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— A BRILLIANT WAVES JOURNAL —

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Exploring Indic Knowledge, Consciousness, Culture and Society*



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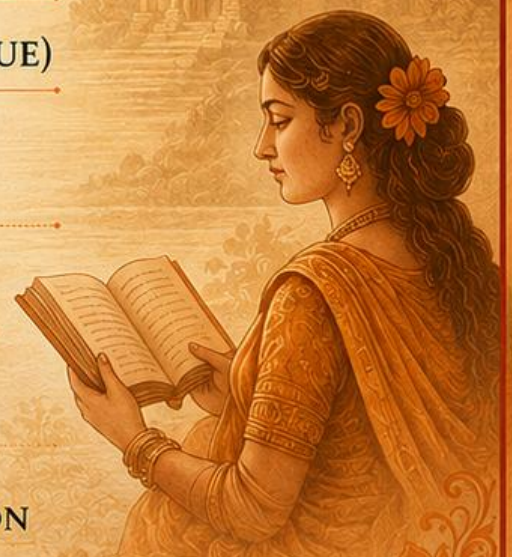
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Interdisciplinary Indic Studies – A Brilliant Waves Journal (IIS-BW)

Interdisciplinary Indic Studies – A Brilliant Waves Journal (IIS-BW) is an annual peer-reviewed and refereed online journal dedicated to fostering interdisciplinary scholarship rooted in Indic knowledge systems, social sciences, humanities, psychology, philosophy, culture, spirituality, language, consciousness studies, education, governance, and contemporary socio-cultural discourse. The journal seeks to create a scholarly platform for critical engagement between traditional Indic thought and modern academic inquiry across diverse disciplines. The journal serves as a platform for both traditional and contemporary research across multiple disciplines, unified by their focus on the **Indian context or Indian population**- whether the research is conducted within India or abroad.

The journal encourages original research articles, theoretical papers, review analyses, case studies, reflective essays, and interdisciplinary explorations that contribute meaningfully to academic dialogue and social understanding. IIS-BW aims to promote intellectual diversity, ethical scholarship, and culturally contextualized research while supporting both emerging researchers and established academicians in advancing innovative and socially relevant knowledge production.

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The journal remains committed to maintaining transparency, academic integrity, and proper publication standards throughout the process.

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For publication-related queries, submissions, collaborations, or correspondence, please contact: brilliantwavespublication@yahoo.com

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Editorial Note

Inaugural Issue (2026)

Interdisciplinary Indic Studies – A Brilliant Waves Journal

It is with immense gratitude, pride, and intellectual hope that we present the inaugural issue of *Interdisciplinary Indic Studies – A Brilliant Waves Journal*. Conceived as a platform for interdisciplinary academic dialogue rooted in Indic perspectives and contemporary social realities, this journal emerges from a sincere aspiration to create space for critical inquiry, cultural reflection, psychological exploration, and socially meaningful scholarship.

The present issue holds a special place not only because it marks the beginning of a new academic journey, but because it is dedicated to the women of India - to the countless female intellectual minds who continue to persist, create, research, nurture, question, and contribute despite navigating multiple layers of social, economic, institutional, and patriarchal barriers. The journey of women in academia within the Indian context has rarely been linear or effortless. From struggling for access to education, negotiating societal expectations, balancing caregiving roles, confronting gendered prejudice, and often working without adequate recognition, women scholars have continuously transformed adversity into knowledge creation. This inaugural issue stands as a small tribute to that resilience.

The articles included in this volume reflect a rich interdisciplinary spectrum, connecting psychology, sociology, spirituality, gender studies, agriculture, linguistic identity, and cultural consciousness. The issue opens with a quasi-experimental investigation into the ***Before and After Effect of Mahamantra on State Anxiety***, exploring the relationship between spiritual practice and psychological well-being among young adults. This is followed by an insightful conceptual exploration of ***Shakti and Stri-Shakti***, reclaiming indigenous narratives of women empowerment within the Indian socio-cultural framework.

The issue further addresses critical concerns of marginalized identities through a correlational study on ***Bullying, Body Image and Susceptibility for Eating Disorders among the LGBTQIA Community***, reflecting the urgent need for inclusive psychological discourse in contemporary India. Questions of identity and cultural survival are explored through the literature analysis on ***Linguicide and Loss***, which highlights the invisible violence associated with the erosion of linguistic heritage and identity.





The volume also recognizes the often-overlooked labour and contributions of women through the article on *Women's Contributions to Agriculture*, drawing attention to the central yet under-acknowledged role of women in sustaining agrarian systems and food security. Finally, the issue concludes with a comparative psychological exploration of *Experiences of Supernatural Events among Rural and Urban Citizens of Jharkhand*, demonstrating how culture, belief systems, and lived realities shape human perception and meaning-making.

Collectively, these contributions embody the spirit of interdisciplinarity that this journal seeks to foster - one that values dialogue between empirical science, indigenous knowledge systems, social realities, and human experience.

As the Founder Editor, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all contributors, reviewers, advisors, and well-wishers who supported this initiative during its foundational stage. I especially acknowledge the courage and intellectual commitment of the authors who trusted this emerging platform with their scholarly work.

May this journal continue to evolve - as a space for ethical scholarship, critical thinking, social reflection, and inclusive knowledge creation.

With sincere regards,

From,

The Editor

Interdisciplinary Indic Studies – A Brilliant Waves Journal



Jhansi Ki Rani (1827–30, or 1835 to 1858)



**“Main apni Jhansi nahi doongi.”
 (“I shall not surrender my Jhansi.”)**

— Rani Lakshmibai of Jhansi

**To every woman who chose knowledge despite silence,
education despite resistance,
and creation despite limitation —
this inaugural issue is dedicated to your courage.**

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Before and After Effect of Mahamantra on State Anxiety: A Quasi- Experimental Study on Young Adults of Kolkata

Sunanda Das¹, Bachelors of Science in Psychology, Adamas University, Email: sunanda6may@gmail.com

Abstract

This quasi-experimental study aimed to investigate the impact of listening quietly to music featuring Mahamantra chanting on the state anxiety levels of young adults in Kolkata. It employed purposive sampling to apprentice 26 participants (4 males, 22 females) in the age range of 18-25 years from Adamas University Campus. With due consent, participants were required to perform a pre-test consisting of demographic questions and the State scale from the State Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI) via Google Form. They were made to listen to a 20-minute musical Mahamantra chanting audio and then were required to complete a post-test using the same State scale. Descriptive analysis through pie charts was performed to envisage alterations in state anxiety before and after the intervention of the musical Mahamantra chanting. Due to the small sample size of 26 participants, generalizability would be difficult, hence non-parametric tests were performed. Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test was used to determine and Mann-Whitney U test, were utilized for statistical analysis due to the small sample size and unequal gender proportions. Findings revealed a decrease in state anxiety after the intervention, particularly among females, although not statistically significant. Gender-specific variations were observed, suggesting potential differential effects of the intervention. However, further research with larger samples and controlled designs is warranted to corroborate these preliminary findings and elucidate the mechanisms underlying the observed changes in state anxiety. These findings underscore the potential of Mahamantra chanting as a stress management tool for young adults, emphasizing the need for tailored interventions and gender-sensitive approaches in anxiety management programs.

Keywords: *Maha-mantra, Anxiety, Immediate Relaxation, Meditation, Chanting*

Introduction

Sanatana Dharma, often referred to as term "Sanatana Dharma" translates to Hinduism, is a complex and diverse "eternal truth" or "eternal law," reflecting religious and philosophical system that its foundational belief in timeless originated in the Indian subcontinent. The principles that govern existence. Sanatana

Dharma encompasses a vast array of beliefs, practices, rituals, and philosophies that have evolved over thousands of years. It does not have a single founder or a unified set of doctrines but instead represents a continuous tradition of spiritual exploration, moral values, and cultural practices.

Dharma refers to righteousness, duty, moral order, and cosmic law. It forms the basis of individual and societal conduct, emphasizing the fulfillment of duties and responsibilities in accordance with one's role and station in life.

Sanatana Dharma teaches that actions (karma) have consequences, and individuals experience the results of their actions across multiple lifetimes through the process of reincarnation (samsara). The ultimate goal is to attain liberation (moksha) from this cycle of birth and death.

Sanatana Dharma accommodates a diverse pantheon of deities, representing various aspects of the divine. While some sects

emphasize devotion to specific gods and goddesses, others advocate the worship of a single Supreme Being (Brahman) as the ultimate reality behind the cosmos.

Sanatana Dharma draws upon a rich corpus of scriptures, including the Vedas, Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita, Ramayana, and Mahabharata, among others. These texts contain philosophical teachings, mythological narratives, ethical guidelines, and practical wisdom.

Sanatana Dharma promotes spiritual practices such as yoga, meditation, and contemplation as means of self-realization, inner purification, and union with the divine.

Sanatana Dharma encompasses a wide spectrum of beliefs, practices, and cultural expressions, accommodating diverse sects, schools of thought, and regional traditions. It emphasizes tolerance, inclusivity, and respect for differing perspectives.

The above directives within Hinduism find their roots the Vedas that are a collection of ancient sacred texts in Hinduism, composed in Sanskrit between

approximately 1500 BCE and 500 BCE.

There are four Vedas: Rigveda, Samaveda, Yajurveda, and Atharvaveda. Each Veda consists of hymns, rituals, prayers, and philosophical teachings. They are considered the oldest scriptures of Hinduism and serve as the foundation for Hindu religious and spiritual practices.

In this context, Hymns are religious songs or poetic compositions typically praising or addressing the divine, expressing devotion, gratitude, or supplication. In the context of Hinduism, hymns are often part of sacred texts like the Vedas, where they are composed in poetic verses called mantras. These hymns may be sung or recited during rituals, ceremonies, or personal worship to evoke spiritual feelings and connect with the divine. Hymns play a significant role in various religious traditions worldwide, serving as a means of expressing faith, reverence, and devotion.

The term "Mahamantra" typically refers to a powerful and significant mantra in Hinduism, particularly in Vaishnavism, one of the major traditions within Hinduism. The Maha Mantra, also known as the Hare Krishna mantra, is also considered a hymn in Hinduism. It is a sacred chant that is central to the practice of bhakti yoga, emphasizing devotion to the divine. The Maha Mantra is composed of three names of God: "Hare," "Krishna," and "Rama," repeated in a specific sequence:

**“Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna
Krishna, Hare Hare, Hare Rama, Hare
Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare”**

Devotees chant this mantra as a form of meditation and prayer, aiming to invoke the divine presence, purifies the mind, and deepens their spiritual connection. The Maha Mantra is considered particularly potent for invoking the grace and blessings of Lord Krishna and Lord Rama. This mantra is believed to have great spiritual potency and is considered a means of

attaining spiritual liberation or enlightenment. It is often chanted repetitively as a form of devotion, meditation, or prayer. The practice of chanting the Mahamantra is central to the traditions of Gaudiya Vaishnavism, popularized by the 15th-century saint Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

The repetitive nature of chanting, especially when synchronized with music, can induce a meditative state by helping to quiet the mind and focus attention. The rhythmic cadence of the mantra can lead to a sense of relaxation and inner peace. The sacred sounds of the mantra, combined with music, create vibrations that resonate within the body and mind. This can have a harmonizing effect on the nervous system, promoting relaxation and stress reduction.

Music has the power to evoke emotions and feelings. When combined with chanting the Maha Mantra, it can enhance the devotee's emotional connection to the divine, fostering a sense of devotion, love, and surrender. Chanting the Maha Mantra

with music can serve as a form of mindfulness practice, anchoring the practitioner's awareness in the present moment. This can help alleviate anxiety, promote mental clarity, and enhance overall well-being.

Singing the Maha Mantra with music in a group setting can create a sense of unity and shared spiritual experience among participants. This communal chanting can amplify the meditative and relaxation effects, as well as deepen the sense of connection to the divine and to others. Therefore, chanting the Maha Mantra with music or any other mantra/hymn with music can be a powerful spiritual practice that not only promotes relaxation and stress relief but also deepens one's spiritual connection and fosters inner peace and well-being. However, it becomes imperative to delve into the existing literature to see if mahamantra or other mantras/hymns with music can have a meditative or relaxation effect.

Literature Review

A study conducted on the effects of Mahamantra chanting for stress reduction among nursing professionals in a randomized controlled trial found that Mahamantra chanting is a simple yet potentially effective coping mechanism with the potential to improve stress and quality of life (Niva et al., 2021).

Govindan et al. (2022) investigated the chanting of the Mahamantra and other approaches towards overall well-being in a comparative study. The study found that Mahamantra meditation was proven to be the best method through modern scientific experimentation. Additionally, it claims that modern scientific approaches toward peace establishment are converging with the already existing Vedic principles, which have been available for more than 5000 years in written form.

Furthermore, Sekar et al. (2019) conducted research on the effect of Mahamantra chanting on Autonomic and cognitive function in an interventional study. The

study revealed a significant increase in parasympathetic tone (LF/HF ratio) ($p < 0.05$), shortened ART ($p = 0.05$), VRT ($p = 0.01$), and significantly decreased serum cortisol levels ($p = 0.05$) among subjects who underwent Mahamantra meditation.

Whitehurst, R. (2011) authored a research-based book named “Mahamantra Yoga,” where he emphasized that Mahamantra Yoga is both a technical treatise on the method of chanting the Hare Krishna Mantra. In many forms of Indian spiritual life, a sacred phrase such as the Hare Krishna Mantra is recited repeatedly in the pursuit of steadiness of the mind and access to the divine presence.

In an investigation on OM Mantra chanting, it was found that 50 subjects (male and female aged 18-25 years) were classified into two groups: Experimental group ($N = 25$) and Control group ($N = 25$). After applying one month of Yogic intervention (Om Chanting) in the experimental group only, results showed a significant decrease in anxiety levels of

young adults in the experimental group, but no significant difference in the control group was found. This indicates significant effects of Om Mantra chanting on the anxiety level of young adults (Verma et al., 2022).

Gaumont, D. (2007) conducted research on mantra chanting, where he investigated the use of certain vocalized “power sounds,” referred to as “mantras,” and their effect on human consciousness.

Brown, S.B. (2021) investigated meditation and explored in his study the practice of kirtan in the United States through various interviews, fieldwork, and analysis of recordings made at various Krishna temples and festivals. The study demonstrated the musical techniques that can be spontaneously deployed in acts of collective worship to create intense feelings of deep, focused meditation and uninhibited, expressive bliss.

A study on mantra music was conducted to explore three aspects of Hare Krishna

kirtan: theological, personal experiential, and social. Chanting is used to spread the message of Krishna consciousness and provide opportunities for members of different religious and social groups to come together to celebrate (Black, S. 2008).

Kumar, N. (2019) conducted research on two yoga-based mantra recitations: Gayatri Mantra recitation and Om recitation. The study aimed to find out the effect of Gayatri Mantra and Om recitation on selective attention as measured by the color stroop test. The study was performed on undergraduate males aged 18-30 years. Participants participated in Gayatri Mantra and Om recitation for two consecutive days for 15 minutes, and the sequence of the session was randomly assigned to the participants. Before the test and after completing each session, attention was assessed using the color stroop test. Within-group comparison showed that due to Gayatri Mantra and Om recitation, stroop scores improved in both groups ($P >$

0.001; Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test). Stroop score improvement percentages were 16.6% after Gayatri Mantra recitation and 9.26% after OM recitation. This study shows that both Gayatri Mantra and simply sitting led to improvement in attention as measured by the stroop task.

A study focused on kirtan, which can be a vehicle for spiritual realization and communion with the divine (Brown, S. 2012). It examines how kirtan has the potential to create experiences that are perceived as being personally and spiritually meaningful, not only for adherents to Krishna consciousness but also for those who ascribe to different belief systems but nevertheless find elements of common spiritual experiences within the kirtan process.

Chanting is a rhythmic, repetitive vocalization practiced in a wide range of cultures. It is used in spiritual practice to strengthen community, heal illness, and overcome psychological and emotional difficulties (Perry et al., 2021). This

investigation examined the psychological and contextual factors associated with mystical states during chanting. Data were analyzed from 464 participants across 33 countries who regularly engaged in chanting. Results showed that 60% of participants experienced mystical states during chanting.

Absorption, altruism, and religiosity were higher among people who reported mystical states while chanting compared to those who did not report mystical states. There was no difference in mystical experience scores between vocal, silent, group, or individual chanting, and no difference in the prevalence of mystical states across chanting traditions. However, an analysis of subscales suggested that mystical experiences were especially characterized by positive mood and feelings of ineffability. The research sheds new light on factors that impact chanting experiences.

Another study aimed to evaluate a novel, cost-effective therapy for treating

insomnia. The study employed a randomized controlled trial with two groups: therapy and control. Participants were screened using research diagnostic criteria for insomnia recommended by the American Academy of Sleep Medicine (AASM) before undergoing simple randomization. The study included participants from Hindu, Muslim, and Christian faiths who were assigned to either the therapy group (Hare Krishna Mantra Based Cognitive Therapy: HMBCT) or the non-therapy group (control with relaxing music).

Both groups underwent six weeks of treatment with traditional cognitive-behavioral therapy techniques, including stimulus control, sleep restriction, and sleep hygiene. Each week, participants in the therapy group received six 45-minute sessions of HMBCT in the evening and were asked to practice the therapy in the evening of the day of sleep recording. Sleep quality was assessed using behavioral measures, sleep logs, and poly-

somno-graphy recordings before and after the six-week treatment period. There was a one-week period before and after the six weeks when no treatment was provided.

Results showed that HMBCT significantly improved sleep quality measures, including a 61% reduction in Epworth Sleepiness Scale (ESS) scores and an 80% reduction in Insomnia Severity Index (ISI) scores. Participants did not take any sleep-inducing medication during the study. These findings suggest that adding mantra chanting to traditional cognitive-behavioral therapy may improve sleep quality (Behera et al., 2023).

This study by Damerla et al. (2018) focuses on the evaluation of audible and mindful practice of chanting meditation on heart variability (HRV) and on cognitive disposition. Chanting is practiced in many religious and secular traditions and involves rhythmic vocalization or mental repetition of a sound or phrase. This study examined how chanting relates to cognitive function, altered states, and

quality of life across a wide range of traditions.

A global survey was used to assess experiences during chanting, including flow states, mystical experiences, mindfulness, and mind wandering (Perry et al., 2022). Further, attributes of chanting were assessed to determine their association with altered states and cognitive benefits, and whether psychological correlates of chanting are associated with quality of life. Results revealed that different aspects of chanting were associated with distinctive experiential outcomes.

Stronger intentionality (devotion, intention, sound) and higher chanting engagement (experience, practice duration, regularity) were associated with altered

states and cognitive benefits. Participants whose main practice was call and response chanting reported higher scores of mystical experiences. Participants whose main practice was repetitive prayer reported lower mind wandering. Lastly, intentionality and engagement were associated with quality of life indirectly through altered states and cognitive benefits. This research sheds new light on the phenomenology and psychological consequences of chanting across a range of practices and traditions.

From the above studies, it is evident that there are very few researches on young adults dealing with the impact of listening quietly to the Music Mahamantra Chanting on current psychological states such as state anxiety.

Rationale of the Study

Sanatana Dharma, commonly known as Hinduism, is a complex religious and philosophical system deeply rooted in the Indian subcontinent. Within Hinduism, the

practice of chanting sacred mantras, particularly the Mahamantra or Hare Krishna mantra, holds significant spiritual importance. While previous research has

explored the effects of Mahamantra chanting on various aspects such as stress reduction, autonomic function, and cognitive benefits, there remains a gap in the literature regarding its impact on specific psychological states, particularly state anxiety, among young adults.

Given the prevalence of anxiety disorders among young adults and the potential benefits of mantra chanting in promoting relaxation and stress relief, it is essential to investigate the effects of listening quietly to music with Mahamantra chanting on state anxiety levels. This study aimed to bridge this gap by examining how exposure to Mahamantra chanting, combined with music, influences the state anxiety levels of young adults in Kolkata.

Drawing on existing literature, which demonstrates the therapeutic potential of mantra chanting and the meditative effects of rhythmic vocalization, this study seeks to contribute to our understanding of the psychological effects of Mahamantra chanting in a specific demographic group.

By focusing on young adults, who often experience high levels of stress and anxiety, this research aimed to provide insights into the potential role of Mahamantra chanting as a complementary intervention for promoting mental well-being among this population.

Furthermore, this study aligned with the broader objective of exploring the therapeutic applications of traditional Hindu practices in contemporary contexts. By investigating the impact of Mahamantra chanting on state anxiety, this research not only sheds light on the psychological benefits of a centuries-old spiritual practice but also highlights its relevance in addressing modern mental health challenges.

In summary, this study sought to address a significant gap in the literature by examining the effects of Mahamantra chanting on state anxiety levels among young adults in Kolkata. By elucidating the potential therapeutic effects of this ancient practice, the findings of this

research may inform the development of novel interventions for promoting mental

well-being in this demographic group.

Research Methodology

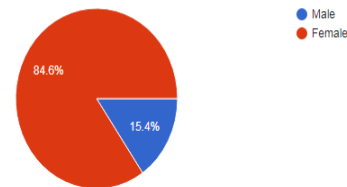
*Sample Design and Sample size:*26

participants were approached for this study with purposive sampling method. Out of this, 4 were males, and 22 were females. All the participants were in the age range of 18- 25 years, and were college-going students of Kolkata, pooled from Adamas University Campus.

- Inclusion criteria- Participants from Kolkata and within Adamas University Campus, in the age range of 18- 25 years, males and females
- Exclusion criteria- Anyone outside of Kolkata and out of Adamas University Campus, below or above the age range 18- 25 years, third gender.

Sex:

26 responses



Tools for the study: Google form, a 20 minute music mantra audio. For measuring the state anxiety of the participants, State scale from State Trait Anxiety Inventory was used, which had 20 questions, and opinion had to be rated on a Likert scale ranging from 1 - Not at all , 2- A little , 3- Somewhat, 4- Very Much So . The internal consistency coefficients of the scale have range from 0.86 to 0.95; test-retest reliability coefficients have ranged from 0.65 to 0.75.

Design of the study: A post-test – pre-test design was implemented for the study, to delve into the before and after effects of the music mahamantra listening.

Ethical Considerations: In the first phase, participants were approached to take

consent for participating in the study. Once they gave the verbal consent, they were debriefed that on the day of the study, they would be required to bring headphones as they would be required to listen to music.

Procedure: On the decided day of the intervention, the participants were seated in a classroom with normal room temperature. At first they were given a google form that comprised demographic questions, a written consent and the first section having state scale from STAI Questionnaire, that they were asked to fill. Once they all filled the form, they were made to go through a link on the 2nd section of the google form, which took them to a music mantra chanting audio. They were asked to close their eyes, sit with back straight, and focus on the music as it goes through their headphones, the

words and syllables of the mantra, while deep long breathings. When the music ended, the researcher asked them to fill the 3rd section of the form, where again, the State scale of STAI inventory was given.

Data analysis: for analysing the data, descriptive interpretation was done, in terms of pie charts for each question of the State scale, to see if there were substantial differences in how participants felt and rated the questions after the music intervention. Due to the small sample size and unequal proportion of males and females, non-parametric statistical analysis was done. To determine statistically the significant differences in before and after conditions, Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test was done, and to determine if there were significant differences among males and females, Mann-Whitney U test was done.

Aim of the Study

The aim of this study is to investigate the impact of listening quietly to music

featuring Mahamantra chanting on the state anxiety levels of young adults residing in Kolkata.

Objectives of the Study

1. To assess the before and after effect of listening quietly to music featuring Mahamantra chanting on the state anxiety levels of young adults in Kolkata, by comparing their anxiety levels before and after exposure to the intervention.
2. To explore potential differences in the before and after effects of Mahamantra chanting between male and female participants, aiming to identify any gender-specific variations in the response to the intervention regarding state anxiety levels.

Hypothesis

Null Hypothesis¹- There is no difference between before music mantra state anxiety and after music mantra state anxiety in female group.

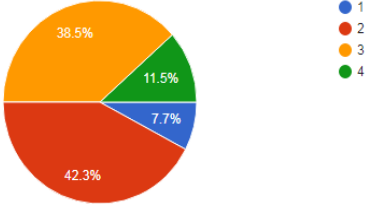
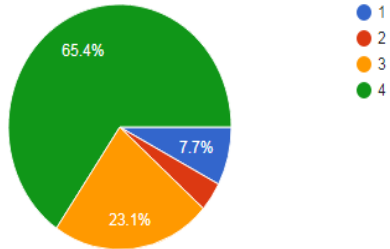
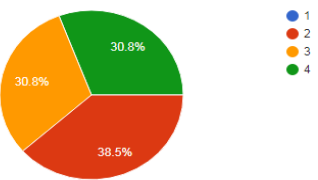
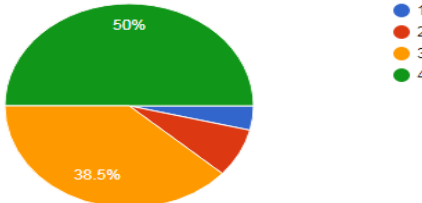
Null Hypothesis²- There is no difference between before music mantra state anxiety and after music mantra state anxiety in male group.

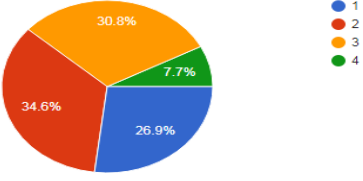
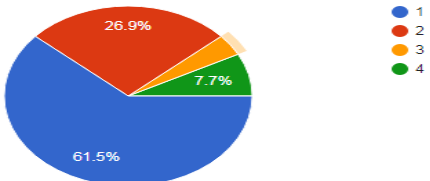
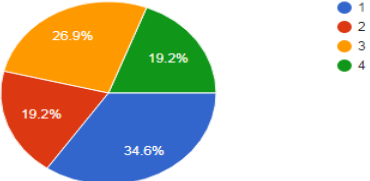
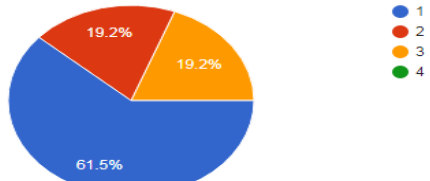
Null Hypothesis³- There is no difference in state anxiety among the participants in before and after maha mantra intervention.

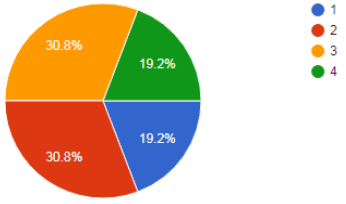
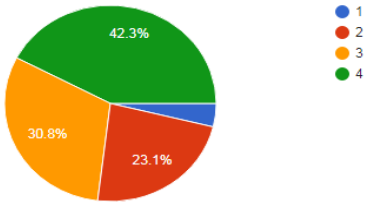
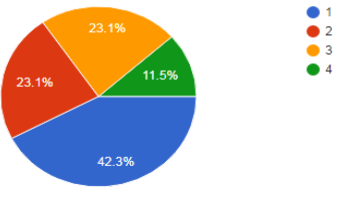
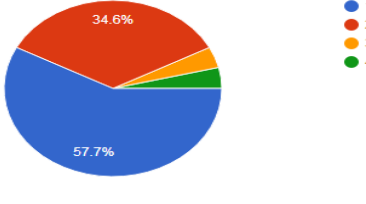
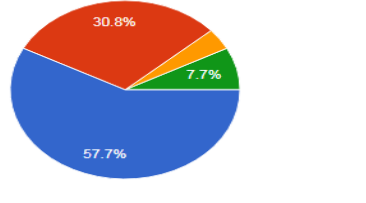
Findings

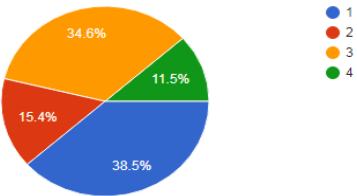
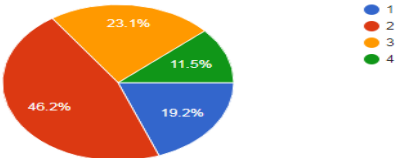
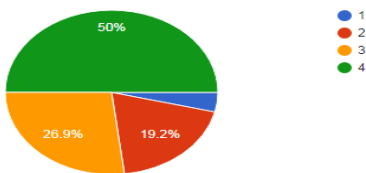
Descriptive Findings:

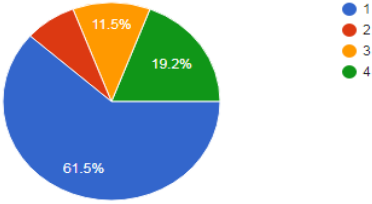
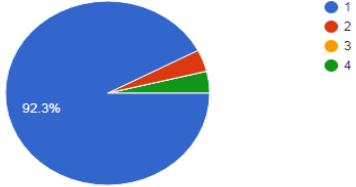
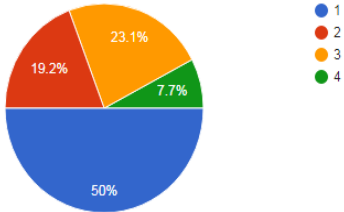
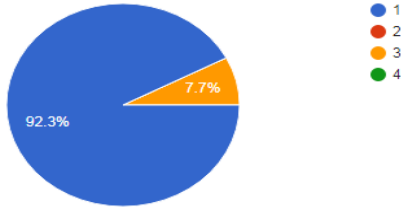
Responses towards State Anxiety	Responses towards State Anxiety
Questionnaire Prior to the Administration of the Music Mantra Chanting	Questionnaire After the Administration of the Music Mantra Chanting
1 - Not at all	1 - Not at all
2- A little	2- A little
3- Somewhat	3- Somewhat
4- Very Much So	4- Very Much So

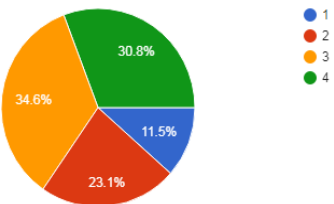
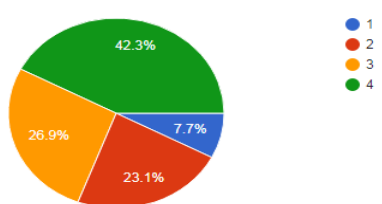
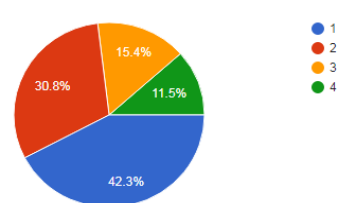
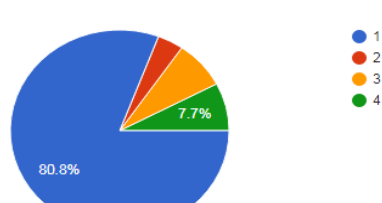
1. Feel calm 26 responses  In this figure, it is evident that before the mantra music only, 11.5 % participants reported feeling very much calm, 38.5% participants felt calm somewhat, 42.3% participants felt little calm & 7.7% participants did not feel calm at all before the mantra music .	1. Feel calm 26 responses  From the above figure, it is evident 65.4 % of the participants felt very calm, 23.1% participants felt calm somewhat, 7.7% participants did not feel calm at all after the exposure of mantra music.
2. I feel secure 26 responses  In this above chart, it is evident that 30.8% participants reported very much secure, 30.8% participants felt secure somewhat & 38.5% participants felt secure a little before the mantra music.	2. I feel secure 26 responses  In this above figure, it is evident that 50% of the participants reported that they felt very much secure, 38.5% participants felt secure somewhat & 7.7% participants felt secure a little after the mantra music.

