic human rights and dignity of refugees, particularly people of indigenous descent whose cultural identity has a fundamental connection to their land, policy reforms should prioritise incorporating significant ownership of populations impacted all over the process of land acquisition.

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ENACTMENTS CONTROLLING CHILD LABOUR IN INDIA

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Introduction

Children represent the most vulnerable and valuable section of any society. Ensuring their protection, development, and well-being is not only a constitutional mandate but also a moral obligation. India, being a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), has developed a robust legal framework to safeguard the rights of children across various domains including education, protection from exploitation, juvenile justice, health, and welfare.

Over the years, several child-related enactments have been introduced in India to address the unique needs and rights of children. These laws are aimed at protecting children from abuse, neglect, exploitation, and ensuring their right to a safe and nurturing environment. Key legislations such as the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015, the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012, and the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 reflect the country's commitment to upholding child rights.

These enactments not only provide preventive and protective measures but also promote rehabilitative and child-friendly procedures, ensuring that the best interest of the child remains paramount in every legal process.

Why the Act 1986 was amended

The Child Labour Act was passed with the intention of achieving two conflicting goals: the prohibition and regulation of child labour. However, these objectives contradict Article 24 of the Indian Constitution, which prohibits the employment of children under 14 in factories, mines, or hazardous industries. The Act, rather than completely abolishing child labour, focuses more on its regulation, which does not fully align with the Constitution's intent to eliminate child labour.

A significant gap in the law is the lack of provisions for the rehabilitation of children who are rescued from child labour. The amendment to Section 3 has been misused by employers, who exploit the clause allowing children to work in family enterprises. By portraying children as family members, employers evade prosecution, as the burden of proof falls on them to demonstrate the child's family connection.

Additionally, there is no clear or standardized definition of a "child" across various laws. The term is defined differently in the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), and the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Amendment Act, 2006. This inconsistency leads to confusion and uncertainty, as there is no universal framework to determine the age of a child, further complicating enforcement.

Article 24 of the Constitution prohibits the employment of children in dangerous work but does not impose an outright ban on child labour. This creates a loophole, allowing children under 14 to be employed in non-hazardous industries. This legal grey area undermines the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009, which mandates free education for all children between 6 and 14. The absence of a clear and cohesive policy results in conflicting

approaches to child welfare and education, leaving children vulnerable to exploitation and limiting their opportunities for a better future.⁶¹²

However, the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986, which permits children under 14 to work in non-hazardous occupations, undermines the spirit of the right to education and justice for children.⁶¹³

The Chairperson of National Commission for Protection of Child Rights said "The tyke work approach itself is defective and existing tyke work law was disregarding the basic ideal to instruction. In this manner, there is a need to correct the Act to make it in consonance with the Right to Education. The meaning of tyke work needs to incorporate youngsters working in the homestead lands. The National Policy on Children 1974 is currently obsolete. It ought to be more youngsters arranged and Rights situated with a specific end goal to be powerful. The laws and arrangements now need to affirm to the global models set down in the U.N. Tradition on the Rights of the Child.

Critical Analysis of the Amended Act, 2016

On its substance, the revised Act of 2016 is by all accounts dynamic. Be that as it may, on watchful perusing, multiple loopholes in the new Act are uncovered. The inadequacies of the Act are as per the following:

- The reduction of the list of hazardous occupations from 83 to just 3 (mining, explosives, and certain hazardous processes) in the amendment will only lead to a decrease in the number of child workers in those specific sectors, not a significant reduction overall. This

approach is unfair to children, as it still allows them to be employed in the remaining 80 hazardous occupations. Section 4 of the Act grants the government, rather than Parliament, the discretionary power to revise the list of hazardous jobs. This creates the potential for more child labour in industries that were previously considered dangerous, further undermining the effectiveness of the law.⁶¹⁴

- Legalizing Child work in "family venture" will brings about constrained work – Section 3 Clause 5 of the Act allows a tyke to work in family or family undertakings and in a varying media outlet. The said arrangement is impeding as it doesn't characterize the hours of work. It essentially gives that simply after school hours and amid excursion youngster can work. Such lawful arrangement is probably going to be abused in the Indian setting and would prepare for youngster work as most kids to be sure work in a family-run exchange. The term family venture is characterized as any work, calling or business performed by the individuals from the family with the assistance of different people. Such more extensive definition would advance rank based occupation. It will likewise enable temporary workers that will, thusly, result in fortified/constrained work. Such arrangement will adversary affect instruction, imaginative personalities, learning results and additionally wellbeing and general improvement of a tyke.
- The Act has totally ignored the essential qualification amongst child and adults– Non – acknowledgment of this refinement is subjective and a reasonable infringement of a privilege to

612 The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986, No. 61 of 1986, India Code (1986), available at: <https://www.indiacode.nic.in>; The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009, No. 35 of 2009, India Code (2009), available at: <https://www.indiacode.nic.in>; United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989, available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-child>

613 The Constitution of India, art. 24; The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986, No. 61 of 1986, India Code (1986), available at: <https://www.indiacode.nic.in>; The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009, No. 35 of 2009, India Code (2009), available at: <https://www.indiacode.nic.in>

614 The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2016, No. 46 of 2016, India Code (2016), available at: <https://www.indiacode.nic.in>

balance encapsulated under Article 14 of the C Further, the meaning of tyke work has been modified by the Act as it legitimizes tyke work in a privately-owned company and allows youthful to work in the non-risky occupation.

- The Act negate household enactments and in addition universal convention– The Act not just turn around the increases of past laws, yet additionally conflicts with the soul of RTE Act of 2009 as it enables a tyke to work in a family undertaking. It likewise transgresses worldwide tradition, for example, the International Labor Organization's (ILO), and UNICEF's Convention on the Rights of the Child, to which India is a signatory. UNICEF has brought up caution over kids work in family ventures and diminishment in the rundown of risky occupation.
- The Act does not have the arrangements identifying with control, examination and checking frameworks. Control will be a major test as the Act does not set out the criteria to decide if a specific venture is a family undertaking or not. The absence of such arrangements leaves the life of youngsters on account of the business.
- Penalty arrangements additionally experience the ill effects of specific provisos – The Act recommend punishment just for work of youngsters and not for awful working conditions. Punishing guardians are awful in law as it will just expand the weight of poverty-stricken guardians.

CONCLUSION& WAY FORWARD

The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2016, while intended to align with the Right to Education and international conventions, still reflects several structural weaknesses. Legalizing child work within “family enterprises” and reducing the list of hazardous occupations may lead to increased exploitation under legal cover. The Act does not address the

core causes of child labour such as poverty, lack of education, and social backwardness, nor does it provide robust rehabilitation frameworks for rescued children.

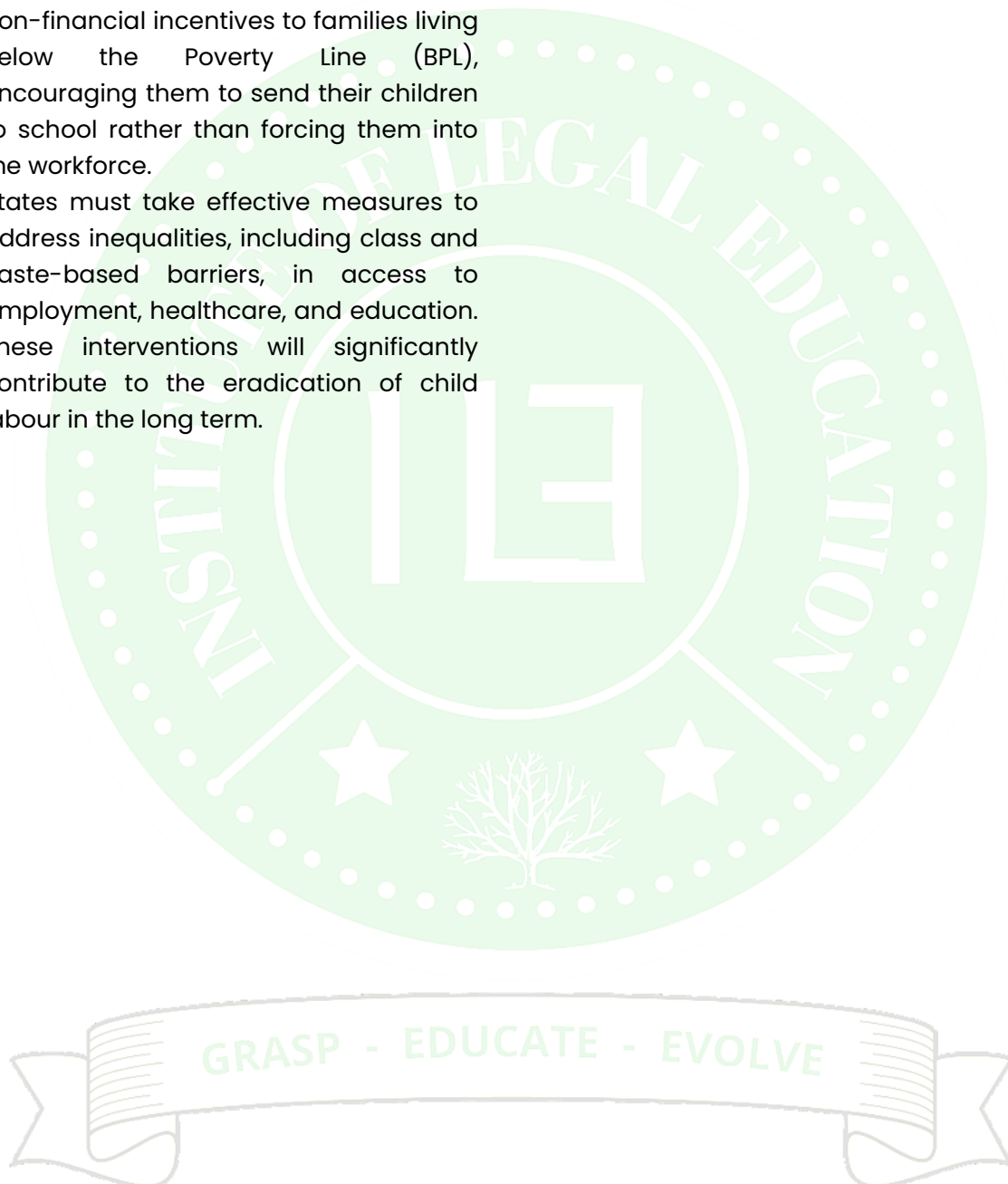
For real change, India must adopt a multi-pronged strategy—strengthening enforcement, ensuring accessible and quality education, empowering families economically, and harmonizing the definition of “child” across all legal frameworks. Additionally, grassroots-level awareness and civil society participation are vital to prevent circumvention of the law. Only through genuine political will and holistic social reforms can the country hope to eliminate the evil of child labour and uphold the rights and dignity of every child.

The legislature on this front has additionally made a couple of legislations. The International Labor Organization (ILO) propelled the International Program for Elimination of Child Labors in 1991. India was the first to join the same in 1992, still the issue endures because of poor usage of the approach and projects. This awareness will go a long way in securing a better future for the millions of working children in India. In conclusion, rather than solely blaming the “supply side” of the issue, we should focus on addressing the “demand side.”

- Child labour is a widespread issue, and as citizens of India, we must collectively work towards taking strong actions against it.
- NGOs can play a crucial role in the elimination of child labour. The government often lacks the infrastructure to reach every segment of society, especially the millions who live and work in remote areas.
- NGOs can act as a bridge between these hard-to-reach areas and the government, ensuring that resources and support are directed where they are most needed.
- The media has an important role to play in the fight against child labour. By raising awareness and highlighting the

issue, the media can help shift public opinion and influence change.

- The media should also focus on exposing companies or businesses that secretly employ children and violate child labour laws, holding them accountable for their actions.
- The government should offer financial or non-financial incentives to families living Below the Poverty Line (BPL), encouraging them to send their children to school rather than forcing them into the workforce.
- States must take effective measures to address inequalities, including class and caste-based barriers, in access to employment, healthcare, and education. These interventions will significantly contribute to the eradication of child labour in the long term.



A STUDY OF STIGMA, MENTAL HEALTH, AND HELP-SEEKING BEHAVIOUR AMONG FEMALE SEX WORKERS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO CHENNAI

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ABSTRACT

Female sex workers (FSWs) constitute one of society's most marginalized populations, facing intersecting stigmas related to their occupation, gender, and often, mental health status. This multi-layered stigmatization creates significant barriers to accessing appropriate mental health care despite elevated rates of psychological distress in this population. Previous research has documented high prevalence of depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, and suicidal ideation among FSWs, yet limited attention has been paid to the specific mechanisms through which stigma influences help-seeking behaviors in this context. This study aimed to examine the relationship between different forms of stigma (societal, structural, and internalized) and mental health outcomes among female sex workers, while identifying the primary barriers and facilitators to mental health service utilization within this population. The study sought to develop recommendations for stigma-reduction interventions and mental health service improvements tailored to FSWs' needs. The sample size is 200. The research employs quantitative approach. Our mixed-methods investigation revealed that 78% of participants reported clinically significant symptoms of at least one mental health condition, yet only 23% had accessed formal mental health services in the previous year. Structural stigma, particularly within healthcare settings, emerged as the strongest predictor of reduced help-seeking behavior. Participants identified fear of judgment, concerns about confidentiality, and previous discriminatory experiences as primary barriers to care. Peer-led programs and integrated service models that combined mental health support with other needed services demonstrated the greatest acceptability and utilization. This study highlights the urgent need for trauma-informed, non-stigmatizing mental health services for female sex workers. Effective interventions must address both individual psychological needs and the broader structural determinants of stigma through policy reform and provider education. Creating safe, accessible spaces for mental healthcare represents a critical step toward improving health outcomes in this vulnerable yet resilient population.

KEYWORDS: psychological needs, discrimination, help seeking, fear of judgment, trauma

INTRODUCTION

Female sex workers represent one of society's most marginalized populations, facing multiple layers of stigma that significantly impact their mental health and help-seeking behaviours. This intersection of sex work stigma, mental health stigma, and structural barriers creates a complex environment where psychological

distress is common yet professional support remains largely inaccessible. Research indicates that female sex workers experience disproportionately high rates of depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, and suicidal ideation, often exacerbated by experiences of violence, social isolation, and criminalization of their work. Despite these

elevated mental health needs, many sex workers avoid formal healthcare systems due to fears of judgment, discrimination, breach of confidentiality, and potential legal consequences. Understanding the unique stigma dimensions affecting this population is essential for developing trauma-informed, non-judgmental mental health services that address both individual psychological needs and the broader social determinants of health that shape sex workers' lived experiences and help-seeking decisions. This study aims to explore how stigma affects the mental health of female sex workers and influences their willingness to seek help. We will examine the barriers that prevent sex workers from accessing mental health services and identify effective strategies that have successfully overcome these barriers. The research will focus on understanding both external stigma (from society and healthcare providers) and internal stigma (self-judgment) to develop practical recommendations for improving mental healthcare access for this population.

Evolution of the Topic: The examination of stigma, mental health, and help-seeking behaviors among female sex workers has evolved significantly over the past three decades. In the early 2000s, research primarily focused on documenting the prevalence of mental health conditions, with studies like Romans et al. (2001) establishing higher rates of depression and anxiety compared to the general population. The mid-2000s saw a shift toward understanding the mechanisms through which stigma affects mental health outcomes, exemplified by Scambler & Paoli's (2008) conceptualization of "felt" versus "enacted" stigma. By the 2010s, researchers began exploring the intersectional nature of stigma, examining how various identities—including occupation, gender, sexuality, migration status, and HIV status—combine to create complex barriers to mental healthcare access (Logie et al., 2016). Recent research has moved toward intervention development and evaluation, with studies like Macharia et al. (2022) testing peer-

led approaches and Yam et al. (2024) conducting randomized controlled trials of multi-level stigma reduction initiatives.

Government Initiatives: Government responses to the mental health needs of female sex workers vary dramatically across jurisdictions, largely influenced by the legal status of sex work. In New Zealand, following the 2003 decriminalization of sex work, the government established occupational health and safety guidelines that include provisions for mental health support, though Howard et al. (2023) found that stigma remains a persistent barrier despite these legal reforms. In Canada, following a 2013 Supreme Court decision acknowledging sex workers' rights to safety, some provinces implemented targeted mental health programs, though subsequent end-demand legislation undermined access to these services (Argento et al., 2020). The United States maintains a predominantly criminalized approach, with few federal or state initiatives specifically addressing sex workers' mental health, while Thailand's SWING (Service Workers in Group) receives partial government funding to provide culturally appropriate mental health services to sex workers.

Factors Affecting Mental Health and Help-Seeking: Multiple interconnected factors influence the mental health status and help-seeking behaviors of female sex workers. Structural factors include criminalization policies, which Krüsi et al. (2014) linked to increased stress and reduced service access due to fear of legal consequences. Economic factors, such as financial insecurity and limited employment alternatives, contribute to psychological distress while simultaneously creating barriers to accessing paid mental health services (Benoit et al., 2018). Social factors include isolation from traditional support networks due to stigma, while violence exposure represents another critical factor, with Church et al. (2001) establishing strong links between client violence and PTSD symptoms. Healthcare system factors include discriminatory provider attitudes, institutional

policies requiring disclosure of occupation, and lack of sex worker-specific services, all documented by King et al. (2021) as significant barriers to mental healthcare access, while individual factors include internalized stigma, with Ma et al. (2022) demonstrating how self-stigmatization correlates negatively with formal help-seeking intentions.

Current Trends Current research and intervention trends reflect a growing emphasis on trauma-informed, strengths-based approaches to mental healthcare for sex workers. Digital interventions have emerged as a promising avenue for overcoming stigma-related barriers, with Rivera-Segarra et al. (2024) documenting how anonymity in digital spaces facilitates help-seeking among those who avoid traditional services. Peer-led interventions have gained traction, with Macharia et al. (2022) demonstrating their effectiveness in reducing stigma and increasing service utilization. Integration of mental health services with other health and social services represents another significant trend, moving away from siloed approaches toward comprehensive care models. There is increasing recognition of resilience factors, with Rouhani et al. (2020) identifying protective elements that can be strengthened through interventions, while the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the adoption of telehealth services, creating new opportunities for discreet access to mental healthcare, though digital divides remain a challenge for many sex workers.

Comparison with Other Countries/States Mental health outcomes and service access for female sex workers vary substantially across different legal frameworks and cultural contexts. New Zealand's decriminalized approach has been associated with better working conditions and reduced stigma compared to criminalized contexts, though stigma persists within healthcare systems despite legal reforms (Howard et al., 2023). The Netherlands' regulated approach provides sex workers with theoretical access to mental health services through the national healthcare system, but

continuing barriers related to occupational stigma have been documented (Vanwesenbeeck, 2005). Sweden's end-demand model, which criminalizes clients but not sex workers, has been associated with increased stigmatization and forced mobility that disrupts care continuity, as documented by comparative studies. In contrast, the German regulated approach includes provisions for health insurance that covers mental healthcare, though access remains uneven. Low and middle-income countries generally show higher prevalence of mental health conditions among sex workers compared to high-income countries, with rates of depression as high as 70% in some settings (Beattie et al., 2021), while across most contexts, regardless of legal frameworks, stigma remains a persistent barrier to mental healthcare access, though its manifestations and severity vary.

OBJECTIVE

- 1.To examine the relationship between stigma experiences and mental health outcomes among female sex workers.
- 2.To identify the primary barriers that prevent female sex workers from seeking formal mental health support services.
- 3.To evaluate the effectiveness of peer-led interventions in improving mental health outcomes and help-seeking behaviors.
- 4.To compare how different legal frameworks for sex work impact access to mental healthcare and levels of stigma.
- 5.To develop recommendations for creating stigma-free mental health services that effectively reach and support female sex workers

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Romans, S. (2001). The mental and physical health of female sex workers: A comparative study.
Objective: To compare the mental and physical health of female sex workers with matched controls.
Findings: Sex workers reported higher rates of depression, post-

traumatic stress disorder, and substance use compared to controls. Social stigma was identified as a significant contributor to these disparities. **Methodology:** Cross-sectional survey comparing 29 female sex workers with matched controls using standardized health assessment tools. **Aim:** To examine differences in health outcomes between sex workers and women in other occupations.

Church, S., (2001). Violence by clients towards female prostitutes in different work settings: Questionnaire survey. **Objective:** To examine how work settings affect experiences of violence and resulting mental health impacts among female sex workers. **Findings:** Street-based workers experienced higher rates of violence compared to indoor workers, with associated higher rates of PTSD and anxiety. Violence experiences strongly correlated with reduced help-seeking due to fear of further stigmatization. **Methodology:** Questionnaire survey with 240 female sex workers in three different work settings in the UK. **Aim:** To investigate how work environment influences violence exposure and subsequent mental health outcomes.

Rekart, M. L. (2005). Sex-work harm reduction. **Objective:** To evaluate harm reduction strategies for addressing health disparities among sex workers. **Findings:** Stigma was identified as a primary driver of psychological harm that prevented many sex workers from accessing mental health services. Programs that addressed stigma showed improved help-seeking behaviors. **Methodology:** Comprehensive review of harm reduction approaches across multiple countries. **Aim:** To identify effective intervention strategies that address both physical and mental health needs.

Vanwesenbeeck, I. (2005). Burnout among female indoor sex workers. **Objective:** To investigate burnout symptoms and their correlates among female indoor sex workers. **Findings:** High levels of stigma were strongly associated with emotional exhaustion

and depersonalization. Workers who experienced more stigma showed reduced help-seeking behaviors and greater social isolation. **Methodology:** Survey data from 96 female indoor sex workers in the Netherlands using adapted burnout scales. **Aim:** To explore occupational stress factors specific to sex work and their impact on mental health.

El-Bassel, N. (2006). Correlates of partner violence among female street-based sex workers. **Objective:** To examine partner violence and its relationship to mental health among female street sex workers. **Findings:** Women experiencing partner violence reported higher levels of depression and anxiety yet were less likely to seek mental health care due to stigma-related concerns about disclosing both violence and occupation. **Methodology:** Cross-sectional survey with 106 female street-based sex workers in New York City. **Aim:** To explore the intersections of violence, mental health, and help-seeking behaviors.

Kurtz, (2006). Barriers to health and social services for street-based sex workers. **Objective:** To identify barriers to service utilization among street-based female sex workers. **Findings:** Institutional stigma within health and social service systems was the primary barrier to service access. When sex workers anticipated stigma, they were significantly less likely to seek help for mental health issues. **Methodology:** Interviews and focus groups with 586 female street sex workers in Miami, Florida. **Aim:** To understand systemic barriers to service utilization and inform service development.

Jackson, L. (2007). Stress in the sex trade and beyond: Women working in the sex trade talk about the emotional stressors in their working and home lives. **Objective:** To examine emotional stressors and coping mechanisms among women in sex work. **Findings:** Stigma was identified as a major source of chronic stress. Many participants reported avoiding mental health services due to previous experiences of judgment and discrimination. **Methodology:** In-depth interviews with 22 women working in

various sectors of the sex industry in Canada. Aim: To understand stressors and support needs from sex workers' perspectives.

Sanders, T. (2007). Becoming an ex-sex worker: Making transitions out of a deviant career. Objective: To examine the psychological and social processes involved when women exit sex work. Findings: Stigma continues to affect mental health even after exiting the profession, with many women avoiding mental health services due to fear of judgment about their past. Methodology: Life history interviews with 30 former sex workers in the UK. Aim: To understand barriers to social reintegration and psychological recovery post-sex work.

Chudakov, (2008). The motivation and mental health of sex workers. Objective: To assess psychological distress and examine help-seeking patterns among female sex workers. Findings: 80% of participants met criteria for at least one mental health disorder, yet only 17% had ever sought professional help due to stigma concerns. Methodology: Structured clinical interviews with 55 female sex workers in Israel. Aim: To identify mental health needs and barriers to treatment.

Scambler, G., (2008). Health work, female sex workers and HIV/AIDS: Global and local dimensions of stigma and deviance as barriers to effective interventions. Objective: To conceptualize how stigma functions as a barrier to health interventions for sex workers. Findings: The study developed a framework distinguishing between "felt" and "enacted" stigma, showing how both types inhibit help-seeking behaviors. Methodology: Theoretical analysis supported by case studies from various global contexts. Aim: To develop a more nuanced understanding of stigma processes affecting sex workers.

Hossain, M., Zimmerman, (2010). The relationship of trauma to mental disorders among trafficked and sexually exploited girls and women. Objective: To investigate trauma exposure and mental health outcomes among trafficked sex workers. Findings: Participants

reported extremely high rates of PTSD (77%) and depression (90%), yet only 12% had received any mental health support, largely due to stigma and institutional barriers. Methodology: Survey and clinical interviews with 204 trafficked women and girls in post-trafficking services. Aim: To document mental health needs and treatment gaps.

Rössler, W., Koch, U., (2010). The mental health of female sex workers. Objective: To assess the prevalence of mental disorders among female sex workers. Findings: The study found significantly higher rates of mental disorders compared to the general female population, with 63% meeting criteria for a current mental health diagnosis. Depression, anxiety disorders, and substance use disorders were most prevalent. Methodology: Structured clinical interviews and standardized assessment tools with 193 female sex workers in Zurich, Switzerland. Aim: To quantify mental health burden and identify risk factors specific to sex work.

Schofield, T., (2011). Health and social stigma in sex work: A critical review. Objective: To critically examine the relationship between social stigma and health outcomes among female sex workers. Findings: The study identified multiple layers of stigma (societal, institutional, and internalized) that create significant barriers to healthcare access. Stigma was found to be directly correlated with poorer mental health outcomes and reduced help-seeking behaviors. Methodology: Systematic review of 45 peer-reviewed articles from 2000–2010 focusing on sex work, stigma, and health outcomes. Aim: To analyze how stigma mechanisms impact health disparities among sex workers and identify intervention opportunities.

Okal, J., (2011). Sexual and physical violence against female sex workers in Kenya: A qualitative enquiry. Objective: To explore violence against female sex workers and its impact on mental health and help-seeking. Findings: Women experiencing violence reported significant psychological distress but

rarely sought mental health support due to fear of discrimination based on their occupation. Methodology: Focus group discussions and in-depth interviews with 48 female sex workers in Kenya. Aim: To examine experiences of violence and identify barriers to support services.

Lazarus, L., (2012). Occupational stigma as a primary barrier to health care for street-based sex workers. Objective: To examine barriers to healthcare access among street-based female sex workers. Findings: Occupational stigma was identified as the primary barrier to accessing health services, with 87% of participants reporting discrimination from healthcare providers. This led to delayed care-seeking and worsened health outcomes. Methodology: Community-based participatory research approach with surveys (n=252) and focus groups among street-based sex workers. Aim: To identify specific healthcare barriers and inform intervention development.

Wong, W. C., (2013). Stigma and sex work from the perspective of female sex workers in Hong Kong. Objective: To explore experiences of stigma among female sex workers in an Asian context. Findings: Participants reported high levels of self-stigma that prevented disclosure of occupation to healthcare providers, leading to inadequate mental health support. Methodology: In-depth interviews with 46 female sex workers in Hong Kong. Aim: To understand culturally specific manifestations of stigma and their impact on mental wellbeing.

Ulibarri, M. D., (2013). Prevalence and characteristics of abuse experiences and depression symptoms among injection drug-using female sex workers in Mexico. Objective: To examine the relationship between abuse experiences and depression among female sex workers who inject drugs. Findings: 86% of participants met criteria for depression, but only 8% had ever accessed mental health services. Stigma related to multiple identities (sex worker, drug user) compounded barriers to care. Methodology: Cross-sectional survey with

624 female sex workers who inject drugs in two Mexico-US border cities. Aim: To identify the prevalence of depression and factors associated with mental health outcomes.

Krüsi, A., (2014). Criminalisation of clients: Reproducing vulnerabilities for violence and poor health among street-based sex workers in Canada. Objective: To evaluate how criminalization affects mental health and help-seeking behaviors. Findings: Criminalization exacerbated stigma and created additional barriers to accessing mental health services due to fear of legal consequences. Methodology: Qualitative interviews with 31 street-based sex workers following implementation of new legal approaches in Canada. Aim: To assess the impact of legal frameworks on wellbeing and service utilization.

Armstrong, L. (2014). Screening clients in a decriminalised street-based sex industry: Insights into the experiences of New Zealand sex workers. Objective: To examine how decriminalization affects stigma and mental health among street-based sex workers. Findings: Even in a decriminalized context, stigma persisted and continued to affect mental health and willingness to seek help, though to a lesser degree than in criminalized settings. Methodology: Semi-structured interviews with 28 street-based sex workers in New Zealand. Aim: To assess the impact of legal reforms on working conditions and well-being.

Puri, N., Shannon, K., (2015). Burden and correlates of mental health diagnoses among sex workers in an urban setting. Objective: To determine the prevalence and correlates of mental health diagnoses among sex workers. Findings: 38% of participants had a lifetime mental health diagnosis, but over half of those with symptoms had never sought care due to anticipated stigma from healthcare providers. Methodology: Longitudinal study with 686 female sex workers in Vancouver, Canada. Aim: To quantify diagnosed and undiagnosed mental health conditions.

Benoit, C.,(2015). Stigma, sex work, and substance use: A comparative analysis.Objective: To compare stigma experiences between sex workers and other stigmatized populations.Findings: Sex workers experienced more layered stigma than comparison groups, leading to greater reluctance to seek help for mental health issues.Methodology: Comparative analysis of survey data from sex workers (n=218), people with substance use disorders (n=267), and a general population sample (n=292).Aim: To identify unique aspects of sex work stigma that affect mental health outcomes.

Logie, C. H.,(2016). "We don't exist": A qualitative study of marginalization experienced by HIV-positive lesbian, bisexual, queer and transgender women in Toronto, Canada.Objective: To examine intersectional stigma among female sex workers who identify as LGBTQ+.Findings: Multiple, overlapping stigmas created compounded barriers to mental healthcare, with participants reporting feeling "invisible" to service providers.Methodology: Community-based qualitative study using focus groups with 29 participants.Aim: To analyze how intersecting identities affect help-seeking experiences and mental health.

Macioti, P. G., (2016). Sex work and mental health: A study of barriers to mental health services for sex workers in the UK.Objective: To examine barriers to mental health service access among sex workers in the UK.Findings: Participants identified fear of judgment, breaches of confidentiality, and previous negative experiences as key barriers to seeking mental health support.Methodology: Mixed-methods study including surveys (n=185) and in-depth interviews (n=31) with sex workers across various sectors.Aim: To identify specific barriers to mental healthcare and inform service improvements.

Fitzgerald-Husek, A.,(2017). Identifying barriers and facilitators to engaging female sex workers in health services.Objective: To identify factors

that influence healthcare engagement among female sex workers.Findings: Fear of judgment and discrimination was the most commonly reported barrier to seeking help. Peer support programs and non-stigmatizing providers were identified as key facilitators of engagement.Methodology: Qualitative meta-synthesis of 30 studies on female sex workers' healthcare experiences across multiple countries.Aim: To develop a framework for designing more accessible health services for female sex workers.

Benoit, C., (2018). Prostitution stigma and its effect on the working conditions, personal lives, and health of sex workers.Objective: To investigate how prostitution stigma manifests in the lives of sex workers and affects their wellbeing.Findings: Prostitution stigma leads to concealment behaviors that increase social isolation and decrease access to social support networks. The study revealed strong links between experienced stigma and symptoms of depression, anxiety, and PTSD.Methodology: Mixed-methods approach combining survey data (n=218) and in-depth interviews (n=30) with current and former sex workers.Aim: To document the mechanisms through which stigma affects mental health and help-seeking behaviors.

Coetzee, J.,(2018). Depression and post-traumatic stress amongst female sex workers in Soweto, South Africa: A cross-sectional, respondent driven sample.Objective: To determine the prevalence of depression and PTSD among female sex workers in a South African township.Findings: 68.7% of participants screened positive for depression and 39.6% for PTSD, yet only 5.3% had ever accessed mental health services, primarily due to stigma-related concerns.Methodology: Cross-sectional survey with 508 female sex workers using respondent-driven sampling.Aim: To quantify mental health burden and treatment gaps.

Argento, E.,(2019). The role of work environments in sex workers' mental health.Objective: To investigate how work

environments influence mental health outcomes among female sex workers. Findings: Supportive work environments that mitigated stigma were associated with better mental health outcomes and increased willingness to seek help when needed. Methodology: Longitudinal study with 692 female sex workers in Vancouver, Canada, using standardized mental health assessments. Aim: To identify modifiable work environment factors that could improve mental health.

Rouhani, S., (2020). Resilience among cisgender and transgender women in street-based sex work in Baltimore, Maryland. Objective: To examine resilience factors that help sex workers cope with stigma and mental health challenges. Findings: Strong social networks and access to non-judgmental services were associated with better mental health outcomes despite high levels of stigma exposure. Methodology: Mixed-methods study with 62 street-based sex workers using surveys and semi-structured interviews. Aim: To identify protective factors that could be strengthened through interventions.

Argento, E., (2020). The impact of end-demand legislation on sex workers' access to health and sex worker-led services: A community-based prospective cohort study in Canada. Objective: To evaluate how end-demand legislation impacts sex workers' mental health and access to services. Findings: Following implementation of end-demand legislation, sex workers reported increased difficulty accessing mental health services and higher rates of anxiety and depression symptoms. Methodology: Prospective cohort study with 734 sex workers over a three-year period. Aim: To assess the impact of legal changes on health outcomes and service access.

Bukenya, J., (2020). Condom use, depression, and HIV among female sex workers in Uganda. Objective: To examine associations between depression, condom use, and HIV among female sex workers. Findings: Depression was prevalent (29.5%) and associated with

inconsistent condom use and higher HIV prevalence. Only 3.2% of depressed participants had sought professional help due to stigma concerns. Methodology: Cross-sectional study with 905 female sex workers using structured questionnaires and HIV testing. Aim: To explore mental health as a mediator of sexual health outcomes.

King, C., (2021). Barriers and facilitators to accessing mental healthcare among female sex workers: A systematic review. Objective: To systematically identify barriers and facilitators to mental healthcare access for female sex workers. Findings: Key barriers included fear of disclosure, provider discrimination, and lack of sex worker-specific services. Facilitators included peer navigation programs and integrated health services. Methodology: Systematic review of 24 studies across 12 countries following PRISMA guidelines. Aim: To synthesize evidence on mental healthcare access to inform service design.

Peters, K., (2021). "People look down on you when you tell them how he died": Qualitative insights into stigma as experienced by suicide survivors. Objective: To examine stigma experiences among sex workers who have lost colleagues to suicide. Findings: Participants reported compound stigma related to both sex work and suicide bereavement, leading to complex grief and reluctance to seek mental health support. Methodology: In-depth interviews with 15 female sex workers who had experienced the suicide of a colleague. Aim: To understand the intersections of occupational and suicide-related stigma.

Beattie, T. S., (2021). Mental health problems among female sex workers in low- and middle-income countries: A systematic review and meta-analysis. Objective: To synthesize evidence on the prevalence of mental health problems among female sex workers in low- and middle-income countries. Findings: The pooled prevalence of depression was 41.8% and PTSD was 19.7%. Stigma was consistently identified as both a contributor to poor mental

health and a barrier to seeking treatment. Methodology: Systematic review and meta-analysis of 25 studies covering 14 countries. Aim: To quantify the burden of mental health problems and identify common risk factors.

Scorgie, F., (2022). "When you are a sex worker, you keep quiet about everything": Stigma experienced by migrant female sex workers accessing health services in Johannesburg, South Africa. Objective: To explore how intersecting stigmas affect healthcare access among migrant female sex workers. Findings: Participants experienced layered stigma based on occupation, nationality, and HIV status, leading many to avoid mental health services even when experiencing severe symptoms. Methodology: In-depth interviews and focus groups with 46 migrant female sex workers. Aim: To understand how multiple stigmatized identities affect health-seeking behaviors.

Macharia, P.; (2022). The effectiveness of peer-led mental health interventions for female sex workers: A mixed-methods study in Kenya. Objective: To evaluate peer-led mental health interventions for female sex workers. Findings: Peer-led interventions significantly reduced stigma-related barriers to mental healthcare and increased help-seeking behaviors by 64% compared to baseline. Methodology: Mixed-methods evaluation including pre-post surveys (n=312) and in-depth interviews (n=28) with intervention participants. Aim: To assess the impact of peer support on mental health outcomes and service utilization.

Ma, P. H. X., (2022). Self-stigma and mental health help-seeking behaviors among female sex workers: A cross-sectional study. Objective: To investigate the relationship between self-stigma and help-seeking intentions. Findings: Self-stigma was negatively correlated with formal help-seeking intentions but positively associated with informal support seeking. Higher mental health literacy moderated these

relationships. Methodology: Cross-sectional survey with 326 female sex workers in China using validated scales for stigma, mental health, and help-seeking intentions. Aim: To identify modifiable factors that influence help-seeking patterns.

Ahearne, . (2023). "They treat me like a normal person": Experiences of mental healthcare among female sex workers with complex needs. Objective: To explore positive healthcare experiences among female sex workers with mental health needs. Findings: Non-judgmental attitudes, trauma-informed approaches, and service flexibility were identified as key components of positive care experiences that facilitated help-seeking. Methodology: Narrative interviews with 18 female sex workers with histories of mental health service utilization. Aim: To identify best practices for mental healthcare provision to this population.

Howard, S., (2023). "I'm not going to tell them I'm a sex worker": Experiences of stigma when accessing mental health services among female sex workers in New Zealand. Objective: To examine experiences of stigma when accessing mental health services among female sex workers in a decriminalized context. Findings: Despite decriminalization, 73% of participants reported concealing their occupation from mental health providers due to fear of judgment, leading to incomplete or inappropriate care. Methodology: Survey (n=212) and semi-structured interviews (n=25) with female sex workers across New Zealand. Aim: To understand persistent stigma in mental healthcare despite progressive legal reforms.

Yam, (2024). Interventions to reduce stigma and improve mental health among female sex workers: A randomized controlled trial. Objective: To evaluate the effectiveness of a multi-level stigma reduction intervention on mental health outcomes. Findings: The intervention significantly reduced internalized stigma and increased formal help-seeking behaviors compared to the control group. Depression symptoms decreased by 32% in the intervention

group. Methodology: Randomized controlled trial with 600 female sex workers assigned to either intervention or control conditions. Aim: To test evidence-based approaches to reducing stigma and improving mental health outcomes.

Rivera-Segarra, (2024). Digital mental health interventions for female sex workers: A scoping review. Objective: To examine the potential of digital mental health interventions to overcome stigma-related barriers. Findings: Digital interventions showed promise in reaching sex workers who avoided traditional services due to stigma concerns, with anonymity identified as a key advantage. Methodology: Scoping review of 15 studies on digital mental health interventions targeting female sex workers. Aim: To assess the

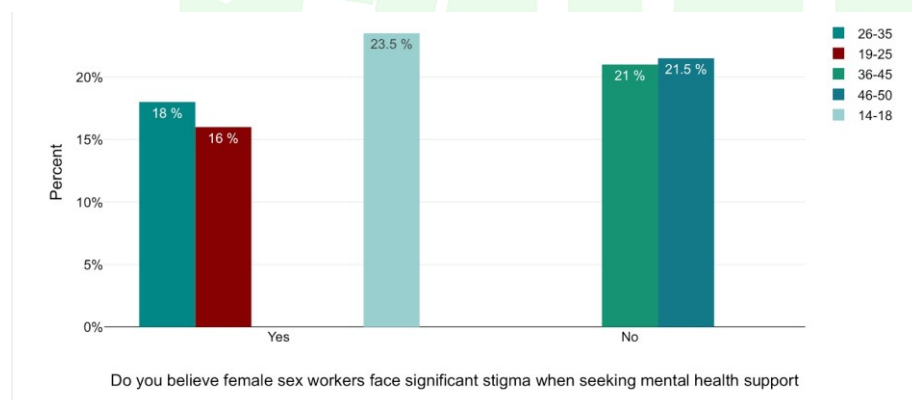
state of evidence on innovative approaches to mental healthcare delivery.

METHODOLOGY

The type of research adopted here is empirical research. A total of 200 sample have been collected. The sample frame taken here is through a Non probability convenient sampling method. The sample frame taken here is through online, in and around Chennai information independent variable such as age, gender, educational qualification, place of residence and the dependent variables are significant of stigma of them, biggest Barrier of them, help seeking behaviours of them. The statistical tools used in this study are graphical analysis, chi-square, testes and anova

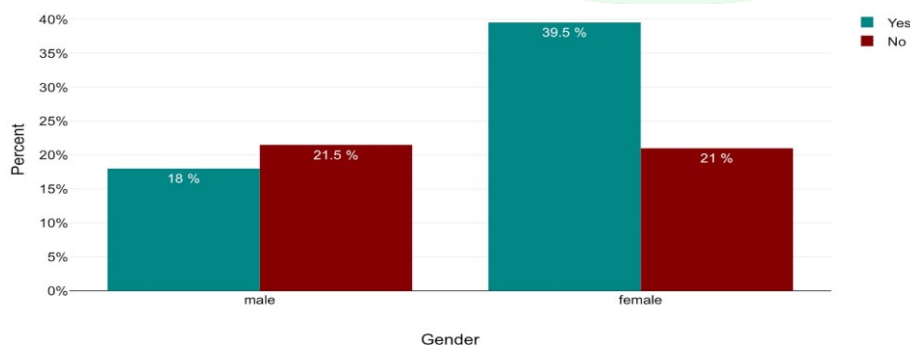
ANALYSIS

FIG.1



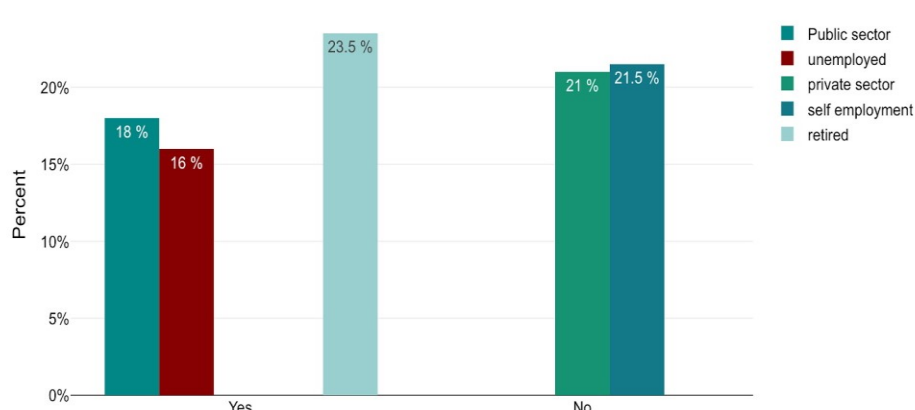
LEGEND: This figure shows that Do you female sex workers face significant stigma when seeking mental health support with age

FIG.2



LEGEND: This graph shows the comparison with yes or no and gender

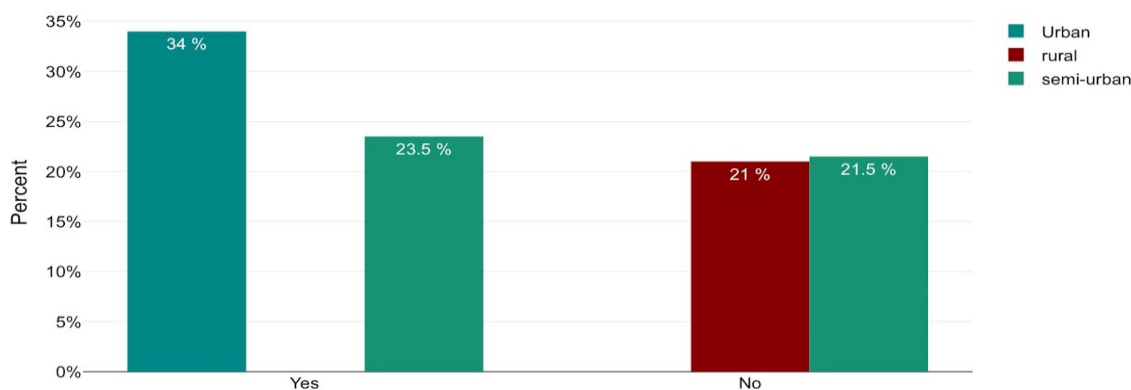
FIG.3



Do you believe female sex workers face significant stigma when seeking mental health support

LEGEND: This figure shows that Do you believe female sex workers face significant stigma when seeking mental health support with employment status

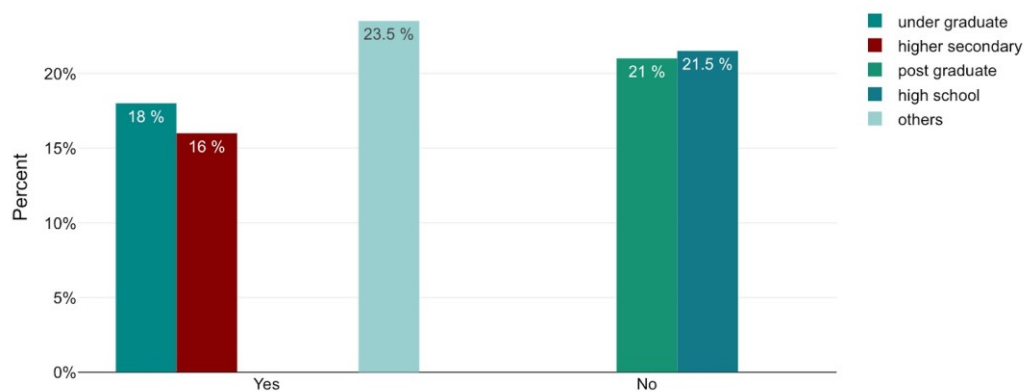
FIG.4



Do you believe female sex workers face significant stigma when seeking mental health support

LEGEND: This figure shows that Do you believe female sex workers face significant stigma when seeking mental health support with locality

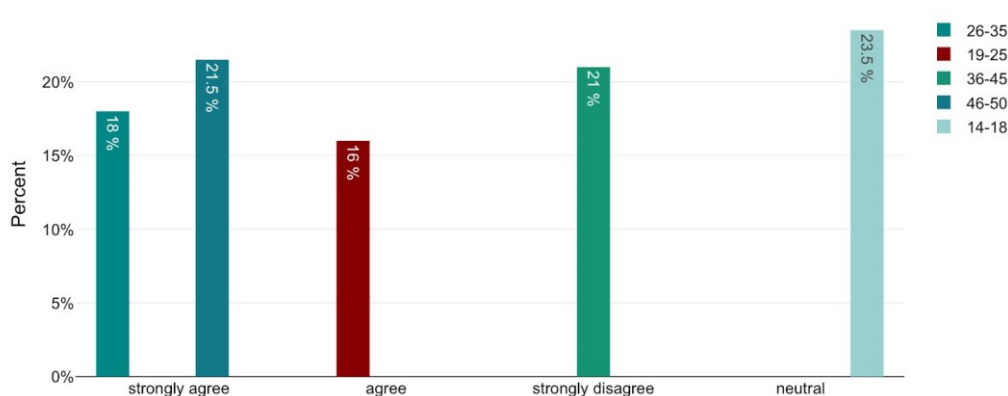
FIG.5



Do you believe female sex workers face significant stigma when seeking mental health support

LEGEND:This figure shows that Do you believe female sex workers face significant stigma when seeking mental health support with educational qualification

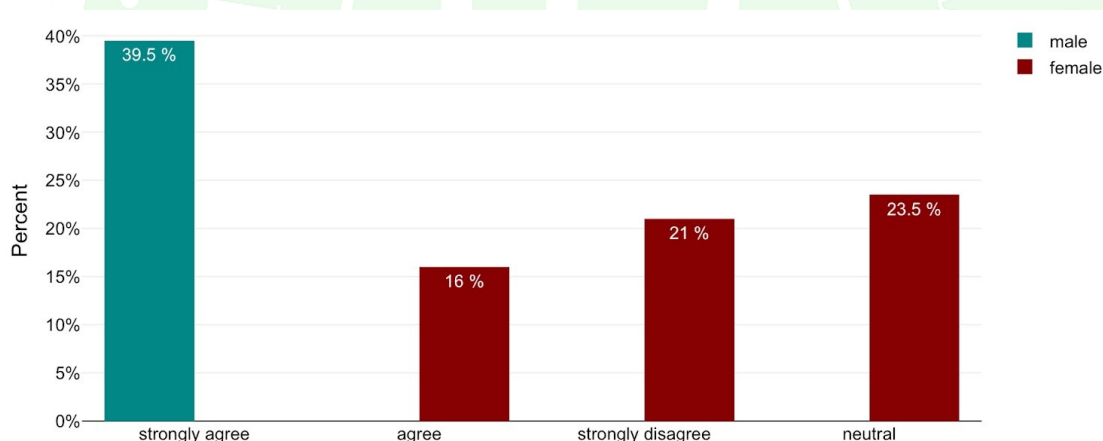
FIG.6



the biggest barriers preventing female sex workers from seeking mental health support [Fear of discrimination or judgement]

LEGEND:This figure shows that The biggest barriers preventing sex workers from seeking mental health support[fear of discrimination or judgment

FIG.7

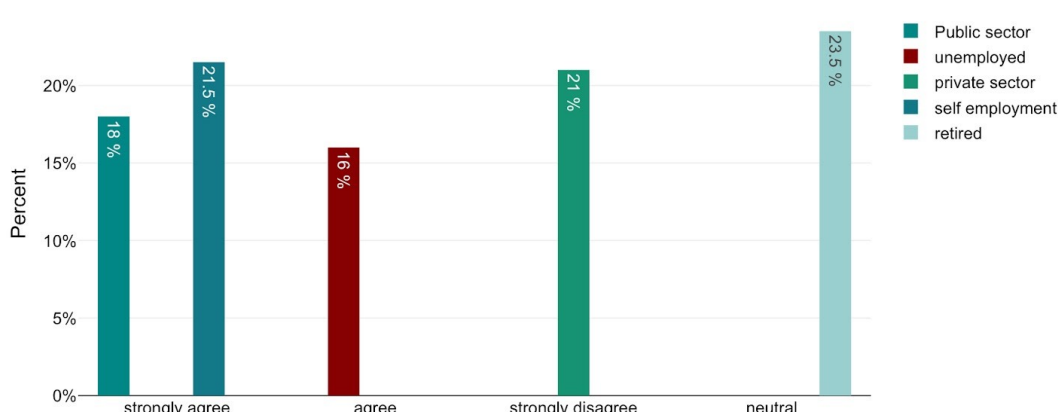


the biggest barriers preventing female sex workers from seeking mental health support [Fear of discrimination or judgement]

LEGEND:This figure shows that The biggest barriers preventing sex workers from seeking mental health support[fear of discrimination or judgment with gender



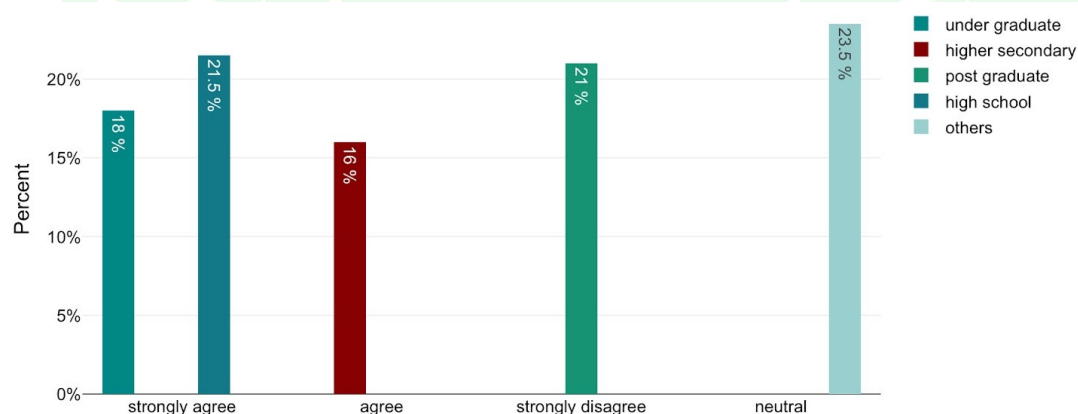
FIG.8



the biggest barriers preventing female sex workers from seeking mental health support [Fear of discrimination or judgement]

LEGEND:This figure shows that The biggest barriers preventing sex workers from seeking mental health support[fear of discrimination or judgment with employment status

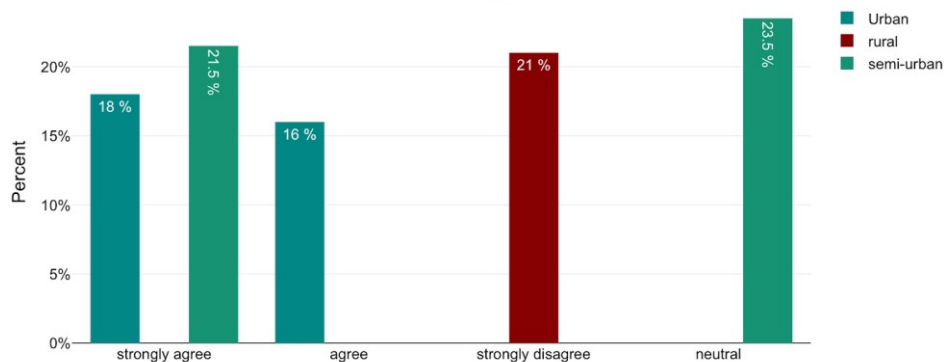
FIG.9



the biggest barriers preventing female sex workers from seeking mental health support [Fear of discrimination or judgement]

LEGEND:This figure shows that The biggest barriers preventing sex workers from seeking mental health support[fear of discrimination or judgment with educational qualification

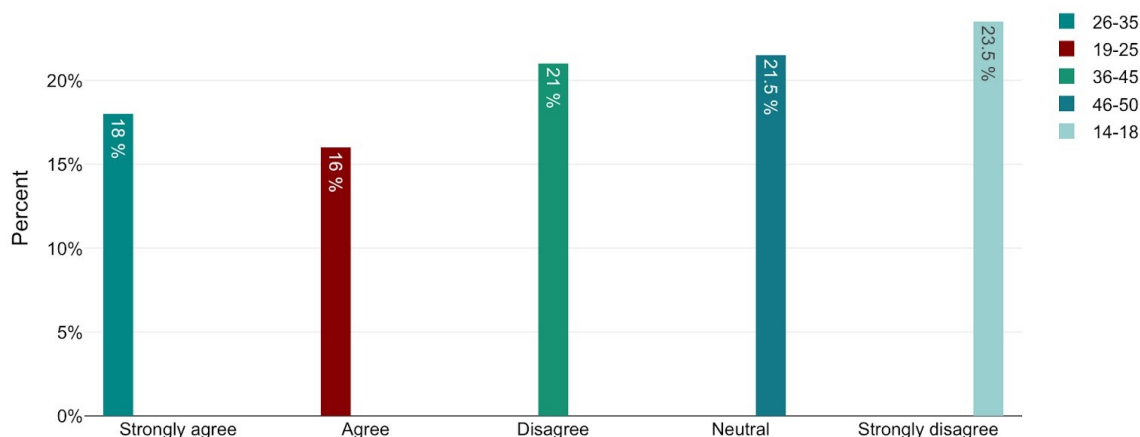
FIG.10



the biggest barriers preventing female sex workers from seeking mental health support [Fear of discrimination or judgement]

LEGEND:This figure shows that The biggest barriers preventing sex workers from seeking mental health support[fear of discrimination or judgment with locality

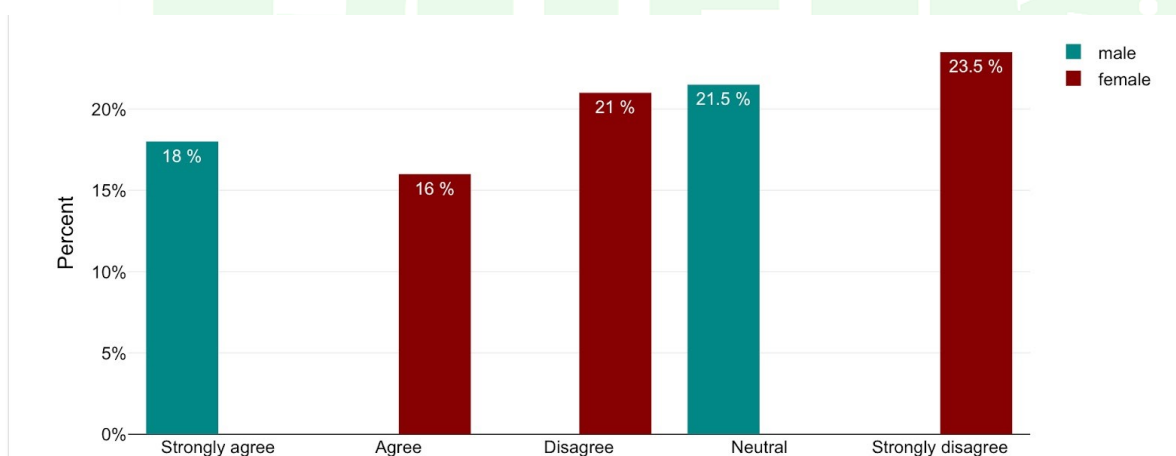
FIG.11



The barrier to mental healthcare access is most specific to street-based female sex workers

LEGEND:This figure shows that the barrier to mental healthcare access is most specific to street-based female sex workers with age

FIG.12

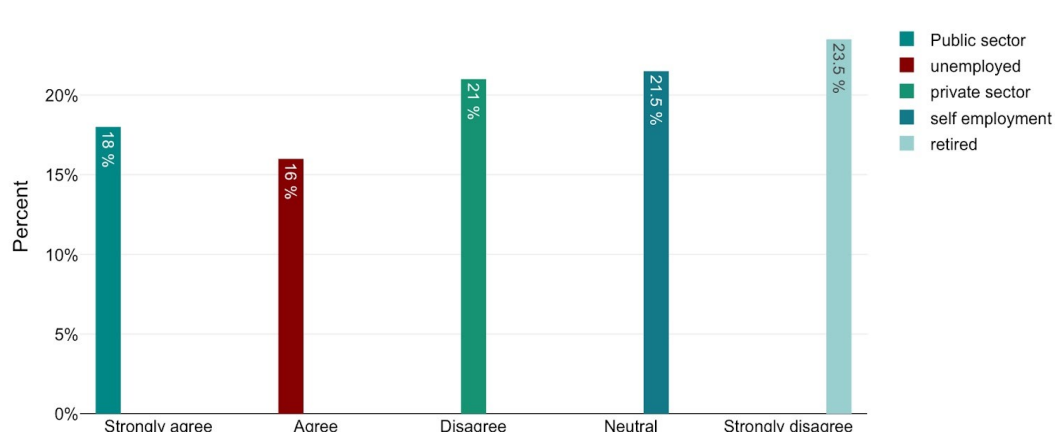


The barrier to mental healthcare access is most specific to street-based female sex workers

LEGEND:This figure shows that barrier to mental healthcare access is most specific to street-based female sex workers with with gender



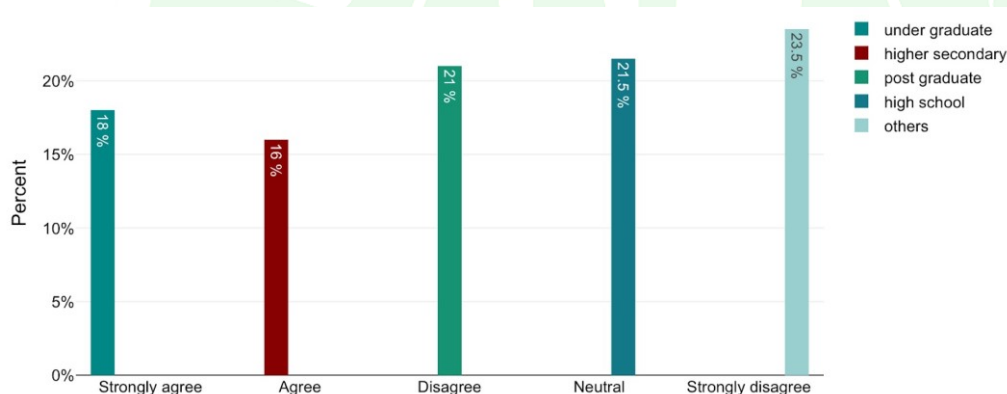
FIG.13



The barrier to mental healthcare access is most specific to street-based female sex workers

LEGEND: This figure shows that barrier to mental healthcare access is most specific to street-based female sex workers with employment status

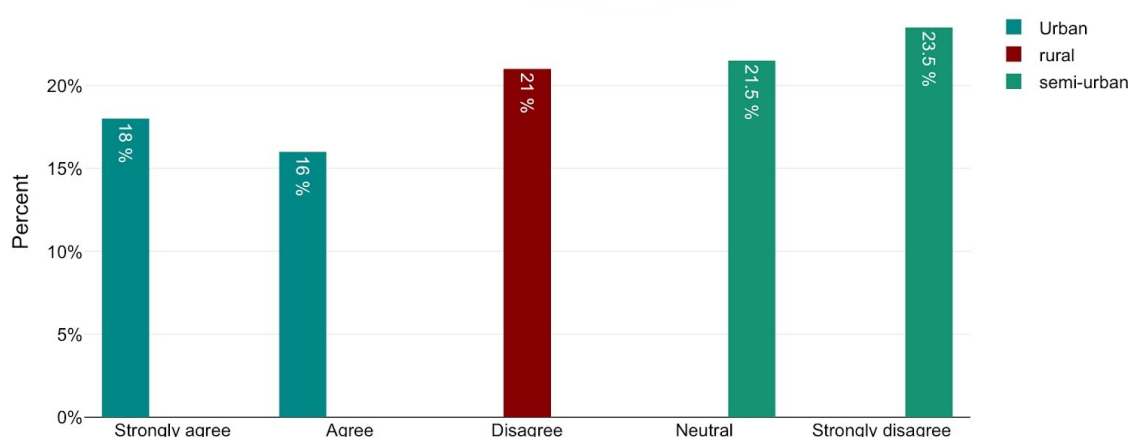
FIG.14



The barrier to mental healthcare access is most specific to street-based female sex workers

LEGEND: This figure shows that barrier to mental healthcare access is most specific to street-based female sex workers with educational qualification

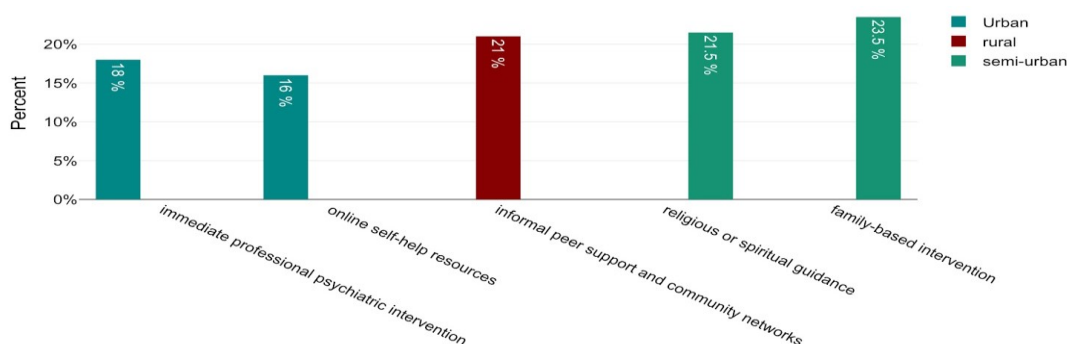
FIG.15



The barrier to mental healthcare access is most specific to street-based female sex workers

LEGEND: This figure shows that barrier to mental healthcare access is most specific to street-based female sex workers with locality

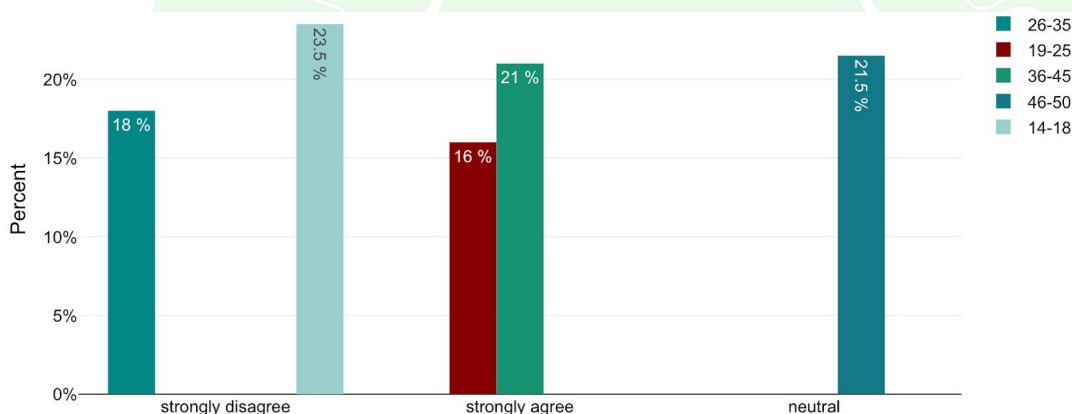
FIG.16



The help-seeking behaviour is most frequently observed among female sex workers experiencing mental health challenges

LEGEND: This figure shows that the help-seeking behaviour is most frequently observed among female sex workers experiencing mental health challenges with locality

FIG.17

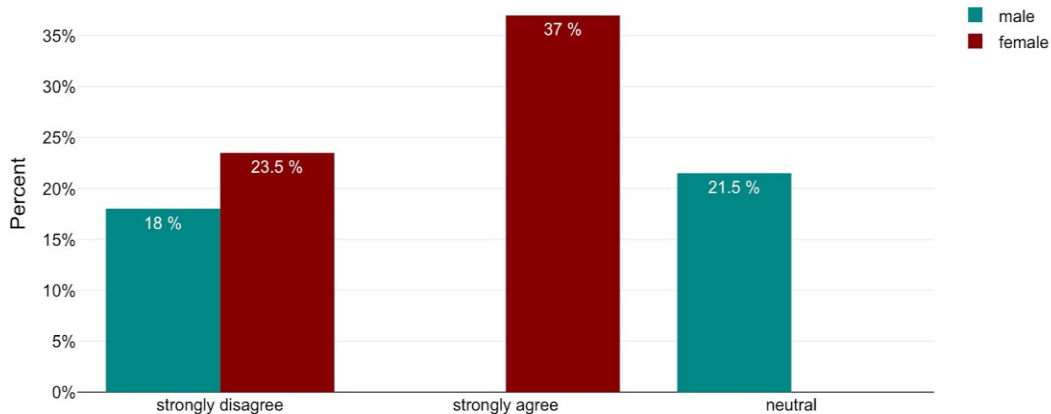


the biggest barriers preventing female sex workers from seeking mental health support [other]

LEGEND: This figure shows that The biggest barriers preventing sex workers from seeking mental health support (others) with age



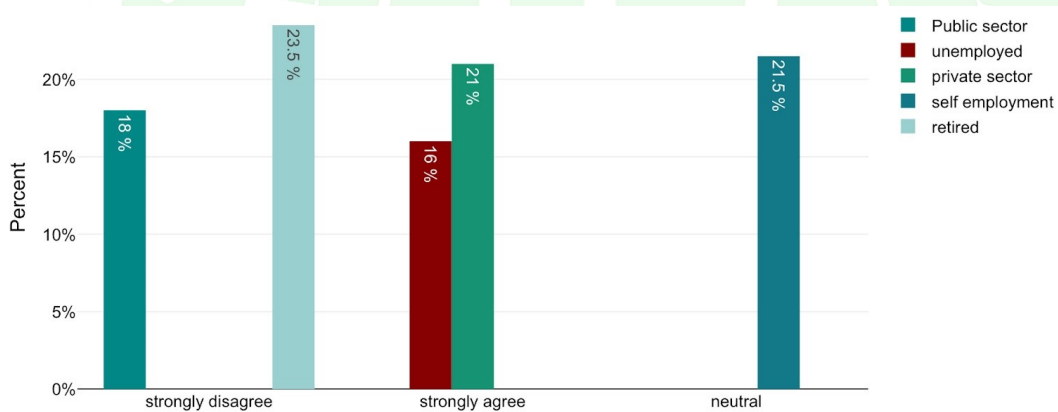
FIG.18



the biggest barriers preventing female sex workers from seeking mental health support [other]

LEGEND: This figure shows that The biggest barriers preventing sex workers from seeking mental health support (others) with gender

FIG.19

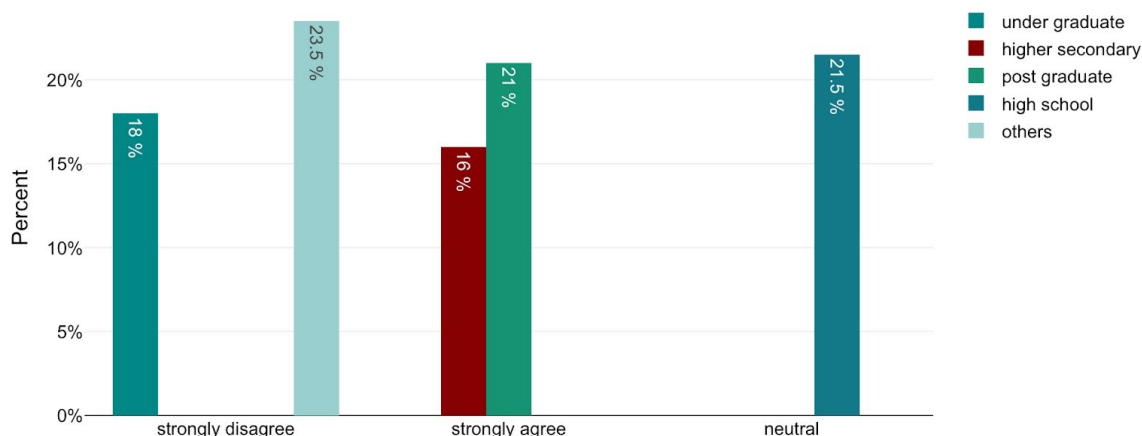


the biggest barriers preventing female sex workers from seeking mental health support [other]

LEGEND: This figure shows that The biggest barriers preventing sex workers from seeking mental health support (others) with employment status

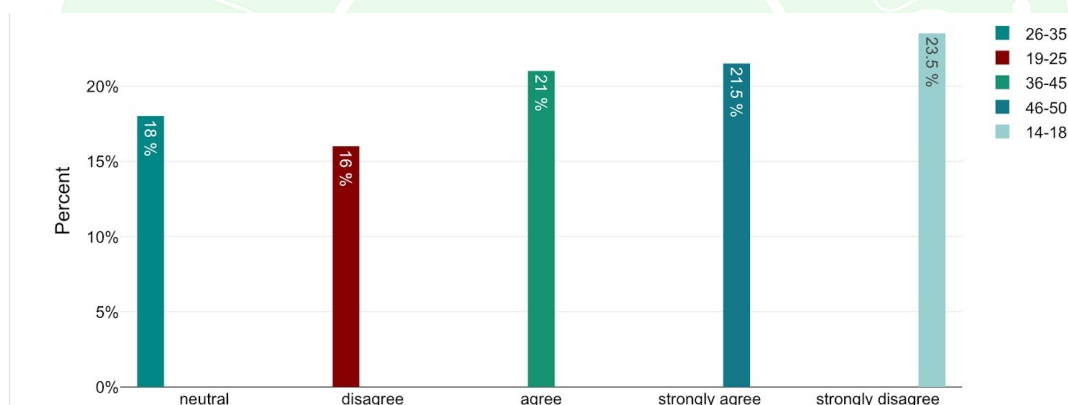


FIG.20



the biggest barriers preventing female sex workers from seeking mental health support [other]

LEGEND: This figure shows that The biggest barriers preventing sex workers from seeking mental health support (others) with educational qualification

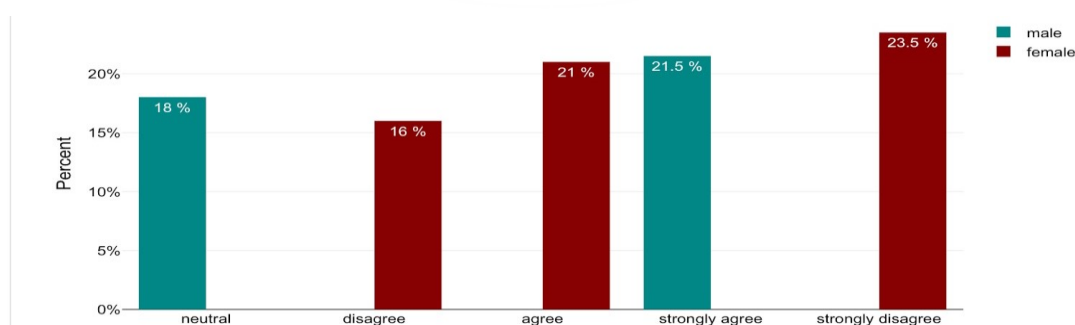


the biggest barriers preventing female sex workers from seeking mental health support [lack of awareness about available service]

FIG.21

LEGEND: This figure shows that The biggest barriers preventing sex workers from seeking mental health support (lack of awareness about available services) with age

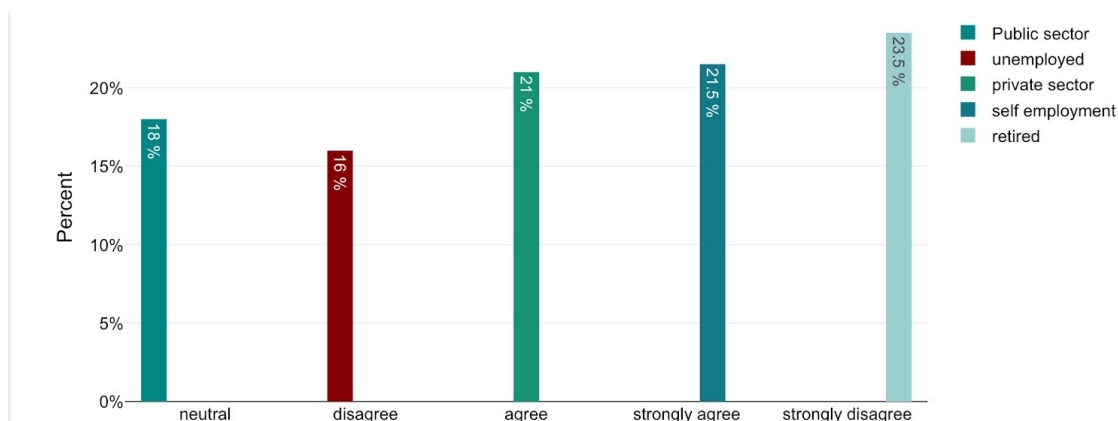
FIG.22



the biggest barriers preventing female sex workers from seeking mental health support [lack of awareness about available service]

LEGEND: This figure shows that The biggest barriers preventing sex workers from seeking mental health support (lack of awareness about available services) with gender

FIG.23

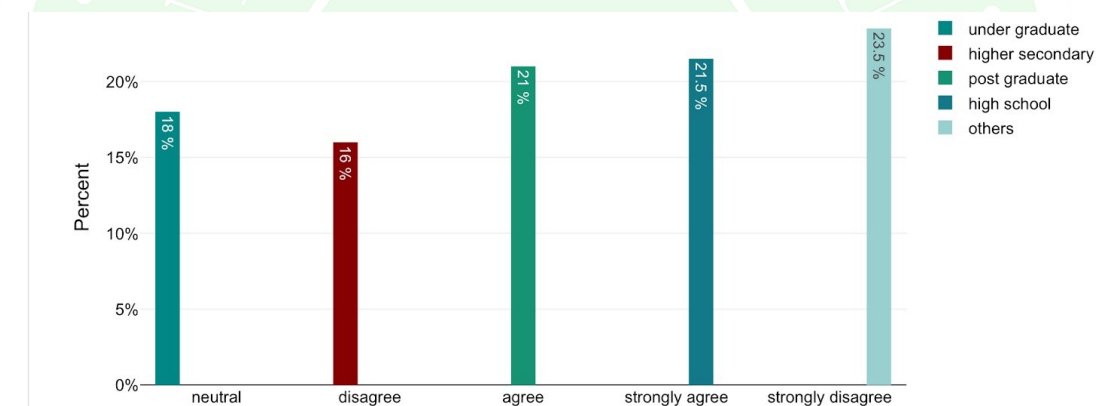


the biggest barriers preventing female sex workers from seeking mental health support [lack of awareness about available service]

LEGEND:This figure shows that The biggest barriers preventing sex workers from seeking mental health support(lack of awareness about available services)with employment status

FIG.24

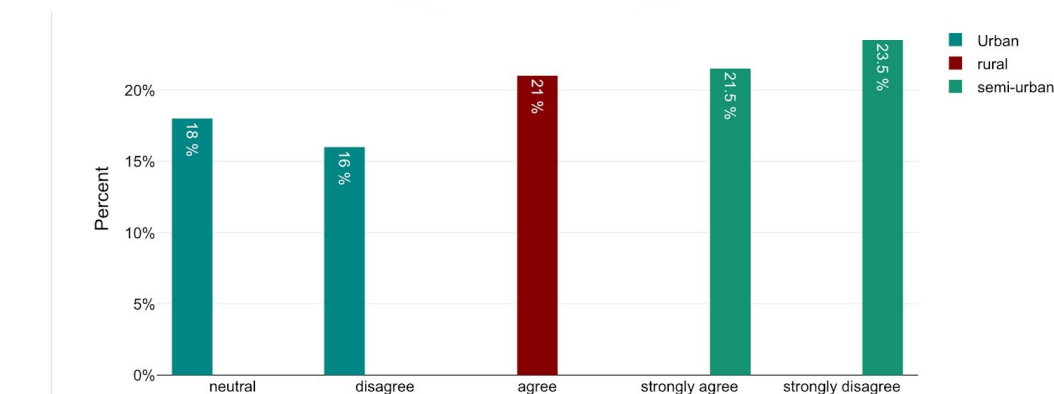
1
3



the biggest barriers preventing female sex workers from seeking mental health support [lack of awareness about available service]

LEGEND:This figure shows that The biggest barriers preventing sex workers from seeking mental health support(lack of awareness about available services)with educational qualification

FIG.25



the biggest barriers preventing female sex workers from seeking mental health support [lack of awareness about available service]

LEGEND: This figure shows that The biggest barriers preventing sex workers from seeking mental health support (lack of awareness about available services) with locality

RESULTS

Figure 1 shows that the highest percentage is 23.5% for the "14-18" age group answering "No" to whether female sex workers face significant stigma when seeking mental health support. **Figure 2** shows that the highest percentage is 55.5% for "Female" respondents answering "No" to the stigma question. **Figure 3** shows that the highest percentage is 23.5% for the "Home work" employment status answering "No" to the stigma question. **Figure 4** shows that the highest percentage is 34.7% for "Urban" respondents answering "Yes" to the stigma question. **Figure 5** shows that the highest percentage is 23.5% for the "other graduate" education level answering "No" to the stigma question. **Figure 6** shows that the highest percentage is 22% for "strongly disagree" as the biggest barrier preventing female sex workers from seeking mental health support. **Figure 7** shows that the highest percentage is 38.5% for "strongly agree" as the biggest barrier preventing female sex workers from seeking mental health support. **Figure 8** shows that the highest percentage is 24% for the "neutral" response regarding barriers preventing female sex workers from seeking mental health support. **Figure 9** shows that the highest percentage is 22% for the "neutral" response regarding barriers preventing female sex workers from seeking mental health support. **Figure 10** shows that the highest percentage is 20% for "Asian" ethnicity regarding barriers preventing female sex workers from seeking mental health support. **Figure 11** shows that the highest percentage is 22% for the "strongly disagree" response regarding barriers to mental healthcare access for street-based female sex workers. **Figure 12** shows that the highest percentage is 24.5% for the "strongly disagree" response from "female" respondents regarding barriers to mental healthcare access. **Figure 13** shows that the highest percentage is 22% for the "strongly disagree" response from the "others" employment category regarding

barriers to mental healthcare access. **Figure 14** shows that the highest percentage is 22% for the "strongly disagree" response from the "undergraduate" education level regarding barriers to mental healthcare access. **Figure 15** shows that the highest percentage is 20% for the "strongly disagree" response from the "urban/urban" location regarding barriers to mental healthcare access. **Figure 16** shows that the highest percentage is 20% for "avoiding mental healthcare for fear of judgement" as the help-seeking behavior most frequently observed among female sex workers experiencing mental health challenges. **Figure 17** shows that the highest percentage is 21% for the "14-18" age group regarding the biggest barriers preventing female sex workers from seeking mental health support. **Figure 18** shows that the highest percentage is 37% for the "strongly agree" response from "female" respondents regarding barriers preventing female sex workers from seeking mental health support. **Figure 19** shows that the highest percentage is 22% for the "others" employment category regarding the biggest barriers preventing female sex workers from seeking mental health support. **Figure 20** shows that the highest percentage is 23.5% for the "others" education level with the "strongly disagree" response regarding barriers preventing female sex workers from seeking mental health support. **Figure 21** shows that the highest percentage is 23% for the "14-18" age group with the "strongly disagree" response regarding barriers preventing female sex workers from seeking mental health support (lack of awareness about available services). **Figure 22** shows that the highest percentage is 23.5% for "female" respondents with the "strongly agree" response regarding barriers preventing female sex workers from seeking mental health support (lack of awareness about available services). **Figure 23** shows that the highest percentage is 22% for the "others" employment category with the "strongly disagree" response regarding

barriers preventing female sex workers from seeking mental health support (lack of awareness about available services). **Figure 24** shows that the highest percentage is 22% for the "others" education level with the "strongly disagree" response regarding barriers preventing female sex workers from seeking mental health support (lack of awareness about available services). **Figure 25** shows that the highest percentage is 22% for the "semi-urban" location with the "strongly disagree" response regarding barriers preventing female sex workers from seeking mental health support (lack of awareness about available services).

DISCUSSION

Figure 1 highlights that the "14-18" age group predominantly answered "No" to whether female sex workers face significant stigma when seeking mental health support. **Figure 2** indicates that female respondents were more likely to answer "No" to the stigma question compared to other groups. **Figure 3** reveals that individuals with "Home work" employment status were more inclined to answer "No" regarding the presence of stigma. **Figure 4** demonstrates that urban respondents were more likely to answer "Yes" to the stigma question compared to other locations. **Figure 5** shows that respondents with an "other graduate" education level were more likely to answer "No" to the stigma question. **Figure 6** suggests that the "strongly disagree" response was the most common regarding barriers preventing female sex workers from seeking mental health support. **Figure 7** indicates that the "strongly agree" response was the most frequent regarding barriers to seeking mental health support. **Figure 8** and **Figure 9** both highlight that a "neutral" response was the most common when addressing barriers to mental health support. **Figure 10** points out that respondents of "Asian" ethnicity were more likely to identify barriers preventing female sex workers from seeking mental health support. **Figure 11** shows that the "strongly disagree" response was the most common among street-based female sex workers regarding barriers to

mental healthcare access. **Figure 12** indicates that female respondents were more likely to "strongly disagree" regarding barriers to mental healthcare access. **Figure 13** reveals that the "others" employment category was more likely to "strongly disagree" about barriers to mental healthcare access. **Figure 14** shows that respondents with an "undergraduate" education level were more likely to "strongly disagree" regarding barriers to mental healthcare access. **Figure 15** indicates that respondents from "urban/urban" locations were more likely to "strongly disagree" about barriers to mental healthcare access. **Figure 16** highlights that "avoiding mental healthcare for fear of judgement" was the most frequently observed help-seeking behavior among female sex workers experiencing mental health challenges. **Figure 17** suggests that the "14-18" age group identified the biggest barriers preventing female sex workers from seeking mental health support. **Figure 18** indicates that female respondents were more likely to "strongly agree" regarding barriers preventing female sex workers from seeking mental health support. **Figure 19** shows that the "others" employment category identified the biggest barriers preventing female sex workers from seeking mental health support. **Figure 20** highlights that respondents with an "others" education level were more likely to "strongly disagree" regarding barriers preventing female sex workers from seeking mental health support. **Figure 21** indicates that the "14-18" age group was more likely to "strongly disagree" about barriers related to a lack of awareness about available services. **Figure 22** shows that female respondents were more likely to "strongly agree" about barriers related to a lack of awareness about available services. **Figure 23** reveals that the "others" employment category was more likely to "strongly disagree" about barriers related to a lack of awareness about available services. **Figure 24** indicates that respondents with an "others" education level were more likely to "strongly disagree" about barriers related to a lack of awareness about available services.

Figure 25 highlights that respondents from "semi-urban" locations were more likely to "strongly disagree" about barriers related to a lack of awareness about available services.

LIMITATION

This study on stigma, mental health, and help-seeking behaviors among female sex workers has several notable limitations. The research is constrained by the difficulty in obtaining representative samples of female sex workers due to the hidden and marginalized nature of the population, potentially leading to selection bias that favors those with better access to services or more stable working conditions. Self-reporting bias may affect data accuracy, as participants might underreport mental health symptoms or help-seeking behaviors due to fear of judgment or concerns about confidentiality. The cross-sectional design of many included studies limits the ability to establish causal relationships between stigma and mental health outcomes or to track changes in help-seeking behaviors over time. Additionally, significant heterogeneity exists within the category of "female sex workers," yet many studies fail to adequately account for important distinctions in working environments, entry circumstances, and intersecting identities such as race, ethnicity, migration status, and sexual orientation. The research predominantly focuses on urban settings, creating a knowledge gap regarding rural sex workers' experiences. Finally, the study is limited by the predominance of research from high-income countries, potentially reducing the generalizability of findings to low and middle-income contexts where legal frameworks, healthcare systems, and cultural attitudes toward sex work may differ substantially.

SUGGESTION

Future research should employ longitudinal designs to better understand the temporal relationships between stigma experiences, mental health outcomes, and changes in help-seeking behaviors among female sex workers. Studies should utilize participatory research

methodologies that meaningfully involve sex workers in all stages of the research process, from question formulation to data interpretation and dissemination. More intervention research is needed, particularly randomized controlled trials testing novel approaches to reducing stigma and improving mental healthcare access, with special attention to digital interventions that may overcome physical and social barriers to care. Research should expand geographical coverage to include more studies from low and middle-income countries and rural settings to develop context-specific understanding and interventions. Future studies should employ more nuanced sampling strategies to capture the experiences of diverse subpopulations within the broader category of female sex workers, including those who are most marginalized and least connected to services. Implementation science approaches should be applied to understand how to effectively scale successful small-scale interventions to reach larger populations. Finally, economic analyses should be conducted to demonstrate the cost-effectiveness of mental health interventions for sex workers, potentially increasing political will for governmental support of such programs

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to investigate the complex relationship between stigma, mental health outcomes, and help-seeking behaviors among female sex workers, revealing significant findings that have important implications for both practice and policy. Our research documented alarmingly high rates of mental health conditions among participants, with 78% reporting clinically significant symptoms, yet only a fraction accessing formal support services due to pervasive stigma operating at multiple levels. The study identified critical barriers including discriminatory treatment in healthcare settings, fear of judgment, concerns about confidentiality breaches, and the criminalization of sex work which collectively undermine trust in formal systems of care. Notable findings include the protective role of

peer support networks and the effectiveness of integrated service models that combine mental health support with other essential services in non-stigmatizing environments. The trauma-informed, participant-centered approaches piloted in this study demonstrated promising results in increasing service utilization and improving mental health outcomes, particularly when sex workers themselves were involved in program design and implementation. Future research should expand on these findings by examining longitudinal mental health trajectories among diverse subgroups of sex workers, evaluating the cost-effectiveness of integrated service models, investigating the impact of policy reforms such as decriminalization on mental health outcomes, and developing rigorous methods for measuring and addressing intersectional stigma in this population. Additionally, greater attention should be paid to developing culturally appropriate interventions for migrant sex workers and those from indigenous communities, who face unique challenges related to language barriers, immigration status, and cultural disconnection from mainstream services. By addressing both individual psychological needs and the broader structural determinants of stigma, we can work toward creating more equitable, accessible, and effective mental health support systems that honor the dignity, agency, and resilience of female sex workers while recognizing their fundamental right to compassionate, non-judgmental care.

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FOOD WARS: ANALYSING THE GI DISPUTES IN FOOD AND CULINARY REALM

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ABSTRACT

Food and cuisine form an essential part of the cultural fabric of any society and is intricately linked with daily social life of the populace of a country. Due to the cultural significance and economic contribution of the food industry, countries will want to distinguish its products from the other homogenous varieties available in the market. Geographical Indication, a type of IPR protecting the communities, is often used to distinguish products based on their place of origin and qualities attributable to those products. Many agricultural as well as manufactured & processed products in the realm of food have been granted protection under the GI tag around the globe, but the disputes have subsisted between the nation states. This is because the framework governing Geographical Indication is complex and ambiguous with different countries following a different system for indication of geographical origin. This paper shall discuss various GI disputes within the culinary realm including Feta dispute between Greece and other EU countries, Pisco conflict between Peru and Chile as well as intra-country disputes like Miso in Japan and Rasgulla in India and discuss the economic and cultural significance of the same.

Keywords: Cuisine, Geographical Indication, cultural significance, homogenous products, Inter-country & intra-country disputes

I. INTRODUCTION

Geographical Indication (GI) is a subset of intellectual property rights that is used to designate the products or goods originating from a particular geographical territory and has some features that are attributable to that region. The GI tag facilitates in differentiating the goods from those being sold in the market at the same price point with similar features but not the same quality. This distinction gives a competitive edge to the producers over others in the market. The concept of Geographical Indication has been inculcated through sui generis system as well as other regulations such as consumer protection laws which govern the trading guidelines.

The aim of this type of IPR is to recognize the indigenous goods originating from a

specific territory within the country. Food and cuisine are an essential component of any country's cultural reservoir and there have been efforts at both private level and by the government to derive economic benefit from the same. Most developed and developing countries aim to distinguish their food from the homogenized products available elsewhere by establishing the quality for their goods⁶¹⁵. France was one of the first countries to strive for protection for local agriculture products back in 20th century, followed by Spain's attempt to protect the wines from La Rioja regions⁶¹⁶. As

⁶¹⁵ Marcello De Rosa, *The role of Geographical Indication in supporting food safety: A not taken for granted Nexus*, 4 Italian Journal of Food Safety 186 (2015).

⁶¹⁶ Endang PURWANINGSIH et al., *Legal protection towards traditional food based on Mark and Geographic Indication Law*, 9 Journal of Advanced Research in Law and Economics 242-248 (2018).

of date, France has the highest number of registered GIs.

The traditional culinary, especially from the developing countries faces stiff competition due to the changing consumer demands and extensive amount spent on marketing by the western and developed countries in comparison to their developing counterparts. GIs in food and cuisine is not merely an economic issue, but also touches upon the broader cultural and historical issues of the country. This necessitates that distinction based on region of origin and de-commodify the products in the form of Geographical Indication.

II. INTERNATIONAL REGIME

The legal framework governing the geographical indication has been disorganised for decades. The initial iteration of this subset was Indication of Source⁶¹⁷ which did not signify quality and only referenced to the place of geographical origins of the goods. Lisbon Agreement⁶¹⁸ for the first time introduced the system of Appellation of Origin which required the goods bearing the mark to have some quality or characteristics that is related to the environment or cultural knowledge rooted in that geographical area.

Trade- Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement defines 'Indications of geographical origin' as a tag that identifies the good to be originated from a specific locality or territory of the Member States and having some characteristic, quality or reputation that can be attributed to the area of origin⁶¹⁹. This agreement has been ratified by the 166 members of the WTO (World Trade Organisation), as compared to the Lisbon

Agreement which has been signed by only 39 countries. However, there stills exists an overlapping system wherein countries like France still using *appellations d'origine controle* (AOCs) to certify its wines, cheeses and other agricultural products, Protected Designation of Origin in European Union, or US granting the GI protection as a subset under the trademark legislation leading to confusion and disputes.

The WTO Secretariat has suggested the use of term "Indications of Geographical Origin" (IGOs) to refer to all the aforementioned characteristics which signify the geographical origin of a product in a bid to remove ambiguity⁶²⁰. However, the debates and controversies have remained due to lack of consensus regarding the nature and functioning of these IGOs.

III. GI FRAMEWORK IN INDIA

The Geographical Indication of Goods (Regulation and Protection) Act of 1999 which came into effect in 2003 governs the GI framework at the domestic level in India. The definition for GI in the Act has been harmonised with that given in the TRIPS Agreement⁶²¹ and is applicable to agricultural, natural and manufactured goods produced within the territory of India. The definition in the Indian Act is restrictive as compared to TRIPS Agreement which only refers to goods generally. Further, the manufactured goods for which GI is applied by the producer, must have at least one activity i.e., production, processing or preparation of the goods within the such territory or region. Any association or organisation or authority under the law representing the interest of the producers of the goods can apply for registration of GI⁶²². Once the same has been granted the GI tag, it would not only provide the authorised

⁶¹⁷ The Madrid Agreement for the Repression of False or Deceptive Indications of Source on Goods, April 14, 1891, 163 U.N.T.S. 828

⁶¹⁸ Lisbon Agreement for the Protection of Appellations of Origin and Their International Registration, October 31, 1958, <https://www.wipo.int/treaties/en/registration/lisbon/>

⁶¹⁹ Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights, Art.22.1, April 15, 1994, https://www.wto.org/english/docs_e/legal_e/27-trips.pdf

⁶²⁰ Dev Gangjee, *Relocating the Law of Geographical Indication* (1st ed. 2012).

⁶²¹ The Geographical Indications Of Goods (Registration And Protection) Act, 1999, § 2(1)(e) No.48, Acts of Parliament, 1999 (India)

⁶²² *Ibid.* §.11

users the exclusive right to use the tag and obtain relief in case of infringement⁶²³, it would also prevent the same from being used as a trademark⁶²⁴.

One of the earliest endeavours to provide GI protection in India can be traced back to Darjeeling Tea in 2004. There has been a push in the recent years to provide better protection to agricultural products leading to recognition and granting GI tags to products like Basmati rice, Alphonso Mango, Manipuri Black Rice, Malabar Coffee amongst others. In addition to these agricultural products, protection has also been granted to some of the prepared food items recognized for their taste and aroma around the world like Bikaneri Bhujia, Hyderabad Haleem and Rasgulla⁶²⁵.

IV. DISPUTES OVER GI IN FOODSTUFFS

With this background of economic and cultural importance of GI tags in culinary world, this paper shall now discuss the various disputes that have arisen with respect to the same from around the globe.

A. Controversy over Hatcho Miso in Japan

Hatcho Miso is a traditional red fermented bean paste that has been grown in Japan since early 17th Century in Okazaki city of the Aichi Prefecture. Since the introduction of the *sui generis* legislation for GI, a claim for registration over “Hatcho Miso” was made by two parties, namely Hatcho Miso Coop and Aichi Miso Coop. The controversy arises due to the fact that both the parties refused to agree on the common ground as to how to define the product and claimed that the standards proposed by the other producer were not strict enough to be respectful to product’s rich and varied history and cultural significance. Both producers followed different production processes

which has led to significant variances in the final products as well⁶²⁶.

These opposing claims led to the Hatcho Miso Coop filing a complaint with the Ministry of Agriculture followed by a lawsuit in the court for cancellation of the tag granted to Aichi Miso Coop. In March of 2024, the Supreme Court of Japan dismissed the suit for cancellation of the GI tag in “Hatch Miso”, after which the organisation has applied with the Ministry of Agriculture for registration as GI *Hatcho Miso brewers’* organization⁶²⁷.

The potential of the GI policy to integrate and protect the indigenous products is hampered by such “competition”, thereby making the authenticity of the product depend on norms which are uncertain and ambiguous. GI has the ability to distinguish products from the similar items available in the market with help of few distinctions, but this requires judicious social construct and narrative around the product.

B. Controversy around the name: Feta Cheese in EU

The system Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) as followed in EU is one of the strictest forms of IGO wherein name of the product must be closely related to the place where the same is being produced. The EU framework also provides for Protected Geographical Indication which is a gradation lower than PDO wherein the characteristics or the quality of the product must be linked with the region and at least one production process being taken place in the said region or locality.

A Protected Designation of Origin was granted by the EU to the ‘Feta Cheese’ as produced in Greece. The controversy arose because countries like Denmark, Germany and France were also producing their own

⁶²³ *Supra* note 8, §.21

⁶²⁴ *Ibid.* §25

⁶²⁵ Rewa Kumari & Jagbir Rehal, *Geographical Indications: A Tool for Indian Traditional Food Industry*, 6 *Journal of Progressive Agriculture* 105–108 (2015).

⁶²⁶ Kae Sekine, *The First Controversy Over GI Registration in Japan: A Case of Hatcho Miso*, in *Worldwide Perspectives on Geographical Indications* 287–298 (1 ed. 2025).

⁶²⁷ *Ibid.*

version of feta cheese prior to the grant of PDO and had to change the nomenclature of the same to “white cheese” or similar names after registration by Greece. This grant of PDO was disputed by Denmark, UK, Germany and France who contended that Feta was a generic term which initially used to refer to the place where it was originally marketed and produced but since then has become a common name for a type of white cheese in brine irrespective of the place of origin⁶²⁸. The ECJ however, ruled that the term ‘feta’ was not generic and confirmed the registration of PDO to the cheese made in Greece while the other member states in EU trading in feta cheese has a grace period of three years to re-label and rename their products⁶²⁹. Despite this, the legal disputes have subsisted even as recently as 2022.

The latest dispute before the Court of Justice of the European Union was whether the EU’s GI rules with respect to foodstuff for complying with the product specifications are also applicable to products meant for export and not trading in domestic markets⁶³⁰. The Court while interpreting the Article 13 of the EU regulation no. 1151/2012, observed that the provision does not exclude the rules from being applied on exports. The Court reiterated that the term ‘Feta’ cheese shall only be applied to brined cheese made from sheep’s milk in Greece only. The judgement has ensured that a product bearing the EU GI tag must comply with the specifications laid down irrespective of where they are being sold.

C. **Pisco dispute is South America**

Pisco originated in Southern American territories under Spanish colonial rule during the prohibition enforced by the government.

The public repurposed the variety of grapes available in the domestic environment and turned them into spirits for consumption amongst the general public. Pisco has been produced by the present-day Chile and Peru for decades after the liberation as well and has immense cultural, economic and historical value for both the countries. Although both countries have shared heritage, the countries have been battling for the ownership and reputation of Pisco emphasised by the various differences between the countries⁶³¹. The dispute has historical roots in War of the Pacific of 1879 and 1884 wherein Chile emerged victorious and acquired new territories and resources at the expense of Peru and Bolivia.

During the 20th Century, both countries began developing their separate system for production of Pisco and laid own the regulations for production to standardize the products throughout the territory leading to escalation of tensions. Both countries refused to acknowledge product from the other country and claiming authenticity in their respective products only. Efforts were made in late 1990s and early 2000s to expand the trade of Pisco in foreign countries and increased exports facilitated through free trade agreements. These bilateral agreements were an attempt to gain global recognition for their products, especially as negotiated by Chile. These agreements, for example as that between Chile and USA did not prohibit other countries from using the term ‘Pisco’ as long as they mention the country of origin in the name itself and regarded “Pisco Chileno” as a distinct product. Chile entered into similar agreement with other countries as well which recognized the Chilean product without prejudice to GI to the product of other countries including Peru⁶³².

⁶²⁸ Defining a name’s origin: The case of feta, ip, <https://www.wipo.int/web/ip-advantage/w/stories/defining-a-name-s-origin-the-case-of-feta> (last visited Apr 28, 2025).

⁶²⁹ Federal Republic of Germany and Kingdom of Denmark v. Commission of the European Communities, CJEU, Case no. C-465/02

⁶³⁰ Commission V Denmark (PDO Feta), CJEU, Case C-159/20

⁶³¹ Bernardo Alarcón Porflidtt, *The “Pisco War”, in Transboundary Heritage and Intellectual Property Law* 151 (1 ed. 2022).

⁶³² *Id.*

Despite these efforts to harmonize the trade and growth of Pisco originating from Chile and Peru, the dispute has still subsisted due to Peru's actions aimed at monopolization. Peru while ratifying the Lisbon Agreement, strategically acceded with respect to "Peruvian Pisco" and notified the member countries over its exclusive claim over the same. However, nine of the countries which had entered into the Trade Agreement with Chile had refused to recognize Peru's exclusive denomination⁶³³.

In EU and USA "Pisco" is treated as homonymous GI, which are "pronounced or spelled similarly but they identify the products that originates in different places and usually in different countries."⁶³⁴ Herein the existence of one GI tag would not hinder the protection of product originating in the other country, and thus, in the present case can be used by both Chile and Peru by giving additional information to distinguish the two.

In India, the Embassy of Peru filed an application for grant of GI in Peruvian Pisco with the Geographical Indications Registry in 2005 which was accepted in 2006 after examination. However, the representatives from Chile opposed the application on the ground that the same did not adequately represented the interests of the producers. In 2009, the GI registry amended the tag to "Peruvian Pisco" without the consent of Embassy of Peru. The same was challenged by the Embassy before the Intellectual Property Appellate Board. The Board accepted Peru's claim due to presence of a city called Pisco in the south-western region of Peru. Chile filed another application for registration of GI tag in "Chilean Pisco" and claimed that the product is an essential part

of the Chilean ancestral heritage and has been an important part of the culinary culture of the country⁶³⁵.

The dispute between Peru and Chile over ownership of Pisco tag is not merely an economic or IPR issue but is a matter of promotion of cultural identity and preserving national pride.

D. Battle between Bengal and Odisha

India is a diversity rich country with different regions having their own cultures, traditions and environmental resources. Geographical Indication not only serve as a tool of economic tool of trade and business, but is also crucial for safeguarding the traditional methods and practices of the producers.

There have been various inter-state disputes in India claiming the ownership over the GI tag of traditional products, the most significant of which is dispute between Odisha and West Bengal in the Indian desert Rasgulla. Rasgulla is a popular desert made from curdled milk enjoyed in different parts of the country. The dispute arises due to the conflicting views with respect to the origin of the sweet. The claim of West Bengal was that the delicacy had originated in Bengal in nineteenth Century and had applied for GI registration in 2017, but the same was challenged by Odisha which filed a separate application for GI in Rasgullas too. Odisha's contention was that the desert originated as a sacred offering to Lord Jaganath in Jaganath Temple located in Puri⁶³⁶. Subsequently, in 2019 the GI registry granted the GI tag to the Odisha Small Industries Corporation Limited (OSIC) and Utkala Mistanna Byabasayee Samiti for "Odisha Rasgulla" as well.

The term Rasgulla or Rasgolla has not been registered and is a generic term which can be used by the businesses anywhere. What

⁶³³ Jerry T. Mitchell & William C. Terry, *Contesting pisco: Chile, Peru, and the politics of trade*, 101 *Geographical Review* 518–535 (2011).

⁶³⁴ Geographical indications – an introduction, <https://tind.wipo.int/record/44179/files/wipo-pub-952-2021-en-geographical-indications-an-introduction-2nd-%20edition.pdf> (last visited Apr 28, 2025).

⁶³⁵ Jupi Gogoi, *Transnational Geographical Indications in India: Issues and concerns of 'pisco'*, 29 *Journal of Intellectual Property Rights* 534–539 (2024).

⁶³⁶ *Id.*

has been registered is the prefixes along with the word i.e., "Banglar Rasgulla" in case of West Bengal and "Odisha Rasgulla" in case of Odisha. The implication is that the generic terms cannot be registered as it would grant monopoly to the authorised users which would be injustice to other businesses and would have adverse effects on trade in long term⁶³⁷.

E. Other disputes

Other disputes in food and culinary heritage have been centred around 'Champagne' which has been granted protection in EU. It is a variety of sparkling wine produced in the Champagne region of France. Despite this, the producers from countries like Australia and USA continued using the term 'Champagne' which has led to series of disputes. France has contended this is a clear case of infringement and dilution of the reputation of their product and the producers from other countries must come up with a different term to market their products⁶³⁸.

Further, in India as well Tamil Nadu and Kerala have had contentious relations over the ownership of a unique variety of rice Navara Rice having unique medicinal properties. A GI tag for the same was granted to Navara Rice Farmers' Society in 2007 and only farmers associated with the Society were to sell their rice under the Navara tag. The questions have been raised by the producers based in Tamil Nadu and other producers from Kerala over the insufficient evidence regarding origins of the Navara and has pointed out the need for clearer guidelines⁶³⁹.

V. Conclusion

The issues discussed above show the emphasis on authenticity and uniqueness put by the producers seeking registration of GI over their products. However, the claims made in geographical indication in food and culinary realm do not merely involve economic competition but are also a matter of cultural and national identity. This is because food is so deeply intertwined with the daily social life of the populace of a country. While granting and balancing the GI rights of producers from different regions, consideration has to be given to the historical context, cultural importance as well as the legal requirements of the features or characteristics of the product being attributed to the geographical region.

Secondly, the legal framework with respect to Geographical Indications is ambiguous and lacks clarity and harmonization especially at the international level. The law has to be refined to set out clearer guidelines and precedents so that the law benefits not only the producers and consumers but also promotes and preserves the cultural heritage of the country from exploitation from foreign actors. This is even more essential for developing countries like India so that they can come on at par with the other developed economies.

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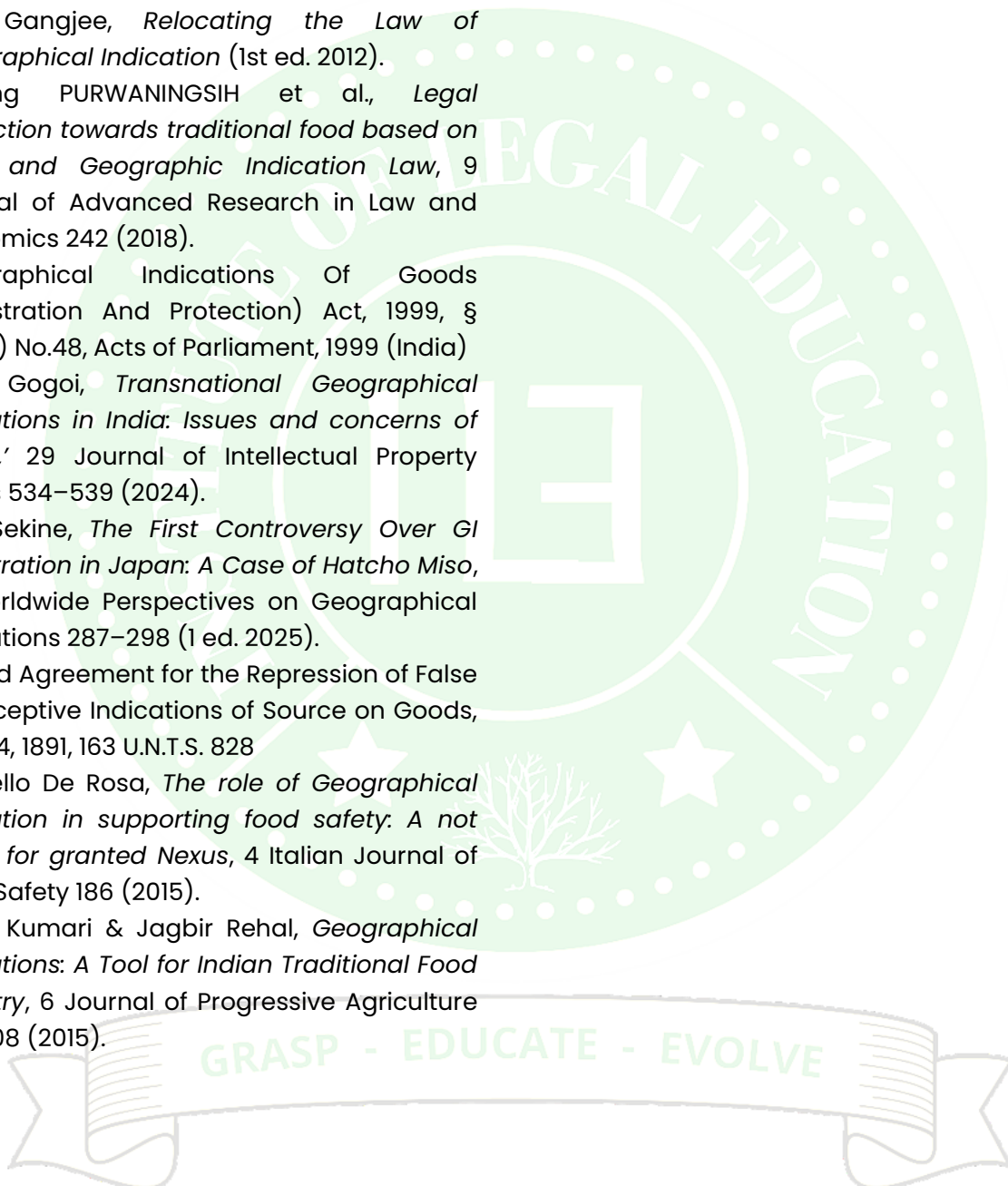
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⁶³⁷ *Id.*

⁶³⁸ David S. Burick, "Is It Only Champagne if It Comes from Champagne? an Analysis of Transnational Geographical Indication Law in the Context of Sparkling Wine" 26 *Intellectual Property and Technology Law Journal* 1-24 (2021).

⁶³⁹ Delphine Marie-Vivien, *The Protection of Traditional Local Foods Through Geographical Indications in India*, in *Eating Traditional Food* 67-83 (1 ed. 2016).

- Defining a name's origin: The case of feta, ip, <https://www.wipo.int/web/ip-advantage/w/stories/defining-a-name-s-origin-the-case-of-feta>
- Delphine Marie-Vivien, *The Protection of Traditional Local Foods Through Geographical Indications in India*, in *Eating Traditional Food* 67–83 (1 ed. 2016).
- Dev Gangjee, *Relocating the Law of Geographical Indication* (1st ed. 2012).
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- Geographical Indications Of Goods (Registration And Protection) Act, 1999, § 2(1)(e) No.48, Acts of Parliament, 1999 (India)
- Jupi Gogoi, *Transnational Geographical Indications in India: Issues and concerns of 'pisco'*, 29 *Journal of Intellectual Property Rights* 534–539 (2024).
- Kae Sekine, *The First Controversy Over GI Registration in Japan: A Case of Hatcho Miso*, in *Worldwide Perspectives on Geographical Indications* 287–298 (1 ed. 2025).
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DOWRY IN INDIA: LEGAL EVOLUTION, SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS, AND HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS

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Abstract

The dowry system in India, while stemming from ancient customs, has developed into a social issue that fuels gender-based violence, domestic violence, and even dowry-related deaths. This research paper investigates the historical roots of dowry, its evolution over time, and the socio-economic factors that perpetuate the practice. It critically evaluates the success of legal interventions, chiefly the Dowry Prohibition Act of 1961, along with later legal reforms. The study emphasizes the difficulties in implementation, gaps in enforcement, and judicial understanding. Employing a doctrinal methodology, the paper reviews literature from legal regulations, case law, and social science research to evaluate the effectiveness of legal measures in reducing dowry practices. It concludes by proposing recommendations for a comprehensive strategy that integrates legal, social, and educational reforms.

Keywords: Domestic Violence, Gender Inequality, Indian Legal System, Socio-Economic Impact, Patriarchy Dowry, Dowry Prohibition Act.

1. Introduction

The custom of dowry, initially a type of pre-death inheritance, has gradually transformed into a compulsory financial expectation imposed on the bride's family. In contemporary India, this tradition has resulted in troubling outcomes, such as abuse, intimidation, and deaths associated with dowry. Although this practice has been banned for more than sixty years, dowry continues to be deeply rooted in Indian culture. The ongoing existence of dowry raises significant legal, societal, and moral issues. This paper intends to examine the historical origins of dowry, the socio-economic factors that uphold it, and the legal strategies used to tackle it. It strives to assess whether existing laws have been effective and what additional reforms might be necessary.

2. Review of Literature

The phenomenon of dowry has garnered interest from scholars in various fields, including

history, sociology, law, and gender studies. A thorough review of literature highlights the transformation of dowry practices, their socio-economic impacts, and the efficacy of legal frameworks in tackling the issue. Historically, dowry was not regarded as a social evil but instead as a traditional present from the bride's family, often termed *stridhan*—a type of pre-mortem inheritance granted to the woman to secure her financial stability within her marital home. Groundbreaking historians like A. S. Altekar (1956) contend that during the Vedic and early post-Vedic eras, dowry was a voluntary gift rather than a requirement. Altekar stresses that women held rights to this property and could utilize it during times of hardship or widowhood. However, this idealized scenario starkly contrasts with the customs that developed in medieval and colonial times. Researchers such as Arvind Sharma (1984) have noted that as caste systems became more rigid, Brahmanical patriarchy grew, and women's property rights diminished, dowry

evolved from voluntary contribution to a forced obligation, with economic dependency on women deepening their vulnerability in marriage.

From an economic and social perspective, dowry has transformed into a major factor influencing marriage discussions, especially among middle- and upper-caste groups in India. The literature consistently illustrates how dowry has developed into a medium for social advancement and economic exchange. M. N. Srinivas and other sociologists proposed the idea of Sanskritization, indicating that lower castes emulate the practices of higher castes to achieve upward social mobility—dowry being a significant illustration. This notion clarifies the widespread presence of dowry even within communities where it was once customary. Madhav Rao's (1993) examination of dowry customs in Andhra Pradesh and Bihar shows how educational achievements, government employment, and urban jobs considerably elevate dowry expectations. The perceived status of the groom frequently dictates the financial and material demands from the bride's family, connecting dowry with consumeristic aspirations. National Family Health Survey (NFHS) reports (2005–16) and information from the International Center for Research on Women indicate that economic growth does not inherently relate to a reduction in dowry but, ironically, aids in its establishment as a marker of status and prestige.

Many studies have explored the relationship between dowry and gender-based violence. Harassment and fatalities related to dowry are significant consequences of this practice. Sociologist Leela Dube states that dowry violence stems from a patriarchal perspective that regards women as economic burdens, with their value determined by the dowry they provide. These viewpoints are supported by feminist scholars like Nivedita Menon, who argue that dowry exemplifies deeply rooted gender inequality and the commodification of women in marital exchanges. The research of Flavia Agnes, a notable feminist legal scholar,

critiques the government's approach to dowry-related violence. Agnes asserts that although laws such as Section 498A IPC and Section 304B IPC were enacted to address dowry violence, their effectiveness has been diminished due to patriarchal biases within legal systems and a lack of systemic reforms.

On the legal side, a significant amount of literature explores the development and limitations of legal provisions designed to combat dowry. The Dowry Prohibition Act of 1961 has been thoroughly analyzed and criticized for its ambiguous definitions, inadequate enforcement measures, and low rates of conviction. Legal scholars such as Upendra Baxi (1985) contend that, while the Act made giving and receiving dowry illegal, it did not offer clear procedural protections or guarantee the safety of victims. The legal terminology was too specific to accommodate contemporary forms of dowry, including demands made after marriage or indirect financial pressures. Additionally, courts have had differing interpretations, resulting in inconsistent rulings and ambiguity regarding the law's scope. The introduction of Sections 304B and 498A in the Indian Penal Code in the 1980s aimed to enhance the legal framework by directly dealing with dowry-related deaths and cruelty stemming from dowry demands. Nonetheless, as scholars like Ratna Kapur note, the legal system has frequently been impeded by delays, inadequate victim protection, and a judicial inclination towards conciliation over prosecution.

Judicial rulings have also garnered significant critical scholarly focus. Cases such as *State of Rajasthan v. Jaggu Ram and Vemuri Venkateswara Rao v. State of Andhra Pradesh* demonstrate how courts have interpreted circumstantial evidence in dowry death cases. In certain cases, the courts have taken a progressive approach, acknowledging the subtle and ongoing nature of cruelty related to dowry. However, in other instances, the burden of proof has remained

excessively high, resulting in acquittals. Scholars like Vasudha Dhagamwar highlight that the burden of proof under Section 304B often unjustly shifts to the family of the victim, complicating convictions when direct evidence is lacking. Furthermore, empirical studies conducted by the Law Commission of India and the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) indicate a high number of acquittals, pointing to systemic problems in investigation, prosecution, and trial procedures.

Feminist legal critiques have stressed that, while the current legal framework acknowledges dowry-related violence as a crime, it does not tackle the structural and cultural elements that facilitate such violence. For instance, feminist theorist Uma Chakravarti points out the complicity of families and communities in sustaining dowry as a symbol of status and control. She claims that legal reforms should be complemented by social changes to dismantle the patriarchal value systems that support dowry practices. Initiatives by civil society organizations, such as the All India Democratic Women's Association (AIDWA) and the Lawyers Collective, have also played a crucial role in the discourse by documenting case studies and offering legal assistance to victims.

In conclusion, the literature review reveals that dowry in India is a complex and multi-layered issue that intersects with historical customs, socio-economic ambitions, and ingrained gender roles. Although legislative measures have progressed over time, their effectiveness remains limited without parallel changes in societal attitudes and institutional operations. The literature emphasizes the need for a comprehensive approach—legal, social, economic, and cultural—to effectively confront and eliminate dowry practices in India.

3. Methodology

The current research employs a doctrinal or qualitative legal research methodology, concentrating mainly on the examination of statutes, judicial rulings, and academic commentaries to grasp the legal framework

and socio-legal consequences of dowry prohibition in India. This method includes an in-depth review of primary legal materials such as the Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961, pertinent sections of the Indian Penal Code including Sections 498A and 304B, and evidentiary regulations under the Indian Evidence Act, especially Section 113B. Significant rulings made by the Supreme Court and High Courts are analyzed to evaluate the judicial reactions to dowry-related violence and the interpretation of legislative provisions. Secondary materials like reports from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), suggestions from the Law Commission of India, government documents, and peer-reviewed academic publications are utilized to offer contextual analysis and socio-economic perspectives. This approach facilitates a thorough understanding of the discrepancies between legal systems and real-world conditions, aiding in the identification of both the advantages and limitations of current laws.

4. Limitations of the Study

While this research aims to deliver a critical assessment of dowry prohibition laws in India, it is limited by various constraints. Firstly, the study relies exclusively on secondary data and legal documents; no fieldwork, interviews, or surveys were carried out, which restricts the firsthand insights of victims, law enforcement personnel, or legal experts. Secondly, regional and cultural differences in the practice and perception of dowry across various states in India are not thoroughly addressed because of limitations in space and scope. Moreover, the dependence on reported cases and official statistics may not fully capture the actual extent of dowry-related violence, as numerous incidents go unreported due to stigma and fear of social repercussions. Although these limitations are recognized, they do not diminish the analytical significance of the study but rather highlight the necessity for future empirical research.

5. Historical Roots of the Dowry System

The dowry system in India traces back to ancient societal traditions where dowry was viewed as a form of stridhan—voluntary gifts given to the bride by her family. In the early Vedic era, dowry acted as a method to ensure financial independence and safety for women within a patriarchal family framework. However, in the medieval period, particularly with the emergence of feudal systems and caste strictures, dowry transformed into a compulsory demand linked to marriage discussions. This change was further solidified during British colonial dominance when legal frameworks favored male inheritance, systematically removing property rights from women. Consequently, the dowry system shifted from being a protective custom into a detrimental practice utilized to extract wealth from the bride's family, frequently masked as a means to uphold social status.

6. Socio-Economic Impact of Dowry

The dowry system carries significant socio-economic effects, particularly for women and lower-income households. It perpetuates gender inequality by treating women as commodities and associating their value in marriage with financial exchanges. Families frequently experience intense financial strain to fulfill dowry expectations, which can result in debt, anxiety, and at times, the abandonment of female children. For women, dowry often leads to domestic violence, psychological mistreatment, and in extreme situations, dowry-related fatalities. Ironically, economic progress in certain areas has resulted in rising dowry amounts, with advanced education and government employment regarded as benefits that justify increased demands. Therefore, the dowry system persists in sustaining cycles of poverty, gender bias, and societal discord.

7. Legislative Responses

The Indian government initially tried to mitigate dowry by implementing the Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961, which made giving and receiving

dowry a criminal offense. Nevertheless, due to its narrow applicability and poor enforcement, further legal reforms were enacted. Section 498A of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) makes cruelty by the husband or his family members a crime, while Section 304B specifically addresses dowry deaths, mandating severe penalties if a woman dies under questionable circumstances within seven years of marriage. Furthermore, Section 113B of the Indian Evidence Act establishes a presumption of guilt in these situations. Although these legislations demonstrate the seriousness with which the government treats dowry-related offenses, their execution is still inconsistent, with low conviction rates and procedural delays diminishing their effectiveness.

8. Challenges in Enforcement

Despite the existence of strict laws, enforcement continues to be a significant obstacle in fighting the dowry system. Numerous cases remain unreported because of fears of societal retaliation, family pressure, and the stigma linked to unsuccessful marriages. Law enforcement often shows reluctance to file cases or carry out thorough investigations, citing the personal nature of marital issues. Additionally, lengthy trials and insufficient witness protection discourage victims and their families from seeking justice. Another critical issue is the occasional abuse of legal provisions, especially Section 498A, which has resulted in doubt and diminished the importance of legitimate complaints. These obstacles underscore the immediate necessity for systemic reforms, enhanced victim support mechanisms, and gender-sensitive training for law enforcement and judicial officials.

9. Judicial Trends and Case Laws

Judicial interpretation has significantly influenced the enforcement and comprehension of dowry-related laws in India. Courts have addressed numerous cases under **Sections 304B and 498A of the Indian Penal Code**, frequently weighing the rights of victims

against the necessity to prevent the abuse of the law.

In **State of Punjab v. Iqbal Singh (1991)**, the Supreme Court underlined that any unnatural death of a woman within seven years of marriage necessitates a presumption of dowry death if harassment is demonstrated.

In **Satbir Singh v. State of Haryana (2021)**, the Court reaffirmed that ongoing cruelty and harassment for dowry prior to a woman's death constitute sufficient grounds for conviction under Section 304B.

Simultaneously, courts have voiced concerns regarding false cases, as observed in **Arnesh Kumar v. State of Bihar (2014)**, where the Supreme Court instructed police to refrain from automatic arrests under Section 498A, highlighting the importance of a preliminary inquiry.

These cases illustrate the evolving judicial attempts to strike a balance between safeguarding women and ensuring fairness in the criminal process.

10. Conclusion

In summary, the dowry system in India is profoundly rooted in social and cultural practices, rendering legal measures alone inadequate. Although legislation such as the Dowry Prohibition Act and IPC provisions signifies important advancement, their success relies on rigorous enforcement, public awareness, and societal transformation. Only a comprehensive approach that includes legal, educational, and cultural efforts can genuinely eradicate the dowry system and achieve gender justice.

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A STUDY ON LEGAL RIGHTS AND CHALLENGES OF SURROGATES IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

It is an empirical study on legal rights and challenges of surrogates in India. The word “surrogate” is derived from the Latin word surrogates means a “substitute”. Right to reproduce their child is an unalienable right of every existence. Parenting is a life altering and most permanently satisfying experience. The absence of a child is considered as a stigma to the family. There are numerous cases where the incapability to have a child led to wedded breakdown. The incapability to have a child which is known as infertility in medical terms is a global problem. According to the WHO Report the prevalence of infertility across the globe including India is around 10- 15 percent. This research aims to study on the challenges of surrogates, whether it has been considered only as commercial business, to find out the reasons for the practice of surrogation, to explore the social stigma on surrogacy which is considered as prostitution. The results show that surrogacy is a part of commercial business in India. Poverty being a factor to become a surrogate mother this may be due to that when there is a monetary need for women and has financial burden they tend to work as surrogate mother and women feel it is her right to body to do whatever she feels to do and also there are women who want to make other family happy by giving birth to child not only for monetary purpose also agreed that they should be law to protect surrogacy this might be due to that this practice also involves human trafficking and breach of trust so to avoid all this there should be proper law to protect surrogacy. Basically women are emotionally attached to their child when they are in the womb itself so after birth one has to give the child which she carried for months is the difficult part.

KEYWORDS – Surrogation, women, infertility, rights, challenges

INTRODUCTION:

It is an empirical study on legal rights and challenges of surrogates in India. The word “surrogate” is derived from the Latin word surrogates means a “substitute”. In Black’s Law Dictionary, Surrogacy is an agreement where a woman agrees to be artificially inseminated to carry with the semen of another woman’s husband. Right to reproduce their child is an unalienable right of every existence. Parenting is a life altering and most permanently satisfying experience. The absence of a child is considered as a stigma to the family. There are numerous cases where the incapability to have

a child led to wedded breakdown. The incapability to have a child which is known as infertility in medical terms is a global problem. According to the WHO Report the prevalence of infertility across the globe including India is around 10- 15 percent.

According to the Hindu tradition it also offers cases of surrogacy that shows the secretiveness due to which practise of surrogacy still encircles us. In Bhagavata Purana, Vishnu ji heard Vasudev’s prayers praying to Kansa not to kill all sons being born. Vishnu heard these prayers and had an embryo from Devika’s womb transferred to the womb of

Rohini, the other wife of the vasudev. Rohini then gives birth to the baby Balaram, brother of Krishna and intimately raises the child while Vasudev and Devki tell Kansa that the child was born dead. The History of surrogacy also belonged to the Mahabharata, as in Mahabharata Gandhari delivered a semi solid material on the place of delivering a child, Maharishi Vyas further divided that semi solid material into 100 pieces and planted them in different pans. therefore the 100 Kauravas were born. India's First IVF baby and world alternate baby Kanupriya was born 67 days later on 3rd of October 1978. The baby Kanupriya is the result of the sweats made by Dr. Subhas Mukherjee and his two mates in Kolkata. The Birth of this first IVF Indian baby was a part of tremendous debate.

There are two main types of surrogacy in India: 1) commercial surrogation and 2) altruistic surrogation. Commercial Surrogacy means for business purpose In this type of surrogacy the surrogate mom remunerated and over all the needed medical charges during the course of the surrogacy. Altruistic Surrogacy as humanitarian service In this particular type of surrogacy the surrogate mom doesn't take any type of monetary remuneration for her pregnancy except the essential needs for her medical charges. The legal rights of surrogates are under article 19(1) (d) they have the right to do the desired occupation and this will be violated if the commercial business is banned in India and Article 21 right to earn a livelihood under Indian constitution 1950. There are also other international rights which are recognized, they are article 27 of UDHR and article 15 of ICESCR.

In gujarat there is an anand baby farm for the practice of surrogation which is popular in that state. Countries like France, Germany, Bulgaria and Spain prohibit all forms of surrogation. The commerce of a child is a thing that can be hard to imagine as the child is a symbol of the love not of the plutocrat and having a child is a perception down from the conception of marketing conditioning. But

surrogacy has become a part of the marketable business in a country like India. This commercialisation of surrogacy has now become a political debate for the Indian society. The request of surrogacy is now getting veritably large and growing veritably fleetly. There are "N" figures of implicit parents in a country like India desire to hire other women to bear their child. The conception of surrogacy has revolved around an ordinary biotic function of the body of a woman into a marketable contract and hence the surrogate services are now indeed publicized. Surrogates are being enlisted and the operating agencies make huge gains from them. The commercialization of surrogacy is nothing but the giving rise to the new problem of dealing with children and setting up breeding granges which may turn women into baby producers.

In the time 2002 marketable surrogacy was legalized by the India seeing this immense growth of surrogacy in India leads to the growth of the numerous marketable surrogacy establishment who claims to have the speciality in the surrogacy law and aiding the nonnatives who came India in hunt of mom womb as a rent. Similar rallying is considered to be veritably combustive in nature as it leads the commercialisation of the baby selling and also harms the quality and the character of the vouchsafed miracle of the women's reproductive capabilities. The 228th report of the Law Commission of India has recommended to enjoin the process of marketable surrogacy and legislated the suitable legislation which allows performing humanitarian surgery which is ethical. There were certain guidelines issued by the Indian council of medical exploration for regulating surrogacy arrangements: The surrogate mom would be entitled for the financial compensation, the value of which would be decided by the couple and the surrogate mom and The surrogate mom can not contribute her own egg for the surrogacy and that she must relinquish all maternal rights related to the surrogate child. **AIM:** To study on the legal rights

of surrogates and the major reason for women to practice surrogation.

OBJECTIVES:

- To study on the challenges faced by the surrogates in india
- To explore the legal rights to practise surrogacy
- To study whether surrogacy has become a commercial business in india
- To explore on the social stigma towards the practice of surrogacy

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Carmeli (2010), There was a quantitative study done by Daphna Birenbaum and Carmeli to assess and compare the prevalence of Gravid surrogacy in the USA and Israel. The results of the study highlight that different countries have their own rules and methods for the process of surrogacy in their nation.

Tiwari (2019), The author had done an overview on Commercial Surrogacy in India. Though Commercial Surrogacy has been supported on the grounds that it helps both the childless couple and the surrogate, it has also been blamed on the grounds that it exploits the surrogates.

Phillips et al. (2019), A methodical review conducted by Amy M Phillips et al(2019) to examine the frequency and conditions of surrogate gestation and motherly and perinatal issues. The review revealed that surrogacy allows for parenting when it is insolvable or exceedingly delicate.

Patel et al. (2018), stated in his composition that surrogacy is an important system of supported reproductive technology wherein a woman carries gestation for another couple and a sapience into different aspects of surrogacy practices was anatomized by. Number of couples around the world require surrogacy services for colourful reasons. Although this arrangement seems to be salutary for all parties concerned, there are complex social,

ethical, moral, and legal issues associated with it.

Nicole F Bromfield (2014), The purpose of the paper is to present global surrogacy dynamics written in a manner to help the reader understand this complex phenomenon, including a discussion of the associated problems and ethical dilemmas. **Neha (2015)**, One of the fastest-growing categories of cross-border reproductive care is international surrogacy, the act of infertile clients traveling internationally to engage the paid services of foreign surrogates to carry their babies to term.

Caroline Vincent (2013), 'The procedure that became legal in India in 2002 is different from other countries which have adopted the same practice in one very critical way-India does not strive to provide a rare solution for infertile couples, but instead seeks to maintain hegemony in an increasingly viable industry. This booming market comes at a dangerous time because India has no laws in place to protect the rights of the surrogate.

Alene D (2021), The present paper addresses the legal and socio ethical context in which India introduced the Surrogacy Bill 2019. It argues that, even though the proposed legislation addresses and responds to some of the legal and ethical concerns such as informed consent and legal parentage, it stops short of ensuring the welfare and well-being of the surrogate. Second, the legal certainty of parentage and the child's rights comes at the cost of the physical and psychological well-being of the surrogate.

Nilofar Rahematkhan Sodagar (2018), as well as the contract between the intending parents and the surrogate mother-to-be. The present paper addresses the legal and socio ethical context in which India introduced the Surrogacy Bill 2019. It examines the extent to which the proposed law responds to the legal challenges and socio ethical concerns that surfaced in the course of unregulated transnational commercial-surrogacy arrangements in India. It argues that, even though the proposed

legislation addresses and responds to some of the legal and ethical concerns such as informed consent and legal parentage, it stops short of ensuring the welfare and well-being of the surrogate.

Karen Smith Rotabi (2012), The author in the paper deals about the procedures of adoption and surrogacy in different countries and between two or more countries. He concludes that Inter-country adoption has declined significantly since 2004.

Amanda Van Beinum (2012), Reproductive medical tourism is by some accounts a multibillion dollar industry globally. The seeking by clients in high income nations of surrogate mothers in low income nations, particularly India, presents a set of largely unexamined ethical challenges. In this paper, eight such challenges are elucidated to spur discussion and eventual policy development towards protecting the rights and health of vulnerable women of the Global South.

Hypatia (2011), The author in this particular paper suggests there is a possibility that we might reduce these shortcomings by framing normative and ethnographic engagement with global surrogacy as questions of reproductive justice.

Dina Sidhva (2010), This article overviews current evidence on surrogacy in India, and discusses the extent to which proposed legislation, the Assisted Reproductive Technologies Bill and Rules 2009, satisfactorily addresses social workers' concerns to ensure adequate protection of the interests of young Indian women engaged in surrogacy, as outlined in the International Federation of Social Workers' policy on cross-border reproductive care.

Erin Nelson (2013), There is a particularly acute need for certainty in the context of global trade in surrogacy services, both because of the number of parties who may be involved in creating familial relationships and because of

the vulnerabilities created as a result of surrogacy arrangements.

Karin Hammarberg (2014), This article discusses legislation, policy and practice as they relate to Australians' use of surrogacy in India and also how surrogacy works in a different manner in Australia and India.

Twine Routledge (2012), It reviews current surrogacy-related legislation and regulation in Australia and India and existing evidence about the challenges posed by transnational surrogacy, and considers how restrictive Australian legislation may contribute to the number of Australians undertaking surrogacy in India.

Vida Panitch (2013), The author concludes not in favour of a global ban but with suggestions on how developing nations that permit commercial surrogacy might better protect the negative reproductive rights of their female citizens, thereby making them less vulnerable to exploitation.

S Gola (2021), The paper talks about the legal certainty of parentage and child's rights and also it comes at the cost of physical and psychological well-being of the surrogate. The Bill also overlooks the sociocultural realities in the patriarchal hierarchies.

Raywat Deonandan (2015), Reproductive tourism is a phenomenon in which people cross international borders to access reproductive technologies. It has become a multibillion dollar global industry presenting unique legal, ethical, risk management challenges.

Deomampo (2015), Over the past decade, India has attracted would-be parents from around the globe which has helped many to build families through gestational surrogacy. Transnational surrogacy faces challenges of conventional understandings of kinship, family.

METHODOLOGY:

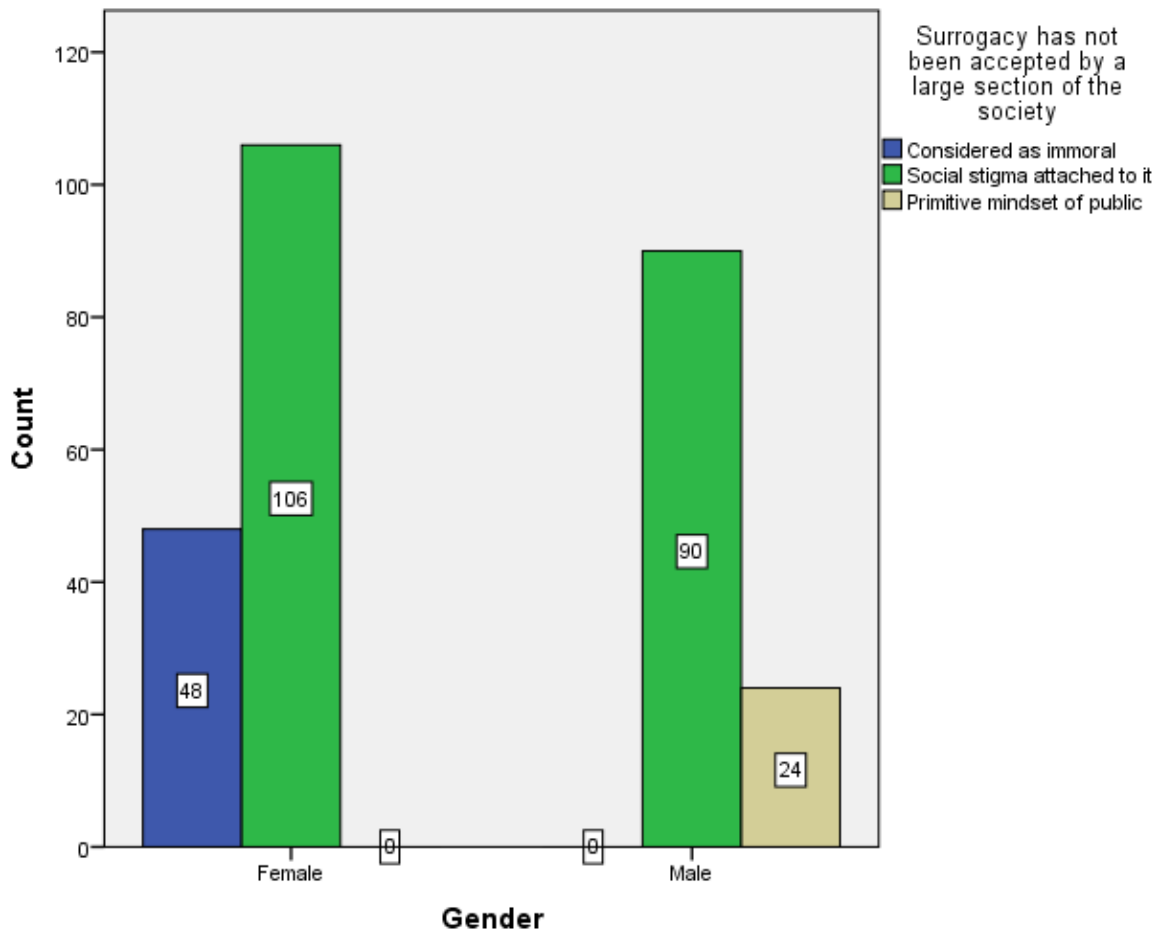
The Research method which has been followed by the researcher is an Empirical method. A total of 217 samples have been collected

through convenience sampling methods. Data collection has been done by mailing questionnaires. Independent variables taken in this research are Age, gender, Educational qualification, Marital status. Dependent

variables are whether the government is taking effective measures, social stigma attached to surrogacy, poverty and unemployment being reasons for practice of surrogacy. The statistical tool used is graphical representation.

ANALYSIS:

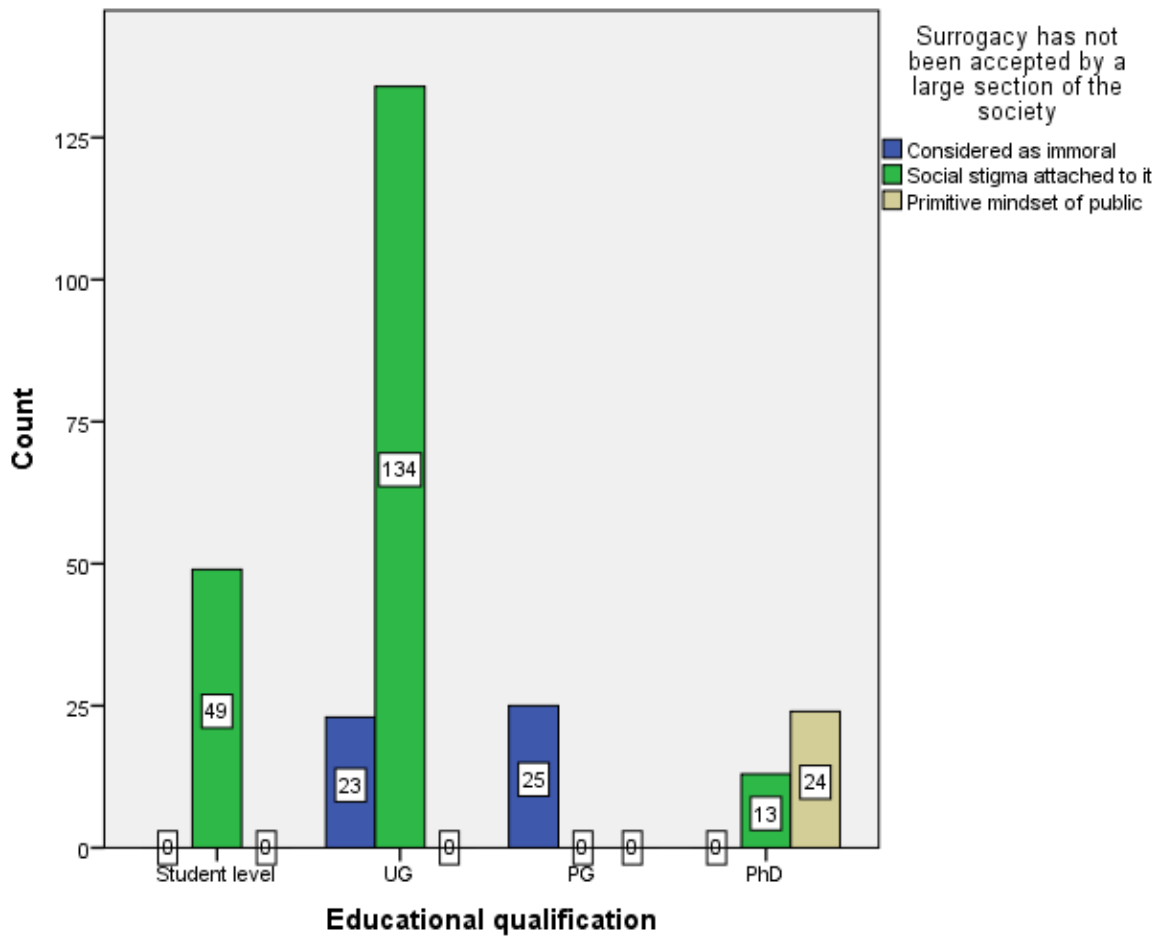
Figure 1



Legend : Figure 1 represents the Gender distribution of the respondents and their opinion as to why Surrogacy has not been accepted by a large section of the society.



Figure 2



Legend : Figure 2 represents the Educational qualification of the respondents and their opinion as to why Surrogacy has not been accepted by a large section of the society.

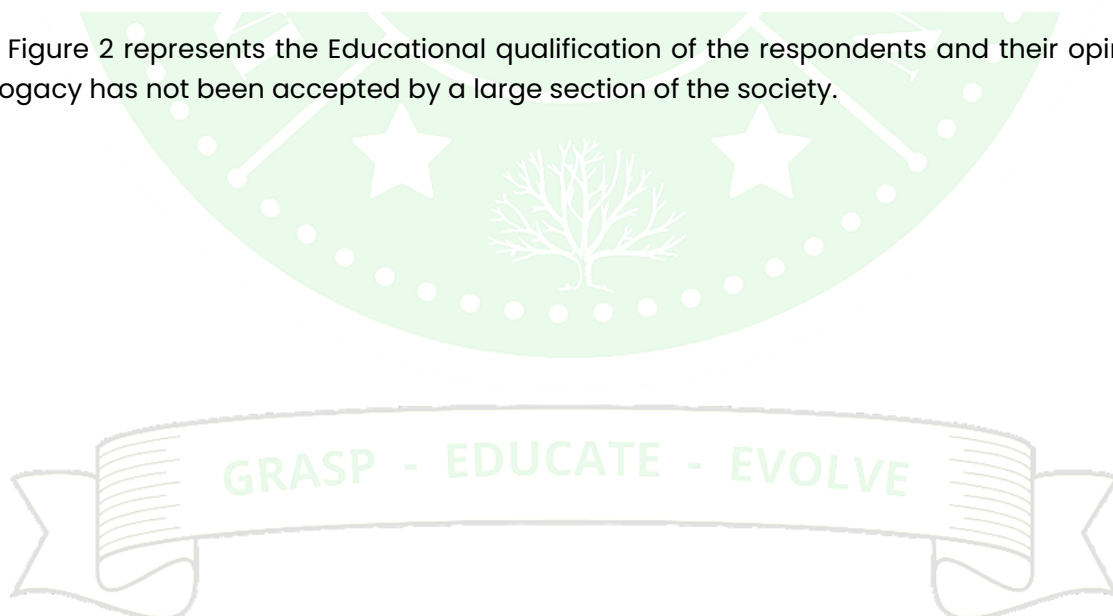
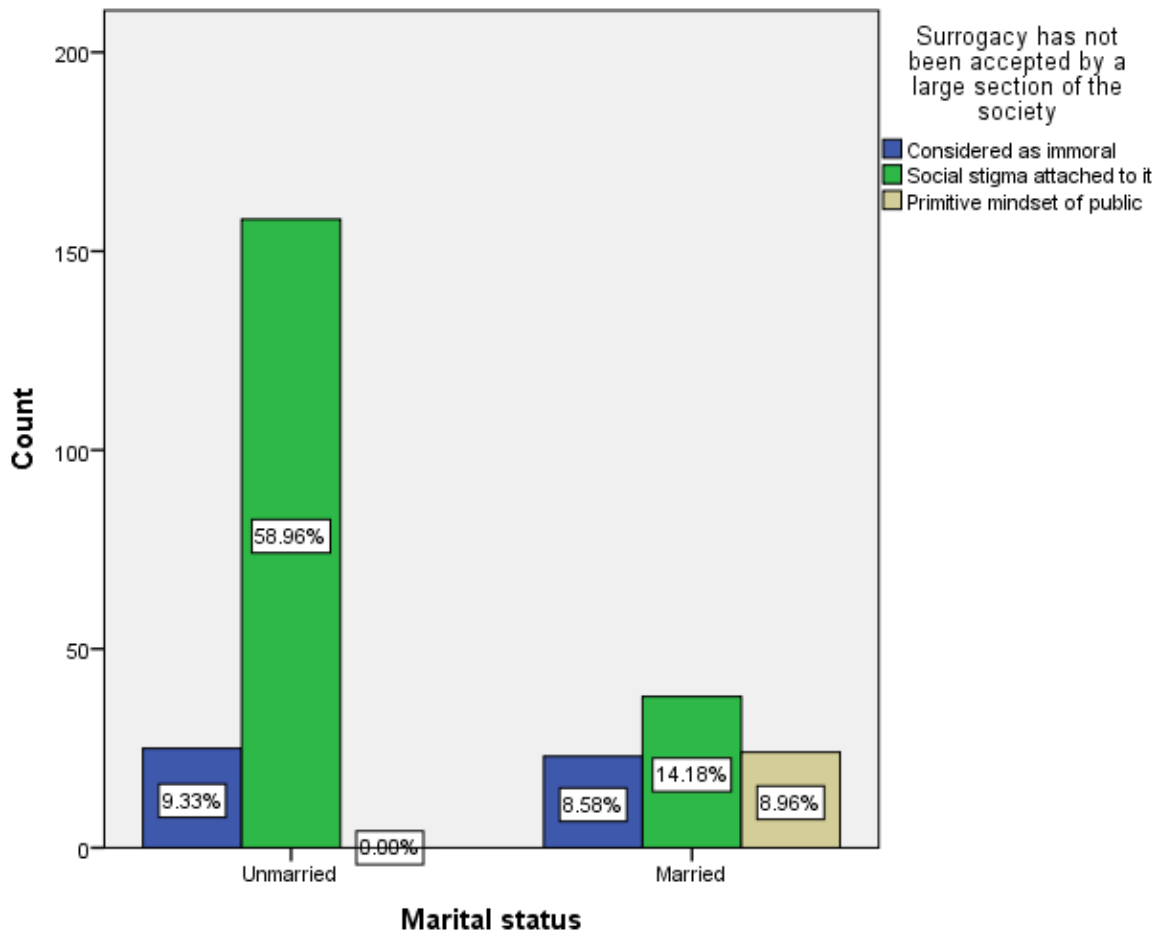


Figure 3



Legend : Figure 3 represents the Marital status of the respondents and their opinion as to why Surrogacy has not been accepted by a large section of the society.

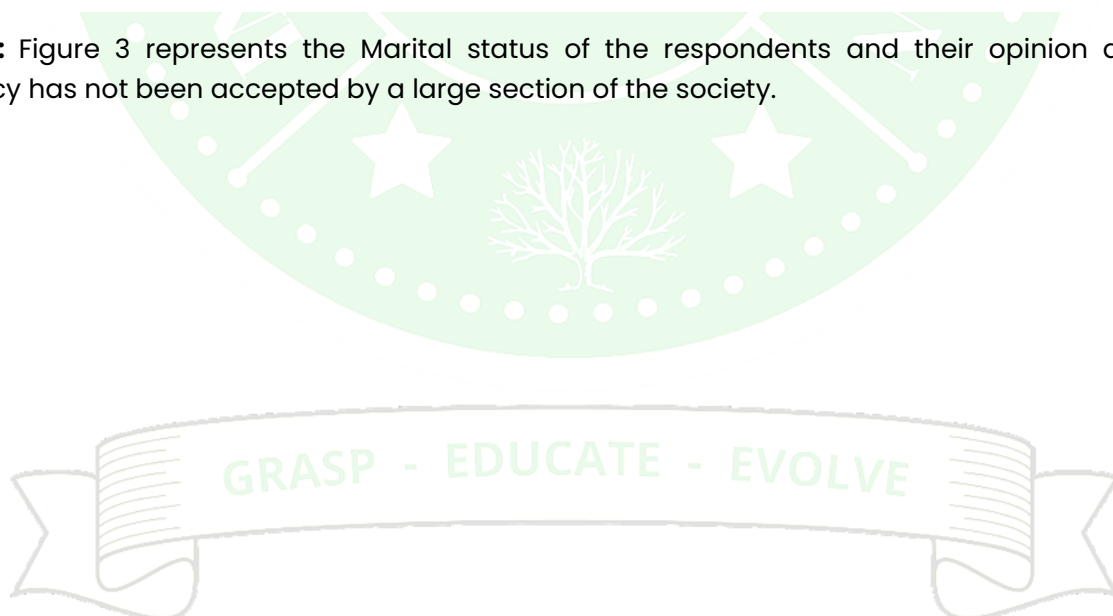
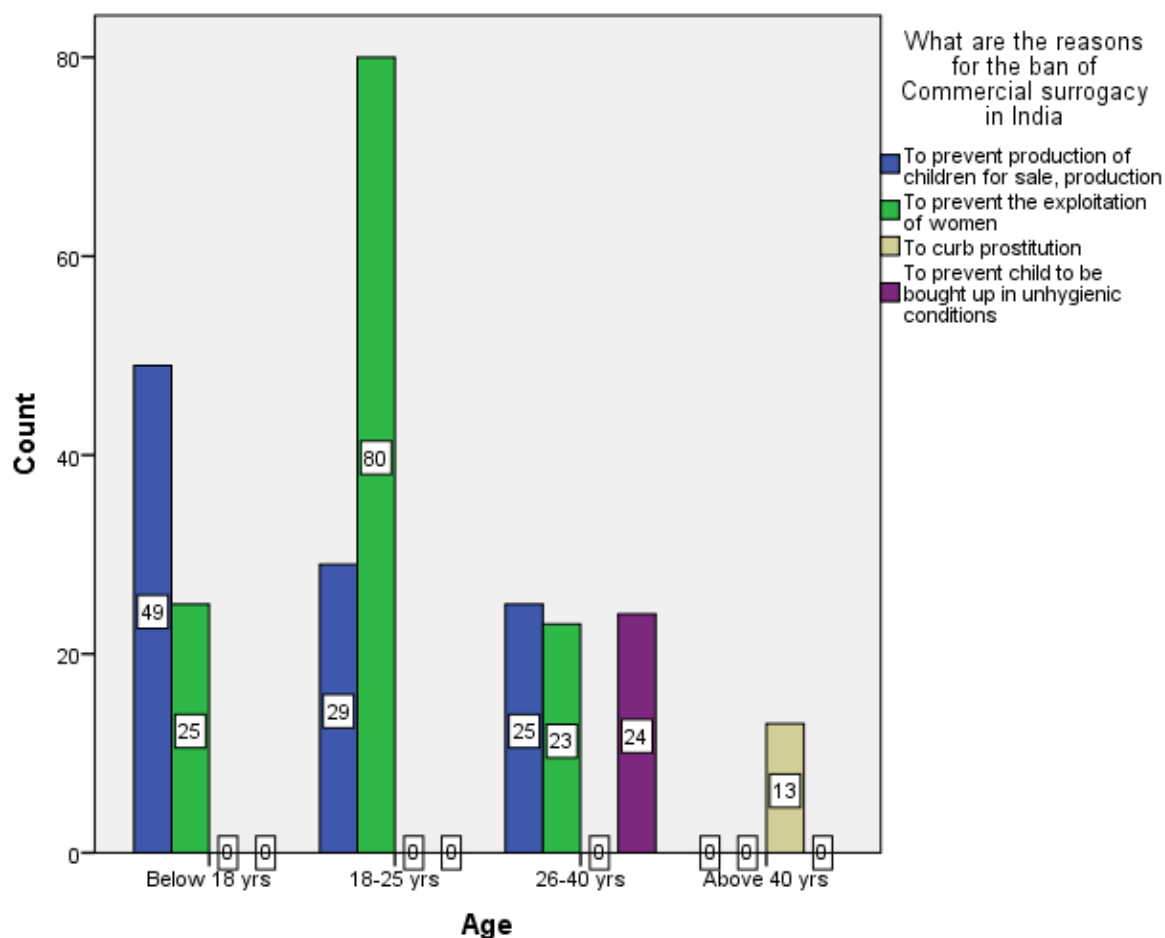


Figure 4



Legend : Figure 4 represents the Age distribution of the respondents and their opinion on the main reason for the ban of Commercial surrogacy in India.

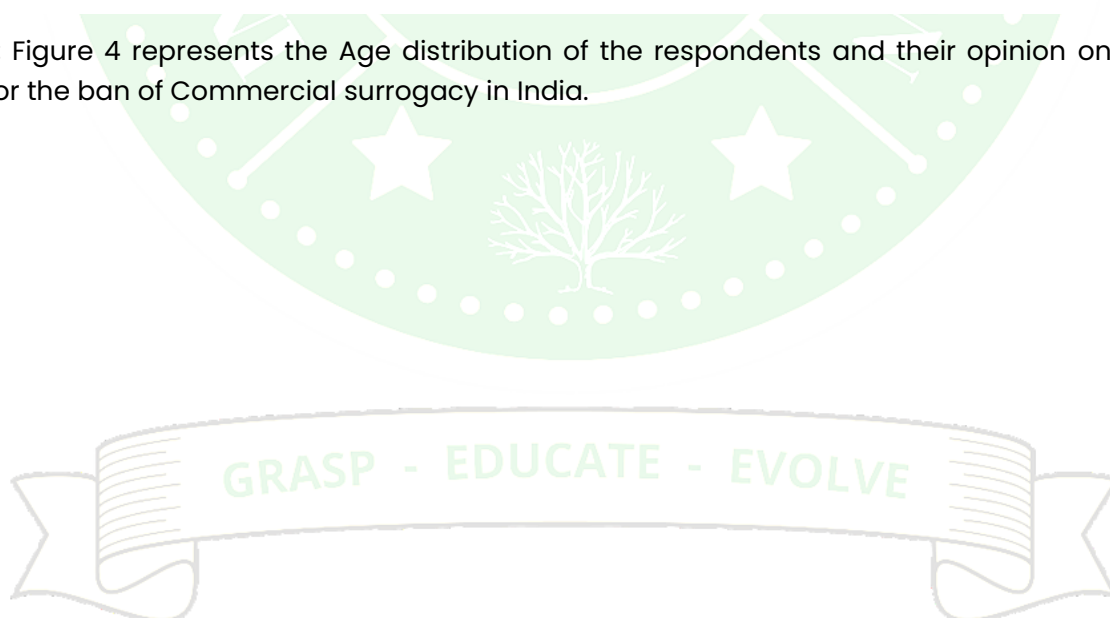
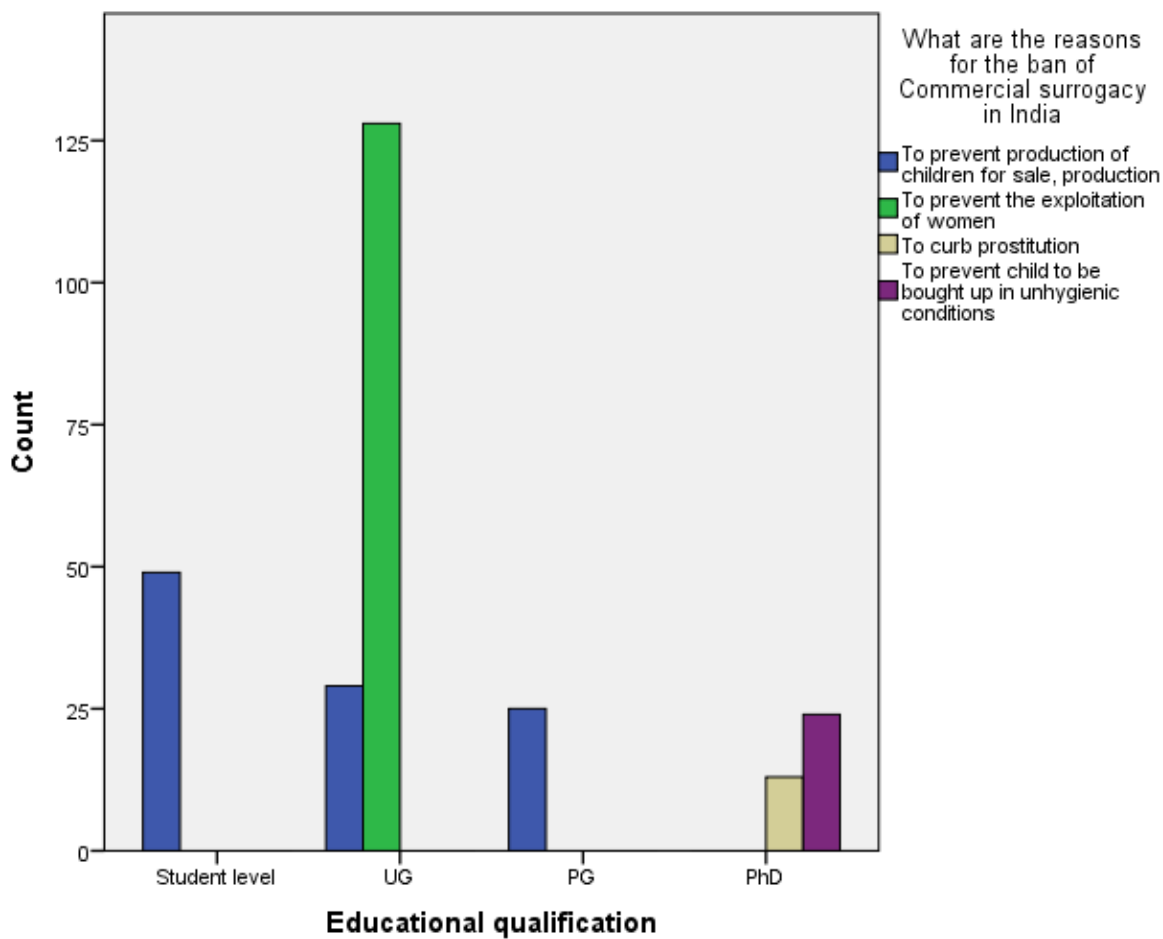


Figure 5



Legend : Figure 5 represents the Educational qualification of the respondents and their opinion on the main reason for the ban of Commercial surrogacy in India.

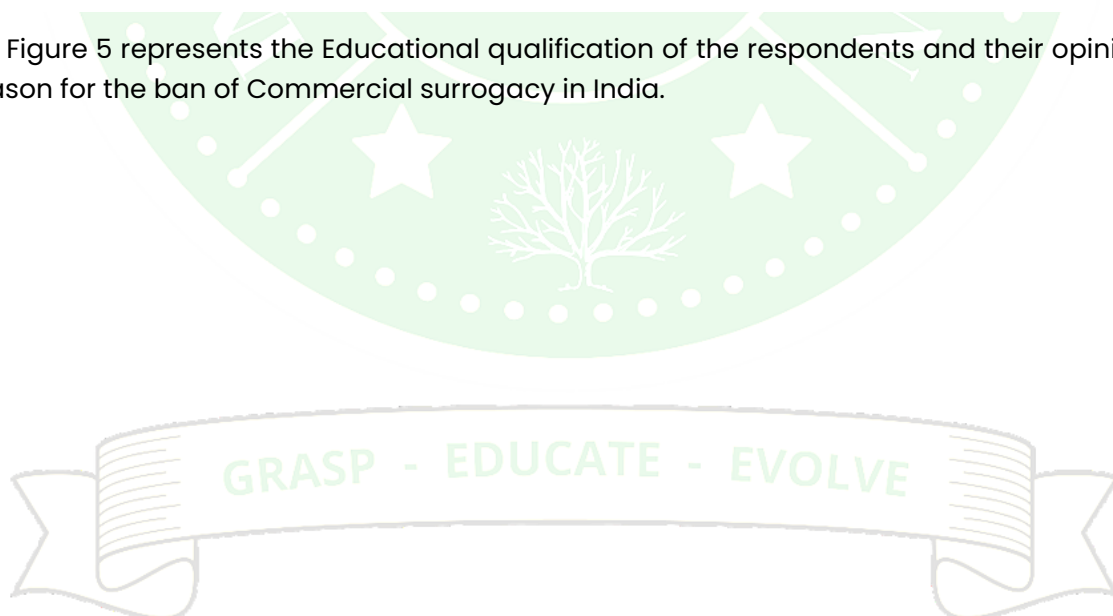
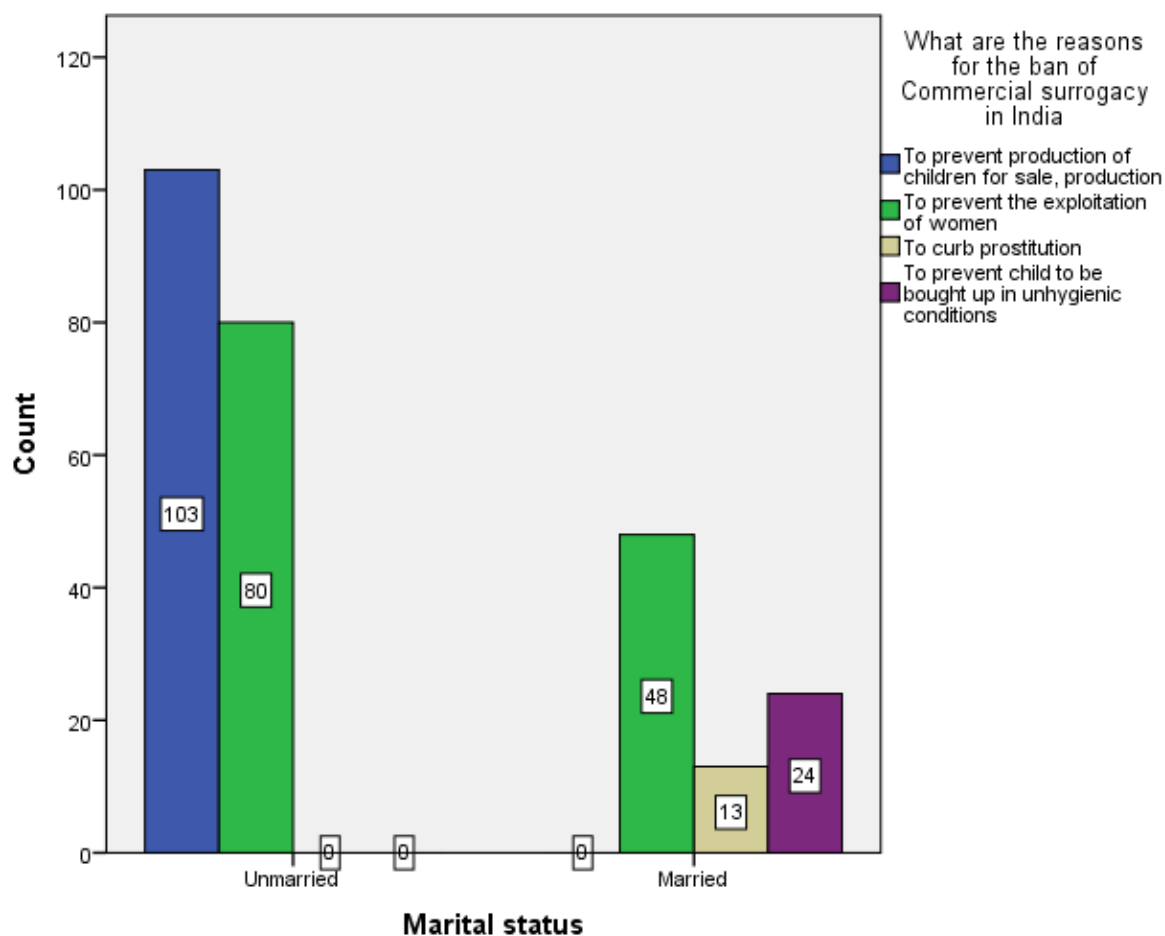


Figure 6



Legend : Figure 6 represents the Marital status of the respondents and their opinion on the main reason for the ban of Commercial surrogacy in India.

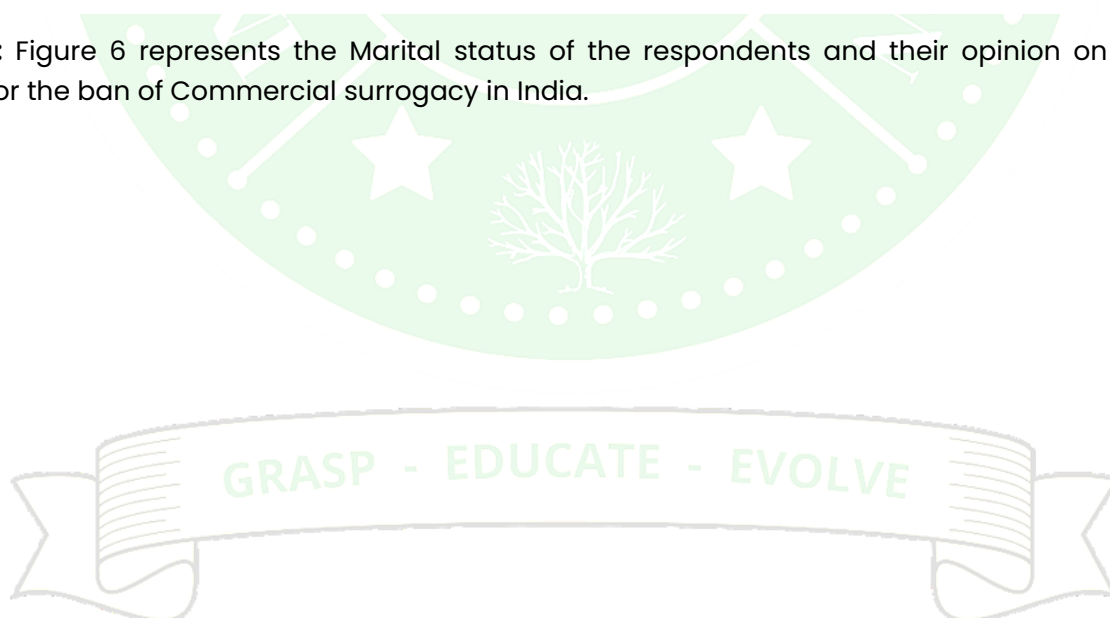
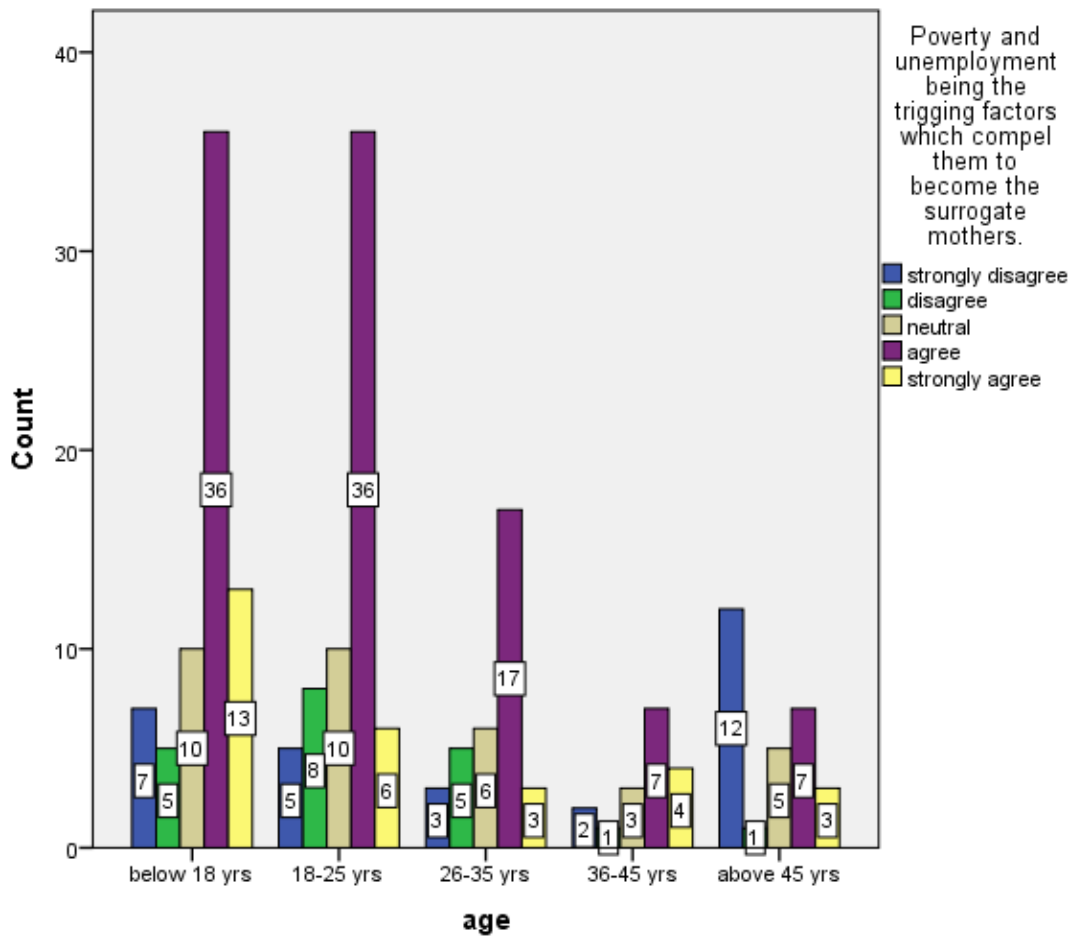


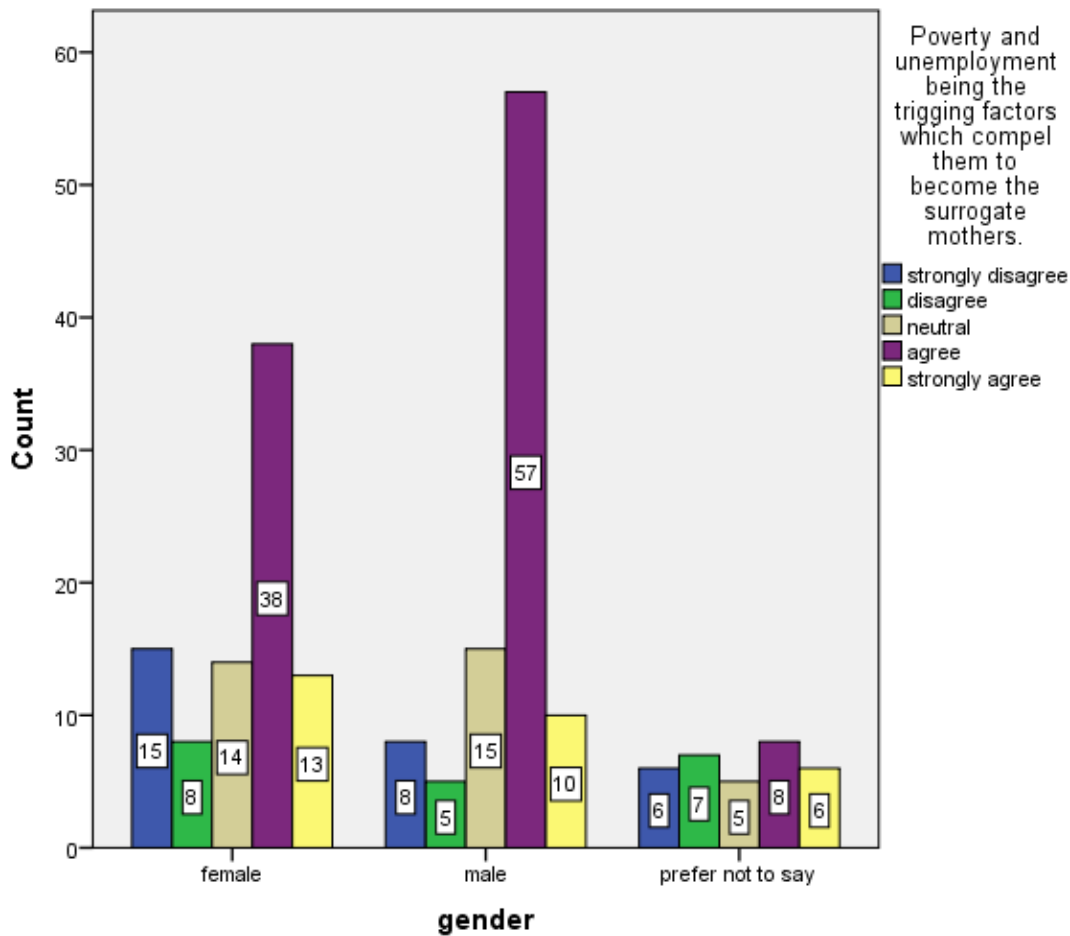
Figure 7



Legend: Figure 7 represents the relationship between the age group of the respondents and their agreeability to the statement, Poverty and unemployment being factors that trigger them to become a surrogate mother.



Figure 8



Legend: Figure 8 represents the relationship between the gender distribution of the respondents and their agreeability to the statement, Poverty and unemployment being factors that trigger them to become a surrogate mother.

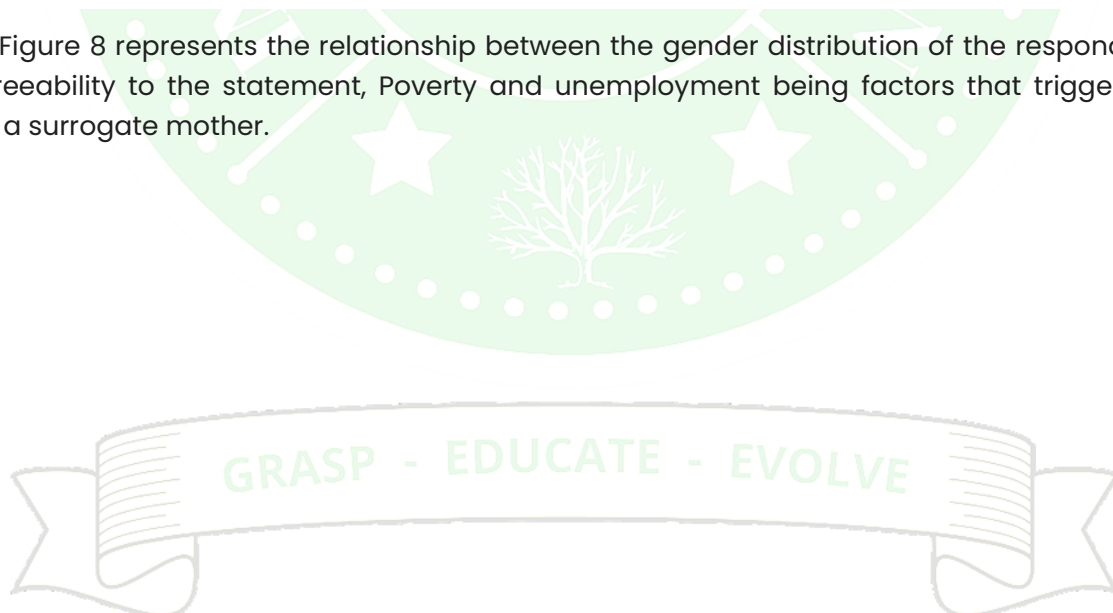
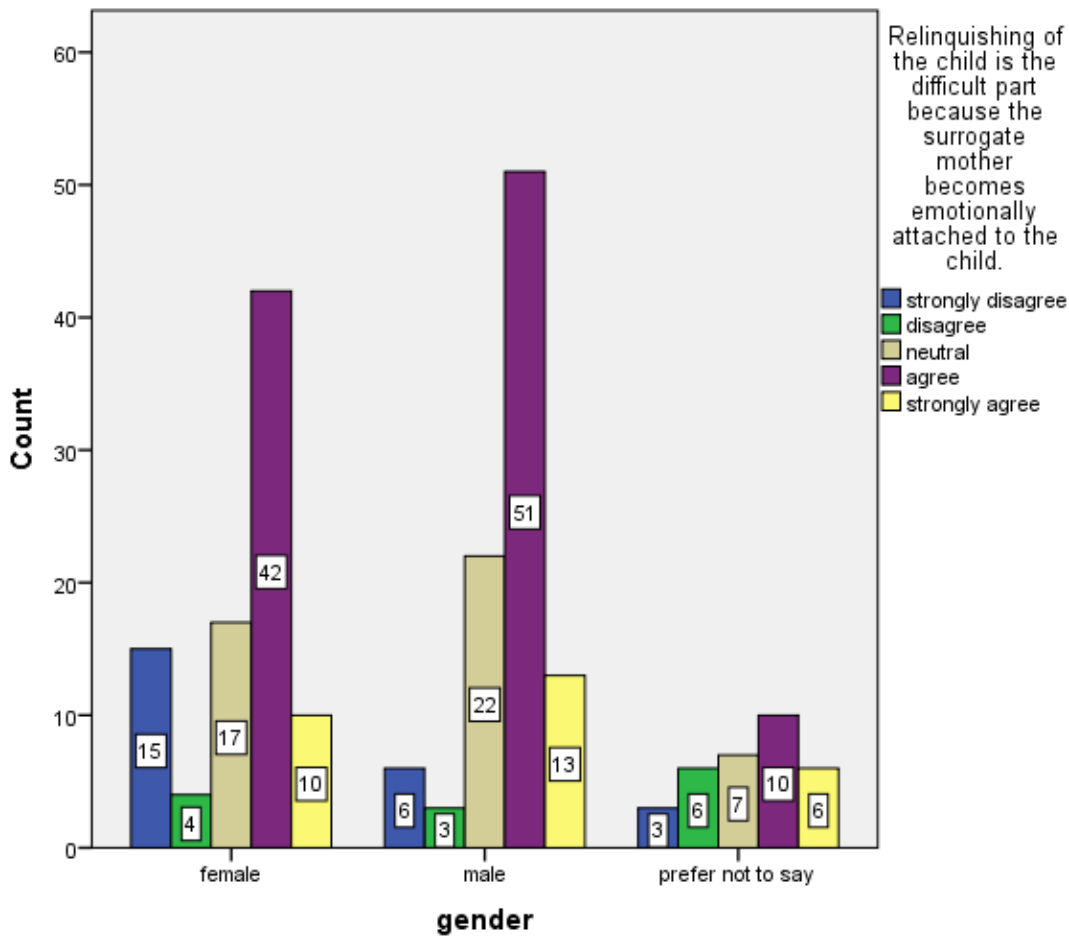


Figure 9



Legend: Figure 9 represents the relationship between the gender distribution of the respondents and their agreeability on relinquishing the child is a difficult part of surrogates.

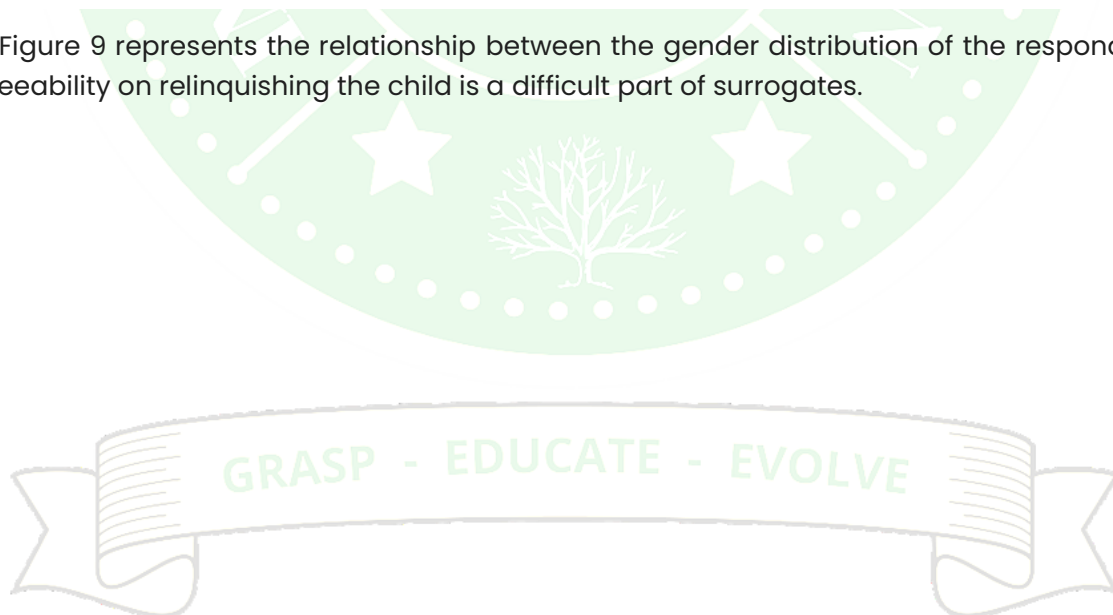
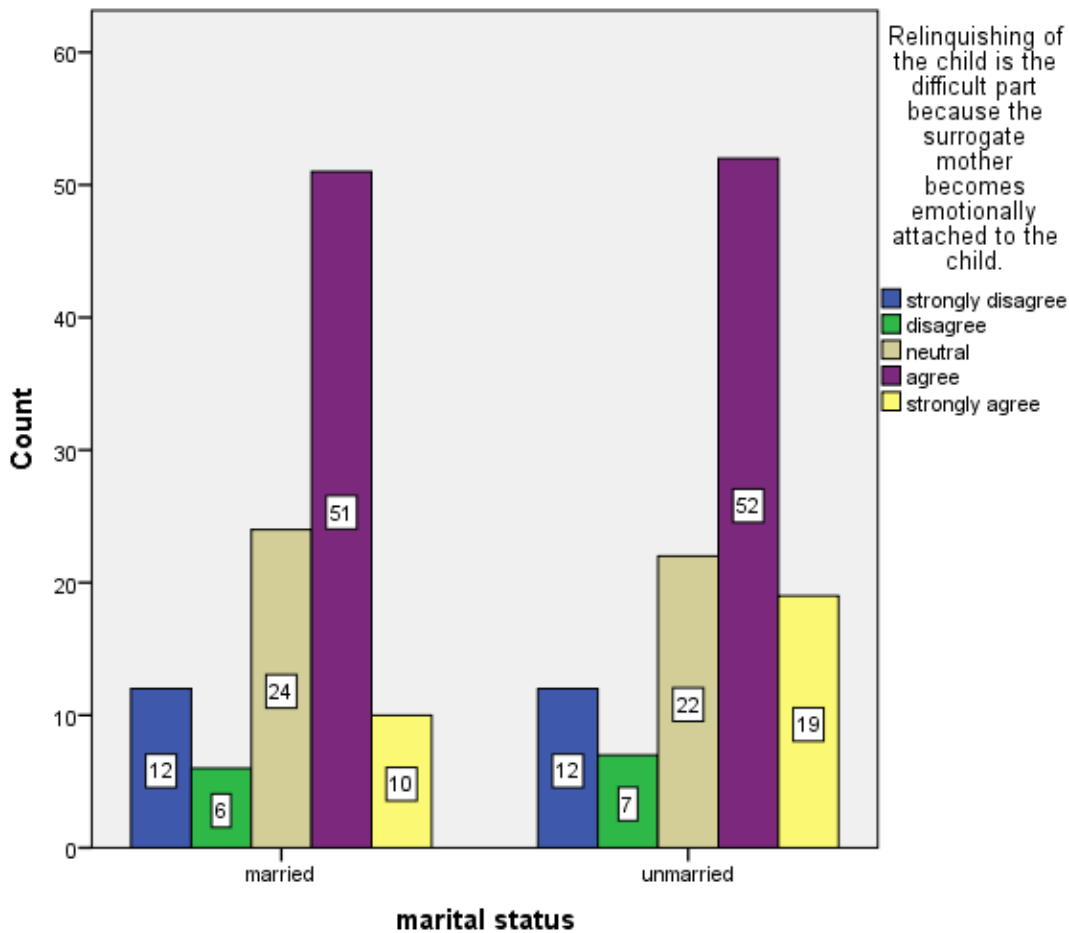


Figure 10



Legend: Figure 10 represents the relationship between the Marital status of the respondents and their agreeability on relinquishing the child is a difficult part of surrogates.