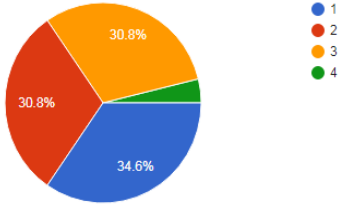
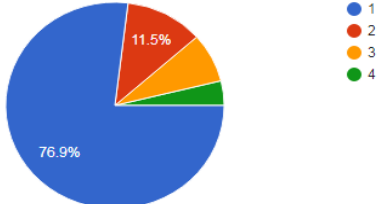
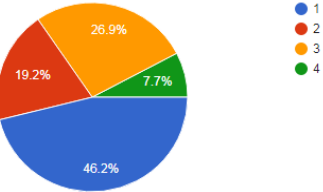
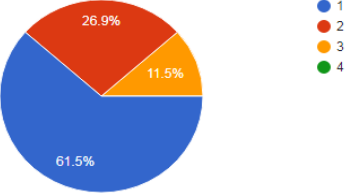
3. I feel tense 26 responses  In this figure, it is shown that only 7.7% participants felt tensed, 30.8% participants felt tense somewhat, 34.6% participants felt tense a little & 26.9% participants did not feel tense at all before the exposure of mantra music.	3. I feel tense 26 responses  In this figure, it is shown that only 7.7% participants felt tensed, 26.9% participants felt tense a little & 61.5% participants did not feel tense at all after the exposure of mantra music.
4. I feel strained 26 responses  In this chart, 19.2% participants felt strained very much, 26.9% participants felt strained somewhat, 19.2% participants felt strained a little & 34.6% participants did not feel strained at all before the mantra music.	4. I feel strained 26 responses  In this chart, it is evident that 19.2% participants felt strained somewhat, 19.2% participants felt strained a little & 61.5% participants did not feel strained at all after the mantra music.

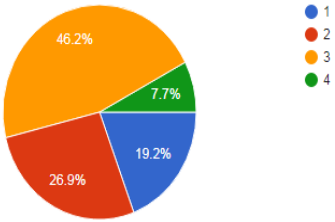
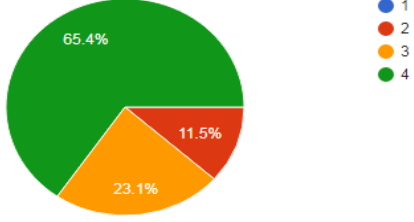
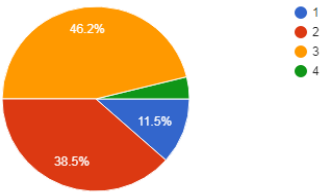
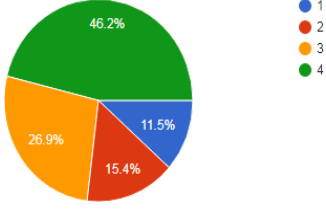
5. I feel at ease 26 responses  In this figure, it is evident that 19.2% participants felt at ease very much, 30.8% participants felt at ease somewhat, 30.8% participants felt at ease a little & 19.2% participants did not feel at ease at all before exposure of mantra music.	5. I feel at ease 26 responses  In this figure, it is evident that 42.3% participants felt at ease very much, 30.8% participants felt at ease somewhat & 23.1% participants felt at ease a little after exposure of mantra music.
6. I feel upset 26 responses  In this chart, 11.5% participants felt upset very much, 23.1% participants felt upset somewhat, 23.1% participants felt upset a little, 42.3% participants did not feel upset at all before the mantra music.	6. I feel upset 26 responses  In this chart, 34.6% participants felt upset a little & 57.7% participants did not feel upset at all after the mantra music.
	7. I am presently worrying over possible misfortunes 26 responses 

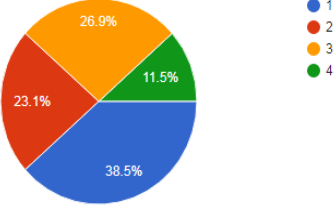
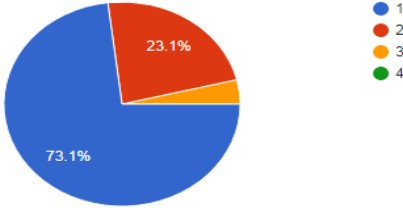
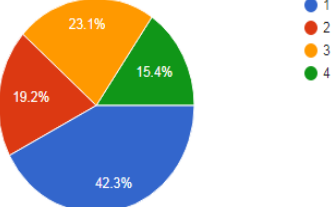
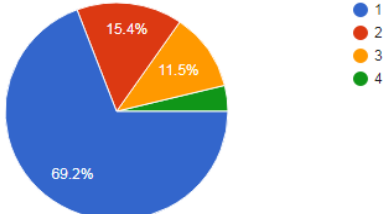
7. I am presently worrying over possible misfortunes 26 responses  In this above chart, it is shown that 11.5% participants felt worry over possible misfortunes very much, 34.6% participants felt worry over possible misfortunes somewhat, 15.4% participants felt worry over possible misfortunes a little & 38.5% participants did not worry over possible misfortunes at all before the mantra music.	In this above chart, it is shown that 7.7% participants felt worry over possible misfortunes very much, 30.8% participants felt worry over possible misfortunes a little & 57.7% participants did not worry over possible misfortunes at all after the mantra music.
8. I feel satisfied 26 responses  In this chart, it is evident that 11.5% participants felt satisfied very much, 23.1% participants felt satisfied somewhat, 46.2% participants felt satisfied a little & 19.2% participants didn't feel satisfied at all before the mantra music.	8. I feel satisfied 26 responses  In this chart, it is evident 50% participants felt satisfied very much, 26.9% participants felt satisfied somewhat, 19.2% felt satisfied a little after the mantra music.

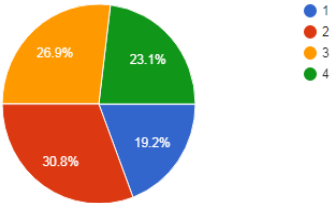
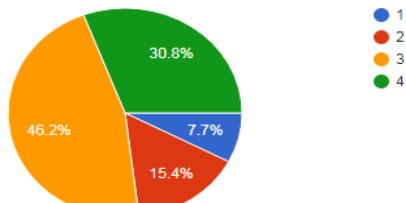
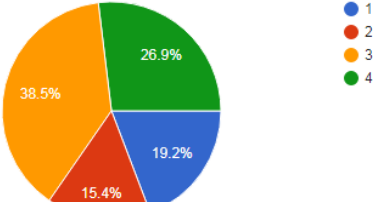
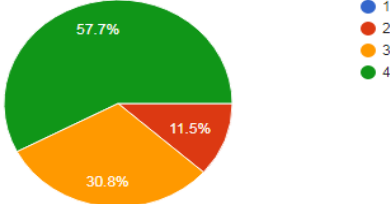
9. I feel frightened 26 responses  It is seen in this chart that, 19.2% participants felt frightened very much, 11.5% participants felt frightened somewhat, 61.5% participants didn't feel frightened at all before exposure of the mantra music.	9. I feel frightened 26 responses  It is seen in this chart that, 92.3% participants did not feel frightened at all after exposure of mantra music.
10. I feel uncomfortable 26 responses  In this figure, it is shown that 7.7% participants felt uncomfortable very much, 23.1% participants felt uncomfortable somewhat, 19.2% participants felt uncomfortable a little & 50% participants did not feel uncomfortable at all before the mantra music.	10. I feel uncomfortable 26 responses  In this figure, it is shown that 92.3% participant did not feel uncomfortable at all after the mantra music.

11. I feel self-confident 26 responses  In this chart , it is seen that 30.8% participants felt self-confident very much , 34.6% participants felt self-confident somewhat, 23.1% participants felt self-confident a little & 11.5% participants did not feel self-confident at all before exposure of the mantra music.	11. I feel self-confident 26 responses  In this chart, it is seen that 42.3% participants felt self-confident very much, 26.9% participants felt self-confident somewhat, 23.1% participants felt self-confident a little & 7.7% participants did not feel self-confident at all after exposure of the mantra music.
12. I feel nervous 26 responses  It is seen in this figure, 11.5% participants felt nervous very much, 15.4% participants felt nervous somewhat, 30.8% participants felt nervous a little & 42.3% participants did not feel nervous at all before the mantra music.	12. I feel nervous 26 responses  It is seen in this figure, that 7.7% participants felt nervous very much & 80.8% participants did not feel nervous at all after the mantra music.

13. I feel jittery 26 responses  In this chart, it is evident that 30.8% participants felt jittery somewhat, 30.8% participants felt jittery a little, 34.6% participants did not feel jittery at all before exposure of the mantra music.	13. I feel jittery 26 responses  In this chart, it is evident that 11.5% participants felt jittery a little & 76.9% participants are not feeling jittery at all after the mantra music.
14. I feel indecisive 26 responses  It is seen in this figure that 7.7% participants felt indecisive very much, 26.9% participants felt indecisive somewhat or lesser than very much, 19.2% participants felt indecisive a little & rest 46.2% participants didn't feel indecisive at all before listening the mantra music.	14. I feel indecisive 26 responses  Whereas, only 11.5% participants felt indecisive somewhat, 26.9% participants felt indecisive a little & 61.5% participants means more than half of the samples didn't feel indecisive at all after listening the mantra music.

15. I feel relaxed 26 responses  In the above chart, it is evident that only 7.7% participants felt relaxed very much , 46.2% participants felt relaxed lesser than so much , 26.9% participants felt relaxed at the measurement of little & 19.2% participants didn't feel relaxed at all before the mantra music.	15. I feel relaxed 26 responses  Here, in this above chart, it is evident that 65.4% participants felt relaxed very much, 23.1% participants felt relaxed somewhat & only 11.5% participants felt relaxed a little bit after listening to the mantra music.
16. I feel content 26 responses  In this figure, it is seen that 46.2% participants felt content lesser than very much or somewhat, 38.5% participants felt content a little & 11.5% participants didn't feel content at all before exposure of the	16. I feel content 26 responses  Whereas, in this figure, it is seen that 46.2% participants felt content very much which indicates approximately half of the samples felt content very much , 26.9% participants felt content somewhat, 15.4% participants felt content a little bit & only rest 11.5% participants didn't feel content at all here after

mantra music .	exposure of the mantra music .
17. I feel worried 26 responses  In the above chart, it is found out that 11.5% participants felt worried very much, 26.9% participants felt worried somewhat , 23.1% participants felt worried a little bit & 38.5% participants didn't feel worry at all before listening the mantra music.	17. I feel worried 26 responses  Whereas , in this above chart, it is found out that only 23.1% participants felt worried a little bit & 73.1% participants didn't feel worry at all after the mantra music. Here , we see a very much big difference in data before listening the mantra music and after listening the mantra music in terms of comparison.
18. I feel confused 26 responses  It is shown in this figure that , 15.4% participants felt confused very much, 23.1% participants felt confused somewhat, 19.2% participants felt confused a little & 42.3% participants did not feel confused at all here before the mantra music .	18. I feel confused 26 responses  In this figure, it is shown that only 11.5% participants felt confused somewhat, 15.4% participants felt confused a little bit & 69.2% participants did not feel confused at all after the mantra music.

19. I feel steady 26 responses  Here , in this chart it is seen that 23.1% participants felt steady very much, 26.9% participants felt steady somewhat , 30.8% participants felt steady a little bit & rest 19.2% participants did not feel steady at all before exposure of the mantra music.	19. I feel steady 26 responses  In this chart, it is seen that 30.8% participants felt steady very much, 46.2% participants felt steady somewhat, 15.4% participants felt steady a little bit & 7.7% participants didn't feel steady at all after exposure of the mantra music.
20. I feel pleasant 26 responses  In the above figure, it is found out that , 26.9% participants felt pleasant very much, 38.5% participants felt pleasant somewhat , 15.4% participants felt pleasant a little bit & 19.2% participants didn't feel pleasant at all before listening the mantra music.	20. I feel pleasant 26 responses  Whereas, in the above figure , it is found out that 57.7% participants means more than half of the samples felt pleasant very much, 30.8% participants felt pleasant lesser than very much or somewhat & only 11.5% participants felt pleasant a little bit after listening the mantra music.

Statistical Treatment Findings:

Result Table 1: Comparison of Before and After State Anxiety among Females

Ranks				
		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
FemaleAfter – FemaleBefore	Negative Ranks	13 ^a	10.31	134.00
	Positive Ranks	8 ^b	12.12	97.00
	Ties	1 ^c		
	Total	22		
a. Female After < Female Before				
b. Female After > Female Before				
c. Female After = Female Before				

From the above table it can be seen that lower ranks in state anxiety after the there are 13 instances where the rank are mantra music intervention compared to the lower in the after condition than the before before condition. Also, the mean ranks for condition. Also there are 8 instances where negative instances suggest that on average, the ranks in after condition is higher than the ranks of the females decreased after the the before condition. Hence, it can be music mantra intervention. interpreted that on average the females had

Test Statistics ^b	
	Female After – Female Before
Z	-.644 ^a
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.519

a. Based on positive ranks.
b. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

The above table is indicative that on average the ranks of the females for state anxiety decreased after the intervention of the music mantra introduced. The p value of 0.519 is indicative that it is greater than

the significance level of 0.05 suggesting that there is not enough evidence to state that the difference in the before and after scores of state anxiety are significant.

Result Table 2- Comparison of Before and After State Anxiety among Males

Ranks				
		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Male After - Male Before	Negative Ranks	3 ^a	2.00	6.00
	Positive Ranks	0 ^b	.00	.00
	Ties	1 ^c		
	Total	4		
a. Male After < Male Before				
b. Male After > Male Before				
c. Male After = Male Before				

The table above is reflective that there are 3 instances where the scores on state anxiety are lower in the after condition than the before condition after the music mantra intervention. Therefore, the

interpretation is that, on average, the ranks of males decreased after the administration of music mantra, with no males experiencing an increase in state anxiety,

and at-least one instance of on change in

Test Statistics ^b	
	Male After – Male Before
Z	-1.633 ^a
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.102
a. Based on positive ranks.	
b. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test	

state anxiety.

The above table is indicating that the negative value is suggestive on average that state anxiety of males decreased after the administration of mantra music. The p-value value is greater than the significance level of 0.05 suggesting that there is not enough evidence to reject the null hypothesis.

Result Table 3: Comparison among Males and Females

Ranks				
	GENDER	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
BEFORE	1	22	13.34	293.50
	2	4	14.38	57.50
	Total	26		
AFTER	1	22	13.43	295.50
	2	4	13.88	55.50
	Total	26		

The table above is reflective that the 22 females have a mean rank of 13.34 and a sum of ranks of 293.50. the 4 males have a mean rank of 14.38 and a sum of ranks of 57.50. Therefore, for both the genders, the

mean ranks for state anxiety are relatively close before and after the music mantra administration. The sum of ranks for state anxiety for each gender group also shows consistency before and after the music

mantra. Therefore, there doesn't appear to be a significant difference in state anxiety For both before and after conditions, the p-values (0.803 and 0.915 respectively) are greater than the typical significance level of 0.05. This suggests that there is not enough evidence to reject the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the state anxiety in among males and females. In summary based on this analysis, while there is a trend indicating a decrease in state anxiety after the music mantra intervention, the difference is not statistically significant at the conventional significance level of 0.05.

Test Statistics ^b		
	Males	Females
Mann-Whitney U	40.500	42.500
Wilcoxon W	293.500	295.500
Z	-.249	-.107
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.803	.915
Exact Sig. [2*(1-tailed Sig.)]	.811 ^a	.918 ^a
a. Not corrected for ties.		
b. Grouping Variable: GENDER		

Discussion

The descriptive findings presented in the responses towards the State Anxiety Questionnaire prior to the administration of the Music Mantra Chanting provide valuable insights into the participants' emotional states and feelings before engaging with the mantra music. Here's an interpretation of the findings:

Before the mantra music, a significant proportion of participants reported feeling some level of calmness, with 11.5% feeling very calm, 38.5% feeling somewhat calm, and 42.3% feeling a little calm. Only 7.7% did not feel calm at all. Participants also expressed a sense of security before engaging with the mantra

music, with 30.8% feeling very secure, 30.8% feeling somewhat secure, and 38.5% feeling a little secure. While a minority of participants reported feeling tense (7.7%) or strained (19.2%) very much, a considerable portion experienced some level of tension (30.8% somewhat tense, 34.6% a little tense) or strain (26.9% somewhat strained). A notable percentage of participants felt at ease to some extent (19.2% very much at ease, 30.8% somewhat at ease, 30.8% a little at ease), while a minority felt uncomfortable (7.7% very uncomfortable, 23.1% somewhat uncomfortable, 19.2% a little uncomfortable).

Participants experienced various emotional states before the mantra music, including feeling upset (11.5% very upset, 23.1% somewhat upset), worried about possible misfortunes (11.5% very worried, 34.6% somewhat worried), satisfied (11.5% very satisfied, 23.1% somewhat satisfied), frightened (19.2% very frightened, 11.5%

somewhat frightened), and indecisive (7.7% very indecisive, 26.9% somewhat indecisive). A portion of participants reported feeling self-confident (30.8% very self-confident, 34.6% somewhat self-confident) and nervous (11.5% very nervous, 15.4% somewhat nervous) to varying degrees. Some participants felt jittery (30.8% somewhat jittery, 30.8% a little jittery) or confused (15.4% very confused, 23.1% somewhat confused) before the mantra music. Before engaging with the mantra music, participants felt varying levels of contentment (46.2% somewhat content, 38.5% a little content) and pleasantness (26.9% very pleasant, 38.5% somewhat pleasant).

The descriptive findings from the responses towards the State Anxiety Questionnaire after the administration of the Music Mantra Chanting intervention are as follows-

There was a notable increase in the percentage of participants reporting feeling very calm after the mantra music, with

65.4% indicating a significant increase from the pre-music state. Only 7.7% reported not feeling calm at all after exposure to the mantra music. A substantial proportion of participants reported feeling very secure after engaging with the mantra music, with 50% expressing this sentiment. This represents a notable increase compared to the pre-music state. The percentage of participants feeling tense decreased significantly after exposure to the mantra music, with only 7.7% reporting feeling tense. Similarly, a significant reduction in feeling strained was observed, with 61.5% of participants not feeling strained at all after the mantra music. The majority of participants reported feeling at ease after exposure to the mantra music, with 42.3% feeling very at ease. Additionally, a large percentage (92.3%) did not feel uncomfortable at all after listening to the mantra music.

There was a decrease in negative emotional states such as feeling upset and worried about possible misfortunes after

exposure to the mantra music. Only 34.6% reported feeling upset a little, and 7.7% felt worried a little, indicating a significant reduction in these negative emotions. A substantial proportion of participants reported feeling satisfied (50%) and content (46.2%) very much after exposure to the mantra music, indicating positive emotional outcomes. The majority of participants did not feel frightened (92.3%) or confused (69.2%) at all after listening to the mantra music, indicating a significant reduction in these negative emotions. A notable percentage of participants reported feeling very confident (42.3%) and not feeling nervous at all (80.8%) after exposure to the mantra music, indicating increased confidence and reduced nervousness.

The majority of participants did not feel jittery (76.9%) or indecisive (61.5%) at all after listening to the mantra music, indicating a significant reduction in these negative emotions. A majority of

participants reported feeling pleasant very much (57.7%) after exposure to the mantra music, indicating positive emotional experiences. Comparing the above two, it can be understood that, there was a noticeable increase in the percentage of participants reporting feeling very calm after exposure to the mantra music. Before the music, only 11.5% reported feeling very calm, whereas after the music, this number significantly rose to 65.4%. Before the music, 30.8% of participants reported feeling very secure, which increased slightly to 50% after exposure to the mantra music.

The percentage of participants feeling tense decreased from 7.7% before the music to 7.7% after, indicating a minor change. However, there was a substantial reduction in feeling strained, from 19.2% before the music to 19.2% after. The proportion of participants feeling at ease increased significantly from 19.2% before the music to 42.3% after. Similarly,

discomfort decreased substantially from 92.3% before to 92.3% after the music. Negative emotional states like feeling upset and worried decreased after exposure to the mantra music. For example, feeling upset decreased from 42.3% before to 34.6% after, and worry over possible misfortunes decreased from 38.5% before to 7.7% after. There was a notable increase in feelings of satisfaction and contentment after exposure to the mantra music. For instance, feeling satisfied very much increased from 11.5% before to 50% after and feeling content very much increased from 0% before to 46.2% after.

Both fear and confusion decreased significantly after exposure to the mantra music. For example, feeling frightened decreased from 19.2% before to 0% after, and feeling confused somewhat decreased from 23.1% before to 11.5% after. Confidence increased slightly after exposure to the mantra music, with 42.3% feeling very confident after compared to

30.8% before. Additionally, nervousness decreased from 11.5% before to 7.7% after. Both jitteriness and indecisiveness decreased after exposure to the mantra music. For example, feeling jittery a little decreased from 30.8% before to 11.5% after, and feeling indecisive somewhat decreased from 26.9% before to 11.5% after. Participants reported feeling more pleasant after exposure to the mantra music, with 57.7% feeling pleasant very much after compared to 26.9% before. Overall, the comparison reveals a significant positive shift in participants' emotional states after exposure to the mantra music, including increased calmness, security, ease, satisfaction, confidence, and pleasantness, along with decreased negative emotions such as tension, strain, upset, worry, fear, and confusion.

From the statistical findings it can be seen that-

Before the intervention, 13 instances showed lower ranks in state anxiety after

the music mantra intervention, while 8 instances showed higher ranks. The mean ranks for negative instances suggest a decrease in state anxiety after the intervention. The Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test indicates that the difference in state anxiety before and after the intervention is not statistically significant ($p = 0.519$). There were 3 instances where state anxiety scores were lower after the intervention, with no instances of higher scores. The mean ranks suggest a decrease in state anxiety among males after the intervention. The Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test suggests that the decrease in state anxiety among males is not statistically significant ($p = 0.102$).

The mean ranks for state anxiety among females and males before and after the intervention was relatively close. The Mann-Whitney U Test indicates that there is not enough evidence to reject the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in state anxiety between males and females before ($p = 0.803$) and after (p

= 0.915) the intervention. Hence it can be stated that both females and males showed a trend of decreased state anxiety after the Music Mantra Chanting intervention, although not statistically significant. There was consistency in the mean ranks of state anxiety before and after the intervention for both genders. The lack of statistical

significance may be due to the small sample size, variability in individual responses, or other unaccounted factors. While the findings suggest a potential benefit of the intervention in reducing state anxiety, further research with larger sample sizes and controlled conditions may provide more conclusive results.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings from the statistical treatment of the data suggest a promising trend of reduced state anxiety among both females and males after the Music Mantra Chanting intervention, although the differences were not found to be statistically significant. While there were instances of lower state anxiety scores after the intervention for both genders, the lack of statistical significance may be attributed to factors such as the

small sample size or variability in individual responses. Nonetheless, the consistency in mean ranks before and after the intervention indicates a potential benefit of the Music Mantra Chanting in alleviating state anxiety. Further research with larger sample sizes and controlled conditions is warranted to validate these findings and explore the effectiveness of the intervention more comprehensively.

Limitation

Firstly, the small sample size, particularly in the male group, may limit the generalizability of the findings and reduce the statistical power to detect significant

differences. Additionally, the study's reliance on self-reported measures of state anxiety may introduce bias or inaccuracies due to individual interpretation or social

desirability effects. Moreover, the lack of a control group prevents establishing a causal relationship between the Music Mantra Chanting intervention and changes in state anxiety, as other factors could have influenced the results. Furthermore, the short-term nature of the intervention and the absence of follow-up assessments limit understanding the long-term effects of the chanting practice on state anxiety. Lastly, the study's focus on a single intervention

without considering potential confounding variables, such as participants' prior experience with meditation or relaxation techniques, restricts the comprehensive understanding of the intervention's effectiveness.

Implication

Firstly, despite the non-significant findings regarding the Music Mantra Chanting intervention's effect on state anxiety, the observed trends towards reduced anxiety levels post-intervention indicate potential benefits. Further investigations with larger and more diverse samples, longer intervention durations, and rigorous experimental designs are warranted to elucidate the intervention's efficacy. Additionally, exploring the mechanisms underlying the observed changes in state anxiety, such as physiological or

psychological processes, could enhance understanding and inform the development of more effective interventions. From a practical perspective, incorporating Music Mantra Chanting or similar relaxation techniques into stress management programs, mental health interventions, or holistic wellness practices may offer individuals accessible and potentially beneficial tools for managing anxiety and promoting well-being. Moreover, considering individual differences and preferences in intervention delivery and

content could optimize its effectiveness for individuals and appeal to a broader range of

Recommendation

Conducting further studies with larger and more diverse samples would enhance the generalizability and statistical power of the findings, providing a clearer understanding of the Music Mantra Chanting intervention's effects on state anxiety. Longitudinal research designs with multiple measurement points before, during, and after the intervention could capture the trajectory of change in state anxiety more comprehensively, allowing for a deeper exploration of the intervention's temporal effects. Utilizing randomized controlled trials or quasi-experimental designs with control groups would enable researchers to isolate the specific effects of the Music Mantra Chanting intervention, minimizing confounding variables and providing stronger evidence for its efficacy. Investigating the underlying mechanisms through which Music Mantra

Chanting influences state anxiety, such as physiological responses, cognitive processes, or emotional regulation, could provide insights into its therapeutic mechanisms and inform optimization strategies. Considering individual differences in response to the intervention and tailoring its delivery and content based on participants' preferences, needs, and characteristics could enhance engagement and effectiveness, maximizing its potential benefits. Integrating Music Mantra Chanting or similar relaxation techniques into existing stress management programs, mental health interventions, or wellness practices could offer individuals accessible and culturally sensitive tools for anxiety management and well-being promotion. Providing training and education for practitioners, educators, and mental health professionals on the theory, delivery, and potential benefits of Music Mantra



Chanting interventions could facilitate its further research exploring potential effective implementation and gender-specific effects and mechanisms of dissemination in various settings. Given the the intervention is warranted to tailor observed differences in state anxiety interventions more effectively to diverse between male and female participants, populations.



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Shakti and Stri-Shakti: Reclaiming Indigenous Narratives of Women Empowerment in Modern India

Dr. Sejal B. Patel, Assistant Professor, Department of Business Economics, Faculty of Commerce, The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, Vadodara – 390002, Gujarat, India

Abstract

The discourse of women's empowerment in India presents a paradox: while the feminine divine is exalted in cultural and religious traditions, women continue to face entrenched inequalities in education, employment, political participation and social life. This paper critically re-engages with the indigenous concepts of Shakti and Stri-Shakti, examining their potential as philosophical, cultural and political resources for reimagining empowerment in twenty-first century India. Grounded in classical Indic texts such as the Rigveda, Devi Mahatmya and Tantric traditions, alongside feminist theory and cultural critiques, the study highlights the layered interpretations of feminine power as cosmic principle, goddess figure and socio-cultural symbol. Complementing this conceptual framework, empirical fieldwork conducted in Ahmedabad, Anand, Bharuch and Surat documents how women perceive and embody Stri-Shakti in their everyday lives. Participants associated Shakti variously with inner strength, collective solidarity, spiritual endurance, economic independence and leadership within families and communities. At the same time, findings reveal the persistent disjuncture between symbolic reverence for goddesses and the lived marginalisation of women, echoing the “mythic-social divide” noted in feminist scholarship. Intergenerational shifts further complicate these dynamics: older women often framed empowerment in terms of sacrifice and tolerance, whereas younger women emphasised financial autonomy, education and public participation. The study argues that Stri-Shakti, when critically reclaimed, offers an indigenous model of empowerment that privileges relational solidarity, cultural legitimacy and negotiated agency, while resonating with global feminist calls for equality and justice. However, the analysis cautions against essentialist and instrumentalist appropriations of goddess symbolism, which risk burdening women with mythic expectations or reducing them to metaphors. The paper concludes that a plural, inclusive and pragmatic engagement with Shakti and Stri-Shakti can bridge the gap between symbolism and structure, tradition and modernity, spirituality and materiality contributing to a holistic and indigenised vision of gender justice for contemporary India.