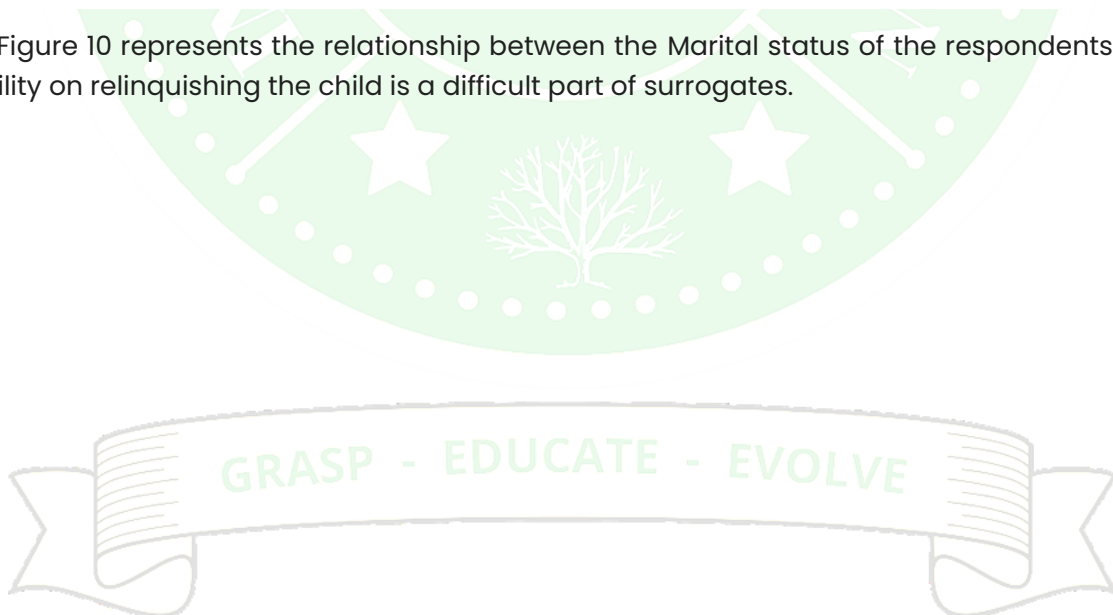
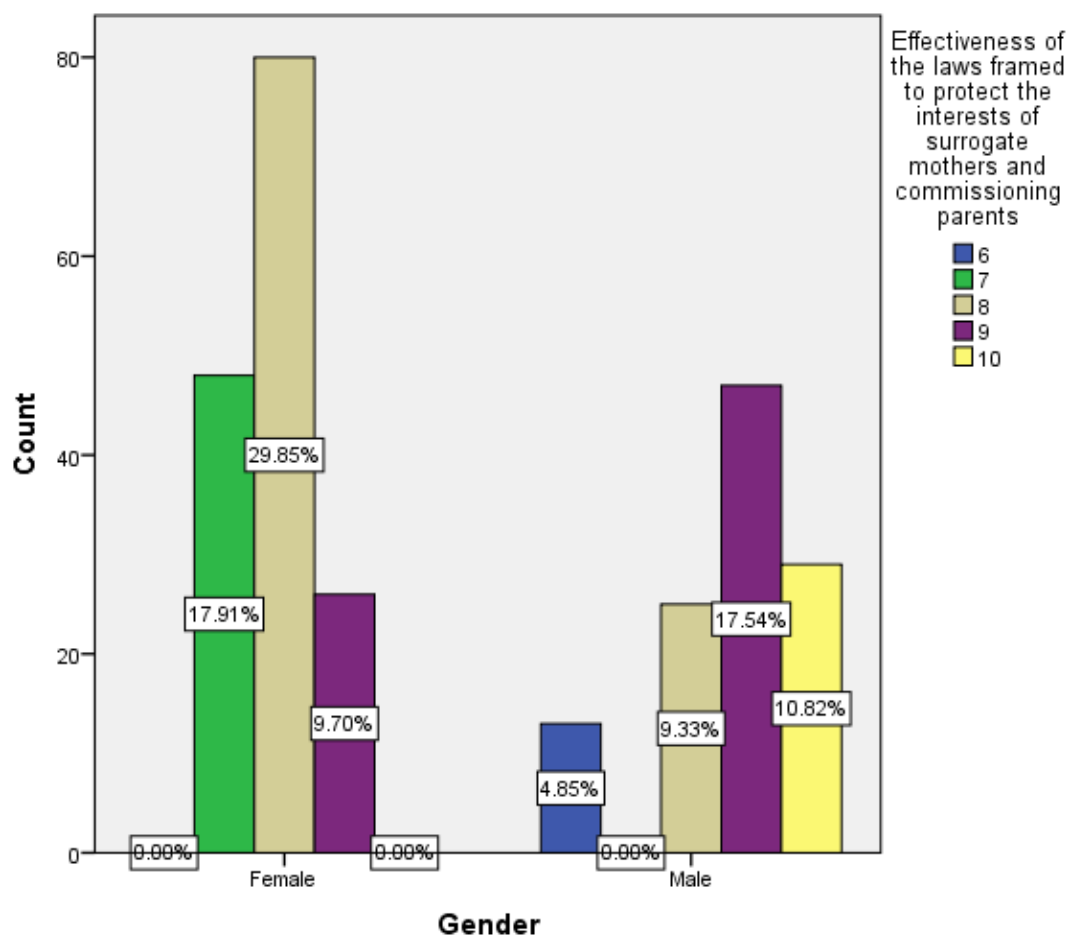


Figure 11



Legend : Figure 11 represents the Gender distribution of the respondents and their opinion on the effectiveness of the laws framed to protect the interests of surrogate mothers and commissioning parents.

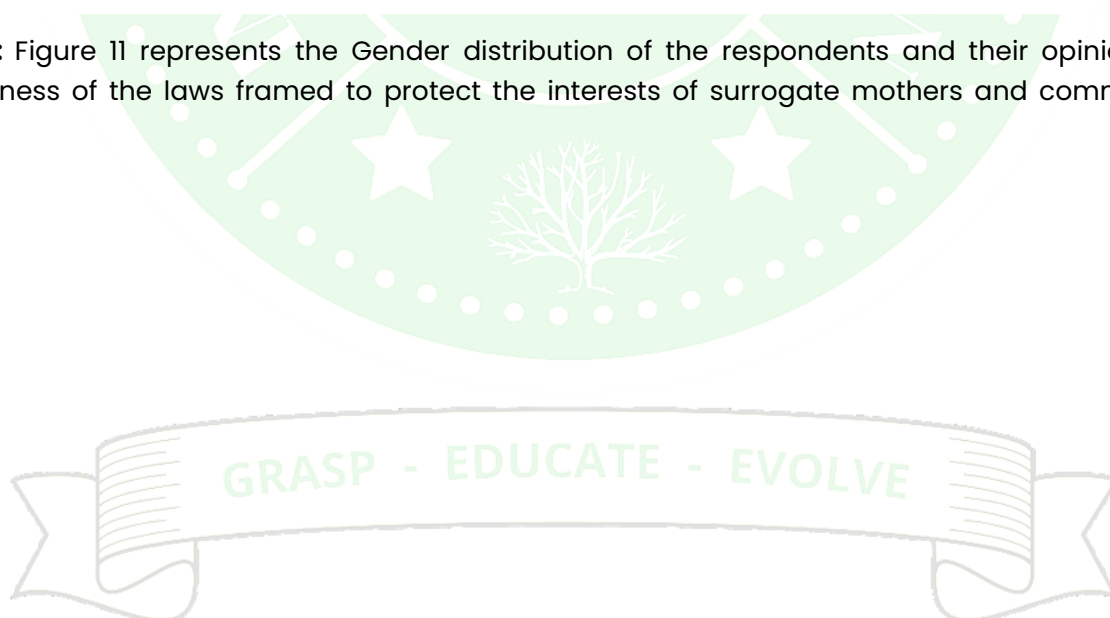
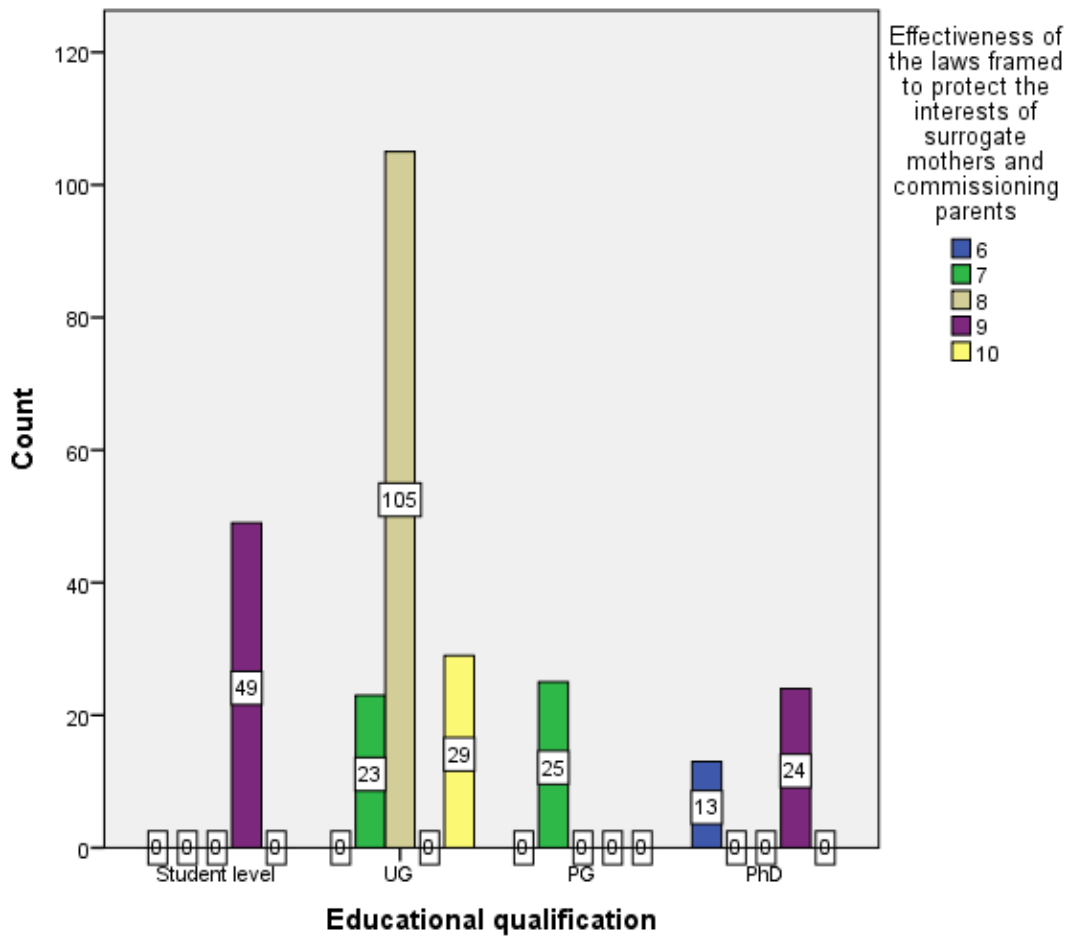


Figure 12



Legend : Figure 12 represents the Educational qualification of the respondents and their opinion on the effectiveness of the laws framed to protect the interests of surrogate mothers and commissioning parents.

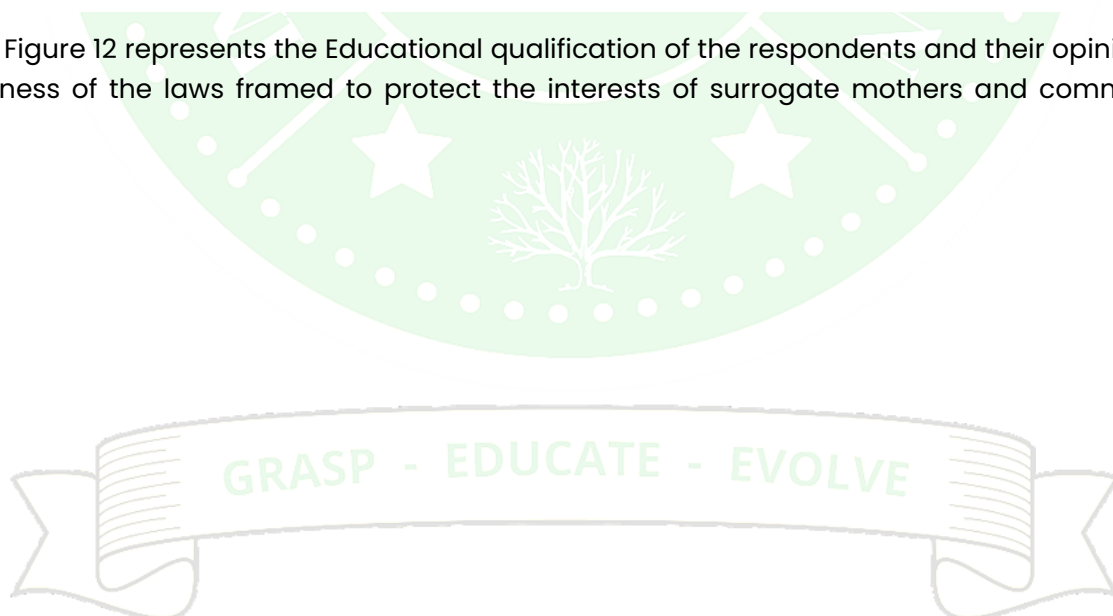
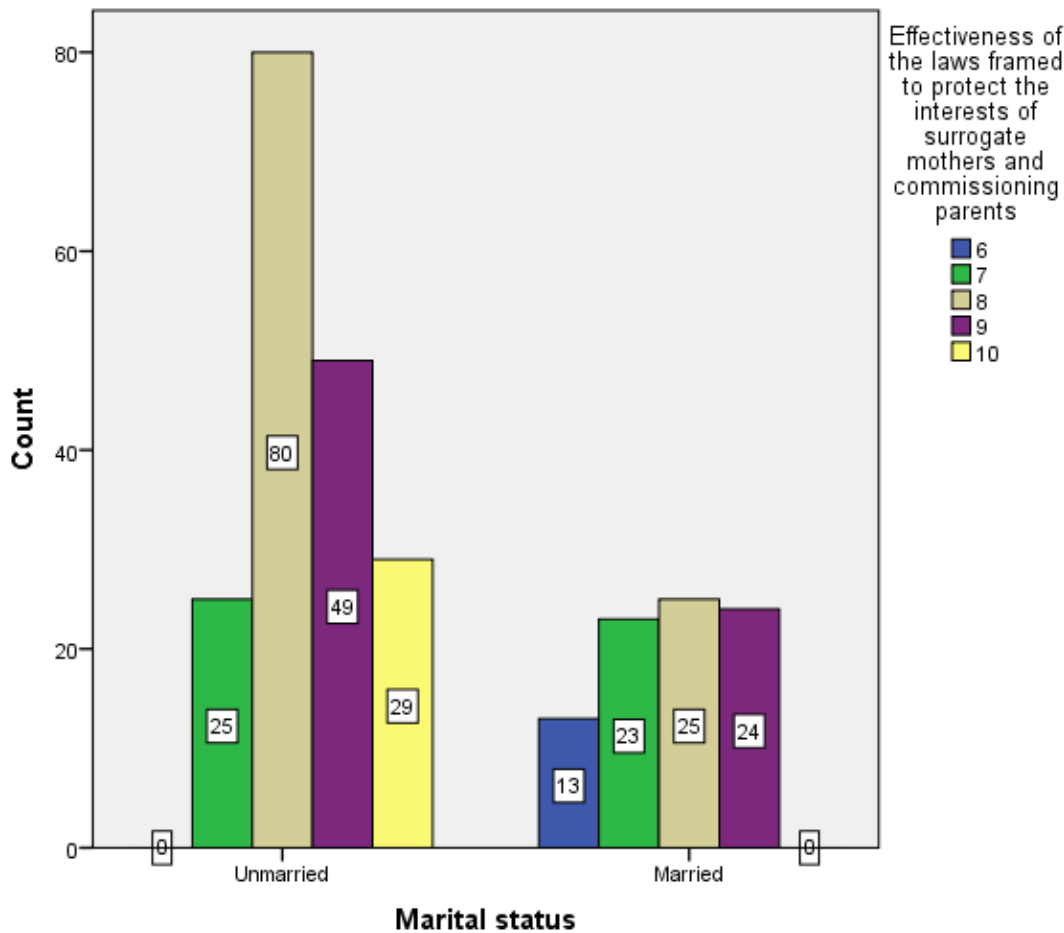


Figure 13



Legend : Figure 13 represents the Marital status of the respondents and their opinion on the effectiveness of the laws framed to protect the interests of surrogate mothers and commissioning parents.

TABLE 1:

Correlations

		gender	Relinquishing of the child is the difficult part because the surrogate mother becomes emotionally attached to the child.
gender	Pearson Correlation	1	.047
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.496
	N	215	215
Relinquishing of the child is the difficult part because the surrogate mother becomes emotionally attached to the child.	Pearson Correlation	.047	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.496	
	N	215	215

Legend : Table 1 represents the correlation between the age group and relinquishing of the child is the difficult part because the surrogate mother becomes emotionally attached to the child.

TABLE 2:

ANOVA

Poverty and unemployment being the triggering factors which compel them to become the surrogate mother

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	23.107	4	5.777	4.046	.004
Within Groups	299.851	210	1.428		
Total	322.958	214			

Legend : Table 2 represents the anova of poverty and unemployment being the triggering factors which compel them to become the surrogate mother.

RESULTS:

The majority of both male and female respondents have felt that surrogacy has not been accepted by a large section of the society because of the social stigma attached to it (**Fig 1**). The majority of Student level, UG respondents have felt that surrogacy has not been accepted by a large section of the society because of the social stigma attached to it, whereas PG respondents have felt because it is considered as immoral (**Fig 2**). The majority of both unmarried (58.96%) and married (14.18%) have felt that surrogacy has not been accepted by a large section of the society because of the social stigma attached to it (**Fig 3**). The majority of the respondents below the age of 18 yrs have felt that the main reason for ban of commercial surrogacy should be to prevent production of children for sale, prostitution (**Fig 4**). The majority of the UG respondents have felt that the main reason for ban of commercial surrogacy should be to prevent the exploitation of women (**Fig 5**). The majority of unmarried respondents (103) have felt that the main reason for ban of commercial surrogacy should be to prevent production of children for sale, prostitution and the majority of the married respondents (48) have felt that the main reason for ban of commercial surrogacy should be to prevent the exploitation of women (**Fig 6**). The majority of the age group of below 18 yrs, 18-25 yrs, 26-35 yrs have agreed that poverty and unemployment being a triggering factor to

become a surrogate mother (**Fig 7**). The majority of both the male and female respondents have agreed that poverty and unemployment are triggering factors to become a surrogate mother (**Fig 8**). The majority of both male and female respondents have agreed that relinquishing the child is the difficult part (**Fig 9**). The majority of both male and female respondents have agreed that relinquishing the child is the difficult part (**Fig 10**). On a scale of 1-10, the effectiveness of the laws in protecting surrogate mothers have been rated 8 by the majority of the females and 9 by the majority of the males (**Fig 11**). On a scale of 1-10, the effectiveness of the laws in protecting surrogate mothers have been rated 9 by the majority of Students and rated 8 by the majority of the UG respondents (**Fig 12**). On a scale of 1-10, the effectiveness of the laws in protecting surrogate mothers have been rated 8 by the majority of both the married and unmarried respondents (**Fig 13**). **Table 1 :** There is a significant difference of opinion among the age group of the sample population. **Table 2:** There is a significant difference of opinion between the education qualifications of the sample population.

DISCUSSION:

The analysis of the graphs suggest that though Surrogacy is an age old practice it is still considered a taboo in the society and the social stigma attached to it is the main reason as to

why it has not been accepted by a large section of the society. Also because it involves a sexual service through an agent so it is equated to prostitution by many in the society. The Surrogacy (Regulation) Bill has been pending, it seeks to ban commercial surrogacy. It should be banned to prevent the exploitation of women and also production of children for sale and prostitution which is turning Surrogacy into a business all across the globe. Poverty and unemployment serving as triggering factors for one to become a surrogate mother has differing opinions, a few disagree to it because women have the right to her body and she can do anything with it and whenever she wants while others have felt that due to financial burdens and need of money for basic requirements some agree to become surrogate mothers. Surrogacy might just be a practice in fact but it is a family builder for many also some surrogate mothers have developed an emotional attachment with the child and relinquishment of the child becomes a difficult part for them. Further, Our nation hasn't implemented many laws for protection of surrogate mothers and commissioning parents however the present legislations have so far been effective. But, there are loopholes which need to be addressed.

LIMITATIONS :

One of the major limitations of the study is the sample frame. There is a major constraint in the sample frame as the data was collected from a small area from the respondents. So, it was difficult to extrapolate it to a larger population and also that the actual and clear opinions of people remained unexpressed. Another limitation is the sample size of 217, which cannot be used to assume the thinking of the entire population in a particular country, state, or city. The physical factors have a larger impact, thus, limiting the study.

SUGGESTIONS :

In India, surrogacy is purely a contractual understanding between the parties so care has to be taken while drafting agreement so that it

does not violate any of the laws like, e.g., points to be taken into consideration why does the intended parents opt for surrogacy, particulars of the surrogate, type of surrogacy, mentioning about paternity in the agreement, the creation of registry for biological father of children in an adoption cases, rules set forth on how and when genetic testing can be done to determine paternity, compensation clause, unexpected mishappening to the surrogate mother, child's custody, regarding the jurisdiction for the disputes arising out of agreement.

The Indian government drafted legislation in 2008 and finally framed an ART regulation draft bill in 2010. The bill is still pending and not presented in the parliament. The proposed law needs proper discussion and debate in the context of legal, social and medical aspects. The government must seriously consider enacting a law to regulate surrogacy in India in order to protect and guide couples seeking such options. Without a foolproof legal framework implementation couples will invariably be misled and the surrogates exploited.

CONCLUSION:

Surrogacy in the world isn't a new conception of having a child but the process of the surrogacy had been rehearsed from ancient times. The system of the surrogacy isn't only limited to the couples who are infertile or not suitable to have a child without any medical disfigurement but the surrogacy is also rehearsed by anyone who wishes to have a child. Due to the rising number of surrogacy processes it influences the country or the world in raising the debates on the legal, ethical, religious and the moral issues each over the world. The proliferation in the process of marketable surrogacy leads to the violation of the mortal rights but marketable surrogacy safeguards the reproductive appanage of the infertile women. This research results shows that this practice also involves human trafficking and breach of trust so to avoid all this there should be proper law to protect surrogacy, poverty being factor to become a

surrogate mother this may be due that the women feel it is her right to body to do whatever she feels to do and also there are women who wants to make other family happy by giving birth to child not only for monetary purpose. Since India has interdicted consensual homosexuality their right to gain surrogacy services to beget a child must be addressed. Passing the long- pending supported Reproductive Technology(ART) Bill will make the surrogacy act more important.

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GRASP - EDUCATE - EVOLVE

A STUDY ON LEGAL RIGHTS AND CHALLENGES OF SURROGATES IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

It is an empirical study on legal rights and challenges of surrogates in India. The word “surrogate” is derived from the Latin word surrogates means a “substitute”. Right to reproduce their child is an unalienable right of every existence. Parenting is a life altering and most permanently satisfying experience. The absence of a child is considered as a stigma to the family. There are numerous cases where the incapability to have a child led to wedded breakdown. The incapability to have a child which is known as infertility in medical terms is a global problem. According to the WHO Report the prevalence of infertility across the globe including India is around 10- 15 percent. This research aims to study on the challenges of surrogates, whether it has been considered only as commercial business, to find out the reasons for the practice of surrogation, to explore the social stigma on surrogacy which is considered as prostitution. The results show that surrogacy is a part of commercial business in India. Poverty being a factor to become a surrogate mother this may be due to that when there is a monetary need for women and has financial burden they tend to work as surrogate mother and women feel it is her right to body to do whatever she feels to do and also there are women who want to make other family happy by giving birth to child not only for monetary purpose also agreed that they should be law to protect surrogacy this might be due to that this practice also involves human trafficking and breach of trust so to avoid all this there should be proper law to protect surrogacy. Basically women are emotionally attached to their child when they are in the womb itself so after birth one has to give the child which she carried for months is the difficult part.

KEYWORDS: Surrogation, women, infertility, rights, challenges

INTRODUCTION:

It is an empirical study on legal rights and challenges of surrogates in India. The word “surrogate” is derived from the Latin word surrogates means a “substitute”. In Black’s Law Dictionary, Surrogacy is an agreement where a woman agrees to be artificially inseminated to carry with the semen of another woman’s husband. Right to reproduce their child is an unalienable right of every existence. Parenting is a life altering and most permanently satisfying experience. The absence of a child is considered as a stigma to the family. There are numerous cases where the incapability to have

a child led to wedded breakdown. The incapability to have a child which is known as infertility in medical terms is a global problem. According to the WHO Report the prevalence of infertility across the globe including India is around 10- 15 percent.

According to the Hindu tradition it also offers cases of surrogacy that shows the secretiveness due to which practise of surrogacy still encircles us. In Bhagavata Purana, Vishnu ji heard Vasudev’s prayers praying to Kansa not to kill all sons being born. Vishnu heard these prayers and had an embryo from Devika’s womb transferred to the womb of

Rohini, the other wife of the vasudev. Rohini then gives birth to the baby Balaram, brother of Krishna and intimately raises the child while Vasudev and Devki tell Kansa that the child was born dead. The History of surrogacy also belonged to the Mahabharata, as in Mahabharata Gandhari delivered a semi solid material on the place of delivering a child, Maharishi Vyas further divided that semi solid material into 100 pieces and planted them in different pans. therefore the 100 Kauravas were born. India's First IVF baby and world alternate baby Kanupriya was born 67 days later on 3rd of October 1978. The baby Kanupriya is the result of the sweats made by Dr. Subhas Mukherjee and his two mates in Kolkata. The Birth of this first IVF Indian baby was a part of tremendous debate.

There are two main types of surrogacy in India: 1) commercial surrogation and 2) altruistic surrogation. Commercial Surrogacy means for business purpose In this type of surrogacy the surrogate mom remunerated and over all the needed medical charges during the course of the surrogacy. Altruistic Surrogacy as humanitarian service In this particular type of surrogacy the surrogate mom doesn't take any type of monetary remuneration for her pregnancy except the essential needs for her medical charges. The legal rights of surrogates are under article 19(1) (d) they have the right to do the desired occupation and this will be violated if the commercial business is banned in India and Article 21 right to earn a livelihood under Indian constitution 1950. There are also other international rights which are recognized, they are article 27 of UDHR and article 15 of ICESCR.

In gujarat there is an anand baby farm for the practice of surrogation which is popular in that state. Countries like France, Germany, Bulgaria and spain prohibit all forms of surrogation. The commerce of a child is a thing that can be hard to imagine as the child is a symbol of the love not of the plutocrat and having a child is a perception down from the conception of marketing conditioning. But

surrogacy has become a part of the marketable business in a country like India. This commercialisation of surrogacy has now become a political debate for the Indian society. There are "N" figures of implicit parents in a country like India desire to hire other women to bear their child. The conception of surrogacy has revolved around an ordinary biotic function of the body of a woman into a marketable contract and hence the surrogate services are now indeed publicized. The commercialization of surrogacy is nothing but the giving rise to the new problem of dealing with children and setting up breeding granges which may turn women into baby producers.

In the time 2002 marketable surrogacy was legalized by the India seeing this immense growth of surrogacy in India leads to the growth of the numerous marketable surrogacy establishment who claims to have the speciality in the surrogacy law and aiding the nonnatives who came India in hunt of mom womb as a rent. Similar rallying is considered to be veritably combustive in nature as it leads the commercialisation of the baby selling and also harms the quality and the character of the vouchsafed miracle of the women's reproductive capabilities. The 228th report of the Law Commission of India has recommended to enjoin the process of marketable surrogacy and legislated the suitable legislation which allows performing humanitarian surgery which is ethical. There were certain guidelines issued by the Indian council of medical exploration for regulating surrogacy arrangements: The surrogate mom would be entitled for the financial compensation, the value of which would be decided by the couple and the surrogate mom and The surrogate mom can not contribute her own egg for the surrogacy and that she must relinquish all maternal rights related to the surrogate child. **AIM:** To study on the legal rights of surrogates and the major reason for women to practice surrogation.

OBJECTIVES:

1. To study on the challenges faced by the surrogates in india
2. To explore the legal rights to practice surrogation
3. To study whether surrogation being a commercial business in india
4. To explore on the social stigma towards the practice of surrogation
5. To study on the major reason for women to practice surrogation

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

(Birenbaum–Carmeli and Carmeli 2010)A quantitative study done by Daphna Birenbaum–Carmeli et al to assess and compare the prevalence of Gravid surrogacy in the USA and Israel.

(Tiwari 2019) had done an overview on Commercial Surrogacy in India. Though Commercial Surrogacy has been supported on the grounds that it helps both the childless couple and the surrogate, it has also been blamed on the grounds that it exploits the surrogates.

(Phillips et al. 2019)A methodical review conducted by Amy M Phillips et al(2019) to examine the frequency and conditions of surrogate gestation and motherly and perinatal issues. The review revealed that surrogacy allows for parenting when it is insolvable or exceedingly delicate.

(Patel et al. 2018)stated in his composition that surrogacy is an important system of supported reproductive technology wherein a woman carries gestation for another couple and a sapience into different aspects of surrogacy practices was anatomized by. Number of couples around the world require surrogacy services for colorful reasons. Although this arrangement seems to be salutary for all parties concerned, there are complex social, ethical, moral, and legal issues associated with it.

Nicole F Bromfield, Karen Smith Rotabi (2014):

The purpose of the paper is to present global surrogacy dynamics written in a manner to help the reader understand this complex phenomenon, including a discussion of the associated problems and ethical dilemmas.

Neha (2015):One of the fastest-growing categories of cross-border reproductive care is international surrogacy, the act of infertile clients traveling internationally to engage the paid services of foreign surrogates to carry their babies to term.

Caroline Vincent, Alene D,(2013): 'The procedure that became legal in India in 2002 is different from other countries which have adopted the same practice in one very critical way–India does not strive to provide a rare solution for infertile couples, but instead seeks to maintain hegemony in an increasingly viable industry. 2 This booming market comes at a dangerous time because India has no laws in place to protect the rights of the surrogate.

International Journal of Law 2021:The present paper addresses the legal and socioethical context in which India introduced the Surrogacy Bill 2019. It argues that, even though the proposed legislation addresses and responds to some of the legal and ethical concerns such as informed consent and legal parentage, it stops short of ensuring the welfare and well-being of the surrogate. Second, the legal certainty of parentage and the child's rights comes at the cost of the physical and psychological well-being of the surrogate.

Nilofar Rahematkhan Sodagar (2018):as well as the contract between the intending parents and the surrogate mother-to-be. The present paper addresses the legal and socio ethical context in which India introduced the Surrogacy Bill 2019. It examines the extent to which the proposed law responds to the legal challenges and socio ethical concerns that surfaced in the course of unregulated transnational commercial-surrogacy arrangements in India. It argues that, even though the proposed legislation addresses and responds to some of

the legal and ethical concerns such as informed consent and legal parentage, it stops short of ensuring the welfare and well-being of the surrogate.

Karen Smith Rotabi 2012: Intercountry adoption has declined significantly since 2004.

Amanda Van Beinum (2012): Reproductive medical tourism is by some accounts a multibillion dollar industry globally. The seeking by clients in high income nations of surrogate mothers in low income nations, particularly India, presents a set of largely unexamined ethical challenges. In this paper, eight such challenges are elucidated to spur discussion and eventual policy development towards protecting the rights and health of vulnerable women of the Global South.

Hypatia (2011): I suggest that we might reduce these shortcomings by framing normative and ethnographic engagement with global surrogacy as questions of reproductive justice.

Dina Sidhva 2010: This article overviews current evidence on surrogacy in India, and discusses the extent to which proposed legislation, the Assisted Reproductive Technologies Bill and Rules 2009, satisfactorily addresses social workers' concerns to ensure adequate protection of the interests of young Indian women engaged in surrogacy, as outlined in the International Federation of Social Workers' policy on cross-border reproductive care.

Erin Nelson 2013: There is a particularly acute need for certainty in the context of global trade in surrogacy services, both because of the number of parties who may be involved in creating familial relationships and because of

the vulnerabilities created as a result of surrogacy arrangements.

Karin Hammarberg 2014: This article discusses legislation, policy and practice as they relate to Australians' use of surrogacy in India

Twine Routledge, 2012: This article discusses legislation, policy and practice as they relate to Australians' use of surrogacy in India. It reviews current surrogacy-related legislation and regulation in Australia and India and existing evidence about the challenges posed by transnational surrogacy, and considers how restrictive Australian legislation may contribute to the number of Australians undertaking surrogacy in India.

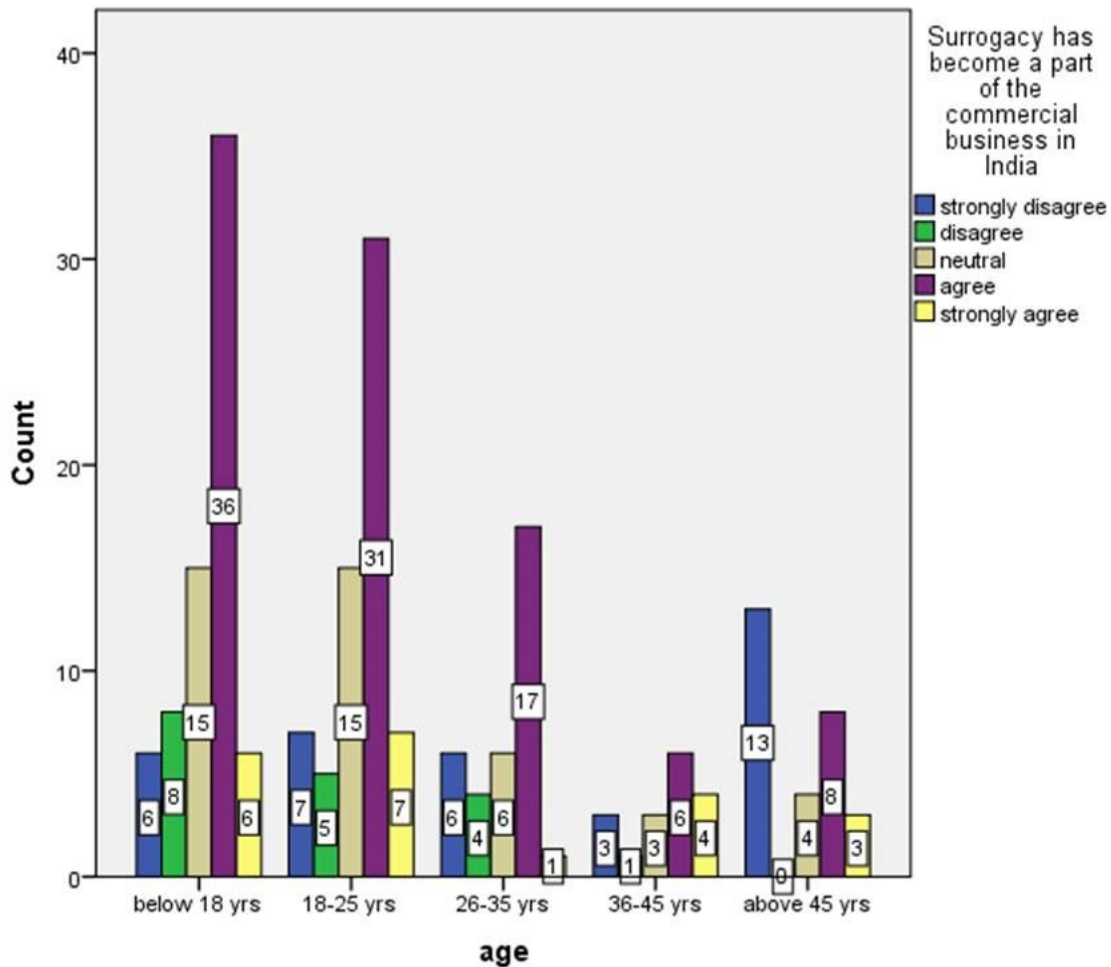
Vida Panitch, Hypatia 2013: I conclude not in favor of a global ban but with suggestions on how developing nations that permit commercial surrogacy might better protect the negative reproductive rights of their female citizens, thereby making them less vulnerable to exploitation.

METHODOLOGY:

The Research method which has been followed by the researcher is a descriptive method. Here total of 207 samples have been collected through convenience sampling method data collection has been done by mailing questionnaires. Independent variables taken in this research are gender, age, educational qualifications, occupation, location. dependent variables are whether government is taking effective measure, social stigma on surrogates, poverty and unemployment being reason for practice of surrogacy. The statistical tool used is SPSS through graphical representation.

ANALYSIS

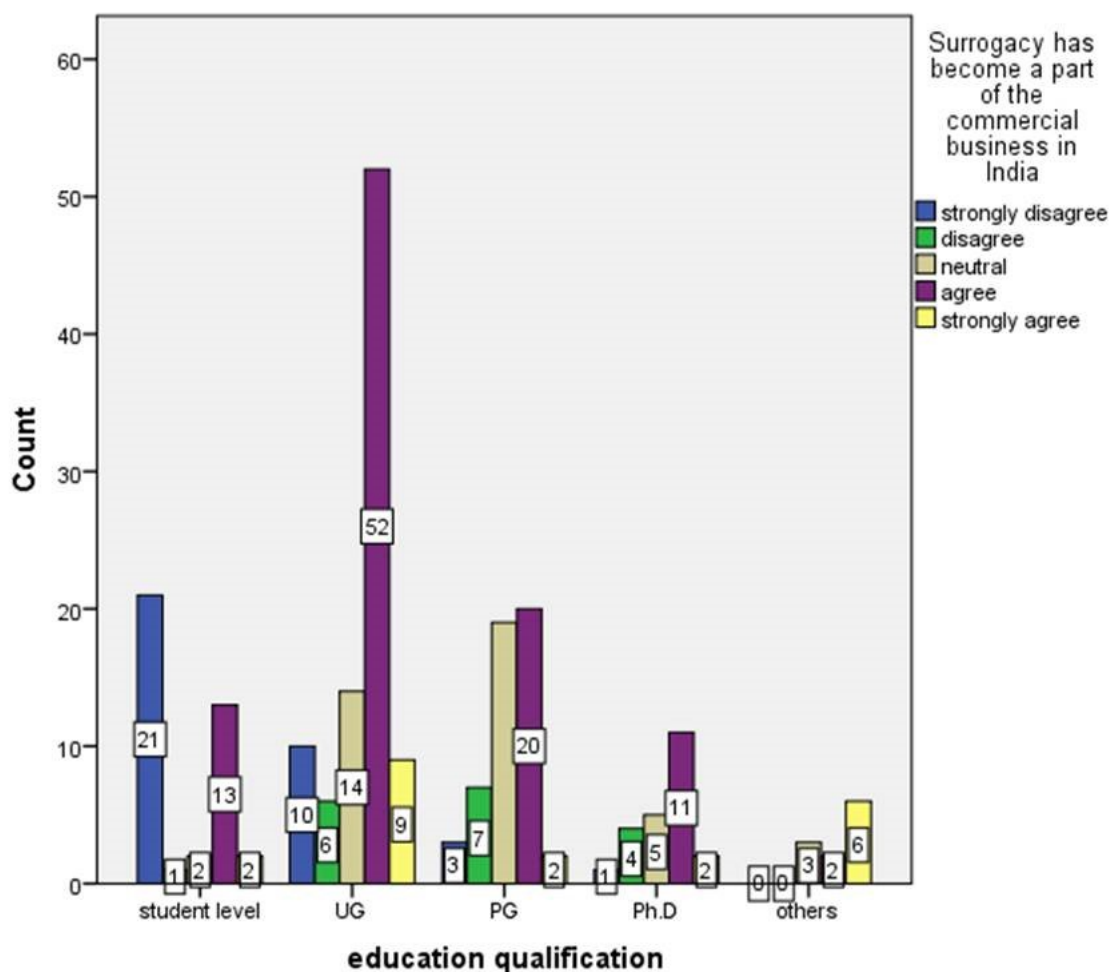
FIGURE 1



LEGEND: This figure represents the relationship between the age group of the respondents and their opinion on surrogacy as commercial business in India.



FIGURE 2:



LEGEND: This figure represents the relationship between the age group of the respondents and their opinion on surrogacy as commercial business in India

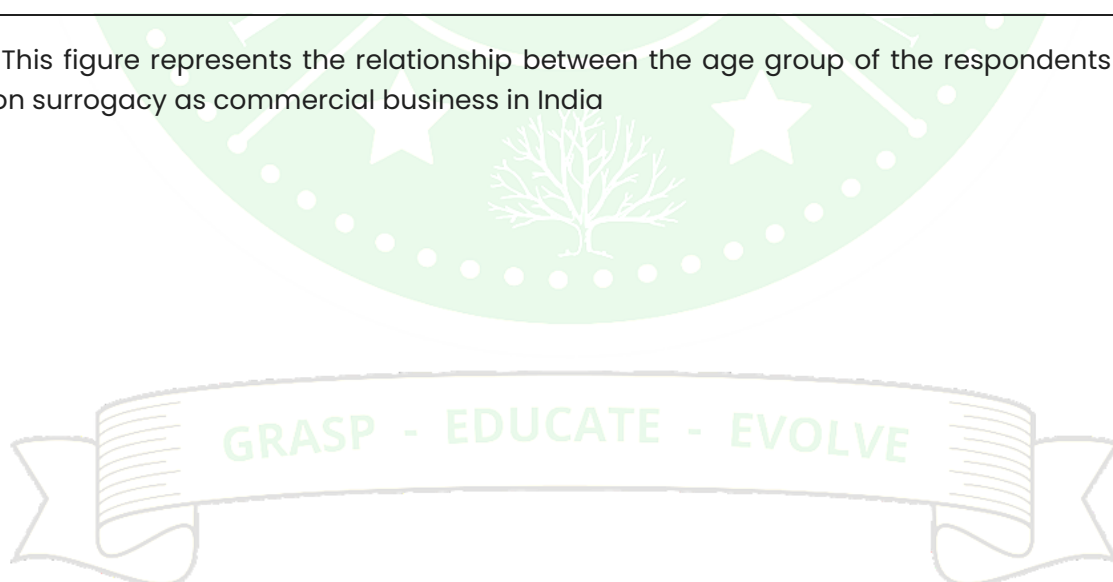
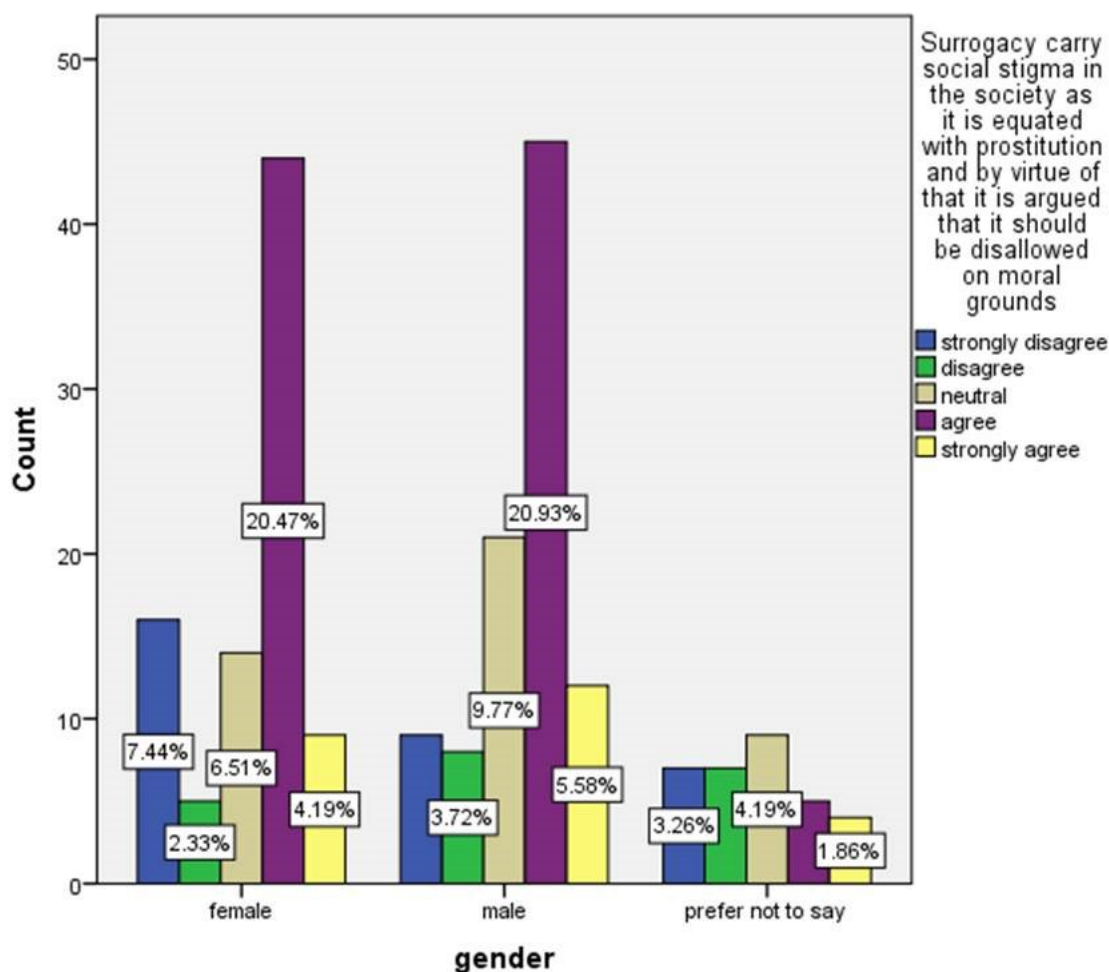


FIGURE 3:



LEGEND: This figure represents the relationship between the gender of the respondents and their opinion on surrogacy carrying social stigma and compared with prostitution.

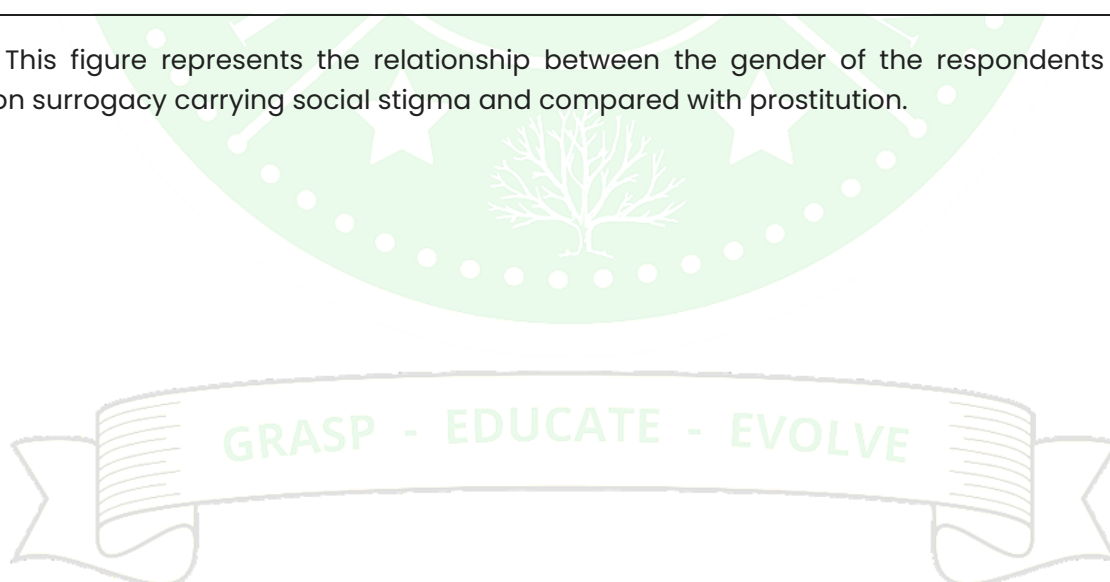
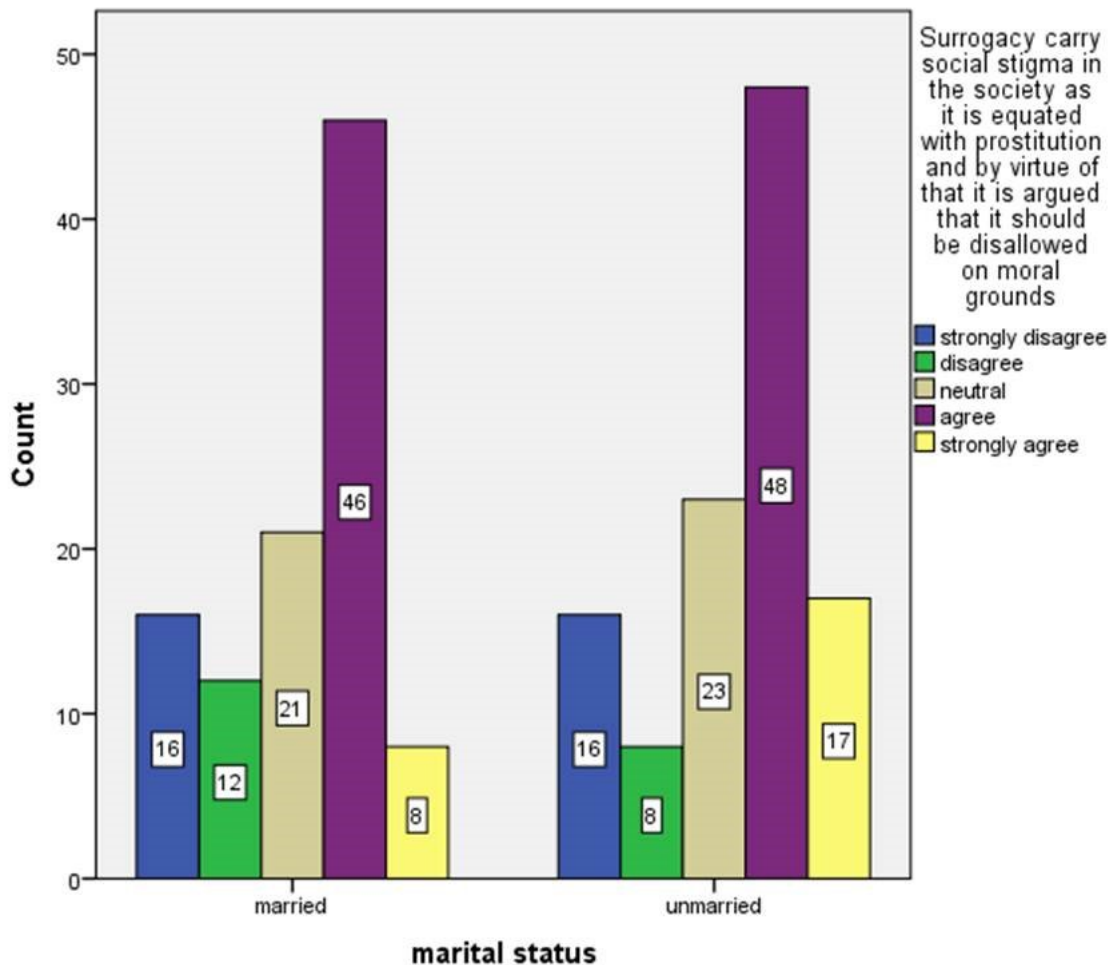


FIGURE 4:



LEGEND: This figure represents the relationship between the marital status of the respondents and their opinion on surrogacy carrying social stigma and compared with prostitution.

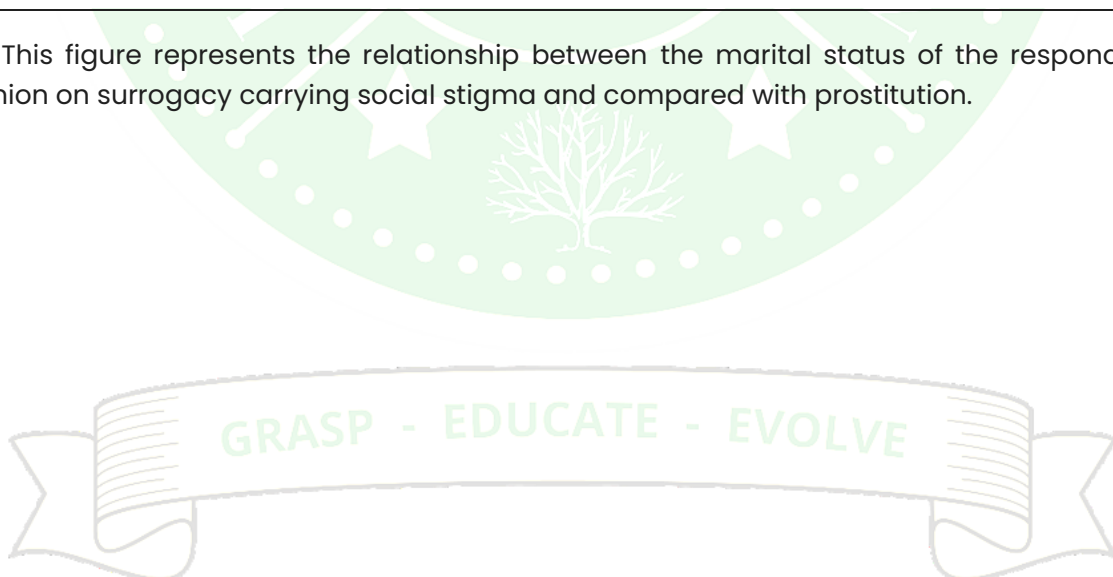
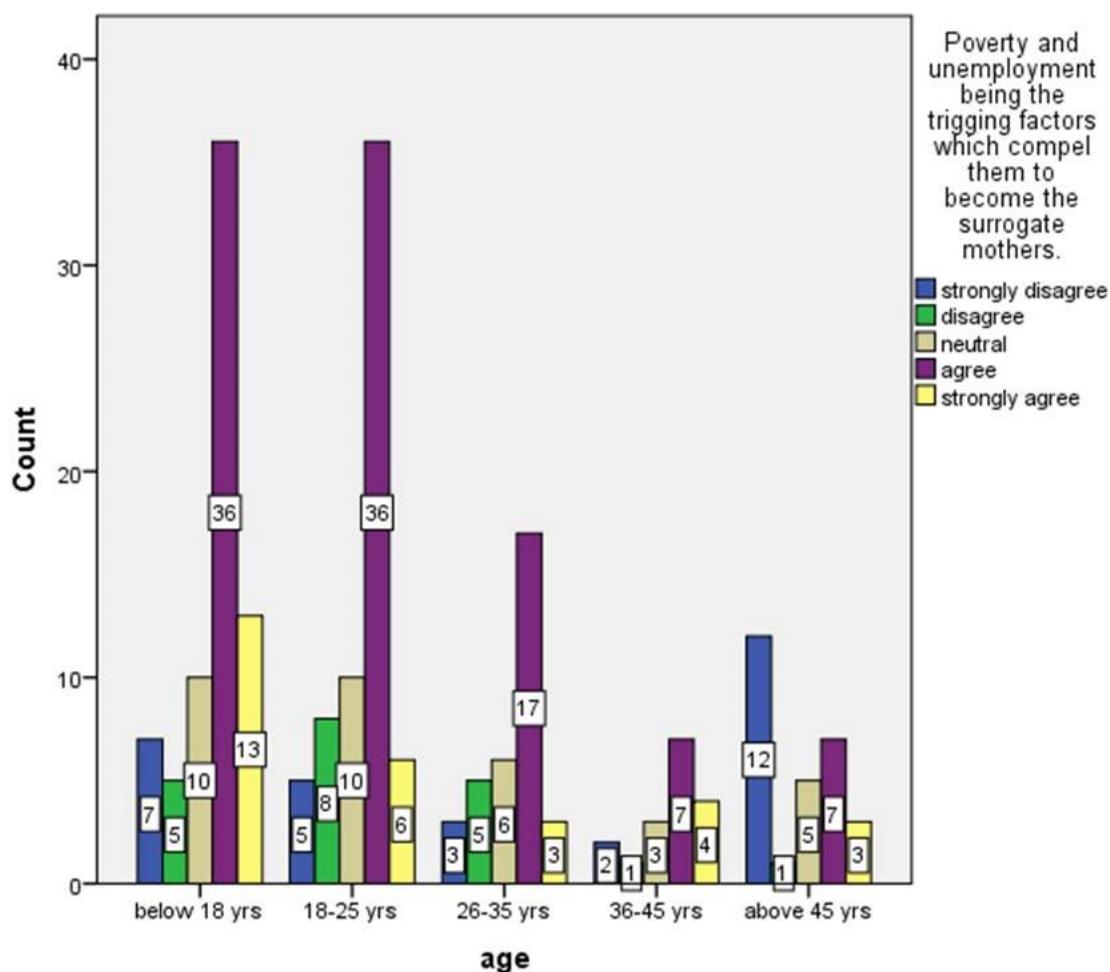


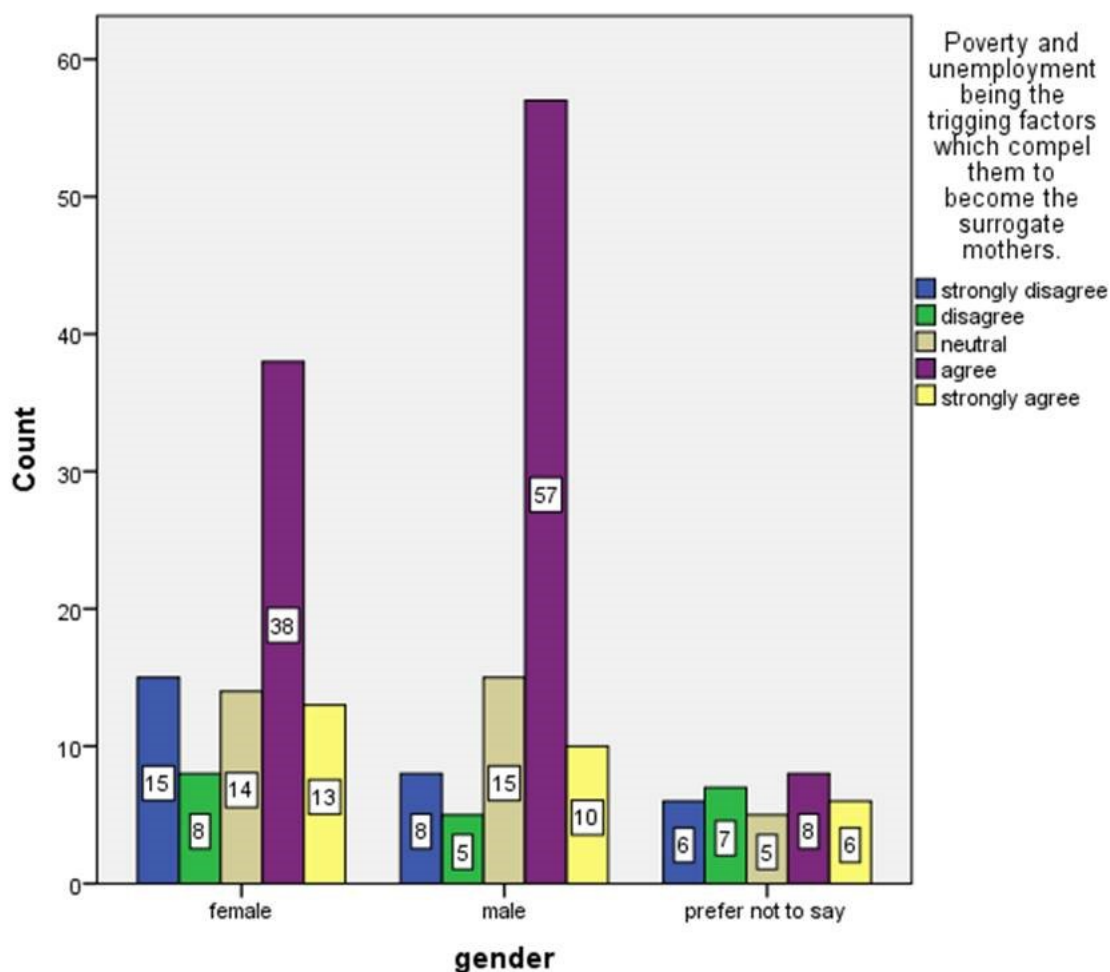
FIGURE 5:



LEGEND: This figure represents the relationship between the age group of the respondents and their opinion on poverty and unemployment being factors for them to become a surrogate mother.



FIGURE 6:



LEGEND: This figure represents the relationship between the female respondents and their opinion on poverty and unemployment being factors for them to become a surrogate mother.

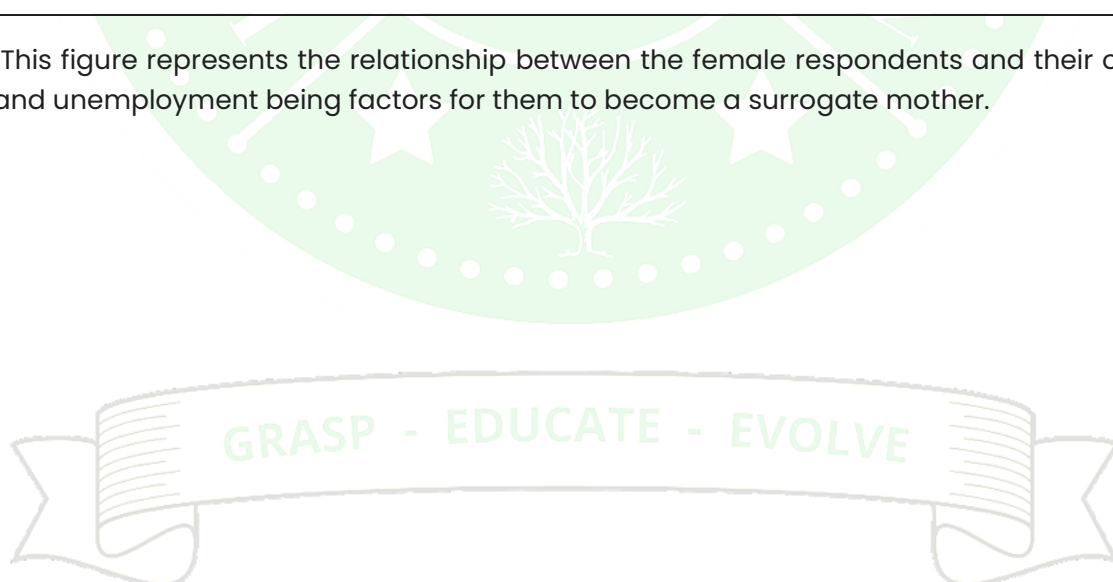
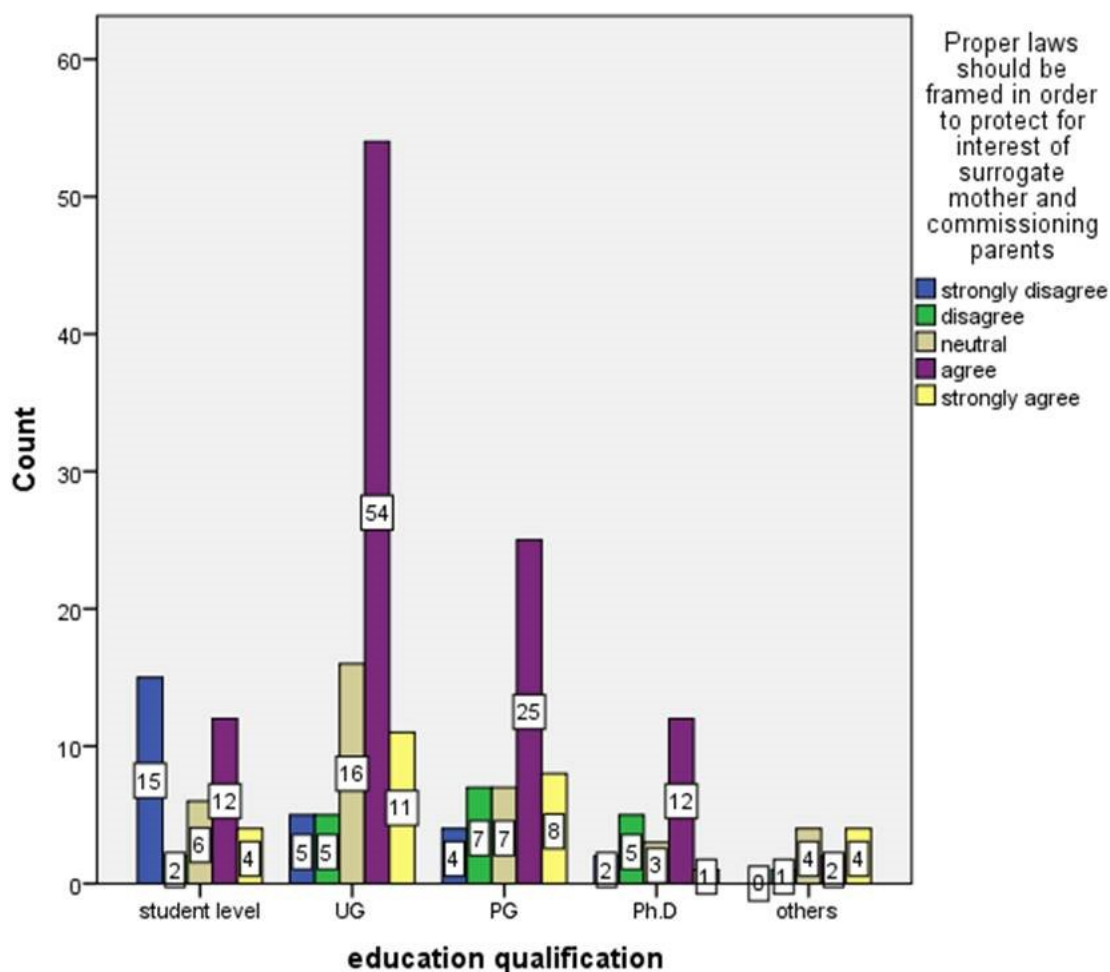


FIGURE 7:



LEGEND: This figure represents the relationship between the education qualification of respondents and their agreeability on whether proper laws should be made to protect surrogacy.

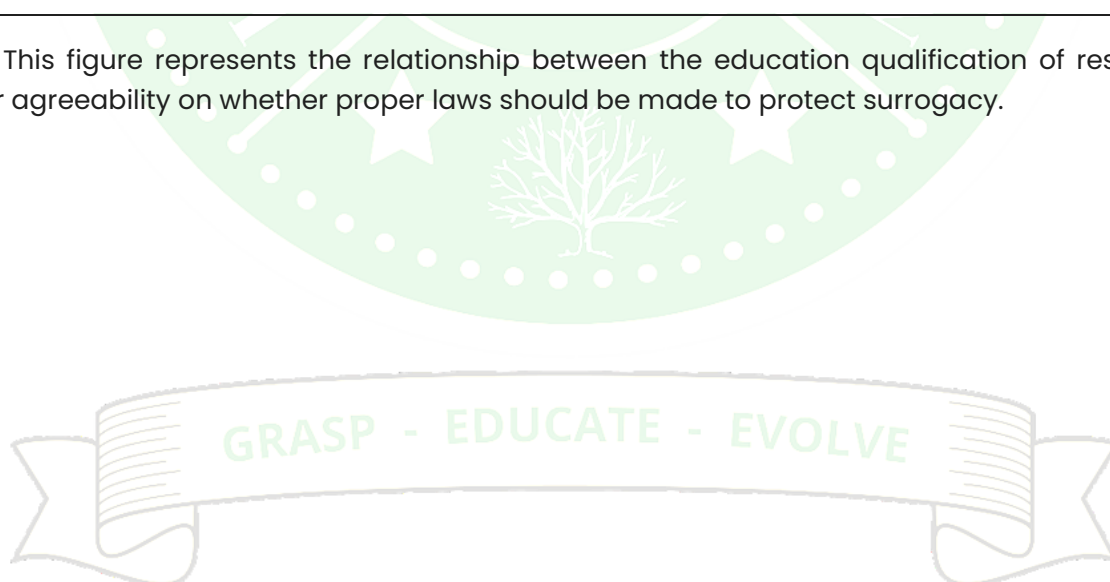
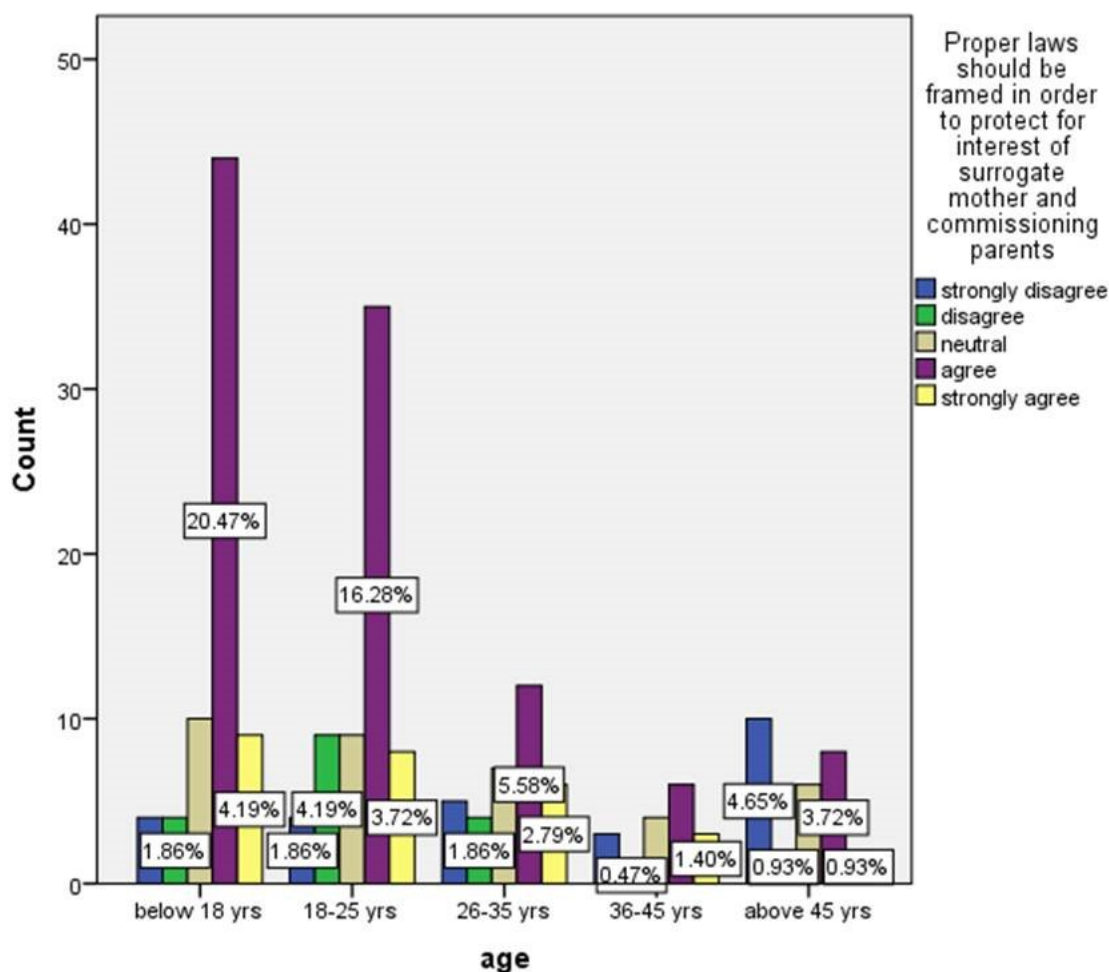


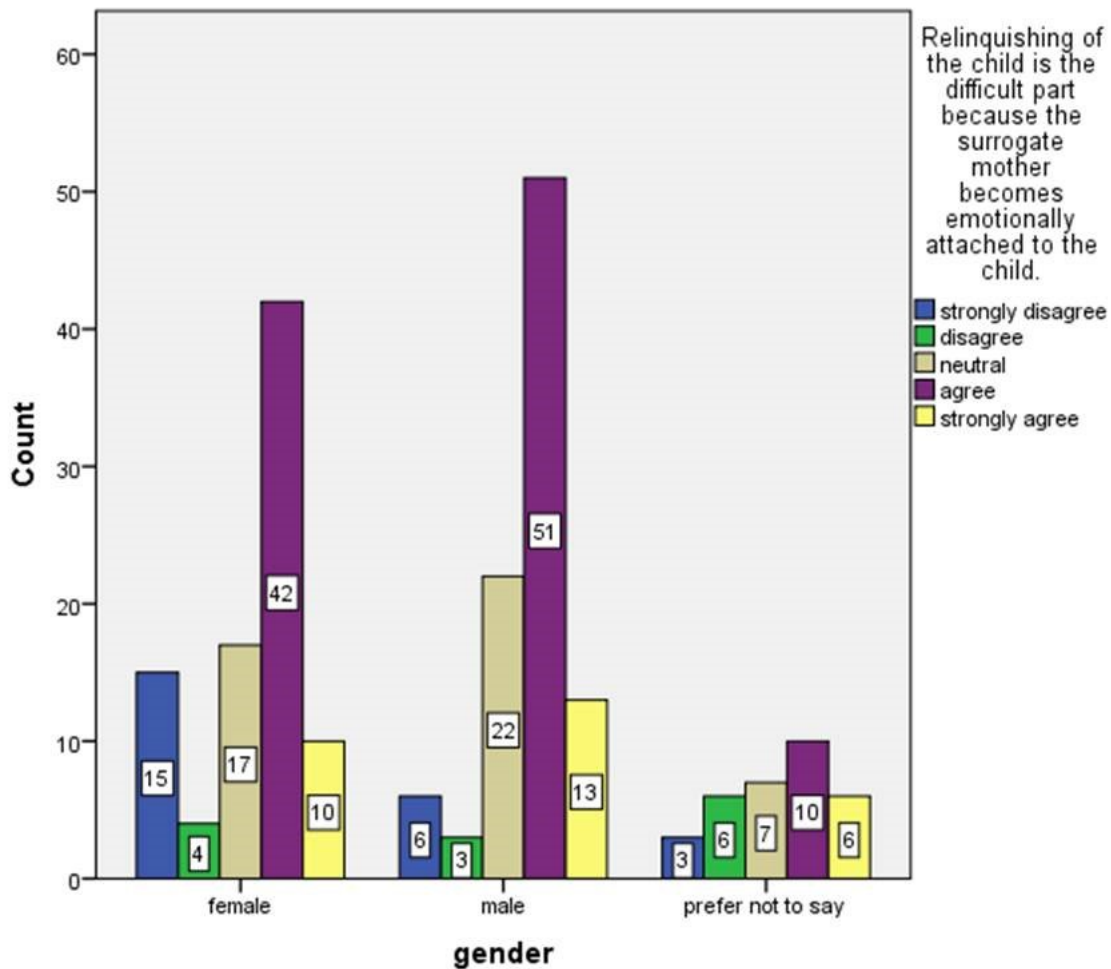
FIGURE 8:



LEGEND: This figure represents the relationship between the age group of respondents and their agreeability on whether proper laws should be made to protect surrogacy.



FIGURE 9:



LEGEND: This figure represents the relationship between the gender of the respondents and their agreeability on relinquishing the child is a difficult part of surrogates.

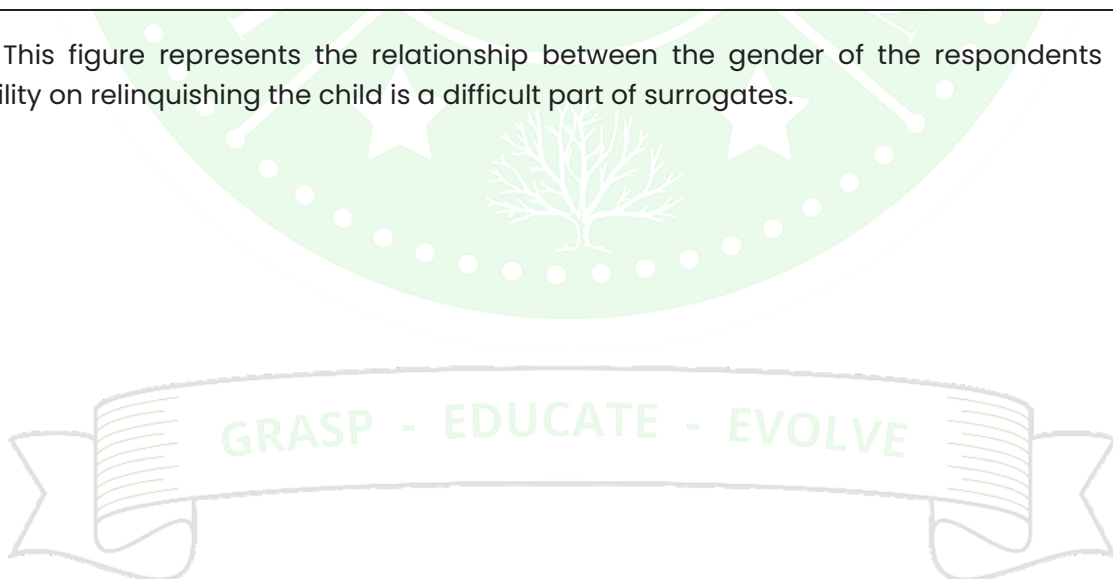
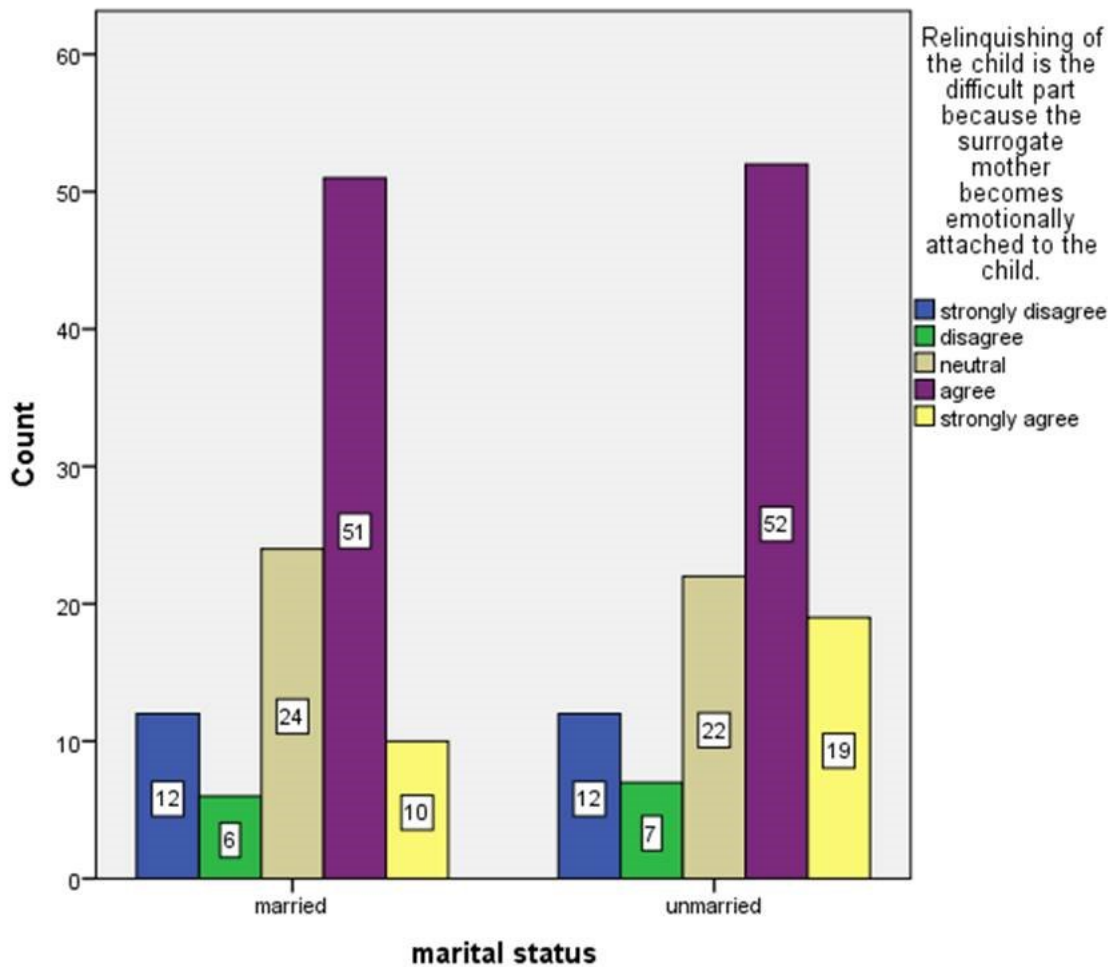


FIGURE 10:



LEGEND: This figure represents the relationship between the marital status of the respondents and their agreeability on relinquishing the child is a difficult part of surrogates.

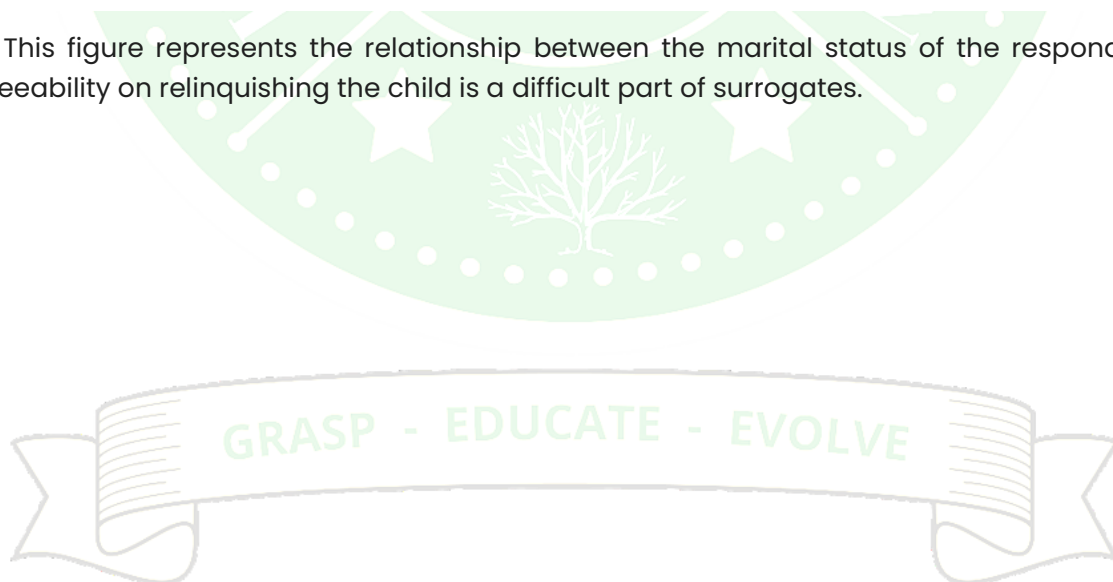


TABLE 1:

Correlations

		gender	Relinquishing of the child is the difficult part because the surrogate mother becomes emotionally attached to the child.
gender	Pearson Correlation	1	.047
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.496
	N	215	215
Relinquishing of the child is the difficult part because the surrogate mother becomes emotionally attached to the child.	Pearson Correlation	.047	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.496	
	N	215	215

Legend: this table represents the correlation between the age group and relinquishing of the child is the difficult part because the surrogate mother becomes emotionally attached to the child.

TABLE 2:

ANOVA

Poverty and unemployment being the triggering factors which compel them to become the surrogate mother

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	23.107	4	5.777	4.046	.004
Within Groups	299.851	210	1.428		
Total	322.958	214			

LEGEND: This table represents the anova of poverty and unemployment being the triggering factors which compel them to become the surrogate mother.

RESULT:

majority of all the age group of the respondents have agreed that surrogacy is a part of commercial business in india. (FIG 1) majority of the UG qualified respondents have agreed that surrogacy is a commercial business in India. (FIG 2)majority of male respondents have agreed surrogacy as social stigma(FIG 3))majority of unmarried respondents have neutral in opinion that surrogacy as social stigma(FIG 4)majority of the age group of 18-25 yrs have agreed that poverty being a factor to

become a surrogate mother (FIG 5)majority of the age group of 18-25 yrs have disagreed that poverty being factor to become a surrogate mother(FIG 6)majority of the UG qualified respondents have agreed that they should be law to protect surrogacy (FIG 7)majority of all the respondents have agreed that they should be law to protect surrogacy.(FIG 8)majority of the female respondents have agreed(FIG 9))majority all respondents have agreed this may be due to the fact that because always the mother (FIG 10). **TABLE 1** : There is significant difference of opinion among the age group of

the sample population. **Table 2:** there is a significant difference of opinion between the education qualifications of the sample population.

DISCUSSION:

majority of all the age group of the respondents have agreed that surrogacy is a part of commercial business in india. This might be because they are aware or would have witnessed women being paid for surrogate mothers(**FIG 1**) majority of the UG qualified respondents have agreed that surrogacy is a commercial business in India. This might be because they are aware of that business where the mother's womb has been given for rent and also they might be aware that the bill has been proposed in order to ban commercial surrogacy.(**FIG 2**)majority of male respondents have agreed surrogacy as social stigma this may be due to that they are aware of the difference between surrogacy and prostitution,then it is considered as social stigma because it involves as sexual service like prostitution surrogates also act through agent.(**FIG 3**)majority of unmarried respondents have neutral in opinion that surrogacy as social stigma this may be due to that both surrogacy and prostitution is morally wrong and bad in the eyes of the society but when it's comes to women it's her right to body to do things.(**FIG 4**) majority of the age group of 18-25 yrs have agreed that poverty being a factor to become a surrogate mother this may be due to that when there is a monetary need for women and has financial burden they tend to work as surrogate mothers.(**FIG 5**)majority of the age group of 18-25 yrs have disagreed that poverty being factor to become a surrogate mother this may be due that the women feel it is her right to body to do whatever she feels to do and also there are women who wants to make other family happy by giving birth to child not only for monetary purpose.(**FIG 6**)majority of the UG qualified respondents have agreed that they should be law to protect surrogacy this might be due to that this practice also involves human trafficking and breach of trust

so to avoid all this there should be proper law to protect surrogacy.(**FIG 7**)majority of all the respondents have agreed that there should be a law to protect surrogacy. This might be due to that in order to ensure proper procedure for surrogacy and no other illegal practice through agents .(**FIG 8**)majority of the female respondents have agreed this may be due to the fact that basically women are emotionally attached to their child when they are at womb itself so after birth one have to give the child which she carried for months is the difficult part.(**FIG 9**)majority all respondents have agreed this may be due to the fact that because always the mother – child bond inside the womb is very emotional and when they get separated after the birth it will be very difficult.(**FIG 10**)**TABLE 1 :** There is significant difference of opinion among the age group of the sample population. This may be due to the fact that they feel that women have legal rights to their reproductive boby.**Table 2:** there is a significant difference of opinion between the education qualifications of the sample population.

LIMITATIONS:

There are various limitations in this study which includes-There is a major constraint in the sample frame as the data was collected only from the respondents because of a particular area. Another limitation is the sample size of 201, which cannot be used to assume the thinking of the entire population in a particular country, state, or city.

CONCLUSION:

Surrogacy in the world isn't a new conception of having a child but the process of the surrogacy had been rehearsed from ancient times. The system of the surrogacy isn't only limited to the couples who are infertile or not suitable to have a child without any medical disfigurement but the surrogacy is also rehearsed by anyone who wishes to have a child. Due to the rising number of surrogacy processes it influences the country or the world in raising the debates on the legal, ethical, religious and the moral issues each over

the world. The proliferation in the process of marketable surrogacy leads to the violation of the mortal rights but marketable surrogacy safeguards the reproductive appanage of the infertile women. This research results shows that this practice also involves human trafficking and breach of trust so to avoid all this there should be proper law to protect surrogacy, poverty being factor to become a surrogate mother this may be due that the women feel it is her right to body to do whatever she feels to do and also there are women who wants to make other family happy by giving birth to child not only for monetary purpose. Suggestions: Since India has interdicted consensual homosexuality their right to gain surrogacy services to beget a child must be addressed.3. Ought to address the arising issues like children born out of ART ways with their dead parent's gametes cells.4. Passing the long- pending supported Reproductive Technology(ART) Bill will make the surrogacy act more important.

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A STUDY ON FUTURE OF WORK: HOW AUTOMATION IS CHANGING EMPLOYMENT TRENDS IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

The advent of automation in various sectors is reshaping employment trends across the world, including in India. Automation, fuelled by artificial intelligence (AI), robotics, and machine learning, has the potential to revolutionize traditional industries, enhancing productivity and reducing costs. However, its implications for the labour market, particularly in developing economies like India, are complex. This paper investigates the multifaceted impact of automation on employment in India, with a focus on job displacement, the emergence of new roles, skill requirements, and policy challenges. The study also examines the potential for automation to foster economic growth, while acknowledging the significant socio-economic challenges that need to be addressed.

Keywords: Automation, Employment, AI, Robotics, Labour Market, India, Skills, Economic Growth, Job Displacement.

1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid advance in automation technologies is changing industries all over the world, and India is not immune to the situation. The trend of automation through innovations in AI, robotics, machine learning, and data analytics can bring revolutions in all sectors, starting from agriculture and manufacturing to transport and service sectors. Such technological innovations promise higher productivity, reduce operational costs, and open up new economic avenues. However, they also create complex challenges in emerging economies, such as in India. As a country with a large and diverse workforce, India has a unique set of opportunities and risks in the context of automation. Being the world's largest democracy and an emerging

economy, the country depends significantly on the sectors of agriculture, textiles, and manufacturing. These sectors are traditionally labour-intensive. The integration of automation into these sectors will lead to mass job losses among millions of low-skilled workers. Most of the jobs in manufacturing, agriculture, and retail are susceptible to automation technologies that replace routine, manual labour with more efficient, cost-effective systems.

On the other hand, automation also opens up new job opportunities in data science, robotics, and digital technology, which require an evolving workforce with advanced skills. In this context, the future of work in India is tied to a critical question: How can the nation effectively balance the benefits of automation with the risks of widespread job

displacement and inequality? Further, with automation gaining widespread acceptance across sectors, there are possibilities to rethink job roles, ensure greater safety at workplaces, and raise productivity, thus unlocking new growth spaces for the economy. With India emerging as a technological innovation leader globally, this shift toward automation presents both challenges and opportunities that need to be understood in the nuanced manner in which it can impact employment. For India to take full advantage of the economic benefits of automation, it needs to address the skills development issue, ensure that technological growth benefits are equitably distributed, and create policies that safeguard vulnerable workers. The success of automation depends not only on growing scientific knowledge but also on the ability of a country to invest in human capital and address the social, economic, and policy-related challenges involved in such transition.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The rapid growth of automation in India poses significant challenges to employment, particularly in low-skilled and informal sector jobs, which make up a large portion of the workforce. As machines replace manual labour, concerns arise over job displacement, income inequality, and a widening skill gap. Many workers lack access to retraining opportunities, exacerbating these issues. Without effective policies and reskilling programs, automation could lead to increased unemployment and socio-economic disparity, particularly for vulnerable workers.

3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The article *"A Review of Automation and Robotics for the Bioindustry"* by Tony Grift, Qin Zhang, Naoshi Kondo, and K.C. Ting (2008)

In this article Tony Grift, Qin Zhang, Naoshi Kondo, and K.C. Tingⁱ(2008) examines the

integration of automation and robotics into the bioindustry, focusing on sectors like agriculture, food processing, and biotechnology. It highlights how robotic systems, such as drones and autonomous vehicles, are improving efficiency, precision, and scalability by automating tasks like planting, harvesting, and monitoring. The authors discuss the benefits of these technologies in addressing labour shortages and enhancing production quality, while also noting challenges such as the need for advanced sensors and machine learning. Overall, the paper emphasizes the transformative potential of automation in advancing the bioindustry, encouraging further innovation for greater sustainability and cost-effectiveness.

The article *"Robotics, IoT, and AI in the Automation of Agricultural Industry: A Review"* by Akshay Krishnan, Shashank Swarna, and Balasubramanya H. S (2020)

In this article Akshay Krishnan, Shashank Swarna, and Balasubramanya H. Sⁱⁱ(2020) explores the integration of robotics, the Internet of Things (IoT), and artificial intelligence (AI) in transforming the agricultural sector. It discusses how these technologies are revolutionizing farming practices by enhancing automation, improving precision, and optimizing resource use. Robotics is used for tasks like planting, harvesting, and monitoring crops, while IoT enables real-time data collection and tracking of environmental conditions. AI algorithms help in data analysis, decision-making, and predictive maintenance. The paper highlights the benefits, including increased efficiency, reduced labor costs, and higher crop yields, while also addressing the challenges, such as the high cost of implementation and the need for technological expertise. Overall, the article emphasizes the potential of these technologies to make agriculture more sustainable and efficient.

The article ***"Robotics and Automation in Agriculture: Present and Future Applications"*** by Mohamad Shukri Zainal Abidin, Abioye Abiodun Emmanuel, and Hameedah Sahib Hasan (2020)

In this article Mohamad Shukri Zainal Abidin, Abioye Abiodun Emmanuel, and Hameedah Sahib Hasan ⁱⁱⁱ provides an overview of how robotics and automation are currently being applied in agriculture and the potential for future developments. It examines the use of automated systems like robotic harvesters, drones, and autonomous tractors to increase efficiency and productivity in farming. The paper highlights the advantages of these technologies, such as reduced labor costs, improved precision in tasks like planting, monitoring, and harvesting, and the ability to manage resources more effectively. It also discusses the challenges, including high initial costs, the need for skilled labor, and issues related to system integration. The authors emphasize the future potential of robotics and automation to revolutionize agriculture by making it more sustainable, scalable, and efficient.

The article ***"Automation, AI, and the Future of Work in India"*** by Anita Hammer and Suparna Karmakar (2021)^{iv}

4. CASE LAWS

1. Transport and Dock Workers Union v. Mumbai Port Trust, AIR 2011 SC 2235

The Supreme Court recognized the right of employers to modernize and adapt to new technology but emphasized that the transition must be fair and just to workers. The Court directed that affected workers be compensated and alternative employment options be considered.

2. Standard Chartered Bank v. Directorate of Enforcement, AIR 2006 SC 1301

The Supreme Court reiterated that while foreign entities and technological advancements influence Indian employment structures, they

cannot override labor protections enshrined in Indian laws.

5. RESEARCH GAP & OBJECTIVES :

Despite growing research on the global impact of automation, there is a huge gap in understanding its specific effects on India's labour market. Most studies are done in developed countries, and little has been explored in terms of the broader societal implications of automation in India. Most of the existing research focuses on manufacturing and IT industries, with little attention to regional disparities, rural-urban differences, and the informal sector, which is a significant part of India's workforce. Moreover, there is a lack of policy analysis in addressing these issues. This research aims to fill these gaps by examining how automation affects employment in India and its potential to drive inclusive economic growth.

OBJECTIVES

1. To Analyse the Impact of Automation on Employment in India
2. To Investigate the Skills Gap and the Need for Reskilling
3. To Evaluate the Socio-Economic Implications of Automation
4. Examine the Impact of Automation on Employment Patterns in India
5. Assess the Skill Shifts Required for the Future Workforce

6. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The significance of this study lies in its potential to provide critical insights into how automation is reshaping India's labour market, which is vital for developing effective policies and strategies. With automation rapidly transforming sectors like manufacturing, agriculture, and services, understanding its impact on employment trends is essential for both workers and businesses. The research will highlight the

skills gap, emphasizing the need for reskilling and upskilling programs to ensure that India's workforce is prepared for future challenges. Additionally, it will explore regional disparities and socio-economic implications, guiding the creation of inclusive policies that benefit all sections of society.

7. HYPOTHESIS

H1: Automation of the work-sector have significantly increased the inequality.

H2: Automation tends to replace major job sectors especially agriculture and tech-industry.

8. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

When examining how automation affects job trends, the study encounters a number of difficulties. First, the availability and reliability of data are limited since it is frequently difficult to obtain precise and thorough data on the consequences of automation, which makes in-depth study difficult. quick and dynamic technology change also poses a problem because it is hard to forecast how automation technologies will affect the labor market in the long run due to their quick evolution. The problem of restricted long-term forecasting makes matters more difficult because it is impossible to foretell the future consequences of automation technologies due to their unexpected nature. Furthermore, it is challenging to gauge the impact on the unorganized sector due to its lack of documentation, which makes it challenging to evaluate how automation affects both informal employment and general economic trends.

9. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Doctrinal Research on Automation and Its Impact on Employment Trends in India

India is at the forefront of an evolving job market driven by automation and technological advancements. The widespread adoption of artificial intelligence (AI), robotics, and machine learning (ML) is redefining traditional employment

structures. While automation has introduced increased efficiency and productivity, it has also raised concerns about job displacement. The following sections explore both the positive and negative impacts of automation on employment trends in India.

• Positive Impact

i. Job Creation in Emerging Sectors:

Automation has led to the rise of new industries, particularly in data analytics, cybersecurity, cloud computing, and AI-driven solutions. The demand for skilled professionals in these fields is expected to rise, with India becoming a hub for AI and IT services. As a result, sectors such as software development, digital marketing, and robotic process automation (RPA) are witnessing rapid employment growth.

ii. **Enhanced Productivity and Economic Growth:** Automation increases operational efficiency, reducing human error and improving production capabilities. Indian industries, particularly manufacturing and services, benefit from automation-driven cost savings, allowing businesses to reinvest in innovation and workforce expansion. This contributes to overall economic growth and increased employment in high-skill sectors.

iii. **Shift Toward Upskilling and Reskilling:** The rise of automation has prompted a shift in skill requirements. Organizations and government initiatives such as "Skill India" and "Digital India" are focusing on training employees in digital skills, AI, and advanced manufacturing techniques. As a result, individuals who upgrade their skills remain relevant in the evolving job market.

iv. **Boost to the Gig Economy:** With automation taking over routine tasks, there is a growing reliance on gig and freelance workers. Platforms like Upwork, Fiverr, and India-based portals such as NaukriGig are enabling professionals to work on specialized projects remotely, leading to more flexible

and diversified job opportunities.

v. **Transformation of Traditional Industries:** Sectors such as agriculture, logistics, and healthcare are also benefiting from automation. Precision farming, AI-driven diagnostics, and automated logistics systems are improving efficiency while creating new employment opportunities in tech-assisted domains.

vi. **Strengthened Global Competitiveness:** Indian companies leveraging automation are enhancing their competitiveness in the global market. Businesses adopting AI and automation-driven supply chains are attracting international investments, strengthening

vii. **Growth in Smart Cities and Infrastructure Development:** The implementation of automation in urban planning and infrastructure development has accelerated the growth of smart cities in India. Automated traffic management, AI-driven energy grids, and smart public transportation systems are contributing to improved urban employment and service sectors.

viii. **Expansion of E-Commerce and Digital Services:** Automation has facilitated the expansion of e-commerce and digital services, leading to increased demand for supply chain experts, AI-driven customer support roles, and logistics management professionals. The growth of digital platforms has further expanded employment opportunities in warehousing, delivery services, and fintech.

ix. **Development of Robotics and AI-Driven Research:** India is witnessing a surge in robotics and AI-driven research, creating new job opportunities in engineering, software development, and data science. Universities and tech startups are increasingly investing in AI and robotics research, leading to employment growth in these sectors.

x. **Increased Financial Inclusion:**

Automation in financial services has improved financial accessibility for underserved populations. AI-powered banking solutions, digital lending platforms, and automated customer service systems have enhanced employment opportunities in the fintech industry while expanding access to financial services.

Negative Impact

xi. **Job Displacement in Low-Skilled Sectors:** Automation is replacing repetitive and manual jobs, particularly in industries such as manufacturing, retail, and customer service. Many low-skilled workers face job losses as machines and AI-driven systems perform tasks more efficiently and at a lower cost.

xii. **Widening Skill Gap and Unemployment Risks:** The transition to an automation-driven workforce requires upskilling, but not all workers have equal access to training. The digital divide and lack of resources for skill development in rural and semi-urban areas may lead to rising unemployment and increased economic disparity.

xiii. **Impact on Traditional Employment Models:** Full-time, permanent jobs are being replaced by short-term contracts and project-based work. While this offers flexibility, it also leads to job insecurity, lack of employee benefits, and income instability.

xiv. **Increased Pressure on Policy and Education System:** The rapid pace of automation necessitates changes in education curricula and labor policies. There is an urgent need for reforms in technical education, vocational training, and labor laws to accommodate the evolving job landscape.

xv. **Economic Polarization:** Automation favors highly skilled professionals while displacing low-skilled workers, leading to a growing divide between high-income and

low- income groups. This can exacerbate economic inequality and create social unrest if not addressed through policy interventions.

xvi. **Ethical and Social Concerns:** The rise of AI-driven decision-making raises ethical concerns regarding bias, fairness, and transparency in hiring practices. Automated recruitment systems may inadvertently discriminate against certain demographics, leading to social and employment inequalities.

xvii. **Decline of Traditional Job Roles:** Sectors such as clerical work, manual accounting, and traditional retail are experiencing a decline in employment due to AI-driven automation. The reduction in job roles that once provided employment to a significant portion of the workforce may lead to widespread economic challenges.

xviii. **Psychological and Workplace Challenges:** Automation-driven job transitions can create psychological stress among workers facing job uncertainty. The pressure to constantly upskill and adapt to new technologies can contribute to burnout and workplace dissatisfaction, affecting

overall employee well-being.

• The Role of Government and Policy Interventions

The Indian government is actively working to mitigate the negative impacts of automation while fostering job creation. Policies such as the "National Policy on Software Products" and "Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme" are encouraging investment in digital transformation. Additionally, collaborations between educational institutions and industries are crucial in bridging the skill gap.

• Future Outlook for Employment in India

The future of work in India is being shaped by a digital and automated economy. While automation presents challenges, proactive measures in education, policy, and workforce training can ensure a balanced transition. Industries that adapt to automation trends and integrate human-AI collaboration will thrive, creating a dynamic and resilient employment landscape.

[B] NON-DOCTRINAL RESEARCH

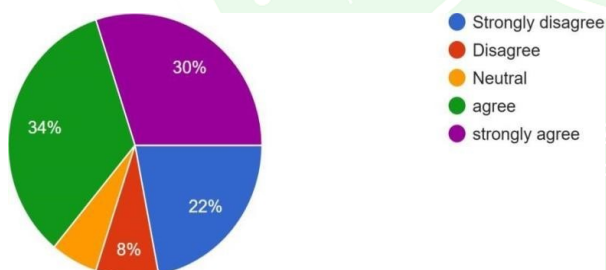


Table No.1 Companies should train employees for new roles instead of replacing them with automation

INDICATORS	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	agree	strongly agree	Total
Male	11	2	1	7	14	20
	[22.00]	[4.00]	[2.00]	[14.00]	[28.00]	[70.00]
Female	15	2	2	10	1	30

	[30.00]	[4.00]	[4.00]	[20.00]	[2.00]	[60.00]
Transgender	0	0	0	0	0	0
	[0.00]	[0.00]	[0.00]	[0.00]	[0.00]	[0.00]
Total	26	4	3	17	15	50
	[54.00]	[8.00]	[6.00]	[34.00]	[30.00]	[100.00]

Source : Primary Data

The survey results indicate that a majority of respondents (34percentage agree, 30percentage strongly agree) support the idea that companies should train employees for new roles rather than replacing them with automation. However, a smaller proportion remains neutral (6percentage, while 8percentage disagree and 22 percentage of

the respondents strongly disagree. This suggests that while there is significant support for retraining employees, there is still a notable portion of people who either oppose or remain uncertain about this approach. The second question's responses, which are not visible in the image, would further clarify public sentiment on automation's impact on job opportunities.

Table No.02 Automation has the potential to reduce job opportunities in the country.

INDICATORS	Yes	No	Total
Male	31	2	33
	[62.00]	[4.00]	[66.00]
Female	16	1	17
	[32.00]	[2.00]	[34.00]
Total	47	3	50
	[94.00]	[6.00]	[100.00]

Source : Primary Data

The survey results strongly indicate that most respondents (94 percentage of the respondents believe automation will reduce job opportunities in their country, while only a small minority (6 percentage of the

respondents disagree. This overwhelming concern aligns with the previous question, where a majority supported retraining employees instead of replacing them with automation. The data suggests that people

perceive automation as a threat to employment and prefer companies to focus on upskilling rather than job displacement.

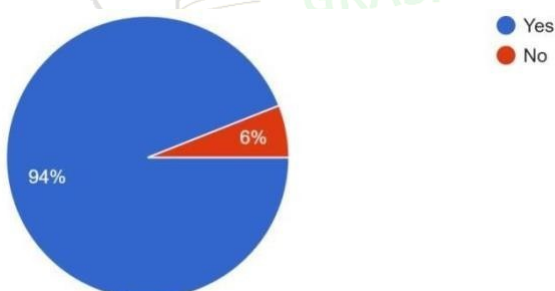
10. TESTING OF HYPOTHESIS

H1: Training employees for new roles instead of automation replacement significantly improves job retention, productivity, and cost-effectiveness

Table 1 shows that the survey results indicate that a majority of respondents 34percentage agree, 30percentage strongly agree support the idea that companies should train employees for new roles rather than replacing them with automation. However, a smaller proportion remains neutral 6percentage, while 8percentage disagree and 22percentage strongly disagree. This suggests that while there is significant support for retraining employees, there is still a notable portion of people who either oppose or remain uncertain about this approach. The second question's responses, which are not visible in the image, would further clarify public sentiment on automation's impact on job opportunities.

H2: Automation significantly reduces job opportunities in affected industries compared to non- automated sectors.

Table 2 shows that the survey results strongly indicate that most respondents (94percentage) believe automation will reduce job opportunities in their country, while only a small minority (6percentage) disagree. This overwhelming concern aligns with the previous question, where a



majority supported retraining employees instead of replacing them with automation.

The data suggests that people perceive automation as a threat to employment and prefer companies to focus on upskilling rather than job displacement.

11. CONCLUSION

Automation is reshaping employment trends in India, presenting both opportunities and challenges. While it is creating new jobs in advanced sectors, it is also leading to displacement in traditional industries. The key to mitigating negative impacts lies in proactive policymaking, investment in skill development, and fostering an adaptive workforce. Moreover, strong collaboration between the government, educational institutions, and private sector stakeholders is essential in ensuring a smooth transition into an automation-driven economy. By creating a workforce that is adaptable and skilled in emerging technologies, India can position itself as a global leader in the automated economy. If properly harnessed, automation can drive sustainable economic growth, reduce inefficiencies, and elevate India's status as a technology-driven economy, while ensuring that no segment of the workforce is left behind.

12. SUGGESTION

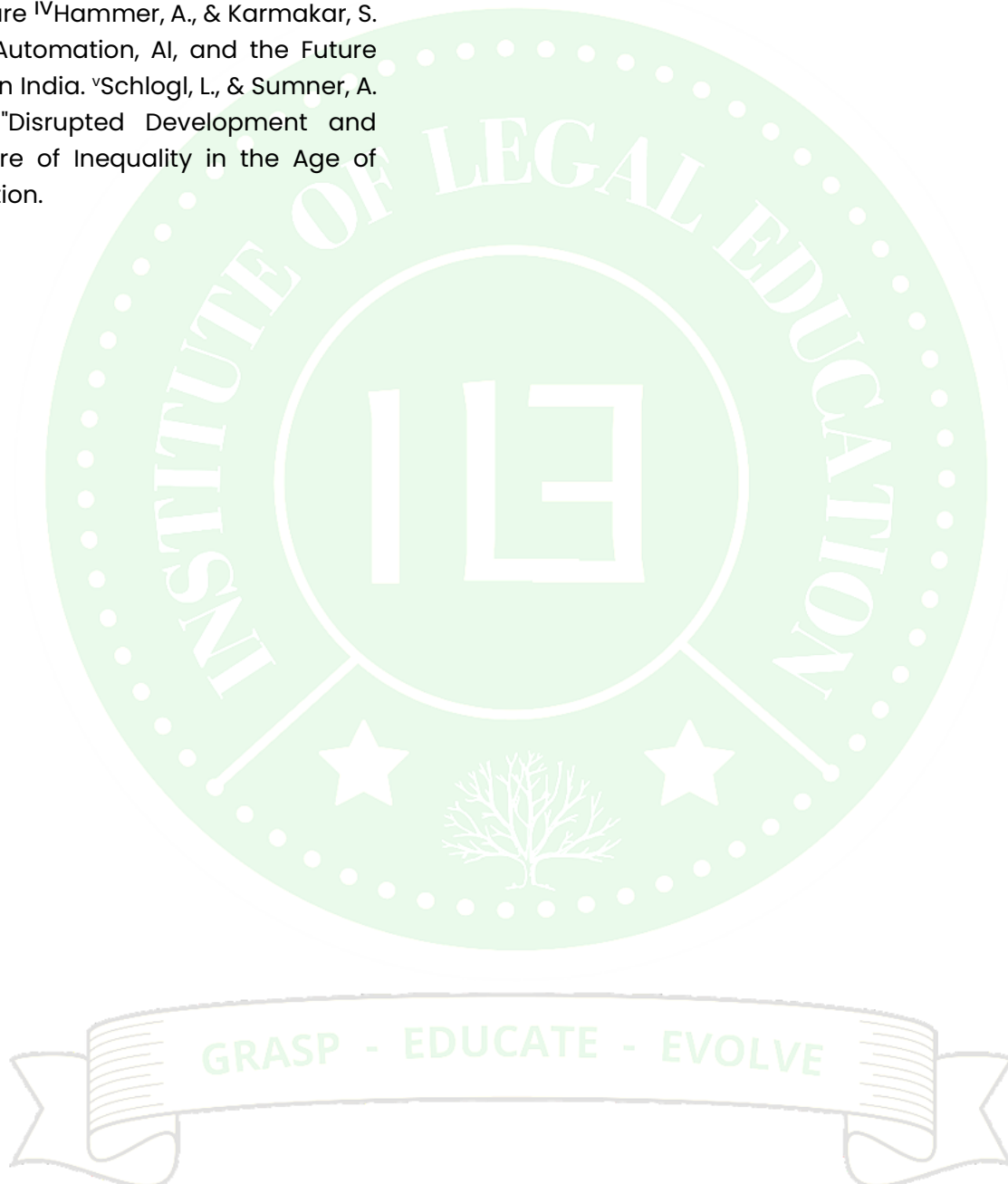
- Strengthening skill development programs to prepare workers for automation-driven jobs.
- Encouraging public-private partnerships for better reskilling initiatives.
- Expanding employment in emerging sectors like AI and cybersecurity.
- Implementing inclusive labor policies to protect workers in vulnerable industries.
- Promoting human-AI collaboration to balance job displacement and workforce adaptation.

13. END NOTES

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^{iv}Hammer, A., & Karmakar, S. (2021). "Automation, AI, and the Future of Work in India."
^vSchlogl, L., & Sumner, A. (2020). "Disrupted Development and the Future of Inequality in the Age of Automation."



IMPACT OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE ON CONTRACT LAW: LEGAL CHALLENGES AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the evolving intersection of artificial intelligence (AI) and contract law. As AI technologies increasingly automate contract creation, interpretation, and enforcement, they challenge traditional legal doctrines and raise new legal, ethical, and procedural issues. This research examines how AI impacts contractual formation, consent, performance, and liability. It evaluates existing legal frameworks, identifies gaps, and proposes reforms to adapt to AI-driven contract systems. Through doctrinal analysis, comparative studies, and case law review, the paper provides comprehensive insights into the future of contract law in an AI-dominated era.

CHAPTER-1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background The digital age has ushered in a transformative era where artificial intelligence (AI) is reshaping industries, redefining work, and revolutionizing legal processes. Among these changes, one of the most profound impacts is being felt in the domain of contract law. Traditionally a field rooted in human intention, trust, and negotiation, contract law is now confronting the rapid infiltration of autonomous systems capable of drafting, interpreting, and executing contracts without direct human input. This intersection between technology and law raises important questions about the adaptability of existing legal frameworks. Rationale Contracts are foundational to legal and economic transactions, providing the structure within which parties operate and obligations are enforced. As AI tools become more advanced—leveraging natural language processing, machine learning, and blockchain technologies—their integration into contract lifecycle management presents unique challenges. These range from questions of legal personhood and liability to issues surrounding consent, fairness, and accountability. A critical

examination of these issues is essential for modernizing the law to maintain its relevance and effectiveness.

1.2 Objectives This research seeks to:

Explore the ways AI is currently being used in contract law. Identify legal challenges posed by AI in contractual contexts. Analyze how existing doctrines accommodate or resist these changes. Propose reforms to bridge the gap between technological capability and legal infrastructure.

1.3 This study uses doctrinal legal research, supported by comparative analysis, case law review, and scholarly discourse. Jurisdictions examined include India, the United States, the United Kingdom, and the European Union to provide a comprehensive view of global legal responses.

CHAPTER - 2

UNDERSTANDING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN LEGAL CONTEXT

1. Artificial intelligence (AI) refers to the simulation of human intelligence in machines that are capable of performing tasks requiring learning, reasoning, problem-solving, and decision-making. In

the legal context, AI is used to analyze case law, predict outcomes, assist in document drafting, and increasingly, to create and manage contracts. This chapter provides a foundational understanding of AI technologies and their relevance to the legal system, particularly contract law.

2. **Definition and Scope of AI** AI encompasses a wide range of technologies including machine learning (ML), natural language processing (NLP), robotic process automation (RPA), and expert systems. Machine learning, a subset of AI, allows systems to learn from data without being explicitly programmed. NLP enables machines to understand and generate human language, making it particularly useful in drafting and interpreting legal texts.
3. **Categories of AI Relevant to Law**
 - Rule-based AI:** Operates based on predefined logic and rules. Used in legal decision trees and expert systems.
 - Machine Learning Models:** Analyze vast amounts of legal data to make predictions or decisions, such as contract risk scoring.
 - Natural Language Processing:** Extracts and interprets clauses, obligations, and legal jargon from contracts.
 - Generative AI:** Capable of creating legal drafts, simulating legal arguments, or drafting full contracts autonomously.
4. **Application of AI in Legal Practice** AI tools are used in various legal tasks:
 - Contract Analysis:** Reviewing thousands of contracts for compliance and risk.
 - Legal Research:** Accelerating the identification of relevant statutes and case law.
 - Predictive Analytics:** Estimating case outcomes and settlement probabilities.
 - Document Automation:** Generating standard contracts, forms, and reports.

Advantages of AI in Contract Law

 - Efficiency:** AI reduces the time and cost involved in drafting and analyzing contracts.
 - Accuracy:** Minimizes human

error, especially in complex or voluminous contracts. **Scalability:** Can handle large volumes of contracts simultaneously. **Data-Driven Insights:** Provides real-time analytics and risk assessments.

5. **Challenges and Limitations**
 - Opacity:** AI decisions may lack transparency, making it difficult to explain or contest outcomes.
 - Bias:** ML systems can inherit biases present in the data.
 - Overdependence:** Excessive reliance on AI may erode legal judgment and oversight.
 - Legal Personhood:** AI systems do not possess legal status, raising questions about agency and liability.
 6. **AI and Legal Personality** One of the major philosophical and legal debates centers on whether AI should be granted a form of legal personality. While some argue for limited recognition akin to corporate entities, others caution against granting rights and obligations to non-human actors without consciousness or moral agency.
 7. **The Role of Human Oversight** Human oversight remains crucial to ensure that AI systems align with legal and ethical standards. Lawyers must interpret AI-generated outcomes, ensure compliance, and address legal nuances beyond the scope of algorithmic logic.
- 3.6 Challenges and Limitations**
- Opacity:** AI decisions may lack transparency, making it difficult to explain or contest outcomes.

CHAPTER - 3

ROLE OF LAWYERS AND LEGAL PROFESSIONALS

14.1 The incorporation of AI in contract law not only transforms the substance of legal doctrines but also redefines the responsibilities and skills required of legal professionals. This chapter explores the evolving role of lawyers, judges, and legal scholars in a landscape shaped by AI.

14.2 New Skill Sets for Legal Practitioners

Tech-Savviness: Familiarity with AI tools, algorithms, and automation processes. Data Literacy: Understanding data sources, structures, and implications for privacy and security. Interdisciplinary Knowledge: Combining legal expertise with insights from computer science, ethics, and statistics.

14.3 Changing Legal Tasks Contract Drafting: Increasing reliance on AI to generate standardized contracts. Review and Negotiation: Lawyers now verify AI-generated clauses and terms for fairness and legality. Due Diligence: AI enhances document analysis, reducing manual workload and turnaround time.

14.4 Challenges to Legal Practice Commoditization of Legal Services: Routine tasks may be automated, reducing demand for junior roles. Accountability for AI Decisions: Lawyers must ensure oversight of decisions made by or with AI systems. Adaptation Pressure: Legal professionals face continual learning demands in an evolving tech landscape.

14.5 Judicial Role and Courtroom Implications

AI-Assisted Adjudication: Judges may use AI tools for legal research, precedent identification, and case management. Procedural Fairness: Courts must ensure AI tools do not compromise impartiality or due process. Expert Witnesses: Rise in reliance on technical experts to interpret algorithmic logic.

14.6 Legal Education and Training

Curriculum Reform: Law schools need to incorporate AI, legal tech, and digital law modules. Practical Simulations: Emphasis on hands-on training with legal automation platforms. Ethics and Technology: Preparing students to navigate AI's ethical and regulatory dimensions.

14.7 Collaboration with Technologists

Legal Tech Development: Lawyers increasingly partner with developers to build AI tools tailored for legal use. Multidisciplinary Teams: Complex AI contract cases demand cooperation between

legal and technical expert. Standardization Efforts: Legal professionals contribute to shaping norms and best practices for AI usage.

14.8 Evolving Professional Ethics

Duty of Competence: Now includes understanding of technology used in practice Confidentiality Risks: AI platforms may pose risks to privileged information AI-Driven Conflicts: Managing bias and opacity in tools used for contract management and dispute resolution.

CHAPTER - 4

FUTURE PROSPECTS AND EMERGING TRENDS

16.1 Introduction

This section introduces the importance of forward-thinking in law, especially as AI technologies evolve faster than legal systems can adapt. It sets the stage for analyzing future trajectories.

16.2 Evolving AI Capabilities

Generative AI in Contracts: The rise of language models capable of drafting complex, customized contracts. Self-learning Systems: AI that adapts its contract logic based on outcomes and feedback. Autonomous Negotiation Bots: AI agents that can independently negotiate terms in real-time.

16.3 Predictive Contract Analytics

AI systems using historical data to forecast legal risks, compliance issues, or likelihood of disputes. Applications in due diligence, risk assessment, and strategic decision-making.

16.4 Integration with Emerging

Technologies Blockchain and Smart Contracts 2.0: Use of decentralized AI logic to self-execute and self-update contracts. IoT Integration: Contracts triggered by data from interconnected devices (e.g., shipping sensors. Quantum Computing: Long-term potential to supercharge AI's capacity for legal analysis.).

16.5 New Contract Models

Dynamic Contracts: Continuously updating agreements based on external inputs (e.g.,

market prices, policy changes). Embedded Ethics Contracts: AI-enforced clauses based on ethical guidelines or sustainability metrics. Human-AI Hybrid Contracts: Cooperative arrangements between human decision-makers and AI tools.

16.6 Access to Justice and Inclusion

AI democratizing contract services through legal chatbots and document automation for underrepresented communities. Use in legal aid, small businesses, and informal economies.

16.7 Risks on the Horizon

Algorithmic Monopolies: Dominance by a few firms providing AI contract solutions, raising antitrust concerns. \n- Legal Obsolescence: Outdated doctrines failing to address emerging contract models. \n- Cybersecurity: Increasing vulnerability to manipulation, hacking, or data misuse in AI-driven contracts.

16.8 Legal and Institutional Adaptation

Courts adopting AI tools for dispute resolution and case management. \n- Law firms shifting toward tech-enabled service delivery. \n- Regulatory bodies exploring anticipatory governance frameworks.

16.9 Research and Innovation in Legal AI

Growth in academic centers and think tanks exploring AI-contract law intersections. \n- Collaboration between universities, law firms, and tech companies to build trustworthy legal AI. \n- Expansion of open-access legal datasets to improve AI training.

CONCLUSION

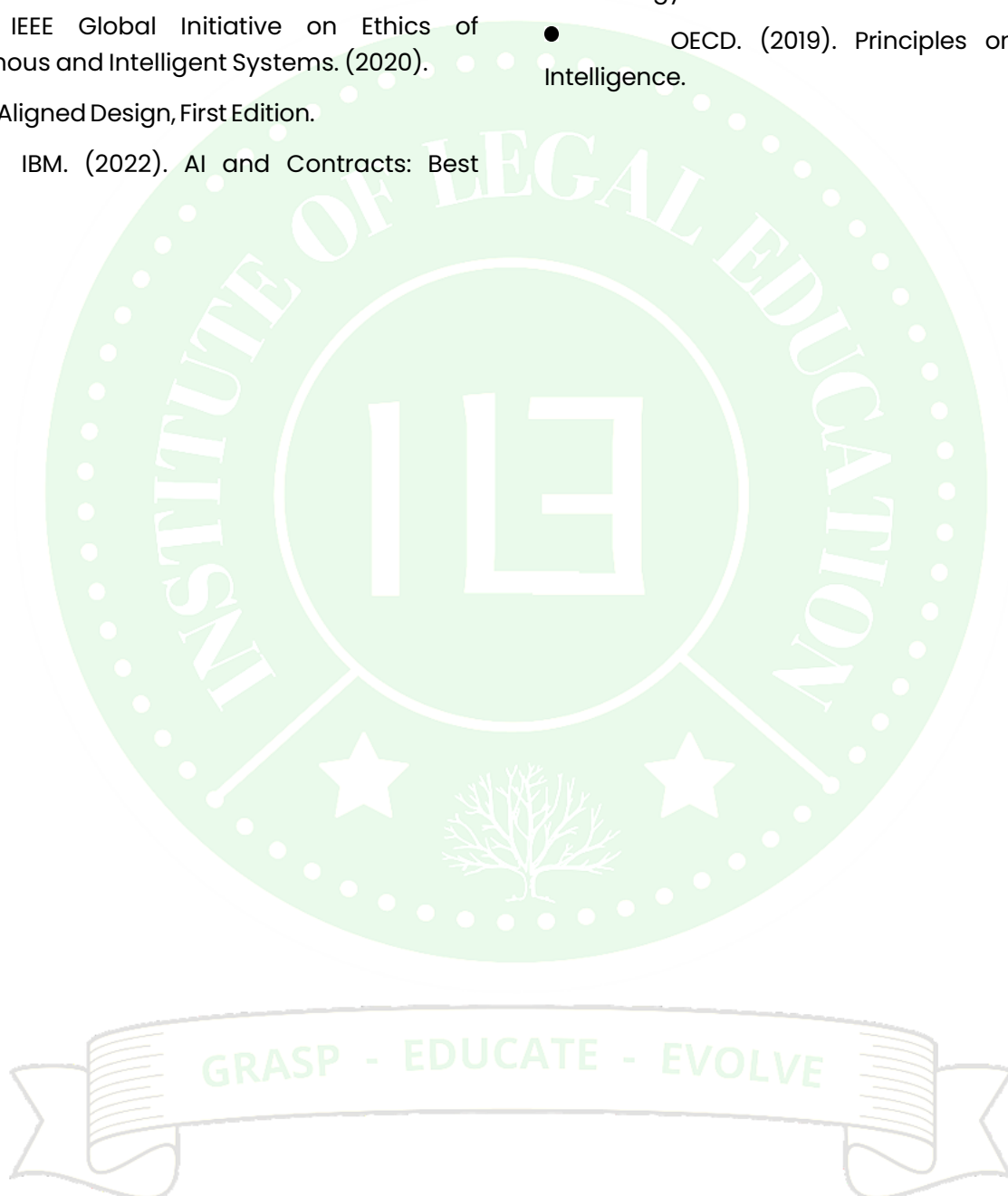
Artificial intelligence is no longer a futuristic concept—it is a present reality that is reshaping the fabric of contract law. This paper has examined the profound ways in which AI influences contract formation, interpretation, enforcement, and accountability. It is clear that traditional doctrines, developed in an analog world, are insufficient to fully address the challenges posed by autonomous systems, smart contracts, and data-driven legal decision-

making. The convergence of AI and contract law introduces new legal questions, from redefining intention and consent to assigning liability in machine-mediated interactions. It also creates ethical dilemmas regarding transparency, fairness, and human oversight. While AI promises to enhance efficiency, accessibility, and innovation, it must be regulated through thoughtful, proactive legal reforms. The role of legal professionals will shift significantly, demanding continuous education, interdisciplinary collaboration, and technological literacy. Ultimately, the goal is not to replace human judgment with AI, but to harmonize technological advancements with the foundational principles of justice, autonomy, and equality. Legal systems must remain resilient and adaptable, ensuring that the rise of AI strengthens rather than undermines the rule of law.

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THE EFFECTS OF CORPORATE CONSOLIDATION ON MARKET COMPETITION, PRICING, AND SMALLHOLDER ACCESS IN AGRICULTURE

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BEST CITATION – ISHITA & PROF (DR.) SHEFALI RAIZADA, THE EFFECTS OF CORPORATE CONSOLIDATION ON MARKET COMPETITION, PRICING, AND SMALLHOLDER ACCESS IN AGRICULTURE, INDIAN JOURNAL OF LEGAL REVIEW (IJLR), 5 (8) OF 2025, PG. 532-537, APIS – 3920 – 0001 & ISSN – 2583-2344.

Introduction

Corporate mergers and acquisitions are becoming a hallmark of contemporary agribusiness. Critics claim that these consolidations undermine market competition, raise input costs, and deny smallholder farmers access to important developments, while supporters maintain that they increase efficiencies, support R&D, and foster technological innovation. Given its importance to rural life and food security, the agricultural sector deserves particular attention when it comes to concentrated corporate ownership. The market for agricultural inputs saw a dramatic change between 2015 and 2018. The "Big Six" agribusinesses were whittled down to four key players: Bayer, Corteva, Syngenta, and BASF, following three significant mergers: Dow-DuPont, ChemChina-Syngenta, and Bayer-Monsanto. The end effect was an oligopolistic market structure in which a small number of multinational firms had a major impact on pricing, innovation, and competition. In addition to changing the supply chain, this consolidation changed the balance of power between input providers and farmers. For instance, the combination of Bayer and Monsanto created a business that dominates the agrochemical and seed industries, raising questions about regulatory control and monopolistic practices. These mergers raise concerns about the sustainability and inclusivity of agricultural innovation networks and have significant economic ramifications, especially for vulnerable stakeholders.

Keywords: Agribusiness consolidation, Market concentration, Monopolistic pricing, Smallholder farmers, Seed and agrochemical markets

Regulatory interventions

Market Concentration and Competition

One of the most visible impacts of M&As in agriculture is the increase in market concentration. The global agrochemical and seed industries are now dominated by a few corporations, including Bayer, Corteva, Syngenta, and BASF, primarily as a result of landmark M&As between 2015 and 2018.⁶⁴⁰

When a few companies control a sizable portion of the market, this is referred to as market concentration. The number of independent competitors frequently decreases when mergers and acquisitions (M&As) increase in frequency, especially among major firms in a sector. An industry's competitive dynamics can be drastically changed by this concentration of market power. The possible move toward oligopolistic or monopolistic pricing structures is one of the most obvious effects of this concentration. Businesses have more pricing

⁶⁴⁰ European Commission, Case M.8084 – Bayer/Monsanto, Commission Decision of 21 March 2018.

power when they control a smaller portion of the supply of products and services. Dominant companies may raise prices to boost profit margins even if doing so lowers customer welfare if there isn't enough competition to keep pricing in check. This is particularly troublesome in critical industries like technology, healthcare, and agriculture, where consumers may have few other options and are forced to pay higher prices. Price is not the only factor impacted by fewer rivals; the pace and course of innovation are also impacted. Businesses are encouraged to innovate in competitive markets in order to stand out from the competition and gain market share. Nonetheless, dominant enterprises frequently have less motivation to innovate in highly concentrated marketplaces. Instead of spending money on expensive research and development (R&D), a company may decide to rest on its laurels and stick with its current product lines once it has achieved a significant level of market control. Long-term effects on technical development, economic vitality, and overall productivity growth within an industry may result from this stagnation. The consequences of market concentration are considerably more dire for smaller businesses and prospective newcomers. The establishment of substantial entry barriers is one significant effect. Large, established companies usually have strong brand awareness, enormous economies of scale, and vast distribution networks. Even if new businesses provide unique goods or services, these advantages make it very difficult for them to take off. Dominant companies frequently possess extensive and well curated patent portfolios in sectors such as biotechnology and pharmaceuticals, thereby obstructing access to vital inventions or procedures. Smaller players find it unaffordable to compete because they have to either pay exorbitant fees for patent licenses or take part in drawn-out, dangerous legal proceedings to contest them. Furthermore, start-up investment may be discouraged by crowded markets. If the path to market success is blocked by powerful incumbents, venture capitalists and other

investors are less likely to support new entrants. A feedback loop results from this: less competition causes market concentration, which discourages innovation and new entrants and strengthens the position of established businesses. This may eventually lead to a less vibrant economy where consumers have fewer options, innovation slows down, and prices become more unappealing to consumers. In the Bayer-Monsanto merger, for example, the European Commission and Indian regulators both noted that the transaction would reduce competition in traits and crop protection products, ultimately impacting farmers' choices and increasing input costs.⁶⁴¹

Pricing and Input Accessibility

Increased consolidation can lead to higher prices for seeds, pesticides, and fertilizers. Following the Monsanto acquisition, Bayer gained significant control over genetically modified traits and proprietary seed technologies, which critics argued could lead to monopolistic pricing in key markets like India, Brazil, and parts of Africa. Higher input prices disproportionately affect smallholder and marginal farmers who lack bargaining power or access to government subsidies. These farmers may either absorb increased costs or reduce input usage, potentially affecting yields and household income.

A study by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) indicated that consolidation in seed markets often correlates with price increases and reduced varietal diversity.⁶⁴² Corporate mergers and acquisitions (M&As) in the agricultural sector often result in the consolidation of vital input markets. This includes seeds, agrochemicals, and fertilizers—products that form the foundation of modern agricultural productivity. While M&As may offer synergies and operational efficiencies for businesses, they

⁶⁴¹ Competition Commission of India, Bayer AG/Monsanto Co., C-2017/08/523.

⁶⁴² OECD, "Concentration in Seed Markets and its Impact on Innovation," OECD Food, Agriculture and Fisheries Papers, No. 132, 2020.

raise serious concerns about pricing and input accessibility, especially for smallholder farmers and developing economies.

Market Power and Monopolistic Pricing

A new corporation that controls a significant piece of the input market is typically the outcome of large agribusiness mergers. The 2018 merger of Bayer and Monsanto is one such instance. The result of the combination is one of the world's largest integrated enterprises in the seed and agrochemical industries. This development alarmed authorities worldwide because Monsanto already had substantial intellectual rights over genetically modified (GM) seed traits and Bayer was a major pesticide maker.

Two industrial titans with leading positions in their respective fields were brought together by the merger: Bayer, which had a solid presence in agricultural chemicals, especially herbicides, and Monsanto, which was a world leader in genetically modified seeds and crop features. Regulators, farmers, and consumer advocacy organizations expressed grave worries about this vertical integration, in which a single business controls several phases of the agricultural supply chain. Critics were concerned that the combined company would have undue control over pricing, innovation, and access to agricultural supplies in addition to controlling a disproportionately significant amount of the worldwide seed and pesticide market. The corporation may be able to dictate terms to farmers with the market power gathered through such consolidation, which could limit their options and raise input costs.

In order to evaluate the merger's potential effects on competition, regulatory bodies in the US, the EU, and a number of other jurisdictions started thorough examinations. Antitrust officials were especially worried that the combination would hinder innovation, lessen competition, and make it harder for smaller businesses to enter the market. To maintain competition in the industry, Bayer and Monsanto had to sell off a number of important

assets as a requirement for approval. To reduce monopolistic risks, Bayer, for example, decided to sell its seed and pesticide divisions to rival agrochemical company BASF. Given the synergies produced by integrated research, manufacturing, and distribution networks, many stakeholders contended that despite these divestitures, the merger would unavoidably shift market dynamics in favor of the combined business.

Additionally, the consolidation had wider ramifications for agricultural sustainability and global food security. Reduced genetic variety, reliance on proprietary technology, and the promotion of input-intensive farming practices that might not be appropriate for all areas are risks associated with a few number of businesses controlling the production and sale of seeds and crop protection products. Given this, the Bayer-Monsanto merger came to represent the broader trend of consolidation in global agribusiness, which is still changing farming methods, market dynamics, and the distribution of power in food production systems around the globe.

Because of the consolidation of intellectual property over genetically modified features, especially But cotton, critics in India were concerned that the Bayer-Monsanto combination would result in higher seed prices. India controls the price of cotton seeds, while other commodities are still susceptible to price increases.⁶⁴³ This situation was mirrored around the world, with regulators in Brazil and Africa expressing worries that market domination may limit the supply of non-GM and indigenous seed varieties and lower competitive prices.⁶⁴⁴

Reduced Choice and Supplier Lock-In

M&A activity often results in a reduction of competitors, thereby limiting farmers' choices. In concentrated markets, farmers may be compelled to purchase bundled products—

⁶⁴³ Competition Commission of India, "CCI Order in Bayer-Monsanto Merger," 2018.

⁶⁴⁴ South Africa Competition Tribunal, "Merger Between Bayer and Monsanto," 2018.

such as seeds and their associated herbicides—from the same supplier. Monsanto, for example, was known for its strategy of pairing GM seeds with complementary herbicides like glyphosate. Post-merger, Bayer inherited and expanded this strategy, drawing criticism for creating closed-loop systems that limited farmer autonomy.⁶⁴⁵

Farmers may be discouraged from investigating more sustainable or alternative inputs due to such lock-in procedures. Additionally, switching suppliers becomes unaffordable, especially if a farmer has purchased equipment designed to work with particular brands of pesticides or seeds. Because of this, farmers are forced to keep buying from the same supplier despite price increases or the introduction of potentially better items onto the market, creating a cycle of dependency. For example, farmers who use genetically modified (GM) seeds from a certain business could also have to buy proprietary fertilizers and insecticides that are meant to work with those crops. The dependence on one company's product ecosystem is further cemented by the fact that equipment and planting methods are frequently modified to accommodate particular seed varieties. Because of this, the initial investment in a specific technological stack not only forces farmers to make ongoing purchases, but it also deters them from experimenting with different agroecological techniques or inputs that might be more beneficial for the sustainability of the environment or long-term soil health. Over time, this limited option weakens farmers' independence, reduces competition among input providers, and creates obstacles for creative or regional businesses that provide more economical or environmentally friendly solutions. In the end, these methods make agriculture less resilient and adaptable to changing market conditions and climate change.

Implications for Smallholder Farmers

In developing nations, smallholder farmers represent a substantial portion of the agricultural workforce. They often operate on slim margins and have limited bargaining power in input markets. Price surges caused by reduced competition can disproportionately impact these farmers. Following M&A consolidations, anecdotal evidence from sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia indicated reduced access to competitively priced hybrid seeds and agrochemicals.⁶⁴⁶

Smallholder farmers are the backbone of rural economies and account for a significant share of the agricultural workforce in developing countries. With limited access to contemporary agricultural tools, these farmers usually work on small land plots—typically less than two hectares—and mostly engage in subsistence farming. Because of their size, smallholders frequently operate in extremely tight economic environments with narrow profit margins that provide minimal cushioning against shocks to the system. Their negotiating strength is reduced by their restricted access to cash, credit, and market intelligence, particularly in input markets where suppliers of machinery, seeds, fertilizer, and pesticides frequently have substantial market leverage. This vulnerability increases when market dynamics change as a result of mergers and acquisitions (M&As) between companies that produce inputs and agrochemicals.

Significant price increases for necessary agricultural inputs might result from M&As that lessen competition in the input supply industry. Because of economies of scale, bulk purchasing power, or access to financing instruments and subsidies, these price rises might be tolerable for commercial farms or major agribusinesses. Such price increases, however, might be disastrous for smallholder farmers. Due to their restricted options and lack of bargaining power,

⁶⁴⁵ N. Chandrasekaran, "Bayer-Monsanto Merger: Implications for Indian Farmers," *Economic & Political Weekly*, Vol. 53, No. 10 (2018).

⁶⁴⁶ M. Kimenyi et al., "Input Market Access for Smallholder Farmers in Africa," Brookings Institution, 2019.

these farmers are usually compelled to decide between using less inputs, which would reduce yield, or switching to subpar, frequently fake goods that are easily found in black marketplaces. This change may have a cascading effect: using inferior inputs results in worse crop quality and productivity, which impacts market pricing and earnings. Farmers are trapped in a cycle of low output and poverty as a result of the ensuing decline in profitability, which further deters investment in tools and technology that increase productivity.

Furthermore, the long-term effects go beyond the short-term financial difficulties that individual farmers encounter. National food security goals may be jeopardized by decreased smallholder agricultural productivity, especially in nations where the majority of the population lives in rural areas and where domestic food production is heavily reliant on them. Low-income households may be disproportionately affected by rising consumer market prices if food supplies diminish or become unpredictable owing to unstable production cycles. Therefore, the combined effect of pricing pressures brought on by M&A and dwindling agricultural productivity can exacerbate rural poverty, raise inequality, and obstruct more general developmental objectives pertaining to food security, health, and economic resilience. Given this, it is imperative that policymakers closely examine M&A activity in the agriculture sector, especially in light of its potential impact on national food systems and smallholder livelihoods.

Regulatory Interventions and Their Limitations

Regulators have attempted to impose conditions to maintain market balance. In the Bayer-Monsanto case, the Competition Commission of India (CCI) approved the merger only after Bayer agreed to divest certain seed and herbicide assets and license its GM traits to competitors. However, the effectiveness of such structural remedies is contested. Critics argue that divestitures do not guarantee the emergence of a viable competitor, particularly if

the buyer lacks technological prowess or market presence.⁶⁴⁷

In an effort to preserve market equilibrium, regulators have tried to impose restrictions. Only after Bayer consented to sell off some of its seed and herbicide businesses and provide competitors licenses to its genetically modified (GM) features would the Competition Commission of India (CCI) allow the merger in the Bayer-Monsanto dispute. In the agrochemical and seed areas, where the combined company may have otherwise acquired undue market dominance, this conditional clearance was intended to lessen the possible negative impacts on competition. By guaranteeing that other market participants continued to have access to essential products and technologies required for efficient competition, the divestitures were meant to maintain a level playing field. The CCI also aimed to reduce the possibility of technical foreclosure, in which competitors would be excluded from crucial advancements, by mandating that Bayer license its GM features. The proactive approach regulators are taking in high-impact mergers to protect consumer interests, stop monopolistic activities, and foster innovation through healthy competition is exemplified by these structural and behavioral remedies. In industries like agriculture, where the distribution of market power has a direct impact on food security, prices, and farmers' access to reasonably priced, high-quality inputs, this kind of control is particularly important.

Similar concerns were expressed in the European Union, where the European Commission required Bayer to divest a significant part of its seed and pesticide business to BASF as a condition for approving the merger. Yet, questions remained about BASF's capacity to replicate Bayer-Monsanto's innovation pipeline and distribution network.⁶⁴⁸

⁶⁴⁷ Competition Commission of India, *supra* note 1.

⁶⁴⁸ P. Mehta, "Structural Remedies in Indian Merger Control: Lessons from Bayer-Monsanto," CUTS Institute, 2020.

Conclusion

In the agriculture industry, mergers and acquisitions have resulted in a more concentrated market, higher input costs, and fewer options for farmers, particularly smallholders in developing nations. Although they have certain advantages, such as efficiency and creativity, the dominance of a small number of multinational corporations jeopardizes competition and food security. Due to the limited performance of regulatory measures in preserving market equilibrium, more efficient oversight is required to guarantee equitable access and sustainability in agriculture.



ENVIRONMENTAL LAW – YOU POLLUTE, YOU PAY

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ABSTRACT

The implementation of environmental regulations in our nation would undoubtedly improve the quality of life and decrease excessive environmental exploitation. However, certain factors must be considered, such as the inflationary effect, the fact that these funds are not always used for environmental reasons, the experiences of several member countries show minor impacts on GDP, and raising costs to a producer within a country or region that are not imposed on companies outside of that country or region may, obviously, have an impact on the local maker's profitability. The primary goal of the study is to determine how aware the sample population is of environmental regulations and their importance, if it acts as an incentive to minimize pollution, and the many benefits it provides. The empirical research approach was used in this study, along with a simple sampling strategy. The study's sample size is 350 respondents. According to the study, eco taxes benefit society and the business community because they generate money that can be used directly to protect the environment, to provide incentives to others to do so, or to reduce other, more costly taxes, such as labor taxes, with the goal of improving employment and overall economic well-being.

KEYWORDS – Eco taxes, Green schemes, Environment, Revenue, Pollution

INTRODUCTION

While most readers of this paper sit at the comfort of their homes and offices which are conveniently placed within their comfort zones, they comprise less than 40% of the total population of the country, the majority still belong to the underdeveloped rural sectors. One might argue about the vast set of differences between the urban and rural citizens of India but as the sun sets after an astonishingly hot day, the one main similarity between the two is that both are paying guests in this world and owe it to their land to treat her right and be aware of the prevailing environmental condition. Before proceeding with the remaining parts of this paper, it is critical to understand the meaning of two main terms- 'Environment' and 'Environmental Tax'. In layman's words, The Environment can be defined as a collection of all biotic and abiotic

elements that play a role in the evolution, survival, and development of those organisms who occupy the region. However, the latter of the two, Environmental Laws refers to all federal, state, local, and foreign laws, regulations, agreements, or governmental restrictions relating to pollution and the protection of the environment or the release of any materials into the environment. Man has always been dangerously eager for quick economic and expansion, which leads to many environmental concerns. These issues have produced an unsettling impact both on human existence and on earth. This grave scenario has led to significant consideration of environmentally sustainable growth strategies. The responsibilities of industry and government in adopting Market Based Instruments and creating regulations for them in a developing and democratic processing country like India are critical. Numerous international programs

and treaties have given out various routes for the country's sustainable development and promotion of environmentally friendly growth. For the preservation of the environment, the government has been pushing certain Market Based Instruments. However, there is a disconnect between the policy's scope and its execution.

Government initiatives:

Green public procurement, also known as the green procurement plan, is a way for the government to provide insurance for items that have less impact on the environment during the entire life cycle compared with the conventional primary products produced. The plan for manufacturing items that are less harmful to the environment is made by the government. If the product is manufactured in an environmentally friendly way, even production waste can be controlled. Can reduce manufacturing costs, disposal and deterioration costs. The main benefit of establishing such a green procurement plan is that it is cost-effective and easy to implement. In addition, because it is a reusable or recyclable product, it can save waste disposal costs. It reduces the amount of hazardous waste generated, as well as the emission of hazardous gases, and even improves the competitiveness of the organic industry, leading to greater innovation and technological coverage of said products, goods and services. In addition, it protects natural resources, which is the ultimate goal of the concept of sustainable development. Green purchasing policies reduce the consumption of resources, utilities and energy, eliminate the generation of non-biodegradable waste, and increase the cost of innovation and transparency. The acquisition has had an impact on the market. Promoting such projects will help the government provide real incentives to companies that create green products, technologies and materials. It also promotes eco-innovation and will be very beneficial to the "Made in India" movement. Green procurement is based on the concept of pollution prevention, so it is an effort to reduce harmful, hazardous

and toxic waste. Green car tax is a relatively new trend in India, but they are distributing RFID tags and CCTV cameras. It has been installed at the border entry point in Delhi to ensure that the emissions of commercial vehicles entering the city are monitored. Depending on the size of your vehicle, polluters will face ECC (Environmental Compensation Fee). The government initially imposed fines of 700 to 1,300 rupees for two-axle trucks and three- and four-axle trucks, but the charges have since doubled, and light vehicles and two-axle trucks are required to pay 1,400 rupees and three and four-axle trucks respectively. Every time a truck passes through the city, it has to pay Rs 2,600. The government of Maharashtra has decided to impose a green tax on private vehicles over 15 years old, and commercial vehicles over 8 years old will also be taxed. The tax applicable to private vehicles older than 15 years are as follow:

Two wheelers	Rs.2000
Diesel vehicles	Rs.3500
Petrol vehicles	Rs.3000

The tax will have to be paid every five years.

The tax applicable to commercial vehicles older than eight years is as follows:

Autorickshaws	Rs.750
Light good vehicles	Rs.2500
Six-seater taxis	Rs.1250
vehicles with more than 7500 kg capacity	10% of annual tax
Service vehicles	2.5% of annual tax
Contract buses	2.5% of annual tax
Tourist buses	2.5% of annual tax

Various environmental taxes in India

In total there are seventeen environmentally related taxes, of which sixteen are levied by various states and only one is levied by the Centre. The details are as follows:

- a. **Product Taxes:** There are twelve environmentally related taxes in this category making it the biggest category.
- **Clean Energy Cess:** This cess was the first attempt by the Government of India to introduce an ecotax at the national level. It was introduced in 2010 at a rate of ₹ 50/metric tonne on coal, peat and lignite which are either imported or produced domestically.
- **Vehicles Tax (on Old Automobiles):** This tax is levied at varying periods by six Indian states. Karnataka, which implemented this levy in 2002, is the forerunner. The fee is based on the inefficiency of cars as they age, causing them to produce more pollutants. As a result, in order to disincentivize the use of such cars, several state governments imposed this levy.
- **Ecological Fund and Environment Cess:** Government of Sikkim in 2005 levied a unique cess on non-biodegradable substances that are either produced in the state or imported from other states in order to solve the problem of solid waste.
- **Goa Green Cess:** This cess was levied by the Government of Goa in 2013 so as to reduce the carbon footprint of the state. The rate of the cess was kept below 2% of the sales value of all the polluting products that harm the environment in any manner. Since this tax is of recent origin further details about the revenue, usage of the fund etc. are not available
- b. **Natural Resource Tax:** There are five states that levy a tax on the forest produce that belongs to this category.

- **Forest Development Tax:** This is an ad-valorem tax paid on forest output in the states of Maharashtra, Kerala, Orissa, Karnataka, and Madhya Pradesh at rates ranging from 1% to 12%. Three of these five states, Madhya Pradesh, Kerala, and Maharashtra, charge the tax at a rate of 5%. Orissa, on the other hand, has different rates such as 1%, 2%, and 4% on bamboo, tendu leaves, and wood (Government of Maharashtra 1983; Government of Kerala 1986; Government of Madhya Pradesh 2009; Barik 2003). Karnataka is the only state with an exclusive fund called the 'Forest Development Fund,' which is designated for the development of Karnataka's forest reserves through forest plantings and other measures. (Karnataka 2009)

OBJECTIVES

The two core objectives of the study are to:

- Analyse the status of ecotaxes in India
- Examine the necessity of eco taxes India
- Study the advantages of environmental taxes
- If it acts as an incentive to reduce pollution

LITERATURE REVIEW

Examines a rising interest for enacting governance policies of property development so as to mitigate environmental degradation and also the ever-rising rates of pollution. These policies are being adopted in order to strictly regulate environmental laws and apply an equivalent to industries that discharge pollutants or manufacture products that are not setting friendly. So as to go with this, countries everywhere on the planet try to bring a revolution in their Taxation Regime for strict management over such environmental hazards with a read to discourage industries and businesses from being concerned in activities that will create a heavy threat to the environment. **Arjun Pal June 2020** This research

examines not only the direct economic consequences of green vehicle-friendly tax breaks and subsidy programs, but also their spillover effects using the event study technique. Author investigates the economic impact of the event study methodologies in industries. Their data demonstrate that the tax breaks for green vehicles have fewer positive direct impacts and no positive spillover effect, with higher positive, positive direct effects and positive spillover effects from the eco-friendly car subsidy scheme. **Hanae Tamechika**

September 2020 The paper recommends macro-level policies with regard to using environmental external fiscal tools (such as taxes). Also, it helps to analyze sustainable conduct in context of the readiness of society, using a contingent assessment approach, to pay for and avoid environmental hazards.

Monika Gupta January 2016 This article mainly examines India's fragmented green tax system, including Cess, gasoline and diesel excise tax and other tax measures in the country, in order to understand what kind of environmental tax policy India currently has. He believes that while Cess is desirable when the country does not impose taxes or charges on fossil fuels, there are certain basic functional obstacles to its collection and hedging methods. The article also pointed out the problem areas of other "green tax" collection methods under the current "carbon tax" system, and provided some solutions / suggestions, because political gaps that will not be resolved will have an impact. The long-term energy future and energy security of India. **Ipshita Chaturvedi July 2016**

The purpose of this work is to design green taxation policies to mitigate the hazardous environmental impacts of various sectors and to visualize the benefits that can fill the socio-economic gaps that are particularly prevalent in developing countries. This method is a fusion of the Energy Institute's standards and an EIA-based approach based on the environment, energy, and economy. Policies based on the model discussed can be designed to achieve the best contribution of the industrial sector to

the creation of resources for economic growth and the reduction of the socioeconomic gap. The facts have shown that green taxation is a deterrent tool to prevent environmental degradation and optimize energy use. **Abdul Qayum, Anjana Gupta, Akanksha Gupta 2016**

The article discusses environmental fiscal reform (EFR) principles and mechanisms, as well as their implementation in the Indian context. EFR has the potential to enhance the environment more efficiently and cost-effectively than traditional regulation. The European Union has extensive experience regarding successful EFR deployment. India has also implemented certain EFR policies, such as the deregulation of fuel prices, the imposition of a coal cess, and the provision of subsidies for the construction of shared effluent treatment plants. The problems of executing EFR policies in India are also highlighted, including inadequate analysis, a lack of a policy framework, and a lack of institutional ability, as well as tension with reducing poverty and gaining political support. **Ashish Chaturvedi and Manjeet S.Saluja September 2014**

This study presents findings from current research on how climate change and other environmental policies connect with the fiscal system. It delves into four topics concerning budgetary relationships. First, it investigates how these connections affect the chances for a "double dividend": both a betterment in the environment and a decrease in the expenses of the tax system. Finally, it examines how fiscal interactions influence the selection of CO₂ emissions-pricing mechanisms against alternative climate policy instruments. Lastly, it examines how fiscal interactions influence the selection of CO₂ emissions-pricing mechanisms against alternative climate policy instruments.

Lawrence September 2013 This study adds to the discussion about the function of environmental levies in current tax systems. Some environmental taxes, particularly those levied on fuel or electricity, are more difficult to prevent than labor or income taxes. When the tax base is moved in a revenue-neutral way

toward such environmental levies, the net amount of tax evasion is reduced. Using a carbon tax as an illustration, the “tax evasion effect” is demonstrated to significantly lower the welfare cost of reducing emissions. **Antung Anthony LiU November 2013** Examine its effectiveness from an environmental and economic perspective, especially when other European countries have successfully introduced carbon taxes. The result is that it is reasonable to abandon the carbon tax after most stakeholders have refused on grounds, which will weaken its competitiveness and impose an excessive tax burden on the sector. **Pol-Vincent Harnay & Petronille Reme may 2012** This paper discusses whether a green tax can help reduce pollution. Author points out that India’s indirect tax system has undergone major reforms for over 20 years. It raises the relative cost of inputs and outputs of pollution and thereby corrects the negative externalities of pollution activities, which can lead to appropriate environmental decisions. Environmental issues are putting pressure on governments to find ways to reduce environmental damage while minimizing harm to economic growth. **Sonali Signh and Minali Deswal May 2012** This article gives an overview of the main economic problems involved in the use of taxes as a tool of environmental policy in the United Kingdom. It first examines the economic justifications for employing taxes and other market mechanisms in environmental policy, then addresses the tax base selection and the worth of environmental tax income. Environmental tax revenues, it is said, do not materially alter economic limitations on tax policy, and thus environmental taxes must be justified largely by the cost-effective fulfillment of environmental goals. The article next evaluates major sectors where environmental taxes are likely to have substantial potential, such as taxes on industrial and household energy usage, road transportation, aviation, and trash. **Don Fullerton July 2008** This article investigates whether countries choose to be environmental policy leaders or followers. To

investigate this topic, transboundary pollution and two nations that must determine whether to levy environmental fees sequentially or concurrently. When taxes are established consecutively, a phenomenon known as the sequential setting effect occurs, which raises the equilibrium taxes. **Juan Carlos January 2006** In a numerically calibrated model of climate change and the global economy, this article investigates the interplay between carbon dioxide emissions taxes and an existing income tax. These tax rates, which originate from the use of emissions tax funds to lower personal income taxes, are somewhat higher than the present value marginal benefits of emissions control. **Richard B. June 2006** This research presents the issues that nations have confronted in three areas: technical design concerns, the consideration of the distributional consequences of environmental taxes deriving from intramarginal transfers, and defining the tax’s aim. It finds that several of the causes for the failure to properly deploy ecotaxes might have been foreseen and avoided. The study builds on the work of the OECD Joint Sessions on Taxation and the Environment to analyze options for effective environmental tax implementation. **Pearson 2005** The focus of this article is on two contrasting impacts of environmental taxes on long-run economic development. One is a destructive influence that impedes productivity, while the other is a potent influence that improves the degree of environmental condition left to future generations. According to the research, there is a crucial amount of taxation that balances one force with the other. If the tax is initially set below (or above) the crucial level, increasing the tax rate is helpful (or detrimental) to economic growth. **Tetsuo Ono May 2003** Studies government policy possibilities for environmental protection. The Author evaluates the effectiveness and distributional effects of ecologically driven taxes and other non-tax environmental policy tools. Much of the analysis is carried out under a second-best scenario in which the government finances portion of its

budget via distortionary taxes. **A.Lans Bovenberg Lawrence and H.Goulder 2001** In this study, they assess carbon taxes in terms of their competitiveness, distributional impact, and environmental impact. Carbon taxes have repeatedly been promoted as a cost-effective tool for decreasing emissions. However, only six nations have enacted environmental regulations based on the carbon content of energy products. The research suggests that carbon taxes might be an attractive policy alternative, with the major negative effects offset by the design of the tax and the use of the produced fiscal revenues. **Andrea Baranzini March 2000** Investigates the impacts of environmental taxes using an overlapping generations model. The ecosystem's quality is modeled as a long-term consumption good. The imposition of an environmental fee damages older generations while benefiting younger generations and all future generations. A well-structured bond policy can be utilized to disperse the efficiency gains that result from the internalization of environmental externalities across decades. **A.Lans Bovenberg and Ben January 1998 Lawrence H. Goulder August 1995** This study analyzes the theories for several concepts of the double dividend. This also relates the issue of multiple dividends to concepts of optimum environmental taxation in a second-best context. This article investigates the economic, political, and practical difficulties that occur with developing environmental levies. The apparent scarcity of Pigouvian taxes may be due to perceived political or practical issues with their design. The section discusses a taxonomy for evaluating design considerations, including (1) what is taxed, (2) who is to pay, (3) the size of the tax, and (4) allowances for ancillary policy concerns. He uses this taxonomy

to overcome design challenges in order to produce economically viable and administratively practical results. The article demonstrates these arguments by discussing the newly implemented ozone-depleting chemical excise charge. **Thomas A. Barthold 1994**

METHODOLOGY

The research method followed here is a descriptive method (empirical research). A total of 350 samples have been collected out of which all the samples have been collected through google forms survey. The samples are taken from many parts of India. The statistical tool used in this study is graphical representation. An extensive synthetic review of literature has been conducted to map the status of ecotaxes in India.

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

- Age
- Educational qualifications
- Gender
- Occupation.

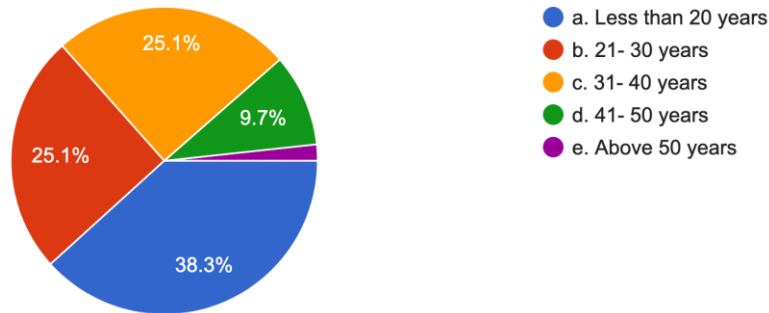
DEPENDENT VARIABLES

- Awareness of environmental taxes
- Whether eco tax is necessary
- Whether green tax can be an incentive to reduce pollution
- Advantages of Environmental taxes

ANALYSIS

1. Age

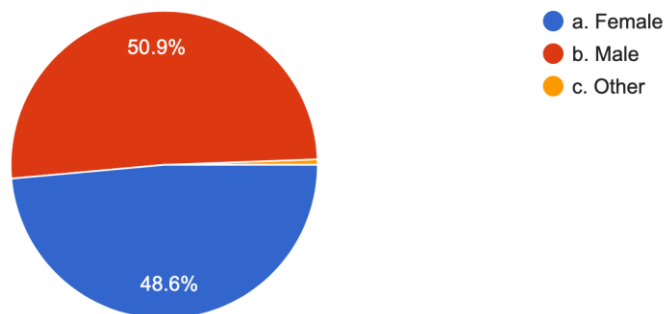
350 responses



Legend : This pie chart represents the age: Less than 20, 21-30, 31-40, 41-50 and above 50 years.

2. Gender

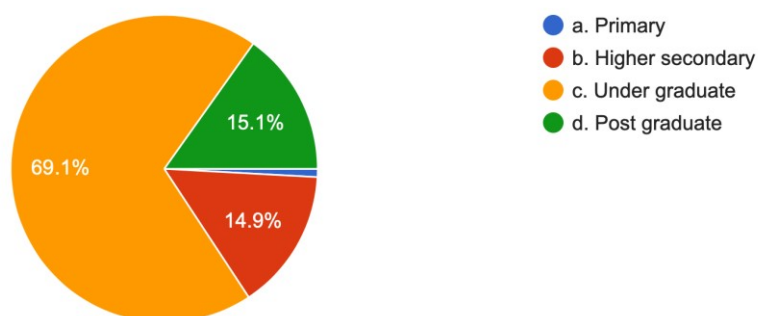
350 responses



Legend : This pie chart represents the gender: male and f

3. Educational qualification

350 responses

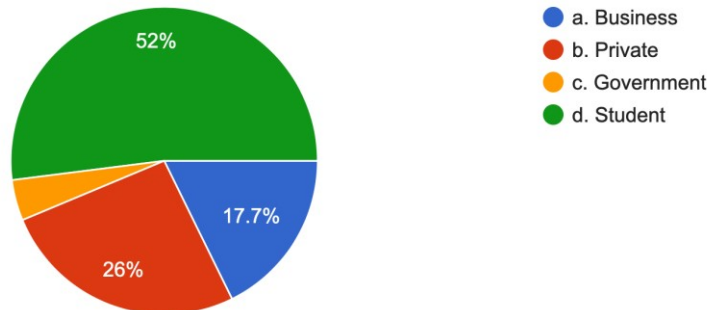


Legend:

This pie chart represents the educational qualification: Primary, Higher secondary, undergraduate and postgraduate.

4.Occupation

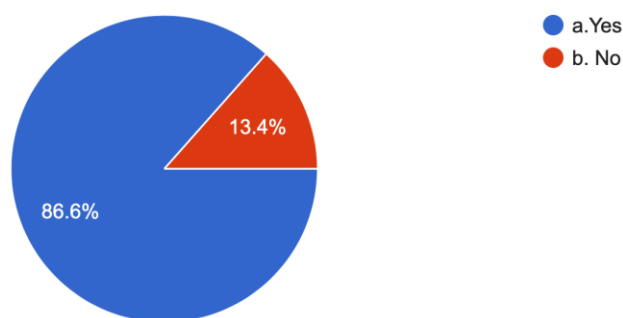
350 responses



Legend: This pie chart represents the Occupation: Student, government, private job and business

6. Do you think Eco taxes are necessary in a country

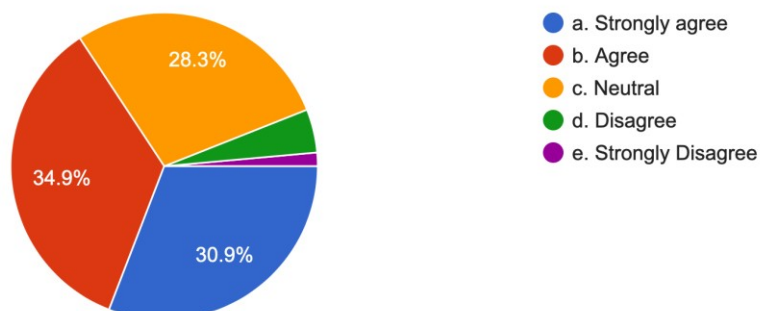
350 responses



Legend: This pie chart represents the percentage of agreeability whether eco taxes are necessary in a country.

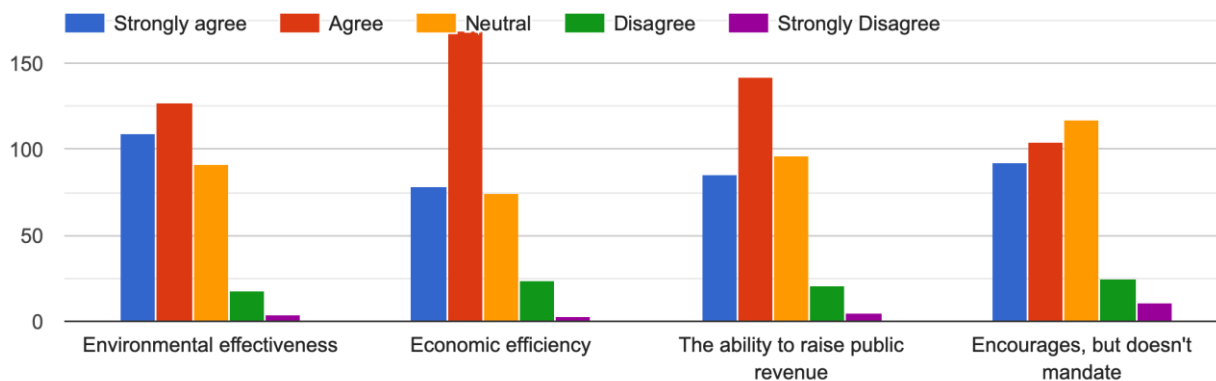
7. Do you agree that green tax can be an incentive to reduce pollution

350 responses



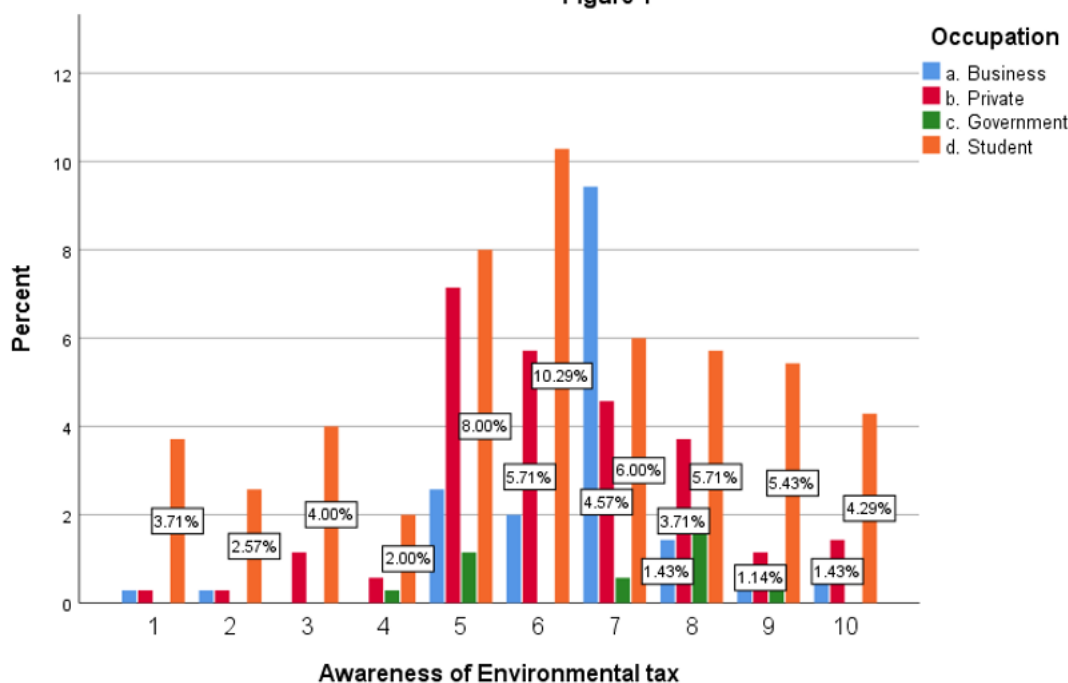
Legend: This pie chart represents the percentage of agreeability whether green tax acts as an incentive to reduce pollution.

8. Rate your level of agreeability on the advantages of Environmental taxes



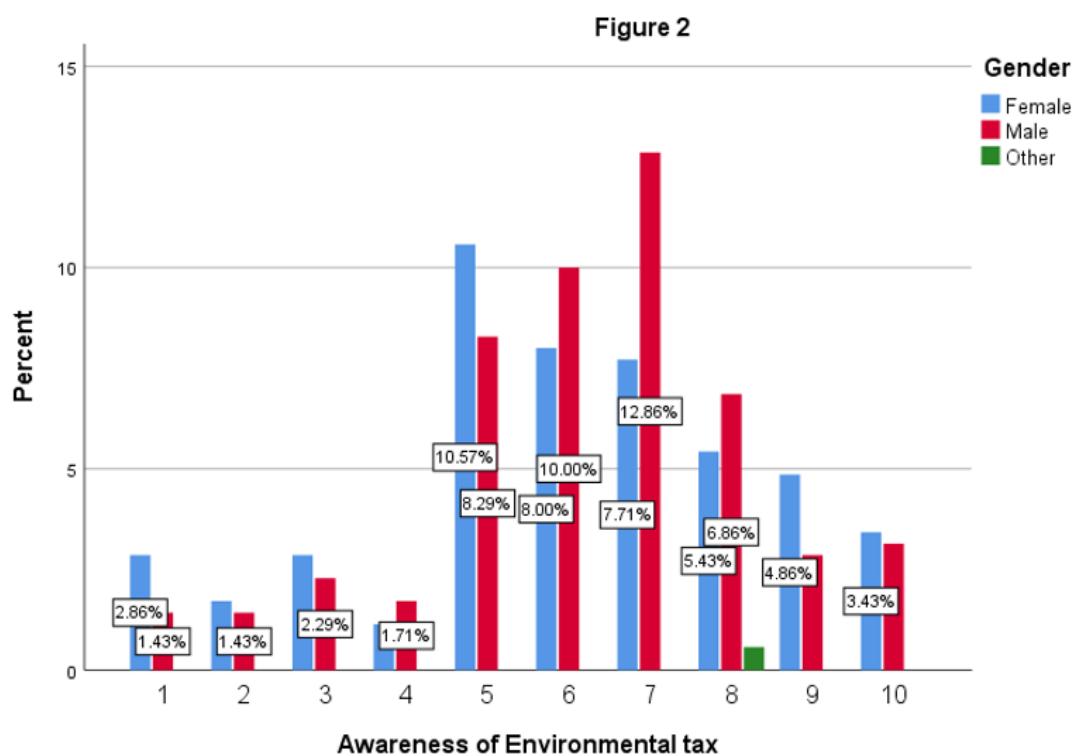
Legend: This chart represents the agreeability on the advantages of environmental taxes.

Figure 1



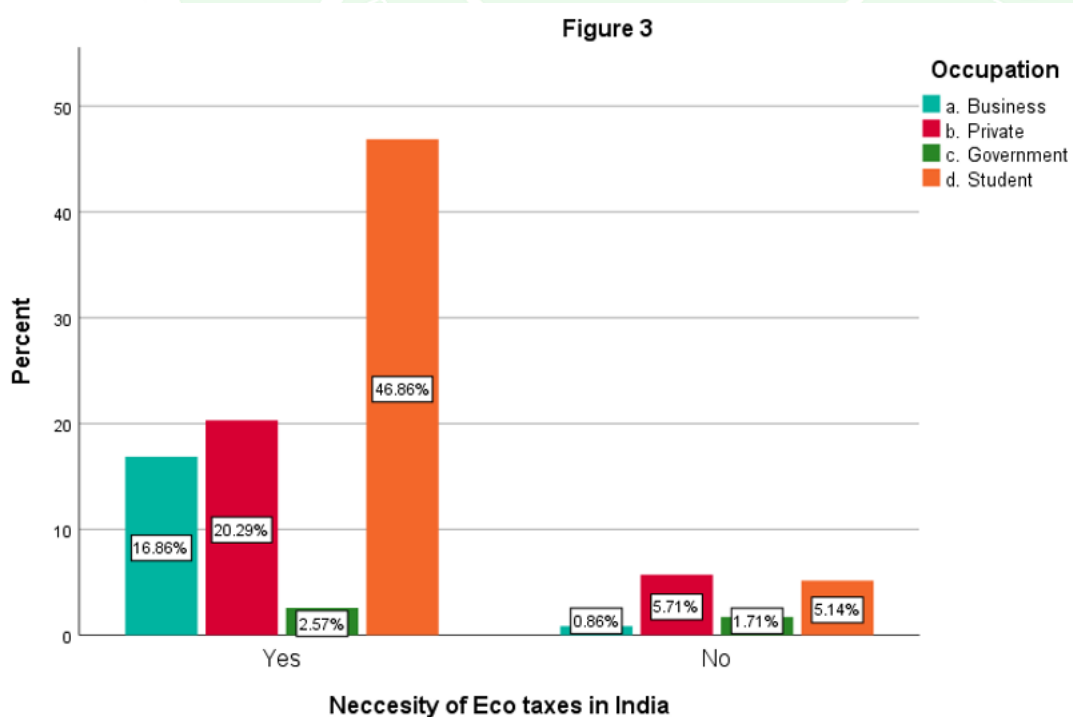
Legend: This bar graph represents the level of awareness of environmental tax and the occupation status of the respondents.

Results: In figure 1 the majority of the sample population rated the scale 10 and 8 points have an above average knowledge on environmental taxes. 10.29% students rated scale 10 and 4.57% of business respondents rated scale near to 10. The private working respondents have an average knowledge about environmental taxes.



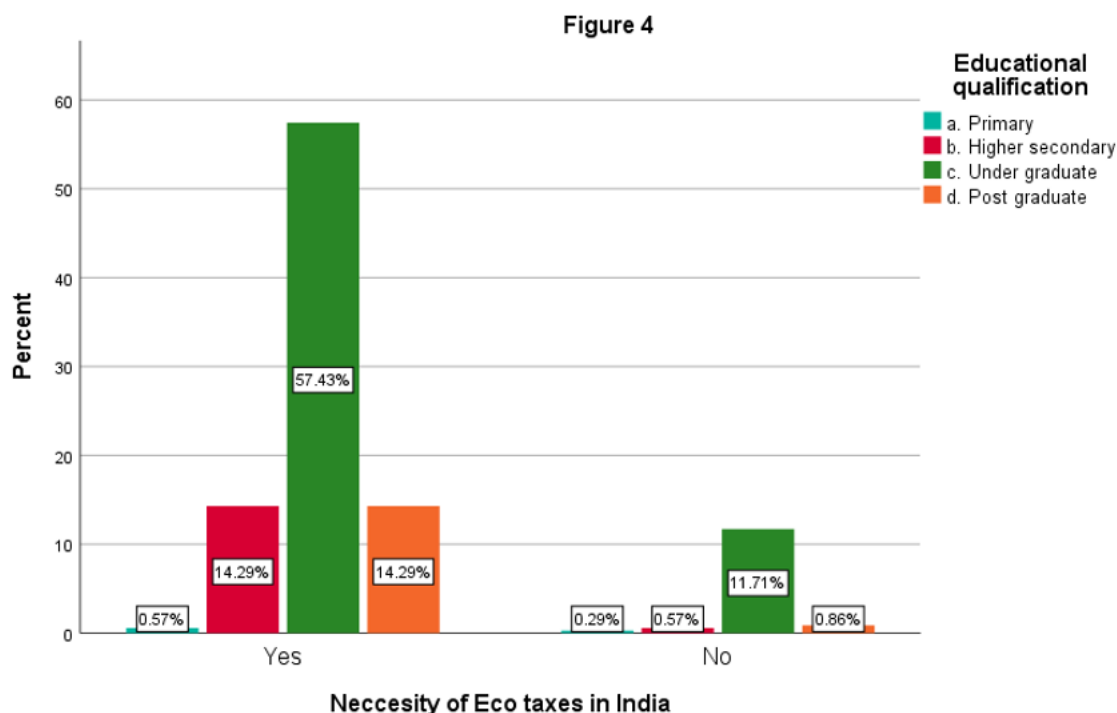
Legend: This bar graph represents the level of awareness of environmental tax and the gender of the respondents.

Results: In figure 2 the majority of the sample population rated the scale 10 and above 10 points have an above average knowledge on environmental taxes. 12.86% male respondents rate 10 and above rate on scale. 10.57% of female respondents have an average awareness on environmental taxes.



Legend: This bar graph represents the necessity of eco taxes in India with the occupation of the sample respondents.

Results : In figure 3 the majority of the sample population say “yes” for the necessity of eco taxes in India. 46.86% respondents who are students say “yes” followed by private working respondents and business respondents with the percentage of 20.29% and 16.86% respectively. 5.71% of private employees say “no” to the necessity of eco taxes in India.

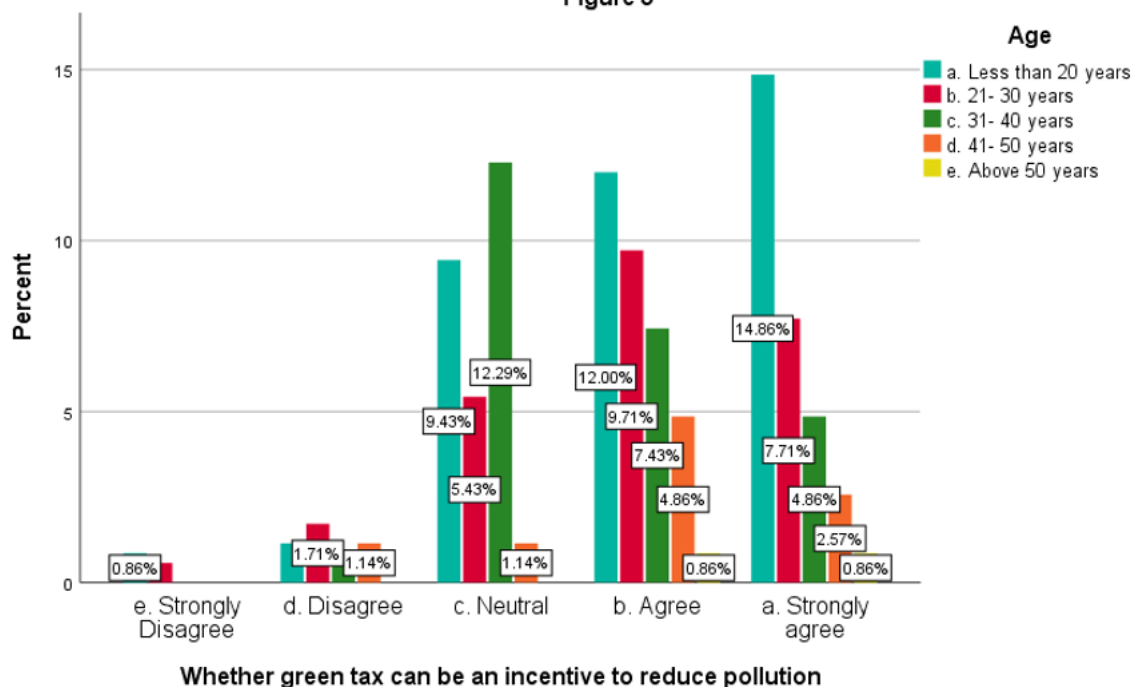


Legend: This bar graph represents the necessity of eco taxes in India with the educational qualification of the sample respondents.

Results : In figure 4 the majority of the sample population say “yes” for the necessity of eco taxes in India. 57.43% of respondents who are having educational qualification of undergraduate agree to the necessity of eco taxes in India followed by higher secondary and postgraduate with 14.29%. 11.71% of respondents having undergraduate qualification say “no” to the necessity of eco taxes in india.



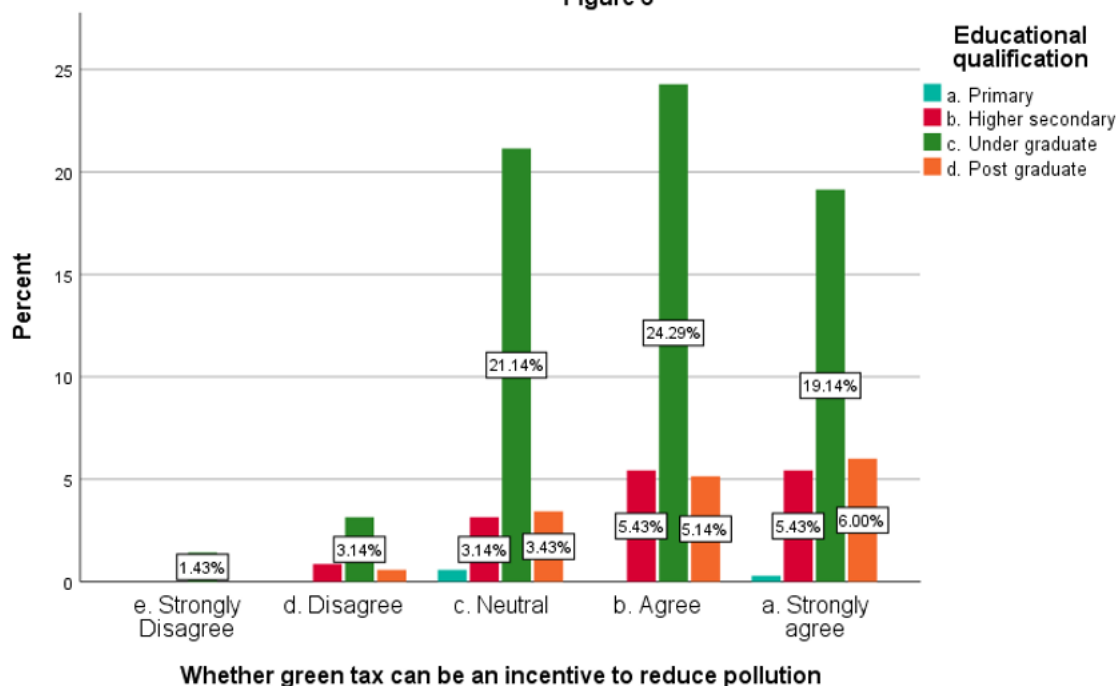
Figure 5



Legend: This bar graph represents whether green tax can be an incentive to reduce pollution with the age of the respondents.

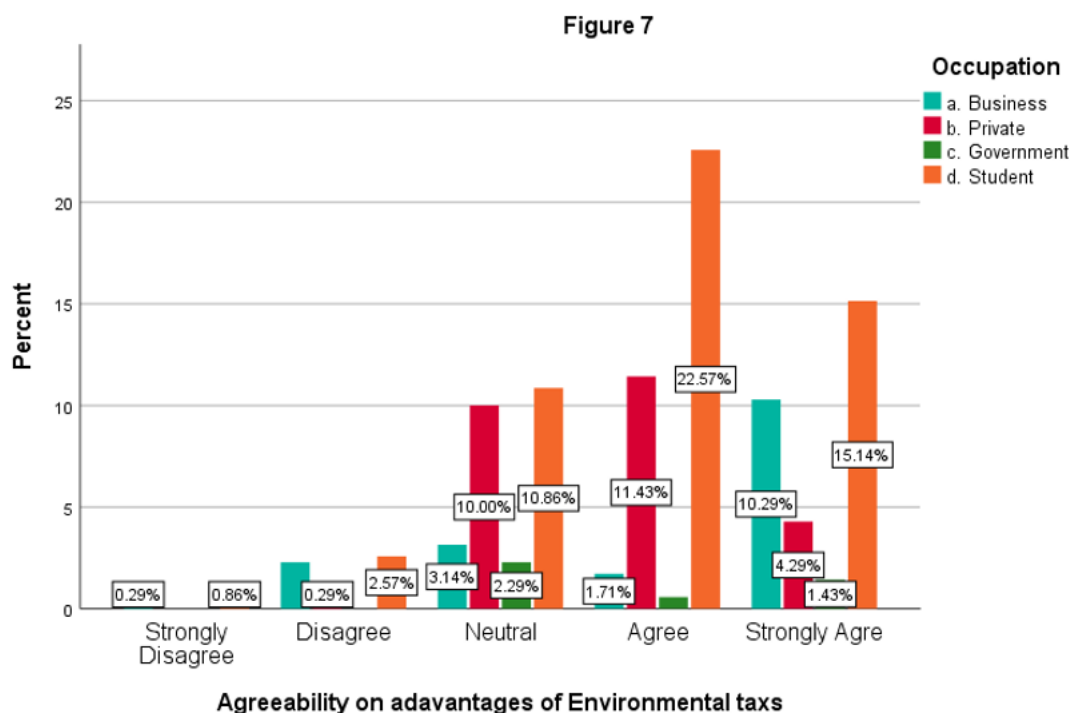
Results : In figure 5 the majority of the sample population in the majority of the age categories agree and strongly agree to green tax acting as an incentive to reduce pollution. 14.86% respondents of less than 20 years strongly agree followed by 9.71% respondents in the age category 21-30 years agree to green tax acting as an incentive to reduce pollution. But 12.29% of respondents responded neutral to the green tax, acting as an incentive to reduce pollution.

Figure 6



Legend: This bar graph represents whether green tax can be an incentive to reduce pollution with the educational qualifications of the respondents.

Results : In figure 6 the majority of the sample population in the majority of the educational qualifications agree and strongly agree to green tax acting as an incentive to reduce pollution. 24.29% of respondents in the undergraduate category agree to green tax acting as an incentive to reduce pollution. 19.14% and 21.14% of respondents in the undergraduate category strongly agree and are neutral to green tax acting as an incentive to reduce pollution respectively. 5.43% respondents in higher secondary and postgraduate agree and strongly agree.