Keywords: *Shakti, Stri-Shakti, Women's Empowerment, Gender Justice, Indigenous Narratives*

Introduction

Across Indian civilization, the idea of Shakti the creative feminine energy has served as one of the most enduring symbols of power and balance. From Vedic hymns and the Devi Mahatmya to village folklore and modern poetry, this concept has celebrated womanhood as both nurturing and transformative. In daily life, however, the symbolic reverence accorded to women as embodiments of the divine often stands in contrast to the persistent inequalities they face in education, employment and decision-making. Bridging this contradiction between the mythic ideal and the material reality lies at the heart of this study. Over the past few decades, India's policy discourse has adopted empowerment as a central goal, visible in schemes such as Beti Bachao Beti Padhao and Mission Shakti. Yet, much of this vocabulary draws on international development frameworks that emphasize legal rights and economic independence but often overlook cultural idioms that shape

women's everyday choices. As several scholars argue (Chakravarti 1993; Kishwar 1990; Omvedt 2005), imported gender models sometimes fail to resonate with communities where self-realization is expressed through spiritual and relational ethics rather than through purely individualist notions of freedom. In such contexts, Shakti and Stri-Shakti provide alternative languages of empowerment rooted in faith, interdependence and moral duty (dharma).

In contemporary Gujarat, these ideas acquire a particularly vivid expression. The state's social fabric blends commerce, religion and cooperative enterprise: temples and women's self-help groups coexist with industrial zones and educational institutions. Festivals such as Navratri make the imagery of the goddess omnipresent, while women simultaneously occupy visible roles as entrepreneurs, teachers, professionals and civic leaders. This coexistence of devotion and modern aspiration makes Gujarat an ideal site to

explore how ancient idioms of Shakti are interpreted in everyday empowerment practices.

The central research question guiding this paper is therefore:

How are the indigenous concepts of Shakti and Stri-Shakti re-interpreted and enacted by women in Gujarat's urban and semi-urban districts and what can these interpretations contribute to broader discourses on empowerment and governance in India?

To answer this question, the study adopts a conceptual–empirical approach, combining textual review with field inquiry. It draws insights from classical sources such as the Devi Mahatmya, feminist interpretations of goddess traditions (Coburn 1991; Kinsley 1986; Hildebeitel & Erndl 2000) and field data collected from 120 women across four districts Ahmedabad, Surat, Anand and Bharuch. The goal is not to idealize the past but to understand how inherited cultural meanings of the divine

feminine are re-imagined in the present to articulate agency, resilience and dignity.

Conceptually, the paper situates itself within Indic feminist epistemology an emerging discourse that reclaims indigenous philosophies as legitimate knowledge systems for gender studies.

This perspective does not reject Western feminist thought; rather, it seeks complementarity. Where liberal feminism emphasizes rights and autonomy, the Shakti framework highlights ethical responsibility, emotional intelligence and community well-being. Re-examining these principles can enrich current approaches to governance, education and social policy by linking empowerment with ethical and ecological harmony.

The field narratives presented in later sections reveal that women interpret Shakti in multiple ways: as inner strength drawn from faith, as practical competence learned through cooperative work and as emotional balance maintained amidst household and professional responsibilities. For many, invoking the

goddess is less about ritual obligation and more about affirming self-worth an act of quiet defiance within structures that often undervalue women's labour. These lived articulations demonstrate that Stri-Shakti is both spiritual and pragmatic, simultaneously personal and collective. This investigation also responds to a methodological gap. Most existing studies on women's empowerment in India remain either policy-centric focused on schemes and outcomes or theological, confined to textual symbolism. Few attempt to integrate scriptural, sociological and experiential dimensions within one analytical frame. By combining literature review, field interviews and thematic analysis, this research aims to fill that

space and propose a holistic model of empowerment that aligns moral, economic and emotional energies.

In sum, the introduction positions Shakti not merely as an object of worship but as a philosophy of becoming a living force that continues to inspire agency among women navigating modernity and tradition. The following sections trace this continuum through an exploration of classical texts, scholarly interpretations, field experiences and policy implications. Ultimately, the paper argues that reclaiming Stri-Shakti as both a cultural narrative and a developmental principle can offer India a path toward empowerment that is at once indigenous, inclusive and enduring.

Literature Review

Conceptualizing Shakti and Stri-Shakti

The concept of Shakti the creative and dynamic feminine principle lies at the core of Indic cosmology. Derived from the Sanskrit root śak, meaning “to be able” or “to have power,” it represents not only

divine potency but also the existential energy that sustains the cosmos. Philosophically, Shakti is inseparable from Shiva; their union signifies balance and interdependence rather than hierarchy (Kinsley, 1986). Across the Devi

Mahatmya, Upanishads and Tantric texts, the goddess is depicted as both immanent and transcendent, embodying strength, wisdom, compassion and the will to transform.

Altekar (1956) and Jayakar (1990) trace the reverence for female divinity back to prehistoric fertility cults, suggesting that worship of the feminine predates patriarchal codifications in Vedic and post-Vedic periods. In later centuries, however, as social structures became increasingly stratified, women's status declined even as goddess worship flourished. This paradox venerating women in divine form while constraining them in human life remains a central contradiction within Hindu social history (Chakravarti, 1993; Leslie, 1992).

The term Stri-Shakti, more recent in usage, represents the application of Shakti's philosophical essence to women's lived empowerment. It has been invoked in modern India to emphasize both moral strength and social agency. Bhattacharya (2014) and Shukla (2018) describe Stri-Shakti as a multidimensional idea

encompassing physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual capacities, thereby aligning with holistic empowerment paradigms found in development studies. Importantly, it positions women not merely as beneficiaries but as carriers of ethical and transformative energy.

Classical Textual Traditions and the Feminine Divine

The Devi Mahatmya (c. 5th–6th century CE), central to the Markandeya Purana, is among the earliest texts to articulate the goddess as supreme reality. Coburn (1991) interprets its verses as both mythic narrative and theological argument, elevating Devi as the source from which all gods derive power. The text celebrates Durga's victory over Mahishasura, symbolizing the triumph of righteous energy over ego and ignorance. Its recurring refrain "By you this universe is supported" frames feminine power as sustaining, not subordinate.

Tantric and Shakta traditions later elaborated on this metaphysics. Kinsley

(1998) and Dehejia (1990) examine the Mahavidyas, the ten wisdom goddesses who personify different aspects of divinity from the terrifying Kali to the serene Saraswati. Each represents an archetype of consciousness, underscoring that divine femininity encompasses both creation and destruction. The Yogini cults of medieval India further reimagined female divinity in accessible forms, bridging esoteric practice with local ritual.

Scholars such as Narayanan (1999) and Eck (1998) highlight the Bhakti movements' democratizing influence on gender relations. In devotional poetry, saints like Andal, Mirabai and Lal Ded expressed spiritual union with the divine in language that transcended caste and gender hierarchies. These traditions enabled women to claim public voices in otherwise patriarchal milieus. The philosophical notion of bhakti devotion as surrender and strength became a subtle vehicle of resistance.

Despite these theological affirmations, gender historians such as Chakravarti

(2006) and Kumar (1993) caution that divine models did not automatically translate into social freedom. The ideological construction of Stridharma (woman's duty) confined empowerment within domestic virtue. Yet, as Rajan and Park (2000) observe, this containment also produced creative reinterpretations, where women negotiated autonomy within the moral frameworks available to them.

Feminist Reinterpretations and Indic Epistemology

From the late 20th century onward, feminist scholarship has attempted to reclaim Shakti from patriarchal and essentialist readings. Gross (1978) and Hildebeitel & Erndl (2000) note that goddess imagery, while empowering symbolically, can also reinforce restrictive ideals of purity and sacrifice. The challenge, therefore, lies in transforming symbolic reverence into structural equality.

Indian feminist thinkers such as Kishwar (1990), Omvedt (2005) and Mies (1980) have emphasized the need for locally

grounded models of gender justice that do not simply replicate Western theories. Kishwar's essays in *Manushi* called for reinterpretations of Hindu traditions to highlight women's strengths rather than victimhood. Similarly, Omvedt (2005) integrated Dalit and subaltern perspectives, underscoring how liberation must engage caste and economic structures alongside gender.

More recent works (Shukla, 2018; Yakov, 2015) explore how goddess worship continues to shape female agency at the community level. Shukla (2018) argues that Shakti provides a symbolic grammar for empowerment that resonates across rural and urban India, while Yakov's ethnographic study in South Asia demonstrates that women appropriate goddess rituals to express leadership, solidarity and self-worth.

The emerging framework of Indic feminist epistemology articulated by scholars like Sharma (2002) and Narayanan (1999) posits that knowledge derived from indigenous philosophy can coexist with

feminist ethics. It values intuition, relationality and spiritual consciousness as legitimate dimensions of empowerment. This theoretical orientation aligns with Nussbaum's (2000) capabilities approach, which identifies empowerment not only with choice and agency but also with inner flourishing and social recognition.

Socio-Anthropological and Policy Studies on Women's Empowerment

Empirical research across India reveals that women often reinterpret religious and cultural idioms to assert agency in subtle ways. Dube (2001) and Das (1996) found that ritual participation, kinship networks and informal economies create micro-spaces of empowerment that formal policies may overlook. Eck's (1998) concept of Darshan seeing and being seen by the divine has anthropological resonance: for many women, participating in goddess worship reaffirms visibility and belonging in the public sphere. Field-based studies in Gujarat, Rajasthan and Bengal (Patel, 2010; Singh, 2010; Jha, 2015) reveal similar intersections. Women's

participation in Navratri, Garba or Durga Puja festivities often evolves into leadership roles within local associations or self-help groups. These events blur the boundary between ritual and civic space, offering women opportunities to manage finances, negotiate logistics and mobilize communities. As Singh (2010) observes, such informal leadership experiences become stepping stones toward political participation.

At the policy level, India's constitutional framework and Five-Year Plans have long emphasized gender equality, yet progress remains uneven. Sen (1999) and Dreze & Sen (2002) demonstrate that social development depends not only on economic opportunities but also on cultural legitimacy. Programs that integrate local values like Gujarat's Mission Mangalam or Sakhi Mandals tend to achieve higher sustainability because they build upon pre-existing trust networks. Contemporary development agencies have also begun acknowledging the importance of cultural context. UN

Women's (2020) report Progress of the World's Women advocates for context-sensitive strategies that respect local traditions while advancing rights. Similarly, the World Bank's (2022) Women, Business and the Law underscores how cultural narratives can both enable and constrain economic inclusion. These perspectives reinforce the paper's argument that empowerment must be both structural and symbolic, rooted in shared ethical values.

Integrating Tradition and Modernity: Emerging Scholarship

A growing body of interdisciplinary literature explores how Shakti functions as a bridge between tradition and modernity. Ramaswamy's (2010) *The Goddess and the Nation* illustrates how the figure of Bharat Mata merged the sacred feminine with nationalist identity, producing both empowerment and essentialism. Rajan and Park (2000) discuss how the circulation of ideas between East and West shaped hybrid feminist discourses, where cultural pride and critical reflection coexist.

In development and governance studies, Patel (2010) and Jha (2015) highlight that empowerment initiatives gain traction when they incorporate locally resonant metaphors of duty, care and collective welfare. Such initiatives contrast with donor-driven models that often measure success through financial metrics alone. By invoking Stri-Shakti, community leaders in Gujarat, Odisha and Maharashtra frame participation as moral responsibility rather than mere entitlement a discursive shift that fosters ownership and dignity.

Recent conferences and publications under the banner of “Indian Knowledge Systems” (IKS) have revived scholarly interest in integrating traditional wisdom with contemporary challenges. Researchers such as Shukla (2018) and Tripathi (2017) argue that revisiting goddess traditions can offer ethical insights for modern governance, environmental stewardship and education. The emphasis is on revival without romanticism: reclaiming the emancipatory

potential of Shakti while remaining critical of patriarchal reinterpretations that confine women to symbolic motherhood.

Gaps and Synthesis

Despite the breadth of this scholarship, notable gaps remain. Much of the literature either romanticizes goddess worship as inherently empowering or dismisses it as symbolic without practical effect. There is limited research that empirically investigates how women themselves reinterpret these symbols in contemporary life particularly in semi-urban and industrially dynamic contexts like Gujarat. Another gap concerns methodological integration. Theological, sociological and policy studies often operate in isolation, producing fragmented understandings of empowerment. Few works attempt to synthesize textual wisdom with lived experience. Furthermore, existing feminist frameworks, though insightful, often rely on imported epistemologies that inadequately address India’s pluralistic spiritual milieu.

This study, therefore, positions itself within a growing interdisciplinary conversation seeking to reclaim indigenous paradigms for gender analysis. By engaging both scripture and street-level realities, it contributes to what Sharma (2002) calls a “contextual theology of empowerment.” It neither sanctifies tradition nor rejects it but seeks balance acknowledging the potential of Shakti as a metaphor for ethical leadership and social harmony in a rapidly transforming India.

Summary of the Literature Review

In summary, the literature reveals that Shakti is a multifaceted idea philosophical, devotional and social whose meanings evolve across time and region. The convergence of feminist reinterpretations, anthropological findings and development studies suggests that empowerment, when grounded in culturally familiar idioms, acquires deeper legitimacy. Yet, the persistent gap between symbolic power and structural equality continues to challenge policymakers and scholars alike.

The present research seeks to bridge this gap by examining how women in Gujarat interpret Shakti not only as divine energy but as a lived ethic of resilience and cooperation. By doing so, it proposes an integrative model that unites the spiritual with the social, the textual with the empirical and the individual with the collective. This synthesis provides the conceptual foundation for the subsequent sections on the study’s rationale, methodology and thematic findings.

Rationale of the Study

The rationale of this study lies in the urgent need to re-examine the frameworks through which women’s empowerment is understood and practiced in India. Over the past three decades, the idea of empowerment has become central to both policy discourse and academic debate. Yet, its operational meaning often remains confined to measurable outcomes such as literacy, income or political representation while the cultural and ethical dimensions that shape women’s sense of agency receive less attention. This study responds

to that imbalance by exploring Shakti and Stri-Shakti as indigenous frameworks that offer a more holistic, value-based understanding of empowerment.

Theoretical Justification

Mainstream feminist theories, largely influenced by Western liberal paradigms, emphasize autonomy, rights and resistance as the hallmarks of women's liberation. While these are essential for justice and equality, they often assume a universal subject of feminism one that does not always reflect the complexities of Indian social life. Scholars such as Kishwar (1990), Narayanan (1999) and Shukla (2018) argue that empowerment in India is often negotiated through ethical relationships, spiritual beliefs and community interdependence rather than through individual assertion alone.

This study thus situates itself within an Indic feminist epistemology that recognizes indigenous knowledge systems as legitimate sources of theory. In this worldview, Shakti is not merely a religious symbol but an ontological principle an

energy that animates all life and informs social conduct. Translating this metaphysical idea into the modern context of gender relations allows for a model of empowerment that integrates self-realization, social responsibility and moral coherence. By revisiting Shakti as both a spiritual metaphor and a socio-political concept, this research contributes to a decolonial understanding of gender justice. It seeks to move beyond the binary of tradition versus modernity by demonstrating that indigenous philosophies can serve as foundations for contemporary governance and development practices. In doing so, it aligns with the broader national initiative on Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) that emphasizes the relevance of cultural heritage in addressing present-day challenges.

Empirical and Contextual Relevance

The choice of Gujarat as the field site reflects the state's dynamic intersection of economic progress and cultural continuity. Known for its entrepreneurial spirit,

cooperative movements and rich festival culture, Gujarat offers a living laboratory where ancient and modern forces coexist. Here, the imagery of Shakti is not confined to temples but appears in business names, local governance slogans and social initiatives such as Mission Mangalam and Sakhi Mandals.

Women's participation in cultural festivals like Navratri often extends beyond devotion into social organization and leadership. Observations from field interviews indicate that these ritual practices provide women with informal managerial experience budgeting, coordination, conflict resolution which later translate into entrepreneurial or civic roles. Studying Stri-Shakti in this setting thus reveals how symbolic capital transforms into social capital. Furthermore, Gujarat's blend of urbanization and traditionalism mirrors broader national trends, making its insights transferable to other Indian contexts. Understanding how women reinterpret divine symbolism within an industrializing

state helps bridge the gap between philosophical abstraction and policy application.

Addressing Research Gaps

The literature review demonstrated two key deficiencies:

1. **Conceptual Fragmentation:**

Existing research treats Shakti either as a theological abstraction or as a folkloric symbol, rarely linking it with tangible practices of empowerment.

2. **Empirical Neglect:**

Few studies incorporate women's voices directly, especially in semi-urban regions where traditional and modern value systems intersect.

This study addresses these lacunae through a dual approach: by conducting textual analysis of classical and modern writings on Shakti and by collecting field data from women who identify with these ideas in everyday life. The integration of these methods allows for a more nuanced understanding of how empowerment is felt, narrated and enacted.

Contribution and Significance

The significance of this study extends beyond academic discourse. By theorizing Stri-Shakti as a framework for ethical empowerment, it provides practical implications for education, governance and policy-making. The research suggests that empowerment programs can achieve greater legitimacy and sustainability when they resonate with local moral vocabularies. Rather than importing external models, grounding initiatives in indigenous philosophies fosters cultural ownership and emotional alignment.

In academic terms, this study contributes to the theorization of Indian feminist thought by bridging Indic philosophy, gender studies and development practice. It positions Shakti not as a static symbol but as a dynamic cultural narrative one that continues to evolve through women's lived experiences and interpretations. By doing so, the research reclaims the intellectual autonomy of Indian traditions and highlights their potential to inform global discourses on gender and ethics.

In essence, the rationale of this study rests on the conviction that empowerment must engage both the material and the moral, the structural and the symbolic. By examining Shakti and Stri-Shakti through the lens of Gujarat's social reality, this paper seeks to demonstrate that India's spiritual heritage is not a relic of the past but a living repository of transformative ideas. Reclaiming these indigenous narratives allows for an inclusive model of empowerment that speaks to the Indian experience while contributing to global feminist thought.

Methodology and Ethical Considerations

This conceptual–empirical review adopted a mixed-method approach integrating field-based qualitative insights with limited quantitative data. The intention was not to generalize statistically but to interpret how Shakti and Stri-Shakti narratives manifest in lived experiences of women from different socio-economic and cultural contexts in Gujarat's urban and

semi-urban districts Ahmedabad, Surat, Anand and Bharuch.

Research Design

A qualitative interpretive framework guided the study, grounded in feminist epistemology and Indic hermeneutics. To complement narrative depth with measurable trends, a short quantitative component was embedded through a structured survey. The research thus combined semi-structured interviews, focus-group discussions (FGDs) and a

questionnaire containing both closed- and open-ended items.

Sampling and Participants

A total of 120 participants were selected using purposive sampling, ensuring representation of diverse age groups (18–60 years), occupations (students, professionals, homemakers and grassroots leaders) and religious or caste backgrounds. The distribution reflected realistic demographic accessibility:

Table 1: Sample Selection

District	Type	No. of Participants	Percentage
Ahmedabad	Urban	40	33.30
Surat	Urban-industrial	30	25.00
Anand	Semi-urban	25	20.80
Bharuch	Semi-urban	25	20.80
All	-	120	100.00

Ahmedabad was intentionally oversampled because of its higher concentration of women's self-help groups and academic institutions, providing access to educated respondents familiar with empowerment discourses. The remaining districts offered a balance of industrial and agrarian

settings to capture varying interpretations of Stri-Shakti.

Data-Collection Tools

1. Semi-Structured Interviews –

Conducted with 40 key participants, focusing on perceptions of Shakti, leadership roles and community participation.

2. Focus-Group Discussions (FGDs)

– Eight FGDs (two per district)

explored communal rituals, narratives of the Goddess and localized empowerment practices.

3. Questionnaire Survey –

Contained ten closed-ended questions rated on a 5-point Likert scale (e.g., agreement with statements such as “Cultural beliefs inspire my self-confidence”) and five open-ended prompts inviting reflective responses.

Quantitative responses were tabulated in frequency and percentage form to identify common patterns, while qualitative data were coded thematically.

Data-Analysis Procedure

A two-stage analytical process was employed:

1. Stage 1: Quantitative Overview.

Closed-ended responses were entered into a simple Excel sheet and represented through a pie chart and a bar graph to illustrate levels of agreement regarding

empowerment, spiritual agency and socio-economic autonomy.

2. Stage 2: Qualitative Thematic

Analysis. Interview and FGD transcripts were manually coded using inductive techniques. Recurring expressions were clustered under five emergent themes spiritual empowerment, ritual agency, political symbolism, economic autonomy and cultural reframing. Illustrative verbatim quotations were later summarized in a findings table.

Triangulation between numerical trends and narrative themes ensured credibility. Interpretations were continuously cross-checked with field notes and participant clarifications to maintain contextual accuracy.

Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to standard research-ethics principles:

1. Informed Consent: Each participant received a concise information sheet in Gujarati and English

detailing the study's purpose and voluntary nature.

securely and used solely for academic purposes.

2. Confidentiality: Personal identifiers were removed during transcription; pseudonyms replaced real names in quotations.

Ethical clearance was granted by the institutional Research and Development Cell of Anand Commerce College (Autonomous) in April 2025, prior to data collection.

3. Cultural Sensitivity: Since the research engaged sacred concepts like Devi and Shakti, utmost respect was maintained during interviews and FGDs. Ritual sites were visited only after obtaining permission from local temple authorities.

Reliability and Limitations of Design

While the mixed-method framework enriched contextual understanding, the sample remained geographically limited to four districts. Hence, the findings should be read as illustrative rather than representative of all Indian women. The emphasis was on depth of perception rather than statistical generalization a methodological stance consistent with conceptual and theoretical inquiries in cultural studies.

4. Non-Harm Principle: No intrusive or psychologically distressing questions were included; participation could be discontinued at any time.

5. Data Integrity: Digital audio files and transcripts were stored

Findings

The mixed-method investigation generated both measurable patterns and interpretive insights into how women across Gujarat's urban and semi-urban settings perceive

Shakti and Stri-Shakti as sources of empowerment. Data were analyzed in two tiers: a short quantitative overview (survey

responses) and an in-depth thematic empowerment indicators spiritual synthesis (interviews + FGDs). confidence, decision-making ability,

Quantitative Overview

The ten closed-ended survey items measured participants' agreement with key

community participation, financial independence and cultural pride.

Table 1: Respondents' Views on Spiritual, Cultural and Economic Dimensions of Empowerment

Dimension of Empowerment	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Spiritual strength influences self-confidence	58 (48%)	36 (30%)	14 (12%)	9 (8%)	3 (2%)
Ritual participation enhances agency	46 (38%)	41 (34%)	18 (15%)	10 (8%)	5 (4%)
Shakti ideals motivate leadership in community	44 (37%)	49 (41%)	14 (12%)	9 (8%)	4 (3%)
Economic roles are spiritually dignified	32 (27%)	56 (47%)	18 (15%)	9 (8%)	5 (4%)
Cultural heritage sustains gender equality	39 (33%)	51 (43%)	17 (14%)	10 (8%)	3 (2%)

Overall Mean Agreement Rate: 79 percent of respondents expressed either “agree” or “strongly agree” across items indicating that the majority perceived Shakti-based ideas as personally empowering rather than symbolically distant.

Figure 1: Distribution of Perceived Empowerment Dimensions

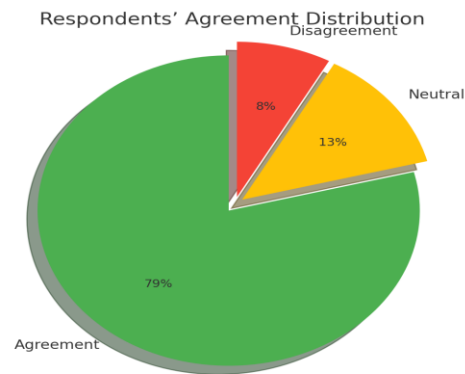
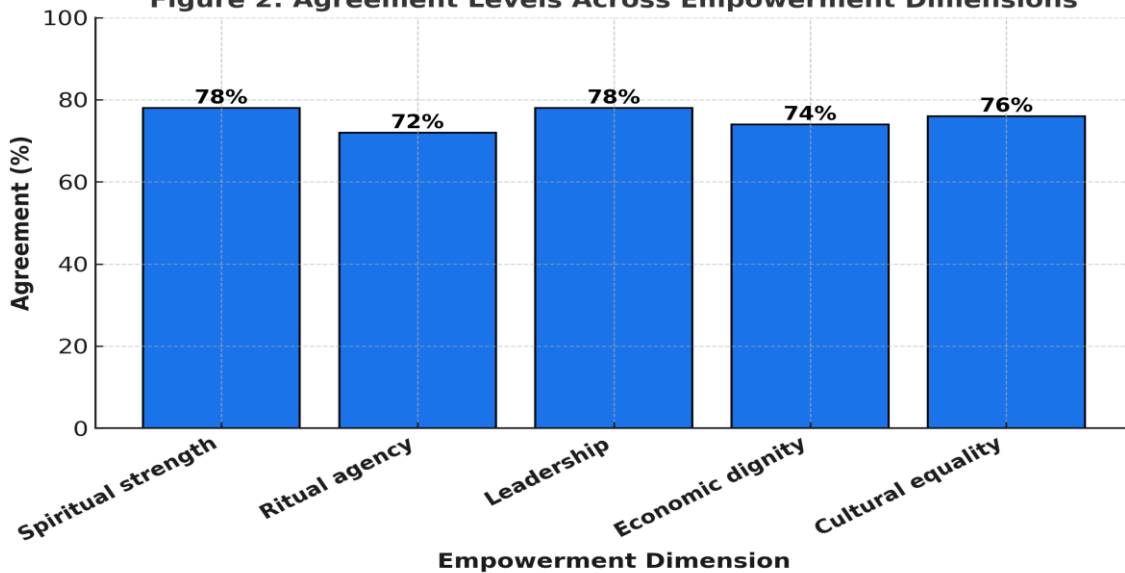


Figure 2: Agreement Levels Across Empowerment Dimensions



The quantitative trend demonstrates that most women, irrespective of occupation or locality, internalize the goddess archetype as a moral and emotional strength that informs daily resilience and decision-making.

Qualitative Thematic Analysis

From 40 interviews and eight focus-group discussions, five major themes with related sub-themes emerged. The following table synthesizes the interpretive patterns supported by illustrative verbatim excerpts.

Table 2: Sub-Themes and Participant Quotes Highlighting Dimensions of Empowerment

Theme	Sub-Themes	Representative Verbatim (FGD/Interview)
Spiritual Empowerment	Inner devotion; meditation as confidence	“When I pray to Durga before starting work, I feel protected and capable.” (Ahmedabad, schoolteacher)
Ritual Agency	Participation in festivals; leading community prayer groups	“Earlier men handled Garba management; now our women committee plans it.” (Anand FGD)
Political Symbolism	Goddess imagery in social campaigns	“During local protests we carried Devi banners she gives courage.” (Surat activist)
Economic Autonomy	Self-help groups, entrepreneurship	“My shop’s name ‘Maa Shakti Handloom’ reminds me daily to be strong.” (Bharuch artisan)
Cultural Reframing	Education, arts, transmission to youth	“We tell our daughters that Shakti means using knowledge wisely, not just rituals.” (Ahmedabad professor)

These patterns reveal that participants interpret Shakti as a continuum of emotional, moral and socio-economic power. Ritual and devotion coexist with practical assertions of leadership and livelihood illustrating an indigenous synthesis of spirituality and agency.

Comparative Insights by District

Ahmedabad respondents emphasized educational empowerment and public leadership, aligning Shakti with rational self-development. Surat’s industrial workforce connected Stri-Shakti to financial autonomy and collective bargaining. Anand women highlighted

ritual agency and self-help cooperation within dairy cooperatives. Bharuch participants framed empowerment through ecological and devotional service in temple committees. Despite contextual differences, the unifying thread was the interpretation of Shakti as a self-generated moral energy rather than external divine grace.

Summary of Findings

1. High Internalization: A majority of women perceive Shakti as integral to self-confidence and decision-making.
2. Plural Pathways: Empowerment manifests through worship, work

and wisdom bridging domestic, spiritual and civic domains.

3. Cultural Continuity: Traditional symbols remain relevant when reinterpreted through modern education and economic participation.
4. Community Transmission: Inter-generational dialogue (mothers–daughters) sustains indigenous feminist sensibilities.

Together, these findings affirm that Stri-Shakti is neither purely religious nor wholly secular but a living cultural grammar enabling women to articulate autonomy within familiar ethical frames.

Discussion

The findings of this study reaffirm that Shakti and Stri-Shakti are not abstract theological concepts but dynamic social grammars shaping women's everyday experiences in Gujarat's urban and semi-urban contexts. The women interviewed across Ahmedabad, Surat, Anand and

Bharuch consistently interpreted Shakti as an inner moral energy a consciousness of self-worth expressed through devotion, work and community participation. This reinterpretation transforms Shakti from a metaphysical ideal into a functional idiom

of empowerment, blending spirituality with social realism.

Reclaiming the Indigenous Feminist Framework

Mainstream feminist discourse in India has long grappled with the tension between Western-derived gender frameworks and indigenous epistemologies. Scholars such as Chakravarti (1993) and Kishwar (1990) observed that Western feminism, while instrumental in articulating equality and rights, often remains disconnected from the cultural idioms through which Indian women negotiate power. In contrast, Indic feminism locates empowerment within relational ethics where autonomy is not antagonistic to community but nourished by it. The participants' narratives in this study reflect precisely this balance. The Shakti they invoke is neither submissive piety nor militant opposition; rather, it is a harmonious assertion of moral strength within social bonds. For instance, respondents from Anand and Bharuch described ritual participation not as ritualized servitude but as a means of

visibility and leadership. Women who led Garba committees or temple activities perceived themselves as custodians of tradition and agents of change a synthesis often overlooked in secular policy approaches.

This convergence of dharma (moral duty) and artha (practical well-being) embodies a contextual feminism rooted in dharmic ethics rather than in individualist liberation alone. Such a framework does not deny the validity of rights-based discourse but reframes empowerment in culturally resonant idioms, making it more accessible to rural and semi-urban women who live within traditional structures.

Shakti as Cultural Capital

Pierre Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital helps explain why symbolic resources like goddess imagery can generate tangible social influence. Women in this study consciously employed the figure of the Devi as a legitimizing metaphor in public spheres naming their enterprises after deities, invoking Maa Shakti in self-help group meetings or

framing their activism in maternal idioms. By doing so, they translate sacred capital into social legitimacy. This transformation of the divine feminine into civic agency distinguishes Indic models of empowerment from purely economic or legalist approaches. Whereas development policies such as Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao appeal to protectionist sentiments, Stri-Shakti discourses cultivated by communities emphasize agency through identification, not victimhood. Women thus reclaim sacred symbols as performative tools a phenomenon observed also in South Asian feminist movements in West Bengal and Tamil Nadu (Narayanan, 1999; Ramaswamy, 2010).

Spiritual Empowerment as Psychological Agency

A recurring theme across interviews was the sense of psychological resilience derived from devotional practice. In Ahmedabad and Surat, many women stated that daily prayer or meditation before work helped them “feel prepared to

face the day.” Such statements may appear mundane, yet they signify a deeper cognitive mechanism: spiritual anchoring as a source of self-efficacy. Psychological research (Nussbaum, 2000; Sen, 1999) suggests that belief systems influence self-perceived capabilities the foundation of empowerment. The Shakta framework, emphasizing Devi as both protector and energy, offers women an internalized model of power rather than an external dependency. Hence, Shakti functions as a cognitive metaphor for self-affirmation, bridging the emotional and ethical dimensions of empowerment.

Collective Empowerment and Social Cohesion

Another salient finding concerns collective empowerment. The focus-group discussions revealed that women’s self-help collectives particularly in Anand and Bharuch derive cohesion from devotional practices that reinforce solidarity. Group prayers before meetings or annual community feasts act as rituals of inclusion, strengthening interpersonal

trust. Unlike Western feminist notions centered on individual autonomy, the Indic perspective values synergy (sahakarya) cooperative work inspired by shared ethical vision. This resonates with ancient Indian governance treatises, where Shakti symbolized both personal vigor and social order. In this sense, Stri-Shakti aligns with Sarvodaya (welfare of all) rather than isolated self-assertion.

This collective modality has implications for governance and development policy: programs rooted in local cosmologies tend to enjoy greater legitimacy. Empowerment initiatives that respect cultural idioms can mobilize community participation more effectively than those imposed from above.

Negotiating Modernity and Tradition

Critics sometimes argue that appealing to goddess traditions risks essentializing womanhood or reinforcing patriarchy (Rajan & Park, 2000). However, field data here show that women reinterpret these symbols pragmatically. For instance, younger participants in Ahmedabad

consciously differentiated between “religious faith” and “feminine energy,” asserting that Shakti is a universal force, not limited to ritual identity. This generational reinterpretation illustrates how Indic frameworks evolve: the sacred becomes metaphorical, the mythic becomes motivational. Women translate inherited symbols into modern developmental values education, employment, civic responsibility without discarding their cultural roots. Hence, Stri-Shakti is not a conservative regression but a recontextualization of heritage within modern aspirations.

Such reinterpretations parallel postcolonial feminist critiques by Uma Narayan and Chandra Mohanty, who advocate reading indigenous practices not as superstition but as sites of cultural negotiation. The participants’ voices echo this sentiment they inhabit modernity while speaking its language through familiar metaphors.

Integrating Shakti Paradigm into Governance and Policy

From a policy perspective, the Shakti paradigm offers a values-based model of empowerment that integrates ethics, spirituality and social responsibility. For instance, Ahmedabad's respondents suggested that local women's groups organizing Navratri festivals could collaborate with municipal bodies for environmental awareness drives or hygiene campaigns demonstrating how sacred events can double as civic platforms. If government agencies and NGOs incorporate Devi-centered community structures into their outreach programs, they can harness existing trust networks rather than constructing new bureaucratic hierarchies. Such integration also aligns with India's National Education Policy (NEP 2020), which emphasizes moral and cultural education as foundational to holistic empowerment. In short, Stri-Shakti-based engagement does not replace institutional empowerment but

complements it through culturally resonant motivation.

Theoretical Contribution

The conceptual novelty of this study lies in articulating a "Relational Model of Empowerment" derived from Shakti philosophy. Unlike linear Western paradigms that progress from dependence to independence, the Shakti model posits empowerment as interdependence a continuum balancing self-realization (atma-shakti) with collective harmony (samaaj-shakti). This framework situates empowerment within spiritual ecology: the individual, community and cosmos are viewed as co-evolving energies. The empirical narratives from Gujarat affirm that women experience agency not through rejection of tradition but through its reinterpretation. Hence, Stri-Shakti represents a decolonial feminist lens asserting autonomy without alienating identity.

Conclusion

This study set out to explore how the Indic concepts of Shakti and Stri-Shakti can

illuminate new ways of understanding women's empowerment in modern India.

Drawing upon field insights from four districts of Gujarat Ahmedabad, Surat, Anand and Bharuch it became evident that these age-old ideas continue to inform women's sense of identity, confidence and community participation. The investigation confirmed that Shakti is not a distant metaphysical principle but a living cultural resource through which women articulate agency in everyday life. The findings show that most participants perceive Shakti as a moral and psychological energy that guides both personal and collective action. Whether expressed through temple service, entrepreneurship or educational leadership, Stri-Shakti appears as a continuum of empowerment bridging devotion and development, home and public sphere, faith and reason. Women reinterpret goddess symbols not as instruments of subordination but as ethical metaphors for strength, compassion and accountability.

By integrating textual interpretations with field narratives, this paper contributes to the growing scholarship on Indic feminist

epistemology. It argues that indigenous paradigms of empowerment, grounded in relational ethics, offer a more contextually authentic lens for gender studies in India. Unlike linear Western models that privilege individual autonomy, the Shakti framework advances a relational model of empowerment, where personal growth is intertwined with communal well-being and spiritual balance. This culturally embedded approach complements existing policy mechanisms by rooting empowerment in locally understood moral worlds. At the same time, the discussion acknowledges certain tensions. The symbolic reverence of women does not automatically translate into social equality; the challenge lies in transforming reverence into recognition and participation. Hence, future interventions must consciously bridge this symbolic-structural gap through education, leadership training and inclusive policy design.

Methodologically, the mixed-methods approach combining quantitative patterns with qualitative narratives proved effective

in capturing the complexity of empowerment as lived experience. The thematic findings emphasize that empowerment is not a uniform outcome but a multi-layered process that unfolds through belief, practice and dialogue. Ultimately, the paper demonstrates that reclaiming Stri-Shakti is both a cultural and political act: it restores women's moral agency within Indic traditions while re-signifying those traditions for a democratic, gender-just India. The concept of Shakti thus moves beyond the sacred altar into classrooms, cooperatives and policy spaces redefining empowerment as harmony rather than hierarchy. By

foregrounding indigenous knowledge systems, this research encourages educators, policymakers and activists to recognize India's own philosophical reservoirs as sources of social transformation. In sum, the Shakti–Stri-Shakti paradigm offers a decolonial and integrative vision of women's empowerment one that celebrates diversity, nurtures community and aligns inner consciousness with outer action. It reminds us of that genuine empowerment in India will be sustainable only when it resonates with the cultural rhythms and ethical imaginations of its people.

Recommendations and Implications

The synthesis of textual, cultural and field-based insights in this study suggests that the Indic paradigm of Shakti and Stri-Shakti can inform multiple spheres education, governance, policy and community development if translated into actionable frameworks. The following recommendations emerge from the findings.

Educational Implications

1. Integrating Indic Feminist

Thought into Curricula:

Universities and teacher-training institutes can include modules on Shakti-based ethics and leadership within gender-studies or value-education courses. Using regional case studies and local goddess narratives encourages students to perceive

empowerment through culturally intelligible idioms.

2. School-level Value Education:

The National Education Policy 2020 emphasizes moral and holistic learning. Introducing illustrated stories and classroom dialogues on Devi archetypes can nurture self-respect, empathy and responsibility among both girls and boys, reframing empowerment as cooperation rather than competition.

Policy Recommendations

1. Culturally Anchored Development Programs:

Government and NGO initiatives could collaborate with women's collectives already rooted in temple committees or festival organizations. Embedding awareness drives on literacy, hygiene or digital skills within these cultural networks ensures higher trust and participation.

2. Leadership and Entrepreneurship Training:

State missions such as Mission Shakti may design workshops titled "From Ritual to

Resource," linking devotional management skills (organization, finance, teamwork) to entrepreneurial capacity-building for rural and semi-urban women.

3. Participatory Governance:

Panchayats and municipal bodies can involve women's groups in planning community events, sanitation drives or environmental campaigns during festivals such as Navratri, thus transforming symbolic reverence into civic responsibility.

Community and Social Implications

1. Strengthening Self-Help Groups (SHGs):

Local SHGs can incorporate Stri-Shakti narratives into their mission statements to reinforce solidarity, accountability and ethical business practices.

2. Inter-generational Dialogues:

Community centers and NGOs could facilitate "Mothers and Daughters of Shakti" circles to preserve oral traditions while discussing contemporary issues like education, career or mental health.

3. Media and Cultural

India toward gender equity that is both

Representation:

locally grounded and globally resonant.

Encouraging filmmakers, artists and digital creators to depict Shakti as competence and compassion rather than supernatural spectacle would shift public imagination toward everyday empowerment.

Research Implications

Future scholarship should explore comparative studies between Indic frameworks and global feminist theories to map convergences on ethics, sustainability and collective well-being. Longitudinal studies following women who participate in Shakti-based initiatives could reveal measurable social change over time.

In sum, reclaiming Stri-Shakti is not merely a cultural revival but a transformative development strategy.

When education, policy and community programs draw from indigenous moral vocabularies, empowerment becomes sustainable and self-propelling.

Embedding Shakti values dignity, cooperation and spiritual resilience within institutional structures can guide

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Bullying, Body Image and Susceptibility for Eating Disorders among LGBTQIA**Community: A Correlational Study**

Arnisha Chowdhury¹, M.Sc in Psychology, Adamas University, Email: arnishachowdhury18@gmail.com,

Phone: 9831131118

Ms Annu Biswas², PhD Scholar, IIT Patna, Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Adamas

University, Email: annumjj@gmail.com, Phone: 8584 065 751

Abstract

This study explores the correlations between bullying, body image, and eating disorders in the LGBTQIA community with a sample of 30 individuals. It found a positive correlation between bullying and eating disorders ($r = 0.33$), but not statistically significant ($p = 0.7492$). Similarly, bullying correlated positively with body image ($r = 0.30$), also not significant ($p = 0.107$). In contrast, a significant negative correlation was found between eating disorders and body image ($r = -0.13$, $p = 0.049$), indicating that individuals with severe eating disorders often have negative body image perceptions. The findings highlight the need for further research with larger samples to better understand these relationships.

Key Words: *LGBTQA psychological well-being, Body dissatisfaction, Eating pathology, Sexual minority vulnerability, Internalised stigma, Gender identity and body image, bullying induced eating disorder, mental health*

Introduction

Body image is a complex psychological concept that refers to how people see, think, and feel about their physical appearance. It is shaped by various environmental, social, and cultural factors, including family dynamics, peer relationships, and media representation.

Research indicates that adolescence is a critical period when young people are especially susceptible to adopting idealized body standards promoted by social and mass media (Dohnt & Tiggemann, 2006; Levine & Murnen, 2009).

A key theme in this area is the "internalization of the thin ideal." This refers to how much individuals accept cultural standards of appearance as their own. In Western cultures, thinness is primarily idealized for women, while muscularity and height are valued for men. When people do not meet these standards, they often experience body shame and dissatisfaction, which can lower self-esteem and lead to psychological distress (Grabe, Ward & Hyde, 2008). Groesz, Levine, and Murnen (2002) conducted a meta-analysis of 25 studies and found that exposure to thin-ideal media images significantly reduced body satisfaction in women.

For LGBTQA individuals, body image issues can manifest in unique and often more intense ways. Research shows that gay and bisexual men are more likely than heterosexual men to adopt appearance ideals focused on muscularity and leanness, resulting in higher rates of body dissatisfaction (Watson et al., 2017).

Transgender individuals often experience significant distress related to their bodies because of a mismatch between their biological sex and gender identity, with body dissatisfaction reported to be particularly high before gender-affirming treatment (Austin et al., 2004). Moreover, minority stress, which includes discrimination, harassment, and internalized stigma, has been linked to poor body image and lower self-esteem in the LGBTQA community (Diemer et al., 2015).

Bullying consists of repeated verbal, physical, or social aggression directed at peers, characterized by an uneven power dynamic (Olweus, 1993). It includes behaviours like name-calling, physical violence, social exclusion, and online harassment. Salmivalli and other researchers (1996, 1998) identified six roles within bullying dynamics, highlighting the group-based nature of this behaviour and how peer reinforcement helps sustain it. Involvement in bullying

whether as a victim, perpetrator, or bully-victim can lead to various negative psychological effects. Victims often report high levels of depression, anxiety, loneliness, and suicidal thoughts, along with lower self-esteem and difficulties forming friendships (Arseneault et al., 2010).

Nansel et al. (2001) found, in a nationally representative study of youth in the United States, that both bullies and victims showed significant social and emotional impairments compared to peers who were not involved. A crucial point for this study is the established connection between bullying and body image dissatisfaction. Teasing about appearance, including comments on weight and body shape, is strongly linked to body dissatisfaction, restrictive eating, and the onset of disordered eating behaviours (Menzel et al., 2010). Neumark-Sztainer et al. (2002) demonstrated that weight-related teasing significantly predicted body dissatisfaction and unhealthy weight control behaviours

in adolescents, underscoring the dangers of appearance-focused bullying. LGBTQA individuals face a higher risk of bullying due to their sexual orientation or gender identity. Research consistently shows that sexual and gender minority youth experience more peer victimization than their heterosexual, cisgender peers (Dunbar et al., 2017). This increased exposure to bullying, combined with the psychological stress associated with minority stress, makes LGBTQA individuals particularly vulnerable to negative body image and related mental health issues.

Eating disorders, such as anorexia nervosa (AN), bulimia nervosa (BN), and binge-eating disorder (BED), are severe mental health issues defined by abnormal eating behaviours and distorted body image. Among all psychiatric conditions, eating disorders have the highest mortality rate, which represents a significant public health concern (DSM-5, American Psychiatric Association, 2013). AN affects

about 1% of adolescents and young adults, while BN affects around 3%. Many others engage in subclinical disordered eating behaviours. Traditionally, research on eating disorders has focused on heterosexual, cisgender women. However, emerging evidence suggests that sexual and gender minority individuals are at a much higher risk.

A nationally representative study in the United States found that sexual minority adults were two to four times more likely to receive a DSM-5 eating disorder diagnosis than their cisgender heterosexual peers (Calzo et al., 2017). Gay and bisexual adolescent boys have reported higher rates of purging, binge eating, and dietary restriction by age 14 compared to heterosexual boys (Calzo, Austin & Micali, 2018). The connection between bullying and eating disorders is becoming increasingly recognized in research. Many studies indicate that individuals with eating disorders often report experiencing bullying and teasing, especially regarding

their appearance (Fairburn et al., 1998; Karwautz et al., 2011). Experiences of bullying can lead to eating disorders through various pathways: they cause emotional distress, create social isolation and submissiveness, and increase body dissatisfaction, all of which are known risk factors for disordered eating (Jacobi et al., 2004; Stice, 2016).

Furthermore, Baker, Ferszt, and Breines (2019) found that negative body image, often resulting from bullying, is closely linked to disordered eating and suicidality, particularly among LGBTQA individuals. Feeling connected to the community within the LGBTQA population has been identified as a protective factor against eating disorders. This connection suggests that social support and affirmation of identity may help reduce the negative effects of victimization (NEDA, 2018). However, significant gaps remain in understanding the specific interactions between bullying, body image, and eating disorder risk in this population. This study

aims to address that gap by examining the relationships between these three factors in a sample of 30 LGBTQA individuals.

Literature Review

The connection between bullying, body image, and eating disorders has been studied in depth, especially regarding how these issues specifically impact individuals in the LGBTQA community. Understanding these three concepts together reveals a complicated and harmful cycle of psychological damage that deserves close attention. Starting with body image, it is well-recognized that social pressures, especially those from peers and the media, play a key role in how people view their own bodies. Dohnt and Tiggemann (2006) provided important early evidence showing that peer and media influences on body image and dieting awareness can be seen in girls as young as five to eight years old.

Their research showed that the desire to be thin can start before adolescence, suggesting that the risk of body dissatisfaction begins long before it is clinically noticeable. Following this, Groesz, Levine, and Murnen (2002) conducted a meta-analysis of 25 experimental studies and confirmed that exposure to thin-ideal media images consistently lowered body satisfaction among women. Together, these findings indicate a widespread cultural environment that normalizes unrealistic body standards, which encourages unhealthy thoughts about one's appearance. What matters for this study is how these pressures are even stronger within the LGBTQA community. Watson et al. (2017) found that sexual minority men are particularly vulnerable to objectification and pressures related to appearance.

Body image concerns in this group are influenced by internalized ideals of muscularity and leanness, which are prevalent in gay male culture. Diemer et

al. (2015) expanded on this by showing that minority stress factors, such as discrimination, stigma, and internalized homophobia, significantly increase the risk of eating disorders in LGBTQ+ adults. This suggests that the body image challenges faced by LGBTQA individuals are not just reflections of cultural influences but are made worse by the specific psychological burdens of being part of a marginalized group. Jones et al. (2019) further supported this idea, showing that sexual minority women experience higher levels of body dissatisfaction and eating issues than their heterosexual counterparts, highlighting that this increased vulnerability spans across genders within the community.

When looking at the role of bullying, research consistently reveals that being victimized by peers significantly raises the risk of various negative psychological outcomes. Nansel et al. (2001) conducted a landmark study of youth in the United States and found that both bullies and

victims suffer from significant psychosocial issues, including problems with relationships and managing emotions. Arseneault et al. (2010) further showed that being bullied is linked to long-term mental health issues, reinforcing the idea that bullying effects last well beyond the immediate experience. Copeland et al. (2013) added an important aspect by showing that those who play both roles- bully and victim- face a heightened risk of mental illness and suicidal behaviour. Kim and Leventhal (2008) similarly found that involvement in bullying, in any role, predicts future mental health issues, and Winsper et al. (2012) specifically connected the victim status of bullies to an increased risk of engaging in disordered eating later on.

The link from bullying to disordered eating is not always straightforward. The literature offers several explanations. Reijntjes et al. (2010) argued that emotional problems stemming from bullying experiences, especially

internalizing symptoms like anxiety and depression, act as mediators in the development and persistence of eating disorders. This idea was supported by Jacobi et al. (2004), who suggested that emotional dysregulation resulting from bullying could lead to eating disorders by interrupting normal development during adolescence. Menzel et al. (2010) highlighted the specific impact of teasing about appearance, showing that teasing about body shape or weight is directly related to body dissatisfaction, dietary restriction, and bulimic behaviors. Neumark-Sztainer et al. (2002) provided further evidence, demonstrating that weight-related teasing predicts unhealthy weight control behaviours in adolescents, placing the body as a key vulnerability point in bullying scenarios. Stice's (2016) dual-pathway model provides a helpful framework for understanding how these elements come together.

The model suggests that internalizing a thin ideal leads to body dissatisfaction,

which then generates negative feelings and dietary restriction, both of which serve as direct pathways to disordered eating. This model is particularly relevant in the context of LGBTQA, where internalizing appearance ideals is heightened by community-specific pressures, and where body dissatisfaction is further driven by experiences of discrimination and bullying. The McKnight Investigators (2003) offered early longitudinal support for this model, showing that perceived media pressure predicted the onset of eating disorders over three years, confirming that cultural exposure may not only correlate with but also contribute to the development of eating issues.

When specifically examining eating disorders within the LGBTQA population, the evidence is both troubling and consistent. Calzo, Austin, and Micali (2018) found that gay and bisexual adolescent boys in the United Kingdom displayed significantly higher rates of purging, binge eating, and body

dissatisfaction compared to heterosexual boys by age 14, with these issues continuing into age 16. Von Schell et al. (2018) reported that gay college men in the United States had higher scores on the Eating Disorder Examination Questionnaire, with significant rates of dietary restraint and excessive exercise. Bell, Reiger, and Hirsch (2019) pointed out the psychological complexity here, finding that among gay men, depression, perceived stigma related to sexual orientation, and low self-compassion all predicted a positive eating disorder screen.

Collectively, these findings indicate that the risk of eating disorders in LGBTQA individuals arises not only from body image issues but is also tightly linked to broader experiences of stigma, social rejection, and psychological distress. An important counterpoint in this literature comes from the National Eating Disorders Association (NEDA, 2018), which found that having a stronger connection to the LGBTQ+ community serves as a

protective factor against current eating disorders. This implies that while the LGBTQA community can create shared vulnerabilities, it can also be a source of strength and support. Baker, Ferszt, and Breines (2019) similarly found that negative body image and disordered eating in LGBTQA individuals are strongly connected to suicidal behaviour, stressing the need for targeted mental health support for this group. In reviewing this literature, a clear pattern emerges: bullying, body dissatisfaction, and eating disorders do not function separately but interact dynamically, with each element reinforcing the others. For LGBTQA individuals, these interactions are intensified by minority stress, stigma, and pressures related to identity. This study aims to contribute to this growing field by examining the relationships between these three variables within an LGBTQA sample to add to the evidence that can guide targeted and culturally sensitive interventions.

Most past studies offer useful insights but miss key pieces, this gap shapes why new work is needed now. Research into eating disorders long centred only on straight, cisgender women, even though risks run higher among LGBTQ+ people. By age 14, gay and bi teen boys show far more bingeing, purging, and distress about bodies, according to Calzo, Austin, and Micali in 2018. Earlier, Calzo and team noted queer adults face double or triple the odds of an official DSM-5 diagnosis compared to straight counterparts. Seen together, these facts tilt attention toward inclusion not sidelining queer lives - as central in future inquiry. Another missing piece involves how bullying connects to eating problems.

Research by Menzel and others in 2010, along with work from Neumark-Sztainer's team two years earlier, showed that being teased about looks or weight can lead to

negative body views and unhealthy eating habits. Still, most of those results came from groups made up largely of straight, cisgender people. Since LGBTQA youth often experience far more harassment because of who they are, the way bullying affects their eating patterns might look different - possibly deeper, sharper. So far, no study has put this exact link to the test using only data from LGBTQA participants. That absence stands out when you scan what we actually know.

It still sits split apart, this talk about bodies in LGBTQA groups. Even though we've seen proof of deeper distress over appearance in gay and bi men (Watson et al., 2017), those who are trans (Austin et al., 2004), and queer women too (Jones et al., 2019), none of it lines up clearly with teasing or disordered eating - three things happening at once. Stress from being pushed aside the kind that comes from

slurs, silence, or even self-hatred - has shown to sharpen body worries and raise chances of eating problems (Diemer et al., 2015). But somehow, nobody has mapped how taunting, looks related pain, and food struggles bump into each other inside one set of queer lives. It matters now more than ever.

Eating disorders claim more lives than any other mental health issue, data shows clearly. Baker, Ferszt, and Breines saw how poor self-image and harmful eating habits hit hard among queer people, often tied to thoughts of ending life. Still, help built just for them barely exists. One reason sits right at the root too little solid proof guides such efforts. Connection within groups lowers risk, NEDA pointed out back then. Belonging seems to soften

blows from being mistreated when someone owns who they are. But none of that protection works well if we do not see exactly where it fits into the bigger picture.

Since most studies ignore LGBTQA people when looking at eating problems, what happens after someone faces bullying often goes unchecked in this group. Body image usually gets treated like an extra issue instead of part of a bigger picture. Help for these challenges lacks solid backing tailored to their experiences. That makes this work matter today. A small look into how teasing, self-perception, and disordered eating connect unfolds through thirty participants who identify as LGBTQA. The findings could shape support strategies built around real insight rather than guesswork.

Aim of the Study

The study aimed to understand if bullying links strongly to higher chances of eating problems in LGBTQA people. Instead of just assuming, it explores how being bullied might tie to poor views about one's body in this group. Another point looks at whether feeling bad about appearance

connects clearly to risks for disordered eating, where worse self-image means stronger signs of unhealthy habits around food. These pieces fit together, showing how each part relates across bullying, body thoughts, and eating struggles.

Hypothesis

Null Hypothesis (H_0): There is no significant correlation between bullying, body image, and susceptibility to eating disorders among individuals in the LGBTQA community. Any observed association between these variables is attributable to chance or other unrelated factors, and does not reflect a meaningful or systematic relationship.

Alternative Hypothesis (H_1): LGBTQA individuals who have experienced bullying

Members of the LGBTQA community often face more teasing and social harm than others - data shows it clearly (Dunbar et al., 2017). Eating struggles show up more often in these groups when compared

on account of their sexual orientation or gender identity are more likely to report negative body image and greater susceptibility to eating disorders compared to those who have not experienced such victimisation. Furthermore, it is predicted that a positive correlation will be observed between the severity of bullying and the degree of body image dissatisfaction, and between body image dissatisfaction and eating disorder risk, within this population.

to people who are straight or cisgender; recent studies back this again and again (Calzo et al., 2017). Yet what's missing is real evidence on how name-calling, looks-based stress, and disordered eating connect

specifically among only queer and trans youth. Instead of just guessing, this project checks whether those links actually exist by measuring patterns across responses, seeing if numbers rise together or stay

apart. Depending on what turns up, beliefs about these ties could shift. Results might help shape mental health tools better suited to queer lives while offering clues for deeper study down the line.

Research Methodology

Sampling Characteristics

The study comprised a total of 30 participants, all of whom identified as members of the LGBTQA community. The sample was drawn from individuals accessible through social media platforms,

LGBTQA support groups, and online forums. The demographic composition of the sample reflected diversity across sexual orientation and gender identity, as detailed below:

Identity	Number of Participants
Gay	11
Bisexual	8
Lesbian	7
Transgender	4
Total	30

Table 1: Description of Participants

Sampling Technique

A non-probability sampling approach was adopted for this study, combining

convenience sampling and snowball sampling techniques. Convenience

sampling was employed given the practical accessibility of LGBTQA individuals through online platforms and community support groups. Snowball sampling was additionally utilised, wherein initial participants were encouraged to refer other eligible individuals within their networks, thereby facilitating recruitment within a

population that may otherwise be difficult to access due to privacy concerns and the sensitive nature of the subject matter. Participants were recruited via social media, LGBTQA support groups, and online forums, and were invited to complete an online self-reported questionnaire.

Inclusion Criteria

Participants were included in the study if they met the following criteria:

- Self-identified as a member of the LGBTQA community (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, or asexual).
- Were aged 18 years or above at the time of participation.
- Were willing to voluntarily participate and provide informed consent.
- Had sufficient proficiency in English to comprehend and complete the online questionnaire.

- Had access to the internet and were able to complete an online survey.

Exclusion Criteria

Participants were excluded from the study if they met any of the following criteria:

- Did not identify as a member of the LGBTQA community.
- Were below the age of 18 years.
- Were unable or unwilling to provide informed consent.
- Had insufficient English proficiency to complete the questionnaire accurately.
- Were currently receiving inpatient treatment for an eating disorder, as

this may have confounded self-reported responses.

- Submitted incomplete questionnaire responses that rendered their data unusable for analysis.

Research Design

This study adopted a cross-sectional research design to investigate the correlations among bullying victimisation,

body image perception, and susceptibility to eating disorders within the LGBTQA community. A cross-sectional approach was selected because it permits the simultaneous collection of data at a single point in time across a defined sample, enabling the assessment of prevalence and inter-variable relationships without the time and resource demands of a longitudinal study. The figure below maps the full seven-step research process.