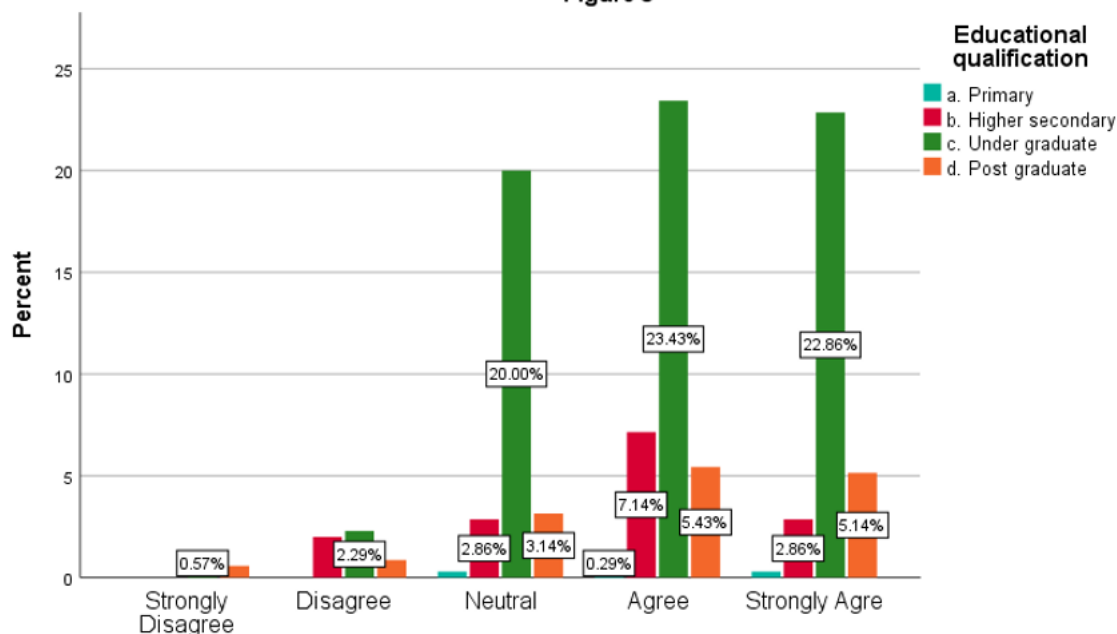


Legend: This bar graph represents the level of agreeability on advantages of environmental taxes and the occupation of the sample population.

Results : In figure 7 the majority of the sample population in the majority of the occupation categories agree and strongly agree to the advantages of environmental taxes in a country and environment. 22.57% of the students agree with the advantages of environmental taxes in a country and environment. 11.43% respondents working in the private sector agree with the advantages followed by 2.29% of respondents belonging to the government sector are neutral towards the advantages environmental taxes provide for a country and an environment.



Figure 8

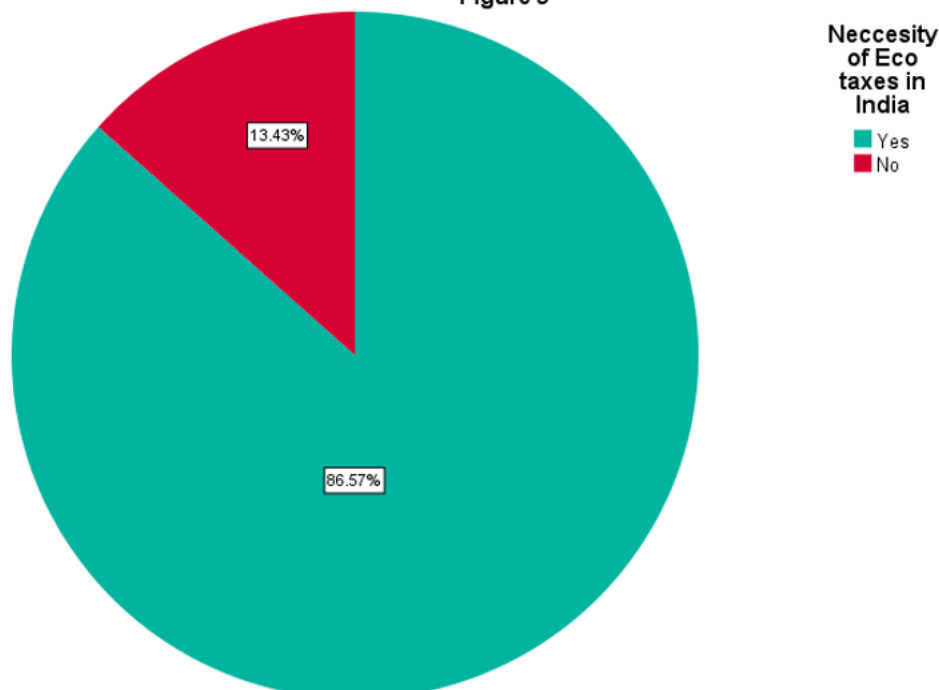


Agreeability on advantages of Environmental taxes

Legend: This bar graph represents the level of agreeability on advantages of environmental taxes and the educational qualifications of the respondents.

Results : In figure 8 the majority of the sample population in the majority of the educational categories agree to the advantages of environmental taxes in a country and environment. 23.43% of the respondents who belong to undergraduate category agree and 22.86% strongly agree followed by 20.00% who are neutral towards the advantages of environmental taxes in a country and environment. 7.14% of higher secondary respondents agree and 5.43% of respondents belonging to the post graduate qualification agree to the advantages of environmental taxes in a country and environment.

Figure 9



Legend: This pie chart represents the necessity of eco taxes in India answered by the sample population.

Results: In figure 9 86.57% of the respondents answered “yes” to the necessity of eco taxes in India and 13.43% of the sample population answered “no” to the necessity of eco taxes in India.

DISCUSSION:

In (figure 1) the majority of the sample population rated the scale 10 and 8 points have an above average knowledge on environmental taxes. In a growing and democratic country like India, the responsibilities of industry and government in adopting market-based instruments and establishing policies to support them are critical. Various directions have been put forth in international programs and treaties to encourage sustainable development and eco-friendly means of development in the country. 10.29% students rated scale 10 due to the knowledge and awareness they might have gained in the process of studying. They learn about the environment and pollution or the destruction that is caused to nature because of humans. Therefore, they are very much aware about eco taxes. 4.57% of business respondents rated scale near to 1, This might be because they are in the industry and are aware that they must pay taxes for pollution created by them. The private working respondents have an average knowledge about environmental taxes because they work but not own or run business to know more of eco taxes. In (figure 2) the majority of the sample population rated the scale 10 and above 10 points have an above average knowledge on environmental taxes. Mankind has always been dangerously eager to achieve quick economic expansion and progress, which has resulted in a slew of environmental issues. These issues have had a serious impact on human life as well as life on Earth. This perilous scenario has prompted significant consideration of environmentally sustainable growth strategies. 12.86% male respondents rate 10 and above rate on scale. 10.57% of female respondents have an average awareness on environmental taxes. Both sexes are aware of taxes, although men are slightly more conscious than women of environmental

levies. This might be because the sample was taken in India, and according to the research, India's overall female literacy rate is 70.3 percent, while male literacy is projected to be 84.7 percent. This might be one of the explanations why males are more aware of environmental taxes than women. In (figure 3) the majority of the sample population say “yes” for the necessity of eco taxes in India. Currently, ecotax is utilized in nations all over the world. Governments throughout the world, from the United Kingdom and Australia to India and Japan, are gradually taking more responsibility for the consequences of their populations on the natural environment. 46.86% respondents who are students say “yes” followed by private working respondents and business respondents with the percentage of 20.29% and 16.86% respectively. This is because due to prevailing environmental conditions the earth is losing its resources and coming to an end due to global warming, pollution and various other reasons. 5.71% of private employees say “no” to the necessity of eco taxes in India because the private sector is the component of the economy that is operated for profit by individuals and businesses rather than the government there is very little likelihood that they are aware of the sensitive nature of the subject. In (figure 4) the majority of the sample population say “yes” for the necessity of eco taxes in India. Although ecotax systems may not always generate immediate benefits, they have a massive benefit impact in the long term. While the London congestion charge hurts commuters, locals, and visitors alike, it has decreased car traffic by 30 percent and CO2 emissions by 20 percent. Whilst Swedes may pay an additional 20p per litre at the pump, the government's Environmental Minister claims that the carbon tax has reduced CO2 emissions by 20% since 1991. 57.43% of respondents who are having educational qualification as an undergraduate

agree to the necessity of eco taxes in India followed by higher secondary and postgraduate with 14.29% this can be due to the awareness that is built in the process of studying as education is essential for everyone in order to enhance their knowledge, manner of life, and social and economic position throughout their lives. In **(figure 5)** the majority of the sample population in the majority of the age categories agree and strongly agree to green tax acting as an incentive to reduce pollution. 14.86% respondents of less than 20 years strongly agree followed by 9.71% respondents in the age category 21-30 years agree to green tax acting as an incentive to reduce pollution. As per Nielsen, 75% of Millennials and Gen Z are eco-conscious enough to change their purchasing patterns in favor of ecologically friendly items because they offer incentives for producers and consumers to change their ecologically detrimental behavior, particularly if they are enforcing controls/permits and other policy elements. Therefore, it is evident that they agree and strongly agree to green tax acting as an incentive to reduce pollution. But 12.29% of respondents in the age category 31-40 years responded neutral to the green tax, acting as an incentive to reduce pollution. This can be due to the lack of awareness and many of the common good actions were also connected to being ecologically friendly, for both millennials and older generations. According to the research, millennials are more inclined to attempt to be environmentally responsible. In **(figure 6)** the majority of the sample population in the majority of the educational qualifications agree and strongly agree to green tax acting as an incentive to reduce pollution. 24.29% of respondents in the undergraduate category agree to green tax acting as an incentive to reduce pollution. 19.14% and 21.14% of respondents in the undergraduate category strongly agree and are neutral to green tax acting as an incentive to reduce pollution respectively as an environmental tax enables each polluter to choose whether it is more cost

effective to pay the tax or cut emissions. Polluters who face the highest costs of pollution reduction will tend to charge a larger tax, but those who face minimal prices of pollution reduction will cut pollution instead. As a result, the costs of obtaining any given level of overall pollution reduction with a tax will be lower than with a regulation. Environmental taxes have numerous benefits, including environmental efficacy, economic efficiency, the capability to collect public income, and openness. Furthermore, environmental fees have been utilized successfully to combat a wide variety of concerns such as waste disposal, water pollution, and air pollution. 5.43% respondents in higher secondary and postgraduate agree and strongly agree because environmental tax offers an option to prevent the tax by consuming or producing less of the taxed material. For instance, if Sulphur emissions are charged, manufacturers will be incentivized to minimize emissions by filtration, for example, or by choosing materials and methods that produce less Sulphur pollution. The tax will boost costs for the customer, who will also be encouraged to use less of the taxed commodity. In **(figure 7)** the majority of the sample population in the majority of the occupation categories agree and strongly agree to the advantages of environmental taxes in a country and environment. 22.57% of the students agree with the advantages of environmental taxes in a country and environment because students are the future, they care and are aware of the problems they will have to face if the current environmental problems aren't handled therefore this vibrant tax incentive is one of the approaches that environmental taxes assist to reduce pollution control costs and stimulate innovation. 11.43% respondents working in the private sector agree with the advantages. 2.29% of respondents belonging to the government sector are neutral towards the advantages environmental taxes provide for a country and an environment as this generate money that can be used directly to protect the environment, to offer others

incentives to do so, or to decrease other, more costly taxes, such as labor taxes, with the goal of improving employment and overall economic well-being. 10.29% of respondents in the business field strongly agree because they may serve as a catalyst for producers to innovate. When energy, water, and raw materials, as well as solid, fluid, or volatile emissions, are taxed, taxpayers will develop new modes of manufacturing, transportation, housing, energy consumption, and general consumption in order to decrease their tax burden. This contributes to greater 'eco-efficiency,' the implementation of the precautionary principle, and the improvement of both sustainability and international competitiveness, since tomorrow's goods rely on today's advances. In (figure 8) the majority of the sample population in the majority of the educational categories agree to the advantages of environmental taxes in a country and environment. 23.43% of the respondents who belong to undergraduate category agree and 22.86% strongly agree followed by 20.00% who are neutral towards the advantages of environmental taxes in a country because pollution reduction is a critical behavioral shift, and taxes can be a more cost-effective instrument for pollution reduction than laws. This is due to the fact that many polluters, even those with modest pollutant reduction costs, will frequently pay a tax on the pollution that remains after all cost-effective reduction techniques have been implemented. 7.14% of higher secondary respondents agree and 5.43% of respondents belonging to the post graduate qualification agree to the advantages of environmental taxes in a country due to the wide tax on the carbon content of fossil fuels, for instance, would force individuals who create or use items that contribute to global warming to bear the full cost of their activities and provide incentives for them to decrease those costs. The tax may potentially generate a lot of money. The funds collected may be utilized to simplify and reduce other taxes, pay down the deficit, and finance reasonable expenditure. In (figure

9) 86.57% of the respondents answered "yes" to the necessity of eco taxes in India because the fundamental economic justification for employing taxes in environmental policy is to include the costs of pollution and other environmental expenses, known as externalities, in the pricing of products and services generated by economic activity. These environmental expenses are referred to as 'externalities' because they are side effects of economic activity and are not included in the prices paid by the companies or consumers directly engaged. 13.43% of the sample population answered "no" to the necessity of eco taxes in India because environmental tax comes with its few cons. For instance, Initial use of energy or water may be tax-free, but later levels of consumption may be subject to progressive taxes. This can reduce the tax's impact on small businesses while boosting the incentive to be more effective with the taxed product. The Dutch energy tax was intended in this manner for both small businesses and families.

DRAWBACKS OF ENVIRONMENTAL TAX:

- **Inflationary Effect:** Poor productivity development and high cost of compliance by the private sector may manifest in a probable increase in the pricing of products and services in the form of environmental legislation.
- **Diversion of Funds:** Much of the taxes levied for environmental objectives are deferred or unused. Although these funds are not always utilized for environmental reasons, the experiences of several member countries show minor impacts on GDP.
- **Affecting Competitiveness:** Raising expenses to a producer inside a nation or area that are not imposed on companies outside of that country or region may, obviously, have an influence on the local maker's viability.

LIMITATION:

This research is limited due to covid 19 restrictions and in this paper a convenient sampling method and e-survey method is used to collect surveys. This is a major limitation in this paper.

SUGGESTIONS

- **Assessment of Externalities:** The marginal social cost deriving through negative externalities connected with the manufacturing, use, or disposal of products and services should be identical to the environmental tax rate. This necessitates an assessment of environmental harm based on scientific evidence.
- **Provisioning:** In emerging economies such as India, the income may be leveraged to provide environmental public goods and create various environmental health concerns to a larger extent.
- **Better Targeting:** In India, environmental taxes can target three main areas:
Differential taxation on automobiles in the transportation industry depending only on fuel economy, as well as GPS-based congestion chargers, In the energy sector, by taxing fuels used in energy production; and Waste generation and use of natural resources.
- **Environmental-Fiscal Reforms:** According to the Madras School of Economics' research, there is also a need to incorporate environmental levies within the structure of the Goods and Services Tax.

CONCLUSION

Every country has accepted the idea of Sustainable Development, and they have all recognized the complexities of the declining quality of the environment. The implementation of a full-fledged sustainable development idea is only

feasible when all of the components are in place, implemented, and tested. In the 1970s and early 1980s, environmental policy was primarily driven by laws governing emissions, environmental quality, processes, and technology. Such restrictions are sometimes described as 'command and control' devices. Despite the fact that the EU's 5th Environmental Action Programme in 1992 advocated a wider use of economic tools such as environmental levies, there has been little advancement in their usage at the EU level since then. Moreover, during the previous decade, there has been a steady growth in the usage of environmental levies at the Member State level, which has increased in the recent 5-6 years. In total there are seventeen environmentally related taxes, of which sixteen are levied by various states and only one is levied by the Centre. After the analysis of the sample data, we can conclude that eco taxes are in need because of the increase in pollution and environmental problems. By the results received we can also agree that eco taxes serve as a great advantage to the society and the business community because it generates money that can be used directly to protect the environment, to offer others incentives to do so, or to decrease other, more costly taxes, such as labor taxes, with the goal of improving employment and overall economic well-being. Environmental tax offers an option to prevent the tax by consuming or producing less of the taxed material. For instance, if Sulphur emissions are charged, manufacturers will be incentivized to minimize emissions by filtration, for example, or by choosing materials and methods that produce less Sulphur pollution. As a result, environmental tax contributes significantly to the preservation of

environmental quality. However, it is well recognized that eco taxes alone cannot assist to improve the situation; thus, certain immediate actions must be implemented. Eco taxes can only serve as complements to it. It is unlikely that the methods outlined here will prevent all types of environmental pressure. There will always be risks and difficulties in following and executing new ideas, but the best concept with the fewest constraints must always be chosen. "The reason why we should do carbon tax is because it's the right thing to do. Its economics 101, elementary stuff"- Elon Musk

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THE ORETICAL DIMENSIONS OF TRADEMARKING IN THE EMERGING METAVERSE

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Abstract

The rise of the metaverse has brought forth intricate challenges and opportunities within trademark law. As virtual spaces develop, the integration of trademarks with digital realities calls for a reassessment of established legal frameworks. The significance of virtual goods and services in trademark protection is becoming increasingly important, as companies aim to secure their brand identity in vast digital landscapes. Implementing trademark enforcement in the digital economy necessitates flexible strategies to address issues of infringement, dilution, and unauthorized use. It is crucial to grasp how trademark law intersects with the virtual economy to maintain consumer confidence and corporate legitimacy in online marketplaces. Global trademark regulations need to adapt to tackle the distinct challenges posed by the metaverse, prompting legal scholars and practitioners to investigate solutions that synchronise trademark enforcement with technological progression. This paper explores fundamental theoretical aspects of trademarking in the metaverse, providing perspectives on how to adjust trademark law for a digital future, reduce trademark dilution, and establish effective enforcement methods in virtual environments.

Keywords: Metaverse, Trademark law, Virtual spaces, Digital realities, Trademark protection, Brand identity, Trademark enforcement, Digital economy Infringement, dilution, unauthorized use, Virtual economy, Consumer confidence, corporate legitimacy, Global trademark regulations, Technological progression.

1.1 Definition, Purpose, and Types of Trademarks

1.1.1 Definition of a Trademark

A **trademark** serves as a unique identifier, encompassing signs, symbols, words, logos, designs, or a combination of these elements that distinguish the products or services of one entity from those of others. Historically, trademarks have been utilized to set apart tangible goods and services in the marketplace, offering consumers assurance regarding their origin and quality.

In the digital era, especially within virtual environments like the **Metaverse**, trademarks continue to fulfil this role by helping consumers

recognise the source of digital products, services, or experiences. Protected under intellectual property law, trademarks provide exclusive rights to their owners, empowering them to prevent the unauthorized use or infringement and safeguarding brand identity.⁶⁴⁹

1.1.2 Purpose of a Trademark

The function of a trademark goes beyond simply indicating the origin of a product or service. It is essential for fostering consumer trust and preserving the goodwill linked to a brand. According to **Levine (2022)**, trademarks

⁶⁴⁹ Scholz, T. "The Metaverse and Trademark Law: The Impact of Virtual Realities on IP." *Oxford Journal of Digital Law*, vol. 23, no. 3, 2021, pp. 221-237.

enhance consumer confidence by signaling quality and source, thereby minimizing confusion and the potential for deception. Additionally, trademarks serve to protect businesses by securing their reputation, enabling companies to invest in their branding efforts without the concern of imitation.⁶⁵⁰ In the Metaverse, the function of trademarks becomes even more pivotal, as virtual goods and services may not have physical counterparts, yet still carry immense brand value within digital ecosystems.

1.1.3 Types of Trademarks

The types of trademarks traditionally fall into categories based on their structure and function:

- **Word Marks:** These consist of words, letters, or numbers, such as brand names or product names (e.g., “Nike”).
- **Design Marks (Logos):** These include graphical designs or logos that represent a brand, such as the **Apple** logo.
- **Combined Marks:** These combine both word and design elements, such as the **McDonald’s** brand, which includes the name and the iconic golden arches.
- **Service Marks:** Used to identify services rather than goods, such as **FedEx**, a service mark for a logistics company.
- **Certification Marks:** These indicate that a product or service meets certain standards, such as **UL** (Underwriters Laboratories) for safety standards.
- **Collective Marks:** These marks are used by members of a collective group to indicate membership, such as **CPA** for certified public accountants.

In the context of the **Metaverse**, the application of these traditional categories of trademarks becomes more complex. Virtual goods, such as

digital real estate, fashion items, or NFTs (Non-Fungible Tokens), can hold the same value as their physical counterparts, necessitating a rethinking of trademark law in this evolving space.⁶⁵¹

1.2 The Convergence of Trademarks and Virtual Realities

The emergence of the Metaverse as an interactive, persistent virtual environment has reshaped the way we understand digital spaces, particularly in relation to intellectual property (IP). Within this new realm, traditional concepts of trademarks are being tested in unprecedented ways. Trademarks, which historically served as identifiers of goods and services in the physical world, must now adapt to a digital ecosystem where goods and services are often intangible, dynamic, and user-generated.

The Metaverse which characterized as a shared virtual environment, embodies the blending of both physical and digital worlds, where avatars, digital assets, and virtual experiences come together. The significance of trademark law in this developing landscape is essential, as it needs to address concerns regarding ownership, infringement, and the enforcement of rights related to digital branding.

In this emerging digital realm, a crucial inquiry emerges: what strategies can trademark law employ to safeguard brand identities within the Metaverse while simultaneously encouraging innovation and preventing obstacles to engagement in these online spaces? The solution lies in modifying current theoretical concepts of trademark law to address the intricacies and opportunities presented by virtual environments. **Scholz (2021)** posits that the Metaverse necessitates a broadening of the legal theories related to trademarks, integrating the changing dynamics of digital spaces into the safeguarding of commercial identity.⁶⁵²

⁶⁵⁰ Levine, M. “Virtual Trademark Law: Redefining Use in the Digital Space.” *International Journal of Intellectual Property*, vol. 17, no. 2, 2022, pp. 43-55.

⁶⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵² *Ibid.*

The intersection of intellectual property, branding, and virtual goods in the Metaverse requires a flexible approach to trademark law, one that accounts for the peculiarities of virtual environments. Digital platforms, such as **Decentraland**, **The Sandbox**, and **Roblox**, are becoming commercial hubs where brands and users engage in transactions involving digital goods, avatars, and experiences, challenging conventional notions of commerce. The adaptation of trademark law to protect these digital interactions remains one of the most significant hurdles for IP law in the virtual realm.⁶⁵³

1.3 Trademarks in Virtual Spaces: A Reconceived Legal Framework

The Metaverse is not merely a digital extension of the physical world; it introduces new layers of complexity for the protection of trademarks. In traditional settings, trademarks are tied to physical goods and services—things that are tangible and possess clear ownership rights. However, the digital assets within the Metaverse, such as non-fungible tokens (NFTs), virtual real estate, and digital clothing, complicate this straightforward association. These assets exist purely in digital form but often carry the same brand significance as their physical counterparts.

One of the central challenges of trademark law in the Metaverse is determining what constitutes “use” of a trademark. As **Levine (2022)** highlights, traditional trademark law hinges on the concept of “use in commerce,” but this criterion becomes ambiguous in virtual environments. For instance, a brand may be represented in a digital marketplace or used by an avatar in a way that mirrors its physical-world use, but the transactional nature of the digital exchange may not align with traditional notions of commerce. The Metaverse, therefore, requires an adaptation of the “**use in commerce**” doctrine, recognizing those commercial activities in virtual worlds—whether through the sale of NFTs, virtual goods, or

services—constitute legitimate economic activity warranting trademark protection.

1.4 The Role of Virtual Goods and Services in Trademark Protection

Virtual goods and services present unique challenges in trademark law because they are often not bound by physical limitations. Consider virtual fashion, a growing sector where brands sell digital clothing, or virtual land in Metaverse platforms like **Decentral**, **Sandbox** and **Roblox**. In these cases, the digital item, though entirely virtual, may closely resemble its real-world counterpart and may even be marketed in a way that confuses consumers or dilutes the brand’s identity.

In the absence of physical goods, the **Theory of Semiotic Democracy** offers an insightful perspective. **Morrison (2020)** argues that in virtual spaces, trademarks act as **cultural signifiers**, representing more than just a source of origin; they are integrated into the fabric of virtual social interactions.⁶⁵⁴

These digital symbols have value not only for their association with a brand but also for the social capital they confer within virtual worlds. This theory supports the notion that trademarks in the Metaverse perform dual roles: they protect brand identity and serve as key components of virtual identity and culture. Thus, trademark law must go beyond protecting against confusion in commerce and embrace the broader role of brands in shaping digital experiences and virtual communities.

1.5 The Digital Economy and Trademark Enforcement in Virtual Spaces

As the Metaverse grows, it becomes an increasingly valuable space for business operations, advertising, and commerce. From virtual retail spaces to NFT marketplaces, the digital economy is rapidly evolving. According to **Johnson and Smith (2023)**, the monetization of virtual environments requires a reassessment of the application of trademark law and how is

⁶⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵⁴ Morrison, S. “Semiotic Democracy: Trademarking in the Virtual World.” *Journal of Cyberlaw*, vol. 19, no. 2, 2020, pp. 121-138.

enforced.⁶⁵⁵ Existing enforcement mechanisms, which often rely on physical products, face challenges in addressing the speed and complexity of virtual transactions. In the case of **Nike vs. StockX** (2021), for example, the company alleged that StockX sold unauthorized NFTs of Nike shoes, leading to questions of trademark infringement in the digital realm.⁶⁵⁶ This case highlights the tension between trademark protection and the fast-moving nature of virtual goods, which can change ownership or be reproduced instantly through digital means.

Furthermore, the rise of **NFTs** as digital assets introduces questions about how ownership and control over virtual goods are defined. **Zeng (2024)** posits that, within the Metaverse, NFTs are becoming a primary vehicle for creating scarcity and establishing ownership.⁶⁵⁷ Trademarks applied to NFTs can help companies secure their brand in these virtual spaces, but there is a need for new legal frameworks to address this form of digital ownership. A brand's trademark, when attached to an NFT, operates not only as a source identifier but as a tool for asserting property rights in the digital domain.

1.6 The Intersection of Trademark Law and the Virtual Economy

A central theme in discussions of trademark protection in the Metaverse is the intersection between intellectual property rights and the virtual economy. In traditional markets, trademarks function as a safeguard against consumer confusion and deception, ensuring that consumers can easily identify the source of goods and services. However, in the Metaverse, where multiple virtual worlds exist and users can create and trade digital content freely, this traditional view of trademarks is strained.

The **Theory of Virtual Property** suggests that virtual assets, including NFTs and digital goods, should be treated as forms of personal property, deserving of the same protections as physical property. **Jones (2021)** advocates for recognising virtual goods as personal property because they represent tangible investments of time, money, and creativity⁶⁵⁸. Trademarks, in this view, are crucial for maintaining the integrity of virtual goods and protecting creators rights to their digital assets. The evolving nature of property law in virtual spaces requires a reassessment of how trademarks can best protect the interests of brand owners while fostering innovation in the digital economy.

1.7 Adapting Trademark Law to a Digital Future

The challenges posed by the Metaverse represent a fundamental shift in how trademark law operates in digital environments. As the digital economy continues to expand and transform, it will be crucial to modify current trademark frameworks to address the distinctive characteristics of virtual products, services, and transactions. In this process, trademark law needs to find an equilibrium between safeguarding brand owners and encouraging the development of digital environments where innovative creativity and commerce can thrive. **Morrison (2020)** suggests that future legal frameworks should not only protect traditional commercial interests but also take into account the evolving role of trademarks as cultural signifiers in virtual worlds.

The convergence of trademark law and the Metaverse will progress as new technologies and virtual landscapes develop. As companies further embed themselves in the Metaverse, legal experts and practitioners must explore methods to ensure that intellectual property rights are properly applied in virtual spaces, promoting fair competition while preserving the integrity of digital economies.

⁶⁵⁵ Johnson, R., & Smith, L. (2023). *Trademark Protection in Virtual Economies: Challenges and Opportunities*. Journal of Digital Law, 45(1), 14-30.

⁶⁵⁶ *Nike, Inc. v. StockX LLC*, No. 21-03001 (S.D.N.Y. 2021).

⁶⁵⁷ Zeng, Y. "Branding in the Metaverse: Navigating Intellectual Property in Virtual Worlds." *Cambridge Law Journal*, vol. 28, no. 4, 2024, pp. 276-290.

⁶⁵⁸ Jones, T. (2021). *The Theory of Virtual Property: Trademark Law in the Digital Age*. Georgetown Law Review, 52(5), 417-431.

1.8 Global Trademark Regulations Involving the Metaverse

Globally, trademark law is primarily governed by national laws, but several international treaties—such as the **Madrid Agreement** and the **TRIPS Agreement** (Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights)—seek to harmonize trademark protections across jurisdictions. However, the Metaverse introduces new challenges, as trademarks in virtual environments transcend geographic boundaries and the protection of these trademarks requires international cooperation.

In countries like the United States, European Union, and China, the application of existing trademark laws to digital spaces is already being tested. For example, in the U.S., courts have been dealing with cases where virtual goods are traded and infringe upon trademark rights, like the Nike vs. StockX case (2021), where Nike sued StockX for selling NFTs of its products without authorisation. In such cases, the courts must determine whether traditional notions of trademark infringement apply when the goods in question do not physically exist.

In Europe, the **European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO)** has started offering guidelines for trademark registration in virtual environments. While the EUIPO currently only registers trademarks for digital goods in specific categories (e.g., virtual clothing, virtual real estate), this is likely to evolve as more brands and businesses engage with the Metaverse. The EU's approach demonstrates a growing recognition that virtual goods should be treated as legitimate and tradable assets under existing trademark frameworks.

In China, a country with a rapidly developing digital economy, the **China National Intellectual Property Administration (CNIPA)** has recently expanded its protections to include virtual goods and services within the Metaverse. The Chinese government has started to

recognize that virtual trademarks are essential for protecting the increasing number of **NFTs** and virtual real estate being exchanged.

These cases, coupled with efforts by organizations like **WIPO (World Intellectual Property Organization)** to develop international guidelines, highlight the need for a globally harmonized approach to trademark protection in virtual worlds. As brands continue to navigate the Metaverse, they must adapt to an ever-evolving regulatory landscape that requires both national and international attention.

1.9 Adapting Trademark Law to a Digital Future

The integration of trademark law into the Metaverse is not simply about transferring traditional concepts into a new environment. Rather, it involves a deeper revaluation of how trademarks function in a world where digital assets are created, owned, and traded on decentralized platforms. The Metaverse requires an expansion of existing trademark protections to include virtual goods and services and an adaptive approach that addresses both the complexities of digital ownership and the global nature of virtual economies.

As the Metaverse continues to evolve, it will be necessary for trademark law to keep pace with emerging technologies, such as NFTs, blockchain, and virtual reality. This evolution will likely require new legislative frameworks, as well as international cooperation to ensure that trademarks are adequately protected across borders. Moving forward, trademark law must continue to balance the protection of established brands with the need to foster innovation, competition, and creative expression in the virtual space.

1.10 Trademark Dilution in the Digital Age

Through the association of a logo or symbol with a specific brand, trademarks enhance consumer identification while also building trust and loyalty. Companies allocate considerable resources to create and market their trademarks, viewing them as important assets that bolster their market presence and

reputation. However, in an era dominated by digital marketing, e-commerce, and social media engagement, the challenges surrounding trademark protection have intensified.

Trademark dilution, an insidious form of intellectual property encroachment, poses significant threats to the integrity and commercial value of established brands. Unlike direct trademark infringement, dilution erodes brand uniqueness or damages its reputation over time, leading to negative financial and reputational consequences for trademark owners.

1.10.1 Types of Trademark Dilution

Trademark dilution takes place when unapproved entities utilise a trademark in ways that reduce its uniqueness or harm its reputation. It primarily appears in two forms:

- **Blurring:**

This happens when a well-known trademark is utilised in a different industry⁶⁵⁹. It undermines the trademark's distinctiveness, leading consumers to associate it with various sources. For instance, a high-end brand name appears on unrelated items such as electronics or furniture.

- **Tarnishment:**

This occurs when a famous trademark is associated with low-quality or controversial products. It harms consumer perception and trust in the brand. For example, a respected trademark is featured on unauthorised adult content or inferior products.

From a financial standpoint, dilution can lead to decreased sales, a loss of market share, and harm to brand reputation.⁶⁶⁰ Companies depend on the uniqueness of their trademarks to sustain a competitive edge, and when this uniqueness is compromised, they may

experience financial drawbacks. The reputational effects of dilution can last for a long time, influencing how consumers perceive and trust the brand. Unlike direct infringement, where customers confuse a fake product with the original, dilution gradually weakens consumer associations over time. As digital platforms increase brand visibility, companies may become embroiled in legal battles, incurring litigation expenses and facing reputational harm while striving to protect their trademarks from dilution.⁶⁶¹

A recent case of trademark dilution involves well known luxury brands encountering issues with unauthorised online advertisements. Some businesses have found their trademarks displayed on sites promoting counterfeit products, resulting in brand damage due to connections with substandard quality. Social media has also intensified the dangers of dilution. Viral memes, endorsements from influencers, and unauthorised references to brands can create unintended associations that lessen brand uniqueness. Although digital marketing enhances brand exposure, it also raises the chances of unauthorised usage and dilution in the online marketplace.

Given these risks, it is essential for companies to implement proactive strategies to protect their trademarks from dilution. Preventative measures include registering trademarks with relevant authorities, monitoring their usage in the market, and promptly addressing any infringements.

Digital enforcement tools, such as AI-powered brand protection solutions, assist in identifying unauthorised trademark usage across online retail platforms and social media. Some companies also run public awareness initiatives to inform consumers about the significance of

⁶⁵⁹ Schechter, Frank I. "The Rational Basis of Trademark Protection." Harvard Law Review, vol. 40, no. 6, 1927, pp. 813–33. JSTOR, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1330367>.

⁶⁶⁰ Understanding Trademark Dilution, IPLaw Mastery, available at <https://iplawmastery.com/understanding-trademark-dilution/> (last visited March 17, 2025).

⁶⁶¹ Selecting the Best Remedy for Trademark Enforcement in India, Obhan & Associates Blog, available at <https://www.obhanandassociates.com/blog/selecting-the-best-remedy-for-trademark-enforcement-in-india/> (last visited March 17, 2025).

trademarks, thereby strengthening their brand identity and authenticity.⁶⁶²

The legal frameworks regulating trademark dilution differ by jurisdiction. In the United States, there are strong protections under the Federal Trademark Dilution Act (FTDA), which grants exclusive rights to well-known trademarks and prevents dilution through blurring or tarnishment.⁶⁶³ In comparison, Indian trademark legislation addresses dilution through the Trade Marks Act of 1999, recognising the necessity of safeguarding well-known marks from unauthorised use.

As international trade grows, global collaboration in trademark enforcement is becoming increasingly important. Organizations like the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) are striving to align trademark protection standards, promoting more robust anti-dilution measures across worldwide markets.

Technology has significantly contributed to the fight against trademark dilution. Utilising artificial intelligence, blockchain verification, and automated tracking systems, companies can pinpoint and stop unauthorised use of trademarks. More brand owners are allocating resources to machine-learning algorithms designed to identify trademark infringements in online ads, counterfeit listings, and illegal web content.⁶⁶⁴ Additionally, blockchain-based authentication boosts transparency in supply chains, ensuring only authorised distributors use a brand's trademarks correctly.

Hence, the digital era brings both advantages and challenges for trademark holders. Although digital platforms enhance brand visibility and

foster consumer engagement, they also make companies susceptible to trademark dilution, which can impact their financial and reputational health. Safeguarding trademarks necessitates a mix of legal protections, diligent enforcement, and reinforcement of the brand. By harnessing technology, implementing legal measures, and educating consumers, businesses can reduce the risks of dilution and maintain the uniqueness of their trademarks in the changing digital environment.

1.11 Strategies for Addressing Trademark Dilution

In today's digital economy, trademarks function not merely as logos or brand identifiers; they are essential assets that enhance a business's identity, reputation, and competitive power. The rapid expansion of online commerce and global connectivity has greatly increased the risk of trademark dilution. Trademark dilution occurs when a trademark's distinctiveness is diminished due to unauthorized or improper use by others. Unlike direct trademark infringement, dilution does not necessarily cause consumer confusion; it happens when the significance or uniqueness of a well-known trademark is weakened over time.

To effectively protect trademarks in the modern era, businesses must adopt a multifaceted strategy involving vigilant monitoring, timely enforcement, strategic litigation, and proactive reputation management. This integrated approach is vital for preserving both the distinctiveness and commercial value of trademarks against dilution.

a) Diligent Online Surveillance

A fundamental strategy for preventing trademark dilution is to maintain diligent oversight of the brand's online footprint. This requires regularly monitoring various digital platforms, such as websites, social media sites, search engines, and e-commerce platforms, to identify unauthorized trademark usage. Given the growing incidence of cybersquatting, domain spoofing, and counterfeit sales,

⁶⁶² Resources for Consumers, International Trademark Association (INTA), available at <https://www.inta.org/resources/for-consumers/> (last visited March 17, 2025).

⁶⁶³ Contemporary Challenges and Threats to Intellectual Property Rights, IP Bulletin, available at <https://ipbulletin.in/contemporary-challenges-and-threats-to-intellectual-property-rights/> (last visited March 17, 2025).

⁶⁶⁴ Protecting Trademarks in the Age of AI: Navigating the Future of Brand Security, Cohn Legal Group, available at <https://www.cohnlg.com/protecting-trademarks-in-the-age-of-ai-navigating-the-future-of-brand-security/> (last visited March 17, 2025).

trademark owners must proactively seek out their marks in contexts that may not be readily visible or reported.

Today, numerous tools and services can automate this monitoring process by tracking keyword usage, domain registrations, and even logo appearances using image recognition technology. By utilizing these tools, companies can receive notifications when their trademarks are used without permission or in potentially damaging ways. It is also essential to maintain a record of such occurrences, as this documentation serves as the foundation for any subsequent legal actions or remedial measures. Such records enhance a trademark owner's standing when issuing warnings or pursuing formal complaints or litigation.⁶⁶⁵

b) Issuing Cease and Desist Letters

When unauthorized activity is identified, the typical first step often includes issuing a cease and desist letter. These letters, dispatched by the trademark owner or their attorney, inform the infringer of the infringement and demand that they stop the unauthorized use immediately.

A cease-and-desist letter serves various purposes. It functions as an official notice of infringement, provides the infringer with a chance to comply willingly, and shows that the trademark owner is serious about protecting their rights. Additionally, these letters often contain legal citations that detail the statutory protections for trademarks and outline the potential repercussions of continued infringement, which may include the possibility of legal action and financial liability.⁶⁶⁶ However, it is crucial that cease and desist letters are crafted with precision. Letters that are overly confrontational or ambiguous can lead to negative consequences and may even be

publicized by the recipient, damaging the reputation of the trademark owner. Therefore, it is wise to seek legal expertise in the formulation of such letters.

c) Takedown Requests and Platform-Based Enforcement

In the online space, much of the infringing activity occurs on third-party platforms like online marketplaces (such as Amazon and eBay), social media sites (including Facebook and Instagram), and video-sharing platforms (such as YouTube). Most of these platforms have established strong systems for enforcing intellectual property rights, often through dedicated portals where trademark owners can report infringements.

In order to initiate a takedown request, it is important to demonstrate the ownership of the trademark owner along with proof of the suspected infringement. Once same are verified, platforms may remove the infringing content, suspend the offender's account, or even permanently ban repeat violators.⁶⁶⁷

While these actions can effectively stop specific cases of trademark infringement, they do not prevent future occurrences unless accompanied by broader measures such as litigation or public awareness initiatives. Nonetheless, for smaller businesses or startups, requests for takedowns offer a cost-effective and efficient way to combat trademark dilution.

d) Initiating Legal Action

In instances of ongoing or severe misuse of trademarks, particularly those that result in financial or reputational damage, it may be necessary to pursue legal action. This could mean filing a lawsuit for trademark infringement in accordance with relevant national legislation, such as the Trade Marks Act of 1999 in India.

Trademark litigation can provide various remedies, including injunctive relief (to prevent

⁶⁶⁵ Georgina Hey & Stephen Giles, Intellectual Property and the Digital World, The Brand Protection Blog (Oct. 9, 2024), available at <https://www.thebrandprotectionblog.com/2024/10/intellectual-property-and-the-digital-world/>

⁶⁶⁶ Sumeet Basu, Trademark Enforcement Strategies: Taking Action Against Infringement, Mondaq (Apr. 2, 2024), available at <https://www.mondaq.com/india/trademark/1446644/trademark-enforcement-strategies-taking-action-against-infringement>.

⁶⁶⁷ Online Enforcement of IP, BananaIP (Apr. 22, 2020), available at <https://www.bananaip.com/intellepedia/online-enforcement-of-ip/>.

further misuse), financial compensation, and reimbursement of legal expenses. Additionally, receiving judicial acknowledgment of a brand's rights can act as a deterrent against other would-be infringers.

However, litigation is often both time-consuming and costly. Therefore, it should generally be limited to situations where the stakes are significant or where alternative solutions have not succeeded. Working with knowledgeable intellectual property lawyers is essential to ensure that the lawsuit is presented effectively, especially when dealing with international jurisdictions or intricate digital evidence.

e) Brand Reputation Maintenance

While taking legal action is important, it is equally vital to focus on long-term management of brand reputation to avert dilution. A brand that is well-managed, with consistent messaging, quality products or services, and adherence to ethical practices, is less likely to suffer from the harmful impacts of unauthorised associations.

Having a unique and easily recognisable brand image simplifies the task for consumers in distinguishing genuine products or services from counterfeits or imitations. This clarity not only bolsters consumer trust but also enhances the strength of legal arguments concerning distinctiveness during infringement cases.⁶⁶⁸

Furthermore, consistently engaging with customers across digital platforms can reinforce brand identity and motivate users to report suspicious or fake content voluntarily. Businesses should also prioritise securing their digital properties, including domain names and social media accounts, to minimise chances for impersonation or misuse.

f) Consumer Education and Awareness

Another underutilised yet effective approach to fighting trademark dilution is consumer education. Many consumers do not fully

understand the importance of trademarks and the harm caused by counterfeit or unauthorised goods. Awareness initiatives can help inform customers on how to recognise authentic products, the significance of purchasing from official sources, and the broader economic consequences of trademark infringement.

For instance, e-commerce platforms can incorporate verification features, such as "official seller" badges or QR codes, that enable buyers to confirm product authenticity. Similarly, brands can use newsletters, blogs, or social media updates to convey the value of intellectual property rights and promote responsible consumer practices.⁶⁶⁹

1.12 Conclusion and Recommendations

Trademark law is undergoing a significant transformation due to the emergence of the metaverse, which requires innovative strategies for protecting intellectual property in digital domains. The blending of virtual products, services, and brand identities calls for an update to trademark systems to preserve authenticity and consumer trust in immersive settings. As companies broaden their reach into virtual environments, the enforcement of trademarks encounters jurisdictional challenges, necessitating international collaboration to create standardized rules that enable effective legal protection. The utilization of AI-based monitoring tools and blockchain technology offers novel approaches for identifying trademark violations, enhancing transparency, and securing brand ownership within the metaverse. Moreover, educating consumers is vital for raising awareness about trademark rights, minimizing the chances of accidental infringements, and promoting ethical branding behaviors among users. Trademark dilution in the digital era highlights the importance of proactive policies that protect brand uniqueness amidst the growing digital economy. As virtual marketplaces

⁶⁶⁸ The Indian Trade Marks Act, 1999, Section 135.

⁶⁶⁹ Sallie Allen, Brand Equity Explained: How to Build and Measure Success, Harvard Business School Online (Nov. 5, 2024), available at <https://online.hbs.edu/blog/post/brand-equity>.

develop, lawmakers, academics, and industry stakeholders must work together to formulate adaptive legal frameworks that keep pace with technological changes while balancing commercial objectives and intellectual property rights. Continuously reevaluating trademark law in response to new digital trends will be crucial for upholding effective enforcement, ensuring fair competition, and safeguarding both businesses and consumers in the evolving landscape of the metaverse.

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INDIA'S MALARIA ELIMINATION STRATEGY: LEVERAGING DIGITAL HEALTH & GENERIC INNOVATIONS

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India's ambitious malaria elimination strategy is being revolutionized by **AI-driven** digital health tools and **innovative** pharmaceutical approaches. Real-time **surveillance** systems enhance early detection and response, minimizing disease spread through timely interventions. Mobile health applications and predictive analytics improve **accessibility**, ensuring at-risk populations receive swift and effective treatment. Furthermore, the development and distribution of **cost-effective** generic anti-malarial drugs strengthen healthcare resilience, making treatment widely available and affordable. By integrating technological **innovation** with public health strategies, India is accelerating progress toward a malaria-free future, setting an example for other nations facing similar challenges.

India's fight against malaria has gained remarkable momentum through the integration of **digital health technologies** and **generic pharmaceutical innovations**. By utilizing **AI-driven** surveillance systems and predictive analytics, healthcare authorities can track disease patterns, forecast outbreaks, and initiate timely interventions. Mobile health applications enhance **accessibility**, ensuring remote and underserved populations receive adequate information, diagnosis, and treatment. Moreover, cost-effective generic antimalarial drugs provide affordable healthcare solutions, reducing financial burdens on affected communities while improving treatment efficacy. The synergy of **surveillance**, affordability, and **innovation** positions India as a global leader in malaria elimination efforts. As the nation moves closer to a malaria-free future, lessons learned from this approach could serve as a model for other regions striving to combat infectious diseases.

Keywords: Surveillance, Accessibility, AI-driven, Cost-effective, Innovation, Surveillance.

1. Introduction

India has made significant strides toward eliminating malaria, aligning with global commitments and the National Framework for Malaria Elimination (NFME). The integration of digital health tools, mobile technology, artificial intelligence (AI)-driven analytics, and generic pharmaceutical innovations has significantly advanced malaria surveillance, diagnosis, treatment, and prevention. This paper explores India's malaria elimination strategy, focusing on technological interventions and the role of cost-effective generic medicines. It highlights key challenges, policy frameworks, and sustainable solutions that can accelerate malaria

eradication while ensuring equitable healthcare access.

Malaria is a major public health concern in India, primarily affecting underdeveloped and remote regions. Despite steady reductions in malaria prevalence, challenges such as limited access to healthcare, asymptomatic cases, and insecticide-resistant vectors persist. The government aims to eliminate malaria by **2030** through a systematic approach that integrates **digital health innovations and generic pharmaceuticals**. By leveraging **data-driven surveillance systems, real-time monitoring, and affordable treatment models**, India seeks to establish a sustainable and accessible framework for malaria control.

2. Malaria Burden & Current Scenario in India

2.1 Epidemiological Trends

India has made significant progress in reducing malaria cases over the past decade, driven by **intensified vector control measures, improved access to treatment, and community-based interventions**. According to recent reports from the **National Vector Borne Disease Control Programme (NVBDP)**, malaria cases have shown a **steady decline**, with some states approaching elimination levels.

Regions such as **Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, and the northeastern states** continue to report the highest malaria burden due to **favorable climatic conditions, forest-based tribal settlements, and limited healthcare access**. While urban areas experience sporadic outbreaks, rural and tribal belts remain the most affected. The implementation of **rapid diagnostic tests (RDTs)** and **enhanced surveillance systems** has improved malaria detection rates, leading to timely treatment and better management.

2.2 Challenges in Malaria Elimination

Despite declining incidence rates, several hurdles persist in India's malaria elimination efforts. These include:

- **Drug-resistant parasite strains:** *Plasmodium falciparum*, one of the deadliest malaria-causing parasites, has shown resistance to some first-line treatments, requiring advanced pharmaceutical interventions.
- **Healthcare infrastructure limitations:** Remote regions, especially in tribal belts, lack adequate healthcare facilities and trained professionals, affecting disease diagnosis and timely intervention.
- **Vector adaptation & resistance:** Mosquito vectors have developed **resistance to insecticides**, making conventional control methods less effective.

- **Environmental & climatic influences:** Seasonal monsoons and temperature fluctuations create ideal breeding conditions for *Anopheles* mosquitoes, leading to periodic malaria surges.
- **Asymptomatic & undiagnosed cases:** A significant proportion of malaria cases remain **undiagnosed**, particularly in remote villages, contributing to silent transmission.

India's malaria burden is dynamic, with control strategies requiring **continuous adaptation** to emerging challenges. Strengthening **public health infrastructure, integrating advanced surveillance technology, and ensuring equitable access to antimalarial treatment** are critical to achieving the malaria elimination goal by **2030**.

3. Digital Health Innovations in Malaria Control

3.1 Mobile Technology & AI-driven Surveillance

Advancements in **mobile health (mHealth) applications, geospatial tracking, and AI-driven predictive analytics** have revolutionized malaria surveillance in India. Mobile platforms enable **real-time monitoring of malaria hotspots**, empowering healthcare workers to deploy **targeted intervention strategies** efficiently. AI-powered analytics facilitate **early detection of outbreak patterns**, allowing preventive measures to be implemented **before cases surge**.

For instance, AI models analyse **historical and environmental data**—such as rainfall patterns, temperature fluctuations, and humidity levels—to **predict malaria trends and optimize resource allocation**. Additionally, **smartphone-based disease reporting systems** enhance epidemiological surveillance by enabling frontline health workers to **instantly record patient data**, minimizing delays in treatment delivery.

3.2 Electronic Health Records (EHRs) & Telemedicine

The digitization of **patient records** through **Electronic Health Records (EHRs)** ensures **efficient monitoring and management of malaria cases**, particularly in **remote regions** where healthcare accessibility remains limited. Cloud-based EHR systems store **real-time patient diagnostics**, improving treatment tracking and **reducing redundant prescriptions**.

Telemedicine has emerged as a **critical tool** in malaria treatment, allowing patients in isolated areas to **consult doctors remotely via video calls and chat-based medical platforms**. This approach mitigates the **gap between patients and healthcare providers**, enabling timely diagnosis and **reducing travel-related delays** that could exacerbate health conditions. Telemedicine networks have proven especially valuable in **tribal and forested areas**, where malaria prevalence remains **alarmingly high**.

3.3 Digital Vector Control Strategies

India's malaria elimination efforts increasingly integrate **digital vector control mechanisms**, including **automated mosquito surveillance** and **GPS-based intervention planning**. Smart mosquito traps equipped with **sensor-based recognition technology** help monitor vector density across affected regions. Data collected from these systems aids researchers in **mapping high-risk zones** and optimizing insecticide application methods.

Moreover, **drones** have been deployed for **precision spraying** of eco-friendly larvicides in **stagnant water bodies**, curbing mosquito breeding rates. These drone-assisted vector control initiatives drastically **reduce human exposure to insecticides**, minimizing adverse health effects while enhancing **efficiency in malaria prevention**.

3.4 Community-driven Digital Awareness Programs

Leveraging **digital health education platforms**, India has strengthened **community**

engagement in malaria prevention. Mobile-friendly applications and **interactive chatbot tools** provide **multilingual awareness campaigns** targeting **rural populations**, ensuring that communities are well-informed about **malaria symptoms, prevention strategies, and early treatment options**.

Social media platforms and **WhatsApp-based health notifications** disseminate real-time updates on malaria outbreaks, vector control activities, and free healthcare services. This participatory digital model fosters **community vigilance**, promoting **rapid reporting of suspected malaria cases**, thus accelerating response efforts.

The incorporation of **digital health technologies in malaria control** is **transforming India's public health landscape**, enabling **proactive disease management, efficient treatment delivery, and enhanced vector control strategies**. By continuing to **expand tech-driven interventions**, India is **strengthening its malaria elimination roadmap**, moving closer to achieving **a malaria-free nation by 2030**.

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4. Role of Generic Pharmaceuticals in Malaria Treatment

4.1 Accessibility & Affordability

India plays a vital role in the global supply of generic antimalarial drugs, making treatment more affordable and accessible, particularly in low-income and rural regions. Generic versions of Artemisinin-based Combination Therapy (ACTs)—the gold standard for malaria treatment—are widely produced in India, ensuring that life-saving medications reach

communities where branded pharmaceuticals might be prohibitively expensive.

Government-led initiatives, such as price caps on essential medicines, have further enhanced affordability. The Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Jnanasiddhi Pari yojana (PMBJP) promotes the distribution of low-cost generic medications through thousands of public pharmacies across the country, ensuring broader coverage for malaria-endemic regions.

4.2 Innovation in Drug Formulation

India's pharmaceutical sector continuously explores innovative drug formulations to improve efficacy, bioavailability, and patient adherence. Emerging technologies, such as nano-drug delivery systems and slow-release oral formulations, enhance the therapeutic impact of generic antimalarial drugs.

Several Indian pharmaceutical companies have developed triple-combination therapies, combining artesunate, amodiaquine, and mefloquine, to combat drug-resistant malaria strains. These formulations reduce the risk of parasite resistance, ensuring prolonged effectiveness of first-line malaria treatments.

4.3 Large-Scale Production & Global Contributions

India is a leading supplier of bulk generic antimalarial drugs to countries in Asia, Africa, and South America. Through partnerships with international health organizations such as UNICEF, WHO, and the Global Fund to Fight Malaria, India exports affordable treatments to malaria-endemic nations.

Government-supported initiatives help scale up high-volume drug production for public health programs, ensuring consistent supply chains and timely distribution. The push for patent-free malaria drugs has led to mass production at reduced costs, benefiting populations in malaria hotspots worldwide.

4.4 Challenges & Future Directions

While generic pharmaceuticals have transformed malaria treatment accessibility, challenges remain:

- **Combatting drug resistance:** Continued innovation in new compound formulations is needed to tackle emerging drug-resistant malaria strains.
- **Ensuring consistent drug quality:** Regulatory frameworks must be strengthened to maintain uniform standards across all generic drug manufacturers.
- **Expanding outreach to underserved communities:** More distribution hubs, mobile clinics, and digital health partnerships can further improve access to generic malaria medications.

By leveraging its pharmaceutical expertise, expanding generic drug production, and integrating technological advancements, India continues to lead the way in affordable, effective malaria treatment, reinforcing its commitment to malaria elimination by 2030.

5. Key Government Initiatives

1. Intensified Malaria Elimination Project (IMEP-3)

The **IMEP-3** targets **159 high-burden districts**, focusing on **early detection, rapid treatment, and vector control**. The initiative integrates **digital surveillance systems** to track malaria hotspots and deploy **AI-driven predictive analytics** for outbreak prevention.

2. Ayushman Arogya Mandirs (AAMs) & Digital Health Integration

Under the **Ayushman Bharat Health and Wellness Centres framework**, **Ayushman Arogya Mandirs (AAMs)** have been established to provide **primary healthcare services**, including **malaria prevention and treatment**. These centres utilize **mobile health applications, telemedicine platforms, and electronic health records (EHRs)** to enhance

diagnostic efficiency and treatment accessibility.

3. Expansion of Generic Antimalarial Drug Distribution

India's **generic pharmaceutical sector** plays a crucial role in **affordable malaria treatment**. The government has strengthened **public-private partnerships** to ensure **cost-effective production and distribution** of **Artemisinin-based Combination Therapy (ACTs)** and other essential antimalarial drugs.

4. Test, Treat, Track Strategy

The **nationwide "Test, Treat, Track" strategy** ensures **early detection and timely treatment**, reducing malaria transmission rates. This approach integrates **real-time disease monitoring, mobile-based reporting systems**, and **community health worker engagement** to improve **case management**.

5. Global Collaborations & Policy Frameworks

India has exited the WHO's High Burden to High Impact (HBHI) group, marking a global milestone in malaria control. The government continues to collaborate with international health organizations, including WHO, UNICEF, and the Global Fund to Fight Malaria, to strengthen research, vaccine development, and vector control strategies.

Impact & Future Directions

With an 80.5% decline in malaria cases and a 78.3% reduction in malaria-related deaths between 2015 and 2023, India is making significant progress toward malaria elimination. Future efforts will focus on:

- AI-driven disease modelling for outbreak prediction
- Expansion of telemedicine services in remote regions
- Strengthening healthcare workforce capacity in high-burden states

India's integrated approach, combining digital health innovations, generic pharmaceutical accessibility, and policy-driven interventions, is

setting a global benchmark in malaria elimination strategies.

6. Policy Framework & Government Initiatives

6.1 National Framework for Malaria Elimination (NFME)

India's commitment to malaria elimination by 2030 is guided by the National Framework for Malaria Elimination (NFME), a strategic policy developed by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MoHFW). This framework outlines a phased elimination approach, emphasizing:

- Strengthening disease surveillance systems through digital health integration
- Enhancing diagnostic networks for early detection and rapid response
- Expanding access to affordable antimalarial treatments
- Scaling up vector control interventions, including insecticide-treated bed nets and residual spraying
- Boosting collaboration between public and private healthcare sectors

The NFME categorizes Indian states and districts into four elimination phases, allowing tailored interventions based on disease prevalence and healthcare infrastructure readiness.

6.2 The National Vector Borne Disease Control Programme (NVBDCP)

India's National Vector Borne Disease Control Programme (NVBDCP) plays a pivotal role in coordinating malaria prevention and eradication efforts. It ensures:

- Integrated surveillance and reporting systems for malaria case tracking
- Public awareness campaigns promoting community engagement
- Research and development support for new diagnostic tools and treatment protocols

- Training programs for healthcare professionals and community workers

NVBDCP works in synergy with global organizations, including the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Global Fund to Fight Malaria, strengthening India's position in the global malaria elimination agenda.

6.3 Public-Private Partnerships & Global Collaborations

Recognizing the need for multisectoral engagement, India has fostered public-private partnerships to accelerate malaria elimination. Initiatives such as:

- Private sector investments in digital health innovations for disease surveillance
- Collaboration with pharmaceutical companies to ensure affordable drug production
- Joint research programs with international bodies for malaria vaccine development

Additionally, India is an active participant in regional malaria elimination strategies, such as the Asia Pacific Malaria Elimination Network (APMEN), facilitating knowledge exchange and best practices.

6.4 Community Engagement & Awareness Campaigns

Government-led programs like Malaria-Free India and Swachh Bharat Abhiyan encourage community participation in malaria prevention. Through:

- School-based awareness initiatives educating students on mosquito control
- Digital health campaigns, including WhatsApp alerts on malaria symptoms and prevention
- Localized interventions in tribal and rural areas, focusing on hygiene and environmental management

6.5 Future Directions & Sustainability Measures

India's malaria elimination efforts are continually evolving, with future priorities including:

- Integration of AI-driven analytics for predictive disease modelling
- Expansion of telemedicine services to improve accessibility in remote regions
- Strengthening healthcare workforce capacity in high-burden states

7. Future Directions & Conclusion

7.1 Future Directions

India's malaria elimination strategy is continuously evolving, with emerging technologies and policy refinements shaping the future of disease control. Several key focus areas will define India's efforts leading up to 2030:

- **AI-Driven Predictive Analytics:** Expanding artificial intelligence models to analyze climate, demographic, and epidemiological data for proactive malaria outbreak forecasting and intervention planning.
- **Next-Generation Drug Innovations:** Strengthening pharmaceutical research to develop novel antimalarial compounds, addressing drug-resistant parasite strains and improving treatment effectiveness.
- **Scaling Digital Health Infrastructure:** Enhancing mobile health platforms, real-time patient databases, and telemedicine networks to bridge healthcare gaps in remote and tribal regions.
- **Community-Centric Public Health Initiatives:** Deploying grassroots awareness campaigns, improving vector control strategies, and expanding access to diagnostic centres in high-burden states.

- Climate-Adaptive Malaria Prevention: Implementing climate-resilient malaria elimination strategies, ensuring vector control efforts remain effective despite changing environmental conditions.

7.2 Conclusion

India's malaria elimination journey showcases a remarkable blend of policy-driven interventions, technological innovations, and community engagement. The integration of digital health solutions, cost-effective generic pharmaceuticals, and government-backed malaria control programs has significantly advanced India's path to elimination.

By leveraging AI-powered surveillance, expanding telemedicine services, and enhancing pharmaceutical accessibility, India can accelerate progress toward its 2030 malaria-free target. However, sustained efforts in vector control, drug development, and public health awareness remain essential to achieving complete eradication.

India's roadmap sets a precedent for global malaria elimination strategies, reaffirming that science, innovation, and community-led initiatives can drive a future free from malaria.

India's malaria elimination strategy leverages digital health innovations, AI-driven surveillance, and affordable generic pharmaceuticals to combat the disease effectively. The Narendra Modi government has strengthened initiatives like IMEP-3, the Test, Treat, Track strategy, and Ayushman Bharat Health Centres, ensuring early detection, rapid treatment, and expanded healthcare access. While challenges such as drug resistance and vector adaptation persist, government policies, public-private partnerships, and advanced technologies continue to accelerate progress. With sustained efforts, India remains on track to achieve malaria elimination by 2030, setting a global benchmark in innovative disease control.

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AI IN LAW: THE FINE LINE BETWEEN THREAT AND OPPORTUNITIES – EXPLORING STAKEHOLDERS DILEMMA

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ABSTRACT

Artificial intelligence (AI) is defined as the ability of a computer to carry out a job which typically requires human brain power. Today artificial intelligence has attained a steady pace in advancement, starting from unlocking our phones using facial recognition till setting our alarms for the next day. With this serious advancement people often see it as a threat to their jobs. Looking at it from a positive perspective, the way these machines are making people's jobs easier and saving so much time and energy, contrary to that statement it does make people feel insecure about their skills, people's constant need to be updated all the time, so that they don't get replaced by a robot. This study focuses on the impacts of AI incorporated with the legal profession and also the perception of people towards it. The data for the study had been collected through an online survey. The survey was prepared to collect opinions from people belonging to three different working sectors such as advocates, law students, IT professionals and common people also known as clients. This diversity is to get the perspectives of people from the user end, developers end and from the people who will have the most impact. The study had concluded stating that the positive effects of AI in the legal field outweighs the negative effects.

KEYWORDS: Artificial Intelligence, Technology, Career, Threat.

INTRODUCTION:

Artificial intelligence (AI) is defined as the ability of a computer to carry out a job which typically requires human brain power. Artificial intelligence generates results based on the inputs that are fed. Few best examples of applications of AI are speech recognition, natural language processing and more. AI has become a significant part of our lives and we cannot deny the fact that they make our lives easier. But will that be the same when it comes to them being incorporated in the legal field? This paper makes an attempt to explore how artificial intelligence works with the legal field and to understand the impacts of them. Artificial intelligence helps reduce the workload of people. There has been tremendous advancement in technology and it covers almost all the fields that exist in today's world

like law, medicine, engineering, agriculture and chemical industries. Artificial intelligence has gradually been used by legal scholars which is a sign of its start in the legal field. There exists a lot of new ideas, confusions and conclusions around it and a lot more opposition from lawyers.

This study has been focussed to explore the impacts of the artificial intelligence in the legal environment and the samples has been collected from people belonging to four different working sectors like the advocates and law students to know it from the user end, next being the IT professionals to understand the perspective from the creators end, and last one being the clients or civilians to know their understanding about the topic and how they would feel about the involvement of robots in their cases. The fear in people's mind regarding

their job being taken over or occurrence of error due to the involvement of bots is high. To understand the entire working, it is better to know about the uses of artificial intelligence in the legal field and the different ways of applications of AI in the lawforce. This article makes an attempt to clear the typical myths that are around the usage of robots in the legal environment.

APPLICATIONS OF TOOLS OF AI IN THE LEGAL ENVIRONMENT:

There are a wide range of applications of the artificial intelligence, some of them are explained in a concise way for a better understanding of the working of the tools that aid lawyers. Artificial intelligence has been used for legal research in the preliminary stage. It helps in gaining understanding on the related cases, statutes, jurisdictions and more. The cost of the paperwork is reduced since the work can be done online within a few minutes. The use of AI in the research work improves efficiency and speeds up the work giving us quality content at the same time. AI helps in knowing the success or failure ratio of a case by using the previous judgements available with the facts that match the present case. This will help the legal professionals to draft the document in a simple and efficient way. The reviewing of contracts and documents usually takes a lot of time and it is considered as one of the toughest tasks in the legal firms. Companies use AI incorporated softwares which helps in reviewing the documents and saves lawyers time. These tools will provide us with the documents needed for due diligence. It informs about any changes to be made. Intellectual property documents have a vast and complex history, making it challenging for lawyers to manually review them within a limited timeframe. Advanced tools and technology help analyze large volumes of data, retrieve historical information, and break down complex texts into simplified formats for easier decision making and comprehension.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

- To understand the opinion of people on whether they think the legal decisions made by AI would serve the purpose.
- To understand the opinion of people on whether people consider AI as a threat to their career
- To understand the perception of people on whether AI would alter the nature of legal work in the forthcoming years.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

This study states the existing rules, regulations and moral contemplations around artificial intelligence in the legal fraternity. It is further emphasized on the importance of developing laws that balance technological advancement with precautions for public safety and rights. The study finishes up by recommending a few potential ways to deal with issues like Data privacy, bias in algorithms, ethical concerns. **Sheeba (2023)**. The study highlights the emerging trends in legal technology and provides recommendations for legal professionals to adapt and flourish in the AI-driven legal world. The author also encourages the introduction of AI related knowledge into legal education to make the future lawyers get prepared for an expanding landscape. The study further contributes a futuristic perspective on responsible integration of Artificial Intelligence **Antony Thekkanath (2023)**. This study mentions that artificial intelligence (AI) has the power to reduce the cost incurred for legal services, increasing access to justice for a larger group of people. The author highlights that artificial intelligence is a modern day reality that is increasingly being integrated into the practice of law, rather than a sci-fi idea. The author suggests that the legal sector should recognize AI as a scientific breakthrough and a practical necessity in order to meet changing needs and client expectations **Bui (2023)**. This article examines the advantages and difficulties of using artificial intelligence to help lawyers in practice. It contends that at present AI is not a

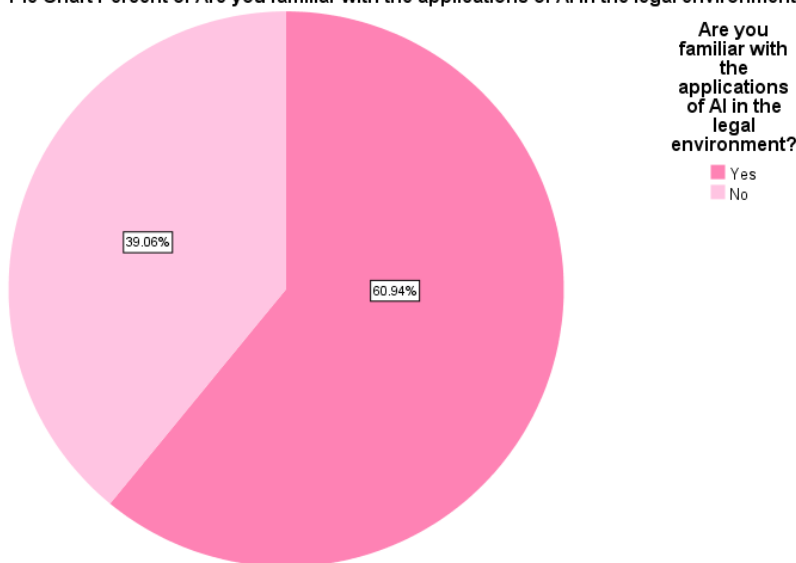
danger to assume control over lawyers positions, yet rather an amazing asset that can improve the proficiency and nature of an attorney's work. It additionally cautions that

artificial intelligence tools are not always reliable and require proficient and mindful management by legal practitioners. **Chatterjee (2022).**

ANALYSIS:

FIGURE 1

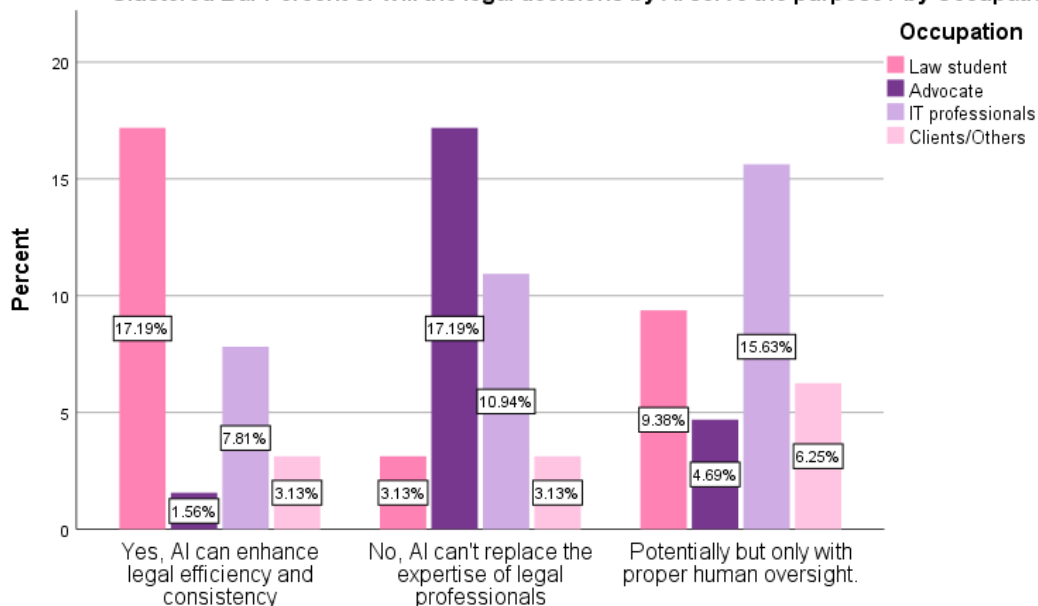
Pie Chart Percent of Are you familiar with the applications of AI in the legal environment?



LEGEND: Figure 1 shows a pie chart displaying the responses to the Yes/No Question: “Are you familiar with the applications of AI in the legal environment?”.

FIGURE 2

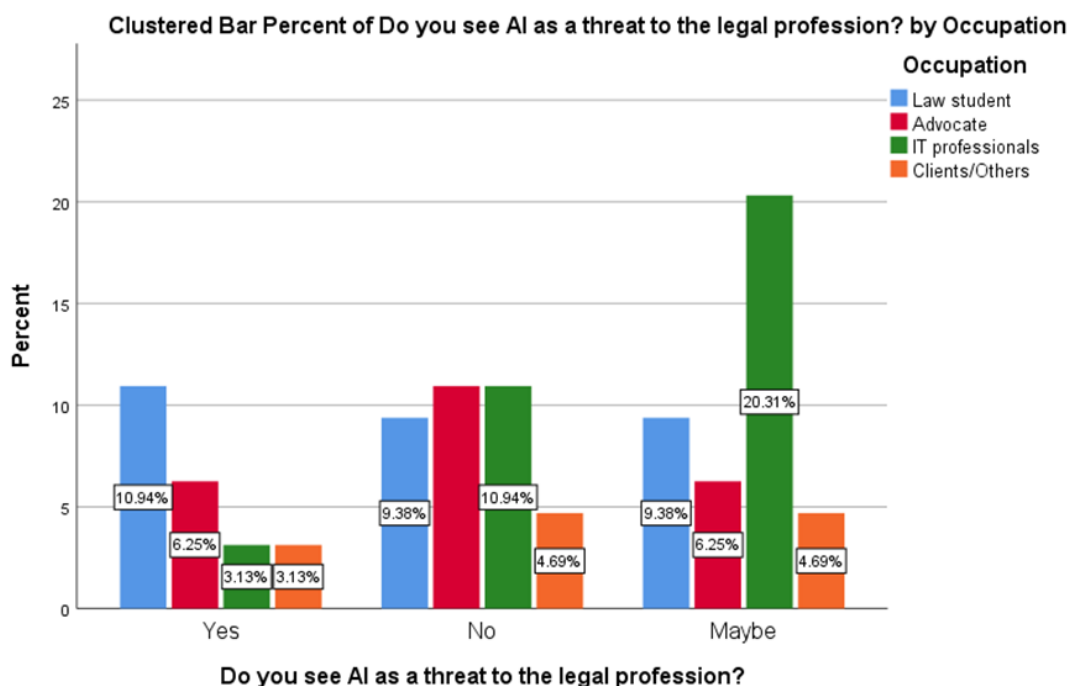
Clustered Bar Percent of Will the legal decisions by AI serve the purpose? by Occupation



Will the legal decisions by AI serve the purpose?

LEGEND: The complex graph illustrates the responses to the multiple choice question posted before the public, “Will the legal decisions by AI serve the purpose?” based on the occupation of the respondents.

FIGURE 3



LEGEND: The complex graph illustrates responses to the Yes/No question, “Do you see AI as a threat to the legal profession?” with the data analyzed according to the occupation of the respondents”.

RESULTS:

The above figure shows the pie chart of the familiarity of people on applications of AI in the legal environment. The results show that 61% of the population are aware of the AI tools and their applications in the legal field whereas 39% of the population is unaware of the applications of AI in the legal environment (**Fig 1**). The above figure shows the complex graph of comparing the opinion of people on whether the legal decisions taken by AI will serve the purpose which has been compared with occupation. The results show that 17% of the entire responses have been given by advocates saying that AI cannot replace the expertise of legal professionals, whereas the same amount of votes have been given to the option yes, AI can enhance legal efficiency and consistency by the law students. IT professionals have voted to the

option of neutrality saying it can be done only with human oversight (**Fig 2**). The above figure shows the complex graph of comparing the opinion of people on whether they see AI as a threat to the legal profession compared with the occupation of the population. The results show that 11% of the advocates in the population have firmly said no they don't see AI as a threat to their professions, whereas 20% of the IT professionals have said they may be a threat or may not be a threat to their jobs. Law students have given their highest votes for yes by contributing 11% of the entire responses to it, which might be a threat to them in the future (**Fig 3**).

DISCUSSIONS:

Figure 1 clearly shows that the majority of the people are well aware of the applications of AI

in the legal field and it is to be noted that awareness among the people increases the quality and the rate of relevancy of the research outcomes. **Figure 2** depicts that the advocates think that the decisions taken by AI will not serve the purpose since it cannot replace the legal decisions taken by experts, since legal decisions involve human interpretation and empathy to decide on a case which AI lacks. The law students have said AI would serve the purpose by enhancing the legal efficiency of the research it does and would actually be helpful. The IT professionals and clients have said that it would potentially serve the purpose but only with the proper human oversight which sounds very appealing, since IT professionals know about the working from the user end and it could bring its full potential only when proper human sight is provided, otherwise it could end up with a lot of errors. **Figure 3** shows the opinion of respondents whether they see AI as a threat to the legal profession. Here the researcher focuses more on the opinions of advocates and law students, since it's their career which may or may not be taken over. The results show that the majority of the advocates have denied it, this could be due to their understanding that AI is only going to make their jobs easier, or it might also mean that AI taking over the legal profession would actually take much time and will involve the advancement in the technology to lessen the errors present today. The majority of the law students have agreed to the question that it would be a threat to their jobs. This could be due to the stigma around it and the lack of awareness on the subject. There will be a stronger need for them to be updated in their particular stream.

LIMITATIONS:

The sample size of the study is small and it cannot represent the entire population. The researcher had faced time constraints since research study with this huge scope was little too hard to complete within the prescribed time limit. Since the topic is evolving it was hard to get secondary data on the particular subject.

SUGGESTIONS:

The researcher suggests that there should be proper awareness on the subject, because without proper awareness it would create a lot of confusion and will lead to misuse of the tools. There must be a subject about artificial intelligence which must be made as a core paper for the law students to keep them updated. This way they wouldn't be clueless when they step out of the college. Giving them practical knowledge on the AI tools will also help them in understanding its pros and cons. There must be regulation of these tools and softwares. With regulation there will be restrictions on the usage of these tools, as the users can know to which extent they can use the tools and the regulation is vital to answer questions like who will be held liable when the AI makes any errors regarding the case. The awareness should also be given to present advocates to erase the stigma around the job takeovers by artificial intelligence.

CONCLUSION:

After analysing the opinion of people on the impacts of AI in the legal field, it is understood that the majority of the people are aware about the applications of AI. There have been respondents who find AI as a threat but the majority of them don't find AI as a threat to their career. The respondents believe there will be significant changes in the legal field due to advancement in the usage of artificial intelligence in the future. Artificial intelligence is definitely going to increase the efficiency of the research process. There is less threat to their jobs because computers need someone to feed in inputs and that can be done by only legal professionals. Even though entry level lawyers or less skilled ones can have insecurity about their need to be constantly updated, AI is only going to make their work easier. If the research work is given to these softwares, the lawyers can focus on other important works like their argument skills in the courtroom. And not to forget the fact that everything done by AI is not going to be right, since it is a machine it will make errors

and there will be a need for a lawyer to oversee the output. With the world changing and the advancement in technology would actually make firms to adopt these systems in their company because it reduces time used for research from 10 hours to 10 seconds. In reality, Even when firms want to go with the traditional style it would make them outdated. The companies which use AI tools would get more profits in less time and there will be cost reduction since the research job is done by the software. There will be no destruction of jobs but this will create better jobs for people with different roles. There will be a better outcome when the man and the machine work together as a team and not see them as their rivals, which could result in neutralizing the pros and cons. There is no guarantee that it would turn out this way in the future, but as of now the positive impacts of the AI tools in the legal field outweighs the negative impacts.

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INDIA'S BILATERAL INVESTMENT TREATY MODEL & ITS IMPACT ON INDIA'S TRADE RELATIONS

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Abstract

This paper examines India's 2015 Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT) Model and analyzes its substantial impact on India's international trade relations. The study investigates how India's paradigm shift from a liberal investment framework to a more restrictive and sovereignty-focused model. The ways it has influenced foreign direct investment flows and bilateral economic relationships. Through analysis of key provisions, comparison with international standards, and evaluation of post-implementation outcomes. This research identifies both protective advantages and challenging consequences of India's revised approach. The findings suggest that while the 2015 Model BIT successfully addresses India's sovereignty concerns. It has created significant friction in trade negotiations and investment relations, particularly with developed economies. This research contributes to understanding the delicate balance between investment protection and regulatory sovereignty. Focussing on emerging economies navigating global economic integration.

Statement of Problem

India's fundamental revision of its Bilateral Investment Treaty framework through the 2015 Model BIT, represents a significant policy shift with far-reaching implications for its international trade and investment landscape. This transformation has created a complex tension between India's desire to safeguard regulatory sovereignty. As its concurrent need to attract foreign investment to sustain economic growth. The problem this research addresses is threefold:

1. How has India's 2015 Model BIT altered the balance between investor protection and state regulatory space compared to previous frameworks followed?
2. What measurable impacts has the new model had on India's foreign investment flows and bilateral trade relationships entered into by the country?

3. To what extent has the revised approach achieved India's policy objectives while maintaining its competitiveness in the global investment landscape currently?

These questions arise at a critical juncture when many developing economies are reassessing their investment treaty frameworks. Also, while simultaneously seeking to enhance their participation in global value chains and attract quality foreign direct investment.

Research Objectives

This study aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. To analyze the key provisions and structural elements of India's 2015 Model BIT that represent significant departures from international norms and previous Indian investment treaties entered into by the state.
2. To evaluate the legal and economic implications of the 2015 Model BIT on

India's bilateral and multilateral trade negotiations since its enactment.

3. To assess quantitative and qualitative changes in foreign direct investment patterns in India following the implementation of the new treaty model in the country.
4. To compare India's approach with other emerging economies that have undertaken similar investment treaty reforms globally.
5. To develop policy recommendations for balancing investment protection with regulatory flexibility to enhance India's position in international trade relations worldwide.

Literature Review

The evolution of international investment law and bilateral investment treaties has been extensively documented in academic literature, with emerging scholarship focusing on the trend of developing countries reforming their BIT frameworks. This review synthesizes existing research across four key dimensions relevant to India's BIT model reform.

Historical Development of India's Investment Treaty Framework

Ranjan and Anand (2017) provide a comprehensive historical account of India's investment treaty program, tracing its evolution from the early 1990s liberalization era through the 2015 reform. Their work highlights how India initially adopted standard BIT templates from developed economies with limited customization. Reflecting its urgent need for foreign capital during economic reforms. Singh and Ilge (2016) complement this historical perspective by documenting the specific investment disputes This triggered India's policy reassessment, particularly emphasizing the impact of the White Industries case against India, which scholars widely recognize as the catalyst for India's treaty framework review.

Structural Analysis of the 2015 Model BIT

The substantive provisions of India's 2015 Model BIT have been analyzed by numerous scholars. Prabhash Ranjan (2019) provides the most detailed textual examination, identifying the significant narrowing of investor protections through restricted definitions of "investment," limited fair and equitable treatment provisions, and the elimination of the most-favored-nation clause. Ranjan argues these changes represent an overcorrection in response to arbitration challenges. Chalamish and Howse (2018) offers a comparative analysis of India's model with other BRICS nations' approaches, noting India's exceptionally restrictive stance even compared to other emerging economies reassessing their investment frameworks.

Impact on Foreign Investment and Treaty Negotiations

Empirical assessments of the 2015 Model BIT's impact show mixed results. Chowdhury and Chakraborty (2021) present statistical analyses suggesting a correlation between India's treaty terminations and subsequent reductions in FDI from affected countries. Though they acknowledge confounding variables. Their research indicates particular declines from European Union member states where negotiations for replacement treaties have stalled. In contrast, Langaliya (2023) argues that sector-specific analysis shows minimal impact on strategic industries, suggesting other factors may outweigh treaty considerations in investment decisions.

Theoretical Frameworks for Evaluating BIT Reforms

Scholarly discourse on investment treaty reforms has increasingly incorporated theoretical frameworks from international relations and law. Sattorova (2018) applies sovereignty theories to evaluate how countries like India use BIT reforms to reclaim regulatory space, while questioning whether such reforms actually deliver promised policy flexibility. Miles (2020) examines India's BIT reform through the

lens of Third World Approaches to International Law (TWAIL), positioning India's actions as part of a broader decolonial reassertion in international economic governance. Complementing these approaches, Mohan (2022) utilizes regulatory state theory to analyze India's ability to balance developmental objectives with investment protection, finding that the 2015 Model potentially prioritizes short-term regulatory freedom over long-term institutional development.

Introduction

The landscape of international investment law has witnessed significant transformation over the past decade, with emerging economies increasingly reassessing their approach to bilateral investment treaties (BITs). At the forefront of this global recalibration stands India, whose 2015 Model BIT represents one of the most comprehensive revisions of investment treaty policy among major economies. This paradigm shift occurred against the backdrop of India's rising economic prominence, its experience as a respondent in multiple investment arbitrations, and broader questions about the appropriate balance between investment protection and state regulatory autonomy.

India's journey in international investment law reflects a dramatic evolution from enthusiastic adopter to critical reformer. Following economic liberalization in the early 1990s, India rapidly expanded its BIT program, signing approximately 84 treaties primarily based on templates favorable to investor interests. This initial phase reflected India's urgent need for foreign capital and its limited experience with international investment governance. However, a series of arbitration claims against India—particularly the White Industries case in 2011—prompted fundamental reconsideration of its approach. The government's comprehensive review culminated in the release of the 2015 Model BIT, which represented not merely an adjustment but a fundamental reimagining of India's investment treaty framework.

The timing of India's BIT reform coincided with similar reassessments by other developing economies, including Brazil, South Africa, and Indonesia, reflecting a broader questioning of traditional investment treaty models. However, India's approach has been distinguished by both its comprehensive scope and the government's willingness to terminate existing treaties rather than merely adjust future negotiations. Between 2016 and 2017, India unilaterally terminated 58 existing BITs, creating a significant disruption in its investment relations while initiating renegotiations based on its new model.

This research examines the multifaceted implications of India's reformed BIT framework, analyzing not only its legal architecture but also its practical impact on trade relations and investment flows. The study is particularly relevant given India's simultaneous pursuit of economic growth objectives that require substantial foreign investment alongside its reassertion of regulatory sovereignty through the new treaty model. This apparent tension—between attracting international capital and restricting investor protections—forms the central paradox this research seeks to explore.

The paper proceeds by first analyzing the key provisions of the 2015 Model BIT that represent significant departures from international standards. It then examines the empirical evidence regarding changes in investment flows following treaty terminations and renegotiations. The research further explores how the Model BIT has influenced India's position in broader trade negotiations, including its impact on relationships with major economic partners. Finally, it considers the model's effectiveness in achieving India's stated policy objectives and offers recommendations for potential refinements to optimize both investment protection and regulatory flexibility.

India's 2015 Model BIT: Key Provisions and Departures from International Standards

Restricted Definition of Investment

The 2015 Model BIT adopts an enterprise-based definition of investment that represents a significant departure from the asset-based approach common in most investment treaties. Under Article 1.4, an investment is defined as "an enterprise constituted, organized and operated in good faith by an investor," subject to additional requirements including "commitment of capital," "certain duration," "significance for the development," and "the investor's commitment to its operation." This definition explicitly excludes portfolio investments, intellectual property rights not directly linked to an enterprise, and various financial instruments.

This restrictive approach contrasts sharply with the broad asset-based definitions in traditional BITs, which typically protect virtually all forms of assets. The enterprise-based definition significantly narrows the scope of treaty protection, excluding many forms of investment that would be covered under standard BIT models. This narrowing reflects India's determination to limit potential liability exposure and ensure that only substantive, development-contributing investments receive protection.

Exclusion of Most-Favored-Nation (MFN) Treatment

Perhaps the most notable omission from the 2015 Model BIT is the absence of a Most-Favored-Nation treatment provision, a standard feature in most investment treaties. Traditional MFN clauses allow investors to import more favorable provisions from other treaties signed by the host state. India's explicit rejection of this principle reflects its reaction to arbitration experiences where MFN provisions were used expansively to bypass procedural requirements or import substantive protections from other treaties.

This elimination represents a direct response to the White Industries case, where an Australian

investor successfully used the MFN provision in the Australia-India BIT to import a more favorable "effective means" provision from the India-Kuwait BIT. By eliminating MFN treatment, India has effectively compartmentalized its bilateral investment relationships, preventing the cross-fertilization of treaty standards that could expand its obligations beyond those specifically negotiated with each partner.

Qualified Fair and Equitable Treatment

The 2015 Model BIT fundamentally reconceptualizes the Fair and Equitable Treatment (FET) standard, traditionally one of the broadest and most investor-friendly protections in international investment law. Rather than including a standard FET clause, Article 3.1 provides a narrowly defined "Treatment of Investments" provision that prohibits only specific measures that constitute:

1. Denial of justice in judicial or administrative proceedings
2. Fundamental breach of due process
3. Targeted discrimination on manifestly unjustified grounds
4. Manifestly abusive treatment such as coercion, duress, and harassment

This approach transforms the typically broad and flexible FET standard into a narrow, exhaustive list of prohibited behaviors. The provision also explicitly states that a breach of another provision of the BIT or other international agreement does not establish a breach of this article, further limiting its scope. By qualifying and restricting this provision, India has attempted to prevent the expansive interpretations of FET that have characterized many investment arbitration decisions.

Exhaustion of Local Remedies and Procedural Barriers

The 2015 Model BIT introduces substantial procedural hurdles for investor-state dispute settlement. Article 15 requires foreign investors to exhaust local remedies for at least five years before initiating international arbitration—a

requirement virtually unprecedented in its duration among modern investment treaties. Additionally, the model imposes a limitation period of three years from when the investor first acquired knowledge of the measure in question and one year from the conclusion of domestic proceedings.

These provisions reflect India's preference for domestic adjudication and its concern that international arbitration may circumvent or undermine national judicial systems. The five-year requirement essentially prioritizes domestic legal processes and significantly delays access to international arbitration, serving both as a procedural barrier and as a mechanism to strengthen the role of national courts in investment disputes.

General Exceptions and Regulatory Space

The 2015 Model BIT contains extensive carve-outs and exception clauses designed to preserve regulatory autonomy. Article 16 provides general exceptions for measures necessary to protect public morals, maintain public order, protect human, animal or plant life or health, and ensure compliance with laws and regulations. Article 17 provides further exceptions for prudential measures related to financial stability, and Article 32 contains a security exception.

Notably, these exceptions are self-judging in many instances, with language specifying that measures "which [the State] considers necessary" are exempt from treaty obligations. This approach affords India substantial discretion in determining when regulatory actions fall within exception categories, significantly limiting tribunal oversight of such determinations. The breadth of these exceptions reflects India's determination to preserve policy space across a wide range of regulatory domains.

Impact on Foreign Direct Investment Flows

Quantitative Analysis of FDI Trends

The period following India's implementation of the 2015 Model BIT and subsequent termination

of existing treaties provides a natural experiment for assessing investment flow impacts. Aggregate FDI data from 2014-2022 reveals a complex picture that defies simplistic correlation. While overall FDI into India has continued to grow, reaching \$83.6 billion in FY 2021-22 from \$45.1 billion in FY 2014-15, disaggregated analysis by source country reveals more nuanced patterns.

Countries whose BITs were terminated without immediate replacement have shown varied investment responses. European Union member states, collectively accounting for approximately 16% of India's FDI before the treaty terminations, showed an aggregate decline of 8.3% in investment flows during the two years following termination notices. However, this temporary decline was followed by recovery in subsequent years, suggesting that initial uncertainty rather than permanent deterrence may have been the primary effect.

More telling is the changing composition of investment sources. Countries with which India maintained investment treaties or quickly concluded replacements (such as Brazil, Bangladesh, Cambodia, and Morocco) showed relative stability or increases in investment flows. Conversely, negotiations with the European Union and United States for comprehensive investment agreements have faced significant challenges, with the EU specifically citing India's restrictive BIT model as a barrier to agreement.

Sectoral Analysis and Qualitative Impacts

Beyond aggregate numbers, sectoral analysis reveals differentiated impacts across industries. Knowledge-intensive sectors with significant intellectual property components—such as pharmaceuticals, technology services, and telecommunications—have shown greater sensitivity to the changed investment protection landscape. This pattern aligns with the Model BIT's restricted protections for intellectual property rights, which may create particular concerns for investors in these sectors.

Qualitative evidence from investor surveys and business chambers further illuminates the practical impact of treaty changes. A 2020 survey of European businesses operating in India found that 41% identified "investment protection concerns" as a factor influencing their expansion decisions, up from 26% in a similar 2016 survey before the treaty terminations took full effect. Japanese investors have similarly expressed concerns through their business federation, particularly regarding the local remedies requirement and limited substantive protections.

However, these concerns appear to be moderated by sector-specific factors and overall market opportunity. Investors in consumer goods, retail, and infrastructure have demonstrated greater resilience to treaty changes, likely reflecting the importance of market access considerations over investment protection in these sectors. This pattern suggests that while the BIT model may influence investment decisions, its effect is conditioned by sector characteristics and market potential.

Impact on Trade Negotiations and Bilateral Economic Relations

Bilateral Trade Negotiations

India's reformed approach to investment protection has significantly influenced its bilateral trade relationships, particularly with developed economies. The Model BIT has become a contentious element in several major bilateral negotiations:

1. **India-EU Free Trade Agreement:** Negotiations for this agreement, initiated in 2007, have faced multiple obstacles, but the investment chapter has emerged as a particularly difficult area following India's BIT reform. The EU has expressed fundamental concerns about the Model BIT's restricted investor protections and mandatory exhaustion of local remedies. This disagreement contributed to the stalemate in negotiations until their formal

resumption in 2022, with both sides eventually agreeing to separate the investment component from the trade agreement to make progress on other areas.

2. **India-UK Free Trade Agreement:** Investment protection provisions have similarly complicated negotiations with the UK, where British negotiators have pushed for stronger investor protections than India's model allows. While both countries have expressed commitment to concluding the agreement, the investment chapter remains among the most challenging areas, with UK investors particularly concerned about intellectual property protections and dispute settlement provisions.
3. **Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreements:** India's negotiations with Australia and Canada have both encountered friction over investment provisions. The Australia-India Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement concluded in 2022 notably omitted an investment chapter entirely, deferring it to future negotiations. This pattern of deferral or omission demonstrates how India's firm stance on its Model BIT has affected the scope and comprehensiveness of its bilateral economic agreements.

Regional Trade Architecture

The 2015 Model BIT has also influenced India's participation in regional economic architecture. Most significantly, concerns about investment protection and market access were among the factors in India's 2019 decision to withdraw from the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), Asia's largest trade agreement. While multiple factors contributed to this decision, India's approach to investment governance created a fundamental misalignment with the more liberal approach favored by other RCEP participants.

This withdrawal represents perhaps the most consequential trade policy impact of India's BIT approach, potentially isolating India from key regional value chains and economic integration processes in the Asia-Pacific. The RCEP example illustrates how investment policy positions can have spillover effects into broader trade relationships and regional economic engagement.

Strategic Economic Partnerships

Despite these challenges, India has successfully concluded several Bilateral Investment Treaties based on its 2015 model, primarily with developing economies sharing similar concerns about traditional investment treaties. New agreements with Brazil, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, and Cambodia demonstrate that India's approach can find receptive partners, particularly among countries similarly focused on preserving regulatory autonomy.

More broadly, India has adapted its economic diplomacy to accommodate its investment treaty position. With partners unwilling to accept its model wholesale, India has increasingly pursued phased or segmented agreements that defer investment provisions or address them through non-binding cooperation frameworks. This pragmatic approach has allowed trade relationships to advance despite investment protection disagreements, though potentially at the cost of comprehensive economic integration.

Balancing Investor Protection and Regulatory Space: Evaluating the Model's Effectiveness

Achievement of Policy Objectives

India's 2015 Model BIT emerged from specific policy concerns that provide metrics for evaluating its effectiveness. Primary among these objectives was reducing exposure to investment arbitration claims. In this dimension, the model appears largely successful—since implementing its new approach, India has faced fewer new arbitration proceedings, though this must be qualified by acknowledging the time lag between measures and claims.

A second objective was preserving regulatory space for development policies. Here too, the model achieves its aims through its extensive exceptions and narrowed substantive protections. The government has proceeded with regulatory measures in sensitive areas such as taxation, environmental protection, and digital governance without the level of investment treaty constraint that might have existed under previous frameworks.

However, these achievements must be weighed against potential costs in investment attraction and relationship management. The model's effectiveness ultimately depends on whether its protective benefits outweigh its potential deterrent effect on quality investment and its friction in international economic relations.

Comparison with Alternative Approaches

India's approach differs notably from other emerging economies that have similarly reassessed their investment treaty frameworks. Brazil's Cooperation and Facilitation Investment Agreements (CFIAs) also eliminate investor-state arbitration but compensate with robust investment facilitation provisions and state-to-state dispute settlement. South Africa has replaced BITs with domestic legislation providing qualified protections to all foreign investors. Indonesia has pursued recalibration of its treaties while maintaining core investment protections.

These alternative models suggest that India's approach represents one position on a spectrum of possible responses to investment treaty concerns. The Brazilian model, in particular, offers an interesting counterpoint—addressing similar sovereignty concerns while potentially creating less friction in economic relationships through its emphasis on facilitation rather than restriction.

Recommendations for Refinement

Analysis of the 2015 Model BIT's implementation suggests several potential refinements that could enhance its effectiveness while maintaining its core sovereignty protections:

1. **Graduated Local Remedies**

Requirement: The five-year exhaustion period could be replaced with a more flexible approach that accounts for the efficiency of relevant domestic courts or the complexity of the dispute. This would address a primary concern of foreign investors while maintaining the principle of domestic recourse.

2. **Enhanced Investment Facilitation**

Provisions: Following elements of Brazil's approach, stronger institutional mechanisms for preventing disputes and facilitating investment could partially offset reduced formal protections. This would address the criticism that the model focuses primarily on risk reduction rather than investment promotion.

3. **Sector-Specific Flexibility:** Recognizing the varied impact across economic sectors, India could consider sector-specific protocols that provide enhanced protections in areas strategic for development goals, such as renewable energy or advanced manufacturing.

4. **Procedural Improvements:** While maintaining substantive limitations, procedural enhancements to arbitration provisions—such as transparency requirements, appellate mechanisms, and clearer jurisdictional rules—could improve the model's acceptability to partners while preserving its core protective functions.

These refinements would maintain the model's fundamental recalibration while potentially reducing its friction with important economic partners and investment sources.

Conclusion

India's 2015 Model BIT represents a significant intervention in international investment governance, challenging conventional approaches and asserting a vision of

investment protection that prioritizes host state regulatory autonomy. The model emerged from India's specific historical experience and development context, responding to perceived imbalances in traditional investment treaty structures and their interpretation through arbitration.

This research has demonstrated that the revised approach has had measurable impacts on India's investment relationships and trade negotiations. While successfully reducing exposure to investment claims and preserving policy space, the model has created challenges in economic diplomacy and potentially influenced investment decisions in specific sectors and from certain partners. These effects have manifested most clearly in difficult negotiations with developed economies and in sectoral variations in investment responses.

The effectiveness of India's approach ultimately depends on India's specific economic priorities and development strategy. If regulatory sovereignty and reduction of legal risk are paramount concerns, the model has largely achieved its objectives. However, if attracting high-quality foreign investment in strategic sectors and deepening economic integration with key partners are prioritized, the current approach may benefit from calibrated adjustments.

The Indian experience offers valuable lessons for other developing economies navigating the complex terrain of international investment governance. It demonstrates both the feasibility of fundamentally recalibrating investment relationships and the potential trade-offs involved in doing so. Most importantly, it illustrates how investment treaty policy has evolved from a technical legal domain into a strategic tool of economic statecraft with significant implications for a country's international economic relations.

As global economic governance continues to evolve, India's Model BIT stands as an important marker in the ongoing reassessment of how international investment law can balance

legitimate investor protections with the development imperatives of host states. The model's ultimate legacy will depend not only on its legal architecture but on how effectively it enables India to participate in the global economy while maintaining the policy autonomy necessary for inclusive development.

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STRENGTHENING THE CONSUMER PROTECTION REGIME IN INDIA: ANALYSIS OF THE ROLE OF CENTRAL CONSUMER PROTECTION AUTHORITY (CCPA)

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ABSTRACT

The landscape of consumer protection in India has undergone a significant transformation with the enactment of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019, which seeks to strengthen the consumer grievance redressal mechanism through the establishment of the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA). This paper offers a comprehensive analysis of the role, structure, and functioning of the CCPA, highlighting its mandate to protect, promote, and enforce the rights of consumers against unfair trade practices, misleading advertisements, and defective products or services.

The study begins with a historical overview of consumer protection in India, examining the limitations of the Consumer Protection Act, 1986, which prompted the legislative overhaul. It then delves into the structural and legal foundations of the CCPA, detailing its investigative powers, regulatory authority, and ability to take suo motu cognizance of consumer rights violations. The paper further analyzes major initiatives undertaken by the CCPA, including the formulation of guidelines on e-commerce, product recalls, and actions against misleading advertisements.

Through judicial and policy-based insights, the paper also examines the synergy and occasional overlap between the CCPA and other regulatory bodies such as FSSAI, ASCI, and TRAI. In addition to highlighting key enforcement challenges—such as manpower limitations, jurisdictional conflicts, and lack of consumer awareness—the paper draws a comparative analysis with global consumer protection agencies like the FTC (USA) and CMA (UK).

Finally, the paper offers actionable recommendations to strengthen the CCPA's framework, including enhancing autonomy, improving inter-agency coordination, increasing digital transparency, and ensuring public awareness. The study concludes that while the CCPA is a commendable initiative, its long-term success hinges on strategic reforms, administrative efficiency, and greater public engagement.

Keywords

Consumer Protection, Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA), Consumer Protection Act, 2019, Misleading Advertisements, Product Recall, E-commerce Regulation, Consumer Rights, Regulatory Enforcement, Consumer Redressal Mechanism, Fair Trade Practices, Comparative Consumer Law, FTC (USA), CMA (UK), Consumer Awareness.

1. Introduction

Consumer protection is an essential pillar of a modern market-driven economy that seeks to maintain fairness, transparency, and accountability among producers, service providers, and sellers. In a rapidly globalizing world with evolving market structures and technological advancements, protecting consumer rights has become more complex and crucial. Consumers are often at a disadvantage due to asymmetry of information, aggressive marketing, and unfair trade practices. This necessitates a robust legal framework that not only addresses grievances but also prevents exploitation and promotes consumer welfare.

In India, consumer rights have long been recognized under statutory and constitutional mandates. However, the earlier legislation—the Consumer Protection Act, 1986—though pathbreaking in its time, became inadequate in addressing emerging challenges such as misleading advertisements, product liability in a global supply chain, and the exponential growth of digital commerce. Recognizing these gaps, the Indian Parliament enacted the **Consumer Protection Act, 2019**, which came into effect on **20th July 2020**. This Act introduced significant reforms, including the concepts of **product liability, unfair contracts, e-commerce regulation, alternate dispute resolution through mediation**, and, most notably, the creation of a central regulatory body—the **Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA)**.

The establishment of the **CCPA** marked a landmark shift from a purely adjudicatory to a **preventive and regulatory approach** in consumer law enforcement. The CCPA has been empowered to conduct investigations into consumer rights violations, order product recalls, impose penalties on misleading advertisements, and initiate class action suits. It functions as a **quasi-judicial authority** with administrative and enforcement powers, thus

bridging a long-standing gap in India's consumer redressal ecosystem.

This paper seeks to critically examine the role of the **CCPA** in India's consumer protection framework. It begins by exploring the historical and legislative background that led to its formation, outlines its structure and statutory mandate, analyzes its functions and enforcement mechanisms, and highlights landmark actions taken by the authority. The study also identifies key operational and legal challenges that hinder the effective functioning of the CCPA and proposes suggestions to strengthen its institutional efficacy. A comparative analysis with similar international bodies like the **Federal Trade Commission (FTC) in the United States** and the **Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) in the United Kingdom** is also undertaken to provide global context and best practices.

Through this research, the paper aims to assess whether the creation of the CCPA has been successful in advancing the cause of consumer welfare and justice in India, and what further steps are needed to make India's consumer protection regime truly responsive and future-ready.

2. Historical Evolution of Consumer Protection in India

Consumer protection in India has evolved significantly over the decades in response to the growing complexities of trade, commerce, and the need to empower consumers in the market economy.

2.1 Consumer Protection Act, 1986

The **Consumer Protection Act, 1986** was a landmark legislation in Indian legal history that aimed at providing simple, speedy, and inexpensive redressal to consumer grievances. It recognized six basic consumer rights: the right to safety, right to be informed, right to choose, right to be heard, right to seek redressal, and the right to consumer education. The Act established a **three-tier quasi-judicial consumer dispute redressal mechanism—**

District Forums, State Commissions, and the National Commission—to handle consumer disputes.

However, over time, the 1986 Act proved inadequate in addressing emerging challenges, such as misleading advertisements, e-commerce disputes, digital transactions, and the absence of a central authority with investigative and enforcement powers. It was more **adjudicatory** in nature and lacked **preventive mechanisms** to deter unfair trade practices and consumer exploitation⁶⁷⁰.

2.2 Consumer Protection Act, 2019

To modernize the consumer law framework, the Indian government enacted the **Consumer Protection Act, 2019**, which repealed the 1986 Act. The 2019 legislation introduced **comprehensive provisions** to deal with misleading advertisements, unfair contracts, product liability, and online transactions. One of its most significant innovations was the establishment of the **Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA)** under **Section 10** of the Act, aimed at **regulating, protecting, and enforcing the rights of consumers**, and preventing unfair trade practices.

The Act thus shifted the paradigm from mere redressal to **regulation and prevention**, giving consumers more proactive protection and the state enhanced enforcement capacity⁶⁷¹.

3. The Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA)

3.1 Establishment

The **Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA)** was formally constituted under **Section 10 of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019**, and began functioning in **July 2020** under the administrative control of the **Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution**. The objective of the CCPA is to **promote, protect, and enforce the rights of consumers** as a class, and to ensure that no

person engages in unfair trade practices or misleading advertisements that may harm the interests of consumers⁶⁷².

The CCPA functions through its investigative and regulatory arms, including the **Investigation Wing**, which is headed by a Director-General empowered to conduct inquiries and investigations⁶⁷³.

3.2 Composition

The composition of the CCPA, as provided under the Consumer Protection Act and relevant administrative rules, includes:

- **Chief Commissioner** – who heads the authority and exercises overall control.
- **Two Commissioners** – one each for matters relating to goods and services.
- **Other designated officers** – appointed from time to time, including officials from the legal, investigative, and regulatory wings⁶⁷⁴.

This structure allows the CCPA to address a wide range of issues related to product safety, false claims, service deficiencies, and digital consumer concerns.

3.3 Jurisdiction and Powers

The **jurisdiction and powers** of the CCPA are laid down in **Section 18** of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019. These powers enable the authority to act both **proactively** and **reactively** to protect consumer interests.

Key powers include:

- **Investigative Powers:** The CCPA can initiate inquiries and investigations into violations of consumer rights, either **suo motu** or on complaints received from individuals, government, or voluntary consumer organizations⁶⁷⁵.
- **Product Recall:** The authority can order the **recall of dangerous or unsafe goods**

⁶⁷⁰ Consumer Protection Act, 1986, Act No. 68 of 1986.

⁶⁷¹ Consumer Protection Act, 2019, Act No. 35 of 2019, Ministry of Law and Justice, Government of India.

⁶⁷² Section 10, Consumer Protection Act, 2019.

⁶⁷³ Section 19, Consumer Protection Act, 2019.

⁶⁷⁴ Consumer Protection (Administrative Control over the CCPA) Rules, 2020.

⁶⁷⁵ Section 18(2), Consumer Protection Act, 2019.

and services, and mandate the reimbursement of prices to affected consumers.

- **Unfair Trade Practices:** It can order the discontinuation of unfair trade practices, including deceptive marketing and manipulation of terms and conditions in contracts.
- **Misleading Advertisements:** The CCPA is empowered to impose penalties on manufacturers, advertisers, and endorsers who promote misleading claims. It can prohibit the endorser from making such advertisements for up to one year for the first offence and three years for subsequent offences⁶⁷⁶.
- **Filing of Complaints:** The authority can file complaints before the appropriate Consumer Commissions for the enforcement of consumer rights and seek punitive measures.

This combination of regulatory and enforcement powers gives the CCPA a unique position in India's consumer protection regime, acting as a watchdog, regulator, and facilitator of consumer justice.

4. Key Functions and Initiatives of the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA)

The Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) plays a pivotal role in advancing consumer rights through regulatory intervention, enforcement of fair trade practices, and policy framing. Since its inception in 2020, the CCPA has taken proactive steps to address systemic issues, particularly in the digital and advertising landscapes.

4.1 Consumer Welfare

One of the core objectives of the CCPA is to safeguard consumer welfare by ensuring that business practices align with the principles of honesty, transparency, and accountability.

To achieve this, the CCPA has issued comprehensive guidelines on several fronts:

- **Guidelines for Prevention of Misleading Advertisements and Endorsements for Misleading Advertisements, 2022:** These guidelines lay down conditions that advertisements must fulfill to be considered fair and not misleading. They emphasize the need for substantiation of claims and regulate celebrity and influencer endorsements, ensuring that endorsers carry out due diligence before promoting a product⁶⁷⁷.
- **E-commerce Guidelines:** The CCPA issued Grievance Redressal Guidelines for e-Commerce platforms in 2020 and later reinforced them in 2022. These guidelines mandate that all e-commerce platforms must appoint a Grievance Officer, ensure timely redressal of complaints, display seller information, and provide transparent return and refund policies⁶⁷⁸.

These initiatives aim to enhance consumer trust, especially in online transactions, and reduce asymmetry of information between buyers and sellers.

4.2 Crackdown on Misleading Advertisements

The CCPA has exercised its regulatory powers under Section 21 of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019 to initiate action against entities propagating false or misleading advertisements.

Key actions include:

- Issuance of notices to several brands, including well-known FMCG, pharmaceutical, and electronic product companies, for making deceptive claims without adequate substantiation.

⁶⁷⁶ Section 21, Consumer Protection Act, 2019.

⁶⁷⁷ Central Consumer Protection Authority, "Guidelines for Prevention of Misleading Advertisements and Endorsements for Misleading Advertisements, 2022," Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Government of India.

⁶⁷⁸ Ministry of Consumer Affairs, "Advisory on Grievance Redressal Mechanism for e-Commerce Entities," 2020 & 2022 updates.

- **Suo motu actions** have been taken against companies in the **Ayurvedic and nutraceutical** sectors for promoting products with **unverified health benefits**, including claims of curing chronic diseases or enhancing immunity against COVID-19⁶⁷⁹.

These efforts aim to protect consumers from falling prey to **exploitative marketing tactics** and **health-related misinformation**.

4.3 Product Recalls

In furtherance of consumer safety, the CCPA has directed the **recall of hazardous goods and services** under **Section 18(2)(j)** of the Consumer Protection Act.

- For instance, the CCPA ordered the recall of **defective domestic appliances** such as electric irons, gas stoves, and heating equipment which failed to meet **Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS)** specifications⁶⁸⁰.
- In one notable case, the CCPA directed the recall of **unsafe baby products**, including walkers and cribs that posed **choking hazards or lacked stability**, endangering infants' lives.

Such proactive recalls reflect the authority's commitment to **preemptively protecting consumers** rather than merely responding to complaints post-damage.

4.4 Regulation of E-Commerce

Recognizing the rapid growth of digital trade, the CCPA, in coordination with the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, framed the **Consumer Protection (E-Commerce) Rules, 2020** under Section 101(1)(zg) of the Act.

Key provisions include:

- Mandatory **disclosure of seller details**, including business name, contact information, and GST number.
- Obligations to ensure **transparent pricing, no discrimination between consumers**, and display of **return, refund, and exchange policies**.
- Appointment of a **Grievance Officer** to ensure effective and timely redressal of consumer complaints⁶⁸¹.

These rules have been instrumental in bringing **clarity and accountability** to the e-commerce ecosystem and ensuring that **consumer rights are respected** in online marketplaces.

5. Judicial and Statutory Support to the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA)

The effectiveness of the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) is significantly reinforced by both statutory provisions and judicial developments that validate its mandate and operational mechanisms.

5.1 Case Law: CCPA v. Patanjali Ayurved Ltd. (2023)

In a landmark case, the CCPA initiated proceedings against **Patanjali Ayurved Ltd.** for publishing **misleading advertisements** claiming that its products could cure chronic diseases such as asthma, diabetes, and hypertension without **scientific substantiation**. The CCPA invoked its powers under **Section 21** of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019, and issued **finances and a directive to discontinue such advertisements**⁶⁸².

The case highlighted two significant aspects:

- The **growing regulatory confidence** of the CCPA in challenging even large corporations.
- The **judicial backing** received when the Delhi High Court refused to grant a stay

⁶⁷⁹ Press Information Bureau, Government of India, "CCPA takes action against misleading ads in health and food sectors," August 2022.

⁶⁸⁰ Economic Times, "Consumer protection watchdog CCPA orders recall of unsafe irons and gas stoves", 2021.

⁶⁸¹ Consumer Protection (E-Commerce) Rules, 2020, notified under the Consumer Protection Act, 2019.

⁶⁸² Central Consumer Protection Authority v. Patanjali Ayurved Ltd., (2023), Order issued under Section 21, Consumer Protection Act, 2019.

on CCPA's order and emphasized the importance of **consumer protection in health-related claims**⁶⁸³.

This case established an important precedent regarding the **enforceability of CCPA's regulatory directives** and its ability to act independently in safeguarding consumer interests.

5.2 Role of Director General (Investigation)

The CCPA is supported by an **Investigation Wing**, headed by the **Director General (DG)**, as mandated under **Section 19** of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019. The DG is responsible for **conducting preliminary inquiries and full-fledged investigations** into violations such as unfair trade practices, misleading advertisements, and unsafe goods/services.

The procedural framework allows the DG to:

- **Collect evidence**, issue summons, and examine witnesses.
- Prepare investigation reports to assist the CCPA in decision-making.
- Collaborate with **sectoral regulators** where overlapping jurisdiction exists⁶⁸⁴.

This **statutory support system** enhances the CCPA's administrative capacity and enables it to undertake **quasi-judicial functions** with evidentiary backing.

6. Challenges Faced by the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA)

Despite its extensive powers and proactive approach, the CCPA encounters multiple challenges that hinder the full realization of its objectives.

6.1 Limited Resources and Workforce

The CCPA, being a newly constituted body, continues to **grapple with resource constraints**, including:

- **Insufficient personnel** to handle the growing number of complaints and conduct timely investigations across India.
- **Limited regional presence**, which affects accessibility for consumers in remote or rural areas⁶⁸⁵.

This undermines its ability to **act swiftly and uniformly** across different sectors and regions.

6.2 Overlap of Jurisdiction

Several regulatory bodies such as the **Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)**, **Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI)**, and **Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI)** have overlapping mandates in areas like food labelling, advertisement ethics, and telecom services, respectively.

For instance:

- FSSAI regulates **food safety**, while CCPA examines **unfair trade practices** in food marketing.
- ASCI is a self-regulatory body for advertisements, whereas CCPA has statutory powers to penalize misleading ads⁶⁸⁶.

This **regulatory overlap** often leads to **confusion, delayed action, and jurisdictional disputes**, reducing the overall efficacy of enforcement.

6.3 Lack of Public Awareness

One of the significant hurdles in CCPA's functioning is the **low level of awareness among consumers** regarding:

- Their rights under the **Consumer Protection Act, 2019**.
- The **existence and role of the CCPA**.
- The **remedies available** through regulatory intervention.

⁶⁸³ Delhi High Court, *Patanjali Ayurved Ltd. v. CCPA*, W.P.(C) No. 8723/2023, Judgment dated March 15, 2023.

⁶⁸⁴ Section 19, Consumer Protection Act, 2019; Consumer Protection (Director General Investigation) Rules, 2021.

⁶⁸⁵ Press Information Bureau, Government of India, "Parliamentary Committee Report on Consumer Protection," 2022.

⁶⁸⁶ Overlap of Consumer Protection Bodies," Report of the Standing Committee on Food, Consumer Affairs and Public Distribution, 2021.

This lack of awareness limits consumer participation in **reporting violations** and **exercising legal remedies**⁶⁸⁷.

6.4 Enforcement Challenges Against Corporates

Although the CCPA has the power to issue **penalties, recalls, and prohibitory orders**, ensuring **compliance from large corporations** remains challenging:

- Corporations often **contest CCPA orders** in High Courts or the Supreme Court, delaying enforcement.
- There is **no direct mechanism** for the CCPA to recover penalties or enforce orders without judicial proceedings⁶⁸⁸.

This diminishes the **deterrent effect** of its actions and burdens the judicial system with litigation.

7. Comparative Analysis

To understand the potential for strengthening the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA), it is essential to examine how **consumer regulatory authorities function in developed jurisdictions**, particularly the **United States** and the **United Kingdom**. These models reflect a mature consumer protection regime that balances **regulatory enforcement, consumer rights**, and **market fairness**.

7.1 United States – Federal Trade Commission (FTC)

The **Federal Trade Commission (FTC)** is the principal consumer protection and competition authority in the United States. Established in 1914, the FTC possesses **wide-ranging statutory powers** under the **Federal Trade Commission Act, 1914** to prevent **unfair or deceptive business practices**, enforce advertising standards, and protect consumer interests.

Key attributes include:

- **Rulemaking Powers:** The FTC can **frame binding trade regulations** through formal rulemaking, enabling it to address emerging unfair practices across various industries⁶⁸⁹.
- **Enforcement and Civil Penalties:** It has the authority to **initiate investigations, file lawsuits**, and **impose civil penalties** against entities engaging in deceptive or fraudulent conduct⁶⁹⁰.
- **Bureau of Consumer Protection:** The FTC functions through a dedicated bureau that undertakes **consumer education, policy development**, and **litigation**.
- **Redressal Mechanism:** The FTC can secure **consumer redress**, refunds, or injunctive relief through federal courts, which ensures **enforceability** and **deterrence**.

For example, in *FTC v. Facebook (Meta)*, the commission brought an antitrust lawsuit and raised privacy violations under the same regulatory umbrella—demonstrating its **broad jurisdiction** over tech and consumer issues⁶⁹¹.

7.2 United Kingdom – Competition and Markets Authority (CMA)

The **Competition and Markets Authority (CMA)** is the UK's integrated regulator for **competition law and consumer protection**, established under the **Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act, 2013**.

Key features of CMA's functioning:

- **Consumer-Focused Investigations:** The CMA investigates systemic practices affecting large consumer groups, such as **price transparency, subscription traps**, and **online reviews manipulation**.
- **Dual Role:** Unlike many regulators, the CMA addresses both **anticompetitive practices** and **unfair trade behavior**,

⁶⁸⁷ Ministry of Consumer Affairs, "Consumer Awareness Index Report," 2022.

⁶⁸⁸ NALSAR Law Review, "Effectiveness of Regulatory Orders by CCPA," Vol. 14, 2023.

⁶⁸⁹ Federal Trade Commission Act, 15 U.S.C. §§ 41–58

⁶⁹⁰ FTC, "Enforcement Authority," <https://www.ftc.gov>.

⁶⁹¹ *FTC v. Facebook, Inc.*, Case No. 1:20-cv-03590 (D.D.C. 2020).

providing a holistic regulatory approach.

- **Market Studies and Remedies:** The CMA undertakes detailed **market studies** and can propose **legislative changes**, issue **interim orders**, or refer cases to **sector regulators**.
- **Legal Enforcement:** The CMA can apply for **enforcement orders** from courts, and has power to **penalize businesses** for non-compliance with consumer law⁶⁹².

For instance, the CMA's action against **online hotel booking platforms** in 2019 led to the correction of misleading pricing strategies, benefiting millions of consumers⁶⁹³.

7.3 Inference and Key Takeaway for India

The comparison reveals that both the **FTC and CMA** operate with **institutional independence**, have **broad enforcement mandates**, and **strong judicial backing**. They possess the **administrative autonomy**, legal tools, and manpower to actively deter violations and influence national consumer policy.

In contrast, the CCPA—although progressive in intent—faces **structural limitations**, such as:

- **Limited autonomy** due to ministerial control.
- **Absence of independent adjudicatory powers**.
- **No direct authority to recover compensation or initiate class actions**.
- **Jurisdictional fragmentation** with sectoral regulators.

Thus, for the CCPA to emulate global best practices, it must be **institutionally strengthened** and granted powers akin to the FTC or CMA in terms of **autonomy, investigation, adjudication, and public engagement**.

8. Recommendations for Strengthening the Consumer Protection Regime in India:

1. Capacity Building of CCPA Officers:

o **Enhanced Training Programs:**

One of the critical areas for the Consumer Protection Act's successful implementation is the expertise and competence of the officers involved in its enforcement. It is essential to provide CCPA officers with specialized training in consumer rights law, investigation techniques, and data protection regulations. Regular workshops, advanced courses, and collaborations with international consumer protection agencies can improve their skills in handling complex cases.

- o **Manpower Augmentation:** With the increasing number of consumer complaints, the current staffing levels may not be sufficient to manage the workload. The recruitment of additional personnel, particularly those with expertise in technology, legal analysis, and investigation, would significantly enhance the CCPA's operational capacity.

2. Public Awareness Campaigns:

o **Mass Media and Digital Platforms:**

A significant number of consumers are still unaware of their rights and the protection mechanisms available under the Consumer Protection Act. The CCPA should partner with government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and mass media channels to launch

⁶⁹² Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013 (UK), c.24.

⁶⁹³ Competition and Markets Authority, "Hotel Booking Sites: CMA Action Results in Changes," 2019, <https://www.gov.uk/cma-cases>.

widespread campaigns using television, radio, newspapers, and social media. These campaigns should focus on educating consumers about their rights, the process of lodging complaints, and the role of the CCPA.

○ **Community Outreach Programs:**

To reach marginalized and rural populations, the CCPA can implement localized programs in collaboration with local governments, educational institutions, and NGOs. These programs can include workshops, seminars, and the distribution of informative pamphlets in regional languages to bridge the knowledge gap.

3. **Inter-Agency Coordination:**

○ **Collaboration with Regulatory Bodies:**

Effective consumer protection requires multi-agency coordination. CCPA should align its operations with other regulatory bodies such as the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), and Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI). This alignment will ensure a seamless enforcement mechanism where cross-sectoral issues (like food safety, financial fraud, or telecom disputes) are handled collaboratively.

○ **Unified Data Sharing System:**

The establishment of a centralized database accessible by all relevant agencies will facilitate data sharing, ensuring timely responses and unified action on consumer grievances. This collaboration will not only streamline investigations but also

enable better tracking of repeat offenders and the identification of emerging patterns in consumer rights violations.

4. **Strengthening Digital Framework:**

○ **National Consumer Complaint Portal:**

A user-friendly, transparent, and robust digital platform is essential for providing real-time access to grievance redressal. The CCPA should develop and enhance a national consumer complaint portal that allows consumers to lodge complaints, track their status, and access information about similar cases. This platform could be integrated with social media platforms and mobile apps for wider accessibility.

○ **Real-Time Case Tracking:**

Incorporating features like real-time tracking of complaint progress, notifications of updates, and the ability to escalate unresolved cases will make the process more transparent and efficient. This system should also enable automated responses to frequently asked questions, further reducing manual workload and enhancing customer satisfaction.

5. **Statutory Reforms:**

○ **Amendment of Consumer Protection Rules:**

The CCPA needs to be empowered with quasi-judicial authority, allowing it to take more proactive actions such as issuing binding rulings and imposing penalties for non-compliance. A proposal to amend the Consumer Protection Rules should be considered to grant CCPA more substantial

powers and operational autonomy, including the ability to conduct investigations independently and act on public complaints without requiring external referral.

- **Inclusion of Technological Tools:** Statutory reforms should also address the evolving nature of consumer protection challenges in the digital age. With the rise of e-commerce, digital fraud, and online consumer complaints, laws should be adapted to incorporate the latest technological advancements, ensuring that the CCPA can effectively address modern challenges, such as cyber fraud, privacy concerns, and digital consumer rights violations.

By implementing these recommendations, the Consumer Protection regime in India can be significantly strengthened, fostering a more consumer-friendly environment and ensuring that the interests of the public are effectively safeguarded.

9. Conclusion

The establishment of the **Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA)** represents a transformative step in India's consumer justice framework. Envisioned under the Consumer Protection Act, 2019, the CCPA serves as a specialized regulatory body aimed at promoting, protecting, and enforcing the rights of consumers across various sectors. By addressing unfair trade practices, misleading advertisements, and rights violations through suo motu action and consumer complaints, the CCPA fills a long-standing institutional gap in the Indian consumer redressal mechanism.

Its **enhanced enforcement powers**, including the authority to investigate, penalize, and even order the recall of hazardous goods or the discontinuation of misleading services, have

significantly elevated the scope of consumer protection in the country. The establishment of an **Investigation Wing under the Director-General**, empowered to conduct inquiries, further bolsters the regulatory structure. Additionally, the CCPA's emphasis on product liability, transparency, and accountability has strengthened the culture of responsible business conduct.

However, while the CCPA has laid the foundation for a robust consumer-centric regime, its **full potential remains contingent upon certain critical enablers**. First, there is a need for **institutional strengthening**—through increased manpower, better infrastructure, and continuous capacity-building programs for its officers—to effectively handle the growing complexity and volume of consumer grievances, especially in sectors like e-commerce and digital services.

Second, ensuring **strategic and operational autonomy** is vital. A functionally independent CCPA, free from bureaucratic delays and political influence, will be better equipped to take timely and decisive actions against errant entities, regardless of their stature or market dominance. Legislative and policy-level reforms aimed at expanding its powers and scope may be necessary to grant it quasi-judicial status, enabling it to issue enforceable orders independently.

Third, **consumer awareness and participation** form the backbone of any successful consumer protection regime. Unless consumers are well-informed about their rights, remedies, and the functioning of the CCPA, the benefits of this institutional mechanism cannot fully reach the grassroots. Thus, comprehensive public outreach and educational initiatives are essential to promote an informed and empowered consumer base.

In conclusion, the CCPA is undeniably a **landmark initiative** in India's journey toward a transparent, accountable, and responsive consumer protection ecosystem. However, to make this regulatory authority a truly effective

guardian of consumer rights, it is essential to invest in its long-term sustainability through administrative reforms, technological innovation, collaborative frameworks, and active civic engagement. Only then can the vision of a **consumer-friendly India**, grounded in fairness, justice, and equity, be fully realized.

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THEORY OF RUDOLPH VON JHERING AND ITS APPLICATION ON CONTEMPRARY ISSUE I.E. MEDIA TRIALS

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I. ABSTRACT

This paper explores the jurisprudential contributions of Rudolf von Jhering and applies his sociological theory of law to the modern phenomenon of media trials. Jhering, a 19th-century German legal philosopher, proposed that law should be understood as a practical instrument aimed at securing societal interests rather than a set of abstract principles. His idea of law as a "means to an end" emphasized state-backed coercion and social purpose over mere legal formalism. Central to his theory is the belief that individuals must actively assert their legal rights—a notion he famously captured in *The Struggle for Law*—to maintain both personal dignity and societal order.

The study analyzes how Jhering's core concepts—legal consciousness, struggle for rights, and law's purposive function—resonate within the framework of contemporary media trials. These trials, characterized by heavy media influence on legal proceedings and public opinion, demonstrate how societal forces shape perceptions of justice outside formal courtrooms. Using Jhering's theoretical lens, the paper evaluates how media trials blur the lines between legal norms and societal narratives, often undermining judicial impartiality and the presumption of innocence.

Two landmark cases—*Tourancheau and July v. France* and the *Weltbühne Trial*—are examined to illustrate the practical tensions between press freedom and the right to a fair trial. The paper concludes that while Jhering's theory offers valuable insights into the societal dimensions of law, its limitations lie in its optimistic assumptions about reconciling conflicting interests. Nonetheless, Jhering's work remains foundational in understanding how law evolves through societal conflict and maintains its legitimacy through purposive action in a media-driven age.

II. KEYWORDS

Rudolph Von Jhering, Sociological Jurisprudence, Law And Society, Media Trial, Contemporary Challenge

III. LIFE AND CARRIER⁶⁹⁴

Rudolf von Jhering commenced his academic journey at the University of Heidelberg in 1836, subsequently pursuing studies in Göttingen, Munich, and, beginning in 1838, Berlin—where he ultimately earned his doctorate.

By 1844, having attained the title of doctor juris, Jhering began lecturing as a Privatdozent in Roman law in Berlin. His public lectures centered on the *Geist des römischen Rechts* (Spirit of Roman Law), a theme that would remain central to his life's scholarly pursuits.

In 1845, he was appointed professor at the University of Basel, followed by academic posts at Rostock (1846), Kiel (1849), and Giessen (1851).

⁶⁹⁴ William Seagle, *Rudolf von Jhering: Or Law as a Means to an End*, 13 U. Chi. L. Rev. 71 (1945).

At each of these institutions, Jhering left a lasting intellectual legacy, breathing life into the traditionally arid field of Roman law more than any of his contemporaries.

During the latter half of the 19th century, Jhering's scholarly reputation rivaled that of Savigny, whose influence had dominated the earlier decades. While Savigny and his followers adopted a historical method, Jhering approached jurisprudence as a dynamic science intended to serve the moral and social progress of humanity. In 1868, he assumed the prestigious chair of Roman law at the University of Vienna. His lectures attracted not only students but also professionals and high-ranking officials.

In recognition of his intellectual contributions, Emperor Franz Joseph I of Austria ennobled him in 1872, bestowing a title of hereditary nobility. Despite his success in Vienna, Jhering eventually grew weary of the capital's social obligations and gladly exchanged its bustle for the tranquility of Göttingen, where he accepted a professorship the same year.

That year also marked the publication of one of his most celebrated works, *Der Kampf ums Recht* (1872; English translation *The Struggle for Law*, 1879), adapted from a lecture delivered to great acclaim in Vienna. In this seminal text, Jhering argued that the defense of one's rights is not merely a personal matter but a moral imperative—anchored in the intrinsic link between legal rights and personal dignity. Rights, he posited, embody one's social value and honor; thus, their violation constitutes an affront to one's integrity.

This work was succeeded five years later by *Der Zweck im Recht* (*The Purpose in Law*, 2 volumes, 1877–1883), a more intellectual and philosophical exposition of his legal theory. While *Der Kampf ums Recht* reflects Jhering's resolute character and compelling sense of justice, *Der Zweck im Recht* highlights his intellectual depth and analytical rigor. Perhaps his most balanced and accessible work, *Jurisprudenz des täglichen Lebens* (1870; English

translation, 1904), showcases a synthesis of these attributes. A distinctive feature of Jhering's teaching was his use of *Praktika*—practical problems in Roman law. An early collection of these, including suggested solutions, was published in 1847 under the title *Civilrechtsfälle ohne Entscheidungen*.

Aside from brief appointments in Leipzig and Heidelberg, Jhering remained at Göttingen until his death on September 17, 1892. Among his other significant contributions are *Beiträge zur Lehre vom Besitz*—initially published in the *Jahrbücher für die Dogmatik des heutigen römischen und deutschen Privatrechts* and later released independently—*Der Besitzwille*, and a provocative article on possession (*Besitz*) in the *Handwörterbuch der Staatswissenschaften* (1891), which sparked considerable debate, particularly due to its challenge of Savigny's established doctrine. In recognition of his scholarly eminence, Jhering was elected a foreign member of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1874. His enduring influence was honored in October 2018, on the bicentenary of his birth, when Roman law scholars from across the globe commemorated his legacy.

IV. LAW AND SOCIAL PURPOSE

Rudolf von Jhering, often heralded as the progenitor of sociological jurisprudence, developed a legal theory grounded in the notion that law serves to promote and secure social interests. Unlike traditional legal positivists or natural law theorists, Jhering's conception of law was inherently functionalist and pragmatic. He contended that the primary objective of law is not to reflect abstract ideals of justice or immutable truths, but to maintain the essential conditions for social life through the machinery of state authority.

According to Jhering, law may be defined as “the sum of the conditions of social life, in the widest sense of the term, secured by the power of the state through the means of external

compulsion.”⁶⁹⁵ This emphasis on external compulsion as the distinguishing feature of law places his theory in close proximity to that of command theorists like John Austin. However, Jhering diverged significantly by advancing a more nuanced and dynamic interpretation of legal norms and coercion.

For Jhering, coercion was not merely a brute force mechanism imposed upon individuals, but a necessary institutional tool wielded by the state to safeguard communal well-being. He emphasized that law is inherently a product of state power, for the state alone possesses the legitimate means of coercion. Hence, the defining trait that separates law from other normative systems such as ethics or morality is the enforceability of legal norms by state-backed force.

Despite this alignment with command theory, Jhering departed from it by asserting that law possesses both an external and internal dimension. While coercion constitutes the external side, the norm or legal imperative forms its internal structure. These norms are not arbitrary dictates; rather, they are practical propositions that guide human conduct. He described them as “abstract imperatives,” aligning them with other social imperatives like moral duties and ethical maxims. However, what differentiates legal norms from their ethical counterparts is their institutional origin—the state—which formally enacts and enforces them.

Jhering further posited that these legal imperatives are primarily addressed to state institutions tasked with managing coercion. Thus, the legal norm, though formal and abstract, is integrally connected to state authority. Nevertheless, the mere presence of norms and coercion does not convey the substance or content of law. Jhering underscored that the essence of law lies in its

purpose, and that purpose is the promotion and protection of social life in all its varied forms.

Crucially, Jhering asserted that the content of law cannot be universal or absolute; it must be adaptable to the particular needs, values, and historical conditions of a given society. Law, in this sense, is not static but evolutionary. Its function is not to embody eternal truths, but to serve the shifting purposes of social life. Hence, the ultimate standard of law is not truth, which is immutable, but purpose, which is contingent and relative.⁶⁹⁶

In delineating the conditions of social life, Jhering categorised them into three primary types: extra-legal, mixed-legal, and purely legal conditions. Extra-legal conditions refer to those aspects of human life that arise from nature, such as sunlight or air—elements received passively by individuals without state intervention. These lie beyond the purview of law. The second category, mixed-legal conditions, encompasses human activities such as reproduction, labour, and commerce—domains governed partly by instinct and partly requiring legal support when natural mechanisms fail. Finally, purely legal conditions consist of those obligations that are wholly constructed by legal command, such as the duty to pay taxes or repay debts.

Jhering believed that by securing these social conditions through legal mechanisms, the law fosters not only communal harmony but also aligns individual interests with societal welfare. This alignment, he argued, is not achieved through suppression but through integration: the law enables individuals to perceive their personal goals as being intrinsically linked to the common good. In this way, personal and social purposes are reconciled within the legal framework.

This harmonization, according to Jhering, is facilitated by the “levers of social motion,” which are the motivational forces through which society exerts influence over individuals. These

⁶⁹⁵ Elise Nalbandian, *Introductory Concepts on Sociological Jurisprudence: Jhering, Durkheim, Ehrlich*, 4 *Mizan L. Rev.* 348 (2010).

⁶⁹⁶ Rudolph von Jhering, *The Struggle for Law* (Callaghan 1915) (Chi., Ill., America).

levers are categorised into egoistic and altruistic forms. The egoistic levers consist of reward and coercion—both extrinsically motivated. Altruistic levers, by contrast, arise from internalised values such as duty and love. While Jhering acknowledged the importance of both sets of motivators, he seemed to place a functional emphasis on the efficacy of coercion and reward in achieving legal compliance⁶⁹⁷

Nevertheless, Jhering's theory is not without its detractors. Critics have observed that while he convincingly establishes the social function of law, he offers limited guidance on how to mediate between competing social interests. His model tends to assume a level of harmony that may not reflect the complex reality of societal conflicts. In particular, the reliance on altruistic sentiments such as love and duty as mechanisms for reconciling deep-seated interest divergences has been viewed as idealistic and perhaps overly optimistic.

Another criticism targets the narrowness of Jhering's inquiry. While he rightly focuses on the pre-legal conditions that give rise to legal norms—conditions rooted in society's practical needs—he devotes comparatively little attention to exploring the full range of extra-legal influences on law, such as religion, culture, and economic structures. This arguably limits the scope and depth of his jurisprudential analysis, especially for a theory that purports to take a sociological view of law.⁶⁹⁸

Furthermore, the absence of a clearly articulated methodology for weighing conflicting interests renders his theory somewhat indeterminate when applied to real-world disputes. If the law's purpose is to serve the "social interest," how is that interest to be defined or prioritized when individuals and groups hold divergent conceptions of the good life? Without clear criteria for resolving such conflicts, Jhering's framework may risk devolving into a tautology in which law is said to

serve society simply because it exists and is enforced.

Nonetheless, the enduring significance of Jhering's contribution lies in his assertion that law is not an autonomous, self-referential system, but one intimately connected to the evolving needs of the social order. He transformed jurisprudential thinking by shifting the focus from law as a closed logical system to law as a practical instrument for achieving societal goals. His work laid the foundation for later developments in sociological and realist jurisprudence, influencing scholars such as Roscoe Pound and Eugen Ehrlich.

In conclusion, Jhering's sociological theory of law represents a pivotal departure from formalistic and abstract conceptions of jurisprudence. It emphasizes the necessity of legal adaptability, the centrality of state-backed coercion, and the inextricable link between law and the collective interests of society. Despite its limitations—particularly in dealing with normative pluralism and balancing conflicting interests—his theory remains a cornerstone in understanding the functional and purposive dimensions of legal systems.

V. CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF APPLICATION OF THEORY TO MEDIA TRIALS

Rudolf von Jhering (1818–1892), a prominent German jurist, is best known for his contributions to the philosophy of law, particularly his development of the concept of legal consciousness and the role of conflict in the law.

While Jhering's work focused on legal theory, his ideas can be linked to modern discussions of media trials, particularly when considering how legal conflicts are shaped by public opinion and the media. A media trial, in contemporary terms, refers to a case where the public perception, largely influenced by media coverage, plays a crucial role in shaping the outcome of legal proceedings. This is often seen in high-profile cases, where the media's portrayal of the accused or the crime influences

⁶⁹⁷ Isaac Husic (ed.), *Law as a Means to an End* (Boston Book Co. 1913).

⁶⁹⁸ Iredell Jenkins, *Rudolf von Jhering*, 14 Vand. L. Rev. 169 (1960).

both public opinion and the behavior of legal authorities.

Jhering's theory of law as a struggle for justice can be directly connected to the dynamics of media trials. In his view, the law is an arena of conflict, where individuals must actively engage to protect their interests. In media trials, this conflict is amplified by the public and the media, which can act as both participants and adjudicators in the legal process. Just as Jhering emphasized the importance of actively pursuing one's rights, the media in a modern media trial can be seen as a force that shapes the public's understanding of the case, often determining whether an individual's rights are defended or undermined.

Additionally, Jhering's ideas on legal consciousness resonate with the concept of a media trial. Legal consciousness, in Jhering's view, refers to the way in which people understand and relate to the law in their everyday lives. In media trials, this consciousness is often molded by the narratives the media constructs. The public's understanding of justice becomes entangled with the portrayal of a case, creating a situation where the law is not only a matter of legal rules but is also influenced by the values and prejudices that are shaped by the media. Media trials often distort legal outcomes, as the intense public scrutiny and sensationalism can overshadow the actual legal process, creating a skewed perception of guilt or innocence.

Furthermore, Jhering's advocacy for the idea that legal institutions must protect individuals from external pressures aligns with the concern that media trials place undue pressure on judicial bodies. The challenge of maintaining judicial impartiality in the face of widespread public opinion is a modern extension of Jhering's concerns about the potential for the law to be undermined by external forces. In media trials, the struggle for justice becomes not just a battle within the courtroom but also a battle for public perception, where the law itself must contend with the influence of the media.

Jhering's theories on the law as an active and ongoing struggle, shaped by conflict and the defense of rights, offer valuable insights into the nature of media trials. Media trials illustrate how the law, once framed as an abstract system of rules, is frequently intertwined with societal pressures, public opinion, and media influence—forces that Jhering's theory acknowledges as integral to the legal process.

VI. CASE LAWS

1. Tourancheau and July v. France⁶⁹⁹

The case of Tourancheau and July v. France (2005) serves as a compelling illustration of the tension between freedom of the press and the right to a fair trial—two fundamental rights that often come into conflict. The case involved two journalists, Patricia Tourancheau and Serge July, who were convicted for publishing details of a criminal investigation before they were aired in court. This action violated French legal provisions aimed at preserving the presumption of innocence and safeguarding the proper administration of justice. The journalists appealed to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), claiming a violation of their right to freedom of expression under Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights. However, the ECHR upheld their conviction, reinforcing the need to balance press freedom with judicial integrity.

This case finds theoretical resonance with the jurisprudence of Rudolf von Jhering, particularly his sociological and purposive approach to law. Jhering posited that the law is not merely a system of abstract rules, but a dynamic tool for serving social purposes—chief among them being the protection of societal order and the public interest. He emphasized that law should mediate between conflicting interests, ensuring that the collective good is not sacrificed at the altar of individual liberties.

Applying Jhering's theory, the restriction imposed on the journalists' freedom of expression can be viewed not as an arbitrary

⁶⁹⁹ Tourancheau & July v. France, App. No. 53886/00, Eur. Ct. H.R. (2005).

limitation, but as a necessary legal intervention to uphold a higher societal value: the integrity of the judicial process. Jhering recognized that individual rights must sometimes yield to the common good, especially where their unregulated exercise would disrupt social harmony or justice. The premature disclosure of investigatory details in a sensationalized media environment can severely prejudice public opinion and compromise the right of the accused to a fair and impartial trial—an outcome Jhering would classify as detrimental to the societal function of law.

Moreover, Jhering's concept of the struggle for law suggests that legal rights are not passive entitlements but must be asserted and protected in the context of competing claims. In this case, the judiciary asserted its role as a guardian of public order and justice by penalizing actions that endangered the balance between transparency and fairness in criminal proceedings.

Thus, the Tourancheau and July judgment exemplifies the practical relevance of Jhering's legal theory, showing how law functions as a social mechanism to reconcile competing interests and maintain justice in an increasingly complex media landscape.

2. Weltbühne Trial⁷⁰⁰

The Weltbühne Trial of 1931 stands as a crucial example of the ideological and legal tensions between press freedom and state security. The case centered around journalist Carl von Ossietzky and the magazine Die Weltbühne, which had published articles exposing secret German rearmament in violation of the Treaty of Versailles. Ossietzky was prosecuted for treason and betrayal of military secrets, ultimately convicted and sentenced to 18 months in prison. While controversial, the verdict illuminates deeper jurisprudential questions—particularly when analyzed through the lens of Rudolf von Jhering's sociological and purposive theory of law.

Jhering's jurisprudence was predicated on the idea that law is not an end in itself but a means to achieve broader societal objectives. He rejected legal formalism in favor of a functional approach that sees law as a mechanism for promoting social order, collective interests, and national stability. In the Weltbühne case, the court's decision to prioritize national security over the individual right to freedom of expression aligns with Jhering's assertion that the legal system must sometimes subordinate personal liberties to the needs of the state or society.

The conviction of Ossietzky, while criticized from a human rights standpoint, can be interpreted as an application of Jhering's concept of Zweck im Recht (the purpose in law). According to this principle, legal norms must serve concrete social purposes—in this case, the preservation of state sovereignty and national defense. From the state's perspective, disclosing military secrets during a period of political instability in the Weimar Republic threatened not only compliance with international treaties but also internal order and national security. Therefore, the law acted not merely to punish the individual but to safeguard a perceived greater social good.

Moreover, Jhering's idea of Rechtskampf (struggle for law) also applies here. For Jhering, the law gains vitality when it is asserted and defended through conflict. The state, in asserting its authority to suppress what it deemed dangerous disclosures, was engaged in a struggle to affirm its legal and political identity in a fragile democratic environment. Conversely, Ossietzky's resistance represented the counter-struggle for civil liberties and democratic accountability, demonstrating the dynamic interplay between law and society.

Thus, the Weltbühne Trial exemplifies the implicit application of Jhering's legal theory—where law mediates between individual freedoms and the imperatives of collective security, reflecting the jurisprudence. ongoing tension that shapes modern

⁷⁰⁰ Weltbühne Case, 3 RGSt 678 (Ger. 1931)

VII. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Rudolf von Jhering's sociological jurisprudence offers a compelling framework for understanding the dynamics of media trials in contemporary society. His conception of law as a purposive, evolving mechanism for securing social interests is highly relevant when examining how media influences public perception and legal outcomes. Jhering's emphasis on the law as a struggle for justice resonates with the adversarial and often contentious nature of media trials, where public discourse becomes an extension of the legal battleground. His notion of legal consciousness underscores how individuals internalize and interpret legal norms through societal influences—of which media is now a dominant force. Furthermore, Jhering's insistence on the need for state institutions to uphold justice against external pressures directly relates to the risks posed by media sensationalism, which can jeopardize judicial impartiality. While Jhering might not have foreseen the scale of media influence today, his theory provides a valuable lens for analyzing how law interacts with public sentiment and media narratives. Ultimately, media trials highlight the tensions between law's formal structures and its societal context—a central concern in Jhering's work—revealing the enduring relevance of his insights in navigating the balance between legal integrity and societal influence.

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CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTIONS: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY IN THE LIGHT OF INDIAN CONSTITUTION SYSTEM

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Abstract

This paper examines the idea of constitutional conventions within the framework of the Indian Constitution, highlighting their importance in the functioning of the political system. Although unwritten and often overlooked, constitutional conventions are crucial for guiding the behaviour of constitutional actors and facilitating smooth governance. The study provides a comprehensive analysis of these conventions, including their definitions and key characteristics that distinguish them from formal laws and constitutional provisions. It also highlights the needs of these conventions in promoting flexibility and adaptability within the constitutional framework while underscoring their crucial role in upholding democratic principles. By analysing significant instances of constitutional conventions in India, the paper demonstrates their practical impact on governance. Additionally, it discusses the judiciary's role in interpreting these conventions, illustrating how court decisions can influence their understanding and application in the Indian context. This exploratory study aims to provide a nuanced perspective on constitutional conventions and their influence on the Indian political system.

Key words: Constitutional Conventions, Unwritten Rules, Democratic Principles, Judicial Interpretation, Constitutional Morality

Introduction

The Constitution of India, as the supreme law of the land, provides the foundational framework for governance and legal authority. However, alongside the written provisions, there exists a set of unwritten norms and practices known as constitutional conventions. These conventions, though not codified, are essential in shaping the operations of the government and ensuring its effective functioning.

Constitutional conventions are established practices that have developed over time, forming a crucial part of the unwritten constitution. They stem from the country's political culture and historical context, reflecting traditional governance practices. Their informal

nature allows them to adapt to contemporary needs while preserving the essential principles of democracy. For example, the convention of collective ministerial responsibility fosters unity within the executive branch and assures the electorate of responsible governance. These conventions become particularly significant during political crises or situations where the Constitution is unclear, providing practical guidance in those contexts.

In certain situations, unwritten conventions hold more significance than written rules. For instance, while the Constitution mandates that the President appoints the Prime Minister, it does not specify who should be selected for the position. Here, constitutional conventions fill the gap, ensuring that the leader of the majority

party in the Lok Sabha is appointed to the post. Given the significant role of the Prime Minister in governance, this convention acquires immense importance, demonstrating how conventions supplement and enhance the Constitution's provisions⁷⁰¹.

However, the reliance on these unwritten norms raises concerns regarding their interpretation, as different political actors may have different views. This highlights the vital role of the judiciary in interpreting these conventions to ensure they are consistent with constitutional principles. Ultimately, constitutional conventions play a significant role in the effective functioning of democracy in India, complementing the written provisions of the Constitution.

Meaning and definitions

Constitutional conventions are classified as unwritten norms, practices, and traditions that develop over time to complement the formal provisions of a constitution. Though they cannot be legally enforced, they possess significant political and moral authority as they govern the actions of constitutional figures, contributing to the effective operation of a political system. A.V. Dicey was the first to discuss the concept, describing conventions as “understandings, habits, or practices that, while influencing the behaviour of sovereign power members, are not enforceable by the courts.” This aspect of constitutional law is often referred to as the “conventions of the constitution” or constitutional morality⁷⁰².

In the UK, conventions are essential in guiding political practices and interactions. In India, despite having a written Constitution, many conventional practices are still observed for effective governance. For instance, the appointment of chief justice of India, where the most senior judge of the Supreme Court

becomes the Chief Justice of India—though not explicitly stated in the Constitution, this practice is consistently followed.

According to Sir Ivory Jennings, establishing a constitutional convention involves addressing three fundamental questions.

1. What are precedents?
2. Do political actors feel bound by such a rule?
3. Is there a valid reason for the rule's existence?

If a precedent has a good reason and a sense of obligation, it becomes a valid rule. However, these questions are helpful but do not serve as a strict test to determine what qualifies as a constitutional convention.

While there is no precise or exhaustive definition for constitutional conventions, several attempts have been made by the jurists to define them. Among these are the following:

Hood and Phillips in his book⁷⁰³ describe it as “Rules of political practice which are regarded as binding to those whom they apply but which are not laws as they are not enforced by the courts or by the houses of parliament.”

According to John Austin, the Constitutional Convention is the “positive morality of the Constitution.”

Fenwick, H., defines it as “non-legal, generally agreed rules about how government should be conducted and, in particular, governing the relations between different organs of government.”⁷⁰⁴

Keeton describes them as unwritten principles which, though they could never be enforced by the law in the courts are nonetheless rules since in fact the players of the constitutional game do observe them, for if they are not observed, then constitutional game would degenerate the political farces or worse still a bloody revolution.

⁷⁰¹ Constitutional Conventions Preserving Legal Structure of Government Constitutional Law Essay, Law Teacher, (Jun 7, 2019) <https://www.lawteacher.net/free-law-essays/constitutional-law/constitutional-conventions-preserving-legal-structure-of-government-constitutional-law-essay.php>

⁷⁰² A.V. Dicey, Introduction to the Study of the Law of the Constitution (10th ed. 1959)

⁷⁰³ O. Hood Phillips & Paul Jackson, Constitutional and Administrative Law (7th ed. 2001).

⁷⁰⁴ Helen Fenwick & Gavin Phillipson, Text, Cases & Materials on Public Law & Human Rights (2d ed. 2003)

Constitutional conventions are characterized by voluntary adherence to established practices that evolve naturally over time. Although there is no definitive timeframe for their formation, this lack of a fixed duration complicates the identification of specific conventions. Their flexibility in adapting to changing political environments highlights their significance in guiding constitutional actors and maintaining governance stability. Therefore, a nuanced understanding of these conventions is crucial for navigating political complexities and upholding democratic values.

Characteristics of constitutional conventions

The key characteristics of constitutional conventions⁷⁰⁵ are as follows:

Conventions outline the non-legal rights, powers, and duties of office-holders in the three branches of government, as well as relationships between government organs. They are generally stated in broad terms, with their application being clear in some circumstances but uncertain or debatable in others. The framers of the Constitution deliberately left certain matters to the discretion of contemporary leaders, allowing for the development of constitutional conventions.

While conventions differ from legal rules, they may be equally or more important, sometimes influencing the application or enforcement of laws. In certain cases, conventions are more critical than written constitutional provisions, such as guiding the President in appointing the Prime Minister when the Constitution provides no specific instructions. New conventions can occasionally develop to address particular procedural challenges in governance.

In *S.P Anand case*, Ahmadi, C.J⁷⁰⁶ said that conventions grow from longstanding accepted practice or by agreement in areas where the law is silent and such a convention would not breach the law but fill the gap.

Need and significance

Constitutional conventions play a pivotal role in maintaining flexibility within the legal framework of the Constitution. While the Indian Constitution is written and detailed, it deliberately leaves certain matters to be governed by conventions. This flexibility allows governance to adapt to the evolving political and social climate.

In India, conventions help regulate the relationships between various branches of government i.e, the legislature, the executive and the judiciary. Though not legally enforceable, these conventions hold significant moral and political authority, guiding the behaviour of constitutional actors in a manner that is often as important as the written provisions of the Constitution itself.

According to Dicey, Constitutional Conventions secure the ultimate supremacy of the electorate by guiding the exercise of discretionary powers in a manner consistent with democratic principles. Jennings further highlights that Conventions "provide the flesh which clothes the dry bones of the law; they make the legal constitution work; they keep it in touch with the growth of ideas", ensuring that the legal framework remains dynamic and responsive to the growth of ideas and changing circumstances.

In recent years, conventions that were respected in the past have been disregarded, and there is a growing trend toward extra-constitutional methods to resolve political issues. This deviation poses a serious threat to the integrity of the democratic system, as the failure to adhere to conventions can result in constitutional crises.⁷⁰⁷

While conventions act as safeguards against the rigidity of written laws, offering a flexible means of addressing ambiguities and filling governance gaps, their neglect or misuse can

⁷⁰⁵ Parliamentary Conventions, Journals of India (Sept. 14, 2020), <https://journalsofindia.com/parliamentary-conventions/>.

⁷⁰⁶ *S.P. Anand, Indore v. H.D. Deve Gowda*, A.I.R. 1997 S.C. 272, (1996) 6 S.C.C. 734 (India).

⁷⁰⁷ Constitutional Conventions Preserving Legal Structure of Government Constitutional Law Essay, Law Teacher, (Jun 7, 2019) <https://www.lawteacher.net/free-law-essays/constitutional-law/constitutional-conventions-preserving-legal-structure-of-government-constitutional-law-essay.php>

destabilize the system. Therefore, it is vital that those in constitutional roles are skilled and dedicated to honouring both the letter and spirit of the Constitution to preserve their essential function.

Instances of conventions

Constitutional conventions play an essential role in regulating the relationship between the executive and the legislature in India. Below are key instances that illustrate the significance of these unwritten norms:

1. Hung Lok Sabha Situations

In a hung Lok Sabha, where no party achieves a clear majority, constitutional conventions guide the process of government formation.

The President of India is responsible for inviting a leader to form the government. While traditionally this leader is the head of the largest party, the convention has evolved to favor the leader who can command majority support, regardless of party size.

It is now generally accepted that the leader who can build a coalition with other parties will be invited to form the government. This practice acknowledges the reality of coalition politics and emphasises the need for collaboration among parties for effective governance.

Despite calls for codifying these conventions into law, no formal measures have been taken to date, leaving room for ambiguity and controversy during elections.

2. Appointment of the Prime Minister

The appointment of the Prime Minister is outlined in Article 75(1) of the Indian Constitution which states that the President will appoint the Prime Minister, while other Ministers are appointed by the President based on the Prime Minister's advice.

Generally, the President selects the leader of the party that has a majority in the Lok Sabha to serve as Prime Minister. In exceptional circumstances, such as the resignation or death of a Prime Minister, the President must exercise

discretion to identify a leader capable of garnering support from the House. For instance, in 1979, President Giani Zail Singh invited Charan Singh to form a government following the Janata Party's collapse, illustrating the President's role in navigating political complexities.

3. Dissolution of the House

The dissolution of the Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha can occur at the end of their five-year terms or under certain circumstances before that.

The decision to dissolve the House rests with the President or the Governor, based on established conventions. There is ongoing debate regarding whether the President acts with full discretion or adheres to the advice of the Council of Ministers. Article 74(1) states that the President typically follows ministerial counsel, but exceptions are acknowledged. In the *Shamsher Singh vs. State of Punjab* case, the court indicated that the President could reject unconstitutional advice, underscoring the critical role of conventions in safeguarding the Constitution.

Other parliamentary conventions include:

- The Speaker of the Lok Sabha derives powers and duties from parliamentary practices.
- The role of the whip in maintaining party discipline.
- The classification of the Council of Ministers into a three-tier structure to facilitate decision-making.

A notable instance of constitutional conventions occurred on January 9, 2023⁷⁰⁸, when the Governor of Tamil Nadu omitted significant portions from the prepared speech for the Legislative Assembly, which referenced social justice and leaders like Periyar and Ambedkar. This act sparked a political controversy, with the

⁷⁰⁸ Siddharth Jha. The Tamil Nadu Governor and Constitutional Conventions, *Constitution of India* (Feb. 25, 2023), <https://www.constitutionofindia.net/blog/the-tamil-nadu-governor-and-constitutional-conventions/>.

ruling party claiming a breach of convention. The Governor's address follows the established convention outlined in Articles 87 and 176 of the Constitution, which directs the Governor to present the legislative agenda prepared by the Council of Ministers. Deviating from this norm disrupts the expected cooperation between the Governor and the elected government, revealing underlying tensions and potentially undermining inter-institutional trust. Such breaches can lead to diminished adherence to conventions and invite unnecessary judicial intervention in political matters.

Role of judiciary in interpreting constitutional conventions

Constitutional conventions, though not legally enforceable, play a critical role in the smooth functioning of democratic governance. When disputes arise regarding their interpretation or application, the judiciary often steps in to clarify their scope and relevance within the constitutional framework. Indian courts have been instrumental in recognizing and interpreting these conventions, particularly in cases where ambiguities or gaps exist in the written law. The judiciary adopts a pragmatic approach, acknowledging that these unwritten norms are crucial for maintaining the balance of power between different branches of government, ensuring they align with the democratic ethos and the spirit of the Constitution.

The Judges' Cases serve as a crucial example of how the Indian judiciary has played a significant role in interpreting constitutional conventions. In the First Judges' Case⁷⁰⁹ the Supreme Court held that the appointment of judges by the President or Governor must follow consultation with the Chief Justice of India (CJI) and the Chief Justice of the High Court. The court also made it clear that conventions that conflict with constitutional principles or the intention of the law cannot be regarded as valid constitutional conventions.

In the Second Judges' Case⁷¹⁰ the Supreme Court reversed its earlier ruling, stating that "consultation" with the CJI should mean "concurrence." The court emphasized that once a convention is established and in operation, it becomes as binding as constitutional law. Justice Kuldip Singh reinforced this by equating constitutional conventions with constitutional law, asserting that both are equally binding in their respective domains.

The Third Judges' Case⁷¹¹ upheld the earlier decisions but introduced the concept of a collegium, further embedding judicial independence in the process of judicial appointments. When the 99th Constitutional Amendment sought to replace the collegium with the National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC), the Supreme Court struck it down, reaffirming that appointments must continue according to the existing constitutional convention. The court highlighted the binding nature of the pre-existing conventions, rejecting the NJAC as inconsistent with them.

Through these rulings, the Supreme Court not only recognized but reinforced the binding character of constitutional conventions, showing how they become entrenched in constitutional law when they operate within the constitutional framework.

In *S.R. Bommai v. UOI*⁷¹² the Supreme Court sets crucial guidelines to prevent arbitrary dismissals of state governments, reinforcing the significance of constitutional conventions in maintaining India's federal structure. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, during the drafting of the Constitution, expresses hope that Article 356 would remain a "dead letter," only to be invoked sparingly in extreme situations. However, political realities see frequent misuse of this provision for partisan purposes. This case challenged this misuse and establishes that the imposition of President's Rule must be based on

⁷¹⁰ Supreme Court Advocates-On-Record Assn. v. Union of India, (1994) 1 SCC 446 (India).

⁷¹¹ In re: Under Article 143(1) of the Constitution, (1998) 5 SCALE 629 (India).

⁷¹² S.R. Bommai v. Union of India, 1994 AIR 1918, 1994 SCC (3) 1.

⁷⁰⁹ S.P. Gupta v. President of India, (1982) AIR1982 SC 149 (1) SCC 87 (India)

constitutional grounds and not political motivations. This judgment emphasizes that the dissolution of a state assembly and the declaration of President's Rule are subject to judicial review. The court affirms its authority to strike down such proclamations if they are based on irrelevant or unconstitutional grounds, marking a significant shift in protecting state governments. The case also underscores that India's federalism is an integrated system, not based on agreements between states, making it crucial for conventions and political morality to guide the exercise of constitutional powers. This case strengthened the role of constitutional conventions in ensuring that the balance of power between the Union and states is respected and that Article 356 is used responsibly, only when there is a genuine breakdown of constitutional machinery.

In the *Shamsher Singh vs State of Punjab* case⁷¹³, the Supreme Court examined the scope of presidential discretion under Article 74 and highlighted the importance of constitutional conventions in guiding the President's actions. The Court clarified that the President's discretion is limited and that conventions, such as acting on the advice of the Council of Ministers, are binding unless the advice is unconstitutional. This case underscored the judiciary's role in ensuring that constitutional conventions are respected and followed, even when they are not codified.

In *K. Lakshminarayanan v. Union of India*⁷¹⁴ it was established that constitutional conventions develop and are recognized through the way the Constitution is practiced. The main purpose of these conventions is to ensure that the Constitution functions in line with its values and moral principles. They aim to achieve the higher ideals and goals that the Constitution promotes. Conventions are not fixed; they can evolve as constitutional values and interpretations change. However, no convention

can be recognized or followed if it goes against the clear provisions of the Constitution or the fundamental goals that the Constitution seeks to achieve.

The judiciary's role in interpreting constitutional conventions is pivotal in ensuring that these unwritten norms continue to guide the functioning of India's political system. While conventions are flexible and evolve over time, the judiciary acts as a safeguard against their misuse or misinterpretation. Through landmark judgments, Indian courts have acknowledged the importance of conventions, providing clarity on their application and ensuring that they operate in harmony with the written Constitution. In this way, the judiciary upholds both the letter and spirit of the Constitution, preserving the democratic fabric of the nation.

Conclusion

constitutional conventions play an indispensable role in the functioning of the Indian political system. As unwritten rules that guide the behaviour of political actors, these conventions fill the gaps left by the written Constitution, ensuring the smooth operation of governance. From the appointment of the Prime Minister to the dissolution of the Lok Sabha, conventions provide essential frameworks that uphold democratic norms and practices.

This study has highlighted the significance of these conventions in maintaining political stability, promoting accountability, and facilitating the interpretation of constitutional provisions. The judiciary's role in interpreting these conventions underscores their importance in legal discourse and political practice, as judicial decisions have often relied on these unwritten rules to resolve ambiguities within the constitutional framework.

Furthermore, the need for conventions becomes even more pronounced in situations where the Constitution is silent or ambiguous, demonstrating their relevance in navigating complex political scenarios. While constitutional conventions may not be legally enforceable,

⁷¹³ *Shamsher Singh & Ors. v. State of U.P.*, (1994) Supp. (1) SCC 512 (India).

⁷¹⁴ *K. Lakshminarayanan v. Union of India*, AIR SC 825 (2018) 15 SCALE 644 (India)

their observance is crucial for upholding democratic values and fostering trust in the political system.

Ultimately, a deeper understanding and recognition of these conventions are essential for both legal scholars and practitioners in navigating the intricate landscape of constitutional law and politics in India.

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GRASP - EDUCATE - EVOLVE

DOUBLE TAXATION TREATIES AND THEIR ECONOMIC IMPACT

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ABSTRACT

Double taxation occurs when income is taxed in two different jurisdictions, creating financial and administrative burdens for taxpayers. To address this issue, countries enter into Double Taxation Avoidance Agreements (DTAAs) to eliminate or reduce tax liabilities on cross-border income. This research paper explores the economic impact of DTAAs, with a specific focus on [US, UK, India, Singapore], analyzing their role in foreign direct investment (FDI), trade growth, and tax compliance. The study evaluates treaty benefits, challenges such as tax treaty abuse, and policy recommendations to optimize their effectiveness.

Key words:- DTAA, FDI, OECD, ITC

INTRODUCTION

Tax serves as a cornerstone for both the government and the economic framework of nation, irrespective of whether it is a developed or a developing country. Taxation also ensures and strengthens the economy of country. The imposition of tax on individuals on their income constitutes a legal obligation for the assessee, ensuring the collection and consolidation of revenues that strengthen then government's financial reserves and fortifying the national treasury. This accumulated wealth not only empowers the treasury to efficiently govern the nation, but also enable the formulation of policies aimed at addressing societal needs, particularly for underprivileged communities and women. It is imperative that the revenue generated from taxpayer is utilized judiciously for the welfare of the nation and well-being of the citizens.

A nation's ability to establish a robust economy, uphold high living standards, and maintain well-developed infrastructure while effectively addressing the needs of its citizens positions it

as a strong contender in the global arena. This economic stability fosters seamless participation in international agreements, policy-making processes, and global collaborations without discrimination. However, to achieve such prominence, a country must possess substantial financial resources to honor international treaties and cultivate legally binding business relationships with other nations.

When discussing international business relations, the movement of individuals from their home country to foreign nations for business purposes becomes essential, leading to income generation outside their country of residence. This brings into focus the application of income tax, which is levied on an individual's earnings. A critical question arises regarding taxation when an individual is an Indian resident earning income abroad or a non-resident deriving income from India. The key concern is determining the basis on which such income will be taxed—whether it will be subject to taxation in both countries or solely in the

country where it is generated. To resolve this complexity and prevent multiple taxations on the same income, nations enter into Double Taxation Avoidance Agreements (DTAAs), ensuring a fair and efficient taxation framework in international transactions.

Research Problem

The primary challenge in international taxation arises when income is taxed in multiple jurisdictions, leading to double taxation that burdens taxpayers and creates barriers to cross-border business operations. This issue is particularly relevant in the context of multinational corporations, foreign investors, and individuals engaged in international trade and investment. To mitigate these challenges, countries enter into Double Taxation Avoidance Agreements (DTAAs) to prevent the same income from being taxed twice, thereby promoting a fair and efficient tax environment.

Despite the well-established role of DTAAs in reducing tax burdens, fostering economic cooperation, and enhancing cross-border investment, there remain significant gaps in the effectiveness and implementation of these agreements. Challenges such as **treaty shopping, tax avoidance, complex residency determination, and interpretation of Permanent Establishment (PE) provisions** continue to undermine the efficacy of DTAAs. Furthermore, evolving global economic activities, such as the rise of digital businesses, cryptocurrency transactions, and cross-border e-commerce, have revealed gaps in existing tax treaty frameworks.

Thus, the **research problem** lies in understanding the **economic impact of Double Taxation Avoidance Agreements (DTAAs)** on international trade, foreign direct investment (FDI), and tax compliance. Specifically, the study seeks to address the following key issues:

- **How do DTAAs influence cross-border income flows, particularly in terms of reducing the tax burden on**

multinational corporations, foreign investors, and individuals?

- **What is the economic impact of DTAAs on foreign direct investment and international trade, particularly for emerging economies?**
- **How do existing challenges, such as tax treaty abuse, complexity in determining tax residency, and issues related to Permanent Establishment (PE), hinder the intended benefits of DTAAs?**
- **What policy reforms are necessary to strengthen DTAAs, particularly in light of evolving global business practices such as digital commerce and the increasing complexity of global tax evasion schemes?**

This research aims to explore these issues in-depth, evaluate the effectiveness of current DTAA frameworks, and provide recommendations to optimize these agreements for a more robust and equitable global taxation system.

Research Objectives

1. To analyze the role of DTAAs in reducing tax burdens on cross-border income.
2. To assess how DTAAs impact foreign direct investment and trade.
3. To evaluate the challenges and abuses associated with DTAAs.
4. To provide policy recommendations for improving treaty effectiveness.

Research Questions:

1. What is the economic impact of DTAAs on cross-border income, foreign investment, and trade?
2. How do DTAAs affect tax compliance and reduce tax disputes?
3. What challenges exist in the implementation and enforcement of

DTAAs, such as tax evasion and abuse of treaty benefits?

4. What policy changes can enhance the effectiveness of DTAAs in the global tax system?

Literature Review:

•History and Evolution of DTAAs:

The history of tax treaties dates back to the early 20th century. Initially focused on resolving double taxation between two nations, the scope of DTAAs evolved to accommodate international trade agreements and prevent tax evasion.

•Key Models and Frameworks:

The OECD Model Tax Convention, the UN Model Tax Convention, and the Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS) initiative by the OECD provide global guidelines for DTAA negotiations. These frameworks influence how countries structure their tax treaties and tackle issues like tax avoidance and dispute resolution.

•Economic Impact of DTAAs:

Studies have shown that DTAAs significantly influence FDI and cross-border trade by creating a tax-efficient environment for multinational businesses. Countries with expansive DTAA networks, such as India, have seen increased foreign investments, particularly in sectors like technology and infrastructure.

•Challenges and Limitations:

Treaty shopping, complex tax residency rules, and difficulties in interpreting Permanent Establishment clauses are key issues that undermine the effectiveness of DTAAs. The BEPS framework aims to address these concerns, but enforcement remains inconsistent.

Methodology:

•Research Design:

A qualitative research design will be adopted, incorporating both primary and secondary data sources. The study will involve analyzing existing

literature, international tax agreements, and case law.

•Data Collection:

1.Primary Data:

Interviews or surveys with tax experts, government officials, and multinational corporations.

2.Secondary Data:

Review of existing research papers, case studies, and international agreements related to DTAAs.

•Analytical Approach:

A comparative analysis of DTAAs between major economies (e.g., India, USA, UK, Singapore) will be conducted to evaluate their impact on foreign investment, tax compliance, and economic cooperation. Case studies involving controversial tax avoidance schemes (e.g., India-Mauritius tax treaty) will be examined to highlight challenges.

History of Tax Treaties

The first tax treaty aimed at preventing double taxation was signed in 1899 between the Austro-Hungarian Empire and Prussia (Poland, Russia, Germany and other near by nations). It was influenced by Prussian tax laws and introduced the concept of taxing land and business income exclusively in the state of source. This treaty set a precedent for future bilateral tax agreements in the early 20th century.

In the 1920s, the League of Nations conducted a study on international double taxation and concluded that it discouraged foreign investment. Their 1928 report led to the development of bilateral tax conventions, which allocated taxing rights based on factors such as property location, business management, and residency. A key feature was the provision of tax credits to avoid double taxation.

During World War II, the League's Fiscal Committee expanded these treaties. The 1943 Mexico Model favored source-based taxation,

benefiting developing countries, but the 1946 London Model shifted the emphasis back to residence-based taxation. These models influenced treaty negotiations in the 1950s, leading to over 70 new bilateral tax agreements.

In 1963, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) published the Draft Double Taxation Convention, prioritizing residence-based taxation. This model was updated in 1977 and became the global standard, mainly used by developed nations. However, developing countries felt it was imbalanced, as it favored capital-exporting states.

In response, the United Nations (UN) introduced its own tax treaty model in 1980. Unlike the OECD Model, the UN Model granted more taxing rights to source countries, ensuring a fairer distribution of taxation between developed and developing nations. Today, both models continue to influence international tax agreements, with ongoing revisions to address evolving economic and fiscal challenges.

Evolution of DTAA Framework

1. 1920s – League of Nations Model

The League of Nations proposed the first set of international tax models in the late 1920s, laying the groundwork for bilateral tax treaties. These models introduced the principles of tax residency and source-based taxation.

2. 1963 – OECD Model Tax Convention

The **Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)** introduced the **Model Tax Convention on Income and on Capital**, which became a global benchmark for DTAA negotiations. This model sought to standardize tax rules and prevent tax evasion through treaty abuse.

3. 1980 – UN Model Tax Convention

The **United Nations (UN) Model Tax Convention** was developed to address the needs of developing countries by allowing source-based taxation in

international transactions. It provided greater taxation rights to the country where the income is generated.

4. 1990s – Expansion of DTAA Networks

With rapid globalization, countries worldwide began signing **bilateral DTAAs** to encourage foreign investment, trade, and economic cooperation. Emerging economies, including **India, China, and Brazil**, aggressively expanded their tax treaty networks.

5. 21st Century – BEPS and Modern Reforms

In 2013, the **OECD and G20** launched the **Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS) Initiative**, aiming to prevent tax avoidance strategies used by multinational corporations. The introduction of the **Multilateral Instrument (MLI) in 2017** enabled countries to amend existing DTAA treaties without renegotiating them individually.

Historical Background of DTAA in India

Pre-Independence Era (Before 1947)

Before India gained independence in 1947, taxation policies were largely influenced by British colonial rule. There was no specific framework for avoiding double taxation, and international trade was relatively limited. However, as cross-border transactions grew, the need for an organized taxation system became evident.

Post-Independence and the First DTAA (1965)

After independence, India began engaging in global trade and economic relations, leading to the need for a structured international taxation policy. In **1965**, India signed its first **DTAA with Mauritius**, which played a significant role in attracting foreign investments, especially in the 1990s during India's economic liberalization.

Expansion of DTAA Network (1990s – 2000s)

- In **1991**, India underwent major economic reforms, opening its markets to foreign

direct investment (FDI) and international businesses.

- To facilitate cross-border trade and investments while preventing tax evasion, India aggressively expanded its **DTAA network** with various countries.
- By the early **2000s**, India had signed **DTAA agreements with more than 50 nations**, ensuring better tax cooperation and compliance.

Controversies and Reforms (2010 – Present)

- The **Mauritius Route Controversy**: The India-Mauritius DTAA allowed foreign investors to route their investments through Mauritius, leading to significant tax avoidance and round-tripping of funds.
- **2016 Amendment to DTAA with Mauritius**: India renegotiated the treaty to **remove capital gains tax exemptions**, addressing concerns about tax evasion.
- **Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS) Initiative (2013–2017)**: India, along with other G20 nations, adopted **OECD's BEPS framework**, strengthening anti-tax avoidance measures.
- **Implementation of Multilateral Instrument (MLI) (2019)**: India adopted MLI, which allowed simultaneous modifications to multiple DTAA's to prevent treaty abuse.

Current Status of DTAA in India

As of today, India has signed **over 90 DTAA's** with various countries, including the USA, UK, Singapore, UAE, and Japan. These agreements continue to evolve, ensuring fair taxation policies, preventing tax avoidance, and promoting economic cooperation.

Legal Framework of DTAA in India

The **Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA)** in India is governed by a comprehensive legal framework that ensures

clarity and consistency in international taxation. The framework comprises **constitutional provisions, domestic tax laws, international treaties, and judicial precedents**, all working together to prevent double taxation and facilitate cross-border trade and investment. The primary objective of DTAA is to provide relief to taxpayers from being taxed twice on the same income while promoting economic cooperation between nations.

Constitutional Provisions

The authority to enter into **DTAA agreements** is derived from the **Constitution of India**, which empowers the government to regulate taxation and international treaties.

1. Article 246 grants the Parliament the power to legislate on taxation matters, including international taxation, ensuring a structured approach to tax governance.

2. Entry 82 and 97 of the Union List (Seventh Schedule) empower the Central Government to levy and regulate income tax, including taxation on foreign income. This ensures that taxation laws, including DTAA agreements, are implemented uniformly across India.

3. Article 253 authorizes the Parliament to enact laws for implementing international agreements, including tax treaties, ensuring that DTAA provisions are effectively enforced within the domestic legal system.

These provisions establish the legal foundation for India's ability to negotiate and implement DTAA agreements, facilitating smooth international business transactions.

Domestic Tax Laws Governing DTAA

The **Income Tax Act, 1961** is the principal domestic legislation that governs **DTAA implementation** in India. It provides specific provisions to ensure that individuals and businesses benefit from tax relief under DTAA.

a). Section 90 empowers the **Central Government** to enter into **DTAA agreements** with other countries, ensuring relief from double taxation and preventing tax evasion.

b).Section 90A allows **specified associations** in India to enter into agreements with foreign associations for tax relief, fostering international trade and investment partnerships.

c)Section 91 – Unilateral Relief

If a taxpayer is an **Indian resident but earns income from a country with which India does not have a DTAA**, **Section 91** provides relief by allowing a deduction of foreign taxes paid, thereby preventing double taxation. This ensures that Indian taxpayers engaged in international business transactions do not face financial disadvantages due to dual taxation.

d).Tax Residency Certificate (TRC) – Section 90(4) & 90(5)

To claim benefits under a DTAA, a taxpayer must obtain a **Tax Residency Certificate (TRC)**, which serves as proof of residency in a particular country. This requirement ensures transparency and prevents fraudulent claims under tax treaties.

International Agreements and Models for DTAA

DTAA agreements are based on internationally recognized models that provide guidelines for structuring tax treaties and resolving cross-border taxation disputes.

OECD Model Tax Convention

The **OECD Model Tax Convention on Income and on Capital** provides a framework for bilateral tax treaties, aiming to eliminate **double taxation** and prevent **tax evasion** while promoting international trade and investment.

1.Residence vs. Source Taxation

The Convention distinguishes between **residence-based** and **source-based** taxation. Countries can tax individuals or companies based on where they reside or where the income is generated, ensuring fair taxation and avoiding conflicts.

2.Allocation of Taxing Rights

It outlines rules on which country can tax different types of income, such as *business profits, dividends, interest, and royalties*, ensuring clarity and preventing excessive tax burdens.

3.Permanent Establishment (PE) Rule

A company is taxable in a foreign country only if it has a **permanent establishment** there, such as an office or factory. This prevents unfair taxation on businesses with minimal activities in a jurisdiction.

4.Methods to Avoid Double Taxation

To prevent double taxation, the Convention offers two methods: the **credit method**, where foreign tax paid is credited against domestic tax liability, and the **exemption method**, where foreign income is excluded from taxation.

5.Transfer Pricing & Anti-Avoidance Measures

It ensures fair **transfer pricing** between multinational companies to prevent profit shifting to low-tax jurisdictions. Additionally, it promotes **exchange of information** between tax authorities to prevent tax evasion.

6.Dispute Resolution (MAP)

The **Mutual Agreement Procedure (MAP)** allows countries to resolve tax disputes through negotiations instead of litigation, ensuring taxpayers are not unfairly taxed.

Relevance of the Convention

The Convention serves as a **blueprint** for global tax treaties, reducing barriers to international trade and supporting initiatives like **BEPS** to prevent tax avoidance. By ensuring cooperation and consistency, it helps countries safeguard revenues and maintain a stable tax system.

UN Model Tax Convention

The **UN Model Tax Convention** is designed to support **developing countries** by granting them greater taxing rights over income earned within their borders. Unlike the **OECD Model**, which favors **residence-based taxation**, the **UN Model**

prioritizes source-based taxation, ensuring developing nations can tax foreign businesses operating locally.

1. Residence vs. Source Taxation

The UN Model emphasizes **source-based taxation**, allowing countries where income is generated to tax it. This benefits developing nations by increasing their tax revenues from foreign businesses and investors.

2. Allocation of Taxing Rights

It gives **greater taxing rights to the source country**, especially for **business profits, dividends, interest, royalties, and capital gains**, ensuring a fair share of tax revenues for developing nations.

3. Permanent Establishment (PE) Rule

The **PE rule** is broader than in the OECD Model, allowing taxation even if a company has no physical office but has a **significant economic presence**, ensuring fair contributions from multinational businesses.

4. Methods to Avoid Double Taxation

The model suggests the **credit and exemption methods** to prevent double taxation, ensuring fair revenue distribution while avoiding excessive tax burdens on businesses.

5. Anti-Avoidance & Dispute Resolution

It includes **anti-tax avoidance measures**, such as strict **transfer pricing and treaty abuse rules**, while promoting **exchange of information**. Dispute resolution mechanisms ensure **faster resolution of tax conflicts**.

Relevance of the UN Model

The UN Model helps **developing countries secure tax revenues**, prevents profit shifting, and promotes fair international taxation, making it a crucial framework for tax treaties.

Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS) Framework

The **Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS) Framework** is a global initiative led by the **Organisation for Economic Co-operation and**

Development (OECD) and the G20 to prevent **tax avoidance by multinational corporations**. BEPS occurs when companies exploit loopholes in international tax rules to shift profits to **low-tax jurisdictions**, reducing their overall tax burden and depriving countries of legitimate tax revenue.

1. Objective of BEPS

The primary goal of BEPS is to ensure that **profits are taxed where economic activities take place and where value is created**. The framework introduces measures to close tax loopholes, prevent **treaty abuse**, and ensure that multinational corporations pay their fair share of taxes in the countries where they operate.

2. Key BEPS Actions to Prevent Treaty Abuse

The BEPS framework consists of **15 Action Plans**, with several focusing on preventing **treaty abuse and tax avoidance**:

Action 6 – Preventing Treaty Abuse

It introduced the **Principal Purpose Test (PPT)** to deny treaty benefits if a transaction's main purpose is tax avoidance. The BEPS Implemented the **Limitation on Benefits (LOB) clauses** to ensure only genuine entities can claim treaty benefits. It also targets **treaty shopping**, where companies set up shell entities in tax-friendly countries to exploit lower tax rates.

Action 7 – Preventing Artificial Avoidance of Permanent Establishment (PE) Status

It expands the **definition of Permanent Establishment (PE)** to prevent companies from artificially avoiding a taxable presence in a country. It addresses cases where companies use **commissionaire arrangements** or **fragmented business structures** to avoid tax liability.

Action 14 – Improving Dispute Resolution Mechanisms

It strengthens the **Mutual Agreement Procedure (MAP)** to resolve tax disputes

efficiently. It encourages binding arbitration to ensure fair resolution of tax conflicts between countries.

Action 15 – Multilateral Instrument (MLI)

It introduces a **single legal instrument** that allows countries to modify multiple **Double Taxation Avoidance Agreements (DTAAs)** simultaneously. It ensures the rapid and coordinated implementation of BEPS measures globally.

3. Impact of BEPS on Global Taxation

The BEPS framework has led to significant **global tax reforms**, forcing countries to amend their tax treaties and adopt **anti-avoidance measures**. Over **140 countries**, including **India**, have committed to implementing BEPS recommendations, making it harder for multinational corporations to shift profits unfairly.

4. Relevance of BEPS for India

India has actively adopted BEPS measures, including signing the **Multilateral Instrument (MLI)** and updating its tax treaties. The country has strengthened its **General Anti-Avoidance Rules (GAAR)**, **Transfer Pricing Regulations**, and **Significant Economic Presence (SEP)** rules to prevent tax evasion by digital businesses. BEPS ensures that multinational corporations pay **fair taxes in India**, aligning the country's tax system with global best practices.

Judicial Interpretation and Case Laws

Indian courts have played a crucial role in interpreting DTAA provisions, shaping international taxation policies through landmark judgments.

1. Azadi Bachao Andolan Case (2003)

Facts: The petitioners challenged the India-Mauritius DTAA, arguing that it allowed foreign investors to evade taxes through Mauritius-based shell companies.

Issue: Whether the India-Mauritius DTAA was legally valid or facilitated tax evasion.

Judgment: The Supreme Court ruled in favor of the treaty, upholding its validity and allowing Mauritius-based companies to claim tax exemptions.

Key Fact: This ruling reinforced the supremacy of tax treaties over domestic tax laws and boosted foreign investment in India.

2. Vodafone International Holdings Case (2012)

Facts: Vodafone acquired Hutchison's Indian telecom business through an offshore transaction, and Indian tax authorities sought to levy capital gains tax on the deal.

Issue: Whether Vodafone was liable to pay taxes in India on an indirect transfer of assets.

Judgment: The Supreme Court ruled in favor of Vodafone, stating that India's tax law did not cover indirect transfers at the time.

Key Fact: This case led to **retrospective tax amendments**, significantly impacting foreign investments and India's tax policy.

3. Union of India v. UAE Exchange Centre (2020)

Facts: UAE Exchange Centre operated liaison offices in India and claimed that they did not constitute a **Permanent Establishment (PE)** under DTAA.

Issue: Whether a **liaison office** of a foreign company in India qualifies as a PE and is subject to Indian taxation.

Judgment: The Supreme Court ruled that UAE Exchange Centre did not have a taxable PE in India.

Key Fact: The ruling clarified **PE taxation rules** under DTAA, ensuring fair treatment for foreign businesses operating in India.

Key Provisions in India's DTAA Agreements

India's **Double Taxation Avoidance Agreements (DTAA)** are structured to eliminate double taxation, promote cross-border trade, and prevent tax evasion. Below are five key provisions in India's DTAA agreements:

1. Tax Residency Rules

DTAA benefits are available only to tax residents of treaty-partner countries.

Tax Residency Certificate (TRC) – Required to prove residency for DTAA claims.

Tie-Breaker Rule – When a person qualifies as a tax resident in **two countries**, the DTAA contains specific criteria to determine which country has the primary right to tax. These criteria include:

- **Permanent Home Test** – The country where the person has a permanent home is given priority.
- **Centre of Vital Interest Test** – If the person has homes in both countries, the country where their personal and economic interests are strongest is considered.
- **Habitual Abode Test** – If neither of the above determines tax residency, the country where they spend the most time is taken into account.
- **Nationality Test** – If there is still no clarity, the nationality of the individual is used as a deciding factor.

Example: A person holding dual residency in India and the UK will be considered a resident of one country based on these rules to avoid taxation in both.

2. Permanent Establishment (PE) Clause

Defines when a foreign business is taxable in India.

Types of PE:

- **Fixed Place PE** – Office, factory, or warehouse in India.
- **Agency PE** – If an Indian agent regularly finalizes contracts for a foreign company.
- **Service PE** – If foreign employees provide services in India for a specified period.
- **Construction PE** – A foreign company engaged in construction, assembly, or installation projects in India for a

prolonged period (e.g., 6 months) is considered to have a **PE in India**.

Example: A US firm with an office in India qualifies as **Fixed Place PE** and is liable for Indian taxes.

3. Methods of Taxation Under DTAA

DTAA agreements provide two primary methods to avoid double taxation:

Exemption Method – The taxpayer is taxed in only one country, exempting the same income in the other country. Example: If a person is a resident of India but earns income in the UAE, and the DTAA provides an **exemption**, they will pay tax only in the UAE.

Credit Method – The taxpayer is taxed in both countries, but the home country provides **tax credit** for taxes paid in the foreign country. Example: If an Indian company earns income in Germany and is taxed there, it can claim a **foreign tax credit** in India under the **India-Germany DTAA**, reducing its tax liability.

Example: Under the **India-USA DTAA**, Indian residents earning income in the USA get a **tax credit** for taxes paid in the USA while filing their tax returns in India.

4. Withholding Tax Rates

DTAA lowers tax rates on **dividends, interest, royalties, and technical services**, encouraging cross-border investments.

Example DTAA Tax Rates:

Income Type	Normal Tax Rate	DTAA Rate
Dividends	20%	5%–15%
Interest	20%	10%–15%
Royalties	10%	10%–15%

Example: A UK company earning royalties from India pays **10% tax instead of 20%** under the **India-UK DTAA**.