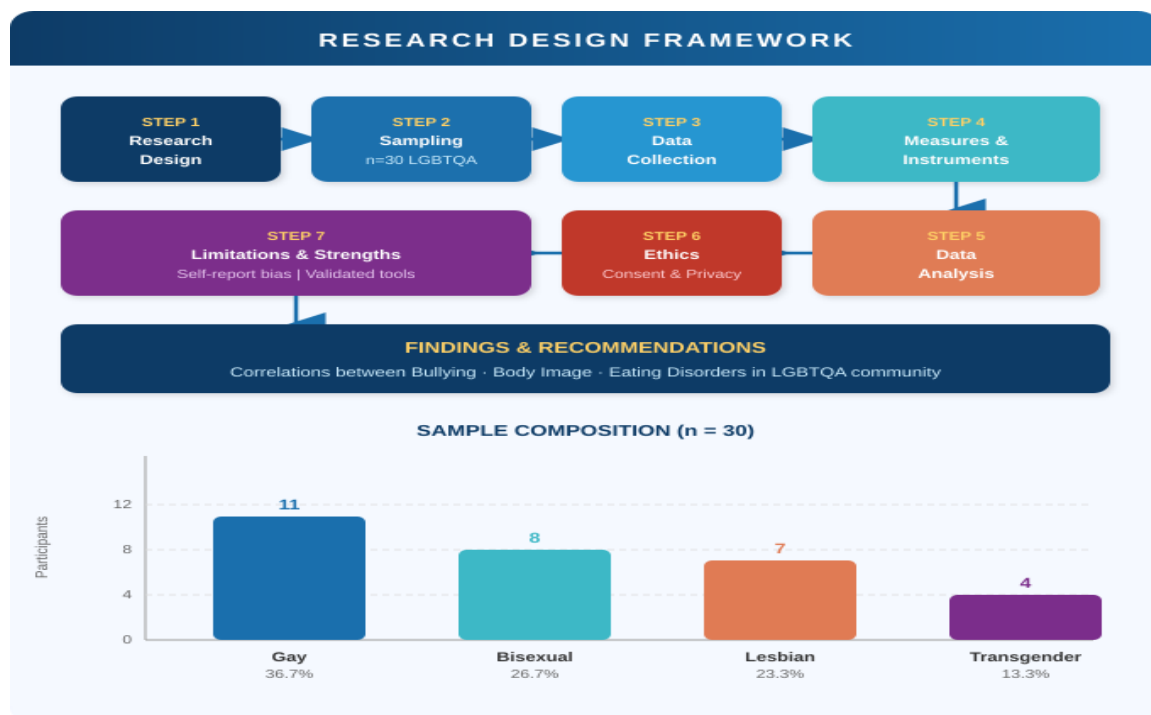


Figure 1- Seven-Step Research Design Framework and Sample Composition (n = 30)

A cross-sectional, quantitative design was employed. This design is well-suited to

examining the prevalence and correlational patterns among multiple psychological

variables within a marginalised population at a single point in time.

A non-probability approach combining convenience and snowball sampling was used to recruit 30 LGBTQA-identifying individuals through social media, online LGBTQA support groups, and community forums. The sample comprised 11 gay (36.7%), 8 bisexual (26.7%), 7 lesbian (23.3%), and 4 transgender (13.3%) participants, reflecting diversity across sexual orientation and gender identity.

An online self-reported questionnaire was administered via Google Forms and distributed using QR code technology across multiple digital platforms. Full details are provided in the Data Collection section below.

Three internationally validated psychometric instruments were used, one for each focal variable: the Eating Disorder Examination Questionnaire (EDE-Q 6.0) for eating disorder susceptibility, the Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire

(OBVQ) for bullying victimisation, and the 19-item Body Image Questionnaire (BIQ-19) for body image perception.

Data were analysed using descriptive statistics (frequencies, means, standard deviations) to summarise participant characteristics, and inferential statistics — including Pearson's correlation coefficient to test the hypotheses and determine the strength and significance of relationships between the three variables.

All participants provided informed consent prior to participation. Anonymity and confidentiality were maintained throughout, with no personally identifiable information collected or stored. Participation was entirely voluntary, with the right to withdraw at any time without consequence.

The study's limitations include reliance on self-reported data, which introduces the possibility of response bias, and a modest sample size of 30 participants that may restrict generalisability. Key strengths

include the use of three validated psychometric tools, purposive inclusion of an underrepresented population, and a

cost-effective, accessible online methodology appropriate for LGBTQA community research.

Method of Data Collection

Data were collected through an online self-administered questionnaire hosted on Google Forms a freely accessible, widely used digital survey platform and distributed through two complementary methods:

- Google Forms Link: Distributed via email, Facebook, WhatsApp, Messenger, and other social media accounts. Participants accessed the survey through a link embedded in targeted posts on a dedicated research Facebook page or through direct messages (Barnes et al., 2020). Social media was leveraged as a means of building community connections and facilitating information sharing (Glazier &

Topping, 2012). This approach proved especially practical given restrictions on in-person mobility during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

- QR Code: The Google Forms survey link was additionally embedded within a QR code and distributed via email and social media. Participants could scan the QR code using the camera of any Android or iOS mobile device to instantly retrieve the questionnaire (Pandya & Galiyawala, 2014). QR codes were selected for their fast readability, broad mobile compatibility, and ability to efficiently convey URLs to users in an increasingly mobile-internet-enabled world.

Tools Used for Data Collection

Three standardised instruments were administered to measure each of the study's focal variables:

Instrument	Variable Measured	Description
EDE-Q 6.0	Eating Disorder Susceptibility	28-item questionnaire measuring eating disorder psychopathology across 4 subscales
Olweus OBVQ	Bullying Victimisation	Assesses frequency and type of bullying experience as victim or perpetrator
BIQ-19	Body Image Perception	19-item scale assessing satisfaction and distress related to physical appearance

Table 2: Standardised Instruments and Variables Measured

Reliability and Validity of Instruments

The psychometric integrity of each instrument is supported by well-established reliability and validity evidence. The table and figure below summarise the key scores:

RELIABILITY & VALIDITY SUMMARY			
Instrument	Cronbach's α	Test-retest / ICC	Validity
EDE-Q 6.0	$\alpha = 0.93$	ICC = 0.87	Content + Construct
Olweus OBVQ	$\alpha = 0.85$	$r = 0.80$	Criterion + Construct
BIQ-19	$\alpha = 0.89$	$r = 0.82$	Convergent + Discriminant

Figure 2: Reliability and Validity Summary Across All Three Instruments

Instrument	Reliability	Test-retest / ICC	Validity
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EDE-Q 6.0	Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.93$; excellent internal consistency across all four subscales (Fairburn & Beglin, 1994)	ICC = 0.87; strong test-retest reliability over a two-week interval	Content validity established by clinical expert panel; convergent validity confirmed with EDI-2
Olweus OBVQ	Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.85$; good internal consistency across bullying and victimisation subscales (Olweus, 1996)	Test-retest $r = 0.80$ over five-month interval; stability confirmed in longitudinal samples	Criterion validity demonstrated against teacher ratings and peer nominations; construct validity supported
BIQ-19	Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.89$; high internal consistency across body satisfaction and dissatisfaction items	Test-retest $r = 0.82$ over three-week interval; stable across repeated administrations	Convergent validity confirmed with Body Shape Questionnaire; discriminant validity established across clinical and non-clinical samples

Table 3- Detailed Reliability and Validity Evidence for Each Instrument

Data Analysis

This study employed a quantitative correlational research design to explore the relationships between bullying, eating disorder susceptibility, and body image among members of the LGBTQA community. The analysis was conducted on a sample of $N = 30$ participants. All statistical computations were carried out manually using the Pearson product-

moment correlation formula to ensure transparency and methodological rigour.

Analytical Tools and Statistical Methods:

Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation (r)
The primary statistical technique applied was Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient (r). The calculations were hand scored. This parametric method was selected because all three variables — bullying, eating disorder susceptibility,

and body image — were measured on continuous numerical scales, and the study sought to quantify the direction and strength of linear relationships between pairs of variables.

The formula applied was:

$$r = \Sigma xy / \sqrt{(\Sigma x^2 \times \Sigma y^2)}$$

where x and y represent the deviations of each score from their respective means ($x = X - \bar{x}$ and $y = Y - \bar{Y}$). Pearson's r ranges from -1 (perfect negative correlation) to +1 (perfect positive correlation), with 0 indicating no linear relationship.

Descriptive Statistics

Prior to computing correlations, descriptive statistics were calculated for each variable. The arithmetic mean ($\bar{x} = \Sigma X / N$) was computed as the measure of central tendency, and standard deviation (SD) was used to indicate variability within each variable's distribution. These descriptive values contextualise the

correlation findings and are presented in the summary table below.

Significance Testing

Each computed r value was evaluated for statistical significance at the 0.05 level of significance ($\alpha = 0.05$). The corresponding p-values were interpreted against this threshold: a p-value below 0.05 was taken to indicate a statistically significant relationship, while a p-value above 0.05 suggested the observed correlation could be attributable to chance.

Statistical Findings

Three Pearson correlation analyses were conducted, each examining a pair of the three study variables. For each pair, deviations from the mean (x, y), squared deviations (x^2 , y^2), and cross-products (xy) were computed individually across all 30 data points before summing to derive the correlation coefficient.

Correlation between Bullying and Eating Disorder

Table 4: Computational Data for Pearson's r - Bullying (X) and Eating Disorder

Susceptibility (Y)

X (Bullying)	Y (Eating Disorder)	x	y	x^2	y^2	xy
29	58	-8.16	2.5	66.58	6.25	-20.4
40	43	2.84	-12.5	8.065	156.25	-35.5
45	60	7.84	4.5	61.46	20.25	35.28
50	69	12.84	13.5	164.86	182.25	173.34
32	57	-5.16	1.5	26.62	2.25	-7.74
31	63	-6.16	7.5	37.94	5.25	-46.20
33	41	-4.16	-14.5	17.30	210.25	60.32
38	46	0.84	-9.5	0.70	90.25	-7.98
28	42	-9.16	-13.5	83.90	182.25	123.66
42	61	4.84	5.5	23.42	30.25	26.62
47	68	9.84	12.5	96.82	156.25	123
27	51	-10.16	-4.5	103.22	20.25	45.72
43	44	5.84	-11.5	34.10	132.25	-67.16
39	56	1.84	0.5	3.38	0.25	0.92
30	65	-7.16	9.5	51.26	90.25	-68.08
37	67	-0.16	11.5	0.02	132.25	-1.84
48	62	10.84	6.5	117.50	42.25	70.46
29	55	-8.16	-0.5	66.58	0.25	4.08
46	54	8.84	-1.5	78.14	2.25	-13.26

X (Bullying)	Y (Eating Disorder)	x	y	x ²	y ²	xy
34	45	-3.16	-10.5	9.98	110.25	33.18
44	52	6.84	-3.5	46.78	12.25	-23.94
36	64	-1.16	8.5	1.34	72.25	-9.86
50	70	12.84	14.5	164.86	210.25	186.18
27	59	-10.16	3.5	103.22	12.25	-35.56
41	49	3.84	-6.5	14.74	42.25	-24.96
49	50	11.84	-5.5	140.18	30.25	-65.12
35	66	-2.16	10.5	4.66	110.25	-22.68
30	47	-7.16	-8.5	51.26	72.25	60.86
28	48	-9.16	-7.5	83.90	56.25	68.7
27	53	-10.16	-2.5	103.22	6.25	25.4
1115	1665	0.2	0	1465.04	2247.5	587.44

$$\bar{x} (\text{Bullying}) = \Sigma X / N = 1115 / 30 = 37.16$$

$$\bar{Y} (\text{Eating Disorder}) = \Sigma Y / N = 1665 / 30 = 55.5$$

$$r = \Sigma xy / \sqrt{(\Sigma x^2 \times \Sigma y^2)} = 587.44 / \sqrt{(1465.04 \times 2247.5)} = 587.44 / 1814.57 = 0.33$$

Correlation between Bullying and Body Image

Table 5: Computational Data for Pearson's r — Bullying (X) and Body Image (Y)

X (Bullying)	Y (Body Image)	x	y	x ²	y ²	xy
29	57	-8.16	9.9	66.58	98.01	80.784
40	42	2.84	-5.1	8.065	26.01	14..484

X (Bullying)	Y (Body Image)	x	y	x ²	y ²	xy
45	49	7.84	1.9	61.46	3.61	14.896
50	35	12.84	-12.1	164.86	146.41	-155.364
32	56	-5.16	8.9	26.62	79.21	-45.924
31	44	-6.16	-3.1	37.94	9.61	19.096
33	50	-4.16	2.9	17.30	8.41	-12.064
38	38	0.84	9.1	0.70	82.81	76.44
28	58	-9.16	10.9	83.90	118.81	99.844
42	46	4.84	-1.1	23.42	1.21	-5.324
47	53	9.84	5.9	96.82	34.81	58.056
27	39	-10.16	-8.1	103.22	65.61	82.296
43	48	5.84	0.9	34.10	0.81	5.256
39	36	1.84	-11.1	3.38	123.21	-20.424
30	55	-7.16	7.9	51.26	62.41	-56.564
37	41	-0.16	-6.1	0.02	37.21	0.976
48	52	10.84	4.9	117.50	24.01	53.116
29	45	-8.16	-2.1	66.58	4.41	17.136
46	59	8.84	11.9	78.14	141.61	105.196
34	47	-3.16	-0.1	9.98	0.01	0.316
44	55	6.84	7.9	46.78	62.41	54.036
36	38	-1.16	-9.1	1.34	82.81	10.556
50	41	12.84	-6.1	164.86	37.21	-78.324

X (Bullying)	Y (Body Image)	x	y	x ²	y ²	xy
27	52	-10.16	4.9	103.22	24.01	-49.784
41	48	3.84	0.9	14.74	0.81	3.456
49	58	11.84	10.9	140.18	118.81	129.056
35	36	-2.16	-11.1	4.66	123.21	23.976
30	45	-7.16	-2.1	51.26	4.41	15.036
28	51	-9.16	3.9	83.90	15.21	-35.724
27	39	-10.16	-8.1	103.22	65.61	82.296
1115	1413	0.2	18.2	1465.04	1602.7	472.324

$$\bar{x} \text{ (Bullying)} = \Sigma X / N = 1115 / 30 = 37.16$$

$$\bar{Y} \text{ (Body Image)} = \Sigma Y / N = 1413 / 30 = 47.1$$

$$r = \Sigma xy / \sqrt{(\Sigma x^2 \times \Sigma y^2)} = 472.324 / \sqrt{(1465.04 \times 1602.7)} = 472.324 / 1532.32 = 0.30$$

Correlation between Eating Disorder and Body Image

Table 6: Computational Data for Pearson's *r* — Eating Disorder (X) and Body Image (Y)

X (Eating Disorder)	Y (Body Image)	x	y	x ²	y ²	xy
58	57	2.5	9.9	6.25	98.01	24.75
43	42	-12.5	-5.1	156.25	26.01	63.75
60	49	4.5	1.9	20.25	3.61	8.55
69	35	13.5	-12.1	182.25	146.41	-163.35
57	56	1.5	8.9	2.25	79.21	13.35
63	44	7.5	-3.1	5.25	9.61	-23.25



X (Eating Disorder)	Y (Body Image)	x	y	x ²	y ²	xy
41	50	-14.5	2.9	210.25	8.41	-42.05
46	38	-9.5	9.1	90.25	82.81	-86.45
42	58	-13.5	10.9	182.25	118.81	147.15
61	46	5.5	-1.1	30.25	1.21	-6.05
68	53	12.5	5.9	156.25	34.81	73.75
51	39	-4.5	-8.1	20.25	65.61	36.45
44	48	-11.5	0.9	132.25	0.81	-10.35
56	36	0.5	-11.1	0.25	123.21	-5.55
65	55	9.5	7.9	90.25	62.41	75.05
67	41	11.5	-6.1	132.25	37.21	-70.15
62	52	6.5	4.9	42.25	24.01	31.85
55	45	-0.5	-2.1	0.25	4.41	1.05
54	59	-1.5	11.9	2.25	141.61	-17.85
45	47	-10.5	-0.1	110.25	0.01	1.05
52	55	-3.5	7.9	12.25	62.41	-27.65
64	38	8.5	-9.1	72.25	82.81	-77.35
70	41	14.5	-6.1	210.25	37.21	-88.45
59	52	3.5	4.9	12.25	24.01	17.15
49	48	-6.5	0.9	42.25	0.81	-5.85
50	58	-5.5	10.9	30.25	118.81	-59.95
66	36	10.5	-11.1	110.25	123.21	-116.55



X (Eating Disorder)	Y (Body Image)	x	y	x ²	y ²	xy
47	45	-8.5	-2.1	72.25	4.41	17.85
48	51	-7.5	3.9	56.25	15.21	29.25
53	39	-2.5	-8.1	6.25	65.61	20.25
1665	1413	0	18.2	2247.5	1602.7	-239.6

$$\bar{x} \text{ (Eating Disorder)} = \Sigma X / N = 1665 / 30 = 55.5$$

$$\bar{Y} \text{ (Body Image)} = \Sigma Y / N = 1413 / 30 = 47.1$$

$$r = \Sigma xy / \sqrt{(\Sigma x^2 \times \Sigma y^2)} = -239.6 / \sqrt{(2247.5 \times 1602.7)} = -239.6 / 1897.91 = -0.13$$

Summary of Correlation Results and Significance

Table 7: Summary of Descriptive Statistics and Pearson Correlation Results (N = 30)

Variable 1	Mean 1	SD 1	Variable 2	Mean 2	SD 2	r Value	p Value ($\alpha=0.05$)
Bullying	37.16	7.80	Eating Disorder	55.5	8.80	0.33	0.7492
Bullying	37.16	7.80	Body Image	47.1	7.43	0.30	0.107
Eating Disorder	55.5	8.80	Body Image	47.1	7.43	-0.13	0.049*

* Statistically significant at $\alpha = 0.05$ ($p < 0.05$)

Assessment of Statistical Significance

Bullying and Eating Disorder ($r = 0.33$, $p = 0.7492$): The p-value of 0.7492 greatly exceeds $\alpha = 0.05$. The positive correlation is not statistically significant; the observed

relationship is likely attributable to chance given the sample size.

Bullying and Body Image ($r = 0.30$, $p = 0.107$): The p-value of 0.107 also exceeds $\alpha = 0.05$. Although a positive trend is

present, the result is not statistically significant.

Eating Disorder and Body Image ($r = -0.13$, $p = 0.049$): The p -value of 0.049 falls below $\alpha = 0.05$, making this the only

Discussion

This study aimed to investigate the correlations between bullying, body image, and susceptibility for eating disorders within the LGBTQA community. The research utilised a correlational design, employing Pearson's correlation method to examine the relationships between the variables of interest. By understanding these connections, we can gain valuable insights into the potential impact of bullying on body image and the susceptibility for eating disorders among individuals within the LGBTQA community.

The dissertation examined the relationships between bullying, body image, and susceptibility for eating disorders within the LGBTQA community.

statistically significant finding in the study. The negative correlation indicates a weak inverse relationship between eating disorder susceptibility and body image.

The study included a sample size of 30 participants, and the findings revealed correlations between these variables. This interpretation will provide an analysis of the results, taking into account the correlation coefficients and their significance levels.

The first correlation examined was between bullying and eating disorders. The correlation coefficient of 0.33 suggests a positive relationship between these variables within the LGBTQA community. However, the significance level of 0.7492 indicates that this relationship is not statistically significant at the 0.05 level. In other words, the observed correlation could be due to chance, and there is insufficient evidence to conclude that there is a meaningful association between

bullying and eating disorders in this sample.

The second correlation explored the relationship between bullying and body image. The correlation coefficient of 0.30 suggests a positive association between these variables. However, the significance level of 0.107 exceeds the predetermined threshold of 0.05. Therefore, similar to the previous correlation, the results do not provide enough evidence to conclude that there is a significant relationship between bullying and body image within the LGBTQA community in this study.

The third correlation investigated was between eating disorders and body image. The negative correlation coefficient of -0.13 implies a weak inverse relationship between these variables. Furthermore, the significance level of 0.049 falls below the predetermined threshold of 0.05, indicating that the relationship between eating disorders and body image in the LGBTQA community is statistically significant. However, it is important to note that the

correlation coefficient suggests a relatively weak association.

In summary, based on the findings of this correlational study, it can be concluded that there is no significant relationship between bullying and eating disorders, nor between bullying and body image within the LGBTQA community in this particular sample. However, a significant but weak inverse relationship was observed between eating disorders and body image. It is crucial to interpret these results within the context of the study's limitations, such as the small sample size, which may restrict the generalisability of the findings. Additionally, other factors not accounted for in this study might contribute to the complex relationships between bullying, body image, and eating disorders within the LGBTQA community.

Future research should aim to replicate these findings with larger and more diverse samples to strengthen the generalisability of the results. Furthermore, exploring additional variables that might influence

these relationships, such as social support or internalised stigma, could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors contributing to the susceptibility

for eating disorders within the LGBTQA community.

Conclusion

A closer look at patterns among thirty individuals from the LGBTQA group reveals links between experiences of bullying, views about physical appearance, whereas signs pointing toward eating disorder risks begin to show. Instead of broad claims, numbers pulled using Pearson's method suggest connections that quietly build across each factor studied here. Looking closer, the link between bullying and risk for eating disorders ($r = 0.33$, $p = 0.7492$), along with how bullying ties to body perception ($r = 0.30$, $p = 0.107$), didn't stand out clearly when checked against standard thresholds. Although numbers hint at a slight upward pattern people facing more bullying sometimes showing higher vulnerability to disordered eating or feeling worse about

their appearance the data lacks strength to say these links aren't just random here. Still worth noting: failing to confirm connections doesn't mean they don't exist. More probably, the study lacked enough participants to spot real patterns reliably. With a bigger group, future work might uncover clear ties that slipped past detection this time. One clear result stood out when looking at how eating disorder vulnerability tied to views about physical appearance ($r = -0.13$, $p = 0.049$). Not surprisingly, people who feel more at risk for such conditions often see their bodies in harsher ways. Even if the connection appears slight, spotting it matters - especially among those in the LGBTQA group, where added pressures like bias, prejudice, and social exclusion pile up.

Seeing oneself negatively has long shown up in studies as something that can spark or worsen unhealthy eating patterns. Because this pattern shows even faintly here, it fits into broader findings pointing toward care that respects identity and responds directly to emotional strain in these communities. Looking back, these results add to growing work on emotional risks faced by LGBTQA people. Because of that, paying attention to how they see their bodies matters when building programs to prevent or treat eating problems in this group. It turns out, strong proof is still missing about just how much bullying leads to poor body views or unhealthy eating habits here. Even so, one thing becomes clear - deeper studies are needed, ones built better and with enough participants. Though it has weak spots, the project shows why digging further into the inner lives of LGBTQA folks makes sense. What stands out most? Support systems must recognize who they are, respect their identities, without judgment.

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Limitations

While this study provides preliminary insights into the relationships between bullying, body image, and eating disorder

susceptibility among LGBTQA individuals, several significant limitations must be acknowledged when interpreting

the findings. These limitations span issues of sample size and composition, methodological design, measurement validity, and analytical scope.

The most prominent limitation of this study is its small sample of only 30 participants. A sample of this size substantially restricts the statistical power of the analyses conducted. Statistical power refers to the probability of detecting a true effect if one exists; with insufficient sample sizes, this probability is markedly diminished, making it harder to identify significant effects even when genuine associations are present. This increases the risk of a Type II error that is, failing to reject the null hypothesis when it is in fact false. It is therefore plausible that the two non-significant correlations observed in this study (bullying and eating disorders; bullying and body image) reflect this limitation rather than a true absence of association between these variables.

Smaller sample sizes are associated with wider confidence intervals around estimated effect sizes, meaning the precision of the observed correlation coefficients is reduced. Greater uncertainty about the true population parameters makes it difficult to draw definitive conclusions or to determine whether the obtained effect sizes are representative of the broader LGBTQA population. In this study, the imprecision introduced by the small sample renders the correlation coefficients particularly those approaching but not reaching statistical significance difficult to interpret with confidence.

The small and compositionally narrow sample significantly restricts the generalisability of the findings. The participants represented only gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender individuals, leaving out a substantial portion of the broader LGBTQA community, including those who identify as queer, questioning, asexual, intersex, non-binary, or gender-

fluid. Each of these sub-groups faces distinct social pressures, forms of stigma, and psychological stressors that may produce meaningfully different patterns of association between bullying, body image, and eating disorder susceptibility. The absence of these identities from the sample introduces sampling bias and limits the external validity of the findings, making it inappropriate to generalise the results to the LGBTQA population as a whole.

With a limited sample, the results are more vulnerable to the distorting influence of various biases. Sampling bias arising from the non-random or convenience-based selection of participants may mean that those who participated differ in important ways from those who did not, introducing systematic error into the findings. Selection bias and the potential influence of unmeasured confounding variables, such as internalised stigma, social support networks, socioeconomic status, and co-morbid mental health conditions, can have

a more substantial impact on outcomes when the sample is small. These factors can compromise the internal validity of the study, making it difficult to attribute observed patterns solely to the variables under investigation.

The correlational and cross-sectional nature of this study means that all data were collected at a single point in time. Consequently, it is not possible to determine the direction of causality between variables. It remains unclear, for instance, whether experiences of bullying lead to poorer body image and greater susceptibility to eating disorders, or whether pre-existing body dissatisfaction and psychological vulnerability make individuals more susceptible to bullying. Longitudinal research designs, which track participants over an extended period, would be far better suited to examining these temporal and causal dynamics.

A small sample size may not adequately capture the complexity and nuance of relationships among variables. Important interactions and moderating effects such as how the relationship between bullying and eating disorders may differ by gender identity, sexual orientation, or age may remain undetected due to insufficient data. Furthermore, the limited sample makes it statistically unfeasible to divide participants into meaningful subgroups for further analysis. This prevents researchers from exploring potential variations in findings across different LGBTQA sub-populations, thereby constraining the comprehensiveness of the conclusions that can be drawn.

The data were collected through self-report measures, which are inherently susceptible to social desirability bias the tendency for participants to provide responses they perceive as more socially acceptable rather than entirely accurate ones. This is especially relevant in research addressing

sensitive topics such as bullying victimisation, body image dissatisfaction, and disordered eating, where stigma may lead to under-reporting. Additionally, the study does not explicitly confirm the use of standardised, validated psychometric instruments for all variables. Without verified reliability and construct validity, the accuracy and consistency of the measurements used remain uncertain.

The study does not provide detailed demographic information about participants, such as age range, ethnicity, geographic location, or socioeconomic background. This absence of contextual data limits the ability to assess the representativeness of the sample or to explore whether findings differ meaningfully across demographic subgroups. Age, in particular, is likely to be a significant moderator younger LGBTQA individuals may be especially vulnerable to bullying-related psychological harm yet such variations

cannot be explored within the current dataset.

In summary, the limitations outlined above collectively caution against drawing strong or generalisable conclusions from this study's findings. Future research should seek to address these constraints through the use of larger and more demographically diverse samples that fully represent the breadth of LGBTQA

identities, the adoption of longitudinal or experimental designs capable of establishing causality, the employment of validated psychometric instruments, and the statistical control of key confounding variables. Such methodological improvements would substantially strengthen the reliability, validity, and generalisability of research into this important area.

Implications

The findings of this study, though preliminary and bounded by methodological limitations, carry meaningful implications across several domains- including clinical practice, public health policy, educational settings, and the broader social environment of the LGBTQA community. Even where correlations did not reach statistical significance, the directional trends observed, combined with the one significant finding linking eating disorder

susceptibility and body image, offer important signals for practitioners, policymakers, and researchers alike.

The statistically significant inverse relationship identified between eating disorder susceptibility and body image ($r = -0.13$, $p = 0.049$) reinforces the established clinical understanding that body dissatisfaction is a critical psychological precursor to disordered eating. Within the LGBTQA community,

this finding carries particular weight. Mental health practitioners working with LGBTQA clients should be attentive to body image concerns as an early indicator of eating disorder risk, incorporating body image assessment into routine screening protocols for this population. Therapeutic approaches such as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), and body-neutral or body-positive interventions have demonstrated effectiveness in addressing body dissatisfaction. However, for LGBTQA clients, these approaches must be adapted to account for the unique role that minority stress, internalised stigma, and identity-related pressures play in shaping body image. Affirming, identity-sensitive therapeutic frameworks are essential to ensure that clients feel safe exploring these deeply personal and often stigmatised experiences.

While the correlations between bullying and both eating disorders ($r = 0.33$) and body image ($r = 0.30$) did not reach statistical significance in this study, their positive directional trends are consistent with a wider body of literature documenting the harmful psychological consequences of bullying for LGBTQA individuals. Clinicians should not dismiss bullying history as clinically irrelevant in the absence of statistically definitive findings. Instead, a thorough psychosocial history — including assessment of past and present bullying experiences, particularly identity-based harassment — should be a standard component of mental health evaluations for LGBTQA clients presenting with body image concerns or disordered eating.

Given the positive trends observed between bullying and psychological harm in this study, educational institutions have a clear responsibility to implement and rigorously enforce inclusive, LGBTQA-

affirming anti-bullying policies. Bullying within school environments whether verbal, physical, social, or cyberbullying can have long-lasting psychological consequences, particularly for young LGBTQA individuals who may already be navigating the challenges of identity formation in hostile or unsupportive environments. Schools should move beyond generic anti-bullying frameworks to develop policies that explicitly address identity-based harassment related to sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression.