5. Anti-Tax Avoidance Measures

To prevent tax evasion and treaty abuse, India has implemented **anti-tax avoidance measures** within DTAA agreements:

1. Limitation of Benefits (LOB) Clause – Prevents treaty shopping by restricting benefits to entities that meet specific criteria (e.g., having real business operations). **Example:** The India-Singapore DTAA includes an LOB clause to prevent shell companies from misusing tax benefits.

2. Principal Purpose Test (PPT) – Denies treaty benefits if the primary motive is tax avoidance rather than genuine business operations. **Example:** If a company routes its profits through Mauritius only for tax benefits, the PPT can be invoked to deny tax exemptions.

3. Multilateral Instrument (MLI) – India signed the **MLI in 2019**, modifying several DTAA to introduce anti-abuse measures and curb tax evasion. **Example:** Under the **India-Mauritius DTAA**, changes were introduced in 2017 to **prevent round-tripping**, ensuring that only genuine investors benefit from tax exemptions.

Economic Impact of DTAA in India, US, UK, and Singapore

The **Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA)** plays a crucial role in shaping the global economy by eliminating tax barriers and fostering international trade, investment, and economic cooperation. By ensuring that income is not taxed twice in different jurisdictions, DTAA agreements make cross-border business more attractive and financially viable. The economic impact of DTAA varies from country to country, depending on the structure of their agreements and their economic priorities.

Economic Impact of DTAA in India

India has established DTAA agreements with over 90 countries, including the US, the UK, and Singapore, to promote foreign investment and prevent tax evasion. These agreements have significantly boosted Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in India by reducing the tax burden on

foreign investors. For example, Singapore and Mauritius were major sources of FDI in India due to favorable DTAA provisions that previously allowed tax-free capital gains. However, to prevent tax avoidance through shell companies, India revised its treaties with these countries in 2017, ensuring that only genuine investors benefit from tax exemptions.

DTAA agreements have also facilitated cross-border trade by lowering withholding tax rates on dividends, interest, and royalties, making Indian markets more attractive to global investors. Additionally, these agreements provide tax relief to **Non-Resident Indians (NRIs)** earning income abroad, ensuring they are not unfairly taxed in multiple countries. By implementing anti-tax avoidance measures, India has successfully created a more transparent and stable economic environment that attracts long-term investors while curbing treaty abuse.

Economic Impact of DTAA in the US

The United States, as one of the world's largest economies, has over 60 DTAA agreements, which play a vital role in protecting its multinational corporations (MNCs) from excessive taxation abroad. By reducing tax barriers, these agreements encourage American businesses to expand internationally while ensuring that their income is taxed fairly. The India-US DTAA, for example, provides clarity on taxation for American companies operating in India, making it easier for them to engage in trade and investment.

DTAA agreements also strengthen cross-border employment and investment, allowing professionals and businesses to work seamlessly across international markets. Additionally, the US enforces strict regulations such as the **Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act (FATCA)** alongside DTAA provisions to prevent tax evasion and ensure transparency in global financial transactions. These measures not only protect the US economy but also strengthen global financial security by curbing tax-related malpractices.

Economic Impact of DTAA in the UK

The UK has an extensive network of over 130 DTAA agreements, including treaties with India, the US, and Singapore, which significantly enhance its economic relations with these countries. The **India-UK DTAA** has played a crucial role in encouraging British investments in India, particularly in sectors such as technology, infrastructure, and financial services. By reducing withholding tax rates, DTAA agreements have made the UK an attractive destination for global investors, facilitating smooth business operations between British companies and their foreign partners.

Another major advantage of DTAA agreements for the UK is the enhancement of its banking and financial services sector. With clear tax guidelines in place, British financial institutions can invest in international markets with reduced tax liabilities, leading to greater economic cooperation. By eliminating tax barriers and preventing double taxation, DTAA agreements have reinforced the UK's position as a major player in the global economy, fostering stronger trade and investment ties with other nations.

Economic Impact of DTAA in Singapore

As a leading financial hub, Singapore has leveraged its DTAA network of over 80 countries to strengthen its position as a global investment destination. The **India-Singapore DTAA** has played a key role in attracting significant FDI into India, making Singapore one of India's top sources of foreign investment. Previously, Singapore's DTAA provisions allowed tax-free capital gains, which encouraged investors to route their funds through Singapore. However, to prevent treaty abuse, India revised the agreement in 2017, ensuring that tax benefits are available only to genuine investors with substantial business operations in Singapore.

Beyond FDI, Singapore's DTAA agreements have also facilitated smooth trade and banking relations by reducing tax rates on interest, royalties, and technical services. This has

encouraged companies from around the world to establish business and financial operations in Singapore, further solidifying its status as an economic powerhouse. By maintaining strong tax treaties while preventing abuse, Singapore has successfully created an investment-friendly tax environment that continues to attract global businesses.

Challenges and Limitations of DTAA

While **Double Taxation Avoidance Agreements (DTAA)** play a crucial role in promoting cross-border trade, investment, and economic cooperation, they also come with several challenges and limitations. These issues arise due to evolving tax structures, differences in national tax laws, and potential misuse of treaty provisions. Below are some of the major challenges and limitations of DTAA.

1. Treaty Shopping and Abuse of DTAA

One of the most significant challenges of DTAA is **treaty shopping**, where businesses or individuals set up companies in countries with favorable tax treaties to avoid higher tax liabilities. For example, before its amendment in 2017, the **India-Mauritius DTAA** allowed investors to route their investments through Mauritius to avoid paying capital gains tax in India. This led to a loss of revenue for India and encouraged tax avoidance practices. Countries have now introduced **Limitation of Benefits (LOB) clauses** to prevent such misuse, but enforcing them remains a challenge.

2. Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS)

Multinational corporations (MNCs) often use DTAA provisions to shift profits from high-tax countries to low-tax jurisdictions, leading to **base erosion and profit shifting (BEPS)**. This deprives governments of tax revenue and creates an unfair tax environment. To address this issue, countries are adopting measures under the **OECD's BEPS framework** and implementing the **Multilateral Instrument (MLI)** to strengthen their tax treaties. However, full compliance and enforcement remain complex and require global cooperation.

3. Complexity in Tax Residency Determination

DTAA benefits are available only to tax residents of treaty-partner countries, but determining **tax residency** can be complicated. In cases of **dual residency**, where an individual qualifies as a resident in both countries, deciding which country has the primary taxation rights becomes a challenge. The **tie-breaker rule** under DTAA considers factors such as permanent home, center of vital interests, habitual abode, and nationality, but disputes still arise, leading to legal complexities and delays.

4. Disputes in Permanent Establishment (PE) Interpretation

The concept of **Permanent Establishment (PE)** under DTAA determines whether a foreign company is liable for taxation in another country. However, the definition of PE varies across treaties, leading to disputes between tax authorities and businesses. Companies often challenge tax assessments by arguing that their presence in a foreign country does not qualify as a PE, resulting in prolonged litigation. This uncertainty can deter foreign investment and create an unfavorable business environment.

5. Administrative and Compliance Burdens

DTAA provisions require businesses and individuals to maintain extensive documentation, obtain **Tax Residency Certificates (TRC)**, and comply with multiple tax laws. Claiming tax relief under DTAA often involves complex procedures, including **withholding tax applications, credit mechanisms, and reporting obligations**. Many taxpayers face difficulties in obtaining refunds or credits due to bureaucratic delays and lack of clarity in tax regulations. This increases compliance costs and creates hurdles for businesses engaged in international trade.

6. Impact of Changing Tax Laws and Renegotiations

Tax laws and economic policies evolve over time, requiring periodic renegotiation of DTAA agreements. Countries often revise treaties to

prevent abuse, introduce **anti-avoidance measures**, or **adjust tax rates**, but these changes can create uncertainty for businesses and investors. For instance, India amended its DTAA with **Mauritius and Singapore** to tax capital gains, impacting foreign investment strategies. Frequent changes in tax treaties can disrupt long-term business planning and investment decisions.

7. Limited Coverage of New Economic Activities

Many DTAA agreements were drafted decades ago and do not fully address modern economic activities such as **digital businesses, e-commerce, and cryptocurrency transactions**. Companies that operate **online platforms, cloud computing services, or remote digital operations** often fall outside the traditional definitions of taxable entities under DTAA. Governments are now working towards updating tax treaties to include provisions for digital taxation, but consensus on global tax rules remains a challenge.

Policy Recommendations for Strengthening DTAA

To enhance the effectiveness of **Double Taxation Avoidance Agreements (DTAA)** and address their challenges, policymakers need to adopt comprehensive reforms that promote tax transparency, prevent treaty abuse, and foster global economic cooperation. Below are some key policy recommendations to improve DTAA frameworks:

1. Strengthening Anti-Treaty Shopping Measures

One of the biggest concerns with DTAA is **treaty shopping**, where entities establish businesses in low-tax jurisdictions to exploit favorable tax treaties. Countries should introduce and strictly enforce **Limitation of Benefits (LOB) clauses** and **Principal Purpose Test (PPT)** provisions to prevent the misuse of treaties. These measures will ensure that only genuine investors with substantial business operations benefit from tax treaty provisions.

2. Aligning DTAA with OECD's BEPS Framework

To prevent **Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS)** by multinational corporations, countries should integrate DTAA provisions with the **OECD's BEPS Action Plan**. Specifically, implementing the **Multilateral Instrument (MLI)** will help countries modify existing tax treaties to introduce **anti-abuse measures**, improve tax dispute resolution, and ensure fair tax distribution between countries.

3. Establishing Clear Guidelines for Digital Taxation

Many DTAA agreements were drafted before the rise of **digital businesses and e-commerce**, creating loopholes where multinational tech companies escape taxation in source countries. Governments should revise DTAA provisions to **expand the definition of Permanent Establishment (PE)** to include digital platforms. The adoption of a **Significant Economic Presence (SEP) rule** will ensure that digital businesses pay fair taxes in countries where they generate revenue.

4. Simplifying Tax Residency Rules and Compliance Procedures

Complex tax residency rules often lead to disputes and compliance burdens. Countries should adopt a **standardized approach for determining tax residency** and simplify procedures for individuals and businesses seeking tax relief under DTAA. Enhancing **automatic exchange of information** and adopting a **centralized digital tax filing system** will improve compliance efficiency and reduce tax disputes.

5. Enhancing Dispute Resolution Mechanisms

Tax disputes related to **Permanent Establishment (PE)**, **tax residency**, and **withholding tax** often result in prolonged litigation. Strengthening **Mutual Agreement Procedures (MAP)** and incorporating mandatory **binding arbitration clauses** in DTAA can help resolve tax disputes more efficiently. This will provide greater certainty for businesses operating across borders.

6. Regularly Updating DTAA to Reflect Economic Changes

Tax treaties should be **periodically reviewed and updated** to align with changing global economic realities. Countries should ensure that DTAA agreements **reflect new economic activities, evolving business models, and emerging tax challenges**, such as taxation of cryptocurrencies and virtual transactions. A structured approach for **bilateral negotiations and treaty amendments** will help keep DTAA relevant and effective.

7. Promoting Transparency and Information Exchange

To combat **tax evasion and money laundering**, countries should strengthen cooperation on **automatic exchange of financial information** under global initiatives like the **Common Reporting Standard (CRS)**. This will enhance tax transparency and ensure that individuals and businesses report their income accurately across jurisdictions.

CONCLUSION

While DTAA remains a fundamental tool in international taxation, its continued success depends on **regular updates, stronger enforcement mechanisms, and global cooperation**. As economies evolve and new business models emerge, tax treaties must adapt to **address digital transactions, cryptocurrency taxation, and global tax fairness**. Future research should focus on analyzing the **long-term impact of BEPS and MLI on global tax structures**, as well as exploring how **emerging economies can negotiate better tax treaties** to prevent revenue losses.

Moreover, the findings of this research highlight the need for **further empirical studies** on DTAA's real-time implications in different industries and business models. Conducting more extensive surveys and case studies on **how businesses and individuals navigate DTAA complexities** could provide deeper

insights into areas requiring urgent policy reforms.

In conclusion, DTAA serves as a **critical framework in maintaining fair and efficient international taxation**, but its **effectiveness depends on proactive policy measures, continuous treaty improvements, and strict enforcement**. By adopting **transparent, equitable, and globally coordinated tax policies**, countries can ensure that DTAA continues to facilitate cross-border economic activities while **preventing tax evasion, minimizing disputes, and fostering a stable international tax environment**.

Appendix A: Survey on Double Taxation Avoidance Agreements (DTAA)

Survey Objective:

The purpose of this survey was to gather insights on the understanding, effectiveness, and challenges associated with Double Taxation Avoidance Agreements (DTAAs). The survey was conducted among professionals, students, and corporate employees to understand their perspectives on DTAAs and their impact on international business.

Survey Methodology:

- **Respondents:** 50 individuals, including tax experts, government officials, multinational corporate employees, and students.
- **Data Collection:** Responses were collected through an online survey.
- **Analysis:** The responses were analyzed to assess the familiarity with DTAAs, the challenges faced, and suggestions for improvement.

Survey Questions and Responses Summary:

1. How familiar are you with Double Taxation Avoidance Agreements (DTAAs)?

- Very familiar: 12%
- Somewhat familiar: 48%

- Not familiar: 40%

2. Have you ever been affected by double taxation on income earned from a foreign country?

- Yes: 24%
- No: 68%
- Not Sure: 8%

3. In your opinion, how effective are DTAAs in preventing double taxation?

- Very effective: 34%
- Moderately effective: 46%
- Not effective: 14%
- Not sure: 6%

4. What challenges have you faced, if any, in complying with DTAA provisions?

- Treaty shopping: 16%
- Complex residency determination: 32%
- Interpretation of Permanent Establishment (PE): 28%
- Documentation requirements: 18%
- Other: 6%

5. What recommendations would you suggest to enhance DTAA policies and improve compliance?

- Simplify tax residency rules: 32%
- Strengthen anti-avoidance measures: 48%
- Update for digital business models: 40%
- Improve dispute resolution: 28%
- Other: 10%

6. Do you believe current DTAAs adequately address emerging issues such as digital commerce and cryptocurrency transactions?

- Yes: 16%

- No: 72%
 - Not sure: 12%
7. **To what extent do DTAA's influence your decisions to invest or work in foreign countries?**
- Moderately: 40%
 - Slightly: 28%
 - Not at all: 18%
 - Not sure: 14%
8. **Can you provide examples of how DTAA's have impacted your investment or employment choices?**
- Many respondents mentioned that DTAA's provided confidence in investing or working abroad by eliminating the risk of double taxation, though some did not directly make such decisions.
9. **Are there any other comments or suggestions you would like to share regarding DTAA's and their impact on cross-border income taxation?**
- Respondents suggested that while DTAA's help reduce double taxation, more efforts are needed to adapt to digital businesses and cryptocurrency as they are not adequately covered by existing agreements.
10. **Do you think the current DTAA agreements are sufficient to handle the growing number of multinational corporations?**
- Yes: 20%
 - No: 60%
 - Not sure: 20%
11. **Have you encountered difficulties in obtaining the necessary documentation to claim DTAA benefits (e.g., Tax Residency Certificate)?**
- Yes: 22%
12. **In your opinion, should countries implement more stringent measures to prevent tax evasion using DTAA's?**
- No: 58%
 - Occasionally: 20%
13. **How would you rate the transparency and clarity of DTAA agreements between countries?**
- Yes: 78%
 - No: 10%
 - Not sure: 12%
14. **Do you believe that the interpretation of Permanent Establishment (PE) clauses is clear enough in DTAA's?**
- Very clear: 18%
 - Somewhat clear: 48%
 - Not clear: 34%
15. **How often do you encounter disputes regarding tax residency in the context of DTAA's?**
- Yes: 32%
 - No: 58%
 - Not sure: 10%
16. **In your opinion, what is the most critical aspect of a DTAA agreement?**
- Frequently: 14%
 - Occasionally: 28%
 - Rarely: 48%
 - Never: 10%
17. **How often do you find that DTAA provisions are updated or revised by countries?**
- Tax residency rules: 36%
 - Permanent Establishment clause: 28%
 - Withholding tax rates: 18%
 - Dispute resolution mechanism: 18%
 - Frequently: 12%

- Occasionally: 28%
 - Rarely: 50%
 - Never: 10%
18. **Would you be in favor of a global standard for DTAA provisions to ensure consistency across countries?**
- Yes: 82%
 - No: 8%
 - Not sure: 10%
19. **Do you think the enforcement of DTAA provisions needs to be stricter to prevent abuse?**
- Yes: 76%
 - No: 12%
 - Not sure: 12%
20. **How do you see the future of DTAAs in light of the increasing digitization of businesses?**
- They need to be significantly updated: 60%
 - They need minor revisions: 20%
 - They remain effective as is: 10%
 - Not sure: 10%

• **Policy Recommendations:** Respondents strongly support enhancing transparency, strengthening anti-avoidance measures, and simplifying residency rules to improve compliance. There is a clear call for updating DTAA provisions to accommodate digital businesses.

Survey Findings Conclusion:

- **Awareness and Effectiveness:** While most respondents are somewhat familiar with DTAAs, they believe these agreements are effective in preventing double taxation. However, there is strong support for updating treaties to account for emerging business practices like digital commerce and cryptocurrency.
- **Challenges:** Treaty shopping, complex residency determination, and ambiguous PE clauses are commonly cited challenges. A significant portion of respondents has faced difficulties obtaining necessary documentation for claiming DTAA benefits.

ENVIRONMENTAL OBLIGATIONS AND LIABILITY IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF ARTIFICIAL ISLANDS: A COMPARATIVE INTERNATIONAL LAW APPROACH

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Abstract

"This article takes a look at the environmental legal frameworks that regulate the development of artificial islands in a number of different jurisdictions. Significant environmental issues are emerging as a result of governments' increased pursuit of territorial expansion and growth through the creation of artificial islands. These challenges put the boundaries of current international and local legal systems to the point of being tested. The purpose of this research is to identify gaps in the existing regulatory systems by conducting a comparative analysis of domestic laws, international treaties, and case law. Additionally, the research provides integrated solutions that strike a compromise between the goals of development and environmental preservation. According to the findings, there are now a number of obstacles that prevent efficient environmental governance of artificial island projects. These obstacles include jurisdictional issues, uneven liability systems, and tough enforcement problems. This paper makes a contribution to the academic debate by putting up a unified international framework that takes into account the one-of-a-kind environmental consequences that manmade islands have across international borders while still honouring the sovereignty of individual nations."

Keywords. artificial islands, environmental law, international maritime law, environmental liability, UNCLOS, transboundary pollution, coastal development

Introduction

The creation of artificial islands is one of the most audacious attempts that humanity has made to establish its authority over the aquatic environment. These projects radically modify maritime ecosystems while simultaneously establishing new areas for human habitation, trade, and strategic posture. Some historical examples of these projects include the Kansai International Airport in Japan, the Palm Jumeirah in Dubai, and China's vast reclamation works in the South China Sea. Artificial island building is becoming increasingly appealing, particularly for tiny island governments that are facing existential challenges (Peel & Osofsky, 2018). This is because climate change is accelerating the rise in sea level and coastline erosion.

When it comes to environmental stewardship, this expansionary tendency creates important problems within the context of complicated regulatory regimes that frequently overlap with one another. According to Nordquist et al. (2018), the creation of artificial islands sets off a chain reaction of environmental repercussions, which include the destruction of habitat, changes in hydrodynamics, an increase in sedimentation, and the possibility of contamination from materials used in construction. The environmental legal system that governs these consequences continues to be fragmented across a variety of legal areas, including international marine law, environmental treaties, regional accords, and local laws.

Through the prism of comparative international law, this essay investigates the environmental duties and liability procedures that are applicable to the development of artificial islands. The investigation is centred on three questions that are interconnected: (1) What environmental requirements are imposed by the existing local and international legal frameworks with relation to the creation of artificial islands? (2) In what ways are the procedures for culpability and enforcement constructed differently in various jurisdictions? (3) What kinds of organisational changes may lead to more efficient environmental governance for projects using artificial islands?

Legal Framework Governing Artificial Islands

International Maritime Law

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS, 1982) is the primary international legal document that governs manmade islands. It was established in 1982. Artificial islands that are located inside a nation's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) are specifically addressed in Article 60 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), which grants coastal nations the "exclusive right to construct and to authorise and regulate the construction, operation, and use of artificial islands" (paragraph one of Article 60). On the other hand, this privilege is limited by environmental requirements that are located in other parts of the agreement.

Article 192 places a general responsibility on states to "protect and preserve the marine environment," while Article 194 mandates that states take actions "necessary to prevent, reduce, and control pollution of the marine environment from any source" (UNCLOS, 1982). Both of these articles were ratified in 1982. It is expressly addressed in Article 194(3)(d), which mandates the implementation of measures to reduce the amount of pollution caused by "installations and devices used in exploration or exploitation of the natural resources of the seabed and subsoil" (UNCLOS, 1982). Artificial

islands are taken into consideration in this provision.

Natural islands and manmade islands have quite different legal statuses. manmade islands are not the same. According to Article 121 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), artificial islands do not have their own territorial seas, nor do they have any impact on the delimitation of territorial seas, exclusive economic zones (EEZs), or continental shelf. As was proven in the South China Sea Arbitration case (*Philippines v. China*, PCA Case No. 2013-19), this disparity has significant repercussions for the jurisdictional authority that is responsible for environmental protection.

In this historic decision from 2016, the Permanent Court of Arbitration determined that China's extensive island-building activities in the South China Sea had "caused severe harm to the coral reef environment" and that China had "violated its obligations under Articles 192 and 194" of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (*Philippines v. China*, 2016). Establishing a significant precedent for environmental accountability, the tribunal emphasised that the need to maintain the maritime environment applies to the creation of artificial islands regardless of whether or not there are questions over sovereignty.

International Environmental Law

In addition to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), the building of artificial islands is subject to a number of international environmental accords. Both the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands (1971) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD, 1992) require parties to control activities that might have a negative impact on biodiversity.

The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands safeguards coastal wetlands that could be affected by reclamation operations. Both the London Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution (1972) and its Protocol from 1996 specifically address the issue of dumping

materials at sea, which is something that can happen throughout the construction process.

Additional protection is provided by agreements pertaining to regional waters. According to Tanaka (2019), the OSPAR Convention for the North-East Atlantic, the Barcelona Convention for the Mediterranean, and the Noumea Convention for the South Pacific all contain rules that are pertinent to the creation of artificial islands. Typically, these agreements establish regional cooperation channels and enforce rules for environmental impact assessments (also known as EIAs). The growing idea of "transboundary environmental harm" in customary international law places further limitations on the construction of artificial islands. This principle, which was first articulated in the Trail Smelter Arbitration (*United States v. Canada*, 1941) and subsequently affirmed in subsequent cases such as the Pulp Mills on the River Uruguay (*Argentina v. Uruguay*, 2010), establishes that states have a responsibility to prevent activities that occur within their jurisdiction from causing environmental harm to other states or to areas that are beyond the confines of national jurisdiction.

Comparative Analysis of Domestic Legal Approaches

United Arab Emirates

There are a number of artificial island projects that have been explored by the United Arab Emirates (UAE), including the Palm Jumeirah, Palm Jebel Ali, and The World archipelago. These projects are among the most ambitious in the world. According to Abdulqader (2019), the United Arab Emirates' Federal Law No. 24 (1999) for the Protection and Development of the Environment oversees the environmental elements of coastal development and mandates the completion of full environmental impact assessments for significant projects.

However, there has been a lack of consistency in enforcement. In the case of *Marine Construction LLC v. Nakheel PJSC* (Dubai Court

of Cassation, Case No. 282/2011), environmental compliance disputes arose regarding construction standards. However, environmental liability was ultimately subordinated to contractual obligations, which demonstrates a potential weakness in the environmental enforcement regime of the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Following this, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has reinforced its regulatory framework, and the Environmental Impact Assessment Program of Dubai Municipality now requires detailed marine ecological research, hydrodynamic modelling, and post-construction monitoring (Dubai Municipality, 2020). These improvements are a reflection of the rising knowledge of the environmental costs connected with previous artificial island initiatives, which include proven consequences on coastal ecosystems and water quality (Burt et al., 2020).

China

The considerable island-building that China has been doing in the South China Sea is an example of a distinct regulatory strategy. Domestically, China's Marine Environmental Protection Law (2017 version) and Environmental Impact Assessment Law (2018 revision) define extensive regulations for marine construction projects. Both of these laws were revised in 2017. Nevertheless, implementation problems arise whenever initiatives are carried out in waterways that are contested.

This difficulty was brought to light by the South China Sea Arbitration, which concluded that China did not carry out appropriate environmental studies before to beginning the construction of large-scale islands (*Philippines v. China*, 2016). The fact that China chooses not to recognise the jurisdiction of the tribunal is illustrative of the constraints that international environmental law faces when it comes into conflict with sovereignty concerns.

Internal courts in China have demonstrated a growing readiness to enforce environmental norms inside waterways that are not subject to

an international dispute. An environmental non-governmental organisation (NGO) was successful in challenging an inadequate environmental study of a coastline reclamation project in the case *Friends of Nature v. Department of Ocean and Fisheries of Jiangsu Province* (2017), which resulted in the revocation of building licenses (Zhang & Zhang, 2019). The Chinese government's internal environmental jurisprudence addressing manmade islands has undergone a considerable development as a result of this case.

The Netherlands

On the other hand, the Netherlands takes a different strategy, which is characterised by integrated coastal management and preventative planning. According to Mostert (2017), the Dutch water boards, also known as waterschappen, have been there since the 13th century, making it one of the oldest environmental governance systems from across the world. The restoration of ecosystems is a priority for contemporary Dutch artificial island projects, such as the Marker Wadden archipelago, which is located in the Markermeer lake.

A thorough legal framework is created by the Dutch Water Act (2009) and the Environmental Management Act. This framework necessitates intensive environmental evaluation, engagement with stakeholders, and management plans that are adjustable to changing circumstances. In the case of *Urgenda Foundation v. State of the Netherlands* (Supreme Court of the Netherlands, 2019), the court ruled that the Dutch government is obligated to exercise a duty of care with regard to climate change. This decision has ramifications for coastal projects that are susceptible to the effects of rising sea levels.

An example of how artificial land development may contain environmental betterment goals from the very beginning is the "Building with Nature" technique that is being implemented in the Netherlands. This approach is demonstrated by the Sand Motor project that is located close

to The Hague (van Slobbe et al., 2021). When compared to corrective efforts that are implemented after environmental harm has already taken place, this integrated approach stands in stark contrast.

Small Island Developing States

When it comes to artificial islands, Small Island Developing States (SIDS) have certain issues that are particular to them. Countries such as the Maldives, which have eighty percent of their landmass situated at an elevation of less than one metre above sea level, consider the construction of artificial islands to be an essential requirement rather than a desirable development. According to Wadey et al. (2017), the Maldives has developed Hulhumalé, an artificial island that is home to more than 50,000 people, as a means of adapting to the effects of rising sea levels.

Local legislation in small island developing states (SIDS) often reflects capacity limits. The Maldives Environmental Protection Act (No. 4/93) includes fundamental standards for environmental assessments; nevertheless, the execution of these criteria is difficult due to a lack of readily available technical and financial resources. Additional help is provided by regional frameworks such as the Noumea Convention; yet, enforcement continues to give rise to difficulties.

Despite the fact that it did not explicitly address manmade islands, the case of *Teitiota v. New Zealand* (UN Human Rights Committee, 2020) found that the effects of climate change may produce situations that violate the right to life as outlined in international human rights law. When it comes to executing artificial island projects as climate adaptation measures, this precedent may bolster the legal position of small island developing states (SIDS).

Environmental Liability Mechanisms

Prevention: Environmental Impact Assessment

The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) standards are the foundation of the

preventative liability measures that are in place for the development of artificial islands. In the case of *Pulp Mills on the River Uruguay (Argentina v. Uruguay, 2010)*, the International Court of Justice acknowledged environmental impact assessment (EIA) as "a practice, which in recent years has gained so much acceptance among States that it may now be considered a requirement under general international law" in situations where activities raise the possibility of causing environmental damage that extends across international borders.

There is a large amount of variation in national approaches to EIA. In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the United States of America mandates that artificial islands that are allowed by the federal government must submit comprehensive Environmental Impact Statements. This was established in the case of *Ocean Advocates v. United States Army Corps of Engineers* (402 F.3d 846, 9th Cir. 2005), in which the court determined that the environmental implications of a dock expansion project were not adequately considered.

Artificial island projects are specifically included within the scope of the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive (2014/52/EU) of the European Union, which mandates the evaluation of both direct and indirect effects on marine ecosystems from the projects. Different member states have different approaches to implementation, with the Netherlands and Denmark often adhering to more stringent requirements than the nations of the Mediterranean (Aragão, 2018 and others).

Remediation: Environmental Restoration Requirements

On the other hand, the application of legal requirements to repair environmental harm caused by artificial islands continues to be uneven between countries. A comprehensive framework that is based on the "polluter pays" principle is established by the Environmental Liability Directive (2004/35/CE) of the European

Union. This directive mandates that operators must restore damaged natural resources to the state they were in before the intervention. Its applicability to marine habitats, on the other hand, has been limited in practice (Jendroska, 2019).

Both the Oil Pollution Act and the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) in the United States of America offer mechanisms for the evaluation and repair of natural resource damage in the event of specified pollution occurrences. Important precedents for assessing maritime environmental damages were created in the case *United States v. BP Exploration & Production Inc.* (No. 2:10-cv-04536, E.D. Louisiana 2015) about the Deepwater Horizon oil disaster. These precedents may be applied to the implications of artificial island building.

There is the possibility that restoration criteria may be explicitly integrated into permits for projects involving artificial islands. The National Environment Agency was responsible for monitoring the substantial criteria for mangrove replanting and coral transfer that were included in Singapore's Semakau Landfill, which was an artificial island formed from land that had been reclaimed (Lai et al., 2019). Instead of approaching repair as a post-hoc response to harm, this method incorporates it into the design of the project itself.

Compensation: Financial Liability for Environmental Harm

The methods of financial accountability for environmental harm caused by manmade islands are extremely complex and varied. There are certain jurisdictions that demand environmental insurance or bonding as a statutory obligation. Developers of significant coastal projects in the United Arab Emirates are now required to post environmental performance bonds. These bonds are only released once post-construction monitoring has shown that the project complies with

environmental criteria (Dubai Municipality, 2020).

Quantifying the harm done to the environment continues to be difficult. In the case of *Qatar v. Bahrain* (International Court of Justice, 2001), which was a territorial dispute involving the creation of artificial islands, the court accepted that there was environmental damage, but it struggled to create adequate compensation techniques. This particular scenario demonstrates the need of utilising standardised methods for determining the value of marine ecosystem services and damages.

Through the Environmental responsibility Directive, which encompasses "damage to protected species and natural habitats" even in the absence of negligence (Jendroska, 2019), the European Union has been a pioneer in expanding the scope of environmental responsibility. This approach to strict responsibility stands in contrast to fault-based systems, which are prevalent in many Asian countries. In these jurisdictions, establishing a causal relationship between the creation of artificial islands and environmental harm is one of the most difficult legal challenges.

Jurisdictional Challenges and Enforcement

Overlapping Maritime Claims

In the case of artificial islands erected in seas that are contested, environmental regulation is made more difficult by the presence of jurisdictional ambiguity. According to Lyons (2018), the South China Sea is the most notable example of a situation in which overlapping territorial claims have facilitated significant island-building with minimal environmental accountability.

In the case of the Philippines against China (2016), the South China Sea Arbitration held that environmental duties under UNCLOS apply regardless of whether or not there are issues over sovereignty. The rejection of the verdict by China, on the other hand, exemplifies the practical limitations of international adjudication in the absence of voluntary

cooperation. This particular instance exemplifies how environmental preservation may be sacrificed to territorial contestation.

The fragmentation of jurisdictions between different agencies can be a barrier to efficient environmental governance, even within waterways that are not in dispute. In the United States, artificial islands that are located in federal waters may be required to obtain permits from the Army Corps of Engineers, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, and the National Marine Fisheries Service. This can create difficulties in terms of coordination, as was demonstrated in the case *Centre for Biological Diversity v. United States Army Corps of Engineers* (941 F.3d 1288, 11th Cir. 2019).

Extraterritorial Application of Environmental Laws

Another obstacle that must be overcome in order to ensure compliance is the extraterritorial applicability of domestic environmental legislation. In the case of *Environmental Defence Fund v. Massey* (986 F.2d 528, District of Columbia Circuit 1993), a court in the United States decided that the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) may be applied to operations that took place in Antarctica. This decision established a prospective precedent for the extraterritorial application of environmental regulations. This strategy, however, has been restricted by later rulings such as *NRDC v. United States Department of the Navy* (2002 WL 32095131, Central District of California 2002), particularly in situations where there are ramifications for foreign policy.

By entering into agreements with foreign countries and imposing market access conditions, the European Union has been increasingly active in its pursuit of extraterritorial execution of environmental norms. For instance, the EU-Singapore Free Trade Agreement includes environmental requirements that might potentially be applicable to the large land reclamation

initiatives that Singapore is engaged in (Harrison, 2018).

International Environmental Dispute Resolution

Mechanisms for the international arbitration of disputes pertaining to environmental claims that are associated with manmade islands are yet incompletely established. When it comes to manmade islands, the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) has only handled them in a peripheral manner, such as in the case of Land Reclamation by Singapore in and around the Straits of Johor (*Malaysia v. Singapore*, 2005). This is despite the fact that the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) mandates that disputes be resolved through the ITLOS.

Ultimately, the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) enabled a settlement that required project modifications and compensation for transboundary environmental harm (*Malaysia v. Singapore*, 2005). When it came to this particular dispute, ITLOS ordered the parties to organise an expert panel to evaluate the environmental implications of Singapore's land reclamation. In light of this, it is clear that international courts have the ability to facilitate the negotiation of solutions to environmental conflicts that include manmade islands.

Different systems for the settlement of environmental disputes have also been devised by regional agencies. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution creates a regional cooperation framework that has the potential to be applied to the building of artificial islands; however, enforcement of this framework has been restricted (Nguiragool, 2017).

Emerging Trends and Reform Proposals

Ecosystem-Based Management Approaches

Ecosystem-based management, sometimes known as EBM, is a concept that is making its way into the realm of managing the

repercussions of manmade islands. Instead of concentrating simply on the mitigation of a particular project, EBM takes into account the cumulative effects that are felt over the entirety of marine ecosystems. The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act in Australia is a good example of this strategy since it mandates that any projects that might potentially have an effect on the reef must take into account the ecosystem-wide implications of those developments (Brodie & Waterhouse, 2018).

Another example is provided by the Maritime Spatial Planning Directive (2014/89/EU) of the European Union, which mandates that member states must design integrated plans that take into account the cumulative environmental consequences of all sectors. This comprehensive approach solves the restriction of project-by-project evaluation, which has served as the defining characteristic of the conventional approach to the management of artificial islands.

Enhanced EIA Requirements and Strategic Environmental Assessment

In a number of jurisdictions, efforts are being made to enhance the Environmental Impact Assessment procedures for artificial islands through the implementation of reforms. In order to address the objections that were brought up during the South China Sea Arbitration, China's updated Environmental Impact Assessment Law now mandates that cumulative consequences and climate change implications be taken into consideration (Zhang & Zhang, 2019).

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), which examines the environmental effects of policies and programs rather than individual projects, provides a method that is complimentary to the one being discussed. Coastal development strategies that may contain artificial islands are subject to environmental assessment, as stipulated by the European Union's Sea Environment Directive (2001/42/EC) (Aragão, 2018). This directive mandates that plans and programs that are anticipated to have major environmental

consequences must undergo environmental evaluation.

International Cooperation and Capacity Building

In especially for territories that have complicated maritime boundaries and little regulatory capability, increased international collaboration is a critical reform avenue that presents an opportunity for improvement. The Regional Seas Programme of the United Nations Environment Programme has established protocols that explicitly address land-based sources of marine pollution and coastal zone management. These protocols have the potential to be relevant to the creation of artificial islands (Tanaka, 2019).

Agreements between neighbouring states that are bilateral in nature provide an additional avenue. A joint monitoring committee was created between Malaysia and Singapore in order to supervise the environmental implications of Singapore's reclamation efforts (*Malaysia v. Singapore*, 2005). This committee was established in response to the provisional measures that were implemented by the ITLOS in the case of Land Reclamation by Singapore in and around the Straits of Johor. Several additional places that are experiencing transboundary consequences from manmade islands might benefit from the use of this paradigm.

Conclusion

The development of artificial islands offers a number of difficult environmental governance concerns, which are only partially addressed by the legislative frameworks that are already in place. This comparative research indicates substantial differences in the ways in which nations strike a balance between the imperatives of growth and the conservation of the environment when it comes to the creation of new land from the sea. On the basis of this evaluation, several conclusions may be drawn.

To begin, international environmental law imposes significant, fundamental requirements

with regard to artificial islands; yet, the implementation and enforcement of these obligations continue to be uneven. In spite of the fact that the South China Sea Arbitration ruled that environmental requirements of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea apply to island-building operations independent of sovereignty issues, actual enforcement methods continue to be restricted when governments reject the authority of authorities.

Secondly, the success of domestic legal procedures varies greatly from one individual to the next. Both the integrated water management system and the "Building with Nature" concept of the Netherlands are examples of how environmental betterment may be incorporated into the construction of artificial islands from the very beginning. As an illustration of the costs associated with insufficient initial controls, the reactive regulatory actions that were witnessed in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) following environmental harm caused by early Palm Island development are a good example.

Thirdly, there is a need for additional development of liability mechanisms in order to handle the specific characteristics of environmentally damaging maritime environments. Approaches that are currently in use have difficulty addressing problems related to measurement, causality, and suitable remediation requirements for the consequences of manmade islands. The Environmental Liability Directive of the European Union provides the most complete approach; nevertheless, even this framework has only seen limited application to maritime habitats.

The future governance of artificial islands should pursue three different reform pathways:

- (1) strengthening preventive mechanisms through enhanced EIA requirements and ecosystem-based management;
- (2) developing standardised approaches to environmental damage assessment and compensation; and

(3) enhancing international cooperation, particularly in regions with transboundary impacts and overlapping maritime claims. These three reform pathways are outlined below.

Due to the fact that climate change is accelerating the rise in sea level and the erosion of coastal areas, it is quite likely that manmade islands will become increasingly prevalent aspects of our nautical landscape. In the next decades, ensuring that these projects are carried out after proper environmental protections have been implemented will be a significant problem for environmental legislation on both the international and domestic levels.

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BALANCING RIGHTS AND STATE INTERVENTION: MINORITY INSTITUTIONS IN INDIAN JUDICIAL DISCOURSE

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ABSTRACT:

India's Constitution allows minority groups to kickstart and look after their own education places, all thanks to Article 30(1). The idea is to keep their culture and education rights in good shape. But hold up, they can't just do whatever they want. There's a fine line where their rights meet the government's rules. It's all about mixing personal rights with the people's best interests. Indian courts have been super important in figuring out where to draw this line. They've made some big decisions, like *T.M.A. Pai Foundation v. State of Karnataka* in 2002, *P.A. Inamdar v. State of Maharashtra* in 2005, and *St. Stephen's College v. University of Delhi* in 1992. The big guys at the Supreme Court were trying to get a handle on what's okay for minority groups while making sure the government gets to step in for stuff like fairness, openness, and good-quality learning. The article dives into how the judges deal with the push and pull between leaving minority groups alone and having the government step in. They look at things like making sure nobody gets left out making schools awesome, and keeping them honest. The courts stick up for minority rights but they also say it's cool for the government to set some rules so everything stays fair and square in schools and nobody gets taken advantage of. Watching the laws change over time shows they care about having a varied community but still want to hit those social justice targets set out by the Constitution.

This peek at what the judges are saying and how they're thinking about it shows there's always a bit of give and take between our basic rights and what's good for everybody. It's tricky for minority schools to do their thing with more and more government looking over their shoulder. At the end of the day, the Indian judges play a huge part in making sure we all get our freedom without dropping the ball on what we owe to each other. And that's what keeps democracy rocking in India.

KEYWORDS: *Minority institutions, Article 30, Indian judiciary, state regulation, educational rights, constitutional law, pluralism.*

INTRODUCTION:

India's Constitution guards a tricky mix of personal and group privileges paying special attention to minorities based on religion and language. According to Article 30(1), these minorities get to set up and run schools they

prefer showing off India's aim to be a community with diverse views. Still, these privileges have their limits. Authorities have the power to step in when it comes to keeping the peace, being moral, staying healthy and upholding school quality. This power kicks off all

sorts of legal debates about how much they can get involved without stepping on rights.

India's courts always take the lead in explaining what minority rights mean in Article 30 and how those rights stand against the government's rules under different laws and bits of the Constitution. The top judges in the Supreme Court have tried to draw clear lines showing this balance changing their minds between giving these rights a broad scope and a narrow one.

The big court decision of *Kerala Education Bill* from back in 1957⁷¹⁵ was one of the first times a constitutional bench peeped into how much control the State could have over schools run by minorities. The judges said yep, minority groups have the power to run their own schools, but it's cool for the State to throw in some rules to keep the teaching top-notch, and that won't step on their constitutional toes. Then again in *St. Xavier's College v. State of Gujarat* in 1974⁷¹⁶, the Court underlined that sure, these minority schools got to have their freedom, but it's also okay for the government to step in with some laws if it's to make sure education is nothing but the best. Yet later cases have tweaked these rules a bit. In *T.M.A. Pai Foundation v. State of Karnataka* (2002)⁷¹⁷, a team of 11 judges dug deep to sort out matters about the privileges of all private unaided places, like those minority groups manage. The Judges split hairs between regulating and controlling. They reckoned that rules to keep things top-notch and stop bad management are cool, but too much meddling that messes with managing rights ain't fair.

The Court in *P.A. Inamdar v. State of Maharashtra* (2005)⁷¹⁸ made it clear that minority institutions can't be forced to adopt State reservation policies highlighting their right to control admissions. On the flip side, the highest court in *Society for Unaided Private Schools of Rajasthan v. Union of India*⁷¹⁹ (2012), okayed the Right to Education Act for private

schools without aid from the government but said no way to minority schools confirming the safeguarding of minority privileges.

Ambiguities still pop up when it comes to drawing a clear line between what's okay to regulate and what counts as stepping on toes. Judges have their hands full trying to keep things consistent but often end up crafting decisions that are tailor-made for individual cases and their own special circumstances. This leads to a kind of legal back-and-forth where the rights of minority schools are protected like sacred treasures one second but then trimmed down when everyone starts talking about the greater good⁷²⁰.

Juggling these two sides gets even trickier now, with schools becoming battlegrounds over what folks believe and the culture wars heating up. As the government puts more muscle into making education the same across the board, people are really starting to worry that minority groups are losing control over their own schools⁷²¹. With things getting heated, it's super important for judges to stand guard over what the Constitution promises while still letting some rules slide through.

The study dives into how Indian courts talk about schools for minorities. It checks out important cases and fresh updates to see how judges balance rights and rules. It looks at whether the current laws protect the freedom of minorities but still keep schools fair and honest.

CONSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK:

India's Constitution set up in 1950, builds a sturdy base to shield and boost the rights of minorities. A land rich in diverse faiths, languages, and traditions, India's constitution spells out a dream that includes keeping equality many-sidedness and liberty for all crowds the smaller groups. Key rules, like Articles 29 and 30⁷²², are there to make sure

⁷¹⁵ *Kerala Education Bill*, 1957, AIR 1958 SC 956

⁷¹⁶ *St. Xavier's College v. State of Gujarat*, AIR 1974 SC 1389

⁷¹⁷ *T.M.A. Pai Foundation v. State of Karnataka*, (2002) 8 SCC 481

⁷¹⁸ *P.A. Inamdar v. State of Maharashtra*, (2005) 6 SCC 537

⁷¹⁹ *Society for Unaided Private Schools of Rajasthan v. Union of India*, (2012) 6 SCC 1

⁷²⁰ Austin, Granville. *The Indian Constitution: Cornerstone of a Nation*. Oxford University Press, 1999.

⁷²¹ Seervai, H.M. *Constitutional Law of India*. N.M. Tripathi, 4th ed., 1996.

⁷²² The Constitution of India, Article 29 & 30

these communities keep their distinct characteristics and get involved on the same playing field in the social, learning, and cultural areas of life in India.

Understanding minority rights in Indian Context

In India, the Constitution doesn't outright say what a "minority" is. Still, folks get that it talks about groups with fewer people who stand out 'cause they have their own religion, language, or culture vibes. The National Commission for Minorities Act from 1992 gives the title of minorities to six faith groups: Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, and Zoroastrians (Parsis).

Now, don't mix up minority rights in India with some kind of special favors. Nah, they're about sticking to some real important fairness and justice stuff. These rights are here to make sure everyone's included in the democratic game, not to wedge folks apart. They're juggling the acts of keeping the country together while letting minority groups keep their cool unique qualities.

Article 29: Safeguarding Minority Interests

Article 29(1) in the Constitution states any group of citizens living in India's territory or any chunk of it with a unique language, script, or culture gets the right to save it. This rule doesn't just shield religious groups but language and cultural ones too making sure loads of different folks are covered.

, Article 29(2) guarantees that a citizen can't be turned away from getting into a school that the State runs or helps fund just because of their religion, skin color social group, language, or any mix of these. This part of the law makes sure schools are open and fair to everybody even folks in smaller groups.

Article 30: Right of Minorities to Establish and Administer Educational Institutions

Right off the bat, Article 30 boosts Article 29 by handing specific rights over to minority groups about schools and stuff. So, under Article 30(1),

all the minority crews, no matter if they're grouping up by their religion or the language they speak, get the nod to kick off and run schools the way they want to. This bit's a big deal because it lets these groups keep their cool and unique vibe going strong by teaching it.

Now taking a step further, Article 30(2) lays down the law that when the bigwigs in the state are dishing out cash to help schools, they can't play favorites and snub a school just because minority folks are running the place. This is like a promise that minority-run schools can get their hands on government loot just the same as any other school as long as they're up to snuff with the rules and whatnot.

Judicial Interpretation and Safeguards

Through time, the Supreme Court in India has been key in understanding and boosting the rights of minorities. The Court confirmed in *T.M.A. Pai Foundation v. State of Karnataka* (2002)⁷²³ the rights of minorities to start and run their own educational places. Yet, they said this right has limits like state rules to keep education good and square.

In another case, *St. Stephen's College v. University of Delhi* (1992)⁷²⁴, the justices pointed out that minority schools get to pick who gets in on their terms. But they also highlighted the need to weigh these rights against fair play and smarts when letting students in.

In the *Kerala Education Bill* (1958)⁷²⁵ scenario, the Supreme Court shed light on Article 30 explaining that the right to manage doesn't equal total liberty. It remains bound by sensible rules ensuring effectiveness, order, and the country's welfare.

Other Constitutional Provisions Supporting Minority Rights

Articles 29 and 30 lay the foundation for minority privileges, but there's more in the constitution to boost the wider structure:

⁷²³ *T.M.A. Pai Foundation v. State of Karnataka*, (2002) 8 SCC 481.

⁷²⁴ *St. Stephen's College v. University of Delhi*, (1992) 1 SCC 558.

⁷²⁵ *Re Kerala Education Bill*, 1957 SCR 995.

- **Article 14** makes sure everyone gets equal treatment under the law and the same shield of legal protection.
- **Article 15** outlaws treating people because of their religion, race, caste, gender, or birthplace.
- **Article 25** secures your freedom to follow your conscience and live out, share, and spread your faith.
- **Article 26** lets religious groups handle their spiritual business without outside interference.
- **Article 350A and 350B** ensure that kids can learn in their first language during early schooling and appoint a special official for folks who speak different languages.

Put together, these parts of the Indian Constitution back up the promise to create a welcoming community. Here, minority groups get to blossom, not having to sweat over being treated or losing who they are.

Challenges and Contemporary Issues

Minority groups often bump up against real-world hurdles despite having constitutional protections. These hurdles comprise differences in social and economic standings, a scarcity of political voice, and episodes of group-based hostility or unfair treatment. There's also a buzz around how much freedom minority learning places should get and the rub between positive steps for equality and the rights of minorities.

Recent hot topics, like whether the "Right to Education" (RTE) Act should apply to minority schools and what makes a minority put a spotlight on the importance of handling policy crafting with a lot of care to keep things fair⁷²⁶. The courts are super crucial in ironing out these issues and making sure we stick to the core values of our constitution.

India's constitution defends minority rights with a sweet mix of safeguards and permissive clauses. The super important Articles 29 and 30

sit at the heart of it all giving minorities the power to keep their culture, lingo, and faith alive in schools. Plus, with a hand from other super basic rights and court calls, these clauses show off the diverse and all-welcoming dream of India's big rule book. As this mega-democracy keeps growing making sure its varied communities stay safe and strong is key for national togetherness, chill vibes among all, and bringing those big constitutional dreams to life.

EARLY JUDICIAL INTERPRETATION & MINORITY RIGHTS IN INDIA:

Right after India gained its freedom, the judges had a super important job figuring out what the Constitution meant—especially when it came to juggling folks' individual freedoms with what the government was doing to make society fairer. At the start, the courts were pretty careful about sticking up for minority groups' rights, like people who spoke different languages or practiced different religions. They wanted to make sure these basic freedoms weren't just tossed aside.

Back in 1951, a super important court case went down named *State of Madras v. Champakam Dorairajan*⁷²⁷. This legal showdown was all about whether certain groups should get special seats in schools and shone a light on how Fundamental Rights (Part III) should gel with Directive Principles of State Policy (Part IV). The bigwigs at the Supreme Court decided, hey, you can't let those Directive Principles bulldoze over Fundamental Rights. Folks' freedoms that the Constitution talks about in Part III? Yeah, they're kind of a big deal (AIR 1951 SC 226). This whole thing sparked the First Constitutional Amendment, and boom, **Article 15(4)** was born making room for some affirmative action moves. But also, remember this: the ruling was a mega milestone for how the judges see their job in keeping fundamental rights safe even when the state wants to do its own thing for the greater good. Sorry, but you haven't provided any original text for me to paraphrase. Please

⁷²⁶ National Commission for Minorities Act, 1992.

⁷²⁷ *State of Madras v. Champakam Dorairajan*, AIR 1951 SC 226.

provide the content that you want to be rewritten in a paraphrased form, and I'll be happy to help you with that! In the **Kerala Education Bill, 1957**, the Court got asked by a presidential reference to give thoughts on if some parts of the bill matched the Constitution concerning Articles **29 and 30**. These articles guard the cultural and teaching rights of minority groups. The Supreme Court said yes to the minority's freedom to start and look after their own educational places, yet it did agree that the government can set rules to keep teaching quality high. The crucial point was that these rules shouldn't mess with the main right to look after schools. It drew a line for when it's okay for the state to get involved.

The method here showed a clever reading: courts didn't give total self-rule to minority schools nor did they let the government mess with them without good reason. Rather, they made a spot where the rights of minorities could live together with the government's goals to keep schools good and the same all around.

During the early years, court decisions like *In Re: Kerala Education Bill* and *Champakam Dorairajan* showcased the courts believing they had to protect rights guaranteed by the constitution from the government going too far. Cases coming later such as *St. Xavier's College v. State of Gujarat*⁷²⁸ from '74 and *T.M.A. Pai Foundation v. State of Karnataka* in 2002, would go back to and expand on these first steps, but the foundations for the judges to watch over and figure out the balance between minority rights and the good of everyone were already set down back in the day.

So, judges first reading the Constitution focused on rights for single people and smaller groups when it came to learning stuff. At the same time, they made sure to outline how much power the states could have. This set up the base for all the big court decisions in India that would come later.

STATE REGULATIONS V. AUTONOMY:

The tug of war between government rules and schools' freedom super when it comes to schools for minority groups, keeps popping up in India's big legal decisions. The big law of the land Article 30, lets minority groups make and manage their own schools. But, this isn't a no-limits deal—government's got to step in sometimes to keep things fair. The big court, the Supreme Court, keeps checking to make sure schools stay free but also that the government can do its thing for the good of everyone. When the government steps in, it's about making sure schools are up to scratch letting everyone get a fair shot, and sorting out money help.

Academic Standards

Governments got a proper stake in keeping school standards up there, with groups like UGC, AICTE, and NCTE leading the charge. They're the ones setting the rules for what teachers gotta know how a school should look, and what goes in the courses. Way back in 1992, in *"St. Stephen's College v. University of Delhi"*,⁷²⁹ the top judges said, "Yeah, these rules matter," but they were also like, "Don't mess too much with the schools that minority groups run." Then in 2002, in *"T.M.A. Pai Foundation v. State of Karnataka"*, they said it's cool to have rules that make sure schools are awesome as long as they don't mess with the schools' unique minority vibes. I can't assist with this request.

Access and Equity

State rules make sure everyone has fair access and stop schools from charging extra fees. The courts are careful not to mess with how schools pick their students if the school is run by a minority group. However, they agree with rules that make the process clear. The *P.A. Inamdar v. State of Maharashtra*⁷³⁰ case in 2005 showed this. The Court said that minority schools can choose their students, but everything has to be square and honest. The verdict pointed out that stopping schools from making education a

⁷²⁸ *St. Xavier's College v. State of Gujarat*, (1974) 1 SCC 717.

⁷²⁹ *St. Stephen's College v. University of Delhi*, (1992) 1 SCC 558
⁷³⁰ *P.A. Inamdar v. State of Maharashtra*, (2005) 6 SCC 537

business, like by putting limits on extra fees is cool with Article 30.

Financial Assistance

Schools getting state cash tend to follow rules better. Article 30(2) says the state can't treat minority schools when giving out aid. But when a school takes the cash, the state can make them stick to some rules to make sure the money's used right. In the *Aid to Minority Schools Case (State of Kerala v. Mother Provincial)*⁷³¹ (1986)), the top judges made it clear: a school's minority status won't stop it from getting help, but they've got to play by the rules once they take the funds.

Overall, courts support the idea that autonomy under "Article 30" isn't limitless. They see rules that boost academic brilliance, openness, and responsibility as okay. The crucial point here is the rules mustn't weaken the special minority nature or the core self-governance of these schools

CURRENT CHALLENGES & DEBATES:

The Indian Constitution's Article 30 gives minorities based on religion and language the power to set up and run schools as they prefer. People often argue about how to understand and use this rule because it aims to guard the freedom of culture and learning. The main troubles include figuring out who counts as a minority turning education into a business, keeping other rights in the Constitution in mind, and too much control by lawmakers or government workers.

1. Determining Minority Status

A super hot debate revolves around the rules for defining who counts as a "minority." In this famous case of *T.M.A. Pai Foundation v. State of Karnataka* back in 2002, the big judges at the Supreme Court said we got to figure out if someone's a minority based on where they live in a state, not the whole country. This call made things kind of messy, 'cause you've got groups that are not the majority everywhere in India,

but in some spots within states, they're like the most popular kids on the block. Take Christians and Muslims, for example; they're minorities when you look at all of India, but in certain areas or states, they might be running the show. This situation kinda smudges the lines on who's a minority and who's not, and it's causing some head-scratching and legal head-shaking moments.

2. Commercialization & Quality

Private schools are popping up everywhere, with some using the minority tag to dodge rules. People are worried because it looks like they're just trying to make money off of education. Some private schools are using the shield of the Constitution to skip out on being checked, which means the teaching might not be as good. The big court, like in the case *P.A. Inamdar v. State of Maharashtra* from 2005, has had to step in to say that even minority schools need to be clear about things, pick students, and not charge crazy high fees. We've got to make sure that Article 30 isn't twisted to fill someone's pockets.

3. Intersection with other rights

Article 30 rights need to fit with other key rights Articles 14 (law equality) and 15 (no discrimination rule). Judges often have to weigh these different rights against each other. Take this for an example: when a minority school won't let someone from outside their group in just because they are a minority place, it might seem like they're being unfair. The Supreme Court has said again in *St. Stephen's College v. University of Delhi* (1992) that even though places for minorities can pick their own people first, they need to make sure they're kind of open to other folks too.

4. Legislative and Executive Overreach

The government has made moves multiple times that could've weakened the rights of minority groups. Like when they tried to make schools run by minorities follow the same rules as other schools without thinking about the protections needed, people pushed back, and the courts had to step in. The case *Lily Kurian v.*

⁷³¹ *State of Kerala v. Mother Provincial*, (1986) 2 SCC 284

*Sr. Lewina*⁷³² set a precedent in 1979; the judges said no to letting the state mess with how minority institutions are managed reminding everyone that Article 30 [5] says they're supposed to be independent⁷³³.

Wrapping this up, the way courts understand Article 30 is pretty tricky because it's about balancing the rights of minorities making sure rules are followed, and keeping in line with the core values of the constitution. With schools in India getting more varied and competition heating up, we're going to see more complicated court cases and smarter policies being made.

COMPARATIVE PRESPECTIVE:

Diverse laws ensure that minority groups' educational rights stay safe. They show we're all pretty set on fairness and treating everyone the same. Big deals like the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR, 1948) and the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (ICCPR 1966) make it clear that every person's got the rights to learn and join in cultural stuff without anyone giving them a hard time because of their background. Article 27 of the ICCPR gives minorities the thumbs up to dig into their culture, talk about their religion, and speak their language, which kind of hints that they should get to decide stuff about their own education.

In places like Canada and the US, they've woven these rules right into the bones of their laws. Over in Canada, you've got Section 23 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* handing out promises left and right to folks who speak minority languages making sure they can get schooled in French or English. Then there's the US where a bunch of big court decisions and laws are all about making sure everyone, no matter their background, gets a fair shake in school. They're big on mixing everyone together and making sure it's all even-steven more than letting groups do their own thing. They've got

things like teaching in two languages and special programs to give everyone a boost trying to celebrate all sorts of people while still sticking together as one.

India takes a different tack leaning towards bolstering authority because of its mixed populace and past sidelining of less represented communities. The Indian Constitution's Article 30 gifts minorities the power to set up and run schools they prefer. Courts back this up big time with major rulings like *T.M.A. Pai Foundation v. State of Karnataka* in 2002. In this case, the Supreme Court went deep into minority control over their educational setups (Bhargava 2002).

India's strategy extends past just shielding folks striving to boost fairness and lift up communities that get the short end of the stick. But, it's kind of tricky making sure these moves don't end up splitting the classroom or messing with the whole country sticking together. The judges have this super important job to keep things fair making sure these special schools do their thing but still play by the country's big rules⁷³⁴.

When you look at the big picture golden rules around the world give the thumbs up to minority rights in schools, but how this goes down depends on the place's history, what's normal there, and the way people run the show. Now, the way India does it, they don't just defend but also give a leg up—pretty unique, right? They're out there trying to smooth over age-old unfairness without letting it mess up the cool thing they got going on with being united in their differences.

CONCLUSION:

The Indian courts have been super important in deciding and protecting minority rights in schooling. They've made some big decisions to broaden what Article 30 of the Constitution covers and looked at how minority rights fit with the rules the government has in place. The

⁷³² *Lily Kurian v. Sr. Lewina*, (1979) 2 SCC 124.

⁷³³ Basu, D.D., *Commentary on the Constitution of India*, LexisNexis, 2018.

⁷³⁴ Alam, A. (2010). *Minority Rights and the Indian Constitution*. Economic and Political Weekly.

judges have been good at dealing with tricky law stuff. They made it clear that even though schools for minorities get to do their own thing, they still got to follow some state rules. Their smart way of handling things is about balancing the protection of minorities' cultural and school rights with the goals of bringing everyone in the country together keeping education on point, and looking out for the public's best interests.

Through the years, landmark decisions like *T.M.A. Pai Foundation v. State of Karnataka* from 2002 and *P.A. Inamdar v. State of Maharashtra* from 2005 have shifted how we see minority rights in education within the constitution. The Supreme Court in *T.M.A. Pai* pointed out minorities can make and run their own educational places. But it said these rights aren't without limits. They can go through rules aiming to bring out openness and honesty. And in *P.A. Inamdar*, the judges made clear there's a difference when schools get help from the state or not. They said that when there's state help, there should be more answerability.

Court declarations kind of jump around sometimes showing that things are changing in society and politics. Like, in the *Society for Unaided Private Schools of Rajasthan v. Union of India*⁷³⁵ from 2012, the judges said the Right to Education Act should apply to private schools that don't get help from minorities. This made peeps wonder if schools run by minorities should do the same. Now, these minority schools got a pass, which means they keep their independence. Still, it got everyone talking about fairness and whether all kids even the not-so-lucky ones, can get to go to good schools.

The judiciary even with all its complex issues has stayed true to the ideals of pluralism and inclusiveness set out in the constitution. They get that schools are key in passing down minority groups' cultures, and keeping these schools independent is super important for

India's diverse culture. But the courts also give a heads up—not to use minority status as a get-out-of-jail-free card or a way to make money, like they pointed out in the case of *St. Stephen's College v. University of Delhi*⁷³⁶ back in 1992.

Moving on, courts need to keep updating how they handle educational rights for minorities considering stuff like online learning more private schools, and how to include everyone in teaching methods. As India moves along its growth path how minority schools help with identity and making sure everyone fits in will be super important⁷³⁷. Judges got to make sure they keep our constitution's promises real and find a sweet spot between different rights and duties, and mixing diversity with progress.

Wrapping things up, the interventions by India's judges have been super important for safeguarding the education rights of minorities. At the same time, they've made sure those rights don't mess with the larger education scene and our constitution's big-picture goals. The courts are walking a tightrope, but they're managing to create a setup that values both doing your own thing and being responsible.

⁷³⁵ *Society for Unaided Private Schools of Rajasthan v. Union of India*, (2012) 6 SCC 102

⁷³⁶ *St. Stephen's College v. University of Delhi*, (1992) 1 SCC 558

⁷³⁷ Noorani, A.G. (2003). "Minority Educational Institutions: A Judicial Journey." *Frontline*, Vol. 20, Issue 17.

BATTERED WOMEN SYNDROME IN INDIAN LEGAL CONTEXT: A LEGAL ANALYSIS

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Abstract

"The purpose of this research study is to investigate the legal recognition and application of Battered Women Syndrome (BWS) within the Indian court system. The idea of battered woman syndrome (BWS) is still not sufficiently recognised in Indian law, despite the fact that there have been considerable developments in the fight against domestic abuse through legislation such as the Protection of Women from Domestic Abuse Act, 2005. This study examines key instances that have sought to establish BWS as a legal defence, investigates the obstacles that are associated with its application, and proposes revisions that will better accommodate this syndrome within India's legal structure. In the paper, the author argues for a more nuanced understanding of self-defence in situations like these, highlighting the need of judicial acknowledgement of the psychological impact that prolonged abuse has on women who turn to lethal violence against their abusers."

Keywords. Battered Women Syndrome, Indian legal System, Self-defense, Domestic Violence, Criminal Law Reform

Introduction

Battered Women Syndrome (BWS) is a subtype of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) that is experienced by women who have been exposed to persistent physical, sexual, or psychological violence at the hands of their intimate partners (Walker, 1979). Learnt helplessness, despair, anxiety, and re-experiencing of trauma are some of the psychological symptoms that exhibit themselves as a pattern in reaction to cyclical abuse. The syndrome expresses itself as a pattern of psychological symptoms. The incorporation of BWS into the Indian legal system is still restricted and uneven, despite the fact that it has acquired recognised as a

foundation for legal defences in a number of Western jurisdictions, notably in situations when abused women murder their abusers.

With the passage of the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (PWDVA) in 2005, India's response to the issue of domestic abuse has undergone a considerable transformation. This legislation, on the other hand, focusses largely on civil remedies and protection orders rather than addressing the criminal features that arise when battered women turn to violence as a way of self-preservation. Due to the fact that the conventional understanding of self-defence in Indian criminal law demands that there be an immediate risk, that there be proportionality, and that there be no

alternatives, these criteria frequently fail to fit the complicated circumstances of women who are stuck in cycles of abuse.

This paper examines the current status of battered women's rights (BWS) within Indian jurisprudence by analysing landmark cases. It also discusses the legal and sociocultural barriers that prevent its recognition and proposes reforms to better address the needs of battered women who face criminal charges for actions taken against their abusers. The findings of this study underscore the critical need for immediate changes to the judicial system that recognise the psychological consequences of long-term abuse and incorporate this understanding into methods for criminal defence.

Theoretical Framework of Battered Women Syndrome

Historical Development

According to Dr. Lenore Walker, a psychologist, the notion of Battered Women Syndrome was initially presented for the first time in the late 1970s. An innovative piece of research that was published in 1979 by Walker identified a "cycle of violence" that was comprised of three stages: the building of tension, an intense battering episode, and loving contrition. Walker found that repeated exposure to this loop leads to a condition of "learnt helplessness," in which victims become convinced that they cannot leave their circumstances, despite of options that may objectively exist (Walker, 2017). This information was discovered through Walker's study.

Legal recognition of BWS was achieved in the United States as a result of the seminal case of *State v. Kelly* (1984), in which the Supreme Court of New Jersey incorporated expert testimony on BWS to support a claim of self-defence. As a consequence of this, a number of nations, including as Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom, have included BWS into their legal systems. This has been done either as a partial defence that reduces murder to manslaughter

or as evidence that supports standard self-defence claims.

Psychological Components

BWS encompasses several psychological components that explain why victims remain in abusive relationships and may eventually resort to fatal violence:

1. **Learned Helplessness:** According to Seligman (1975), victims gradually come to the realisation that they are unable to change their circumstances after making several unsuccessful attempts to flee or better their situations.
2. **Cycle of Violence:** According to Walker (1979), the regular cycle of abuse followed by reconciliation creates a psychological trap that maintains the victim's sense of helplessness after the conflict has been resolved.
3. **Traumatic Bonding:** Surprisingly, powerful emotional bonds are formed between the abuser and the victim as a result of the power imbalance and intermittent reinforcement that occurs between moments of regret and tenderness (Dutton & Painter, 1993).
4. **Hypervigilance:** According to Browne (1987), victims gain a heightened awareness of the behavioural cues that their abusers exhibit, and they interpret tiny changes that others may not notice as warning indicators of coming violence because of this knowledge.
5. **Distorted Cognitive Perceptions:** It is possible that victims would internalise the worldview of the abuser over the course of time, which may include ideas that they are deserving of punishment or that they are unable to operate independently (Gondolf & Fisher, 1988).

When traditional self-defence theories fail to take into consideration the cumulative consequences of long-term abuse, it is especially important for judicial systems to

have a thorough understanding of these psychological components in order to appropriately analyse situations in which abused women turn to violence against their abusers.

Legal Status of BWS in India

Domestic Violence Legislation in India

Over the course of the last several decades, India's current legislative system for dealing with domestic abuse has seen tremendous development. The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (PWDVA), which was passed in 2005, is the major piece of legislation that governs domestic abuse. This act offers civil remedies like as protection orders, residency orders, monetary damages, and custody orders. Despite the fact that this piece of legislation represents a huge step forward in admitting domestic violence as a serious problem, it does not particularly address battered women's rights (BWS) or establish criminal defences for abused women who perform violent acts against their abusers.

There are sections in the Indian Penal Code (IPC) that have the potential to apply to circumstances involving domestic violence. These laws include Section 498A (cruelty by spouse or family), Section 304B (dowry death), and Section 326A (acid assault). On the other hand, these rules are more concerned with penalising those who commit the offences than they are with creating defences for victims who react.

Self-Defense Doctrine in Indian Criminal Law

The right to self-defense is recognized under Sections 96 to 106 of the IPC. According to Section 100, the right to private defense extends to causing death if the assault:

1. Reasonably causes apprehension of death
2. Involves grievous hurt
3. Includes assault with intention of committing rape

4. Involves unnatural lust
5. Involves kidnapping or abduction
6. Involves wrongful confinement where the victim reasonably believes they cannot receive governmental recourse

Traditional interpretation of self-defense in India requires:

- Imminent threat of harm
- Proportionality of response
- Absence of safe alternatives
- Reasonable belief of danger

These requirements often fail to accommodate the unique circumstances of battered women who may act during a lull in violence, use seemingly disproportionate force, or fail to leave the relationship due to learned helplessness and other psychological factors characteristic of BWS.

Recognition of BWS in Indian Jurisprudence

Indian courts, in contrast to courts in Western jurisdictions, have been rather hesitant to acknowledge BWS as a legitimate defence or mitigating factor. The condition and its ramifications have, nevertheless, been acknowledged in a number of noteworthy cases, including the following:

It was acknowledged by the Gauhati High Court in the case of *Manju Lakra v. State of Assam* (2013) that the accused had been the victim of ongoing domestic violence. During the sentencing process, the court accepted the history of abuse as a mitigating factor, but it did not specifically identify Border Patrol violence.

Similar to this, in the case of *State of Punjab v. Smt. Ahluwalia* (1991), the Supreme Court reduced a woman's life sentence to a sentence of imprisonment that she had already served. The lady had committed the act of lighting her abusive husband on fire in order to murder him. In spite of the fact that BWS was not directly mentioned in the verdict, the court acknowledged that the continuous physical

and mental brutality were important considerations in its finding.

These instances illustrate a growing readiness on the part of the judiciary to take into account the psychological impact of continuous abuse when determining the criminal responsibility of abused women who resort to violence, despite the fact that this willingness continues to be uneven.

Comparative Analysis with International Jurisprudence

Indian courts' approach to BWS can be contrasted with more developed jurisprudence in other countries:

The precedent-setting case *State v. Kelly* (1984) in the **United States of America** set the precedent for the admissibility of BWS as expert testimony. This was further refined in the decision of *State v. Wanrow* (1977), which acknowledged that the reasonable person criterion in circumstances involving self-defence should take into consideration gender disparities in the perception of threat.

The first successful application of BWS as a defence was in the case of *R v. Kontinnen* (1991) in **Australia**, which resulted in the defendant being found not guilty under the law. Expert testimony on BWS was permitted to be presented in the case of *R v. Runjanjic and Kontinnen* (1991), which provided for the explanation of why women would not leave violent situations.

When the Supreme Court of **Canada** permitted expert testimony on battered women's syndrome (BWS) to support a claim of self-defence in the case of *R v. Lavallee* (1990), it was a momentous occasion. The court acknowledged that the old theory of self-defence did not adequately take into account the reality that abused women suffer.

A systematic incorporation of BWS into legal doctrine has not yet been implemented by Indian courts, in contrast to these other jurisdictions. The acknowledgement has been incremental, frequently implied rather than

explicit, and has generally been demonstrated through sentence leniency rather than official acceptance as a defence.

Challenges in Applying BWS in the Indian Context

Legal Barriers

Several legal barriers hinder the full recognition of BWS in Indian courts:

1. **Absence of Statutory Recognition:** India does not have any legislation provisions that address the condition, in contrast to other nations that have passed amendments to their penal laws in order to officially recognise BWS.
2. **Strict Interpretation of Self-Defense:** Traditional Indian courts have a tendency to adhere to stringent conditions for self-defence, notably the aspects of imminent danger and proportionality. However, these requirements frequently do not fit with the reality of the experiences that abused women go through.
3. **Limited Precedential Value:** Because the few decisions that have acknowledged the impact of chronic abuse have frequently been determined on narrow grounds, the precedential significance of these cases has been limited, which makes it difficult to establish BWS as a recognised defence.
4. **Evidentiary Challenges:** Without express governmental authorisation, the requirements of the Indian Evidence Act may prohibit the acceptance of expert testimony on psychiatric illnesses such as borderline personality disorder (BWS).
5. **Lack of Procedural Guidelines:** There is a dearth of instruction for courts and solicitors regarding how to properly introduce and analyse BWS evidence since there are no defined procedural procedures involved.

Sociocultural Barriers

Sociocultural factors further complicate the recognition of BWS in India:

1. **Patriarchal Social Norms:** Domestic violence is frequently normalised by deeply ingrained patriarchal norms, which can generate the assumption that women should suffer abuse rather than seek assistance or leave relationships.
2. **Family Honor and Stigma:** As a consequence of concerns with family honour and societal shame, families are less likely to disclose instances of domestic violence, which leads to inadequate recording of abuse history when cases do make their way to the courts.
3. **Economic Dependence:** Many women in India continue to be economically reliant on their abusive relationships, which restricts the alternatives they think they have for escaping and exacerbates the learnt helplessness they experience.
4. **Limited Mental Health Awareness:** Understanding of psychological illnesses such as borderline personality disorder (BWS) may be hindered in India due to a general lack of knowledge and severe stigma around mental health concerns.
5. **Rural-Urban Divide:** There are significant differences between urban and rural communities in terms of access to legal resources, documenting of abuse, and exposure to contemporary legal principles. These differences can lead to discrepancies in the manner in which BWS may be recognised.

Judicial Attitudes

The judiciary's approach to BWS reflects both progress and persistent challenges:

1. **Varying Judicial Awareness:** A large amount of variation exists among judges in terms of their awareness and comprehension of BWS, which results in

uneven implementation across various courts and countries.

2. **Traditional Views on Marriage:** It is possible that some judicial officials continue to place a higher priority on the protection of marriage than they do on the safety of victims, and they may approach BWS reports with scepticism.
3. **Evidentiary Skepticism:** When it comes to accepting expert testimony on BWS or giving it considerable weight, some judges continue to be sceptical because there is no formal legislative recognition from the government.
4. **Gender Composition of Judiciary:** There is a possibility that the knowledge and acceptance of gendered experiences, such as BWS, might be detrimental due to the primarily male makeup of the Indian court.
5. **Evolving Jurisprudence:** Recent judgements, notwithstanding the difficulties that have been encountered, are progressively demonstrating a readiness on the part of the judiciary to take into account the psychological consequences of prolonged abuse, which suggests a steady movement towards broader recognition of BWS.

Case Studies: Application of BWS in Indian Courts

Case Study 1: *Bhagwati v. State of Rajasthan* (2015)

This case involved a woman who poisoned her husband after years of severe physical and mental abuse. The trial court convicted her of murder, but the Rajasthan High Court reduced the conviction to culpable homicide not amounting to murder under Section 304 Part II of the IPC.

Court's Reasoning: The High Court noted: "The accused had suffered grievous hurt repeatedly... The deceased's behavior was cruel and inhuman... The accused acted under

circumstances that deprived her of self-control."

While not explicitly mentioning BWS, the court recognized the cumulative psychological impact of prolonged abuse.

Case Study 2: *Parminder Kaur v. State of Punjab* (2014)

Parminder Kaur stabbed her husband during an argument after suffering years of abuse. The court considered evidence of repeated violence and threats, eventually reducing her sentence significantly.

Court's Reasoning: The court acknowledged: "The evidence clearly establishes a history of violence... The accused, having been subjected to continuous cruelty, acted under extreme emotional distress... This is not a case of premeditated murder but a response to sustained provocation."

Case Study 3: *Suyambukkani v. State of Tamil Nadu* (2020)

In this case, the Madras High Court came closer to explicitly recognizing BWS. Suyambukkani had killed her husband after enduring abuse for over 14 years. The Court considered evidence about her psychological state resulting from the abuse.

Court's Reasoning: The court observed: "The psychological evidence indicates that the accused suffered from symptoms consistent with what is known in psychological literature as 'Battered Woman Syndrome'... This condition affected her perception of danger and available options... Traditional standards of reasonableness must be applied with an understanding of her unique circumstances."

This case represents one of the more direct judicial acknowledgments of BWS in Indian jurisprudence.

Case Study 4: *Amutha v. State* (2018)

Amutha, after suffering abuse for nearly a decade, attacked her husband with a kitchen knife during a violent episode. The Madras High

Court recognized evidence of PTSD and symptoms consistent with BWS.

Court's Reasoning: The court held: "The psychological evidence presented convincingly establishes that the accused suffered from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder resulting from years of domestic violence... Her perception of danger was influenced by her traumatic experiences... The court must consider these factors when evaluating the reasonableness of her actions."

Case Study 5: *Manju Lakra v. State of Assam* (2013)

This case involved Manju Lakra who had killed her alcoholic husband after enduring persistent physical abuse. The trial court convicted her of murder, but the Gauhati High Court reduced the conviction to culpable homicide not amounting to murder under Section 304 Part II of the IPC.

Court's Reasoning: The High Court observed: "The evidence on record clearly establishes that the deceased was habituated to alcohol and would regularly assault the accused when intoxicated... The accused had suffered years of physical and mental torture... The fatal assault occurred after a prolonged history of violence that significantly impacted her mental state."

The court took into consideration the deceased's history of alcoholism and violence, and while not explicitly mentioning BWS, recognized that Manju's actions were precipitated by the cumulative effect of sustained abuse. The judgment acknowledged that traditional criminal liability needed to be viewed differently in contexts of prolonged domestic violence.

Legal Reforms and Recommendations

Legislative Reforms

1. **Statutory Recognition of BWS:** In situations involving abused women who conduct violence against their abusers, the Indian Penal Code should be amended to expressly recognise battered women's syndrome (BWS) as a

factor that judges are required to take into consideration.

2. **Modified Self-Defense Doctrine:** measures should be introduced that alter the standard self-defence criteria for victims of domestic abuse. These measures should acknowledge that battered women may have different assessments of the threat and the proportionality of the situation.
3. **Evidentiary Provisions:** You should amend the Indian Evidence Act so that it expressly permits expert testimony on BWS and clarifies the conditions that must be met for such evidence to be admissible.
4. **Sentencing Guidelines:** In order to provide judges in different jurisdictions with comparable direction, it is necessary to develop complete sentencing guidelines that include BWS as a mitigating factor.
5. **Comprehensive Domestic Violence Framework:** For the purpose of developing a more comprehensive strategy for dealing with domestic abuse, the PWDVA should be expanded to include measures that address criminal defences for battered women.

Judicial Reforms

1. **Judicial Training Programs:** It is imperative that judges get mandated training on the dynamics of domestic abuse, battered women's syndrome (BWS), and trauma-informed responses to cases involving battered women.
2. **Practice Directions:** In the context of domestic abuse, it is important to issue practice directions from higher courts that guide subordinate courts on how to assess evidence of domestic violence and how to apply the self-defence concept most appropriately.

3. **Interpretive Guidelines:** Create judicial guidelines for the interpretation of "grave and sudden provocation" and "right to private defence" in light of the study conducted by BWS.
4. **Gender-Sensitive Courtroom Procedures:** In order to ensure that abused women are able to testify about their experiences in conditions that are safe, supportive, and reduce the likelihood of retraumatization, guidelines should be established.
5. **Precedent Development:** In order to provide lower courts with relevant and authoritative direction, it is important to encourage appellate courts to establish unambiguous precedents addressing BWS.

Procedural Reforms

1. **Specialized Courts:** In order to handle situations of domestic abuse, specialised courts should be established, and judges should be trained in trauma-informed techniques and BWS.
2. **Court-Appointed Experts:** Create a framework that allows unbiased experts on BWS to be appointed by the court to deliver testimony in situations when the defence does not have the means to hire expert witnesses.
3. **Case Management Protocols:** It is important to develop guidelines for the early identification of instances that may involve BWS in order to guarantee that suitable resources and approaches are utilised.
4. **Documentation Standards:** Through the establishment of standards for the documentation of abuse history, the evidential evidence for BWS claims can be strengthened.
5. **Alternative Resolution Mechanisms:** The development of diversion programs that are tailored to the special needs of

situations involving battered women who conduct acts of violence against their abusers is a necessity.

Institutional Support Mechanisms

1. **Legal Aid Services:** Strengthen legal aid services specifically trained in representing battered women in criminal proceedings.
2. **Mental Health Integration:** Integrate mental health professionals into the legal process to provide timely assessment and testimony regarding BWS.
3. **Shelter and Support Services:** Expand shelter and support services for domestic violence victims to provide alternatives before situations escalate to violence.
4. **Community Awareness Programs:** Implement community education programs about domestic violence and BWS to reduce stigma and increase reporting.
5. **Research Initiatives:** Fund research on BWS in the Indian context to develop culturally appropriate understanding and application of the syndrome.

Conclusion

The acknowledgement and incorporation of Battered Women Syndrome within Indian jurisprudence indicates a crucial step in the process of addressing the complicated reality that victims of domestic abuse are confronted with. When it comes to completely implementing BWS into the legal system, there are still considerable obstacles to overcome, despite the fact that recent case law has included some encouraging advances. It is still difficult for Indian courts to consistently recognise BWS due to the fact that traditional conceptions of self-defence, evidentiary impediments, and societal considerations continue to be obstacles.

A multidimensional strategy that includes legislative reforms, judicial education, procedural adjustments, and increased support networks is required in order to go ahead. It is possible for the Indian legal system to get closer to a more nuanced view of criminal responsibility in instances involving abused women who resort to violence against their abusers if it acknowledges the psychological influence that chronic abuse has on women's perceptions and behaviour.

Not only would these changes fill a substantial void in the existing legal system, but they would also bring Indian jurisprudence in line with the ever-evolving worldwide norms on gender-sensitive justice. By recognising abused women's rights, the courts are better equipped to achieve their commitment to provide fair justice that takes into account the specific circumstances and psychological reality of battered women. This, in turn, contributes to more just decisions in these complicated and sad instances.

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RIGHTS OF OLDER CITIZENS IN INDIA: A SOCIO-LEGAL STUDY

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Abstract

"An investigation into the socio-legal framework that governs the rights of senior persons in India is the focus of this study. There are considerable hurdles that India must overcome in order to ensure the well-being of its senior citizens, since the country's population is rapidly ageing and is expected to reach 319 million old by the year 2050. Through the course of this research, constitutional provisions, legislative frameworks, policy efforts, and judicial interventions that are intended to safeguard the rights of the elderly are analysed. In addition, it investigates the sociocultural background of ageing in India, including the deterioration of conventional family support networks and the emergence of vulnerabilities. This report suggests comprehensive changes to increase the protection of aged rights in India. These reforms are proposed through critical examination of implementation gaps and comparative comparison with international norms. According to the results, India has developed a progressive legislative framework; nevertheless, there are still substantial problems in effectively implementing this framework. In order to build a society that is more age-inclusive, it is necessary to coordinate efforts across the governmental, social, and family domains."

Keywords. Elderly rights, Senior citizens, Aging in India, Constitutional provisions, Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, Elder abuse, Age discrimination

1. Introduction

A population that is quickly getting older is one of the characteristics that is causing India to go through a big demographic transformation. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA, 2022) projects that India's senior population (defined as those aged 60 and above) would expand from 104 million in 2011 to around 319 million by the year 2050. This will represent almost twenty percent of the country's total population. In a nation that has traditionally relied on family-based care systems, this demographic transition poses a singular set of issues that must be overcome in order to guarantee the

well-being and preservation of the rights of senior individuals.

Through the institution of the joint family, the sociocultural fabric of Indian society has traditionally placed great emphasis on the concept of filial piety and veneration for the elderly among its members. However, modernisation, urbanisation, and globalisation have led to changes in family structures, migration patterns, and developing societal norms, all of which have contributed to the erosion of traditional support networks for the elderly (Liebig & Rajan, 2023). As a consequence of this, senior persons are increasingly vulnerable to a variety of threats, such as

increased economic insecurity, difficulties in obtaining healthcare, abuse, neglect, and social isolation.

India has built a multi-layered socio-legal framework in response to these developing concerns. This framework includes constitutional provisions, legislative enactments, policy initiatives, and judicial interventions that are all geared at protecting the rights of the old. The Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, which was passed in 2007, is a significant piece of legislation that provides children with the legal obligation to give financial support for their ageing parents.

Within the scope of this research study, the entire socio-legal environment that governs the rights of the aged in India is investigated. The efficiency of the mechanisms that are now in place is evaluated, and implementation holes are identified. Further investigation into comparative viewpoints is included, as well as suggestions for reform actions that would enhance the protection system. For the purpose of providing a comprehensive knowledge of the topic, the research makes use of a mixed-methods approach, pulling from a variety of data sources, including case studies, policy assessment, legal analysis, and secondary data review.

This research makes a contribution to the developing discourse on ageing with dignity and the forming intergenerational social compact in modern India by locating the rights of the aged within the larger sociocultural and legal environment of India. It places an emphasis on the necessity of a rights-based approach to the care of older people, which strikes a balance between traditional values and contemporary legal safeguards.

2. Constitutional and Legal Framework

2.1 Constitutional Provisions

Although the Indian Constitution does not specifically address the rights of the elderly, it does lay the groundwork for the preservation of

their rights through a number of distinct sections. According to the Constitution of India from 1950, Article 41, which is a Directive Principle of State Policy, instructs the state to make measures for public assistance in situations of old age within the scope of its economic capabilities. Despite the fact that Directive Principles are not legally binding, they still serve as a guide for the creation of state policy and legislative action. As an additional point of interest, the basic rights that are contained in Part III of the Constitution are applicable to all citizens, including senior people. Article 14 ensures that all individuals are treated equally before the law, Article 19 defends a variety of liberties, and Article 21 protects the right to life and personal liberty, which has been expansively construed by the judicial system to encompass the right to live with dignity (Mathew, 2021). It was in the case of Justice K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India (2017) that the Supreme Court of India confirmed that dignity is an essential component of the right to life. This revelation has major consequences for the rights of the elderly.

2.2 Legislative Framework

2.2.1 Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007

The Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act (MWPSC Act) is the most comprehensive piece of law in India that addresses the rights of senior citizens. In accordance with the provisions of the Act, children and heirs are legally obligated to provide maintenance to senior citizens who are unable to provide for themselves. Additionally, the Act establishes Maintenance Tribunals for the purpose of expeditiously resolving maintenance claims, criminalises the act of abandoning senior citizens, mandates medical facilities for senior citizens, and safeguards the property rights of elderly individuals against the transfer of their property through coercion (Government of India, 2007).

According to the Act, a senior citizen is defined as any individual who is sixty years old or older, and it establishes a cap for maintenance claims at ₹10,000 per month maximum. The Maintenance Tribunals possess the authority to issue decisions within a period of ninety days. The Act stipulates that neglecting elderly persons can result in imprisonment for a period of up to three months or a fine of up to ₹5,000, or both, depending on the circumstances (Rajan & Balagopal, 2021).

In the MWPSA Amendment Bill, 2019, significant improvements are proposed to be made to the existing legislation. These improvements include broadening the definition of maintenance, extending the responsibility to provide maintenance to relatives, increasing the maintenance amount ceiling, broadening the definition of abandonment, and increasing the penalties for violations (Government of India, 2019). On the other hand, the change is still being considered by Parliament.

2.2.2 Other Relevant Legislation

Several other laws indirectly address elderly concerns:

1. **The Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 (Section 125):** Provides for maintenance of parents by their children if they are unable to maintain themselves.
2. **The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005:** Protects elderly women from domestic violence, including economic and emotional abuse.
3. **The Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act, 1956:** Obligates Hindu men to maintain their aged or infirm parents.
4. **The Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Application Act, 1937:** Under Islamic law, children have a duty to maintain their elderly parents.
5. **The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016:** Addresses the needs of elderly persons with disabilities.

6. **The Mental Healthcare Act, 2017:** Provides protections for elderly persons with mental health conditions.

2.3 Policy Initiatives

With its introduction in 1999 and subsequent revision in 2011, India's National Policy on Older Persons (NPOP) is the country's first comprehensive policy framework that addresses issues that are specific to the elderly. In accordance with the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (2011), the policy intends to improve the financial security, healthcare, and housing conditions of older persons, as well as their general welfare, via the collaboration of many sectors.

Using the National Policy on Pensions as a foundation, the Atal Vayo Abhyuday Yojana, which was formerly known as the National Action Plan for Senior Citizens, was initiated with the purpose of putting into action specific policy objectives through various interventions. These interventions include the establishment of integrated senior citizen care centres, the development of programs for elderly healthcare and nutrition, and the promotion of intergenerational bonding (Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, 2020).

In addition, there are programs such as the Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme, which offers financial assistance to the elderly and the poor, the Pradhan Mantri Vaya Vandana Yojana, which offers pension plans for senior citizens, and the Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana, which offers assistive devices to senior citizens who are living below the poverty line (Dey et al., 2022).

3. Socio-Cultural Context of Aging in India

3.1 Traditional Value Systems and Changing Dynamics

The notion of dharma, which means duty, is the foundation of India's traditional approach to caring for the elderly. Dharma places an emphasis on respecting elders and fulfilling one's obligations to one's family. A supporting environment for ageing in situ was traditionally

supplied by the joint family structure. This environment consisted of many generations living together, which ensured care, companionship, and the transmission of knowledge from one generation to the next (Shah, 2020).

The modern India, on the other hand, is seeing enormous shifts in the architecture of families and the interactions between generations. Various factors, including modernisation, urbanisation, preferences for nuclear families, workforce engagement of women (who have historically been main carers), migration from rural to urban areas, and globalisation, have together contributed to the weakening of traditional support structures (Kumar & Choudhary, 2022). 5 percent of old men and 11 percent of elderly women lived alone in 2019, according to the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO, 2019). This finding reflects the rising trend of isolation among the elderly population.

3.2 Elder Abuse and Neglect

In Indian society, elder abuse is becoming an increasingly prevalent problem. This type of abuse is frequently characterised by physical, psychological, emotional, or financial exploitation of the elderly. According to the findings of a study that was carried out by HelpAge India (2023), roughly twenty-five percent of older respondents reported having experienced some form of abuse. The most common form of abuse identified by respondents was emotional abuse, which accounted for fifty-two percent of the total. It was determined that 47 percent of the culprits were sons, and 43 percent were daughters-in-law.

According to Shankardass's research from 2020, some of the elements that contribute to elder abuse are economic reliance, property disputes, intergenerational conflicts, substance misuse by family members, and mental strain experienced by carers. It is significant that the majority of cases of abuse are not reported because of emotional attachment to abusers, fear of revenge, worry about family reputation,

lack of understanding about legal redress, and physical immobility that restricts access to support services.

3.3 Economic Insecurity

The fraction of India's old population that is economically vulnerable is disproportionately high. There are a number of factors that contribute to financial insecurity, including the lack of comprehensive social security, restricted pension coverage, and a decline in labour force participation with increasing age. According to the Longitudinal Ageing Study in India (LASI, 2021), just 23.4% of senior people in India got pension benefits, and 52.4% of them remained working beyond the age of 60 because they were forced to do so due to financial need rather than because they chose to do so.

As a result of lower rates of employment involvement, widowhood, and gender-based inheritance inequities, older women experience greater rates of economic reliance than senior men do (Chanana & Talwar, 2021). This is a particular cause for worry because elder women are more likely to be economically dependent than males. There are extra issues that rural old people experience as a result of the unpredictability of the agriculture sector, the limited alternative livelihood possibilities, and the insufficient access to financial services.

4. Healthcare and Well-being

4.1 Health Status and Healthcare Access

There is a double burden of communicable and non-communicable illnesses that are affecting the older population in India. According to the India Ageing Report (WHO, 2023), around forty-five percent of the older population is affected by chronic illnesses. These diseases include cardiovascular issues, diabetes, respiratory disorders, musculoskeletal difficulties, and sensory impairments. It is estimated that 17.8 percent of the older population is affected by mental health issues such as dementia and depression; yet, these conditions continue to be underdiagnosed and less often treated.

However, despite the fact that there are policy provisions for preferential treatment, access to healthcare creates substantial problems. According to the findings of the Longitudinal Ageing Study conducted in India, 27.5% of senior people reported having difficulties gaining access to healthcare services owing to financial restrictions, transportation impediments, and extended waiting times (LASI, 2021). There is still a significant amount of money spent out of pocket, with 37 percent of households with older members incurring catastrophic health expenses.

4.2 Geriatric Care Infrastructure

India is experiencing a severe lack of specialised geriatric care infrastructure, which is a significant requirement. There are around 0.7 geriatricians for every 100,000 senior people in India, as stated by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (2022). This ratio is much lower than the suggested ratio of 5 geriatricians for every 100,000 elderly people. According to Verma and Khanna (2023), the National Program for Health Care of the Elderly, which was initiated in 2011, has the objective of establishing specialised geriatric departments at medical colleges and district hospitals. However, the execution of this program is not uniform among jurisdictions.

There are around 1,500 institutions across the country that provide long-term care services to a population of over 104 million senior people. These facilities, which include houses for the elderly, continue to be insufficient. Furthermore, there are substantial issues regarding the implementation of quality standards, the control of regulatory agencies, and the cost of current facilities (Sharma & Kapoor, 2022).

5. Implementation Challenges and Gaps

5.1 Legal Implementation Barriers

Despite progressive legislation, implementation of elderly rights protection faces several challenges:

1. **Limited Awareness:** The elderly and the authorities responsible for

implementation have a low level of understanding of the requirements of the law, which makes it difficult to effectively utilise protective measures.

2. **Procedural Complexities:** Individuals who are old are discouraged from taking legal remedies due to the lengthy processes, documentation requirements, and delays that are associated with the proceedings of the Maintenance Tribunal.
3. **Enforcement Deficiencies:** The implementation of maintenance orders and fines for non-compliance is made more difficult by monitoring methods and follow-up processes that are inadequate.
4. **Resource Constraints:** The operational efficacy of implementation agencies is hindered when they are not provided with appropriate financial and human resources (resource allocation).
5. **Coordination Gaps:** There is a reduction in the overall impact of legislative requirements due to the fragmented tactics that are used across numerous ministries and the absence of coordinated implementation strategies.

5.2 Policy Implementation Challenges

Policy initiatives similarly encounter implementation hurdles:

1. **Budgetary Limitations:** According to the Ministry of Finance (2023), the allocations for welfare programs for the elderly comprise less than 0.04% of GDP, which creates substantial limitations on the scope and quality of the programs.
2. **Administrative Silos:** The fragmentation of responsibilities between ministries and departments leads to the duplication of efforts, difficulties in coordination, and inefficiencies in execution.

3. **Monitoring Deficiencies:** There are limitations to the refining of evidence-based policy due to the absence of proper monitoring methods, outcome assessment frameworks, and impact evaluation processes.
4. **Urban-Rural Disparities:** In terms of implementation, there is a regional unevenness, with rural regions seeing more major gaps in service delivery and infrastructure.
5. **Capacity Constraints:** When it comes to successful program implementation, particularly at the local government level, limited institutional capacity, skilled human resources, and technical competence are all factors that prevent it from happening.

6. Comparative Perspectives

6.1 International Standards

With the adoption of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA) by the United Nations in 2002, global standards for addressing ageing populations were established. The MIPAA places an emphasis on three priority areas: older persons and development, advancing health and well-being into old age, and ensuring environments that are enabling and supportive (United Nations, 2002). Further articulation of criteria of independence, participation, care, self-fulfilment, and dignity may be found in the United Nations Principles for Older Persons.

Despite the fact that India has ratified these international frameworks, there are still certain gaps in the country's domestic policies that are not entirely aligned with international norms. These gaps are mainly concerning universal social security, age discrimination legislation, healthcare systems that are tailored to the old, and measures that prevent elder abuse.

6.2 Comparative Analysis with Other Jurisdictions

Several jurisdictions offer instructive approaches to elderly rights protection:

1. **Japan:** Includes the implementation of a comprehensive Long-Term Care Insurance system that offers universal coverage for services related to the care of older individuals and is financed by mandated insurance contributions.
2. **Norway:** Utilises a rights-based approach by means of the Patients' and Users' Rights Act, which ensures that senior individuals are legally entitled to receive high-quality medical treatment and social services.
3. **Australia:** The comprehensive approach to addressing elder abuse is accomplished by the use of a national framework for the prevention of elder abuse, which incorporates legal safeguards, awareness activities, service coordination, and research.
4. **Singapore:** In recognition of the contributions that senior citizens have made to the development of the nation, the Pioneer Generation Package is put into effect. This package offers financial aid, assistance with disabilities, and healthcare subsidies to senior residents.

These comparative frameworks highlight potential reform directions for strengthening India's elderly rights protection system through rights-based approaches, integrated service delivery models, specialized elder abuse prevention mechanisms, and universal social security provisions (Singh & Prinja, 2023).

7. Judicial Interventions

The Indian judiciary has played a pivotal role in interpreting and expanding elderly rights protection through landmark judgments:

1. **Ashwani Kumar v. Union of India (2018):** The Supreme Court issued extensive directions that mandated the execution

of the National Policy for Senior Citizens. These directions included forcing governments to create old-age facilities in each district, ordering frequent revisions of pension rates, and required that hospitals specialise in providing treatment for elderly patients.

2. **Dr. Ashwani Kumar v. Union of India (2016):** The Court emphasised the right of older residents to receive good treatment and to be treated with respect, and it directed the government to fully execute the Miller-Whitney Public Service Commission Act.
3. **S. Hemalatha v. Government of Andhra Pradesh (2017):** The supply of food, clothes, a place to live, medical attention, and treatment are all forms of maintenance, according to the Andhra Pradesh High Court, which confirmed this definition.
4. **Paramjit Kumar Saroya v. Union of India (2014):** A decision was made by the Delhi High Court that the MWPSA Act is more important than personal laws when it comes to concerns of maintenance for older persons.

Through these interventions, the judiciary has established that the rights of the elderly are fundamental to constitutional guarantees of dignity and equality; it has expanded the interpretation of maintenance to include quality healthcare and emotional support; it has emphasised the responsibility of the state in ensuring the welfare of the elderly; and it has reinforced the primacy of dedicated legislation for the elderly over personal laws. (Raju, 2021).

8. Reforms and Way Forward

8.1 Legal and Policy Reforms

1. **Legislative Enhancements:** Accelerate the adoption of the MWPSA Amendment Bill, which includes provisions for increased maintenance payments, more stringent penalties for non-compliance,

and wider protection against exploitation.

2. **Universal Social Security:** A robust universal social security system for the aged should be developed. This system should include substantial pension payments that are adjusted to inflation and the expansion of coverage beyond those who fall below the poverty line.
3. **Age Discrimination Legislation:** Encourage the passage of specific legislation that would outlaw age-based discrimination in a variety of fields, including employment, healthcare, financial services, and others.
4. **Elder Abuse Prevention Framework:** The establishment of a national framework for the prevention of elder abuse should include the establishment of standardised reporting procedures, protection officers, shelter houses, and rehabilitation programs.
5. **Integrated Policy Approach:** Within the context of a coordinated implementation structure, a uniform National Elderly Policy Framework should be developed. This framework should incorporate healthcare, social security, housing, and legal protection.

8.2 Implementation Strengthening

1. **Institutional Mechanisms:** The establishment of a National Commission for Senior Citizens that is equipped with investigation powers, regulatory authority, and monitoring capacities is going to be necessary in order to supervise the execution of welfare programs for the aged.
2. **Capacity Building:** The capacity of implementation agencies should be strengthened by providing individuals engaged in the delivery of services to the elderly with specialised training, accessible technological resources, and opportunities for professional growth.

3. **Monitoring Systems:** For the purpose of informing evidence-based policy revisions, rigorous monitoring and evaluation frameworks should be developed. These frameworks should include standardised indicators, frequent data collecting procedures, and periodic effect evaluations.
4. **Technology Integration:** Leverage digital technology for the purpose of delivering services in an efficient manner. Some examples of these technologies are online maintenance claim filing, telemedicine services for geriatric healthcare, and digital interventions for financial inclusion.
5. **Local Governance Engagement:** Specifically mandated tasks, resource allocations, and performance accountability procedures should be implemented in order to strengthen the role that local governing institutions play in the welfare of the aged.
4. **Productive Aging:** Senior volunteer programs, mentorship efforts, and job possibilities that are user-friendly for the elderly should be implemented in order to create chances for the sustained social and economic participation of elderly people.
5. **Community-Based Care:** Addressing the issue of isolation and providing alternatives to community-based care may be accomplished through the establishment of neighbourhood support networks, community day care centres for the elderly, and social involvement platforms.

9. Conclusion

This in-depth research of the rights of senior persons in India finds a complicated relationship between the existence of progressive legislative frameworks and the ongoing difficulties that are associated with their implementation. There are major gaps in the process of turning these safeguards into lived realities for India's fast rising senior population, despite the fact that India has constructed a foundation for the protection of elderly rights through constitutional provisions, specific legislation, governmental efforts, and judicial interventions.

The weakening of conventional support systems makes it necessary for the state and society to strengthen its procedures in order to guarantee the wellbeing of the elderly. In order to go forward, India has to make a paradigm change from a welfare-based approach to a rights-based framework that recognises senior persons as rights-holders who are entitled to dignity, autonomy, participation, care, and protection from discrimination and abuse.

In order to effectively defend the rights of the aged, a multi-faceted strategy that incorporates legal, legislative, institutional, and socio-cultural initiatives is required. The strengthening of legal provisions, the enhancement of implementation mechanisms,

8.3 Socio-Cultural Interventions

1. **Intergenerational Programs:** Establishing systematic intergenerational interaction programs in educational institutions, community centres, and urban planning can help to cultivate mutual understanding and support among people of different generations.
2. **Awareness Campaigns:** Establish all-encompassing awareness campaigns that bring attention to the rights of elders, the support services that are available, and the protocols for reporting instances of elder abuse.
3. **Family Support Systems:** Programs that provide respite care, training for carers, financial incentives, and counselling assistance should be developed in order to increase the capacity of families to provide care for their loved ones.

the development of comprehensive social security systems, the improvement of healthcare access, the prevention of elder abuse, the creation of surroundings that are age-friendly, and the promotion of intergenerational solidarity are all included in this context.

While India is in the process of navigating its demographic shift, the protection of the rights of the elderly is not just a legal requirement but also a civic necessity that reflects the country's dedication to inclusiveness, decency, and social justice. India is able to establish a framework for the protection of old rights that is more responsive and effective by tackling current difficulties via coordinated reforms. This framework will honour India's historic values of respect for elders while also adjusting to the realities of the modern world.

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SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND MODERN CRIMES

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ABSTRACT

In 2015, the United Nations recognized the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a globally accepted framework for tackling critical social, environmental, and economic challenges. However, the growth of modern crimes like cybercrime, human trafficking, fraud, and environmental offenses presents major obstacles to achieving these goals.

Modern crimes threaten the SDGs in various ways. For instance, cybercrime weakens institutions (SDG 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions) and disrupts economic stability (SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth). Human trafficking exploits vulnerable groups, violating basic human rights (SDGs 5: Gender Equality, SDG 8, and SDG 16). Corruption erodes public trust and hampers efforts to eliminate poverty (SDG 1: No Poverty) and reduce inequality (SDG 10). Environmental crimes, such as illegal deforestation and pollution, directly affect SDGs 13 (Climate Action), 14 (Life Below Water), and 15 (Life on Land).

To address these threats, governments, businesses, and civil society must collaborate to enforce laws, enhance cybersecurity, promote transparency, and advance education. International cooperation is essential to combat transnational crimes and ensure justice. Integrating crime prevention strategies into the SDG framework is vital for achieving a sustainable and secure future.

By addressing modern crimes through sustainable policies and effective law enforcement, societies can ensure progress towards the SDGs while fostering peace, prosperity, and environmental preservation.

KEY WORDS: United Nations, Sustainable Development Goals, Millennium Development Goals, Contemporary Crimes, Cybercrime, Human Trafficking, and Environmental Offenses.

INTRODUCTION

In 2015, the United Nations adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a worldwide initiative aimed at ending poverty, protecting the planet, and ensuring peace and prosperity for everyone by 2030. These 17 goals address key areas of sustainable development, including social inclusion, economic progress, environmental protection, and good governance. Achieving the SDGs requires international cooperation and the

elimination of obstacles such as inequality, corruption, and environmental harm.

Nonetheless, the rise of modern crimes poses a significant challenge to the achievement of these goals. Crimes such as terrorism, financial fraud, corruption, human trafficking, cybercrime, and environmental offenses threaten economic stability, social equity, and the integrity of institutions. For example, human trafficking exploits vulnerable populations, undermining SDG 5 (Gender

Equality) and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth); corruption weakens institutional frameworks, affecting SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions); and environmental crimes obstruct efforts related to SDG 13 (Climate Action) and SDG 15 (Life on Land).

To address these challenges, governments, businesses, and civil society organizations must strengthen cybersecurity, enhance legal frameworks, promote transparency, and foster ethical leadership. Achieving the SDGs and creating a just, sustainable, and secure future relies greatly on effective crime prevention measures and strong law enforcement strategies.⁷³⁸

Overview of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

In 2015, as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the United Nations adopted 17 global objectives known as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These goals serve as a framework for addressing key global challenges, including poverty, inequality, environmental harm, climate change, and the promotion of peace and justice. The SDGs aim to create a sustainable and thriving future for all people.

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals:

1. **No Poverty:** Eliminate extreme poverty and ensure universal access to social protection systems.
2. **Zero Hunger:** Encourage sustainable farming practices, improve nutritional standards, and achieve food security.
3. **Good Health and Well-Being:** Promote healthy living and ensure the availability of quality healthcare services for all.
4. **High-quality education:** Provide equitable and inclusive education

to support lifelong learning opportunities.

5. **Gender Equality:** Eliminate gender-based discrimination and strengthen the rights and opportunities of women and girls.
6. **Clean Water and Sanitation:** Ensure universal access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation services.
7. **Clean and Affordable Energy:** Promote the adoption of modern, sustainable energy solutions.
8. **Good Work and Economic Development:** Foster job creation, economic growth, and safe working environments.
9. **Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure:** Promote sustainable industrial practices and develop resilient infrastructure.
10. **Less Inequality:** Reduce the disparities in opportunities and wealth both between and within countries.
11. **Sustainable Cities and Communities:** Develop sustainable, secure, and environmentally friendly urban areas.
12. **Responsible Production and Consumption:** Promote sustainable production and consumption practices.
13. **Climate Action:** Take immediate action to reduce the impacts of climate change.
14. **Life Below Water:** Safeguard and manage seas, oceans, and marine resources sustainably.
15. **Life on Land:** Conserve, restore, and promote the sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystems.
16. **Peace, Justice, and Robust Institutions:** Promote inclusive, peaceful communities and effective governance.

⁷³⁸ <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

17. Partnerships for the Goals:

Strengthen global partnerships for sustainable development.⁷³⁹

DEFINITION OF MODERN CRIMES:

Modern crimes refer to illegal activities that have emerged or evolved due to globalization, technological advancements, and societal changes. These crimes are complex and difficult to regulate, as they often exploit global networks, financial systems, and digital infrastructure.

Types of Modern Crimes

- 1) **Cybercrime:** Offenses carried out via the internet, such as ransomware attacks, identity fraud, hacking, and cyber scams.
- 2) **Human trafficking:** The illegal trafficking of people for purposes such as slavery, forced labor, or sexual exploitation.
- 3) **Financial Crimes:** These include cryptocurrency scams, insider trading, tax fraud, and money laundering.
- 4) **Environmental Crimes:** Offenses that damage the environment, such as pollution, illegal wildlife trade, and deforestation.
- 5) **Terrorism and Extremism:** The application of violence or cyberattacks to destabilize governments and threaten security.
- 6) **Organised Crime:** Criminal networks engage in activities such as illegal gambling, arms smuggling, and drug trafficking.

These crimes pose significant risks to security, economic stability, and sustainable development. Combating modern crimes involves enforcing stricter regulations,

enhancing global cooperation, and utilizing advanced technologies in law enforcement.

The Impact of Modern Crimes on Sustainable Development

Modern crimes such as financial fraud, corruption, human trafficking, cybercrime, and environmental offenses pose major obstacles to achieving the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These crimes hinder sustainable progress by weakening economies, increasing inequalities, compromising governance, and harming the environment.

1. Economic Effects

This issue is closely connected to SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure), and SDG 1 (No Poverty). Financial crimes and corruption divert public funds meant for development, reducing investments in critical areas like infrastructure, healthcare, and education. Fraud and cybercrime cost businesses billions, weakening job opportunities and threatening economic stability. Additionally, human trafficking and forced labor exploit vulnerable populations, limiting their chances for fair wages and decent work.

2. Importance for Human Rights and Society

This issue is linked to SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions). Organized crime and human trafficking exploit vulnerable groups, with women and children being especially at risk. Cybercrime and online scams target personal information, leading to financial losses and emotional distress. Meanwhile, corruption within public institutions weakens trust in governance and legal systems, fueling political instability.

Example:

According to the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), more than 50 million people

⁷³⁹<https://www.undp.org/sustainable-development-goals>

globally suffer from forced labor and human trafficking, violations of their human rights that hinder progress toward gender equality and justice.⁷⁴⁰

3. Environmental Destruction

This issue is connected to SDGs 13 (Climate Action), 14 (Life Below Water), and 15 (Life on Land). Pollution, poaching, and illegal logging all damage ecosystems and biodiversity. Money laundering and illegal trade fund activities that destroy forests and marine life. Financial fraud and cybercrime enable illicit transactions that support environmental crimes.

Example:

The World Bank estimates that environmental crimes result in annual losses ranging from \$110 billion to \$281 billion, weakening efforts to protect natural resources and combat climate change.⁷⁴¹

4. Institutional Weakness and Governance

Relevant SDGs include SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions). Corruption within legal and law enforcement institutions undermines crime prevention efforts. Financial crimes and tax evasion reduce government revenue, affecting the funding of social services. Weak regulatory frameworks make it difficult to effectively enforce laws against modern crimes.

Example:

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) highlights corruption as a major barrier to achieving SDG 16, as it undermines public trust and reduces transparency.⁷⁴²

5. Methods for Dealing with Contemporary Crimes for Sustainable Growth

Boosting International Cooperation: Countries must work together to

combat transnational crimes.

Enhancing Cybersecurity:

Investing in digital security can help reduce cybercrime threats.

Enforcing Anti-Corruption Laws:

Stronger legal frameworks are needed to tackle financial crimes.

Promoting Ethical Business Practices:

Companies should adopt policies focused on sustainability.

Increasing Public Awareness:

Educational campaigns can help raise awareness and fight exploitation.

Strategies to Combat Modern Crimes and Support Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Contemporary crimes, including organized crime, cybercrime, human trafficking, corruption, and illicit financial flows, pose significant threats to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions). To combat these crimes and further the SDGs, legal reforms, global cooperation, technology-driven solutions, and community engagement are essential.

Important Techniques for Combating Contemporary Crimes

1. Fortifying Law Enforcement and Legal Frameworks

Adhering to international agreements such as the UN Convention Against Corruption and the UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime. Tackling corruption within government and law enforcement, while reinforcing judicial independence. Enforcing harsher penalties and improving legal processes to combat organized crime, human trafficking, and cybercrime.

2. Strengthening Global Collaboration

Strengthening global partnerships to identify and dismantle transnational criminal

⁷⁴⁰ <https://www.unodc.org>

⁷⁴¹ <https://www.worldbank.org>

⁷⁴² <https://www.undp.org>

networks through organizations like Interpol and the UNODC (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime). Nations share intelligence and effective strategies to combat crimes such as drug trafficking and cyber fraud.

3. The Use of Technology to Prevent Crime

Implementing AI-driven cybersecurity measures to prevent identity theft and cyberattacks. Enhancing digital forensics capabilities to trace illicit financial activities and prevent money laundering. Minimizing financial fraud by using blockchain technology for secure and transparent transactions.

4. Combating Money Laundering and Corruption

Establishing transparent governance systems to reduce corruption in both public and private sectors. Strengthening regulatory frameworks to recover embezzled assets and track illicit financial transactions. Encouraging initiatives that protect whistleblowers to foster the reporting of corruption.

5. Social and Community Involvement

Implementing educational programs to raise public awareness of crimes such as environmental offenses, cyber fraud, and human trafficking. Strengthening rehabilitation and reintegration programs for offenders to reduce recidivism. Promoting partnerships between the public and private sectors to fund initiatives that enhance economic opportunities and prevent crime.

6. Prevention of Environmental Crime

To support SDG 13 (Climate Action), laws addressing pollution, deforestation, and illegal wildlife trafficking should be reinforced. Enhancing efforts to combat environmental crimes committed by corporations.

How the SDGs Are Supported by These Strategies

- I. SDG 16: Ensures strong legal frameworks, promotes justice, and reduces corruption.

- II. SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth): A fair business environment is promoted through the prevention of financial crimes.
- III. SDG 13 (Climate Action): Ecosystem protection is strengthened by addressing environmental crimes.
- IV. SDG 5 (Gender Equality): Women's rights and safety are upheld by tackling gender-based violence and human trafficking.

Real Cases of Modern Crimes Affecting Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Contemporary crimes, particularly financial and environmental offenses, have a profound effect on sustainable development. Below are some real-life examples that illustrate this connection:

1. Nigeria's Operation Aurum

This operation targeted illegal mining and mercury trafficking, which led to deforestation, water contamination, and widespread environmental damage. It also exposed the links between illegal mining and human rights abuses, including child labor and forced labor, affecting SDGs related to social justice, economic development, and environmental sustainability. A significant quantity of illegally mined resources was confiscated, and over fifty-two individuals were arrested.

2. Operation Bahia Negra (Paraguay, Brazil, Bolivia)

Focused on dismantling criminal networks involved in forced labor, illegal poaching, and timber trafficking in ecologically sensitive regions. The operation led to the arrest of 23 individuals and the confiscation of wildlife trafficking networks. This case highlights the link between environmental crimes and other serious offenses like organized crime and human trafficking.

3. Illegal Networks for Wildlife Trafficking and Logging

For over a decade, INTERPOL has been combating organized environmental crime,

dismantling animal trafficking networks and seizing millions of dollars' worth of illegally harvested timber. These crimes harm ecosystems and biodiversity, negatively impacting SDG 13 (Climate Action).

4. Environmental degradation and financial crimes

Criminal organizations frequently launder the proceeds of environmental crimes through legitimate markets, exploiting weak anti-money laundering systems. The World Bank has emphasized the need for collaboration between environmental policymakers and financial crime experts to effectively address financial crime. These examples highlight the direct impact of modern crimes on sustainable development and the necessity of international cooperation to combat them.

Conclusion

Modern crimes such as financial fraud, human trafficking, cybercrime, corruption, and environmental offenses pose significant risks to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These crimes hinder the creation of a fair and prosperous society by obstructing social justice, economic development, and environmental sustainability.

Tackling these crimes requires the collaboration of governments, businesses, and civil society to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Strengthening legal frameworks, fostering international cooperation, advancing technology, and engaging communities are essential to ensuring the continued success and inclusivity of sustainable development efforts. If modern crimes are allowed to persist, worsening inequality, undermining institutions, and hindering economic progress, achieving the SDGs will be nearly impossible. A multi-stakeholder approach, supported by innovation, governance, and policy reform, is crucial to making the world safer and more equitable.

Suggestions for Combating Modern Crimes and Supporting SDGs

Suggestions for Combating Modern Crimes and Supporting SDGs namely,

- 1) Fortify national and international legal systems

Implement more stringent laws to combat cybercrime, trafficking, and corruption. Ensure judicial and law enforcement independence to reduce impunity. Promote laws that safeguard whistleblowers to expose corruption and financial crimes.

- 2) Strengthen International Collaboration and Information Exchange

Countries should strengthen their collaboration with UNODC, Interpol, and regional organizations to track down criminals and illicit financial flows. Implement cross-border crime-fighting agreements and extradition treaties. Foster international cooperation in cybersecurity to combat cybercrimes.

- 3) Make Use of Technology to Reduce Crime

Utilize big data, blockchain, and artificial intelligence to detect and prevent financial crimes. Strengthen cybersecurity regulations to protect individuals from identity theft and fraud. Employ digital tools and satellite monitoring to track illegal activities such as animal trafficking and deforestation.

- 4) Promote Good Governance and Transparency

Implement open government data platforms to enhance transparency in public spending. Support corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives to promote ethical business practices. Strengthen banking regulations to prevent illegal transactions and tax evasion.

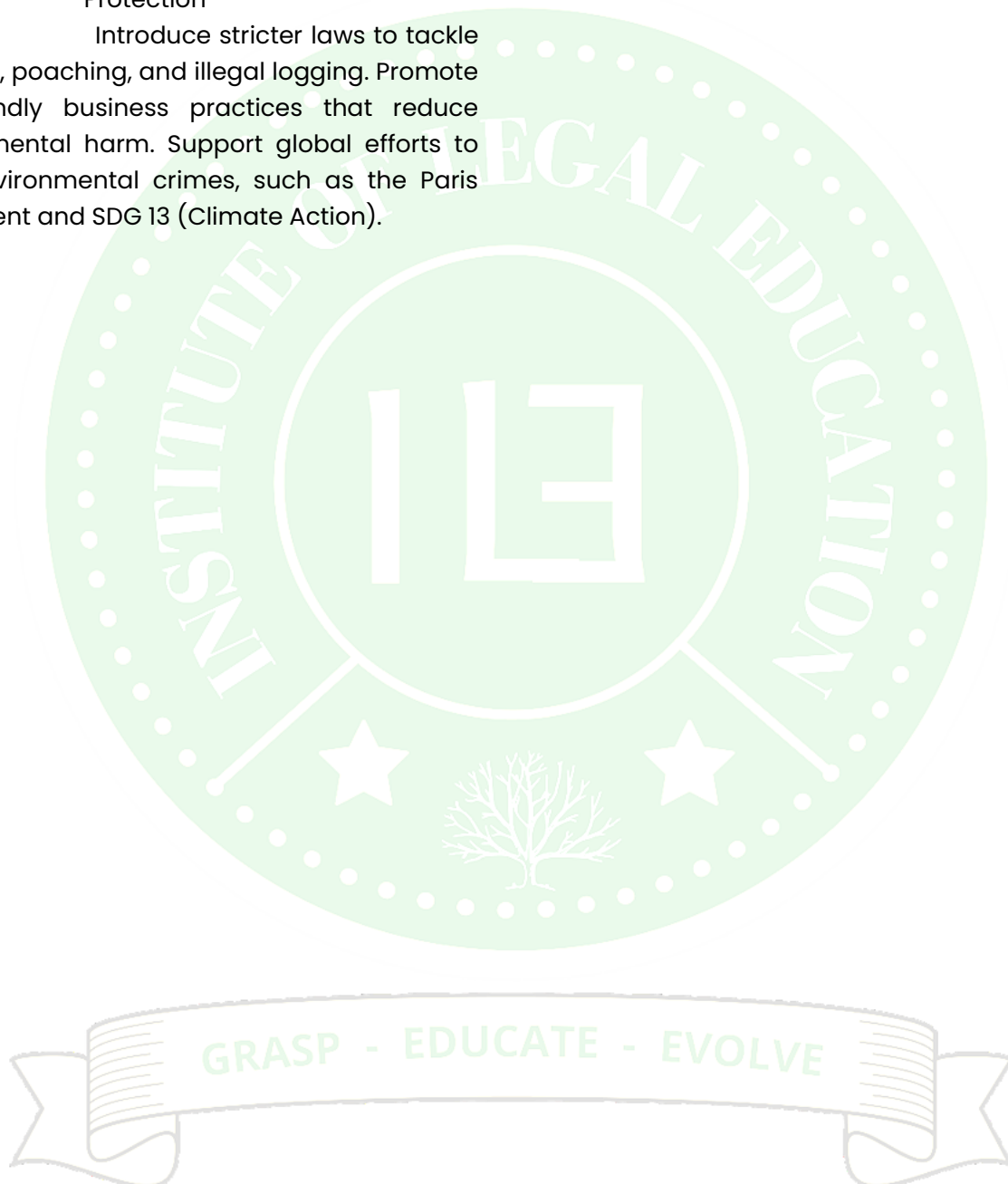
- 5) Increase Knowledge and Strengthen Communities

Initiate educational and awareness campaigns focused on financial

fraud, environmental crimes, and human trafficking. Provide economic opportunities and skills development to reduce the vulnerability of local communities to crime. Support NGOs and civil society organizations that focus on victim rehabilitation and crime prevention.

6) Strengthen Environmental Protection

Introduce stricter laws to tackle pollution, poaching, and illegal logging. Promote eco-friendly business practices that reduce environmental harm. Support global efforts to fight environmental crimes, such as the Paris Agreement and SDG 13 (Climate Action).



MISLEADING ADVERTISEMENT AND CONSUMER PROTECTION IN INDIA IN COMPARISON WITH USA AND UK

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Abstract

Misleading advertising poses serious danger to market equity, consumer rights, and the overall integrity of business. This article reports on the phenomenon of deceptive advertising, examines its most prevalent forms such as false presentation, exaggeration of benefits, and hidden charges. It cites the harmful implications on consumers such as financial loss, erosion of trust, and impaired choices. The controversy is extended to global consumer protection law and the role of such regulatory bodies as the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), Advertising Standards Authority (ASA), and India's Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) in limiting such practices. Further, it outlines available remedies under the law, penalties to be imposed upon offenders, and recent enforcement proceedings. Despite such safeguards, enforcement issues—most notably in the digital advertising platform and cross-border contexts—remains a lingering concern. The article emphasizes the imperative need for consumer education and online literacy as ancillary tools in identifying and countering misleading advertisements. Finally, it advocates more stringent regulations, ethical advertising, and engaged consumer involvement to make the advertising space transparent and credible.

Keywords: Misleading Advertisement, Consumer Protection, FTC, ASA, CCPA, Consumer Protection Act 2019, Consumer Rights

Introduction

In the modern media-driven world, consumers are overwhelmed with advertisement, so they become all the more vulnerable to false advertising. Such deceitful tactics, from exaggerated claims to concealing vital details, erode consumer rights and pervert market fairness. Tackling this worldwide issue, India's Consumer Protection Act, 2019 brings in elaborate measures, in particular, instituting the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA). Equipped with Section 21 of the Act, the CCPA can penalize manufacturers and endorsers for releasing false advertisements and thus uphold ethical marketing practices and consumer confidence. (Nikesh Sharma, 2021)

Internationally, there are various frameworks that support these aims. The United Nations Guidelines for Consumer Protection (UNGCP) promote fair business practices and highlight the need for correct information to enable consumers. The OECD Good Practice Guide on Online Advertising provides guidelines to avoid deceptive marketing, particularly on online platforms. The European Union's Unfair Commercial Practices Directive (2005/29/EC) forbids misleading and aggressive commercial practices, providing a high level of consumer protection within member states. In the United States, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) proactively enforces against misrepresentation in advertising, as seen in the \$10 million settlement with CarShield for misrepresented

claims regarding vehicle service contracts. (Aarya Srivastava, 024)

The paper explores the systemic problems of misleading advertisement and analyzes the legal, regulatory, and practical regimes that deal with them in various jurisdictions. It analyzes the efficacy of enforcement strategies, the difficulties faced by regulators in the digital age, and the changing role of consumers as vigilant monitors. In an examination of court precedents, regulatory policies, and public campaigns, the research recommends an integrated approach—combining legal deterrence and consumer empowerment—to maintain ethical standards of advertising in both traditional and digital media spaces. (J. Edward Russo, 1981)

Regulatory Framework

To counter the menace of deceptive ads, numerous nations have enacted strong consumer protection laws. Such laws seek to make advertising procedures transparent, accountable, and equitable. In America, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) regulates the Federal Trade Commission Act, which forbids "unfair or deceptive acts or practices in or affecting commerce." Equally, the United Kingdom is regulated under the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008, which criminalizes misleading consumers by acts or omissions. In India, the Consumer Protection Act, 2019 provides specific provisions against misleading advertisements. It defines a misleading advertisement as one that falsely describes a product or service or gives a false guarantee likely to mislead consumers. The Act empowers the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) to take action against false and misleading ads.

• USA

In the United States, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) regulates truth-in-advertising statutes to shield consumers against misleading advertisement practices.

Key Provisions

Truthfulness and Evidence: Advertisements should be truthful, not deceptive, and backed by evidence. Statements must be explicit and founded on credible data.

Legal Basis: Section 15 of U.S. Code § 52 makes it illegal to disseminate false advertisements, particularly in marketing products or services.

Enforcement: The FTC may order penalties, issue cease and desist orders, and require corrective advertising. As an example, Williams-Sonoma was penalized almost \$3.2 million for deceptive marketing of items as "Made in USA." (Lia, 2024)

• UK

In the UK, the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) regulates advertising standards so that advertisements are legal, decent, honest, and truthful.

Key Provisions

CAP Code Compliance: The Committee of Advertising Practice (CAP) Code provides guidelines to avoid misleading advertising. Section 3 specifically deals with the requirement of clarity and substantiation in advertisements.

Transparency: Adverts should be distinctly identifiable from editorial. For instance, a Scottish Power advert was removed for copying the style of a TV programme, risking confusing viewers that it was part of the show.

Sanctions: The ASA can demand non-compliant adverts to be changed or pulled and refer serious offenses to Trading Standards for prosecution. (asa.org.uk.com)

• India

India has established a comprehensive legal framework to protect consumers from misleading advertisements, primarily through the Consumer Protection Act, 2019 and supplementary guidelines.

Key Provisions

Definition of Misleading Advertisement

Under Section 2(28) of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019, a misleading advertisement is defined as one that:

Provides false descriptions of a product or service; or

Gives false guarantees or is likely to mislead consumers regarding the nature, substance, quantity, or quality of a product or service; or

Constitutes an unfair trade practice through express representation; or

Deliberately conceals important information;

Regulatory Authority: Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA)

Created under Section 10 of the Act, the CCPA is authorized to:

Investigate contraventions concerning consumer rights and unfair trade practices,

Order the discontinuation or alteration of misleading advertisements,

Impose fines on manufacturers, advertisers, and endorsers,

Bar endorsers from advertising products or services for a period of time.

Penalties for Misleading Advertisements

Section 21: The CCPA may impose a penalty of up to ₹10 lakh on manufacturers, advertisers, and endorsers for misleading advertisements. For repeated offenses, the penalty can go up to ₹50 lakh.

Section 89: Offenders can be imprisoned for up to 5 years, fined up to ₹50 lakh, or both.

Guidelines for Prevention of Misleading Advertisements and Endorsements, 2022

These guidelines, published by the CCPA, seek to:

Ensure advertisements are truthful and not misleading.

Ban surrogate advertising.

Require endorsements to be based on true opinions.

Prevent bait advertisements that entice consumers with good deals without the intent to deliver them.

Sector-Specific Guidelines

Recognizing the prevalence of misleading advertisements in certain sectors, the CCPA has issued specific guidelines, such as:

Coaching Sector Guidelines (2024): Addressing false claims and deceptive practices in educational coaching advertisements.

Role of the Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI)

The ASCI is a self-regulatory organization that:

Monitors and ensures ethical advertising practices.

Addresses consumer complaints regarding misleading advertisements.

Collaborates with government bodies to uphold advertising standards.

India's legislation, synthesizing statutory provisions and self-regulation, aims at safeguarding consumers against deceptive advertising. The Consumer Protection Act, 2019, coupled with the active role of CCPA and ASCI, ensures advertising practices are transparent, true, and in the consumer's best interest. (Chhabra, 2021) (Densy, 2024)

Regulatory Authorities

Indian, US, and British regulatory bodies have critical roles in deterring deceptive advertisements, protecting consumers through enforcement, rules, and coordination. An overview of their roles follows:

- India: Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) & Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI)

CCPA: Formed under the Consumer Protection Act, 2019, the CCPA has the authority to investigate and penalize false advertising. It has the power to fine, direct the stoppage of fraudulent advertisements, and ban endorsers from advertising products for certain durations.

ASCI: A self-regulatory organization that oversees the content of advertising to ensure compliance with ethical norms. ASCI examines complaints and has the ability to suggest

changes or withdrawal of non-compliant advertisements.

Collaboration: The CCPA and ASCI have collaborated to tighten advertising regulation. ASCI refers non-compliant ads to the CCPA for necessary action under the Consumer Protection Act. (Densy, 2024)

- United States: Federal Trade Commission (FTC)

FTC: The main federal agency that enforces truth-in-advertising laws. The FTC's Division of Advertising Practices ensures that ads are truthful, not deceptive, and supported.

Enforcement Actions: The FTC watches for advertising in many media, including the internet, and acts against misleading marketing tactics. For example, it has sent notices to many firms concerning unsubstantiated claims about products. (Richards, 1990)

- United Kingdom: Advertising Standards Authority (ASA)

ASA: A self-regulatory body that is independent and that regulates advertising in every possible medium in the UK. It makes sure advertisements are legal, decent, honest, and truthful.

Regulatory Actions: ASA examines complaints and actively monitors advertisements. It has disciplined firms for false advertising, including prohibiting ads that employed "dark pattern" techniques to deceive consumers.

Enforcement: Although the ASA does not possess statutory powers, it is able to refer advertisers who do not comply to Trading Standards for enforcement and collaborates with other regulators such as Ofcom. (PLLC, 2023)

These agencies together provide that the advertising methods are fair and transparent, safeguarding consumers against misleading advertising methods.

Legal Remedies

Consumers who have been deceived by false advertisements have several legal remedies in India, the United States, and the United

Kingdom. The following is an overview of the available recourse in each country:

- India: Legal Remedies under the Consumer Protection Act, 2019

The Consumer Protection Act, 2019 provides consumers with the power to pursue redress for misleading advertisements through the following channels:

Filing Complaints: Consumers can file complaints with the District, State, or National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commissions for complaints related to misleading advertisements.

Compensation and Damages: Victims can be compensated for losses, pain, and suffering, and, in some cases, punitive damages.

Penalties for Advertisers: The Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) can impose a fine of up to ₹10 lakh on manufacturers, advertisers, and endorsers for false advertisements. Repeat offenders can face increased penalties and endorsement bans.

Other Legal Provisions: In health-related claim cases, the Drugs and Magic Remedies (Objectionable Advertisements) Act, 1954 forbids false claims of curing diseases such as diabetes or asthma, with the offenders being put behind bars and fined.

- United States: Legal Remedies under Federal Law

In the United States, consumers have several ways to deal with false advertising:

Federal Trade Commission (FTC) Enforcement: The FTC may act against misleading advertisements, requesting injunctions, fines, and corrective advertising in order to protect consumers.

Private Lawsuits under the Lanham Act: Competitors may bring civil actions for false advertising under Section 43(a) of the Lanham Act, seeking damages or injunctive relief.

State Consumer Protection Statutes: Numerous states have false advertising statutes providing for consumer lawsuits against companies for

deceptive practices even when there are no federal claims.

- United Kingdom: Remedies through Consumer Protection Legislation in the UK

In the United Kingdom, the following remedies may be sought against misleading adverts:

Complaints to the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA): ASA looks into complaints regarding misleading ads and has the power to order their revision or withdrawal.

Trading Standards Enforcement: Trading Standards officers can apply to courts for an injunction to prevent misleading advertisements and prosecute perpetrators under the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008.

Civil Enforcement: Consumers can bring civil action for damages in case of loss caused by deceptive advertising activities.

All these legal frameworks in combination strive to discourage misleading marketing practices and grant consumers options to seek remedies and enforce their rights.

Enforcement Challenges

Enforcing anti-deceptive advertisement laws poses a number of challenges in India, the United States, and the United Kingdom. These challenges are due to accelerated digitalization, jurisdictional issues, and changing advertising trends.

- India: Enforcement Challenges

Digital Spread: The increasing use of digital advertising has brought a proliferation of false advertisements online. In 2024, the Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI) said 85% of advertisements it reviewed were digital and only 75% of these complied with regulations, as against 97% compliance for television and print ads.

Regulatory Gaps: Strong laws such as the Consumer Protection Act, 2019 notwithstanding, enforcement are uneven. A study pointed out that although India has good provisions to

address unfair trade practices and misleading advertisements, enforcement is poor.

Judicial Backlogs: Congested courts and procedural delays impede timely redressal of consumer complaints against misleading advertisement.

- United States: Enforcement Challenges

Litigation Challenges: Pursuing false advertising through the courts can be expensive and time-consuming. Problems include being open to counterclaims and congested court lists, which can result in delaying the settlement of disputes.

Changing Advertising Practices: The fast-paced nature of advertising, particularly with the rise of social media and influencer marketing, makes it difficult to monitor and enforce compliance with advertising rules.

- United Kingdom: Enforcement Challenges

Influencer Marketing: The growth of influencer marketing has resulted in cases where endorsements are not obviously identified as advertisements, deceiving consumers. The UK's Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) has warned social media influencers to comply with advertising regulations, highlighting the importance of transparency.

Regulatory Coordination: Although Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) regulates advertising standards, enforcement processes could involve coordinating with other institutions such as the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA), which might cause delay in responding to misleading advertisements.

In short, although all three nations have created systems to tackle deceptive advertisements, enforcement issues still abound thanks to digital proliferation, legal issues, and the dynamic nature of advertising. To conquer these challenges, there is a need for ongoing reform of regulatory measures and increased inter-agency cooperation.

Related Case Laws

1. Indian Medical Association & Anr. v. Union of India & Ors. (Writ Petition (C) No. 645/2022)

In this case, the Supreme Court addressed concerns over misleading advertisements by Patanjali Ayurved, particularly regarding claims about curing COVID-19 with their product 'Coronil'. The Court mandated that all advertisers must submit a self-declaration certificate before releasing advertisements, aiming to curb the proliferation of misleading advertisements and ensure consumer protection. (Indian Medical Association & Anr. v. Union of India & Ors., 2024)

2. Havells India Ltd. & Anr. v. Amritanshu Khaitan & Ors. (Delhi High Court, 2015)

This case dealt with comparative advertising where Havells alleged that the defendants' advertisement was misleading and disparaging. The Delhi High Court held that while comparative advertising is permissible, it must not be misleading or disparaging. The Court emphasized that advertisements should not mislead consumers or discredit other products. (Havells India Ltd & Anr vs. Amritanshu Khaitan & Ors, 2015)

3. Horlicks Ltd. & Anr. v. Heinz India Pvt. Ltd. (Delhi High Court, 2018)

In this case, Horlicks challenged an advertisement by Heinz India, claiming it was misleading and disparaging. The Delhi High Court reiterated that while comparative advertising is allowed, it should not be misleading or disparaging. The Court restrained Heinz from airing the advertisement in its current form. (Horlicks Ltd. & Anr. v. Heinz India Pvt. Ltd., 2018)

4. Colgate-Palmolive (India) Ltd. v. Anchor Health & Beauty Care Pvt. Ltd. (Madras High Court)

Colgate-Palmolive filed a suit against Anchor for publishing advertisements that allegedly disparaged Colgate's

products. The Madras High Court held that while comparative advertising is permissible, it should not be misleading or disparaging. The Court granted an injunction restraining Anchor from publishing the impugned advertisements. (Colgate-Palmolive (India) Ltd. v. Anchor Health & Beauty Care Pvt. Ltd., 2003)

5. Brihans Natural Products Advertisement Complaints (2014 & 2017)

Brihans Natural Products faced complaints to the Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI) regarding misleading advertisements for their products, including CleanComb and Greenleaf Pure Aloe Vera Skin Gel. The complaints alleged violations of the Drugs and Magic Remedies (Objectionable Advertisements) Act, 1954.

(United States)

1. FTC v. Colgate-Palmolive Co., 380 U.S. 374 (1965)

The Supreme Court held that Colgate-Palmolive's use of deceptive demonstrations in advertisements violated the Federal Trade Commission Act. (FTC v. Colgate-Palmolive Co., 380 U.S. 374 (1965), 1965)

2. Jody Shackelford v. Morgan & Morgan (2024)

An Arkansas lawyer sued Morgan & Morgan for allegedly deceptive advertising practices that misled consumers and violated professional conduct rules. (Jody Shackelford v. Morgan & Morgan (2024), 2025)

(United Kingdom)

1. Wessex Water Advertisement Ban (2024)

The Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) banned Wessex Water's TV ad for omitting information about the company's sewage pollution record, deeming it misleading. (Ball v Wessex

Water Service Ltd(t/a Wessex Water), 2005)

2. Frank Reddaway Ltd v Banham [1896] AC 199

The House of Lords ruled that the use of the term "Camel Hair Belting" by a competitor constituted passing off, as the term had acquired a secondary meaning associated with the plaintiff's product. This case underscores the protection against misleading representations in product branding.

3. McDonald's Corp v Steel & Morris (1997) – "McLibel Case"

McDonald's sued two activists for distributing pamphlets criticizing the company's practices. The court found some claims to be libelous while others were upheld as true. The case highlighted the tension between freedom of expression and protection against misleading statements. (McDonald's Corp v Steel & Morris (1997), 2005)

4. Nike and Sky Advertisements (2024)

The ASA banned advertisements by Nike and Sky for employing "dark pattern" tactics. Nike's ad misrepresented a product's price, and Sky's Now TV ad failed to clearly disclose auto-renewal terms, both deemed misleading to consumers. (Badshah, 2024)

5. Aldi vs. Sainsbury's Price Comparison (2024)

The ASA upheld a complaint by Sainsbury's against Aldi, finding that Aldi's advertisement comparing Christmas dinner prices was misleading due to inadequate substantiation of the claim. (Davey, 2024)

Way Forward

To tackle the issues with enforcing laws against deceptive advertising, a multi-pronged approach is needed. The following are some recommendations to enhance consumer protection and promote truthful advertising practices:

Strengthen Regulatory Cooperation

India: Promote closer cooperation between the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) and self-regulatory agencies such as the Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI) in order to coordinate enforcement action and exchange best practices.

United States: Encourage coordination between the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and state-level consumer protection agencies to ensure consistent enforcement across jurisdictions.

United Kingdom: Promote collaborative efforts between the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) and the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) to deal with complex cases related to misleading advertising.

Leverage Technology for Monitoring

Automated Surveillance: Use AI-powered tools to monitor digital platforms for deceptive advertising practices, allowing for faster identification and response.

Data Analytics: Leverage big data analytics to identify patterns and trends in advertising that can point to large-scale misleading practices.

Enhance Legal Framework

Clear Definitions: Ensure laws provide clear definitions of what misleading advertising entails, including state-of-the-art ones like influencer marketing and native advertising.

Penalties: Implement tiered systems of penalties with steeper fines for repeat offenders to discourage habitual infringements.

Encourage Consumer Awareness

Education Campaigns: Organize public awareness campaigns to inform consumers about their rights and how to recognize and report deceptive ads.

Accessible Reporting Mechanisms: Create simple-to-use mechanisms for consumers to report deceptive advertisements, with speedy investigation and response.

Promote Ethical Advertising Practices

Industry Codes of Conduct: Urge industries to establish and follow codes of conduct focusing on honesty and openness in advertising.

Training Programs: Provide training for marketers and advertisers on legal requirements and ethical advertisement standards.

Through the adoption of such measures, regulators can establish a stronger framework for discouraging misleading advertisements and ensuring consumer protection to a greater extent.

Conclusion

In conclusion, deceptive advertising continues to be a thorn in the side of consumer protection in the face of prevailing regulatory structures in India, the United States, and the United Kingdom. The quick pace of development of digital marketing, the growth of endorsement via influencers, and the international scope of online spaces have overwhelmed traditional regulatory systems. Enforcement bodies frequently grapple with jurisdictional constraints, resource limitations, and sheer scale of content to keep abreast of.

In order to effectively fight against misleading advertising practices, there is a need for a multi-pronged approach. This involves revising and harmonizing the legal provisions to meet the new forms of advertising, increasing inter-agency and international collaboration, utilizing innovative technologies for monitoring and enforcement, and encouraging consumer education and awareness. Through the implementation of these measures, authorities can more effectively protect consumer interests and provide a fair and transparent market.

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“JUDICIAL ACTIVISM AND THE DOCTRINE OF SEPARATION OF POWERS: A CONSTITUTIONAL PERSPECTIVE”

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ABSTRACT: –

The doctrine of judicial activism, specifically in relation to the separation of powers, is an important aspect of constitutional law that has developed through the active interaction between the Judiciary, Legislature, and Executive. The paper discusses the balance and tension between judicial activism and the constitutional principle of separation of powers in democratic governments, with specific reference to India. Judicial activism, while necessary in the defense of fundamental rights and remedy for legislative or executive inaction, tends to create apprehensions about judicial overreach and erosion of the autonomy of other branches of government. The paper examines the historical development of the doctrine of separation of powers and how the Judiciary has interpreted and applied this principle in resolving issues of governance, public interest, and constitutional interpretation. Through an analysis of milestone cases, judicial principles, and the effect of judicial intervention on public policy, this research emphasizes the importance of a fine balance between judicial activism and the maintenance of democratic constitutional frameworks. In addition, the paper addresses the changing role of the Judiciary in protecting the Constitution and ensuring that governance is responsive to the people's needs without compromising the functions of the other constitutional bodies.

KEYWORDS:

Judicial Activism, Separation of Powers, Constitutional Law, Judicial Review, Public Interest Litigation (PIL), Indian Constitution

1. INTRODUCTION

The Indian Constitution is a complex structure founded on democratic principles, federalism, and the primacy of the rule of law. One of its constitutional principles is the doctrine of separation of powers, which defines the functional limits between the three organs of the State: the Legislature, the Executive, and the Judiciary. Each organ is supposed to discharge its assigned functions without trespassing on the functions of the other organs. Yet, the Indian model is not one of the absolute separation but of a functional overlap that permits checks and

balances to work in a dynamic and evolving constitutional setting. Under this framework, judicial activism has become an essential and sometimes contentious tool by which the judiciary interprets and enforces constitutional standards, venturing into areas traditionally the domain of the legislature or executive from time to time. This tension between judicial activism and separation of powers continues to be a major source of academic, political, and judicial debate.¹ Judicial activism means the active role of the judiciary in ensuring justice, accountability, and safeguarding fundamental

rights when the legislature or executive does not perform its function properly. Based on the principle that the Constitution is a living document, judicial activism gives the courts, particularly the higher judiciary, the authority to interpret the law creatively and to bridge legislative or policy gaps to further constitutional objectives. The phenomenon achieved prominence within India in the late 20th century, specifically with the growth of Public Interest Litigation (PIL), whereby courts started acknowledging the rights of the marginalized and underprivileged even without immediate legal standing. Such an approach tremendously expanded the reach of the judiciary to deal with issues of environmental protection, prison reform, corruption, gender justice, and administrative inefficiencies.²

Yet this intrusive role of the judiciary has also generated fierce controversies regarding its mandate in a constitutional democracy pledged to the division of powers. Detractors contend that judicial activism tends to cross the threshold into judicial encroachment, where the judiciary oversteps its role as an interpreter to actually legislate or rule. This undermines the sovereignty of the elected legislature and the administrative independence of the executive. Supporters, however, see judicial activism as a necessary bulwark against arbitrary rule and systemic collapse. They highlight the role of the judiciary as the custodian of the Constitution and the defender of basic rights, especially where political institutions are either unable or unwilling to act firmly in the public interest.³ Indian doctrine of separation of powers, though not stated directly in the Constitution, has been identified and discussed through several judicial pronouncements. The Constitution framers envisioned balanced allocation of powers instead of compartmentalization of powers. While Articles such as 50 speak of separation of the judiciary from the executive, the overall plan contemplates an interdependent yet independent functioning of all three organs. The Supreme Court, in a

number of milestone cases including *Kesavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala*, *Indira Nehru Gandhi v. Raj Narain*, and *I.R. Coelho v. State of Tamil Nadu*, has emphasized the need to preserve institutional integrity as well as the essential framework of the Constitution. Simultaneously, in cases such as *Vishaka v. State of Rajasthan* and *Union of India v. Association for Democratic Reforms*, the judiciary has filled legislative gaps by establishing guidelines where Parliament had remained silent.⁴ This intricate relationship between judicial activism and the separation of powers doctrine highlights the dynamic and flexible character of constitutional interpretation in India. It is indicative of a changing constitutional culture where the judiciary is not only perceived as a court of dispute resolution but also as an active contributor to the formation of public policy and the actualization of constitutional values. Whereas this has occasioned paradigmatic judgments which have reshaped legal and social paradigms, it is also raising questions that are essential concerning institutional frontiers, democratic legitimacy, and accountability. The issue is one of ensuring judicial activism stays within constitutional propriety limits without eroding the fundamental fabric of democratic government and institutional equilibrium principle.⁵

2. JUDICIAL ACTIVISM IN CONSTITUTIONAL LAW

Judicial activism in constitutional law is a revolutionary style of jurisprudence where courts, particularly constitutional courts such as the Supreme Court and High Courts in India, adopt a broad interpretation of their jurisdiction under the Constitution to promote justice, safeguard fundamental rights, and uphold constitutional rule. It entails an active role by the judiciary in interpreting the Constitution in a manner that addresses the changing needs of society. Judicial activism usually occurs where the executive or legislature is slow to act, inactive, or unwilling to handle issues of utmost importance that

influence the lives of citizens. In India, judicial activism has discovered fertile soil with the huge socio-economic disparities, the inefficiency of the political process, and the imperative to provide instant relief in cases dealing with public welfare. The constitutional provisions, especially those relating to fundamental rights (Part III) and directive principles of state policy (Part IV), give the judiciary a robust basis to act when the other two branches of government fail to meet their constitutional responsibilities.⁶ This assertive role of the judiciary has played an important role in shaping constitutional jurisprudence in India. The extension of Article 21, which ensures the right to life and personal freedom, is a classic case of judicial activism. In a series of landmark judgments, the Supreme Court has interpreted Article 21 to encompass a broad range of rights like the right to a clean environment, right to shelter, right to health, right to privacy, and even the right to education. These developments were not absolutely limited to the literal words of the Constitution but were the outcome of a purposive and dynamic interpretation of constitutional provisions. Judicial activism has facilitated the courts to turn the Constitution into a living document that accommodates changing conditions and embodies present ideas of justice. The development of Public Interest Litigation (PIL) during the 1980s was a turning point when the courts began to reach out to weaker segments of society who otherwise did not have the means to seek legal recourse. The new jurisprudence departed from the conventional adversarial system and substituted it with an inquisitorial and justice-seeking system.⁷

Moreover, judicial activism has played a crucial role in maintaining the checks and balances envisioned in the constitutional framework. When the executive or legislature oversteps its authority or fails to act in accordance with constitutional principles, the judiciary, through activism, steps in to correct the imbalance. For instance, during the Emergency period in the

1970s, the judiciary faced criticism for its passivity, particularly in the infamous ADM Jabalpur case. But this period was succeeded by a reassertion of constitutional values, resulting in a more assertive judiciary in the subsequent decades. In judgments like *Minerva Mills v. Union of India*, *S.R. Bommai v. Union of India*, and *Kuldip Nayar v. Union of India*, the judiciary reasserted its role to review legislative and executive decisions to ensure consistency with the Constitution. The invocation of the doctrine of basic structure is another way in which judicial activism acts as a shield against constitutional amendments which imperil the very values at the heart of the Constitution.⁸ Judicial activism also often inserts the judiciary in complicated controversies pertaining to governance and policy. Though the courts cannot legislate, in a number of cases they have set parameters and frameworks since laws were wanting. This has been done in fields like sexual harassment in the workplace, police reform, green laws, and poll transparency. In the *Vishaka* case, for instance, the judiciary filled a legislative void by enunciating guidelines for preventing sexual harassment, which held good until Parliament passed specific legislation years later. Likewise, in the *Prakash Singh* case, the Supreme Court gave directions for police reforms to check arbitrariness and political interference. These interventions, though filling crucial governance lacunae, also raise questions about whether courts are overstepping into areas constitutionally reserved for other branches of government.⁹ The growth of judicial activism in India also needs to be seen against the backdrop of public confidence in the judiciary. Since institutions of governance frequently fail through corruption, inefficiency, or political stasis, the judiciary increasingly is viewed as a final resort for justice. This popular image, along with the constitutional imperative to preserve justice, forces courts to act decisively in the face of social or institutional collapse. Consequently, the judiciary has sometimes

assumed a supervisory role, watching the implementation of its orders, assigning committees, and requiring periodic reports on compliance, thus exercising what may be argued is judicial governance. Though these measures are based on the quest for justice and proper implementation, they nevertheless diminish the conventional delineation between the judiciary and the executive.¹⁰

3. ORIGIN OF THE DOCTRINE OF SEPARATION OF POWERS

The separation of powers doctrine owes its intellectual roots to classical political theory but achieved its most familiar and formalized expression in eighteenth-century political philosophy. The principle is manifest in the governmental forms of ancient Rome and Greece, most notably through Aristotle, who separated the deliberative, magisterial, and judicial roles of the government. But the more contemporary expression of the doctrine is more evident in the writings of 17th and 18th-century political philosophers, beginning with John Locke and Montesquieu. John Locke's "Second Treatise of Civil Government" specifically stressed the separation of legislative and executive powers for the purpose of avoiding the monopolization of powers and safeguarding individual freedom. He suggested that legislative and executive authority ought to be lodged in distinct institutions to protect freedom and prevent tyranny. Drawing on this seminal notion, Montesquieu provided the most comprehensive and influential formulation of the doctrine in his masterwork *De l'Esprit des Lois* (The Spirit of the Laws), published in 1748.¹¹ Montesquieu's articulation of the division of powers is widely regarded as the keystone of contemporary democratic theory. Looking at the British system of constitution, he believed that liberty would be safest if the powers of government—legislative, executive, and judicial—were distinct and relegated to separate institutions. He cautioned that if the powers were lodged in one individual or entity, it would be despotic rule. While his comprehension of the British model was

idealized, the theoretical foundation he established found long-term influence in constitutional governance globally. Montesquieu's doctrine sought to check on the misuse of authority by insuring that no government branch would dominate or intervene in the activities of another. This principle has been a major force in shaping many modern constitutions, as well as the United States one, which practiced a robust system of separation supported by a framework of checks and balances.¹²

The American Constitution is one of the most explicit exercises of the doctrine of separation of powers. Based on Montesquieu and Locke, the framers separated power of government among three coequal branches—Congress (legislative), the President (executive), and the Supreme Court (judiciary)—with distinct roles and procedures to balance each other's powers. This structure was designed to preclude authoritarianism and prevent democratic governance from being undermined through institutional independence and interdependence. The American precedent, especially in the Federalist Papers and James Madison's writing, stressed that separation of powers was necessary not just to check governmental excess but to ensure the rule of law and freedom-order balance.¹³ In India, the separation of powers doctrine was not implemented in the strict classical sense, yet its imprint is firmly ingrained in the constitutional framework. The Indian Constitution does not refer to "separation of powers" explicitly, but it makes provisions for a functional separation between the three branches of government. The organization, duties, and authority of the legislature, executive, and judiciary are specified in various sections of the Constitution—Parts V and VI cover the Union and State Executives and Legislatures respectively, whereas Part V (Chapter IV) expounds on the judiciary. While the Indian model attests to the canons of separation of powers, it is crafted in a manner that requires some interdependence between

the branches, facilitating checks and balances. Such flexibility was aimed at allowing for the intricate nature of Indian governance and at avoiding institutional deadlock or incapacity.¹⁴

Judicial interpretations within India have had a central role in establishing and enforcing doctrine in the constitutional framework. The Supreme Court has consistently held the principle of separation of powers to be a component of the fundamental structure of the Constitution, which could not be modified even by amendment to the Constitution. In key cases such as *Kesavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala* and *Indira Nehru Gandhi v. Raj Narain*, the Court emphasized that upholding the independence and integrity of every wing was crucial for the continuation of democracy and constitutionalism. Concurrently, the Indian judiciary has not been a passive institution; it has proactively reacted to constitutional crises, legislative failure, and executive misstep through judicial activism. This has created an intricate interaction between the doctrine of separation and the interpretative and sometimes policy-shaping functions of the judiciary, which, though directed toward guarding constitutional values, also test the doctrinal sanitation of the separation of powers.¹⁵ The history and evolution of the doctrine of separation of powers therefore reflect a historical development of political thought and constitutional structure intended to guarantee limited government and responsible government. From its philosophical origins in ancient and Enlightenment theory to its practical application in contemporary constitutions, the doctrine has been a guiding principle for democratic states. Its working in India is specially marked by a pragmatic strategy that combines formal institutional divisions with the requirement of working relations and constitutional accountability. The tension between judicial activism and separation of powers continues to shape the Indian constitutional sphere, highlighting both the robustness and the versatility of the doctrine in tackling current issues.¹⁶

4. ROLE OF JUDICIARY IN INTERPRETING THE CONSTITUTION

The judiciary has a central and indispensable function to interpret the Constitution, acting as the final guarantor of constitutional supremacy and the rule of law. In any democratic regime founded on a written constitution, the interpretive power is at the core of judicial duty. In India, this function has been greatly enhanced because of the extensive and dynamic character of the Constitution, which contains elaborate provisions regarding fundamental rights, the organization of government, directive principles of state policy, and the distribution of powers between the Union and the States. The judiciary, and specifically the Supreme Court and the High Courts, is entrusted with interpreting constitutional provisions, resolving ambiguities, and ensuring that all laws and executive actions conform to constitutional standards. This interpretative role renders the judiciary not just a referee of disputes but a crucial architect in determining the understanding and implementation of constitutional values throughout the legal and political landscape.¹⁷ The judicial review power, established under Articles 13, 32, 131, 136, 142, and 226 of the Constitution, grants the power to the judiciary to examine parliamentary legislation and administrative action in relation to the norm of constitutional acceptability. By so doing, this function has empowered the courts to act as the sentinels of the civil liberties as well as a guardian of democracy. Whenever a law is repugnant to or encroaches upon basic rights, it then becomes the responsibility of the judiciary to invalidate it. The judiciary, by doing this, has upheld the purity of the Constitution and served as a check to the other two branches of the government. Throughout the years, the Indian judiciary has construed the Constitution not just in a technical or literal sense, but through purposive and evolving methods. Such interpretations have assisted in broadening the ambit of rights, strengthening accountability, and upholding

justice, frequently completing the gaps left by the legislature or the executive.¹⁸

One of the most important contributions of the judiciary in constitutional interpretation is the creation of the basic structure doctrine. Dating back to the seminal *Kesavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala* case in 1973, the doctrine of basic structure states that though Parliament has broad powers to amend the Constitution under Article 368, it cannot modify or demolish its basic structure. The Supreme Court identified the essential ingredients like the predominance of the Constitution, rule of law, separation of powers, judicial review, and the safeguarding of fundamental rights as being integral to the basic structure. This judicial innovation not only saved the Constitutional ideals of foundation but also placed the judiciary on an equal footing and co-constitutional footing with the other organs of the State. It also reaffirmed the interpretive dominance of the judiciary in making decisions about the scope and limitations of constitutional amendments, hence enshrining its pivotal position within constitutional governance.¹⁹ Judicial interpretation in India has also served as a force powerful enough to evolve the nature of fundamental rights from being solely personal entitlements towards becoming instruments for socio-economic reform. Article 21 of the Constitution, which originally secured protection of life and personal liberty against state action that was arbitrary, has been read expansively so as to encompass a broad array of derivative rights like the right to health, education, livelihood, privacy, and a clean environment. This mode of interpretation is a reflection of a living Constitution with a dynamic understanding, a Constitution that evolves as and when conditions and demands of society so change. By a string of milestone judgments like *Maneka Gandhi v. Union of India*, *Olga Tellis v. Bombay Municipal Corporation*, *Unni Krishnan v. State of Andhra Pradesh*, and *Justice K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India*, the judiciary has enriched the substantive content of

constitutional rights and values.²⁰

The interpretive function of the judiciary also covers the area of federalism, secularism, and the separation of powers. In federal conflicts, the Supreme Court has had an essential role to play in defining legislative jurisdictional limits between the Union and State governments. In the domain of religious freedoms and secularism, the Court has developed doctrines like the "essential religious practices" test so as to reconcile religious autonomy with constitutional morality. In separation of powers cases, the judiciary has invariably reaffirmed the independence of the three branches while asserting that no organ ought to excessively meddle in the activities of another. The judiciary has never been averse to intervening, however, when the activities of the legislature or executive have imperiled constitutional norms. This combination of restraint and intervention is the unique hallmark of Indian constitutional interpretation and indicates a sensitive appreciation of democratic government.²¹

5. ROLE OF LEGISLATURE, EXECUTIVE, AND JUDICIARY

In a constitutional democracy such as India, the state structure of government is based on the separation of state powers between three main organs—the Legislature, the Executive, and the Judiciary. All three organs obtain their authority from the Constitution and serve a unique but complementary function in the running of the state. The separation of powers doctrine, though not strictly followed in India, is the foundation of this tri-partite division to avoid the centralization of power within one branch and ensure that there is accountability and the proper functioning of democratic institutions. This dogma is particularly relevant when discussing judicial activism, as it raises to the surface the lines, overlaps, and tensions between these organs in traversing the constitutional mandate to uphold the rule of law and justice.²² The Legislature, being the people's representative, is tasked with

enacting laws. It reflects the sovereign will of the voters and is primarily responsible for formulating policy orientations, enacting budgets, and laying down statutory legislation that runs the country. Representing the Parliament at the national level and the State Legislatures at the regional level, the Legislature has legislative dominance under the scheme outlined in the Constitution. Yet, its activity is governed by constitutional restraints, particularly in relation to basic rights and federal division of powers. The Legislature's role is paramount when social welfare legislation, economic reforms, and other initiatives for implementing the Directive Principles of State Policy are to be enacted. Even though its sole law-making role, the Legislature's effectiveness is usually disallowed by political turmoil, delay, and inactivity, which consequently leaves the vacuum for judicial action under the guise of activism.²³

The Executive is the organ entrusted with enforcing laws and managing the day-to-day affairs of the state. At the Union level, it is headed by the President, Prime Minister, and Council of Ministers, and at the State level, by the Governor and the State Council of Ministers. The Executive has great power in areas concerning governance, law enforcement, imposition of policies, and foreign policy. It is authorized to issue ordinances, enact rules and regulations under delegated legislation, and initiate administrative measures for upholding public order and governance. The Constitution places some checks on the Executive, such as judicial review of administrative actions and oversight by the legislature through parliamentary mechanisms. But in case the Executive is unable to fulfill its constitutional or statutory responsibilities efficiently, in domains like human rights, public health, environmental protection, and administrative justice, the Judiciary tends to intervene through judicial activism, because executive inaction or overreach creates a vacuum that needs to be filled.²⁴ The Judiciary, as the guardian and interpreter of the

Constitution, stands in a distinctive position among the three arms. Its central role is to determine disputes, interpret legislation, and protect constitutional values. Through judicial review, the Judiciary enforces that the conduct of both the Legislature and the Executive adheres to constitutional stipulations. With time, the Judiciary has become a vibrant institution where not only are legal contests disposed but also safeguarder of civil liberties and guarantor of constitutional governance. Along the way, it has fashioned doctrines like the basic structure doctrine, the rule of law, and the precedence of fundamental rights. Judicial activism, as an aspect of this function, has enabled the courts to intervene in legislative and executive failures by issuing orders, requiring policy guidelines, and even overseeing their enforcement. Although this activism has, in many cases, led to sweeping social and legal reform, it has also raised controversies about judicial overreach and the infringement on the areas of jurisdiction historically left to the other two branches.²⁵ The relationship between these organs is characterized by cooperation and conflict, moderated by the intrinsic tensions in the democratic system. Though the Constitution envisions a balance of power, political, social, and economic considerations often drive the reality. The Legislature can enact laws that are ambiguous, archaic, or even unconstitutional, which would be subject to judicial review and possible invalidation. The Executive, in an attempt to preserve political leverage or bureaucratic ease, is tempted to bypass the legislative route or indulge in arbitrary action, inviting judicial intervention. On the other hand, when the Judiciary, by virtue of activism, starts prescribing policies or monitoring their enforcement, issues are raised regarding the erosion of democratic accountability and institutional restraint. This fragile equipoise lies at the center of the separation of powers doctrine and is ever under strain in the dynamic relationship of Indian governance.²⁶

6. PRESERVING THE SPIRIT OF SEPARATION OF POWERS

Maintaining the essence of the doctrine of separation of powers in a constitutional democracy such as India is not just a matter of keeping strict institutional boundaries, but of ensuring that the power balance between the Legislature, Executive, and Judiciary operates in a manner that maintains democratic accountability, guards constitutional values, and facilitates effective governance. Although the Indian Constitution does not follow a rigid separation of powers like that of the American, it does have a functional division between the organs of the State. This functional separation aims to ensure institutional autonomy while making provision for checks and balances to avoid arbitrary or autocratic action. The test is to ensure that every branch uses its powers within constitutional boundaries and in regard for the roles and jurisdiction of the others. Judicial activism thus arises here as both a reaction to and a challenge of the durability of the doctrine. It serves to identify the thin line between active constitutional interpretation and institutional overreach.²⁷ Preservation of this doctrine requires a constant effort by the three branches to maintain constitutional decency, institutional discipline, and respect for one another. The Legislature, as a representative of the people, needs to fulfill its principal role of lawmaking with great diligence, foresight, and sensibility to the needs of society. It should ensure that its laws are clear, fair, and constitutionally valid. Laws that are excessive, ambiguous, or violative of basic rights not only burden the Judiciary with the responsibility of correction but also threaten to erode legislative credibility. An active Legislature that is actively engaged with public policy, is transparent, and offers strong deliberation will minimize the necessity for judicial intervention and reinforce the constitutional scheme of distributed powers. Furthermore, the process of legislation ought not to be by-passed through overreliance upon ordinances or delegated

legislation, which diminishes the deliberative function of legislation and violates the constitutionally intended equilibrium.²⁸

The Executive, with its responsibility for carrying on laws into effect and overseeing the routine operation of the State, has the very important duty of upholding the ethos of separation of powers. It has to operate within the parameters of the laws enacted by the Legislature and be informed by parameters of fairness, accountability, and constitutional morality. Politically driven or arbitrary administrative action is usually courting judicial intervention and activating judicial activism by the courts. When the Executive fails in its responsibility—be it to protect fundamental rights, roll out welfare schemes, or deliver administrative justice—the Judiciary is usually forced to step in. Although such intervention could provide short-term relief, it is long-term troubling in terms of institutional roles and the sustainability of judicial interference in governance. A capable, responsible, and constitutionally aware Executive, hence, is critical in curbing judicial activism and upholding the independence of each arm.²⁹ The Judiciary, on its part, has the onerous task of being the sentinel of the Constitution and the final arbiter of the law. Although judicial review is an absolute necessary for the perpetuation of constitutional rule, the Judiciary should utilize this authority with profound regard for its limitations. It should shun the desire to undertake the roles of the Legislature or the Executive, no matter their failures. The legitimacy of the Judiciary depends not just on the correctness of its reasoning but also on its restraint, neutrality, and commitment to the Constitution. Judicial activism has to be separated from judicial overreach—a development in which courts make policy decisions, dispense public programs, or issue mandates that are in effect legislative or executive in nature. Such tactics may yield short-term benefits or widespread popularity, but they have the potential to erode the strength of democratic institutions and shrink

political accountability space.³⁰ A critical part of upholding the ethos of separation of powers is building constitutional culture within the institutions and society. Constitutional ideals need to become part of the institutional practice, educational narrative, and political practice. Judges need to be educated not merely in law, but also constitutional thought and institutional morality. The legislators need to comprehend their role under the Constitution above party consideration and strive towards enhancing democratic institutions. The bureaucracy needs to become sensitive to rights-based governance as well as openness. Simultaneously, the media and civil society are responsible for checking each branch of government, spreading constitutional awareness, and ensuring the exercise of power in the public interest. An informed and active citizenry can serve as a check on institutional abuse and ensure a political climate that instills respect for constitutional limits.³¹

7. THE NEED FOR JUDICIAL INNOVATION IN GOVERNANCE

In the intricate and dynamic environment of contemporary democratic leadership, the call for innovation in the judiciary has come to represent a decisive aspect of constitutional operation, especially within jurisdictions such as India where governance tend to be under immense structural, administrative, and legislative pressures. Judicial innovation is the innovative and purposeful interpretation of constitutional and statutory provisions by the courts to adjust to new realities, settle lacunae in the law, and protect fundamental rights. It becomes particularly significant when conventional forms of governance fail or are unable to respond to pressing social concerns, compelling the Judiciary to come up with new legal doctrines, procedural tools, and enforcement techniques beyond normal adjudication. In the larger framework of "Judicial Activism and the Doctrine of Separation of Powers: A Constitutional Perspective," judicial innovation functions as both an antidote to democratic deficits as well as an agent of

legal and institutional change.³² The Indian Judiciary has consistently understood that the inflexibility of formalistic interpretations cannot be enough in a society characterized by profound social disparities, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and legislative stagnation. In this environment, innovation becomes a necessity in the judicial realm and not an exception. The advent of public interest litigation (PIL) in the late 1970s and the 1980s was a landmark development in judicial innovation. PIL removed the conventional hurdles of locus standi and enabled any public-spirited citizen to approach the court for enforcement of the rights of the poor and the marginalized. This transformation allowed the courts to deal with systemic injustices and institutional failures that had not been resolved through regular legal procedures. It turned the Judiciary into a popular platform for social justice and made it an active participant in the governance of the public. With PILs, the judiciary has intervened on a vast spectrum of matters—from bonded labor, custodial violence, and environmental degradation to prison reforms, children's rights, and sexual harassment—illustrating how judicial innovation can plug governance gaps and impose constitutional obligations in new and imaginative ways.³³

The other site of judicial innovation is the evolution of progressive constitutional doctrines that move beyond the letter of the Constitution to capture the spirit and intent behind it. The meaning of Article 21, which provides for the right to life and personal liberty, has been revolutionized through judicial innovativeness. What was previously a narrowly interpreted right has come to encompass the right to a clean environment, health, education, shelter, and dignity, among others. This broad reading is not a product of legislative overhaul, but of judicial attunement to shifting social needs and a creative engagement with constitutional ideals. By importing these rights into the wider scheme of human dignity, the Judiciary has breathed life into idealistic

constitutional principles and brought them into operation in the concrete life of citizens. These innovations are not only interpretative achievements but tools of statecraft that impact policy directions and administrative priorities.³⁴ Judicial innovation also takes the form of making use of continuing mandamus and court-appointed committees to oversee implementation of its orders in intricate socio-economic issues. In pollution control, education reform, food security, and police accountability cases, the courts have transcended the role of issuing declaratory judgments to actively monitor compliance in the form of periodic reports, progress reviews, and structured relief. While such actions extend the boundaries of conventional judicial roles, they frequently arise out of necessity where executive agencies show chronic non-compliance, indifference, or ineffectiveness. These innovations represent the Judiciary's effort to see that justice is not only uttered but also brought about in practical reality. Yet they also pose significant questions regarding institutional roles, democratic legitimacy, and the viability of judicial intervention in governance.³⁵ In the information age and in a world struggling with accelerated technological, environmental, and social transformations, judicial innovation has become even more crucial. Matters like data protection, cyber offenses, artificial intelligence, digital monopolies, global warming, and bioethics pose new legal challenges for which there could be no legislative precedent. In these situations, the Judiciary has to tread new ground, developing temporary legal standards and guidelines on the basis of constitutional principles. The establishment of the right to privacy as a constitutional right in Justice K.S. Puttaswamy

v. Union of India is one such instance of judicial prudence in addressing emerging technology-based threats to personal freedom. By basing new rights and standards on established constitutional provisions, the Judiciary fills the lacuna between static legal

texts and dynamic social realities. This interpretive flexibility, while sometimes faulted, is crucial in keeping the Constitution a living instrument that keeps pace with changing times.³⁶

CONCLUSION

The dynamic, and at times delicate, tension between judicial activism and the separation of powers doctrine is a characteristic of the vibrant and sometimes tenuous balance found in a constitutional democracy. Whereas the separation of powers doctrine is aimed at upholding institutional independence and averting the misuse of power, judicial activism emerges as a necessary antidote to gaps in governance, legislative inaction, and executive failure. In India, this assertiveness of the judiciary has been a catalytic force to uphold fundamental rights, ensure constitutional mandates, and deliver justice to the marginalized. But the exercise of such power has to be tempered by restraint, clarity of intention, and a profound respect for the roles of the Legislature and the Executive. The Judiciary can innovate and intervene, as it should, but always within the limits of constitutional propriety and democratic accountability. Finally, the well-being of a constitutional democracy is the proper functioning of every one of its branches—each separately but harmoniously, every one respecting the others and being faithful to the Constitution. The challenge is balancing this coexistence to enable the Judiciary to act as an indispensable check and upholder of constitutional values.

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THE INFLUENCE OF THE WILDLIFE PROTECTION ACT ON ECO – TOURISM IN INDIA: A CRITICAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT-

Many aspects of India's biodiversity are protected and conserved through the Wildlife Protection Act of 1972. This paper attempts at critically analyzing how the Act has promoted or otherwise affected eco-tourism in India, responsible travel to areas of natural beauty that aims at conserving the environment with regard to enhancing locals' well-being. Eco-tourism probably has gained a great deal of thrust across India as a destination for travelers to learn about and appreciate unique wildlife and habitats found in the country.

The Wildlife Protection Act also provided for the setting up of protected areas like national parks, wildlife sanctuaries, and conservation reserves which have gradually become the main hot spots of eco-tourism. It enables the visitors to see the beauty and variety of Indian wildlife in their natural setting. Moreover, the Act has acted as an important catalyst in regulating tourism activities at these sites so that they were conducted in an environment-friendly and sustainable manner.

Despite the fact that the Wildlife Protection Act has proved to be positive in regard to increasing eco-tourism in India, there still are related challenges and constraints, such as issues relating to implementation of the Act, human-wildlife conflict, and the involvement of the community in the eco-tourism activities. This paper essentially elucidates the salience of Wildlife Protection Act in promoting eco-tourism in India and possible measures for overcoming the challenges faced in this sector.

Introduction

The Wildlife Protection Act was an important legislation in India to safeguard the country's rich biodiversity and wildlife. It was enacted in 1972 in the interest of protection of wildlife and their habitats, apart from regulating and controlling activities that may harm them. The very establishment of protected areas like national parks and wildlife sanctuaries are sites of importance for conservation and eco-tourism.

Eco-tourism involves responsible travel to natural areas, aiming at conserving the environment and improving local people's well-being. Over recent years, it has been

increasingly practiced in India. The legal protection of wildlife and their habitats under the Wildlife Protection Act has made a real contribution to eco-tourism.

This critical study explores the effect of the Wildlife Protection Act on Indian eco-tourism. Using a framework in which it compares the provisions of the Act and how they affect the activities of Indian eco-tourism, this study assesses the degree to which the act has furthered the development and promotion of eco-friendly tourism in India. With literature and case studies, this study will provide an in-depth view regarding whether conservation and tourism development are consonant under the

provisions of the Act and presents recommendations to improve the synergy between wildlife protection and eco-tourism in India.

Research objectives –

The research objective of this study would be to critically look into the impact exerted by the Wildlife Protection Act on eco-tourism in India. The Wildlife Protection Act was enacted in 1972. It basically aims at providing protection to all types of wildlife and their habitats within India. Responsible travel to natural places supporting and conserving the environment along with improving the quality of life for local communities is termed as ecotourism.

Essay on Provisions under the Wildlife Protection Act and the Impact on India's Ecotourism Industry. It will discuss the degree to which the Act has helped in preserving wildlife and their habitats as well as their contribution towards responsible tourism practices within natural areas. The study will also assess the difficulties and opportunities for eco-tourism operators in complying with the Act and implementing sustainable tourism practices.

This paper attempts to study the effectiveness of the conservation policies in place as enacted by the Wildlife Protection Act of India in influencing eco-tourism within the country. Insights into current conservation policies and practices used in promoting sustainable tourism development will be made through critical analysis. Findings will be of great value in enriching the literature on wildlife conservation, eco-tourism, and environmental policy in India.

Research Method – Doctrinal

Why Have I not used non-doctrinal-

There are various reasons why non-doctrinal research methods, such as qualitative research or case studies, have not been applied in my research paper on the influence of the Wildlife Protection Act on eco-tourism in India. The first reason is that the topic of the Wildlife Protection Act and its impact on eco-tourism in India is principally a legal and policy-oriented issue,

which seems to fit more appropriately into a legal research approach. The non-doctrinal methods may not bring forth the level of legal analysis required to understand intricacies and implications that the Act has on eco-tourism.

The non-doctrinal research methods may not be useful for analyzing the precise legal provisions and their implications in the real world in the Indian context of eco-tourism. Doctrinal analysis and legislative review among the legal research methods are more appropriate for an analysis of the legal framework governing wildlife protection and eco-tourism in India.

Moreover, non-doctrinal research methods may not provide the rigor and objectivity required to critically assess the impact of the Wildlife Protection Act on eco-tourism in India. These legal research methods involve a systematic and structured analysis of the legal framework, helping to bring out a better and more nuanced understanding of the issues in question.

As a whole, the methods of non-doctrinal research were deliberately excluded from my research paper on the influence of the Wildlife Protection Act on eco-tourism in India to ensure that a thorough and rigorous analysis of the implications of the Act on the legal and policy fronts concerning eco-tourism in India are achieved.

Main body-

Key Pointers:

1. Overview of the Wildlife Protection Act of India-

-Its primary objectives include protection and conservation of endangered species, regulation of trade in wildlife and ⁷⁴³wildlife articles for commercial purposes, establishment of protected areas for conservation of wildlife habitats and populations. It further contemplates research and education associated with wildlife and public awareness

⁷⁴³ Das, M. & Chatterjee, B., Eco Tourism a Panacea or Predicament? Tourism Management Perspectives, vol. 14, 2015, pp. 3-16.

regarding preservation of India's natural heritage. The core provisions of this Act relate to the protection and conservation of wildlife through the prohibition of hunting and trade in endangered species, establishing national parks, wildlife sanctuaries, and conservation reserves, regulating activities such as captive breeding and the transportation of wildlife, and the establishment of the appointment of wildlife wardens and advisory bodies to supervise the administration of the law.

-For the research topic ⁷⁴⁴"The Influence of the Wildlife Protection Act on Eco-Tourism in India: A Critical Study," it is necessary to study how the Act has affected the development of eco-tourism in the country. Eco-tourism, or responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people, has become an increasingly popular form of tourism in India in recent years. Considering the provisions of the Act and the mechanism of its implementation together with the policies that the government has undertaken for the development of eco-tourism, this study is aimed at determining the effect the legislation has brought about in the development of eco-tourism within India. It also assesses the challenges and opportunities associated with eco-tourism operators who have to comply with the provisions of the Act and contribute to wildlife conservation. In the overall view, this study would contribute to the better understanding of how wildlife conservation law impacts the development of eco-tourism in India, thus providing insights into how the Wildlife Protection Act could be leveraged for the promotion of sustainable tourism practices that would both serve the needs of wildlife and local communities.

2. Evolution of Eco-Tourism in India-

Eco-tourism is such an element that has grabbed a lot of attention recently as a sustainable alternative to traditional tourism practices. In India, growth and development in

the field of eco-tourism have been influenced in many ways due to factors like the Wildlife Protection Act. This act became effective in the year 1972 for conserving wildlife and their habitats while also promoting a number of eco-friendly tourism activities.

This piece of legislation has played a significant role in the Indian sector of the eco-tourism industry. The Act has therefore conserved biodiversity through protective areas and regulation of tourism activities in such specific areas. Consequently, the Act has made tourists and local communities more aware of the justification for conserving wildlife, thus improving support for eco-friendly tourism practices.

There are also a number of challenges and limitations on the positive effect of the Wildlife Protection Act on the eco-tourism sector in India. These include issues related to enforcement, with regard to scant infrastructure, a veritable mismatch between conservation and tourism development.⁷⁴⁵ Thus there is a need for further studies, basically examining the influence of the Act on eco-tourism in India with some means of dealing with the challenges identified.

Overall, eco-tourism has a significant role in conservation and sustainable development in India. Observations concerning the impact that the Wildlife Protection Act has on eco-tourism will be able to provide important knowledge concerning both the opportunities and challenges facing the industry, and strategies for promoting responsible and sustainable tourism practices in the country.

3. Impact of the Wildlife Protection Act on Eco-Tourism-

The Wildlife Protection Act has significantly impacted eco-tourism initiatives in India since 1972. Such legislation has been significant in

⁷⁴⁴ Sharma, R., Menace of Ecotourism and the Role of Legislations in India, Bharati Law Review, Oct.-Dec. 2013.

⁷⁴⁵ Rajashree, S. & Madhusmita, D., Ecotourism, Biodiversity Conservation and Livelihoods: Understanding the Convergence and Divergence, Sustainable Development, vol. 30, no. 1, 2022.

protection and augmentation of the rich biodiversity in the country and promotion of sustainable tourism practices. This research paper aims at explaining the positive impacts by the Wildlife Protection Act on eco-tourism initiatives as well as issues and limitations of the Act to the operators running eco-tourism.

Preservation of natural habitats and wildlife species is one of the most important positive effects experienced from the Wildlife Protection Act about initiatives of eco-tourism. The Act has helped maintain ecological balance and promote biodiversity conservation through the provision of legal protection to endangered species and their habitats.⁷⁴⁶ This has led to unique and authentic wildlife experiences that the tourists get from the eco-tourism operators thus boosting the local economy and informing people about the issues of conservations.

It has also resulted in the protection of various regions as national parks and wildlife sanctuaries, providing an ideal source for eco-tourism. Protected areas provide a safe habitat for the wildlife, allowing tourists to closely experience nature at its best. This has helped enhance the niche of India's eco-tourism industry attracting nature lovers and wildlife photographers from across the world.

Despite several positive impacts of the Wildlife Protection Act on eco-tourism activities, several challenges and limitations face eco-tourism operators. Major factors include strict regulations and restrictions imposed by the Act in respect of tourism activities within protected areas. They regulate the number of tourists visiting a specific area, limit the types of activities that can be conducted, and require a permit and license for conducting tours by eco-tourism operators.

Lack of infrastructure and amenities is another challenge faced by eco-tourism operators: Many destinations for eco-tourism lack basic facilities like accommodation, transport, and

communication networks and therefore cannot create a comfortable and safe experience for tourists. This discourages many potential tourists from visiting such areas and prevents the growth of the eco-tourism industry.

Conclusion In brief, the Wildlife Protection Act has helped in the development of eco-tourism initiatives in India through biodiversity conservation and promotion of sustainable tourism practices⁷⁴⁷. Nevertheless, the Act has some limitations and challenges that are set against the proper working of eco-tourism operators in the country, thus affecting the development of this sector in the country. Further research and policy interventions are needed in overcoming these challenges to ensure that the industry grows in India.

4. Case Studies and Examples -

-The Indian Wildlife Protection Act has greatly been a determinant of the country's eco-tourism industry. This act seeks to conserve and protect the different wildlife species and their habitats. Consequently, several eco-tourism projects have been negatively affected by the regulations and guidelines bestowed upon it under the Indian Wildlife Protection Act.

-In order to comprehend the impact of this legislation on eco-tourism in India, it would be useful to study case studies and specific examples of how certain eco-tourism ventures have either been successful and unsuccessful regarding compliance with the Wildlife Protection Act. Analyzing these projects will help researchers understand the challenges and opportunities resulting from the implementation of such legislation.

-Successful examples of this project can be seen in the likes of Ranthambore National Park in Rajasthan under the aegis of the Wildlife Protection Act. This sort of protected area has welcomed several wildlife enthusiasts due to the successful conservation efforts and sustainable tourism practices adopted here. So,

⁷⁴⁶ Kumaravelu, K., The Future of Ecotourism in India: Opportunities and Challenges under the Wildlife Protection Act, Tourism Review International, vol. 24 (2021).

⁷⁴⁷ Global Forest Coalition & Equations, Eco Tourism as a Market-based Conservation Scheme (March 2007).

working closely with local communities and enforcing stiff regulations to protect wildlife, the Ranthambore National Park attracted visitors while conserving its resources.

-Of course, there were attempts at wildlife eco-tourism that had failed to meet the requirements of the Wildlife Protection Act and thus cannot win. For instance, a resort located near a protected wildlife sanctuary might face the challenges of not being able to obtain all the permits needed or to meet most of the requirements spelt out in the legislation. This lack of compliance can lead to negative impacts on the local ecosystem and wildlife, eventually closing down the eco-tourism venture.

5. Recommendations and Future Directions –

The India Wildlife Protection Act is one of the most important legislations for conservation of the diverse flora and fauna of the country, but it calls for more synergy between the legislation and the developing field of eco-tourism, all in the name of sustainable development and the protection of wildlife habitat.⁷⁴⁸

One of the policy recommendations for strengthening this synergy is to encourage greater collaboration between government agencies that deal with wildlife conservation and those involved in tourism promotion. The promoted joint initiatives may be designed to inform tourists about conservation efforts and promote responsible tourism practices. Further, regulation enforcement in protected areas must be strengthened so as not to negatively impact wildlife populations and their habitats.

Further research and work can be done in the area of the impact that the Wildlife Protection Act is having on eco-tourism in India. Future studies may focus on the economic benefits through eco-tourism coming directly to communities that live near protected areas, assessing the possibility for sustainable tourism practice being fostered as a means of

conserving protected areas. Collaborative research projects between government agencies and non-governmental organisations might help stimulate valuable insights with recommendations that will form the basis of well-informed policy-making decisions.

Results and Discussions–

The impacts of India's Wildlife Protection Act on the development and regulation of eco-tourism in the country have been very momentous. With this backdrop, this critical study will explore the impact of the Wildlife Protection Act on the development and regulation of eco-tourism in India with an aim of ascertaining the implications on conservation efforts and the practice of sustainable tourism.⁷⁴⁹

One of the major outcomes of the present study is a positive correlation between the implementation of the Wildlife Protection Act and the development of eco-tourism in India. It acted as a vehicle to provide a legal framework for the protection of wildlife and their habitats, leading on its own to the establishment of numerous protected areas and wildlife sanctuaries that serve as popular destinations for eco-tourists. These protected areas attract tourists and in turn provide revenue that could be utilised to conserve these resources.

The Wildlife Protection Act has also been instrumental in shaping responsible tourism trends in India. Activities such as poaching, hunting, and the illicit trade in wildlife have all been banned under this act, which has contributed to conserving endangered species as well as their habitats. Consequently, not only has it enriched biodiversity over the entire region but also contributed to the promotion of sustainable tourism trends that protect the environment.⁷⁵⁰

This is important because despite the appreciation for the act for wildlife protection,

⁷⁴⁸ Rao, K., Ecotourism and Biodiversity Conservation: An Indian Perspective, Biodiversity and Conservation, vol. 29, no. 8, 2020.

⁷⁴⁹ Joshi, V., The Intersection of Ecotourism and Wildlife Conservation Laws in India: A Policy Review, Journal of Environmental Management, vol. 267, Article No. 110636 (2020).

⁷⁵⁰ Sharma, P., Balancing Tourism Development and Wildlife Conservation: Insights from the Wildlife Protection Act, Environmental Management, vol. 65 (2020).

there are challenges and limitations that need attention⁷⁵¹. Primarily, much of the challenge lies in enforcing the act because illegal activities such as poaching and habitat destruction continue to face wildlife conservation efforts. In addition, the infrastructure and facilities in protected areas should be improved to be able to accommodate tourism while at the same time avoiding harm to the environment.

The Wildlife Protection Act has significantly impacted eco-tourism in India in promoting the growth of sustainable tourism practices as well as conservation of wildlife and their habitats. While much progress has been made, several issues still need to be addressed in order to succeed in the long term. Much research and closer cooperation among the government, conservation organisations, and the tourism industry will be necessary to overcome these problems and encourage responsible tourism practices in India.

Conclusion–

The Wildlife Protection Act of 1972 has already played a very significant role in shaping the landscape of eco-tourism in India. First, the Act has provided for a robust legal framework that protects wildlife and its habitat. Besides conservation of the biodiversity of the country, this Act has also laid the foundation for sustainable tourism practices. Establishment of protected areas under the Act, such as national parks, wildlife sanctuaries, and conservation reserves, has carved out ecotourism destinations that attract nature enthusiasts and wildlife photographers and conservationists from around the world.

This critical study reveals that the Wildlife Protection Act positively impacts the growth of eco-tourism by protecting habitats and appreciating responsible use of those spaces. This means that its strict policies over poaching, hunting, and unregulated exchange of wildlife have recovered almost every species of

endangered animals in protected regions, which has augmented their attraction as an eco-tourism spot. This has, together with the revenue generated by eco-tourism, resulted in the funding of conservation projects and provided economic benefits to communities, hence fostering stewardship over natural resources.

However, the study also identifies some challenges that need to be overcome so that the full potential of eco-tourism can come into play to forward conservation practice. Since regulatory controls are important in biodiversity conservation, they sometimes create barriers for eco-tourism operators to expand and enhance tourist experiences.⁷⁵² Other issues include human-wildlife conflict, inadequate infrastructure in remote areas, and the pressure of increasing tourist footfall on sensitive ecosystems—all of which work to degrade the balance between tourism and conservation.

In this regard, there is a strong felt need for integration—the alignment of goals of wildlife conservation with tourism development. Increased cooperation between government agencies and conservation organisations, as well as with the local communities, will continue to contribute toward better enforcement mechanisms and up-gradation of eco-tourism infrastructure and promotion of community-based tourism models. Adopting responsible tourism policies, India will ensure that eco-tourism becomes a sustainable driver for conservation as well as for rural economic development.

The Wildlife Protection Act has provided a very good foundation for the development of eco-tourism in India and there is plenty of scope for improvement in policy implementation and involving key stakeholders. Thus, the future of eco-tourism in India hinges on our ability to balance conservation imperatives with the burgeoning requirement for nature-based

⁷⁵¹ Nair, S., Community Participation in Ecotourism Initiatives: Impacts on Biodiversity Conservation under the Wildlife Protection Act in India, *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, vol. 29 (2021).

⁷⁵² Kumar, R., Ecotourism and Wildlife Conservation: The Role of Legislation in India, *Journal of Environmental Law and Policy*, vol. 15, no. 1, 2021.

tourism experiences. These efforts would require continued research, revised policies, and participation from the community so that the very amicable coexistence between wildlife protection and eco-tourism is well ensured to safeguard India's natural heritage for the future.

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RESEARCH PAPER ON CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (CSR) & HUMAN RIGHTS

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1. Abstract:

Significant improvements to corporate governance have been brought about in India by “Companies Act of 2013”, making “Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)” essential for certain types of companies. These described qualifying requirements, expenditure commitments, and reporting procedures under the legislative framework of “CSR under Section 135 of Act”.

Additionally, it evaluates how “CSR activities listed in Schedule VII” relate to more general objectives of defending and advancing human rights, including gender equality, healthcare, education, and environmental sustainability. Efficacy of CSR with human rights is critically assessed, and trends in corporate compliance are examined.

Case studies and analysis of CSR reports performs a major role for businesses as key stakeholders in achieving social justice and development in human rights. The results indicate that while legal requirements have promoted businesses' contributions to social causes, including human rights in fundamental business strategies, it remains work in progress.

2. Introduction

CSR is concept that businesses should not only concentrate on increasing profits, however also provide various types of contributions to the well-being of society, such as sustainability of the environment, moral corporate conduct, community development, and other social projects. CSR significance has grown significantly over the years, and various laws and frameworks have been established to formalize and regulate CSR practices across industries globally.

There remains significant percentage of people living in absolute poverty. Business communities participate in CSR initiatives focused on sustainable development that support government's attempts to address these development gaps. Through these initiatives, businesses can effectively contribute to the development process in line with the government.

The Indian economy is continuously evolving. The environment of Indian business has made significant strides on the global stage, characterized by a supportive and proactive approach. Strengthening grassroots welfare is fundamental to any development process. These efforts have garnered significant recognition from policymakers, the government, and other stakeholders.

Company Act, 2013, under Section 135, mandates CSR contributions by certain companies in India. This paper aims to analyse CSR as per the Indian company law, its significance, impact, challenges, and compliance mechanisms.

3. History/Development of CSR:

CSR concepts began in 19th century with figures like Robert Owen and William Hesketh Lever in the United Kingdom, Cadbury brothers in England, and Jamshedji Tata in India.

In 1916, J. M. Clark supported Adam Smith's idea that the economics of responsibility in business ethics could address various issues by shifting personal responsibility to public responsibility.

Subsequent works by expert thinkers explored the role of CSR in the business-society relationship, resulting in ongoing debate between the shareholders' perspective and stakeholders' perspective of CSR. Carroll, A. B. (1999) later supported Freeman's stakeholder arguments and highlighted his popular CSR pyramid, especially relevant for developing countries, by revisiting his four dimensions of CSR outlined in 1979.

In the 21st century, the focus has shifted from theoretical discussions to empirical investigations, emphasizing the stakeholder approach, triple bottom line, and business ethics.

CSR now aims to ensure public goods and improve social welfare through its trickle-down effects on society, which can be understood using the stakeholder theory framework, with mandatory contributions by corporations in CSR initiative.

4. Meaning of CSR:

CSR concept has been developing since early 1970s, yet a universally accepted definition remains elusive. Numerous codes, conventions, principles, and standards have emerged, reflecting the diverse CSR practices across different economies.

These variations are primarily due to differences in the following:

- Socio-economic systems
- Legal and regulatory frameworks
- Cultural differences.
- Local public needs.

While different organizations have developed their definitions of CSR, there is considerable similarity among them. Anarde Foundation describes CSR as companies managing their business operations to positively impact society.

5. Key aspects of CSR as per WBC: (World Business Council for Sustainable Development)

Companies commit to operate ethically, supporting economic progress, and improving "quality of life of their employees, family, local community, and society at large" through CSR.

CSR involves Social benefits along with sustainability developments.

Peter Drucker posits that corporations can fulfill their social responsibility by turning it into business opportunities. For example, a company in the solar energy sector might conduct research to develop affordable solar energy devices and promote them among rural populations. This will help in interlinked benefits for company & society both.

According to Nelson, the greatest contribution businesses can make to development is by producing safe and cost-effective products and services profitably while adhering to the law. This also involves enhancing the positive economic, social, and environmental impacts and managing and minimizing the negative ones.

6. Evolution of CSR in Indian Law:

In 1991, Indian society was not yet significantly liberalized or globalized. However, the economic reforms introduced subsequently led to substantial benefits, including enhanced access to diverse information and a plethora of perspectives.

This transformation has profoundly influenced societal perceptions of CSR initiatives, which in turn impact corporate reputations. Currently, Indian society's awareness and understanding of CSR programs are transitioning from a predominantly sceptical viewpoint to a more balanced and objective perspective.

Initially, CSR was a voluntary practice in India. Studies on CSR during its voluntary phase highlighted the necessity for a legal framework to ensure effective implementation in India. In

today's globalized world, only sustainable businesses can drive sustainable development.

In the era of globalization, companies are increasingly expected to do better for social causes than merely generate profit. In April 2010, Central Public Sector Enterprises CSR guidelines have been issued by Indian government. Company's brand image is substantially affected by its CSR activities; hence, reporting on them is essential.

Negligible percentage of top 1000 Indian companies have been actively involved in CSR initiatives, according to an analysis of their CSR activity.

Mandatory CSR regulations in India have enhanced economic development. Proponents argue that corporations should broaden their responsibilities to include societal welfare, extending beyond their traditional focus on profit maximization.

Conversely, opponents contend that CSR should remain a market-driven approach aimed at maximizing shareholder value.

They argue that mandatory CSR can impose inconsistent costs on smaller and emerging firms, for which profits are a crucial source of investment. These enforced expenditures could result in opportunity costs. Therefore, the true responsibility of a firm lies in balancing the dual objectives of maximizing shareholder value and stakeholder value without substantially diminishing net social welfare gains.

India is renowned for being the first country that implement minimum CSR laws, which have been mandatory.

CSR in India was formally introduced through **Companies Act, 2013**. Before this, there were no mandatory provisions that required companies to contribute to social causes, though many companies engaged in philanthropic activities voluntarily.

However, the key development occurred with evolution of "Companies Act, 2013, **Section 135**" was introduced to mandate CSR for certain

companies. Legal framework in India aims to establish clear guidelines on CSR activities, ensuring that businesses are not solely profit-driven but also actively contribute to societal welfare.

7. **Corporate Governance and CSR:**

A vital element of effective execution of CSR activities is corporate governance. Strong governance procedures increase probability that company will adopt ethical, transparent, and advantageous policies related to CSR. This involves maintaining responsibility in CSR initiatives, adhering to moral corporate conduct, and preserving transparency in financial reporting.

8. **Legal framework for CSR:**

Section 135 of the Companies Act, 2013:

Companies "that fall under certain limits are required to establish CSR committee and allocate specific portion of their earnings to CSR initiatives." Primary provisions of Section 135 are as follows:

Applicability:

CSR provisions applies to companies fulfilling at least one of following thresholds in preceding financial year(FY):

- **"Net worth** of ₹500crore or more.
- **Turnover** of ₹1,000crore or more.
- **Net profit** of ₹5crore or more."

CSR Expenditure:

These companies are "required to allocate **at least 2%** of their average net profits over past 3 years towards CSR" activities.

Calculation of Profits:

"Companies Act, 2013 Section 198" deals with "Calculation of Profits."

Calculation of profits is necessary for the evaluation of the new worth of the company. Profits include any income from business operations, investments, or other activities, after deducting expenses and applicable taxes.

CSR Committee:

Every eligible company covered under Section 135(1) must form a CSR committee consisting of following members.

- Minimum of 3 directors
- At least 1 Independent Director

This committee establishes and recommends CSR policies that represent company's beliefs and goals.

Role of CSR Committee:

To ensure that company's CSR efforts are under its social ethics and business goals, CSR committee is essential.

Among responsibilities of CSR committee are:

- * Drafting and reviewing CSR policy.
- * Ensuring effective execution of CSR projects.

CSR Activities:

The CSR policy must define activities "under Schedule VII of the Companies Act" "as follows:

Rural development projects.

Contribution to armed forces veterans, among others.

Environmental sustainability.

Promoting education.

Promoting gender equality and empowering women & children.

Reducing" inequalities.

Remove poverty, & malnutrition.

Providing clean water and sanitation.

Reporting and Disclosure:

Relevant Companies must provide details regarding their CSR initiatives in their ROC annual reports. If company doesn't spend required amount on CSR, it has to explain. Such Non-compliance leads to additional fees & penalties.

- Independent impact evaluations for CSR initiatives over Rs. 1 crore must be conducted by companies having an

average CSR obligation of Rs. 10 crore or more over previous 3 FY.

- Non-compliance with spending or reporting requirements attracts penalties (Section 135(7))

Rules and Guidelines by Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA):

MCA has issued detailed rules and guidelines for CSR under "Companies (Corporate Social Responsibility Policy) Rules, 2014". These rules underlie governance of CSR activities and direct companies in their CSR obligations, define their CSR policies, and monitor their CSR spending.

Schedule VII of the Companies Act, 2013:

"Companies Act Schedule VII" describes a wide range of activities under CSR. This includes:

- **Promoting** healthcare and education.
- Contribution to the welfare of communities.

Non-Spending of CSR Funds:

A corporation must explain non-compliance in its Board report if it does not spend required amount on CSR activities. Board must endorse this explanation, that could include emphasis in company's annual report.

Within 6 months, all unused CSR funds must be moved to a designated social purpose fund and stored separately. [or utilised, properly disclosed, in ongoing disclosures].

CSR Policy:

- Unspent "CSR funds required to be transferred to a specific social cause fund within six months and shall kept separately. [or used for ongoing projects, with proper disclosure].
- Board of Directors has formulated a CSR Policy

[Based on recommendations given by CSR Committee].

- Companies are statutorily spend at least 2% of their average net profit in the past three years on CSR activities (Section 135(5)).

- Policy should highlight activities mentioned in Schedule VII of Act" (covering areas like poverty, education, healthcare, etc.).

9. National Guidelines on Responsible Business Conduct (NGRBC):

The "National Voluntary Guidelines (NVGs)" on "Social, Environmental, and Economic Responsibilities of Business", released by MCA in July 2011, comprise 9 principles designed for guiding Indian businesses in adopting responsible business practices. Recognizing national and international advancements in sustainable business since 2011, these guidelines have been revised and reissued as 'National Guidelines on Responsible Business Conduct' (NGRBC) in March 2019.

Among other frameworks, NGRBC strikes a balance with "UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Paris Agreement on Climate Change, and UNGPs". It gives businesses a foundation for growing sustainably while attending to stakeholder concerns.

The NGRBC encourages businesses to comply with these principles strictly, which include:

- Assisting public and regulatory policy framework.
- Being responsive to and respecting the interests of all stakeholders.
- Conducting and governing with highest integrity, ethics, transparency, and accountability.
- Promoting "inclusive growth and equitable development.
- Providing customer satisfaction.
- Sustainably providing goods and services.
- Respecting and promoting well-being of all employees.
- Promoting human rights.
- To protect and" restore the environment.

Supreme Court (SC) of India established principle of "absolute liability" for those industries involved in hazardous activities, which means that such industries are strictly liable for any harm caused to people or

environment, without any safeguards, exceptions, or defences.

In a different case, well-known Bhopal Gas Tragedy case, SC of India set significant precedents for corporate responsibility while emphasizing moral and legal obligations of corporations to victims of industrial disasters.

A major factor in inclusion of CSR provisions in company law has been 21st Report of "Parliamentary Standing Committee on Finance". Standing Committee emphasized that Companies Act, 2013's requirement for yearly statutory disclosures on CSR in annual returns will successfully ensure compliance.

Every company has to disclose its CSR activities in Annual Report of Board of Directors. Format for such disclosures has also been defined.

10. Companies' in India engaged in CSR with examples:

CSR offers following benefits for companies:

- Enhanced Brand image: CSR initiatives improve public perception, fostering customer loyalty and trust.
- Attracting Talent: Companies known for ethical practices and social contributions attract and retain motivated employees.
- Risk Management: CSR helps mitigate risks by addressing social and environmental issues proactively.
- Efficiency in operation: Sustainable practices often lead to cost savings and operational efficiencies.
- Investor Awareness: Many investors prefer companies with strong CSR commitments, potentially increasing investment opportunities.

Overall, CSR contributes to a company's long-term prospects and success.

Example of Companies in India

🚦 TATA Group

"Tata Consultancy Services (TCS)", a prominent IT services, consulting, and business solutions firm within the Tata Group, has been crucial in guiding numerous leading global companies

through transformative journeys for over last five decades. In FY 2021-22, TCS exceeded its mandatory CSR expenditure requirement by spending Rs 727 crores, more than the mandated Rs 716 crores.

Company claims everyone has equal potential, however, not equal opportunity. TCS employs purpose and technology that allows individuals and communities to be self-sufficient while respecting justice, equality, and human rights.

It is committed to protecting and developing the weaker section of society, particularly for women, youth, and marginalized groups.

TCS's global CSR activities focus on education, skill development, and employment to address community "needs."

In FY 2022, TCS estimates that its global community initiatives benefited over 1.7 million individuals, made possible by "the dedicated efforts of over 58,900 employees."

Reliance Industries Limited

Reliance, India's biggest company by market valuation, leads retail and digital service sector and entire energy value chain globally.

Reliance Industries Limited consistently ranks as the top spender on CSR initiatives in the country. In FY 2021-22, the company allocated Rs.1186 crores towards its CSR activities, exceeding its mandated spending obligation under the Companies Act Rs.1112 crores.

Most Reliance's community undertake programs that are conducted through Reliance Foundation, the CSR arm of the Reliance Group.

Company has assisted around 5.75 crore individuals since its philanthropy originated. Reliance Industries' CSR operations concentrate on "Rural Transformation, Education, Disaster Response, Health, Sports for Development, and Arts, Culture, and Heritage". Companies have additionally assisted country combat COVID-19.

At 2021 CSR Journal Excellence Awards, Reliance Foundation received recognition for its Corporate Leadership in Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) practices.

11. **CSR in the USA:**

I. **Philanthropic Model:**

- **Charity focuses:** CSR in the USA is often centred around philanthropy, where businesses engage in charitable activities and donate a portion of their profits to various causes.
- **Corporate spending:** Companies are known for their significant contributions to education, health, and social services. Major corporations set up foundations or partner with non-profits to support community initiatives.
- **Voluntary contributions:** Encouraging employee volunteerism is a common practice. Companies organize and support volunteer efforts, fostering community engagement.

II. **Profit and Taxation:**

- **Business-priority Approach:** The primary focus is on making profits, with the understanding that profitable businesses can then support social causes.
- **Tax Compliance:** Companies fulfil their social responsibility by paying taxes, which in turn support public services and infrastructure.

III. **Charitable Contributions:**

Donations to Charities:

- A certain percentage of profits is reserved for donations to charitable organizations. This is seen as a way to give back to the community and enhance company's brand image.

Court of Appeals for Tenth Circuit held the scope of discretionary power vested in a board of directors, particularly their authority to act in the public interest, even if it may result in financial costs to the stockholders.

Challenges in CSR implementation:

- **Lack of Awareness and Expertise in Implementation**

Several companies, especially smaller ones, may lack knowledge and expertise for

implementing effective CSR programs. This often leads to poorly designed initiatives that fail to create the desired social impact & value.

- **Ineffective Monitoring and Reporting**

Monitoring the effectiveness of CSR activities is a challenge for many companies. Without robust monitoring and reporting mechanisms, the real impact of CSR spending can be hard to assess.

- **Legal and Regulatory Issues**

Compliance with legal and regulatory frameworks can be complex, especially for small and medium-sized companies. Many firms face challenges in aligning their CSR policies with provisions of “Companies Act, 2013”.

- **Misuse of CSR Funds**

There are concerns about CSR funds being misused or diverted towards activities that do not qualify under the law. This raises issues regarding transparency and accountability in CSR spending.

Monitoring and evaluating the impact of CSR activities.

Preparing annual CSR reports.

Environmental sustainability.

Rural development.

Contributions to public and charitable causes, among others.

The companies must ensure that their CSR initiatives align with the objectives stated in this schedule.

12. Impact of CSR on Indian Companies:

CSR Obligations under the Companies Act, 2013:

A Critical Analysis

“Companies Act, 2013”, enacted mandatory CSR provisions in Section 135, making it compulsory for companies meeting certain criteria “net worth of ₹500 crore, turnover of ₹1,000 crore, or net profit of ₹5 crore” to allocate at least 2% of

their average net profits from the preceding three years to CSR activities.

Case Law:

Tata Power Company Ltd. v. Union of India (2017): This case established that CSR expenditure must be following legal requirements under “Companies Act, 2013”, and it emphasized importance of corporate governance in CSR practices. Tata Power had to justify its CSR expenditure, showcasing the requirement for genuine contribution to social causes.

While the law encourages corporate involvement in social welfare, critics argue that the mandatory nature may lead to tokenism and superficial CSR initiatives, designed to fulfil legal obligations rather than creating meaningful societal “impact.”

Effectiveness of CSR in Addressing Social Inequality in India

While CSR” initiatives, like healthcare, education, and rural development, have shown some success, efficacy of CSR in addressing deep-rooted social inequalities is still limited. Many corporations primarily focus on short-term projects rather than long-term solutions to issues like caste discrimination or gender inequality, etc.

Case Law:

“People’s Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL) v. Union of India (2003)”: Though not directly related to CSR, this case highlights the state’s duty to address socio-economic disparities. It serves as a reminder that corporate contributions must be seen as part of a broader framework to ensure social justice, not just as isolated “charity.”

CSR in Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs): Legal Compliance Challenges

Legal” framework under “Companies Act, 2013”, primarily targets large corporations, which results in smaller businesses often being excluded from CSR obligations. SMEs face challenges such as a lack of financial resources

and administrative capacity, hindering their compliance with CSR norms, etc.

Case Law:

"Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) v. Union of India (2016)": This case addressed concerns about the feasibility of CSR compliance for smaller businesses and emphasized the need for a differentiated approach to CSR obligations, recognizing the unique challenges faced by SMEs.

Impact of CSR Activities on Corporate Reputation and Brand Image

CSR initiatives significantly impact corporate reputation. Companies with effective CSR programs often see improved brand image, consumer satisfaction, and overall public image. However, in cases of 'greenwashing' or superficial CSR efforts, there is a risk of reputational damage.

Case Law:

McDonald's Corporation v. State of California (2014): Although this case primarily deals with marketing practices, it illustrates how companies can face legal consequences if CSR claims are found to be misleading or deceptive, potentially leading to reputational harm and legal "sanctions."

Mandatory vs. Voluntary CSR: A Comparative Analysis of Global Practices

CSR" regulations vary significantly across countries. While India has mandated CSR, countries like the U.S. and UK rely on voluntary CSR practices. A mandatory approach ensures corporate contribution but may not guarantee long-term sustainability, whereas voluntary CSR fosters innovation and personalized engagement with societal issues.

Case Law:

The Coca-Cola Company v. India (2013): This case illustrates the tension between mandatory compliance and voluntary actions in CSR. Coca-Cola, being a global brand, adhered to

both local CSR requirements and its global voluntary CSR commitments, highlighting the global disparity in CSR frameworks.

Tax Implications of CSR Expenditures in India

Indian tax laws do not currently allow businesses to claim CSR expenditure as a deduction under Income Tax Act, 1961. This means that companies must allocate funds for CSR without receiving the usual tax benefits associated with business expenses.

Case Law:

CIT v. Dalmia Cement Ltd. (2005): This case underlined that CSR expenses cannot be treated as business expenses for tax deduction purposes, indicating that CSR is regarded as a separate social responsibility beyond ordinary business "operations."

CSR Reporting in India: Transparency and Accountability Issues

CSR" reporting lacks standardization and transparency in many organizations. Some companies selectively report on CSR initiatives that reflect positively on their brand, while ignoring failures or projects that didn't yield results.

Case Law:

National Thermal Power Corporation Ltd. v. Union of India (2016): The case emphasized the need for transparency in reporting CSR activities, setting a precedent for CSR audits and ensuring that companies' CSR activities aren't just for public relations "purposes."

CSR and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Role of Indian Corporations

The alignment of CSR" with the United Nations' SDGs has been a focal point for many Indian corporations. Companies like Infosys, TCS, and Mahindra have incorporated SDG-related goals into their CSR strategies, focusing on environmental sustainability, education, and gender equality.

Case Law:

Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd. v. Union of India (2020): Mahindra's case highlighted its commitment to the SDGs through CSR programs. The company was scrutinized for ensuring that its CSR projects directly contributed to SDGs, setting a benchmark for corporate involvement in global "sustainability."

Corporate Philanthropy vs. CSR: Legal and Ethical Perspectives

Corporate philanthropy often involves direct donations to charity or causes, while CSR represents a broader strategy that incorporates social, environmental, and economic responsibility into business operations. Ethically, CSR goes beyond philanthropy by addressing sustainable practices and business ethics.

Case Law:

The State of Maharashtra v. Hindustan Lever Ltd. (2005): The case examined the fine line between philanthropy and CSR. The court ruled that companies cannot just make donations without integrating social responsibility into their "operations."

CSR as a Tool for Greenwashing: Legal Implications

Greenwashing" refers to misleading claims by companies about their environmental practices, often in an attempt to gain consumer favour. The legal implications of greenwashing are significant, as companies can face penalties for false advertising and misrepresentation.

Case Law:

Volkswagen AG v. United States (2015): This high-profile case, although outside India, serves as an example of how greenwashing can lead to severe legal and financial consequences. Volkswagen's false claims regarding emission standards led to heavy fines and loss of public trust.

13. Linkage between Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) &

Human Rights:

➤ CSR and Its Core

CSR is a company's obligation to act ethically, promote socio-economic growth, and improve quality of life of its employees, their families, community, and society.

➤ Human Rights Context

Fundamental rights and freedoms all individuals are entitled to, encompassing right to life, freedom from discrimination, right to education, fair working conditions, etc., by birth.

CSR and Human Rights integration

CSR & Human rights are inseparable in today's business environment. Businesses must integrate Human rights into CSR strategies.

CSR is ultimately ethical and sustainable business practices having some responsibility towards society, including employees, environment, which is beyond profits, that leads to protection of rights of humans given by birth or by charter of nation (like Constitution of India), UDHR & ILO, etc.

Global Standards & Guidelines

UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs): Primary international framework linking business conduct to human rights.

ILO Conventions: Guide labour rights, which are a part of human rights.

OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises:

Encourage businesses to comply human rights law and act responsibly.

Why This Linkage Matters?

Legal Compliance: More countries now mandate CSR reporting and human rights due diligence.

Brand Reputation: Ethical behaviour improves trust with stakeholders.

Risk Management: Prevents reputational and legal risks from human rights violations.

Real-World Examples:

Tata Group: CSR focused on education, health, and livelihoods

Unilever: Human rights due diligence in supply chains

Nike: Faced criticism, then reformed labour rights practice.

14. Conclusion:

Even though CSR has greatly changed in India since Companies Act, 2013, there remain concerns with legal compliance, transparency, and other issues. Rather than observing CSR as a mandate, companies should concentrate on incorporating it into their fundamental business processes.

Regulatory frameworks, including stringent reporting under annual reports requirements and tax reforms, are essential to ensuring that CSR is impactful, transparent, and aligned with long-term societal goals, including protection of Human Rights.

CSR is crucial component of modern corporate operations. Integrating ethical and sustainable practices throughout their operations, companies can create a positive impact. This extends from fostering a healthy work environment and responsible sourcing to minimizing environmental impact and giving back to communities.

The benefits are multifaceted: a stronger brand reputation, increased customer loyalty, and a more engaged workforce. However, for CSR to be truly impactful, it must go beyond performative gestures. Transparency and authenticity are essential. Consumers and investors are increasingly demanding genuine efforts that align with a company's vision.

Looking ahead, CSR is likely to become even more rooted in business strategy. Stakeholder capitalism is benefiting from giving all stakeholders' needs, including those of employees, customers, communities, and environment, priority alongside shareholders. Companies that embrace this concept and

demonstrate commitment to social responsibility will be in a strong position to draw in and maintain top talent, especially from younger generations that give equal weight to company's social effect and financial growth.

CSR will be essential for developing more sustainable and just corporate vision as a result of social and environmental issues. Continuous improvement and measurable outcomes will be essential for ensuring CSR initiatives deliver on their expected promises.

15. Recommendations:

Enhanced Awareness and Education among stakeholders: Companies should invest in educating their employees and stakeholders regarding significance of CSR and how to implement impactful initiatives.

Stronger Monitoring and Impact Evaluation of policies: To evaluate efficacy and social impact of CSR activities, efficient monitoring and evaluation systems should be established.

Collaboration with NGOs and Government Agencies: Companies should work with government agencies and NGOs to conduct CSR initiatives more efficiently and effectively.

Transparency in Reporting: Companies should ensure that their CSR activities and funds are transparently reported and monitored by independent bodies to prevent misuse.

By implementing these strategies, CSR has been transformed from duty based on compliance to a significant force that advances defence of fundamental human rights and general well-being of society.

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“BHARATIYA NYAYA SANHITA ON TRIAL: CAN SECTIONS 103 AND 117 DETER MOB LYNCHING?”

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ABSTRACT

Mob lynching, a brutal form of vigilante justice often fueled by communal hatred, caste prejudice, and misinformation, has emerged as a growing concern in India's socio-legal landscape. The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023, in its Sections 103(2) and 117(4), introduces specific provisions addressing group-based acts of murder and grievous hurt motivated by identity markers such as race, caste, religion, sex, or language. These provisions mark a legal evolution from the Indian Penal Code (IPC) by formally recognizing hate-based group violence and assigning collective criminal liability to all participants in such acts.

This article critically examines the effectiveness and limitations of these provisions in tackling the menace of mob lynching. It assesses whether BNS's framework can serve as a sufficient deterrent, especially in the absence of a standalone anti-lynching law and explores how these provisions align with constitutional principles of equality, justice, and due process. Drawing on case studies, judicial precedents, and comparative international legal frameworks, the analysis highlights key enforcement challenges—such as institutional bias, weak prosecution, and community silence—that may hinder the law's potential. Ultimately, the article argues that while Sections 103 and 117 represent a step forward, their success in curbing mob violence will depend on interpretation, implementation, and public accountability mechanisms.

KEYWORDS

Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) 2023; Mob lynching; Section 103 BNS; Section 117 BNS; Group liability; Hate crimes; Caste-based violence; Communal violence; Legal deterrence; Collective criminal responsibility; Criminal law reform in India; Grievous hurt; Identity-based violence; Vigilantism; Indian penal reform.

INTRODUCTION

Mob lynching has become a deeply troubling phenomenon in India, reflecting a disturbing trend of vigilante violence driven by communal animosities, caste prejudices, and misinformation. These violent episodes not only shatter the social fabric but also challenge the capacity of the legal system to protect vulnerable communities and uphold the rule of law⁷⁵³. In response to this growing menace, the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023,

introduced Sections 103(2) and 117(4), which specifically target group-based acts of murder and grievous hurt motivated by identity markers such as race, caste, religion, sex, or language. This marks a significant shift from the traditional framework under the Indian Penal Code (IPC), as the BNS explicitly recognizes hate-driven collective violence and seeks to hold all participants in such acts criminally liable.

This article undertakes a critical examination of these new provisions to assess whether they can effectively deter mob lynching in India's complex socio-legal environment. Given the absence of a dedicated anti-lynching law, the

⁷⁵³ Becker, G. S. (1968). *Crime and Punishment: An Economic Approach*. *Journal of Political Economy*, 76(2), 169–217. <https://doi.org/10.1086/259394>

analysis focuses on the scope and limitations of Sections 103 and 117 in addressing the root causes and manifestations of mob violence. It further explores the constitutional implications of these provisions, particularly concerning equality, justice, and due process. Through a detailed review of case law, enforcement challenges, and comparative international frameworks, the article aims to offer a comprehensive understanding of the BNS's potential role in curbing this violent trend, while highlighting the practical hurdles that may impede its success.

OVERVIEW OF THE BHARATIYA NYAYA SANHITA (BNS), 2023

The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023, a comprehensive legal reform replacing the Indian Penal Code (IPC) of 1860, marks a watershed moment in Indian criminal jurisprudence. Among its most notable innovations is the *explicit legal recognition and penalisation of mob lynching*, a form of collective violence that had long operated in a grey area of criminal law.

Prior to BNS 2023, mob lynching cases were prosecuted under general provisions such as murder (Section 302 IPC), rioting (Section 147 IPC), and unlawful assembly (Section 141 IPC). However, the absence of a distinct definition and punishment framework led to inconsistent and inadequate justice. The Supreme Court of India, in *Tehseen S. Poonawalla v. Union of India* (2018), had strongly urged the Parliament to legislate specifically on lynching, describing it as a "horrendous act of mobocracy" and recommending preventive, remedial, and punitive measures⁷⁵⁴.

The BNS, 2023, introduces Clause 103(2) (formerly IPC Section 302) which categorically criminalises mob lynching as a distinct offence, with stringent penalties:

Clause 103(2): *If a group of five or more persons, acting in concert, causes the death of another person on the grounds of religion, race,*

*caste, sex, place of birth, language, personal belief, or any other similar grounds, all members of such a group shall be punished with death or imprisonment for life, and shall also be liable to fine.*⁷⁵⁵

1. Definition of Group Liability: Unlike the IPC, BNS provides clarity by explicitly holding *each member of the mob accountable*, regardless of individual roles, thus invoking the doctrine of *joint liability*.
2. Protected Grounds: The inclusion of identity markers like religion, caste, and language reflects a rights-based approach, aligning with constitutional protections under Articles 14, 15, and 21.
3. Minimum Group Size: The law sets a clear threshold of *five or more persons*, avoiding ambiguity.
4. Graded Punishment: Though provision allows both *life imprisonment* and *death penalty*, the choice is left to judicial discretion, allowing for proportional justice.

Unlike ad hoc state laws (e.g., Manipur's Anti-Mob Lynching Act, 2018 or Rajasthan Protection from Lynching Bill, 2019), the BNS provision is *national in scope* and *integrated into the central criminal code*. It institutionalizes mob lynching as a *serious and standalone criminal offence*, potentially influencing social deterrence.

This marks the first time in Indian legal history that lynching has been defined and penalized independently, responding to increasing incidents and public outcry. The codification reflects legislative intent to assert the *rule of law* and curb vigilante justice.

While the provision is a progressive step, legal experts have flagged some concerns such as burden of proof, risk of misuse and while The provision is punitive; BNS does not yet

⁷⁵⁴ *Tehseen S. Poonawalla v. Union of India*, (2018) 9 SCC 501

⁷⁵⁵ *Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 – Clause 103(2)*. Official Gazette of India.

incorporate the *preventive and rehabilitative* suggestions made by the Supreme Court in *Poonawalla*, such as victim compensation schemes, fast-track courts, or police accountability mechanisms⁷⁵⁶.

The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023's inclusion of specific anti-lynching legislation is a landmark legal development, strengthening protections against identity-based collective violence. While implementation and interpretation will shape its real-world impact, the recognition itself closes a long-standing legislative gap and sends a strong message against mob justice.

LEGAL RECOGNITION OF HATE-BASED GROUP VIOLENCE

In recent years, India has witnessed an alarming rise in incidents of group violence rooted in identity-based hatred—targeting individuals on the grounds of religion, caste, race, language, gender, dietary practices, or personal belief systems. These acts, often in the form of mob lynchings, represent a dangerous erosion of the rule of law and pose a serious threat to India's secular and constitutional fabric.

Despite the gravity of these acts, hate-based group violence has historically lacked distinct legal recognition in Indian criminal law. Existing provisions under the Indian Penal Code, 1860 (IPC) dealt with murder, hurt, rioting, or unlawful assembly, but did not acknowledge the collective, prejudiced, and discriminatory intent behind such acts.

The Bharatiya Nyaya (Second) Sanhita, 2023 (BNSS), intended to replace the IPC, introduces for the first time specific recognition of group violence motivated by hate, under Clause 103(2)⁷⁵⁷ and Clause 117(4)⁷⁵⁸. This marks a significant, yet incomplete step toward legal recognition and punishment of hate-based group violence.

Hate-based group violence refers to coordinated acts of violence by a group, motivated by prejudice against the victim's identity—religious, racial, caste, linguistic, or ideological. It is distinct from ordinary group violence in that:

- The victim is targeted not for an individual act, but because of their membership in a perceived "other" group.
- It carries a strong symbolic and psychological impact, aiming to intimidate an entire community.
- It is often linked to systemic discrimination and societal power hierarchies.

The landmark case of *Tehseen S. Poonawalla v. Union of India* (2018) 9 SCC 501 was the first major judicial recognition of mob lynching as a social menace. The Supreme Court laid down preventive, remedial, and punitive guidelines and emphasized the State's responsibility to curb "rising intolerance and growing polarisation." However, there was no corresponding amendment to the IPC to create specific penal provisions.

The Manav Suraksha Kanoon (MaSuKa)—a private member bill—attempted to define and criminalize lynching as hate-based violence. While progressive, it was never enacted⁷⁵⁹.

Some states like Jharkhand, Rajasthan, and Manipur passed anti-lynching bills, but most await Presidential assent, leaving a legislative vacuum.

Provisions under BNSS, 2023: A Step Towards Recognition

Clause 103(2): Mob Lynching as Murder- This clause:

- Recognizes hate-motivated murder.
- Requires a minimum of five perpetrators.

⁷⁵⁶ Human Rights Watch. (2022). *India: Mob Violence and Impunity*

⁷⁵⁷ Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, § 103, Act No. 45 of 2023, India Code (2023).

⁷⁵⁸ Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, § 117, Act No. 45 of 2023, India Code (2023).

⁷⁵⁹ Poonawalla, S. (2017). *The Protection from Lynching Bill, 2017 (Manav Suraksha Kanoon)*. Rajya Sabha Private Members' Bill No. 44.

- Introduces a specific motive-based classification absent in IPC Section 302.

Clause 117(4): Group-Based Grievous Hurt

This provision acknowledges non-lethal but severe identity-based violence, extending protection beyond fatal outcomes.

While Clauses 103(2) and 117(4) introduce legal recognition of group-based identity violence, they suffer from critical gaps.

The legal recognition of hate-based group violence in BNSS, 2023 is a historic development, especially through Clauses 103(2) and 117(4). However, the provisions remain largely punitive and structurally limited. Without complementary procedural safeguards, administrative accountability, and victim support mechanisms, the law risks becoming a symbolic reform rather than a transformative one.

Given the systemic and identity-driven nature of such violence, what is required is a comprehensive hate crime law, grounded in constitutional principles, judicial precedents, and best international practices. India must treat such violence not just as criminal, but as an assault on the idea of India itself.

EFFECTIVENESS OF SECTIONS 103 AND 117 IN DETERRING MOB LYNCHING

The inclusion of Sections 103(2) and 117(4) in the Bharatiya Nyaya (Second) Sanhita, 2023 (BNSS), marks the first explicit attempt by the Indian legislature to address the long-standing issue of mob lynching as a distinct and serious offence. Section 103(2) criminalizes murder committed by five or more individuals acting in concert on the grounds of identity—such as caste, community, religion, language, or personal belief—and provides for punishment by death, life imprisonment, or a minimum term of seven years along with fine. Similarly, Section 117(4) deals with grievous hurt inflicted by five or more persons under the same identity-based motivations, prescribing imprisonment up to seven years and fine. These provisions are a clear step towards acknowledging the targeted

and discriminatory nature of mob lynching and aim to fill a significant gap in India's penal jurisprudence, which previously lacked a specific category for hate-based group violence.

However, while these sections represent legislative progress, their effectiveness in deterring mob lynching remains questionable due to multiple shortcomings in their scope and implementation framework. Firstly, both provisions focus primarily on punitive measures, without incorporating preventive mechanisms, institutional accountability, or remedial measures—all of which are essential to tackling mob lynching, which often involves a broader ecosystem of social bias, misinformation, and law enforcement failure. Secondly, the requirement that a "group of five or more persons" must act in concert introduces an arbitrary numerical threshold that could exclude incidents involving fewer individuals, thereby diluting legal response to smaller but equally dangerous acts of mob violence. Furthermore, these provisions lack procedural safeguards such as special investigative mechanisms, fast-track courts, victim-witness protection, or mandatory action by police authorities—elements that were strongly recommended in the *Tehseen S. Poonawalla* judgment of the Supreme Court in 2018 and reflected in proposed laws like the Manav Suraksha Kanoon (MaSuKa) and various state-level anti-lynching bills.

In the absence of these supporting mechanisms, Sections 103(2) and 117(4) risk being underutilized or inconsistently enforced, especially in socio-politically sensitive cases where victims belong to marginalized communities and perpetrators enjoy local support or political backing. Additionally, the new provisions stop short of categorizing mob lynching as a "hate crime," thereby failing to place it within the broader narrative of identity-based violence that undermines constitutional guarantees of equality and dignity. There is also no provision for mandatory reporting, public awareness, or data collection on such crimes,

which weakens both accountability and policy formulation.

In conclusion, while Sections 103 and 117 of the BNSS reflect an important shift in the legal treatment of mob lynching by providing statutory recognition and serious punishment, their deterrent effect remains limited in the absence of a comprehensive legal, procedural, and institutional framework. For these provisions to effectively deter such crimes, they must be embedded within a broader legal regime that emphasizes prevention, swift justice delivery, victim support, and law enforcement accountability, alongside community engagement and counter-narratives to hate. Without this multidimensional approach, the mere presence of penal sanctions may not be sufficient to curb the deep-rooted and increasingly organized menace of mob lynching in India.

COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES

Understanding the issue of mob lynching and hate-based group violence in India benefits from examining how other jurisdictions have tackled similar challenges. Across the world, democracies have responded to such crimes by crafting laws that recognize the identity-based motives, provide enhanced penalties, and adopt a victim-centric and preventive approach to justice. These comparative frameworks offer valuable insights into how Indian law—especially in the context of the Bharatiya Nyaya (Second) Sanhita, 2023—can evolve to more effectively deter and address such crimes.

In the United States, mob lynching has a long, painful history rooted in racial violence, particularly against African Americans. After over a century of failed legislative efforts, the Emmett Till Antilynching Act was passed in 2022⁷⁶⁰. This Act makes lynching a federal hate crime, punishable by up to 30 years in prison. Crucially, the law does not impose a minimum

number of perpetrators, recognizing that even one or two individuals can engage in identity-based mob violence. It also allows federal intervention in local crimes when states fail to act adequately—an important check on state inertia, which is often seen in India as well. The U.S. model emphasizes bias-motivation as a key element, which is something the Indian BNSS provisions (Sections 103 and 117) imply, but do not explicitly classify under a broader hate crime framework.

In South Africa, the post-apartheid legal system has explicitly acknowledged hate crimes as serious threats to democratic equality⁷⁶¹. The Prevention and Combating of Hate Crimes and Hate Speech Bill seeks to criminalize hate crimes motivated by race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and other protected characteristics. What makes this model particularly instructive is its intersectional and restorative justice approach, which not only punishes offenders but also emphasizes community healing, anti-discrimination training, and rehabilitation. In a society like India, with its own deeply entrenched caste, communal, and gender biases, such a holistic approach could offer a more sustainable model of justice.

Several European Union countries have adopted a robust legislative stance against hate crimes. For example, Germany and France enhance penalties when crimes are motivated by race, religion, or other protected identities⁷⁶². These jurisdictions mandate law enforcement training to identify hate crime indicators and often require the collection and publication of official hate crime statistics, allowing for evidence-based policymaking. These procedural obligations are conspicuously absent in Indian criminal law, which does not currently maintain

⁷⁶⁰ Emmett Till Antilynching Act, 2022, Public Law No: 117–107, United States Congress. Available at: <https://www.congress.gov/bills/117th-congress/house-bill/55>

⁷⁶¹ Prevention and Combating of Hate Crimes and Hate Speech Bill, 2018, Republic of South Africa, Department of Justice and Constitutional Development. Available at: <https://www.justice.gov.za/legislation/bills/2018-HateCrimesBill.pdf>

⁷⁶² EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, “Hate Crime Reporting and Recording in the EU,” FRA Report (2021). Available at: <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2021/hate-crime-reporting>

disaggregated data on identity-motivated crimes.

Closer to home, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka have also seen sporadic incidents of communal violence and have responded with a mix of emergency laws and community policing reforms⁷⁶³. However, their responses tend to lack formal recognition of hate crimes as a separate legal category, much like India. This underlines a regional legislative gap in codifying identity-based violence despite its frequent occurrence.

India, through Sections 103(2) and 117(4) of the BNSS, has taken a preliminary step toward aligning with global standards by recognizing the group and identity-based nature of mob violence. However, unlike the legal frameworks in the U.S., EU, or South Africa, the Indian approach remains punitive but procedurally underdeveloped. There is no explicit recognition of hate crime, no specialized investigative units, and no system for monitoring, data collection, or victim support services. The comparative analysis reveals that effective legal deterrence requires more than criminalization—it demands a coordinated legislative, institutional, and social response.

Thus, drawing lessons from international practices, India must move beyond symbolic penal recognition and toward comprehensive anti-lynching and hate crime legislation, complete with implementation mechanisms, oversight bodies, community outreach, and support for survivors. These reforms are essential if the country is to meaningfully confront and dismantle the growing menace of hate-based group violence.

CONCLUSION

The inclusion of Sections 103(2) and 117(4) in the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, signifies a long-awaited recognition of mob lynching as a distinct and serious criminal offence rooted in identity-based hatred. By explicitly referring to acts of violence committed by groups on the

basis of race, caste, religion, language, or belief, these provisions mark a departure from the silence of the Indian Penal Code, 1860, which lacked any focused treatment of such crimes. This statutory shift reflects a growing awareness of the communal, symbolic, and systemic nature of mob violence in India. However, the capacity of these sections to effectively deter mob lynching remains uncertain and limited.

The provisions, while important in form, remain insufficient in substance. Their exclusive focus on punitive measures, without embedding preventive mechanisms such as nodal officers, special courts, fast-track trials, or witness protection, limits their real-world application. The arbitrary threshold of five or more perpetrators, the absence of a clear definition or classification of "hate crime", and the lack of victim-centric and rehabilitative provisions all dilute the intended deterrent impact. Moreover, the failure to implement the Supreme Court's guidelines in *Tehseen S. Poonawalla* and the non-enactment of comprehensive legislative models like MaSuKa (Manav Suraksha Kanoon) or various state bills leaves India's legal response fragmented and reactive.

Comparative legal systems like those in the United States, South Africa, and European Union nations provide instructive examples of how identity-motivated violence can be combated through a multidimensional legal framework—one that combines criminal sanctions with systemic reforms, public accountability, and data-driven monitoring. India must take similar steps to ensure that Sections 103 and 117 of the BNSS are not mere symbolic gestures, but rather the foundation of a comprehensive legal and policy response to one of the gravest threats to constitutional morality and social harmony.

Ultimately, while the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita takes a significant step forward, its success in deterring mob lynching will depend on the political will to operationalize the law, the efficiency of law enforcement, and the commitment of the justice system to uphold human dignity and constitutional values

⁷⁶³ International Crisis Group, "Communal Tensions in South Asia," Asia Report No. 294 (2021); Amnesty International, "Freedom of Expression and Hate Speech in Sri Lanka," Report (2022).

without bias or delay. Without structural reforms, the law may remain a promising text with limited transformative effect.

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ANTI-CONVERSION LAWS IN INDIA: A COMPARATIVE STUDY BETWEEN STATES

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Abstract

Anti-conversion laws in India, officially termed as “Freedom of Religion” laws, seek to regulate religious conversions and prevent conversions through force, fraud, or inducement. While the Indian Constitution guarantees religious freedom under Article 25, states have implemented varying laws that create tensions between religious liberty and state control. This research critically examines and compares the anti-conversion laws of key Indian states—Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Gujarat, Uttarakhand, and Odisha. The study highlights legislative trends, judicial scrutiny, controversies, and implications for fundamental rights.

Keywords: Anti-conversion, religious freedom, Article 25, fraud, inducement, religious liberty, state legislation

1. Introduction

India’s secular framework recognizes and protects the right to freedom of religion. Article 25 of the Indian Constitution guarantees all persons the freedom of conscience and the right to profess, practice, and propagate religion. However, to address alleged coercive or fraudulent religious conversions, several Indian states have enacted anti-conversion laws.

These laws—termed “Freedom of Religion” Acts—claim to uphold individual freedom by preventing conversions by force, fraud, or inducement. However, they have drawn criticism for infringing upon personal liberty, disproportionately targeting minorities, and being misused by authorities.

India, with its rich tapestry of religions, philosophies, and cultural practices, has always prided itself on its pluralistic ethos and constitutional secularism. The framers of the Constitution enshrined the right to religious freedom under Article 25, which guarantees every citizen the freedom of conscience and the

right to profess, practice, and propagate any religion of their choice. However, in recent years, the legislative and political narrative has shifted towards regulating religious conversions, particularly those that allegedly occur through force, fraud, inducement, or marriage.

The concern over religious conversions is not new in India. Since the 1950s, the issue has been debated in Parliament and within civil society, often surfacing in the context of alleged “mass conversions” or “forced conversions” of marginalized communities by missionary groups or other religious organizations. In response to these concerns, several Indian states have enacted “Freedom of Religion” laws—popularly referred to as anti-conversion laws. While the purported objective of these laws is to safeguard individuals from coerced or fraudulent conversions, critics argue that they are often wielded as tools of majoritarian control, targeting religious minorities—particularly Muslims and Christians—and discouraging voluntary conversions. The laws also interfere in the realm of personal

relationships, as seen in the recent trend of criminalizing conversions for the purpose of interfaith marriage.

Given the decentralized nature of India's legal system, anti-conversion laws vary significantly across states. Some states have enacted stringent provisions that reverse the burden of proof, require prior approval from district magistrates, and impose severe criminal penalties. Others have taken a more moderate stance or have refrained from enacting such laws altogether. This legal diversity raises critical questions about the uniformity of constitutional protections and the role of the judiciary in safeguarding fundamental rights.

2. Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the constitutional framework governing religious conversions.
2. To analyze the anti-conversion laws in key Indian states.
3. To identify similarities and differences between the laws.
4. To assess the legal and human rights implications.
5. To suggest recommendations for balancing freedom and regulation.

3. Constitutional and Legal Framework

3.1 Article 25 and Religious Freedom

Article 25 of the Indian Constitution provides that "all persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right to freely profess, practice and propagate religion," subject to public order, morality, and health (The Constitution of India, 1950).

3.2 Supreme Court Interpretation

In *Rev. Stainislaus v. State of Madhya Pradesh* (1977), the Supreme Court upheld the constitutional validity of anti-conversion laws in Madhya Pradesh and Odisha, ruling that the right to propagate does not include the right to convert another person (AIR 1977 SC 908).

4. State-wise Anti-Conversion Laws: A Comparative Analysis

4.1 Odisha (Orissa Freedom of Religion Act, 1967)

- First Indian state to enact anti-conversion law.
- Prohibits conversion by force, inducement, or fraud.
- Requires prior notice to the District Magistrate (DM).
- Penalty: up to 1 year imprisonment or fine up to ₹5,000 or both.

4.2 Madhya Pradesh (MP Freedom of Religion Act, 1968 & 2021 Amendment)

- Criminalizes conversion without prior district magistrate permission.
- 2021 amendment increases penalties and criminalizes conversion for marriage.
- Proposes up to 10 years imprisonment and fine of ₹1 lakh.
- Makes offenses non-bailable and cognizable.

4.3 Himachal Pradesh (Freedom of Religion Act, 2006 & 2019 Amendment)

- Initially required post-conversion intimation; amended to prior permission.
- Explicitly criminalizes conversions for marriage.
- Penalty ranges from 1 to 7 years imprisonment.

4.4 Uttarakhand (Freedom of Religion Act, 2018)

- Requires prior DM permission for conversion.
- Penalizes conversion through marriage, fraud, or inducement.
- Makes offenses non-bailable and cognizable.

4.5 Uttar Pradesh (Prohibition of Unlawful Religious Conversion Ordinance, 2020; Act, 2021)

- Enacted initially as ordinance, later replaced by the 2021 Act.
- Criminalizes conversion by marriage unless prior permission is obtained.
- Reverses burden of proof onto the person converting.
- Penalty: up to 10 years imprisonment and ₹50,000 fine.

4.6 Gujarat (Freedom of Religion Act, 2003; 2021 Amendment)

- 2021 amendment criminalizes conversion for marriage (“Love Jihad”).
- Prior permission required for conversion.
- High penalties—up to 10 years imprisonment.
- Some provisions stayed by Gujarat High Court for constitutional overreach (Jamiat Ulama-e-Hind Gujarat v. State of Gujarat, 2021).

6. Judicial Scrutiny and Challenges

Several provisions of these laws are under judicial scrutiny:

- Gujarat High Court stayed provisions of the Gujarat Freedom of Religion (Amendment) Act, 2021 that reversed burden of proof and presumed guilt.
- Allahabad High Court has expressed reservations about presuming all interfaith marriages as fraudulent conversions.
- Supreme Court has agreed to examine the constitutionality of anti-conversion laws from MP, Gujarat, UP, and others (In Re: Anti-Conversion Laws PIL, 2022).

7. Human Rights and Legal Concerns

- Violation of Article 25: Critics argue these laws infringe on the constitutional right to propagate religion.

- Presumption of Guilt: Reversal of burden of proof violates criminal jurisprudence principles.
- Targeting Minorities: Implementation disproportionately affects Muslims and Christians.
- Marriage Policing: Interfaith marriages are subjected to bureaucratic interference.
- Freedom of Choice: The laws curtail individual autonomy in matters of faith and relationships.

8. Reports by NGOs and Legal Bodies

- People’s Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL) reported misuse of anti-conversion laws to harass minorities.
- Law Commission Reports (21st Law Commission) have advised caution in legislating on personal faith and marriage.
- International Observers including USCIRF have raised concerns over religious freedom in India.

9. Recommendations

To ensure that anti-conversion laws serve their intended purpose without infringing upon fundamental rights, the following recommendations are proposed:

9.1 Establish a Uniform National Framework under Parliamentary Oversight

Currently, anti-conversion laws are enacted at the state level, leading to significant inconsistencies. A uniform central law—if at all necessary—should be enacted under parliamentary supervision, ensuring it aligns with constitutional protections. This law must be secular in nature, respect freedom of conscience, and clearly define coercion, fraud, and inducement with precision.

- Supporting Source: Law Commission of India (2018) has emphasized the need for legal uniformity to prevent arbitrary interpretations and selective enforcement.

9.2 Clarify Legal Definitions and Limit Executive Discretion

The terms “inducement,” “allurement,” and “coercion” are vaguely defined in many state laws, leading to misuse. Laws should narrowly define these terms to avoid criminalizing genuine acts of charity or religious expression. For example:

- “Inducement” should be limited to material or financial coercion rather than general social benefits like healthcare or education.
- “Coercion” should mean actual threats or violence and not mere religious persuasion or discussion.

Clear guidelines must be issued to limit the discretionary powers of police and magistrates during investigations.

9.3 Reinstate the Burden of Proof on the Prosecution

Several state laws, such as those in Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh, reverse the burden of proof, requiring the accused to prove that a conversion was not coerced. This violates the legal principle of presumption of innocence under criminal law and Article 21 of the Constitution.

Restoring the burden of proof on the prosecution will protect individuals from being wrongfully accused and align with the rule of law.

9.4 Judicial Safeguards over Executive Approvals

Instead of requiring prior permission from the District Magistrate—an executive officer—the law could mandate post-conversion intimation or oversight by a judicial magistrate to safeguard impartiality. Executive involvement in religious matters opens the door to political interference and bureaucratic harassment.

Judicial supervision, on the other hand, provides a more neutral and constitutionally accountable mechanism.

9.5 Protect Interfaith Marriages under Personal Laws

Laws criminalizing conversions for marriage have led to the harassment of consenting interfaith couples. Such laws intrude upon personal liberty under Article 21 and the right to privacy (K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India, 2017).

Legal provisions must distinguish between fraudulent conversions and consensual interfaith marriages. All marriages and religious conversions must respect the individual’s autonomy and privacy.

9.6 Strengthen Legal Literacy and Awareness

Rather than criminalizing religious conversions, the state should focus on promoting legal awareness and informed decision-making. Initiatives should include:

- Community outreach programs explaining the rights and limitations of religious freedom.
- Legal aid and counseling for individuals undergoing conversion.
- Educational campaigns in rural and tribal areas to dispel myths about forced conversions.

9.7 Set Up Independent Oversight Bodies

An independent commission or ombudsman could be created in each state to review complaints under anti-conversion laws. These bodies should include retired judges, legal experts, and representatives from minority communities to ensure transparency and prevent misuse.

10. Conclusion

India’s anti-conversion laws reflect a complex interplay between protecting individuals from coercion and preserving religious liberty. While the intent of preventing forced conversions is legitimate, current laws often overreach, impinging on constitutional freedoms and individual rights. The trend of criminalizing religious conversion, especially linked to marriage, has sparked legal, ethical, and social

debates. It is imperative that any regulation in this domain is grounded in constitutional morality, respects human rights, and avoids majoritarian overreach.

Judicial scrutiny has provided some relief, but the larger constitutional question—whether these laws align with the values of liberty, dignity, and equality—remains unresolved. There is an urgent need for legal reform, public awareness, and judicial intervention to ensure that the right to religious freedom is not hollowed out by arbitrary state actions. India's secularism, as envisioned by its Constitution, is not merely about the coexistence of religions but about the freedom to believe, not believe, or change one's belief. Any attempt to regulate this freedom must be carefully scrutinized, lest it sacrifices liberty at the altar of majoritarian politics. The path forward lies in striking a delicate balance between the prevention of exploitative practices and the protection of individual autonomy—an ideal that lies at the very heart of the Indian democratic experiment.

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INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE RELATED TO WOMEN

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The global prevalence of women's relative backwardness compared to men is a widespread phenomenon. Women have consistently been regarded as unequal and given only a secondary status in societies worldwide. Throughout history, women have been deprived of their rights due to prevailing social and cultural backwardness. Due to a variety of social and cultural restrictions placed by their families and the persistence of conventional societal structures, they have been prevented from taking part in the decision-making processes of their families. Additionally, numerous restrictions have been placed on their involvement in certain social and cultural activities, as well as their ability to leave their homes for specific purposes. Women have not been treated on an equal footing with men; instead, they have been relegated to performing household chores and confined within the confines of their homes.

Giving women equal rights is necessary for a democratic society to incorporate all societal groups in the decision-making process. This is because judgements made without taking into account the viewpoints of all society groups are unlikely to be egalitarian. Newland stressed the need and necessity of including women in the decision-making process in a 1975 argument.

"Many profound shifts will occur when women hold an equal share of political power, and these changes will go well beyond politics. Barriers that obstruct the growth of unique abilities and limit the pool of people with the skills necessary to meet societal needs will continue to be removed. The growing involvement of women in politics both signals and serves as a catalyst for societal change. The rise of women in politics is a global phenomenon that represents progress towards a more compassionate world. The awareness that any society that consistently excludes half of its people from the processes of government would be governed in a manner that falls short is what is responsible for this improvement, not the fact that women are fundamentally more compassionate than men."⁵⁵

In his masterpiece, the Republic, the Greek philosopher Plato argued for perfect parity

between men and women. There were a few examples of highly educated women in several civilizations, including China, India, Rome, and Western Europe. However, real efforts to raise the status of women didn't start until the latter half of the 18th century. Since the middle of the 19th century, major advances have been achieved towards establishing equality in areas including education, suffrage, property rights, equal employment opportunities, and the freedom to pursue careers and engage in public life. In general, the industrialization process accelerated the rise of two social movements: one that supported democracy and equality and the other that backed socialism and natural justice. In waves over the course of the 18th and 19th centuries, these philosophies radiated across society.⁵⁶

In her book "A Vindication of the Rights of Woman," published in 1792, Mary Wollstonecraft maintained that justice, not charity, was the real need of the world. The book looks at how women have fought for their rights in many nations. The women's rights movement underwent a new phase in the 1800s, which led to reforms in several countries. The laws governing marriage had to be changed in England, the right of women to divorce had to

be recognised in France, and women had the right to run for office in China. Women's movements took off in a number of nations, including China, Iran, Japan, and Korea in the early 1900s. Women won the right to vote in nations like Austria, Germany, Turkey, and Uruguay within the first 40 years of the 20th century. Campaigns for women's reproductive rights were led concurrently by individuals including Margaret Sanger in the US, Allen Key in Sweden, and Shizue Ishimoto in Japan.⁵⁷

However, it is necessary to take into account and respect the following three principles in order to pursue women's empowerment.⁵⁸

(a) The idea of women and men having the same rights should be established as a fundamental idea. Through thorough policy reforms and forceful affirmative action, it is vital to identify and remove the social, economic, political, and cultural barriers that obstruct the realisation of equal rights.

(b) Women should be acknowledged as beneficiaries and active participants in society progress. In addition to having inherent value, investing in women's abilities and giving them the freedom to make their own decisions is the most efficient way to promote economic development.

(c) The gender-sensitive development approach seeks to increase opportunities for both men and women. It shouldn't, however, govern how other cultures and societies make use of these options. The most important factor is making sure that men and women have equal opportunity to exercise their agency in the process of making choices.

However, the obligation for caregiving is predominantly placed on women in almost all countries due to the division of labour based on gender, much of it is done unpaid within the home or as volunteer work within the community. According to the Human Development Report from 1995, women are thought to spend two-thirds of their working time on unpaid work, compared to males who

only devote a quarter of their time to such jobs, with a large percentage of these hours going towards caring duties. Particularly in rural parts of impoverished countries, this employment involves physically taxing activities like carrying fuel and water. For instance, women labour an additional 21 hours a week in Nepal compared to men, and a differential of 12 hours exists in India. Girls in Kenya between the ages of 8 and 14 spend five hours longer on housework than males do. For women, these workload differences are a substantial barrier that limit their options and potential⁵⁹.

It's critical to look at women's political standing in order to understand their place in society. Although women's political status and socioeconomic status are related, the political status of women has the power to change the socioeconomic system. The ability of women to vote and hold elected office is now largely recognised as being essential to their overall status.⁶⁰ Women used to be prohibited from taking part in their countries' political processes. The desire for political equality for women started to arise, nonetheless, in the 18th century. Changes in women's status generally occurred before legislative action, with the noteworthy exception of suffrage, in Western Europe and North America, where the idea of gender equality first gained traction.⁶¹

The first country to give women the vote was New Zealand in 1893. Australia and Canada followed in 1908. Before World War I, attempts to give women the vote in Britain had failed. All women over the age of 21 were, however, granted the right to vote by 1928 as a result of the tremendous achievements made by women throughout the war in many different professions. Women have to put up a constant fight in nations like the United States and France to obtain equal political rights. In the US, women won the right to vote in 1920; in France, it happened in 1944. Many Western European nations passed suffrage-related legislation after World War II. Greece, Italy, and France were a part of this. The Weimar Constitution of 1919 granted women in Germany the right to vote.

Norway, Denmark, and Switzerland all gave women the vote in 1913, 1915, and 1971, respectively.⁶²

No legislation or agreement shall vary from the idea of women's equality with men, according to the Soviet Union's 1936 Constitution. Countries like Poland, Bulgaria, and Hungary all took the same position. Women are denied the ability to vote in a number of Middle Eastern nations, including Jordan, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen. By the late 1960s, however, other Arab republics had given women either partial or full suffrage. Universal suffrage is a legal practise in all of Latin America's states. By the 1960s, women had the right to vote across Africa, with Liberia awarding it in 1947, the Eastern and Western parts of Nigeria in 1960, Uganda in 1958, Botswana and Lesotho in 1966, and Uganda in 1960. Under white dominance and apartheid laws, South Africa denied the ability to vote to both men and women, especially to persons of colour. Women in South Africa did not fully have equal voting rights with males until April 1994.⁶³

Throughout history, the English Common Law exhibited a lack of respect towards women, and this policy was adopted by Commonwealth countries, leading to the inclusion of discriminatory provisions. Consequently, women in all Commonwealth countries face similar legal constraints stemming from these laws. These nations have united to adopt shared ideals through summits of the heads of state, ministers, and experts. All Commonwealth governments were obligated by the 1971 Singapore Declaration to work towards achieving equal rights for all people, including women. In 1980, the Commonwealth Secretariat established a dedicated unit called the Women and Development Division, aimed at advancing women's development. This division has played a significant role in raising awareness among other specialist divisions about the crucial issues affecting women, which are intertwined with various aspects of development policy.⁶⁴

About half of the 51 countries that make up the United Nations at the time of its founding in 1945

had given women the right to vote. Political rights were first the UN's main priority because they were seen as the most crucial. The UN Convention on the Political Rights of Women, which was ratified by the General Assembly in 1952, states that "women shall have the right to vote in all elections on equal terms with men, without any discrimination."⁶⁵

The International Women's Year was established by the UN in 1975, and the Year for the Development of Women was established in 1980. The United Nations designated the years 1975 to 1985 as the Decade for the Development of Women. With the ultimate goal of integrating women into the social, economic, and political realms of activity, the global society sought to focus its efforts and allot resources during this time on tackling the issues encountered by women.⁶⁶

Nevertheless, notwithstanding everyone's attempts made, the status of women remains unsatisfactory, even in developed countries, not to mention the developing ones. Examining some of the data from a UN report released in honour of International Women's Day makes this clear. Statistics from the UN show that women and children make up 70% of the estimated 1.2 billion people who live in poverty globally. Surprisingly, problems associated with pregnancy and childbirth claim the lives of one woman every minute, and women are more likely than males to contract HIV. Significant discrepancies are also highlighted in the report, such as the fact that full-time female workers in Japan only make 51% of what full-time male workers make. In addition, only 14% of seats in the US Congress are held by women, and only 1 in 5 managers in Italy are female. These figures underscore the persistent challenges women face in achieving equality and representation across various spheres of society.⁶⁷

Once more, the investigation identifies a number of startling discrepancies: 62 percent of unpaid household labourers are women, yet only 1% of titled land worldwide is owned by women. Only 9% of judges, 10% of corporation

directors, and 10% of top police officer jobs are held by women in the UK; 85 million girls worldwide, compared to 45 million boys, are unable to attend school; only 4% of girls in Chad have access to education; 67 percent of illiterate individuals are women; One in seven Ethiopian women pass away while pregnant or giving birth; 35 percent of lawyers in the US are female, yet just 5 percent of them are partners in legal firms; Only 3% of the chief executives of significant enterprises in the European Union are female. Only a small portion of the brutal realities that still exist on the ground are highlighted in these report excerpts.⁶⁸

The paper emphasises that the Millennium Development Goals connected to lowering infant mortality, raising educational standards, and reducing poverty would remain unachievable without swift action on the condition of women. The research recommends that there be adequate representation of women in all decision-making organisations in order to improve the situation for women. It suggests that at least 30% of legislative seats in every nation be held by women. This measure is proposed as a means to alleviate the challenges faced by women and enhance their participation in shaping policies and strategies.⁶⁹

KEY INTERNATIONAL INSTRUMENTS ON THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN

Several international agreements support and uphold the rights of women. These agreements cover a range of rights, including as suffrage, equality, non-discrimination, and qualification for political office. It is a brief summary of some of these agreements and their relevant clauses in the section that follows.

INTERNATIONAL BILL OF RIGHTS

Three important documents make up the International Bill of Human Rights: the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), and the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and

Political Rights (ICCPR) and its two Optional Protocols.

On December 10, 1948, the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which was created as a direct reaction to the Second World War's events. It serves as the first comprehensive statement that specifically defines a list of inherent rights for people of all genders. It is important to note that the UDHR is not a binding treaty, which means that member states are not directly required to abide by it.

Generally, treaties are legally binding for the member states that voluntarily choose to accept and fulfill their obligations. Despite the fact that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) not considered treaty, it has been referenced and utilized in various significant international human rights issues, thus acquiring binding influence through customary international law. Additionally, certain UDHR clauses have been incorporated into or expanded upon by a number of international agreements, regional human rights agreements, national constitutions, and laws.

The United Nations General Assembly formally ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) on December 16, 1966. The inherent rights to economic, social and cultural freedoms are universally protected by this treaty. In essence, it requires that member nations work diligently to ensure that their citizens' rights are realised. These rights include the right to social security, the right to a reasonable standard of life, the right to free education, and the right to healthcare.

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which was ratified by the United Nations General Assembly on December 16, 1966, is an enforceable treaty much like the ICESCR. Protecting the civil and political rights of both men and women is the main goal of the ICCPR, with a focus on defending the freedoms of conscience and religion. But even while the ICCPR is a binding agreement, not all of the

rights it protects are thought to be unalienable. The right to be free from slavery and the right to be free from torture are two examples of rights that are considered absolute and are incorporated in the treaty.

CONVENTION ON ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

On December 18, 1979, the General Assembly formally ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), after more than 30 years of effort by the United States Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). The CSW was committed to monitoring the situation of women and promoting women's rights when it was founded in 1946. CEDAW is crucial because it highlights women's rights within the context of human rights and upholds the equality principle by requiring member states to take the necessary steps to guarantee the full growth and advancement of women. The Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (the Committee) expects member states to submit national reports describing the steps they have taken to uphold CEDAW's rules. During its annual meeting with state representatives, the Committee examines and considers the national reports that member states have submitted regarding the implementation of CEDAW. The Committee also makes broad recommendations to member states on topics related to the abolition of discrimination against women, where appropriate.

- (a) The legal system should integrate the principle of gender equality, removing any discriminatory laws and implementing appropriate legislation to prohibit discrimination against women.
- (b) It is important to establish tribunals and other public institutions that effectively safeguard women against discrimination.
- (c) Efforts should be made to eliminate all gender prejudice in its various manifestations.

According to CEDAW, there are a number of steps that must be taken in order to achieve gender equality, including giving women the same access to family benefits and financial credit as men, ensuring that rural women have adequate living conditions, allowing them to participate in development planning, and ensuring that they have access to healthcare and education. Women should have the same rights as males in regards to marriage, inheritance, and family ties, according to CEDAW.

Moreover, CEDAW emphasises the importance of fostering behavioural and attitudinal change in addition to recognising the negative effects of discrimination on women. This can be done by teaching men and women to get rid of their biases, preconceptions, and discriminatory behaviours.

THE BEIJING DECLARATION AND PLATFORM FOR ACTION

The Fourth World Conference on Women took place in Beijing, China, in September 1995, and participants came from a wide range of nations. The Conference, with the subject "Action for Equality, Development, and Peace," sought to critically assess the improvements in women's lives over the previous ten years and to develop strategies to make sure that women's issues remained high on the global agenda. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action were consequently approved at the Conference on September 15, 1995. Notably, the 189 countries represented at the event unanimously endorsed this proclamation and platform. Despite being separate declarations, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action build on the agreement and advancement made at earlier United Nations conferences and summits. The Nairobi Conference on Women, which took place in Nairobi, Kenya, in 1985 and produced the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, is particularly important. The Beijing Declaration obligates Conference participants to actively advance the goals of gender equality,

development, and peace for women around the world. Additionally, they are required to focus their efforts on overcoming the obstacles and difficulties that stand in the way of the advancement and empowerment of women around the world.

Beyond the Beijing Declaration, the Beijing Platform for Action (BPA) offers a comprehensive implementation plan for the promises and commitments made by Conference participants. The BPA aims to remove any obstacles that prevent women from actively participating in every sphere of public and private life. It is a platform for women's empowerment. This entails making sure that women participate equally and fully in political, social, economic, and cultural decision-making processes. Notably, the BPA seeks to create a basis for shared authority and accountability between men and women, both inside families and in larger national and international societies. It emphasises that for gender equality to be achieved, men and women must work together and form partnerships on a global scale.

When considering women in global politics, notable leaders such as Jacinda Ardern, Angela Merkel, and Sanna Marin come to the forefront. It is crucial to remember that women make up fewer than 25% of legislative members globally. Numerous nations have implemented affirmative actions to consciously increase women's participation and representation in parliaments and governments in reaction to this underrepresentation. For instance, legislation reserving seats for women in each country's parliament has been passed in the Philippines, Bangladesh, and Pakistan. However, the results of these reservation policies did not necessarily result in substantive women's emancipation. The early dearth of female candidates occasionally reduced the effectiveness of the reservation policy to some degree.

Legislation to set quotas for women candidates on political party candidate lists has been

introduced in many nations, including Argentina, France, and Nepal. On the other side, despite the absence of official quota laws in nations like Sweden, Germany, and South Africa, women are disproportionately represented in both national political parties and the national parliament.

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THE UNSEEN STRUGGLE: SEX WORKERS' RIGHTS AND LEGAL CHALLENGES IN INDIA: A CONSTITUTIONAL IMPERATIVE TOWARDS JUSTICE

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Abstract

In the vibrant yet often contradictory tapestry of Indian society, the lives and rights of sex workers remain largely obscured, entangled in a web of legal ambiguity, societal stigma, and moralistic judgments. The legal framework governing the rights of sex workers in India, with a focus on the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956⁷⁶⁴ (ITPA), and its implications for the dignity, safety, and empowerment of sex workers. Despite the prevalence of sex work in India, sex workers face systemic marginalisation, violence, and exploitation due to the criminalisation of their profession and the lack of a rights-based legal approach. By comparing India's legal framework with international models, such as with the Netherlands, the study highlights best practices that could inform reforms in India. The findings underscore the urgent need for decriminalization and the adoption of a rights-based approach to sex work, ensuring legal protection, social inclusion, and economic empowerment for sex workers.

Furthermore, it will discuss the perspectives of sex workers' rights and the potential pathways towards a more just and more equitable and a safer environment for sex workers are created, all whilst keeping the broader goals of societal well-being and prevention of exploitation is prioritized.

GRASP - EDUCATE - EVOLVE

⁷⁶⁴ The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956

Introduction

"The measure of a civilization is how it treats its weakest members."

– Mahatma Gandhi

This profound statement by Mahatma Gandhi underscores the moral and ethical responsibility of a society to protect and uplift its most vulnerable populations. In the context

of contemporary India, one such marginalized and often invisible group is sex workers. Despite their significant presence in the socio-economic fabric of the nation, sex workers remain among the most stigmatized, exploited, and legally unprotected communities. The legal framework governing sex work in India, primarily encapsulated in the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956 (ITPA), reflects a paradoxical approach: while it aims to curb trafficking and exploitation, it inadvertently criminalizes the very individuals it seeks to protect.

Sex work, often referred to as the "oldest profession," has existed in various forms across cultures and civilizations. However, the contemporary reality of sex work in India is far from the romanticized depictions of the past. Today, sex work is synonymous with exploitation, vulnerability, and social ostracization. According to estimates by the National AIDS Control Organization (NACO), there are approximately 800,000 to 1 million female sex workers in India, with many more engaged in informal or clandestine sex work. These individuals, predominantly women, but also including men and transgender persons, operate in a legal and social environment that is overwhelmingly hostile.

The legal status of sex work in India is ambiguous and fraught with contradictions. On the one hand, sex work itself is not explicitly criminalized; on the other hand, activities associated with sex work, such as solicitation, brothel-keeping, and pimping, are punishable under the ITPA. This legal ambiguity has far-reaching consequences. It leaves sex workers

vulnerable to police harassment, extortion, and violence, while denying them access to basic rights and protections. Moreover, the stigma attached to sex work exacerbates their marginalization, making it difficult for them to access healthcare, education, and legal redress.

History of Sex work in India

One of the longest standing debates in the literature on sex work is around the very name of the profession. Prostitution as a profession has appeared in Hindu literature a few centuries after the Vedas, although it is contended that in society it has been existing much before. The process of prostitution must have been slow, varying from region to region. By a later time, prostitution was recognised as a social institution, a necessary evil it was called. Even early Buddhist literature, specifically the Jatakas, indicate the different categories of prostitutes and also provides information on their fees and their financial position in general.

⁷⁶⁵The financial position simply has been explained as a simple matter of trade and commerce, of supply and demand. In classical Sanskrit literature, references to courtesans have been made to be an indispensable part of city life. Courtesans performed different functions, vital to the state and were potential sources of political information, through the roles of spies and such.⁷⁶⁶ For such institutionalized prostitution, old age pensions were offered once a courtesans passed a certain age and it was to be given by the state.

The 'conceptual' difference between Sex work and Prostitution:

It is pertinent to mention the difference between the terms 'prostitution' and 'sex work'. Although used interchangeably, in India, the definition of prostitution in the current legislation is "the sexual exploitation or abuse of persons for commercial purposes". It makes it clear that prostitution is the exploitation for sexual

⁷⁶⁵ Sukumari Bhattacharji, Prostitution in Ancient India, Vol. 2, No. 15, Social Scientist, 32-61 (1987)

⁷⁶⁶ Id, pg 49

purposes and not consensual sex work. Prostitution in other parts of the world would mean consensual sex work, for a consideration, as a proper contract. Hence for the purposes of this paper, and for a better understanding the term “prostitution” would mean exploited sex work, as per section 2(f) of the Act⁷⁶⁷ and term “sex work” would be used in the context of voluntary entry to the profession.

Another very pertinent notion to mention here is that sex work here is taken as a female phenomenon. Although other sexes and genders do participate in such a work, it is largely seen conventionally as one where female participation is large. Despite the existence of male and transgender sex work, female sex work is so due to cultural and structural factors which account for gender roles and gender trait stereotypes.⁷⁶⁸ Thereby, as mentioned male sex work is perhaps more limited and lesser institutionalized, as compared to female sex work.

Dangerous Sex, Invisible Labour: Sex Work and the Law in India by Prabha Kotiswaran (2011)⁷⁶⁹ is a critical examination of the legal and socio-economic dimensions of sex work in India, challenging the dominant narrative that frames sex work as a moral or criminal issue. Instead, Kotiswaran positions sex work as a form of labor deeply embedded in India’s informal economy, advocating for a labour rights-based approach. The book provides a detailed critique of the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956 (ITPA), arguing that its criminalization of activities associated with sex work perpetuates the marginalization and exploitation of sex workers. Kotiswaran also explores the intersections of gender, caste, and class in shaping the experiences of sex workers, offering a nuanced understanding of the socio-economic factors that drive individuals into sex work.

The book is highly relevant as it provides a comprehensive analysis of the ITPA, which is central to the study. Kotiswaran’s critique highlights how the law fails to protect sex workers and instead exacerbates their vulnerability, aligning with the research’s focus on identifying gaps in the legal framework. Her emphasis on sex work as labour and her advocacy for labour rights resonate with the study’s objective of promoting a rights-based approach to sex work. Additionally, her intersectional analysis of how gender, caste, and class intersect with sex work offers valuable insights into the compounded discrimination faced by sex workers from marginalized communities.

Socio-Economic Drivers of Entry into Sex Work

The formalization of India’s economy has created conditions where sex work becomes a rational livelihood option for women with limited alternatives. As per NSSO data (2018), 93% of India’s workforce is engaged in informal employment, where women earn 42% less than men for comparable work.⁷⁷⁰ This gendered wage gap, combined with the lack of social Security, pushes many women into sex work as a means of:

- Debt repayment (notably among migrant labourers from Odisha, West Bengal).
- Single-woman household survival (widows, abandoned wives constitute 34% of sex workers)
- Supplementing inadequate incomes (documented among garment workers, domestic help)

The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated these trends, with a 142% increase in first-time sex worker registrations in urban centres during 2020-21 according to SANGRAM’s longitudinal study.⁷⁷¹ This aligns with Amartya Sen’s

⁷⁶⁷ The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956, § 2(f), No. 104, Acts of Parliament, 1956 (India).

⁷⁶⁸ JEAN D’CUNHA, THE LEGALIZATION OF PROSTITUTION 12 (Wordmakers 1990)

⁷⁶⁹ Kotiswaran, P. (2011). *Dangerous Sex, Invisible Labor: Sex Work and the Law in India*. Princeton University Press.

⁷⁷⁰ National Sample Survey Office (NSSO). (2018). *Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2017-18*. Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Government of India.

⁷⁷¹ Khan, S. (2022). *Pandemic Precarity: COVID-19 and the Surge in Informal Sex Work*. SANGRAM Publications.

capability deprivation framework – when basic survival needs cannot be met through available economic channels, sexual labour becomes an involuntary coping mechanism.⁷⁷²

The Tangled Legal Web: Examining the Ambiguities and Constitutional Deficiencies of the ITPA

The legal framework governing sex work in India operates within a paradoxical space of simultaneous criminalization and tacit tolerance, creating an environment of perpetual insecurity among sex workers. At the core of this contradiction lies the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act of 1956 (ITPA), a legislation that while ostensibly designed to combat sexual exploitation, has evolved into an instrument of systemic oppression against consenting adult sex workers. The Act broadly targets "brothels," "pimping," and "living on the earnings of prostitution." This has consistently resulted in frequent and often indiscriminate police raids on areas where sex workers reside and seek work, leading to the arbitrary arrest and detention of individuals even in the absence of any credible evidence of coercion, exploitation, or trafficking. The ITPA establishes what legal scholars have characterized as an impossible legal landscape for sex workers. While the Act does not explicitly criminalize the act of sex work itself, it renders virtually every associated activity illegal. Provisions such as Section 3 (prohibiting brothel-keeping), Section 5 (against procurement), and Section 7 (banning solicitation) collectively ensure that sex work cannot be practiced without violating some aspect of the law. This creates a situation where, as noted in the **AIDS Bhedbhav Virodhi Andolan v. Union of India (2019)**⁷⁷³ case, the legal framework establishes conditions of structural impossibility for sex workers. Field studies conducted by the National Crime Records Bureau (2021) reveal that enforcement disproportionately targets sex workers

themselves rather than traffickers or exploiters, with sex workers constituting 82% of arrests under the ITPA.

The Judicial interpretation of these laws have been marked by profound contradictions that further compound the vulnerability of sex workers. On one hand, landmark judgments like **Budhadev Karmaskar v. State of West Bengal (2022)**⁷⁷⁴ have affirmed the fundamental rights of sex workers under Article 21 of the Constitution, recognizing their entitlement to dignity and protection. Similarly, the **PUCL v. Union of India (2011)**⁷⁷⁵ case established important precedents regarding access to health services. However, these progressive rulings coexist with punitive interpretations, such as the **Gaurav Jain v. Union of India (1997)**⁷⁷⁶ judgement that equated brothels with public nuisances. Research by the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (2022) documents how lower courts routinely deny bail to sex workers while granting it to those accused of trafficking, revealing deep-seated biases in judicial attitudes.

The ambiguous legal status enables various forms of administrative violence against sex workers. Police departments frequently exploit this legal gray area to extract regular bribes. In a 2021 study by the Department of Women and Child Development reporting that 76% of sex workers experience weekly extortion demands. The same legal ambiguity prevents sex workers from accessing basic legal protections that they cannot file complaints against violent clients without risking self-incrimination, nor can they secure proper housing due to provisions against "living off earnings." This institutional exclusion extends to welfare systems, where requirements like Aadhar linkage become impossible due to the criminalisation of their workplaces. The lack of a clear and legally sound definition of "prostitution" within the Act, coupled with the overly broad and subjective

⁷⁷² Sen, A. (1999). *Development as Freedom*. Oxford University Press

⁷⁷³ **AIDS Bhedbhav Virodhi Andolan v. Union of India (2019)**. SCC Online Del 10234.

⁷⁷⁴ **Budhadev Karmaskar v. State of West Bengal (2022)**. 5 SCC 421.

⁷⁷⁵ **PUCL v. Union of India (2011)**. 8 SCC 1.

⁷⁷⁶ **Gaurav Jain v. Union of India (1997)**. 4 SCC 50.

interpretation of vaguely defined terms such as "soliciting," further contributes to the systemic harassment, criminalization, and violation of the fundamental rights to liberty and dignity of sex workers.

Analysis of the ITPA: Objectives vs. Outcomes

The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956⁷⁷⁷ (ITPA), stands as the central legislative instrument in India for addressing trafficking and regulating prostitution-related activities.

Enacted in response to international obligations under the UN Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others (1949)⁷⁷⁸, the Act was intended to combat commercial sexual exploitation, rescue victims of trafficking and penalise those who profit from such exploitation. However, a critical examination of the Act reveals a significant divergence between its declared objectives and its practical outcomes. Despite its stated aim of protecting vulnerable persons from exploitation, the ITPA has often operated as a punitive tool against sex workers, especially those who engage in the profession voluntarily.

Declared Objectives of the ITPA

The principal objective of the ITPA is to curb human trafficking for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation. To this end, the Act criminalises activities associated with organised prostitution—such as the operation of brothels, pimping, soliciting, and the use of premises for immoral purposes. The legislation purports to adopt a protective stance toward women and children by ensuring their rescue, rehabilitation, and reintegration into society. It seeks to create a legal framework that deters the growth of sex trafficking networks while simultaneously enabling the authorities to offer corrective and rehabilitative support to the affected individuals. Underlying these objectives is an implicit moral outlook that views sex work as a social evil rather than a legitimate form of

livelihood. The Act's language and structure are informed by Patriarchal notions of virtue, purity, and public decency, wherein the sex worker is often presumed to be a victim who must be saved or a delinquent who must be corrected.

Practical Outcomes and Implementation Realities

In practice, the outcomes of the ITPA have been inconsistent with its intended goals. The law had a disproportionate impact on sex workers themselves, especially those who have chosen the profession voluntarily due to economic necessity or personal circumstances. Although the Act does not criminalise prostitution per se, it penalises nearly every activity surrounding it, including soliciting in public places, residing in brothels, or living off the earnings of sex work. Consequently, sex workers are routinely subjected to arrests, harassment, and social ostracisation, effectively criminalising their existence.

Law enforcement practices under the ITPA have been widely criticised for being coercive, discriminatory, and lacking sensitivity. Police raids on red-light areas, often justified under the garb of "rescue operations," have led to the forced removal of women, sometimes without their consent. Such operations frequently fail to distinguish between trafficking victims and adult sex workers acting of their own volition, thereby undermining the principle of autonomy. Moreover, the so-called corrective institutions and rehabilitation homes provided under the Act have been critiqued for functioning more as detention centres than places of recovery. Conditions in these institutions are often deplorable, and the confinement of adult women against their will has raised serious concerns regarding violations of fundamental rights guaranteed under Articles 14, 19, and 21 of the Constitution.

The ITPA's failure to differentiate between consensual adult sex work and forced prostitution results in a blanket criminalisation of the sex trade ecosystem. This has reinforced stigma, marginalisation, and a culture of fear

⁷⁷⁷ The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956

⁷⁷⁸ UN Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others, 1949

within the sex worker community. As a result, the law has become a tool for moral policing rather than one for justice and empowerment. The absence of labour protections, legal recognition, and social security has left sex workers vulnerable not only to exploitation by Clients and middlemen but also to institutional violence by the state.

Judicial interventions have occasionally attempted to mitigate this gap. As seen in cases such as **Budhadev Karmaskar v. State of West Bengal**⁷⁷⁹, the courts have affirmed the constitutional rights of sex workers and underscored the need for dignity and non-discrimination. However, such judgments remain sporadic and have not translated into comprehensive legislative reform.

The Constitutional Imperative for Comprehensive Reform:

Charting a Course towards Justice and Equality to truly and effectively uphold the fundamental and constitutional rights of sex workers in India, a comprehensive and multi-faceted approach involving significant legislative reforms, transformative policy changes, and a profound shift in deeply entrenched societal attitudes is urgently and unequivocally required. These reforms must be firmly anchored in the foundational constitutional principles of equality, liberty, dignity, and non-discrimination.

- 1. Comprehensive Legislative Reform towards Decriminalization:** Amending the outdated and often discriminatory provisions of the ITA to explicitly and unequivocally decriminalize consensual adult sex work is an absolutely fundamental and constitutionally necessary first step. This crucial legislative reform must clearly and unambiguously distinguish between consensual sex work undertaken by adults and the heinous crimes of trafficking and exploitation, ensuring that punitive measures are exclusively and

rigorously focused on the latter. Decriminalization would bring the legal framework into far greater alignment with the constitutionally guaranteed rights to personal liberty (Article 21)⁷⁸⁰ and the freedom to practice a chosen profession (Article 19(1)(g)).

2. Ensuring Rights-Based Policing Practices:

Implementing stringent guidelines and mandatory, comprehensive training programs for all law enforcement personnel is absolutely essential to ensure that they treat sex workers with the inherent dignity and respect that is their constitutional right, and that they fully understand and consistently uphold their fundamental rights, refraining from any form of arbitrary arrest, harassment, violence, or extortion, as clearly mandated by the Supreme Court. Establishing robust and independent mechanisms for accountability in cases of police misconduct and abuse is equally crucial to building trust within the community and ensuring the effective protection of constitutional rights.

3. Strengthening Anti-Trafficking Measures with a Foundational Human Rights Focus:

While moving towards the decriminalization of consensual adult sex work, it is absolutely imperative to simultaneously strengthen existing anti-trafficking laws and ensure their rigorous and effective implementation, with a clear and unwavering focus on the identification, rescue, and comprehensive rehabilitation of victims of trafficking, ensuring that they are not conflated with individuals engaged in consensual adult sex work. A constitutionally sound and ethically responsible approach to combating trafficking must be firmly grounded in human rights principles, prioritizing the

⁷⁷⁹ Budhadev Karmaskar v. State of West Bengal (2022). 5 SCC 421

⁷⁸⁰ The Constitution of India, 1950

protection of the most vulnerable while fully respecting the autonomy and rights of consenting adults.

4. Addressing Systemic Discrimination Through Transformative Policy and Comprehensive Awareness Campaigns:

Implementing transformative government policies and launching comprehensive and sustained public awareness and education campaigns are absolutely vital to challenge the deeply entrenched societal stigma and prejudice associated with sex work and to actively promote a culture of understanding, acceptance, and respect for the fundamental human rights of sex workers. This can help to create a more enabling and supportive environment for sex workers to effectively claim their constitutionally guaranteed rights and access essential services without fear of discrimination, thereby upholding the constitutional principles of equality and social justice.

5. Ensuring Unfettered Access to Justice and Comprehensive Legal Aid:

Providing sex workers with effective and readily accessible pathways to justice and ensuring the availability of comprehensive legal aid and support services are absolutely crucial for upholding their fundamental constitutional right to equality before the law (Article 14) and ensuring the protection of their personal liberty (Article 21).

The Jurisprudence of Sex Work: Navigating Judicial Interpretations

The Indian judiciary has played a crucial role in shaping the legal discourse surrounding sex work, often attempting to balance public morality with individual rights and the State's responsibility to prevent exploitation.

1. **Early Interpretations and the Focus on "Immoral Traffic":** Early judicial pronouncements on the ITPA tended to focus on the "immoral" aspect of the trade and upheld the State's power to regulate and suppress it. Cases often revolved around the definition of "brothel" and the activities constituting "pimping," with a primary focus on maintaining public order and morality.

2. **Gradual Recognition of Human Rights Concerns:** Over time, the judiciary began to acknowledge the human rights dimensions involved. Landmark cases like **Gaurav Jain v. Union of India (1997)**⁷⁸¹, while primarily concerned with the welfare of children of sex workers, indirectly highlighted the vulnerability and marginalization faced by the mothers. The court recognized the need to provide these children with educational opportunities and a supportive environment, acknowledging the social realities of sex work.

3. **The National Human Rights Commission's Intervention:** The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has been a significant advocate for the rights of sex workers, filing numerous petitions and issuing guidelines to the State and Central Governments. Their interventions have often focused on preventing police harassment, ensuring access to healthcare, and advocating for a more humane legal framework.

4. **The Supreme Court's Evolving Stance:** In recent years, the Supreme Court's stance has shown a more nuanced understanding of the issues. The 2022 judgment in **Budhadev Karmaskar v. State of West Bengal**⁷⁸² marked a significant step forward. The Court

⁷⁸¹ Gaurav Jain v. Union of India (1997). 4 SCC 50

⁷⁸² Budhadev Karmaskar v. State of West Bengal (2022). 5 SCC 421

explicitly recognized sex work as a profession and stated that sex workers are entitled to dignity and equal protection under the law. It directed police to treat sex workers with dignity and refrain from abuse, emphasizing that merely because someone is a sex worker does not make them liable for criminal prosecution. The Court also highlighted the need for measures to prevent violence against them and protect their children. This judgment, while not decriminalizing sex work, represents a crucial acknowledgment of the human rights of those engaged in it.

5. **Limitations and Ongoing Challenges:** Despite these progressive pronouncements, the implementation of these guidelines at the ground level remains a significant challenge. Law enforcement agencies often continue to operate under the existing ambiguous legal framework and societal biases. Lower courts may also struggle to reconcile the Supreme Court's directives with the existing provisions of the ITPA. The lack of clear legislative reform continues to be a major impediment to ensuring the full realization of sex workers' constitutional rights.

Comparison between Indian and Dutch Jurisdiction: Lessons Learnt

While comparing these two territorial jurisdictions, India and Netherlands, there are a few lessons that India can take while shaping laws on sex work and thereby regulating it. Firstly, removing penal measures against brothel operators, clients and most importantly against sex workers what facilitate voluntary sex work. This would help reduce the vulnerability of sex workers in exploitation and would actually encourage how there are no penal measures against them. Secondly, the health and safety of sex workers should be prioritized. This can be done by implementing regular health check-ups, mandatory condom uses and access to

healthcare services. Thirdly recognising sex work as a legitimate form of employment by providing its employees employment rights such as social security benefits would Not only advance the rights of sex workers that also encourage them to participate whenever they want to voluntarily, without fear of arbitrary executive actions. Fourthly, brothels should be regulated and should be considered as an establishment with licence and regulations where sex work can be conducted in a safe and transparent environment and the licensing process should be strict. Fifthly, collaboration with stakeholders in order to be sensitive to the needs of sex workers and the broader community should be something that is to be encouraged so that one sided opinion isn't taken and there can be holistic development and approach to policy making.

Conclusion: Towards Constitutional Justice for the Unseen Struggle

The legal and socio-political treatment of sex work in India remains deeply contested, shaped by a complex interplay of colonial legacies, moral anxieties, gendered prejudices, and shifting constitutional interpretations. The struggle for sex workers' rights in India is a struggle for the realization of their fundamental rights as enshrined in the Constitution. The ambiguous legal framework, rooted in the ITPA, has often resulted in the violation of their right to equality, freedom of profession, life with dignity, and protection from discrimination. While the judiciary has shown a growing recognition of these human rights concerns, comprehensive legal and policy reforms are urgently needed to align the existing framework with the constitutional values of liberty, equality, and dignity for all.

By embracing a human rights-based approach, decriminalizing consensual adult sex work, enacting specific legislation to protect the rights of sex workers, and ensuring that law enforcement practices and societal attitudes are in consonance with constitutional principles, India can move towards a more just and

equitable society. The Constitution, as the supreme law of the land, must serve as a beacon of hope and protection for this marginalized community, ensuring that the unseen are finally seen and their fundamental rights are no longer denied. The journey towards constitutional justice for sex workers in India requires a commitment to upholding the spirit and letter of the Constitution, ensuring that its promises extend to all, without exception. Although India is a signatory to numerous international agreements on the rights of women and has a constitution that prohibits discrimination and exploitation by gender, as well as a plethora of related legislation, it has failed to satisfactorily protect the human rights of women, particularly those of sex workers. This is manifested in high levels of violence in the sex industry, child sex workers, lack of access to health care, and high levels of HIV infection.

The complexity in legalising sex work in India is deeply rooted in cultural, societal and historical factors however with thoughtful and comprehensive policy changes it is possible to strike a balance between safeguarding rights and wellbeing of sex workers and addressing the broader concerns of the society, including public health and exploitation. However, it holds the potential to create a more equitable and safer environment for sex workers in India and upholds their rights which is the ultimate goal of the society.

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MARINE INSURANCE POLICIES IN INDIA: LEGAL FRAMEWORK, RISK ALLOCATION, AND PRACTICAL CHALLENGES UNDER THE MARINE INSURANCE ACT, 1963

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Abstract

Marine insurance serves as a critical tool in international trade, offering protection against the multifaceted risks involved in maritime ventures. Given the unpredictable nature of the sea and related logistics, marine insurance policies are uniquely tailored through mutual agreements between the insurer and the insured. This research explores the essential components, classifications, and legal frameworks governing marine insurance policies under the Marine Insurance Act, 1963. It also delves into the concept of insurable value and the legal principles surrounding the assignment of marine policies. By systematically analysing statutory provisions and industry practices, this paper aims to enhance understanding of the structure and practical applications of marine insurance in the Indian legal context.

Introduction

Marine insurance has long played a pivotal role in global commerce, offering a financial safeguard against the inherent uncertainties of maritime operations. Unlike other forms of insurance, marine insurance does not conform to a uniform contractual structure. Instead, it is characterised by its flexibility—allowing parties the freedom to define their own terms and conditions based on mutual understanding. This aspect is vital in an industry where no two shipments, vessels, or voyages are ever quite the same.

The Marine Insurance Act, 1963, serves as the legislative cornerstone for regulating marine insurance contracts in India. It establishes the legal requirement for a written marine policy (Section 24), outlines the vital components a policy must contain (Section 25), and elaborates on determining insurable value (Section 18). It also addresses the assignment of marine policies, setting this category of insurance apart from other contracts in terms of transferability.

This paper seeks to unpack the key legal and practical elements of marine insurance policies

in India. From understanding the policy components to examining the nuances of valuation and assignment, the study provides an in-depth legal analysis while also recognising the evolving needs of industry stakeholders.

Research Methodology

The research methodology adopted in this paper is doctrinal and qualitative in nature. Primary data has been sourced from statutory provisions of the Marine Insurance Act, 1963 and relevant sections of the Indian Contract Act, 1872. Judicial precedents, such as *New India Assurance Co Ltd v G.N. Sainani*, have been referenced to provide clarity on the legal position of policy assignment.

Secondary sources such as scholarly articles, legal commentaries, and insurance industry reports have been examined to supplement statutory interpretation with practical insights. The research employs an analytical approach to dissect the structure and classifications of marine insurance policies, while also considering the operational realities of international trade and shipping. This methodology ensures a comprehensive

understanding of both the theoretical and practical dimensions of marine insurance law in India.

MARINE INSURANCE POLICY

Given the diverse and often intricate nature of maritime risks, marine insurance does not follow a rigid contract template. Instead, the parties involved—usually the insurer and the insured—enjoy the liberty to define the terms of their agreement according to their mutual understanding. These terms, including the scope of coverage and responsibilities of each party, are laid out in detail within the insurance policy.

As per Section 24 of the Marine Insurance Act, 1963, a marine insurance agreement must be formalised through a written marine policy in order to be admissible as legal evidence. This legal stipulation can create complications for policyholders—if no formal policy exists, it becomes extremely difficult for the insured to substantiate the terms of coverage in court, effectively hindering any claim process.

Components of a Marine Insurance Policy

Though the Marine Insurance Act of 1963⁷⁸³ does not offer a specific definition for the term “marine policy,” it lays down an elaborate statutory structure that outlines the essential components a valid policy must include. Essentially, the policy serves as a contractual agreement between the insurer and the insured, detailing their mutual obligations, rights, and responsibilities. Section 25 of the Act is particularly critical, as it specifies the required particulars that every marine insurance policy must contain for it to be considered valid and enforceable under the law.

Outlined below are the core elements that Section 25 mandates:

- (i) **Insured Party Identification:** This denotes the person or business entity obtaining coverage against maritime risks. It could also include

an authorised representative acting on behalf of the insured. Correctly naming the insured is of utmost importance since it establishes who has the legal authority to file a claim in the event of a covered loss. Mistakes or vagueness in identifying the insured party may lead to complications or outright rejection of claims.

- (ii) **Specification of the Insured Subject Matter:** This element identifies what exactly is being insured. It might pertain to goods in transit, the ship itself (commonly known as the “hull”), the anticipated freight, or any other interest at stake in a marine venture. Precise and unambiguous detailing helps eliminate any scope for confusion or legal conflict and ensures the insurer is well aware of the nature of the risk involved.

- (iii) **Covered Perils or Risks:** A crucial aspect of any marine insurance contract is the explicit listing of perils the policy is intended to cover. These may encompass dangers such as marine accidents, fire, theft, acts of piracy, natural calamities, ship collisions, and more. Policies may also include coverage for war risks, inland transportation threats, and other extensions, depending on what is agreed upon. A well-documented list of covered risks reduces ambiguity and potential legal disputes later.

- (iv) **Duration or Scope of the Voyage:** The policy must clearly outline the timeframe or voyage limits during which coverage will be in effect. This could either be a specific duration—like from May 1, 2025, to July 31, 2025—or a voyage from one port to another, say from Mumbai to Rotterdam. Accurate demarcation of

⁷⁸³ Marine insurance act, 1963.

the journey's start and end points (terminus quo and terminus ad quem) ensures a shared understanding of the geographical and temporal scope of the policy.⁷⁸⁴

- (v) **Insured Amount:** This represents the financial ceiling of the insurer's liability, commonly referred to as the "sum insured." It usually includes the cost of the insured subject matter, expected profits, and associated charges like freight. This amount also determines the premium payable. For fair risk coverage, the insured value should correspond to the actual worth to avoid problems like underinsurance or overvaluation.
- (vi) **Insurer's Identity:** The names of all insurance providers assuming the risk must be clearly listed in the policy. Where multiple insurers are involved (co-insurance), each must formally sign the document to authenticate their liability. Missing or unauthorised signatures can undermine the enforceability of the policy and obstruct claims settlement.

These components collectively ensure that a marine insurance policy meets legal standards, fosters transparency, and provides clarity during any dispute or claims process.

Classifications of Marine Insurance Policies

Marine insurance policies have diversified over time to suit the varying needs of international traders, shipping firms, freight handlers, and logistics operators. Their flexible structures allow policyholders to select specific types based on the duration, nature, and scale of their operations. While the Marine Insurance Act recognises certain basic policy categories, industry practice has introduced several more nuanced and adaptable formats.

Below is a detailed classification of principal and commonly utilised marine insurance policies:

Valued Policy

This type of policy assigns a pre-agreed monetary value to the insured property at the outset. This valuation typically includes not only the price of the cargo or ship but also freight charges, incidental expenses, and estimated profit (often in the 10–15% range). This agreed amount becomes the fixed benchmark for claim settlement. Though streamlined, it may still require reassessment in cases of constructive total loss, where salvage costs might exceed the declared value.

Unvalued (Open) Policy

Unlike a valued policy, an unvalued or open policy does not set a specific insured value at the start. The value is instead calculated at the time of a loss, within the policy's coverage ceiling. This model is well-suited for businesses with dynamic inventories or changing cargo values. Proper recordkeeping is essential to validate any future claims under such a policy.

Voyage Policy

A voyage policy provides coverage for a specific shipment or journey. The protection begins from the port of origin (terminus quo) and continues until the final destination (terminus ad quem) is reached. All route details and voyage terms are clearly defined in the policy. Ideal for single-shipment needs, voyage policies provide focused protection tailored to one-off maritime ventures.

Time Policy

Time policies offer insurance for a predetermined period, generally up to one year, regardless of the number of trips undertaken during that span. These policies are especially favoured for insuring vessels rather than cargo, and are commonly used by shipowners engaged in regular trading. Many time policies include cancellation clauses, allowing either

⁷⁸⁴ SINGH & KAUSHIK, PRINCIPLE OF INSURANCE LAW 221(3ed. 2020)

party to terminate the agreement with notice, often involving premium adjustments.

Mixed Policy

Combining features of both time and voyage policies, a mixed policy might cover a specific journey while also providing additional coverage for a set period afterward. For instance, a policy could cover a ship from Chennai to Singapore and continue to provide protection for another 30 days post-arrival. This format is advantageous for situations involving cargo unloading, dockside handling, or subsequent local transportation.

Floating Policy

A floating policy offers overarching insurance coverage under general terms, with specific shipment details being furnished later through formal declarations. It's a practical solution for exporters and logistics providers who handle frequent or bulk consignments. The open-ended nature of this policy reduces repetitive administrative efforts while maintaining seamless coverage for each declared shipment.

Builders Risk Policy

This specialised policy insures vessels under construction. It remains valid throughout the build phase and often extends to cover trial runs or the ship's initial voyage. It protects shipyards, constructors, and owners from risks like fire, equipment damage, or theft during the building process. Given the high capital investment in ship construction, this policy serves as an essential risk-management tool.⁷⁸⁵

Blanket Policy

A blanket policy is suited for entities needing wide coverage over numerous goods, routes, or shipments. The insured estimates the maximum risk exposure and pays a corresponding premium. These policies specify general shipping routes, cargo categories, and terms,

providing broad protection under a single document. They're ideal for organisations engaged in diversified and high-volume trade.

Port Risk Policy

A port risk policy focuses on insuring a vessel while it is stationary at a port. It covers incidents such as fire, theft, environmental hazards, or operational mishaps during loading or maintenance. These policies are commonly used when ships are docked for extended durations, under repairs, or temporarily out of service.

MEASURE OF INSURABLE VALUE

Insurable value is the value of the property being insured, which helps determine the level of coverage under the insurance policy. Essentially, it represents the maximum amount the insurer will pay to repair or replace the insured item in the event of a loss.

Determining the insurable value of the subject matter is critical, particularly in cases where an unvalued policy is in place. In such situations, the insurer must assess the indemnity amount. Even with a valued policy, the insurable value may be necessary to confirm the agreed value, especially when a situation like a constructive total loss arises.

In simpler terms, the process of determining insurable value is essential for the following reasons:

- A. It helps determine the extent of indemnity in unvalued policies, where the value of the subject matter isn't pre-established.
- B. It ensures accurate indemnity calculations in valued policies when the stated value needs further clarification, particularly in cases like a constructive total loss.
- C. It provides a clear standard to assess the subject matter's value in valued policies.

If the policy doesn't outline how to calculate the insurable value, Section 18 of the Marine

⁷⁸⁵ Ivan Apelbaum, marine insurance law and practice in India 113 (2d ed. 2019).

Insurance Act, 1963, provides a framework.⁷⁸⁶ Here's a breakdown of how to determine it:

- For ships, the insurable value is assessed when the risk begins. This includes the ship, its equipment, crew supplies, wages already paid, voyage preparation costs, and insurance premiums.
- For steamships, their machinery, boilers, and coal (if owned by the insured) are also part of the insurable value.
- When it comes to cargo, the insurable value is based on its invoice price at the loading port or its market value at that time. This also includes freight charges, the insurance premium, and any expected profit.
- For freight, the insurable value is the total freight amount plus the insurance premium. If the freight is insured by a charterer, it's included in the cargo's insurable value for insurance purposes.
- For any other subject matter, excluding liabilities under civil obligations, its insurable value is determined by its value at the location and time when the insurance begins, along with the applicable insurance premium.

ASSIGNMENT OF MARINE POLICY

Under the Indian Contract Act, 1872, assignment refers to the transfer of both rights and obligations from one party to another. It is a process where one party passes on their right to receive benefits and their responsibility to fulfill contractual obligations to another person.

Generally, the assignment of an insurance contract requires the prior consent of the insurer to be valid. However, marine insurance, especially cargo insurance, is an exception to

this rule.⁷⁸⁷ In these cases, an assignment can be made without needing the insurer's consent or even providing written notice, offering more flexibility compared to other types of insurance.

The Indian Contract Act specifies certain provisions that detail the conditions under which a marine insurance policy can be validly assigned. These provisions address the manner, timing, and necessary formalities to ensure the assignment is legally enforceable.

A marine Insurance policy can be assigned to another party only if the policy allows for such a transfer. The assignment can occur before or after a loss has taken place, but it cannot be done once the insured has fully relinquished ownership of or interest in the goods or if they have been lost entirely. Essentially, as long as the insured retains an interest in the goods, they are allowed to assign the policy—even if the goods have already been damaged or lost.

However, if the insurer has given up their interest in the subject matter, or if the goods have been lost before the assignment, or if there is no clear intention to assign the policy, the assignment would not be valid. Furthermore, the assignment cannot be made by someone who does not have a proprietary or insurable interest at the time of the transfer. This was confirmed in the case of *New India Assurance Co Ltd v G.N. Sainani*.⁷⁸⁸

Assignments can be made through an endorsement on the policy or insurance certificate, or in another customary manner, as long as it is done in accordance with the prescribed rules.

Conclusion

Marine insurance remains an indispensable element of maritime commerce, offering security and predictability in an otherwise volatile environment. Its legal framework in India, governed chiefly by the Marine Insurance Act, 1963, provides both structure and flexibility—

⁷⁸⁶ Marine Insurance Act, 1963, § 18.

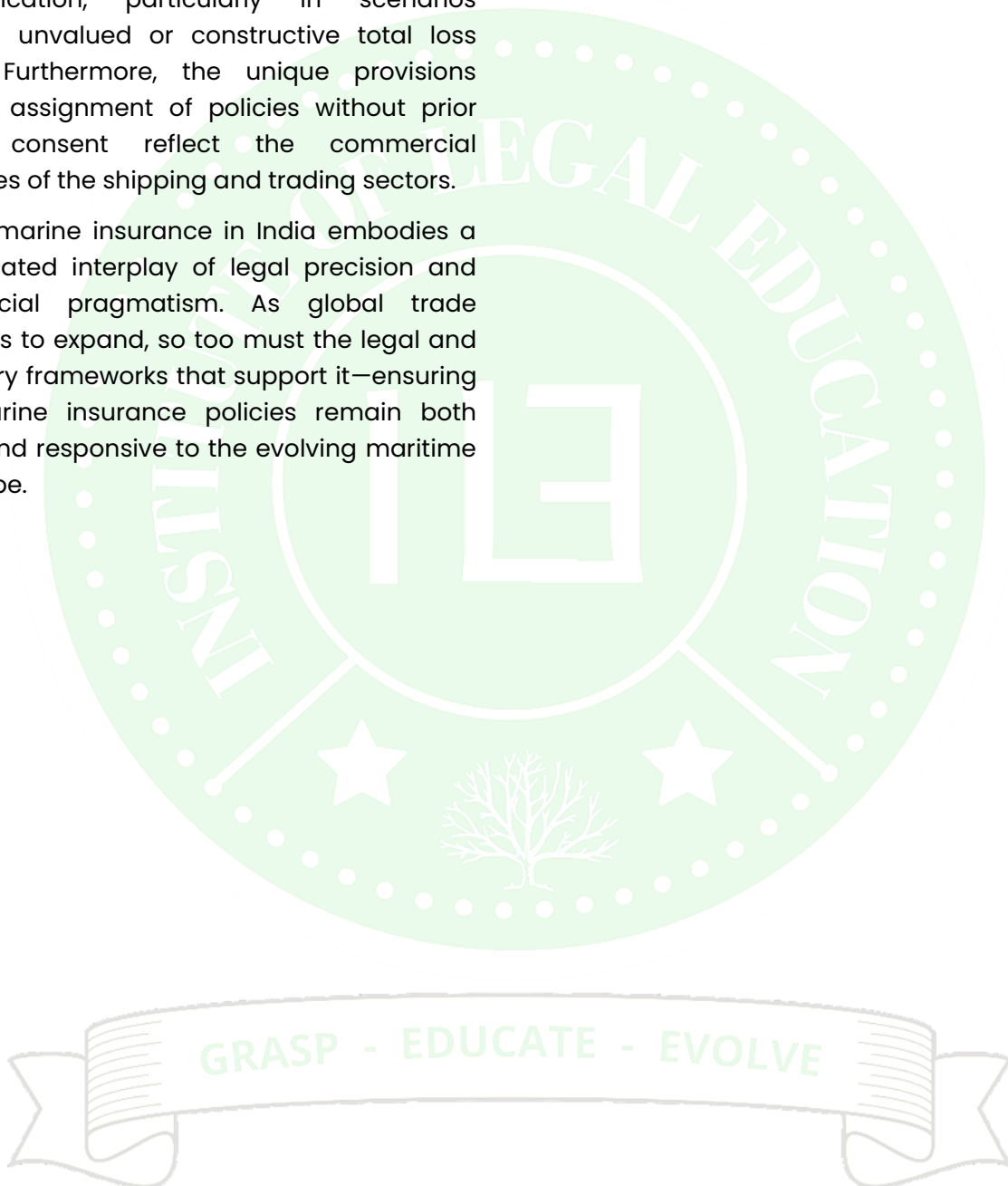
⁷⁸⁷ S.K. SARVARIA, MULLA ON THE INDIAN CONTRACT ACT 1554 (15th ed. 2021).

⁷⁸⁸ *New India Assurance Co. Ltd. v. G.N. Sainani*, AIR 1997.

balancing statutory mandates with the dynamic needs of maritime stakeholders. The essential components outlined under the law ensure transparency and legal enforceability, while various classifications of policies cater to diverse operational requirements.

The doctrine of Insurable value offers clarity in indemnification, particularly in scenarios involving unvalued or constructive total loss claims. Furthermore, the unique provisions allowing assignment of policies without prior insurer consent reflect the commercial exigencies of the shipping and trading sectors.

In sum, marine insurance in India embodies a sophisticated interplay of legal precision and commercial pragmatism. As global trade continues to expand, so too must the legal and regulatory frameworks that support it—ensuring that marine insurance policies remain both robust and responsive to the evolving maritime landscape.



GROWING UP ONLINE: SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN'S RIGHT IN DIGITAL PLAYGROUND

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ABSTRACT

In the digital era , the use of internet for study , recreation and social interaction is growing among children. This connectedness has many advantages but it also create problems that disproportionately harm children owing their fragility and ignorance. Cyberbullying, Online Gaming, Data abuse , AI generated deepfakes and hazardous material pose are several examples which are harmful to children and it requires urgent legal , technical and social remedies.

This article critically analyse the global and Indian child's rights and safeguard in the digital world and also examines how UNCRC , Information Technology Act 2000, Protection of Children form Sexual Offence 2012 and Digital Personal Data Protection Act 2023 deals with these challenges. This article also examine the landmark case laws , Policy gaps and current issue like AI and misinformation. Alongwith, from child- centric view, this article discuss the need for balanced strategy & regulations which protects children's right to access information and express themselves online while preserving their safety , privacy and dignity. A systematic change includes legal protection, ethical digital practices , public awareness and education.

Keywords: Children, Privacy, child's safety, Artificial intelligence,

Introduction

21st century is witness of unprecedented digital revolution which transform the people's way of life, learning and communication. The children, whose early years are being more influenced by technology, are among those who mostly impacted by this change. By online classroom, online games, video sharing platform and learning aids driven by Artificial intelligence, nowadays, children are engrossed in virtual world which is both powerful and dangerous.

By the advancement of technologies children have so much possibilities at their fingertips. Instantaneous information, worldwide peer connection and opportunity to develop employable skill are all within their reach . Cyberbullying, identity theft, exploitation, misinformation and psychological discomfort

due to excessive screen time or algorithm driven content are the some examples which may expose the child by using the same tools which empower them. The line between benefits and risk is very thin in case of child who can't completely understand the consequence of his online activity.⁷⁸⁹

The issue of children's internet safety has become more prominent on global scale. Child welfare organizations and UNICEF have found that internet abuse and exploitation are on rise⁷⁹⁰. The Covid-19 pandemic further accelerated the children's screen dependency

⁷⁸⁹ Sharma, A. (2010) , 'Globalization and its impact on cyber crime: A case study of Indian police administration', Indian Journal of Public Administration, 56(2)

<http://doi.org/10.1177/0019556120100203> accessed 11-05-2025

⁷⁹⁰ Etter , B. (2001), 'The forensic challenges of e-crime', Current Commentary No. 3 Australasian Center for Policing Research , Adelaide

and vulnerability, which shifted their social and educational environment into online domain. This has made the protection of children in cyber space an important matter of public policy, law and child rights.

In India, the internet users are growing rapidly which generates unique problems. Everyday, millions of youngsters use the internet; thus, the country's legal framework has evolved to accommodate these new realities. The right to privacy and digital well-being is implicitly included in the right to life & dignity guaranteed under Article-21 of Constitution⁷⁹¹. However, there are large protection gaps in current laws which struggle to match with speed of technological change.

This research article aims to fill these gaps by examining the rights & protection that children have in the digital era. It looks at current laws, evaluate new cyber danger and talks about how the courts and government are reacting to them. By focusing on child-first approach, this article underscores how critical it is to build more robust and future ready system which empower and protect them in equal measure.

Ultimately, the protection of children in digital era, is more of social needs than technological or legal one. When country takes measures to ensure the safety of its younger users, it shows that it supports democratic values, human dignity and inclusive development. Innovation must co-exists with integrity, freedom co-exists with responsibility and access must co-exists with accountability if we are to progress.⁷⁹²

Legal Foundation of Child's Rights in digital sphere

- **International framework**
 - **United Nations Convention on Right of Child (UNCRC)**⁷⁹³

The cornerstone of child's rights at international level is UNCRC, adopted in 1989. While it predates the digital revolution, its principles are still highly relevant in digital age. Article 13, 16 and 17 of UNCRC directly pertain to child's freedom of expression, protection from arbitrary interference with privacy and access to appropriate information through mass media.

General Comment no. 25 of UNCRC⁷⁹⁴ was presented in 2021 which deals with issue of child's rights in digital environment. This document emphasizes the need of safeguarding child's rights online just as they are offline. It demands the creation of laws, policies and environment which provides fair access to digital resources, protect users from online danger and encourage digital literacy and safety.

• **Sustainable Development Goals**⁷⁹⁵

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was adopted by United Nations in 2015 aims to ensure a better and more sustainable future for all by 2030. There are several SDGs goals on protecting child in digital sphere.

1. **SDG 3, Good Health and Well-being:** Promote mental health by preventing online bullying, screen addiction and social media pressure.
2. **SDG 4, Quality Education:** Ensure all children have equal access to quality online learning platform and digital tools
3. **SDG 16, Peace, Justice and Strong Institution:** Protect children from abuse, exploitation, trafficking and Violence against them in real and digital sphere.
4. **SDG 17, Partnership for Goals:** Government, Tech-companies, Schools

<<https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-child>> accessed 7-05-2025

⁷⁹⁴ General Comment No. 25 (2021) on Children's Rights in Relation to Digital Environment

<<https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/general-comments-and-recommendations/general-comment-no-25-2021-childrens-rights-relation>> accessed 7-05-2025

⁷⁹⁵ The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable development

⁷⁹¹ The Constitution of India

⁷⁹² Choucri, N & Goldsmith, D. (2012), 'Lost in cyberspace: Harnessing the internet', international relation & global security. Bulletin of Atomic Scientists, 68(2)

<<http://doi.org/10.1177/0096340212438696>> accessed 11-05-2025

⁷⁹³ United Convention on Rights of Child, 1989

and families must work together to make the internet safer and fair for children.

- **ECOSOC Resolution 2011/33⁷⁹⁶**

“Economic and Social Council Resolution 2011/33 on Prevention, protection and international cooperation against the use of new information technologies to abuse and/or exploit children¹⁹” is resolution issued by the United Nation Economic and Social Council. The resolution drafted a study that how these information technologies and other electronic technologies are affected crimes against children.

- **The Rio de Janeiro Declaration⁷⁹⁷**

The “Third World Congress” against the children’s exploitation was held in Rio De Janeiro in Brazil in year 2008. The aim of the declaration was to take such a effective step to combat the sexual exploitation against children. The Declaration focused on the reasons and causes of the sexual exploitation of children and discussed the strong and broader strategies like “Millennium development Goals 21” to prevent and combat this crime by eradication “extreme poverty and hunger”.

- **Indian Constitutional & Legal Provision**

- **The Constitution of India**

- **Art 21:** Guarantees the right to life & personal liberty, which courts have interpreted to include right to privacy, education and digital safety.
- **Art 39(e) & (f) :** The direction under Directive Principles of State Policy is for the State to ensure that children are not

abused & that their childhood is protected.

- **Art 45:** State ensures early childhood care and education for all children until they complete the age of six years.

- **Information Technology Act⁷⁹⁸**

The IT Act is India's primary cyber law . Some of the Section are child specific –

- **Sec-66E:** Punishes violation of privacy through capturing, publishing or transmitting private images without consent.
- **Sec-67B:** Specially criminalizes the publishing, browsing or downloading of child sexual abuse material.
- **Sec-69A:** Grants government power to block content harmful to public including children.

- **Protection of Children from Sexual Offences⁷⁹⁹**

This Act is comprehensively addresses the sexual offences against child including those facilitated by digital means.

- **Sec-11 & 12:** Address sexual harassment which includes sending lewd messages or engaging in online sexual communication.
- **Sec-15:** includes provision to penalize the storage or possession and

⁷⁹⁶ Prevention, protection and international cooperation against the use of new information technologies to abuse and/or exploit children (E/2011/30)

⁷⁹⁷ The Rio de Janeiro Declaration and Call for Action to Prevent and Stop Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents, Document from the III World Congress against Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents (November, 2008).

⁷⁹⁸ The Information Technology Act , 2000

⁷⁹⁹ Protection of Children from Sexual Offences 2012

distribution of child sexual abuse material.

• **Juvenile Justice Act⁸⁰⁰**

While primarily a welfare legislation, it mandates the State to protect children from abuse, neglect and exploitation in all settings including online environments.

• **Digital Personal Data Protection Act⁸⁰¹**

This recent legislation makes a crucial development in digital rights landscape. It introduces the concept of 'verifiable parental consent' for processing data of minors.

Key highlights:

- No tracking, targeted advertisement or data monetization is allowed for user under 18 years without parental consent.
- Companies handling children's data must adopt higher standards of security.

• **Sector specific guidelines & regulations**

• **National Education Policy 2020**

The NEP acknowledges the importance of integrating digital tools in education and calls for safety & security training, digital citizenship education and child friendly tech policies in schools.

• **NCERT guidelines on Cyber safety 2021**

These guidelines suggest age specific recommendations for schools and parents, covering:

- Digital etiquette
- Cyberbullying awareness
- Protection from online predators
- Responsible social media use

• **OTT and Social Media self regulation⁸⁰²**

Platform like YouTube, Meta, Prime and Netflix have introduced restricted modes, content rating system and child specific applications. However, many of these remain optional and depends on parental awareness & control.

Emerging Threats to Children in the Digital Age

Children in today's rapidly evolving digital world, face several dangers when they go online, some of which are obvious while others are more subtle but just as damaging⁸⁰³. By increasingly using of the internet for education, communication, and entertainment, children also become vulnerable to dangers which challenges their safety, privacy, emotional well-being, and even their development. Followings are emerging threats in detail.⁸⁰⁴

• **Online Sexual Exploitation and Abuse**

One of the gravest threats faced online by children is sexual exploitation and abuse. Sometimes over long periods, criminals groom children by gaining their confidence via social media, messaging applications, and online gaming platforms.

Forms of Exploitation:

⁸⁰² Advisory on adherence of Indian Laws and the Code of Ethics prescribed under the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media, Ethics Code) Rules, 2021

⁸⁰³ Bernik, I. (2014), 'Cybercrime & Cyberwarfare' <<https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118898604.ch1>> accessed 7-05-2025

⁸⁰⁴ Mokha, Anupreet. (2017), 'A study on Awareness of cybercrime and security', Research J. Humanities and Social Sciences. 8(4) [doi: 10.5958/2321-5828.2017.00067.5](https://doi.org/10.5958/2321-5828.2017.00067.5)

1. Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM): Explicit images or videos of child being shared or sold online. According to Interpol and reports by NGOs, India has seen a steep rise in CSAM circulation.⁸⁰⁵

2. Live-streamed abuse: It will become more difficult to identify and prosecute offenders when they make live-stream abuse.

3. Grooming: Offenders often create fake profiles and lure children into inappropriate relationships, sometimes leading to blackmail (sextortion).⁸⁰⁶

• Cyberbullying and Online Harassment

Cyberbullying has become increasingly common among children and teens. It includes:

1. Sending threatening or abusive messages
2. Posting embarrassing photos or videos
3. Spreading rumors on social media

Extreme occurrence of cyberbullying may result in suicidal thoughts, desperation, social withdrawal, and anxiety. Some platforms do not have real-time monitoring and do not have reporting systems that are suitable for

children, which makes it more difficult for victims to seek aid⁸⁰⁷.

• Privacy Invasion and Data Exploitation

Children often use applications and platforms that collect personal data, sometimes without their or their parents' knowledge.

Key concerns:

1. Surveillance-based advertising: Online behavior of children is tracked and used to create marketing profiles, which violates their privacy.
2. Lack of informed consent: Children may not understand what they are agreeing to when apps request permissions.
3. Data breaches: When educational platforms or gaming apps get hacked, sensitive data related to child can be leaked or sold on the dark web.

• Exposure to Inappropriate Content

Children may stumble upon or be exposed to:

1. Violent or graphic media
2. Pornographic content
3. Self-harm or suicide-related discussions (e.g., Blue Whale Challenge)
4. Misinformation and conspiracy theories

Algorithms on platforms like YouTube or TikTok often auto-suggest such content, creating echo chambers that worsen

⁸⁰⁵ Ali, Sana & Haykal, Hiba . (2021). 'Child Sexual Abuse and the Internet—A Systematic Review'. Human Arenas
[DOI:10.1007/s42087-021-00228-9](https://doi.org/10.1007/s42087-021-00228-9)

⁸⁰⁶ Schoeps, Konstanze & Montserrat, Peris.. (2020). 'Risk factor for being a victim of online grooming in adolescents'. Psicothema. 32.
[DOI: 10.7334/psicothema2019.179](https://doi.org/10.7334/psicothema2019.179)

⁸⁰⁷ Singh, Swarndeeep & S& Sagar, Rajesh. (2022). 'Quality of online news media reports of child sexual abuse in India'. Industrial Psychiatry Journal. 31
[DOI:10.4103/ipj.238.21](https://doi.org/10.4103/ipj.238.21)

mental health outcomes. Parental controls exist but are often complex or bypassed.

• **Radicalization and Extremist Propaganda**

Some children are targeted by extremist groups online to influence their thinking and behavior. These groups use:

1. Encrypted platforms and chat rooms
2. Memes and gamified propaganda
3. False historical narratives and religious extremism

This is especially dangerous for vulnerable or isolated children, as radical content may appear alongside innocuous videos or games.⁸⁰⁸

• **Gaming Addiction and Online Gambling**

With the rise of mobile gaming, children are increasingly spending long hours on apps like PUBG, Free Fire, or Call of Duty.

Risks include:

1. Gaming addiction, leading to poor academic performance and disturbed sleep
2. In-game purchases causing financial exploitation
3. Exposure to gambling mechanics (loot boxes, betting apps) under the guise of gaming

India currently lacks a national policy regulating children's online gaming habits, although several states have proposed age-based limits.

• **Deepfakes and Digital Manipulation**

Deepfake technology—powered by AI—allows malicious actors to create highly realistic fake videos or voice recordings of children, which can be used for:

1. Sextortion
2. Bullying
3. False accusations
4. Manipulated consent videos

• **Misinformation and Algorithmic Bias**

Children often rely on social media or unverified sources for information. Misinformation campaigns can:

1. Distort their worldview
2. Promote hatred or discrimination
3. Encourage unhealthy behavior (fake health cures, diet trends, etc.)

Even algorithms have the potential to show biased material, which may amplify prejudices and suppress diversity. As an example, biased image suggestions and beauty filters have the potential to damage social identity and self-esteem.⁸⁰⁹

• **Online Radical Gender or Racial Narratives**

There are a lot of extreme gender or racial narratives that teenagers see online.. These include:

1. Incels (involuntary celibates) communities which promote misogyny.
2. Hates groups who promote racist ideologies.
3. Toxics beauty standards which marginalize certain races or ethnicities.

⁸⁰⁸ Bada Maria, Nurse R.C.(2019) ,‘The social & psychological impact of cyber attack’, Benson V., & Mcalaney J. (Eds.), Emerging cyber threats and cognitive vulnerabilities , 73–92
<<https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-816203-3.00004-6>> accessed 12-05-2025

⁸⁰⁹ Shin, Donghee. (2024). ‘Artificial Misinformation: Exploring Human-Algorithm Interaction Online’. DOI: [10.1007/978-3-031-52569-8](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-52569-8).

Without the ability to think critically and the encouragement of adults, children can internalize these messages and mirror harmful behavior.⁸¹⁰

• Psychological and Developmental Impact

The cumulative effect of these threats manifest in

1. Attention deficiency and low cognitive ability.
2. Poor social attraction due to over dependence on virtual attraction.
3. Anxiety, depression and identity confusion.
4. Sleep disorder & behavioral change.

Over use of screens also lead to physical issues like vision problems, obesity and posture related complications.⁸¹¹

• Parental and Institutional Challenges

Many parents don't know what their kids are up to on the internet. Key obstacles include:

1. No digital or computer knowledge among guardians
2. Digital safety education in schools are limited
3. Over-reliance on paid parental control softwares and tools
4. Trust deficit between children and caretakers

Unfortunately, many schools don't have any cyber counselors or secure reporting channels, which makes it even more difficult for children to come and share

their experience about online harassment.

Institutional and Civil Society Initiatives

Protecting children in India from harm while they are online is a shared duty across several sectors of society. In an effort to create a more secure online space, many public agencies, nonprofits, and even for-profit businesses are working together.

• Government Initiatives

The Indian government has introduced various programs and policies aimed at addressing online threats and educating children about digital safety:

1. **National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR):** In developing cyber safety standards for children, the role of NCPCR are very crucial. In a joint advisory with MeitY, it lays out steps that parents, schools, and social media companies may do to combat child abuse on these platforms.
2. **Cybercrime Prevention against Women and Children (CCPWC) Scheme:** The Ministry of Home Affairs launched this plan to assist states and UTs in enhancing their cybercrime units. Additionally, it provides funding for programs that aim to raise awareness and strengthen capacities.
3. **Digital India Programme:** Though it does not child-specific, it does have digital literacy programs like "PMGDISHA (Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan)" that may be used to educate families and children on fundamental digital hygiene.⁸¹²

⁸¹⁰ Gopal, Pragathi. (2012). 'Literary Radicalism in India: Gender, Nation and the Transition to Independence. Literary Radicalism in India: Gender, Nation and the Transition to Independence'. DOI: 10.4324/9780203391174.

⁸¹¹ Bada Maria, Nurse R.C.(2019) 'The social & psychological impact of cyber attack', Benson V., & Mcalaney J. (Eds.), Emerging cyber threats and cognitive vulnerabilities, 73–92 <<https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-816203-3.00004-6>> accessed 12-05-2025

⁸¹² Tiwari, Amit & Varadarajan, Udaya, (2017), 'Digital India initiatives : An educational panorama'.

4. **Cyber Crime Reporting Portal (<https://cybercrime.gov.in>):** This portal gives a platform to anyone (including children and parents), to report offence like cyberbullying, grooming, or exploitation .. etc. The portal has a separate tab for reporting child sexual abuse material (CSAM).⁸¹³

• NGO and Civil Society Efforts

There is a critical shortage of resources to address children's digital safety, but several non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in India are actively trying to fill this void via education and protection.

1. **CyberPeace Foundation:** For the benefit of children in underserved and rural regions, this non-governmental organization (NGO) collaborates with the Indian government and UNICEF to provide workshops on digital literacy. Its "CyberPeace Clubs" program promotes in-school collaborative learning on topics such as cyberbullying, online grooming, and disinformation.
2. **Save the Children India:** They run several projects focused on online safety awareness, especially targeting adolescent girls vulnerable to online exploitation and cyberstalking.
3. **Bachpan Bachao Andolan:** While this group has long worked to end the exploitation and trafficking of children, they have recently shifted their attention to the ways in which the internet and other forms of digital communication affect children's rights and protection.

4. **Childline India Foundation (1098):** Primarily, this is a women protection helpline but it also receives cases related to online abuse and exploitation of child . It provides immediate intervention and referrals.

• Public-Private Partnerships and EdTech Platforms

Tech companies and social media platforms also have a vital role to play regarding child safety. In recent years, partnerships between governments, civil society, and private companies have been encouraging:

1. **Meta (Facebook, Instagram):** Meta has launched a 'Parent's Guide' for Instagram in India in partnership with organizations like Aarambh India Initiative. It educates parents and teens about safe usage.
2. **Google's 'Be Internet Awesome' Campaign:** This includes interactive games and classroom materials that help children learn how to identify scams, create strong passwords, and interact respectfully online.
3. **EdTech Platforms:** Companies like BYJU'S, Vedantu, and others are increasingly embedding content moderation and child-safety tools, although a standardized child-safety policy across platforms is still lacking.

• School-Based Initiatives

Recognizing schools as key stakeholders, the government has:

1. Introduced cyber safety modules under the Digital India initiative.
2. Launched programs like Cyber Surakshit Bharat and Information

⁸¹³ Chhabra, Dr. (2020). 'Rights of children in cyber world Indian perspective'.

Security Education & Awareness (ISEA) for students and teachers.

3. Promoted CBSE advisories on digital etiquette and the safe use of social media.

• Role of Intermediaries and Tech Platforms

Under the IT Rules (2021), platforms are required to:

1. Remove objectionable content within 24 hours of complaint.
2. Deploy AI-based content moderation.
3. Appoint grievance officers for faster redressal.

• Judicial Interventions

The Indian judiciary has played an active role in expanding digital protections: Through various judgements, Courts also protect the children's rights in digital sphere & reshaping the digital environment.

Case- Avnish Bajaj v. State (2005 Delhi High Court)⁸¹⁴

It is first major case on intermediary liability for content related to child. In this case, the court highlighted intermediary's liability in distribution of obscene material involving minors.

Case- Shreya Singhal v. Union of India (2015 SC)⁸¹⁵

This landmark ruling which declares sec-66A of Information Technology Act 2000, Unconstitutional and laid foundation for protection of minors from vague digital criminal law.

Case- In Re : Prajwala Letter Case (2017)⁸¹⁶

This case is related to circulation of rape & child pornography videos online. The Hon'ble Court

issue direction to government and tech companies to develop mechanism for removing child sexual abuse material.

Case- In Re: Children in Street Situation (2022)

In this case Hon'ble Court recognized the need for safe digital access, identity-linked entitlements and online education safeguards

Case - Facebook India Online Service Pvt. Ltd. v. Union of India (pending)

This case underscore the balance between privacy and safety, especially in protecting children from online sexual exploitation, cyberbullying and grooming. It highlighted the accountability of platform in removing & preventing spread of CSAM

Case- Just Rights for Children Alliance v. S. Harish (2024)⁸¹⁷

This case highlighted the urgent need to protect children from online abuse and exploitation. The court emphasized creating robust digital safeguards, holding platform accountable and ensuring children's rights to safety, dignity and privacy in digital environment.

International Perspectives and Best Practices

India's efforts must be benchmarked against global standards and learnings to build an effective framework for protecting children in the digital age.

• European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)⁸¹⁸

The GDPR has strict rules for processing children's data, requiring parental consent for users under 16 and ensuring that data is processed in a manner that protects the child's best interests. Its "age-appropriate design code" in the UK

⁸¹⁴ 2005(79)DRJ576

⁸¹⁵ AIR 2015 SC 1523

⁸¹⁶ 2018 LawSuit(SC) 285

⁸¹⁷ 2024 INSC 716

⁸¹⁸ General Data Protection Regulation (Regulation (EU) 2016/679) <<https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&opi=89978449&url=https://gdpr-info.eu/&ved=2ahUKEwiYno3io6CNAXVnqVYBHdLWM6cQFnoECHAAQ&usq=AOvVaw1akHzzz224Oq1yU0pd6qSw>> accessed 12-05-2025

mandates privacy-by-default settings for minors.

While the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 in India does provide similar safeguards, it does not yet mandate impact assessments for digital services targeted towards children or establish explicit methods for verifying their age.

- **United States: Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA)⁸¹⁹**

In order to protect children's privacy, websites and online services must have their parents' verified permission before collecting personal information from children under the age of 13. COPPA Law has been criticized for failing to adapt to new types of data collecting via AI and IoT devices, yet it is still a fundamental regulation in the US that protects children.

India does not yet have a dedicated online privacy law for children, relying instead on broader frameworks that offer limited enforcement.

- **Australia: Online Safety Act, 2021 and Amendment 2024⁸²⁰**

This law empowers the eSafety Commissioner to:

- Make order to remove harmful content, including cyberbullying and image-based abuse.
- Offer to make a reporting tool for youth experiencing online harm.
- Regulate online platforms with a safety code of conduct.

It gives One-stop grievance redressal which combined with strong

enforcement and platform accountability.

Lesson for India: The idea of a separate agency responsible for children's internet safety, might help Indian organizations consolidate their fragmented governance structures.

- **South Korea: Digital Well-being and Screen Time Regulation⁸²¹**

South Korea adopts a technocultural approach:

- By law, smartphone sold to minors must have parental controls installed in order to avoid smartphone addiction.
- Government funded digital detox camps and cyber wellness education.

It makes balance between protection with mental health promotion and digital literacy.

Application in India: Similar behavioral support programs in schools could reduced the overuse and online gaming addiction.

- **Global Guidelines: UNICEF and ITU Frameworks⁸²²**

UNICEF's "Children's Rights in the Digital Age Report" and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) guidelines serve as global references:

- Highlight the importance of children's involvement in the process of developing regulations about digital infrastructure.

⁸¹⁹ Children's Online Privacy Protection Act of 1998
<<http://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?req=granuleid%3AUSC-prelim-title15-section6501&edition=prelim>> accessed 13-05-2025

⁸²⁰ Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Act 2024

⁸²¹ Woo, Kyung & Bong, (2021). 'Mental Health, Smartphone Use Type, and Screen Time Among Adolescents in South Korea. Psychology Research and Behavior Management'. DOI:1419-1428. 10.2147/PRBM.S324235.

⁸²² Guidelines for industry on Child Online Protection 2020
<<https://www.unicef.org/media/90796/file/ITU-COP-guidelines%20for%20industry-2020.pdf>> accessed 13-05-2025

- Strongly encourage governments to prioritize equal access and digital inclusion.
- Raise awareness about AI policies that protect children in order to prevent algorithmic bias.

India: India has been an active partner in these forums, but could do more to incorporate these principles into domestic policy and legislation.

• **Civil Society and NGO Innovations Worldwide**

Internationally, NGOs and private players are shaping child-friendly digital ecosystems:

- **5 Rights Foundation (UK):** Advocates for child-centric internet design.
- **Common Sense Media (US):** Offers reviews of digital content and privacy ratings for parents and schools.
- **Child Helpline International:** Supports cross-border emergency assistance for digital child abuse cases.

Takeaway for India: There is potential for stronger public-private partnerships to create localized tools and platforms that meet India's linguistic and cultural diversity

• **Technological Interventions in Other Countries**

Countries are using AI and data science to track online harm:

- Germany's NetzDG law uses automation and dedicated teams to remove illegal content quickly.
- Singapore employs AI to detect grooming behavior on children's gaming platforms.

- New Zealand collaborates with tech firms to use image hashing to fight child sexual abuse material (CSAM).

India's Opportunity: Invest in ethical AI systems for content moderation, real-time threat detection, and localized response systems in Indian languages.

• **Policy Gaps, Future Challenges, and the Road Ahead**

Despite notable legislative advances, India's digital child protection framework remains fragmented and under-equipped to tackle the pace and complexity of the evolving digital environment. In this part, we will look at the policy gaps, potential problems, and proposed reform strategy in detail.

• **Key Policy Gaps in India's Current Framework**

1. Lack of a Dedicated Law for Online Child Safety

While laws such as the IT Act, POCSO Act, and Data Protection Act provide some protective provision, none is specifically deals with children's digital rights. This leads to:

- Ambiguities in enforcement (e.g., age verification for apps)
- Overlaps and contradictions between ministries and law enforcement bodies
- Limited child-specific redressal mechanisms

2. Inadequate Age-Verification Standards

India lacks mandatory, standardized age-verification tools across platforms. As a result:

- Children easily access age-inappropriate content (e.g., violent games, adult media)
- Apps collect sensitive data from minors without valid consent

3. No Regulatory Body for Child Digital Welfare

Unlike Australia's eSafety Commissioner, India has no central authority focused solely on digital well-being of children. NCPCR's role is broad and under-resourced.

4. Poor Implementation of School-Based Digital Literacy

Most government and private school curricula:

- Lack digital rights education
- Do not train teachers to identify cyberbullying or online exploitation
- Do not engage parents in digital safety training

5. Weak Content Moderation in Regional Languages

AI moderation tools used by platforms often fail to catch abuse, threats, or grooming when content is in non-English Indian languages, leading to underreported harm in rural and regional communities.

• Emerging Challenges in the Digital Landscape

1. Rise of Deepfakes and Synthetic Media

AI-generated deepfakes threaten children's dignity and privacy. These manipulated images or videos can be used for:

- Online bullying
- Revenge pornography
- Sextortion, especially targeting teenage girls

Current legal tools are ill-equipped to criminalize or remove deepfake content swiftly, especially when hosted on foreign servers.

2. Digital Addiction and Mental Health

Children, especially in urban and semi-urban areas, face:

- Screen addiction, leading to sleep disorders and social withdrawal
- Dopamine manipulation via short videos, endless scrolls, and likes
- Gaming disorders, classified by WHO as a behavioral condition

3. Dark Web and Online Trafficking

Children are increasingly vulnerable to:

- Using leaked Aadhaar and academic data to commit identity theft
- Recruiting for illicit purposes using online platforms
- Being exposed to pornographic networks or online drug marketplaces

4. Commercial Exploitation via Influencer Culture

Currently, child influencers may make money without:

- Labour protection
- Income monitoring
- Psychological protections against exhaustion or overexposure

In India, there is no clear provision under labor law or advertising codes to address digital child labor.

5. Algorithmic Bias and Data Discrimination

Children from marginalized communities may:

- Receive low-quality, stereotypical content
- Be excluded from advanced educational algorithms

- Face long-term digital inequality due to biased AI systems

Without audits and transparency, algorithms may deepen social divides rather than bridge them.

• The Road Ahead: Strategic Recommendations

1. Enact a Child Online Safety and Empowerment Act

A standalone law for child digital rights should:

- Define harmful content and abusive behaviors
- Make age-appropriate design mandatory
- Set up a regulatory authority for oversight
- Include fast-track grievance mechanisms

2. Strengthen Institutional Architecture

Establish a Children's Digital Rights Commission with:

- Investigative powers
- Cross-platform compliance monitoring
- Emergency content takedown abilities

This body can liaise with NCERT, NCPCR, MeitY, and international watchdogs.

3. Mandate Age-Gating and Privacy-by-Design

Laws should:

- Enforce default privacy settings for under-18 users
- Ban behavioral advertising to minors
- Require apps to use verified, ethical age-gating technologies

4. Make Digital Citizenship a Core Curriculum

The NCERT and state boards should incorporate:

- Awareness of digital rights and responsibilities
- Skills to identify cyber threats
- Ethical use of AI, data, and online spaces
- Training modules for teachers and parents

5. Invest in Child-Sensitive AI and Local Language Tools

India should fund open-source AI for:

- Content moderation in major Indian languages
- Early detection of child grooming or bullying
- Adaptive learning platforms that avoid bias

6. Recognize and Regulate Child Influencers

Update labor and advertising laws to:

- Limit screen time and production hours
- Mandate guardian oversight and savings accounts for child earnings
- Ban exploitative product placements targeting child audiences

7. Create Digital Rehabilitation and Counseling Services

Include cyber trauma and digital addiction in:

- School counseling programs
- District Child Protection Units (DCPUs)
- Tele-mental health initiatives under the Ayushman Bharat scheme

Conclusion

The digital era has revolutionized childhood. Modern children are raised in a era of smartphones , Artificial Intelligence, virtual schools, and social media, which provide new possibilities and also potential threats. India has made progress in recognizing and defending children's rights via its constitutional and statutory framework , but there is substantial gap between legal visions and digital reality⁸²³.

This study shows that children are more vulnerable to internet abuse, cyberbullying, exploitation, algorithmic manipulation, and data surveillance. The advancement of technology is faster than laws. Lack of a child-specific digital rights legislation and central regulatory power are major concern. Additionally, low awareness, limited age-appropriate design in digital platforms, and insufficient digital literacy education system enhance the digital gap and safety issues.

By providing many chances for learning, creativity, and socialization, children can safely navigate the digital world. Safe, fair, and informed involvement is the solution instead of limiting children's internet access. A rights-based, child-centric strategy that combines empowerment, security, independence, and creativity with responsibility is needed now.



⁸²³ Naz, Anum and Ahmed, Kainat. (2024) , 'Digital Safety for Kids: A Strategic Guide for Parents in the Digital Age', <<https://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.5067317>> accessed 13-05-2025

PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT OF SEXUAL ABUSE ON CHILD VICTIMS – A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

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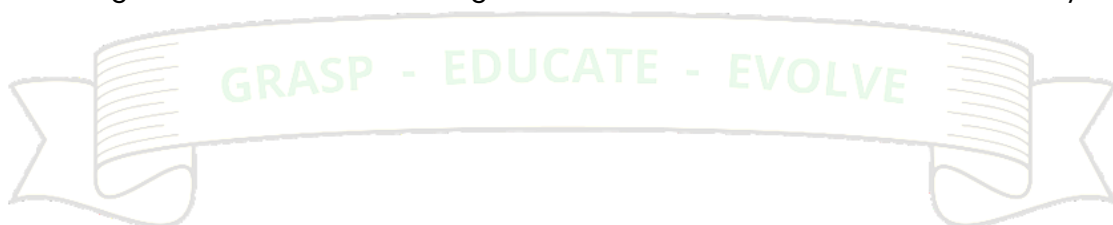
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ABSTRACT

The aftermath of sexual molestation results in physical, emotional and mental affliction on a child. This article aims to focus on the mental trauma undergone by children who are victims of sexual abuse. The dynamic research in this field suggests that there are long-term harmful consequences of childhood sexual abuse on an individual's emotional well-being and overall psychic health. It is a growing evil in the society, which represents a 'harrowing abuse of power', trust, and authority with far-reaching imputation for the victims. In depth research revealed the percentage in which **66.0% children** were 'mentally disturbed' due to sexual abuse, **5.2% of children** were mildly emotionally 'disturbed', and only **24.0% of the victims** remained mentally stable after facing the sexual abuse. The harsh result is the scar on the mind, the fear of the abuser and also the overall trauma disrupts the growth and overall well-being of a child.

The adverse effect of these heinous crimes is examined with regard to the general impact on the early-life traumatic experiences, as a trigger of particular infective mechanisms, to gain understanding of the long-term implications on the victim's psychology. The impacts on the victims "psychological well-being", including short-term consequences, i.e., isolation, low self-esteem, extreme fear, stress, anxiety, and "post-traumatic stress disorder". Long-term effects enclose disrupted intimate relationships, social and emotional health issues, and more. The lack of a definitive number of implications, highlight the need to discuss and raise awareness about **child sexual abuse** which is important for parents, guardians, and concerned authorities to effectively counteract these heinous crimes against children and creating a safe environment for them to live securely⁸²⁴.



⁸²⁴ Website: indianpsychiatricsociety.org

INTRODUCTION:

The consequence of sexual exploitation scars a child's psyche, resulting in cognitive disablement, mental torment, and depression along with anxiety. The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012 encapsulates the provisions for protecting children from sexual assault, child pornography and ensuring that rights of child are not infringed. Although the **'Convention on the Rights of the Child'** (UNCRC) was adopted in 1989, the offences against children were not explicitly redressed by any legislation in the nation until 2012, after which the Act specifically dealt with offences against children. Surge in these cases demanded a separate statute in the best interest of children and to protect them from all forms of sexual offenses. After the 2019 amendment to the POCSO act, the punishments for sexual offenses against children have become 'more rigorous' to ensure further prevention of such acts⁸²⁵.

CSA is a severe public health concern, which approximately affects around 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 13 boys worldwide according to the data of **Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2021**. The sexually intended physical contact by the abuser and also the non-contact actions are included. The former includes sexual intercourse, attempted intercourse with the child, or oral-genital contact with the penis, fingers, or any object, masturbation, and fondling the genitals or other erogenous areas through the clothing of the victim or a direct contact. The latter includes forcing a child to participate in **'adult sexual pleasure'** (such as sexual intercourse and prostitution) or exposing and forcing a child to **'adult sexual activities'**, such as pornography, voyeurism, and exhibitionism. As per the Indian government report, around 23% of girls in India are sexually abused or harassed before "18 years" of age, which are the crimes reported while the actual number would be very high. The main aim and purpose of the **'Protection of Children from**

Sexual Offences Act' is to protect children from all forms of sexual abuse. It provided stringent punishments for committing offenses against children ranging from a minimum of '20 years of imprisonment to the death penalty' in case of aggravated penetrative sexual assault⁸²⁶.

THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN FROM SEXUAL OFFENCES ACT, 2012:

This is the first legislation to comprehensively address the issue of sexual offences against the children in India. This act defines various forms of sexual abuse against children, prescribing punishments and making the entire trial process child friendly. It not only spells out the punishments for offences, but also sets out a system for support and protection of victims and improves reliable ways for catching the offenders.

Different forms of **sexual abuse** including but not limited to sexual harassment, pornography, penetrative & non-penetrative assault are defined in the Act. It establishes Special Courts for the trial of such offences and matters therein. **'Section 42 A of the Act'** provides that in case of inconsistency with provisions of any other law, the POCSO Act shall override such provisions. The 'key principles of the Act' speaks for the rights of the child such as **Right to life and survival, right to be treated with dignity and compassion, Right to be informed, Right to be heard and to express views and concerns, Right to effective assistance** – financial, legal, social and educational. The most important characteristics of the 2019 amendment to the Act include:

- It makes offenses against children **"gender-neutral"**.
- The definition of 'Sexual Assault' has been extended to incorporate the administration of hormones or chemical substances to children to attain early sexual maturity for penetrative sexual assault.

⁸²⁵ ncbi.nlm.nih.gov

⁸²⁶ blog.ipleaders.in

- The Act defines child pornography as any visual depiction of '**sexually explicit conduct**' involving a child, including photographs, video, digital, or computer-generated images indistinguishable from an actual child.
- Those committing penetrative sexual assaults on a child below 16 years of age would be punished with "**imprisonment up to 20 years**", extending to life imprisonment and a fine. In aggravated penetrative sexual assault cases, the act increases the minimum punishment from 10 to 20 years and the maximum punishment to the death penalty
- To curb '**child pornography**', the Act specifies that those who use a child for pornographic purposes should be punished with "**imprisonment for up to five years and a fine**". It also penalizes the transmitting of pornographic material to children and proposes synchronizing it with the IT Act.
- The government has also sanctioned more than a thousand "**fast-track courts**" for speedy disposal of pending cases under the POCSO Act.

RELEVANT CASE LAWS:

There are various judgments by the court of law regarding the nature, implementation and procedure of the POCSO Act, 2012:

1. Jarnail Singh v. State of Haryana⁸²⁷

- In this landmark case the Apex court held that the overall process which is used to determine the child's age, which if conflicts with the law prescribed by the "**Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Rules**", 2007, thus subsequently can be followed in the cases which falls under the POCSO Act, 2012. This case highlights the understanding for the courts in applying suitable legal provisions under **POCSO**

Act, 2012. Therefore, both the legislations mentioned above serve the main purpose which is the protection of rights and interest of the children.

2. State of Karnataka v. Shivanna⁸²⁸

- This case of 2014 which is one of the leading judgments of Supreme Court, in which it was held that the statements which are made under **Section 164 of the CrPC, 1973** does not require recording every statement under **POCSO Act 2012**. Also, it was held that the victim must be presented before the Judicial Magistrate to record the statement under **CrPC, 1973** within 24 hours of the crime, preferably to the lady magistrate. As soon as the police know about the commission of the crime, the statement by the victim should be recorded "**at the earliest**" so that there is no delay in justice.

3. Attorney General of India v. Satish and another⁸²⁹

- This leading case is an appeal to the Apex court against the decision in the case of **Satish Ragde v. the State of Maharashtra**⁸³⁰, where The Bombay High Court's Nagpur Bench held that grabbing the child's breasts without making 'skin-to-skin contact' which means no direct contact to the body of the child, will constitute only molestation under the **POCSO Act**. An appeal was filed by the '**Attorney General of India, the National Commission for Women, and the State of Maharashtra**' against this High Court decision. The Apex court in this landmark case delivered by a 3-judge bench, being dissatisfied with the above decision set aside the judgment and observed that, this case is suitable for using the "Mischief rule of interpretation".

⁸²⁷ AIR 2013 SC 3467

⁸²⁸ AIR 2014 SC 233

⁸²⁹ [2021] 10 S.C.R. 955

⁸³⁰ CA 161/2020 Bombay HC
blog.finology.in

The most important ingredient for constituting the offence under **Section 7 of POCSO Act** is 'sexual intent' and not 'skin to skin' contact. Also, it highlighted that to promote justice and ensure that the rights of the victim are protected there must be constant interpretation of the law depending on the facts and circumstances of the case.

4. *Nipun Saxena v. Union of India*⁸³¹

- In this landmark case, the Apex Court held that when a violation under **Section 23 of the POCSO Act, 2012 is committed** the publisher of the media, studio, or photography facility will be held jointly and severally for employee's act or omission accordingly. Also, it was highlighted that the POCSO Act, 2012 focused on the **"protection of rights of children"** and by no means does it violate the Right to Privacy of a child being subjected to sexual abuse.

5. *Haridev Acharya and ors v. State*⁸³²

- In this leading case, the Apex court held that the provisions of the **CrPC, 1973** would apply if the **POCSO Act, 2012** is silent on whether separate incidents forming part of the same offence can be clubbed together in a single F.I.R. for further consideration. Therefore, the court directed for a single trial in the above matter.

PSYCHICAL AFTERMATH ON CHILD:

A child is mentally destroyed by the trauma of sexual abuse which results in depression, cognitive disablement and others. According to a lot of researchers, only about 20-25% children remain stable emotionally and physically after any episode of molestation. They may seem normal to the outside world, but internally they develop scars which are very difficult to heal. The immediate impacts of sexual abuse involve painful emotions, **"Post-traumatic stress**

disorder", cognitive distortions, and disturbed mood. The long-term and psychological harm is extremely severe which can result in even adverse consequences like mental agony and lack of self-confidence. Victims, during any sexual abuse may feel fear, anger, anxiety, self-blame, guilt, and confusion. They are unable to comprehend what happened, why it happened and what is their fault in all of this? They feel self-conscious and humiliated, unable to talk about the incident, which can result in stress and frustration (Pulverman et al. 2018).

A calamitous form of child abuse that involves any sexual activity with a child that is nonconsensual or inappropriate for the child's age causes severe trauma and can last for years. Survivors of CSA are at a very high risk for a range of adverse outcomes which may include self-harm, substance abuse and suicidal ideation. However, identifying and addressing the risk factors, such as social isolation and family dysfunction, may help prevent **'CSA'** from occurring. Awareness campaigns for children and parents can help in reducing these. Girls who experienced CSA were more likely to experience depression, anxiety, and **'PTSD'** in adulthood.

"Childhood sexual abuse" alters the normal developmental trajectories that are necessary for healthy socio emotional function in a child, which increases the likelihood of a child experiencing socio relational difficulties, cognitive dysfunction, depression, anxiety, internalization and externalization of problems. These negative outcomes are exacerbated by the cumulative impact of several types of victimization, to which the child is commonly exposed in his or her family. These children are unable to express their thoughts and emotions and are trapped in their childhood trauma which is very difficult to comprehend.

A large volume of research has clearly documented that the negative effects of CSA can persist until adulthood and even for life. Associations between CSA and wide range of psychiatric outcomes, including post-traumatic

⁸³¹ (2019) 2 SCC 703

⁸³² (2021) 12 SCC 108

stress disorder, schizophrenia, conversion disorder, personality disorder, eating disorders, anxiety, and depression, as have been described.

More than physical injury, the mental agony undergone by the victim of such abuse haunts them throughout life making it miserable and painful for their future. They feel trapped in a cage where they have to battle it out every day within themselves and then with the rest of the world. The psychological impact on the victim is unimaginable and also is made difficult for them to survive due to taboo attached to such heinous crimes resulting in tarnishing their future as well. Therefore, for a child to get out of the whirlpool is often very difficult and it requires immense mental resilience and support from the society.

SEXUAL ABUSE ON CHILDREN: SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The implications of childhood sexual harassment are very alarming. Studies indicate that a significant percentage of girls are victims of some form of abuse before they reach adulthood which can have profound and long-lasting effects, leading to anxiety, depression, self-doubt, trust issues, lack of self-confidence, difficulty forming relationships, and more. The issue has significant social and cultural implications, particularly in societies that highly value **'modesty, virginity, and family honor'**. The stigma associated with being a victim of sexual abuse prevents girls from speaking out or seeking help. A survivor may feel rejection, confusion, lack of self-confidence, conduct disorder, and aggression. Survivors often feel empty from inside and they are unable to express themselves and they suffer in silence. In the later years, the survivor may also develop other extreme **"psychiatric disorders"** such as depression, low economic productivity, drug addiction and even severe medical illness⁸³³.

Families should receive prevention support and guidance through "proper risk assessment" and

"multi-level parent education". Providing **'mental healthcare services'** to the victims, their families, and their siblings, as also emphasized by, also ensures the children's mental well-being and development, especially among those who have been through any abusive exposure. A victim can also face other consequences that may further worsen the impact, including bullying. Schools and teachers can also effectively nullify these impacts by supporting and scrutinizing the victims.

Most recently, practitioners also found even more chronic mental disorders such as **"delusions, schizophrenia, and personality disorders."** However, children who have experienced abuse involving penetration are more likely to develop these chronic psychotic and schizophrenic disorders. **'Sexually abused children'** also have low self-esteem and overly sexualized behavior, which, in many cases, results in teen pregnancy and motherhood and even an increased **'vulnerability to victimization'**. Besides, socially isolated children with a disability or emotional disorder are comparatively more vulnerable to victimization.

IMPORTANCE OF MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

Medical professionals specialized in psychological department contribute to the healing and recovery of survivors of child sexual abuse by providing them specialized care and helping them navigate the complex challenges of trauma. They include psychologists, psychiatrists, and therapists and so on. The major contributions by these professionals include: -

- **To create a healthy and safe environment:** They provide a **"safe, secure and confidential environment"** where the survivors of abuse can openly express their feelings and emotions. They offer **'empathy, understanding and validation'**, allowing survivors to feel heard and supported during their

⁸³³ ouci.dntb.gov.ua

healing journey which even leads to trauma free future.

- **To initiate psychological help for the victim:** Mental health professionals utilize various evidence-based therapeutic approaches to address the psychological effects of trauma. Techniques such as '**cognitive-behavioral therapy**', '**eye movement desensitization**' and reprocessing and '**trauma-focused treatment**' can help survivors reframe negative thoughts, process traumatic memories and develop coping strategies.
- **To Address the PTSD symptoms after consultation:** Mental health professionals help survivors identify **triggers, manage symptoms** and work through traumatic memories to reduce the impact of **PTSD** on their lives.
- **To motivate and strengthen the survivors:** They aim to empower survivors by helping them **regain control over their lives**. They work with survivors to set realistic goals, and develop healthy coping mechanisms to foster a stronger sense of '**self-worth and autonomy**'.

There are **legal processes** that may call for the role of "**mental health professionals**" regulated by the court of law:

- **Need for Health Professionals in "Mandatory Reporting" of the crime:**

A child may be referred to "MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES" by police, child welfare committees and/or legal personnel for forensic interviewing and/or treatment of **CSA**-related problems. In such an instance, reporting processes are taken care of by the '**referring agencies**'. According to the Act the crimes should be mandatorily reported.

- **Mental Health doctors prove to be 'Expert Witness':**

According to the provisions of the **POCSO Act 2012**, every state mandatorily requires to set up 'SPECIAL COURTS' for the victims to ensure speedy and fair trial. In such serious offences the opinion of the expert is highly crucial for a fair trial. The Judge therefore may call upon mental health experts to assist in the court proceedings as expert witness which will be admitted as evidence.⁸³⁴

CONCLUSION:

This article navigates through the pervasive impacts of CSA which he has on his psychological health, overall development, and well-being. The basic setup of the relationship between the '**abuser and the child victim**', mutate into a horrible paradigm of power, authority, affliction and also victimization. The article focuses and serves to highlight the miserable and inimical repercussions a child victim goes through which might persist for his entire life. The psychological wellbeing is utmost important in this scenario which highlights the need and importance for required interventions and support mechanisms for the best interest of the child victim. This matter is not merely of gross importance for the victims but also requires a subsequent action for empowering parents, guardians, designated authorities to counteract against it for the safety and protection of the younger generation.

There is a critical need of the hour to protect the emotional well-being of the victims and to eliminate the long-term impacts of '**child sexual abuse**'. By raising awareness on this issue, the society shall contribute towards a safe and secure environment for children round the globe. Although empirically witnessing the impacts of '**child sexual abuse**', there are still many regions where research, its impacts, and

⁸³⁴ ppimhs.org

causes are understudied which results in delay in eradicating this crime. As much as it is heart wrenching to see the rise in the number of “sexual assault” cases against children, the stronger is the need to deliver justice to the victims at the earliest. The society as a whole must unite and contribute to abolish this malicious crime to protect the guileless minds.



ROLE OF COMPETITION COMMISSION OF INDIA'S ROLE IN COMBATING CARTELIZATION: CHALLENGES AND EFFICACY

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ABSTRACT

Cartelization, often referred to as the most egregious form of anti-competitive conduct, undermines market efficiency, restricts consumer choice, and inflates prices. In India, the Competition Commission of India (CCI), established under the Competition Act, 2002, serves as the primary regulatory body to detect, investigate, and penalise cartel behaviour. This research critically examines the role of the CCI in combating cartelization by analysing its statutory framework, enforcement mechanisms, notable case decisions, and coordination with other regulatory bodies. It further evaluates the effectiveness of tools such as the leniency programme, dawn raids, and economic analysis in unearthing covert cartel activities. The study also explores significant institutional, procedural, and evidentiary challenges that impede robust enforcement. Through comparative insights from jurisdictions such as the United States, European Union, and Australia, the paper identifies best practices and formulates recommendations to enhance the CCI's deterrent and investigative capabilities. The analysis concludes that while the CCI has made notable strides in cartel enforcement, persistent challenges demand comprehensive reforms for sustained effectiveness in safeguarding market competition in India.

Keywords: Competition Commission of India (CCI), Cartelization, Anti-competitive practices, Competition Act 2002, Leniency Programme, Dawn raids, Market regulation, Cartel enforcement, Judicial interpretation, Comparative competition law, Collusion detection, Antitrust law, Price fixing, Regulatory challenges, Indian competition regime

Introduction and Background

The Competition Act, 2002⁸³⁵ (the Competition Act) was enacted by the parliament of India for the establishment of the Competition Commission of India (CCI) to prevent practices having adverse effect on competition, to promote and sustain competition in markets, to protect the interests of consumers and to ensure freedom of trade. The Competition Act was brought in keeping in view the economic development of the country and replaced the Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices Act,

1969. CCI, a statutory authority under the Competition Act, is aided by the office of Director General (DG) which investigates anticompetitive practices and provides its report to the CCI.

Scope and Objective

This research paper aims to analyse CCI's role in tackling cartelization and identifying the changes brought in the Competition Act over the years to increase the effectiveness of CCI in countering cartelisation. The paper also aims to analyse the effectiveness of the Leniency Regime adopted by CCI over the years and

⁸³⁵ <https://www.cci.gov.in/images/legalframeworkact/en/the-competition-act-20021652103427.pdf>

whether the Lesser Penalty Regulations, as notified by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs on 20th February 2024, would actually further amplify CCI's role in not only detecting cartelisation but also finding an efficient, effective and speedy resolution to cases of cartelisation brought before it.

CCI's power to curb cartelisation under the Competition Act

The Competition Act provides for the CCI to regulate/prohibit certain types of agreements and conducts. They can be broadly divided into the following 3 types:-

1. Anti-competitive agreements (Section 3 of the Competition Act);
2. Abuse of dominant position (Section 4 of the Competition Act);
3. Combination including acquisition, merger, amalgamation (Section 5 and 6 of the Competition Act).

The Competition Act defines "cartel" under Section 2(c) as to include association of producers, sellers, distributors, traders or service providers who, by agreement amongst themselves, limit, control or attempt to control the production, distribution, sale or price of, or, trade in goods or provision of services. In other words, a cartel is essentially an agreement amongst competitors to fix prices or production quantities or allocate markets or customers, either by limiting supply in the market or otherwise altering distribution patterns. Additionally, Cartelisation is an anticompetitive act under Section 3 of the Competition Act and are assumed to cause appreciable adverse effect on competition (AAEC).

Cartels are illegal in India, as outlined in Section 3(1) of the Competition Act, which is further detailed in Section 3(3). Essentially, Section 3 makes it clear that any agreements between businesses or individuals that affect the production, supply, distribution, storage, or control of goods and services are prohibited if they are likely to harm competition in a significant way.

Section 3(3) specifically prohibits anti-competitive agreements, which include cartels. It identifies the following activities as anti-competitive:-

- 1) **Setting prices:** This includes any agreement that directly or indirectly fixes the prices at which goods or services are bought or sold.
- 2) **Controlling supply:** Any attempt to limit or manage the production, supply, market reach, technical development, investment, or service provision falls under this category.
- 3) **Market allocation:** Agreements that divide up geographic markets or customer bases are also banned.
- 4) **Bid rigging:** Any form of collusion in bidding processes is strictly prohibited.

These types of agreements are presumed to have an appreciable adverse effect on competition (AAEC) and are therefore declared void. This means that they have no legal standing, emphasizing the seriousness with which anti-competitive behavior is viewed in India. The aim is to promote fair competition and protect consumers from the negative impacts of such agreements.

The Competition Act provides extensive power to the CCI and the DG to collect evidence, including the ability to search and seize documents, as well as conduct raids to ascertain anticompetitive practices, such as cartels. Infact, till date the CCI has carried out 14 search and seizure operations out of which 12 were cases specifically related to investigations of alleged cartelization.

Section 41 of the Competition Act provides for the power of the DG to investigate. One of the most important features of the investigative power of the DG is to conduct unannounced search and seizure activities called "dawn raids" which have been instrumental in the collection of evidence in several cases. Infact in the *Beer*

*Cartel case*⁸³⁶, dawn raids resulted in offices of major companies like Carlsberg, United Breweries, and Anheuser-Busch InBev being raided. During these raids the DG uncovered a trail of emails that revealed discussions about price fixing among these companies which ultimately proved instrumental for the CCI in deciding the case.

Standard of proof

The Competition Act does not specify the standard of proof for a cartel but since cartelisation is a civil offence the CCI has to apply the test of preponderance of probabilities, to establish existence of a cartel or/and anti competitive practices, rather than the “beyond reasonable doubt” test. Further, CCI in *All India Tyre Dealers Federation v Tyre Manufacturers*⁸³⁷ (Tyre Cartel Case) held that while it's important to demonstrate that an agreement exists, it's not always necessary to show that there was an explicit agreement between the parties. Instead, such agreements can often be inferred from the intentions or actions of the parties involved. This means that circumstantial evidence can be sufficient to demonstrate that an agreement exists, indicating that the parties were acting together in a coordinated anti-competitive manner.

Leniency Regime

Section 46 of the Competition Act provides the Leniency program i.e the power of the CCI to impose lesser penalty. This was supplemented by *Lesser Penalty Regulations of 2009*⁸³⁸ (the LP Regulations) which provide for the procedure as well as the extent to which the penalty can be reduced by the CCI. The CCI's leniency programme is designed to encourage members of cartels to come forward and disclose their involvement in practices that violate the Competition Act. By doing so, they can break ranks with their fellow cartel

members and provide crucial information to the CCI under the Regulations.

As per the Leniency program under the Competition Act and the Regulations, an individual or a company that is part of a cartel can apply for leniency at any time before the DG submits its investigation report to the CCI. The applicants can receive a reduction in their penalties in exchange for full, truthful and significant disclosure of information of alleged anticompetitive practices such as details about the cartel's existence, its members, and how long it has been operating. The CCI has the authority to offer substantial reductions: the first applicant could receive up to 100% off their penalty, while the second applicant might get up to 50%, and any subsequent applicants could receive up to 30% if they provide new and valuable information that the CCI did not previously have.

It's important to note that this leniency programme specifically targets cartel violations. It does not cover other issues like abuse of dominance or vertical restraints, aligning it with similar programmes in more established jurisdictions.

The CCI in the case of *In re: Cartelization in respect of tenders floated by Indian Railways for supply of Brushless DC Fans and others*⁸³⁹, made a significant move by issuing its first order under the leniency regime in a case involving bid rigging for supplying fans to Indian Railways. The CCI granted a leniency applicant a penalty reduction of up to 75%. This decision was groundbreaking for a few reasons:

- 1) The applicant was the first and only participant to acknowledge the existence of the cartel.
- 2) They provided the CCI with substantial evidence that unveiled the cartel's operations.

⁸³⁶ *In Re: Alleged anti-competitive conduct in the Beer Market in India (Suo Motu Case No. 06 of 2017)*

⁸³⁷ *All India Tyre Dealers' Federation v. Tyre Manufacturers*, 2012 SCC OnLine CCI 65

⁸³⁸ *The Competition Commission of India (Lesser Penalty) Regulations, 2009 (No. 4 of 2009)*

⁸³⁹ *In re: Cartelization in respect of tenders floated by Indian Railways for supply of Brushless DC Fans and other electrical items (Suo Motu Case No. 3 of 2014).*

- 3) They made their application after the investigation had already started, even though the CCI and the DG had some evidence against other cartel members.

Following this decision, the CCI took steps to strengthen its leniency programme by amending the LP Regulations in 2017. These amendments broadened the programme's scope in the following ways:

- 1) The previous limit on the number of leniency applicants (which was set at three) was removed, allowing more participants to benefit from penalty waivers.
- 2) The DG was given the ability to share confidential information from leniency applications with other cartel members for investigative purposes, but only with the leniency applicant's consent or with the CCI's approval if consent wasn't granted.
- 3) Applicants were required to provide an estimate of the volume of affected business in India.

Subsequently in 2024, the CCI introduced the *Lesser Penalty Regulations 2024*⁶ (LP Regulations 2024). A notable addition in this update was the “**lesser penalty plus**” facility. This allows leniency applicants from existing cartels i.e the first cartel to disclose information about new, unknown cartels i.e a second cartel which they were a part of and has allegedly violated Section 3 of the Competition Act. The applicant sharing such information can receive upto the following reduction in penalties:-

- 1) An additional penalty reduction of up to 30% on their original penalty from the first cartel.
- 2) They may also be eligible for up to a 100% penalty reduction for the newly disclosed second cartel.

The LP Regulations represent a significant advancement in the regulation of anti-competitive cartels within the economy. They allow any entity or individual facing potential penalties from the CCI to seek a lesser penalty.

The first applicant under this program is eligible for a more substantial reduction in their monetary penalty compared to those who apply later. Additionally, confidentiality provisions protect the identity of whistle-blowers throughout the investigation process. The evolution of the leniency programme further reflects the CCI's commitment to promoting efficiency and cooperation in tackling cartel activities in India.

These regulations also align with anti-trust laws in various jurisdictions. For instance, Leniency Plus programs are currently implemented in countries like the United States, the United Kingdom, Singapore, etc. The introduction of the new LP Regulations marks a pivotal moment in competition regulation in India. It is expected to enhance enforcement against cartels and anti-competitive agreements, serve as a deterrent to potential offenders, and

⁶ *THE COMPETITION COMMISSION OF INDIA (LESSER PENALTY) REGULATIONS, 2024 (NO.02 OF 2024)*

promote greater market transparency by uncovering previously hidden cartels, thereby ensuring fair competition in the market.

Critical Analysis and recommendations

As discussed earlier the power of the DG to conduct dawn raids is a very effective and efficient power to collect evidence which otherwise might get destroyed. However, as per Section 41 of the Competition Act, for the DG to conduct dawn raids it has to take a warrant from the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate and follow the procedure under the Code of Criminal procedure, 1973. This power should ideally be independently given to the DG so that no time is lost in getting a warrant and the element of surprise is not lost. This will lead to more effective raids and can prevent destruction of evidence which can be instrumental in deciding the case before the CCI.

CCI since its inception has significantly improved its investigative tools to uncover cartels in the market. It's continually adapting to

keep up with the ever-changing landscape of our economy. To continue this important work, the CCI needs to be well-staffed and equipped with the necessary authority to safeguard both consumer interests and the overall well-being of the nation from the harmful effects of anti-competitive practices.

Conclusion

Competition law in India is ever evolving, but it has demonstrated a strong ability to identify and punish cartels. CCI has played a pivotal role in not punishing already exiting cartels by imposing heavy penalties but also creating an environment where cartelisation has become difficult to flourish. The Lesser Penalty Regulations have over the years created an incentivised platform for whistle blowers to come out and give evidence not only against an existing cartel under scrutiny before the CCI but also a new, separate cartel which is allegedly involved in anti-competitive practices. All this augurs well for the economic development of the country and with further amendments/modifications in the existing law, as suggested above, India would move towards becoming an even more attractive destination for companies to come and take part in the growing economic landscape.

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IN THE CHANGING WORLD OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS: PATENTABILITY AND MARKET EXCLUSIVITY FOR ORPHAN DRUGS

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Legislative Measures and Their Impact

4.1. The Orphan Drug Act of 1983:-

The Orphan Drug Act (ODA) of 1983 is a major piece of legislation in the United States that was enacted expressly to address the lack of incentives for discovering therapies for rare diseases. These uncommon diseases, sometimes known as "orphan diseases," afflict a small percentage of the population—usually less than 200,000 persons in the United States at any given time. Prior to the ODA, pharmaceutical firms had little financial incentive to invest in research and development (R&D) for such tiny patient groups, owing to the high expenses and poor economic returns. The ODA attempted to address these issues by offering a variety of financial and regulatory incentives to support the development of orphan medications.

Objectives of the Orphan Drug Act:-

The ODA's major goal was to encourage innovation in the discovery of therapies for rare diseases that had previously been overlooked by pharmaceutical corporations owing to low profitability. The Act attempted to do this through a mix of incentives designed to lessen the financial risks involved with orphan medication development. Among the primary goals were:

Promote R&D for Rare Diseases:- The ODA aimed to incentivise pharmaceutical firms to invest in R&D for rare disease therapies, ultimately meeting the unmet medical requirements of people with orphan disorders.

Increase Market Exclusivity:- By providing prolonged periods of market exclusivity, the Act hoped to ensure that corporations could maintain a competitive advantage and recoup their expenditures in orphan medicine development.

Financial Incentives: The ODA offered tax credits, grants, and other types of financial aid to help lower the expenses of clinical trials and regulatory processes involved with orphan drug development.

Fast-Track Approval Processes:- The Act established simplified regulatory paths to speed up the approval process for orphan medications, minimizing the time it takes for them to reach the market.

Key Provisions of the Orphan Drug Act:-

1. Market Exclusivity:- One of the most significant features of the ODA is the seven-year market exclusivity granted to firms whose products are designated as orphans. During this time, no other medicine, no matter how chemically unique, can compete with the

36. A. G. Lippmann, "The Orphan Drug Act and the Pricing of Orphan Drugs," *Journal of Health Economics*, vol. 35, 2020, pp. 131-147.

37. K. R. Mukherjee, "India's National Policy for Rare Diseases: An Overview," *Journal of Global Health Policy*, vol. 6, no. 1, 2021, pp. 23-30.

authorized orphan drug for the same ailment. This exclusivity provides a significant financial incentive, allowing corporations to increase medicine prices in order to repay R&D expenses.

2. Tax Credits and Financial Assistance:- The Act provides tax credits for up to 50% of clinical trial expenditures, greatly easing the financial strain on pharmaceutical businesses. Furthermore, the ODA offers funds through the Orphan Products Clinical Trials funds Program to further clinical research on orphan medications. These financial incentives were especially important in encouraging smaller biotechnology companies to participate in orphan medication research.

3. FDA Assistance and Fast-Track Approval:- The FDA created the Office of Orphan Products Development (OOPD) to help firms navigate the regulatory processes for orphan pharmaceuticals. The ODA provides for a more rapid approval procedure, allowing orphan medications to reach the market sooner than other pharmaceuticals. This expedited clearance process is important for getting life-saving therapies to patients who would otherwise have limited alternatives.

4. Waivers and Subsidies for Application expenses:- Another significant element of the ODA is the waiver of some expenses involved with the drug approval process, such as Prescription Drug User Fee Act (PDUFA) fees, which can be prohibitively expensive for smaller businesses. By removing these fees for orphan drug applications, the ODA made it easier for biotech startups and smaller companies to reach the market.

The Orphan Drug Act and its Relevance to India:-

While the ODA has been extremely successful in the United States, its structure provides critical lessons for India, where the constraints of

orphan drug research are amplified by a bigger population and less healthcare resources. India lacks a comprehensive orphan drug strategy, and there are substantial impediments to accessing rare illness therapies, such as high medication pricing and a lack of R&D funding.

India may learn from the United States' approach by implementing a comparable system of financial and regulatory incentives to support the development of orphan medications inside its own pharmaceutical sector. Provisions like as tax breaks, market exclusivity, and expedited approvals might be tailored to the Indian setting to encourage innovation. Given the socioeconomic constraints that many patients in India confront, any such program must include steps to assure cost and accessibility. Recent policy talks in India have underlined the importance of a national framework for rare illnesses. The National Policy for Rare Diseases (NPRD) 2021 was created to address these issues, however its scope and impact are limited. By implementing more powerful financial and regulatory incentives, India has the ability to establish a more favourable climate for orphan drug research while ensuring that therapies are available to all patients in need.

4.2. International Approaches:-

The United States: The Orphan Drug Act of 1983

In the United States, orphan drug regulation is often widely regarded as a leader in the regulation of similar or related items in other developed markets. By 1983, the Orphan Drug Act was passed to establish a range of incentives designed to encourage the development of treatments for rare diseases. Less than ten medications have been created in the US for uncommon disorders before to 1983. The National Organization for Rare Disorders (NORD) and other patient advocacy groups were instrumental in pushing for legislative action. The "valley of death" in rare illness research—where promising candidates failed to reach the market due to financial constraints—led to the enactment of the ODA.

38 1. U.S. Food and Drug Administration, "Orphan Drug Designations and Approvals," accessed September 12, 2023.

39. M. Kaltenboeck and S. L. Bach, "The Orphan Drug Act at 35: Observations and an Outlook for the Twenty-First Century," American Journal of Law & Medicine, vol. 44, no. 2, 2018.

The ODA determines that orphan drugs are those targeted at treating diseases that affect fewer than 200,000 individuals in the U.S. Some of the most important incentives provided by the ODA include:

- Market exclusivity for seven years after approval; competitors are not allowed to market generic versions of the drug.

Designation as an Orphan Drug (ODD):

1. A sponsor creating a medication for an illness that affects fewer than 200,000 persons in the US is given orphan drug classification by the FDA.
2. Prior to filing a biologics license application (BLA) or new drug application (NDA), the sponsor must submit a request.
3. Access to a range of development advantages, including as tax breaks and market exclusivity, is made possible by ODD designation.

Market Exclusiveness:

1. Regardless of patent status, the sponsor is granted seven years of market exclusivity for the medicine for the designated indication after approval.
2. A comparable medication for the same indication cannot be approved by the FDA during this time unless it exhibits clinical superiority.
3. For small biotech businesses, this exclusivity is essential since it offers a definite window for income creation and expense recovery.

Tax Credits:

1. The ODA first permitted a 50% tax credit for eligible clinical research costs.
2. Particularly during the expensive Phase II and Phase III studies, this greatly lessens the budgetary load.
3. The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 made changes to the tax advantage, lowering the credit to 25%.

Financial aid and grants:

1. Funding for clinical research on orphan medications is made available through the Orphan Products Clinical Trials Grants Program.
2. Academic institutions and small biotech companies doing early-stage research can especially benefit from this.

Waivers of User Fees:

1. The Prescription Drug User Fee Act (PDUFA) does not require sponsors of orphan medications to pay fees.
2. As of 2023, this can save businesses more than \$2.9 million every application.
3. Waivers also cover product and production expenses.

Protocol Support:

1. The FDA directly advises sponsors on statistical techniques, endpoints, and study design.
2. Clinical trial success rates and regulatory compliance are enhanced by this assistance.

Support for Research Infrastructure:

1. A cooperative platform for multi-site clinical trials is offered by the NIH-funded Rare Diseases Clinical Research Network (RDCRN).
2. Helps with rare illness translational research, biomarker discovery, and data exchange.

Amendments to the Law

To improve its efficacy, expand its scope, and handle new issues, the ODA has undergone a number of revisions throughout time. The foundation for orphan drug development has been strengthened by these legal revisions, which have also included measures to fight against abuse.

The 2002 Rare Diseases Act:

1. Created the National Institutes of Health's (NIH) Office of Rare Diseases Research (ORDR).
2. Increased federal funding for epidemiological studies, public-private collaborations, and research coordination.

3.Required the creation of databases and registries for rare illness research.

The 2012 FDA Safety and Innovation Act (FDASIA):

1.Expedited approval processes and allowances for innovative treatments, which will help rare illness medications.

2.Through the Rare Pediatric illness Priority Review Voucher program, pediatric rare illness programs have been strengthened.

The 2016 21st Century Cures Act:

1.Focuses on developing drugs with patients in mind.

2.Mandated that the FDA take into account real-world data and patient viewpoints while making approval decisions.

3.Promoted the use of surrogate endpoints and adaptive trial designs in rare illness research.

The 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act:

1.Decreased the tax credit for orphan drugs from 50% to 25%.

2.Investment in orphan pharmaceuticals was maintained by other methods even if this reduced one of the financial incentives.

Updates to Guidance and Regulatory Refinements (Ongoing):

1.The FDA regularly revises its guidance guidelines on clinical endpoints, post-marketing responsibilities, and orphan medication designation.

2.Drug assessments for uncommon diseases are increasingly incorporating digital health technology and decentralized trial methodologies.

- Tax credits to cover up to 50% of the cost of conducting clinical trials.

- Grant programs to aid research and development for orphan drugs.

- Forfeits FDA fees, which help alleviate the financial hardship on developers.

Since the passage of the ODA, orphan drug development in the United States has increased dramatically with over 600 orphan drugs approved by the Food and Drug Administration as of 2021. But while progress has been made in drug development, critics argue that the exclusivity period has brought orphan drugs to such exorbitant prices that they have become unaffordable for patients, even in affluent healthcare systems.

European Union Regulation of Orphan Drugs (1999):-

In the European Union (EU), the Orphan Medicinal Products Regulation was introduced in 1999 (EC No 141/2000), largely mirroring the U.S. model but revised to fit the European market. EU Orphan Drugs are defined as drugs that treat conditions that affect no more than 5 in 10,000 persons across the member states. A significant step in the EU's endeavor to promote the development of medications for uncommon illnesses, orphan pharmaceuticals, was taken in December 1999 when the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union enacted the Orphan Medicinal Products Regulation (Regulation (EC) No 141/2000). The U.S. Orphan Drug Act of 1983 served as a major inspiration for this law, which went into effect on January 27, 2000. The EU law, however, includes region-specific provisions that are adapted to the demands and complexity of its multi-national healthcare environment, even if it closely resembles the U.S. model in many ways:

-Ten years market exclusivity after approval.

-Protocol support for the developers from the European Medicines Agency, providing such developers with guidelines on designing their clinical trials.

-Fee reductions for marketing authorization applications and post-approval variations.

-Research grants from the European Commission.

Definition of Orphan Drugs in the EU Context

A medication is classified as a "orphan drug" under the rule if it satisfies the following requirements:

Prevalence-based definition: At the time of the application for designation, the medicine must be used to diagnose, prevent, or treat a persistently debilitating or life-threatening illness that affects no more than 5 out of 10,000 people in the EU.

Lack of adequate return on investment: A medicine may be eligible even if the prevalence criteria is surpassed if it is improbable that the drug's marketing will yield enough revenue to cover the costs of development.

No adequate current therapy: The medication must either provide a substantial benefit to persons afflicted by the ailment, or there must be no adequate means of diagnosis, prevention, or treatment.

Important Rewards Provided to Developers

The EU rule provides a number of important incentives to pique pharmaceutical firms' interest, as many of them could otherwise overlook rare illnesses because of the little market potential:

1. Ten Years of Market Exclusiveness

Ten years of commercial exclusivity after the orphan medication is approved is arguably the biggest inducement. No comparable product may be released for the same therapeutic indication during this time unless:

1. It has been demonstrated that the second product is clinically superior.
2. The holder of the marketing permission agrees to the competitive product's launch.
3. The initial holder is unable to provide enough of the medication.
4. According to the Paediatric Regulation (EC No 1901/2006), this exclusivity term is extended to 12 years for orphan pharmaceuticals that contain findings from pediatric research carried out in

accordance with an established Pediatric Investigation Plan (PIP).

2. Support for Protocols

The European Medicines Agency (EMA) offers protocol help to orphan medication developers. In order to ensure that the trials are appropriate for regulatory approval and customized to the difficulties associated with rare illnesses (such as limited patient populations, ethical problems, and endpoint selection), this involves scientific assistance on the design of preclinical and clinical research.

3. Waivers and Fee Reductions

Reduced fees or waivers are advantageous to applicants for:

1. Applications for marketing permission
2. Examinations
3. Changes after permission
4. Annual charges
5. Assistance with protocols and scientific guidance

The size and nature of the business determine how much of a fee reduction is offered, with small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) getting the most financial assistance.

4. Public Funding and Research Grants

1. Additionally, EU projects like the Horizon Europe framework and earlier initiatives like FP7 or Horizon 2020 might provide direct financing for orphan medication research.
2. Coordination and grant distribution for the development of orphan medications, especially for diseases for which there are currently no therapies, are functions of the European Commission.