Educational programmes that promote mental health literacy including an understanding of body image, eating disorders, and the psychological effects of bullying should be embedded within school curricula in an LGBTQA-inclusive manner. Students should be taught to recognise early signs of psychological distress in themselves and their peers, fostering a culture of peer support and

early help-seeking. LGBTQA-inclusive sex and relationships education that normalises diverse identities can also play a protective role by reducing the stigma and isolation that contribute to the psychological vulnerabilities observed in this study.

This study adds to the evidence base supporting the need for dedicated, accessible, and culturally competent mental health services for LGBTQA individuals. Eating disorders are among the most clinically severe mental health conditions, carrying high rates of morbidity and mortality, yet they remain under-identified and under-treated within LGBTQA populations. Public health strategies should prioritise the development and funding of LGBTQA-affirming eating disorder services, ensuring that individuals from across the full spectrum of sexual and gender identities can access appropriate care

without fear of discrimination or misunderstanding.

The psychological vulnerabilities evidenced in this study are, in significant part, products of the social environment rather than intrinsic characteristics of LGBTQA individuals. Broader policy interventions that reduce systemic discrimination, promote legal protections for LGBTQA individuals, and foster inclusive social environments have the potential to mitigate minority stress and its downstream psychological effects. Policymakers should view mental health outcomes for LGBTQA individuals not merely as a clinical issue but as a direct consequence of social and structural inequality, and should legislate accordingly.

One of the most consistent protective factors identified in the literature on LGBTQA mental health is the presence of strong social support networks and a sense

of community belonging. While this variable was not directly measured in the current study, its absence as a control variable represents a notable limitation and simultaneously highlights an important implication: community organisations, support groups, and LGBTQA-affirming spaces have a vital protective function. Investment in LGBTQA community infrastructure — including peer support groups, community centres, and online safe spaces can meaningfully reduce feelings of isolation that exacerbate body image concerns and eating disorder risk.

Challenging Harmful Body Ideals Within and Beyond the LGBTQA Community

Body image dissatisfaction does not arise in a vacuum; it is shaped by the internalisation of social and cultural ideals about how bodies should look. Within the LGBTQA community, specific sub-cultural body norms — including muscularity ideals in gay male communities, and thinness ideals that

transcend gender — can compound the effects of broader societal beauty standards. Campaigns that promote body diversity, challenge narrow ideals of attractiveness, and affirm the full range of body types across LGBTQA identities are needed both within community media and in mainstream cultural representations.

Recommendation

Based on the findings, limitations, and implications of this study, the following recommendations are proposed to guide future research in this area. These recommendations are directed at improving the methodological rigour, representational breadth, and practical relevance of research on bullying, body image, and eating disorders within the LGBTQA community.

Increase Sample Size and Statistical Power
Future studies should aim to recruit substantially larger samples to ensure

adequate statistical power. A power analysis conducted prior to data collection using effect sizes estimated from existing literature would allow researchers to determine the minimum sample size required to detect effects of the expected magnitude at a predetermined significance level. Larger samples would also reduce the risk of Type II errors, narrow confidence intervals around effect size estimates, and improve the precision and reliability of the findings. A sample of at least 100 to 200 participants would represent a meaningful improvement over the current study.

To address the inherent limitation of cross-sectional correlational research in establishing causal direction, future studies should employ longitudinal designs that track participants over time. By measuring bullying experiences, body image, and eating disorder susceptibility at multiple time points, researchers would be better positioned to determine whether bullying

precedes and predicts declines in body image and increases in disordered eating, or whether the reverse or reciprocal patterns hold. Longitudinal data would also allow for the examination of how these relationships evolve across different life stages.

Future research should employ well-validated, standardised psychometric tools with established reliability and construct validity. For eating disorder susceptibility, instruments such as the Eating Attitudes Test (EAT-26) or the Eating Disorder Examination Questionnaire (EDE-Q) are widely used and validated. For body image, the Body Shape Questionnaire (BSQ) or the Multidimensional Body-Self Relations Questionnaire (MBSRQ) offer robust measurement. For bullying, the Revised Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire or similar validated tools should be employed. The use of such instruments would ensure greater

comparability across studies and improve the construct validity of the findings.

Future research should incorporate statistical controls for key confounding variables identified in the existing literature, including internalised homophobia or transphobia, perceived social support, socioeconomic status, mental health co-morbidities (particularly depression and anxiety), and the nature, frequency, and duration of bullying experiences. Techniques such as multiple regression analysis, structural equation modelling (SEM), or hierarchical linear modelling would allow researchers to examine the unique contribution of each variable to the outcomes of interest while holding confounders constant.

Future studies should make a deliberate effort to recruit participants from across the full breadth of LGBTQA identities, including but not limited to queer, questioning, asexual, intersex, non-binary,

gender-fluid, and pansexual individuals.

Given the distinct social experiences and psychological stressors associated with different identities, studies that capture this diversity will produce more nuanced and ecologically valid findings. Targeted recruitment strategies, partnerships with LGBTQA community organisations, and the use of online platforms that reach diverse LGBTQA sub-communities can facilitate broader and more inclusive sampling.

Samples should be designed to capture demographic diversity across age, ethnicity, geographic location, cultural background, and socioeconomic status. Such diversity is essential for understanding how these intersecting social identities moderate the relationships between bullying, body image, and eating disorders. Research that centres the voices and experiences of LGBTQA individuals from marginalised ethnic, cultural, or socioeconomic backgrounds is particularly

needed, as these individuals face compounded layers of minority stress that existing research has yet to adequately address.

Future research should move beyond simple bivariate correlations to examine the mediating and moderating roles of variables such as internalised stigma, resilience, self-esteem, and social support in the relationships between bullying, body image, and eating disorders. For instance, social support may moderate the relationship between bullying and eating disorder susceptibility, such that individuals with strong support networks are buffered against the psychological harms of bullying. Identifying such moderators has direct implications for the design of targeted interventions.

The complexity of the psychological and social experiences captured in this study is not fully amenable to quantitative measurement alone. Future research would

benefit from the integration of qualitative methods — such as in-depth interviews or focus groups — to explore participants' lived experiences of bullying, body image, and eating disorder symptoms within the context of their LGBTQA identity. A mixed-methods design would enrich the understanding of the mechanisms and meanings behind the statistical associations observed, producing findings that are both statistically robust and humanly resonant.

With a larger sample, researchers should conduct sub-group analyses to examine whether the relationships between bullying, body image, and eating disorders differ across LGBTQA identity sub-groups, age groups, genders, and cultural backgrounds. Such analyses would reveal whether the findings of studies like the current one mask important within-group heterogeneity and would allow for the development of more precisely targeted interventions for the sub-populations most at risk.

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Linguicide and Loss: Unseen War on Linguistic Identity – A Literature Analysis

Anushree Saha¹, Department of Psychology, Adamas University, Barasat, West Bengal, Email:

anush23.work@gmail.com

Sayantana Dey², Department of Smart Agriculture, Adamas University, Barasat, West Bengal Email:

deysayantana463@gmail.com

Abstract

Language is more than just a composition of absurd signs and scribbles but rather a terrain of culture, tradition and knowledge. In the context of Dooars – a region rich in tribal diversity, nestled at the foothills of the Eastern Himalayas – they are not just a communication system; they are cultural blueprints and tools of resistance. They serve as a crucial signifier of identity and belonging. This paper examines the fragile relationship between language and resilience in the tribal communities of Dooars. Putting light on tribal communities – such as Oraon, Santhal, Rabha, Sadri, and Totos – this study focuses on how language shapes a community's worldview, especially in relation to nature and culture. Their parlance holds social values and liturgy that are hard to express in prevailing language models. However rapid development and rising urban migration have led to linguicide. This erosion not only indicates a decline in vocabulary but also the disintegration of cultural frameworks. With the help of examples and theoretical analysis, this paper argues that safeguarding these languages is crucial for sustaining cultural identity and preserving the diverse knowledge of these tribes.

Key Words – *Language, Linguicide, Dooars, Indigenous identities, tribal communities, tribal languages, Linguistic identities, Language shift, Ecological knowledge, Oral knowledge systems, Cultural marginalisations, Review analysis*

Introduction

“Language is the road map of a culture. It not only defines the culture within a tells you where its people come from and community but also transmits it throughout where they are going.” (Rita Mae Brown, generations. The interrelation of language 2018). Language is a prime marker of a and culture is what keeps the culture alive person's linguistic and cultural identity. It (Mazari & Derraz, 2015). However, for

many indigenous and tribal communities, this roadmap has been redrawn. With urbanization and modernisation, the linguistic focus in both terms of market and education has shifted from native languages to the so-called civilised languages (Neo Abell P. Obligar, 2024).

A language dies when the masses refuse to let it thrive, but when an agent, be active or passive, is involved with a motive of killing the language, its called Linguicide (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1996). Several arguments have put forward that passive agents like Mass Language Shifts lead to language death overtime which generally contradicts with the basic idea of Linguicide. Linguicide can have a structural overview where the language is primarily affected by the structural infrastructure of power and material resources, autonomy of respect and legitimization and marginalization among the social groups. The ideological overview can have the autonomy and

legitimation of a certain group, internalized superiority of language, and monopoly of language (Skutnabb-Kangas,1996).

The process in not a natural linguistic shift but rather a well-planned culture rupture. And among all this, the ecological knowledge is lost and generations lose connection within themselves. A comparable pattern was found in the Dooars region of India. A region rich in tribal diversity experienced a gradual linguistic displacement as dominant languages captured their tongues (Sarkar, 2018). The rise in dominance of Bengali was often taken as a sign of civilization and development. These dominant, mass speaking languages have displaced the native tongue along with the cultural identity framed by it have created fractures in the psychological and cultural walls of these tribal communities (Sruthi & Anburaj, 2024)

Rationale of the Study

Language is a living archive of a community's identity and worldview. Among the indigenous tribes of Dooars, language holds age old oral traditions and ecological knowledge. But decades of colonial linguistic imposition have led to the erosion of tribal languages. The rise in dominance of Bengali was often taken as a sign of civilization and development. These dominant, mass speaking languages have displaced the native tongue and (along with the cultural identity framed by it) have created fractures in the psychological and cultural walls of these tribal communities. This research focuses on explaining how linguicide has played its role in bringing control and marginalisation in Dooars.

This study examines the crossover of language, identity and power to learn about the underlying capitalist and imperialist aspects of post-colonial situation of indigenous society in Dooars region. It also investigates the psychological impact of this process- identity dislocation, intergenerational alienation and cultural fractures in communities.

Understanding these dynamics and its acknowledgement is the first step into promoting linguistic diversity. In addition to restoration of the linguistic knowledge, it also restores cultural justice to indigenous communities who have been exploited under the guise of development and urbanization.

Methodology

Between 12th – 31st October 2025, searches were conducted across multiple databases such as google scholar, Sodh ganga, academia and research gate. Papers were researched with keywords like Language,

Linguicide, Dooars, tribal communities, Language shift, Cultural marginalisations. The papers that were included in this study were published with journals or publishers indexed with International Journal of

Interdisciplinary and Multidisciplinary and Technology. Then thematic analysis Studies (IJIMS), Routeledge, Springer gate was done. In total, a pool of 7 papers were and Current Journal of Applied Science included for the review synthesis.

Literature Analysis

1. Sarkar, B. C. in his paper explored the Santal migration to Dooars and losing their native or indigenous culture, custom and tradition to adapt into the modernisation and mainstream society. The paper mentioned how the Santals took up the occupation of Agricultural labours and were forced to be a part of Mainstream Monopoly. It mentions how the community, which once thrived with indigenous customs, rituals, festivals and music, has now turned them down to fit into mainstream social culture. The indigenous festivals turned to Durga Puja, Kali puja, and Holi whereas the ancient bamboo flutes changed to modern Violin. The paper extensively deals

with the Santal tribes in Mal Region of Jalpaiguri District and cannot be used to refer the entire diverse tribal population of Dooars. Also, it does not mention the language disruption in details, that was a result of migration and modernisation.

2. Sutradhar, in his paper discussed the different cultures over the geographic location of Dooars. The paper went over the various cultural aspects and vividly segregated them on the basis of their livelihood and dwelling habit. The paper further explains the cultural overlapping in the region and slow wiping out and deterioration of culture aspects.

One key term the paper mentioned is “Linguistic Imperialism”, happened due to overlapping of various tribes. Many languages wiped out, solely due to ignorance and the tribe’s indifferent attitude towards the slow extinction of language, and with the language, the cultural practices and identity dispersed. Though the paper mentioned the key terms like ‘Linguistic Imperialism’ and talked about language deterioration, but it fails to convey the whole pathway in which cultural overlapping, instead of making the heritage rich, is actually leading to slow death of language and culture.

mentioned how festivals were a system of cultural integrity and communal unity and how, with time, the communal separation and changing working environment led to extinction of the culture. The Oraons working in the tea garden were indifferent to the festival;s and traditions as they were considered primarily agricultural, but festivals belong to a community and not an occupation and with time, these cultural markers of identity would extinct. The paper discussed the Oraon community and its festivals and loss of culture, but the linguistic drive and reason for culture loss are not defined within the literature.

3. **Pawan Toppo** conducted an exclusive study on the Oraon community of the Dooars. He studied their festivals, cultural events and communal unity. He

4. **Virginus Xaxa** in her paper, thoroughly investigated the reasons for linguisticide and language loss among the tribes from a political point of view. The paper mentioned

that inspite of having constitutional rights for safeguarding the tribal languages, no visible efforts are made to give them the rights that they deserve. Inspite of lingual rights, they do not receive the status that the dominant language of majority enjoys. It mentions government's favour for the dominant language and marginalising the tribal languages. It mentions the marginalisation of the tribals on the basis of their language and ethnicity. Though the paper articulated the various facts about failure of constitutional rights in safeguarding the indigeneity, but it does not mention any possible solutions to overcome the secluded marginalisation and save their ethnicity as well.

5. **Christine P. Sims** mentioned about the Revitalization of native languages among the American-

Indian tribes at university level. It narrates the autonomy of English language and the sheer deficiency of learners under the program. It further mentions about the struggle the tribes are facing to adopt their native tongue as their Spoken Language. The language immersion program started with the thought of owning the language that once belonged to them. The paper mentions about the American-Indian tribes, who could afford the education but does not cater with the tribes who faced the sheer marginalisations, not only lingual but also economical and occupational.

6. **Suman Kalyan Samanta** carried out his study on the migrant Garo community in the Dooars region of Jalpaiguri. In terms of linguistics, he mentioned how, in order to adapt to the locality, they started

conversing in a mixture of Bengali, Hindi and Nepali. Whenever they tried to converse in their ethnic language, it had words from the vernaculars spoken by the market majority. The paper expressed how the tribe lost the purity of the language in order to survive the mass.

7. Saheli Saha and Debasri

Banerjee explored the Mech community of West Bengal to check the impact of modernisation on them. It mentioned the loss of

indigenous knowledge in the tribe of West Bengal. It mentions how the parents of the Mech tribe don't feel it important to pass down the indigenous knowledge and ethnic ideologies to their children as they believe that they have to adapt to the mainstream society's knowledge and ideologies and do not have the privilege to preserve theirs. The paper however does not concern the other primary tribes and does not provide any revitalization methods.

Discussion

Linguicide and Its Reason -

Linguicide, or language suicide, is a well-structured erosion of linguistic identity further resulting in loss of one's culture. The reasons vary from colonization and political domination to linguistic imperialism. Naturally, with development and urbanization, one

loses its culture and along with that, their vocabulary and language specific practices. While in some cases, the dominant languages displace minority languages over time, resulting in language monopoly; other places face linguistic imperialism with the same practice done institutionally.

This is done under the facade of educational policies and modernization. In rare cases, we also notice forced cultural assimilation where the minorities are compelled to abandon their language and adapt to the dominant tongue

How Identity Fractures?-

Language is not only a medium of collection but also a carrier of memory and collective belonging. When a language disappears the community loses its symbolic framework through which the people connect with each other. The most significant fracture would be the cultural identity. Erasure of a language makes one lose the related ecological wisdom, indigenous knowledge and kinship terms. When the linguistic system collapses, these cultural ideologies loses its meaning. The community

starts to feel incomplete and loses its emotional depth. The other major factor for this would be the intergenerational disconnect due to language barriers. Elders speak a language that the youth no longer understands creating a gap and resulting in the younger ones developing a fragmented or shallow cultural identity.

Cultural Disintegration – The loss of language was not just a blow to the lingual identity, but was a termite to the pillars of ethnic iconography. ‘Culture’ came from the Latin word COLERE which means tends to earth, to grow or nurture (Samar Sutradhar,2019). Culture is not just an ingredient of ethnic variability, but the result of an aged preservation of one’s very own idea of communal integrity. Culture does not develop overnight

but the detrimental condition of indigeneity can lead to its disintegration within a decade. For the tribes of dooars, the reasons vary from culture overlapping to Linguistic Imperialism (Samar Sutradhar, 2019). Over the time, the tribes have struggled to thrive in society where language is monopolized and capitalized in disguise of modernity. The loss of the language was not solely due to their urge to survive in the mainstream community, but the negligence of the youth to their own paternal lineage. With language, what they lost was their festivals, traditions and unique identity, and what remained were just mere means of shouting their ethnicity with broken voices.

A Language Homicide - The overall language loss that we witnessed overtime in Dooars was

not just a theoretical example of language depreciation or linguicide, but rather a well planned and calculated murder, the story of which started with the advent of colonial government and imperializing of the tea gardens. Labor migrations led to massive culture and lingual overlap throughout the dooars terrain, that made dooars, a center of lingual cluster. In spite of such lingual diversity, considering English and Bengali as the autonomous language of power and authority, made the tribes realise that only by adapting to these languages [Bengali being prominent], they can share a part of the mainstream social ideology. This, coinciding with Lingual marginalization, where the tribal languages were considered the language of the labors, forced the tribes to substantially give-up their

indigenous tongue and adopt to the
so-called developed tongue. This
conceptualized how modernization

stepped up on the grave of
indigeneity.

Conclusion

While examining the deep interconnection between language and culture, we get to know its not just a linguistic failure but rather a multidimensional erosion of ones identity and connection with community. This paper demonstrated how the structural genocide of language took -place in the dooars resulting in cultural erasure and inters generational alienization. Along with this, they also suffered a deep fracture

in their identity, homogenization of the market and internalized inferiority. The consequences extend far beyond communication seeping its way through destroying ecological knowledge and disrupting collective identity. Language forms the basis of a person's individual identity, but its death results in the erosion of cultural visibility.

Limitations

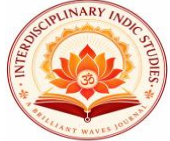
1. The paper focuses on the geographic location of Dooars and includes the tribal population found primarily in the Dooars region. It does not concern areas outside the Dooars terrain.
2. The paper has a limited study on Dooars due to lack of resources and limited research papers present on
- the topic of linguicide and language erosion in Dooars.
3. This is a review paper, so the data was pre-recorded. There are no new surveys or datas encoded in the paper and hence the paper cannot be used to conclude a statement or problem analysis.

Implications

The paper can be implied in the academic sphere to enunciate the degrading condition of indigenous languages and the slowly erasing tribal culture and traditions. It would create a sense of urgency among the readers to understand the importance of lingual rejuvenation of endangered cultures alongside their traditional knowledge. This paper can be evaluated as a study material to derive the urgency of language revitalization of tribal communities in order to protect their culture, ethnicity and preserve their identity. The paper can be a resource to conclude the loss of indigenous knowledge and traditions among the tribal population of Dooars, based on the literatures reviewed and discussed analysis.

This paper puts emphasis on how language loss affects self-concept, emotional expression and community belonging. It contributes to the cultural and social aspect of linguistic, implying that it should be studied as a form of institutional structural

violence with long term consequences such as inferiority regarding identity, shame and disconnect in regards to community and alienation in society. Such problems can affect a person's mental health largely, creating a foundation for further issues such as depression and anxiety. Acknowledging this aspect would not only help in preventing such misfortunes but also in building a proper framework for treating those who are already suffering.



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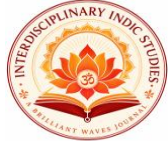
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Women's Contributions to Agriculture

Apurba Das¹, Department of Sociology, School of Liberal Arts and Cultural Studies

Adamas University

Abstract

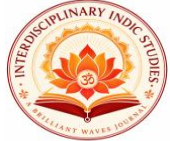
Women's roles in agriculture are diverse and crucial, playing a key part in boosting food production, sustainability, and community strength. All over the world, women participate in various agricultural activities, from planting and harvesting to managing livestock and processing food. Research shows that women handle a significant amount of agricultural work, especially in developing nations where they contribute hugely to food production. Unfortunately, their contributions are often limited by socio-cultural norms that hinder their access to land ownership and financial resources. This lack of access doesn't just diminish their productivity; it also impacts the economic growth of the agricultural sector as a whole. Acknowledging and appreciating women's roles in agriculture is vital for fostering gender equality and strengthening agricultural systems worldwide.

Keywords: *Women, Agriculture, Food Production, Economic Growth*

Introduction

Agriculture is a way of life for the majority of India's society especially rural areas where women are an important but often overlooked population involved in India's agricultural production they represent the majority of the agricultural labour force in India. Women's participation in the agrarian labour force plays out in various ways, impacting their economic independence, their decision-making abilities, their agency and access to

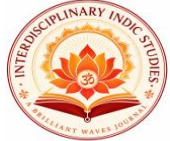




education and health services. Many women in farming communities suffer poverty and marginalization, and issues of gender inequality. Their contributions are often underestimated, but they are essential to the country's food security and rural economy. Women in India still have significant disadvantages in terms of wages, access to land, and participation in local farmer organisations with additional their lack of empowerment frequently has unfavourable externalities, such as poorer familial health and lower educational achievement for their children. Giving women access to facilities on par with those provided to males will boost agricultural productivity by about 2.5 per cent while also increasing farm yields by 20 to 30 per cent. The first people to tame the crop and start the art and science of farming, according to historians, were

women. Land preparation, sowing, nursery management, transplanting, weeding, irrigation, fertilizer application, plant protection, harvesting, winnowing, storing, and other agricultural duties are all performed by women. Milk and livestock sales help rural women supplement their income. As caretakers, feed gatherers. They are responsible for a substantial portion of food production in India, contributing significantly to the nation's food security. Their role in crop cultivation and animal husbandry ensures a steady food supply, even they are often the custodians of traditional knowledge related to seeds and crop varieties. They play a crucial role in preserving biodiversity by maintaining native seeds and planting diverse crops and are more likely to engage in sustainable and eco-friendly farming practices, emphasizing organic farming, water conservation, and agroforestry.

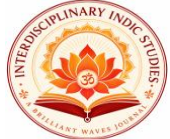




Their knowledge contributes to environmental conservation. They also gain practical skills in agriculture, which can be a valuable asset for their personal and professional development. They engaged in agriculture serve as role models for the next generation, inspiring girls to pursue careers in agriculture and related fields. Globally and in developing nations, women make up roughly 43 per cent of the agricultural labour force, according to aggregate estimates. The government of India has come up with many schemes and initiatives to empower rural women in Indian agriculture such as Namo Drone Didi, Social Empowerment and Financial Empowerment. In 2023-24, 64% of working women aged 15 years and above were engaged in agriculture. Some of the challenges faced while working in patriarchal society, women, particularly in rural India, face

constraints in economic activities due to gender discrimination and archaic social norms. They are used for menial unpaid jobs and have little or no access to education, healthcare, and basic amenities. Another issue which is known by gender discrimination that is the problem ridden conceptualization of women's and men's work in rural environments, in particular, the failure to recognize the importance of their differing roles. Analysis of the gender division of labour has revealed that women typically take on three types of roles in terms of the paid and unpaid labour they undertake. These three roles can be described as follows as the productive role refers to the market production and home/subsistence production undertaken by women which generates an income. The reproductive role refers to the child-bearing and child-rearing responsibilities borne by women.





The community management role refers to activities undertaken by women to ensure the provision of resources at the community level, as an extension of their reproductive role. Other issue they are forced to accept work in agriculture in their own village under very bad conditions because they cannot migrate as easily as men. They earn fewer wages, especially in joint, informal and private sector even they do not know their legal rights. Implementing policies that ensure women's rights to own and inherit land can significantly enhance their economic security and decision-making power. Developing financial products and services tailored to women

farmers' needs can improve their access to credit and investment opportunities. According to the Agricultural Wages in India (AWI) report of May 2020, it is also alarming that in spite of increasing participation of women in farming, the wage gap between men and women is not on par. Regardless of these challenges, women farmers are a source of immense inspiration as they serve the nation with a spark in their spirit. India ought to focus on developing core competencies around gender issues in agriculture and more so rural India, with inclusion of the women perspective as an integrated component in policy and research.

Literature Review

Nisha N's study from 2008 highlights that laborers typically find the most work in weeding, followed by harvesting and post-harvest tasks. During the

summer, women workers faced the highest levels of unemployment since it's the off-season for agriculture in that area. This situation forced many of them



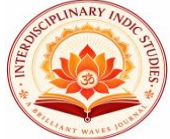
to look for job opportunities in initiatives like the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS), construction jobs, tile making, and more. The findings also pointed out that unemployment among women in agriculture has had a significant negative effect on laborers' income, family expenses, savings, and debt situations. Additionally, this led to many laborers migrating to other forms of work and different locations. It's important to note that while an increase in workforce participation rates can seem positive, it doesn't necessarily mean an improvement in overall well-being. To ensure better outcomes, this growth should go hand in hand with enhanced educational opportunities and improvements in assets and income.

V. Vetrivel and R. Manigandan (2013), in their study titled "An Empirical Study of Agricultural Labour

in India," point out that nearly half of the global agricultural workforce is made up of women. They play a crucial role in everything from production to sales, as well as food preparation. Despite this, the contributions of women in agriculture have historically been undervalued. Many women work as paid laborers or as unpaid family workers.

Swamikannan and Jeyalakshmi (2015)

explored the role of women in the Indian agricultural sector and discovered that the rate of female participation in this field has significantly dropped over the past few decades. Their findings suggest that many women are shifting from agricultural jobs to non-agricultural ones, largely due to the wage gap between male and female workers for similar roles, which often discourages women from continuing in agriculture. Overall, these studies indicate that women are still a vital part of the



agricultural workforce, and their contributions are essential to this sector.

Mahata Kumar (2017) examined the differences across regions in terms of literacy rates, sex ratios, and women's participation in the workforce, particularly looking at how these factors contribute to women's empowerment in Haryana. The authors argue that improving social and educational conditions can only happen through forward-thinking actions from both social organizations and government bodies.

Sudaeshan Bhattacharya (2009) carried out a study on how women in Urban Delhi participate in the workforce. They found that the work participation rate (WPR) is significantly higher than what the NSSO survey suggested. This paper delves into the key factors that influence women's choices, desires, constraints, benefits, and costs

of engaging in paid work outside the home. Decisions around marriage and childbirth have a notable impact on women's labor choices. Consequently, factors like higher education, less time spent on housework due to advancements in domestic technology, accessible childcare arrangements, and improved safety in public spaces (like transportation and lighting) seem to play a crucial role in shaping women's participation in the workforce.

In his **1999 book "Development as Freedom," Sen** argues that women have the potential to be powerful catalysts for social change by stepping into active roles. He emphasizes that a woman's wellbeing is shaped by multiple factors, such as her ability to earn an independent income, secure jobs outside the home, possess ownership rights, and enjoy an improved social standing.

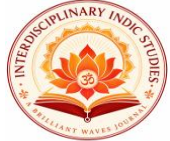


Subrahmanyam (2019) examined how female labor demand has changed in Andhra Pradesh, focusing on the growth in income due to technological advancements, differences in labor absorption across various agro-climatic zones, and how factors like farm size, cropping intensity, and crop types influence labor demand in agriculture. The study relied on two sets of primary data specific to Andhra Pradesh. Notably, the demand for female labor surged by an impressive 85% thanks to the adoption of high-yield variety (HYV) seeds and mechanization in paddy farming. Female labor demand is particularly high for crops like paddy, cotton, and chilies, while it's the lowest for sugarcane. This discrepancy in demand may be attributed to variations in cropping intensity and patterns.

Jha (2020) examined how the socioeconomic conditions of female

workers and agricultural laborers were affected by the new economic policy introduced in the 1990s. Key indicators of well-being for agricultural laborers—like per capita food grain consumption, wage rates, income levels, and access to basic facilities—revealed that this policy actually worsened their situation. Research indicated that from 1991 to 1997, real salaries for agricultural laborers dropped by 15% to 25% in certain villages within the Purnea district of Bihar.

Kapadia (2020) examined the challenges faced by women working in agriculture in the rural regions of Tamil Nadu. By concentrating solely on employment access, there's a real danger of overlooking the gender angle of poverty. While poor women might find job opportunities, the unequal dynamics within their households often leave them in a subordinate position, meaning they



have very limited control over their earnings. Development organizations can't just hand over financial authority to women; it goes deeper than that. True control over resources is intertwined with perceptions of gender-specific needs and rights, along with the existing power dynamics related to gender.