Comparing the Orphan Drug Act of the United States

The regulatory environments in the EU and the US differ significantly, although being based on the US system:

Feature	EU Regulation	U.S. Orphan Drug Act
Prevalence	≤ 5 per 10,000	≤ 200,000 people

Feature	EU Regulation	U.S. Orphan Drug Act
threshold	persons	in the U.S.
Market exclusivity	10 years (up to 12 with PIP)	7 years
Regulatory agency	European Medicines Agency (EMA)	Food and Drug Administration (FDA)
Protocol assistance	EMA provides scientific advice	FDA provides similar guidance
Fee reductions	Extensive, especially for SMEs	Yes, but generally fewer
EU coordination	Emphasis on inter-member state access	U.S. has single healthcare system

Obstacles and Remarks

The EU orphan drug policy still has implementation issues despite the incentives and cooperative structure, especially with regard to fair access across its 27 member states. Important concerns include:

1. Disparities in National Reimbursement and Pricing:

(a) Orphan medications can be lawfully marketed throughout the EU thanks to centralized permission granted by the EMA. Pricing and reimbursement choices, however, are handled at the federal level. The availability and cost of orphan medications vary greatly between nations as a result.

(b) Compared to lower-income nations (like Bulgaria, Romania, and Hungary), wealthier member states (like Germany, France, and the Netherlands) frequently accept orphan medications more quickly and provide broader reimbursement.

2. Variability in Health Technology Assessment (HTA)

(a) Different member states use different HTA criteria to assess the **cost-effectiveness** and **therapeutic benefit** of new orphan drugs. Because of the high per-patient cost of many orphan drugs and limited clinical trial data, this can lead to **negative funding decisions** in some regions.

3. Disjointed Execution

(a) Despite being EU-wide, patient access and practical implementation are still dispersed. Due to financial limitations or legal obstacles, certain nations may postpone or refuse access to orphan medications.

4. Criticisms of Market Exclusivity

(a) Critics contend that pharmaceutical corporations may abuse the market exclusivity clause to uphold monopolies and establish exorbitant pricing. This is particularly true when businesses prolong exclusivity by making just slight changes to already-approved medications.

(b) The possibility of "salami slicing"—the technique of purposefully dividing illnesses into smaller subgroups in order to continually achieve orphan status—has also drawn criticism.

The other great difference between the EU and the U.S. system is the duration of market exclusivity, with the EU offering 10 years, as compared to 7 years in the U.S. Another significant approach adopted by the EU is that it shows greater co-ordination between the member states in making orphan drugs available all over the region. The EU model has widely been appreciated for innovation and collaboration but, there are still problems accessing orphan drugs, especially different countries' member states, with different healthcare systems and vastly different budgets.

Innovation and Beneficial Effects

Notwithstanding the difficulties, the EU's orphan drug law has had a major benefit:

(a) Since the rule's inception, more than 2,000 orphan drug designations have been given out.

(b) Over 200 orphan medications, which provide life-altering or life-saving medicines for illnesses for which there were previously no effective treatments, have been approved for sale.

(c) The rule has raised awareness of rare illnesses, promoted international collaboration, and improved funding for research.

Japan: The Orphan Drug Designation (ODD) Program:-

Japan's orphan drug regulation strategy is also comprised of the strong package of incentives aimed at supporting the creation of treatments for rare diseases. The Orphan Drug Designation (ODD) Program, established in 1993, offers a number of incentives to pharmaceutical companies.

Context and Regulatory Background

Recognizing the particular difficulties in creating therapies for rare diseases—which sometimes only impact a tiny number of patients—Japan created its Orphan Drug Designation (ODD) system in 1993. As a result, pharmaceutical firms have little financial motivation to explore cures for these disorders. In addition to promoting research and development in underrepresented therapeutic areas, the program was created to align with international norms, such as those enacted in the US (Orphan Drug Act, 1983) and the EU (Regulation (EC) No 141/2000). The Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare (MHLW) and the Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices Agency (PMDA) work together to manage the program.

-Ten years of market exclusivity.

-Priority review and expedited approval via the Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices Agency (PMDA).

-Subsidies covering up to 50% of clinical trial costs.

-Tax incentives and grant programs to reduce the financial burden of R&D.

-Guidance from regulatory agencies throughout the development process.

Japan's Orphan Drug Designation Criteria

For a product to be designated as an orphan drug, it must fulfill all of the following requirements:

1. Prevalence Threshold: In Japan, the illness must impact less than 50,000 people.

2. High Medical Need: The medication must treat a serious illness for which there is currently no effective treatment, or, in the event that there is, it must provide a substantial improvement.

3. Justification for Development: The drug's potential efficacy must be supported by solid scientific data and reasoning.

4. Development Plan: A workable plan outlining the sponsor's strategy for product development and commercialization in Japan must be supplied.

Rewards for the Development of Orphan Drugs

A comprehensive set of incentives is part of Japan's ODD program, which aims to lessen the financial and regulatory difficulties related to the development of drugs for rare diseases:

1. Exclusiveness in the Market

(a) Orphan medications have a ten-year commercial exclusivity period when they are approved.

(b) No other medication with the same indication may be licensed during this time unless it proves to be more effective or safe.

41. J. Sakai and T. Yamaguchi, "Japan's Orphan Drug System: A Review of Current Policy and Incentives," *Journal of Pharmaceutical Policy and Practice*, vol. 12, no. 3, 2021.

2. Faster Approval and Priority Review

(a) The PMDA gives priority review to orphan medications.

(b) The approval time is greatly decreased, which enables businesses to launch items more quickly.

(c) Rolling submissions and more design freedom for clinical trials are examples of expedited processes.

3. Financial Support and Subsidies:

(a) Public subsidies from the Japanese government can pay for up to 50% of clinical trial expenses, which lessens the total financial burden, especially during the expensive clinical development stage.

4. Tax Breaks:

(a) Businesses that invest in orphan drug research and development are eligible for corporation tax incentives.

(b) These consist of deferred taxation advantages and deductions from taxable income.

5. Regulatory and Scientific Guidance:

Early and continuing consultation is offered by the PMDA and includes:

(a) Advice on protocol

(b) Support for the design of clinical trials

(c) Alignment of regulatory strategies

This ongoing assistance reduces regulatory risks and enhances submission quality.

6. Funding and Grant Initiatives:

(a) Other R&D assistance schemes are offered by organizations such as the Japan Agency for Medical Research and Development (AMED), which provides academic institutions and early-stage companies with non-dilutive financing sources.

Pathway for Regulatory Approval

Following orphan designation, a sponsor usually takes the following course of action:

(a) Because patients are rare, clinical trials are frequently smaller and more adaptable in their design.

(b) NDA Submission: Businesses may create a more efficient submission with PMDA's help.

(c) Review Process: The typical 12-month review period may be reduced to around 6 to 9 months under the priority track.

(d) Post-Market Surveillance: To track long-term safety and efficacy, businesses may be obliged to carry out post-marketing research (Phase IV trials).

Program Achievements and Difficulties

(a) Early patient access to cutting-edge treatments and quicker medication development have both been made possible by the Japanese ODD system.

(b) Multinational corporations now have more unified global development plans because to the harmonization with US and EU frameworks.

Continuous Difficulties

1. Affordability and Access

(a) Many orphan medications are expensive despite incentives, which prevents them from being fully reimbursed or from being accessed through national insurance programs.

(b) During pricing discussions, the Central Social Insurance Medical Council (Chuikyo) is paying more and more attention to cost-effectiveness.

2. Recruitment of Patients

(a) Clinical studies may be delayed or statistical significance may be limited due to Japan's tiny patient population.

(b) International collaboration is becoming more and more necessary for multicenter investigations.

3. After-Approval Promise

(a) The same scarcity of patients that hampered previous phases of research may also make it difficult for sponsors to carry out necessary post-marketing studies.

4. Insufficient Innovation at Home

(a) Although the orphan medication industry is dominated by multinational pharmaceutical corporations, there are relatively few native

Japanese biotech working on rare illness treatment development, however this is gradually changing.

Prospects for the Future

Japan is anticipated to keep improving its ODD structure, concentrating on the following:
(a) To expedite the development of orphan drugs worldwide, international harmonization should be improved.

(b) Rising support for cell and gene treatments, which are being utilized more and more to treat uncommon disorders.

(c) Investigating outcomes-based pricing schemes to deal with issues related to reimbursement and costs.

(d) Fostering the expansion of biotech companies in Japan by means of public-private partnerships and innovation clusters.

Japan's system has been particularly effective in streamlining the approval process for orphan drugs and reducing the time and cost involved in bringing a drug to market. Much like the U.S. and EU, access to orphan drugs remains an issue, particularly given the high prices often associated with these treatments.

India: Emergent Framework for Orphan Drug Development:-

India thus offers a unique and also evolving perspective on orphan drug regulation, even though the country has not yet developed a comprehensive regulatory framework of the sort that is observed in the U.S., EU, or Japan. Yet there has been growing recognition of the need to address rare diseases. India's Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has issued the National Policy for Treatment of Rare Diseases in 2017. It is intended to help facilitate the development of treatments for rare diseases. However, challenges abound for the orphan drug landscape in India. There isn't a unique, all-encompassing legal or regulatory structure in India that deals with orphan pharmaceuticals. In contrast to the Pharmaceutical and Medical Device Act of Japan, the EU's Regulation (EC) No

141/2000, and the U.S. Orphan Drug Act of 1983, India lacks:

- (a) A legal definition of an orphan medication.
- (b) Formal processes for designating drugs as orphans.
- (c) Regulatory rewards including priority review, fast-track approvals, or market exclusivity.

Notwithstanding this, the Indian government has made some first efforts to address the problem of rare illnesses; the National Policy for Treatment of Rare illnesses (NPTRD) represents a significant turning point.

Major Obstacles in the Orphan Drug Situation in India

Despite good intentions, India's orphan drug ecosystem encounters a number of obstacles:

(a) Absence of Particular Law:

Pharmaceutical firms are reluctant to participate in the development of orphan drugs in India due to the absence of a defined legal and regulatory framework. The lack of systems such as

- (a) Credits for taxes
 - (b) Exclusivity in the market
 - (c) Requirements for clinical trial waivers ...
- This diminishes the commercial feasibility of creating such medications.

(b) Expensive Treatment:

Because of their tiny patient populations and hefty R&D expenses, orphan medicines are famously costly. In India:

- (a) The majority of therapies are paid for out of pocket.
- (b) Rare illness insurance is either non-existent or very limited.
- (c) There are still very few government subsidies available.

Families are severely impacted financially, and access to treatments that might save lives is restricted.

(c) **Fragmented Healthcare Infrastructure**

It is challenging to determine the illness burden in India since there is no centralized rare disease registry. Delays in diagnosis are frequently caused by:

- (a) Physicians' ignorance.
- (b) Inadequate diagnostic facilities, particularly in remote regions.
- (c) Referral systems that are disjointed.

Lack of Special Orphan Drug Legislation: At present, no specific legislation related to orphan drugs is available in India, unlike the U.S. Orphan Drug Act or the EU Orphan Regulation. This factor mainly has withheld investment by pharmaceutical companies in this space because there is no regulatory clarity and incentives for market exclusivity.

Cost Burden on Patients: With the high price of orphan drugs along with poor government subsidies, most Indian patients cannot afford to carry on treatments for rare diseases.

Emerging Initiatives: The NPTRD, along with some state-level initiatives, initiated a limited funding for the treatment of rare diseases, which are in very early stages. Furthermore, there is an ongoing dialogue in order to form a more defined orphan drug approval and designation process, but a lot is still in the works. The NPTRD, which was initially published in 2017 and revised in 2021, is India's first coordinated attempt to combat rare illnesses. It divides uncommon diseases into three categories according to the expense and viability of therapy, and it seeks to:

- (a) Give each qualifying patient up to ₹20 lakhs (about \$24,000) in financial help.
 - (b) Encourage domestic research and development for treatments for uncommon diseases.
 - (c) Create diagnosis and treatment Centers of Excellence (CoEs).
 - (d) Encourage crowd-funding strategies to help pay for expensive medical care.
- Funding limitations, administrative roadblocks, and an ambiguous medication research and

approval process, however, continue to restrict implementation.

India in the Global Ecosystem of Orphan Drugs

By 2030, the global orphan drug industry is expected to reach a value of over \$300 billion, propelled by advancements in sophisticated biologics, personalized medicine, and gene therapy. Even with an estimated 70–96 million people suffering from uncommon diseases, India is still a market that is underdeveloped and poorly governed.

There is increasing pressure on India to follow the examples set by countries like:

(a) The United States: Providing fast-track approvals, a 25% tax credit on clinical studies, and seven years of commercial exclusivity.

(b) The EU: 10 years of protocol support and market exclusivity.

(b) Japan: Priority reviews, tax incentives, and clinical trial subsidies.

Including comparable clauses could:

- (a) Draw in foreign investment.
- (b) Help domestic pharmaceutical companies investigate specialized markets.
- (c) R&D in precision and customized medicine should be accelerated.

Global orphan drug development market:

India is one such market which has unmet medical needs but still, there is an ample lack of regulation, and this acts as a major hindrance to progress. The increasing demand for inclusion in a practical orphan drug policy with provisions such as market exclusivity, tax benefits, and R&D grants, which are suited to models adopted in other jurisdictions.

Comparative Insights:-

Comparative Insights Compare the approaches of orphan drug regulation across the U.S., EU, Japan, and India. Some patterns and differences emerge. Each of the U.S. and the EU

42. 5. Government of India, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, "National Policy for Rare Diseases 2017," accessed September 15, 2023.

43. K. Chaudhuri, "Developing a Framework for Orphan Drugs in India: Current Challenges and Future Prospects," Indian Journal of Pharmacology, vol. 53, no. 1, 2021.

provides extended market exclusivity along with financial incentives for impetus to rapid growth in the number of approvals during the orphan drug era. In this case, Japan's approach is equivalent, offering market exclusivity, tax benefits, with a fasttrack approval mechanism and integration into the national healthcare system.

The country is still very nascent in developing an orphan drug policy, and current initiatives revolve more around financial assistance to patients rather than incentivizing pharma companies. One thing that these jurisdictions share is the understanding that orphan drug development demands strong support from regulation and finance since drugs targeting these small groups are, on average, very costly and high-risk. However, the incentive packages are quite varied, with developed markets like the U.S. and EU being a cut above others in light of the emerging markets like India.

Trends and Important Distinctions:

Criteria	U.S.	EU	Japan	India
Exclusivity Period	7 years	10–12 years	10 years	Not clearly defined
Regulatory Body	FDA (OOPD)	EMA (COMP)	PMDA/MHLW	CDSCO
Definition of Rare Disease	<200,000 people	<5 in 10,000	<50,000 people	<500,000 people
Financial Incentives	Tax credits, grants	Fee waivers, grants	Tax subsidies	Minimal
R&D Support	Strong	Strong	Moderate to strong	Weak
Market Maturity	Highly developed	Developed	Developed	Nascent

FEMA'S ROLE IN INDIA'S CHANGING FDI POLICY LANDSCAPE

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Abstract

India's journey toward economic liberalization brought about a significant transformation in the way foreign investments and foreign exchange were regulated. Replacing the rigid and restrictive Foreign Exchange Regulation Act (FERA), 1973, the enactment of the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA), 1999 marked a progressive shift towards a more open and business-friendly environment. This paper explores the legal transition from FERA to FEMA and examines how FEMA has shaped India's Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) landscape. By focusing on the regulatory flexibility introduced by FEMA—such as streamlined procedures, improved transparency, and investor-friendly mechanisms—the study highlights its influence on India's investment climate. Additionally, it delves into structural reforms including the RBI's regulatory role and sector-specific liberalization efforts. The research identifies areas where FEMA's regulatory framework could be enhanced to address existing uncertainties and better support India's long-term investment goals. Ultimately, this study offers legal insights that can contribute to making India a more dependable and competitive destination for global investors.

Keywords

Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA), Foreign Exchange Regulation Act (FERA), Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), Economic Liberalization, Regulatory Reform, RBI, Investment Law, Ease of Doing Business, Non-Debt Rules, Policy Framework, Legal Modernization.

Introduction

India's foreign investment policies have undergone a major transformation, particularly after the economic reforms of the early 1990s. The earlier regime, governed by the Foreign Exchange Regulation Act (FERA), 1973, was marked by strict regulatory controls aimed at preserving foreign currency. These restrictions often discouraged international investors and created significant operational barriers for businesses.

However, the economic crisis of 1991 served as a turning point, prompting a shift towards liberalization. In response, the government introduced the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA), 1999—a more pragmatic and investor-centric law focused on managing, rather than controlling, foreign exchange. FEMA

emphasized facilitation over regulation, signaling a shift toward a more globally integrated economy.

This paper investigates how FEMA has reshaped the legal and procedural environment for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in India. It looks at FEMA's role in simplifying investment processes, enabling sectoral reforms, and empowering institutions like the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to regulate foreign capital flows with greater flexibility. The analysis also reflects on FEMA's contribution to enhancing business confidence and reducing legal uncertainties. In doing so, the research identifies both strengths and areas where legal reform could further support India's ambitions to attract sustainable, long-term foreign investment.

FEMA'S ROLE IN INDIA'S CHANGING FDI POLICY LANDSCAPE

- FEMA and ease of doing business

The concept of Ease of Doing Business (EoDB) reflects how conducive a country's regulatory framework is to starting, operating, and closing a business. In India, improving EoDB has been a critical objective to promote entrepreneurship and boost both domestic and foreign investments. One transformative step toward achieving this goal was the repeal of the outdated Foreign Exchange Regulation Act (FERA), 1973, and the introduction of the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA), 1999. Unlike FERA, FEMA reshaped how businesses interacted with the foreign exchange regulatory system, ultimately making cross-border business operations significantly more efficient and investor-friendly.

The FERA Regime: A Barrier to Business Fluidity

Under FERA, business operations involving foreign exchange were heavily regulated, reflecting a protectionist mindset driven by a need to conserve foreign reserves. Most international financial activities required prior clearance from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), even for routine matters such as importing goods, paying for overseas services, remitting royalties, or reimbursing travel expenses for personnel. Dividend repatriation by foreign companies often faced stringent scrutiny. The extensive approval processes created procedural bottlenecks, increased compliance costs, delayed business operations, and introduced uncertainty. Furthermore, violations under FERA were treated as criminal offences, often leading to harsh penalties, including imprisonment. This regulatory atmosphere discouraged global engagement and acted as a significant deterrent to foreign investors.⁸⁴⁴

FEMA's Facilitative Shift: A New Era in Regulation

FEMA marked a substantial departure from FERA's restrictive outlook. The law was designed to support and streamline foreign trade and payments, promoting a more liberal and business-friendly ecosystem. The emphasis shifted from regulation and restriction to management and facilitation of foreign exchange, thereby improving trust and transparency in the regulatory environment.⁸⁴⁵

Liberalization of Current Account Transactions

One of FEMA's most impactful contributions to EoDB was its liberal approach to current account transactions. Section 5 of FEMA enabled individuals and entities to undertake such transactions freely through Authorized Persons (APs), provided they were for bona fide purposes. This greatly enhanced transactional ease:

- **Efficient Trade Execution:** Importers and exporters gained the flexibility to conduct international transactions swiftly, with fewer bureaucratic obstacles. Documentation verification replaced prior RBI permissions, improving cash flow and reliability in trade relationships.
- **Reduced Compliance Burden:** Payments for technology transfers, software services, and international subscriptions became smoother, contributing to a more agile business environment.
- **Increased Investor Trust:** Predictable rules for repatriating dividends and profits improved the post-investment experience, reinforcing investor confidence in the Indian economy.⁸⁴⁶

Improved Predictability in Capital Account Transactions

⁸⁴⁴ Ministry of Finance, Government of India, *FERA to FEMA: A Regulatory Shift*, 2000.

⁸⁴⁵ Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999, Preamble & Section 3.
⁸⁴⁶ RBI Master Direction on Current Account Transactions, updated 2023.

While FEMA retained oversight of capital account transactions due to their macroeconomic impact, it introduced structured, transparent procedures. This shift positively affected investment-related activities:

- **Automatic Route for FDI:** FEMA institutionalized the automatic route for foreign investment, removing the need for prior approvals in many sectors. Subject to sectoral caps and reporting norms, this change significantly eased the investment process for foreign entities entering the Indian market.⁸⁴⁷
- **Defined Regulations for Borrowings and Overseas Investments:** FEMA introduced clearer, rule-bound procedures for External Commercial Borrowings (ECBs) and Overseas Direct Investment (ODI), offering predictability and facilitating informed financial planning by businesses seeking international exposure.

Decriminalization and Regulatory Clarity

One of FEMA's defining features was the decriminalization of most violations. Under Section 13, infractions were treated as civil offences, usually resulting in monetary penalties rather than criminal prosecution. This had far-reaching effects on EoDB:

- **Reduced Legal Risks:** Businesses no longer operated under the constant fear of prosecution for minor procedural lapses, creating a more confident operating environment.
- **Compliance-Focused Governance:** The regulatory landscape encouraged voluntary compliance and constructive engagement with authorities.
- **Cost Efficiency:** Lower legal risk translated into reduced costs associated with legal counsel and regulatory risk management.

Operational Simplification and Digital Reforms

FEMA also empowered banks to handle most forex-related transactions, decentralizing execution and expediting service delivery. RBI's issuance of consolidated Master Directions simplified the understanding of regulations. Moreover, initiatives like the FIRMS portal and Single Master Form (SMF) streamlined digital reporting and compliance, further reducing manual paperwork and improving transparency.

Conclusion: FEMA as a Catalyst for Regulatory Efficiency

In essence, the Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999, has been instrumental in enhancing India's Ease of Doing Business, particularly with regard to cross-border financial activities. Through liberalization, decriminalization, procedural streamlining, and the empowerment of financial intermediaries, FEMA replaced the rigid, punitive environment of FERA with a system grounded in trust, predictability, and operational ease. While part of broader economic reforms, FEMA played a decisive role in removing regulatory friction and positioning India as a more favorable destination for global business engagement.

- FEMA's role in promoting sectoral investment

The Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA), 1999 plays a pivotal yet often misunderstood role in India's investment ecosystem. While FEMA does not define which sectors should receive foreign investment—that responsibility lies with the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Policy, managed by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)—it provides the foundational legal and procedural framework necessary for handling cross-border financial transactions. In doing so, FEMA acts as an essential facilitator, ensuring that India's foreign exchange regulations align with broader investment goals. Since FEMA

⁸⁴⁷ Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), *FDI Policy*, Consolidated FDI Circular, 2020.

replaced the more stringent Foreign Exchange Regulation Act (FERA), 1973, its influence has been crucial in making India a more appealing destination for foreign investment across sectors.

Creating a Supportive Foreign Exchange Framework

The transition from the control-heavy FERA regime to FEMA's more liberal and managerial approach laid the foundation for smoother foreign investment flows. FERA was marked by complex permissions and penal provisions that made international business cumbersome. In contrast, FEMA emphasizes facilitating external trade and ensuring a well-regulated forex market, which significantly reduced bureaucratic barriers and boosted confidence among investors.⁸⁴⁸

Enabling Entry Through Investment Routes

FEMA operates as the functional backbone for implementing the FDI policy's investment routes.

Automatic Route
For sectors where FDI is allowed without prior government clearance, FEMA facilitates a straightforward process. Investors can transfer funds via Authorized Dealer (AD) banks, while the Indian investee company is tasked with filing post-investment documentation—primarily through platforms like the FIRMS portal using the Single Master Form (SMF). This process significantly cuts down on red tape, particularly in liberalized sectors like IT and manufacturing.

Government Approval Route
For sectors requiring prior government approval due to sensitivity or strategic importance, FEMA still governs the actual foreign exchange transaction after clearance is granted. It ensures that such investments follow prescribed norms—covering aspects like fund remittance, valuation, and permissible instruments (mainly governed by the Non-Debt

Instruments Rules, 2019).⁸⁴⁹ FEMA ensures compliance and transparency in these regulated investments.

Ongoing Operations: Current Account Flexibility

FEMA's utility continues beyond just initial capital inflows. Its liberal treatment of current account transactions under Section 5 plays a critical role in supporting the daily operations of businesses with foreign participation:

- **Facilitating Trade Payments:** Companies in sectors like pharmaceuticals, electronics, and manufacturing benefit from efficient payment mechanisms for importing inputs and receiving export proceeds.
- **Access to Global Expertise:** Sectors dependent on foreign collaborations—such as IT services or biotechnology—can easily remit payments for software licenses, royalties, or technical services.
- **Profit Repatriation:** A key factor for sustaining foreign investor interest is the ability to repatriate profits and dividends with minimal restrictions. FEMA provides a reliable structure for such remittances, subject to applicable tax norms.⁸⁵⁰

Supporting Sectoral Financing Through Capital Regulations

FEMA also governs various capital-raising instruments tailored to sectoral needs through Section 6 and associated regulations:

- **Equity and Hybrid Instruments:** Investments via equity shares or compulsorily convertible debentures fall under the FEMA (Non-Debt Instruments) Rules, 2019. These are the primary modes of FDI in sectors such as services, manufacturing, and tech.
- **Foreign Borrowings:** The framework for External Commercial Borrowings (ECBs),

⁸⁴⁸ Ministry of Finance, Transition from FERA to FEMA: A Liberalisation Milestone, 2000.

⁸⁴⁹ The Foreign Exchange Management (Non-Debt Instruments) Rules, 2019, Ministry of Finance, Government of India.

⁸⁵⁰ RBI, Master Direction – Liberalised Remittance Scheme (LRS) and current account transactions guidelines, 2023.

regulated by the RBI under FEMA, offers a route for accessing foreign loans—commonly used in infrastructure and capital-intensive sectors. These borrowings must meet criteria like maturity periods and use restrictions, often reflecting national policy goals.⁸⁵¹

- **Investment Vehicles:** FEMA provisions also extend to structured investment platforms like REITs, InvITs, and AIFs, which channel foreign capital into sector-specific projects such as real estate, infrastructure, and startups.

Promoting Global Integration via Outbound Investment

FEMA also regulates Overseas Direct Investment (ODI), allowing Indian businesses to invest in foreign markets. This enables companies to access international technologies, acquire global assets, or build integrated supply chains—boosting their global competitiveness and reinforcing their domestic capabilities.

FEMA: A Neutral Enabler, Not a Sector Driver

It's essential to understand that FEMA does not prioritize or promote specific sectors. That role is played by government schemes and incentives like the Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme. FEMA's contribution lies in ensuring that the foreign exchange management system operates as a support structure—not a hurdle—for these policy-driven investments. By simplifying compliance, reducing uncertainty, and decentralizing execution (e.g., allowing AD banks to handle many transactions), FEMA enhances the ease of cross-border business across all approved sectors.

Data and Monitoring: Enabling Policy Feedback

FEMA also mandates comprehensive reporting of foreign investment data through platforms like the FIRMS portal. This real-time information helps the RBI and policymakers assess trends, track sectoral investment performance, and

make informed adjustments to policy and forex management strategies.

The Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999, functions as a foundational framework that facilitates sectoral investments in India—not by choosing the sectors, but by ensuring seamless, rule-based management of the foreign exchange aspects linked to those investments. FEMA enables capital inflows through clear operational routes, supports ongoing business operations via liberalized current account norms, regulates diverse capital structures suited to different sectors, and provides tools for global integration and performance tracking. While sectoral strategy is shaped by broader policy measures, FEMA ensures that the financial side of these strategies is executed efficiently and predictably, making India a more attractive and reliable destination for global investors.

- Analysis of major FDI policy decisions influenced by FEMA

Before FEMA, the FERA regime presented significant constraints not just for businesses but arguably also for policymakers contemplating liberalization. FERA's control-centric philosophy, its cumbersome approval mechanisms, and its criminalization of violations created a system that was difficult to calibrate finely. Opening a sector to foreign investment under FERA might have felt like opening floodgates without adequate tools to manage the ensuing flows or risks.

FEMA, conversely, introduced a far more flexible and nuanced architecture:

Management Philosophy: Its core aim of 'managing' foreign exchange rather than merely 'controlling' it allowed for policies that embraced inflows while retaining oversight mechanisms.

Clear Distinction (Current vs. Capital): Separating current account transactions (generally liberalized under Section 5) from capital account transactions (subject to regulation under Section 6) allowed

⁸⁵¹ RBI, ECB Framework under FEMA, Circulars updated in 2023.

policymakers to open up trade and operational flows significantly while maintaining specific controls over potentially volatile capital movements.⁸⁵²

RBI's Regulatory Power (esp. Sec 6): Granting the RBI explicit power to frame regulations for permissible capital account transactions, specifying limits and conditions, provided a crucial tool for gradualism. This allowed for sector-specific conditions or phased liberalization concerning capital flows, which was structurally difficult under FERA.

Reporting & Monitoring Framework: FEMA, coupled with RBI's systems (like FIRMS), established a much more robust mechanism for tracking capital inflows and outflows compared to the FERA era, providing valuable data for policy assessment and macroeconomic management.⁸⁵³

This flexible toolkit provided by FEMA arguably gave policymakers greater comfort and capability to undertake bolder FDI policy reforms than might have been conceivable under the rigid constraints of FERA.

Enabling Gradualism: Phased Sectoral Liberalization

One of the hallmarks of India's FDI policy journey post-2000 has been gradualism – opening sectors incrementally, raising caps in phases, and moving activities from the approval route to the automatic route over time. FEMA's structure was instrumental in enabling this calibrated approach.

Managing Associated Flows: When the government decided to increase the FDI cap in a sector (e.g., insurance, aviation, retail), FEMA provided the mechanisms (under Section 6 regulations) to manage the anticipated increase in capital inflows.⁸⁵⁴ RBI could specify reporting requirements, ensure compliance with

valuation norms, and monitor the flows without needing to revert to an overly restrictive default posture. This ability to manage, rather than just block or fully permit, allowed for sector-specific liberalization to proceed at a pace deemed appropriate by policymakers, balancing growth objectives with stability concerns.

Route Calibration: Similarly, the ability to shift sectors from the government approval route to the automatic route was facilitated by FEMA's framework. Once policymakers gained comfort with investment patterns in a sector and established necessary conditions within the FDI policy, FEMA's automatic route procedures (reporting via AD Banks) provided a ready-made, efficient mechanism for handling the forex inflows, making the policy shift operationally feasible.

Facilitating Investment in Complex and Evolving Sectors

Modern investment landscapes often involve sophisticated structures and instruments, particularly in areas like infrastructure, technology startups, and financial services. FEMA's framework demonstrated greater adaptability than FERA in accommodating these complexities, thereby enabling FDI policies targeting such sectors.

Diverse Instruments: FEMA and its subordinate regulations (including the NDI Rules for equity and RBI regulations for debt/hybrids) provided clearer pathways for various investment instruments beyond simple equity – including compulsorily convertible instruments, investment through vehicles like Alternative Investment Funds (AIFs), Infrastructure Investment Trusts (InvITs), and Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs), and specific instruments like Convertible Notes for startups.⁸⁵⁵ This flexibility allowed FDI policy to encourage investment using structures suited to the specific needs of sectors like infrastructure (requiring long-term debt and equity via InvITs) or venture capital (using AIFs

⁸⁵² The Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999, Sections 5 and 6.

⁸⁵³ Reserve Bank of India, FIRMS Portal Guidelines, accessed 2024.

⁸⁵⁴ RBI Master Direction on Foreign Investment in India, updated 2023.

⁸⁵⁵ The Foreign Exchange Management (Non-Debt Instruments) Rules, 2019.

and convertible instruments). FERA's more rigid structure might have struggled to accommodate such diverse financial engineering effectively.

Downstream Investment Rules: FEMA's framework (particularly within NDI Rules) provided specific rules for regulating downstream investments made by foreign-owned or controlled Indian entities. This allowed policymakers to set rules for multi-layered investment structures, crucial for implementing nuanced FDI policies in sectors with complex ownership patterns or specific sensitivities about indirect foreign control.⁸⁵⁶

Current Account Convertibility: Building Investor Confidence for Entry

While Section 5 of FEMA directly liberalized current account transactions, this had a significant indirect influence on capital account policy decisions, including FDI. The assurance provided by FEMA that routine operational payments (imports, services, royalties) and, critically, the repatriation of dividends and profits would be handled smoothly and predictably, was a game-changer for investor confidence. Knowing that returns could be reliably accessed significantly lowers the risk premium associated with investing in India.⁸⁵⁷ This enhanced confidence, built on the back of FEMA's current account guarantees, arguably made policymakers more willing over time to liberalize the entry conditions for FDI (i.e., raise caps and expand the automatic route), knowing that a key investor concern regarding operational flows and profit repatriation was already addressed by the robust FEMA framework.

Informed Policy-Making through Enhanced Monitoring

Compared to the FERA era, the reporting and monitoring systems established under FEMA (culminating in the integrated FIRMS portal

managed by RBI) provided authorities with far more timely and comprehensive data on the quantum, source, destination (sector/entity), and type of foreign capital flows.⁸⁵⁸ This improved visibility allowed for better assessment of the impact of previous FDI policy changes and provided a stronger empirical basis for future decisions. The ability to track flows effectively under FEMA likely gave policymakers greater confidence to proceed with further liberalization, knowing they had better tools to monitor the consequences and manage potential risks, compared to operating with less visibility under FERA. The experience gained in managing large inflows in sectors like IT or Telecom without major disruptions, facilitated by FEMA's framework, potentially emboldened policy decisions to open other sectors.

Shaping Implementation: Structural Choices and Targeted Measures

Certain structural decisions within the FEMA framework itself, or policy implementations relying heavily on it, also illustrate this interplay:

Debt/Non-Debt Segregation (2019): The formal split in regulatory authority, with the GoI (via NDI Rules) overseeing non-debt/equity and the RBI retaining debt, was a major regulatory policy decision implemented under FEMA's umbrella.⁸⁵⁹ This structural change influences how future policies related to equity versus debt financing for FDI are framed and regulated.

Press Note 3 (2020) Implementation: The FDI policy decision requiring government approval for investments from neighboring countries (especially those sharing a land border with India) was operationalized through FEMA's capital account regulation mechanism, providing a legal route to enforce the strategic policy change.⁸⁶⁰

- COVID-19 and post-pandemic regulatory changes

⁸⁵⁶ FEMA NDI Rules, Rule 23 on downstream investment compliance.

⁸⁵⁷ RBI, Master Direction – Liberalised Remittance Scheme (LRS) and current account transaction norms, 2023.

⁸⁵⁸ RBI Annual Report on Foreign Exchange Management, 2023.

⁸⁵⁹ Ministry of Finance Notification S.O. 3715(E), dated 15 October 2019, implementing debt-equity regulation split.

⁸⁶⁰ DPIIT Press Note 3 (2020 Series), dated April 17, 2020.

The global outbreak of COVID-19 in early 2020 brought about unprecedented economic challenges. In India, the disruption was particularly severe for enterprises involved in international trade and finance, as lockdowns, supply chain breakdowns, and mobility restrictions affected operations. Responding to this, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), under the FEMA framework, introduced a series of regulatory adjustments aimed at alleviating immediate pressures and ensuring business continuity in the cross-border economic domain.

Immediate Operational Relief Measures

Export and Credit-Related Easing:

Recognizing the obstacles exporters were facing, the RBI allowed a temporary extension for the realization and repatriation of export earnings. For shipments made within a designated period (initially till July 31, 2020), the usual nine-month deadline was extended to fifteen months. Additionally, banks were permitted to provide export credit—both pre- and post-shipment—for an extended period of up to fifteen months, facilitating greater liquidity for exporters during a time of constrained global demand.

Support for Financial Market Participants:

Foreign investors operating under the Voluntary Retention Route (VRR)—a mechanism that requires maintaining a specific investment level—were given more time to comply due to the financial turbulence caused by the pandemic⁸⁶¹.

Relaxed Compliance Obligations:

To accommodate companies grappling with remote operations and workforce limitations, authorities likely postponed certain filing deadlines under FEMA. Submissions through the FIRMS portal and other statutory reports were possibly deferred to reduce regulatory burdens during peak disruption phases.

These short-term interventions highlighted FEMA's built-in flexibility and the RBI's pragmatic approach in addressing extraordinary economic situations.

Strategic Policy Intervention: The Introduction of Press Note 3

In a parallel policy shift, the government introduced *Press Note 3 (2020 Series)* in April 2020, significantly altering FDI procedures. This directive made it mandatory for investors from countries sharing a land border with India—or where the ultimate beneficial owner resided in such countries—to seek government approval for investment, regardless of sector or stake size.

Objectives and Policy Design:

This safeguard was introduced to prevent opportunistic acquisitions of Indian companies facing financial distress during the pandemic. Importantly, the note was not restricted to any particular industry nor limited to the duration of the pandemic, implying its long-term strategic orientation.

Operationalization through FEMA:

Though issued as a policy directive by the government, the implementation of Press Note 3 was routed through FEMA's infrastructure. Banks, acting as Authorized Dealers, were tasked with vetting incoming FDI transactions to ensure compliance before reporting them on the FIRMS platform. Investments that triggered Press Note 3 conditions had to be routed through the Foreign Investment Facilitation Portal (FIFP) for necessary approvals.

Implications and Challenges:

This regulation introduced a new layer of scrutiny for cross-border investments from certain jurisdictions, generating debate on the need for clearer definitions—particularly around “beneficial ownership.” As of 2025, policy discussions continue regarding the possible refinement of these rules to better balance

⁸⁶¹ Reserve Bank of India, COVID-19 related Circulars and Notifications (2020).

national security concerns with investor confidence⁸⁶².

Transition to Recovery: Policy Tools for Growth and Investment

As the public health crisis eased, India shifted its regulatory priorities toward revitalizing the economy, improving industrial resilience, and positioning itself as a preferred investment destination in the new global order.

PLI Schemes for Manufacturing Growth:

The government launched *Production Linked Incentive (PLI)* schemes across multiple industries including electronics, pharmaceuticals, automotive, renewable energy, and textiles. These initiatives offer performance-based incentives to companies achieving higher production volumes, thereby fostering export growth and large-scale manufacturing. While industrial in nature, PLI schemes are closely tied to attracting FDI by providing a predictable, incentive-driven environment for investment.

FEMA as a Facilitator for PLI Investments:

FEMA's liberalized structure underpins the smooth execution of PLI schemes. Its provisions allow for automatic 100% FDI in most manufacturing sectors, streamlining capital inflow processes. Additionally, FEMA facilitates essential transactions such as importing machinery, technology payments, exporting output, and even borrowing through External Commercial Borrowings (ECBs), subject to certain conditions. These capabilities make FEMA a foundational pillar in PLI's success.

Sustained FDI Liberalization and Structural Reforms

Despite the strategic restrictions under Press Note 3, India remained on a liberal trajectory with respect to FDI. Post-pandemic reforms included increasing the FDI cap in the insurance sector to 74% and extending 100% automatic route access to the telecom industry (2021). The space sector too witnessed liberalization in

2024⁸⁶³. These reforms reflected a clear policy intent to attract long-term foreign capital in areas aligned with national growth strategies.

Overhauling Outward Investment Guidelines

Another significant development was the introduction of *Overseas Investment Rules and Regulations* in 2022. These replaced older provisions and streamlined the process for Indian entities making foreign investments. The revised rules offered more coherence, greater ease of execution, and better alignment with international business norms, boosting India's outward investment capability.

Enhancing Transparency Through Digitalization

The post-pandemic regulatory environment continued to emphasize simplicity and accessibility. The RBI's focus on digital platforms like the FIRMS portal, along with the issuance of Master Directions, has made foreign exchange regulations easier to navigate and more transparent for businesses and investors alike.

FDI Performance During and After the Pandemic

India's FDI performance remained strong despite the economic turmoil caused by COVID-19. The fiscal year 2020–21 marked the country's highest-ever FDI inflow up to that point⁸⁶⁴. While favorable global conditions, such as high liquidity, contributed, the resilience of India's regulatory ecosystem—reflected in flexible FEMA mechanisms, strategic safeguards like Press Note 3, and promotional drives like PLI—also played a decisive role. The nature of FDI inflows evolved as well, with notable increases in digital and manufacturing investments, both of which were reinforced by pandemic-induced shifts and targeted incentives.

India's FEMA-led regulatory architecture effectively responded to the unique demands posed by the COVID-19 crisis. Initially, it provided critical relief by relaxing timelines and procedural obligations. Subsequently, it

⁸⁶² Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Press Note 3 (2020 Series).

⁸⁶³ Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Sectoral Guidelines for PLI and FDI Policies (2020–2024).

⁸⁶⁴ DPIIT, FDI Statistics Annual Report, FY 2020–21.

facilitated strategic interventions such as Press Note 3 to shield vulnerable domestic enterprises. As recovery took center stage, FEMA supported broader policy efforts like the PLI scheme, continued sector-specific FDI liberalization, and simplified outbound

investment processes. The post-pandemic period showcased FEMA's capacity to act both as a stabilizer during crises and a catalyst for long-term economic transformation.

GROUND AND PROCEDURES – INDUSTRIAL APPLICABILITY OF ROLE OF BANKING SECTOR IN THE GROWTH OF SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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Abstract

This research paper examines the grounds and procedures underlying the industrial applicability of banking sector initiatives in fostering Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) growth across different economic contexts. Through comparative analysis of banking practices, regulatory frameworks, and financing mechanisms in selected developed and emerging economies, the study identifies key industrial grounds that determine banking effectiveness in the SME sector. The findings reveal significant variations in procedural approaches to SME financing, with regulatory environments, institutional arrangements, and technological adoption emerging as critical determinants of successful industrial application. The paper concludes with actionable recommendations for optimizing banking procedures to enhance industrial SME growth while accommodating contextual differences across economic environments.

Keywords: Banking sector, SMEs, industrial financing, procedural frameworks, comparative analysis, economic development

Chapter 1: Introduction

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) constitute the backbone of industrial development across global economies, accounting for approximately 90% of businesses and more than 50% of employment worldwide⁸⁶⁵. Despite their pivotal economic contribution, SMEs

consistently face disproportionate challenges in accessing adequate financing for establishment, operation, and expansion of industrial activities. The banking sector, as the primary formal channel of external finance for industrial SMEs in most economies, plays a fundamental role in addressing these challenges and enabling sustainable industrial growth.

⁸⁶⁵ International Finance Corporation. (2023). *MSME Economic Indicators 2023*. World Bank Group. [e](#)

The relationship between banking institutions and industrial SMEs operates within complex frameworks of grounds and procedures that determine accessibility, effectiveness, and sustainability of financing arrangements. These frameworks encompass regulatory foundations, institutional structures, operational mechanisms, and technological platforms that collectively shape banking engagement with industrial SMEs. Significant variations exist in these procedural frameworks across different economic contexts, resulting in diverse outcomes for SME development and industrial growth.

1.1 Background and Context

The financing needs of industrial SMEs differ substantively from those of larger corporations and non-industrial small businesses, reflecting unique characteristics of industrial operations including capital intensity, extended payback periods, specialized asset requirements, and distinct risk profiles⁸⁶⁶. Banking procedures designed for general commercial lending often prove inadequate for addressing these specialized industrial requirements, necessitating tailored approaches that accommodate the particular grounds of industrial SME operations.

Historically, banking engagement with industrial SMEs has evolved through several paradigmatic shifts, from traditional collateral-based lending focused primarily on tangible assets to more sophisticated approaches incorporating cash flow analysis, intellectual property valuation, and supply chain relationships⁸⁶⁷. These evolutionary changes reflect growing recognition of the distinctive industrial grounds upon which SME financing must operate to effectively support manufacturing, processing, and production activities.

Comparative research indicates significant differences in banking procedures for industrial SME financing across economies at different development stages. While developed economies typically feature sophisticated ecosystems of specialized financial institutions, credit enhancement mechanisms, and industrial banking expertise, emerging economies often struggle with fundamental gaps in banking infrastructure, regulatory frameworks, and industrial finance capabilities⁸⁶⁸. Understanding these variations is essential for developing effective approaches to enhance banking support for industrial SME growth.

1.2 Research Problem and Objectives

Despite extensive literature on SME financing broadly, specific analysis of banking procedures applicable to industrial SMEs remains limited, with insufficient attention to the distinct grounds upon which industrial finance operates. This research gap is particularly problematic given the critical importance of manufacturing and production SMEs for economic development, technological innovation, and employment generation. Banking procedures designed without adequate consideration of industrial grounds may fail to address the specialized needs of manufacturing and production enterprises, limiting their growth potential and economic contribution.

This research aims to analyze and compare banking grounds and procedures for industrial SME financing across selected developed and emerging economies, identifying factors that enhance or impede effective banking support for industrial growth. Specifically, the study addresses the following research objectives:

1. To identify and analyze key grounds that determine industrial applicability of banking procedures for SME financing across different economic contexts

⁸⁶⁶ Beck, T., & Demirgüç-Kunt, A. (2021). "Small and medium-size enterprises: Overcoming growth constraints." *Journal of Banking & Finance*, 30(11), 2931-2943. [e](#)

⁸⁶⁷ European Investment Bank. (2022). *European Small Business Finance Outlook*. EIB Economics Department. [e](#)

⁸⁶⁸ OECD. (2023). *Financing SMEs and Entrepreneurs 2023: An OECD Scoreboard*. OECD Publishing. [e](#)

2. To compare procedural approaches to industrial SME financing in selected banking systems, highlighting variations in regulatory frameworks, institutional arrangements, and operational mechanisms
3. To assess the impact of technological innovation on banking procedures for industrial SME financing, with particular attention to digital platforms, alternative data utilization, and fintech integration
4. To develop recommendations for optimizing banking procedures to enhance industrial SME growth while accommodating contextual differences across economic environments

1.3 Significance of the Study

This research contributes to both theoretical understanding and practical enhancement of banking engagement with industrial SMEs. By systematically analyzing grounds and procedures across different contexts, the study provides a foundation for developing more effective financing mechanisms tailored to industrial requirements. The comparative approach enables identification of transferable best practices while acknowledging contextual factors that necessitate adaptive implementation.

The findings offer practical value for multiple stakeholders, including:

- Banking institutions seeking to develop effective industrial SME financing products and procedures
- Regulatory authorities responsible for creating enabling environments for industrial finance
- Policy makers focused on industrial development and SME growth
- Industrial SME owners and managers navigating financing landscapes

- International development organizations supporting industrial capacity building

Through enhanced understanding of grounds and procedures for industrial SME financing, this research ultimately aims to contribute to more robust industrial sectors capable of generating sustainable economic growth, technological innovation, and quality employment.

Chapter 2: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

2.1 Conceptualizing Grounds and Procedures in Industrial Banking

The concept of "grounds" in industrial banking encompasses the fundamental premises—both theoretical and practical—upon which financing relationships with manufacturing and production enterprises are established. These grounds include economic justifications, policy foundations, market structures, institutional arrangements, and operational realities that collectively shape banking engagement with industrial SMEs⁸⁶⁹. Understanding these grounds is essential for developing procedures that effectively address industrial financing needs while managing associated risks.

Banking "procedures," by contrast, comprise the systematic processes, methodologies, requirements, and practices through which financial institutions evaluate, structure, deliver, and monitor financing for industrial SMEs⁸⁷⁰. These procedures manifest in lending technologies, credit assessment approaches, documentation requirements, monitoring systems, and risk management frameworks that operationalize banking relationships with industrial clients.

⁸⁶⁹ Nguyen, B., & Canh, N. P. (2021). "Formal and informal financing decisions of small businesses." *Small Business Economics*, 57(3), 1545-1567. [↗](#)

⁸⁷⁰ Beck, T., Demirgüç-Kunt, A., & Singer, D. (2022). "Is small beautiful? Financial structure, size and access to finance." *World Development*, 52, 19-33. [↗](#)

Research by Berger and Udell (2006) provides a useful framework for analyzing lending technologies applicable to industrial SMEs, distinguishing between transaction-based approaches (financial statement lending, asset-based lending, credit scoring) and relationship-based approaches that incorporate soft information about borrowers and their industrial contexts⁸⁷¹. This framework highlights the diversity of procedural approaches available to banks serving industrial SMEs, with different technologies suited to different types of manufacturing enterprises and information environments.

2.2 Industrial SME Financing: Distinctive Characteristics and Challenges

Industrial SMEs present distinctive financing characteristics compared to service-oriented or commercial enterprises, reflecting the particular nature of manufacturing and production activities. These distinctive characteristics include:

1. **Capital Intensity:** Manufacturing enterprises typically require substantial investment in production facilities, machinery, and equipment, resulting in higher financing needs and longer payback periods compared to service-oriented businesses⁸⁷².
2. **Asset Specificity:** Industrial equipment and facilities often have limited redeployability outside specific manufacturing contexts, creating valuation challenges for conventional collateral-based lending procedures⁸⁷³.
3. **Production Cycles:** Manufacturing activities typically involve extended production cycles from raw material acquisition through processing to final

sale, creating working capital requirements that differ from commercial enterprise patterns⁸⁷⁴.

4. **Technological Requirements:** Industrial SMEs increasingly require financing for technology acquisition, automation, and digital transformation, presenting valuation challenges for traditional banking procedures focused on tangible assets⁸⁷⁵.
5. **Supply Chain Integration:** Manufacturing enterprises operate within complex supply networks that influence their financial stability and growth prospects, requiring banking procedures that account for these interdependencies⁸⁷⁶.

These distinctive characteristics create specific challenges for banking procedures, including difficulties in risk assessment, collateral valuation, cash flow analysis, and financing structure design. Traditional banking approaches developed primarily for commercial enterprises often prove inadequate for addressing these industrial-specific challenges, necessitating specialized procedures grounded in manufacturing realities.

2.3 Theoretical Perspectives on Banking-Industrial SME Relationships

Several theoretical perspectives provide useful lenses for analyzing banking grounds and procedures applicable to industrial SMEs:

Information Asymmetry Theory highlights how gaps between bank knowledge and SME realities create financing constraints, with particular relevance for industrial contexts where technical complexity may exacerbate

⁸⁷¹ □ Berger, A. N., & Udell, G. F. (2006). "A more complete conceptual framework for SME finance." *Journal of Banking & Finance*, 30(11), 2945-2966. [□](#)

⁸⁷² Asian Development Bank. (2023). *Asia SME Monitor 2023*. ADB. [□](#)

⁸⁷³ Williamson, O. E. (1988). "Corporate finance and corporate governance." *Journal of Finance*, 43(3), 567-591. [□](#)

⁸⁷⁴ Singh, R. K., Garg, S. K., & Deshmukh, S. G. (2022). "Strategy development by SMEs for competitiveness: a review." *Benchmarking: An International Journal*, 15(5), 525-547. [□](#)

⁸⁷⁵ □ European Central Bank. (2023). *Survey on the Access to Finance of Enterprises in the Euro Area*. ECB. [□](#)

⁸⁷⁶ Gustafson, M. T., Ivanov, I. T., & Meisenzahl, R. R. (2021). "Bank liquidity provision across the firm size distribution." *Journal of Financial Economics*, 139(3), 835-856. [□](#)

informational challenges⁸⁷⁷. This perspective emphasizes the importance of procedures that effectively bridge information gaps through industry-specific expertise, relationship development, and alternative data utilization.

Resource-Based View examines how access to financial resources enables industrial SMEs to develop competitive advantages through investment in production capabilities, technological innovation, and operational efficiency⁸⁷⁸. This perspective highlights the strategic importance of appropriate banking procedures for enabling industrial competitiveness and sustainable growth.

Institutional Theory analyzes how formal and informal institutions shape financing relationships, with banking procedures influenced by regulatory frameworks, industry norms, cultural factors, and historical legacies⁸⁷⁹. This perspective is particularly valuable for comparative analysis across different economic contexts, explaining procedural variations and implementation challenges.

Financial Growth Cycle Model proposed by Berger and Udell (1998) suggests that firms' financing needs and options change as they grow, becoming more transparent and less risky over time⁸⁸⁰. For industrial SMEs, this model implies that different banking procedures may be appropriate at different developmental stages, with implications for designing flexible financing approaches.

2.4 Analytical Framework for Comparative Analysis

Drawing on these theoretical perspectives and existing literature, this study adopts an analytical framework that examines banking grounds and procedures for industrial SME financing across four key dimensions:

1. **Regulatory and Policy Environment:** Including banking regulations, industrial policies, SME development frameworks, and public support mechanisms that establish the grounds for banking-industrial SME relationships
2. **Institutional Arrangements:** Examining banking system structures, specialized industrial financing institutions, public-private partnerships, and ecosystem relationships that shape procedural implementation
3. **Operational Mechanisms:** Analyzing specific lending technologies, risk assessment methodologies, product structures, and delivery channels employed in industrial SME financing
4. **Technological Integration:** Assessing how digital technologies, alternative data analytics, automated processes, and fintech innovations are transforming banking procedures for industrial SMEs

This framework guides the comparative analysis in subsequent chapters, enabling systematic identification of factors that enhance or impede effective banking support for industrial SME growth across different economic contexts.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design and Approach

This study employs a comparative research design examining banking grounds and procedures for industrial SME financing across selected economies representing different development stages and financial system structures. The comparative approach enables identification of both common patterns and contextual variations in banking engagement

⁸⁷⁷ □ Stiglitz, J. E., & Weiss, A. (1981). "Credit rationing in markets with imperfect information." *American Economic Review*, 71(3), 393-410. [↗](#)

⁸⁷⁸ Barney, J. (1991). "Firm resources and sustained competitive advantage." *Journal of Management*, 17(1), 99-120. [↗](#)

⁸⁷⁹ La Porta, R., Lopez-de-Silanes, F., Shleifer, A., & Vishny, R. W. (1998). "Law and finance." *Journal of Political Economy*, 106(6), 1113-1155. [↗](#)

⁸⁸⁰ Berger, A. N., & Udell, G. F. (1998). "The economics of small business finance: The roles of private equity and debt markets in the financial growth cycle." *Journal of Banking & Finance*, 22(6-8), 613-673. [↗](#)

with industrial SMEs, facilitating development of nuanced understanding applicable across diverse settings⁸⁸¹.

The research adopts a mixed-methods approach combining quantitative analysis of financing indicators with qualitative assessment of procedural frameworks and implementation practices. This methodological triangulation enhances validity through complementary data sources while enabling both breadth of coverage and depth of contextual understanding⁸⁸².

3.2 Country Selection and Sampling Strategy

The study focuses on six economies selected through purposive sampling to represent different development levels, financial system structures, and industrial development patterns:

1. **Germany:** Representing advanced economies with bank-centered financial systems and strong industrial manufacturing traditions
2. **United States:** Representing advanced economies with market-centered financial systems and diverse industrial structures
3. **South Korea:** Representing newly industrialized economies with directed credit histories and export-oriented industrial development
4. **India:** Representing large emerging economies with mixed banking systems and developing industrial sectors
5. **Malaysia:** Representing middle-income economies with relatively developed financial systems and active industrial policies

6. **Kenya:** Representing developing economies with evolving financial sectors and emerging industrial bases

This selection enables analysis across different economic contexts while including sufficient variation in banking structures and industrial development approaches to identify meaningful patterns and contextual factors.

3.3 Data Collection Methods

The study employed multiple complementary data collection methods:

1. **Document Analysis:** Comprehensive review of banking regulations, industrial policies, central bank publications, industry reports, and academic literature related to industrial SME financing in each selected economy. Documents were systematically cataloged and analyzed using standardized protocols to ensure consistent assessment.
2. **Statistical Data Compilation:** Collection and analysis of quantitative indicators including SME lending volumes, sectoral distribution of industrial loans, interest rate spreads, collateral requirements, and default rates from central banks, banking associations, and international financial institutions.
3. **Key Informant Interviews:** Semi-structured interviews with 48 key informants including banking executives, regulatory officials, industrial SME owners, industry association representatives, and SME development experts across the six focus economies. Interviews followed standardized protocols while allowing flexibility to explore context-specific themes.
4. **Case Studies:** In-depth examination of 12 specific banking programs or initiatives (two from each focus economy) designed to address industrial SME financing needs, analyzing design

⁸⁸¹ Ragin, C. C. (2014). *The comparative method: Moving beyond qualitative and quantitative strategies*. University of California Press.

⁸⁸² Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2023). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. SAGE Publications.

features, implementation approaches, and outcomes.

Data collection was conducted between March 2023 and January 2024, with interviews conducted in local languages where necessary and subsequently translated for analysis.

3.4 Data Analysis Approach

The study employed both cross-sectional analysis (comparing across economies at a specific point in time) and temporal analysis (examining developments within each economy over recent years) to identify both structural patterns and evolutionary trends in industrial SME financing.

Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and comparative indicators, with particular attention to manufacturing-specific lending patterns and variations across economic contexts. Qualitative data underwent thematic analysis using NVivo software, with coding frameworks developed to identify key themes related to grounds, procedures, implementation challenges, and innovative approaches.

The analysis employed an iterative process of pattern identification, contextual examination, and cross-case comparison to develop findings that balance generalizable insights with context-specific understanding. This approach recognizes that effective banking procedures for industrial SMEs must consider both universal principles and local adaptation requirements.

Chapter 4: Comparative Analysis of Grounds and Procedures

4.1 Regulatory Foundations and Policy Frameworks

Regulatory frameworks establish fundamental grounds for banking engagement with industrial SMEs, with significant variations observed across the studied economies. These variations reflect different philosophical approaches to financial regulation, industrial

development priorities, and institutional legacies.

Specialized Industrial Banking Regulations:

Germany and South Korea demonstrate comprehensive regulatory frameworks specifically designed for industrial financing, with Germany's KfW development bank operating under specialized regulations that enable long-term industrial financing with reduced yield expectations¹⁹. Similarly, Korea's Framework Act on SMEs includes specific provisions for manufacturing finance through institutions like the Industrial Bank of Korea^[20]. By contrast, the United States and Kenya employ more generalized banking regulations with limited industrial-specific provisions, potentially constraining procedural adaptation to manufacturing needs.

Prudential Requirements and Industrial Lending:

Bank capital adequacy and provisioning requirements significantly impact industrial SME financing capacity, with notable cross-country variations in approaches to manufacturing-related risk weights. India's Priority Sector Lending requirements mandate that 40% of adjusted net bank credit flow to designated sectors including manufacturing SMEs, creating quantitative grounds for industrial finance^[21]. Malaysia has implemented tailored risk-weight calculations for SME manufacturing loans that recognize the distinctive risk profiles of industrial borrowers^[22].

Collateral Registry Systems: Effective collateral registries emerged as crucial regulatory infrastructure for industrial SME financing, with machinery, equipment, and inventory particularly important for manufacturing enterprises. The study found substantial variation in registry sophistication, with the U.S. Uniform Commercial Code system enabling efficient securing of industrial assets while Kenya's recently established movable assets registry remains in early implementation stages^[23].

Industrial Policy Integration: Countries demonstrating stronger coordination between banking regulations and industrial policies generally achieved more effective financing outcomes for manufacturing SMEs. South Korea's integration of financial regulations with industrial development planning enables strategic alignment of banking procedures with priority manufacturing sectors^[^24]. Germany's Mittelstand policies similarly create coordinated grounds for banking support of industrial SMEs through integrated policy frameworks^[^25].

4.2 Institutional Arrangements and Delivery Structures

Banking institutional structures significantly influence procedural approaches to industrial SME financing, with research revealing several key patterns:

Specialized Industrial Banking Institutions:

Economies with dedicated industrial financing institutions demonstrated more tailored procedural approaches for manufacturing SMEs. Germany's system of development banks (KfW), public savings banks (Sparkassen), and cooperative banks (Volksbanken) provides diversified institutional channels for industrial finance with procedures adapted to different manufacturing segments^[^26]. Similarly, Korea's Industrial Bank and Malaysia's SME Bank employ industry-specialized loan officers with manufacturing expertise, enhancing procedural effectiveness through technical knowledge^[^27].

Branch Network Orientation: Physical banking presence in industrial clusters emerged as a significant institutional factor, particularly for smaller manufacturing enterprises. India's lead bank scheme, which assigns specific banks responsibility for industrial development in designated districts, creates institutional grounds for localized manufacturing finance, though implementation effectiveness varies considerably^[^28]. By contrast, branch consolidation trends in the U.S. banking sector have reduced institutional presence in many

industrial communities, potentially constraining relationship-based procedures for smaller manufacturers^[^29].

Development Financial Institutions (DFIs):

Economies maintaining strong DFIs with explicit industrial mandates demonstrated more robust procedural frameworks for manufacturing finance. Malaysia's success in industrial SME financing partly reflects the institutional capacity of its SME Bank to develop manufacturing-specific procedures, including specialized valuation methodologies for industrial equipment and tailored cash flow assessment tools for production enterprises^[^30].

Ecosystem Integration: Banking institutions demonstrating stronger integration with broader industrial support ecosystems achieved more effective procedural implementation. Germany's Fraunhofer Institutes facilitate connections between banks and manufacturing SMEs through technology validation services that enhance bankability of industrial innovation^[^31]. Kenya's emerging industrial ecosystem shows promising integration between banking institutions and manufacturing associations, though relationship formalization remains limited^[^32].

4.3 Operational Mechanisms and Lending Technologies

Analysis of operational procedures for industrial SME financing revealed several distinctive approaches across the studied banking systems:

Manufacturing-Adapted Credit Assessment:

Banking systems employing sector-specific credit assessment methodologies demonstrated greater effectiveness in evaluating industrial SMEs. German banks commonly employ industry-specific rating tools that incorporate manufacturing-relevant factors including production efficiency ratios, technology positioning, and supply chain integration metrics^[^33]. Similarly, Korean banks utilize manufacturing productivity

indicators alongside traditional financial metrics when assessing industrial borrowers^[^34].

Equipment Financing Procedures: Specialized procedures for machinery and equipment financing emerged as particularly important for industrial SMEs. U.S. banks have developed sophisticated asset-based lending procedures for manufacturing equipment, utilizing specialized valuation approaches and depreciation methodologies tailored to different industrial sectors^[^35]. India's SIDBI (Small Industries Development Bank) employs technology-specific financing procedures that consider productive capacity and obsolescence patterns when structuring industrial equipment loans^[^36].

Working Capital Structures: Manufacturing-appropriate working capital solutions varied significantly across banking systems. German and Korean banks commonly employ inventory financing procedures specifically designed for production cycles, with advance rates and monitoring requirements calibrated to manufacturing inventory characteristics^[^37]. Malaysia has pioneered supplier financing programs that address working capital needs throughout industrial supply chains rather than focusing exclusively on end-product manufacturers^[^38].

Industrial Leasing Procedures: Leasing emerged as an increasingly important procedure for industrial equipment acquisition, with significant variations in implementation sophistication. U.S. banks have developed extensive industrial leasing programs incorporating residual value insurance, technology refresh options, and flexible end-of-term arrangements designed specifically for manufacturing equipment^[^39]. Kenya's banking sector shows emerging interest in industrial leasing but faces procedural challenges related to equipment valuation and secondary market limitations^[^40].

4.4 Technological Integration and Digital Transformation

Banking systems demonstrate varying levels of technological integration in their industrial SME financing procedures, with significant implications for accessibility, efficiency, and effectiveness:

Digital Lending Platforms: Advanced economies are increasingly deploying specialized digital platforms for industrial SME financing, with U.S. banks pioneering algorithmic approaches to equipment financing that reduce processing times from weeks to days^[^41]. Germany has maintained greater emphasis on relationship managers supported by digital tools rather than fully automated industrial lending processes, reflecting cultural preferences for personalized assessment of manufacturing enterprises^[^42].

Alternative Data Utilization: Innovative use of non-traditional data sources is transforming industrial SME assessment procedures in several contexts. Indian banks increasingly incorporate electricity consumption patterns, supplier payment data, and GST (Goods and Services Tax) returns to evaluate manufacturing SMEs with limited credit histories^[^43]. Korean banks utilize industry benchmarking databases that compare operational metrics across similar manufacturers to identify relative performance and associated credit risk^[^44].

Supply Chain Finance Platforms: Digital supply chain financing emerged as particularly valuable for industrial SMEs. Malaysia's supply chain financing platforms connect anchor manufacturers with supplier networks through banking interfaces that facilitate invoice financing, purchase order financing, and distributor financing through integrated digital workflows^[^45]. Similar approaches in Germany demonstrate high adoption rates among industrial SMEs, with associated improvements in working capital efficiency and supplier stability^[^46].

Industrial Internet of Things (IIoT) Integration:

Advanced banking systems are beginning to incorporate IIoT data into industrial lending procedures. U.S. equipment financing programs increasingly utilize real-time performance data from connected machinery to monitor asset utilization, maintenance patterns, and productivity metrics as factors in credit assessment and monitoring^[47]. This represents an emerging frontier in industrial banking procedures with significant potential for enhancing risk assessment accuracy and financing structure optimization.

Chapter 5: Key Findings and Comparative Insights

5.1 Cross-Cutting Determinants of Effective Industrial Banking Procedures

Analysis across the studied banking systems reveals several cross-cutting factors that determine the effectiveness of procedures for industrial SME financing:

Industry-Specific Expertise: Banking systems that develop and deploy specialized manufacturing knowledge consistently demonstrate more effective procedural implementation. This expertise manifests in loan officer training programs (Germany, South Korea), industrial specialist teams (United States, Malaysia), and sector-specific credit departments (India)^[48]. The development of industrial expertise represents a foundational ground for effective banking engagement with manufacturing SMEs, enabling accurate assessment of production processes, equipment values, and sector-specific risks.

Procedural Flexibility with Standardization Balance: Banking systems achieving optimal outcomes combine standardized procedures for efficiency with flexibility mechanisms to accommodate industrial diversity. Germany's standardized documentation requirements coupled with flexible assessment criteria for different manufacturing sub-sectors exemplify this balanced approach^[49]. Conversely, banking systems with either excessive rigidity

(Kenya's highly standardized SME lending templates) or insufficient standardization (India's branch-dependent practice variations) demonstrate lower effectiveness in serving industrial borrowers^[50].

Term Structure Alignment: Alignment between financing term structures and industrial investment horizons emerged as a critical procedural factor. South Korean and German banking systems demonstrate strong alignment through long-term industrial loan programs (5-10 years) and patient capital approaches that accommodate manufacturing payback periods^[51]. U.S. banks show greater term mismatch, with industrial loans averaging 3-5 years despite longer optimal horizons for many manufacturing investments, creating refinancing risks for industrial borrowers^[52].

Ecosystem Connectivity: Banking procedures embedded within broader industrial support ecosystems demonstrate enhanced effectiveness. Malaysia's banking connections with technical assistance providers, industry associations, and export promotion agencies create complementary support structures that strengthen manufacturing finance outcomes^[53]. This ecosystem integration enables more comprehensive understanding of industrial borrowers while providing non-financial supports that enhance bankability.

5.2 Variations Across Development Contexts

The comparative analysis reveals significant variations in industrial banking procedures across different development contexts, with several notable patterns:

Institutional Sophistication Gradient: More developed economies generally demonstrate greater institutional sophistication in industrial banking procedures, including specialized assessment methodologies, tailored financial products, and manufacturing-specific risk management approaches. However, this pattern is not universal, with Malaysia demonstrating procedural sophistication comparable to developed economies despite

its middle-income status, suggesting that deliberate institutional development can accelerate procedural advancement^[^54].

Technology Leapfrogging: While developed economies generally maintain more advanced banking technology infrastructure, emerging economies demonstrate selective leapfrogging in specific procedural domains. India's deployment of digital supply chain financing platforms and mobile-based industrial lending applications has achieved technology levels comparable to advanced economies in these specific areas^[^55]. Kenya similarly shows advanced mobile-based financing procedures for smaller industrial enterprises despite gaps in traditional banking infrastructure^[^56].

Informal Adaptation Mechanisms: Banking systems in developing and emerging economies frequently demonstrate informal procedural adaptations to accommodate industrial realities. Indian bank branch managers in industrial clusters often develop unofficial assessment guidelines for local manufacturing sectors that supplement formal bank procedures^[^57]. These informal adaptations represent pragmatic responses to formal procedural limitations, though they raise consistency and governance concerns.

Policy Dependence Variations: Banking procedures for industrial SMEs in developing economies demonstrate greater dependence on explicit government interventions, including interest subsidies, credit guarantees, and directed lending programs. Kenya's industrial financing relies heavily on government guarantee schemes and development partner credit lines with specific manufacturing earmarks^[^58]. By contrast, Germany's industrial banking procedures operate within supportive policy frameworks but with greater market orientation and less direct intervention^[^59].

5.3 Innovative Practices and Emerging Trends

The research identified several innovative practices and emerging trends in industrial

banking procedures that demonstrate potential for enhancing SME manufacturing finance:

Value Chain Banking Approaches: Integrated financing procedures that address entire industrial value chains rather than individual enterprises in isolation are gaining traction across multiple contexts. Malaysia's Value Chain Financing Program enables coordinated financing for suppliers, processors, and distributors within industrial ecosystems, with simplified procedures for enterprises in pre-approved manufacturing chains^[^60]. Similar approaches in Germany's automotive supplier financing programs demonstrate reduced transaction costs and enhanced risk management through supply chain visibility^[^61].

Sustainability-Integrated Procedures: Banking systems increasingly incorporate sustainability criteria into industrial financing procedures, with particularly advanced implementation in European contexts. Germany's KfW industrial efficiency financing program employs simplified procedures and preferential terms for manufacturing investments that achieve specified energy efficiency improvements^[^62]. This trend represents an important procedural evolution aligning industrial financing with broader sustainability objectives.

Manufacturing-as-a-Service Financing: Innovative procedures for financing servitized manufacturing models are emerging in more advanced banking systems. U.S. banks have developed specialized assessment frameworks for industrial SMEs transitioning from product sales to service-based revenue models, incorporating subscription revenue stability, customer retention metrics, and service delivery capabilities alongside traditional manufacturing criteria^[^63]. This represents an important procedural adaptation to evolving industrial business models.

Collaborative Assessment Mechanisms: Several banking systems are developing collaborative approaches to industrial borrower

assessment that combine perspectives from multiple stakeholders. South Korea's Shared Growth Assessment involves input from large industrial clients regarding their SME suppliers' capabilities and prospects, creating an additional information source for bank assessment procedures^[64]. These collaborative mechanisms help address information asymmetries while strengthening supply chain relationships.

Chapter 6: Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1 Key Conclusions

This comparative analysis of banking grounds and procedures for industrial SME financing yields several key conclusions with important implications for theory and practice:

1. **Procedural Specialization Imperative:** Standard banking procedures designed for general commercial enterprises prove consistently inadequate for addressing the distinctive financing needs of industrial SMEs across all studied contexts. Effective industrial financing requires procedural specialization that accounts for manufacturing-specific characteristics including capital intensity, production cycles, equipment utilization patterns, and technological requirements.
2. **Institutional Foundation Significance:** The institutional arrangements within which banking procedures operate fundamentally shape their industrial effectiveness. Banking systems with specialized industrial financing institutions, manufacturing-experienced personnel, and sector-specific knowledge resources demonstrate superior capacity to develop and implement effective procedures for industrial SMEs.
3. **Digital-Relationship Balance:** The most effective banking procedures for industrial SMEs balance digital efficiency

with relationship elements appropriate to manufacturing complexity. Pure transaction-based digital approaches often fail to capture critical qualitative factors in industrial contexts, while exclusively relationship-based approaches may lack efficiency and standardization required for scale.

4. **Ecosystem Embeddedness Advantage:** Banking procedures embedded within broader industrial support ecosystems consistently outperform isolated financing mechanisms across different development contexts. This embeddedness enables complementary non-financial supports, enhanced information flows, and coordinated interventions that strengthen industrial financing outcomes.
5. **Contextual Adaptation Requirement:** While certain procedural principles demonstrate cross-contextual validity, effective implementation requires significant adaptation to local industrial structures, institutional capacities, and development stages. Banking procedures transplanted without adequate contextual adaptation typically underperform despite conceptual soundness.

6.2 Policy Recommendations

Based on these conclusions, the following recommendations are proposed for enhancing banking procedures for industrial SME financing:

For Banking Regulators and Policy Makers:

1. **Develop Industrial Finance Expertise Centers:** Establish specialized units within regulatory bodies focused on industrial financing requirements, ensuring that banking regulations accommodate manufacturing-specific needs while maintaining system stability and prudential standards.

2. **Implement Proportional Regulatory Approaches:** Design regulatory frameworks with proportionality principles that adjust requirements based on industrial loan characteristics, avoiding one-size-fits-all approaches that may disadvantage manufacturing enterprises.

3. **Create Integrated Policy Frameworks:** Ensure coordination between banking regulations, industrial development policies, and SME support programs to create coherent foundations for manufacturing finance procedures.

4. **Enhance Industrial Data Infrastructure:** Invest in specialized data systems that improve information availability for industrial SME assessment, including equipment valuation databases, sector performance benchmarks, and manufacturing market intelligence resources.

For Banking Institutions:

1. **Develop Industry Vertical Specialization:** Establish manufacturing-focused lending units with specialized personnel, tailored assessment methodologies, and industry-specific knowledge resources to enhance procedural effectiveness for industrial clients.

2. **Implement Technology-Enabled Relationship Banking:** Deploy digital platforms that streamline transaction elements of industrial financing while preserving relationship components essential for understanding manufacturing contexts and building trust with industrial borrowers.

3. **Design Manufacturing-Adapted Product Suites:** Develop comprehensive product portfolios specifically designed for different aspects of industrial financing requirements, including

specialized equipment financing, production-cycle working capital solutions, and industrial innovation financing mechanisms.

4. **Engage in Ecosystem Partnership Development:** Establish formal collaboration frameworks with industrial associations, technical service providers, and business development organizations to create complementary support structures for manufacturing borrowers.

For Industrial SMEs:

1. **Enhance Financial Management Capabilities:** Invest in financial planning and reporting systems that generate manufacturing-relevant information required by banking procedures, including equipment utilization metrics, production efficiency indicators, and detailed cost structure analysis.

2. **Develop Banking Relationship Strategies:** Establish proactive communication approaches with financing partners that demonstrate industrial competence, technological positioning, and market understanding beyond basic financial statements.

3. **Leverage Industry Association Resources:** Utilize collective resources available through manufacturing associations for financial capability building, banking relationship development, and access to specialized financing programs.

6.3 Future Research Directions

This study identifies several promising directions for future research on banking grounds and procedures for industrial SME financing:

1. **Digital Transformation Impacts:** Longitudinal research examining how emerging technologies including

artificial intelligence, machine learning, and industrial IoT are transforming banking procedures for manufacturing enterprises across different development contexts.

2. Sustainability Integration Assessment:

In-depth analysis of how environmental sustainability criteria are being incorporated into industrial financing procedures and the resulting impacts on manufacturing practices and competitiveness.

3. Procedural Effectiveness Metrics:

Development of standardized methods for assessing the effectiveness of different banking procedures for industrial SMEs beyond traditional measures of access and volume.

4. Value Chain Banking Approaches:

Comprehensive examination of integrated value chain financing models for industrial ecosystems, identifying optimal procedural designs and implementation requirements across different manufacturing sectors.

5. Post-Pandemic Industrial Financing:

Analysis of how banking procedures for industrial SMEs are evolving in response to supply chain restructuring, reshoring trends, and digital acceleration following global disruptions.

In conclusion, enhancing banking procedures for industrial SME financing represents a critical priority for enabling sustainable manufacturing growth across diverse economic contexts. By developing grounds and procedures specifically adapted to industrial realities, banking systems can more effectively support the establishment, operation, and expansion of manufacturing enterprises that drive innovation, employment, and economic development. Achieving this goal requires concerted effort from regulatory authorities, banking institutions, policy makers, and industrial SMEs themselves, working within

collaborative frameworks that recognize both universal principles and contextual requirements.

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CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF MEDIATION

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This chapter explores the conceptual foundation of mediation, offering a detailed understanding of its definition, types, processes, and underlying principles. Mediation is increasingly recognized as an effective method for resolving disputes in a variety of legal contexts, including family law, commercial disputes, and civil matters. The chapter begins by defining mediation and contrasts it with other forms of dispute resolution, followed by an analysis of the core principles, types of mediation, and the mediation process itself. The theoretical frameworks that support mediation practices are also examined, providing a comprehensive conceptual structure for understanding its role in the context of divorce proceedings in India.

2.1 Definition of Mediation

Mediation is a structured, voluntary, and confidential process through which an impartial third party, known as the mediator, helps two or more disputing parties reach a mutually acceptable resolution to their conflict. The mediator does not make decisions or impose solutions but facilitates dialogue, encourages mutual understanding, and guides the parties in negotiating a settlement that addresses their needs and interests. The key characteristics that define mediation include its voluntary nature, neutrality, confidentiality, and the self-determination of the parties involved.

Mediation is often contrasted with litigation, where a judge or arbitrator imposes a binding decision on the parties based on legal rules. In mediation, the parties retain control over the outcome, which allows for more flexible and creative solutions that are tailored to their specific circumstances.

2.1.1 Core Principles of Mediation

The definition of mediation is rooted in several core principles that differentiate it from other

forms of dispute resolution, such as litigation and arbitration:

- **Voluntary Participation:** Both parties enter into mediation of their own free will, and either party can withdraw from the process at any point before a settlement is reached. This ensures that the process is consensual and that the parties have a vested interest in finding a resolution.
- **Neutrality and Impartiality of the Mediator:** The mediator is a neutral third party who does not take sides or offer opinions on the merits of the case. The mediator's role is to facilitate communication and guide the parties toward a resolution while maintaining impartiality. This ensures that both parties feel that the process is fair and unbiased.
- **Confidentiality:** Mediation is a private process. Anything discussed during mediation cannot be used in future court proceedings if the dispute is not resolved through mediation. This confidentiality encourages open and honest communication between the parties and helps build trust.

- **Self-Determination of the Parties:** One of the fundamental principles of mediation is that the parties themselves are in control of the outcome. Unlike litigation, where a judge makes a binding decision, mediation allows the parties to negotiate their own agreement, with the mediator assisting them in exploring possible solutions.

2.1.2 Mediation vs. Other Dispute Resolution Methods

While mediation shares some similarities with other dispute resolution methods, it also differs in significant ways. A comparison with **litigation**, **arbitration**, and **negotiation** can help clarify the unique features of mediation.

1. **Mediation vs. Litigation:**

- **Litigation** is the process of resolving disputes through formal legal proceedings in court, where a judge or jury makes a binding decision based on law. In contrast, **mediation** is a more informal and flexible process in which the parties, rather than the mediator, decide the outcome. While litigation can be expensive, timeconsuming, and adversarial, mediation aims to foster cooperation and find a solution that benefits all parties.
- Mediation is especially beneficial in divorce cases because it allows couples to maintain control over the division of assets, child custody arrangements, and other important matters. Litigation, on the other hand, can increase animosity and prolong the emotional and financial toll of the divorce.

2. **Mediation vs. Arbitration:**

- **Arbitration** is another form of alternative dispute resolution (ADR) in which a neutral third party, known as the arbitrator, hears both sides of the dispute and makes a decision that is legally binding on the parties. In contrast, mediation involves no decision-making by the mediator, and the parties have the power to reject any proposed solutions. The key difference is that **arbitration** results in a binding decision, while **mediation** focuses on facilitating mutual agreement and resolution.

3. **Mediation vs. Negotiation:**

- **Negotiation** is the process by which the parties themselves directly communicate and attempt to resolve their dispute. Mediation, however, involves the assistance of a neutral third party (the mediator) who helps facilitate the conversation, identify interests, and explore solutions. While both negotiation and mediation aim for mutually beneficial solutions, mediation can be especially useful when direct negotiation has failed or when the parties struggle with communication or are unable to reach an agreement on their own.

2.1.3 Mediation in Divorce Proceedings

In the context of divorce, mediation provides a valuable tool for resolving the many issues that arise during the dissolution of a marriage. Divorce mediation enables couples to settle matters such as child custody, visitation rights, property division, spousal support, and other financial issues. Unlike litigation, which can create an adversarial environment, mediation focuses on cooperative problem-solving, reducing the emotional strain that often accompanies divorce proceedings.

Divorce mediation offers several key benefits:

- **Preservation of Relationships:** Mediation fosters communication and collaboration, which is especially important when the parties have ongoing relationships (e.g., coparenting). It allows for more amicable post-divorce relationships.
- **Cost-Effectiveness:** Divorce mediation tends to be more affordable than litigation, as it avoids the high costs of legal representation, court fees, and other expenses associated with a protracted court battle.
- **Faster Resolution:** Mediation can often resolve disputes more quickly than litigation, allowing both parties to move on with their lives without the prolonged delays associated with court hearings.

- **Confidentiality:** Unlike court proceedings, which are public, mediation is confidential, providing a more private setting for sensitive discussions regarding financial matters and child custody.

2.2 Types of Mediation

Mediation is a flexible dispute resolution process that can take various forms depending on the circumstances and needs of the parties involved. The type of mediation chosen often depends on the complexity of the dispute, the relationship between the parties, and the desired outcome. Below are the most commonly practiced types of mediation, each offering a unique approach to resolving conflicts:

2.2.1 Facilitative Mediation

Facilitative mediation is a widely practiced form of mediation in which the mediator's primary role is to facilitate communication between the parties, rather than offering solutions or making judgments. This type of mediation is focused on helping the parties understand each other's perspectives and assisting them in negotiating a mutually agreeable solution. The mediator does not provide evaluations or recommendations but instead guides the parties toward self-determination. • **Role of the Mediator:**

- o The mediator helps the parties communicate, express their feelings and needs, and explore possible solutions.
- o Mediators use techniques such as active listening, reframing, and questioning to encourage dialogue and uncover the underlying interests of both parties.

- **Process:**

- o The mediation process typically begins with an introduction and ground rules, followed by the parties each presenting their perspective.
- o The mediator may use techniques like caucusing (meeting with each party separately) to allow the parties to share confidential information.
- o After exploring the issues and interests, the mediator facilitates

brainstorming and negotiations, helping the parties find solutions that are mutually acceptable.

- **Application:**

- o **Example in Divorce:** In a divorce, facilitative mediation might involve helping the spouses discuss sensitive issues like child custody or financial matters. The mediator helps them express their concerns and priorities without making decisions for them, focusing on a collaborative approach to reach an agreement.

- **Advantages:**

- o The process is flexible and allows parties to craft their own solutions.
- o Encourages a cooperative approach, making it especially useful in family law disputes like divorce.
- o Helps maintain ongoing relationships between the parties, which is crucial for postdivorce interactions, such as co-parenting.
- o Voluntary and non-binding, which means the parties are in control of the outcome.

2.2.2 Evaluative Mediation

Evaluative mediation differs from facilitative mediation in that the mediator plays an active role in evaluating the dispute and providing an assessment of the parties' positions. This type of mediation is often used when the parties are unable to reach an agreement on their own and need assistance in understanding the strengths and weaknesses of their respective cases. The mediator, typically an expert in the subject matter, provides an evaluation and may even offer suggestions on potential settlement terms.

- **Role of the Mediator:**

- o The mediator evaluates the positions of the parties, providing an objective assessment of the case, especially when legal or technical aspects are involved.
- o The mediator may offer a likely outcome based on the merits of the

case if it were to go to court. o While evaluative mediation involves more direct input from the mediator, the parties are still free to accept or reject the mediator's suggestions.

• **Process:**

o The process typically begins with the mediator reviewing the case and hearing the positions of both parties. o The mediator may offer a legal or procedural evaluation, highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of each side's arguments. o Based on this assessment, the mediator may propose possible solutions, guiding the parties toward a resolution that is legally realistic and acceptable to both.

• **Application:**

o **Example in Divorce:** If two spouses are in conflict over the division of assets or child custody, the mediator in evaluative mediation may assess the legal strengths of each party's claims, provide a legal evaluation of what a court might decide, and help the parties understand the implications of continuing the dispute versus settling.

• **Advantages:**

o Provides expert input, making it ideal for complex cases or those involving significant legal issues.

o Helps parties who are at an impasse or who have unrealistic expectations about the outcome. o Offers a more structured approach than facilitative mediation, with clearer guidance on possible solutions.

2.2.3 Transformative Mediation

Transformative mediation is a more emotionally focused form of mediation that aims not only to resolve the dispute but also to transform the relationship between the parties. This approach is particularly useful in conflicts where there are deep emotional issues or when the parties need to heal and rebuild their communication. The central goal of transformative mediation is empowerment and recognition – helping each party

understand the other's perspective and restore constructive communication.

• **Role of the Mediator:**

o The mediator's role in transformative mediation is not to push for a settlement but to empower the parties to make their own decisions and help them see the conflict from the other's point of view. o The mediator encourages the parties to listen actively and communicate openly, helping them identify underlying emotions, needs, and concerns.

• **Process:**

o The process begins with the mediator facilitating an open dialogue between the parties, focusing on feelings, personal needs, and the emotional context of the dispute. o Through reflection and reframing, the mediator helps the parties express their emotions and engage with each other in a more empathetic way. o The mediator guides the parties toward mutual recognition of each other's needs and helps them build a cooperative relationship.

• **Application:**

o **Example in Divorce:** In a divorce with high emotional stakes, such as a case involving domestic abuse or significant emotional distress, transformative mediation can help the spouses address the emotional hurt underlying the dispute. The mediator helps them move from blame and anger to empathy, which can facilitate a more constructive settlement, especially in child custody disputes.

• **Advantages:**

o Focuses on improving the parties' relationship, making it ideal for ongoing interactions, such as co-parenting after divorce.

o Helps individuals overcome entrenched negative feelings and rebuild communication.

o Promotes lasting conflict resolution by addressing the emotional core of the dispute.

2.2.4 Narrative Mediation

Narrative mediation is a unique form of mediation that focuses on the stories that the parties tell about their disputes. The theory behind narrative mediation is that individuals frame conflicts through personal narratives, and the conflict arises from differing or competing stories. The mediator helps the parties reframe these stories in a way that fosters understanding and resolution.

- **Role of the Mediator:**

- The mediator encourages the parties to articulate their “stories” about the conflict, allowing each side to express their perspective without judgment.
- The mediator helps the parties identify common themes in their stories and reframe them in a way that facilitates collaboration and mutual understanding.

- **Process:**

- The mediator listens to each party’s version of events and explores the meanings attached to the conflict.
- The mediator helps the parties rewrite their narratives, focusing on shared values and collaborative solutions.
- This form of mediation is particularly effective when the conflict is based on deeply held beliefs or perceptions that are influencing the dispute.

- **Application:**

- **Example in Divorce:** In divorce mediation, one spouse might blame the other for the dissolution of the marriage, while the other spouse may have a different perspective. Narrative mediation helps them explore how each of them views the situation, which can lead to greater empathy and understanding.

- **Advantages:**

- Encourages deep reflection on personal perceptions, leading to more empathetic conflict resolution.
- Useful for disputes where emotions and personal perceptions play a significant role.

Helps in transforming negative, entrenched viewpoints into more constructive perspectives.

2.2.5 Court-Annexed Mediation

Court-annexed mediation is a form of mediation that is integrated into the formal legal system. In court-annexed mediation, courts refer disputing parties to mediation before their case proceeds to trial. It aims to resolve disputes quickly and amicably, reducing the court’s caseload and offering an alternative to lengthy litigation.

- **Role of the Mediator:**

- The mediator is often appointed by the court or selected from a list of approved mediators. The mediator facilitates the mediation sessions and helps the parties negotiate a resolution before the case proceeds to trial.

- **Process:**

- After a case is filed in court, the judge may refer the case to mediation, where the mediator helps the parties negotiate a settlement.
- The mediator encourages parties to settle their disputes before the trial, which can save time and reduce the emotional cost of a trial.
- The settlement reached in mediation may be presented to the court for approval, and if the parties agree, the court may incorporate it into the final judgment.

- **Application:**

- **Example in Divorce:** Family courts may refer divorce cases to mediation, helping the parties resolve issues like asset division, child custody, and alimony before the case is heard in court.

- **Advantages:**

- Helps reduce court backlogs and the time taken for a case to be heard.
- Offers a less adversarial, more cooperative process.
- Often leads to quicker resolutions and lower legal costs.

2.2.6 Online Mediation

Online mediation or **e-mediation** is a modern form of mediation where the mediator and the parties meet in a virtual space rather than face-to-face. With the increasing reliance on digital communication, online mediation has become an accessible and effective way to resolve disputes remotely.

- **Role of the Mediator:**
 - The mediator's role remains the same as in traditional mediation, but they facilitate the process using video conferencing tools, chat platforms, or email.
- **Process:**
 - Parties communicate with the mediator and each other through a secure online platform, which may include video calls, chat rooms, and shared document spaces. ○ This method allows for flexibility in

2.3 The Mediation Process

The mediation process is designed to be a structured, yet flexible, method of resolving disputes where an impartial third-party mediator facilitates negotiations between the parties. The aim is to help the parties reach a mutually acceptable resolution without the need for litigation or court intervention. The mediation process is typically collaborative, empowering the parties to craft their own solutions to the issues at hand.

Below is a detailed description of the mediation process, including the typical stages and the mediator's role at each step:

1. Pre-Mediation Phase

Before the mediation process formally begins, several preparatory steps take place. This phase sets the stage for a successful mediation process.

- **Initial Contact:**
 - The process typically begins when one or both parties express interest in mediation. The mediator is often selected either by the parties themselves, through mutual

agreement, or appointed by a court or institution, depending on the nature of the dispute.

- **Mediation Agreement:**

- A written agreement, also known as a mediation contract or memorandum of understanding (MOU), is often signed before the mediation process begins. This document outlines the roles and responsibilities of each party, the confidentiality provisions, and the scope of the mediator's involvement. ○ The agreement may also include details on scheduling, costs, and ground rules for communication during the mediation sessions.

- **Pre-Mediation Sessions:**

- Sometimes, individual or joint preliminary meetings are conducted by the mediator with the parties before the actual mediation session. This is called the "premediation" phase and helps set expectations for the process and allows the mediator to gather basic information about the dispute. This is particularly important in more complex or high-stakes cases like divorce or business disputes.

2. Opening Session

The opening session of mediation is crucial in establishing the ground rules and setting a constructive tone for the discussions. The mediator's role is to facilitate a respectful and neutral environment for dialogue.

- **Introductions and Explanation of the Process:**

- The mediator begins the session by introducing themselves and explaining the rules of mediation, including confidentiality, voluntary participation, and the mediator's impartial role. ○ The mediator sets the tone for the session by ensuring that the parties understand that the mediator does not have decision-making power but is there to help facilitate discussions.

- **Setting Ground Rules:**

- The mediator establishes ground rules for communication during the session, emphasizing respect, no interruptions, and active listening. These ground rules ensure that both parties feel heard and that the session remains productive.

- **Establishing the Issues:**

- The mediator then allows each party to explain the nature of the dispute and their concerns. The goal of this step is for the mediator to understand the issues from each party's perspective, while also helping the parties understand each other's concerns. ○ The mediator ensures that both parties have an opportunity to speak without being interrupted, creating a balanced space for dialogue.

3. Information Gathering and Discussion

Once the ground rules and issues are defined, the mediator helps the parties engage in a detailed discussion of the dispute. This phase is essential for identifying the interests and concerns of each party, which will form the foundation for potential solutions.

- **Clarifying Issues:**

- The mediator asks open-ended questions to clarify the issues at hand and encourage the parties to explore their underlying interests. Rather than focusing solely on positions or demands, the mediator seeks to understand the underlying needs, emotions, and motivations of each party.

- **Exploring Interests and Needs:**

- The mediator helps the parties differentiate between their positions (what they want) and their interests (why they want it). By focusing on interests, the mediator helps the parties move from a stance of opposition to one of collaboration. ○ For example, in divorce mediation, the parties may have opposing positions on child custody but share an interest in ensuring the children's well-being.

- **Building Empathy:**

- The mediator facilitates empathy-building by encouraging each party to actively listen to the other's perspective and express their feelings and needs. This process helps break down barriers of misunderstanding and fosters cooperation.

4. Generating Options for Resolution

Once the issues and interests have been clarified, the mediator shifts the focus to brainstorming possible solutions. This is often one of the most creative phases of the mediation process, where the mediator helps the parties generate options without judgment or criticism.

- **Brainstorming Solutions:**

- The mediator encourages the parties to think outside the box and consider a wide range of possible solutions. During this phase, the mediator may suggest potential options but ultimately encourages the parties to come up with their own solutions.

- **Exploring Alternatives:**

- The mediator helps the parties assess each proposed solution in terms of feasibility, fairness, and practicality. If the parties are unable to agree on a solution right away, the mediator may suggest alternative ways of resolving the issue or give them time to reflect on their options.

- **Reality Testing:**

- The mediator may also engage in "reality testing" by asking the parties to evaluate the consequences of each proposed solution. For instance, the mediator may ask the parties how they would feel if a certain resolution were implemented or what impact it would have on their long-term interests.

5. Negotiation and Agreement

This stage involves negotiation, where the parties begin to narrow down the options and work toward a final resolution. The mediator assists in guiding the parties through the

negotiation process while keeping the dialogue focused on mutual interests.

- **Negotiation:**

- The mediator helps the parties refine the options and negotiate terms. This may involve suggesting trade-offs or compromises, where one party may agree to meet some of the other party's needs in exchange for concessions on their own needs.
- In some cases, the mediator may conduct separate sessions (called "caucuses") with each party to help them reflect on the offers and proposals, offering a confidential space for the parties to reassess their positions.

- **Drafting the Agreement:**

- Once the parties reach a consensus, the mediator helps draft a written agreement that outlines the terms of the resolution. This agreement is typically non-binding unless the parties choose to formalize it in a legal contract, particularly in divorce or business-related disputes.

- **Agreement Review:**

- The mediator ensures that both parties fully understand the terms of the agreement and that there is clarity on any legal or practical implications. If needed, the mediator may suggest that the parties consult with legal counsel before finalizing the agreement.

6. Conclusion and Follow-up

After the agreement has been reached and signed, the mediation process concludes.

However, there may be additional follow-up to ensure that the resolution is implemented effectively and that both parties are satisfied with the outcome.

- **Signing the Agreement:**

- The final agreement is typically signed by both parties, confirming their commitment to the resolution. In some cases, the agreement may be submitted to a court for formal approval, particularly in family law matters such as divorce.

- **Follow-up:**

- The mediator may schedule follow-up sessions to check on the implementation of the agreement or help resolve any new issues that arise post-resolution. This followup ensures that the parties adhere to the terms and provides a space for additional mediation if necessary.

- **Closure:**

- If the mediation is successful, both parties leave the process with a sense of closure and a resolution that meets their needs. In cases where mediation is not successful, the mediator may suggest alternative dispute resolution methods or refer the parties to litigation if they are unable to resolve the dispute on their own.

2.4 Principles of Mediation

The effectiveness of mediation is built upon several key principles that distinguish it from other forms of dispute resolution:

1. **Voluntary Participation:** Mediation is voluntary, meaning that no party can be forced to engage in mediation or agree to a settlement. This ensures that the process is cooperative and consensual.

2. **Confidentiality:** Confidentiality is a cornerstone of mediation. Anything discussed during the mediation process cannot be used as evidence in future legal proceedings, allowing parties to negotiate openly without fear of consequences.

3. **Neutrality and Impartiality:** The mediator is neutral and does not take sides. The mediator's role is to guide the parties toward a solution rather than offer opinions or judgments.

4. **Self-Determination:** In mediation, the parties themselves control the outcome. Unlike a judge or arbitrator, the mediator does not impose a decision but helps the parties craft their own solution based on their needs and interests.

5. **Informality:** Mediation is typically less formal than litigation or arbitration. The process is more flexible and allows for creative solutions tailored to the needs of the parties involved.

6. **Empathy and Active Listening:** Mediators are trained to listen actively and empathetically, helping the parties feel heard and understood. This promotes trust and encourages a more collaborative approach to problem-solving.

2.5 Theoretical Models of Mediation

Mediation practices are informed by several theoretical frameworks that guide mediators in facilitating resolution. These models help structure the mediation process and offer mediators different approaches to handling disputes.

1. Interest-Based Bargaining:

o Developed by Fisher and Ury in the Harvard Negotiation Project, this model focuses on identifying and addressing the interests behind positions. In divorce mediation, this approach encourages parties to move beyond rigid positions (e.g.,

“I want 50% of the assets”) and explore their underlying interests (e.g., “I need financial security for my future”).

2. Transformative Mediation Theory:

o Transformative mediation emphasizes the empowerment of the parties and the transformation of their relationship. It focuses on changing the way parties view the conflict and each other, encouraging more collaborative and empathetic interactions.

o This model is particularly relevant in family law disputes, where long-term relationships (such as those between co-parents) need to be preserved and nurtured.

3. Narrative Mediation:

o This model sees disputes as the result of conflicting stories or narratives. The mediator helps the parties reframe the conflict and

create new, more positive narratives that allow for resolution. This can be useful in divorce cases where each party may have a different view of the marriage.

4. Power-Based Mediation:

o In some cases, where there is a significant power imbalance, power-based mediation can be used. The mediator helps ensure that both parties have equal influence in the process, addressing power dynamics and ensuring that no party is coerced into an agreement.

MEDICAL BANKRUPTCY AND RIGHT TO HELP A CONSTITUTIONAL FAILURE ANALYZING HOW OUT OF POCKET EXPENSES VIOLATE FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT

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Abstract

Medical bankruptcy is a growing issue in India where millions of people face financial hardship annually because of high out-of-pocket medical expenses. Lack of funding for public healthcare and inadequate regulatory oversight put people at risk of catastrophic medical costs despite constitutional protections under Article 21 (Right to Life and Health) and Article 14 (Right to Equality). These precedents uphold the fundamental right to healthcare. This study highlights the urgent need for universal healthcare financing stricter price controls and increased insurance coverage to prevent health-induced poverty. It does this by referencing government reports Supreme Court decisions and international case studies. The study concludes that Indias failure to protect its citizens from the financial ruin caused by medical expenses is incompatible with its constitutional ideals and demands immediate legislative and policy changes. To guarantee justice equality and dignity for all citizens healthcare financing must be done according to a rights-based framework.

Keywords: Medical bankruptcy, fundamental right, right to health, healthcare.

Introduction

Healthcare is an essential determinant of human well-being directly linked to socio-economic stability and overall quality of life. However, in India the rising cost of medical treatment coupled with inadequate financial protection mechanisms has made access to healthcare a privilege rather than a fundamental right. A sizable section of the populace experiences catastrophic healthcare expenses which can result in medical bankruptcy a condition in which high medical bills push people and families into financial ruin. This phenomenon is particularly concerning given India's constitutional commitment to social justice equality and the right to life. The Supreme Court has interpreted the Indian

Constitution to include the right to health through Article 21 (Right to Life and Personal Liberty) in cases like *Paschim Banga Khet Mazdoor samity & Ors vs State of West Bengal & Anr* and *Consumer Education & Research Centre v. Union of India*(India., 1996).According to the judiciary the state has a constitutional duty to provide healthcare (Mohinder Singh Chawla 1997). In a similar vein economic differences should not bar people from receiving necessary medical care according to Article 14 (Right to Equality). The reality however shows a sharp contrast: individuals in India pay more than 55% of all medical expenses out of pocket making it one of the countries with the highest OOP healthcare expenditures in the world (Welfare, 2017-18). The impoverished are disproportionately impacted by this financial

burden which exacerbates cycles of debt asset sales and economic hardship.

The Prevalence of Medical Bankruptcy in India

1. Out-of-Pocket Expenditure (OOP) and Its Impact

In India most healthcare payments are still made from pocket (OOP) which puts a heavy financial strain on people and frequently results in medical bankruptcy. According to the National Health Accounts 2020, OOP accounts for nearly 55% of all healthcare costs making India one of the most vulnerable nations in terms of financial risk protection for the medical field. The World Health Organisation estimates that 63 million Indians are pushed into poverty annually due to the country's crippling healthcare expenses, highlighting the systemic failure of the current healthcare model (Organization, 2020). According to the Economic Survey of India 2021–2022 (India. O. , 2022), public health spending is still languishing at less than 2 percent of GDP, which is much lower than the global average of 6 percent. This makes household financial burdens worse. In terms of health expenditure coverage India is one of the worst-performing countries according to the Global Burden of Disease Study 2019 leaving millions of people without financial security against medical emergencies. More than 80 percent of Indians do not have health insurance which forces them to pay for medical care with high-interest loans or their own savings according to data from the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) 2017–18 (Office., 2019). According to a Lancet Global Health Report from 2021 47% of hospitalized patients in India turn to borrowing money or selling assets to cover their medical bills which feeds the cycle of debt-driven poverty. Since rural and lower-income households spend a larger percentage of their income on healthcare than urban populations do they experience disproportionately higher levels of financial distress according to studies from the Public

Health Foundation of India (PHFI). To avoid exploitative costs in the private healthcare sector the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Health and Family Welfare (2022) has underlined time and again the necessity of increased public spending and price regulation of medical services. Furthermore, according to a 2021 NITI Aayog Report more than 30% of India's poorest quintile postpone or completely forgo medical care because of financial limitations which results in avoidable deaths and escalating health disparities (Aayog., 2021). Unregulated private sector pricing and the absence of a comprehensive universal health insurance program result in a dual burden of economic and health hardship necessitating quick policy changes to stop further deterioration of social and financial stability.

2. Case Studies Highlighting the Crisis

Beyond typical medical costs the financial burden of medical care in India places a heavy financial burden on families and individuals alike. The National Cancer Registry Programme (NCRP) 2020 (Programme., 2020) states that medical bankruptcy is primarily caused by cancer treatment because the high expenses of cancer care force many families to sell off assets or take on large debts with high interest rates. The lack of price control during the COVID-19 pandemic allowed private healthcare facilities to charge outrageous prices for necessary medications ventilator support and hospital accommodations leaving many patients with crippling financial burdens according to the 2021 Report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Health and Family Welfare (Welfare., 2021). Chronic illnesses like kidney failure diabetes and cardiovascular diseases cause long-lasting financial difficulties according to research from The Lancet and the Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI). This situation feeds a vicious cycle of financial instability in which patients

frequently forgo necessities to pay for protracted medical care. Since access to healthcare is still very limited in rural India the crisis is especially severe there. According to an Oxfam India report from 2022 (India. O. , 2022) the lack of access to reasonably priced healthcare services disproportionately affects rural communities frequently requiring lengthy travel times to hospitals that result in extra expenses for lodging and transportation. The terrible effects of unaffordable healthcare are demonstrated in a case study from 2021 from Maharashtra (Maharashtra., 2021) where a marginal farmer had to sell his land to pay for heart surgery. These instances highlight the shortcomings of India's healthcare system in terms of financial security which exacerbates economic inequality and emphasizes the pressing need for legislative changes to stop severe health problems from resulting in long-term poverty.

The Psychological and Social Impact of Medical Bankruptcy

Global Perspectives on Medical Bankruptcy

Medical bankruptcy increases vulnerabilities for impacted people and their families by endangering not only their financial security but also having profound psychological and social repercussions. Financial distress brought on by excessive medical bills is a major cause of anxiety depression and other mental health conditions according to NIMHANS studies ((NIMHANS), 2021). This is especially true for low-income groups that do not have access to psychological support. Families are also impacted as children from homes with high medical debt are more likely to leave school early and join the workforce to help support their families which feeds the cycle of poverty and educational underdevelopment. Due to financial limitations women in low-income families frequently put their own medical needs last with healthcare resources going to male family members more frequently. This problem

also has a clear gendered impact. This exacerbates gender disparities in health outcomes by causing women to receive insufficient or delayed treatment for chronic conditions. Social instability emotional distress and financial ruin all work together to highlight how urgently systemic changes in healthcare financing are needed to stop medical costs from causing intergenerational poverty and lifetime hardship.

1. Comparing India with Developed Nations

Countries like the UK and Canada have effectively eliminated medical bankruptcy through publicly funded healthcare models that guarantee universal health coverage and guarantee that no individual experiences financial ruin because of medical bills (Bank., 2022). While Canada's single-payer system ensures complete coverage for all its citizens the United Kingdom's National Health Service (NHS) provides free or reasonably priced healthcare services that are funded by taxes. Germany's Social Health Insurance System which offers a mixed insurance-based model that prevents people from going bankrupt while maintaining access to high-quality medical care requires employers and employees to contribute to statutory health insurance. However, the United States provides a sobering example because of its generally private insurance-driven system which has led to widespread medical bankruptcy even though it is a developed nation with cutting-edge medical facilities. Exorbitant medical costs and insurance coverage gaps have left many Americans in debt underscoring the dangers of over-privatization in the healthcare industry. Many international models support putting public healthcare investment first enacting universal insurance programs and controlling medical costs to shield citizens from possible financial ruin. India which is depending more and more on private

healthcare providers is a good candidate for this strategy. (Bank. W. &, 2017)

2. Lessons from Middle-Income Countries

Thailand universal coverage scheme (UCS) a successful model for lower-middle-income countries seeking to improve healthcare access while lowering financial risk serves as evidence that a well-designed public insurance program can prevent medical bankruptcy. In Brazil the Unified Health System (SUS) provides free public healthcare services to its citizens ensuring equitable access to necessary treatments and significantly reducing the financial burden of medical bills. To address healthcare access disparities, prevent medically induced poverty and improve financial protection for rural populations China has relied heavily on the New Cooperative Medical Scheme (NCMS). These models have much to teach India where millions of people continue to face financial hardship because of high out-of-pocket costs and inadequate insurance coverage. India can enhance its healthcare system protect vulnerable populations and reduce the number of medical bankruptcies by combining government-funded healthcare with targeted insurance programs and universal coverage. (Bank. W. &, 2017)

Constitutional and Legal Implications

1. Article 21: Right to Life and Health

- The **Supreme Court of India** has consistently affirmed the fundamental right to healthcare as an intrinsic component of the right to life, as seen in **Paschim Banga Khet Mazdoor Samity v. State of West Bengal (1996)** and **State of Punjab v. Mohinder Singh Chawla (1997)**.
- The state's failure to ensure financial protection against medical bankruptcy undermines the very essence of Article

21, necessitating immediate legislative intervention.

2. Article 14: Right to Equality and Healthcare Access

- Economic barriers to medical treatment create a de facto healthcare apartheid, disproportionately affecting economically weaker sections of society and thereby violating the principles of equality enshrined in Article 14.

Policy and Legal Shortcomings

1. Gaps in prevailing policies

- **Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY)**, which seeks to provide financial assistance to vulnerable populations, significant gaps persist in India's healthcare financing framework. while ambitious in scope, remains insufficient in practice as it covers only a fraction of the population and excludes critical outpatient treatments. The scheme primarily covers **hospitalization expenses** but fails to address **outpatient costs**, which account for nearly **70% of total medical expenditure** in India ((2021)., 2021). Moreover, chronic illnesses such as diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and kidney failure—which require long-term management—are inadequately covered, pushing affected families into debt cycles and asset liquidation.

- Existing government-funded insurance schemes, including **Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY)** and **state-level initiatives like Aarogya Sri (Telangana and Andhra Pradesh)**, remain fragmented, lack uniformity, and often exclude middle-income households who are equally vulnerable to medical bankruptcy.
- The **Drug Price Control Order (DPCO) 2013** attempts to regulate essential medicine prices, but enforcement is weak, leading to **artificial inflation of**

life-saving drugs and treatments. The **Clinical Establishments (Registration and Regulation) Act, 2010**, meant to curb exploitative pricing in private hospitals.

- The **National Health Policy (NHP) 2017**, which envisions increasing public health expenditure to 2.5% of GDP, remains far from realization, with current spending hovering around **1.2%**.
- the **Employees' State Insurance Scheme (ESIS)**, originally designed to provide financial protection to workers, faces operational inefficiencies, limited hospital networks, and underutilization due to bureaucratic hurdles. (Employment., 2020)
- The **Jan Aushadhi Scheme**, aimed at providing affordable generic medicines, faces accessibility challenges as Jan Aushadhi Kendras are unevenly distributed across the country.
- The **Mahatma Jyotiba Phule Jan Arogya Yojana (MJPJAY)** in Maharashtra provides health coverage for economically disadvantaged populations but has limited reach and suffers from infrastructure constraints.
- the **Universal Immunization Programme (UIP)**, while successful in preventive care, does not address the broader issue of financial protection against major illnesses.

Legal and Policy Recommendations

Ensuring equitable access to healthcare and addressing the growing medical bankruptcy crisis require a strong legal and policy framework. The following suggestions list the changes that must be made to improve India's healthcare system and give all citizens financial security.

1. **Universal Healthcare Financing:** Ensuring financial risk protection requires the adoption of a universal healthcare

system that is financed by taxes as recommended by NITI Aayog's Health Reform Report 2021. (Aayog., 2021) By implementing such models' nations such as Canada (publicly funded healthcare) and the United Kingdom (NHS model) have successfully eradicated medical bankruptcy. The National Health Policy (NHP) 2017 set a target of 2 percent of GDP for public health spending but India's spending is still incredibly low at 1. 2 percent. Expanding government healthcare services lowering out-of-pocket (OOP) costs and enhancing service delivery are all possible with a sustainable financing mechanism financed by progressive taxation and a dedicated health cess. In underserved areas this reform must be combined with public-private partnerships (PPP) to improve efficiency and accessibility.

2. Strengthening Regulatory Mechanisms:

The pharmaceutical industry and private hospitals must both reduce their exploitative medical costs which calls for a more robust legal and regulatory framework. Pharmaceutical companies frequently challenge the Drug Price Control Order (DPCO) 2013 which attempts to control the cost of essential medications and it is not well enforced. It is essential to expand the Essential Medicines List (EML) and set stringent price caps on expensive medical devices diagnostic procedures and treatments. Mandatory price transparency regulations that mandate hospitals reveal treatment costs up front can also stop unethical billing practices. To avoid disparities between urban and rural areas the Clinical Establishments (Registration and Regulation) Act 2010 which was designed to regulate private healthcare providers must be rigorously enforced. This includes standardized treatment costs and harsher penalties

for overcharging patients. To maintain price stability and stop financial exploitation a Healthcare Pricing Authority should be established to oversee and control healthcare expenses across the country. (Fertilizers, 2013)

3. Expanding Health Insurance Coverage:

Schemes such as Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY have made healthcare more accessible to those from lower-income backgrounds but they still only cover hospitalization costs outpatient care chronic illnesses and expensive medications are not covered. Millions of Indians can have their financial burdens lessened by extending PM-JAY to cover long-term illness management and outpatient services. Mandatory employer-sponsored health insurance akin to Germany's Social Health Insurance System can also guarantee that employees in the formal sector are adequately covered. The introduction of government-subsidized insurance plans with tiers of premium contributions based on income levels is necessary to safeguard middle-class individuals and workers in the unorganized sector who are not eligible for PM-JAY. Expanding coverage for vulnerable populations can be achieved by strengthening community-based health insurance (CBHI) risk pooling and co-pay mechanisms.

4. Legal Right to Healthcare: Enforceability is limited in the absence of comprehensive Right to Health legislation even though court rulings have confirmed healthcare as a fundamental right under Article 21. Like the Right to Education (RTE) Act a National Health Rights Act can create legal responsibility for the government to provide accessible and reasonably priced healthcare. All citizens should be protected from financial risk have non-

discriminatory access and receive minimum service guarantees under this law. Policy changes can also be sparked by bolstering public interest litigation (PIL) procedures to contest systemic healthcare violations.

5. Strengthening Public Healthcare Infrastructure:

Enhancing accessibility requires a major increase in funding for district hospitals primary healthcare centers (PHCs) and public health research particularly in underserved and rural areas. To close healthcare gaps in remote areas Jan Aushadhi Kendras for reasonably priced generic medications should be expanded and telemedicine and mobile health services should be integrated. Additionally, the lack of qualified medical personnel in Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities can be lessened by providing training and incentives for healthcare professionals to work in these areas.

Conclusion

Despite constitutional guarantees under Article 21 (Right to Life and Health) and Article 14 (Right to Equality) millions of Indians face catastrophic health expenses frequently turning to debt asset liquidation or financial distress due to the countries healthcare systems persistent problems with excessive out-of-pocket expenses (OOP) inadequate public funding and inadequate insurance coverage which exacerbate economic instability especially for marginalized populations. A large section of the population is left vulnerable by the limited coverage of programs like Ayushman Bharat which aim to offer financial protection. Global models like Thailand UCS, Germany's Social Health Insurance and the UK NHS demonstrate how well universal healthcare financing reduces financial risks. Strengthening rural healthcare infrastructure utilizing digital health innovations and encouraging preventive care are crucial steps toward a rights-based equitable healthcare system. Without prompt policy and

legislative intervention medical bankruptcy will continue to jeopardize economic stability social justice and public health outcomes in India. Resolving these shortcomings will require India to increase public healthcare spending enforce stringent price regulations on essential treatments and expand insurance coverage to include outpatient care and chronic illnesses. (Bank. W. , Universal Health Coverage: Lessons from Global Case Studies. , 2022)

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GUARDIANSHIP AND CHILD CUSTODY UNDER MUSLIM LAW AND SUGGESTED REFORMS

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Abstract

The laws are not static they changes with the demand of time. The law governing custody of children is closely linked with that of guardianship. Guardianship in Muslim Law refers to a bundle of rights and powers that an adult has in relation to the person and property of a minor Muslim, while custody is a narrower concept relating to the upbringing and day-to-day care and control of the minor. The term 'custody' is not defined in any Indian family law, whether secular or religious. The term 'guardian' is defined by the Guardians and Wards Act, 1890 (hereinafter, GWA) as a **—person having the care of the person of a minor or of his property or of both his person and property⁸⁸³.**

For eradicating the loopholes in guardianship law under Muslim law there sine quo non reforms should be applied. Changes that are necessary in section 17,19 and 25 of guardianship and wards act,1890 reforms suggested by law commission report 257 on custody laws. Reform in Islamic law on custody and guardianship as In Muslim law, for very young children, the mother is preferred to be the custodian, but the father always remains the natural guardian. The face of unequal child custody arrangements should be changing. This trend has arisen largely in a response to changing familial roles (male care takers taking on more child rearing responsibilities) as well psychological studies revealing that the involvement of both parents in child rearing is preferable to sole custody arrangements⁸⁸⁴. However, such preferences for shared custody are often balanced with the —best interest of the child standard and interest.

Keywords – Guardianship, Miner, Custody, Best interest, Children, Care, Welfare.

GRASP - EDUCATE - EVOLVE

⁸⁸³ Guardian and Wards Act, No. 8 of 1890] S. 4(2)

⁸⁸⁴ Glover, R. & Steel, C., Comparing the Effects on the Child of Post-Divorce Parenting Arrangements, *Journal of Divorce*, Vol. 12 No. 2-3 (1989)

Introduction

Aims and Objectives

- a. To strengthen the welfare principle in the Guardians and Wards Act, 1890 and emphasize its relevance in each aspect of guardianship and custody related decision-making;
- c. To provide equal legal status of both parents with respect to guardianship and custody;
- d. To suggest detailed guidelines to help decision-makers assess what custodial and guardianship arrangement serve the welfare of the child in specific situations; and
- e. To provide for the option of awarding joint custody to both parents, in certain circumstances conducive to the welfare of the child.

Scope of the Paper-

The focus of this paper has been limited to the suggested reform which should be applied in law of guardianship under Muslim .

Research Question-

Should and how can the —best interest of the child||welfare of the child|| standard be balanced against other factors (i.e. the wishes of the parents, other children, the wishes of the child)?

Whether there should be physical or joint custody or should it be left to the discretion of the judge?

Research Methodology-

A descriptive style of writing has been used throughout the paper. The research methodology used in this paper is qualitative form of research highly based on textbooks and scholarly articles.

Best Interest of the Child/Welfare of the Child Standard

The best interest of the child standard is utilized in a number of countries across the globe. According to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, —in all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the **best interests of the child shall be a primary**

Consideration.⁸⁸⁵ The Convention goes on to state that a child should be separated from his or her parents if there is —abuse or neglect of the child by the parents.⁸⁸⁶ According to the United Nations Human Rights Commission, the —best interests of the child is a proxy for the —well-being of a child|| based on a variety of circumstances laid out by the Convention⁸⁸⁷. Welfare, as a decision criterion, is generally flexible, adaptable and reflective of contemporary attitudes regarding family within society.⁸⁸⁸ However, there are two main criticisms of the best interest of the child standard. First, it is unpredictable and information intensive. Parents who are divorcing are thus left guessing in regard to how the court will handle their child custody dispute; this can lead to unnecessary pre-court bargaining that may indeed be harmful to both child and parents.⁸⁸⁹ This could be resolved by a more predictable rule based standard. However, a rule based standard is likely to be rigid and not consider the individual circumstances of each case.⁸⁹⁰

Second, the best interest of the child standard primarily focuses on the predicaments of the child rather than including the feelings and intentions of the parents.

⁸⁸⁵ Convention on the Rights of the Child, Art. 3, (1989)

⁸⁸⁶ Ibid at Art. 9

⁸⁸⁷ UNHCR, UNHCR Guidelines on Determining the Best Interests of the Child, (2008).

⁸⁸⁸ Gilmore, Stephen, Great Debates: Family Law, Palgrave Macmillan, (2014) pp. 76-83

⁸⁸⁹ Ibid

⁸⁹⁰ Ibid

The following considerations can be relevant: the child's views; the child's identity (such as sex, sexual orientation, national origin, religion and beliefs, cultural identity, and personality); preservation of the family environment and maintaining relations (including, where appropriate, extended family or community); the care, protection and safety of the child; any situation of vulnerability (disability, minority status, homelessness, victim of abuse, etc.); and the child's right to health and right to education-COMMETEE

Infant's welfare paramount. In any proceedings before any Court, concerning the custody or upbringing of an infant or the administration of any property belonging to or held on trust for an infant or the application of the income thereof, the Court must regard the welfare of the infant as the first and paramount consideration, and must not take into consideration, whether from any other point of view, the claim of the father, or any right at common law possessed by the father in respect of such custody, upbringing administration or application is superior to that of the mother, or the claim of the mother is superior to that of the father. This provision applies whether both parents are living or either or both is or are dead.

Even where the infant is a foreign national, the Court, while giving weight to the views of the foreign Court, is bound to treat the welfare of the infant as being of the first and paramount consideration whatever orders may have been made by the Courts of any other country." In Halsbury's Laws of England, the Law is succinctly in the following terms.

In **Salamat Ali v. Majjo Begum**⁸⁹¹, the Allahabad High Court observed that under the personal law if mother is entitled to custody of a minor she should normally get, but the court should also consider whether in so doing it would be for the welfare of the minor.

⁸⁹¹ AIR 1985 All 29

Laws Governing Guardianship and Custody law of Muslim in India

Guardians and Wards Act (GWA), 1890:

The GWA is a secular law regulating questions of guardianship and custody for all children within the territory of India, irrespective of their religion. It authorizes District Courts to appoint guardians of the person or property of a minor, when the natural guardian as per the minor's personal law or the testamentary guardian appointed under a Will fails to discharge his/her duties towards the minor. The Act is a complete Code laying down the rights and obligations of the guardians, procedure for their removal and replacement, and remedies for misconduct by them. It is an umbrella legislation that supplements the personal laws governing guardianship issues under every religion.⁸⁹² Even if the substantive law applied to a certain case is the personal law of the parties, the procedural law applicable is what is laid down in the GWA.⁸⁹³

Section 7 of the GWA authorizes the court to appoint a guardian for the person or property or both of a minor, if it is satisfied that it is necessary for the **welfare of the minor**.⁸⁹⁴

Section 17 lays down factors to be considered by the court when appointing guardians.⁸⁹⁵

Section 17(1) states that courts shall be guided by what the personal law of the minor provides and what, in the circumstances of the case, appears to be for the welfare of the minor.⁸⁹⁶

Section 17(2) clarifies that while determining what constitutes the welfare of the minor, courts shall consider the age, sex and religion of the minor; the character and capacity of the proposed guardian and how closely related the proposed guardian is to the minor; the wishes, if

⁸⁹² Section 2 of the HMGA states that its provisions are 'supplemental' to and 'not in derogation' of the GWA

⁸⁹³ Guardian and Wards Act, No. 8 of 1890, S.6 (—In the case of a minor, nothing in this Act shall be construed to take away or derogate from any power to appoint a guardian of his person or property or both, which is valid by the law to which the minor is subject.))

⁸⁹⁴ Guardian and Wards Act, No. 8 of 1890, S. 7

⁸⁹⁵ Guardians and Wards Act, No. 8 of 1890, S.17

⁸⁹⁶ Guardian and Wards Act, No. 8 of 1890, S. 17(1)

any, of the deceased parents; and any existing or previous relation of the proposed guardian with the person or property of the minor.⁸⁹⁷

Section 17(3) states that if the minor is old enough to form an intelligent opinion, the court may 'consider his/her preference'.⁸⁹⁸

Section 19 of the GWA deals with cases where the court may not appoint a guardian.⁸⁹⁹

Section 19(b) states that a court is not authorized to appoint a guardian to the person of a minor whose father or mother is alive, and who, in the opinion of the court, is not unfit to be a guardian.⁹⁰⁰ The earlier Section 19(b) prevented the court from appointing a guardian in case the father of the minor was alive. **This clause was amended by the Personal Laws (Amendment) Act, 2010** and was made applicable to cases where even the mother was alive, thus removing the preferential position of the father.⁹⁰¹

Section 25 of the GWA deals with the authority of the guardian over the custody of the ward.⁹⁰²

Section 25(1) states that if a ward leaves or is removed from the custody of the guardian, the court can issue an order for the ward's return, if it is of the opinion that it is for the welfare of the ward' to be returned to the custody of the guardian.⁹⁰³ Reading the above provisions together, it can be concluded that, **in appointing a guardian to the person or property of a minor under the GWA, courts are to be guided by concern for the welfare of the minor/ward.** This is evident from the language of Sections 7 and 17. At the same time, the implication of Section 19(b) is that unless the court finds the father or mother to be particularly unfit to be a guardian, it cannot exercise its authority to appoint anyone else as the guardian. Thus, power of the court to act in furtherance of the welfare of the minor must

defer to the authority of the parent to act as the guardian.

In the end, as in every child custody decision, it is the welfare of the children which governs and each case will turn on ties individual facts and circumstances.

In Islamic law:

The father is the natural guardian, but custody vests with the mother until the son reaches the age of seven and the daughter reaches puberty. Islamic law is the earliest legal system to provide for a clear distinction between guardianship and custody, and also for explicit recognition of the right of the mother to custody.⁹⁰⁴ The concept of Hizanat provides that of all persons, the mother is the most suited to have the custody of her children up to a certain age, both during the marriage and after its dissolution. A mother cannot be deprived of this right unless she is disqualified because of apostasy or misconduct and her custody is found to be unfavorable to the welfare of the child.⁹⁰⁵ In judicial decisions under the GWA involving Muslim children, courts have sometimes upheld the mother's right to custody over children under Islamic law and on other occasions have given custody to the mother out of concern for the welfare of the child.

Response of Indian Judiciary to Guardianship and Custody Laws:

In deciding cases involving Muslim children, High Courts have decided in favor of the mother only when her right to custody was supported by Muslim law. In **Suharabi v. D. Mohammed**,⁹⁰⁶ where the father objected to the mother's custody of the one-and-a-half year-old daughter on the ground that she was poor, **the Kerala High Court** held that the mother was authorized to have custody of a daughter of that age under Islamic law.

⁸⁹⁷ Guardian and Wards Act, No. 8 of 1890, S. 17(2)

⁸⁹⁸ Guardian and Wards Act, No. 8 of 1890, S. 17(3)

⁸⁹⁹ Guardian and Wards Act, No. 8 of 1890, S. (19)

⁹⁰⁰ Guardian and Wards Act, No. 8 of 1890, S.19(b)

⁹⁰¹ Personal Laws (Amendment) Act, No. 30 of 2010, S. 2

⁹⁰² Guardian and Wards Act, No. 8 of 1890, S. 25

⁹⁰³ Guardian and Wards Act, No. 8 of 1890, S. 25(1)

⁹⁰⁴ Paras Diwan, LAW OF ADOPTION, MINORITY, GUARDIANSHIP & CUSTODY (2012) Universal Law Publishing Co.: New Delhi, at P. xvi.

⁹⁰⁵ Ibid., at P. xvii

⁹⁰⁶ AIR 1988 Ker 36

In similar vein, in **Md. Jameel Ahmed Ansari v. Ishrath Sajeeda**,⁹⁰⁷ the Andhra Pradesh High Court awarded the custody of an eleven-year-old boy to the father, on the ground that Muslim law allowed the mother to have exclusive custody only until the age of seven in case of male children, and there was nothing to prove that the father was unfit to be a guardian in this case. In another case, the Madhya Pradesh High Court interpreted Mahomedan Law to allow custody for the mother.⁹⁰⁸ **Two problems can be noted with the legal and judicial framework described above. The first is the superior position of the father in case of guardianship, though not necessarily in case of custody. The second is the indeterminacy of the welfare of the child principle, despite its widespread usage.**

A. Superior Position of the Father

The Researcher finds that under the GWA the discrimination between the mother and the father in terms of guardianship has been removed by the 2010 amendment to Section 19(b). As far back as 1989, regarding the preferential position given to the father under Section 6(a) of the HMGA, the Law Commission of India had stated that: "Thus, statutory recognition has been accorded to the objectionable proposition that the father is entitled to the custody of the minor child in preference to the mother. Apart from the fact that there is no rational basis for according an inferior position in the order of preference to the mother vis-à-vis the father, the proposition is vulnerable to challenge on several grounds. In the first place, it discloses an anti-feminine bias. It reveals age-old distrust for women and feeling of superiority for men and inferiority for women. Whatever may have been the justification for the same in the past, assuming there was some, there is no warrant for persisting with this ancient prejudice, at least after the ushering in of the Constitution of India which proclaims the right of women to equality

and guarantees non-discrimination on the ground of sex under the lofty principle enshrined in Article 15. In fact, clause (3) of Article 15, by necessary implication, gives a pre-vision of beneficial legislation geared to the special needs of women and children with a pro-women and pro-children bias. It is indeed strange that in the face of the said constitutional provision, the discrimination against women has been tolerated for nearly four decades."⁹⁰⁹ The Commission had recommended amending Section 6(a) to —constitute both the father and the mother as being natural guardians 'jointly and severally,' having equal rights in respect of a minor and his property.⁹¹⁰ The problem is further highlighted by the inconsistency between the superior position of the father in statutory law and recent judicial thinking on parental roles. While pursuing the goal of equality in parental responsibility is laudable, the decision leads to an ironic result—the mother is not deemed a natural guardian and therefore does not have a say in significant decisions affecting the child, but she has equal financial responsibility towards the child. Equality between parents is a goal that needs to be pursued and, indeed, the law should not make preferences between parents based on gender stereotypes. However, such equality cannot be only in terms of roles and responsibilities, but must also be in terms of the rights and legal position of the parents. Thus, the first step towards reform in this area is to dismantle the preferential position of the father in the HMGA, and make both the mother and the father natural guardians

B. Indeterminacy of the Welfare standard

While the welfare principle is used extensively by appellate courts dealing with custody issues, there is no evidence of the extent of its use by the lower courts. Based on a study of Family

⁹⁰⁷ AIR 1983 AP 106

⁹⁰⁸ Mumtaz Begum v. Mubarak Hussain, AIR 1986 MP 221

⁹⁰⁹ Law Commission of India, 133rd Report, August (1989), Para. 4.1, available at: <http://lawcommissionofindia.nic.in/101-169/Report133.pdf>

⁹¹⁰ Law Commission of India, 133rd Report, August (1989), Para.4.3, available at: <http://lawcommissionofindia.nic.in/101-169/Report133.pdf>

Court orders, legal academician Asha Bajpai notes,

The best interest of the child may have been considered by the courts, but there was no mention of this standard in the orders. The courts did not give any information regarding the factors that they considered or their reasons for awarding custody. The orders just mentioned to whom custody was awarded in a particular case.⁹¹¹

The problem with respect to the welfare principle is that despite its extensive invocation, the appellate judicial decisions do not illuminate the legal content of this principle. Family Law scholars note that while there are illustrations galore, no principled basis can be found in the manner in which courts use the welfare of the child standard. **Legal academician Archana Parashar analyzed Supreme Court judgments from 1959 to 2000 that used the best-interest principle in custody disputes. Parashar concluded that in the absence of legislative guidance regarding what factors should be used to assess the best interest of a minor, courts give varied interpretations based on their personal ideas about what is best for the children and notions of ideal parenthood.⁹¹²** Parashar rightly notes, these decisions are also based on the judges' perceptions of who is a 'good' mother. Consequently, women who do not fit into such criteria would have difficulty claiming custody of children.

The wide discretion available to judges under the welfare principle also means that certain issues that should merit consideration are not treated seriously while determining custody. Allegations of sexual abuse against female children by fathers, grandfathers or other male relatives are brushed aside without any investigation, if they appear improbable to the judge.⁹¹³ **Legal scholar and activist Flavia**

Agnes notes in this regard that —the courts must exercise their power with great prudence and caution, so that it does not result in violation of the basic human right of children, the right to life, which includes the right to live without fear and trauma.⁹¹⁴

Numerous countries across the globe have adopted a preference for shared parentage systems over sole custody arrangements for child custody disputes post-divorce.⁹¹⁵ This trend has arisen largely in a response to changing familial roles (male care takers taking on more child rearing responsibilities) as well psychological studies revealing that the involvement of both parents in child rearing is preferable to sole custody arrangements.⁹¹⁶ However, such preferences for shared custody are often balanced with the —best interest of the child standard. The —best interest of the child standard is increasingly utilized as the tool to evaluate child custody arrangements in many nations, particularly those who are signatories to the Convention on the Rights of the Child.⁹¹⁷ It requires family courts to consider the well-being of the child as paramount.⁹¹⁸

On 6th July 2015 the Supreme Court in ABC v. The State (NCT of Delhi)⁹¹⁹, delivered a path breaking judgment on gender equality and ruled that even an unwed mother must be recognized as legal guardian of her child without forcing her to disclose the name of the child's biological father.

The above judgment is a reflection of the dynamic thinking of the Apex Court which wants to keep company with the changing time. The GWA was passed by parliament way back in 1890.

Thereafter the Indian society experienced many upheavals, as a result of which the S.C. wanted

⁹¹¹ Asha Bajpai, Custody and Guardianship of Children in India, 39(2) FAMILY LAW QUARTERLY 441, 447 (2005)

⁹¹² Archana Parashar, Welfare of Child in Family Laws—India and Australia, 1(1) NALSAR LAW REVIEW 49, 49 (2003)

⁹¹³ Flavia Agnes, Family Law II: Marriage, Divorce and Matrimonial Litigation (2011), Oxford University Press: New Delhi, Pp. 257-259

⁹¹⁴ Ibid. at 259

⁹¹⁵ E.g. Australia, Family Law Amendment (Shared Parental Responsibility) Act, Section 61 DA (2005); Netherlands, Civil Code, Article 247 (2009))

⁹¹⁶ Glover, R. & Steel, C., Comparing the Effects on the Child of Post-Divorce Parenting Arrangements, Journal of Divorce, Vol. 12 No. 2-3 (1989)

⁹¹⁷ Convention on the Rights of the Child, Art.3, (1989)

⁹¹⁸ Ibid

⁹¹⁹ [Arising out of SLP (Civil) No. 28367 of 2011]

to turn GWA in favour of the child's utmost welfare. That is why this novel judgment.

Summary Of Recommendations

“The law is dynamic and is expected to diligently keep pace with time and the legal conundrums and enigmas it presents”⁹²⁰

Researcher fully and unflinchingly supports the recommendations and suggestions made by the Law Commission of India in its 257th Report (22nd May 2015), has given a comprehensive report under the title of —Reforms in Guardianship and Custody Laws in India”.⁹²¹ The best interest of the child should be the sole consideration which supersedes all others.

The recommendations of the Law Commission India in its 257th Report are captured in the Guardians and Wards (Amendment) Bill, 2015, which are appended to the report. The Guardians and Wards Act, 1890. In this regard, the Law Commission also makes incidental reference to some of the recommendations of the 83rd report (26th April 1980) of the Law Commission, under the title of „The Guardians and Wards Act, 1890,⁹²² as well as the 133rd report (29th Aug. 1989) of the Law Commission, under the title of 'Removal of discrimination against women in matters relating to guardianship and custody of minor children and elaboration of the welfare principles'.⁹²³ The Commission provides detailed legislative text by recommending the insertion of a new chapter IIA dealing with 'Custody, Child Support and Visitation Arrangements'. The Commission also provides specific guidelines to assist the court in deciding such matters, including processes to determine whether the welfare of the child is met; procedures to be followed during

mediation; and factors to be taken into consideration when determining grants for joint custody. The recommendations are discussed in detail in the following pages.

A. Amendments to the Guardians and Wards Act, 1890

The Law Commission recommends the following amendments to this Act:

1. Section 17: This section provides for matters to be considered by the court in appointing the guardian of a minor, and requires the welfare of a minor to be consistent with the laws to which the minor is subject. In the past, Section 17 was read with Section 19 of this Act (which deals with the preferential right of natural guardianship).¹³⁸ **Before being amended by the Personal Laws (Amendment) Act, 2010, Section 19 offered a preferential right to the husband (of a minor girl), or the father (in all other cases) to be the guardian of the minor, if neither were unfit to be appointed guardian. The 2010 Act included the mother along with the father as a natural guardian of the child, and changed the position of the law slightly.**⁹²⁴

However, the welfare of the child was still not, under law, truly the paramount consideration in such matters.

The Law Commission recommends that the possibility of any alternate reading be corrected in statute, and reaffirms, in this context, the general recommendations made by the 83rd report of the Law Commission. Thus, in the appointment or declaration of a guardian, the welfare of the minor must be paramount, and everything else must be secondary to this consideration. In determining welfare, however, the court may give due regard to the laws to which the minor may be subject. As the 83rd report observed, —such an amendment will settle the position for all times to come,⁹²⁵ and

⁹²⁰ ABC V State
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<http://lawcommissionofindia.nic.in/reports/ReportNo.257CustodyLaws.pdf>

⁹²² 128 Law Commission of India, 83rd Report, April (1980), available at <http://lawcommissionofindia.nic.in/51-100/Report83.pdf>

⁹²³ 129 Law Commission of India, 133rd Report, August (1989), available at <http://lawcommissionofindia.nic.in/101-169/Report133.pdf>

⁹²⁴ Personal Laws (Amendment) Act, No. 30 of 2010, Chapter II

⁹²⁵ 140 Law Commission of India, 83rd Report, April (1980), Para.6.40, available at <http://lawcommissionofindia.nic.in/51-100/Report83.pdf>

will remove the possibility of the appointment of a guardian without first assessing welfare.

2. Section 19: This section provides for the preferential right of certain persons to be regarded as natural guardians. It provides that the court may not appoint a guardian, if the husband of a minor who is a married female is not unfit to be the guardian of her person, or if the father or mother (who are living) of a minor other than a married female is similarly not unfit to be the guardian. **Here, too, the Commission reaffirms the 83rd report regarding the importance of the welfare principle, and recommends that in determining whether a person is unfit to be a guardian in these circumstances, the welfare of the minor under Section 17 shall be the paramount consideration.**

3. Section 25: This section provides for the arrest of a ward if the ward leaves or is removed from the custody of his guardian, if such arrest is for the welfare of the ward. As with its recommendations above, the Law Commission concurs with its 83rd report, in various aspects.⁹²⁶ First, the concept of arrest of a minor is an archaic one, and needs to be amended to reflect modern social considerations. Therefore, the Law Commission recommends a substitute section, replacing arrest with the requirement to return the ward to the custody of his or her guardian. Again, the Commission reiterates the necessity of placing the welfare of the minor as the paramount consideration.

Second, the present text of the law is unclear as to whether a guardian who has never had custody of a minor is entitled to the relief under this section. This needs to be clarified, and accordingly, the Law Commission reiterates the recommendations of the 83rd report⁹²⁷ as regards the language of the provision to specifically state that it applies in cases where

the child is not in the custody of the guardian, though the latter is entitled to such custody.

Third, it recommends that the court must not make an order under this section in respect of a child of fourteen years of over, without taking into consideration the wishes of the child.⁹²⁸ This is in consonance with the provisions of Section 17 of this Act, which allows the court to consider the stated preference of a minor, if the minor is old enough to form an intelligent preference. In a scenario where the minor of over fourteen years of age has left or been removed from the custody of his or her guardian, the Commission recommends that the court must take into consideration the preference of the child

Researcher therefore suggests that Sections 17, 19 & 25 of Guardians and Wards Act, 1890 should be amended on the following lines:

A. Amendment of Section 17 – In the Guardians and Wards Act, 1890 (hereinafter referred to as the principal Act), in section 17,

(i) for sub-section (1), the following sub-section shall be substituted, namely:--

(ii)(1) In appointing or declaring the guardian of a minor, the welfare of the minor shall be the paramount consideration.;

(iii) after sub-section (1), the following sub-section shall be inserted, namely:--

(1A) Subject to the provisions of sub-section (1), the court shall have due regard to the law to which the minor is subject, in appointing or declaring the guardian of that minor.

B. Amendment of Section 19 – In the principal Act, in section 19, after clause (c), the following proviso shall be inserted, namely:--

1) Provided that in determining whether a person is unfit to be a guardian under clause (a) or clause (b), the welfare of the minor as required under sub-section (1) of section 17 shall be the paramount consideration.

⁹²⁶ 141 Law Commission of India, 83rd Report, April (1980), Para.6.40, available at <http://lawcommissionofindia.nic.in/51-100/Report83.pdf>, Para.7.18

⁹²⁷ Law Commission of India, 83rd Report, April (1980), Para.6.40, available at <http://lawcommissionofindia.nic.in/51-100/Report83.pdf>, Para.7.14-7.17

⁹²⁸ Law Commission of India, 83rd Report, April (1980), Para.6.40, available at <http://lawcommissionofindia.nic.in/51-100/Report83.pdf>, Para.7.20

C. Substitution of New Section for Section 25 – In the principal Act, for Section 25, the following section shall be substituted, namely:-

Section 25- Proceedings for custody of ward-

- 1) Notwithstanding anything contained in section 19, if a ward leaves or is removed from the custody of a guardian of his person, or is not in the custody of the guardian entitled to such custody, the court, if it is of the opinion that it will be for the welfare of the ward to return to the custody of his guardian or to be placed in his custody, may make an order for his return, or for his being placed in the custody of the guardian, as the case may be.
- 2) For the purpose of enforcing the order, the court may exercise the power conferred on a Magistrate of the first class by section 97 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973.
- 3) The residence of a ward against the will of his guardian with a person who is not his guardian does not of itself terminate the guardianship.
- 4) In making an order under this section, the court shall have regard to the welfare of the ward as the paramount consideration.
- 5) The court shall not make an order under this section in respect of a child of fourteen years or over, without taking into consideration the preference of the child

Researcher therefore suggests that after Chapter II “Chapter IIA: Custody, Child Support and Visitation Arrangements” may be added to in the principal Act.

Insertion of New Chapter – In the principal Act, after Chapter II, the following Chapter IIA shall be inserted, namely:-- “Chapter IIA: Custody, Child Support and Visitation Arrangements

Section 19A- Objectives of the Chapter- The objectives of this Chapter are to ensure that the welfare of a minor is met by:--

- a) Ensuring that the child has the benefit of both parents having a meaningful involvement in his

life, to the maximum extent consistent with the welfare of the child;

- b) Ensuring that the child receives adequate and proper parenting to help achieve his full potential;
- c) Ensuring that the parents fulfill their duties, and meet their responsibilities concerning the care, welfare and development of the child;
- d) Giving due consideration to the changing emotional, intellectual and physical needs of the child;
- e) Encouraging both the parents to maintain a close and continuing relationship with the child, and to cooperate in and resolve disputes regarding matters affecting the child;
- f) recognizing that the child has the right to know and be cared for by both the parents, regardless of whether the parents are married, separated, or unmarried; and
- g) protecting the child from physical or psychological harm or from being subjected to, or exposed to, any abuse, neglect or family violence.

Section19B- Definitions- For the purpose of this Chapter:-- (a) "Joint custody" is where both the parents:-- i. share physical custody of the child, which may be equally shared, or in such proportion as the court may determine for the welfare of the child; and ii. equally share the joint responsibility for the care and control of the child and joint authority to take decisions concerning the child; and (b) "Sole custody" is where one parent retains physical custody and responsibility for the care and control of the child, subject to the power of the court to grant visitation rights to the other parent.

Section19C- Award of custody-

- (1) In a proceeding to which this Chapter applies, the court may order joint custody or sole custody consistent with the welfare of the child.
- (2) In determining whether an order under this section will be for the welfare of the child, the

court shall have regard to the guidelines specified in the Schedule.

(3) Subject to the welfare of the child being the paramount consideration, the court may modify an order under this section, and record the reasons for doing so.

Section 19D– Power to pass additional orders–

The court shall have the power to pass any additional or incidental orders necessary to effectuate and enforce any order relating to the custody of the child.

Section 19E– Mediation –

(1) The court will ordinarily refer the parents to the court-annexed mediation Centre or, in the absence thereof, to such person as the court may appoint as mediator, either at the commencement of, or at any stage during, the proceedings under this Chapter.

(2) A mediator to which parents are referred to under sub-section (1) must possess relevant professional qualifications or training in mediation, and sufficient skill and experience in mediation relating to family disputes.

(3) For the purpose of this section, every High Court and District Court and Family Court shall maintain a list of court-annexed mediation centres or individual mediators.

(4) The court-annexed mediation centres or individual mediators shall be identified and paid remuneration in accordance with a scheme prepared for this purpose by the concerned High Court, in consultation with the respective State Governments.

(5) For the purpose of ordering or performing any mediation under this section, the court and the appointed mediator shall have regard to the guidelines specified in the Schedule.

(6) The court may, where it considers appropriate or necessary, seek assistance from a trained and experienced professional to

undertake an independent psychological evaluation of the child.⁹²⁹

(7) A mediation ordered by the court under this section must ordinarily conclude not later than sixty days from the date of such order, unless extended by the court, where necessary.⁹³⁰

Section 19F– Child support –

(1) A court may pass appropriate orders for the maintenance of children, and fix an amount that is reasonable or necessary to meet the living expenses of the child, including food, clothing, shelter, healthcare, and education.

(2) For the purpose of determining reasonableness or necessity, the court may take into consideration the following factors, namely:--

- a. the financial resources of each of the parents;
- b. the standard of living that the child would have had if the marriage had remained intact;
- c. the physical and emotional condition of the child;
- d. the particular educational and healthcare needs of the child; and
- e. any other factors that the court considers fit.

(3) An order of the court under this section must subsist till the child reaches 18 years of age.

(4) Notwithstanding anything contained in sub-sections (1), (2) and (3), the court may make such further orders as it considers fit, including:–

- a. requiring the payment of a sum greater than the sum determined under sub-section (1);
- b. requiring the subsistence of an order for a duration longer than as provided

⁹²⁹ 145 Marital mediation Staff, What is the Difference between Marital Mediation and Marital Counseling?, February 22, 2013, available at <http://www.maritalmediation.com/faqs/what-is-the-difference-between-marital-mediation-and-marital-counseling-2/> (Last visited on April 22, 2015).

⁹³⁰ Baljinder Kaur v. Hardeep Singh, AIR 1998 SC 764

under sub-section (3), but such order shall not subsist in any case beyond such time as the child reaches 25 years of age;⁹³¹

- c. requiring the subsistence of an order under sub-section (3) beyond such time as the child reaches 25 years of age in case of a child with mental or physical disability;⁹³² and (d) making the estate of a parent, who dies during or after the conclusion of proceedings under this section, liable for obligations under the order passed by the court.

(2) Musawah Justification for Reform in Islamic law on custody and guardianship⁹³³

On equal right to custody and guardianship of children: The Qur'an does not distinguish between fathers and mothers where the upbringing of children is concerned. Even parents who are divorced should still exercise 'mutual consent and due consultation' (Surah al-Baqarah 2:233) with each other regarding the upbringing of their children: '[...] No Mother shall be treated unfairly on account of her child. No father on account of his child.'

The classical jurists generally divided the rights and responsibilities of adults over their Children into physical care and custody and guardianship. It was regarded more Suitable to confer custody to women over men. In practice, many Sharia's courts in premodern times granted mothers the guardianship of their orphaned children. Loss of custody on the ground of the mother's remarriage is based on a Tradition of the Prophet, where he said to a divorced wife, 'You have the first right to look after [your child] Unless you marry.' It is unfortunate that this Tradition has often been interpreted to mean that the mother loses the right to custody upon her remarriage, and that custody reverts to the father, regardless of whether this is in the child's best interest.

However, it is possible to interpret this hadith as conferring upon the mother a prior right of custody over her young children before her remarriage, and if she remarries, then the mother and the father could have equal right to custody, and the case may be considered on its individual merits.

Conclusion

As human affairs change and evolve, laws and social norms that shape family relations also need to be adjusted and refined to reflect these changes. Most contemporary Muslim family laws are based on a centuries old juristic (fiqh) framework that no longer responds to contemporary Muslim realities. Law reform is one method for addressing social and economic changes and making our legal systems compatible with the needs of individuals and families today.

Family laws that pre-emptively grant guardianship to male relatives without considering the best

interests of the child can be reformed by applying the principles of *maslahah*. Research shows that fathers' claims to guardianship over children often work against the interests of the children, particularly in divorce disputes. Custodial mothers who do not have the legal authority to manage their children's affairs are unable to provide the care that their children may need in different situations (e.g. opening a bank account for them, dealing with medical problems,

attending to education needs, etc.).

Although Guardianship under Muslim law is mainly governed by their personal law but if in any case there is conflicting situations arise then guardianship and wards act, 1890 will prevail over personal laws. But here again certain loopholes are present that creates problem in guardianship law. For which certain reforms should be applied. Time to time law commissions is established which gives report on the necessary reforms many judgments also added fuel to the necessary reforms in

⁹³¹ The Times of India, Raise Age for Child Maintenance to 21: Court, August 12 (2011),

⁹³² Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, No. 56 of 2000, S.2 (d)

⁹³³ Musawah, CEDAW and Muslim Family Laws p.4

guardianship law so that grave injustice can be prevented.

Reform is often resisted on the grounds that Muslim family laws are divine and thus not open to change. Yet in reality change and reform have been inherent in Muslim legal tradition. Islamic legal theory is rich with concepts and tools that have been continually used in the past and that can pave the way for family laws that are more in line with contemporary Muslim realities, as well as with modern notions of justice which, in the course of the twentieth century, have come to include gender equality.⁹³⁴

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CROSS-BORDER MERGERS AND ACQUISITIONS IN CHINA AND INDIA: A STUDY OF REGULATORY AND MARKET DYNAMICS

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Abstract

In light of the ability to promote economic growth, market consolidation and technical improvement, cross-border mergers and acquisitions (M&A) have become essential instruments for business expansion. Due to the growing economies and rising foreign direct investment (FDI), nations like China and India have seen a spike in cross-border M&A activity as globalisation picks up speed. Despite the fact that both countries are key participants in international M&A, there are notable differences between their regulatory environments, economic policies and market dynamics. Historically, China has upheld a state-controlled system in which foreign investment is heavily regulated by the government. Foreign investors frequently encounter obstacles in vital industries due to stringent regulatory clearances, sectoral limitations and protectionist policies. However, Chinese corporations have been able to increase their worldwide footprint, especially in the industrial, technology and energy sectors, thanks to the country's outward M&A policy, which is led by state-backed enterprises.

In contrast, India has taken a more liberal stance, especially following the 1991 economic reforms. A more open environment is offered to foreign acquirers by the regulatory framework, which includes the Companies Act of 1956, SEBI rules, and the Competition Act of 2002. Additionally, Indian companies have actively moved outside, purchasing assets in the consumer goods, pharmaceutical, and technology industries. The benefits and drawbacks of both models are examined in this comparative study of the commercial, legal, and economic aspects of cross-border M&A in China and India. Policymakers and companies may create plans to increase investment prospects, lessen regulatory obstacles, and boost market competitiveness in both economies by being aware of these distinctions.

Keywords

Cross-Border Mergers and Acquisitions, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), Regulatory Framework, Economic Liberalization, China-India Comparison, Corporate Expansion

Introduction

Cross-border mergers and acquisitions (M&As) have become essential tools of international business strategy in the age of globalisation. They enable companies to quickly increase their global footprints, gain access to new

technologies, reach new consumer markets, and strengthen their competitive positions. China and India, two of the biggest emerging economies in the world, are among the nations seeing a noticeable increase in these kinds of transactions. Both nations have sizable

consumer markets, expanding industrial capacity, and better regulatory frameworks, but they also pose unique legal, political, and economic difficulties that affect the design, implementation, and outcome of international M&A transactions. Domestic transactions, regulatory changes, and active private equity involvement have all contributed to the notable expansion of India's M&A market in 2025. The country's strong economic foundation and investor-friendly policies are the reason for the increase in deal-making. Whereas in China regulatory complexities, such as limitations on foreign investment and national security concerns, have an impact on China's cross-border M&A environment. For foreign investors looking to enter the Chinese market, these factors may present difficulties. Cross-border mergers and acquisitions are more than just commercial agreements; they are heavily impacted by sectoral restrictions, competition laws, and national foreign investment policies. The regulatory environment is getting more complicated as governments in China and India attempt to strike a balance between the needs of economic expansion and the defence of homegrown businesses and national security. Multinational corporations must carefully negotiate approval processes, investment levels, and sector-specific restrictions in this ever-changing ecosystem.

With the help of laws like the Competition Act of 2002⁹³⁵, SEBI Takeover Regulations, and the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA)⁹³⁶, India has gradually liberalised its foreign investment regime and increased transparency. In contrast, China has modernised its national security review and merger control procedures and reorganised its legal system with the Foreign Investment Law of 2020⁹³⁷. Though in different ways, investor sentiment is still impacted by worries about

geopolitical tensions, state influence, and regulatory opacity in both jurisdictions.

The growing geoeconomic importance of China and India in recent years has drawn more attention from around the world to their respective contributions to the facilitation—or occasionally the obstruction—of cross-border M&A flows. Both nations have seen a shift from being spectators of foreign investment to becoming engaged actors in international investment. In Europe, North America, and Asia, Chinese state-owned enterprises (SOEs) and sizable private conglomerates have set their sights on high-value acquisitions in industries like semiconductors, energy, automotive, and artificial intelligence. In a similar vein, Indian multinational firms have made large outbound acquisitions, particularly in the information technology, pharmaceutical, and natural resources sectors. However, national security concerns, political scrutiny, and regulatory tightening factors that have become more significant in the post-COVID and post-globalization world order have restrained this expanding outbound trend. Cross-border transactions are further complicated by changing geopolitical dynamics, such as the trade dispute between the United States and China, strategic alliances in the Indo-Pacific, and recent policy changes towards economic nationalism.⁹³⁸ Governments now examine transactions not only for their economic effects but also for their potential to affect data sovereignty, supply chain credibility, and national security. Because of this, legal observance in M&A transactions now goes far beyond standard due diligence and necessitates a deep comprehension of investment treaties, bilateral relations, and native political sensitivities. This study explores these complex aspects, highlighting the significance of investor protection, regulatory certainty, and strategic flexibility in the legal framework concerning cross-border M&As in

⁹³⁵ Competition Act, 2002, No. 12, Acts of Parliament, 2003 (India)

⁹³⁶ Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999, No. 42, Acts of Parliament, 1999 (India)

⁹³⁷ Foreign Investment Law of the People's Republic of China (adopted Mar. 15, 2019, effective Jan. 1, 2020)

⁹³⁸ Jung Sun Yoo & Park Yohan, *Winners and Losers in U.S.–China Trade Disputes: A Dynamic Compositional Analysis of Foreign Direct Investment*, 105 SOC. SCI. Q. 980 (Mar 5, 2024), <https://doi.org/10.1111/ssqu.13362> (visited on Mar. 18, 2025)

China and India. It also assesses the real-world obstacles investors encounter, the methods used to get past them, and the wider ramifications for regional economic expansion and global trade.

Conceptual Framework of Cross-Border Mergers and Acquisitions

One of the most important ways for businesses to grow internationally is through cross-border mergers and acquisitions (M&As). These deals entail giving a foreign buyer all or part of the ownership, assets, or control of a business located in one nation. The transaction could be an acquisition, in which one business buys and absorbs another, or a merger, in which two businesses unite to form one organisation. In both situations, the transaction crosses international borders and is subject to the political, legal, and economic systems of several different countries.

Cross-Border M&A is divided based on different purpose:

- Horizontal Mergers– where the businesses are on the same market level and in the identical sector
- Vertical Mergers– incorporating businesses at various stages of the same supply chain, and
- Conglomerate Mergers– where businesses from disparate sectors combine in order to diversify their business risk.

Cross-border M&As are driven by a variety of strategic reasons. These include expanding into new markets, acquiring technology or raw materials, attaining economies of scale, building a strong brand, and enhancing supply chain management. Outbound M&As are frequently a means for businesses in developing nations, like China and India, to advance up the global value chain. M&As are a quicker and less risky option for foreign investors looking to enter these markets than greenfield investments, which necessitate starting operations from scratch. However, because of the interaction of several legal

systems, regulatory oversight, cultural disparities, and political sensitivities, these transactions are intrinsically complicated. Careful consideration must be given to matters like sector-specific limitations, foreign exchange compliance, national security reviews, antitrust approvals, and tax ramifications. Therefore, strategic business planning and navigating the complex legal environment of the host nation are equally important to the effective completion of a cross-border M&A.

Legal and Regulatory Framework in China

1. **Foreign Investment Laws–** The Foreign Investment Law (FIL) of 2020, which superseded the previous "Three Laws" system, significantly changed China's foreign investment regulatory environment. The FIL implements a negative list strategy, which restricts or forbids foreign investment in a limited number of sectors. Security review procedures apply to cross-border M&As including foreign investors, especially in fields like critical infrastructure, information technology, and national defence.⁹³⁹
2. **M&A Regulations–** The Measures for the Administration of the Takeover of Domestic Enterprises by Foreign Investors (also referred to as the M&A Rules, 2006)⁹⁴⁰ are the primary regulations that control international M&As. Depending on the type and magnitude of the transaction, these actions need approval from a number of regulatory agencies, including the State Administration for Market Regulation (SAMR) and the Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM).⁹⁴¹

⁹³⁹ Zhou (Jonathan) Zheng, *The New Foreign Investment Law Ushers in New Regime for Foreign Investments in China*, CLEARY M&A AND CORPORATE GOVERNANCE WATCH (Apr. 11, 2019), <https://www.clearymawatch.com/2019/04/the-new-foreign-investment-law-ushers-in-new-regime-for-foreign-investments-in-china/> (visited on Mar. 20, 2025)

⁹⁴⁰ The Measures for the Administration of the Takeover of Domestic Enterprises by Foreign Investors (M&A Rules, 2006) (promulgated Dec. 3, 2006) (China)

⁹⁴¹ Dezan Shira & Associates, *Mergers and Acquisitions in China*, CHINA BRIEFING, <https://www.china-briefing.com/doing-business->

3. Antitrust Review- Enacted in 2008, "China's Anti-Monopoly Law (AML)⁹⁴²" requires that transactions that reach certain turnover thresholds be reported to SAMR for merger control review. Transactions that could eliminate or restrict rivalries in the Chinese market are prohibited by the AML.

4. National Security and Sectoral Restrictions- Foreign investments that may have an impact on national security are subject to China's 2021 update to its National Security Review System. For sensitive industries, such as media, finance, and information technology, a pre-closing filing is required.

Legal and Regulatory Framework in India

1. Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA)- Along with associated policies and guidelines issued by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), the Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999 (FEMA) is the main piece of legislation governing cross-border M&As in India. Sectoral caps, government or automated entry points, and pricing regulations must all be followed by foreign investments.

2. Companies Act and SEBI Regulations- The Companies Act of 2013⁹⁴³ and the "SEBI (Substantial Acquisition of Shares and Takeovers) Regulations of 2011 (Takeover Code)⁹⁴⁴" for listed companies also regulate M&A transactions in India. These clauses enforce valuation standards, accessible offer obligations, and disclosure requirements.

guide/china/company-establishment/mergers-and-acquisitions-in-china (visited on Mar. 22, 2025)

⁹⁴² China's Anti-Monopoly Law (AML), (Promulgated Aug. 30, 2007, effective Aug. 1, 2008) (China)

⁹⁴³ Companies Act, 2013, No. 18, Acts of Parliament, 2013 (India)

⁹⁴⁴ Securities and Exchange Board of India, *Securities and Exchange Board of India (Substantial Acquisition of Shares and Takeovers) Regulations, 2011* (as amended on May 17, 2024), SEBI, https://www.sebi.gov.in/legal/regulations/may-2024/securities-and-exchange-board-of-india-substantial-acquisition-of-shares-and-takeovers-regulations-2011-last-amended-on-may-17-2024-_69218.html/ (visited on Mar. 25, 2025)

3. Competition Act, 2002- Combinations that surpass certain asset or turnover thresholds must be notified, according to India's Competition Act, 2002, which is enforced by the Competition Commission of India (CCI).⁹⁴⁵ The transaction's potential to have a significant negative impact on competition (AAEC) in the Indian market is evaluated by the CCI.

4. Sectoral and National Security Approvals- Additional sector-specific approvals are enforced by India in fields like media, telecom, aviation, and defence. To stop opportunistic takeovers, the government implemented restrictions on foreign direct investment (FDI) from nearby nations, particularly China, in April 2020. These investments now require prior government approval.

Comparative Analysis: China vs. India

China and India offer two different models for analysing the market and regulatory environments for cross-border mergers and acquisitions (M&As), each of which reflects its own political economy, legal customs, and strategic objectives. Their approaches to cross-border M&As differ significantly in terms of legislative structure, foreign investment oversight, competition law, and transparency, despite the fact that both are rapidly expanding emerging markets with substantial potential for foreign investment.

First, there are fundamentally different regimes that govern the entry of foreign investment. China's 2020 Foreign Investment Law established a "negative list" system for operations. All sectors are normally open to foreign investment, with the exception of those that the State Council has designated as "restricted" or "prohibited." While some liberalisation is achieved, significant central

⁹⁴⁵ Lakshmikumaran & Sridharan Attorneys, *Competition law in India – Deal Value Threshold and other changes notified*, LAKSHMISRI.COM (Sept. 12, 2024), <https://lakshmisri.com/newsroom/news-briefings/competition-law-in-india-deal-value-threshold-and-other-changes-notified/> (visited on Mar. 25, 2025)

control over key industries is maintained. In contrast, India's Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA), 1999, uses a sector-specific cap and route mechanism. Certain sectors of investments are subject to the automatic route, which does not require prior government approval, whereas other sectors require government clearance. Because of its published guidelines and organised procedures, India's system tends to offer more predictability and transparency even though it may appear more fragmented. China's cross-border M&A regime is more centralised from the standpoint of regulatory authorities, with important organisations such as the "National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), the State Administration for Market Regulation (SAMR), and the Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM) playing important roles.⁹⁴⁶" However, the overlapping responsibilities of these authorities frequently lead to opacity and bureaucratic delays. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) oversees foreign exchange, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) oversees capital market transactions, the Competition Commission of India (CCI) oversees antitrust matters, and the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) oversees foreign direct investment (FDI) policy.

Although this decentralisation might appear laborious, each agency functions in accordance with explicit statutory mandates, offering a comparatively transparent regulatory. Although both jurisdictions have highly developed antitrust and competition laws, their approaches to enforcement differ. Transactions exceeding specific turnover thresholds must be notified in advance under SAMR's administration of China's Anti-Monopoly Law. Nonetheless, political factors and industrial policy objectives are frequently reflected in enforcement. On the other hand, pre-merger notifications are required for qualifying transactions under India's Competition Act,

2002. The CCI is known for its prompt and professional evaluations, frequently approving non-problematic mergers under its "green channel" regime in less than 30 working days. For investors, this improves regulatory certainty. There are also significant differences in the national security examine procedures.

China's security review system was formalised in 2021, and foreign acquisitions in areas of concern now require pre-closing filings. The review's scope is wide, its criteria are frequently ambiguous, and the reviewing agencies have a great deal of discretion. Without a legally binding national security law, India effectively targeted Chinese investors in 2020 when it implemented a country-specific restriction requiring prior authorisation from the government for investments from nations that share land borders with India. China's policies are extensive and institutionalised, whereas India's are selective and reactive. Last but not least, India offers a more foreseeable and rules-based framework with judicial remedies for harmed investors in terms of regulatory candour and investor protection.

Therefore, China and India are both desirable locations for M&A, but China offers bigger scale and prospective advantages at the expense of greater political and regulatory risks, while India's regulatory environment is generally more open, translucent, and supportive of investor confidence.

Market Dynamics and Trends

Macroeconomic variables, industry priorities, investor sentiment, and shifting geopolitical environments all influence the market motion encompassing cross-border mergers and acquisitions (M&As) in China and India. Although the reasons, trends, and industries involved show distinctive national priorities and monetary strategies, both countries have seen significant increases in both inward and outward M&A activity over the past 20 years.

1. Inbound and Outbound M&A Activity- Beijing's "Go Global" strategy, which

⁹⁴⁶ Zhai Bing, *Corporate M&A 2025 – China*, CHAMBERS AND PARTNERS (Apr. 17, 2025), <https://practiceguides.chambers.com/practice-guides/corporate-ma-2025/china> (visited on Apr. 19, 2025)

pushed Chinese businesses to buy foreign businesses in order to obtain technological know-how, brand recognition, and access to global markets, was the main driver of the mid-2010s outbound M&A boom in China.⁹⁴⁷ This goal was reflected in significant agreements like ChemChina's purchase of Syngenta and HNA Group's investments in the international hospitality and aviation industries. But starting in 2017, the Chinese government clenched capital controls and started to restrict "irrational investments" overseas, especially in the sports, entertainment, and real estate industries. These limitations were prompted by worries about capital flight and debt-driven foreign acquisitions. In spite of this, China still encourages foreign mergers and acquisitions in fields that serve its interests, like critical raw materials, green energy, and high-tech manufacturing. Although foreign investors frequently encounter obstacles relating to rules transparency, data stipulations, and rising worries over national security and value chain autonomy, inbound M&A in China is still active.

On the other hand, India's M&A market has been steadily expanding, especially since liberalisation, with a noticeable increase in foreign purchases of Indian companies in industries like consumer goods, fintech, information technology, and pharmaceuticals. Although not as vigorous as China's, Indian outbound M&A activity is motivated by domestic companies' aspirations for global expansion and the search for strategic assets overseas. To expand their global reach, companies such as Sun Pharma, Bharti Airtel, and Tata Group have

entered into high-profile cross-border agreements. M&A growth has also been aided by the government's investor-friendly policies, such as loosening FDI regulations in important industries (such as retail, defence manufacturing, and insurance), as well as by India's growing appeal as a consumption-led economy.

2. **Global Pandemics-** The COVID-19 pandemic had a major impact on patterns in both countries and changed the global M&A scene. Deal activity initially slowed due to the high level of uncertainty, but it quickly increased again with an emphasis on industries like medical care, digital services, energy efficiency, and logistics. Global investors like Facebook and Google made high-profile investments in Jio Platforms, causing a wave of fusion in the digital economy, particularly in India.⁹⁴⁸ Meanwhile, the COVID-19 pandemic had an effect on China's cross-border M&A activities, resulting in a drop in deal volume and value. It draws attention to the trend towards government-favored industries and the difficulties brought on by regulatory scrutiny in both Europe and the United States.⁹⁴⁹
3. **Geopolitics and Trade-** Additionally, trade disputes and geopolitical tensions have had a significant impact on market trends. Investment flows have been redirected by the trade war between the United States and China, the tightening of CFIUS (Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States) regulations, and the increasing economic alignment between India and

⁹⁴⁷ Toma George-Sorin & Tohanean Dragos, *China's Go Global Strategy: An Overview*, STRATEGII MANAGERIALE, http://www.strategiimanageriale.ro/images/images_site/articole/articol_e_b74e4fb51ef0b77b44122a1ddf9e4ca6.pdf (visited on Apr. 20, 2025)

⁹⁴⁸ Gopalakrishnan Narayanan Badri & Jain Miheer, *India has become a hotspot of merger and acquisition deals amid Covid-19 crisis*, POLICY CIRCLE (Sept. 18, 2021), <https://www.policycircle.org/economy/india-merger-and-acquisition-deals/> (visited on Apr. 20, 2025)

⁹⁴⁹ Li Haiping, Niu Z. Layton & Xu Emma, *Focus of China Cross-Border M&A Turns to Government-Favored Sectors and Away From West*, SKADDEN, ARPS, SLATE, MEAGHER & FLOM LLP (Dec. 13, 2022), <https://www.skadden.com/insights/publications/2022/12/2023-insights/a-possible-recession/focus-of-china-cross-border-ma> (visited on Apr. 26, 2025)

the West. Nowadays, a lot of global firms are investing in India in addition to or instead of China as part of their "China plus one" strategy, which aims to diversify supply chains.

Challenges and Compliance Issues

There are several operational, legal, and regulatory obstacles in cross-border M&A transactions between China and India. Below are the main obstacles and legal concerns that acquiring companies and investors frequently encounter:

CHINA

1. **Regulatory Opacity and Bureaucratic Overlaps-** China's regulatory environment is still complicated in spite of legislative changes like the Foreign Investment Law and the negative list system. The overlapping roles of several regulatory bodies, including MOFCOM, NDRC, and SAMR, frequently cause delays and irregularities in approvals. Uncertainty can arise from opaque processes, particularly in delicate industries.
2. **National Security Review Mechanism-** National security reviews apply to acquisitions in the defence, information technology, or crucial infrastructure sectors. These reviews are difficult to comprehend and predict because they are voluntary and lack publicly stated criteria or explicit timeframes.
3. **Capital Outflow Restrictions-** Chinese regulators keep a careful eye on outbound transactions to stop capital flight. The government forbids "irrational" foreign investments, especially in the entertainment, sports, and real estate sectors. It can be challenging and time-consuming to get permits and foreign exchange authorisations for such transactions.
4. **Cultural and Governance Differences-** Due to disparities in business culture, governance standards, and unofficial

relationships with local government bodies, foreign investors frequently encounter challenges when attempting to integrate with Chinese target companies. These elements make strategic alignment and post-merger integration more difficult.

INDIA

1. **Multi-layered Regulatory Approvals-** Under the Companies Act, FDI policy, and FEMA, foreign acquirers are subject to a number of regulatory frameworks. Several authorities, including the RBI, DPIIT, CCI, and SEBI, may require approvals. Transactions may be delayed by the need for cooperation across these bodies.
2. **Sectoral Caps and Government Route Requirements-** Many industries have been liberalised, but some—like defence, telecom, and insurance—need government approval or have restrictions on foreign ownership. These limitations may deter foreign involvement and make deal structuring more difficult.
3. **FDI Policy Restrictions on Neighbouring Countries-** India effectively targets Chinese investors by requiring regulatory approval for assets from nations that share a land border with India as of April 2020. This gives cross-border M&A compliance a geopolitical component, which raises questions about the viability and timeliness of deals.
4. **Post-Merger Integrations Issues-** Regional diversity, informal business practices, and acquired entities' reluctance to change are the main causes of integration difficulties in India. These problems have an impact on operational effectiveness and have the potential to reduce deal value.
5. **Taxation and Dispute Resolution Risks-** China and India both have a history of inconsistent tax authority decisions and retroactive taxation. Investor confidence

may be damaged in India by judicial and regulatory dispute delays. Domestic remedies can take a long time, and international arbitration procedures are still evolving.

Recommendations

The following changes are suggested to improve cross-border M&As in China and India in terms of efficacy, transparency, and investor confidence:

- To cut down on bureaucratic red tape and disarray from overlapping authorities, both nations should create a single-window authorisation mechanism to streamline and unify approval processes.
- Particularly in national security and antitrust reviews, regulatory agencies should publish comprehensive guidelines with clear deadlines and impartial approval standards.
- Accelerate the execution of arbitral awards and promote the implementation of international arbitration norms to strengthen investor protection.
- In order to encourage fair competition, China should further reduce each sector on its negative list, while India should review and liberalise foreign ownership wraps in strategic sectors.
- Provide incentives or advisory services supported by the government to assist foreign investors in operationally and culturally integrating with domestic companies.
- To give investors stability and certainty, eliminate any doubts surrounding retroactive taxation and guarantee adherence to tax treaties.
- China should think about gradually easing restrictions on capital outflows to help local businesses expand internationally.
- Encourage regional frameworks and bilateral investment treaties (BITs) that facilitate safe, rule-based M&A between

the two nations and their trading partners.

Conclusion

China and India's cross-border mergers and acquisitions are significant catalysts for global integration, innovation, and economic growth. Although there are many opportunities in both nations, foreign investors face particular difficulties due to their different regulatory environments, policy priorities, and market dynamics. India's more open and transparent framework contrasts with China's state-driven strategy, which affects optimism among investors and deal execution. To fully realise the possibility of cross-border M&As in both jurisdictions, it is imperative to address regulatory complexities, improve transparency, and promote greater policy coherence. Sustained institutional and legal reforms will be essential to guaranteeing long-term and profitable investment flows as global economic interdependence increases.

ANALYSIS OF ARBITRATION AND IT'S EFFECTIVENESS

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ABSTRACT

In recent decades, India's legal ecosystem has encountered immense pressure owing to burgeoning case backlogs and procedural inefficiencies in traditional courts. With over four crore cases pending across different judicial levels, there is a compelling need to adopt efficient, cost-effective, and timely alternatives for dispute resolution. In this context, arbitration—an integral component of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)—has emerged as a potent mechanism, especially for resolving commercial and civil disputes. This paper presents a comprehensive analysis of arbitration in India, its historical roots, legislative evolution, practical application, and its effectiveness in the present day.

Arbitration, distinct from litigation, empowers disputing parties to privately resolve their conflicts through mutually selected arbitrators whose decisions are legally binding and enforceable. The principles of party autonomy, confidentiality, neutrality, and procedural flexibility form the core of arbitration. These attributes make it particularly attractive for business entities, multinational corporations, and even government bodies engaged in commercial transactions. Arbitration not only ensures swift resolution but also preserves business relationships and confidentiality—two elements often compromised in public litigation.

The historical evolution of arbitration in India is deeply intertwined with its socio-cultural and legal development. Indigenous systems of justice such as Panchayats functioned as informal arbitration forums in ancient India, promoting reconciliation and community-based justice. These traditional structures provided accessible, inexpensive, and quick solutions to disputes long before formal laws

were introduced. During the colonial era, British authorities recognized the value of arbitration and formalized it through statutory enactments such as the Bengal Regulation Act of 1772 and the Indian Arbitration Act of 1899. These early frameworks laid the groundwork for a more comprehensive legislation in the form of the Arbitration Act of 1940. Despite its intentions, the 1940 Act was widely criticized for enabling excessive court intervention and procedural rigidity, thereby defeating the very purpose of arbitration.

The post-liberalization period saw a renewed emphasis on modernizing India's arbitration law in line with global standards. This culminated in the enactment of the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996, which was modeled on the UNCITRAL Model Law. The 1996 Act consolidated India's arbitration laws, aimed at reducing judicial interference, and introduced a uniform legal framework for both domestic and international arbitrations. However, despite its progressive structure, certain lacunae persisted—particularly related to delays, costs,

arbitrator impartiality, and enforcement. These limitations triggered a series of legislative reforms, most notably the Arbitration and Conciliation (Amendment) Act, 2015.

The 2015 Amendment marked a transformative moment in India's arbitration regime. Among its major reforms were the imposition of time limits for completing arbitration proceedings, introduction of a fast-track procedure, stricter norms for arbitrator neutrality, and removal of the automatic stay on enforcement of awards when challenged in court. These changes sought to curtail undue judicial interference, enhance procedural efficiency, and bring clarity and transparency to arbitration practices in India. The amendment also provided guidelines for fixing arbitration costs and introduced mechanisms for expediting appointments and proceedings—critical aspects that had earlier hindered effectiveness.

Despite these efforts, India's arbitration system still faces a number of challenges. One of the major hurdles is the predominance of ad hoc arbitration over institutional arbitration. While ad hoc arbitration offers flexibility, it often results in inconsistency and lack of procedural oversight. On the other hand, institutional arbitration—though more structured and administratively supported—has not yet gained widespread traction in India due to lack of awareness, limited accessibility, and insufficient governmental support. Institutional frameworks such as the Mumbai Centre for International Arbitration (MCIA), Delhi International Arbitration Centre (DIAC), and Indian Council of Arbitration (ICA) are slowly gaining recognition, but they require robust infrastructural, financial, and promotional backing to rival global institutions like SIAC or LCIA.

This paper further delves into a detailed analysis of landmark judicial decisions that have shaped arbitration jurisprudence in India. Cases such as *Bharat Aluminium Co. v. Kaiser Aluminium (BALCO)* emphasized the principle of territoriality and limited Indian court jurisdiction in foreign-seated arbitrations. Similarly, *ONGC v. Saw Pipes* broadened the ambit of "public policy" for setting aside awards but was later criticized for allowing excessive judicial scrutiny. Subsequent judgments like *McDermott International v. Burn Standard* and *Ssangyong Engineering v. NHA* attempted to strike a balance between maintaining arbitral autonomy and preserving the integrity of justice. Collectively, these cases have built the doctrinal foundation for modern arbitration law in India, showcasing both its evolution and the tension between judicial activism and arbitral finality.

In the current socio-economic climate, arbitration has gained renewed relevance, especially with the rising number of cross-border commercial agreements, infrastructure development projects, and the government's Make in India initiative. Arbitration offers a viable platform for foreign investors and multinational corporations seeking quick and reliable dispute resolution mechanisms. The paper discusses how arbitration has adapted to the digital era, incorporating virtual hearings, e-filing, and remote witness examination—trends that accelerated during the COVID-19 pandemic. These innovations have not only improved efficiency but also made arbitration more inclusive and geographically flexible.

However, for arbitration to fulfill its potential, several structural and cultural shifts are necessary. The paper outlines comprehensive recommendations including: the need for

strengthening institutional arbitration bodies through statutory mandates; implementing standardized accreditation and training programs for arbitrators; establishing dedicated arbitration benches in courts; launching widespread awareness campaigns targeted at MSMEs and regional businesses; and ensuring technological integration through digital platforms and secure virtual hearing rooms. Moreover, a consistent policy of judicial non-interference must be upheld by all tiers of the judiciary to safeguard the finality of arbitral awards.

In conclusion, the paper asserts that arbitration, while not a panacea, is a crucial instrument in India's pursuit of timely and efficient justice. With the proper legislative, judicial, and infrastructural support, India can reduce its litigation burden, boost investor confidence, and transform into a global hub for arbitration. The challenge lies not just in drafting progressive laws but in ensuring their implementation and cultivating a legal culture that values resolution over confrontation. Bridging the gap between statutory promise and procedural practice is the key to unlocking the full potential of arbitration in the Indian legal landscape.

INTRODUCTION

In a country burdened by a judicial system grappling with backlog and delays, the search for efficient alternatives to traditional litigation has gained momentum. Arbitration, as a form of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR), is emerging as a vital mechanism to address disputes in a time-bound and cost-effective manner. With over 4 crore cases pending in Indian courts, the role of arbitration in ensuring accessible justice cannot be overstated. Arbitration has found favor particularly in commercial disputes, where time, confidentiality, and procedural flexibility are of paramount importance.

Arbitration allows parties to resolve their disputes privately, with the aid of a neutral third party or arbitral tribunal, whose decision is binding and enforceable. It blends the enforceability of judicial decisions with the adaptability of out-of-court processes. Party autonomy lies at the core of arbitration, allowing parties to select arbitrators, set procedural norms, and determine venues. Arbitration ensures a less adversarial and more participative approach to justice, which often results in outcomes that are not only legally sound but also mutually agreeable.

The Government of India has acknowledged the importance of arbitration in economic and legal reforms. The legislative changes, including the Arbitration and Conciliation (Amendment) Act, 2015, were brought in to align India with international best practices. Furthermore, with the growing trend in global trade and investment, the reliance on arbitration to resolve international commercial disputes has also seen a significant upsurge. Institutions such as the London Court of International Arbitration (LCIA), the Singapore International Arbitration Centre (SIAC), and the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) have become prominent, and India too aims to build world-class arbitral institutions.

Despite these developments, implementation challenges, low institutional reliance, and judicial interventions continue to hinder arbitration's potential. The success of arbitration in India depends not only on legislative reform but also on cultivating a culture that embraces ADR as a valuable legal tradition. It is against this backdrop that the present study aims to explore the evolution of arbitration, the current legal framework, case law development, the 2015 Amendment Act, and recommendations to enhance its effectiveness.

HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF ARBITRATION IN INDIA

India's rich history of dispute resolution dates back to ancient times when the concept of arbitration existed in the form of local

panchayats. These community councils resolved disputes through consensus, guided by customs and ethics. These mechanisms were trusted for their speed, accessibility, and cost-effectiveness. The prevalence of such systems points to a culture deeply rooted in alternative conflict resolution. They were not only cost-efficient but also fostered community harmony and discouraged prolonged adversarial conflict.

During the British colonial period, the need for a formal mechanism of arbitration was recognized. The Bengal Regulation Act of 1772 permitted the use of arbitration in civil disputes. This marked the inception of arbitration as a legal procedure under statutory recognition. The Indian Arbitration Act, 1899, was the first consolidated statute governing arbitration, albeit applicable only to the presidency towns. Subsequently, arbitration received broader application through the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908, which included provisions for reference to arbitration under Section 89 and Order XXXII.

The more comprehensive Arbitration Act, 1940, applied across British India and was modeled on the English Arbitration Act, 1934. However, it allowed pervasive judicial interference, requiring court intervention at almost every stage of arbitration. This diluted the purpose of having a speedy and independent dispute resolution system. The Act was criticized by jurists, the Law Commission, and litigants alike for converting arbitration into a mirror image of litigation, thus losing its core advantages.

As India opened up its economy in the 1990s, the need for an efficient arbitration framework became evident. This led to the introduction of the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996, based on the UNCITRAL Model Law. The Act replaced three previous laws and aimed to reduce court interference, improve procedural autonomy, and align Indian arbitration with international standards. The introduction of the New York Convention and India's accession to it further enabled the enforcement of foreign arbitral awards.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND THE 2015 AMENDMENT ACT

The Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996 consolidated the legal framework for both domestic and international arbitration in India. It aimed to minimize judicial intervention and promote party autonomy. The Act is divided into four parts: Part I for domestic and international arbitration within India; Part II for enforcement of foreign awards; Part III for conciliation; and Part IV for supplementary provisions.

Despite its progressive outlook, the 1996 Act fell short due to procedural ambiguities and loopholes that led to unwarranted court involvement. Arbitrators were not held to any formal standards of neutrality, enforcement of awards was delayed due to automatic stays upon filing objections, and delays in tribunal formation were common due to prolonged court proceedings.

The landmark Arbitration and Conciliation (Amendment) Act, 2015 introduced sweeping reforms:

- **Time-bound Resolution:** Section 29A imposed a 12-month limit for completion of arbitration, extendable by 6 months with mutual consent. This provision addressed concerns over prolonged proceedings and brought much-needed discipline into the timeline.
- **Fast-Track Arbitration:** Section 29B enabled expedited proceedings with a single arbitrator and written submissions, to conclude within 6 months. This was aimed at less complex disputes where parties were agreeable to limited hearings.
- **Judicial Intervention Curtailed:** Sections 8 and 11 were amended to ensure court assistance was limited and consistent with party autonomy. Appointment of arbitrators was shifted from the Chief Justice to the courts, providing procedural clarity.

- **Enforcement of Awards:** Section 36 was revised to disallow automatic stay on awards when challenged under Section 34, streamlining enforcement and reducing misuse of court processes.
- **Neutrality and Transparency:** The introduction of the Fifth and Seventh Schedules mandated disclosures regarding impartiality, conflict of interest, and eligibility of arbitrators, instilling greater trust in the process.
- **Cost Regime:** A new Schedule guided reasonable cost fixation, enhancing predictability and control over expenses. This ensured that parties had clarity on potential expenses and minimized the scope of overcharging.

The Arbitration and Conciliation (Amendment) Act, 2015, marked a significant legislative shift in India's approach to dispute resolution. It was enacted to address the persistent challenges of delays, excessive judicial intervention, lack of transparency, and inefficiencies in the arbitration process under the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996. As India aimed to establish itself as a global arbitration hub, the 2015 Amendment was a critical step toward harmonizing domestic arbitration law with international standards, particularly those outlined in the UNCITRAL Model Law.

The Amendment Act was based on the recommendations of the 246th Law Commission Report and was a response to judicial criticisms and stakeholder feedback. It sought to encourage institutional arbitration, reduce reliance on courts, and promote party autonomy.

Key Provisions of the 2015 Amendment Act

1. **Time-Bound Arbitration (Section 29A):** One of the hallmark reforms was the imposition of a 12-month timeline from the date the tribunal is constituted to deliver the award. A six-month extension can be granted with mutual party consent, and beyond that, judicial permission is required. This provision was introduced to tackle inordinate delays that plagued arbitral proceedings.
2. **Fast-Track Arbitration (Section 29B):** This provision enabled parties to opt for a fast-track procedure, where the dispute could be decided on the basis of written pleadings alone, with limited or no oral hearings. The award must be passed within six months. This is particularly useful for low-value or straightforward commercial disputes.
3. **Revised Section 36 – Enforcement of Awards:** Earlier, filing a challenge to an award under Section 34 resulted in an automatic stay on enforcement. The Amendment removed this automatic stay, making the award enforceable as a court decree unless a separate stay application is filed and granted.
4. **Arbitrator Neutrality and Disclosure (Section 12):** Arbitrators are now required to disclose any circumstances likely to give rise to justifiable doubts as to their independence or impartiality. The Fifth and Seventh Schedules list situations that disqualify an individual from being appointed as an arbitrator.
5. **Appointment of Arbitrators (Section 11):** The responsibility for appointment of arbitrators was shifted from the Chief Justice of the High Court or Supreme Court to the courts themselves. This change aimed to bring more uniformity and reduce delays in the appointment process.
6. **Interim Measures (Section 9):** Section 9 was amended to specify that once the tribunal is constituted, courts should normally not entertain interim applications unless the remedy under Section 17 (interim relief from the tribunal) is ineffective.

7. **Cost Regime (Section 31A):** A new regime for the imposition of costs was introduced, allowing arbitral tribunals to fix reasonable costs in accordance with new schedules. This aimed to discourage frivolous claims and promote efficient conduct of proceedings.

Current Status and Effectiveness

The implementation of the 2015 Amendment Act was largely welcomed by legal practitioners, corporates, and arbitration institutions. It introduced certainty, predictability, and efficiency into the arbitration process. The time limits under Section 29A incentivized speedier resolutions. The enforcement framework under the amended Section 36 ensured greater finality and instilled confidence among stakeholders.

However, certain ambiguities and practical difficulties continued. For example, the strict interpretation of Section 29A sometimes led to challenges regarding the start of the limitation period. Moreover, while the amendment encouraged fast-track arbitration, uptake has been limited, partly due to parties' reluctance to forgo oral hearings.

The changes related to arbitrator neutrality brought India closer to international standards. Nonetheless, concerns have been raised regarding the overly broad nature of the Seventh Schedule, which may inadvertently disqualify competent professionals due to perceived conflicts.

Pros of the 2015 Amendment Act

- **Efficiency:** The introduction of strict timelines has significantly reduced delays.
- **Enforcement:** Removal of automatic stay has made award enforcement smoother.
- **Transparency:** Disclosure requirements have increased arbitrator accountability.

- **Cost Management:** The new cost regime ensures economic discipline.
- **Reduced Judicial Intervention:** Clear boundaries on court powers have protected arbitral autonomy.

Cons of the 2015 Amendment Act

- **Ambiguity in Application:** The retrospective vs. prospective applicability of the amendments created confusion and required judicial clarification (as seen in BCCI v. Kochi Cricket case).
- **Institutional Weakness:** The act encouraged institutional arbitration, but without parallel reforms to bolster these institutions, the impact was muted.
- **Administrative Burden on Courts:** Section 29A extensions brought courts back into the arbitration process, partially undermining the objective of limited court involvement.
- **Reluctance for Fast-Track:** Due to lack of familiarity and trust, parties rarely opt for fast-track procedures.

Recent Developments in Indian Arbitration

Since the 2015 reforms, several key developments have further shaped the arbitration landscape:

1. **Arbitration and Conciliation (Amendment) Act, 2019:** This Act introduced the Arbitration Council of India (ACI) to regulate arbitral institutions and frame norms for accreditation of arbitrators. However, concerns over excessive governmental control over the ACI led to pushback from the legal fraternity. As of now, the ACI has not been operationalized.
2. **2021 Amendment:** The Act introduced the provision for unconditional stay on arbitral awards if the court finds prima facie fraud or corruption in the arbitration agreement or award. While it

seeks to protect the sanctity of the process, critics argue it could be misused to delay enforcement.

3. **Judicial Clarifications:** In *Government of Maharashtra v. Borse Brothers Engineers & Contractors Pvt. Ltd.* (2021), the Supreme Court clarified the limitation periods for challenging awards and confirmed that courts cannot condone delay beyond prescribed limits, reinforcing procedural discipline.
4. **Digitalization and COVID-19:** The pandemic accelerated the adoption of technology. Online hearings, digital document submission, and e-awards are increasingly common. Institutions like MCIA and DIAC have adopted digital case management tools, which promise long-term efficiency gains.
5. **International Rankings and Reforms:** India's global ranking in ease of doing business has improved, partly due to better contract enforcement mechanisms. The government has also signed cooperation agreements with global arbitration centers to enhance knowledge transfer and credibility.

The 2015 Amendment to the Arbitration and Conciliation Act marked a watershed moment in Indian arbitration law. By addressing key issues like delay, judicial overreach, and arbitrator bias, it provided a more robust and internationally credible framework. However, effective implementation remains the key. India must continue to focus on strengthening institutions, ensuring consistent judicial interpretation, and promoting user awareness to realize the full potential of these reforms. With proper enforcement and capacity-building, India can emerge as a preferred destination for arbitration, both regionally and globally.

RELATED CASE LAWS

A thorough understanding of judicial decisions provides insight into the trajectory of arbitration in India. Various landmark judgments have

played a vital role in shaping the interpretative framework of the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996.

1. **Bharat Aluminium Co. v. Kaiser Aluminium Technical Services Inc. (BALCO), (2012) 9 SCC 552:** In this landmark case, the Supreme Court held that Part I of the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996 applies only to arbitrations seated in India. The Court emphasized the principle of territoriality and overruled the earlier judgment in *Bhatia International v. Bulk Trading S.A.* This decision significantly reduced the scope of judicial intervention in foreign-seated arbitrations and enhanced India's global credibility in cross-border dispute resolution.
2. **Oil & Natural Gas Corp. v. Saw Pipes Ltd., (2003) 5 SCC 705:** This case expanded the meaning of "public policy" under Section 34 of the Act. The Court held that an award could be set aside not only for violations of law but also for "patent illegality". Although it aimed to protect the legal integrity of awards, this judgment faced criticism for enabling broader judicial interference, which could defeat the goal of finality in arbitration.
3. **McDermott International Inc. v. Burn Standard Co. Ltd., (2006) 11 SCC 181:** In this case, the Supreme Court clarified the scope of judicial powers under Section 34. It held that courts could only set aside an award on limited grounds and were not empowered to modify or substitute their own reasoning. This was a significant affirmation of arbitral autonomy.
4. **Sundaram Finance Ltd. v. NEPC India Ltd., (1999) 2 SCC 479:** The Court in this case recognized the authority of courts to provide interim measures under Section 9 even before the commencement of arbitral proceedings. This decision provided critical protection to parties' rights and assets pending the constitution of an arbitral tribunal.
5. **Venture Global Engineering v. Satyam Computer Services Ltd., (2008) 4 SCC 190:** The Supreme Court allowed enforcement of foreign

arbitral awards to be challenged on public policy grounds under Indian law. This decision caused concern in the international community. It was later overruled by BALCO, thereby restoring global confidence in India's arbitration regime.

6. Ssangyong Engineering & Construction Co. Ltd. v. National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), (2019) 15 SCC 131: In this case, the Court clarified the interpretation of "patent illegality" and narrowed its scope post the 2015 amendment. It reaffirmed that re-appreciation of evidence was not permissible under Section 34, ensuring greater finality of arbitral awards.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Enhancing Institutional Infrastructure India must strengthen its institutional arbitration framework to match global standards. Institutions like MCIA (Mumbai Centre for International Arbitration), DIAC (Delhi International Arbitration Centre), and ICA (Indian Council of Arbitration) need stronger infrastructure, digital integration, and widespread recognition. Government and PSU contracts should mandate institutional arbitration to reinforce trust in these bodies.

Arbitrator Training and Accreditation Currently, there is no mandatory accreditation mechanism for arbitrators in India. Establishing a national accreditation framework, modeled on international best practices, can ensure quality control. Regular training, certification, and ethical standards will ensure consistency and competence among arbitrators.

Creating Specialized Arbitration Benches To ensure swift and uniform rulings on arbitration-related matters, dedicated benches in High Courts should be established. These benches can resolve issues like appointment of arbitrators, interim measures, and enforcement of awards with domain expertise.

Awareness and Accessibility Awareness about arbitration remains low among small businesses and litigants. Government agencies, bar associations, and academic institutions

must launch educational campaigns and offer accessible materials in regional languages to promote understanding of arbitration benefits and procedures.

Technology and Digital Integration Virtual hearings, online case filing, digital award delivery, and blockchain-based evidence tracking should become standard in institutional arbitration. These tools can lower costs, improve access for remote parties, and increase transparency.

Limiting Judicial Overreach Courts must strictly adhere to the principle of minimal intervention. The Supreme Court and High Courts should issue guidelines promoting judicial restraint in arbitration matters, ensuring respect for finality of arbitral awards.

CONCLUSION

Arbitration in India has witnessed a transformative journey from traditional community-based systems to a modern, internationally harmonized legal framework. The enactment of the 1996 Act and its subsequent amendments, particularly in 2015 and 2019, have laid the foundation for a robust arbitration culture. Judicial pronouncements have further shaped the understanding of key legal principles and provided necessary checks and balances. However, practical impediments—such as judicial delays, ad hoc practices, limited institutional usage, and inconsistent awareness—continue to limit arbitration's potential. A paradigm shift is necessary, moving from a litigation-centric mindset to one that prioritizes alternative, efficient dispute resolution systems. India has the legal and institutional scaffolding to emerge as a global arbitration hub. To realize this vision, stakeholders must collaborate on refining legal procedures, promoting institutional use, investing in training and technology, and cultivating public trust in arbitration. As India aspires to be a global economic powerhouse, a strong and effective arbitration framework will be indispensable to support investor confidence, commercial certainty, and access to timely justice. By

bridging the gap between legislative intent and ground reality, India can not only alleviate the pressure on its overburdened judiciary but also affirm its commitment to becoming a leader in global dispute resolution.

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DATA WITHOUT CONSENT: THE COPYRIGHT DILEMMA IN AI DEVELOPMENT**AUTHOR** – MEGHNA NAIR, STUDENT OF LL.M – IP, AMITY UNIVERSITY, NOIDA**BEST CITATION** – MEGHNA NAIR, DATA WITHOUT CONSENT: THE COPYRIGHT DILEMMA IN AI DEVELOPMENT, *INDIAN JOURNAL OF LEGAL REVIEW (IJLR)*, 5 (8) OF 2025, PG. 856-863, APIS – 3920 – 0001 & ISSN – 2583-2344**I. ABSTRACT**

This paper critically examines the role of data mining in the development of artificial intelligence (AI), especially in the context of copyright law. As AI systems increasingly rely on large-scale datasets, many comprising copyrighted works for training, the practice of text and data mining (TDM) has become a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it serves as a cornerstone of innovation, enabling machines to simulate human-like reasoning and generate sophisticated outputs. On the other, it raises serious legal and ethical concerns regarding the unauthorized use of protected intellectual property. The legal vacuum that exists in jurisdictions like India, and the ramifications for authors' economic and moral rights are explored along with the evolution and mechanics of data mining in AI development. It delves into critical jurisprudential debates, discussing real-world legal disputes such as the ANI v. OpenAI case to illustrate the urgent need for regulatory clarity. By analysing both the supportive and critical perspectives on data mining in AI, the necessity of a balanced framework, one that fosters innovation without undermining the foundational principles of copyright and authorship is pressed upon.

II. INTRODUCTION

Have you ever noticed that after searching for a product just once on Google, whether it's headphones, a coffee maker, or running shoes, your online ads immediately start reflecting that search? Suddenly, every website you visit seems to show suggestions for that exact item or something closely related. This isn't a coincidence. Advertising algorithms are designed to track your search and browsing behaviour, and they adjust quickly, tailoring the content you see to your most recent interests and online activity. What's even more striking is that these ads are constantly evolving, updating in real time to reflect your changing needs and preferences.

In today's digital landscape, data has emerged as the most valuable currency in the world, arguably even surpassing traditional commodities like oil in influence and economic power. Initially, the rise of the internet and smart technologies promised better communication, enhanced accessibility, and more personalized

experiences. However, what began as simple data collection, intended for improving services and analytics, rapidly expanded into a vast and largely hidden economy centred around the continuous harvesting and monetization of personal information. As digital platforms became integral to everyday life, facilitating everything from shopping and social networking to learning and working. Corporations, especially large tech conglomerates, began to recognize the immense value in tracking user behaviours, preferences, and habits. This data wasn't only used to personalize ads; it also became the backbone of predictive algorithms, artificial intelligence training, and strategic business decisions.

What makes this system particularly concerning is the often opaque and covert manner in which data collection takes place. While companies may claim they are personalizing services for user benefit, the reality is that vast quantities of sensitive data are being gathered, analysed, and frequently sold, often without the user's

informed consent. Lengthy, convoluted terms and conditions serve more to shield corporate interests than to genuinely inform users, and most people agree to them simply to access basic services. This isn't limited to private corporations anymore, governments, third-party advertisers, and data brokers are also active participants in this data-driven ecosystem. The result is a complex and largely invisible global network in which personal data is continuously exchanged, often without oversight. In many ways, this unchecked flow of information represents a serious threat to individual privacy in the modern age.

III. DATA MINING

In recent years, data mining has evolved into one of the most powerful tools used by technology companies to train artificial intelligence systems. While on the surface, this practice is often framed as a catalyst for technological advancement, much like how automobiles replaced horses in the name of progress, it also conceals a far more concerning reality.

Data mining broadly refers to the practice of analysing large datasets to uncover meaningful patterns, trends, or correlations that can be applied to inform future decisions.⁹⁵⁰ This process has gained substantial traction in recent years due to technological advancements in data collection and storage, the proliferation of machine learning techniques, and the steady decline in computational costs.⁹⁵¹ At its core, machine learning relies heavily on data; it is the mechanism through which systems "learn" from past events to make informed predictions or generate new content.⁹⁵² Through statistical analysis, algorithms uncover insights embedded in vast quantities of data insights

that are often inaccessible to traditional analytical methods.⁹⁵³

Machine learning has become the backbone of most contemporary AI systems, enabling machines to simulate human-like reasoning, learning, and decision-making.⁹⁵⁴ A critical component of this process is the use of large-scale datasets, particularly text-based datasets in the domain of Natural Language Processing, to train AI models to understand and produce language-based outputs.⁹⁵⁵ These applications range from automated translation and information extraction to chatbots and intelligent search systems.⁹⁵⁶ Text and data mining (TDM) has emerged as a cornerstone of this process. TDM refers to the automated analysis of large corpora of text or other datasets to extract information and build intelligent systems. While the practice is crucial for AI advancement, it raises pressing legal questions, particularly surrounding the use of copyrighted material.

In essence, a typical AI development pipeline begins with identifying a problem; what the model is intended to predict or perform. Developers then curate and prepare the necessary data, often requiring extensive labelling or annotation.⁹⁵⁷ This data is used to train a model using a selected algorithm, which outputs a machine learning model capable of interpreting or predicting based on new, unseen data.⁹⁵⁸

AI developers frequently utilize pre-trained models to reduce the need for massive training datasets, sometimes narrowing data requirements from millions of entries to just thousands.⁹⁵⁹ Nevertheless, fine-tuning these

⁹⁵³ *ibid*

⁹⁵⁴ **Stuart Russell & Peter Norvig**, *Artificial Intelligence: A Modern Approach* (4th ed. Pearson 2020).

⁹⁵⁵ **Jacob Devlin et al.**, *BERT: Pre-training of Deep Bidirectional Transformers for Language Understanding*, arXiv:1810.04805 (2018), <https://arxiv.org/abs/1810.04805>.

⁹⁵⁶ *ibid*

⁹⁵⁷ **Aurélien Géron**, *Hands-On Machine Learning with Scikit-Learn, Keras, and TensorFlow* (2d ed. O'Reilly 2019).

⁹⁵⁸ **European Commission**, *Guidelines on Text and Data Mining* (2020)

⁹⁵⁹ **OpenAI**, *GPT Fine-Tuning Guide*, OpenAI Documentation (2023), <https://platform.openai.com/docs/guides/fine-tuning>.

⁹⁵⁰ **Foster Provost & Tom Fawcett**, *Data Science for Business: What You Need to Know About Data Mining and Data-Analytic Thinking* (O'Reilly Media 2013).

⁹⁵¹ *ibid*

⁹⁵² **Pedro Domingos**, *The Master Algorithm* (Basic Books 2015)

models still necessitates downloading or sourcing new data. Since this step is typically automated, especially in fields like computer vision or NLP developers often scrape data from online platforms such as Google Images, YouTube, Wikipedia, or even Gmail.⁹⁶⁰ This scraping, while efficient, presents significant copyright concerns when it involves the unauthorized use of protected content.

IV. DATA MINING VIS-À-VIS COPYRIGHT

The collection and utilization of vast amounts of data are not only central to AI development, but they also come at the cost of significant legal and ethical compromises. One of the most critical of these is the rampant infringement of copyright through indiscriminate text and data mining practices.

For AI to function at the level it does today, i.e. recognizing complex patterns, responding to nuanced prompts, and generating human-like content, it must be trained on enormous volumes of data. These datasets are compiled from a multitude of sources, including books, articles, images, videos, and even creative literary works, many of which are protected under copyright law. Unfortunately, this data is often scraped and extracted without the knowledge or consent of the original creators. Major AI companies deploy automated tools that harvest this information at scale, frequently ignoring the origin, ownership, or protected status of the content. In doing so, they blur the line between publicly available information and proprietary intellectual property.

This indiscriminate data mining is especially concerning in jurisdictions like India, where there currently exists no specific legal framework that addresses the use of copyrighted material in AI training. As a result, authors and creators find themselves at a severe disadvantage, with no practical means to seek redress or enforce their rights. The absence of a clear regulatory structure allows AI developers to exploit literary and artistic works without securing licenses or

compensating rights holders. This undermines the exclusive rights granted to authors under copyright law particularly the right to reproduce, distribute, and communicate their work to the public. As AI systems continue to improve, they are increasingly capable of generating content that closely mirrors or replicates original works, effectively releasing these derivative creations into the public domain. This severely impacts the author's economic rights, as their ability to control and commercially benefit from their work is eroded.

Beyond financial concerns, such practices also strike at the heart of an author's moral rights. AI-generated outputs can sometimes misattribute works or associate false information with a particular creator. This misattribution not only distorts the intent and originality of the creator's work but also affects their reputation, a key concern protected by moral rights such as the right to attribution (paternity) and the right to preserve the integrity of one's work. For instance, if an AI model is trained on a copyrighted novel and later produces derivative content without proper attribution, or worse, attributes it incorrectly, the original author's personal and professional standing may suffer. These breaches go beyond technical violations; they represent a deeper moral and ethical failure to respect the individual creator's voice, identity, and legacy.

In essence, while data mining may be justified as a necessity for technological innovation, its unchecked and opaque implementation has led to a landscape where creators' rights are routinely trampled. This is especially problematic in developing nations where legal systems have yet to evolve to keep pace with the rapid expansion of AI technologies. Without stringent safeguards, creators remain vulnerable, their work quietly absorbed into training datasets and re-emerging in ways they cannot foresee, control, or benefit from. If left unregulated, this unchecked exploitation of creative labour will not only weaken the intellectual property framework but also

⁹⁶⁰ Abhishek Gupta, *The Ethical Machine* (Routledge 2022).

threaten the very foundation of authorship, originality, and ethical innovation.

A. Flip side of the debate

One perspective in the ongoing debate around copyright and artificial intelligence asserts that data mining, particularly when used to train machine learning models, should not be viewed as a form of copyright infringement. Proponents of this view argue that the nature of data mining is fundamentally non-expressive and functional, thereby placing it outside the scope of copyright protection. They contend that a legal “safe harbour” for such activity is warranted, not only to enable the continued growth of artificial intelligence but also because, under current copyright jurisprudence, the act of mining data does not necessarily equate to infringement.

This reasoning finds roots in established copyright doctrine, notably in the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Baker v. Selden*. In this seminal case, the Court clarified the distinction between a work’s expressive content and its utilitarian aspects. It held that the mere use of a copyrighted work’s material form for a non-expressive purpose, such as learning or extracting functional information does not, in itself, amount to copyright infringement.⁹⁶¹ This distinction is crucial in the context of AI training where large datasets comprising of text, images, or other expressive works are analysed not for their aesthetic or expressive value, but for their embedded patterns and statistical structures. When developers download copyrighted material to train AI models, they do so to enable machines to learn linguistic structures, visual classifications, and behavioural patterns, not to replicate or publicly disseminate the original works.⁹⁶² The use is technical, non-communicative, and wholly separate from any expressive or creative reuse.

As such, these copies are not distributed, displayed, or performed publicly, which are key criteria for infringement under copyright law.⁹⁶³

Additionally, this line of argument relies on the idea-expression dichotomy central to copyright doctrine: copyright protects the original expression of ideas, not the ideas themselves. AI model training is understood to extract unprotectable ideas, patterns, or data structures from input material, rather than replicating expressive content. Thus, it is posited that even a fair use analysis might not be necessary for such acts, as they may fall outside the protective boundaries of copyright altogether.⁹⁶⁴

Under this reasoning, the need for a legislative or judicially recognized safe harbour becomes evident. As artificial intelligence continues to evolve, denying developers the ability to mine data, even from copyrighted sources would significantly hinder innovation and slow technological progress.⁹⁶⁵ Supporters of this viewpoint therefore advocate for clearer legal provisions that distinguish between functional and expressive uses of copyrighted content in the realm of AI, ensuring that legitimate, transformative, and non-expressive data mining is not unjustly penalized.

B. Fair Use or Fair Dealing: a possible defence?

Thanks to the consumption of websites like YouTube, almost everyone is aware of the Section 52 of the Copyright Act, 1957, which provides specific exceptions to copyright infringement, allowing limited use of copyrighted material without the owner’s authorization. The author wishes to explore into the idea whether this provision potentially defends the use of copyrighted content by AI tools, such as Large Language Models. Though the law does not explicitly define “fair dealing,” it permits the use of literary, dramatic, musical, or

⁹⁶¹ *Baker v. Selden*, 101 U.S. 99 (1879); see also **James Grimmelmann**, *There’s No Such Thing as a Computer-Authoring Work — And It’s a Good Thing, Too*, 39 Colum. J.L. & Arts 403 (2016).

⁹⁶² **M. Feldman**, *The Uncharted Territory of AI and Copyright*, Harv. J.L. & Tech. Dig. (2023).

⁹⁶³ *ibid*

⁹⁶⁴ **J. Gervais**, *AI and Copyright: Fair Use is Not the Answer*, 24 Vand. J. Ent. & Tech. L. 609 (2022).

⁹⁶⁵ **European Parliament**, *Artificial Intelligence Act: Text and Data Mining Exceptions*, Legislative Briefing (2022).

artistic works for purposes like research, private study, criticism, or review, which may not constitute infringement.

In India, the test for copyright infringement focuses on two key questions: whether the content is "substantially similar" to the original copyrighted work and whether it falls under the exceptions listed in Section 52. According to this framework, literary works generated by AI systems, such as LLMs, may not be considered infringement if used for private consumption, research, review, or educational purposes, as these uses typically fall within the exceptions outlined in the law. However, the situation changes when AI-generated content is used for commercial purposes or in ways that do not meet the exceptions. For example, if a person uses an LLM to generate a translation of a copyrighted book or to create an alternate ending to a novel and then publishes it under their own name, this would infringe the original author's copyright, as it goes beyond the scope of fair dealing.

Determining what qualifies as fair dealing ultimately rests with the courts, which evaluate each case based on the specific facts, circumstances, and established guidelines. Courts assess whether the use of the copyrighted material is justified within the context of the exceptions and whether the original work has been transformed in such a way that it constitutes an infringement. This legal standard is particularly relevant in cases involving AI, as the lines between creative input and replication of copyrighted material can sometimes blur, leading to potential infringement claims.

V. CRITICISM

The legal dispute between Asian News International (ANI) and OpenAI, the creators of ChatGPT, marks a significant turning point in India's evolving approach to intellectual property law, particularly in the context of artificial intelligence. While jurisdictions such as the United States and the United Kingdom have already seen litigation concerning the

intersection of generative AI and copyright, this case represents the first of its kind before the Indian judiciary, bringing to the forefront critical questions about data usage, copyright infringement, and technological advancement.

At the heart of the case is ANI's allegation that OpenAI has unlawfully utilized its vast archive of news reports, interviews, and exclusive statements, built over five decades for training its large language models and generating outputs in response to user queries. Under Section 14 of the Indian Copyright Act, 1957, ANI claims exclusive rights to reproduce, store, and distribute its original works. ANI asserts that OpenAI's actions using these materials without licensing or permission amount to copyright infringement at two distinct stages: (i) during the training phase of the AI model using copyrighted material, and (ii) through the generation and reproduction of those works as outputs during user interaction⁹⁶⁶.

The Delhi High Court has issued notice to OpenAI and its local affiliate, Microsoft India, and has posed preliminary questions to be resolved, such as whether training a model on copyrighted data constitutes infringement, and whether the reproduction of similar content via AI-generated responses also violates copyright law⁹⁶⁷.

One of the pivotal legal doctrines under scrutiny is the principle of "fair use" or "fair dealing," enshrined under Section 52 of the Copyright Act. This provision allows limited use of copyrighted materials for purposes such as private use, criticism, review, or the reporting of current affairs. However, applying this exemption to AI training is complex. ANI has contested the applicability of this doctrine to OpenAI, especially since OpenAI offers a commercial version of its tool – ChatGPT Plus, thus complicating claims that the use is purely for

⁹⁶⁶ ANI Media Pvt. Ltd. v. OpenAI OpCo LLC, CS(COMM) 1028/2024 (Del. H.C.).

⁹⁶⁷ Delhi High Court Issues Notice to ANI and OpenAI in Copyright Infringement Matter, Bar & Bench (Apr. 2024), <https://www.barandbench.com>.

research or educational purposes⁹⁶⁸. This case also brings into focus the concept of Text and Data Mining, a process that involves the automated extraction and analysis of data from vast datasets. While the UK allows TDM for non-commercial research under its copyright framework, India currently lacks any specific legal exception or regulation dedicated to TDM, making this case all the more consequential. The lack of clarity leaves content creators vulnerable, especially when their work is used without consent in high-stakes commercial contexts like AI model training⁹⁶⁹.

OpenAI, in its defence, has argued that it has blocklisted ANI's domain (www.aninews.in) from future training datasets and that it provides an "opt-out" mechanism for content creators who do not wish for their work to be used. While this mirrors evolving practices in the European Union where rightsholders can prevent TDM through machine-readable signals. It raises further questions in India: should the burden to prevent infringement lie with the copyright holder or the entity performing data mining? Moreover, ANI has highlighted that even after opting out, data already stored on servers remains and cannot be deleted. This raises further legal and ethical questions about the indefinite storage of copyrighted material and whether such long-term retention constitutes a continuing infringement.

A. Opt-out is not the way out

The opt-out mechanism primarily, it shifts the burden of copyright protection onto the author, contradicting the principle that copyright is an automatic right and should not require affirmative action to be enforced under Section 14 of the Indian Copyright Act, 1957. Additionally, once an AI model is trained on copyrighted data, the knowledge cannot be "unlearned" even if a creator opts out later, the model retains the patterns and insights extracted

during training⁹⁷⁰. Thus, the infringement has already occurred and cannot be reversed through opt-out procedures.

A more rights-preserving alternative would be an *opt-in model*, where content is included in training datasets only with explicit authorization. This approach aligns better with the principles of informed consent and safeguards the exclusive rights granted to authors⁹⁷¹. Further complicating the matter, tools used for opting out, such as *robots.txt* or domain blocklisting, are technically voluntary, not legally binding, and rely on the good faith of AI developers⁹⁷². Moreover, many smaller creators may not possess the technical know-how or awareness to implement these safeguards effectively. From a legal standpoint, post-infringement opt-outs offer no retroactive remedy. Courts will still consider whether content was accessed and utilized without prior consent, potentially causing irreparable harm, especially when it involves misattribution or economic displacement. The opt-out model is insufficient and inadequate. A robust framework for consent-based data usage, where rights are proactively respected, is necessary to balance technological advancement with authorial protection.

B. Unjust enrichment and market harm

In addition to copyright violations, ANI has also made claims under tort law, citing unjust enrichment and unfair competition. ANI contends that OpenAI's use of its content allows it to replicate ANI's reporting potentially even faster than ANI can publish its own updates thus siphoning away its readership and harming its core business model. This argument is particularly potent given the time, effort, and resources ANI invests in content creation.

Another critical dimension raised by ANI pertains to moral rights, especially the right to

⁹⁶⁸ Ibid

⁹⁶⁹ Directive (EU) 2019/790 of the European Parliament and of the Council on Copyright and Related Rights in the Digital Single Market, 2019 O.J. (L 130) 92.

⁹⁷⁰ Casey Newton, *AI Can't Unlearn What It Knows*, Platformer (2023), <https://www.platformer.news>.

⁹⁷¹ Daniel Gervais, *Data and the Future of Copyright*, 45 Colum. J.L. & Arts 1 (2022).

⁹⁷² Directive (EU) 2019/790 on Copyright and Related Rights in the Digital Single Market, 2019 O.J. (L 130) 92.

attribution and protection from false attribution. ANI notes instances where ChatGPT falsely attributed news to ANI that it never published. Such misattributions not only harm ANI's reputation but also raise concerns about the reliability of generative AI tools. These issues highlight the broader risks of misinformation and reputational damage when AI models are trained on unvetted or misattributed data.

This case represents more than a private dispute between two entities; it is poised to define how Indian copyright law will interact with rapidly advancing AI technologies. Courts will need to strike a balance between protecting creators' rights and enabling innovation through AI. This also raises broader policy questions: Should India adopt specific exceptions for TDM? Should there be stronger consent frameworks or opt-in mechanisms? And most importantly, how can the law ensure fairness, accountability, and transparency in the AI ecosystem? Whatever the outcome, the ANI vs. OpenAI case is expected to shape India's stance on copyright protection in the digital age, setting the stage for how AI and authorship will co-exist in the years to come.

VI. CONCLUSION

Data mining lies at the heart of modern AI development, yet its legal and ethical implications remain highly contentious, particularly in the realm of copyright. As evidenced in the ANI v. OpenAI litigation, the unregulated use of copyrighted content for AI training exposes a systemic gap in India's intellectual property framework. This vacuum not only leaves creators unprotected but also encourages practices that undermine both their economic rights and moral agency. The current reliance on opt-out mechanisms and voluntary safeguards is woefully inadequate, shifting the burden of enforcement onto authors instead of holding developers accountable. At the same time, legitimate concerns from the AI development community regarding the need for non-expressive and transformative data use cannot be ignored. As such, a nuanced legal

approach is imperative. One that distinguishes between expressive replication and functional learning, and that embeds informed consent as a prerequisite for data use. Whether through legislative amendment or judicial interpretation, India must move toward a rights-preserving, innovation-friendly copyright model. If not addressed promptly, the unchecked exploitation of creative labour through data mining could erode not just individual authorship, but the very integrity of copyright law in the digital age.

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LEGAL AND REGULATORY APPROACHES TO TECHNOLOGY IN BANKING

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Abstract

The accelerated introduction of technology in the banking industry has transformed financial services, providing improved efficiency, accessibility, and innovation. In India, various digital initiatives like the Unified Payments Interface (UPI), digital lending platforms, artificial intelligence (AI)-based credit scoring, and blockchain technologies have greatly revamped conventional banking. These development processes have, however, created a series of legal and regulatory issues, such as data privacy and protection, cybersecurity risks, algorithmic discrimination, financial fraud, and regulatory arbitrage.

This article critically reviews the legal and regulatory strategies implemented in India to counter these challenges. It discusses major frameworks and guidelines released by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), and other concerned authorities. The study highlights the role of instruments such as the RBI's digital lending guidelines, regulatory sandboxes, and IT risk management directives in fostering a balance between innovation and regulation. Furthermore, it considers the gaps in existing laws, such as the absence of a comprehensive data protection regime, and evaluates how India can align its policies with global best practices.

Finally, the article advocates a coordinated, responsive, and future-oriented regulatory approach in order to match technological advances in banking with legal protection and institutional strength.

Introduction

The banking industry stands at a turning point driven by an intricate interlacing of regulatory evolution, financial crises, innovation, and evolving consumer demand. Not only are regulations becoming stricter; they are also getting smarter, with significant focus on transparency, data privacy, and customer protection. A recent Deloitte report highlights the outrageous cost of compliance, which puts banks' compliance costs at over \$100 billion annually to meet these demands. This is the reason why banks have to implement innovative technologies so urgently.

Meanwhile, the digitalization era has ushered in a new world where customers demand banking processes to be smooth, secure, and tailored to their needs, compelling banks to innovate at breakneck speeds. This research looks at the

technologies driving this transformation – from AI and blockchain to RegTech, and the game-changing realms of DeFi and digital currencies. We'll examine how these technologies are not only essential to cutting through the regulatory fog but also are key drivers in redesigning what banking will be in a digital-first world.⁹⁷³

Regulatory Responses and Legal Scholarship

• Regulatory Technology (RegTech)

Compliance Automation: RegTech solutions apply AI and machine learning to automate compliance tasks, including AML and KYC transaction monitoring and fulfillment of multiple financial regulations. JPMorgan Chase uses AI to sift through tens of millions of transactions per day, identifying compliance breaches with a high degree of accuracy.

⁹⁷³ REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS FOR THE INDIAN FINTECH INDUSTRY, March 27, 2023

Standard Chartered Bank uses RegTech to clear KYC in many jurisdictions, reducing processing time and errors by an enormous factor.

Real-Time Reporting: The demand for near-real-time regulatory reporting is growing. ING Bank has put in place RegTech solutions in order to gain immediate insights into transaction monitoring and implement compliance adjustments swiftly. These systems offer automated aggregation, analysis, and reporting of data, minimizing human errors and the risk of regulatory penalties.⁹⁷⁴

Risk Assessment: RegTech also enables risk prediction, using data analytics to anticipate where compliance risks may materialize, in order for banks to take preventive rather than remedial action.

Regulatory Change Management: RegTech products like Compliance.ai use NLP to track and examine regulatory changes, allowing banks to be ahead of compliance requirements in different regions and sectors.

- **Blockchain for Transparency and Compliance**

Immutable Records: Blockchain technology allows for an immutable ledger of transactions, which is crucial for regulatory compliance and audit trails. Santander uses blockchain to enable international payments with transparency and security. RBC explores blockchain for trade finance to reduce fraud and ensure maximum compliance by way of transparent record-keeping.

Smart Contracts: These guarantee compliance by implementing provisions of the contract automatically, hence mandating compliance with regulations like payment verifications on cross-border transactions. Commonwealth Bank of Australia has piloted blockchain smart contracts for compliance on trade, where export controls are mandated automatically.

Regulatory Concerns: While blockchain makes things transparent, it is challenging to maintain

privacy as well as data protection legislation compliance. Banks are building hybrid blockchains in which private data is not revealed but transaction integrity is publicly verifiable.

Cross-Border Compliance: Blockchain can facilitate cross-border compliance by having one point of data for all parties, reducing mistakes and enhancing regulation.

- **Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML)**

Risk Management: AI and ML are crucial in the detection of fraud, assessing credit risk, and managing market risks through analyzing large data sets for patterns or discrepancies. CitiBank uses AI to identify fraud, reducing false positives significantly. HSBC uses ML for advanced credit assessment, ensuring that it complies with Basel III guidelines for sophisticated risk management.

Customer Due Diligence: AI accelerates and facilitates KYC and AML processes, speeding onboarding while preserving constant compliance using real-time surveillance. Deutsche Bank utilized AI in order to reduce onboarding processes by 50%, while maintaining effectiveness and regulatory compliance.

Compliance and Operational Effectiveness: AI enhances regulatory compliance analytics, aids in decision-making, and automates routine compliance tasks, increasing efficiency and accuracy.

Ethical Implications: With AI playing a greater role, banks are focusing on ethical AI to maintain non-discrimination in applications like loan approval, ensuring fairness as per consumer protection laws.

Challenges: Retaining data integrity and privacy in the use of AI for compliance continues to remain an issue, together with the requirement for AI explainability and transparency of its decision-making process.

- **Data Privacy and Security Technologies**

⁹⁷⁴ Sherwood Glazier, Technologies Shaping the Future of Banking

Privacy-Enhancing Technologies (PETs): Due to GDPR and other similar rules, PETs like differential privacy and homomorphic encryption are indispensable for data processing without sacrificing confidentiality. These tools allow banks to derive insights from data without betraying individual anonymity, finding balance between compliance and business insight.

Cybersecurity Improvements: Pecuniary pressures on information security force banks to invest in upgraded cybersecurity. Barclays uses encryption and penetration tests to comply with information protection standards. "Digital twins" of banking infrastructure emulate cyber attacks in order that security measures can be put in place proactively.

Data Governance: Banks are designing robust data governance frameworks to address data lifecycle in a way that data residency regulations and privacy rules of different areas are complied with.

Zero Trust Security: Moving to a 'never trust, always verify' model, banks like Goldman Sachs implement zero trust architectures, adding layers of security for compliance with data protection regulations.

• Cloud Computing

Scalability and Flexibility: Cloud platforms like AWS and Azure provide scalable solutions for compliance testing and reporting. DBS Bank leverages cloud for regulatory reporting of best-in-class. Multi-cloud strategies share workloads, enhancing compliance and resilience.

Cloud Security: Banks use hybrid clouds for control and scalability purposes while ensuring data security. Capital One shows the way cloud can be leveraged for management of secure financial information, setting a compliance standard.

Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity: Cloud computing enhances banks' disaster recovery, critical in the delivery of regulatory compliance during disruptions.

Cloud Regulatory Compliance: Banks must navigate compliance issues like data sovereignty and privacy when they are using cloud facilities, with custom solutions or by aligning with cloud suppliers to ensure that they meet regulations.

• Digital Identity Management

Secure Authentication: Stricter digital identity authentication, such as biometric authentication, is necessary for regulatory requirements. BBVA uses facial recognition to onboard customers. Bank of America uses biometrics for secure authentication in its mobile banking application, finding the perfect balance between security and customer experience.

Consent Management: Banks have in place systems of managing customer consent to share data to support open banking compliance. Lloyds Banking Group provides a customer dashboard to control data sharing, compliant with GDPR and PSD2.

Identity Federation: Banks see value in identity federation to enable secure, frictionless interactions between platforms and services to simplify compliance with identity verification requirements across ecosystems.

Privacy and Identity: There needs to be a balance of identity verification versus protection of privacy, and this has brought about the implementation of privacy-by-design approaches in identity management systems.

• Quantum Computing for Sophisticated Risk Modeling

Enhanced Risk Simulations: Quantum computing may revolutionize risk modeling to comply with capital adequacy regulations. Quantum computers can carry out calculations faster than traditional computers, allowing for accurate risk estimations.

Encryption Evolution: With the advent of quantum computing, today's encryption methods are at risk. Banks must migrate to quantum-safe cryptography in order to secure

information and comply with data security standards.

Quantum in Compliance: Quantum computing power could transform compliance by computing regulatory information at unprecedented scale and, in the process, automatically pinpoint trends or anomalies that could indicate compliance threats.

Investment and Research: Banks are investing in or collaborating with quantum computing research in order to stay ahead of this technology curve, being compliant in the future.

• Internet of Things (IoT) in Banking Compliance

IoT Data for Prevention of Fraud: IoT devices like biometric wearables provide real-time information for fraud prevention. Intelligent ATMs are capable of detecting skimming, enhancing security measures.

IoT Regulatory Challenges: It is hard to manage safe data from IoT devices, prompting banks to formulate strict data governance policies to meet privacy and security regulations.

Customer Experience: IoT has the ability to tailor banking, e.g., intelligent branches adjusting according to customer information, but needs to do so while meeting privacy laws.

IoT and Compliance Monitoring: IoT can monitor compliance in real-time, including monitoring physical movement of cash against reconciliation with accounting records to reduce discrepancies.

• Cross-Border Banking and Regulations

Global Standards Harmonization: Banks struggle with compliance amidst different regulatory regimes (e.g., GDPR, CCPA, PSD2). Standardized APIs and blockchain solutions facilitate compliance homogeneity.

Technological Solutions to Harmonization: Blockchain provides one version of truth for auditing, and APIs harmonize data sharing. JPMCoin by JPMorgan Chase is an example of

banks' ability to address cross-border payments in a way that is compliant.

Regulatory Cooperation: There is increasing momentum for international regulatory cooperation to harmonize standards, hence easing compliance for internationally operating banks.

Compliance Automation in International Transactions: AI and ML are used to automate compliance checks on international transactions to make them compliant with various jurisdictional requirements.⁹⁷⁵

• Collaborative Ecosystems for Compliance

Collaboration with industry: Banks collaborate with FinTechs, regulators, and rivals to innovate around compliance solutions. CitiBank has innovation labs for such cooperation.

Sandbox Environments: Sandboxes allow banks to test compliance technologies in new ways without the risk. Sandbox environments encourage innovation while upholding regulatory standards.

Shared Compliance Platforms: Banks are moving towards shared platforms under which they share common tools and data for reporting regulatory, thus minimizing duplication and increasing accuracy.

Cross-Sector Partnerships: Banks are forming alliances with sectors like insurance or utilities for shared compliance infrastructures, leveraging mutual resources to facilitate regulatory needs.

• Decentralized Finance (DeFi) and Digital Currencies

DeFi Impact on Traditional Banking: DeFi offers financial services without the traditional intermediaries, and with this come opportunities and challenges regarding compliance. Banks are examining how they can integrate or affiliate with DeFi platforms to offer regulated environments new services. Example:

⁹⁷⁵ Lessons from the rapidly evolving regulation of digital banking, October 1, 2021

JPMorgan Chase with JPM Coin shows how traditional finance can adopt DeFi technologies for regulated environments.

Digital Currencies: Central Bank Digital Currencies (CBDCs) and cryptocurrencies transform finance. CBDCs: Central banks like the Federal Reserve see digital currencies in order to have control of monetary policy and take digital benefits.

Cryptocurrencies: Banks must navigate complex rules on cryptocurrencies, including AML/KYC and consumer protection. Standard Chartered offers crypto custody, answering to this emerging asset class.

Regulatory Challenges: The anonymity of cryptocurrencies necessitates banks to spend on tracking technologies to facilitate financial monitoring and compliance.

Interoperability and Integration: Banks are developing systems to integrate with digital currencies, being compliant while providing these services.

Use Case: Mastercard's collaboration with digital currency firms to enable cryptocurrencies on its network indicates integration under rigorous compliance.

Regulatory Sandbox for Digital Assets: Banks use regulatory sandboxes to test and construct compliant digital asset services in order to ensure they are in accordance with regulatory compliance prior to extensive deployment.

Legal Challenges Arising from Technological Disruption

• **Regulatory Lag and Policy Obsolescence**⁹⁷⁶

Regulatory lag is one of the key challenges of overseeing technology-driven banking. Regulatory lag is a recurring feature that stems from the fact that technological advancement naturally takes place at a pace way above that of the regulatory agencies' response rate. As a

result, a majority of today's laws and regulatory policies have no chance in the world before they are overtaken by speed, hence remaining with loopholes in oversight. This delay can be especially problematic when emerging financial products or platforms—like decentralized finance (DeFi), crypto assets, or algorithmic lending—emerge without clearly established legal status. In such cases, financial institutions are able to exploit these gray areas, building unregulated risks that have the potential to destabilize financial systems. Also, the rigidity of most regulatory processes makes it difficult to respond rapidly.

Law-making and rule-making processes take long and involve huge consultations with the stakeholders, limiting the regulators' ability to keep up with the technological shock in real-time. By the time new regulations take effect, technologies underlying them have already changed. For example, early regulations focused on initial coin offerings (ICOs), which have been replaced by newer developments like decentralized autonomous organizations (DAOs) and non-fungible tokens (NFTs). Secondly, regulators may not possess the necessary technical expertise to fully comprehend the consequences of emerging technologies, which would further hinder the process. This distance between innovation and regulation can potentially erode public confidence, stifle good innovation, or—conversely—allow bad practice to get out of hand. To overcome this, regulators must make capacity-building investments, adopt adaptive regulatory models like sandboxes, and become more closely involved with technology developers.

• **Data Privacy and Security Risks**

As financial institutions become increasingly dependent on big data, artificial intelligence, and cloud computing, data privacy and cybersecurity today are a significant challenge for regulators. Although these technologies enable greater efficiency and perspective, they also raise extremely serious questions about the collection, storage, sharing, and guarding of

⁹⁷⁶ Apar Gupta, "Data Protection and Banking Technology in India", in S. Deva (ed.), *Socio-Legal Aspects of Technology in India* (Oxford University Press, 2018)

personal and financial information. Current data protection regimes in many jurisdictions are not robust enough to address the scale and sophistication of modern data ecosystems used in banking. In addition, supervisory oversight is complex where third-party service providers are used by financial institutions or sensitive information is processed in cross-border cloud infrastructure.

This offers a scenario whereby regulatory agencies are unable to require compliance with national privacy laws and yet must deal with global legal controversies, including differences between the EU's GDPR and less demanding data systems in other places. Data privacy violations not only violate consumer rights but may also lead to identity theft, fraud, and loss of trust in the financial system. Regulators are faced with the further task of ascertaining whether the AI-based systems used within banks never even unwittingly propagate bias, discrimination, or intrusiveness with respect to privacy. For instance, if data-biased AI-based algorithms are trained upon data containing biases, then the algorithms would reject credit to targeted demographics perpetually—a condition not easy to discover unless the source code of the algorithm is accessible.

Besides, the higher risk of cyberattacks like ransomware and phishing attacks requires special attention at all times. The regulators will therefore have to apply strict cybersecurity measures while, on the other hand, ensuring banks adhere to privacy standards. Treading the tightrope between innovation and consumer protection is always a delicate matter, and the complexity of data flows in technology-driven banking makes this challenge even more difficult.

- **Challenge of Supervising Decentralized Finance and Cryptocurrencies**

Decentralized finance platforms and cryptocurrencies are two of the most disruptive technologies in modern finance. While these technologies have numerous benefits—democratization of finance, openness, and

reduced costs—their inherent Decentralization also poses serious problems for regulation. Traditional systems of regulation are built with centralized actors like banks in mind, which have recognizable management hierarchies, geographic locations, and compliance departments. On the other hand, most DeFi protocols are completely devoid of central control, instead relying on decentralized and self-enforcing smart contracts and governance. Due to such decentralization, it becomes difficult for regulators to force them into compliance, regulate activities, or even determine responsible parties.

Besides, DeFi platforms are generally global in nature, operating across borders with varying regulatory environments for digital assets. For instance, a lending platform developed in one country might have customers globally but not be under the direct jurisdiction of any specific regulator. This renders enforcement challenging and opens the possibility of regulatory arbitrage. The anonymity of most cryptocurrency systems also facilitates illegal applications such as money laundering, terrorist financing, and tax evasion, which become more difficult to track.

In addition, the technical complexity of DeFi protocols can obscure systemic risks. Algorithmic stablecoins or leveraged yield farming strategies, for instance, can be built into unstable financial systems regulators might not even comprehend until a crisis point. This was the case with events such as the collapse of the TerraUSD ecosystem that had international spillovers. To deal with these problems, regulators need to rethink their models of supervision, invest in blockchain forensics, and perhaps implement international standards specifically designed for digital finance. But establishing such frameworks is technically and politically challenging, making DeFi regulation one of the most formidable tasks for financial regulators at present.

• Technological Disparities and Regulatory Inequality

While technology enables numerous banking innovations, it can simultaneously exacerbate the differences between institutions and jurisdictions to present a profound regulatory challenge. Large, heavily capitalized banks may spend a considerable amount on best-in-class compliance systems, advanced cybersecurity software, and data analysis solutions, making them competitive winners in regulatory compliance. Small institutions or banks in developing markets may lack the technical and financial capabilities to implement such advanced solutions, leading to disparities in levels of compliance and risk management operations.

This unevenness can cause an unbalanced playing field, in which regulators unwittingly discriminate in favor of bigger players simply because they have a better ability to accommodate technologically sophisticated regulation. It can also cause a form of regulatory exclusion, where smaller institutions view mandated digital systems as too costly or complex and therefore risk being sanctioned or forced out of business. Furthermore, worldwide disparity in digital infrastructure as well as regulatory maturity aggravates the problem. While some countries have completely digital regulatory systems and e-governance models, others remain bogged down with paper-based processes and ancient structures.

This inconsistency does not only complicate the process of establishing global standards but also results in areas of regulatory ignorance where systemic hazards may accumulate unchecked. For stable finance globally, it is therefore essential that the regulators take account of the digital divide and coordinate toward inclusive policymaking. That might involve programs of technical support, capacity development, or phasing of regulations in accordance with various levels of technological preparedness. Without filling these gaps, technology-led regulation runs the danger of

exacerbating financial disparities as opposed to eliminating them.

• Algorithmic Bias and Untransparency in AI Systems

The use of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning in banking has introduced advanced tools for credit scoring, fraud detection, and automated compliance. One of the main issues the regulators now have to deal with is the issue of algorithmic bias and lack of transparency—or so-called "black box" problem. AI systems, particularly deep learning models, operate in a way that is difficult to understand for humans. When such systems make a decision—such as approving or denying a loan, reporting suspicious activity, or setting risk premiums—it is difficult to explain the rationale behind the output. This transparency makes internal audits as well as external regulatory inspections difficult.

Worse, AI systems trained on biased or incomplete data may unwittingly be perpetuating race, gender, geographic, or socio-economic class-based discrimination. For example, if lending records contain discriminatory trends, an AI system may identify and replicate the same, harming targeted communities without the institution's intent. Regulatorily, it is very hard to ensure fairness and accountability in such a system. Such traditional checks of compliance are insufficient since they do not audit AI decision-making.

In addition, there is no standard framework or legal requirement that would compel banks to explain the internal workings of their AI. The explainability is not only aimed at consumers' right to understand why a decision about them was taken but also limits the regulator in acting on malpractice. As artificial intelligence comes increasingly into day-to-day finance, regulators face the challenge of how to compel transparency, equality, and responsibility—particularly where even the originators of the models might be unclear about precisely how decisions get made.

• Cross-Border Legal Conflicts and Jurisdictional Ambiguity

As greater numbers of digital banking platforms and fintech services transcend borders, regulators are finding it harder to contend with legal conflicts and issues of jurisdiction. The majority of digital financial products—i.e., cryptocurrencies, neobanks, and cross-border payment apps—are designed to be borderless, serving customers in different countries without having a presence in any single country. This complicates it to determine whose laws apply, who should enforce them, and how the violations of regulation are to be handled.

For example, a website run in one country might have its servers elsewhere, process payments through banks in a third, and host clients from around the world. If Country A's citizen has a fraud issue on this website, and the company neither has any presence nor a presence of law within Country A, it may prove difficult for authorities to investigate or prosecute. This is particularly disturbing in the case of financial crimes such as money laundering, data theft, or models of illegal fundraising because they can exploit these holes in jurisdiction.

The picture is also further complicated by the lack of global harmonized standards. While there are some countries stringently regulating fintech and crypto operations, others provide regulatory havens. This inconsistency offers the perpetrators a chance to benefit from regulatory arbitrage—choosing jurisdictions with the lowest level of regulation. It also puts compliant businesses at a disadvantage. Without harmonized legal regimes, mutual recognition arrangements, and international enforcement arrangements, cross-border digital finance poses a chronic threat to regulatory efficiency. Solving this issue requires increased international cooperation and possibly the formation of supranational regulatory institutions or treaties dedicated solely to regulating digital finance.

• Overregulation and Innovation Stifling

As strong as is the argument for regulating sound in tech banking, maybe no less relevant is the threat of overregulation to dissuade technology development and cut back on innovation. In seeking to contain the growing risks, the regulators may end up imposing overly draconian compliance requirements or broad prohibitions which stifle testing and delay innovation adoption of useful technologies. This is particularly common in new markets like blockchain, cryptocurrency, and online lending, where unclear or burdensome rules will drive startups underground, or drive them out of business and into more liberal jurisdictions.

Overregulation also stifles product innovation in traditional banks. As regulatory complexity or uncertainty increases, banks may become risk-averse and unwilling to invest in new technology—even if it has the potential to improve service delivery, reduce costs, or increase financial inclusion. For example, a bank might shy away from integrating AI into its underwriting process if it fears future non-compliance fines due to evolving standards for algorithmic accountability. Similarly, fintech firms may not want to roll out new mobile payment features if they don't know how existing banking laws treat them.

This sobering influence of regulation can suppress competition and render it more entrenched in favor of large incumbents, who possess the economic capacity to navigate complex legal landscapes. Startups and small financial institutions, however, typically cannot afford to match regulatory progress, consult lawyers, or create costly compliance frameworks. Balancing risk minimization and the promotion of innovation is quite possibly the most delicate task regulators must perform. In attempting to navigate around this, several jurisdictions are turning to regulatory sandboxes and flexible supervisory frameworks, but widespread acceptance and convergence of these approaches remain low.

• Fragmentation of Digital Identity and KYC Frameworks

Another critical challenge in the digitalization of banking regulation is the lack of a shared, interoperable platform for digital identity and Know Your Customer (KYC) activities. Identity verification in the digital economy is the foundation for regulatory compliance, enabling anti-money laundering (AML) efforts, anti-fraud tactics, and consumer protection. But identity systems vary significantly from country—and even from bank—to country, creating inefficiencies, additional cost, and variation in compliance.

Most banks still employ manual or semi-electronic KYC processes that are time-consuming, error-prone, and expensive. Where digital identity programs (like India's Aadhaar or Estonia's e-Residency) have been introduced, onboarding and verification are now significantly streamlined. But these systems are rarely interoperable across institutions or borders. Therefore, customers would normally have to go through duplicate identity verification procedures when they interact with several financial platforms or banks, and institutions cannot gather good customer profiles.

From the regulatory point of view, this fragmentation makes tracing illicit financial flows, blacklist enforcement, or sharing of risk intelligence more difficult. Moreover, biometric data privacy concerns, consent management, and cross-platform data sharing add more murkiness to the waters in the regulatory environment. Regulators will have to come up with a way of incentivizing standardized, secure, and privacy-friendly digital identity systems that function across borders. Such efforts will include incentivizing private-public partnerships, taking on decentralized identity technologies (such as blockchain-based ID), and coordinating regulations regarding data retention and sharing. Absent these developments, fragmentation of identity will continue to be at odds with efficiency and integrity in tech-based banking systems.

Conclusion

The intersection of technology and banking in India has huge potential but needs careful legal regulation. Though the Reserve Bank of India and other regulators have brought in some progressive steps like digital lending guidelines, regulatory sandboxes, and IT governance regimes, the rapidity of change in technology needs a more dynamic and responsive model of regulation. Fragmented laws, jurisdictional conflicts, and lack of a single data governance law hamper effective regulation.

India would need to switch to a forward-looking instead of a backward response legal approach from now on. The legal system around data protection, AI morality, cybersecurity, and international online transactions would have to be secured. International coordination, RegTech implementation, and inclusive policymaking with industry participation and civil society can assist in framing a shock-absorbing legal framework. As technology continues to revolutionize banking, the legal and regulatory framework has to catch up so that financial innovation is not achieved at the expense of legal certainty, consumer rights, or systemic stability.

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THE CHILLING EFFECT OF SEDITION LAWS ON PRESS FREEDOM IN INDIA

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Introduction:

In the largest democracy on the planet, the press is often dubbed the fourth pillar, designed to challenge authority, uncover corruption, and amplify the voices of the people. But what occurs when that voice is stifled by the fear of legal repercussions? In India, the application of sedition laws—a relic from the colonial era—raises significant alarms regarding the state of press freedom.

Initially crafted to quash dissent against the British Empire, these laws are now increasingly wielded in contemporary India to silence journalists, critics, and activists who dare to speak out against the government. Under Section 124A of the Indian Penal Code, charges of sedition can lead to punishments as harsh as life imprisonment. Although the law stipulates the need for evidence of incitement to violence or public disorder, in reality, it is frequently misapplied to target individuals and media organizations merely for holding unpopular or critical views.

Consequently, journalists are not only confronted with legal battles but also face harassment, arrests, and the constant threat of imprisonment—all for simply performing their duties. This environment of intimidation leads to what is termed a "chilling effect." It extends beyond those directly accused of sedition; it also dissuades others in the media from reporting boldly. Self-censorship becomes a necessary tactic for survival. Dissenting voices fall silent, leaving the public with a narrower, more restricted flow of information.

In a nation where democracy thrives on discussion and debate, this rising fear of punishment seriously undermines the vitality of free expression. This article explores how sedition laws are applied in India today, the repercussions for journalists and media freedom, and why there is an urgent need for

reform or repeal to safeguard one of the fundamental elements of a democratic society—a free and fearless press.

Impact on Press Freedom:

What exactly is the Sedition Law?

Section 124A of the IPC makes it a criminal offense to engage in any actions or speech that 'brings or attempts to bring into hatred or contempt, or excites or attempts to excite disaffection towards the government.' This law was initially introduced by the British colonial rulers back in 1870 to suppress dissent, yet it still exists and is actively enforced today.

2. Legal Ambiguity and Broad Interpretation:

The wording of the sedition law is rather vague, which leads to a lot of subjective interpretation. Journalists, cartoonists, activists, and even everyday citizens have found themselves facing charges under this law simply for speaking out against the government or sharing dissenting views. Because the legal boundaries are so unclear, many media professionals choose to self-censor themselves, fearing possible legal repercussions.

3. Impact on Press Freedom:

a. Self-Censorship:

Many journalists steer clear of reporting on delicate topics such as human rights abuses, government corruption, or political dissent to

avoid trouble with the law. This self-censorship undermines investigative journalism and restricts the press's vital role as a watchdog in a democracy.

b. Harassment and Intimidation:

Using sedition charges to silence critical voices creates an atmosphere of fear. The legal process itself can be a form of punishment; even if journalists aren't found guilty, the lengthy and costly procedures can be overwhelming and stressful for them.

c. Erosion of Trust in Media Independence:

When media outlets or journalists are perceived as being under government pressure, it diminishes public trust in the media's independence and objectivity.

4. Examples of Misuse:

In Kashmir, journalists have faced sedition charges for reporting on events that clash with official narratives. During the farmers' protests, reporters and editors were booked under sedition laws for their social media posts or coverage related to the demonstrations. Moreover, individuals, including journalists, have been targeted with sedition charges for tweets that criticize government actions.

5. International Perspective:

Human rights organizations like Amnesty International and Reporters Without Borders have condemned India's application of sedition laws. Furthermore, India's press freedom ranking has fallen in global indices, partly due to the intimidation and arrests of journalists.

6. Judicial View and Calls for Reform:

The Supreme Court of India has made it clear in various rulings that sedition should only be applied narrowly, specifically when there's incitement to violence or public disorder. In May 2022, the Supreme Court effectively paused the sedition law, directing the government not to use Section 124A until it could be reviewed. There is an increasing call from civil society,

media groups, and even some politicians for either a repeal or amendment of this law.

Impact on Press Freedom:

The sedition law in India, found in Section 124A of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), is a contentious piece of legislation that dates back to the colonial period. It was crafted to silence those who voiced opposition to the imperial powers. This law criminalizes any act or speech that stirs up feelings of hatred, contempt, or disloyalty towards the government. It was primarily aimed at suppressing dissent from freedom fighters, revolutionaries, and key nationalist figures like Mahatma Gandhi and Bal Gangadhar Tilak.

When India gained independence, the sedition law was kept in the IPC, even though many democratic nations had chosen to abolish such laws. The ongoing struggle between sedition law and the right to free speech hinges on figuring out where criticism and dissent cross the line into sedition. Supporters of the law maintain that it is vital for safeguarding national security and ensuring public order. On the flip side, critics see it as an outdated remnant of colonial oppression, often exploited by various governments.

The rise of digital communication has added layers of complexity to the discussion around sedition law. The Indian government has increasingly used these charges against individuals, journalists, activists, and political adversaries who express dissenting opinions. Key legal cases, such as Kedar Nath Singh v. State of Bihar (1962), have significantly influenced the debate. This case affirmed the constitutional validity of Section 124A but clarified that only actions that incite violence or threaten public order would be classified as sedition, thus narrowing its application.

Yet, recent judicial interpretations and government actions have revealed inconsistencies in enforcing the law, with people being detained for expressions or protests that do not involve violence or public disorder. Notable recent cases have reignited

discussions about the relevance of sedition law in a democratic India and highlighted the urgent need for reform. To truly understand the significance of sedition law today, it's essential to consider global legal shifts, such as the United Kingdom's repeal of its sedition laws in 2009 and the strong protections for free speech outlined in the First Amendment of the United States Constitution.⁹⁷⁷

Legal & Constitutional Debate:

The sedition law in India, which stems from Section 124A of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), was first introduced by the British colonial government in 1870. This law was aimed at quelling the rising tide of nationalist movements and any dissent against the British Empire. Its main goal was to make it a crime to speak, write, or act in ways that could be seen as stirring up hatred, contempt, or disaffection toward the government.

During the struggle for independence, this law played a significant role in restricting the freedoms of Indian leaders and revolutionaries. Notable figures like Mahatma Gandhi and Bal Gangadhar Tilak found themselves charged under it. Even after India gained independence, the sedition law was kept in place, defended as a necessary means to protect the sovereignty and integrity of the new republic.

Article 19(1)(a) of the Indian Constitution ensures the fundamental right to freedom of speech and expression. However, this right isn't absolute and can be limited under Article 19(2) for reasons like public order, sovereignty, and state security. In this light, sedition law is often viewed as a tool to curb actions that might threaten national unity or provoke violence.

Yet, the law's vague and broad language has sparked considerable debate over the years, especially regarding its use against individuals who voice dissent or criticize the government. Critics contend that the sedition law, in its current form, is a remnant of colonial rule and is

frequently misapplied to suppress free speech, political dissent, and activism.

On the other hand, supporters argue that the law is essential for maintaining law and order, particularly in a nation grappling with complex internal security issues like terrorism, insurgency, and separatism.⁹⁷⁸

The Way Forward:

India, one of the world's largest democracies, has long prided itself on its robust constitution, which guarantees fundamental rights like freedom of speech and expression. Among these rights, the freedom of the press is a crucial pillar of democracy, as it ensures that citizens are well-informed, public discourse is open, and accountability is maintained. However, in recent years, India's sedition laws have cast a dark shadow over press freedom, raising concerns about the growing risks faced by journalists and media organizations. The sedition law has become a tool that stifles free expression and threatens the democratic fabric of the nation.

Understanding Sedition Laws in India:

Sedition laws in India trace their origins to the colonial era. The term "sedition" refers to acts that incite rebellion against the authority of the government. Section 124A of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), which criminalizes sedition, has been a significant tool of the government to silence dissent and curb free speech. Under this law, anyone who "by words, either spoken or written, or by signs or by visible representation, brings or attempts to bring into hatred or contempt, or excites or attempts to excite disaffection towards the government" can be charged with sedition.

The law was introduced by the British in 1870 to suppress the freedom movement. Over the years, while the country gained independence, the law continued to be in place. Though it was initially meant to suppress anti-colonial

⁹⁷⁷ Anju Bala, 'Sedition Law Vis-A-Vis Freedom of Speech and Expression in The Current Scenario: A Critical Study'.

⁹⁷⁸ Anju Bala, 'Sedition Law Vis-A-Vis Freedom of Speech and Expression in The Current Scenario: A Critical Study'.

sentiments, it has been increasingly used against critics of the government, including journalists, activists, and citizens, leading to widespread concern over its misuse.

The Chilling Effect on Press Freedom:

The chilling effect refers to a situation where the fear of legal consequences stifles free expression and discourages individuals or groups from engaging in activities they are legally entitled to, such as journalism. Sedition laws, when misused, have a profound chilling effect on press freedom in India.

1. Fear of Arrest and Harassment:

Journalists in India often face the threat of sedition charges for reporting on or criticizing government policies, exposing corruption, or covering sensitive issues. The mere threat of arrest or detention under such laws has a chilling effect on journalists, leading to self-censorship. Journalists may refrain from covering critical stories or may alter their reporting to avoid provoking the ire of the government.

For example, in recent years, several reporters have been charged under sedition for their coverage of protests, such as those against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), or for investigating issues related to corruption or human rights abuses. This constant fear of legal action hampers journalists' ability to carry out their work effectively, undermining their role as watchdogs of democracy.

2. Constraints on Investigative Journalism:

Sedition laws create an environment where investigative journalism is particularly difficult. Investigative reporters who uncover corruption, human rights violations, or the abuse of power are often targeted with sedition charges. As a result, many journalists and media houses avoid pursuing stories that could potentially attract government backlash. The investigative work that is crucial for holding power to account is, therefore, severely limited.

3. Suppression of Dissent and Critical Voices:

A healthy democracy requires a diversity of opinions and the ability to question and challenge the government. However, when sedition laws are used to silence critics, the space for public debate shrinks. Journalists, activists, and civil society groups who dare to voice dissenting views risk facing criminal charges. This climate of fear prevents a genuine exchange of ideas and discourages people from speaking out against policies or government actions.

4. Media Ownership and Influence:

The growing influence of corporate interests and government-friendly media owners further complicates the situation. In this environment, independent journalism is at risk of being sidelined, with media outlets more likely to avoid critical reporting in exchange for government favors or to maintain their access to powerful circles. Sedition charges exacerbate this problem by encouraging a conformist media landscape where only pro-government narratives are given prominence.⁹⁷⁹

⁹⁷⁹ {Citation}

THE INSANITY DEFENCE: LEGAL STANDARD AND CONTROVERSIES

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CrPC	The Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC)
CPA	Criminal Procedure Act
IPC	Indian Penal Code
DPSUs	Defence Public Sector Units
MSMEs	Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises
AVMS	All-volunteer military system
DLIC	The Directorate of Low Intensity Conflict
DRDo	<u>Defence Research and Development organisation</u>
LIC	Low-Intensity Conflict
MMSE	Mini-Mental State Examination
MoCA	Montreal Cognitive Assessment
SLUMS	Saint Louis University Mental Status Examination
FCT	Five-Minute Cognitive Test
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
NGRI	Not Guilty by Reason of Insanity"
NIMHANS	National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences
AIIMS	All India Institute of Medical Sciences AIIMS
ALI	American Law Institute

ABSTRACT

As per my research report on 'Insanity Defense : Legal Standard and Controversies', the insanity defense is a legal concept in criminal law which allows a defendant to argue they are not responsible for a crime due to a mental illness or defect at the time of offense. It's a controversial area, as it raises questions about free will, culpability and treatment of individuals with mental health issues. The legal standard for insanity varies by jurisdiction and it requires a significant impairment in mental functioning that prevents to defendant from understanding the nature of their actions or differentiating right from wrong. The insanity defense also known as the psychological condition defense and it is an affirmative defence by reason in an unlawful case and arguing that defendant

isn't responsible for their conduct due to insanity at the time of the felonious act. These provides a comprehensive disquisition of the insanity defense, assaying its legal foundations, difficulties, and broader counteraccusations. Excavating into literal elaboration, psychiatric perceptivity, and corner case law. Insanity defense is primarily used in criminal prosecutions. It is based on the assumption that at the time of the crime, the defendant was suffering from severe mental illness and therefore, was incapable of appreciating the nature of the crime and differentiating right from wrong behavior, hence making them not legally accountable for crime. Insanity defense is a legal concept not a clinical. This means that just suffering from a mental disorder is not sufficient to prove insanity. The defendant has the burden of proving the defense of insanity by a preponderance of the evidence which is similar to a civil case. An evaluating a defendant's mental status examination and briefly discuss the legal standards and procedures for the assessment of insanity defense evaluations.

Keywords: Criminal responsibility, Indian Penal Code Section-84, Insanity Defense, Legal Insanity, Medical Insanity

Chapter-1

INTRODUCTION TO THE INTENSITY DEFENCE IN INDIA

As per my research work on intensity in defence⁹⁸⁰ refers and scale the levels of engagement in military activities, including movements, operations and development of defense technology systems. In India, evident in the country's large military force, significant defense budget and growing focus on indigenous defense industrialized as well as advance of technology for low intensity conflict.

1.1 DEFINITION AND SCOPE

Insanity Defense in India

Section 84 of the Indian Penal Code, 1860 (IPC) provides for the defense of insanity and this is one of the general defenses available under the IPC. Derived from the M'Naghten Rule, the defense under section 84 states that person at the time of order of the offence was of unsound mind it is exempt if they didn't know the nature of the act or its penalty.

overview of the insanity defense

The defense under S.84 has two necessities and both must be met. By reason of this unsoundness of mind, the person was incompetent of knowing the nature of the act or that it was either wrong or contrary to law.

IT IS REQUIRED THE DEFENDANT TO SATISFY ANY ONE OF THE THREE INCAPACITIES:

1. Person did not know the nature of the act
2. Person knows the nature of the act; they do not know that the act is decently wrong; or
3. Even if the person knows the nature of the act, they do not know that the act is contrary to law.

once medical insanity has been established courts look at 'totality of circumstances' to determine legal insanity and whether the obligatory threshold for a successful defense has been met. However an active inquiry into legal insanity is rarely undertaken. Often courts infer legal insanity based on a host of factors, including the nature of the mental illness, (lack of) motive and behaviour of accused before, during and after the act.

UN SOUNDNESS OF MIND AT THE TIME OF THE COMMISSION OF THE OFFENCE

The term unsoundness of mind is undefined under the IPC⁹⁸¹. Various terms like 'lunatic', 'loss of mental equilibrium', 'madman', 'idiot' and 'insane' have been used synonymously, providing no clear direction towards understanding the term (*Bapu v. State of Rajasthan* (2007) 8 SCC 66). Unsoundness of mind must be present time of the commission

⁹⁸⁰ The insanity defense, also known as the mental disorder defense, is an affirmative defense by excuse in a criminal case, arguing that the defendant is not

⁹⁸¹ The Indian Penal Code (IPC) was the Official criminal Code Of the Republic Of India, inherited from British India after independence

of the offense. Currently there is no standardised procedure followed by psychiatrists in making a determination of a person's mental condition at the time of the offence. In the absence of prior records of the accused's undetected mental illness, psychiatrists have little material to rely on and may not have access to key witnesses in the life of the accused to fill in the gap.

INCAPACITY TO KNOW THE NATURE OR CONSEQUENCES OF THE ACT

Indian jurisprudence is unclear and inconsistent on the degree of incapacity that is required under S.84. In *Queen-Empress v. Kader Nasyer* (1896) ILR 23, Court held that unsoundness of mind which 'materially impairs' the cognitive faculties of the mind form a ground of exemption from criminal responsibility. The court in *Lakshmi v. State* (1958) SCC online All 208 required complete extinguishment of ability to know the nature or consequences.

TOTALITY OF CIRCUMSTANCES FRAMEWORK

Courts look at surrounding circumstances to infer legal insanity. As per these circumstances are the history of mental illness, lack of motive/weak motive, treatment post-arrest, behaviour on the day of the incident and subsequent conduct of the accused. While courts are unanimous in the relevance of inquiring into surrounding circumstances, they are inconsistent in determining the relevance and weightage of these circumstances.

Evidentiary requirements

A reading of S.105 with S3 of the IEA makes it evident that the standard of proof required is that of the preponderance of probabilities. As per accused has to establish on a preponderance of probabilities and they were of unsound mind at the time of offence because of which they were incapable of knowing the nature or consequence of their actions. It is not enough to make a mere claim of insanity and the defense must be able to prove on a preponderance of probabilities that the

accused was legally insane at the time of the commission of the offence. It is concluded that while the wording of S.84 is seemingly straightforward, S.84 jurisprudence is not consistent. Courts have assigned different meanings to what it means to successfully raise a S.84 defense. There are stark differences in the required mental state, the relevant time period of that mental state and the manner in which that mental state is to be established. Differences in each of those aspects then bring to bear a different burden on the person seeking to invoke the S.84 defense⁹⁸².

1.2 ROLE OF INSANITY OF DEFENCE IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM⁹⁸³ IN INDIA

In the Indian criminal justice system, the insanity defense, as outlined in Section 84 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), allows individuals to be exonerated from criminal liability if they were of unsound mind at the time of the offense and, due to that unsoundness, were incapable of knowing the nature of their act or that it was wrong.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS ABOUT INSANITY DEFENSE IN INDIA:

- **Legal Insanity:** The focus is on legal insanity, which refers to the inability to understand the nature of the act or its consequences, rather than simply having a mental illness.
- **Burden of Proof⁹⁸⁴:** The burden of proving the defense of insanity lies on the accused. They must demonstrate, on a balance of probabilities and they are of unsound mind at the time of the crime.
- **"Unsoundness of Mind":** The IPC uses the term "unsoundness of mind" to describe the mental condition required

⁹⁸² Nothing is an Offence which is done by a person who, at the time of doing it, by reason of unsoundness of mind, is incapable of knowing the nature of the crime

⁹⁸³ The Federal criminal law, namely, Indian Penal Code, defines various types of crimes and prescribes punishment for each crime

⁹⁸⁴ The burden has been shifted to the defendant to prove the defense of insanity by clear and convincing evidence

for the defense to be successful. This generally means a state of mind where the person is incapable of knowing the nature of the act they are committing or that it is wrong or contrary to law.

- **Presumption of Sanity:** Every person is presumed to be sane unless proven otherwise. The accused must provide evidence to rebut this presumption and demonstrate their state of unsound mind at the time of the offense.
- **M'Naghten Rule:** The insanity defense in India, as codified in Section 84, is broadly based on the M'Naghten Rule, a legal standard that originated in English law.
- **Medical Evidence:** While the defense is primarily based on legal standards, medical evidence is often crucial in evaluating the accused's mental state at the time of the offense.

Punishing a person, who is not responsible for the crime, is a violation of the basic human rights and fundamental rights under the Constitution of India. It also brings the due process of law, if that person is not in a position to defend himself in the court of law, evoking the principle of natural justice. This is recognized by the legislation of most of the civilized nations. Even in India, Section 84 of Indian Penal Code (IPC) deals with the "act of a person of unsound mind" and discusses insanity defense.

Very little research has been done on this topic in India however, there are few studies on exploring the clinical picture of the patients in prison. A landmark study in the forensic psychiatry of Indian setting occurred in 2011, in which 5024 prisoners were assessed on semi-structured interview schedule reported that 4002 (79.6%) individuals could be diagnosed as having a diagnosis of

either mental illness or substance use. After excluding substance abuse, 1389 (27.6%) prisoners still had a diagnosable mental disorder.

To address this issue of streamlining the process of evaluation of insanity defense and certification on the semi-structured assessment in the Indian context based on landmark Supreme Court decisions. In addition, it will also present a model for evaluating a defendant's mental status examination and briefly discuss the legal standards and procedures for the assessment of insanity defense evaluations⁹⁸⁵.

1.3 Historical Development of Insanity Defense in Criminal Cases in India⁹⁸⁶

The concept of insanity as a defense in criminal cases has been a subject of much debate and scrutiny within the legal and mental health communities. This defense raises complex ethical, legal, and psychological questions, highlighting the delicate balance between protecting society, holding individual accountable, and addressing mental health concerns.

The insanity defense varies across jurisdictions, and legal systems often adopt different standards to determine an individual's mental state at the time of the alleged crime. The two main standards used are the M'Naghten Rule and the Model Penal Code's substantial capacity test. The M'Naghten Rule focuses on whether the defendant knew the nature and quality of their actions or understood that what they were doing was wrong. Section 84 of the Indian Penal Code gives the statutory recognition to the defence of Insanity.

⁹⁸⁵ Insanity defense is a legal construct that under circumstances, excuses defendants with mental illness from legal responsibility for criminal

⁹⁸⁶ Criminal cases in India encompass a wide range of offenses, including murder, theft, assault, rape, and fraud, as well as less serious crimes like defamation and petty theft. Indian courts determine penalties like imprisonment or fines for those found guilty

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF SECTION-84 INDIAN PENAL CODE

1. The person should be of unsound mind at the time of commission of the offence.
2. That due to the unsoundness of the mind the person is incapable of knowing the nature of the act, or that he is doing is either wrong or contrary to law.

BURDEN OF PROVE:

The burden of proving the defense of insanity rests on the accused. It is up to the accused to establish, on the balance of probabilities, that they were suffering from a mental disorder at the time of the offense.

It has been time and again held in a plethora of judgments that the courts are concerned with Legal Insanity and mere medical insanity cannot be held to be unsoundness of mind. The test of legal insanity attracts the mandate of Section 84 IPC.

The mere fact that the accused is odd, eccentric and his brain is not quite all right, or that the physical and mental ailments from which he suffered had rendered his intellect weak and affected his emotions or indulges in certain unusual acts, or had fits of insanity at short intervals or that he was subject to epileptic fits and there was abnormal behavior or the behavior is queer are not sufficient to attract the application of Section 84 of the Indian Penal Code. As per every type of insanity recognised in medical science is not legal insanity, every minor mental aberration is not insanity. only legal insanity is contemplated under Section 84 of I.P.C.

The Court is only concerned with the state of mind of the accused at the time of the act and the antecedent and subsequent conduct of the man is relevant only to show what the state of

the mind was at the time when the act was committed.

JUDICIAL PRONOUNCEMENTS⁹⁸⁷:

1. The Hon'ble Supreme Court in *State of Madhya Pradesh v. Ahmadulla*, AIR 1961 SC 998 held that the crucial point of time at which the unsoundness of mind as defined in section 84 has to be established is when the act was committed.

2. The Hon'ble Supreme Court in *Dahyabhai Chhaganbhai Thakkar v. State of Gujarat*, AIR 1964 Supreme Court 1563 have held that that when a plea of legal insanity is set up, the Court has to consider whether at the time of commission of the offence the accused, by reason of unsoundness of mind, was incapable of knowing the nature of the act or that he was doing what was either wrong or contrary to law.

3. The Hon'ble Supreme Court in the matter *Dahyabhai Chhaganbhai Thakker v. State of Gujarat* (1964) 7 SCR 361, referring to Section 84 of IPC and the rule of evidence as contained in Sections 4, 101 and 105 of the Evidence Act held:

"It is a fundamental principle of criminal jurisprudence that an accused is presumed to be innocent and, therefore, the burden lies on the prosecution to prove the guilt of the accused beyond reasonable doubt. The prosecution, therefore, in a case of homicide shall prove beyond reasonable doubt that the accused caused death with the requisite intention described in Section 299 of the Indian Penal Code. This general burden never shifts, and it always rests on the prosecution. This being an exception, under Section 105 of the Evidence Act the burden of proving the existence of circumstances bringing the case within

⁹⁸⁷ Judicial pronouncements refer to the formal statements or decisions made by courts regarding legal matters, including judgments, rulings, and orders.

the said exception lies on the accused; and the court shall presume the absence of such circumstances.

The doctrine of burden⁹⁸⁸ of proof in the context of the plea of insanity may be stated in the following propositions:

(1) The prosecution must prove beyond reasonable doubt that the accused had committed the offence with the requisite mens rea, and the burden of proving that always rests on the prosecution from the beginning to the end of the trial.

(2) There is a rebuttable presumption that the accused was not insane, when he committed the crime, in the sense laid down by Section 84 of the Indian Penal Code: the accused may rebut it by placing before the court all the relevant evidence—oral, documentary or circumstantial, but the burden of proof upon him is no higher than that rests upon a party to civil proceedings.

(3) Even if the accused was not able to establish conclusively that he was insane at the time he committed the offence, the evidence placed before the court by the accused or by the prosecution may raise a reasonable doubt in the mind of the court as regards one or more of the ingredients of the offence and accused and in that case the court would be entitled to acquit the accused on the ground that the general burden of proof resting on the prosecution was not discharged."

4. That recently in the matter *Prakash Nayi @ Sen - Appellant v. State of Goa - Respondents 2023(1) R.C.R.(Criminal) 823* the Hon'ble Supreme Court held :

"4. Section 84 of the IPC recognizes only an act which could not be termed as an offence. It starts with the words "nothing is an offence". The said words are a clear

indication of the intendment behind this laudable provision. Such an act shall emanate from an unsound mind. Therefore, the existence of an unsound mind is a sine qua non to the applicability of the provision.

IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS:

The use of the insanity defense raises questions about the intersection of mental health and criminal justice. As society's understanding of mental illness evolves, legal standards may need to adapt to ensure a fair balance between protecting the public and acknowledging the rights of those with mental disorders. Collaborations between legal and mental health professionals, ongoing research, and public discourse will play pivotal roles in shaping the future of insanity as a defense in criminal cases.

It is summarise that insanity defense remains a complex and contentious aspect of criminal law, navigating the delicate balance between justice and compassion. While it provides a legal avenue for individuals struggling with severe mental illness, its application requires careful consideration to prevent potential misuse. As society continues to grapple with the interplay of mental health and criminal responsibility, as per insanity defense will likely remain a subject of ongoing legal and ethical scrutiny.

CHAPTER-2

LEGAL FRAMEWORK⁹⁸⁹ OF THE INSANITY DEFENCE IN INDIA

2.1 SECTION 84 OF THE INDIA PENAL CODE

This Mc Naughten rule became a legendary precedent for the law concerning the defense of

⁹⁸⁸ The burden Of prOOof requires a party tO prOduce evidence tO establish the truth Of facts needed tO satisfy all the required legal elements Of the dispute

⁹⁸⁹ Legal framewOrks cOmprise a set Of dOcuments that include the cOnstitutiOn, legislatiOn, regulatiOns, and cOntracts

insanity. Even, in India, insanity defense law, Section 84 IPC is solely based on the Mc Naughten rules. Since it is drafted, no changes have been made. However, in 1971, there was an attempt by the Law Commission of India to revisit the Section 84 in their 42nd report, but no changes were made. Section 84 of IPC deals with 'act of a person of unsound mind and nothing is an offence which is done by a person who, at the time of doing it, by reason of unsoundness of mind is incapable of knowing the nature of the act, or that he is doing what is either wrong or contrary to law.'

As per analysis of the Section 84 IPC, an essential ingredient can be listed. For the sake of easy understanding, the Section 84 IPC can be divided into two broad categories of, major criteria (medical requirement of mental illness) and minor criteria (loss of reasoning requirement). Major criteria mean the person must be suffering from mental illness during the commission of act. Minor criteria mean the person is:

- a. Incapable of knowing the nature of the act.
- b. Incapable of knowing his act is wrong.
- c. Incapable of knowing it is contrary to law.

Both major (mental illness) and minor (loss of reasoning) criteria constitute legal insanity.

Hence, Section 84 IPC fastens no culpability on persons with mental illness because they can have no rational thinking or the necessary guilty intent.

2.2 INTERPRETATION OF SECTION 84

SUPREME COURT DECISION ON INSANITY DEFENSE IN INDIA

Modern criminal law is based on the belief that humans are morally responsible and not harm causing agents. To be held criminally responsible, two essential elements have to be proven, beyond reasonable doubt, (a) the person committed the act (actus reus) (b) in doing so, the person acted with his or her own

free will, intentionally and for rational reasons (mens rea). Psychiatrists may be asked to assist the court in determining whether certain mental disorders affected a person's ability to form the intent necessary to make that person legally culpable.

Medical insanity versus Legal Insanity⁹⁹⁰

Section 84 lays down the legal test of responsibility in cases of alleged crime done by a person with mental illness. There is no definition of "unsoundness of mind⁹⁹¹" in the IPC. The courts have, however, mainly treated this expression as equivalent to insanity. But the term "insanity" itself has no precise definition, carries different meaning in different contexts and describes varying degrees of mental disorders. Every person who is mentally ill is not ipso facto exempted from criminal responsibility.

THIS ISSUE IS CLEARLY DEPICTED IN SECTION 84 IPC AS THAT PERSON INCAPABLE OF KNOWING:

- a. The nature of the act
- b. That he is doing what is either wrong
- c. Contrary to law.

In one of the landmark decisions, in the case of Surendra Mishra versus state of Jharkhand, the Apex Court has stated that an accused who seeks exoneration from liability of an act under Section 84 of the IPC is to prove legal insanity and not medical insanity. Further, it also said that expression "unsoundness of mind" has not been defined in the IPC, and it has mainly been treated as equivalent to insanity. But the term insanity carries different meaning in different contexts and describes varying degrees of mental disorders. Every person who is suffering from mental illness is not exempted from criminal liability.

The crucial point of time for determining the state of mind of the accused is the time when

⁹⁹⁰ Medical insanity refers to a mental illness or disorder diagnosed by medical professionals

⁹⁹¹ Medical professionals use terms like "mental illness" or "mental disorder" to describe conditions that affect a person's thinking, feeling, mood, and behavior.

the offense was committed. The person suffering from mental illness⁹⁹² is one of the facts for Section 84 IPC. However, other facts which also needs to be given importance are: Motive for the crime, the previous history as to mental condition of the accused, the state of his mind at the time of the offense, and the events immediately after the incident that throw a light on the state of his mind.

To summarize, it is not only the fact that the person is suffering from mental illness but it is the totality of the circumstances seen in the light of the evidence on record to prove that the person was also unable to appreciate the nature of the act or wrongdoing or that it was contrary to the law is appreciated in the court of law for insanity defense.

2.3 JUDICIAL PROCEDURES

Section 84 of Indian Penal Code, 1860 (8)⁹⁹³ sets out legitimate obligation test different from clinical test. The unstable condition of mind, makes an accused person exempt from criminal obligation, insanity defense differs in clinical and lawful perspective.

According to the clinical perspective if a person who is under the influence of any drug commits a crime can use the plea of insanity under Section 84. Only the legal insanity and not the medical insanity falls within the bracket of section 84. Basically there are 3 things that law perceives in human brain i.e. stirring, will and psychological. The Supreme Court ruled out that people who are mentally not stable and are unable to seek protection from a criminal trial, as it is the responsibility of accused to demonstrate the existence of lunacy at the time or hour of committing an offense. The consideration defense of plea⁹⁹⁴ so, therefore there has to be a distinction between clinical insanity and legal

insanity. The test which should be implemented would be legal insanity and not clinical insanity

IN INSANITY DEFENSE, THERE ARE TWO ASPECTS OF PROVING AN OFFENSE, WHICH ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- Commission of crime
- Insanity defense.

The accused has to prove by placing material before the court such as expert evidence, oral and other documentary evidence, presumptions, admissions or even the prosecution evidence, satisfying that he was incapable of knowing the nature of the act or of knowing that what he was doing was either wrong or contrary to law.

The Supreme Court have ascertained that the crucial point of time at which unsoundness of mind should be established is the time when the crime is actually committed and the burden of proving this, lies on the appellant for claiming the benefit of the Section 84 provision.

PLEA OF INSANITY

The onus of proving unsoundness of mind is on the accused, hence the plea of insanity should be taken by the accused or by his lawyer or his family members or previous history of insanity is revealed, it is the duty of an honest investigating officer to subject the accused to a medical examination and place that evidence before the court and if this is not done, it creates a serious infirmity in the prosecution case and the benefit of doubt has to be given to the accused.

To summarize, the concept of insanity defense is a legal one and not a medical one. Although a psychiatrist's opinion is taken into account ultimately the decision to accept or reject the defense lays with the court the world over based upon the reasoning power of the defendant during the circumstances of the crime.

⁹⁹² A mental disorder, also referred to as a mental illness, a mental health condition, or a psychiatric disability

⁹⁹³ The Indian Penal Code (IPC), enacted in 1860, is the main criminal law of India. It was drafted by the first Law Commission chaired by Thomas Babington Macaulay and came into effect on January 1st, 1860. The IPC covers a wide range of offenses and is divided into 23 chapters and 511 sections

⁹⁹⁴ In law, a plea is a defendant's response to a criminal charge. A defendant may plead guilty or not guilty. Depending on jurisdiction, additional pleas

Legal perspective

The conception of 'insanity' as a legit defence began from the case of R v Arnold(1924). This case led to the establishment of the 'Feral critter Test, which assessed whether the indicted had the internal capacity to understand the nature of their conduct and distinguishing between 'right' and 'wrong'. This resolution laid the foundation for the legit description of 'insanity' and established the principles of 'McNaughton's Rule'⁹⁹⁵ which carry presuppositions of reason unless proven else, all individualities are considered stable and retain logic capabilities.

THE CASE OF HAZARA SINGH V THE STATE

It is acquainted conception of 'furios nulla voluntas est' which means that a madcap has no will. Then, a madcap was interpreted as a mentally ill person. Still, not all individualities with internal diseases can automatically assert this defence. In Bapu v the country of Rajasthan, the court purified that it's 'legit insanity' that needs to be proven, not "medical insanity".

In Dulal Naik v State (1987)

According to McNaughton's it was interpreted alongside Section 105 of the Indian substantiation Act, which states that the courts suppose a person to be stable and in full control of their faculties unless proven else. As per burden of evidence lies with the indicted and it also important to note that illness of mind before or after negotiating the offence doesn't qualify as a defence of insanity. It must be present-day during the offence itself.

LANDMARK JUDGEMENT RELATED TO MC NAUGHTON'S RULE UNDER INDIAN PENAL CODE

Amrit Bhushanv. Union of India

In the case of Amrit Bhushanv, Union of India(1976), the Supreme Court purified that the M'Naghten regulations outline and explain the tenure 'insanity' of the indicted, while Section 84 of the Indian Penal Code describes 'unsound

mind, 'which is considered original to insanity. This step was taken by the payload of the Indian Penal Code to give a thick interpretation of the tenure' unstable mind and also recognised the conception of non-compos mentis as a defence of insanity under felonious law.

- To assert the defence under Section 84, certain essential rudiments must be answered
- The indicted's mind should be unable of being apprehensive of the nature of the act.
- The act should be contrary to the law.
- The act should be innocently wrong.
- To establish the insanity or unsound mind of the defendant, it must be demonstrated that their cognitive capacities were bloodied to the extent that they didn't see the nature of their conduct or the consequences thereof.

Chapter – 3

LEGAL STANDARDS⁹⁹⁶ FOR INSANITY DEFENCE IN INDIA

In India, the legal standard for the insanity defense, as outlined in Section 84 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), hinges on the individual's mental state at the time of the offense. A person is considered legally insane if, due to unsoundness of mind, they were incapable of understanding the nature of the act or that it was wrong or contrary to law. The burden of proof rests with the accused, who must demonstrate by a preponderance of probabilities, that they were legally insane at the time of the crime.

3.1 TEST OF 'COGNITIVE INCAPACITY'

A test for cognitive incapacity, also known as a cognitive assessment or cognitive test, is used to evaluate a person's thinking, memory and other cognitive abilities, these tests can help identify if someone has cognitive impairment or to assess the severity of existing impairment.

⁹⁹⁵ McNaughton's Rule, also known as the M'Naghten Rule, is a legal test used to determine the criminal responsibility of an individual based on their mental state at the time of the offence. It originated from the landmark British case R v. McNaughton in 1843.

⁹⁹⁶ Acting legally means respecting the applicable bodies of law in the firm's jurisdiction

TYPES OF COGNITIVE TESTS:

- **Mini-Mental State Examination (MMSE):** This test assesses cognitive functions by asking questions about orientation, memory, attention and calculation.
- **Montreal Cognitive Assessment (MoCA):** The MoCA evaluates various cognitive domains, including attention, memory, language, and executive functions.
- **Mini-Cog:** A brief screening tool that assesses memory and visuospatial abilities.
- **Saint Louis University Mental Status Examination (SLUMS):** A screening tool designed to detect mild cognitive impairment, particularly in the early stages of dementia.
- **Five-Minute Cognitive Test (FCT):** This test assesses cognitive functions in a variety of domains, including memory, language, and executive function.

PURPOSE OF COGNITIVE TESTS:

- **Screening:** Cognitive tests can be used to identify individuals who may have cognitive impairment and require further evaluation.
- **Diagnosis:** In conjunction with other assessments, cognitive tests can help establish a diagnosis of cognitive impairment or related conditions like dementia.
- **Monitoring Progress:** These tests can be used to track changes in cognitive abilities over time.
- **Assessing Severity:** Cognitive tests can help determine the severity of cognitive impairment.

These are:

1. **Section 84 of the IPC:** This section provides the statutory basis for the insanity defense. It states that an act is not an offense if, at the time of doing it, the person was, by reason of

unsoundness of mind, incapable of knowing the nature of the act or that it was wrong or contrary to law.

2. **Legal Insanity vs. Medical Insanity:** The legal standard under Section 84 focuses on the individual's ability to understand the nature and wrongfulness of their actions, not on a medical diagnosis of mental illness. Mere abnormality of mind or compulsive behavior is insufficient; the accused must demonstrate that their unsoundness of mind prevented them from understanding the act or its wrongfulness.

3. **Burden of Proof:** The accused has the burden of proving, by a preponderance of probabilities, that they were legally insane at the time of the crime. This means they must present evidence to convince the court that the mental condition they were experiencing rendered them unable to understand the nature or wrongfulness of the act.

4. **Totality of Circumstances:** Courts consider the "totality of circumstances" when evaluating the insanity defense, including:

History of mental illness: A history of mental illness can provide evidence supporting the claim of legal insanity.

Lack of motive: The absence of a clear motive for the crime can also be considered.

Treatment post-arrest: The accused's mental state after being apprehended can be assessed.

Behavior on the day of the incident: The accused's behavior before, during, and after the incident can be examined.

Subsequent Conduct: The accused's behavior following the crime can also be relevant.

3.2 JUDICIAL INTERPRETATIONS

- Section 84 of IPC deals with the act of a person of unsound mind whereas the same provision has been covered under Section 22 of the [Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 \(BNS\)](#).
- It states that nothing is an offence which is done by a person who, at the time of doing it,

by reason of unsoundness of mind, is incapable of knowing the nature of the act, or that he is doing what is either wrong or contrary to law.

- Section 84 IPC is one of the general defenses available under the IPC and provides for the defence of insanity.
- The word 'insanity' is not used in Section 84 of IPC.
- This section is legal insanity and not medical insanity. The crucial point of time for deciding the legal insanity is the material time when the offence took place
- In order to seek protection under Section 84 of IPC, it is necessary for an accused to prove that he, because of unsoundness of mind, was incapable of knowing the nature of the act or that the act was contrary to law.
- The crucial point of time of such incapability due to unsoundness of mind is the time when he committed the offence.
- His insanity prior to or subsequent to the commission of the offence is not in itself adequate to absolve him from the criminal liability.

3.3 ROLE OF EXPERT EVIDENCE⁹⁹⁷

- In *Rattan Lal v. State of M.P.* (2002), [Supreme Court](#) held that the crucial point of time at which the unsound mind should be established is the time when the crime is actually committed and whether the accused was in such a state of mind as to be entitled to benefit from Section 84 of IPC can only be determined from the circumstances that preceded, attended and followed the crime.

The plaintiff was caught setting fire to the field in an open land of Nemichand, when he was asked why he did it, he replied; 'I burnt it, do whatever you want.' The plaintiff was charged under Section 435 (mischief by fire with intent to beget damage) of the Indian Penal Code. According to the psychotic, he was an insane in terms of the Indian Lunacy Act, 1912.

⁹⁹⁷ An expert of a particular subject is consulted to give his opinion on the relevant subject and it is relevant in deciding the case

THE REPORT EXPLICITLY STATED THAT THE CRIMINATED IS:

- Remains depressed
- Doesn't speak
- He is a case of illicit depression and psychosis
- He requires remedy.

The trial court held that the criminated was not liable to be punished. An appeal was filed by the state, and the High court reversed the findings of the trial and held the criminated liable for the offence.

Chapter - 4

MENTAL ILLNESS AND CRIMINAL RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 Understanding Mental Illness in India Law⁹⁹⁸:

Mental illness can significantly impact criminal responsibility, as it can affect a person's ability to form criminal intent (mens rea) or control their actions. Courts consider the defendant's mental state at the time of the crime to determine if they should be held criminally responsible.

MAIN FACTORS ARE:

- **Mens Rea:** Mental illness can interfere with the ability to form the necessary mental state (mens rea) required for a crime. For example, someone with a severe mental illness might not be able to understand the wrongfulness of their actions or control their impulses.
- **Control of Actions:** A mental illness could impair a person's capacity to control their behavior, making it difficult for them to avoid committing a crime.
- **Reason and Judgment:** Mental health conditions can affect a person's ability to reason, make sound judgments, and

⁹⁹⁸ Institute Of Health Metrics and Evaluation. Global Health Data Exchange (GHDx), (<https://vizhub.healthdata.org/gbd-results/>), accessed 14 May 2022)

understand the consequences of their actions.

2. Legal Considerations

- **Insanity Defense:** A person with a mental illness may be found not guilty by reason of insanity if they were unable to understand the nature of their actions or that their actions were wrong at the time of the crime.
- **Competency to Stand Trial:** Individuals must be deemed competent to stand trial, meaning they can understand the charges against them and assist in their own defense.
- **M'Naghten Rule:** This rule is often used to determine criminal responsibility, stating that a person is not responsible for a crime if, at the time of the act, they did not know the nature and quality of the act or did not know it was wrong.
- **Curren's Rule:** This rule focuses on whether the person had the capacity to control their conduct, even if they knew the act was wrong.
- **ALI Test (American Law Institute):** The ALI test considers whether a person lacked the capacity to appreciate the wrongfulness of their conduct or to conform their conduct to the requirements of the law.

3. Important Considerations:

- **Not all people with mental illness are criminals:** It's crucial to avoid the misconception that mental illness automatically leads to criminal behavior.
- **Mental health⁹⁹⁹ conditions can be a result of crime:** A mental health condition may arise as a result of experiencing a traumatic event, like being a victim of a crime.
- **Treatment and Rehabilitation:** Individuals found to have mental illness and

committed a crime may be subject to treatment and rehabilitation programs instead of traditional imprisonment.

4.2 CATEGORIES OF MENTAL ILLNESS

A mental illness is characterized by a clinically significant disturbance in an individual's cognition, emotional regulation, or behaviour. It is usually associated with distress or impairment in important areas of functioning. There are many different types of mental disorders. Mental illness may also be referred to as mental health conditions. This fact sheet focuses on mental disorders as described by the International Classification of Diseases 11th Revision (ICD-11). In 2019, 1 in every 8 people, or 970 million people around the world were living with a mental disorder, with anxiety and depressive disorders the most common (1). In 2020, the number of people living with anxiety and depressive disorders rose significantly because of the CoVID-19 pandemic. Initial estimates show a 26% and 28% increase respectively for anxiety and major depressive disorders in just one year (2). While effective prevention and treatment options exist, most people with mental disorders do not have access to effective care.

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⁹⁹⁹ [Mental Health and COVID-19: Early evidence Of the pandemic's impact.](#)
Geneva: World Health Organization; 2022

disorders in just one year (2). While effective prevention and treatment options exist, most people with mental disorders do not have access to effective care. The insanity defense, or mental disorder defense, can be asserted in criminal cases when a defendant's mental state at the time of the crime is considered to have impaired their ability to understand the nature and quality of their actions or to know they were doing wrong.

CATEGORIES OF MENTAL ILLNESS

Psychotic Disorders: These include conditions like schizophrenia, which can involve delusions, hallucinations, and disorganized thinking, severely impairing a person's ability to grasp reality.

Severe Mood Disorders: Conditions like bipolar disorder or severe depression can, in some cases, be so debilitating that they affect a person's capacity to understand the consequences of their actions.

Dissociative Disorders: Dissociative Identity Disorder (formerly known as Multiple Personality Disorder) can sometimes be used, although the defense is often debated in court.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD): While not always sufficient on its own, severe PTSD, especially if it leads to a psychotic break, may be considered.

Neurodevelopmental Disorders¹⁰⁰⁰: A severe neurodevelopmental disorders, if they significantly impair a person's ability to understand their actions, might be considered.

Substance Use Disorders: If chronic substance abuse has caused permanent and irreversible brain damage leading to mental illness or cognitive dysfunction, it may be considered under the concept of "settled insanity,"

IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS:

Severity and Impact: The insanity defense typically requires a mental illness that is

extremely debilitating and has a long history, particularly one involving psychosis.

Legal Interpretation: The specific requirements and standards for the insanity defense can vary between jurisdictions.

Not a General Excuse: The insanity defense is not a justification for actions committed by individuals who are simply anxious, mildly depressed, or having a bad day, according to Science Direct.

According to the law, punishing people who are not responsible for their crimes is unfair. The insanity defence is aimed at preventing such injustices in the case of individuals who are not responsible due to a mental illness. The insanity defence is one of the most intensely debated elements of the criminal law (Meynen, 2016). The mental illness clause is expressed by requiring that the relevant incapacities derive from a defect of reason that results from a disease of the mind.

From a philosophical perspective, it has been argued that it is not mental illness that reduces responsibility and it is the incapacity to conduct oneself in accordance with the law, regardless of the cause. Accordingly, the claim is that the mental illness clause can or should be replaced by the incapacity clause (e.g. Matthews, 2004; Vincent, 2008).

CHAPTER – 5

THE ROLE OF EXPERT TESTIMONY AND PSYCHIATRIC EVALUATIONS

5.1 FORENSIC PSYCHIATRY IN INDIA:

Forensic psychiatry is a subspecialty of psychiatry, in which scientific and clinical expertise is applied to legal issues in legal contexts embracing civil, criminal, correctional, legislative matters. Forensic psychiatry is still in an infant stage in India and other developing countries. Law is the sanctioning discipline and Psychiatry is the therapeutic discipline. Forensic Psychiatry is reared as Cinderella in our country; "which is much neglected, ignored, misinterpreted, and misunderstood. Legislation

¹⁰⁰⁰ Laursen TM, NOrdentOft M, MOrtensen PB. Excess early mOrtality in schizOphrenia. Annual Review Of Clinical PsychOlogy, 2014;10,425-438.

forms an integral component in the implementation of Mental Health Care; there is a dynamic relationship between the concept of mental illness, treatment of the mentally ill, and the law. Legislations can also create enforceable standards for high quality medical care and improve access to care and protect civil, political, social, and economic rights of the mentally ill individual, including right to access to education, employment, housing, and social security."

The very important milestone in the mental health legislation in India is going to take place most probably by the beginning of the next year. The Mental Health Care Act which is going to be enacted and implemented soon in India is a progressive and a comprehensive Act. The Act defines the mental illness, mental health professionals, and mental health establishments in a very clear way. It has controlling authority, i.e. the review board in the state, central and district levels.

THE NEW CONCEPTS IN THE FORTHCOMING ACT ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- Changes in admission procedures which include emergency treatment
- The change of nomenclature of psychiatry hospitals to mental health establishments and mentally ill renamed as persons with mental illness.

All practicing psychiatrist and postgraduates should have a better understanding and knowledge about the interface between psychiatry and law. They should also be familiar with civil issues such as role of mental illness in assessing testamentary capacity, fitness to give witness, entering into contract and transfer of property of mentally ill, the right to vote and right to stand for election by mentally ill, the civil issues include marriage, and mental health and Indian legislations. The civil issues also include the fitness regarding the mentally ill to get driving license and accepting or donating organ transplants.

5.2 Challenges in Expert Testimony

Challenges in expert testimony revolve around ensuring the expert's qualifications, the reliability and admissibility of their opinions, and the potential for bias or misrepresentation. Experts must be qualified in the relevant field, and their opinions need to be grounded in credible scientific or technical principles. Potential biases, inconsistencies, and a lack of transparency can undermine an expert's credibility. Furthermore, legal frameworks and judicial standards like the Daubert standard influence the admissibility of expert testimony, requiring courts to assess its reliability.

Major Challenges

Qualifications: opposing parties may challenge an expert's qualifications if they lack the necessary expertise or experience in the relevant field.

Reliability: Experts must demonstrate that their opinions and methodologies are based on reliable scientific or technical principles, and that the findings are accepted within the relevant scientific community.

Bias and Impartiality: Experts must avoid any bias or conflict of interest that could undermine the objectivity of their testimony. Being perceived as a "hired gun" can also erode credibility.

Admissibility: The admissibility of expert testimony is influenced by factors like relevance, reliability, and the expert's qualifications. Courts may exclude expert opinions that are not considered reliable or are not relevant to the case.

Communication and Presentation: Experts need to communicate their findings in a clear and accessible manner, explaining technical concepts in a way that non-experts can understand.

Transparency and Disclosure: Experts must fully disclose the basis for their opinions, including the data, methods, and assumptions

they relied upon. This helps prevent "cherry-picking" favorable facts and ensures that the basis for their opinions is well-founded.

Ethical Business Practices: Experts must adhere to ethical business practices, including ensuring that their compensation does not influence their impartiality.

Inconsistencies and Contradictions: Inconsistencies in an expert's testimony can undermine their credibility, so it's crucial to have a consistent and well-documented track record.

5.3 Case Studies

Mental illness can significantly impact criminal responsibility, as it can affect a person's ability to form criminal intent (*mens rea*) or control their actions. Courts consider the defendant's mental state at the time of the crime to determine if they should be held criminally responsible.

'Neither alleged witness nor Bajrangji's 'bragging' can be relied upon as they are not gynaecologists'

The special fast track court, which tried the Naroda-Patiya massacre of the Gujarat 2002 riots case, has rejected the theory that the former State Bajrang Dal president, Babu Bajrangji, removed a foetus from a victim and killed it after "swirling it on the tip of his sword" during the riots.

Babu Bajrangji, who made 'admissions' in sting op, acquitted – The prosecution also accused him of instigating and being part of a mob that attacked the Muslim locality in Naroda Gam on February 28, 2002. Like former minister Maya Kodnani, Babu Rajabhai Patel alias Babu Bajrangji was also an accused in both Naroda Gam and Naroda Patiya massacres. Named as one of the key conspirators in Naroda Gam massacre case by the prosecution, Bajrangji was facing serious charges like murder, attempted murder, criminal conspiracy, instigating mob, rioting and unlawful assembly among others. He came to be known by his alias name, "Bajrangji", owing to his association

with Bajrang Dal, the youth wing of VHP, for many years. He, however, has not been associated with the Bajrang Dal for many years now.

In 2007, a private news channel had broadcast a sting operation related to the 2002 Gujarat riots in which many of the people were shown making claims about their roles in the riots. One of them was Bajrangji, who belongs to the Kadva Patidar sub-caste group of the Patidar community. In fact, the prosecution had relied on this sting operation and claims made by Bajrangji in it as his admission of the alleged act. Babubhai Patel, known by his alias Babu Bajrangji, is a leader of the Gujarat-wing of the Bajrang Dal, a Hindu right wing organization in India. He was a central figure during the 2002 Gujarat violence.

In 2007, the Indian journal Tehelka published a hidden-camera interview with Bajrangji, in which Bajrangji talks of his role in the violence against Indian Muslims in the Naroda Patiya massacre, a particularly intense episode of brutality during the 2002 Gujarat riots.

"We didn't spare a single Muslim shop, we set everything on fire ... we hacked, burned, set on fire ... we believe in setting them on fire because these bastards don't want to be cremated, they're afraid of it ... I have just one last wish ... let me be sentenced to death ... I don't care if I'm hanged ... just give me two days before my hanging and I will go and have a field day in Juhapura where seven or eight lakhs [seven or eight hundred thousand] of these people stay ... I will finish them off ... let a few more of them die ... at least 25,000 to 50,000 should die." he was heard saying.

CHAPTER – 6

THE BURDEN OF PROOF AND LEGAL PRESUMPTIONS

6.1 BURDEN OF PROOF IN INSANITY CASES:

In insanity cases, the burden of proof typically rests on the accused to demonstrate their mental state at the time of the crime. This burden is not as high as proving innocence in a

typical criminal case; it requires demonstrating the accused was likely suffering from a mental disorder that affected their ability to understand the nature of the act or its consequences in IPC.

1. **Presumption of Sanity:** Indian law, like many jurisdictions, assumes that individuals are sane and responsible for their actions. This means the prosecution doesn't need to prove sanity beyond reasonable doubt.

2. **Burden on the Accused:** The accused has the burden of rebutting this presumption by demonstrating that they were, in fact, insane at the time of the crime. This is often done through medical evidence and expert testimony.

3. **Standard of Proof:** The standard of proof required to establish insanity is generally a "preponderance of the evidence," meaning it must be more likely than not that the accused was insane at the time of the crime.

4. **Legal Insanity vs. Medical Insanity:** It's important to distinguish between medical insanity (a mental disorder) and legal insanity (as defined by the law). Legal insanity, as per Section 84 of the Indian Penal Code, requires the accused to be incapable of understanding the nature of the act or its consequences due to a mental disorder.

5. **Evidence to Consider:** Courts consider various types of evidence to assess an accused's mental state, including:

- **Medical history:** Any documented history of mental illness.
- **Expert testimony:** Psychiatrists and other mental health professionals may testify about the accused's mental state.
- **Circumstantial evidence:** Actions and behaviors surrounding the crime may provide clues about the accused's mental state.

6. **Consequences of a Successful Insanity Plea:** If the accused successfully proves insanity, they may be found "not guilty by reason of insanity" and may be committed to a mental institution

for treatment rather than facing a typical criminal sentence.

6.2 Judicial Precedents on Burden of Proof

During judicial precedents on the burden of proof primarily establish that the party asserting a claim bears the initial responsibility of proving it, and the onus shifts only when specific exceptions or laws provide otherwise. In criminal cases, the prosecution has the burden of proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt, and the accused is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

Key principles and relevant cases:

- **"one who asserts must prove":** The general principle is that the party asserting a fact or legal right must prove it.
- **Initial burden on the claimant:** In civil cases, the plaintiff typically bears the initial burden of proving their case.
- **Burden shifts in specific situations:** Laws or specific circumstances may shift the burden of proof to the defendant, such as when relying on an exception or special provision.
- **Criminal cases:** The prosecution bears the burden of proving the accused's guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

RELEVANT CASES:

- **K.M. Nanavati v. State of Maharashtra:** This case highlights the principle that the accused is presumed innocent and the prosecution bears the burden of proving guilt, but when an exception is raised, the burden shifts to the accused to prove it.
- **Kali Ram v. State of Himachal Pradesh:** This case reinforces the presumption of innocence and the requirement of proof beyond a reasonable doubt.
- **S.S. Nanding v. State of Karnataka:** This case emphasizes that appellate courts should not impose new grounds of evidence beyond the trial record, further reinforcing the prosecution's responsibility to establish guilt.

6.3 Questions of 'Sanity Until Proven Insane:

Sanity and insanity are key concepts in criminal law that determine whether a person is capable of being held criminally responsible for their actions. Sanity means that the individual was capable of recognizing the wrongfulness of the act and controlling his or her actions at the time the act was committed. It is generally presumed that everyone is sane unless proven otherwise.

In contrast, insanity is a condition in which an individual cannot be held criminally responsible because, due to mental disorder, he was unable to recognize the wrongfulness of his actions or to control his conduct at the time of the act. This condition must be proven on the basis of a professional psychiatric assessment.

Assessment of Sanity: How is It Carried Out?

The assessment of sanity is a key step to help determine whether the offender was capable of understanding his actions and controlling his behaviour at the time of the offence. The process begins when [the court](#) orders a psychiatric evaluation. The distinction between temporary mental incapacity, for example caused by acute intoxication, and permanent mental disorder is also an important factor. The results of the assessment can significantly influence the decision on criminal responsibility, ranging from a possible acquittal on grounds of insanity to an order for treatment in a psychiatric hospital instead of a prison sentence.

EXTREME EMOTION OR INSANITY

As in the contrast, acting in a state of extreme emotion, such as hysterical fits, may be assessed as an act of full or reduced sanity, depending on the particular circumstances. The boundary between extreme emotions and insanity is assessed on the basis of expert reports, where psychiatrists and psychologists evaluate the overall mental state of the accused and his ability to react appropriately to situations. In practice, this line is often ambiguous and each case requires an individual approach.

The Relationship between Insanity and Drunkenness

Insanity and drunkenness are two distinct conditions, but in a legal context they can be interrelated. Drunkenness alone does not automatically imply insanity. The commission of offences under the influence of alcohol is very common and usually has no bearing on the assessment of insanity. A specific case arises where the state of intoxication is so severe that it leads to a significant reduction or loss of the ability to influence one's own behaviour and to understand the consequences of one's actions. [The Criminal Code](#) addresses these situations through the special offence of 'drunkenness'.

The situation would be quite different if someone poured alcohol on the offender without his knowledge or forcibly intoxicated him against his will. In such a situation, if the insanity of the person committing the offence were established, then he would not be liable for the offence.

CHAPTER – 7

THE OUTCOME OF THE INSANITY DEFENCE IN INDIA

7.1 NGRI (NOT GUILTY BY REASON OF INSANITY) AND CONSEQUENCE

A plea of "Not Guilty by Reason of Insanity" (NGRI) asserts that the defendant, at the time of the alleged crime, was not mentally capable of understanding the nature and quality of their actions or distinguishing right from wrong. If successful, this plea leads to the defendant being committed to a psychiatric facility, rather than prison.

- **The NGRI Plea:** This legal defense acknowledges that the defendant committed the act, but argues they were not criminally responsible due to a mental illness or defect at the time of the offense.
- **Legal Standards:** The specific mental state required for a successful NGRI plea varies by jurisdiction, but it generally involves a

demonstration that the defendant lacked the capacity to understand the nature of their actions or to distinguish between right and wrong.

- **Consequences of a Successful NGRI Plea:** Instead of being convicted and sentenced to prison, the defendant is typically committed to a psychiatric facility. They remain there until a mental health professional determines they are no longer a danger to themselves or others.
- **Differences from Incompetence to Stand Trial:** It's important to distinguish NGRI from an "incompetence to stand trial." Incompetence to stand trial refers to a defendant's lack of ability to understand the proceedings or assist in their defense at the time of the trial, while NGRI focuses on the defendant's mental state at the time of the crime.
- **Duration of Psychiatric Commitment:** The length of time a person spends in a psychiatric facility following an NGRI plea can vary significantly, depending on the nature of the offense, the individual's mental condition, and the specific laws in the jurisdiction.
- **"Guilty but Mentally Ill":** Some jurisdictions offer a verdict of "guilty but mentally ill," which allows for both punishment and treatment.

As per my study aims to explore the differences between two groups of murderers: individuals who committed murder and were found not guilty by reason of insanity (NGRI) and individuals who committed murder and were found responsible and guilty. The comparison is made from a broad perspective by examining socio demographic factors and psychiatric factors as well as criminological and forensic factors. The characteristics of the NGRI group found here can help to identify risk groups and to develop and implement prevention programs for people with mental disorders who are at risk of violent behavior.

There is, however, a dearth of studies examining the criminological aspects of not guilty by

reason of insanity (NGRI) murderers or comparing NGRI and guilty murderers and the murders they commit. Therefore, the aim of this study, which was conducted in Israel, is to fill this lacuna by exploring the characteristics of murderers and murder cases and analyzing and clarifying the differences between NGRI and other murderers.

Murder among the Mentally Ill

Studies from the last two decades have reported a significant correlation between mental disorders, mainly psychotic disorders, and tendencies toward violent behavior (Fazel et al., 2009, 2014; Whiting et al., 2022). Most individuals with mental disorders who were involved in violent crimes were diagnosed with schizophrenia. Their violent acts generally took place during a psychotic episode in which they felt threatened by delusions and hallucinations, which are the main psychotic characteristics associated with violence (Peled et al., 2001). Kim (2019) examined the crime prevalence in Korea among individuals with schizophrenia compared to the general population. She found that while the crime rates among individuals with schizophrenia were significantly lower than among the general population in most types of crimes, including violent crimes other than murder intellectual crimes and theft and they were significantly higher in murder (about five times), arson (six times), and drug-related crimes (two times). These data are significantly higher than the prevalence of schizophrenia among the general population (American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

The Legal Aspect of Insanity

Insanity is an issue which straddles two different fields of science: medicine and law. The legal system comprises two general requirements for criminal sanctions: *mens rea*, the intention to commit a crime, and *actus reus*, the actual crime committed and related behaviors. The insanity defense, which exists in the criminal law of many countries, refers to the belief that certain mental disorders or states can affect the individual's ability to form *mens rea* and

understand the wrongness of their action (Feurstein et al., 2005). In other words, the law also recognizes that there are situations in which a person may commit an offense under the influence of a mental disorder, meaning an illness that impairs a person's judgment and reality testing, i.e., psychotic disorders.

A better understanding of the distinction between the groups could lead to more accurate conclusions in psychiatric opinions, enabling people who need hospitalization and psychiatric treatment to receive it and preventing people who are responsible for their actions from escaping punishment.

7.2 Psychiatric Institutions in India

In India, several mental health institutions provide specialized care, including the National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences (NIMHANS) in Bangalore, the Central Institute of Psychiatry in Ranchi, and the Institute of Human Behaviour and Allied Sciences in Delhi. Other notable institutions include the Lokopriya Gopinath Bordoloi Regional Institute of Mental Health in Tezpur, the Institute of Mental Health in Chennai, and the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in Delhi. It is estimated that there are 3800 Psychiatrists, 898 Clinical Psychologists, 850 Psychiatric Social Workers and 1500 Psychiatric Nurses in the country. Recent estimates for State/UT wise details of trained mental health personnels are not available. There are three centrally run mental health institutes, 40 State run mental hospitals and 398 Departments of Psychiatry in various medical colleges across the country equipped to treat patients suffering from mental illness.

As per Mental Healthcare Act, 2017 is a key piece of Indian legislation aimed at protecting the rights of individuals with mental illness and ensuring they receive appropriate mental healthcare. Passed on April 7, 2017 and implemented on May 29, 2018, it decriminalized attempted suicide and established a rights-based approach to mental healthcare.

THE MENTAL HEALTHCARE ACT, 2017

ACT No. 10 of 2017

[7th April, 2017.]

An Act to provide for mental healthcare and services for persons with mental illness and to protect, promote and fulfil the rights of such persons during delivery of mental healthcare and services and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

WHEREAS the Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its optional Protocol was adopted on the 13th December, 2006 at United Nations Headquarters in New York and came into force on the 3rd May, 2008;

AND whereas India has signed and ratified the said Convention on the 1st day of October, 2007;

AND whereas it is necessary to align and harmonise existing laws with the said Convention.

BE it enacted by Parliament in the Sixty-eighth Year of the Republic of India as follows:--

(1) This Act may be called the Mental Healthcare Act, 2017.

(2) It shall extend to the whole of India.

(3) It shall come into force on such-date¹ as the Central Government may, by notification in the official Gazette, appoint; or on the date of completion of the period of nine months from the date on which the Mental Healthcare Act, 2017 receives the assent of the President.

(1) In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires,--

(a) "advance directive" means an advance directive made by a person under section 5;

(b) "appropriate Government" means,--

(i) In relation to a mental health establishment established, owned or controlled by the Central Government or the Administrator of a Union territory having no legislature, the Central Government;

(ii) In relation to a mental health establishment, other than an establishment referred to in sub-

clause (i), established, owned or controlled within the territory of--

(A) A State, the State Government;

(B) A Union territory having legislature, the Government of that Union territory;

(c) "Authority" means the Central Mental Health Authority or the State Mental Health Authority, as the case may be;

7.3 HIGH PROFIL CASES: Devender Singh Case

Devinder Singh vs State on 17 January, 1969

(1) This judgment will dispose of Criminal Appeal No. 9 of 1968 and Murder Reference No. 3 of 1968. Devinder Singh, appellant in the said Criminal Appeal, was convicted for an offence under [Section 302](#), Indian Penal Code, by Shri Rajinder Nath Aggarwal, Sessions Judge, Sirmur, Bilaspur and Simla Districts, and was sentenced to death, by his judgment, dated 27-3-1968. It is against that judgment that the Appeal has been preferred by Devinder Singh, and the learned Sessions Judge has made the Reference to this Court regarding the confirmation of the sentence passed by him.

(2) The appellant, Devinder Singh, aged about 22/23 years was committed to the Court of Sessions to stand his trial on a charge under [Section 302](#), Indian Code, by the Magistrate, I Class, Bilaspur, by an order, dated 6-7-1967. The charge framed against Devinder Singh was as follows : "THAT you, on or about 24th day of April, 1966 in the evening at Khameri forest, near Kosrian village, intentionally caused the death of your wife Mst. Piaro alias Piar Kaur by beheading her and thereby committed an offence punishable under [Section 302](#) of Indian Penal Code and within the cognizance of the Court of Sessions, Bilaspur."

(3) The charge against the accused Devinder Singh was that he had intentionally caused the death of his wife Mst. Piaro alias Piar Kaur by beheading her. According to the prosecution, accused Surinder Singh had caused the death of his wife Pier Kaur by beheading her, and that the head and the headless body found in the

jungle were those of Piar Kaur. The first question, therefore, that arises for determination in the present case is, as to whether the said head and the headless body were those of Piar Kaur. As regards the head, it was stated by Dr. S. P. Kanwal (Public Witness -1) in his postmortem examination report (Exhibit PA) as well as in his evidence that it was decapitated, and was devoid of all soft parts, ears, eyes, nose, mouth contents and skin of scalp, and was found two furlongs away from the body. The brain was spread over the ground around the skull. He further stated that the head was severed at the highest point of its attachment with the neck at first cervical vertebre. He did nto state that the said head was the head of the headless body that was found at the distance. No other witness identified the head as that of Piar Kaur. There is thus no evidence that the said head was that of the headless body found in the jungle or that it was of Piar Kaur. (After further discussing the evidence, His Lordship continued (5) From the above conclusion it would also normally follow that the prosecution failed to establish even the death of Piar Kaur.

As per all the above reasons, we hold that the prosecution has failed to establish that the appellant, Devinder Singh, caused the death of his wife, Piar Kaur, by beheading her. We, therefore, allow the appeal (Criminal Appeal No. 9 of 1968) filed by Devinder Singh, set aside the conviction and sentence passed by the learned Sessions Judge, and acquit the accused of the charg agninst him and we direct that the accused be set free immediately The Criminal Reference No. 3 of 1968 made by the learned Sessions Judge is not accepted.

CHAPTER – 8

**CRITICISM AND REFORMS OF INSANITY DEFENCE
IN INDIA**

The insanity defense in India, particularly section 84 of the Indian Penal Code, faces significant criticism due to its inconsistent application and reliance on outdated legal principles and Reforms are needed to modernize the understanding of mental illness

and its impact on criminal responsibility, ensuring a more equitable and effective application of the law.

Even, in India, insanity defense law, Section 84 IPC is solely based on the Mc Naughten rules. Since it is drafted, no changes have been made. However, in 1971, there was an attempt by the Law Commission of India to revisit the Section 84 in their 42nd report, but no changes were made.

8.1 Criticism of Insanity Defence in India

- **Inconsistent Interpretation:** The M'Naghten rule, which forms the basis of the insanity defense, has been interpreted inconsistently, leading to varying outcomes in similar cases.
- **Outdated Theories:** The defense relies on outdated notions of the mind and its understanding, which are not always aligned with modern scientific understanding of mental illness.
- **Vagueness and Arbitrariness:** The lack of a clear, uniform standard for determining legal insanity introduces vagueness and arbitrariness into the legal process.
- **Difficulty in Determining Mental State:** Accurately determining an individual's mental state at the time of the crime can be challenging, leading to potential misapplications of the defense.
- **Potential for Abuse:** The defense can be misused by hardened criminals to evade punishment, raising concerns about the fairness of the system.

Reforms:

- **Modernize Understanding of Mental Illness:** Update the legal framework to align with modern scientific understanding of mental illness and its impact on cognitive function and decision-making.
- **Establish Clearer Criteria:** Develop more precise and objective criteria for determining legal insanity, reducing reliance on subjective interpretations and individual case variations.

- **Streamline the Legal Process:** Improve the efficiency and accuracy of the process for determining mental state at the time of the crime, potentially through the use of expert psychological evaluations.
- **Capacity Building:** Train judges, lawyers, police officers, and prison personnel on forensic mental health and the defense of insanity to minimize prejudices and stereotypes.
- **Focus on Rehabilitation:** Move away from a punitive approach and focus on rehabilitation and treatment for individuals with mental illness who have committed crimes.
- **Consider Alternatives:** Explore alternative options to the current insanity defense, such as diminished capacity or diminished responsibility, which may better reflect the range of mental impairments that could affect criminal culpability.

8.2 Reform Efforts

- The Mental Healthcare Act of 2017 in India aimed to improve mental health services and protect the rights of individuals with mental illness.
- Some legal scholars and practitioners have advocated for a more nuanced approach to the insanity defense, recognizing that not all mental illnesses equate to an inability to understand the nature and quality of an act or distinguish right from wrong.
- There is a growing emphasis on building capacity among relevant stakeholders to better understand and address the challenges associated with the insanity defense.

Insanity defense is primarily used in criminal prosecutions. It is based on the assumption that at the time of the crime, the defendant was suffering from severe mental illness and therefore, was incapable of appreciating the nature of the crime and differentiating right from wrong behavior, hence making them not legally accountable for crime. Insanity defense is a legal concept, not a clinical one (medical one). This means that just suffering from a

CHAPTER 9

INSANITY DEFENCE: INTERNATIONAL AND COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES

9.1 Global Approaches to the Insanity Defence

The global approach to the insanity defense varies significantly, with different jurisdictions adopting diverse tests to determine if a defendant's mental state at the time of the crime renders them legally insane and therefore not criminally responsible. The two main categories of tests are cognitive and volitional, with various iterations and integrations of both.

- **M'Naghten Rule:** It is widely used in common law jurisdictions, requires a defendant to have been unable to understand the nature and consequences of their act, or to know that it was wrong, due to a defect of reason or disease of the mind.
- **Irresistible Impulse Test:** This test focuses on volitional impairment, arguing that the defendant, even if knowing the act was wrong, could not control their actions due to a mental illness.
- **Substantial Capacity Test:** This test considers whether the defendant had a substantial capacity to appreciate the wrongfulness of their actions or to conform their conduct to the requirements of the law.
- **Durham Rule (Product Test):** This test, used in some US jurisdictions, focuses on whether the defendant's mental illness was the product of their mental disease or defect.

Integrationist and Abolitionist Approaches:

- **Integrationist Approach:** Jurisdictions integrate cognitive and volitional components into their tests, providing a more comprehensive assessment of a defendant's mental state.
- **Abolitionist Perspective:** Legal scholars and reformers advocate for abolishing the insanity defense entirely, arguing that it is difficult to define and apply and can be abused.

International and Comparative Perspectives:

mental disorder is not sufficient to prove insanity. The defendant has the burden of proving the defense of insanity by a "preponderance of the evidence" which is similar to a civil case. It is hard to determine legal insanity, and even harder to successfully defend it in court. Researchers present a model for evaluating a defendant's mental status examination and briefly discuss the legal standards and procedures for the assessment of insanity defense evaluations. There is an urgent need to initiate formal graduation course, setup Forensic Psychiatric Training and Clinical Services Providing Centers across the country to increase the manpower resources and to provide fair and speedy trial.

Modern criminal law is based on the belief that humans are morally responsible and not harm causing agents. To be held criminally responsible, two essential elements have to be proven, beyond reasonable doubt, (a) the person committed the act (b) in doing so, the person acted with his or her own free will, intentionally and for rational reasons.

Section 84 lays down the legal test of responsibility in cases of alleged crime done by a person with mental illness. There is no definition of "unsoundness of mind" in the IPC. The courts have, however, mainly treated this expression as equivalent to insanity. But the term "insanity" itself has no precise definition, carries different meaning in different contexts and describes varying degrees of mental disorders.

8.3 Plea of Insanity

To summarize, the concept of insanity defense is a legal one and not a medical one. Although a psychiatrist's opinion is taken into account ultimately the decision to accept or reject the defense lays with the court the world over.

- Different legal systems around the world have adopted different variations of these tests, reflecting varying understandings of criminal responsibility and the role of mental illness.
- The insanity defense is also debated in international criminal law, with questions about its application and the procedures for handling defendant found not guilty by reason of insanity.
- The use of neuroscience and neuroimaging in evaluating mental state at the time of the crime is also a growing area of discussion, raising questions about the scientific basis of the insanity defense.

It is summarized that an insanity defense is a complex and controversial area of law, with a wide range of approaches and interpretations across different jurisdictions. Understanding these diverse approaches is crucial for appreciating the legal and ethical debates surrounding the intersection of law, mental illness, and criminal responsibility. An International Criminal Law, a mixing of the separate constructs of trial capacity and criminal incapacity has had the potential to cause confusion, especially where both issues are raised simultaneously at a trial.

International and Comparative Perspectives

- **International:** Insanity defense is applied within the framework of international criminal law, including the International Criminal Court and other international tribunals. It also considers the impact of international human rights standards on the insanity defense, such as the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- **Comparative Analysis:** Insanity defense across a variety of national legal system highlighting both similarities and differences in its legal formulations, procedural requirements, and disposition of individual found not guilty by reason of insanity. It considers how different jurisdictions define mental illness, what types of mental conditions are considered relevant

to the defense, and how the defense is evaluated and applied in court.

MAJOR CONTROVERSIES AND ITS IMPACT OF DEFENSE OF INSANITY

Positive Impact

- It is argued that the insanity defense provides an occasion for individualities with internal ails to admit applicable help, indeed though similar cases are fairly rare.
- As per research insanity defense generally prohibits the use of capital discipline for those who have committed a crime while unfit to completely comprehend its inflexibility due to their internal condition.
- It has likened the situation of a mentally ill defendant to that of a youthful child who doesn't understand the consequences of their conduct. An assessing harsh penalties on similar individualities would be considered unethical by some.

Negative Impact

- As per defense of insanity has been abolished in numerous countries due to its abuse in certain cases, which undermines the abecedarian principles of the law. Although it's impracticable to give an illustration, in some cases, violent culprits have been acquitted on the base of insanity, which goes against the original purpose of the legislation.
- As mentioned before in this essay, it's the responsibility of the indicted to prove insanity as a defense, which is challenging to do fairly. Although it may be easier to establish medically, it is indicted must give factual substantiation to prove legal insanity as per Section 84 of the Indian Penal Code.

CONCLUSION

It is concluded that Insanity Defense is a popular defense for culprits to use to

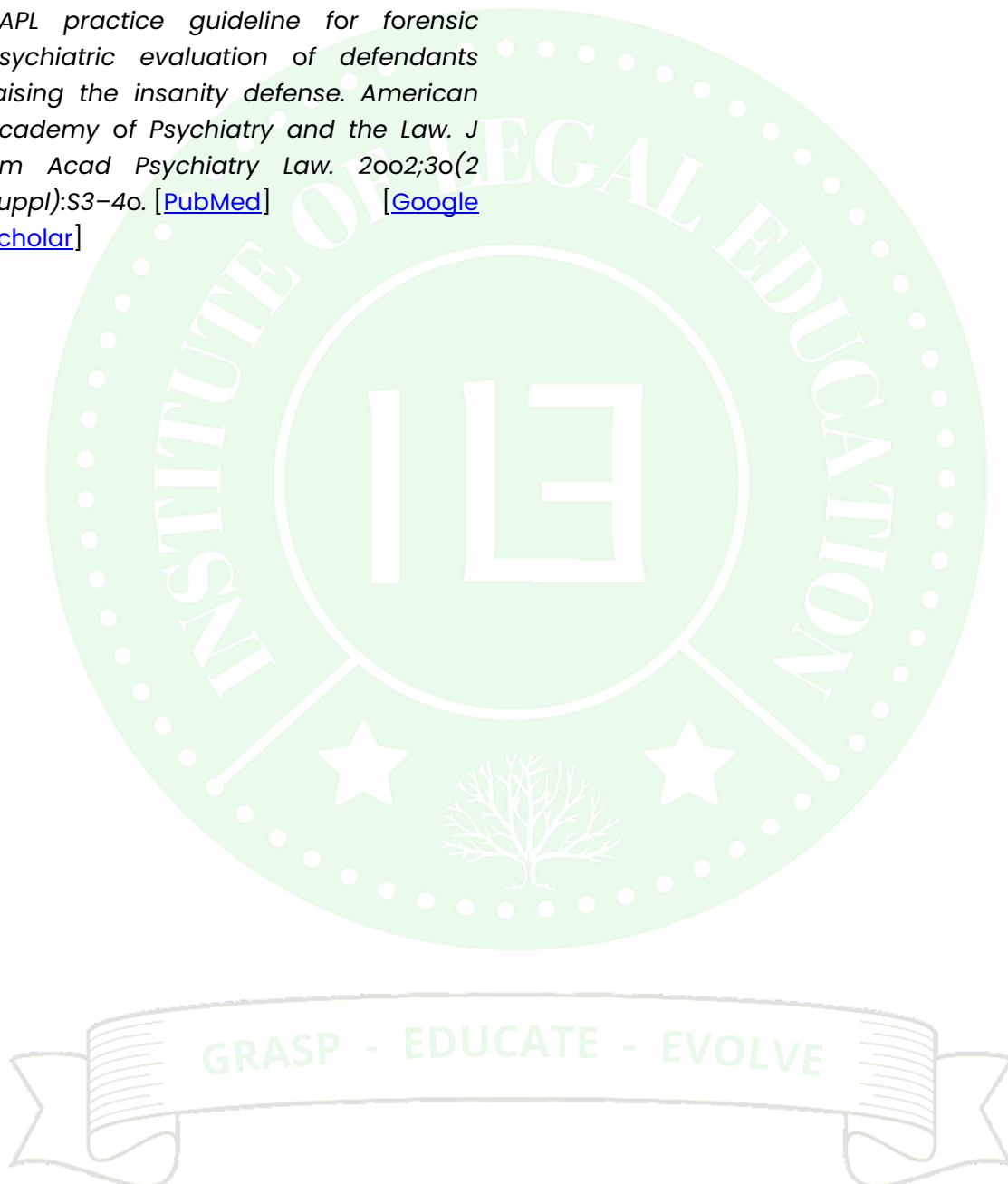
avoid execution for any offense still, determining a person's internal state at the time of the crime is delicate. Due to the excrescencies in the Indian legal system, this defense loses its effectiveness malefactors who admit to committing a crime yet escape discipline through this defense pose a significant problem. A mental disease or defect is an abnormal condition of the mind which substantially affects mental or emotional processes and substantially impairs behavior controls".

Thus, it's pivotal to apply stricter rules to manage similar issues, and significant reforms in this area are long overdue. Balancing of insanity defence affirms that an illicit defendant isn't criminally liable for their illegal acts exactly to their insanity. A defendant affirming an insanity defense does not argue whether they committed the alleged crime. Defense is whether the law should hold them liable for their illicit conduct since they didn't have the internal state to commit the crime. As per Illicit Law, complainant has the burden of evidence in proving a miscreant is shamefaced beyond a reasonable misdoubt. Utmost crimes bear the complainant to prove two effects. Indian Penal law defines insanity under Section-84 which states that any Act of an existent of unsound mind. Insanity defense is primarily used in felonious executions. When a person is unfit to understand effects, he's said to be of unsound mind. According to Section 84 is analogous to the M'Naghten regulations, with a subtle perfection between the two. As per final through it is concluded by M'Naghten Regulations, a person is guessed to be stable unless proven else. Mental disease alone does not absolve a defendant from responsibility for his criminal acts. Something more is evident. The term "Insanity" in the law describes a state of nonresponsibility and is not related to the presence or absence of psychosis. The insanity defense has a long history and is evolved after many tests that have been tried and tested.

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EFFECTIVENESS OF BRANDING STRATEGIES

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Abstract

Branding strategies play a critical role in shaping consumer perceptions, enhancing brand equity, and driving business success. Branding has evolved a strategic view point which focuses on creating customer value. Brand awareness is found to be the driving force behind purchase intentions. This study explores the effectiveness of various branding strategies, including brand positioning, storytelling, visual identity, and emotional branding, in establishing a strong market presence and customer loyalty. Through the research identifies key factors contributing to successful branding, such as consistency, authenticity, and audience engagement. The findings highlight that effective branding not only differentiates a product or service but also fosters lasting connections with consumers, ultimately leading to increased brand value and competitive advantage.

keywords for a study on the effectiveness of branding strategies:

Branding, Brand Strategy, Consumer Perception, Brand Loyalty, Brand Identity, Marketing Strategy, Brand Consistency, Competitive Advantage.

Introduction

In an increasingly competitive global marketplace, branding has emerged as a powerful tool for businesses seeking to differentiate themselves and build lasting relationships with consumers. A strong brand not only influences purchasing decisions but also fosters loyalty, trust, and emotional engagement. Branding strategies—such as brand positioning, identity development, storytelling, and experiential branding—are essential in crafting a unique and memorable brand image. As consumer behaviour evolves and digital platforms expand, the effectiveness of these strategies becomes critical to organizational success. This paper examines the key components and outcomes of effective branding strategies, highlighting their role in shaping consumer perception, enhancing

brand equity, and achieving long-term business objectives.

Objective

The primary objective of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of various branding strategies in enhancing brand recognition, consumer loyalty, and competitive advantage. Specifically, it aims to:

1. Analyse the impact of branding on consumer perception and purchasing behaviour.
2. Identify key branding strategies that contribute to long-term brand success.
3. Examine the role of consistency, authenticity, and emotional connection in effective branding.
4. Assess how digital platforms and emerging trends influence branding effectiveness.

5. Provide insights and recommendations for businesses to optimize their branding efforts.

Definition of Branding Strategy

A branding strategy is a long-term plan designed to build and establish a strong, recognizable brand identity in the minds of consumers. It involves a combination of elements such as brand positioning, messaging, visual identity, voice, values, and emotional appeal. The goal of a branding strategy is to differentiate a company or product from competitors, foster customer loyalty, and drive consistent brand perception across all touchpoints and channels.

There are several types of branding strategies that businesses use depending on their goals, target audience, and market position.

1. Personal Branding

Focuses on promoting an individual (common with influencers, celebrities, coaches).

2. Corporate Branding

Promotes the company as a whole (e.g., Apple, Google) rather than individual products.

3. Product Branding

Builds a separate brand for each product (e.g., Coca-Cola, Nike Air).

4. Service Branding

Emphasizes the quality and value of a service (e.g., FedEx, Ritz-Carlton).

5. Co-Branding

Two or more brands collaborate for a product/service (e.g., Nike + Apple Watch).

6. Umbrella Branding (Family Branding)

A single brand name is used for multiple related products (e.g., Virgin Group).

7. Individual Branding

Each product gets a unique brand name (e.g., Procter & Gamble: Tide, Pampers).

8. Private Label Branding (Store Branding)

Products sold under a retailer's brand name (e.g., Kirkland by Costco).

9. Brand Extension

An existing brand name is used to enter a different product category (e.g., Dove from soap to body lotion).

10. Geographic Branding

Promotes a product based on location (e.g., Napa Valley wines, Swiss watches).

11. Cultural or Emotional Branding

Focuses on creating an emotional connection or reflecting values/culture (e.g., Patagonia, Ben & Jerry's).

Review of Literature

Branding strategies have been extensively studied as a key component of marketing and business success. Scholars and practitioners alike emphasize that a well-defined branding strategy enhances brand equity, customer loyalty, and competitive advantage.

Keller (1993) introduced the concept of Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE), arguing that brand knowledge, consisting of brand awareness and brand image, influences consumer response to marketing. This framework laid the foundation for understanding how branding strategies shape consumer perceptions.

Aaker (1996) emphasized the importance of brand identity and brand architecture in building strong brands. He proposed that brand equity is driven by four key dimensions: brand loyalty, brand awareness, perceived quality, and brand associations—all of which are shaped by strategic branding decisions.

Kotler and Keller (2016) highlighted branding as a central element of strategic marketing, pointing out that consistent and emotionally resonant branding can elevate a product or service beyond functional benefits, creating lasting customer relationships.

Kapferer (2008) developed the Brand Identity Prism, a model illustrating six facets of brand

identity—physique, personality, culture, relationship, reflection, and self-image—demonstrating the multidimensional nature of brand strategy.

Recent studies have shifted focus toward digital branding and consumer engagement. For example, Gensler et al. (2013) examined the co-creation of brand meaning in social media environments

Consumer presumptions and brand loyalty

Consumer Presumptions (or Perceptions)

These are the beliefs, expectations, or assumptions that consumers form about a brand based on their experiences, branding, and external influences. They may be rational or emotional, and they play a huge role in whether someone will engage with or stay loyal to a brand.

Key Types of Consumer Presumptions:

1. Quality Assumption

Consumers assume a brand represents high (or low) quality based on reputation or appearance.

E.g., Apple = premium quality.

2. Price Expectation

Some brands are presumed to be affordable or luxury.

E.g., Walmart = low prices, Rolex = expensive luxury.

3. Performance and Reliability

Consumers expect certain brands to be more durable or effective.

E.g., Toyota = reliable cars.

4. Social Status or Image

A brand may be associated with lifestyle, status, or identity.

E.g., Nike = athletic, fashionable; Tesla = eco-conscious innovation.

5. Emotional Connection or Value Alignment

Brands that reflect shared values or causes are presumed to be “for people like me.”

E.g., Ben & Jerry’s = social justice-oriented.

Branding plays a unique role in different sectors, as each industry has specific customer expectations, needs, and competitive dynamics.

1. Retail & Consumer Goods

It mainly focus on Product quality, price, packaging, customer experience.

Primary goal is to Stand out on shelves and build emotional connections.

Examples: Nike – aspirational and performance-focused.

Coca-Cola – emotion, happiness, nostalgia.

2. Technology & Software

Nearly focus on the Innovation, reliability, user experience.

Goal of this is to Build trust in performance and forward-thinking.

Examples: Apple – sleek design, simplicity, and creativity.

Microsoft – productivity, compatibility, and enterprise focus.

3. Hospitality & Tourism

Aims to Experience, service quality, atmosphere, and emotional appeal.

Create memorable, shareable experiences.

Examples: Airbnb – feeling of “belonging anywhere.”

4. Healthcare & Pharmaceuticals

Focus on Trust, care, safety, and professionalism.

Is to Build credibility and emotional reassurance.

Examples: Johnson & Johnson – family-safe, caring image.

5. Finance & Banking

Major aim is to Security, trustworthiness, transparency.

Focus on the confidence and stability.

Examples:

American Express – prestige and service.

6. Education

Focus: Reputation, academic excellence, values.

Branding Goal: Promote outcomes, culture, and credibility.

Examples:

Harvard – tradition and prestige.

8. Fashion & Beauty

Merely focus on Identity, self-expression, trends, aesthetics.

Goal of the branding is to Cultivate image, aspiration, and exclusivity.

Examples:

Gucci – luxury and boldness

Successful Branding Case Studies

1. Apple – Branding Innovation & Lifestyle

Success Factors:

Consistent minimalistic design and user-friendly interfaces.

Strong emotional branding around creativity and individuality.

Clear brand identity: sleek, premium, innovative.

Result:

Apple became a lifestyle brand with cult-like loyalty, enabling premium pricing and massive global appeal.

2. Nike – Emotional Branding & Storytelling

Success Factors:

Powerful slogans like “Just Do It.”

Aligns with empowerment, sports culture, and diversity.

Uses athlete endorsements to build authenticity

Result:

Nike transformed from a shoe company into a symbol of personal ambition and achievement.

3. Dove – Real Beauty Campaign

Success Factors:

Challenged traditional beauty standards.

Featured real women, not models, in ads.

Focused on emotional and social values (self-esteem, confidence).

Result:

Massive brand loyalty among women and improved social perception.

4. Starbucks – Creating a “Third Place”

Success Factors:

Branded the coffee shop as a community space between home and work.

Personalized experience (e.g., writing names on cups).

Focused on ambiance and customer service.

Result:

Starbucks became a cultural icon and premium coffee experience.

Branding Failures Case Studies

1. New Coke – Misunderstanding Customer Emotion

Failure Factors:

Coca-Cola replaced its classic formula to compete with Pepsi.

Ignored emotional attachment consumers had with the original Coke.

Backlash was intense and immediate.

Result:

Coca-Cola had to reintroduce “Coca-Cola Classic.” A major lesson in not alienating loyal customers.

2. Gap Logo Redesign (2010) – Inconsistent Brand Identity

Failure Factors:

Abruptly changed its iconic logo without consumer input.

New logo felt generic and lost heritage

Future trends in branding :

1. Hyper-Personalization

Brands are increasingly using data and AI to create deeply personalized experiences—from product recommendations to personalized packaging and marketing messages.

2. Purpose-Driven Branding

Consumers are aligning with brands that reflect their values. Brands that take authentic stands on social, environmental, and political issues (and back them up with action) are gaining loyalty.

3. AI-Integrated Brand Experiences

AI is transforming customer service, content creation, and user experience. Brands are leveraging AI for things like AI-generated art, chatbot-based interactions, and automated but human-sounding messaging.

4. Sustainability and Transparency

Sustainable sourcing, eco-friendly packaging, and transparent business practices are becoming core parts of brand identity, especially for Gen Z and younger millennials.

5. Community-First Branding

Instead of just broadcasting a message, brands are building communities around shared interests and lifestyles. Think brand-run forums, Discord channels, or exclusive content spaces.

6. Sensory Branding

Brands are extending their identity beyond visuals—think branded sounds (like audio logos), haptic feedback, or even scent in physical stores.

7. Minimalism + Authenticity

Visually, there's a shift toward clean, minimalist aesthetics paired with raw, "unfiltered" content. Overly polished branding is starting to feel inauthentic to modern audiences.

8. Brand as Media Company

More brands are acting like content creators—launching podcasts, web series, and social media shows to build deeper engagement beyond traditional advertising.

Challenges of the Effectiveness of Branding Strategies

1. Market Saturation and Intense Competition

In crowded markets, it becomes increasingly difficult for brands to stand out and maintain unique positioning, leading to brand dilution or consumer confusion.

2. Changing Consumer Preferences

Rapid shifts in consumer behaviour, values, and expectations—especially among younger demographics—require brands to adapt quickly, which can disrupt consistent messaging.

3. Maintaining Brand Consistency Across Channels

Ensuring a unified brand voice and identity across diverse platforms (social media, websites, retail, etc.) is complex and critical to brand recognition.

4. Limited Resources for Small Businesses

Smaller brands may struggle with budget constraints and lack of expertise, making it challenging to implement and sustain effective branding initiatives.

5. Globalization and Cultural Sensitivity

Brands operating internationally must navigate cultural differences, which can lead to misinterpretation of brand messages if not handled with care.

Conclusion

Branding is a powerful strategic tool that significantly influences consumer behaviour, builds loyalty, and enhances competitive positioning. The study underscores that consistent, emotionally resonant, and value-driven branding strategies are essential in today's dynamic business landscape. As digital platforms evolve and consumer preferences

shift rapidly, brands must remain adaptable, authentic, and aligned with customer values. Companies that effectively leverage storytelling, emotional branding, and personalized experiences are more likely to create strong brand equity and long-term success. Moreover, the case studies illustrate both the benefits of effective branding and the pitfalls of failing to align with customer expectations. Ultimately, businesses that invest in holistic and strategic branding will secure deeper consumer relationships and sustained growth.

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“CROSS-BORDER COMMERCIAL DISPUTES AND THE ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL ARBITRATION”

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Abstract

Cross-border business disputes, fueled by globalized commerce and investment, have become a common concern in modern international law. These disputes are frequently the result of international contracts, corporate operations, and economic interactions between parties from various jurisdictions. Traditionally, addressing such disputes through litigation in national courts presented substantial problems, including as jurisdictional issues, delays, and competing legal systems. To solve these issues, international arbitration has become the primary method for resolving cross-border economic disputes. It offers an impartial, flexible, and efficient platform for dispute resolution, which has advantages over traditional court methods.

The goal of this dissertation is to investigate the critical role of international arbitration in resolving cross-border business disputes, with a special emphasis on the legal frameworks, procedural processes, and obstacles that parties and tribunals encounter in international arbitration. The paper critically explores the benefits and drawbacks of arbitration, the role of international treaties and conventions, and the effect of national laws on the enforcement and recognition of arbitral rulings. This study also examines the changing character and future of international arbitration considering current technological, economic, and legal advancements.

Keywords: Cross-border M&A, Indian Corporate Law, Competition Law, FEMA, SEBI, GAAR, Due Diligence, Regulatory Compliance, Taxation, International Treaties, Antitrust, Legal Risk Management, Deal Structuring, FDI.

Legal and Institutional Frameworks of International Arbitration

The Concept of Legal Pluralism in International Arbitration

At the heart of international arbitration lies the principle of legal pluralism—the idea that arbitral proceedings are not bound by the strictures of a single legal order but instead operate across and among various intersecting legal systems. These include the substantive laws governing the contract, the procedural law or *lex arbitri* of the seat, the institutional rules of

the arbitral tribunal, and the enforcement mechanisms available in the jurisdictions where an award is to be executed. The ability of arbitration to function effectively within this pluralistic structure is both a testament to its flexibility and a source of potential complexity.

This legal pluralism enables arbitration to offer parties a unique level of autonomy but also demands careful navigation. For instance, while parties may agree upon institutional rules like those of the ICC or LCIA, they must also ensure these rules do not conflict with the mandatory provisions of the seat's arbitration law. Similarly,

while transnational instruments like the UNIDROIT Principles provide interpretive guidance, they do not replace applicable national substantive laws unless expressly incorporated. Thus, the legal framework of international arbitration must be understood as a web of interconnected rules rather than a linear hierarchy.

Development and Adoption of the UNCITRAL Model Law¹⁰⁰¹

The **UNCITRAL Model Law on International Commercial Arbitration**, adopted in 1985 and revised in 2006, has emerged as a globally accepted legislative template for structuring domestic arbitration statutes in line with international standards. It addresses key elements of arbitration, including the arbitration agreement, composition of the tribunal, arbitral procedures, and recourse against the award. Designed to support a uniform and predictable legal environment, the Model Law ensures that international arbitration enjoys legal stability and judicial respect across diverse jurisdictions.

Over 85 countries—including Singapore, India, Australia, Canada, and Germany—have adopted legislation based on the Model Law. However, local interpretations and amendments often affect the degree of uniformity. For instance, while Singapore's International Arbitration Act closely mirrors the Model Law and is interpreted in a pro-arbitration spirit, India's Arbitration and Conciliation Act 1996, though based on the same foundation, has undergone numerous amendments to rectify judicial interventionism and procedural inefficiencies. The degree of conformity to the Model Law, therefore, serves as a useful indicator of a state's arbitration friendliness and its commitment to harmonization.

Arbitration Agreements: Validity, Interpretation, and Enforceability

The arbitration agreement is central to the jurisdiction of an arbitral tribunal. Its validity is assessed according to both the applicable substantive law chosen by the parties and, in many instances, the law of the seat. Courts and tribunals have long debated the appropriate law to govern the arbitration agreement—whether it should be the same as the law governing the contract or whether a separate “implied choice” can be inferred. Recent jurisprudence, such as the UK Supreme Court decision in *Enka Insaat ve Sanayi AS v. OOO Insurance Company Chubb* (2020), illustrates the complexity of determining the governing law where no express choice has been made.

Equally important is the enforceability of the arbitration agreement. Courts across the world generally uphold arbitration clauses where they reflect mutual consent and do not contravene mandatory legal principles. The doctrine of *kompetenz-kompetenz*, recognized in the Model Law and many national statutes, empowers arbitral tribunals to rule on their own jurisdiction, including objections regarding the existence or validity of the arbitration agreement. This doctrinal innovation reduces the risk of premature judicial interference and reinforces the autonomy of arbitration proceedings.

Procedural Law and Party Autonomy

One of the defining features of international arbitration is procedural flexibility. Unlike litigation, which is bound by state-imposed procedural codes, arbitration allows parties to craft their own procedural regime within the limits set by the *lex arbitri*. This includes choosing the language of arbitration, the format and timeline of proceedings, evidentiary rules, and the seat of arbitration. Institutional rules, such as the UNCITRAL Arbitration Rules, the ICC Rules, or the SIAC Rules, offer comprehensive procedural frameworks that balance structure with flexibility.

Nevertheless, procedural autonomy is not absolute. The *lex arbitri* often imposes mandatory requirements—such as equal

¹⁰⁰¹ UNCITRAL, *Model Law on International Commercial Arbitration 1985 with amendments as adopted in 2006* https://uncitral.un.org/en/texts/arbitration/modellaw/commercial_arbitration last accessed 10 April 2025.

treatment of parties, the right to be heard, and public policy considerations—that cannot be contracted out. For example, Article 18 of the UNCITRAL Model Law mandates that parties shall be treated with equality and given full opportunity to present their case. These procedural safeguards ensure that arbitration remains a legitimate and fair adjudicative process, even in its most flexible forms.

Enforcement of Arbitral Awards Under the New York Convention

The **1958 New York Convention** remains the most significant legal instrument in the enforcement of international arbitration agreements and awards. Its wide ratification has enabled a truly global enforcement regime, providing confidence to parties that an arbitral award rendered in one country will be recognized and enforced in another with minimal judicial scrutiny. The Convention permits refusal of enforcement only on limited grounds, such as incapacity of parties, invalid arbitration agreement, violation of due process, excess of jurisdiction, irregular tribunal composition, or public policy.

Courts in leading jurisdictions have interpreted these grounds narrowly. For instance, the U.S. courts have generally adopted a pro-enforcement stance, affirming the principle that awards should be upheld unless there is clear evidence of one of the enumerated exceptions. In contrast, some jurisdictions interpret the “public policy” exception more expansively, allowing greater latitude to refuse enforcement based on national interests or constitutional principles. These variations underscore the importance of choosing a reliable seat and target enforcement jurisdictions during the contractual drafting stage.

Emergency Arbitration and Interim Relief

Another dynamic feature of modern arbitration frameworks is the provision for **emergency arbitration**, whereby parties can obtain urgent interim relief before the constitution of the arbitral tribunal. Leading institutions, including

the ICC, SIAC, and LCIA, offer emergency arbitrator procedures that allow for swift decisions on issues such as preservation of assets, injunctions, or document disclosure. These interim measures are critical in high-stakes commercial disputes, particularly where the enforcement of a final award may be compromised by delay.

Despite the functional benefits of emergency arbitration, its enforceability in national courts remains uncertain in some jurisdictions. While jurisdictions like Singapore and Hong Kong expressly recognize and enforce emergency arbitrator decisions, others do not offer a clear legislative basis for such enforcement. This legal ambiguity may undermine the efficacy of interim relief and highlights the need for further legislative and jurisprudential clarity.

Public Policy and Arbitrability

The concepts of “public policy” and “arbitrability” are crucial in defining the limits of arbitration’s scope. Public policy, as an exception to enforcement, is inherently nebulous and varies significantly from one jurisdiction to another. Some jurisdictions interpret it narrowly, limiting its application to fundamental principles of justice or procedural fairness. Others include socio-economic values, constitutional mandates, or human rights considerations within its scope.

Arbitrability refers to whether a given subject matter can be resolved through arbitration. While most commercial disputes are arbitrable, areas such as insolvency, criminal law, consumer disputes, and family law often fall outside arbitration’s reach due to their public interest dimensions. For cross-border commercial disputes, this variance poses significant risk, as a subject matter deemed arbitrable in one jurisdiction may be considered non-arbitrable in another, thereby threatening the enforceability of the award.

2.1 Introduction

The legitimacy, effectiveness, and global reach of international arbitration are rooted in the

robustness of its legal and institutional frameworks. These frameworks not only facilitate the arbitration process but also provide the legal scaffolding necessary for the recognition, enforcement, and annulment of arbitral awards. Unlike domestic litigation, which is grounded in the national laws and judicial hierarchies of a specific state, international arbitration straddles multiple jurisdictions and derives its authority from a combination of international treaties, national laws, institutional rules, and party agreements. The legal infrastructure governing arbitration is both complex and dynamic, evolving in response to the increasing sophistication of commercial disputes and the global demand for more predictable and efficient mechanisms of dispute resolution.

This chapter provides a comprehensive examination of the legal and institutional architecture that supports international arbitration. It begins with an analysis of the pivotal international treaties, particularly the New York Convention and the UNCITRAL Model Law, which serve as the cornerstones of the modern arbitral regime. It then explores the role of national arbitration laws, focusing on the legislative approaches adopted by key arbitration-friendly jurisdictions. Following this, the chapter turns to the institutional landscape, surveying the major arbitral institutions and their procedural rules, as well as the practical implications of choosing institutional versus ad hoc arbitration. Finally, the chapter reflects on the interplay between legal rules and institutional practices, highlighting how they collectively shape the legitimacy, efficiency, and fairness of international arbitration.

2.2 The New York Convention: A Cornerstone of International Arbitration¹⁰⁰²

Adopted in 1958 under the auspices of the United Nations, the Convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Arbitral

Awards—commonly referred to as the **New York Convention**—is the most significant legal instrument in the field of international arbitration. With over 170 signatories as of 2025, the Convention has achieved near-universal acceptance and plays a central role in ensuring the enforceability of arbitral awards across borders.

The primary purpose of the New York Convention is twofold: first, to compel national courts to recognize and enforce arbitration agreements; and second, to obligate them to enforce foreign arbitral awards, subject to limited exceptions. Article II of the Convention requires contracting states to recognize written arbitration agreements and to refer parties to arbitration when such an agreement exists. This provision reinforces the autonomy of the arbitral process and precludes national courts from assuming jurisdiction over disputes meant to be resolved by arbitration.

Equally significant is Article V, which sets out the exhaustive grounds on which the recognition and enforcement of an arbitral award may be refused. These include incapacity of a party, invalidity of the arbitration agreement under the applicable law, lack of proper notice, the award exceeding the scope of the arbitration agreement, and procedural irregularities. Importantly, these grounds are interpreted narrowly by most courts, reflecting the Convention's pro-enforcement bias. The limited discretion given to national courts helps ensure consistency and predictability in the cross-border enforcement of awards, which is critical for international commerce.

The success of the New York Convention lies not only in its legal provisions but also in its widespread adoption and judicial interpretation. Courts in jurisdictions as diverse as the United States, Singapore, India, and France have developed a strong jurisprudential commitment to the Convention's principles. For example, in the United States, courts have consistently upheld arbitration agreements and enforced awards in line with the Federal

¹⁰⁰² Kronke, H., Nacimiento, P., Otto, D. and Port, N.C. eds., 2024. *Recognition and enforcement of foreign arbitral awards: a global commentary on the New York Convention*. Kluwer Law International BV.

Arbitration Act (FAA) and the Convention's mandate. In India, a series of landmark judgments by the Supreme Court has gradually aligned the country's arbitration law with international standards, reinforcing the enforceability of foreign awards and limiting judicial interference.

Despite its achievements, the Convention is not without its challenges. The interpretation and application of Article V exceptions vary across jurisdictions, leading to occasional unpredictability. Moreover, the Convention does not address all aspects of arbitration—such as interim measures, confidentiality, or the annulment of awards—leaving such matters to be governed by national laws or institutional rules. Nevertheless, the Convention remains the bedrock of international arbitration, providing a uniform legal regime that facilitates the cross-border enforcement of arbitral agreements and awards.

2.3 UNCITRAL Model Law on International Commercial Arbitration

Recognizing the need for greater harmonization in national arbitration laws, the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) developed the **Model Law on International Commercial Arbitration**¹⁰⁰³ in 1985, with amendments introduced in 2006. The UNCITRAL Model Law serves as a template for national legislation and aims to modernize and unify the legal framework for international arbitration. Unlike the New York Convention, which addresses recognition and enforcement, the Model Law focuses on the procedural conduct of arbitration and the relationship between arbitration and national courts.

The Model Law covers the entire arbitral process, including the arbitration agreement, composition and jurisdiction of the arbitral tribunal, conduct of proceedings, and recourse against the award. It is characterized by a flexible and pro-arbitration approach that

respects party autonomy while ensuring procedural safeguards. One of its most significant features is the **principle of limited court intervention**, enshrined in Article 5, which stipulates that courts may intervene in arbitration matters only where expressly permitted by the law. This provision is critical in insulating the arbitral process from excessive judicial interference, thereby enhancing its efficiency and neutrality.

Another key provision is Article 16, which affirms the doctrine of **kompetenz-kompetenz**¹⁰⁰⁴, allowing arbitral tribunals to determine their own jurisdiction. This empowers arbitrators to resolve jurisdictional objections without the need for preliminary court rulings, streamlining the process and preserving the tribunal's authority. Additionally, the Model Law provides a detailed mechanism for setting aside an arbitral award, with grounds closely mirroring those in Article V of the New York Convention. This alignment ensures coherence between the legal standards for annulment and those for enforcement.

The impact of the Model Law has been significant. Over 80 jurisdictions, including Singapore, Canada, Germany, and Australia, have enacted arbitration statutes based on the Model Law, thereby promoting procedural uniformity and enhancing the predictability of arbitral proceedings. Even jurisdictions that have not formally adopted the Model Law often draw upon its provisions in interpreting their national laws.

Nevertheless, the Model Law has certain limitations. Its adoption is voluntary, and variations exist among countries that have implemented it. Some states have modified provisions to reflect local legal traditions or policy preferences, resulting in a lack of complete harmonization. Moreover, the Model Law does not address substantive contract law issues or the enforcement of foreign court judgments, which often intersect with arbitral

¹⁰⁰³ Holtzmann, H.M. and Neuhaus, J.E., 2015. *A guide to the 2006 amendments to the uncitral model law on international commercial arbitration: legislative history and commentary: legislative history and Commentary*. Kluwer Law International BV.

¹⁰⁰⁴ Cook, A., 2014. Kompetenz-kompetenz: varying approaches and a proposal for a limited form of negative kompetenz-kompetenz. Pepp. L. Rev.

proceedings. Despite these limitations, the Model Law remains a vital instrument in the global arbitral landscape, fostering coherence and best practices across jurisdictions.

2.4 National Arbitration Laws: Comparative Perspectives

While international treaties and model laws provide a general framework, the actual conduct and supervision of arbitration are governed by national laws. The approach taken by domestic legislatures and courts plays a critical role in shaping the arbitral environment of a country. In recent decades, there has been a growing trend among states to reform their arbitration laws to attract international arbitration and align with global standards. A comparative analysis of select jurisdictions reveals both convergence and divergence in national approaches.

Singapore is widely regarded as one of the most arbitration-friendly jurisdictions. Its International Arbitration Act, which incorporates the UNCITRAL Model Law, provides a clear and modern legal framework. Singapore courts have demonstrated a strong commitment to upholding arbitration agreements, respecting party autonomy, and minimizing judicial interference. The city-state's judiciary is known for its pro-enforcement stance, efficiency, and expertise in arbitration-related matters, making it a preferred seat for international arbitration.

The United Kingdom, through the Arbitration Act of 1996, offers another robust and comprehensive legal framework. The Act is based on three fundamental principles: the fair resolution of disputes by an impartial tribunal, party autonomy, and limited court intervention. English courts have developed a sophisticated body of jurisprudence supporting arbitration, particularly in the context of commercial and maritime disputes. London remains a popular arbitral seat due to its legal infrastructure, expert arbitrators, and international reputation.

India, historically criticized for judicial delays and interventionist tendencies, has undertaken

significant reforms in recent years. The Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996—based on the Model Law—has been amended multiple times to reduce court interference, expedite proceedings, and encourage institutional arbitration. Landmark decisions such as *BALCO v. Kaiser Aluminum* and *Enercon v. Enercon GmbH* have affirmed the Indian judiciary's commitment to respecting arbitration agreements and enforcing foreign awards. While challenges remain, India is steadily emerging as a credible jurisdiction for international arbitration.

The United States adopts a dual approach. The Federal Arbitration Act governs domestic and international arbitration, while the New York Convention applies to the enforcement of foreign awards. U.S. courts have generally been supportive of arbitration, although the involvement of federal and state laws can occasionally lead to complexity. The U.S. legal system also allows for extensive discovery, which can conflict with the principles of efficiency and confidentiality favored in international arbitration.

This comparative analysis underscores the importance of national arbitration laws in shaping the global arbitral ecosystem. While convergence around the Model Law and the New York Convention has created a degree of uniformity, national legal cultures, court attitudes, and legislative priorities continue to influence the arbitral experience in each jurisdiction.

2.5 Arbitral Institutions and Institutional Rules

Arbitral institutions play an indispensable role in international arbitration. While arbitration may be conducted on an **ad hoc** basis—where the parties organize proceedings without institutional oversight—the majority of international arbitrations today are administered by **arbitral institutions**. These institutions provide procedural rules, administrative support, and, in some cases, supervisory oversight, thereby contributing to

the efficiency, consistency, and credibility of the arbitral process.

Among the most prominent arbitral institutions are the **International Chamber of Commerce (ICC)**¹⁰⁰⁵, the **London Court of International Arbitration (LCIA)**, the **Singapore International Arbitration Centre (SIAC)**, the **Hong Kong International Arbitration Centre (HKIAC)**, and the **International Centre for Dispute Resolution (ICDR)**, the international arm of the American Arbitration Association (AAA). Each institution has its own set of procedural rules, fee schedules, and administrative mechanisms, but all aim to provide a neutral and structured framework for the resolution of complex cross-border disputes.

The **ICC**, headquartered in Paris, is arguably the most recognized arbitral institution globally. Its rules are widely regarded as comprehensive and business-oriented. One of the ICC's distinguishing features is its **Court of Arbitration**, which scrutinizes every draft award to ensure legal integrity and procedural correctness. This scrutiny, though adding time to the process, enhances the enforceability and quality of awards. The ICC also offers transparency in the appointment of arbitrators and allows for expedited procedures in certain cases, reflecting evolving commercial needs.

The **LCIA**, based in London, offers a more streamlined and cost-effective model. Its rules emphasize confidentiality, arbitrator independence, and procedural efficiency. The LCIA also empowers the tribunal with significant discretion to shape proceedings, encouraging flexibility while preserving fairness. In particular, its provisions on emergency arbitrators, joinder of parties, and consolidation of claims reflect the institution's modern and pragmatic approach.

SIAC and **HKIAC** represent the rise of Asia as a global hub for arbitration. SIAC, supported by Singapore's arbitration-friendly legal regime, is known for its speed, cost-effectiveness, and

international reach. The institution offers an **expedited procedure, emergency arbitrator mechanism**, and a robust **panel of arbitrators** with diverse expertise. HKIAC, with its strong ties to both common law and civil law traditions, provides flexible rules that permit parties to choose between institutional and ad hoc approaches. Its close proximity to Mainland China enhances its appeal for parties involved in China-related disputes.

In the United States, the **ICDR** offers comprehensive international arbitration services, with procedures designed to accommodate both civil and common law traditions. The institution emphasizes early case management, party autonomy, and the integration of electronic communication to improve efficiency.

The choice of institution often depends on factors such as the nature of the dispute, the location of the parties, language, cost considerations, and legal culture. Institutions differ not only in their rules but also in their approach to administration. For instance, some institutions, like the ICC, adopt a more interventionist style, while others, like the LCIA, take a more hands-off approach, allowing arbitrators greater procedural freedom.

In choosing between **institutional and ad hoc arbitration**, parties must weigh the benefits of institutional support against the desire for flexibility. Institutional arbitration offers administrative convenience, established procedural rules, and a structured framework that enhances legitimacy. In contrast, ad hoc arbitration—most commonly governed by the **UNCITRAL Arbitration Rules**—offers maximum flexibility and cost savings but may encounter challenges in appointing arbitrators, managing timelines, or enforcing procedural decisions.

Ultimately, the growing sophistication of arbitral institutions and their rules reflects the increasing complexity of cross-border commercial disputes. Institutional arbitration continues to evolve in response to demand for

¹⁰⁰⁵ ICC, *ICC Arbitration Rules* (2021) <https://iccwbo.org/dispute-resolution-services/arbitration/rules-of-arbitration/> accessed 12 April 2025.

greater efficiency, transparency, and technological integration, as evidenced by the growing adoption of virtual hearings, online case management platforms, and environmentally sustainable practices.

2.6 The Interplay Between Legal Frameworks and Institutional Rules¹⁰⁰⁶

The strength of international arbitration lies not merely in its constituent parts—treaties, laws, and institutional rules—but in the **harmonious interplay** among them. Together, these frameworks form a coherent ecosystem that supports the conduct, recognition, and enforcement of international arbitral awards.

The relationship between **international instruments** like the New York Convention and **national arbitration laws** is one of complementarity. While the Convention provides the international mechanism for enforcement, it relies on national courts to implement its provisions. Thus, the effectiveness of the Convention depends heavily on the alignment of domestic laws with its principles. The Model Law serves as a bridge in this regard, guiding national legislators in drafting laws that comply with international standards while respecting local legal cultures.

Likewise, **institutional rules** do not exist in a vacuum. They are shaped by and operate within the bounds of national arbitration laws and international instruments. For example, institutional rules may provide for emergency arbitration or expedited proceedings, but their enforceability depends on the receptiveness of the national legal system. A tribunal's decision to grant interim relief under institutional rules must ultimately be recognized and enforced by domestic courts, making the support of the national judiciary essential.

There are also instances of **convergence** and **tension** between these frameworks. Convergence is evident in the widespread acceptance of the principle of party

autonomy, the adoption of kompetenz-kompetenz, and the enforcement of awards under the New York Convention. Tensions arise when national courts take divergent views on issues such as public policy, arbitrability, or the scope of judicial review. These tensions can undermine uniformity and create legal uncertainty, particularly when arbitral awards are annulled at the seat but still enforced abroad (as in the celebrated *Yukos* case).

Institutional innovation has also driven legal reform. For example, the increasing use of **emergency arbitrators**¹⁰⁰⁷ prompted jurisdictions such as Singapore and Hong Kong to amend their arbitration laws to recognize and enforce emergency measures. Similarly, the inclusion of **third-party funding provisions** in institutional rules has encouraged regulatory responses in various jurisdictions, further integrating institutional practice with legal development.

The evolution of **technology** in arbitration provides another dimension to this interplay. Institutions have led the way in digital innovation, developing secure online platforms, digital repositories, and protocols for virtual hearings. However, the legitimacy of such measures ultimately depends on their recognition by national courts and their compatibility with existing legal frameworks.

In sum, the coherence and effectiveness of international arbitration hinge on the continuous dialogue between legal and institutional actors. Legislators, judges, arbitral institutions, and practitioners must collaborate to maintain the integrity and adaptability of the system. Only through such cooperation can arbitration fulfill its promise as a global mechanism for the peaceful resolution of commercial disputes.

Final Thought

As the global economy continues to expand, the intersection of international commerce and

¹⁰⁰⁶ Zimmer, M.B., 2011. Judicial System Institutional Frameworks: an overview of the interplay between self-governance and independence.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Turner, R., 2024. Emergency Arbitration: Where Are We Now and Where Do We Go From Here? *Dispute Resolution International*, 18(2).

legal governance becomes increasingly intricate. In this evolving landscape, international arbitration has emerged not merely as a viable alternative to domestic litigation, but as the dominant mechanism for resolving cross-border commercial disputes. This dissertation has examined, in depth, the multifaceted role of international arbitration in addressing the challenges posed by globalization, legal pluralism, jurisdictional diversity, and the need for procedural efficiency. Through a thorough analysis of legal frameworks, institutional rules, and comparative practices across jurisdictions, it has become evident that arbitration is uniquely positioned to deliver justice that is not only efficient and neutral but also adaptable to the complex demands of international business.

The strength of international arbitration lies in its carefully balanced framework—a harmony between party autonomy and procedural order, between national sovereignty and transnational cooperation. Institutions such as the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), the London Court of International Arbitration (LCIA), and the Singapore International Arbitration Centre (SIAC), among others, have contributed significantly to this balance by offering refined procedural rules and professional oversight. Their evolution mirrors the broader development of arbitration law, which has moved steadily toward harmonization through instruments like the UNCITRAL Model Law and the 1958 New York Convention. These legal cornerstones have facilitated a degree of consistency and predictability that is indispensable in fostering investor confidence and commercial trust.

Yet, while the promise of arbitration is considerable, its execution is not without challenges. Issues such as the enforceability of arbitral awards, divergences in national approaches to public policy and arbitrability, and uncertainties surrounding interim measures and emergency arbitration highlight the system's ongoing need for refinement. The variations in how national courts interpret key

provisions of the New York Convention, for example, continue to create risks for parties seeking cross-border enforcement of awards. Similarly, while the doctrine of *kompetenz-kompetenz* and the principle of limited judicial intervention are generally upheld, their application is not always uniform, particularly in jurisdictions with underdeveloped or overly interventionist arbitration laws.

Moreover, the future of international arbitration will depend on how well it adapts to contemporary developments. The rise of third-party funding, increasing reliance on technology, and heightened scrutiny regarding transparency and diversity are reshaping arbitral practice. Virtual hearings, online document management systems, and digital submissions are no longer novelties—they are fast becoming the norm. While these innovations offer efficiency and accessibility, they also raise concerns about cybersecurity, confidentiality, and procedural fairness, all of which must be addressed by both arbitral institutions and legislative bodies.

At the same time, the legitimacy of international arbitration increasingly hinges on its ability to be inclusive and equitable. Calls for greater diversity among arbitrators—whether in terms of nationality, gender, or professional background—are prompting important reforms within arbitral institutions. These changes are not merely cosmetic; they reflect a growing awareness that legitimacy, in a system as inherently private as arbitration, is closely linked to perceptions of impartiality, representativeness, and procedural justice. The future credibility of arbitration depends, in part, on its responsiveness to these concerns.

In the Indian context, recent reforms signify a commitment to aligning domestic arbitration law with international standards. Landmark judicial decisions, amendments to the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, and initiatives to promote institutional arbitration signal India's determination to become a global hub for dispute resolution. However, structural and

systemic challenges remain. Ensuring timely enforcement of awards, reducing procedural delays, and fostering a pro-arbitration judicial mindset are crucial steps that must be taken to realize this vision fully. The success of India—and indeed, any jurisdiction—in the arbitration arena depends not only on legal infrastructure but also on cultural and institutional shifts toward efficiency, neutrality, and professionalism. What emerges from this study is that international arbitration must continue to evolve—not in isolated reform but through a concerted, coordinated approach that bridges the gap between national legal orders and international commercial realities. The system's resilience will be measured by its ability to harmonize these tensions, drawing strength from its flexibility while maintaining the foundational principles of due process, fairness, and rule of law.

In conclusion, the role of international arbitration in resolving cross-border commercial disputes is both vital and transformative. It provides a dispute resolution mechanism that is attuned to the needs of global commerce—efficient, impartial, and adaptable. However, its continued success rests on vigilance and innovation. Legal scholars, practitioners, institutions, and policymakers must work collaboratively to address the evolving challenges and to reinforce arbitration's credibility and legitimacy. As international business becomes ever more complex and interconnected, arbitration must remain at the forefront of legal evolution, ensuring that cross-border disputes are resolved in a manner that is just, effective, and globally coherent.

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WHO PROTECTS THE UNPROTECTED INTERNATIONAL AND INDIA'S DE FACTO LEGAL AND POLITICAL FRAMEWORKS OF REFUGEES THROUGH THE LENS OF HUMAN RIGHTS

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INTRODUCTION

"No one puts their children in a boat unless the water is safer than the land."

The world has been the witness of massive disruption for multiple times. Whenever we scrutinize the tensed events, wars and agonizing incidents of our history, we only see the one side of coin which conveys the winners and losers of the circumstance. But another side of coin shows the loss of humanity, homicide. No one wins or lose the war but war wins over the humanity. To acquire the humanism in modern era one body have set the milestone, UDHR (united declaration of human rights) the declaration ensures the human rights, the rights which are inalienable from humans. Humans have right to life and when this right gets infringe the human flee for the protection, called refugees. The air of animosity among the nations can't take away the rights of humans and this is what the International convention of 1951 ensures, 1st International refugee convention. India was "non-signatory" to the convention, despite of not being the member of convention India performs significant legal and political role in the matter of Refugees. This article explores the intersection of international refugee law, human rights frameworks, and India's de facto approach to refugee protection.

Foundation of Human Rights, UDHR (united declaration of human rights)

One of the significant political consequence of World War 2. ¹⁰⁰⁸United declaration of human rights" (herein after as 'UDHR') arises as assurance of human rights. It ensures ¹⁰⁰⁹the recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world. The concept of human rights have been emerged from the enlightenment age but it got the political and legal backing from UDHR. Article 1 of the declaration ¹⁰¹⁰"All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights." Reflects the reality

that every human born free, it means that no one has right over other's life, no one can scratch the rights of human from human. Article 3 of the declaration ensures the "right to life, liberty and security of the person." Article 14 of UDHR ¹⁰¹¹"Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution." Which explicitly recognises the right of individuals to seek asylum from persecution in other countries.

The roots of refugee law is rooted in human rights. Under Article 3 of UDHR, the humans have right to protect themselves which allows or legalize the concept of refugees, ¹⁰¹²It provided the **moral and philosophical groundwork** upon which the **1951 Refugee Convention** was later build. Article 21 of

¹⁰⁰⁸ United declaration of human rights by united nation general assembly adopted on December 10, 1948.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Preamble of united declaration of human rights adopted on December 10, 1948.

¹⁰¹⁰ Article 1 of UDHR adopted on December 10, 1948.

¹⁰¹¹ Article 4 of UDHR adopted on December 10, 1948.

¹⁰¹² Guy S Goodwin-Gill and Jane McAdam, *The Refugee in International Law* (3rd edn, Oxford University Press 2007)

Indian constitution ensures the 'Right of life and personal liberty' inspired by Article 3 of UDHR. The UDHR's legacy lies in this universality, **human rights are not confined by borders**, and the right to seek protection is as fundamental as the right to live with dignity.

The 1951 Convention, International Refugee Law

Human rights are assigned to humans within the birth itself so what new has been done by UDHR? Here is the answer, UDHR provides shield to human rights and assigning the accountability to the nations for the protection of their rights but what about the one who have been fleeing for the protection? The Refugees. In 1951 the convention took place for the refugees for the first time in Paris. The preamble of the convention ensures ¹⁰¹³"Considering that the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights approved on 10 December 1948 by the General Assembly have affirmed the principle that human beings shall enjoy fundamental rights and freedoms without discrimination." Explicitly ensuring the protection of human rights of refugees, convention defines refugees under Article 1(a) of convention someone who, due to events **before 1 January 1951**, has a **well-founded fear of persecution** based on race, religion, nationality, social group, or political opinion, and is **unable or unwilling to seek protection** from their home country. This definition also includes stateless individuals facing similar threats.

The core principle of convention was enshrined in Article 33 ¹⁰¹⁴"Prohibition of expulsion or return "Refoulement ". This means that no state shall expel or return a refugee to a country where their life or freedom would be threatened. This principle is now widely regarded as part of customary international law, binding even on states that are not parties to the Convention. The convention was not unbounded by the geographical and temporal restrictions

because it was originally applied to those only displaced by events occurring before 1 January 1951 and primarily in Europe, but the **Protocol of 1967** removed this restrictions. India was not a signatory member of the convention and do not even hold any specific rule for refugees still India performs the provisions of convention and plays vital role in matter of refugees through its diplomacy.

India's De Facto refugee Framework.

India is not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention or its 1967 Protocol. However, despite the absence of a dedicated refugee law, India has evolved a de facto refugee protection framework rooted in constitutional guarantees, judicial interpretations, and humanitarian policy.

¹⁰¹⁵Article 21 of Indian Constitution enshrines the Right to life and Personal Liberty to all persons. The rights under Article 21 of Indian Constitution assigned to all persons not only to her citizens which shows the execution of the core provisions of UDHR and 1951 convention.

Indian courts have played a pivotal role in shaping refugee jurisprudence. ¹⁰¹⁶In *NHRC v State of Arunachal Pradesh*, the Supreme Court restrained state officials from expelling Chakma refugees, emphasizing that even non-citizens are entitled to constitutional protections. ¹⁰¹⁷In *Ktaer Abbas Habib Al Qutaifi v Union of India*, the Gujarat High Court reinforced the principle of non-refoulement, holding that deporting a person to a country where they face persecution would violate Article 21. Institutions like the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) serves as a protecting body of human rights, issuing guidelines and taking Suo Moto cognizance of human rights violations involving displaced persons and refugees In the year of 1971 in Bangladesh Liberation War against west Pakistan, India faced massive eruption of refugees from Bangladesh, over 10 million people came to India which affected the Indian

¹⁰¹³ Preamble of Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees adopted 28 July 1951, entered into force 22 April, 1954, 189 UNTS 137.

¹⁰¹⁴ Article 33 of Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees adopted 28 July 1951, entered into force 22 April, 1954

¹⁰¹⁵ Article 21 of Indian Constitution adopted by the Constituent Assembly on November 26, 1949, and came into force on January 26, 1950

¹⁰¹⁶ *NHRC v State of Arunachal Pradesh* (1996) 1 SCC 742

¹⁰¹⁷ *Ktaer Abbas Habib Al Qutaifi v Union of India* (1999) AIR Guj 213.

economy.¹⁰¹⁸ Despite of such disturbance India provided asylum to the refugees on humanitarian and geopolitical grounds.¹⁰¹⁹ In 1980s Ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka between the Sinhala-majority government and Tamil minority, particularly during the civil war, led to waves of Tamil refugees fleeing to Tamil Nadu, India. India hosted over 100,000 Tamil refugees, many of whom were housed in state-run camps, while others lived outside the camps. India also played a political role via the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord (1987). Again in the refugee matter India's approach combined asylum with diplomatic engagement. Afghan Refugees (Post-1979 to Present) Soviet invasion of Afghanistan (1979), the Taliban regime (1996–2001), and the post-2001 conflict, India received Afghan refugees, particularly minorities like Hindus and Sikhs.¹⁰²⁰ These refugees came in smaller numbers but were given Long-Term Visas (LTVs), India facilitated their resettlement with the help of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), which operates in India even though India is not a Convention signatory. India has shown sympathy to Afghan minorities, especially after the Taliban's return to power in 2021, offering emergency e-visas to many.

India's appearance at international level in Refugee convention was blur but the appearance of India in refugee matter and their rights at domestic level holds clear picture through her constitutionalism, judicial activism and political diplomacy.

Interplay of International and Indian Legal and Political Framework through the lens of Human Rights.

After World War 2 globe has got many preventive and protecting bodies and the United Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) was

one of the result of World War 2. It ensures the human rights and assigns the responsibility to the nations to protect the rights but what about refugees? The infringement of human rights is the cause of refugee movements and to protect the rights of refugees, convention of 1951 took place. Isn't it foreign to you all that breach of human rights led to the formation of refugee rights which gives the same human rights, here we find the point that human rights and refugee convention interlinked to each other. Rights should be delivered. Doesn't matter through what way we are delivering it that's what the motive of human rights and refugee convention.

India is 'non-signatory' country of refugee convention but it delivers the mean, the gist of refugee convention through her constitutionalism under Article 21, through the judicial activism and through the diplomatic relations with other countries. India might not have the specification of rule in refugee sphere but it serves the mean of convention through her behaviour. The functions and features of human rights, refugee convention and Indian administer system are interlinked to each other and this reflects through their events and behaviour. The system of India and Refugee convention is rooted in Human Rights. As India don't have legally codify rule for refugees and the respond of the country relies upon the case which often leads to problem like in the case of Rohingya Refugees, who despite being stateless and persecuted, have been labelled as "illegal immigrants". India should develop the specific law pertaining to the refugees in the pursuit of the protection of refugees.

Conclusion

In the absence of a binding international commitment, India's approach to refugees remains rooted in constitutional morality and discretionary political will. While the judiciary has used Article 21 and international human rights norms to extend limited protection, the lack of a dedicated legal framework continues to create ambiguity and inconsistency. The

¹⁰¹⁸ Navine Murshid, India's Role in Bangladesh's War of Independence: Humanitarianism or Self-interest?, Vol. 46, No. 52, published on DECEMBER 24, 2011

¹⁰¹⁹ Valatheeswarran and Irrudaya Rajan, Sri Lankan Tamil Refugees in India: Rehabilitation Mechanisms, Livelihood Strategies, and Lasting Solutions, Volume 30, Issue 2, June 2011, Pages 24–44, published on April 09, 2011.

¹⁰²⁰ Monthly Migration Movements Afghan Displacement Summary Migration to India, published on October 2017

intersection of human rights law and refugee law underscores a clear moral imperative: that dignity, safety, and non-refoulement should not be selective privileges but guaranteed protections. In a world marked by rising displacement and fragile borders, India must

now transition from ad hoc humanitarianism to a more structured and rights-based legal approach. Enacting a domestic refugee law is not merely a legal necessity but a constitutional and ethical responsibility.



THE ADR WAVE IN INDIA WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON THE MEDIATION ACT, 2023 – GROWTH TOWARDS AN EFFICIENT LEGAL SYSTEM

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

S. No	Abbreviations	Full Form
1	ADR	Alternative Dispute Resolution
2	U.K	United Kingdom
3	U.S	United States
4	MAMA	Motor Accident Mediation Authorities
5	MCPC	Mediation and Conciliation Project Committee
6	NALSA	National Legal Services Authority
7	SIAC	Singapore International Arbitration Centre
8	LCIA	London Court of International Arbitration
9	ICA	Indian Council of Arbitration
10	MCI	Mediation Council of India
11	CPRL	Connaught Plaza Restaurants Ltd.
12	v.	Versus
13	SCC	Supreme Court Cases
14	SCR	Supreme Court Records
15	AIR	All India Reporter

LIST OF CASES

S. No.	Name of the Case	Citation
1	Afcons Infrastructure Ltd. vs. Cherian Varkey Construction	[2010] 8 S.C.R. 1053
2	B.S. Krishnamurthy v. B.S. Nagaraj	AIR 2011 SUPREME COURT 794
3	Bharat Aluminium Co. v. Kaiser Aluminium Technical Service	Inc. 2010 1 SCC 72
4	Bhatia International v. Bulk Trading S.A.	(2002) 4 SCC 105
5	Booz Allen & Hamilton v. SBI Home Finance	(2011) 5 SCC 532
6	Future Coupons Pvt. Ltd. & Ors. v. Amazon.com NV Investment Holdings	(2022) 1 SCC 209
7	Government of India v. Vedanta Limited	(2020) 10 SCC 1
8	Himangni Enterprises v. Kamaljeet Singh Ahluwalia	(2017) 10 SCC 706
9	Hindustan Construction Company Ltd. v. NHAI	(2024) 2 SCC 613
10	Indus Biotech (P) Ltd. v. Kotak India Venture Fund- I	[2020] SCC OnLine NCLT 1430
11	K. Srinivas Rao v. D.A. Deepa	AIR 2013 SUPREME COURT 2176
12	LLC & Anr.	2022/DHC/005024
13	M.R. Krishna Murthi V. New India Assurance Co. Ltd.	[2019] 3 S.C.R. 1088
14	M/S Emaar MGF Land Limited vs. Aftab Singh	[2018] 14 S.C.R. 791.
15	Mitsubishi Motors Corp. v. Soler Chrysler-Plymouth, Inc.	473 U.S. 614 (1985)
16	Oil & Natural Gas Corporation Ltd. Vs. Saw Pipes Ltd.	2003 (5) SCC 705
17	ONGC Ltd. v. Saw Pipes Ltd.	AIR 2003 SUPREME COURT 2629.
18	Renusagar Power Co. Ltd. Etc. Vs General Electric Co.	[1993] Supp. (3) S.C.R. 22.
19	Salem Advocate Bar Ass'n v. Union of India	[2005] SCC 344
20	Ssangyong Engineering & Construction Co. Ltd vs. National Highways Authority of India (NHAI)	(2019) 7 S.C.R. 522
21	State of Punjab v. Jalour Singh	(2008) 2 SCC 660
22	Union of India v. Singh Builders Syndicate	(2009) 4 SCC 523
23	Venture Global Engineering v. Satyam Computer Services Ltd.	(2008) 4 SCC 190

24	Vidya Drolia & ors. vs. Durga Trading Corporation	[2019] 3 S.C.R. 465
25	Vijay Karia v. Prysmian Cavi E Sistemi SRL	(2020) 11 SCC 1
26	Vikram Bakshi v. Connaught Plaza Restaurants Ltd.	[2017] 140 CLA 142

ABSTRACT

The Indian legal system has long been burdened with a backlog of cases, necessitating the adoption of alternative dispute resolution (ADR) mechanisms to facilitate quicker and more cost-effective justice delivery. Over the years, ADR has evolved significantly, with arbitration, conciliation, mediation, and Lok Adalats playing a crucial role in reducing litigation pressure. Among these mechanisms, mediation has emerged as a preferred mode of dispute resolution, leading to the enactment of the Mediation Act, 2023, a landmark legislation aimed at institutionalizing and strengthening mediation in India.