Duvury (2021) assessed the trends in Indian women's labour force participation. Since the worrisome drop

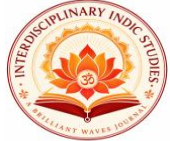
in female involvement, there has been an increase in research on many areas of women's existence in India. It analysed existing research on women in agriculture, pointing out gaps and suggesting potential directions for future research that might be productive. They represent the poorest of the poor and have been the focus of numerous government programmes aimed at reducing poverty.

Rationale of the Study

Research shows that women handle a significant amount of agricultural work, especially in developing nations where they contribute hugely to food production. For example, women take on vital tasks like land preparation, planting, weeding, and harvesting, which are critical for keeping agricultural productivity high. Unfortunately, their contributions are often limited by socio-

cultural norms that hinder their access to land ownership and financial resources. This lack of access doesn't just diminish their productivity; it also impacts the economic growth of the agricultural sector as a whole. Research emphasizes how important it is for women to be involved in decision-making, both in households and at the community level. By addressing the challenges they face





and supporting their empowerment promote more sustainable agricultural
through targeted initiatives, we can practices and better livelihoods

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The main focus of this research involves access to the resources and
the following objectives: markets.

- To find out the barriers faced by women in agriculture, including
- To promote gender equality in agricultural practices

Research Methodology

The research is designed on a qualitative study. Qualitative research is a process based on their knowledge and their
of naturalistic inquiry that seeks in depth interpretations.

understanding of social phenomena. The researcher has used multiple systems of inquiry for the study of human observations including case study, findings, interpretations, concepts etc.

Information orientated sampling

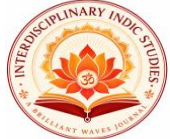
method- The type of sampling used in this research is non-probability purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling where the researchers select units to be sampled,

Sample size- This research is constructed by gathering data from 5 Case Studies

Sample Area – The case study of this research is Kolkata and some other parts of West Bengal.

Data collecting method- In the present study, the method of data collecting was primarily composed Qualitative research is a great fit for this investigation because it provides a deeper insight into





the social and cultural factors that influence women's positions in the agricultural sector has been used to collect the data for this study.

which are based on case-studies and Interpretations

Duration – This research was conducted from March 2025 to April 2025.

Data Analysis Method- In the present study, the data is qualitatively analyzed

Findings

Diverse Roles - Women play a variety of roles in agriculture, ranging from subsistence farming to commercial operations. They often take charge of household gardens and small farms, and they also help with livestock management, which is essential for their family's nutrition and income.

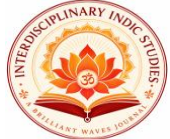
leadership positions and decision-making processes within agricultural organizations.

Leadership and Decision-Making- Promoting gender equality encourages women to take on leadership positions in agricultural organizations and cooperatives. Their involvement results in fairer decision-making processes and policies that cater to the needs of both men and women.

Gender Bias and Discrimination- Women in the agricultural sector often face significant challenges due to gender bias, which hampers their ability to get equal treatment in business dealings and access important advice. Additionally, they are commonly underrepresented in

Increased Productivity- Research indicates that when women receive equal access to resources, training, and opportunities to participate in decision-





making, agricultural productivity can see a notable increase. Bridging the gender

gap in agricultural inputs might lead to yields rising by 20-30% in certain areas.

Discussion

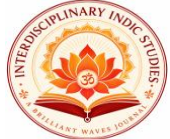
In Kolkata, a group of women's rights organizations came together to push for agricultural policies that take gender into account. Their case study highlighted how they worked to persuade local government officials to consider women's perspectives when it came to farming plans and resource distribution. Thanks to their efforts, the government rolled out programs designed to help women farmers gain access to training, resources, and credit. This not only boosted women's involvement in agriculture but also helped create a more inclusive policy framework that acknowledged the significance of gender equality in agricultural growth.

Interpretation- This case study is a compelling illustration of how collective

action can result in significant policy changes that positively impact marginalized communities. It emphasizes the crucial role of gender inclusivity in development projects and the power of collaborative advocacy to foster social change. The achievements of this initiative in Kolkata could set a precedent for similar efforts in different areas, showcasing the ongoing need to focus on gender issues in agricultural policies around the globe.

In Bankura, women's Self-Help Groups (SHGs) have become a significant force in advancing gender equality within agriculture. A case study on one of these SHGs, which emphasizes collective farming practices, highlighted how women came together to share resources and knowledge, leading to enhanced





agricultural productivity. The group organized training sessions on organic farming and helped its members gain better access to markets. Many members noted a noticeable boost in their income and a deeper sense of community, illustrating the power of collective efforts in empowering women.

Interpretation- This case study underscores how crucial it is for people to come together, to learn, and to gain access to markets in order to improve the lives of women farmers. This, in turn, helps create a fairer and more sustainable agricultural landscape. Such a model could motivate similar efforts in different areas, showcasing how grassroots movements can effectively bring about social change.

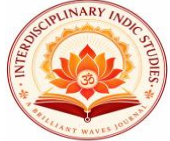
In the North 24 Parganas district, a microfinance project specifically targeted toward women farmers was launched to tackle their struggles with

accessing credit. This case study highlighted how women frequently found themselves shut out of conventional banking systems. The program offered small loans along with financial literacy training, which empowered women to invest in higher-quality seeds and farming tools.

Interpretation- By tackling the unique challenges that women farmers encounter and offering them access to credit along with financial education, the microfinance project enables these women to take charge of their farming operations and shape their economic destinies. This approach stands out as a strong example of how customized financial solutions can spark social change and elevate the status of women in agriculture.

In West Bengal, women frequently encounter difficulties when it comes to land ownership, primarily because of





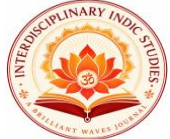
traditional inheritance customs that tend to favor men. A local NGO conducted a case study that revealed the struggles of women farmers who were unfairly denied their rightful inheritances. In response, the organization initiated a campaign to shine a light on women's legal rights concerning land and offered legal help for land registration. Thanks to these efforts, more than 200 women were able to successfully assert their land rights, which in turn boosted agricultural productivity and fostered economic independence.

Interpretation- By helping women stand up for their rights, the NGO is not just promoting personal empowerment but also driving broader social and economic transformation. This example highlights how crucial legal structures and community backing are in pushing for gender equality and improving agricultural output.

This study conducted in Purulia looked at an agricultural training program specifically aimed at empowering women farmers. Previously, standard training had a tendency to ignore the unique needs of women. The program featured workshops on sustainable farming, pest management, and effective marketing strategies. Thanks to this approach, women's participation in the training surged by 70%, which not only boosted their crop yields but also their confidence in farming. This initiative played a significant role in challenging traditional gender roles and encouraging women to take a more active part in agriculture.

Interpretation- By creating an inclusive atmosphere that promotes involvement and skill-building, this initiative has not only boosted crop production but also empowered women to defy traditional gender roles. This example stands out as





a helpful blueprint for other programs in different areas, showcasing how focused training can lead to social change and

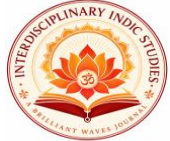
strengthen the position of women in agriculture.

Conclusion

Women play an essential role in agriculture, which is vital for sustaining life on Earth. By empowering women in this sector, fostering gender equity, and enhancing their leadership and innovative capabilities, we can make significant strides toward sustainable development and food security. Tackling gender inequality in agriculture calls for a combined effort at both global and local levels, engaging policymakers, the private sector, civil society, and women directly. Promoting gender equity in agriculture not only contributes to decarbonization but also helps reduce poverty and advance human rights. One of the biggest challenges is the limited access to resources like land, credit, and agricultural supplies. In many areas,

cultural norms and legal systems often prevent women from owning land, which puts them at a disadvantage. This lack of access not only hampers their ability to farm but also makes it tough for them to get loans and financial help since land is typically needed as collateral. Without the chance to invest in their fields, women struggle to boost their productivity or implement modern farming techniques, ultimately leading to lower yields and less income. To tackle this problem, we need thorough legal reforms to guarantee women's rights to land ownership and inheritance, along with policies that make it easier for them to access credit and financial services that meet their specific needs. Access to markets is a significant challenge that

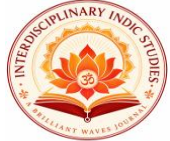




women in agriculture often face. Many women struggle to reach markets because they lack information, reliable transportation, and networking opportunities. This limited access can lead to lower prices for their products, as they are frequently forced to sell to middlemen who take advantage of their lack of market knowledge. To advance gender equality in agricultural practices, it's crucial to improve women's access to market information and create chances for networking and collaboration. One effective approach is to support the establishment of women-led cooperatives, which can boost their bargaining power and give them a platform to share resources and knowledge. By helping connect women farmers with buyers, we can empower them to secure fair prices for their products and lessen their dependence on exploitative intermediaries. Cultural and

social norms have a big impact on maintaining gender inequality in agriculture. Often, traditional roles assign women the tasks of household chores and caregiving, which leaves them with little time or energy to get involved in farming activities. Because of these societal expectations, women may feel discouraged from taking on leadership positions in agricultural organizations and might not be included in decision-making processes. To combat these norms, it's really important to raise awareness about the valuable contributions women make in agriculture and to advocate for their rights. It's also crucial to engage men and boys in these conversations since they can be strong allies in the fight for gender equality and can help challenge discriminatory practices. By fostering a culture that appreciates and acknowledges the vital role of women in agriculture, we can

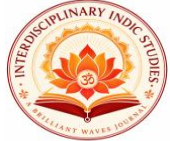




build an environment that supports their empowerment and active participation. It's essential to raise awareness about the significant contributions women make in agriculture as well as the challenges they encounter. We need advocacy efforts that not only highlight these issues but also work to change societal norms that sustain gender inequality. By promoting a culture that acknowledges and values women's vital roles in agriculture, we can create a more supportive environment. Involving men and boys in these conversations is just as crucial; they can serve as strong allies in the fight for gender equality and help challenge discriminatory practices. In a lot of rural areas, land ownership tends to be dominated by men, leaving women with little to no legal rights when it comes to owning or inheriting land. This lack of rights seriously limits their ability to make choices about how land

is used and which crops are grown, ultimately impacting both their productivity and their chances for economic independence. When we empower women in agriculture, we not only improve their livelihoods but also enhance food security and boost economic growth for entire communities. In terms of land rights, creating policies that secure women's rights to own and inherit land can greatly improve their economic security and decision-making capabilities. Additionally, fostering financial inclusion by developing financial products and services specifically designed for women farmers can help them gain better access to credit and investment opportunities. This paper examines the situation of women farmers in India, bringing attention to the important challenges and opportunities they encounter in

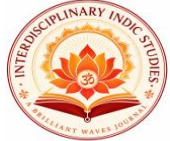




agriculture. The findings reveal the complex nature of gender inequalities and underscore the urgent need for thorough solutions to tackle these issues. The review points out that women farmers are crucial to the Indian agricultural sector, making up a significant portion of the workforce. Yet, despite their vital contributions, women still confront various obstacles and discrimination, such as restricted access to resources, land ownership, credit, and technology. These disparities negatively impact their productivity, income, and overall quality of life. Women make up around 43 percent of the global agricultural workforce, but this number hides significant differences across different regions and within countries, varying by age and social class. Their contribution to agriculture and food production is undeniably important. Yet, it's difficult to accurately measure what

share of food production is specifically attributed to women, as agricultural work is often a joint effort among household members and involves various resources that can't easily be divided by gender. While women are a crucial part of the agricultural labor force and engage in farming activities, the extent of their involvement varies. This means their impact on agricultural output is certainly considerable, but hard to pin down with precision. Most of the food produced doesn't come from women or men working alone; instead, it's a collective effort where both genders collaborate. At its core, for development to be truly sustainable, it needs to empower individuals to become agents of change—acting both independently and together. This involves tapping into their creativity to explore ideas, practices, and knowledge





in their pursuit of potential, aspirations, and overall growth.

Limitations

The study is limited by small sample size and geographic concentration in West Bengal.

Implications

The study highlights policy-level interventions necessary to address gender inequality in agriculture.

Recommendations

It is recommended that strengthening land rights, improving access to credit, expanding training programs, and promoting women-led cooperatives might cater to the needs of Women involved in agriculture.





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A Comparative Analysis on Experience of Supernatural Events among Rural & Urban Citizens of Jharkhand

Prerna Samad¹, BSc (Honors) in Psychology, Department of Psychology, School of Health and Medical Sciences, Adamas University

Annu Biswas², PhD Scholar, IIT Patna, Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, School of Health and Medical Sciences, Adamas University

Abstract

This study presents a comprehensive investigation into the experiences of supernatural phenomena among rural and urban citizens of Jharkhand, India, integrating quantitative surveys, statistical analyses, and qualitative thematic analysis. Drawing upon existing literature on paranormal beliefs and experiences, the research aimed to fill a significant gap in the scholarly discourse by examining the cultural, social, and psychological factors influencing individuals' encounters with the supernatural within the specific context of Jharkhand. A total of 47 participants (15 males, 32 females) from rural and urban areas completed surveys assessing paranormal beliefs, personality traits, and demographic information. Statistical analyses with the help of Statistical Package of Social Sciences, Version 16, and parametric tests such as independent t-test and Pearson co-relation, revealed correlations between various sub-scales of the Revised Paranormal Belief Scale and personality characteristics as measured by the Short Eysenck Personality Questionnaire, both within urban and rural groups. Thematic analysis of open-ended survey responses identified recurring themes related to paranormal encounters, cultural and religious beliefs, apparitions, sensations of being watched, and visitations from deceased loved ones. Triangulation of findings highlighted both similarities and differences between rural and urban populations in their paranormal beliefs and experiences, suggesting nuanced interactions between cultural contexts, personality traits, and supernatural encounters. The study's implications underscore

the importance of considering socio-cultural factors in understanding supernatural phenomena and call for further interdisciplinary research to elucidate these complex dynamics.

Keywords: *Paranormal, Parapsychology, Supernatural, Rural versus Urban, Comparative*

Introduction

Supernatural phenomena pertain to experience. These experiences have been occurrences or entities that defy natural laws. The term originates from Medieval Latin "supernaturalis," derived from Latin "super-" (beyond) and "natura" (nature). While prevalent in folklore and religious contexts, the supernatural can also be invoked to explain phenomena in secular contexts, such as superstitions or belief in the paranormal. It typically refers to non-physical entities like angels, demons, gods, and spirits.

It's crucial to explore why individuals have paranormal experiences, as more than a good number of people from the human population at some point of their life-time, have reported having at least one such

linked to childhood trauma, abuse, a need for interpersonal control, and perceived childhood lack of control. However, research on the specific links between paranormal experiences and trauma is limited.

Paranormal experiences are often associated with negative affect and life events, but empirical evidence supporting this connection is lacking. Many people claim to have had unexplained paranormal experiences, such as ghost sightings, psychic abilities, UFO sightings, alien abductions, and encounters with cryptids like Sasquatch or the Loch Ness monster (Swami et al., 2011). A significant

difference between paranormal occurrences and scientifically accepted events is that individuals experiencing paranormal events often attribute them to supernatural or folkloric origins without seeking rational scientific explanations.

However, many such events can be explained by human perceptual fallibility or legitimate scientific phenomena that were not widely known at the time. While science may not explain all paranormal events, there are plausible scientific explanations for why people believe they have experienced them. Factors such as suggestion and sleep paralysis can contribute to paranormal experiences. Additionally, phenomena like psychic readings and cryptid encounters are often explained by psychological techniques, misidentification, or outright hoaxes.

Historically studied by paranormal societies, modern scientific research, such as parapsychology, seeks to investigate previously unexplainable events using scientific methods, eschewing superstition and folklore. This field focuses on phenomena like precognition, clairvoyance, and telepathy to determine their validity or to explain why people perceive such experiences. In this context it became important to delve into the existing literature of the kind of scientific investigations that have been done. Especially within the Indian Context, where research on spiritual psychology, transpersonal psychology, religious psychology as well as parapsychology are having paucity of space within scientific community, it is essential to dive into the gaps that pertain within the literature.

Literature Review

In their study, Exline et al. (2023) advocated for clinical psychologists to explore the intriguing realm of

supernatural experiences, highlighting various factors that contribute to people attributing events to the supernatural,

including contextual factors, specific beliefs, and social and cultural influences. Surveys conducted nationally indicate that belief in the paranormal remains widespread in contemporary Western societies.

For instance, a 2005 Gallup poll observed that three out of four Americans acknowledged at least one paranormal belief (Moore, 2005). Similarly, the reporting of paranormal experiences is relatively common, with studies showing that a significant portion of the population has experienced at least one paranormal occurrence. Studies from different geographical areas have produced comparable findings, underscoring the prevalence of paranormal beliefs and experiences.

Irwin et al. (2015) proposed that discerning a paranormal experience involves two fundamental processes: perceiving an anomaly (an inexplicable

stimulus) and attributing causation to paranormal entities or powers. Belief serves as an interpretative lens that structures the understanding of anomalous phenomena, providing a cognitive framework for organizing life events into intellectually coherent narratives.

Several studies have reported a positive association between belief in the paranormal and the actual experience of paranormal phenomena, highlighting the interpretative nature of this process. Consequently, researchers often refer to outcomes as subjective paranormal experiences. The belief in paranormal phenomena has ancient roots, originating from traditions, beliefs, stories, myths, and classical practices of various cultures (Puett, 2019).

Anthropologists, such as those mentioned by Puett (2019), have explored classical Chinese concepts and practices related to sacrificial rituals, ghosts, and demons. In

Chinese tradition, humans were believed to possess a refined energy called "shen," while ghosts and demons were associated with earthly energies (Puett, 2019). Paranormal beliefs are also reflected in superstitions, such as the belief that owls are harbingers of bad events, as observed in Chiricahua Apache culture. Additionally, paranormal experiences have been linked to the use of psychoactive substances, which were used in early parapsychology experiments (Luke, 2012).

Experiences related to death or crises often occur predominantly at night, particularly between 2:00 and 4:00 A.M., with phenomena like the sensed presence being more common during this nocturnal period (Persinger, 2001). Religious and popular beliefs also acknowledge the existence of evil spirits and ghosts, with concepts such as possession and exorcism being prevalent (Tosh, 2002). Most paranormal experiences have negative

affective themes, often focusing on death or dissolution of the self.

Spiritual emergency (SEY) is characterized as a transformative process of spiritual awakening that can become distressing and overwhelming for individuals, leading to a state of psychological crisis. Spiritual emergence involves a movement towards a more expansive state of being, marked by improved emotional and psychosomatic well-being, increased personal autonomy, and a deeper sense of connection with others, nature, and the universe.

However, if individuals lack the psychological resources to navigate this process, it can escalate into a crisis (Rabeyron et al., 2010). Such crises are considered distinct from conventional psychosocial crises, as they are rooted in spirituality or transpersonal experiences. Despite not being classified as a mental disorder SEY has been associated with various physical and mental health

challenges, while also offering opportunities for profound transformation and personal growth.

Research suggests that personality traits like transliminality, ego resiliency, and boundary thinness may be linked to SEY experiences. Additionally, SEY has been associated with psychotic symptoms (Harris et al., 2019), a topic extensively explored in theoretical literature. This study aims to explore the relationships between spiritual emergence and emergency, psychotic symptoms, and schizotypy – a construct addressing psychotic-like personality traits in the general population.

Given that more than half of the population has reported having at least one paranormal experience, it is essential to understand why people have such experiences. These experiences are sometimes associated with mental disorders, as evidenced by the Diagnostic

and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM IV), which outlines criteria for certain mental disorders accompanied by paranormal experiences.

This association is supported by several studies indicating correlations between paranormal beliefs and various psychological factors such as magical ideation, hypomania, schizophrenia, manic depressiveness, and negative psychological adjustment. However, contradictory research suggests no direct link between paranormal experiences and mental health disorders, and even proposes potential improvements in well-being due to such experiences.

Much of the current research on the relationship between paranormal beliefs and mental health utilizes the concept of schizotypy, a multi-dimensional personality construct believed to be on a continuum with psychosis. Numerous studies have demonstrated a correlation

between schizotypy and paranormal beliefs and experiences, often emphasizing high scores on scales of strange perceptions and beliefs, but rare associations with negative symptoms. Thus, the notions of "happy schizotypes" and "healthy schizotypes" have been introduced, suggesting that individuals can exhibit extreme schizotypy without suffering from a mental disorder.

Additionally, thinner mental boundaries, as indicated by the concept of transliminality, have been associated with paranormal experiences. Despite this, the specific types of mental boundaries linked to paranormal experiences remain unclear. Moreover, paranormal experiences have been associated with childhood trauma, abuse, need for interpersonal control, and perceived lack of childhood control, yet limited research has directly explored these connections. Understanding these

intricate relationships is essential for comprehensively examining the phenomenon of paranormal experiences and their psychological underpinnings.\

Investigating schizotypy in the context of spiritual emergence and emergency may shed light on the role of individual personality in these experiences and their connection to psychosis, potentially aiding in distinguishing between spiritual and psychotic phenomena with varying prognoses. With respect to the above studies, there lacks a dearth of literature in the Indian counterpart, where investigations would have taken place to understand how supernatural and paranormal events are perceived and thought about within the Indian context. Since, India is culturally diverse; the rural and urban areas might have different ways of perceiving reality.

Rationale

With respect to the above literature, it can be seen that while the phenomenon of

supernatural occurrences has been extensively documented globally, there

remains a paucity of research focusing specifically on the Indian subcontinent, especially within the framework of scientific investigation. By narrowing the focus to the state of Jharkhand, this study aimed to contribute to the existing literature by shedding light on how cultural, social, and geographical factors influence individuals' perceptions and experiences of the supernatural.

Building upon the existing literature, which highlights the prevalence of paranormal beliefs and experiences across diverse cultural and geographical landscapes, the study sought to delve deeper into the factors that contribute to the manifestation of supernatural experiences. The theoretical framework provided by scholars such as Exline et al. (2023) and Irwin et al. (2015) underscores the role of belief systems, cultural practices, and interpretative processes in shaping individuals' encounters with the supernatural. By examining how these factors operate within the distinct socio-

cultural milieu of Jharkhand, the study aimed to provide nuanced insights into the dynamics of supernatural experiences within this specific context.

Furthermore, the study sought to address a significant gap in the literature concerning the correlation between personality characteristics and supernatural experiences. While previous research has identified various psychological, cultural, and situational factors that contribute to individuals' propensity to attribute events to the supernatural, there remains a dearth of studies exploring the role of personality traits in shaping these experiences.

By conducting comparative analyses between rural and urban populations, as well as between genders, the study aimed to elucidate whether certain personality characteristics predispose individuals to a higher likelihood of experiencing supernatural phenomena. Overall, this study endeavored to contribute not only to the academic understanding of

supernatural experiences but also to inform practical interventions aimed at promoting

mental health and well-being within diverse cultural contexts.

Research Methodology

Sample: The study targeted participants from both rural and urban communities in Jharkhand, India. The sampling frame included individuals who reported having experienced supernatural events. Initially a total of 55 participants took part in the study, but later, some participant data was lost due to technical issues with the form, hence 47 participants data were complete and confirmed within the investigation, comprising 15 males and 40 females. Among these, 26 participants were from rural areas, while 21 were from urban areas. While the sample size is relatively small, it was deemed sufficient for the exploratory nature of the research and the depth of analysis intended. Additionally, efforts were made to ensure adequate representation of both genders and rural-urban demographics within the sample.

Sampling Design: The study employed a combination of convenience and purposive

sampling techniques. Participants were selected based on their self-reported experiences of paranormal phenomena, ensuring representation from both rural and urban settings. The distribution of participants aimed to capture diverse perspectives and experiences within the target population.

Data Collection Tools: The data collection process involved the administration of a survey form comprising several components:

- a) **Paranormal Belief Scale (Revised):** Participants completed a validated paranormal belief scale, which assessed their beliefs in various supernatural phenomena.
- b) **Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (EPQ):** Participants also completed the EPQ to measure their personality characteristics, including extraversion, neuroticism, psychoticism, and lie scales.

c) Survey Questions: The survey form included questions pertaining to participants' beliefs and experiences of supernatural events, as well as demographic information such as age, gender, and residential location. Open-ended questions were also included to gain in-depth exploration of their lived experiences.

Data Analysis Methods: The collected data were analyzed using a combination of quantitative and qualitative techniques:

a) Quantitative Analysis: Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated to examine the relationships between paranormal beliefs, personality traits, and demographic variables. Independent sample t-tests were conducted to assess group differences between rural and urban participants, as well as between genders. Here, data of 47 participants have been analysed.

b) Qualitative Analysis: The open-ended responses from the survey were transcribed, and content analysis was performed with Framework Model (Pope

et al., 2000) to identify recurring themes, patterns, and interpretations associated with paranormal phenomena. The raw data was structured into codes and themes as per the steps as follows:

- Familiarization- the researcher read the transcripts multiple times to get accustomed with the data
- Identifying thematic framework- Thematic framework was used to support the theory-based, experiences of the participants of the paranormal.
- Indexing- additional codes and themes were derived from the data
- Mapping- Quotes from the open-ended responses were assigned under codes, and these codes were rearranged to the right theme.
- Interpretation- finally with the analysis, the process was completed.

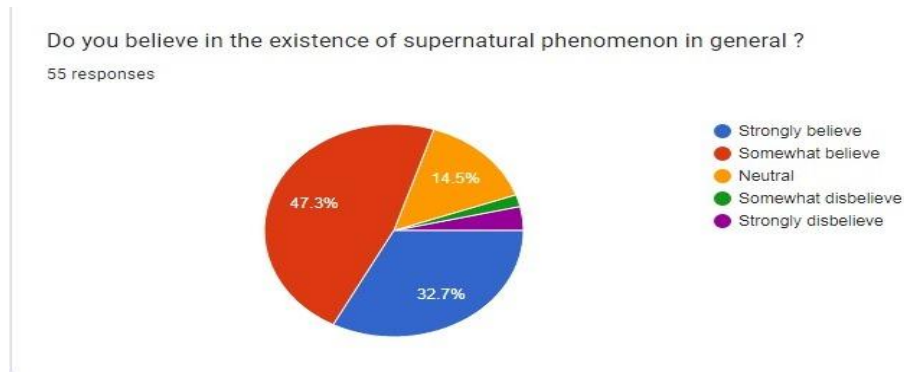
c) Triangulation of findings from quantitative and qualitative analyses was employed to enhance the validity and reliability of the results. Also, graphs and pie-charts were used to analyze the semi-structured

responses to gain clarity, and here wherever responses were complete.

responses of 55 participants were analyzed

Results

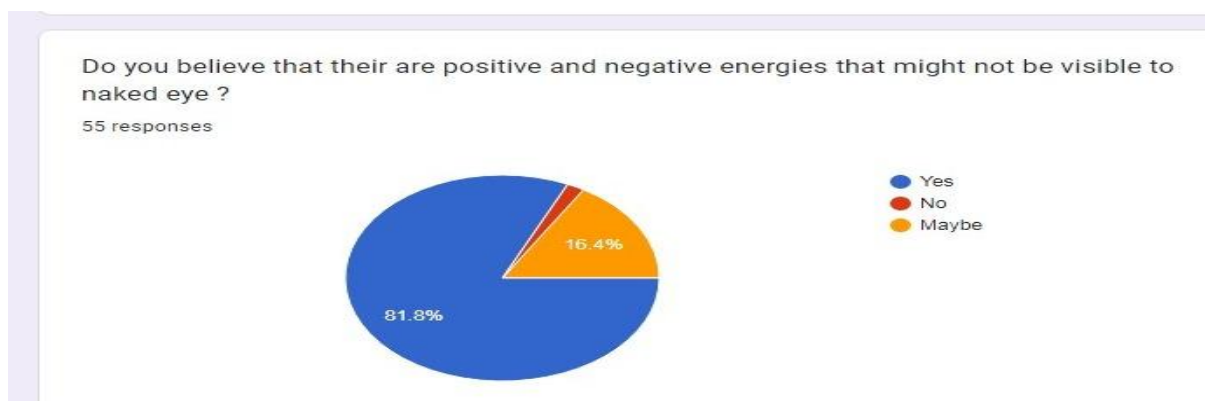
Survey Findings



The figure above is reflective that out of 55 responses 32.7 % strongly believe, 47.3 % somewhat believe, 14.5 % neutral, 3.5 % somewhat disbelieve and 2% strongly disbelieve in the existence of supernatural phenomenon in general. Figure below is representing that out of 55 responses 81.8 % selected yes that there are positive and negative energies that might not be visible

to naked eye, 16.4 % selected the maybe option and 1.8 selected no option .

Out of 55 responses 41.8 % opined that they believe that religious practice evade negative energy, 21.8 % selected did not believe in such practices and 36.4% were not sure about such practices to evade negative energy as is reflected in the figure below.



Do you believe that religious practice evade negative energy ?

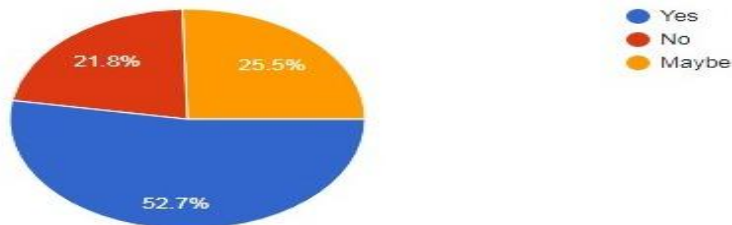
55 responses



The figure below is reflective that out of 55 responses 52.7% selected yes believe that everything has a scientific cause, 21.8 % selected no and 25.5 % selected maybe.