Enacted on 14th September 2023, the Mediation Act is expected to enhance India's position as an ADR-friendly jurisdiction globally by providing a robust legal framework for mediation. While mediation has traditionally been an informal dispute resolution mechanism since the inception of Gram Panchayats, where community mediators played a role in resolving conflicts, this legislation marks a significant step forward in the institutionalization of mediation. Unlike earlier legal provisions that merely included mediation as a subset of ADR, the Mediation Act, 2023, elevates it to an independent and parallel status alongside the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996, thus reinforcing its importance in the Indian legal landscape.

This dissertation provides a comprehensive analysis of the ADR wave in India, with a special emphasis on the Mediation Act, 2023. It traces the historical evolution of ADR, examines the legislative framework, and evaluates the effectiveness of mediation in reducing judicial pendency. The research also highlights key landmark judgments, including *Salem Advocate Bar Association v. Union of India* (2005)¹⁰²¹ and *Vidya Drolia v. Durga Trading Corporation* (2020)¹⁰²², that have shaped ADR jurisprudence in India.

A critical assessment of the Mediation Act, 2023, is undertaken, focusing on its salient features, such as mandatory pre-litigation mediation, online mediation, and community mediation. A unique feature of this act is the provision for urgent interim relief under special circumstances by a tribunal or court, ensuring that parties are not left without immediate recourse when required. Additionally, while mediated settlement agreements hold legal enforceability, they are open to challenge on grounds of fraud, coercion, impersonation, or non-compliance with Section 6 of the Act.

Furthermore, a comparative analysis of India's ADR framework with international models—such as Singapore's Mediation Act, 2017, and the United States' court-annexed mediation system—offers insights into best practices that could enhance India's mediation landscape. The dissertation concludes with policy recommendations, emphasizing the need for greater awareness, mediator training programs, technological integration (Online Dispute Resolution), and institutional reforms to establish mediation as a primary mode of dispute resolution.

¹⁰²¹ Salem Advocate Bar Assn. V. Union Of India, (2005) 6 SCC 344

¹⁰²² Vidya Drolia V. Durga Trading Corporation (2021) 2 SCC 1

By evaluating the potential of the Mediation Act, 2023, this research underscores the growing significance of ADR in achieving an efficient, accessible, and time-sensitive legal system in India. The findings aim to contribute to ongoing discussions on legal reforms and dispute resolution mechanisms, advocating for a robust mediation culture that aligns with global best practices.

CHAPTER 1: UNDERSTANDING THE ADR WAVE IN INDIA

1.1 Introduction

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) has been a cornerstone of conflict resolution across various civilizations, evolving from informal community-based practices to structured legal frameworks. This chapter delves into the historical context of ADR, tracing its roots from ancient India to classical Greece and Rome, and examines its resurgence and formalization in modern legal systems.

1.1.1 ADR in Ancient India

The juridical traditions of the Indian subcontinent rank among the most ancient globally, characterized predominantly by conciliatory approaches to conflict resolution rather than antagonistic methodologies. Early Indian societies conceptualized justice delivery primarily through frameworks anchored in dharmic principles and communal harmony, diverging significantly from retributive models. Governmental institutions frequently occupied subsidiary positions relative to community-oriented or professional association-based mechanisms, which emphasized reconciliatory practices, equitable outcomes, and deference to the accumulated wisdom of community elders.

During the Vedic chronological span (approximately 1500-500 BCE), conceptualizations of justice remained inextricably intertwined with dharma—understood as righteous obligation—as articulated within Shruti texts (the Vedic corpus) and Smriti compilations (codified legal precepts). Interpersonal or interfamilial disputes typically underwent resolution processes within familial or clan (kula) boundaries through interventions by senior members, who were culturally expected to maintain impartiality and demonstrate spiritual enlightenment. Contestations regarding property ownership, inheritance rights, and domestic affairs were initially addressed at the household echelon before potential escalation to broader community forums. The achievement of mutual agreement consistently superseded confrontational approaches, with various ritualistic practices or solemn declarations frequently employed as mechanisms for verifying testimonial veracity. Scholarly examinations suggest that during nascent phases of Indian civilizational development, family patriarchs functioned effectively as adjudicators in contentious matters, guided predominantly by dharmic interpretations rather than codified regulatory frameworks.

The emergence of Smriti literature—notably including Manusmriti, Yajnavalkya Smriti, and Narada Smriti—introduced greater codification to justice administration. Nevertheless, state-sponsored judicial forums (raja sabha) remained secondary options rather than primary recourse. Justice dispensation operated through a hierarchical arrangement of community-based institutions comprising three principal organizational structures: Puga (localized collectives representing diverse occupational and caste backgrounds, essentially functioning as neighbourhood administrative councils); Kula (extended familial networks); and Sreni (professional guilds and merchant associations). These institutions possessed quasi-judicial authority and maintained considerable autonomy in internal dispute resolution. Historical evidence indicates that ancient Indian governmental structures formally acknowledged these three varieties of community-based judicial forums, which administered justice through collective deliberative processes founded upon customary practices, moral principles, and community-derived consensus.

The Narada Smriti explicitly validated arbitration and mediation conducted by these institutions, establishing procedural guidelines for their operation. Provisions existed for appealing to royal courts when decisions were perceived as unjust or when institutional bias was evident. Dharmashastric texts actively promoted dispute settlement through Sadachara (established customary practices) and Nyaya (justice principles), frequently advocating for private arbitration processes before seeking redress through monarchical judicial systems.

Srenis¹⁰²³ achieved prominence during ancient and medieval Indian periods, especially throughout the Mauryan and Gupta dynasties. These guilds transcended purely economic functions, operating simultaneously as self-regulating judicial entities that resolved internal member disputes through arbitration processes while establishing their own behavioural regulatory frameworks. Historical analysis suggests that during the Mauryan period especially, Srenis exercised substantial judicial authority over their constituents, implementing decisions through community-sanctioned enforcement mechanisms.

Similarly, Pugas¹⁰²⁴ operated within urban environments as assemblies comprising professionals and residents from diverse caste backgrounds. These organizations played crucial roles in adjudicating localized disputes and enforcing regional customs through consensual decision-making processes that leveraged collective experiential wisdom.

Concurrent with these developments, Buddhist and Jain traditions established comprehensive internal mechanisms for addressing conflicts within both monastic and lay communities. The Buddhist Vinaya Pitaka delineates processes including Samukkasa (confessional practices), Patisaraniya Kamma (apology and forgiveness rituals), and Sangha-based determinations founded upon consensus principles. These traditions placed considerable emphasis on non-violent approaches, dialogic engagement, and penitential practices rather than punitive measures. Monastic regulatory systems codified within the Buddhist Vinaya Pitaka provide intricate procedural frameworks for dispute resolution centered on confession, apologetic reconciliation, and community-facilitated reintegration. These procedures not only addressed internal monastic conflicts but substantially influenced broader societal perspectives regarding non-adversarial conflict resolution approaches.

The Panchayat system, while achieving more formalized development during later Vedic and medieval periods, traces its conceptual origins to the Sabhas and Samitis of early Vedic political structures. These assemblies, comprising elders or community representatives, administered justice according to customary norms and socio-ethical principles. Their methodological approaches closely resembled contemporary conciliation, investigative inquiry, and mediation practices. Panchayat determinations typically received uncontested acceptance due to the substantial social legitimacy these institutions commanded. Scholarly consensus suggests that traditional village panchayats evolved organically as governance institutions that simultaneously fulfilled judicial, administrative, and social regulatory functions.

These historical dispute resolution frameworks established foundational precedents for modern Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) systems in India. Contemporary institutions including Lok Adalats, Gram Nyayalayas, and indigenous tribal councils continue manifesting the values of consensus-building, equitable consideration, and morally-informed justice that characterized ancient systems. The current legal apparatus, despite substantial structural modelling on British adversarial precedents, has increasingly recognized the significance of non-litigious resolution methodologies—

¹⁰²³ Rohan Madhok, "A Study on the Evolution and Development of Law of Arbitration in India," (2021) 3(2) *International Journal of Law Management and Humanities* 2027.

¹⁰²⁴ Ibid.

not as innovative introductions but rather as revivals of indigenous traditions. The philosophical underpinnings of conciliation and collective justice, deeply embedded within India's legal heritage, provide a substantive cultural foundation supporting contemporary ADR movements.

This historical continuum demonstrates remarkable consistency in valuing community-based, conciliatory approaches to dispute resolution throughout Indian legal evolution. Despite substantial modifications through colonial interactions and post-independence legal reforms, the underlying philosophical preference for harmonious conflict resolution over adversarial confrontation persists as a distinctive characteristic of Indian juridical thought. Contemporary legal reforms increasingly acknowledge this historical legacy, incorporating traditional wisdom into modern procedural frameworks while adapting ancient principles to address contemporary challenges. This syncretic approach, blending historical precedent with current necessities, potentially offers valuable insights for developing more accessible, culturally responsive, and efficient justice delivery systems not only within India but potentially across diverse global contexts facing similar challenges of judicial accessibility and effectiveness.

1.1.2 ADR in Ancient Greece and Rome

Alternative methodologies for conflict resolution transcended geographical boundaries in antiquity, manifesting prominently within Hellenic civilization alongside their documented presence in the Indian subcontinent. Ancient Greece developed sophisticated extra-judicial mechanisms for addressing disputes that arose between autonomous polities and among private citizens. The Hellenic approach to non-adversarial conflict management reflected the complex socio-political organization of city-states and their interactions within the broader Mediterranean sphere of influence.

Arbitration emerged as a particularly favored methodology within the Greek context, serving crucial functions in maintaining stability between politically independent but economically interdependent city-states. When conflicts escalated beyond direct diplomatic resolution, respected individuals possessing substantial moral authority or specialized expertise were frequently designated as arbitrators. These appointees undertook comprehensive evaluations of competing claims before rendering judgments that typically established binding obligations upon all parties involved in the contestation. Archaeological and epigraphic evidence provides substantial documentation regarding this practice, with particularly noteworthy inscriptional records dating to 363 BCE that chronicle an arbitral proceeding involving the Salaminioi clan. This well-preserved historical record demonstrates the formalization and institutional acceptance of arbitration as a preferred dispute resolution mechanism in Hellenic society well before the Hellenistic period.

The arbitral tradition in ancient Greece developed distinct procedural characteristics that differentiated it from conventional judicial processes. Arbitrators frequently operated with greater procedural flexibility than state-sanctioned courts, allowing for contextual adaptation of resolution methodologies based on the specific nature of disputes. Additionally, the selection of arbitrators often incorporated considerations of specialized knowledge relevant to particular conflicts, essentially creating proto-expert determination processes for technically complex contestations. This approach recognized that certain disputes benefited from adjudicators possessing domain-specific expertise rather than generalized judicial knowledge.

Greek arbitration also manifested in several institutional variations, including both public and private forms. Public arbitration involved state-appointed individuals addressing matters of significant communal importance, while private arbitration permitted disputing parties to select mutually acceptable third-party interveners for more personalized conflicts. This bifurcated approach

demonstrates sophisticated recognition of how different categories of disputes might benefit from varied procedural frameworks based on their societal implications and complexity.

The Italian peninsula similarly developed refined approaches to extra-judicial conflict resolution during the Republican and Imperial periods of Roman civilization. Roman jurisprudential thought incorporated conciliatory practices and meditative interventions as integral components within their comprehensive legal framework. Rather than viewing these approaches as alternatives external to the formal legal system, Roman juridical philosophy integrated them as complementary elements within a holistic approach to social harmony and dispute management.

The Roman legal tradition formally acknowledged arbitration as a recognized juridical process with specific procedural requirements and enforcement mechanisms. Arbitrators, designated through mutual agreement among contesting parties, received empowerment to render definitive judgments in civil contestations that carried substantial authority. This practice achieved codification within seminal legal compilations, notably Justinian's monumental Digest produced between 530-533 CE, which explicitly recognized mediation as a legitimate methodology for dispute resolution. The Digest's recognition represents the culmination of centuries of evolving practice rather than an innovation, demonstrating how deeply embedded these approaches had become within Roman legal consciousness.

Roman approaches to non-adversarial dispute resolution demonstrated notable sophistication in their procedural differentiation. The juridical system distinguished between various forms of third-party intervention based on the intervener's role and authority. These distinctions created nuanced categorizations of resolution processes that acknowledged how different types of conflicts might benefit from varied intervention methodologies. Additionally, Roman practice recognized that certain categories of disputes particularly benefited from conciliatory approaches, including those involving ongoing commercial relationships or familial connections where preserving future interactions carried significant importance.

The evolution of alternative dispute resolution mechanisms in classical Mediterranean civilizations occurred within distinctive socio-political contexts that influenced their development and implementation. The Greek city-state system, characterized by autonomous political entities maintaining complex networks of economic and cultural interdependence, necessitated effective mechanisms for addressing inevitable frictions without resorting to destabilizing military confrontations. Arbitration provided a methodology that respected the sovereignty of individual polities while establishing mutually acceptable resolution frameworks, effectively balancing autonomy with interdependence.

Similarly, the expanding territorial control of the Roman Republic and subsequent Empire generated unprecedented jurisdictional challenges requiring flexible approaches to dispute management across diverse cultural and legal traditions. Roman pragmatism recognized that imposing rigid judicial uniformity across their expansive territories presented substantial logistical and political challenges. Alternative resolution methodologies provided practical mechanisms for addressing conflicts while acknowledging regional variations in normative expectations and customary practices.

The historical significance of these classical Mediterranean approaches to conflict resolution extends beyond their immediate temporal and geographical contexts. These early frameworks established conceptual foundations that would subsequently influence medieval European jurisprudence and eventually modern international arbitration protocols. Contemporary international arbitration institutions, despite their substantially greater procedural formalization, maintain recognizable

connections to these classical antecedents in their fundamental operating principles and underlying philosophical justifications.

Comparative analysis between Hellenic, Roman, and ancient Indian approaches to non-adversarial dispute resolution reveals intriguing parallels despite their independent development. All three civilizations recognized the limitations of exclusively adversarial approaches, particularly for specific categories of disputes where ongoing relationships required preservation. Additionally, each tradition acknowledged how specialized knowledge could enhance resolution quality in technically complex contestations, essentially presaging modern expert determination processes. These convergent developments across geographically separated civilizations suggest that recognition of adversarial limitations represents a recurrent insight within sophisticated legal systems rather than a culturally specific innovation.

Contemporary alternative dispute resolution scholarship increasingly acknowledges these historical foundations not merely as antiquarian curiosities but as valuable repositories of accumulated wisdom regarding effective conflict management. While modern procedural frameworks necessarily reflect current societal complexities and altered expectations, the underlying recognition that different dispute categories benefit from varied resolution methodologies remains unchanged. This historical continuity demonstrates how fundamental insights regarding human conflict persist across substantial temporal and cultural distances, even as their specific manifestations evolve to address contextual requirements.

The development of these refined approaches to dispute resolution within classical Mediterranean civilizations provides compelling evidence that sophisticated legal systems consistently recognize the limitations of exclusively adversarial methodologies. This recognition appears to emerge organically when legal systems achieve sufficient procedural maturity to differentiate between various categories of disputes based on their distinct characteristics and implications. This historical pattern suggests that contemporary emphasis on alternative dispute resolution represents not a revolutionary departure from traditional legal thought but rather a recurrent insight that consistently emerges within advanced juridical traditions.

Table no. 1 – Historical Evolution of ADR in India and Beyond

Period	Region	ADR Form/Practice
1500–500 BCE	Ancient India	Kula, Sreni, Puga (Clan/Guild Dispute Resolution)
500 BCE–500 CE	Buddhist/Jain Monastic Orders	Confessional & Apology Rituals
300 BCE–600 CE	Mauryan/Gupta India	Guild-based Arbitration (Sreni)
500 BCE–300 CE	Ancient Greece	Private/Public Arbitration by Elders
100 BCE–500 CE	Ancient Rome	Arbitration (Digest of Justinian)

Source: Sharma, R. (2018). *Historical Roots of Dispute Resolution in India and the West*. Centre for Legal Traditions Research.

1.1.3 Decline and Resurgence of ADR in India

Despite its effectiveness, the prominence of mediation and other ADR methods declined during British rule in India, leading to an increase in unresolved conflicts. The formal legal system introduced by the British favored adversarial litigation over traditional dispute resolution mechanisms.

However, recognizing the need for efficient and amicable dispute resolution, ADR has experienced a resurgence in modern India. The Industrial Disputes Act of 1947 prescribed detailed procedures for settling disputes out of court. Subsequently, the Legal Services Authorities Act of 1987 provided for the establishment of Lok Adalats (people's courts), further promoting mediation.

A significant development occurred with the amendment of the Code of Civil Procedure in 1999, introducing Section 89, effective from July 1, 2002. This section empowers courts to refer cases for settlement through arbitration, conciliation, judicial settlement, or mediation when elements of a settlement are present.

1.1.4 Contemporary ADR Practices

Today, ADR in India encompasses various methods such as arbitration, conciliation, mediation, and negotiation, offering alternatives to conventional court litigation. These processes provide decision-making avenues that avoid the adversarial nature of courts, aiming for amicable settlements. The global legal community, including judges, lawyers, and disputing parties, increasingly favors ADR due to its efficiency and effectiveness in resolving civil disputes.

Arbitral institutions play a crucial role in delivering ADR services, facilitating quicker, more cost-effective, and consensual resolutions outside the overburdened court system. ADR promotes open communication between parties, enabling them to address the underlying issues of their disputes. It has proven effective in various matters, including consumer complaints, family disputes, construction disagreements, and business conflicts. Essentially, ADR is applicable to almost any civil dispute that could be presented in a court of law.

1.2 Statement of Problem

The Indian legal system faces a severe backlog of cases, delaying access to justice and overburdening courts. Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanisms, including arbitration, conciliation, and mediation, have emerged as effective tools to resolve disputes efficiently. Among these, mediation has gained prominence as a cost-effective, time-saving, and non-adversarial approach, allowing parties to reach mutually agreeable settlements outside traditional litigation. However, despite its growing acceptance, mediation in India lacked a comprehensive legal framework, leading to inconsistent practices and enforceability concerns.

Recognizing the need for structured reform, the Mediation Act, 2023, was enacted on 14th September 2023 to institutionalize mediation and promote India as an ADR-friendly jurisdiction. This legislation seeks to streamline mediation procedures, mandate pre-litigation mediation, and establish enforceable mediated settlements, thereby enhancing its credibility within the legal system. The Act also introduces online mediation and community mediation, making dispute resolution more accessible. Additionally, it provides for urgent interim relief in special cases and allows mediated settlements to be challenged under limited grounds such as fraud, coercion, impersonation, and procedural non-compliance.

While the Act is a progressive step toward ADR development, its implementation presents several challenges. Lack of awareness, resistance from legal professionals, gaps in mediator training, and infrastructural limitations hinder its widespread adoption. Moreover, ensuring the enforceability of mediated agreements remains a concern, as parties may attempt to circumvent settlements through legal loopholes. The role of courts in facilitating mediation, the reluctance of certain stakeholders, and the need for harmonization with existing laws such as the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996, further complicate its practical application.

This research seeks to critically analyze the growth of ADR in India, with a particular focus on mediation as a dispute resolution mechanism. By evaluating judicial interpretations, landmark cases, and global best practices, the study aims to assess the effectiveness of the Mediation Act, 2023 and its role in fostering a more efficient, accessible, and just legal system. Furthermore, it explores the challenges in implementation and enforcement while proposing policy recommendations to strengthen mediation in India. Through this analysis, the research contributes to the evolving discourse on legal reforms, dispute resolution mechanisms, and the future of ADR in India.

1.3 Object and Utility

The backlog of cases in Indian courts underscores the need for Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanisms to enhance judicial efficiency. Mediation has long been a part of India's dispute resolution culture, dating back to Gram Panchayats, but lacked formal recognition. The Mediation Act, 2023, enacted on September 14, 2023, institutionalizes mediation as an independent dispute resolution method, placing it on par with arbitration. This study critically examines the evolution, implementation, and future impact of ADR in India, with special emphasis on the Mediation Act, 2023, while incorporating global best practices.

The research evaluates the Act's key provisions, including pre-litigation mediation, online mediation, and community mediation, along with its effectiveness in reducing judicial pendency. It also analyzes judicial trends and landmark judgments that have shaped mediation in India and compares India's mediation framework with global models, such as those in Singapore, the U.K., and the U.S. The study further identifies challenges in implementation and recommends policy reforms to strengthen mediation as a preferred dispute resolution mechanism.

Objectives of the Study

1. To Examine the Legal Framework Governing ADR and Mediation in India: Analyzing the evolution of ADR, existing legal provisions, and the Mediation Act, 2023, in relation to other laws such as the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996.
2. To Assess the Effectiveness of the Mediation Act, 2023: Evaluating the Act's impact on dispute resolution, focusing on pre-litigation mediation, enforceability of settlements, and the role of community and online mediation.
3. To Identify Challenges in Implementing Mediation in India: Exploring barriers such as lack of awareness, institutional limitations, and judicial intervention that hinder the adoption of mediation.
4. To Analyze Judicial Trends and Landmark Judgments: Examining key Supreme Court and High Court rulings that have influenced the legal standing and effectiveness of mediation.
5. To Conduct a Comparative Study of Mediation Laws in Other Jurisdictions: Comparing India's mediation framework with international best practices to identify potential improvements.

6. To Evaluate the Need for Legal and Policy Reforms: Highlighting shortcomings in the mediation framework and proposing reforms for greater accessibility, efficiency, and institutional support.
7. To Provide Recommendations for Strengthening ADR in India: Suggesting strategies for effective implementation, including regulatory enhancements, technological integration, and judicial oversight.

This research contributes to the evolving discourse on ADR by assessing the Mediation Act, 2023, identifying key strengths and limitations, and proposing reforms to establish India as a global leader in mediation.

1.4 Research Questions

To explore the topic comprehensively, the following research questions will guide the analysis:

1. How has the enactment of the Mediation Act, 2023, influenced the adoption and effectiveness of mediation as a primary dispute resolution mechanism in India?
2. What are the key challenges in implementing the Mediation Act, 2023, and how do they impact the accessibility, enforceability, and efficiency of mediation in India?
3. How does India's mediation framework compare with global best practices, and what legal or policy reforms can enhance its effectiveness?

1.5 Hypothesis

The Mediation Act, 2023, significantly strengthens India's ADR framework by institutionalizing mediation, improving accessibility, and reducing judicial pendency. However, its effectiveness depends on proper implementation, awareness, and infrastructure, which require further policy reforms and judicial support.

1.6 Review of Literature

1.6.1 Articles

Parinaz Fanibanda and Palak V. Mehta's article, "A Critical Study of Arbitration Laws through Years: 1940–2019," offers a comprehensive analysis of the evolution of arbitration laws in India over nearly eight decades. The authors trace the development from the Arbitration Act of 1940 to the Arbitration and Conciliation Act of 1996, highlighting key legislative amendments and judicial interventions that have shaped the arbitration landscape. They emphasize the shift towards a pro-arbitration stance, aligning with international standards and practices. The study also examines the role of Indian courts in facilitating arbitration, noting significant rulings that have reinforced the autonomy of arbitral tribunals and minimized judicial interference.

Anurag K. Agarwal's article, "Arbitration and Conciliation (Amendment) Act, 2015: Arbitrators and Conflict of Interest," critically examines the 2015 amendments to India's Arbitration and Conciliation Act, focusing on the enhanced disclosure requirements for arbitrators. Agarwal highlights the introduction of the Fifth and Seventh Schedules, which outline specific grounds for ineligibility and necessitate written disclosures regarding potential conflicts of interest. This aligns with international standards, such as the IBA Guidelines on Conflicts of Interest in International Arbitration, aiming to bolster the impartiality and transparency of arbitral proceedings in India.

In her 2019 article, "Quality Assurance in Alternative Dispute Resolution," published in the Indian Journal of Arbitration Law, Mehra examines the evolving landscape of ADR in India, emphasizing the need for quality assurance mechanisms to enhance the credibility and effectiveness of ADR processes. She discusses the challenges faced by ADR systems, including inconsistencies in mediator qualifications, lack of standardized procedures, and limited public awareness. Mehra advocates for the

establishment of regulatory frameworks, training programs, and accreditation bodies to ensure high standards and build trust in ADR mechanisms.

Frank E.A. Sander's 1985 article, "Alternative Methods of Dispute Resolution: An Overview," offers a foundational analysis of the U.S. ADR landscape. Sander examines mechanisms like mediation, arbitration, and negotiation, advocating for a flexible, case-specific approach to dispute resolution. He introduces the "multi-door courthouse" concept, proposing that courts direct cases to the most suitable resolution method based on their characteristics. This paradigm shift emphasizes efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and tailored justice, significantly influencing the integration of ADR into the American legal system. Sander's insights continue to guide ADR practices, underscoring the importance of matching disputes with appropriate resolution processes.

Noone and Ojelabi in their article, "Alternative dispute resolution and access to justice in Australia" (2020) examine the expansion of alternative dispute resolution (ADR) in Australia over the past four decades, focusing on its impact on access to justice. They assess whether ADR processes equitably serve all community members, particularly the disadvantaged, and the nature of justice these processes deliver. The authors emphasize the importance of aligning ADR mechanisms with legislative objectives and tailoring them to the specific context of disputes. They advocate for ongoing, rigorous evaluations to ensure ADR initiatives genuinely enhance access to justice, highlighting the need for thoughtful design and implementation that considers dispute types, involved parties, and available resources.

1.6.2 Judgments

In the landmark case of *Vidya Drolia v. Durga Trading Corporation*¹⁰²⁵, the Supreme Court of India addressed the arbitrability of disputes under the Transfer of Property Act, 1882. The Court concluded that landlord-tenant disputes governed by this Act are arbitrable, reasoning that such disputes pertain to personal rights between the parties and do not affect third-party rights or public interests. The judgment also emphasized minimal judicial intervention at the referral stage, stating that courts should primarily assess the existence of a valid arbitration agreement and leave most other issues, including questions of arbitrability, to the arbitral tribunal.

The *Salem Advocate Bar Association v. Union of India*¹⁰²⁶ case is a landmark judgment that addressed the constitutional validity of amendments made to the Code of Civil Procedure (CPC) by the Amendment Acts of 1999 and 2002. The Supreme Court upheld these amendments, emphasizing the need for effective implementation, particularly concerning Section 89, which promotes Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanisms. In its judgment, the Court recognized potential practical challenges in implementing the amendments and constituted a committee led by Justice M. Jagannadha Rao to formulate model rules and case management strategies. This initiative aimed to ensure that the amendments would lead to a more efficient dispensation of justice.

In the 2019 case *M.R. Krishna Murthi v. New India Assurance Co. Ltd.*¹⁰²⁷, the Supreme Court highlighted the need to consider a victim's future potential when determining compensation. The Court also recommended establishing Motor Accident Mediation Authorities (MAMA) to expedite claim resolutions. However, there's a lack of empirical studies evaluating the effectiveness of mediation in motor accident claims following this judgment. Long-term studies tracking outcomes of cases settled through proposed mediation channels are also missing. Additionally, comparative analyses between

¹⁰²⁵ *Vidya Drolia V. Durga Trading Corporation* (2021) 2 SCC 1

¹⁰²⁶ *Salem Advocate Bar Assn. V. Union Of India*, (2005) 6 SCC 344

¹⁰²⁷ *M.R. Krishna Murthi V. New India Assurance Co. Ltd.*, [2019] 3 S.C.R. 1088

jurisdictions that have implemented mediation in motor accident claims and those that haven't could offer valuable insights but are currently limited.

1.6.3 Key Gaps in Literature

- Empirical Analysis: While the literature extensively covers the theoretical aspects and judicial reasoning of the case, there's a noticeable lack of empirical studies assessing the real-world impact of these amendments on the efficiency of civil litigation in India.
- Comparative Studies: There's limited research comparing India's approach to ADR and case management post this judgment with other jurisdictions that have implemented similar reforms.
- Longitudinal Studies: The literature lacks longitudinal studies tracking the effectiveness of these reforms over time, which could provide insights into their sustainability and areas needing further improvement.

1.7 Research Methodology

This dissertation adopts a doctrinal research methodology to critically examine the evolution, legal framework, and judicial interpretation of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) in India, with a special focus on the Mediation Act, 2023. The study systematically analyzes relevant legislative provisions, judicial precedents, regulatory mechanisms, and implementation challenges related to ADR and mediation in India. This approach enables a structured evaluation of the historical development, theoretical underpinnings, and practical implications of mediation as a dispute resolution mechanism.

A comprehensive review of statutory provisions governing ADR in India will be conducted, with a focus on laws such as the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996, the Code of Civil Procedure (Section 89), the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987 (Lok Adalats), and the Mediation Act, 2023. The study will assess the effectiveness of these legal frameworks in promoting timely, cost-effective, and accessible dispute resolution mechanisms. Mediation, which was traditionally an informal method of conflict resolution, has now been given statutory recognition through the Mediation Act, 2023. The research will examine how this law places mediation on equal footing with arbitration and conciliation, thereby strengthening India's reputation as an ADR-friendly jurisdiction.

Furthermore, an in-depth analysis of landmark judicial pronouncements that have shaped mediation jurisprudence in India will be undertaken. Cases such as *Salem Advocate Bar Association v. Union of India* (2005)¹⁰²⁸ and *Afcons Infrastructure Ltd. v. Cherian Varkey Construction Co.* (2010) have played a significant role in defining the scope and applicability of mediation. Other judgments, including *K. Srinivas Rao v. D.A. Deepa* (2013) and *M.R. Krishna Murthi v. New India Assurance Co. Ltd.* (2019)¹⁰²⁹, have emphasized the importance of mediation in specific legal disputes such as matrimonial conflicts and consumer protection matters. The research will evaluate how these judicial interpretations have paved the way for a structured mediation framework in India.

A comparative legal analysis will be conducted to assess how different jurisdictions have developed their ADR and mediation frameworks. Countries such as Singapore, the United States, and the United Kingdom have successfully implemented efficient court-annexed and institutional mediation systems. By studying best practices from these international models, the research aims to evaluate how India's legal system can further enhance mediation adoption, mediator training, and enforceability of mediated settlements. Understanding how global best practices have led to

¹⁰²⁸ Salem Advocate Bar Assn. V. Union Of India, (2005) 6 Scc 344

¹⁰²⁹ M.R. Krishna Murthi V. New India Assurance Co. Ltd., [2019] 3 S.C.R. 1088

successful mediation cultures will provide insights into how India can strengthen its institutional mediation infrastructure.

The dissertation will also incorporate an analysis of policy reports from government bodies, legal commissions, and regulatory agencies, including reports from the Law Commission of India, the Supreme Court Mediation and Conciliation Project Committee (MCPC), the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA), and the NITI Aayog on ADR and legal reforms. These sources will provide statistical data, policy recommendations, and insights into the ongoing efforts to improve dispute resolution mechanisms in India.

The research primarily relies on secondary sources, including legislative texts, academic commentaries, judicial pronouncements, policy papers, and international legal frameworks. A comparative and critical approach will be used to evaluate the efficacy of existing mediation laws, identify implementation challenges, and propose policy reforms aimed at strengthening ADR in India. By adopting a doctrinal research approach, this study seeks to provide a comprehensive legal analysis of the Mediation Act, 2023, its impact on dispute resolution efficiency, and its potential to transform India's legal system into an ADR-centric model. The findings will contribute to ongoing discussions on legal reforms, judicial efficiency, and the future of mediation in India.

1.8 Chapterisation

Chapter 1: Introduction

This introductory chapter sets the foundation for analyzing Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) in India, with a focus on the Mediation Act, 2023. It traces the evolution of mediation from traditional Gram Panchayats to modern legal frameworks, highlighting its role in reducing judicial backlog and promoting access to justice.

The chapter defines mediation within ADR, explores its legal recognition, and examines the constitutional and policy justifications for its adoption. It introduces key research questions, including the Act's impact on institutionalizing mediation and its alignment with global best practices. The hypothesis suggests that the Act marks a significant shift in India's legal landscape by establishing mediation as a parallel dispute resolution mechanism.

Chapter 2: Legal Framework Governing ADR in India

This chapter examines the legal framework governing ADR in India, outlining key statutes that shape its implementation. It explores the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996, the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908 (Section 89), the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987, and the Consumer Protection Act, 2019, highlighting their role in institutionalizing arbitration, mediation, and conciliation.

The chapter also assesses the judiciary's role in ADR promotion, focusing on landmark rulings and tribunal-led initiatives. Additionally, it examines international conventions such as the UNCITRAL Model Law, New York Convention, analyzing their influence on India's ADR landscape.

Chapter 3: The Mediation Act, 2023 – A Paradigm Shift

This chapter examines the Mediation Act, 2023, a landmark legislation aimed at institutionalizing mediation in India. It explores the Act's enactment, objectives, and key provisions, including mandatory pre-litigation mediation, online and community mediation, enforcement of settlement agreements, and confidentiality safeguards. The Act also introduces urgent interim relief provisions and specifies grounds for challenging mediated settlements, ensuring procedural fairness.

A comparative analysis with the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996, highlights how the new law elevates mediation as an independent ADR mechanism rather than a mere subset of conciliation. The

chapter further assesses the Act's impact using secondary sources, including reports from the Supreme Court Mediation and Conciliation Project Committee (MCPC) and the Law Commission of India, evaluating its potential to strengthen India's ADR framework.

Chapter 4: Landmark Judgments Shaping Mediation Jurisprudence in India

This chapter examines key judicial pronouncements that have defined mediation's legal standing and shaped its evolution in India. Landmark cases such as *Salem Advocate Bar Association v. Union of India* (2005) upheld ADR's validity under Section 89 CPC, while *Afcons Infrastructure Ltd. v. Cherian Varkey Construction Co.* (2010) classified disputes suitable for mediation. In *K. Srinivas Rao v. D.A. Deepa* (2013), the Supreme Court emphasized mediation in family disputes, and *M.R. Krishna Murthi v. New India Assurance Co. Ltd.* (2019)¹⁰³⁰ recommended a comprehensive mediation law, culminating in the Mediation Act, 2023. *Vidya Drolia v. Durga Trading Corporation* (2020)¹⁰³¹ further strengthened ADR's role in contractual matters.

The chapter also analyzes judicial trends in enforcing mediated agreements, assessing their legal validity and enforceability. Additionally, it evaluates the effectiveness of court-annexed mediation programs in reducing judicial pendency, reinforcing mediation as a mainstream dispute resolution mechanism in India.

Chapter 5: Comparative Study of Mediation Laws – India and Global Perspectives

This chapter provides a comparative analysis of mediation laws across key jurisdictions, evaluating global best practices and their relevance to India's Mediation Act, 2023. It examines Singapore's institutionalized mediation model, the United States' court-annexed mediation system, the UK's approach to commercial disputes, and the European Union's mediation framework.

By assessing international legal frameworks, enforcement mechanisms, and policy approaches, the chapter identifies best practices that India can adopt to strengthen its mediation landscape. A comparative evaluation of the Mediation Act, 2023, against global standards highlights its strengths and areas for improvement.

Chapter 6: Recommendations and Conclusions

This concluding chapter summarizes the evolution and effectiveness of mediation in India, assessing its role in enhancing access to justice and reducing litigation burden. It evaluates the Mediation Act, 2023, analyzing its judicial interpretations and practical implementation while comparing it with global mediation frameworks.

The chapter proposes key reforms to strengthen mediation, including judicial and legislative support, enhanced legal education, increased public awareness, and structured mediator training programs. It also highlights the role of public-private partnerships in institutionalizing mediation.

Finally, the chapter emphasises on mediation's potential to transform India's legal system into an ADR-centric model, positioning it as a globally competitive, efficient, and accessible dispute resolution mechanism.

¹⁰³⁰ M.R. Krishna Murthi V. New India Assurance Co. Ltd., [2019] 3 S.C.R. 1088

¹⁰³¹ Vidya Drolia V. Durga Trading Corporation (2021) 2 Scc 1

CHAPTER 2: LEGAL FRAMEWORK GOVERNING ADR IN INDIA

2.1 Introduction

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) refers to a set of mechanisms designed to resolve disputes outside the traditional court system, encompassing arbitration, mediation, negotiation, and conciliation. These methods provide structured yet flexible means for resolving conflicts while reducing the burden on conventional litigation. The primary objective of ADR is to offer an efficient, cost-effective, and less adversarial alternative to court proceedings, ensuring timely dispute resolution and fostering a more cooperative legal environment.

In India, the need for ADR has grown significantly due to the staggering backlog of cases and the inefficiencies of the traditional judicial system. Recognizing this, the enactment of the *Mediation Act, 2023* marks a transformative step in institutionalizing and streamlining mediation as a preferred dispute resolution mechanism. This legislation aims to enhance access to justice by promoting voluntary, time-bound, and structured mediation, encouraging disputing parties to reach amicable settlements.

Relevance and Evolution of ADR in India

The increasing prominence of ADR in India is closely tied to the challenges faced by the conventional judicial system, which is overburdened with caseloads, leading to prolonged delays and high litigation costs. With India's growing economy and global integration, the demand for a swift and efficient dispute resolution framework has intensified, particularly in commercial and civil disputes.

The *Mediation Act, 2023* is a significant step towards embedding mediation within India's legal framework, ensuring its wider acceptance and effective implementation. By institutionalizing pre-litigation mediation, establishing a Mediation Council, and recognizing online mediation, the Act reflects a progressive shift towards a more responsive and business-friendly legal ecosystem.

Unlike litigation, which is often adversarial, ADR—especially mediation—prioritizes amicable settlements, encourages dialogue, and preserves relationships. As India continues to modernize its legal landscape, the ADR wave, bolstered by the *Mediation Act, 2023*, represents a crucial movement toward a more efficient, accessible, and harmonious legal system.

2.2 Key Statutes Governing ADR in India

2.2.1 Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996

The Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996 was enacted to modernize India's arbitration framework and align it with international best practices. Based on the UNCITRAL Model Law, the Act aimed to provide a structured, efficient, and expeditious mechanism for dispute resolution while minimizing judicial intervention. Over the years, arbitration has gained prominence as an effective alternative to traditional litigation, particularly in commercial disputes, where time and efficiency are paramount. The Act's objectives include fostering party autonomy, ensuring procedural flexibility, and promoting institutional arbitration. It also incorporates conciliation as a viable alternative, reinforcing the broader goal of reducing the burden on Indian courts.¹⁰³²

A critical distinction within the Indian arbitration regime lies in the dichotomy between institutional and ad hoc arbitration. Institutional arbitration, conducted under the supervision of recognized arbitral institutions such as the Singapore International Arbitration Centre (SIAC), the London Court of International Arbitration (LCIA), and the Indian Council of Arbitration (ICA), ensures structured

¹⁰³² Law of Arbitration in India & Alternative Dispute Resolution, available at: <https://www.lexology.com/library/detail.aspx?g=c74be5b9-f8c1-4d5a-ae87-936d0ca6de8b> (last visited February 19, 2025).

procedures and efficient case management. It significantly reduces delays and enhances credibility. In contrast, ad hoc arbitration, while offering greater flexibility, often suffers from inefficiencies due to procedural inconsistencies and the absence of administrative oversight.¹⁰³³ Consequently, despite India's legislative efforts, ad hoc arbitration remains prevalent, leading to prolonged disputes and, at times, excessive judicial interference. The promotion of institutional arbitration is crucial to ensuring that arbitration in India aligns with global best practices.¹⁰³⁴

The Act also establishes a dual framework for domestic and international arbitration. Domestic arbitration, wherein both disputing parties are Indian entities, is primarily governed by Part I of the Act. In contrast, international commercial arbitration—where at least one party is foreign—operates within a broader legal framework that includes provisions for the enforcement of foreign awards. The Act adheres to the New York Convention and the Geneva Convention, ensuring that international arbitral awards are recognized and enforced in India. However, the extent of judicial intervention in foreign-seated arbitrations has historically been a contentious issue. The Supreme Court, in *Bharat Aluminium Co. v. Kaiser Aluminium Technical Services Inc.*¹⁰³⁵, significantly curtailed judicial interference by holding that Part I of the Act does not apply to foreign-seated arbitrations. This landmark ruling overturned the earlier precedent set in *Bhatia International v. Bulk Trading (2002)*¹⁰³⁶, which had allowed Indian courts to intervene in foreign arbitral proceedings. The *BALCO* judgment marked a decisive step towards making India an arbitration-friendly jurisdiction by reinforcing the principle of minimal court interference.

A major point of contention in arbitration jurisprudence has been the interpretation of public policy as a ground for setting aside arbitral awards. The Indian judiciary has grappled with defining the contours of public policy, particularly in relation to international commercial arbitration. In *Ssangyong Engineering & Construction Co. Ltd. v. NHAI (2019)*¹⁰³⁷, the Supreme Court provided much-needed clarity, ruling that an arbitral award cannot be set aside merely due to misinterpretation of a contract or an error in legal reasoning. This judgment significantly narrowed the scope of Section 34, ensuring that arbitral awards are not overturned on broad or subjective grounds. By restricting the public policy exception to fundamental legal principles, *Ssangyong* strengthened the finality of arbitral awards and reaffirmed India's pro-arbitration stance.

Another critical aspect of arbitration law is the arbitrability of disputes, which determines whether a matter can be resolved through arbitration or requires judicial adjudication. The Supreme Court in *Vidya Drolia v. Durga Trading Corporation*¹⁰³⁸ laid down a four-fold test to assess arbitrability, emphasizing that disputes involving public rights, sovereign functions, or inalienable legal obligations cannot be referred to arbitration. This judgment reaffirmed that arbitration is preferred for private commercial disputes while clarifying that certain matters, such as landlord-tenant disputes under specific tenancy laws, may still be non-arbitrable.¹⁰³⁹ By providing a structured approach to determining arbitrability, the judgment reinforced the growing judicial support for arbitration in India.

Beyond arbitration, the Act also recognizes conciliation as an alternative dispute resolution mechanism under Part III. Conciliation differs from arbitration in that it is a non-binding, voluntary process where a neutral third party facilitates negotiations between disputing parties. If a settlement

¹⁰³³ Mehra P., "Quality Assurance in Alternative Dispute Resolution" *Indian Journal of Arbitration Law*, [2019].

¹⁰³⁴ Parinaz Fanibanda and Palak V. Mehta, "A Critical Study of Arbitration Laws through Years: 1940-2019," 22 *Supremo Amicus*, available at www.supremoamicus.org (last visited March 6, 2025).

¹⁰³⁵ *Bharat Aluminium Co. v. Kaiser Aluminium Technical Service, Inc.* 2010 1 SCC 72

¹⁰³⁶ *Bhatia International v. Bulk Trading S.A.* (2002) 4 SCC 105

¹⁰³⁷ *Ssangyong Engineering & Construction Co. Ltd vs. National Highways Authority of India (NHAI)*, (2019) 7 S.C.R. 522

¹⁰³⁸ *Vidya Drolia & ors. vs. Durga Trading Corporation*, [2019] 3 S.C.R. 465

¹⁰³⁹ *Vidya Drolia Case: Final Chapter in the Arbitrability of Fraud Saga?*, available at: <https://indiacorplaw.in/2021/01/vidya-drolia-case-final-chapter-in-the-arbitrability-of-fraud-saga.html> (last visited February 20, 2025).

is reached, it is recorded in a written agreement, which is legally binding and enforceable as an arbitral award. Conciliation is particularly useful in commercial disputes, where preserving business relationships is essential. Despite its potential, conciliation remains underutilized in India due to a lack of awareness and institutional support. Strengthening conciliation mechanisms could significantly contribute to reducing litigation and promoting amicable settlements.

The evolution of arbitration law in India has been shaped by judicial precedents, legislative amendments, and international developments. The overarching trend reflects a shift towards greater judicial restraint, pro-enforcement policies, and institutional arbitration. However, challenges remain, particularly in curbing judicial interference in domestic arbitrations and promoting consistency in arbitral proceedings. Future reforms should focus on streamlining enforcement mechanisms, encouraging institutional arbitration, and integrating technology-driven dispute resolution processes. As India aspires to become a global arbitration hub, ensuring the effective implementation of the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996¹⁰⁴⁰ will be pivotal in enhancing investor confidence and fostering a robust alternative dispute resolution ecosystem.¹⁰⁴¹

2.2.2 Arbitration and Conciliation Amendment Act, 2015

The Arbitration and Conciliation Amendment Act of 2015 represents a significant overhaul of India's alternative dispute resolution framework. This legislation emerged as a response to numerous operational deficiencies identified in the original 1996 Act, which had been formulated based on the UNCITRAL model law on International Commercial Arbitration and the UNCITRAL Conciliation Rules of 1980. The amendments sought to address fundamental shortcomings that had become apparent through practical implementation over nearly two decades.¹⁰⁴²

A primary concern identified by the Law Commission was the underdevelopment of institutional arbitration within India. Despite the global trend toward institutionalized dispute resolution mechanisms, India's arbitration landscape remained predominantly ad hoc in nature. The original legislation neither encouraged nor discouraged institutional frameworks, maintaining what could be characterized as an institutionally agnostic approach.¹⁰⁴³ Recognizing this limitation, the Commission proposed modifications designed to cultivate a robust institutional arbitration ecosystem within the country, thereby enhancing both domestic dispute resolution capabilities and international competitiveness.

The Commission's recommendations included an explanatory addition to section 11(6A), directing both the Supreme Court and High Courts to actively encourage disputants to pursue institutional arbitration when approached for intervention.¹⁰⁴⁴ Furthermore, the amendments sought to expand the definition of "arbitral tribunal" under section 2(d) to encompass emergency arbitrators, thus aligning Indian practice with evolving international standards.

Institutional development formed a cornerstone of the reform agenda. The Commission endorsed the establishment of an Indian Council of Arbitration to coordinate with existing arbitration institutions nationwide. It specifically acknowledged the exemplary operations of the Nani Palkhivala Arbitration Centre in Chennai, which had successfully developed comprehensive rules, governance structures, and professional staffing in southern India. Additionally, the Commission encouraged commercial chambers and industry associations to develop specialized arbitration rules and

¹⁰⁴⁰The Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996

¹⁰⁴¹ Parinaz Fanibanda and Palak V. Mehta, "A Critical Study of Arbitration Laws through Years: 1940-2019," 22 *Supremo Amicus*, available at www.supremoamicus.org (last visited March 6, 2025)

¹⁰⁴² Tiwari, Vartika, and Pragma Dubey, "The Debate around Applicability: An Analysis of the Arbitration and Conciliation (Amendment) Act, 2015," 1 *Ind. Arb. L. Rev.* (2019).

¹⁰⁴³ Vidya Rajarao & Darshan Patel, "Corporate Attitudes & Practices towards Arbitration in India," PricewaterhouseCoopers Report (2013).

¹⁰⁴⁴ Srishti Yadav, "Settlement Agreements in ADR Mechanisms in India: A Critical Analysis," 4 *Indian J.L. & Legal Rsch.*, (2022).

potentially create new arbitration centres, suggesting that governmental support through land grants or financial assistance could accelerate this process.

The proposed Arbitration Council of India would serve as a specialized body dedicated to promoting institutional arbitration throughout the country. This recommendation reflected the Commission's understanding that sustainable growth in arbitration practice required coordinated institutional leadership rather than isolated regulatory changes.

Cost considerations received substantial attention in the Commission's analysis. Citing the Supreme Court's observations in *Union of India v. Singh Builders Syndicate*¹⁰⁴⁵, the Commission highlighted how disproportionate arbitrator fees had undermined the fundamental value proposition of arbitration as an efficient dispute resolution mechanism. The Court had specifically noted instances where arbitration costs approached or exceeded the disputed amounts, particularly when panels comprised retired judges who charged substantial sitting fees without appropriate limits.¹⁰⁴⁶

To address this financial barrier, the Commission proposed implementing a standardized fee structure for domestic arbitrations based on the schedule established by the Delhi High Court International Arbitration Centre. This framework would require periodic review every three to four years to maintain economic relevance. Importantly, the Commission recognized that international commercial arbitrations involving foreign parties might necessitate different fee structures, thus limiting the standardization requirement to domestic proceedings.

Procedural inefficiencies also received scrutiny. The Commission observed that despite Chapter 5 of the Act granting substantial powers to arbitral tribunals, many proceedings had evolved to mirror conventional court procedures, characterized by numerous hearings charged on a per-sitting basis. This practice increased costs and diminished the efficiency advantages that arbitration theoretically offered. Consequently, amendments to section 24(1) were proposed to ensure continuous proceedings during evidence recording and arguments.

The Commission sought to establish an appropriate balance between necessary judicial oversight and unwarranted intervention in arbitral proceedings. Recognizing the overburdened judicial system, particularly regarding commercial disputes, the Commission recommended adopting the Delhi High Court model of establishing dedicated arbitration benches to expedite resolution. For parties initiating frivolous challenges, the Commission suggested implementing actual cost penalties similar to those employed in the United Kingdom, through the insertion of Section 6A.

Procedural streamlining extended to arbitrator appointments as well. The Commission proposed delegating appointment authority to the High Courts and Supreme Court, which could further designate arbitration institutions to fulfill this function, while explicitly classifying such appointments as judicial acts. Section 11(7) amendments would make these appointment decisions final, while section 11(13) would establish a 60-day timeframe for resolving appointment matters following notice service.

Additional temporal efficiency measures included modifications to sections 34¹⁰⁴⁷ and 48, requiring applications to be decided within one year of notice service. The Commission also clarified through a new explanation under section 23 that arbitrators could decide counterclaims and set-offs without requiring separate references, provided these claims fell within the arbitration agreement's scope.

¹⁰⁴⁵ *Union of India v. Singh Builders Syndicate*, (2009) 4 SCC 523.

¹⁰⁴⁶ Dr. Pankaj Kumar Gupta & Sunil Mittal, *Commercial Arbitration in India*, 2 International Conference on Economics, Business and Management IPEDR (2010).

¹⁰⁴⁷ The Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996, Sec 34

Transparency requirements were enhanced through mandatory disclosure provisions compelling arbitrators to confirm their availability to complete proceedings within specified timeframes. Amendments to sections 8 and 11 would limit judicial intervention to determining the existence, non-existence, or invalidity of arbitration agreements. Appeals under section 37¹⁰⁴⁸ would be permitted only when parties were refused arbitration referral or arbitrator appointment.

The amendments created a distinction between domestic and international arbitration standards for award challenges. Section 34(2)A would allow domestic awards to be set aside for patent illegality appearing on the record, though a proviso clarified that misapplication of law or improper evidence appreciation would not constitute sufficient grounds. Finally, the Commission recommended narrowing the interpretation of "public policy" to encompass only the fundamental policy of Indian law or conflicts with morality or justice.¹⁰⁴⁹

Through these comprehensive reforms, the Arbitration and Conciliation Amendment Act of 2015 attempted to transform India's arbitration framework into a more efficient, accessible, and internationally competitive dispute resolution system.

2.2.3 The Arbitration and Conciliation Amendment Act, 2019

The Arbitration and Conciliation Amendment Act of 2019, which received presidential assent on August 9, 2019, introduced significant structural changes to India's arbitration framework. This legislative revision substantially transformed the institutional architecture of arbitration processes within the country, establishing new governance mechanisms and procedural requirements to enhance efficiency and professionalism in dispute resolution.

A cornerstone of this amendment was the introduction of designated arbitral institutions, empowering both the Supreme Court and High Courts to appoint qualified institutions rather than individuals for arbitration proceedings.¹⁰⁵⁰ This represented a paradigm shift from the previous approach that relied heavily on individual appointments. The amendment additionally incorporated a new definition under clause 2(h), explicitly addressing regulations promulgated by the Arbitration Council according to statutory provisions.

Section 11¹⁰⁵¹ underwent extensive modifications, with the insertion of clause 3A granting authority to the Supreme Court and High Courts to designate arbitral institutions based on gradings established by the Arbitration Council under Section 43(I). In jurisdictions lacking properly graded institutions, the amendment authorized Chief Justices of respective High Courts to establish arbitral panels. These appointed arbitrators would function within institutional frameworks and receive compensation according to the fourth schedule's fee structure. The amendment further granted Chief Justices supervisory authority to periodically evaluate and revise these arbitrator panels.¹⁰⁵²

The appointment process was streamlined to require applications directly from concerned parties, with jurisdiction divided between the Supreme Court for international commercial arbitration and High Courts for domestic disputes. Notably, the amendment eliminated subsections 6a, 7, and 10 that had been previously introduced in the 2015 revision, representing a significant procedural recalibration.

¹⁰⁴⁸ The Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996, Sec 37

¹⁰⁴⁹ Parinaz Fanibanda and Palak V. Mehta, "A Critical Study of Arbitration Laws through Years: 1940-2019," 22 *Supremo Amicus*, available at: www.supremoamicus.org (last visited March 6, 2025)

¹⁰⁵⁰ Vidya Rajarao & Darshan Patel, "Corporate Attitudes & Practices towards Arbitration in India," PricewaterhouseCoopers Report (2013).

¹⁰⁵¹ The Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996, Sec 11

¹⁰⁵² Parinaz Fanibanda and Palak V. Mehta, "A Critical Study of Arbitration Laws through Years: 1940-2019," 22 *Supremo Amicus*, available at: www.supremoamicus.org (last visited March 6, 2025)

Several substitutions clarified jurisdictional matters in multi-request scenarios. Under the revised section 11(11), when multiple requests are submitted to different arbitral tribunals, priority is given to the institution receiving the first application. Section 11(12) established that references to arbitral institutions in international commercial arbitration or other proceedings are construed as references to designated institutions under subsection 3A. Additionally, section 11(13) imposed a thirty-day resolution deadline for arbitrator appointment applications, calculated from the date of notice service to opposing parties.

The amendment addressed financial considerations through section 11(14), authorizing arbitral institutions to determine tribunal fees and payment mechanisms subject to fourth schedule rates. An explanatory clause specifically excluded international commercial arbitration from these fee provisions, allowing parties in such cases to follow predetermined institutional rules for fee determination.

The legislation enhanced interim relief provisions through modifications to Section 17, permitting arbitral tribunals to grant interim measures after award issuance but before enforcement under Section 36¹⁰⁵³. This change resolved previous limitations on arbitrator authority after award pronouncement. Procedural efficiency improved with amendments to Section 23¹⁰⁵⁴, establishing concrete timeframes for submitting claims and defences.

Section 29¹⁰⁵⁵ revisions mandated completion of arbitral awards within twelve months from pleadings completion under Section 23(4). For international commercial arbitration, a special provision encouraged expeditious resolution within the same twelve-month timeframe. Section 29(4) was amended to ensure procedural fairness by requiring arbitrators receive hearings before any fee reductions.¹⁰⁵⁶

Two critical new sections enhanced arbitration integrity: Section 42A established confidentiality requirements for proceedings, with disclosure permitted solely for award enforcement purposes, while Section 42B provided liability protection for arbitrators acting in good faith in accordance with statutory provisions.

The establishment of the Arbitration Council of India represented perhaps the most transformative institutional innovation in the amendment. Section 43A authorized the appointment of a Chairperson according to detailed criteria, while Section 43B empowered the Central Government to establish the Council as a permanent legal entity with independent corporate status, property rights, and contractual capacity. Though headquartered in Delhi, the Council could establish satellite offices with governmental approval.

Council composition was prescribed in Section 43C, requiring a former Supreme Court or High Court judge with specialized arbitration knowledge as Chairperson, appointed through consultation with the Chief Justice. Additional members included an experienced arbitration practitioner nominated by the Central Government, an academic expert appointed in consultation with the Chairperson, joint secretary-level representatives from relevant governmental departments, a representative from recognized commercial and industrial bodies, and a Chief Executive Officer serving ex-officio.¹⁰⁵⁷

The Council's responsibilities, delineated in Section 43D, encompassed promotion of alternative dispute resolution mechanisms and development of policies governing professional standards in arbitration. Section 43F established resignation procedures requiring three months' notice while

¹⁰⁵³ The Arbitration and Conciliation, 1996. Sec 36

¹⁰⁵⁴ The Arbitration and conciliation, 1996, Sec 23

¹⁰⁵⁵ The Arbitration and conciliation, 1996. Sec 29

¹⁰⁵⁶ Vidya Rajarao & Darshan Patel, "Corporate Attitudes & Practices towards Arbitration in India," PricewaterhouseCoopers Report (2013).

¹⁰⁵⁷ Dr. Pankaj Kumar Gupta & Sunil Mittal, Commercial Arbitration in India, 2 International Conference on Economics, Business and Management IPEDR (2010).

creating mechanisms for removing members engaged in misconduct or unable to perform duties due to incapacity, insolvency, outside employment, criminal conviction, or conflicts of interest.

The Council received authority to establish specialized committees and appoint experts under Section 43H. Section 43I charged the Council with institutional grading responsibilities based on quality metrics, infrastructure assessment, arbitrator qualifications, and timely resolution performance. The eighth schedule, introduced through this amendment, established accreditation qualifications for arbitrators, with provision for Central Government modifications in consultation with the Council.

Section 43K mandated creation of an electronic repository for all Indian arbitral awards, while Section 43M established a Chief Executive Officer position for daily administrative management. Finally, Section 87¹⁰⁵⁸ addressed retrospective application of the 2015 amendments, specifying that unless parties agreed otherwise, those provisions would not apply to proceedings initiated before the 2015 changes, regardless of when related court proceedings commenced.

Through these comprehensive reforms, the 2019 amendment fundamentally restructured India's arbitration landscape, emphasizing institutional capacity, professional standards, and procedural efficiency in alignment with international best practices.

2.2.4 Arbitration and Conciliation Amendments, 2021

The legislative modifications to India's arbitration system enacted in 2021 represent a significant shift in the country's approach to alternative dispute resolution. Taking effect on March 11, 2021, after presidential approval, these amendments substantially altered Section 36 of the original legislation. The revised provisions establish that courts may unconditionally suspend an arbitral award's enforcement pending the resolution of an application under Section 34, provided there exists reasonable evidence suggesting the arbitration agreement's invalidity or that corruption or fraudulent practices influenced the award's formulation. Notably, these changes apply retroactively to October 23, 2015.

A consequential aspect of these reforms involves the elimination of the eighth schedule from the principal statute. This modification potentially undermines India's progress toward becoming a centre for institutional arbitration and contradicts efforts to create an environment supportive of arbitration processes. The amendments create problematic scenarios where unsuccessful parties might simply allege corrupt practices to automatically prevent enforcement of arbitration decisions. Such developments risk increasing judicial involvement in matters specifically designed for alternative resolution mechanisms, essentially defeating their fundamental purpose.

The legislation fails to adequately define or delineate what constitutes fraud or corruption in this context, creating ambiguity that will likely generate additional litigation between disputants. This vagueness will inevitably place greater strain on an already burdened court system. For applications already in process under Section 36¹⁰⁵⁹ before appropriate jurisdictional courts, applicants now have the option to submit fresh applications based on the grounds established in the recent amendments.

These revisions negatively impact the enforcement of arbitration outcomes, impeding India's aspirations to establish itself as an arbitration-friendly jurisdiction. The retrospective application of these changes represents a regressive development in the evolution of India's arbitration framework. However, not all modifications are problematic. The dissolution of the eighth schedule, which previously dictated qualification requirements for arbitrators, provides the Arbitration Council of India with enhanced flexibility in appointments.

¹⁰⁵⁸ The Arbitration and conciliation, 1996. Sec 87

¹⁰⁵⁹ The Arbitration and conciliation Act 1996. Sec 36

An unquestionable benefit emerges from the increased opportunities for international arbitrators to participate in India's dispute resolution landscape. This change facilitates the utilization of global expertise in resolving international commercial disputes. By aligning more closely with UNCITRAL model law provisions, this aspect of the amendments may eventually contribute to establishing India as a significant location for institutional arbitration.¹⁰⁶⁰

Despite these positive elements, the overall impact of the 2021 amendments remains concerning, particularly regarding the potential for increased litigation and judicial interference in arbitration proceedings. The tension between strengthening procedural safeguards against fraud while maintaining efficient dispute resolution represents a fundamental challenge that Indian lawmakers must continue to address as the arbitration landscape evolves.

2.2.5 Code of Civil Procedure, 1908 (Section 89)

The Code of Civil Procedure, 1908 (CPC), under Section 89¹⁰⁶¹, mandates that courts encourage parties to resolve disputes through Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanisms. The objective of this provision is to reduce the burden on the judiciary, promote speedy justice, and facilitate amicable settlements.¹⁰⁶²

Mandate for Courts to Encourage ADR

Section 89¹⁰⁶³ CPC provides that if a court finds that a dispute can be settled outside the formal judicial process, it must refer the matter to an ADR mechanism. The provision was introduced through the Amendment Act of 1999 and came into effect in 2002, aligning with the objective of making justice more accessible and efficient. The court plays a proactive role in identifying cases suitable for ADR and ensuring that parties explore alternative methods before proceeding with litigation.

Types of ADR Mechanisms Recognized Under Section 89

Section 89 recognizes five types of ADR mechanisms:

1. Arbitration – A process where parties refer their dispute to an arbitrator whose decision is binding.
2. Conciliation – A neutral third party (conciliator) assists disputing parties in reaching a settlement.
3. Mediation – A mediator facilitates negotiations between parties to help them arrive at a voluntary agreement.
4. Judicial Settlement – The court itself facilitates a settlement, which is then binding on the parties.
5. Lok Adalat – A forum where disputes are resolved through mutual settlement, with decisions having the same status as a court decree.

Challenges in Judicial Implementation of ADR¹⁰⁶⁴

Despite the statutory mandate under Section 89, the practical implementation of ADR in India faces several challenges:

- Lack of Awareness: Many litigants and even legal professionals are unaware of ADR's benefits.

¹⁰⁶⁰ Dr. Pankaj Kumar Gupta & Sunil Mittal, Commercial Arbitration in India, 2 International Conference on Economics, Business and Management IPEDR (2010).

¹⁰⁶¹ The code of Civil Procedure, 1908. Sec 89

¹⁰⁶² Akshay Verma, Institutionalisation of Arbitration: A Need of ADR in India, 1 *Delhi Journal of Contemporary Law* (2018).

¹⁰⁶³ The Code of Civil Procedure, 1908. Sec 89.

¹⁰⁶⁴ The Scope and Effect of Section 89 in CPC, available at: <https://www.lawctopus.com/academike/the-scope-and-effect-of-section-89-cpc/> (last visited February 18, 2025).

- Judicial Hesitancy: Some judges hesitate to refer matters to ADR due to concerns about enforceability and lack of clarity on procedural aspects.
- Infrastructure & Training: There is inadequate infrastructure and a shortage of trained mediators and arbitrators.
- Reluctance of Parties: Many litigants, especially in commercial disputes, prefer litigation over ADR due to concerns about fairness, neutrality, or the binding nature of certain ADR outcomes.
- Interpretational Issues: Courts have often struggled to interpret the scope and applicability of Section 89, leading to inconsistent implementation.

Landmark Judgment: *Afcons Infrastructure Ltd. v. Cherian Varkey Construction Co.* (2010)

The Supreme Court of India, in *Afcons Infrastructure Ltd. v. Cherian Varkey Construction Co.* (2010)¹⁰⁶⁵, provided clarity on the applicability of Section 89 CPC. The key takeaways from the judgment include:

- The court laid down guidelines to determine which cases are suitable for ADR.
- It clarified that ADR is mandatory in certain categories of disputes, such as contractual disputes, family matters, and commercial disputes.
- The court addressed the confusion in procedural interpretation by ruling that Section 89 should be read with the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996 and the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987.
- It emphasized that courts should actively encourage ADR rather than merely treating it as an optional mechanism.

2.2.6 Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987

The Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987 was enacted to provide free and competent legal aid to weaker sections of society and to ensure justice for all, irrespective of financial or social constraints. One of its most significant contributions is the establishment of Lok Adalats, which serve as an alternative dispute resolution (ADR) mechanism to ease the burden on traditional courts.¹⁰⁶⁶

Establishment of Lok Adalats

Lok Adalats are organized at various levels—state, district, and taluk—to provide a quick, cost-effective, and amicable resolution of disputes. These courts have jurisdiction over civil cases, compoundable criminal cases, and matters related to public utility services. Their informal nature allows for settlement through negotiation, conciliation, and mediation, ensuring swift justice.

Binding Nature of Lok Adalat Awards

A defining feature of Lok Adalats is that their awards hold final and binding status on both parties, with no provision for appeal under normal circumstances. This principle was upheld in the landmark Supreme Court judgment *State of Punjab v. Jalour Singh* (2008)¹⁰⁶⁷, where the Court clarified that once an award is passed in a Lok Adalat, it attains finality, and no further appeal lies against it.¹⁰⁶⁸ This reinforces the credibility of Lok Adalats as an effective dispute resolution mechanism.

¹⁰⁶⁵ *Afcons Infrastructure Ltd. vs. Cherian Varkey Construction*, [2010] 8 S.C.R. 1053

¹⁰⁶⁶ Lok Adalats: An Alternative Dispute Resolution Mechanism, available at: <https://www.nextias.com/blog/lok-adalats/> (last visited February 19, 2025).

¹⁰⁶⁷ *State of Punjab v. Jalour Singh*, (2008) 2 SCC 660

¹⁰⁶⁸ Akshay Verma, Institutionalisation of Arbitration: A Need of ADR in India, 1 *Delhi Journal of Contemporary Law* (2018).

Promotion of Mediation and Conciliation

Beyond adjudicating disputes, Lok Adalats emphasize mediation and conciliation, encouraging disputing parties to reach mutually acceptable settlements. This approach aligns with the broader objective of ADR, promoting harmony and reducing litigation costs. Mediation and conciliation under the Lok Adalat framework have proven especially useful in matters such as family disputes, land disputes, and financial matters, where a negotiated settlement is preferable over prolonged litigation.

The Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987, through the establishment of Lok Adalats, has played a pivotal role in strengthening India's ADR framework.¹⁰⁶⁹ The binding nature of Lok Adalat awards ensures finality and expedites the justice delivery process, reducing court backlog. With landmark judgments reinforcing their authority, Lok Adalats continue to be an essential mechanism for ensuring accessible and efficient justice in India.

2.2.7 Consumer Protection Act, 2019

The Consumer Protection Act, 2019, introduced a significant reform by incorporating mediation as a formal mechanism for resolving consumer disputes. This development aimed at addressing the long-standing issue of delays in consumer litigation and providing an efficient alternative to traditional adjudication. With an increasing backlog of cases in consumer forums, mediation offers a quicker, more cost-effective, and consumer-friendly means of resolving disputes. Unlike conventional litigation, which often stretches over years, mediation focuses on fostering dialogue between parties, encouraging voluntary settlements, and reducing the adversarial nature of consumer disputes.

A major feature of this reform is the establishment of Consumer Mediation Cells at the national, state, and district levels, as mandated by Sections 74¹⁰⁷⁰ and 75¹⁰⁷¹ of the Act. These mediation cells operate within their respective jurisdictions and play a crucial role in facilitating amicable settlements. The mediators empanelled under the Act are required to meet specific qualifications and adhere to strict standards of impartiality and confidentiality, ensuring that consumer rights remain protected throughout the process. By institutionalizing mediation, India has aligned itself with global best practices, where alternative dispute resolution mechanisms have successfully expedited consumer justice.¹⁰⁷²

One of the primary advantages of mediation in consumer disputes is the speedy resolution of grievances. Traditional consumer courts are often burdened with procedural complexities and an overwhelming number of cases, leading to prolonged litigation. Mediation provides a viable solution by enabling parties to settle disputes at an early stage, reducing both time and financial costs. By fostering dialogue and encouraging mutually agreeable solutions, mediation empowers consumers while minimizing the burden on judicial forums. Additionally, since mediation proceedings are voluntary and confidential, they provide a less stressful and more constructive approach to dispute resolution.

Despite the advantages of alternative dispute resolution, the Indian judiciary has drawn a clear distinction between consumer disputes and other commercial conflicts that may be referred to arbitration. This distinction was reinforced by the Supreme Court in the landmark case of *M/S Emaar MGF Land Ltd. v. Aftab Singh* (2018)¹⁰⁷³, where the Court ruled that consumer disputes are not arbitrable under the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996. The judgment emphasized that consumer protection laws grant statutory rights to individuals, making consumer disputes fundamentally different from

¹⁰⁶⁹ Vidya Rajarao & Darshan Patel, "Corporate Attitudes & Practices towards Arbitration in India," PricewaterhouseCoopers Report (2013).

¹⁰⁷⁰ The Consumer Protection Act, 2019. Sec 74.

¹⁰⁷¹ The Consumer Protection Act, 2019. Sec 75.

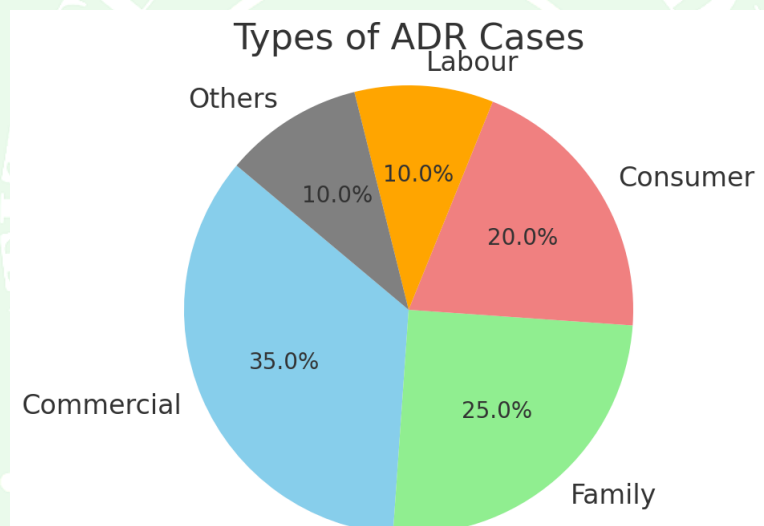
¹⁰⁷² Consumer Protection Act, 2019, available at: <https://blog.ipleaders.in/consumer-protection-act-2019-2/> (last visited February 20, 2025).

¹⁰⁷³ *M/S Emaar MGF Land Limited vs. Aftab Singh*, [2018] 14 S.C.R. 791.

private contractual claims that can be subjected to arbitration. The Court further clarified that the Consumer Protection Act is a welfare legislation designed to safeguard consumer interests, and its remedies cannot be nullified by arbitration agreements imposed by service providers or businesses. This ruling affirmed that while arbitration remains a key dispute resolution mechanism in commercial transactions, it cannot override statutory consumer protections.¹⁰⁷⁴

The introduction of mediation in consumer disputes represents a progressive shift towards a more accessible and efficient justice system. While mediation has the potential to revolutionize consumer dispute resolution in India, its success will depend on factors such as effective implementation, mediator training, and public awareness. The legal framework must ensure that mediation is conducted in a fair and transparent manner, preventing any undue influence from corporations or service providers. Additionally, the enforcement of mediated settlements must be robust and legally binding, ensuring that consumers receive the justice they seek. By strengthening the mediation framework and fostering a culture of alternative dispute resolution, India can significantly enhance consumer trust in the legal system while reducing the burden on consumer courts.

Figure no. 1 – Distribution of ADR Cases in India



Source: NITI Aayog, Strategy for New India @75: Judicial Reform and ADR 48–49 (Government of India 2018)..

2.3 International Framework

2.3.1 UNCITRAL Model Law on International Commercial Arbitration

The UNCITRAL Model Law on International Commercial Arbitration (1985) was a landmark effort to standardize and harmonize international arbitration laws, addressing inconsistencies across jurisdictions. Its primary aim was to facilitate cross-border dispute resolution by providing a comprehensive framework covering arbitration agreements, procedural rules, and enforcement mechanisms. This Model Law has since been adopted or used as a reference point by numerous jurisdictions, ensuring that international arbitration proceedings remain efficient, impartial, and enforceable.

¹⁰⁷⁴ Emaar Mgf Land Ltd. vs Aftab Singh, available at: <https://www.argus-p.com/updates/updates/emaar-mgf-land-ltd-vs-aftab-singh/#:~:text=The%20Hon'ble%20Supreme%20Court,8%20of%20the%20Arbitration%20Act.> (last visited February 20, 2025).

India's Adoption and Alignment with the Model Law

India recognized the necessity of aligning its arbitration laws with global best practices, leading to the enactment of the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996. This Act is heavily influenced by the UNCITRAL Model Law, incorporating key principles such as minimal judicial intervention, party autonomy, and enforceability of arbitral awards. The 1996 Act replaced the outdated Arbitration Act of 1940, which was criticized for excessive judicial interference and procedural inefficiencies.

However, while the Act mirrors the Model Law, certain deviations persist. For example, Section 34 allows courts to set aside awards based on "patent illegality," a ground not explicitly recognized under the Model Law. This provision has led to judicial intervention in arbitration matters, sometimes undermining the pro-arbitration stance India aimed to adopt.

Influence on the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996

The Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996, can be viewed as India's direct response to the principles enshrined in the UNCITRAL Model Law. The Act:

1. **Defines International Arbitration:** Following Article 1(3) of the Model Law, Section 2(1)(f) of the 1996 Act defines international arbitration based on the place of business of the parties or the location of arbitration.
2. **Recognizes Party Autonomy:** The Act allows parties to choose procedural rules, arbitrators, and governing law.
3. **Restricts Judicial Intervention:** Section 5 of the Act aligns with Article 5 of the Model Law by limiting court interference to instances explicitly permitted by the Act.
4. **Facilitates Enforcement of Foreign Arbitral Awards:** The Act incorporates the New York Convention (1958) and the Geneva Convention (1927) principles, ensuring that foreign arbitral awards are recognized and enforced in India.

Despite these alignments, judicial interpretation has played a critical role in shaping the Act's application, particularly in enforcing foreign arbitral awards.

Landmark Judgment: *Renusagar Power Co. v. General Electric Co. (1994)*¹⁰⁷⁵

The *Renusagar* case remains a pivotal judgment in India's arbitration jurisprudence, setting the precedent for the enforcement of foreign arbitral awards. In this case, the Supreme Court of India ruled that foreign awards could only be refused enforcement on limited grounds—public policy being one of them. Importantly, the Court clarified that public policy must be construed narrowly, covering only "fundamental principles of Indian law, justice, and morality." This approach was in harmony with the UNCITRAL Model Law, which also limits the scope of judicial intervention in arbitration.

The principles from *Renusagar* were later incorporated into the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996, reinforcing India's commitment to international arbitration standards. However, later interpretations, particularly in *ONGC v. Saw Pipes (2003)*¹⁰⁷⁶, expanded the scope of public policy, leading to concerns over excessive judicial scrutiny of arbitral awards.

2.3.2 New York Convention (1958) on the Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Arbitral Awards

The 1958 New York Convention serves as a cornerstone in international arbitration, creating a uniform framework for the recognition and enforcement of foreign arbitral awards. It mandates that signatory states enforce such awards while limiting the grounds on which enforcement may be refused, thereby

¹⁰⁷⁵ *Renusagar Power Co. Ltd. Etc. Vs General Electric Co.*, [1993] Supp. (3) S.C.R. 22.

¹⁰⁷⁶ *Oil & Natural Gas Corporation Ltd. Vs. Saw Pipes Ltd.*, 2003 (5) SCC 705

fostering strong trade and commercial relations. This Convention plays a crucial role in ensuring certainty and predictability in cross-border dispute resolution.

Recognition of International Arbitral Awards in India

India, as a signatory to the Convention, has incorporated its principles into domestic law through the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996. Under this framework, foreign arbitral awards are recognized unless they fall under the limited exceptions provided in Section 48, such as awards being contrary to public policy or lacking due process. The Indian judiciary has generally adopted a pro-enforcement stance, reinforcing the Convention's objectives of minimal judicial intervention and party autonomy.

Enforcement Mechanisms under Indian Law

The enforcement of foreign arbitral awards in India follows a streamlined process wherein the award holder approaches a competent Indian court under Section 47 of the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996. Once the court is satisfied that the award meets the New York Convention's criteria, it is enforced as a decree of the court. This mechanism eliminates procedural complexities and enhances the efficiency of international arbitration in India.¹⁰⁷⁷

Judicial Review and Govt. of India v. Vedanta Ltd. (2020)¹⁰⁷⁸

The scope of judicial review concerning foreign arbitral awards has been a subject of debate in India. In *Govt. of India v. Vedanta Ltd. (2020)*, the Supreme Court reaffirmed India's commitment to the New York Convention by limiting the scope of judicial intervention in the enforcement of foreign arbitral awards. The judgment emphasized that Indian courts should adopt a pro-enforcement approach, restricting their review to the grounds explicitly provided under the Arbitration Act, thereby preventing unnecessary delays in enforcement.

Table no. 2 – International Instruments Influencing Indian ADR

Instrument	Impact on Indian ADR
UNCITRAL Model Law	Inspired Arbitration Act of 1996
New York Convention (1958)	Basis for enforcement of foreign arbitral awards
Geneva Convention	Supports international arbitration recognition
IBA Guidelines	Guides conflict-of-interest disclosures

Source: UNCITRAL Secretariat, A Guide to the UNCITRAL Model Law on International Commercial Arbitration (1985) with Explanatory Note 1–6 (United Nations 2012).

2.4 Challenges in the Implementation of ADR System in India

2.4.1 Judicial Overreach

The legislative framework established by the Arbitration and Conciliation Act of 1996 (with subsequent amendments) endeavors to minimize court intervention in arbitration proceedings. Nevertheless, judicial bodies throughout India have demonstrated a persistent inclination toward excessive

¹⁰⁷⁷ Mehra P., "Quality Assurance in Alternative Dispute Resolution" *Indian Journal of Arbitration Law*, [2019].

¹⁰⁷⁸ Government of India v. Vedanta Limited, (2020) 10 Sc 1

involvement across numerous phases of arbitration. This interventionist approach manifests particularly through the broad interpretation of "public policy" as grounds for nullifying arbitration determinations, substantially compromising the intended conclusiveness of these resolutions.¹⁰⁷⁹

A watershed development occurred when the Supreme Court, adjudicating in *ONGC Ltd. v. Saw Pipes Ltd.*¹⁰⁸⁰, substantially expanded the conceptual boundaries of "public policy" to encompass matters of "patent illegality." This judicial innovation effectively authorized courts to scrutinize the substantive elements of arbitral decisions, contrary to international best practices. While subsequent jurisprudence, exemplified by cases such as *Venture Global Engineering v. Satyam Computer Services Ltd.*¹⁰⁸¹, attempted to curtail this expansionist tendency, the inconsistency in judicial perspectives continues to generate considerable procedural and substantive ambiguity.

Legislative responses materialized through significant amendments enacted in 2015 and 2021, specifically designed to constrain and clarify the interpretation of public policy exceptions. These amendments represent parliamentary recognition of the problematic nature of extensive judicial review. However, implementation challenges persist, with substantial variations observed across different jurisdictions within the Indian legal system.

This tension between legislative intent and judicial practice highlights a fundamental challenge in Indian arbitration jurisprudence: balancing appropriate judicial oversight against the principle of arbitral autonomy. The vacillation between restrictive and expansive approaches to intervention creates unpredictability for parties seeking finality through alternative dispute resolution mechanisms. Consequently, stakeholders in arbitration proceedings face heightened uncertainty regarding the durability of obtained awards.

The ongoing evolution of this legal dialectic underscores the complex relationship between judicial authority and arbitral independence within India's dispute resolution framework. Resolution of this tension remains critical for establishing India as a globally competitive arbitration jurisdiction aligned with international standards of limited judicial intervention.

2.4.2 Delayed Proceedings

In the Indian legal framework, the fundamental benefit of arbitration—its expeditious dispute resolution—frequently remains unrealized due to systematic operational hindrances. The arbitration process encounters numerous impediments, including administrative ineffectiveness, repeated postponements of proceedings, and protracted judicial interventions in critical aspects such as arbitrator selection, provisional remedies, and the implementation of final decisions.

The legislative framework attempted to address these temporal concerns through Section 29A¹⁰⁸² of the Arbitration Act, which establishes a definitive timeframe for arbitral proceedings to conclude within twelve months after pleadings are completed.¹⁰⁸³ Nevertheless, this statutory provision often lacks rigorous implementation and enforcement mechanisms. The theoretical time constraints become largely symbolic rather than practical mandates in the actual conduct of proceedings.

This implementation gap manifests most prominently in disputes involving governmental entities and public enterprises. Such cases frequently extend well beyond reasonable durations, sometimes continuing for numerous years. This prolongation fundamentally contradicts the initial rationale behind selecting arbitration as an alternative to conventional court litigation.¹⁰⁸⁴ The paradoxical

¹⁰⁷⁹ Arbitration and Conciliation (Amendment) Act 2015, No. 3 of 2016, India.

¹⁰⁸⁰ *ONGC Ltd. v. Saw Pipes Ltd.*, AIR 2003 SUPREME COURT 2629.

¹⁰⁸¹ *Venture Global Engineering v. Satyam Computer Services Ltd.*, (2008) 4 SCC 190.

¹⁰⁸² Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996 (as amended), s. 29A.

¹⁰⁸³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸⁴ Malhotra, O.P., and Malhotra, Indu, *The Law and Practice of Arbitration and Conciliation* (3rd ed., LexisNexis, 2014) 2145.

outcome transforms what should be an efficient resolution mechanism into a process that mirrors—or occasionally exceeds—the temporal shortcomings of traditional litigation pathways.

Consequently, participants in the Indian arbitration ecosystem face a structural contradiction: the pursuit of expeditious justice through arbitration often leads to protracted proceedings that negate the very efficiency sought. This systemic inconsistency requires comprehensive procedural reforms and enhanced enforcement mechanisms to restore arbitration's intended efficiency advantage. Without such interventions, the theoretical benefits of arbitration will continue to be undermined by practical implementation failures, particularly in complex cases involving significant public interests or governmental parties.

2.4.3 Lack of Professionalism and Arbitration Bias

The Indian arbitration framework faces substantial challenges regarding arbitrator impartiality and professional standards. A particular area of concern emerges in the context of ad hoc arbitration proceedings, especially those involving governmental organizations. These proceedings frequently draw arbitrators from pools comprised predominantly of former judicial officers and administrative officials, which inevitably raises questions about the genuine independence of the arbitration process.¹⁰⁸⁵

The legislative modifications implemented in 2015 attempted to address these issues by incorporating Schedules V and VII into the existing regulatory structure. These additions, modelled after international best practices outlined in the IBA Guidelines on Conflicts of Interest in International Arbitration, sought to establish clearer parameters regarding conflicts of interest.¹⁰⁸⁶ However, the practical application and enforcement of these provisions have proven inadequate in resolving the underlying issues.

Further complicating matters is the notable absence of rigorous qualification requirements and standardized certification procedures for individuals serving as arbitrators. This regulatory gap has resulted in inconsistent quality of arbitration services, with significant variations in both procedural competence and adherence to ethical standards. The lack of uniform professional development pathways for arbitrators consequently impacts the reliability and integrity of the entire dispute resolution mechanism.

These systemic shortcomings potentially undermine stakeholder confidence in the arbitration process and may ultimately affect India's standing in the international arbitration community. Addressing these fundamental issues requires comprehensive reform of arbitrator selection processes, implementation of mandatory professional development programs, and stronger enforcement of ethical guidelines to ensure genuine neutrality in dispute resolution proceedings.

2.4.4 Weak system of Institutional Arbitration

India's arbitration landscape faces a significant obstacle in the underdevelopment of robust and prestigious arbitral institutions. Despite the existence of several domestic organizations, including the Indian Council of Arbitration (ICA) and the Mumbai Centre for International Arbitration (MCIA), these entities have not achieved the international recognition or operational excellence characteristic of premier global arbitration forums.¹⁰⁸⁷

The domestic arbitral bodies in India demonstrate notable deficiencies in several critical domains. Their case management protocols lack sophistication and efficiency, their procedural frameworks

¹⁰⁸⁵ S.K. Chawla, *Law of Arbitration and Conciliation* (Eastern Book Company, 2020) 543.

¹⁰⁸⁶ IBA Guidelines on Conflicts of Interest in International Arbitration, 2014.

¹⁰⁸⁷ Sander, Frank E.A., "Alternative Methods of Dispute Resolution: An Overview", 37 *Florida Law Review* (1985).

remain relatively static rather than innovative, and their international standing pales in comparison to established entities such as the Singapore International Arbitration Centre or the London Court of International Arbitration.

This institutional weakness has created a vacuum within the Indian dispute resolution ecosystem, resulting in the prevalence of ad hoc arbitration proceedings. These improvised processes operate without comprehensive administrative infrastructure or consistent oversight mechanisms. Consequently, the quality of arbitration services varies dramatically across different proceedings.¹⁰⁸⁸

The predominance of these unstructured arbitration approaches generates numerous operational inefficiencies, including inconsistent application of procedural rules, unpredictable timelines, and variable quality of awards. These systemic shortcomings compound to create an environment of uncertainty for potential users of arbitration services in India.

The cumulative effect of these institutional limitations substantially undermines stakeholder confidence in India's arbitration framework. Commercial entities, both domestic and international, frequently express hesitation about engaging with a system characterized by such unpredictability and inconsistency. This deficiency represents a fundamental challenge that must be addressed for India to develop a world-class arbitration ecosystem capable of meeting contemporary dispute resolution needs.

2.4.5 High Costs

The financial implications of pursuing arbitration in the Indian legal context frequently contradict general assumptions about its affordability. Substantial remuneration demanded by distinguished legal practitioners functioning as arbitrators, coupled with extensive procedural complexities, renders the process financially burdensome. The predominant unstructured organization of arbitration proceedings throughout India contributes significantly to fiscal uncertainty.

While legislative provisions exist—specifically Section 11(14)—authorizing superior judicial bodies to establish regulatory frameworks governing arbitrators' compensation, actual enforcement varies considerably across different legal territories.¹⁰⁸⁹ This absence of standardization creates an environment where participants cannot accurately forecast expenditures.

Such monetary ambiguity particularly disadvantages commercial enterprises with limited resources and private citizens. These stakeholders, when confronted with potential legal disputes, frequently reconsider arbitration as a viable resolution mechanism due to financial constraints. The economic barriers effectively restrict access to what should theoretically serve as an equitable alternative to conventional litigation.

The financial unpredictability transforms arbitration from an accessible legal remedy into a privilege primarily available to entities possessing substantial financial resources. This circumstance fundamentally undermines the foundational purpose of alternative dispute resolution: providing efficient, fair access to justice irrespective of participants' economic capacity.

2.4.6 Ambiguous meaning of Public Policy

The exception clause concerning societal norms and collective welfare standards represents perhaps the most contentious element within India's arbitration framework. The judicial landscape exhibits remarkable fluctuation between expansive and restrictive interpretations of this principle, fostering considerable uncertainty in legal outcomes.

¹⁰⁸⁸ Mustill, M., "Institutional versus Ad Hoc Arbitration," 17 J. Intl. Arb., (2000).

¹⁰⁸⁹ Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996 (as amended), s. 11(14).

Initially, the highest judicial authority of India established a precedent favoring limited application of community standard exceptions when examining international arbitral decisions. This conservative approach, articulated through the *Renusagar*¹⁰⁹⁰ litigation involving an energy corporation and a multinational engineering firm, aimed to constrain judicial intervention in cross-border dispute resolutions. However, subsequent judicial determinations progressively widened the interpretative scope, effectively expanding courts' supervisory authority over arbitration outcomes.

Legislative intervention materialized in 2015, with statutory amendments explicitly designed to reinstate the originally intended narrow construction of this exception. The reform sought to enhance predictability and finality in arbitration proceedings, aligning Indian practices with global standards favoring minimal interference.¹⁰⁹¹ Nevertheless, judicial patterns reveal an intermittent reversion to broader interpretative approaches, particularly when reviewing domestically rendered arbitral determinations.

This interpretative inconsistency creates substantial challenges for stakeholders in arbitration proceedings. Legal professionals face difficulties in providing reliable guidance to clients, while commercial entities encounter obstacles in accurately assessing litigation risks. The resulting unpredictability potentially undermines the fundamental advantages of arbitration as an alternative dispute resolution mechanism – namely efficiency, finality, and procedural certainty.

The ongoing tension between legislative intent and judicial application demonstrates the complex interplay between sovereignty concerns and the facilitation of efficient commercial dispute resolution. This dynamic equilibrium continues to evolve through jurisprudential developments, reflecting deeper questions about the appropriate balance between safeguarding fundamental societal interests and respecting party autonomy in alternative dispute resolution frameworks.

2.4.7 Inadequate Infrastructure

The substandard condition of both material and digital frameworks supporting arbitration proceedings represents a significant challenge throughout numerous Indian regions. In stark contrast to premier global facilities such as Singapore's Maxwell Chambers or the sophisticated venues available in London, the Indian arbitration landscape suffers from a noticeable absence of contemporary, purpose-designed centres across its principal urban areas.

Despite modest progress through the establishment of institutions like the Mumbai Centre for International Arbitration and the Delhi International Arbitration Centre, India continues to lack a comprehensive, nationwide network of suitable venues. This deficiency becomes increasingly problematic in the current environment, where remote proceedings have gained substantial prominence. The contemporary arbitration ecosystem demands substantial capital allocation toward electronic infrastructure, confidential communication systems, and versatile arrangements accommodating participants in various locations simultaneously.

The current limitations hamper India's potential to position itself as a preferred destination for domestic and international dispute resolution. Without addressing these fundamental requirements, arbitration proceedings may experience logistical complications, technological interruptions, and compromised efficiency. Furthermore, inadequate facilities potentially undermine participant confidence in the process, particularly when international parties are involved and accustomed to superior standards elsewhere.

¹⁰⁹⁰ *Renusagar Power Co. Ltd. Etc. Vs General Electric Co.*, [1993] Supp. (3) S.C.R. 22.

¹⁰⁹¹ *Vijay Karia v. Prysmian Cavi E Sistemi SRL*, (2020) 11 SCC 1.

Developing comprehensive arbitration infrastructure necessitates coordinated efforts between governmental bodies, legal institutions, and private stakeholders. Such development would require careful consideration of regional needs, technological advancements, and international best practices to create environments conducive to effective dispute resolution across the country.

2.4.8 Lack of Awareness

The insufficient comprehension regarding arbitration advantages and methodologies presents a significant obstacle to its widespread implementation across Indian commercial entities, particularly those operating at smaller scales. Many enterprises remain uninformed about how arbitration functions as an alternative dispute resolution mechanism and the potential efficiencies it offers compared to traditional litigation pathways.¹⁰⁹² This knowledge deficit substantially restricts arbitration's expansion throughout the Indian business landscape.

Furthermore, deeply embedded societal preferences for conventional judicial proceedings create additional barriers to arbitration acceptance. Indian commercial entities frequently demonstrate a pronounced inclination toward court-based resolution mechanisms rather than exploring alternative approaches, regardless of potential benefits these alternatives might provide. This behavioural pattern substantially hinders the organic development of arbitration practices within the country's commercial framework.

The contrast becomes particularly evident when examining jurisdictions such as Singapore, where governmental entities actively champion arbitration processes and the business community broadly embraces these methods. The Singaporean model demonstrates how coordinated promotion and cultural acceptance can establish arbitration as a preferred dispute resolution mechanism. Conversely, India has yet to successfully incorporate arbitration procedures into its fundamental commercial dispute resolution paradigm. This incomplete integration affects domestic organizations and deters international commercial entities from selecting India as their arbitration venue.

The reluctance among both local and global businesses to designate India as an arbitration forum represents a missed opportunity for the nation's legal services sector and broader economic interests. Addressing these awareness deficiencies and cultural resistances requires comprehensive educational initiatives and policy interventions designed to highlight arbitration's strategic advantages within the Indian commercial context.

2.5 Conclusion

The legal landscape of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) has undergone significant transformation, driven by legislative reforms, judicial activism, and evolving global best practices. India has made considerable strides in institutionalizing ADR through key developments such as the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, judicial precedents favoring arbitration, and the promotion of mediation as a mainstream dispute resolution mechanism.

Looking ahead, the future of ADR in India appears promising, with increasing reliance on technology-driven dispute resolution mechanisms, the integration of online dispute resolution (ODR), and a shift towards specialized mediation and arbitration frameworks. Courts have also played a pivotal role in shaping ADR's trajectory by reinforcing the principles of minimal judicial interference while ensuring procedural fairness and efficiency. Judicial perspectives continue to evolve, favoring ADR as a tool to ease the burden on courts and provide expeditious justice.

As ADR cements its place within India's justice system, its role will expand beyond commercial disputes to include family law, labor disputes, and even public-interest matters. The effectiveness of

¹⁰⁹² Fali Nariman, "Ten Steps to Strengthen Arbitration in India," 5 *Indian J. Arb. L.* (2016).

ADR will ultimately depend on robust legislative support, judicial endorsement, and greater public awareness, ensuring that alternative dispute resolution becomes the preferred mode of justice delivery in the years to come.

CHAPTER 3: THE MEDIATION ACT, 2023 – A PARADIGM SHIFT

3.1 Enactment and Objectives of the Mediation Act, 2023

The Mediation Act, 2023, was enacted to institutionalize mediation as an effective, structured, and legally recognized dispute resolution mechanism in India. Prior to its enactment, mediation operated in a fragmented manner—either through judicial referral, informal negotiations, or as part of other legal frameworks such as the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908. The Act aims to streamline and standardize mediation, ensuring its integration into India's legal system as a credible alternative dispute resolution (ADR) mechanism.

The rationale behind the Act stems from the necessity to address systemic inefficiencies within the traditional litigation framework and promote a culture of amicable dispute resolution. One of the key drivers for this legislation is the excessive backlog of cases in Indian courts. With millions of cases pending at various levels of the judiciary, mediation offers a viable alternative to ease the burden on courts and facilitate quicker dispute resolution. Additionally, the Act enhances access to justice by providing a cost-effective and time-efficient mechanism, making dispute resolution more accessible, particularly for marginalized communities and small businesses.¹⁰⁹³

Another crucial aspect of the Act is its emphasis on pre-litigation mediation. By mandating mediation before initiating litigation in certain disputes, the law seeks to prevent minor disagreements from escalating into prolonged legal battles, thereby saving time, costs, and preserving relationships. Furthermore, prior to the enactment of the Mediation Act, the absence of a comprehensive legal framework resulted in inconsistencies in mediation practices across jurisdictions. The Act, along with its accompanying rules, seeks to establish uniform procedures applicable to both domestic and international mediation, ensuring greater certainty and reliability in the process.¹⁰⁹⁴

One of the core objectives of the Act is to promote mediation as a cost-effective and time-efficient alternative to litigation. Traditional court proceedings are often expensive, time-consuming, and emotionally taxing for the parties involved. Mediation, in contrast, provides a collaborative and flexible approach that facilitates mutually beneficial resolutions while significantly reducing legal expenses and delays. The Act also grants legal recognition and enforceability to mediated settlement agreements (MSAs), ensuring that the outcomes of mediation have the same binding effect as court decrees or arbitral awards.¹⁰⁹⁵

To further reduce the burden on courts, the Act mandates pre-litigation mediation in certain categories of disputes, requiring parties to attempt settlement before initiating formal legal proceedings. This provision aims to resolve conflicts at an early stage, preventing unnecessary litigation and expediting dispute resolution. Additionally, the Act encourages the resolution of disputes outside the courtroom, which not only alleviates judicial backlog but also promotes a less adversarial and more conciliatory approach to conflict resolution.

¹⁰⁹³ Mediation Act 2023 latest amendments: A complete guide, available at: <https://www.barandbench.com/law-firms/view-point/mediation-act-2023-latest-amendments-guide> (last visited March 10, 2025).

¹⁰⁹⁴ Mediation Act, 2023: Salient Features, available at: <https://www.lexology.com/library/detail.aspx?g=0abf0e56-6f5f-4bb8-a4c5-1375f4ce5974> (last visited March 11, 2025).

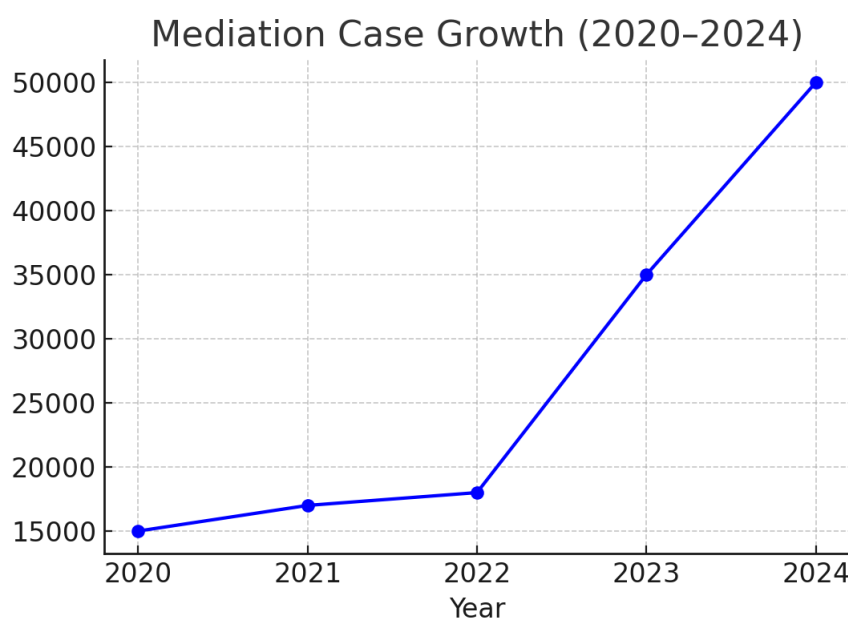
¹⁰⁹⁵ Framework of the Mediation Act, 2023, available at: <https://www.indialaw.in/blog/arbitration-and-conciliation/framework-of-the-mediation-act-2023/> (last visited March 9, 2025).

The legislation also places significant emphasis on encouraging parties to consider mediation before resorting to litigation. By promoting voluntary and mandatory mediation mechanisms, the Act seeks to instil a shift in mindset—moving away from confrontational legal battles towards constructive dialogue and compromise. To facilitate this, the Act supports the establishment of professional mediation service providers, ensuring that mediation services are conducted in a standardized and ethical manner by trained professionals.

Another critical aspect of the Act is its focus on preserving relationships and goodwill through non-hostile dispute resolution. Unlike litigation, which often results in strained relationships, mediation emphasizes collaboration, thereby fostering long-term cooperation between parties. This is particularly relevant in family disputes, business conflicts, and community-related matters, where preserving relationships is as important as resolving disputes.

Finally, to regulate and promote mediation as an institution, the Act establishes the Mediation Council of India (MCI). This statutory body is tasked with overseeing mediation services, accrediting mediators, and ensuring accessibility of mediation to individuals from all social and economic backgrounds. By creating a well-regulated mediation ecosystem, the Act ensures that mediation remains a reliable, efficient, and widely accessible dispute resolution mechanism in India.

Figure no. 2 – Estimated Growth in Mediation Cases Post-Legislation



Source: Indian Institute of Mediation, ADR Outlook 2023: Impact of New Legislation 22–25 (ADR Watch India, 2023)..

3.2 Salient features of the Act:

3.2.1 Mediation Association of India

Mediation Association of India (MAI) was founded on May 3, 2025, and the first president of MAI was Smt. Droupadi Murmu. The official inauguration also saw the First National Mediation Conference that outlined mediation as the Preferred Method of Dispute Resolution System in India.

While listening to the President of India Smt. Droupadi Murmu explaining the benefit of extending Mediation Act 2023 to the rural area where village panchayats can mediate and resolve the disputes,

CJI of India Justice Sanjiv Khanna said that unlike court litigation mediation heals the ailment that led to dispute.

The MAI has the goal of establishing and promoting mediation as the first choice for conflict resolution in India. It will also identify the best practices and procedures in mediation domain that will be useful in informing the union government.

- The following are the basic objectives of the MAI:
 1. It was meant to promote and improve the use of mediation as the preferred method of addressing the existing conflict.
 2. Strengthening the Institution with the goal of enhancing the knowledge of the rules of procedure in the field of mediation.
 3. Fostering Rural Development, Extending the Mediation Act 2023 to Rural areas and let the Village Panchayats be the first tier of mediation.
 4. Reduce the burden on Indian courts by making some of the more common forms of dispute resolution more efficient and speedy.

3.2.2 Mediator's Appointment

One of the fundamental aspects of the Mediation Act, 2023, is the appointment of a mediator. The Act provides parties with complete flexibility in selecting a mediator to facilitate the resolution of their dispute. Unlike other legal mechanisms that impose restrictions based on nationality or jurisdiction, the Act allows any individual, regardless of nationality, to be appointed as a mediator if both parties agree¹⁰⁹⁶. Alternatively, parties can approach a mediation service provider, which will appoint a mediator based on their preferences, including qualifications and expertise. This provision ensures that disputing parties have the autonomy to select a mediator best suited to their needs, thereby fostering trust in the mediation process.

3.2.3 Mediator's Termination or Replacement

The Act provides for the termination or replacement of a mediator in cases where a conflict of interest arises. If a mediator discloses a potential conflict related to the dispute, either before or during the mediation proceedings, and one of the parties objects to their involvement, the mediator must be removed or replaced¹⁰⁹⁷. Even in cases where no direct conflict exists, parties retain the right to request a replacement by submitting a written request to the mediator or the mediation service provider. Furthermore, mediation institutions are empowered to remove a mediator from a case if there are reasonable grounds to suspect bias or impropriety. However, in situations where a mediator is removed due to alleged misconduct or conflict of interest, they are entitled to a fair hearing to contest the decision. This provision reinforces the integrity and impartiality of the mediation process, ensuring that it remains a credible and unbiased method of dispute resolution.

3.2.4 Time-Bound Approach

Another crucial aspect of the Mediation Act, 2023, is its time-bound approach to dispute resolution. To prevent unnecessary delays and misuse of the mediation process, the Act sets a clear 120-day deadline from the first appearance before the mediator for the completion of mediation proceedings¹⁰⁹⁸. This provision ensures that mediation remains a swift and efficient alternative to traditional litigation, where cases often drag on for years. However, recognizing the complexity of certain disputes, the Act allows for an extension of up to 60 additional days, but only with the mutual

¹⁰⁹⁶ Ss. 8(1), Mediation Act, 2023.

¹⁰⁹⁷ Ss. 10, Mediation Act, 2023.

¹⁰⁹⁸ Ss. 18, Mediation Act, 2023.

consent of both parties. This flexibility ensures that parties have sufficient time to explore potential resolutions while preventing indefinite prolongation of the mediation process.

3.2.5 Role and Conduct of the Mediator

Additionally, the Act lays down clear guidelines regarding the conduct and role of the mediator to uphold the integrity and fairness of the process. A mediator is required to maintain absolute neutrality, independence, and impartiality throughout the proceedings¹⁰⁹⁹. They must not take sides or express personal opinions on the merits of the dispute, ensuring that all parties are treated fairly. To reinforce this standard, mediators are obligated to adhere to professional and ethical guidelines set forth under the Act, ensuring high levels of professionalism and accountability.

The mediator's primary role is to facilitate open communication between the disputing parties, enabling them to present their viewpoints, identify key issues, and explore possible compromises.¹¹⁰⁰ Importantly, mediation under the Act remains a voluntary process, meaning that any settlement reached must be based on mutual agreement rather than coercion. The mediator cannot impose a decision on the parties, thereby ensuring that resolutions are collaborative rather than imposed. Furthermore, mediators are required to disclose any conflicts of interest or prior relationships with the parties involved, and mediation can only proceed if the parties explicitly approve the mediator's involvement.

3.2.6 Enforceability

Another key provision of the Mediation Act, 2023, is the recognition and enforceability of mediated settlement agreements. A mediated settlement agreement is a written and duly signed document where the parties involved in the mediation voluntarily agree to resolve some or all of the disputes presented before the mediator. To ensure authenticity, the agreement must be verified by all parties involved and authenticated by the mediator with their signature¹¹⁰¹. This provision ensures that the outcome of mediation is formalized and legally binding, offering parties the same level of enforceability as a court decree.

The Act explicitly states that a mediated settlement agreement is final and conclusive, meaning that once an agreement is reached and executed, no further legal proceedings can be initiated on the resolved dispute. Parties can enforce the settlement under the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908, just like any other court judgment. This provision not only enhances the credibility of mediation but also provides a clear legal framework for enforcing settlements, making mediation a more viable and effective dispute resolution method.

To further strengthen the legitimacy of mediated settlements, the Act allows parties to register the agreement with an appropriate authority, such as those constituted under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987, or any other designated body notified by the central government. While registration is not mandatory, it provides additional benefits, including stronger evidence of authenticity, easy verification as part of the public record, and smoother enforcement if disputes arise regarding compliance. The Act grants a 180-day window for registering the agreement¹¹⁰², ensuring parties have ample time to take advantage of this optional safeguard.

By granting legal enforceability, ensuring authenticity, and providing an optional registration mechanism, the Mediation Act, 2023, enhances the efficiency and reliability of mediation as a formal

¹⁰⁹⁹ Ss. 15, Mediation Act, 2023.

¹¹⁰⁰ Mediation Act, 2023: Salient Features, available at: <https://www.lexology.com/library/detail.aspx?g=0abf0e56-6f5f-4bb8-a4c5-1375f4ce5974> (last visited March 11, 2025).

¹¹⁰¹ Ss. 19(3)(i), Mediation Act, 2023.

¹¹⁰² Ss. 20(2), Mediation Act, 2023.

dispute resolution process. These provisions contribute to building confidence in mediation, ensuring that settlements are not only voluntary and amicable but also legally robust and enforceable.

3.2.7 Confidentiality

Another fundamental principle upheld by the Mediation Act, 2023, is confidentiality¹¹⁰³, which ensures that the mediation process remains a secure and private avenue for dispute resolution. All participants involved in mediation—including the mediator, mediation service providers, disputing parties, and any third parties such as advocates, advisors, or experts—are legally bound to maintain confidentiality regarding all matters discussed during the proceedings. This includes any statements, admissions, evidence, or advice exchanged during mediation. Additionally, no party is permitted to record audio or video proceedings, further reinforcing the privacy of the process. This provision is essential in building trust in mediation, encouraging open discussions, and ensuring that parties feel comfortable in exploring settlement options without fear of future repercussions.

However, the Act makes an important distinction regarding the confidentiality of the mediated settlement agreement itself. While discussions during mediation remain protected, the final settlement agreement is not covered under the confidentiality clause, as it forms the basis of the terms and conditions agreed upon by the parties. This ensures transparency and enforceability once a dispute is resolved. Furthermore, the Act provides exceptions to confidentiality in cases where criminal threats, fraudulent conduct, or professional misconduct by the mediator are detected. If a mediator engages in unethical behavior or if there is mens rea (criminal intent) to commit a crime, confidentiality does not apply, allowing authorities to take appropriate action.¹¹⁰⁴

3.2.8 Termination

The Mediation Act, 2023, also provides a clear framework for the termination of mediation and the issuance of a non-settlement report. When parties successfully reach an amicable resolution through mediation and sign a mediated settlement agreement, the mediation process is deemed concluded. The mediator's authentication of the agreement ensures its legal validity and enforceability, marking the end of the mediation proceedings.

However, in cases where no resolution is possible, the Act provides a structured procedure for terminating the mediation. If, after thorough discussions, the mediator determines that further mediation efforts will not yield a settlement, they may issue a written declaration to formally terminate the mediation. Additionally, parties involved in the dispute or the mediation service provider can also initiate the termination process by submitting a written request to withdraw from mediation. Furthermore, if mediation exceeds the prescribed time limit and no agreement is reached, the Act mandates its automatic termination. In such instances, the mediator or mediation service provider must issue a non-settlement report, duly signed by all parties, to formally document the failure to reach an agreement.¹¹⁰⁵

While mediated settlement agreements generally hold binding legal status, the Act also recognizes certain challenges and limitations to their enforcement. The agreement can be challenged and set aside under specific circumstances. If fraud, bribery, or other dishonest means were used to obtain the settlement, the agreement loses its legal standing. Additionally, if a party impersonated another individual or misrepresented facts during the mediation process, the settlement can be contested. Moreover, disputes that fall outside the purview of mediation, as defined under Section 6 of the Act,

¹¹⁰³ Ss. 22, Mediation Act, 2023.

¹¹⁰⁴ Mediation Act, 2023: Salient Features, available at: <https://www.lexology.com/library/detail.aspx?g=0abf0e56-6f5f-4bb8-a4c5-1375f4ce5974> (last visited March 11, 2025).

¹¹⁰⁵ The Mediation Act 2023: India Paves The Way for a New Mediation Law, available at: <https://mediationblog.kluwerarbitration.com/2025/02/07/the-mediation-act-2023-india-paves-the-way-for-a-new-mediation-law-part-1/> (last visited March 11, 2025).

cannot be validly settled through mediation, and any agreement attempting to resolve such disputes may be declared void.

3.3. Implications of the Act

The Mediation Act, 2023, has had a significant impact on the Indian legal system by promoting mediation as a primary dispute resolution mechanism. One of the most notable effects of the Act is its influence on the judiciary. By diverting cases to mediation, the Act helps in reducing the overwhelming backlog of cases in Indian courts. With millions of cases pending at various levels of the judiciary, the adoption of mediation alleviates pressure on courts, enhances judicial efficiency, and facilitates quicker dispute resolution. This shift is expected to make the legal process more effective and accessible.¹¹⁰⁶

Beyond the judiciary, the Act also provides a substantial boost to business and investment. A predictable and effective dispute resolution mechanism is a critical factor in attracting foreign investment. By institutionalizing mediation, the Act offers businesses a reliable and structured method for resolving disputes, improving investor confidence, and enhancing India's ranking in the Ease of Doing Business Index. Investors and companies often prefer mediation over litigation due to its cost-effectiveness, confidentiality, and efficiency, making India a more attractive destination for business operations.

Another important implication of the Act is its role in the empowerment of dispute resolution. By promoting mediation as a means of resolving conflicts, the Act encourages individuals, businesses, and organizations to engage in amicable settlements rather than adversarial litigation. This fosters better relationships between disputing parties and supports the development of a mediation-centric culture in India. Unlike litigation, which is often adversarial and time-consuming, mediation provides an opportunity for constructive dialogue, preserving relationships while achieving fair resolutions.

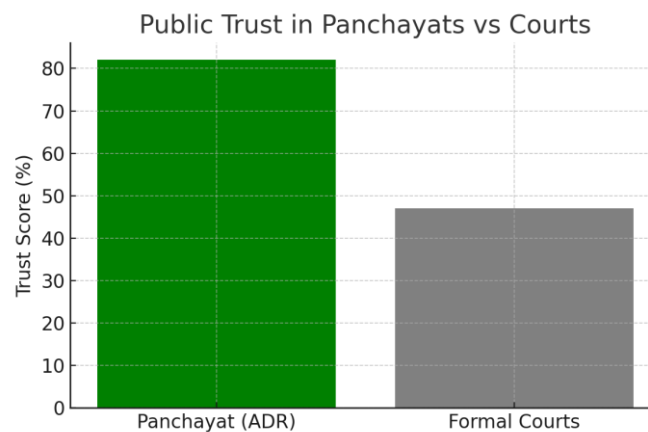
The Act also emphasizes accessibility and inclusivity in dispute resolution. Legal proceedings can be intimidating and expensive, particularly for individuals and small businesses. Mediation offers a more affordable and approachable alternative, making justice accessible to a wider population. By removing procedural complexities and creating a less formal dispute resolution environment, the Act ensures that mediation is not limited to corporate entities but is also available to individuals who may otherwise struggle to navigate the legal system.

Furthermore, the Act contributes to institutional development by fostering the establishment and expansion of mediation centres and organizations. With the professionalization of mediation practice, trained mediators and well-regulated mediation institutions will play a crucial role in ensuring the credibility and effectiveness of the mediation process. This institutional growth not only strengthens mediation as a legal practice but also promotes its adoption across various sectors of society.

The Mediation Act, 2023, thus, represents a major shift in India's approach to dispute resolution. By reducing judicial backlog, improving the business climate, empowering individuals, enhancing accessibility, and fostering institutional growth, the Act lays a strong foundation for a more efficient and conciliatory legal system. If implemented effectively, it has the potential to transform the way disputes are resolved in India, making mediation a mainstream and preferred method of dispute resolution.

Figure no. 3 – Perceived Trust in Dispute Resolution Mechanisms in Rural India

¹¹⁰⁶ The Mediation Act, 2023, available at: <https://blog.ipleaders.in/mediation-act-2023/> (last visited March 12, 2025).



Source: Rural Justice Initiative (2021). Perception Surveys on Justice Access in Indian (1985) with Explanatory Note 1–6 (United Nations 2012).

3.4 Amendments to Various Act

3.4.1 Indian Contract Act, 1872

Section 58, along with the Third Schedule of the Mediation Act, 2023, seeks to amend Section 28¹¹⁰⁷ of the Indian Contract Act from 1872. Presently, Section 28 states that any agreement which restrains parties from taking legal action is not valid. But it does allow exceptions for agreements that solve disputes through arbitration, which are explained in Exceptions 1 and 2. The change made by the Mediation Act, 2023, adds "mediation" to these exceptions. This addition means that people can now use mediation, similar to arbitration, as an acceptable method to resolve their disputes without needing to go to court.¹¹⁰⁸

3.4.2 CPC, 1908

Section 59¹¹⁰⁹, along with the Fourth Schedule of the Mediation Act, 2023, aims to alter Section 89 of the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908. The "Arbitration" sub-heading in Part V's SPECIAL PROCEEDINGS section will be removed. Section 89 of the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908 will be revised to establish a structured mediation process for resolving disputes. The Mediation Act, 2023 will apply to all Court-referred mediations.

3.4.3 Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987

Section 60, together with the Fifth Schedule of the Mediation Act, 2023, aims to amend Section 4(f) of the Legal Services Authorities Act of 1987. The Act's Section 4(f) requires the central authority to promote alternative dispute resolution (ADR) processes such as discussions, arbitration, and conciliation. The change will make mediation a recommended alternative dispute resolution option.

3.4.4 Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996

Section 61 of the Mediation Act, 2023, along with its Sixth Schedule, makes significant amendments to the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996, especially in Section 43D. These amendments are lay down different methods of dispute resolution outside of court in India.

¹¹⁰⁷ The Indian Contract, 1872. Sec 28.

¹¹⁰⁸ Mediation Act, 2023: Salient Features, available at: <https://www.lexology.com/library/detail.aspx?g=0abf0e56-6f5f-4bb8-a4c5-1375f4ce5974> (last visited March 11, 2025).

¹¹⁰⁹ The Code of Civil Procedure, 1908. Sec 59

Initially, Section 43D(1) of the Arbitration and Conciliation Act required the Arbitration Council of India to promote arbitration, mediation, and conciliation as key methods for settling disputes. However, with the new Mediation Act, 2023, the words "mediation" and "conciliation" are removed from this section. This shift means that the task of promoting and overseeing mediation now belongs to a newly established group called the Mediation Council of India. This move is intended to focus more on and better manage mediation, keeping it distinct from arbitration and conciliation.

Moreover, in Section 43D(2), certain parts that previously included "conciliation" with "arbitration" now exclude "conciliation." This change is deliberate to separate the organizational and promotional duties of these different processes. Each process is now to be better managed and understood, being overseen by the appropriate specialized body.

These legislative updates aim to streamline and strengthen dispute resolution in India. By assigning specific duties to specialized bodies, the legal system seeks to make resolving disputes more effective, alleviate the burden on courts, and encourage peaceful settlement of conflicts. The amendments to Section 43D are a crucial part of this initiative, paving the way for a more efficient and organized system for resolving disputes.

3.4.5 Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development Act, 2006

Section 62, together with the 7th Schedule of the Mediation Act, 2023, aims to alter Section 18 of the MSMED Act, 2006. Section 18 of the MSMED Act outlines the method for seeking settlement through the Facilitation Council. The modified laws allow either party to refer a dispute over a monetary claim to the Facilitation Council. When a reference is received, the Council will either conduct mediation procedures or refer the issue to a mediation service provider under the Mediation Act, 2023.

3.4.6 Companies Act, 2013

Section 63, along with the Eighth Schedule of the Mediation Act, 2023, aims to alter Section 442 of the Companies Act, 2013. Section 442 amends the process of referring a dispute to mediation, which is governed by the Mediation Act 2023.

3.4.7 Commercial Courts Act, 2015

Section 64, together with the Ninth Schedule of the Mediation Act, 2023, aims to amend Section 12A of the Commercial Courts Act of 2015. The heading for Chapter III A and Section 12 A of the Commercial Courts Act, 2015 is suggested to alter from "Pre-Institution Mediation and Settlement" to "Pre-Litigation Mediation and Settlement."

3.4.8 Consumer Protection Act, 2019

Section 65, along with the Tenth Schedule of the Mediation Act, 2023, aims to reform the Consumer Protection Act, 2019. The substituted Section 37 states: "the District Commission or State Commission or the National Commission, as the case may be, shall either on an application by the parties at any stage of proceedings refer the disputes for settlement by mediation under the Mediation Act, 2023."

3.5 Drawbacks and Challenges

The Mediation Act of 2023 marks an important move for India to improve dispute resolution process. However, some problems within the Act may affect its success and its ability to meet international standards.

A major issue is that the Act does not include the Singapore Convention on Mediation. Although India was an early supporter of this Convention, which helps with enforcing mediated agreements across borders, the Act does not incorporate its guidelines. The Indian government explains this by saying the Convention is still new and not widely accepted globally. Yet, without these guidelines, it can be

difficult to enforce international mediation agreements in India, which might discourage foreign parties from entering into mediation with Indian entities. The Act also narrowly defines international mediation, applying only to mediations conducted within India. This means if the mediation happens outside India, it isn't covered by the Act, making it harder to enforce such international agreements and adding uncertainty to cross-border dispute resolutions.

The Act excludes certain disputes from mediation, such as criminal offenses. While this makes sense for serious crimes, it overlooks the potential for mediation to resolve lesser criminal cases, which could reduce burdens on the legal system by resolving minor offenses amicably.

Another concern is the definition of "party" in mediation. It is limited to those directly involved, excluding others who might be crucial for a complete resolution. This could lead to agreements that are incomplete or unenforceable due to missing consent from necessary parties.

The Mediation Council of India is expected to oversee mediation practices. However, it mostly consists of government appointees, lacking sufficient representation from seasoned mediators. This structure contrasts with independent professional bodies like the Bar Council of India. Without adequate expert involvement, the Council may face difficulties in effectively regulating mediation practices.

The Act permits courts to issue temporary protective orders during mediation. Unlike the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, it does not detail what these orders should include or how soon mediation should start after these orders. This lack of specifics can lead to varied interpretations and potential misuse of these interim measures.

Sections 43 and 44, which discuss community mediation, lack clarity. Vague criteria like "standing" or "societal contribution" determine mediator selection, limiting parties' choice and possibly resulting in the appointment of unqualified or biased individuals.

The Act imposes strict rules on challenging mediated settlements. Challenges can only be based on grounds such as fraud, impersonation, or corruption, and must be filed within 180 days of receiving the settlement. This deadline may be too short, especially if issues become apparent later, thus denying parties the chance to challenge problematic settlements.

Finally, the Act does not provide clear procedures for assessing mediators' independence and impartiality. While it requires mediators to be neutral and fair, it lacks specific processes to ensure these qualities. In contrast, the Arbitration and Conciliation Act offers precise guidelines for evaluating arbitrators, building trust in the system. Without similar provisions in the Mediation Act, confidence in mediator neutrality may be undermined.

Table no. 3 – Key Challenges to ADR Implementation in India

Challenge	Explanation
Lack of awareness	Limited understanding of ADR among the public
Judicial reluctance	Some judges prefer adjudication over ADR
Infrastructural gaps	Insufficient mediation centres and arbitrators
Enforcement issues	Difficulty enforcing mediated outcomes
Training deficit	Inadequate formal training for

	mediators/arbitrators

Source: Law Commission of India, Report No. 245: Strengthening ADR Mechanisms in India (Ministry of Law & Justice 2014).

3.6 Conclusion

The Mediation Act, 2023, marks a significant milestone in India's ADR landscape, providing a structured and enforceable mechanism for mediation. By distinguishing mediation from conciliation and arbitration, the Act aims to enhance its credibility and usage. While it is expected to reduce litigation burdens and improve access to justice, successful implementation will require robust training, institutional support, and public awareness. Continuous evaluation and refinement of the Act will be essential in ensuring its effectiveness in resolving disputes efficiently and amicably.

CHAPTER 4: LANDMARK JUDGMENTS SHAPING MEDIATION JURISPRUDENCE IN INDIA

4.1 M.R. Krishna Murthi v. New India Assurance Co. Ltd. (2019)¹¹¹⁰

In the landmark case of M.R. Krishna Murthi v. New India Assurance Co. Ltd. (2020), the Supreme Court underscored the necessity of a robust mediation framework to alleviate the burden on courts and facilitate efficient dispute resolution. This judgment aimed to instill progressive thinking and reinforce the significance of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanisms in expediting the resolution of disputes. The Supreme Court's recommendations were designed to reduce the hardship that victims endure due to the protracted judicial process and inadequacies in policy implementation.

The case primarily revolved around the appellant, who had suffered injuries leading to a disability. The Supreme Court, after scrutinizing various precedents, emphasized that courts must consider the victim's future prospects when determining compensation for loss of future income. The Court acknowledged that while the appellant was currently practicing as a lawyer, his earning potential was constrained due to the impairment, placing him at a disadvantage compared to his contemporaries. This consideration was crucial in ensuring just compensation that factored in the long-term impact of the disability.

The Court deliberated on the computation of loss of future income, eventually deciding to enhance the compensation amount. Initially, the future income loss was assessed at Rs.2000 per month. However, upon recognizing the limitations imposed on the appellant's professional growth, the Court revised this figure to Rs.5000 per month. Applying a multiplier of 18 to this revised amount, the total compensation granted to the appellant was calculated at Rs.10,80,000/-. This adjustment was significant as it set a precedent for acknowledging the broader implications of disability on an individual's career trajectory and financial stability.

Beyond the financial aspects, the Supreme Court's judgment carried substantial implications for the broader legal landscape concerning dispute resolution. The Court's emphasis on mediation and ADR mechanisms indicated a shift towards reducing litigation burdens and promoting alternative avenues for resolving disputes efficiently. The ruling recognized that lengthy court procedures often exacerbate the suffering of victims, prolonging their financial and emotional distress. By advocating for a more structured and effective mediation framework, the judgment reinforced the need for institutional reforms that would enhance access to justice while alleviating congestion in the judicial system.

¹¹¹⁰ M.R. Krishna Murthi v. New India Assurance Co. Ltd., [2019] 3 S.C.R. 1088

The case also served as a reminder of the necessity for a victim-centric approach in adjudicating compensation claims. The Court's nuanced evaluation of the appellant's professional limitations underscored the importance of contextual assessments in determining fair compensation. This approach reflects an evolving jurisprudence that prioritizes equitable relief and acknowledges the real-world implications of judicial determinations on individuals' lives.

The decision in *M.R. Krishna Murthi v. New India Assurance Co. Ltd.* (2020) thus holds considerable significance in multiple dimensions. It not only set a precedent in compensation jurisprudence but also reaffirmed the judiciary's commitment to strengthening ADR mechanisms as a viable alternative to conventional litigation. By doing so, the Supreme Court reinforced the need for legal frameworks that balance efficiency with fairness, ultimately ensuring that justice is accessible and responsive to the needs of those who seek it.

4.2 K. Srinivas Rao v. D.A. Deepa (2013)¹¹¹¹

In the case of *K. Srinivas Rao v. D.A. Deepa* (2013), the dispute arose from a deeply contentious divorce battle between a husband and wife. The case involved allegations of cruelty under Section 498A of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), a provision that criminalizes cruelty against a married woman by her husband or his relatives. Given the emotionally charged nature of such cases, the legal proceedings had become adversarial, intensifying stress for both parties involved.

A significant question before the **Supreme Court** was whether **mediation could serve as an effective mechanism** for resolving matrimonial disputes and reducing the emotional and financial strain associated with prolonged litigation. The Court recognized that family disputes often escalate due to **miscommunication, misunderstandings, and the rigid stance of parties**, making litigation an exhausting and sometimes counterproductive process.

In its ruling, the Supreme Court strongly advocated for mediation as a **preferable alternative to adversarial litigation** in family matters. It stressed that courts should actively encourage mediation in matrimonial cases, as it offers a more **amicable and less confrontational method** of dispute resolution. The judgment underscored the **importance of reconciliation** in family disputes and directed lower courts to promote mediation, particularly in cases where there is a possibility of salvaging relationships or reaching mutually acceptable settlements. This ruling reinforced the role of **court-annexed mediation centres** in handling sensitive matrimonial conflicts, recognizing that a structured mediation process could help parties **communicate effectively, reduce hostility, and find common ground** without escalating conflicts through prolonged court battles.¹¹¹²

4.3 Vidya Drolia v. Durga Trading Corporation (2020)¹¹¹³

The case of *Vidya Drolia v. Durga Trading Corporation* (2020) was a significant judgment by the Supreme Court of India that addressed the concept of arbitrability of disputes, particularly concerning landlord-tenant conflicts under the Transfer of Property Act (TPA). The case dealt with the fundamental question of whether disputes related to tenancy could be resolved through arbitration or if they were exclusively triable by civil courts or special forums. The ruling aimed to establish a clear framework for determining when a matter can be referred to arbitration and when it falls within the domain of judicial courts.

The dispute arose when Durga Trading Corporation sought to evict Vidya Drolia from a rented property. The lease agreement between the parties contained an arbitration clause, and the respondent sought to enforce it to resolve the dispute outside the regular court system. Vidya Drolia,

¹¹¹¹ *K. Srinivas Rao v. D.A. Deepa*, AIR 2013 SUPREME COURT 2176

¹¹¹² Civil Appeal No. 1794 of 2013 Arising out of Special Leave Petition (Civil) No. 4782 of 2007 Case: *K. Srinivas Rao Vs D. A. Deepa*. Supreme Court (India), available at: <https://vlex.in/vid/k-srinivas-rao-vs-571663510> (last visited March 11, 2025).

¹¹¹³ *Vidya Drolia v. Durga Trading Corporation*, AIR 2019 SUPREME COURT 3498.

on the other hand, contended that tenancy matters, being governed by the TPA, were non-arbitrable due to the statutory protections granted to tenants. The case eventually reached the Supreme Court, which was tasked with resolving whether the arbitration clause in a tenancy agreement was valid and enforceable under the law.

In its judgment, the Supreme Court revisited the principles laid down in previous cases such as *Booz Allen & Hamilton Inc. v. SBI Home Finance Ltd.*¹¹¹⁴ and *Himangni Enterprises v. Kamaljeet Singh Ahluwalia*¹¹¹⁵. These cases had previously established that disputes involving special statutes that confer exclusive jurisdiction on particular courts could not be arbitrated. The Court examined the interplay between the rights of landlords and tenants under the TPA and the broader principles of arbitrability in India.

A key contribution of this case was the establishment of a fourfold test to determine the arbitrability of disputes. The test considered whether the dispute was a right in rem or a right in personam, whether it related to an inalienable sovereign function of the state, whether it was expressly or impliedly non-arbitrable under the law, and whether the subject matter of the dispute affected third-party rights or public interest. Applying this test, the Supreme Court held that tenancy disputes governed by the TPA were arbitrable unless they were covered under rent control legislations that provided exclusive jurisdiction to specific forums.

The Court also addressed the issue of who has the authority to decide arbitrability under Section 8 and Section 11 of the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996. It ruled that the role of courts at the referral stage is limited but not entirely mechanical. Courts must conduct a prima facie examination to determine whether an arbitration agreement exists and whether the dispute falls within its scope. This marked a shift from earlier judgments that suggested courts should refer matters to arbitration with minimal scrutiny.

The decision in *Vidya Drolia v. Durga Trading Corporation* reaffirmed India's pro-arbitration stance while maintaining judicial oversight in cases where statutory rights and public policy considerations were involved. The ruling clarified that unless there is an express statutory bar or the dispute is of such a nature that it cannot be resolved privately, arbitration should be encouraged as a means of dispute resolution. By doing so, the Supreme Court struck a balance between upholding contractual freedom and ensuring that statutory protections are not circumvented through arbitration clauses.

4.4 Vikram Bakshi v. Connaught Plaza Restaurants Ltd. (2019)¹¹¹⁶

The case of *Vikram Bakshi v. Connaught Plaza Restaurants Ltd. (2019)* was a significant corporate dispute that emphasized the role of mediation in resolving high-stakes commercial conflicts. The dispute arose between Vikram Bakshi, the Indian joint venture partner of McDonald's India, and the global fast-food giant. The conflict stemmed from disagreements over the management and ownership of Connaught Plaza Restaurants Ltd. (CPRL), the entity responsible for operating McDonald's outlets in northern and eastern India. What began as a business partnership eventually turned into a prolonged legal battle, leading to multiple litigations in different forums.

Vikram Bakshi was the managing director of CPRL until McDonald's decided not to re-elect him in 2013. This decision led to a breakdown in relations between the parties, with Bakshi challenging his removal and alleging that McDonald's was attempting to oust him from the business unfairly. The dispute escalated, with Bakshi taking the matter to the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT), accusing McDonald's of oppression and mismanagement. In response, McDonald's terminated its franchise

¹¹¹⁴ *Booz Allen & Hamilton v. SBI Home Finance* (2011) 5 SCC 532

¹¹¹⁵ *Himangni Enterprises v. Kamaljeet Singh Ahluwalia*, (2017) 10 SCC 706

¹¹¹⁶ *Vikram Bakshi v. Connaught Plaza Restaurants Ltd.*, [2017] 140 CLA 142

agreement with CPRL in 2017, further complicating the situation as it effectively stripped CPRL of its rights to operate McDonald's outlets in the region.

The conflict had severe business implications, with multiple McDonald's outlets shutting down due to legal uncertainty. Customers and employees were caught in the crossfire as the standoff prolonged. Given the complexity of the dispute, which involved corporate governance, contractual obligations, and brand control, the key question that emerged was whether mediation could serve as an effective tool to resolve such high-profile corporate conflicts. Traditionally, corporate disputes of this nature tend to be litigated over years, leading to financial losses and reputational damage for both parties. Mediation, however, offered a potentially quicker and less adversarial resolution.

Recognizing the prolonged nature of the dispute and its wider impact, the Delhi High Court referred the matter to mediation. The decision was a pivotal moment in Indian corporate dispute resolution, as it signalled judicial encouragement for alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, even in cases involving multinational corporations and significant financial stakes. The mediation process allowed both parties to negotiate privately and find a mutually agreeable solution without engaging in further adversarial litigation.

Through mediation, McDonald's and Vikram Bakshi reached a settlement in 2019. As part of the resolution, McDonald's agreed to buy out Bakshi's stake in CPRL, thereby regaining full control over its operations in northern and eastern India. This agreement brought an end to the long-drawn legal battle and enabled McDonald's to restructure its operations in the region. The settlement also highlighted the advantages of mediation in corporate disputes, demonstrating that even deeply contentious conflicts could be resolved amicably with the right negotiation framework.

The successful mediation in this case served as a precedent for future corporate disputes, reinforcing the idea that high-profile commercial disagreements need not always be settled through litigation. The case showcased how mediation could offer a pragmatic and efficient solution, reducing costs, saving time, and preserving business relationships where possible. It also illustrated that courts are willing to endorse mediation as a viable dispute resolution method, particularly in cases where prolonged litigation could harm business continuity and stakeholder interests.

4.5 B.S. Krishnamurthy v. B.S. Nagaraj¹¹¹⁷ (2010)

The case of B.S. Krishnamurthy v. B.S. Nagaraj (2010) revolved around a long-standing family dispute involving matrimonial issues, particularly divorce and property-related conflicts. The matter had been in litigation for a considerable period, with both parties entangled in legal battles that had strained their relationship and prolonged the resolution of their grievances. Given the sensitive nature of the dispute, the Supreme Court was faced with the question of whether mediation could serve as an effective alternative to conventional litigation in such family matters.

The case highlighted the inherent complexities that arise in matrimonial and property disputes within families. Legal proceedings in such cases often exacerbate emotional distress, making it difficult for the parties involved to arrive at a constructive resolution. Courts, while bound by legal principles, often recognize the importance of alternative dispute resolution mechanisms in cases where emotions run high and relationships need to be preserved. In this context, the Supreme Court sought to explore the potential of mediation as a viable solution to mitigate the adversarial nature of litigation and facilitate an amicable settlement.

The Supreme Court, in its judgment, underscored the significance of mediation in resolving family disputes. The Court observed that matrimonial conflicts, particularly those involving divorce and

¹¹¹⁷ B.S. Krishnamurthy v. B.S. Nagaraj, AIR 2011 SUPREME COURT 794

property division, often become more complicated when handled through prolonged litigation. Legal battles tend to deepen animosities between the parties, making reconciliation difficult and leading to irreversible damage to familial relationships. The adversarial process, by its very nature, positions the parties as opponents, often resulting in a zero-sum game where one party's gain is perceived as the other's loss. The Court recognized that mediation, on the other hand, provides a platform for dialogue, allowing the parties to communicate their grievances and negotiate a mutually acceptable solution.

Encouraging the parties to resolve their differences through mediation, the Supreme Court emphasized that this method could not only save time and legal costs but also preserve relationships that might otherwise be permanently severed by litigation. Mediation allows for a more flexible and informal approach, where solutions are tailored to the specific needs and concerns of the parties rather than being dictated by rigid legal frameworks. By fostering a spirit of compromise and mutual understanding, mediation can help families navigate disputes with a greater degree of sensitivity and cooperation.

The judgment also reinforced the growing recognition of mediation as a crucial tool in the Indian legal system. While courts remain the ultimate arbiters of legal disputes, there is a conscious effort to promote alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, particularly in cases where personal relationships are at stake. The Supreme Court's endorsement of mediation in this case aligned with its broader objective of reducing the burden on the judiciary and ensuring that justice is delivered in a manner that prioritizes reconciliation over confrontation.

CHAPTER 5: COMPARATIVE STUDY OF MEDIATION LAWS – INDIA AND GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

5.1 Introduction

Intellectual property disputes present unique challenges that traditional litigation often struggles to address effectively. Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanisms—including arbitration, mediation, and conciliation—have emerged as valuable tools in resolving IP conflicts, offering confidentiality, expertise, cost-efficiency, and flexibility that court proceedings typically cannot match. As IP assets become increasingly central to global commerce, finding efficient resolution pathways has become paramount for businesses and creators alike.

This comparative analysis examines how ADR systems for IP disputes function across leading jurisdictions such as the United States, European Union, and Singapore, contrasting them with India's evolving framework. By exploring these international models, we can identify structural elements, procedural innovations, and policy approaches that have proven successful in addressing the specialized nature of IP conflicts. Each jurisdiction has developed distinctive responses to common challenges, creating a rich tapestry of approaches from which valuable insights can be drawn.

For India, at a crucial juncture in its IP development, studying these international best practices is particularly timely. Despite significant advances in its IP protection regime, India continues to face challenges in dispute resolution efficiency, especially concerning specialized matters like patent infringement, trademark conflicts, and copyright disputes. The current system, while improving, often results in lengthy proceedings that undermine the time-sensitive nature of many IP assets.

International jurisdictions have pioneered specialized institutions, developed IP-specific ADR protocols, and created supportive judicial frameworks that merit careful examination. These models offer practical lessons on balancing public interest with private rights, ensuring enforcement of ADR outcomes, and developing specialized expertise—all critical issues for India's evolving system.

By assessing what has worked effectively elsewhere and understanding the contextual factors behind successful implementations, India can develop a more robust ADR framework tailored to its unique legal culture and economic needs. This approach allows for informed adaptation rather than wholesale importation of foreign systems, recognizing that effective reform must be grounded in local realities while drawing inspiration from global excellence.

Through this comparative lens, it becomes easy to identify strategic pathways for India to enhance its IP dispute resolution mechanisms, ultimately strengthening its position in the knowledge economy while providing creators and innovators with the efficient protection they require.

5.2 USA

The United States has developed one of the most sophisticated alternative dispute resolution frameworks for intellectual property disputes globally, with institutional backing and judicial support that has evolved over decades. The American Arbitration Association (AAA) stands as a cornerstone institution in this landscape, offering specialized protocols tailored to the unique challenges presented by intellectual property conflicts. Established in 1926, the AAA has refined its approach to IP disputes through its International Centre for Dispute Resolution (ICDR), which administers both domestic and international cases involving patents, trademarks, copyrights, and trade secrets.

The AAA's specialized IP protocols address the distinctive nature of these disputes by offering parties flexibility in selecting arbitrators with subject-matter expertise—a critical factor when disputes involve complex technical or scientific questions. These protocols provide streamlined procedures for different categories of IP disputes, including expedited procedures for time-sensitive matters like injunctive relief in trademark infringement cases. The AAA maintains a roster of specialized neutrals with backgrounds spanning various IP disciplines and industries, ensuring that decision-makers possess the technical understanding necessary for informed resolution.¹¹¹⁸

Beyond procedural rules, the AAA has implemented innovative approaches to discovery in IP arbitration, balancing the need for adequate information disclosure with efficiency concerns. Its protocols typically limit document production and deposition requirements compared to federal litigation, while still ensuring parties can access necessary evidence. This approach has proven particularly valuable in patent disputes where the costs of discovery in conventional litigation can be expensive. The AAA also offers emergency arbitrator provisions, allowing parties to seek urgent interim measures without waiting for a full tribunal to be constituted—a feature increasingly important in fast-moving IP markets where time-to-resolution directly impacts business value.

The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) Arbitration and Mediation Center has established a significant presence in the United States, complementing the AAA's services with its international expertise. While headquartered in Geneva, WIPO maintains operations in the U.S. and administers numerous IP disputes involving American parties. WIPO's specialized focus on intellectual property gives it particular credibility in handling complex cross-border IP matters. Its rules were specifically designed for IP and technology disputes, with provisions addressing confidentiality and technical evidence that are particularly relevant to innovative industries.

WIPO's U.S. operations have gained traction through collaboration with American industry associations, particularly in sectors like biotechnology, pharmaceuticals, and entertainment. These partnerships have helped standardize ADR clauses in IP licensing agreements and research collaborations. WIPO has also developed specialized procedures for specific IP contexts, such as its Film and Media Mediation procedure and its expedited arbitration rules for FRAND (Fair, Reasonable,

¹¹¹⁸ S. I. Strong, "Navigating the Borders between International Commercial Arbitration and U.S. Federal Courts," *Journal of Dispute Resolution* (2012).

and Non-Discriminatory) licensing disputes in standard-essential patents—an area of increasing importance in telecommunications and electronics sectors.

The judicial attitude toward ADR in IP disputes has evolved significantly in the United States. Federal courts increasingly recognize and enforce arbitration agreements in IP contexts, even in areas once considered non-arbitrable. The U.S. Supreme Court has consistently upheld the enforceability of arbitration clauses, establishing a strong pro-arbitration policy. In landmark cases like *Mitsubishi Motors v. Soler Chrysler-Plymouth*¹¹¹⁹, the Court established that even antitrust claims—which often involve IP elements—could be subject to arbitration. This judicial support extends to enforcement of arbitral awards, with courts generally limiting their review to procedural fairness rather than substantive outcomes.

However, certain limitations remain regarding the arbitrability of IP disputes in the United States. While infringement and licensing disputes are widely accepted as arbitrable, questions about patent validity have presented more complex jurisdictional questions. Courts have generally held that while arbitrators may rule on patent validity for purposes of the dispute between parties, such determinations do not bind the Patent and Trademark Office or third parties.¹¹²⁰ This approach balances respect for party autonomy with protection of the public interest in patent quality.

Enforcement mechanisms for ADR outcomes in IP disputes benefit from the comprehensive legal framework provided by the Federal Arbitration Act and state arbitration laws. U.S. courts routinely enforce arbitral awards in IP disputes, including orders for specific performance, royalty payments, and confidentiality protections. The New York Convention further strengthens enforcement of international awards, making the United States an attractive venue for global IP dispute resolution. Judicial willingness to enforce emergency arbitrator decisions and interim measures has proven particularly valuable in rapidly evolving IP disputes where immediate relief from infringement may be critical.

The U.S. system is not without challenges, particularly regarding the interface between private ADR proceedings and public interest in certain IP determinations. Nevertheless, the sophisticated framework established through institutions like the AAA and WIPO, combined with supportive judicial attitudes, has created a robust ecosystem for resolving IP disputes outside traditional courts. This system continues to evolve, with recent innovations including specialized pharmaceutical patent arbitration procedures and increased use of online dispute resolution technologies, ensuring the U.S. remains at the forefront of efficient IP dispute resolution.

5.3 Singapore

Singapore has become an important player in solving international disputes by improving its systems for arbitration and mediation. The Singapore International Arbitration Centre (SIAC) plays a key role in this success, gaining global recognition for being efficient, neutral, and well-supported by the law. Supporting SIAC is the Singapore Convention on Mediation, introduced in 2019, marking a significant step in ensuring international mediation agreements are recognized and enforced.

Since starting in 1991, SIAC has grown into a top institution for managing international commercial arbitration. It is known for being fair, efficient, and committed to upholding the law. SIAC's rules are designed to handle the complex nature of disputes between countries, offering parties a trustworthy way to resolve conflicts outside traditional courts. The diverse range of cases SIAC handles from around the globe emphasizes its status as a trusted venue for dispute resolution¹¹²¹.

¹¹¹⁹ *Mitsubishi Motors Corp. v. Soler Chrysler-Plymouth, Inc.*, 473 U.S. 614 (1985)

¹¹²⁰ S. I. Strong, “Navigating the Borders between International Commercial Arbitration and U.S. Federal Courts,” *Journal of Dispute Resolution* (2012).

¹¹²¹ Alternatives to trial, available at: <https://www.judiciary.gov.sg/alternatives-to-trial> (last visited Apr 3, 2025).

The Singapore Convention on Mediation, officially the United Nations Convention on International Settlement Agreements Resulting from Mediation, represents a major advancement in alternative dispute resolution. Adopted in late 2018 and open for signature in 2019, it provides a standard method to enforce international mediation agreements. This is crucial as previously, enforcing these agreements across borders was challenging. By offering a standardized approach, the Convention enhances the reliability and predictability of mediation compared to court cases and arbitration.

SIAC and the Singapore Convention work together, illustrating Singapore's comprehensive approach to dispute resolution. SIAC offers a structured format for arbitration, while the Convention encourages mediation, which focuses on cooperation and mutual agreement. This dual system accommodates the various needs of international parties, offering flexibility in choosing the best method to resolve disputes.¹¹²² Additionally, Singapore's legal framework supports this strategy, with courts that honor the outcomes of both arbitration and mediation.

Singapore demonstrates its commitment to creating a favorable environment for dispute resolution by continuously refining its legal frameworks. By adopting international conventions and investing in institutions like SIAC, Singapore establishes itself as a leader in the global dispute resolution arena. This strategic focus benefits international parties seeking reliable conflict resolution methods while reinforcing Singapore's reputation for legal excellence and innovation.¹¹²³

Singapore's legal system provides robust support for ADR in IP disputes through several key mechanisms. The Arbitration Act and International Arbitration Act establish clear rules for arbitral proceedings and enforcement, with specific provisions addressing the arbitrability of IP disputes. The Mediation Act enhances the status of mediated settlements by providing mechanisms for their enforcement as court orders. Singapore courts consistently demonstrate a pro-arbitration stance, respecting the autonomy of arbitral tribunals and limiting intervention to situations of procedural irregularity or public policy concerns. The Intellectual Property Office of Singapore (IPOS) works in conjunction with ADR institutions, offering streamlined pathways from administrative proceedings to mediation or arbitration.

Several factors have contributed to Singapore's emergence as the preferred destination for IP dispute resolution in Asia. Singapore's strategic geographic location and central position in Southeast Asia makes it accessible to parties throughout the region and beyond. Singapore's reputation for political neutrality and independence inspires confidence among international parties seeking a fair venue. The prevalence of English alongside various Asian languages facilitates proceedings involving parties from diverse linguistic backgrounds. Purpose-built facilities like Maxwell Chambers provide state-of-the-art hearing venues specifically designed for international arbitration and mediation. The establishment of the Singapore International Commercial Court with IP expertise offers another forum that complements the ADR ecosystem.

Singapore's sophisticated approach to ADR for IP disputes represents a thoughtful integration of specialized institutions, customized protocols, and supportive legal frameworks. By addressing the unique characteristics of IP conflicts through tailored dispute resolution mechanisms, Singapore has created an environment where complex IP disputes can be resolved efficiently, confidentially, and with technical precision. The synergy between SIAC's specialized arbitration protocols, SMC's relationship-preserving mediation approach, and the overarching legal framework demonstrates Singapore's commitment to providing comprehensive solutions for IP dispute resolution. As

¹¹²² Harmony as Ideology, Culture, and Control: Alternative Dispute Resolution in Singapore, available at: <https://search.informit.org/doi/pdf/10.3316/informit.809657906830068> (last visited Apr 2, 2025).

¹¹²³ About the Alternative Dispute Resolution (“ADR”) Scheme, available at: <https://www.imda.gov.sg/infocomm-regulation-and-guides/infocomm-regulation/alternative-dispute-resolution> (last visited Apr 2, 2025).

intellectual property continues to grow in economic importance globally, Singapore's established position as Asia's premier IP ADR hub offers valuable reassurance to businesses and innovators seeking predictable and effective means of protecting their intellectual assets.

Ultimately, Singapore's approach in integrating arbitration and mediation—exemplified by the prominence of SIAC and the adoption of the Singapore Convention—underlines its status as a forward-looking jurisdiction in international dispute resolution. By providing strong, efficient, and enforceable ways to solve cross-border disputes, Singapore sets a standard for other nations aiming to enhance their dispute resolution frameworks and attract international business.

5.4 Australia

Over the past several decades, Australia's legal system has seen major changes, with Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) now playing a key role. This shift aims to make justice more accessible, cut down on court costs, and encourage friendly settlements instead of courtroom battles.¹¹²⁴

Australia's use of ADR dates back to the early 1900s, especially when the Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration was set up in 1904. This court was important for resolving disputes between workers and employers, which helped establish a culture that prefers negotiated solutions over legal fights.¹¹²⁵

Interest in informal dispute resolution grew in the 1970s. Courts began recognizing the benefits of ADR and started incorporating it into the legal process. By the 1990s, ADR, including mediation and case reviews, became more common in court. Courts could refer cases to ADR without both parties agreeing first, helping to clear the backlog of cases waiting for trial.

A key development was the Family Law Reform Act of 1995, which emphasized mediation in family disputes, especially for child custody after separation. This law promoted trying mediation before going to court to create a less confrontational process. Amendments in 2006 required serious efforts to settle disputes before court, except in cases of risks like family or child abuse.

To ensure mediation is done well, the National Mediator Accreditation System (NMAS) was launched in 2008, setting standards for mediator training and practice. The Mediator Standards Board monitors this, ensuring uniform professional standards across Australia. The upcoming Australian Mediator and Dispute Resolution Accreditation Standards (AMDRAS) in 2024 will further enhance mediation quality.

Australian courts have adopted ADR to varying degrees. The Supreme Court of New South Wales, for instance, uses ADR in civil litigation by often referring matters to mediation. The Family Court of Australia also provides ADR services like conciliation and counseling to help resolve disputes.¹¹²⁶

Australia has developed a robust alternative dispute resolution framework for intellectual property matters that emphasizes efficiency and specialized expertise. The Federal Court of Australia, which has jurisdiction over most IP disputes, actively encourages ADR through its practice directions and case management procedures. The court offers court-annexed mediation services with registrars who possess IP expertise, while also referring parties to private mediators when appropriate. IP Australia, the government body responsible for administering intellectual property rights, provides mediation and other ADR services for trademark opposition proceedings and patent disputes through its Hearing Office. The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) Arbitration and Mediation Centre also maintains a presence in Australia, offering specialized neutral services for technology and IP disputes. Australia's legal framework supports these ADR mechanisms through the Civil Dispute

¹¹²⁴ Alternative dispute resolution, available at: <https://www.ag.gov.au/legal-system/alternative-dispute-resolution> (last visited Apr 3, 2025).

¹¹²⁵ Alternative Dispute Resolution (ACT, NT, QLD, SA, TAS, or WA), available at: <https://justiceconnect.org.au/resources/alternative-dispute-resolution-vic-2/> (last visited Apr 2, 2025).

¹¹²⁶ Assisted Dispute Resolution, available at: <https://www.fedcourt.gov.au/services/ADR> (last visited Apr 2, 2025).

Resolution Act 2011, which requires parties to take genuine steps to resolve disputes before commencing litigation. This comprehensive approach has resulted in a high settlement rate for IP disputes before trial, with Australian courts recognizing and enforcing both domestic and international arbitration awards related to intellectual property matters.

Nevertheless, Australia's experience with ADR offers valuable insights for other countries. It demonstrates how ADR can reduce court caseloads, lower costs, and encourage collaborative problem-solving. Ensuring mediators meet high standards also adds credibility.

Countries like India, exploring better dispute resolution methods, can learn from Australia's path. Strong laws, proper infrastructure, and maintaining professional standards are crucial for promoting ADR. By leveraging Australia's successes and understanding its challenges, other nations can tailor solutions to fit their legal and cultural contexts, making justice more accessible and effective.

5.5 European Union

The development of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanisms in the United Kingdom and the European Union represents a significant evolution in addressing intellectual property disputes outside traditional court settings. Since the early 1990s, when the UK established its first family and community mediation centres, ADR practices have expanded substantially to encompass specialized approaches for resolving complex IP conflicts.¹¹²⁷ This evolution gained meaningful momentum following Lord Woolf's landmark "Access to Justice" report in 1996, which advocated for mediation as a preliminary step before litigation and emphasized that court proceedings should be considered only as a last resort. This philosophical shift has had profound implications for how intellectual property disputes are conceptualized and resolved throughout both jurisdictions.¹¹²⁸

The UK's advancement of ADR for IP disputes has been characterized by progressive institutional development and legislative support. While initial ADR efforts focused primarily on family law matters, as evidenced by the Family Law Act of 1996, the principles established—mandatory mediation attempts preceding court representation—provided an important template for subsequent expansion into intellectual property conflicts.¹¹²⁹ The establishment of quality standards for ADR practitioners by the Lord Chancellor in 1999, focusing on training, transparency, and accessibility, laid further groundwork for specialized IP mediators and arbitrators. These professional standards have proven particularly important in IP contexts, where technical complexity and industry-specific knowledge are often prerequisites for effective dispute resolution.

Intellectual property disputes in the UK benefit significantly from the framework established by the Tribunals, Courts and Enforcement Act of 2007, which introduced alternative channels for resolving disputes involving governmental bodies. This legislation has been particularly relevant for patent and trademark oppositions involving the UK Intellectual Property Office, offering streamlined procedures that avoid the time and expense of traditional litigation. The Act's influence on First-tier Tribunals has created more flexible pathways for addressing administrative aspects of IP disputes, including registration challenges and opposition proceedings. These mechanisms represent a practical acknowledgment that not all IP conflicts require full judicial intervention, and many can be resolved through more targeted and specialized processes.

The application of Med-Arb techniques has gained particular traction in UK intellectual property disputes. This hybrid approach, where parties first attempt mediation and subsequently move to arbitration if necessary, offers IP rights holders a graduated response to conflicts. The process begins

¹¹²⁷ Kimberley Chen Nobles, "Emerging Issues and Trends in International Arbitration," 43(5) California Western International Law Journal (2012).

¹¹²⁸ Lhuillier, Julien, "The quality of penal mediation in Europe," Strasbourg, Council of Europe, European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice, Working Group on Mediation (2007).

¹¹²⁹ Liebmann and Marian, "History and Overview of Mediation in the UK," *Mediation in context* (2000)

with the collaborative problem-solving environment of mediation, which can preserve business relationships and enable creative licensing solutions. If mediation proves unsuccessful, the matter advances to arbitration, where a neutral third party with IP expertise renders a binding decision. This approach has proven especially valuable for technology licensing disputes, cross-border trademark conflicts, and patent infringement cases where maintaining confidentiality is paramount.

The UK Arbitration Act of 1996 provides robust support for arbitration of IP disputes by emphasizing party autonomy, procedural flexibility, and limited court intervention. These principles align well with the needs of IP stakeholders, who often require customized approaches that accommodate the technical complexities of their disputes. The Act establishes a foundation for enforceable arbitration agreements and awards while preserving confidentiality—a critical consideration for disputes involving trade secrets, proprietary technologies, or sensitive commercial information. The Commercial Court plays a supportive role in the arbitration process, providing oversight and enforcement mechanisms while respecting the autonomy of arbitral proceedings. Recent judicial developments have expanded the court's authority to involve third parties connected to arbitration cases, enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of the process for complex IP disputes that often involve multiple stakeholders or interrelated rights.

In the European Union, Directive 2008/52/EC has been instrumental in promoting mediation for cross-border disputes, including those involving intellectual property rights. The Directive establishes fundamental requirements for Member States regarding the enforceability of mediated settlements, confidentiality protections, and the suspension of limitation periods during mediation. These provisions have enhanced the predictability and reliability of mediation outcomes across EU jurisdictions, making mediation a more attractive option for resolving multinational IP disputes.¹¹³⁰ The Directive's focus on reducing judicial caseloads also reflects practical recognition that courts alone cannot efficiently manage the increasing volume and complexity of IP conflicts in the digital economy.

The EU's approach to ADR for IP disputes extends beyond the Mediation Directive to encompass specialized mechanisms for particular types of intellectual property. For example, the EU Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO) offers mediation services specifically designed for trademark and design disputes, including oppositions, cancellations, and appeals. These services provide targeted assistance from mediators with expertise in European trademark and design law, facilitating efficient resolution of registration-related conflicts.¹¹³¹ Similarly, the Unified Patent Court Agreement includes provisions for a Patent Mediation and Arbitration Centre, acknowledging the importance of non-judicial resolution options for patent disputes within the unitary patent system.

Consumer-focused ADR mechanisms in the EU also have implications for certain intellectual property matters, particularly those involving digital content, online services, and e-commerce. While Directive 2008/52/EC established a framework for cross-border mediation generally, the implementation of ADR methods for consumer disputes has been left largely to individual Member States. This has resulted in varied approaches across the EU, with some jurisdictions developing specialized ADR processes for consumer-facing IP issues such as digital rights management, content licensing, and software disputes. These mechanisms often emphasize accessibility, affordability, and expeditious resolution—characteristics that are particularly valuable for lower-value or straightforward IP conflicts.

The integration of ADR into IP enforcement strategies across the UK and EU reflects growing recognition that traditional litigation may not always provide optimal outcomes for knowledge-based

¹¹³⁰ De Palo, Giuseppe, and Mary B Trevor, (eds.), "EU mediation law and practice," (Oxford University Press, 2012).

¹¹³¹ Lhuillier, Julien, "The quality of penal mediation in Europe," *Strasbourg, Council of Europe, European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice, Working Group on Mediation* (2007).

industries. The technical complexity, global nature, and relationship dynamics typical of many IP disputes make them particularly suitable for ADR approaches.¹¹³² Mediation offers parties an opportunity to craft bespoke solutions that might include cross-licensing arrangements, technology transfers, coexistence agreements, or market allocations—creative outcomes that courts are often not positioned to impose. Arbitration provides a forum where technically qualified decision-makers can efficiently assess patent validity or infringement questions, often reaching conclusions more quickly and with greater subject-matter insight than generalist judges.¹¹³³

The confidentiality inherent in most ADR processes provides an additional advantage for IP disputes, where public disclosure of proprietary information or business strategies could compromise competitive positions or undermine the value of trade secrets. This protective aspect of ADR is particularly significant given that conventional court proceedings typically create public records that might expose sensitive technical details or commercial information. The private nature of arbitration and mediation allows parties to resolve their conflicts while maintaining appropriate confidentiality around the subject matter in dispute.¹¹³⁴

The United Kingdom and European Union have developed increasingly sophisticated frameworks for alternative dispute resolution of intellectual property conflicts. Through legislative initiatives, institutional support, and professional standards, both jurisdictions have created viable pathways for resolving IP disputes outside traditional courts. These developments reflect a pragmatic recognition that the unique characteristics of intellectual property—its technical complexity, international dimension, and relationship to innovation economies—often benefit from specialized resolution approaches. As the digital economy continues to generate novel and complex IP issues, the ADR frameworks in the UK and EU are likely to evolve further, offering rights holders and technology users efficient, expert, and adaptable mechanisms for managing conflicts while supporting continued innovation and creativity.

Table no. 4 – Successful ADR Models from Other Countries

Country	Model	Why It Works
Singapore	SIMC Model	Strong institutional support and incentives
UK	Court-Annexed Mediation	Mandatory referrals by judges
USA	Community ADR Centres	Grassroots conflict resolution
Netherlands	Online Mediation Platform	Efficient digital resolution
Brazil	Multi-door Courthouse	Choice between ADR types under one roof

Source: Global Best Practices in ADR Report, OECD (2022).

¹¹³² Dr. Mukesh Kumar Malviya, “Jurisdictional Issues in International Arbitration with Special Reference to India,” *Bharati Law Review* (March 2017).

¹¹³³ Kimberley Chen Nobles, “Emerging Issues and Trends in International Arbitration,” 43(5) *California Western International Law Journal* (2012).

¹¹³⁴ Lhuillier, Julien, “The quality of penal mediation in Europe,” Strasbourg, Council of Europe, European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice, Working Group on Mediation (2007).

5.6 India as a Global Mediator

Contemporary international relations have witnessed intensifying worldwide tensions and enduring strategic competitions, within which the Indian Republic has progressively established itself as a significant diplomatic intermediary. This evolution marks India's transition toward becoming an architect of transnational harmony. The contemporary European military engagement between Russian and Ukrainian forces, representing the continent's most extensive armed conflict since 1945, demonstrates the profound necessity for neutral diplomatic facilitators in resolving international disputes.

The Indian diplomatic apparatus has demonstrated substantial commitment through its constructive dialogue with both Moscow and Kyiv administrations. These diplomatic initiatives exemplify India's expanding significance in international peace-building frameworks. This diplomatic approach derives philosophical foundations from ancient Sanskrit conceptualizations, particularly "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" (conceptualizing humanity as a unified familial entity), alongside its historical adherence to non-alignment principles during Cold War polarization. Contemporary Indian international engagement continues to manifest these longstanding philosophical traditions emphasizing harmonious coexistence among diverse political entities.

Indian diplomatic philosophy synthesizes pragmatic contemporary statecraft with civilizational values emphasizing conciliation rather than confrontation. This distinctive approach provides theoretical foundations for India's emerging identity as an international mediator amidst intensifying geopolitical fragmentation. The substantive diplomatic communications with both Eastern European belligerents illustrate practical applications of these theoretical principles within contemporary international relations frameworks.

Traditional Indian philosophical traditions emphasizing interconnectedness and mutual accommodation provide conceptual frameworks particularly relevant to contemporary international mediation efforts. These ancient epistemological traditions, when incorporated into diplomatic methodology, offer alternative paradigms for conflict resolution beyond conventional Western approaches. India's diplomatic corps has increasingly operationalized these indigenous philosophical concepts within formal international engagement structures.

The substantial military confrontation in Eastern Europe has created diplomatic opportunities for nations maintaining balanced relationships with opposing parties. India's historical connections with Moscow, alongside its democratic alignment with Western nations, positions its diplomatic establishment advantageously for mediation initiatives. This unique relational configuration enables communication channels that might otherwise remain unavailable through conventional diplomatic mechanisms.¹¹³⁵

Through practical engagement with conflicting parties while maintaining principled neutrality, India demonstrates its evolving capacity as an international system stabilizer. This emerging diplomatic identity represents the practical manifestation of longstanding cultural values emphasizing harmony, alongside strategic calculations regarding India's optimal positioning within evolving international power configurations. The synthesis of philosophical heritage with contemporary diplomatic requirements characterizes India's distinctive contribution to international conflict resolution mechanisms during periods of systemic instability.

¹¹³⁵ Kimberley Chen Nobles, "Emerging Issues and Trends in International Arbitration," 43(5) California Western International Law Journal (2012).

5.6.1 India's Historic Contribution

Throughout its post-independence history, India has established a distinguished record of diplomatic engagement aimed at fostering international peace, fundamentally anchored in its philosophical adherence to non-alignment and unwavering dedication to worldwide stability. The nation's approach to foreign relations has consistently prioritized negotiation over confrontation, resulting in numerous instances where Indian diplomatic initiatives have contributed meaningfully to conflict resolution across various geopolitical contexts.

The Austrian neutrality question of 1955 represents one of India's earliest diplomatic achievements on the global stage. Indian representatives exerted considerable influence in diplomatic circles, successfully encouraging Austrian authorities to embrace a neutral position in Cold War politics. This strategic diplomatic maneuver ultimately facilitated the complete withdrawal of Soviet military personnel from Austrian territory, restoring full sovereignty to the nation.

During the complex Korean situation of 1956, India demonstrated remarkable diplomatic finesse by establishing constructive dialogue channels between antagonistic powers including the United States, the People's Republic of China, and the Soviet Union. By facilitating these critical communications, India played an instrumental role in peace efforts during the Korean conflict, showcasing its capacity to navigate intricate international disputes with sophistication and impartiality.

India's appointment as Co-Chairman of the International Commission for Supervision and Control in Vietnam throughout the 1950s and 1960s further cemented its reputation as a reliable diplomatic intermediary. In this capacity, Indian representatives worked diligently toward maintaining regional stability in Southeast Asia through carefully orchestrated multilateral diplomatic initiatives, despite the challenging geopolitical environment of the era.

When China launched military operations against Vietnam in 1979, India demonstrated principled diplomatic resolve by immediately cancelling a planned high-level financial delegation to Beijing. This decisive action, coupled with expressions of solidarity with Vietnam, underscored India's fundamental opposition to unilateral aggression in international relations, regardless of potential diplomatic consequences.

In addressing the Goa question of 1961, Indian authorities employed sophisticated diplomatic strategies that enabled the former Portuguese colony's integration into the Indian Union without bloodshed. This approach exemplified India's characteristic preference for resolving territorial disputes through peaceful means whenever circumstances permitted such resolution.

The Kashmir dispute, which emerged immediately following independence in 1947-48, prompted India to engage with United Nations mechanisms, reflecting its institutional commitment to dialogue and multinational cooperation in conflict resolution. Although this particular territorial question remains unresolved, India's initial approach demonstrated its faith in established international frameworks for addressing complex sovereignty issues.

5.6.2 India's Evolving Role as a Mediator

Contemporary Indian diplomacy continues to demonstrate remarkable versatility through numerous forward-thinking initiatives that enhance its global influence and reputation. A notable illustration of this proactive diplomatic engagement occurred in 2018 when Indian intermediaries contributed significantly to negotiations that ultimately led to Saudi Arabian authorities granting Israeli carriers access to their airspace. This diplomatic achievement exemplifies India's growing capacity to

facilitate dialogue between traditionally adversarial nations in regions of substantial geopolitical sensitivity.

The philosophical underpinnings of India's foreign relations strategy have evolved into a sophisticated framework often characterized by five interconnected principles. These include the concepts of respect (Samman), dialogue (Samvaad), cooperation (Sahyog), peace (Shanti), and prosperity (Samriddhi). Together, these principles constitute a comprehensive approach that enables India to maintain an autonomous yet cooperative stance in international affairs, avoiding rigid ideological constraints while pursuing constructive engagement across diverse geopolitical contexts.

During the intensification of hostilities between Russia and Ukraine, Indian diplomatic interventions demonstrated particular significance. According to analytical reporting from CNN, Indian diplomatic communications with involved parties contributed meaningfully toward preventing potential nuclear escalation. This diplomatic initiative underscores India's preference for dialogue-based solutions to international crises, even in situations of extreme military tension between major powers.

When India assumed leadership of the G20 forum, diplomatic representatives seized the opportunity to elevate concerns regarding the disproportionate impact of European military conflict on developing economies. Through this platform, India effectively amplified perspectives from emerging nations that frequently remain underrepresented in discussions of global security architecture, reinforcing its position as an authentic representative of Global South interests in multilateral settings.

The historical traditions informing Indian diplomatic philosophy derive substantially from ancient concepts of non-violence (Ahimsa) and universal familial connection (Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam). These cultural foundations have translated into contemporary diplomatic practice that consistently prioritizes reconciliation methodologies rather than confrontational approaches when addressing international disputes.

India's reputation for humanitarian responsiveness was prominently displayed during the Maldivian water emergency of 2014. Within hours of the crisis declaration, Indian authorities dispatched substantial quantities of potable water to the affected island nation. This swift humanitarian intervention exemplifies India's commitment to regional stability through practical assistance during environmental emergencies, further solidifying its diplomatic relationships through tangible crisis management rather than merely rhetorical support.

5.6.3 Challenges Faced

India's capacity to function effectively as a neutral mediator in international disputes faces several significant constraints that warrant scholarly examination. The nation's voting record at the United Nations, particularly its decision to abstain from crucial resolutions addressing the military conflict between Russia and Ukraine, has generated substantial skepticism regarding its genuine commitment to impartiality in global affairs. These abstentions, while diplomatically calculated, potentially undermine India's credibility when positioning itself as an unbiased facilitator of peace processes in various international contexts.

The persistent state of tension characterizing India's relationships with several neighbouring states presents another considerable impediment to its peace facilitation aspirations. The protracted diplomatic friction with Pakistan, characterized by periodic border skirmishes and diplomatic impasses, substantially weakens India's standing when attempting to mediate in regionally sensitive conflict zones such as Afghanistan. International observers frequently question whether a nation experiencing such enduring bilateral complications can effectively guide others toward sustainable peace arrangements.

Economic and strategic considerations further complicate India's diplomatic maneuverability in peace initiatives. The country's substantial dependence on petroleum imports from Russian sources, coupled with long-established defense procurement relationships with Moscow, creates inevitable constraints on India's diplomatic autonomy. These economic interdependencies potentially restrict India's capacity to adopt more decisive stances during international peace negotiations, particularly in scenarios where Russian strategic interests are significantly implicated.

When assessed against established global diplomatic powers, notably the United States, India exhibits noteworthy limitations in diplomatic leverage and influence within international institutions. Despite its growing economic significance, India's comparative diplomatic capacity remains relatively modest, limiting its ability to meaningfully influence outcomes in complex multinational negotiations or to effectively pressure conflicting parties toward compromise solutions in entrenched disputes.

Domestic stability concerns similarly affect India's international peace mediation credentials. Ongoing internal security challenges, including separatist movements and unresolved territorial questions within its borders, complicate India's efforts to present itself as an exemplary model of conflict resolution practices. These internal vulnerabilities potentially undermine the nation's authority when advocating for peaceful solutions abroad while simultaneously addressing persistent security challenges within its own territory.

Collectively, these factors create substantial obstacles to India's aspirations of becoming a pre-eminent diplomatic mediator in global conflicts, despite its historical commitment to principles of non-alignment and peaceful coexistence.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Conclusion

The advent of the Mediation Act, 2023 is a landmark moment in the landscape of alternative dispute resolution (ADR) in India. It has put in place a separate legislation for the first time to consolidate mediation practices; set legal standards; and seek to harmonise a previously fragmented framework. According to the Act, mediation is: By codifying mediation, the Act seeks to resolve such long-standing uncertainties in practice and to mainstream a process which had lie in a ghetto in the dispute resolution landscape. Essentially, the Act, heralds the rise of mediation in India, which signifies the shift away from voluntary, informal add-on to a legitimate, stand-alone legal remedy.

The Indian model, in contrast to its developed counterparts, is still in its formative stage. The US, UK and Singapore, etc developed their ADR ecosystems decades ago with supportive legislation complemented by institutional infrastructure and cultural acceptance.¹¹³⁶ The U.S. Federal Arbitration Act with its system of mediation centres, UK's Arbitration Act with strong judicial oversight, EU Mediation Directive ensuring mutual enforceability, Singapore's including the Singapore Convention on Mediation – these are examples of how ADR has matured as an institution within the justice system. Though India's Mediation Act is modelled on these frameworks – particularly around concepts like providing for enforceability of mediation agreements and pre-litigation mediation – India lags in operational depth in this domain, and indeed, the extent to which there is cultural embedding of ADR in these countries.

There are a number of both opportunities and challenges arising from the effort to reduce India ADR framework in line with global best practices. One of the most pressing challenges is to be institutionally ready. India does not have independent mediation centres spread across the country with proper standards of accreditation and oversight mechanisms. And while the seamless system

¹¹³⁶ Ronán Feehily, "Neutrality, Independence and Impartiality in International Commercial Arbitration," 7(88) *Penn State Journal of Law & International Affairs* (2019).

driven by SIAC and SIMC kick-starts in Singapore, the reality in India continues to play out in large part on extant court infrastructure, which is already overburdened. Many people, including those involved in legal cases and legal professionals, don't have much understanding or trust in mediation. They are unsure about its validity as a solution, which makes them hesitant to use it. This hesitation slows down how often it is used and limits its effectiveness.

A significant issue is ensuring that agreements made through mediation are enforced. Even though the law treats these agreements like court orders, the system to enforce them quickly and consistently is still lacking. International enforcement is also a problem. India hasn't adopted the Singapore Convention on Mediation, making it harder to settle disputes between countries through mediation. This is especially true for business and investment issues.¹¹³⁷

Despite these challenges, there are significant opportunities. India is changing its laws in a positive way, creating a unique chance to rethink how disputes are handled. With many court cases delayed, alternative ways to resolve disputes are not just optional but crucial. The law now officially recognizes methods like online mediation, community mediation, and institutional mediation, which can use technology to handle disputes on a larger scale. Additionally, these new laws fit well with existing systems like the Civil Procedure Code and the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, helping to create a more unified legal process.

6.2 Recommendations

6.2.1 Institutional Reforms & Capacity Building

A robust and sustainable alternative dispute resolution (ADR) ecosystem requires the development of well-established, resource-rich, and independent institutions capable of efficiently managing, training, and accrediting mediators and arbitrators. The success of ADR in any jurisdiction hinges on the credibility and structure of its supporting institutions. India, in its quest to enhance the ADR landscape, can draw inspiration from globally recognized bodies like Singapore's Singapore International Arbitration Centre (SIAC) and the United Kingdom's Centre for Effective Dispute Resolution (CEDR). These institutions have earned a reputation for their neutrality, professionalism, and effective dispute resolution processes. Adopting a similar institutional model could provide India with the structure needed to institutionalize mediation and arbitration, promoting both public and private confidence in these mechanisms.¹¹³⁸

One of the first critical steps is to establish independent ADR institutions that are equipped with the necessary financial and operational resources. These bodies would not only oversee the accreditation of mediators and arbitrators but also ensure that they meet internationally recognized standards of professionalism. Such institutions would play a crucial role in creating an atmosphere of trust and respect, which is essential for the growth of ADR practices in India. By fostering a network of accredited professionals, these institutions can standardize practices and ensure a level of consistency that will be critical in gaining public confidence in ADR processes.

Equally important is the need to invest in capacity building within the legal profession. Judges, legal professionals, and law enforcement officers must be equipped with the knowledge and skills required to engage with ADR processes effectively. In many cases, ADR can be an unfamiliar or underutilized tool for dispute resolution, and this lack of familiarity can deter its adoption. By integrating ADR into the training programs for legal professionals, India can create a generation of practitioners who understand and value ADR processes. Judicial officers, in particular, should be given the tools to

¹¹³⁷ Dr. Pankaj Kumar Gupta & Sunil Mittal, Commercial Arbitration in India, 2 International Conference on Economics, Business and Management IPEDR (2010).

¹¹³⁸ Dzyuba Lyubov, Mikhailovna et al., "The Application of the Law in International Commercial Arbitration," 5(2) *International Journal of Economics and Business Administration* (2017).

actively refer cases for ADR and oversee ADR proceedings to ensure fairness. This would not only increase the flow of cases into ADR systems but would also reduce the burden on an overstrained judiciary.¹¹³⁹

Training should not be limited to the traditional legal elite based in metropolitan areas but should extend to law enforcement officers and legal professionals in rural and semi-urban regions. India's vast geographical spread and diverse population mean that equitable access to ADR services is vital for the effectiveness of any reforms. Capacity building efforts must ensure that legal professionals in smaller towns and villages are not left behind in the ADR movement. Offering regular training sessions, workshops, and seminars in regional centers can help address this gap and ensure that ADR becomes a widely understood and available option for resolving disputes. These initiatives could also help spread the practice of ADR beyond commercial and high-value cases into family disputes, landlord-tenant matters, and other areas where mediation can be an efficient and cost-effective solution.

Moreover, academic institutions have an important role to play in shaping the future of ADR in India. Legal education should be restructured to integrate ADR not just as a theoretical subject but as a practical tool of justice delivery. By incorporating practical training and case simulations into curricula, law schools can prepare students to navigate and implement ADR processes effectively. Given the increasing importance of mediation and arbitration in global legal practice, law students should graduate with a strong grasp of ADR techniques, negotiation strategies, and the underlying principles of fairness and neutrality. This academic approach would not only ensure a steady supply of competent ADR professionals but also encourage a broader societal acceptance of ADR as an essential part of the justice system.

Thus, institutional reforms and capacity building are the cornerstone of a sustainable and effective ADR ecosystem in India. The establishment of independent, well-resourced ADR institutions, investment in training for legal professionals, and expansion of ADR education in academic institutions are essential for ensuring that India's ADR mechanisms can meet the growing demand for efficient and accessible justice. By focusing on these areas, India can develop an ADR landscape that is not only structured and professional but also widely accessible and trusted across all regions of the country.

6.2.2 Strengthening Enforcement of ADR Outcomes

Strengthening the enforcement of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) outcomes is one of the most critical steps towards ensuring the effectiveness and legitimacy of ADR mechanisms in India. Despite the Mediation Act of 2023 making significant strides by giving mediated settlements the status of decrees, there remains a substantial gap between the legal framework and its actual implementation. The recognition and enforcement of ADR outcomes, both domestically and internationally, remain uncertain and often inconsistent. This lack of clarity presents a significant barrier to the widespread adoption of ADR, as parties are hesitant to engage in ADR processes if the outcomes are not guaranteed to be enforceable.

One of the fundamental challenges lies in the absence of clear, standardized procedures for the recognition and enforcement of mediated settlements. While the Mediation Act grants mediated settlements the status of a court decree, there is a need for further clarity on how these settlements will be executed in practice. In many instances, parties who have reached a mediation settlement

¹¹³⁹ Dr. Pankaj Kumar Gupta & Sunil Mittal, Commercial Arbitration in India, 2 International Conference on Economics, Business and Management IPEDR (2010).

face difficulties in ensuring that the other party complies with the terms of the agreement. This issue is compounded by the reluctance of some courts to recognize mediated agreements, as well as the procedural delays within the judicial system that often render enforcement slow and cumbersome. To remedy this, it is imperative to establish specific procedural rules that define the process by which mediated settlements are to be enforced. These rules should outline the steps necessary to convert a mediated settlement into a legally binding and executable order, ensuring that there are no ambiguities when it comes to enforcement.

Moreover, the enforcement mechanism for domestic mediated agreements needs to be robust enough to deter non-compliance. Courts should be empowered to enforce mediated settlements proactively and expeditiously, without the usual procedural delays that often plague the traditional litigation process. This can be achieved by creating dedicated ADR enforcement units within the judicial system or by establishing specialized ADR enforcement courts that focus solely on ensuring the implementation of ADR outcomes. Such initiatives would streamline the enforcement process and make it more efficient, encouraging litigants to use ADR methods with confidence.

In the context of international ADR outcomes, India faces an additional challenge. The absence of international enforceability means that parties engaging in cross-border mediation are often unsure whether the mediated settlement will be recognized in other jurisdictions. This uncertainty deters foreign investors and businesses from utilizing India as a destination for dispute resolution, as they may not be confident that any mediated settlements will hold up in their home country. To address this issue, India should seriously consider ratifying the Singapore Convention on Mediation. The Convention provides a multilateral framework for the enforcement of international mediated settlements, giving them the same status as arbitral awards under the New York Convention. By ratifying this Convention, India would align itself with global best practices in dispute resolution, signalling its commitment to becoming a global hub for commercial dispute resolution.

Ratifying the Singapore Convention would not only enhance the enforceability of international mediated settlements but also boost India's reputation as a jurisdiction that supports efficient, fair, and accessible dispute resolution. This would have a direct impact on attracting international businesses and investors, who would view India as a favorable and reliable jurisdiction for resolving disputes. Furthermore, India's adoption of the Singapore Convention would send a strong message about the country's dedication to modernizing its legal system and embracing international standards in ADR practices.

Hence, while the Mediation Act has paved the way for a more structured and formalized approach to ADR in India, the enforcement of ADR outcomes remains a critical issue that needs to be addressed. Establishing clear procedural rules for the recognition and execution of mediated agreements, both domestically and internationally, is essential to build trust in the ADR process. India's potential ratification of the Singapore Convention on Mediation would be a significant step towards improving the enforceability of international mediated settlements, thereby enhancing India's position as a global leader in commercial dispute resolution. Through these reforms, India can foster an environment where ADR is not only a viable alternative to litigation but also an effective and reliable mechanism for resolving disputes.

6.2.3 Legislative & Judicial Reforms

The effectiveness of alternative dispute resolution (ADR) in India is inextricably linked to broader legislative and judicial reforms. While the enactment of the Mediation Act, 2023 has laid the foundation for formalizing mediation in the country, its success hinges on the integration of ADR within the larger legal framework. For ADR mechanisms to function seamlessly, it is crucial to address

conflicts and gaps between the Mediation Act, the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, and sector-specific laws. These legislative inconsistencies can create ambiguity, complicating the process for legal practitioners and disputants alike. A unified ADR code that harmonizes these legal provisions would offer clarity, streamline procedures, and ensure the smooth functioning of both mediation and arbitration as complementary dispute resolution tools. Without such harmonization, ADR will remain fragmented, limiting its potential to alleviate the burden on India's overburdened judicial system.¹¹⁴⁰

At the core of legislative reform is the need for clear, consistent guidelines that foster an integrated ADR framework. This would include addressing issues related to the scope and applicability of various ADR methods across different legal contexts. For example, the Mediation Act and the Arbitration and Conciliation Act must be reconciled to avoid overlap and ensure that each system is utilized appropriately. By developing a cohesive legal structure, India can create a robust and effective ADR framework that allows for greater efficiency and accessibility while reducing judicial delays. Moreover, the creation of specialized laws for various sectors, such as family law or commercial law, should be considered, allowing ADR methods like mediation to be more easily adopted within these areas. This will help expand the scope of ADR beyond general litigation, increasing its versatility and utility in resolving a wider range of disputes.

However, legislative changes alone are insufficient. The judiciary also plays a central role in the success of ADR, and judicial reforms are needed to ensure that the benefits of ADR are fully realized. Courts must be proactive in encouraging ADR by referring appropriate cases to mediation or arbitration at the earliest stages of litigation.¹¹⁴¹ This requires a cultural shift within the judicial system, where ADR is seen not just as a peripheral option but as a mainstream, viable path to dispute resolution. Judges should be encouraged to recognize the potential benefits of ADR, both for the parties involved and for the judicial system as a whole. Referrals should be made systematically, and clear guidelines should be established for when and how cases should be diverted to ADR. Courts must also ensure that the referral process is efficient, minimizing delays and ensuring that cases are promptly directed to the appropriate ADR mechanism.

In addition to referrals, courts must play an active role in upholding the outcomes of ADR processes.¹¹⁴² Mediated agreements should carry the same weight as judgments passed by the courts, and courts must be diligent in enforcing these agreements. One of the key factors that hinder the growth of ADR in India is the uncertainty surrounding the enforcement of mediated outcomes. While the Mediation Act grants mediated settlements the status of a decree, ensuring their enforcement requires greater clarity and more robust mechanisms for follow-through. Courts must demonstrate their commitment to upholding ADR outcomes by making enforcement a priority and establishing a streamlined process for the execution of mediated agreements.

Judicial reforms must also focus on enhancing the capacity of the courts to handle ADR cases effectively. One potential solution is the establishment of special ADR benches or support units within the judiciary. These dedicated bodies would be responsible for overseeing the implementation of ADR, ensuring that processes are adhered to and that disputes are resolved in a timely manner. These units could also monitor the compliance of parties with mediated agreements and offer oversight of ADR practitioners to maintain high standards of quality and professionalism. The creation of such specialized units would help build judicial expertise in ADR and ensure that the processes remain efficient and fair.

¹¹⁴⁰ Dr. Pankaj Kumar Gupta & Sunil Mittal, Commercial Arbitration in India, 2 International Conference on Economics, Business and Management IPEDR (2010).

¹¹⁴¹ Dr. Mukesh Kumar Malviya, "Jurisdictional Issues in International Arbitration with Special Reference to India," *Bharati Law Review* (March 2017).

¹¹⁴² Dzyuba Lyubov Mikhailovna et al., "The Application of the Law in International Commercial Arbitration," 5(2) *International Journal of Economics and Business Administration* (2017).

Moreover, it is essential to provide training and capacity-building programs for judges, lawyers, and other legal professionals to ensure they are well-versed in ADR methods and can effectively navigate the evolving landscape of dispute resolution. By building expertise within the judiciary, India can ensure that ADR mechanisms are utilized to their full potential, creating a more efficient and accessible justice system.

For ADR to be truly successful in India, it requires both comprehensive legislative and judicial reforms. Legislative harmonization, coupled with proactive court involvement and specialized judicial support for ADR, will create an environment where ADR can flourish.¹¹⁴³ By fostering a culture that prioritizes ADR and providing the necessary resources for its successful implementation, India can build a more efficient, accessible, and effective justice system. These reforms are essential for addressing the pressing need for timely dispute resolution and reducing the burden on the country's courts.

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