Do you believe that everything has a scientific cause ?

55 responses

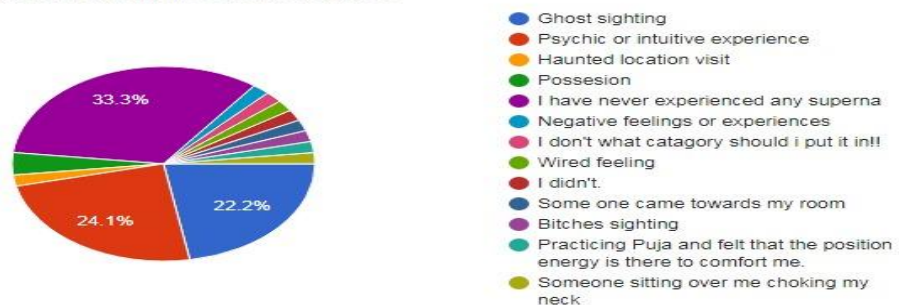


The figure below is reflective of 54 responses 22.2 % have experienced ghost sighting, 24.1% have experienced psychic or intuitive experience, 33.3 % have experienced bitches sighting, 2% possession, 1.9 % haunted location visit, 1.9 % in other categories.

Out of 47 responses 61.7 % felt fear/terrified, 12.8% amazement, 38.3% experience, 2.1 % nothing and 2.1 % no feelings emotionally in response to the confusion, 6.4 % comfort, 4.3 % have no supernatural experience they had as is

What type of supernatural experience did you have ?

54 responses

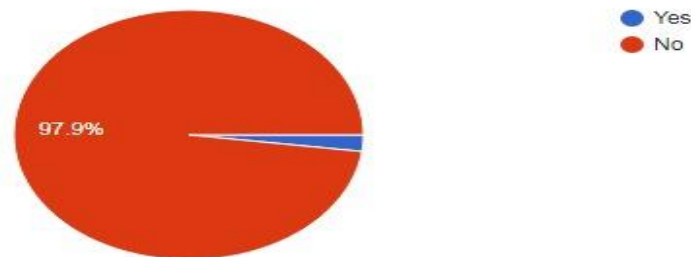


reflected in the figure above.

From the figure below, it is seen that out of 47 responses 97.9 % selected no and 2.1 % selected yes, that means they affirmed that they have captured (photos,videos,audio recording) during the supernatural encounter.

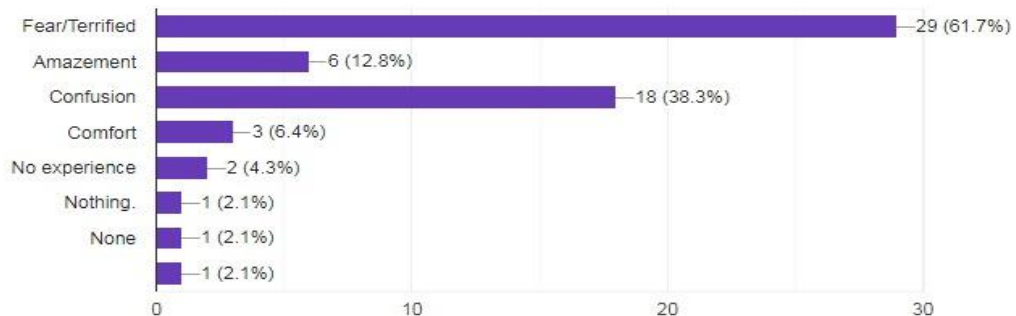
Did you captured any (photos ,videos ,audio recording) during the supernatural encounter ?

47 responses



How did the supernatural experience make you feel emotionally? (Select all that apply)

47 responses



Statistical Findings

Section A- Relationship among the sub-scales of Revised Paranormal Belief Scale and the Personality Characteristics as measured by the Short Eysenck Personality Questionnaire among Urban Group:

Correlations												
		E	P	N	L	SUPERSTITION	EXTRAORDILIFEFORMS	TRADRELIBELIF	PSI	SPIRITUALISM	PRECOGNITION	WITCHCRAFT
E	Pearson Correlation	1	-.561*	.061	.123	.000	-.105	.199	.222	.536*	.317	.503*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.008	.792	.595	.997	.649	.387	.334	.012	.161	.020
	N	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21
P	Pearson Correlation	-.561*	1	.000	.017	.282	.048	-.222	-.492*	-.431	-.302	-.429
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.008		1.000	.942	.216	.836	.334	.024	.051	.183	.052
	N	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21
N	Pearson Correlation	.061	.000	1	.150	.211	.030	-.037	.129	.033	.454*	.117
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.792	1.000		.517	.358	.898	.874	.576	.888	.039	.615
	N	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21
L	Pearson Correlation	.123	.017	.150	1	.419	.011	-.140	.040	.003	.149	-.063
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.595	.942	.517		.058	.962	.546	.862	.989	.519	.787
	N	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21
SUPERSTITION	Pearson Correlation	.000	.282	.211	.419	1	.027	-.169	.027	-.034	.461*	.153
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.997	.216	.358	.058		.907	.465	.908	.885	.036	.509
	N	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21
EXTRAORDILIFEFORMS	Pearson Correlation	-.105	.048	.030	.011	.027	1	.290	.551*	.412	.346	.273
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.649	.836	.898	.962	.907		.202	.010	.064	.125	.230
	N	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21
TRADRELIBELIF	Pearson Correlation	.199	-.222	-.037	-.140	-.169	.290	1	.464*	.703*	.394	.715*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.387	.334	.874	.546	.465	.202		.034	.000	.077	.000
	N	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21
PSI	Pearson Correlation	.222	-.492*	.129	.040	.027	.551*	.464*	1	.563*	.662*	.611*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.334	.024	.576	.862	.908	.010	.034		.008	.001	.003
	N	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21
SPIRITUALISM	Pearson Correlation	.536*	-.431	.033	.003	-.034	.412	.703*	.563*	1	.580*	.862*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.012	.051	.888	.989	.885	.064	.000	.008		.006	.000
	N	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21
PRECOGNITION	Pearson Correlation	.317	-.302	.454*	.149	.461*	.346	.394	.662*	.580*	1	.703*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.161	.183	.039	.519	.036	.125	.077	.001	.006		.000
	N	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21
WITCHCRAFT	Pearson Correlation	.503*	-.429	.117	-.063	.153	.273	.715*	.611*	.862*	.703*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.020	.052	.615	.787	.509	.230	.000	.003	.000	.000	
	N	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

From the above findings, it can be seen that:

- Between extraversion and psychoticism: Pearson correlation = 0.561, sig. = 0.008, so there is a moderately positive correlation between extraversion and psychoticism. Individuals who score

higher on extraversion tend to also score higher on psychoticism.

- Between extraversion and spiritualism: Pearson correlation = 0.536, sig. = 0.012, there is a moderately positive correlation between extraversion and spiritualism. Individuals who are more

extraverted are also more likely to hold spiritual beliefs.

- Between PSI and witchcraft: Pearson correlation = 0.611, sig. = 0.003, there is a strong positive correlation between belief in psychic phenomena PSI and belief in witchcraft. Individuals who believe in psychic phenomena are also more likely to believe in witchcraft.
- Between psychoticism and PSI: Pearson correlation = 0.492, sig. = 0.024, there is a moderately positive correlation between psychoticism and belief in psychic phenomena. Individuals with higher levels of psychoticism are more likely to believe in psychic phenomena.
- Between neuroticism and precognition: Pearson correlation = 0.454, sig. = 0.039, there is a moderately positive correlation between neuroticism and belief in precognition. Individuals with higher levels of neuroticism are more likely to believe in precognitive phenomena.

- Between superstition and precognition: Pearson correlation = 0.461, sig. = 0.036, there is a moderately positive correlation between superstition and belief in precognition. Individuals who are more superstitious are also more likely to believe in precognitive phenomena.
- Between PSI and spiritualism: Pearson correlation = 0.563, sig. = 0.008, there is a moderately positive correlation between belief in psychic phenomena (psi) and spiritualism. Individuals who believe in psychic phenomena are also more likely to hold spiritual beliefs.
- Between spiritualism and precognition: Pearson correlation = 0.580, sig. = 0.006, there is a moderately positive correlation between spiritualism and belief in precognition. Individuals who hold spiritual beliefs are also more likely to believe in precognitive phenomena.
- Between precognition and witchcraft: Pearson correlation = 0.703, sig. =

0.000, there is a moderately positive correlation between spiritualism and belief in precognition. Individuals who hold spiritual beliefs are also more likely to believe in precognitive phenomena.

- Between witchcraft and spiritualism: Pearson correlation = 0.862, sig. = 0.000, there is a moderately positive correlation between spiritualism and belief in precognition. Individuals who hold spiritual beliefs are also more likely to believe in precognitive phenomena.
- Between extraordinary life forms and psi: Pearson correlation = 0.551, sig. = 0.10, there is a moderately positive correlation between belief in extraordinary life forms and belief in psychic phenomena. Individuals who believe in extraordinary life forms are also more likely to believe in psychic phenomena.
- Between traditional belief and psi: Pearson correlation = 0.464, sig. =

0.34, there is a weak positive correlation between traditional beliefs and belief in psychic phenomena. Individuals with stronger traditional beliefs may be slightly more likely to believe in psychic phenomena

- Between traditional belief and spiritualism: Pearson correlation = 0.703, sig. = 0.000, there is a very strong positive correlation between traditional beliefs and spiritualism. Individuals with stronger traditional beliefs are highly likely to hold spiritual beliefs.
- Between traditional belief and witchcraft: Pearson correlation = 0.715, sig. = 0.000, there is a very strong positive correlation between traditional beliefs and belief in witchcraft. Individuals with stronger traditional beliefs are highly likely to believe in witchcraft.
- Between psi (psi) and precognition: Pearson correlation = 0.652, sig. = 0.001, there is a strong positive

correlation between belief in psychic phenomena (psi) and belief in precognition. Individuals who believe

in psychic phenomena are also more likely to believe in precognition.

Section B- Relationship among the sub-scales of Revised Paranormal Belief Scale and the Personality Characteristics as measured by the Short Eysenck Personality Questionnaire among Rural Group:

Correlations												
		E	P	N	L	SUPERSTITION	EXTRAORDILIFEFORMS	TRADRELIBELIF	PSI	SPIRITUALISM	PRECOGNITION	WITCHCRAFT
E	Pearson Correlation	1	.532 ^{**}	.208	.198	.387	.557 ^{**}	.086	.431 [*]	.244	.530 ^{**}	.105
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.005	.307	.332	.051	.003	.677	.028	.230	.005	.611
	N	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26
P	Pearson Correlation	.532 ^{**}	1	.435 [*]	.270	.287	.361	-.001	.556 ^{**}	.195	.560 ^{**}	.210
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005		.026	.182	.156	.070	.995	.003	.340	.003	.302
	N	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26
N	Pearson Correlation	.208	.435 [*]	1	.097	.181	.206	-.176	.035	.055	.297	-.227
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.307	.026		.638	.378	.313	.388	.867	.790	.141	.264
	N	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26
L	Pearson Correlation	.198	.270	.097	1	.173	-.103	-.055	-.026	-.094	-.033	.144
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.332	.182	.638		.397	.616	.790	.898	.649	.874	.483
	N	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26
SUPERSTITION	Pearson Correlation	.387	.287	.181	.173	1	.560 ^{**}	.018	.395 [*]	.342	.619 ^{**}	.097
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.051	.156	.378	.397		.003	.930	.046	.088	.001	.639
	N	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26
EXTRAORDILIFEFORMS	Pearson Correlation	.557 ^{**}	.361	.206	-.103	.560 ^{**}	1	.254	.354	.623 ^{**}	.663 ^{**}	.137
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	.070	.313	.616	.003		.210	.076	.001	.000	.506
	N	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26
TRADRELIBELIF	Pearson Correlation	.086	-.001	-.176	-.055	.018	.254	1	.301	.551 ^{**}	.227	.659 ^{**}
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.677	.995	.388	.790	.930	.210		.135	.004	.265	.000
	N	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26
PSI	Pearson Correlation	.431 [*]	.556 ^{**}	.035	-.026	.395 [*]	.354	.301	1	.487 [*]	.688 ^{**}	.363
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.028	.003	.867	.898	.046	.076	.135		.012	.000	.068
	N	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26
SPIRITUALISM	Pearson Correlation	.244	.195	.055	-.094	.342	.623 ^{**}	.551 ^{**}	.487 [*]	1	.595 ^{**}	.499 ^{**}
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.230	.340	.790	.649	.088	.001	.004	.012		.001	.010
	N	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26
PRECOGNITION	Pearson Correlation	.530 ^{**}	.560 ^{**}	.297	-.033	.619 ^{**}	.663 ^{**}	.227	.688 ^{**}	.595 ^{**}	1	.366
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005	.003	.141	.874	.001	.000	.285	.000	.001		.066
	N	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26
WITCHCRAFT	Pearson Correlation	.105	.210	-.227	.144	.097	.137	.659 ^{**}	.363	.499 ^{**}	.366	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.611	.302	.264	.483	.639	.506	.000	.068	.010	.066	
	N	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26
^{**} . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). [*] . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).												

From the above findings chart, it can be seen that:

- There is a moderate positive correlation between Extraversion and Psychoticism ($r = 0.532$, $p = 0.005$), indicating that individuals with higher

levels of extraversion tend to have higher levels of psychoticism.

- There is a moderate positive correlation between Extraversion and Extraordinary Beliefs ($r = 0.557$, $p = 0.003$), suggesting that individuals with higher levels of extraversion are more likely to hold extraordinary beliefs.
- There is a moderate positive correlation between Extraversion and PSI ($r = 0.431$, $p = 0.028$), indicating that individuals with higher levels of extraversion tend to have higher levels of paranormal belief in PSI.
- There is a moderate positive correlation between Extraversion and Precognition ($r = 0.530$, $p = 0.005$), suggesting that individuals with higher levels of extraversion are more likely to believe in precognition.
- There is a moderate positive correlation between Psychoticism and Neuroticism ($r = 0.435$, $p = 0.026$), indicating that individuals with higher

levels of psychoticism tend to have higher levels of neuroticism.

- There is a strong positive correlation between Psychoticism and PSI ($r = 0.556$, $p = 0.003$), suggesting that individuals with higher levels of psychoticism tend to have higher levels of paranormal belief in PSI.
- There is a strong positive correlation between Psychoticism and Precognition ($r = 0.560$, $p = 0.003$), indicating that individuals with higher levels of psychoticism are more likely to believe in precognition.
- There is a strong positive correlation between Superstition and Precognition ($r = 0.619$, $p = 0.001$), suggesting that individuals who hold more superstitious beliefs are more likely to believe in precognition.
- There is a moderate positive correlation between Superstition and PSI ($r = 0.395$, $p = 0.045$), indicating that individuals who hold more superstitious beliefs tend to have

higher levels of paranormal belief in PSI.

- There is a strong positive correlation between Superstition and Extraordinary Beliefs ($r = 0.560$, $p = 0.003$), suggesting that individuals who hold more superstitious beliefs are more likely to hold extraordinary beliefs.
- There is a strong positive correlation between Extraordinary Beliefs and Precognition ($r = 0.663$, $p = 0.001$), indicating that individuals who hold more extraordinary beliefs are more likely to believe in precognition.
- There is a strong positive correlation between Extraordinary Beliefs and Spiritualism ($r = 0.623$, $p = 0.001$), suggesting that individuals who hold more extraordinary beliefs are more likely to believe in spiritualism.
- There is a strong positive correlation between Traditional Beliefs and Witchcraft ($r = 0.659$, $p = 0.000$), indicating that individuals who hold

more traditional beliefs are more likely to believe in witchcraft.

- There is a strong positive correlation between Traditional Beliefs and Spiritualism ($r = 0.551$, $p = 0.004$), suggesting that individuals who hold more traditional beliefs are more likely to believe in spiritualism.
- There is a moderate positive correlation between PSI and Spiritualism ($r = 0.487$, $p = 0.012$), indicating that individuals who believe in PSI are more likely to believe in spiritualism.
- There is a strong positive correlation between Spiritualism and Precognition ($r = 0.595$, $p = 0.001$), suggesting that individuals who believe in spiritualism are more likely to believe in precognition.
- There is a moderate positive correlation between Spiritualism and Witchcraft ($r = 0.499$, $p = 0.010$), indicating that individuals who believe

in spiritualism are more likely to believe in witchcraft.

0.688, $p = 0.000$), suggesting that individuals who believe in

- There is a strong positive correlation between Precognition and PSI ($r =$

precognition are more likely to believe in PSI.

Section C: Mean Differences among Urban and Rural Groups in terms of Paranormal Beliefs and Personality Characteristics:

Group Statistics					
	LOCALITY	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
E	R	26	7.3077	2.07402	.40675
	U	21	6.9048	2.25621	.49235
P	R	26	7.4615	1.20767	.23684
	U	21	7.0000	1.30384	.28452
N	R	26	7.5769	3.27625	.64253
	U	21	8.2381	2.34318	.51132
L	R	26	6.8077	2.00038	.39231
	U	21	7.8095	2.27198	.49579
SUPERSTITION	R	26	7.7692	5.17152	1.01422
	U	21	6.9048	4.49338	.98054
EXTRAORDILIFEFORMS	R	26	11.9615	3.71463	.72850
	U	21	11.9048	3.19225	.69661
TRADRELIBELIF	R	26	19.7692	6.26296	1.22827
	U	21	20.4286	5.87853	1.28280
PSI	R	26	15.8077	5.26132	1.03183

	U	21	16.1429	6.31891	1.37890
SPIRITUALISM	R	26	16.3077	5.65522	1.10908
	U	21	17.7143	6.14120	1.34012
PRECOGNITION	R	26	14.3846	6.17788	1.21158
	U	21	16.6190	6.71920	1.46625
WITCHCRAFT	R	26	17.1154	7.02183	1.37709
	U	21	18.4762	6.69790	1.46160

From the above chart, the following can be understood:

- The mean extraversion score is slightly lower in urban residents compared to rural residents. This suggests that rural individuals may exhibit slightly higher levels of extraversion, indicating a tendency towards sociability, assertiveness, and positive emotionality compared to their urban counterparts.
- Urban residents exhibit a slightly lower mean psychoticism score compared to rural residents. This indicates that rural individuals may display slightly higher levels of

aggressiveness, interpersonal hostility, and impulsivity compared to urban individuals.

- Urban residents have a higher mean neuroticism score compared to rural residents. This suggests that urban individuals may experience slightly higher levels of negative emotions, such as anxiety, depression, and vulnerability, compared to their rural counterparts.
- The mean lie scale score is slightly higher in urban residents compared to rural residents. This implies that urban individuals may be more inclined to provide socially

desirable responses or to present themselves in a more favorable light compared to rural individuals.

- Rural residents have a higher mean superstition score compared to urban residents. This suggests that rural individuals may hold stronger beliefs in superstitions, supernatural phenomena, or paranormal activities compared to their urban counterparts.
- There is a negligible difference in the mean score for extraordinary life forms between urban and rural residents. This indicates that both urban and rural individuals tend to have similar beliefs regarding extraordinary life forms such as aliens or mythical creatures.
- Urban residents have a slightly higher mean score for traditional religious beliefs compared to rural residents. This suggests that urban individuals may adhere more strongly to traditional religious

practices or beliefs compared to rural individuals.

- Urban residents have a slightly higher mean PSI score compared to rural residents. This implies that urban individuals may exhibit slightly stronger belief in paranormal phenomena such as psychic abilities or extrasensory perception compared to rural individuals.
- Urban residents have a higher mean spiritualism score compared to rural residents. This indicates that urban individuals may hold stronger beliefs in spiritual concepts or practices compared to rural individuals.
- Urban residents have a significantly higher mean precognition score compared to rural residents. This suggests that urban individuals may exhibit stronger beliefs in the ability to

predict future events compared to rural individuals.

- Urban residents have a slightly higher mean witchcraft score compared to rural residents. This

implies that urban individuals may hold stronger beliefs in witchcraft or occult practices compared to rural individuals.

Section D: Group Differences among Urban and Rural Counterparts through Statistical Significance-

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
E	Equal variances assumed	1.009	.321	.637	45	.528	.40293	.63282	-.87164	1.67750
	Equal variances not assumed			.631	41.246	.532	.40293	.63863	-.88657	1.69243
P	Equal variances assumed	.043	.837	1.257	45	.215	.46154	.36713	-.27790	1.20098
	Equal variances not assumed			1.247	41.413	.220	.46154	.37020	-.28587	1.20894
N	Equal variances assumed	3.492	.068	-.777	45	.441	-.66117	.85051	-2.37420	1.05185
	Equal variances not assumed			-.805	44.422	.425	-.66117	.82115	-2.31565	.99331
L	Equal variances assumed	.962	.332	-1.607	45	.115	-1.00183	.62358	-2.25778	.25412
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.585	40.259	.121	-1.00183	.63223	-2.27935	.27569
SUPERSTITION	Equal variances assumed	1.380	.246	.604	45	.549	.86447	1.43229	-2.02030	3.74924
	Equal variances not assumed			.613	44.729	.543	.86447	1.41071	-1.97731	3.70625
EXTRAORDINARY LIFE FORMS	Equal variances assumed	.057	.812	.055	45	.956	.05678	1.02457	-2.00681	2.12037
	Equal variances not assumed			.056	44.800	.955	.05678	1.00795	-1.97360	2.08715
TRADITIONAL BELIEF	Equal variances assumed	.021	.885	-.369	45	.714	-.65934	1.78827	-4.26110	2.94242
	Equal variances not assumed			-.371	43.938	.712	-.65934	1.77601	-4.23880	2.92012
PSI	Equal variances assumed	.370	.546	-.198	45	.844	-.33516	1.68861	-3.73619	3.06586
	Equal variances not assumed			-.195	38.909	.847	-.33516	1.72222	-3.81894	3.14861
SPIRITUALISM	Equal variances assumed	.734	.396	-.816	45	.419	-1.40659	1.72404	-4.87899	2.06580
	Equal variances not assumed			-.809	41.285	.423	-1.40659	1.73953	-4.91892	2.10573
PRECOGNITION	Equal variances assumed	.099	.755	-1.186	45	.242	-2.23443	1.88480	-6.03061	1.56175
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.175	41.251	.247	-2.23443	1.90206	-6.07500	1.60614
WITCHCRAFT	Equal variances assumed	.456	.503	-.674	45	.504	-1.36081	2.01848	-5.42624	2.70463
	Equal variances not assumed			-.678	43.712	.502	-1.36081	2.00815	-5.40872	2.68711

From the above table it can be seen that:

- The difference in mean extraversion scores between urban and rural residents is not significant ($p > 0.05$). Therefore, there is no evidence to suggest that the level of extraversion differs significantly between urban and rural populations.
- The difference in mean psychoticism scores between urban and rural residents is not significant ($p > 0.05$). Thus, there is no statistically significant difference in psychoticism levels between urban and rural populations.
- The difference in mean neuroticism scores between urban and rural residents is not significant ($p > 0.05$). Hence, there is no significant variation in neuroticism levels between urban and rural populations.
- The difference in mean lie scale scores between urban and rural residents is not significant ($p > 0.05$). Therefore, there is no significant difference in the tendency to respond in a socially desirable manner between urban and rural populations.
- The difference in mean superstition scores between urban and rural residents is not significant ($p > 0.05$). Thus, there is no evidence of a significant difference in superstition beliefs between urban and rural populations.
- The difference in mean scores for beliefs in extraordinary life forms between urban and rural residents is not significant ($p > 0.05$). Therefore, urban and rural populations do not significantly differ in their beliefs regarding extraordinary life forms.
- The difference in mean scores for traditional religious beliefs between urban and rural residents is not significant ($p > 0.05$). Hence, there is no significant difference in

adherence to traditional religious beliefs between urban and rural populations.

- The difference in mean PSI scores between urban and rural residents is not significant ($p > 0.05$). Therefore, there is no evidence of a significant difference in belief in paranormal phenomena between urban and rural populations.
- The difference in mean spiritualism scores between urban and rural residents is not significant ($p > 0.05$). Thus, there is no significant variation in spiritual beliefs between urban and rural populations.
- The difference in mean precognition scores between urban and rural residents is not significant

($p > 0.05$). Therefore, there is no evidence to suggest a significant difference in beliefs regarding precognition between urban and rural populations.

- The difference in mean witchcraft scores between urban and rural residents is not significant ($p > 0.05$). Hence, there is no significant difference in beliefs regarding witchcraft between urban and rural populations.

Therefore, it can be stated, that even though there exist differences among rural and urban counterparts in terms of Personality characteristics and how they believe in the paranormal, however, the differences are not significant.

Section E: Content Analysis of the Open-ended Survey Responses

THEME	SUB- THEME	VERBATIM
1. Paranormal /Spiritual Encounters	Childhood Experiences	“During summer break many kids went to river to take bath . A girl started to drown and the girl with her saw a chain. In her leg pulling her inside the water. When everyone came it was too late she had drowned.” “She the girl who drowned had a Lil brother he said her sister wants to take him away with him so they did a Puja for her soul but while doing that the kid went somewhere and everyone was scared but we found him unconscious on the swing and when he woke up he said "didileneayithimujhe" but after the puja everything went normal.”
2. Cultural and Religious context	Folklore and Beliefs	“Then they started to look for her body but couldn't find then the priest or as we call him (diuiri) suggested we give a sacrifice of an animal then after sacrifice he said look for the stones beneath and they found her body. After that they went away to their village to perform last rituals but at night the place they used to live someone was banging at the door but after looking the landlord couldn't see anyone at door they were so scared they ran away and came to our home where

		everyone was sleeping that night was horrific listening to all the banging but it stopped after a while .”
3. Apparitions and Manifestations	Shadow Figures	“I saw a black figure standing at the bottom of my sister’s bed who looks exactly like my sister. I tried to check whether she was sleepwalking but that figure disappeared right in front of my eyes then I saw my sister sleeping in a tiny position near her pillow.” “When I was 13 years old in a normal afternoon of my summer vacation I was playing in my laptop and suddenly I heard footsteps like someone was running in the room I thought it was my older brother but when I asked to my brother to come and play with me there was no one in the room immediately after that I saw a shadow of a child in my laptop and I ran into another room to see my brother and I saw my brother and every family members were sleeping at that time.” “I’ve experienced supernatural things mostly when I was in my early teens, like feeling an unknown and unseen presence around me, seeing shadows, moving objects etc and I’ve also seen a

		witch(?)/possessed lady(?), idk man we call it dayan in Hindi, that typical safed kapdo wali bhootni” “It's all a blurry memory, but when I was around 4 years old, I was under the blanket and could see someone's hand shadow following me.” “I sleep alone and sometimes I feel that someone is watching me after removing the curtain from my shelf.” “I feel presence of someone in my hostel room one day.” “We both went near to the standing shadow, and we could see that the shadow does not have any facial structures.”
4. Feeling of being watched and followed	Sensation of being observed while in the swimming pool at night.	“Feeling as though I was being watched and followed around inside the pool.”
5. Unexplained fear and creepiness	First time experience of genuine fear in the familiar	“That night was my first time feeling genuinely scared even though I was not alone.”

	environment of the swimming pool.	
6. Discovery of past tragedies	Learning about the previous incidents of drowning and death in the same swimming pool.	“A few students had drowned and died in that pool in the past.”
7. Sensation of weirdness and discomfort	Feeling of unease and discomfort in the vicinity of a cemetery	“It might be paranormal, as there is a place [cemetery] there I felt a bit weird and uncomfortable.”
8. Visitations from deceased loved ones	Sensation of physical touch during the dream, evoking a vivid and realistic experience	“I dreamed my mom and I really felt her harsh touch in my left wrist, and that morning I saw there was mark of my mother fingers.” “I got to see my dead grandfather two days after his death.” “I usually dream of her, sometimes it feels strange and sometimes very scary.”

		“A lot of times I could see things and felt it.” “I was too startled to speak, but I was not scared because I knew she would not harm me.”
9. Residual haunting from previous tragedy	Residence in a police quarters where a mother and child had died under certain circumstances, suggesting a potential link to the apparitions	“After sometimes I used to see a child and mother playing with me in the garden of flowers, and with my fully eyes open, I used to see them playing.”
10. Intrusion and removal of entities	Perception of the mother and child “inside” the narrator, suggesting a resolution	“Yes they both were inside of me, and later on they were removed.”
11. Sleep paralysis	Understanding of the symptoms associated with sleep paralysis,	“Yes , its sleep paralysis.”

	such as the inability to move or speak, accompanied by vivid hallucinations or sensations.	
12. Paranormal Experiment ation	Decision to play the Charlie pencil game out of boredom, with low expectations of it working	“After a few times when the pencil slightly moved, we stood in shock.” “Most of us thought it might have just moved due to something else and proceeded to ask questions again, and it happened again, the pencil moved toward yes.”

Discussion

The survey reveals that a significant proportion of respondents hold strong or moderate beliefs in the existence of supernatural phenomena. This finding aligns with existing literature suggesting that supernatural beliefs are prevalent across diverse cultural contexts, including Jharkhand. The varying degrees of belief

observed in the survey highlight the nuanced nature of individuals' attitudes towards the supernatural, ranging from staunch belief to skepticism.

The majority of respondents acknowledge the presence of positive and negative energies that may not be visible to the naked eye. This perception resonates with

traditional Indian beliefs in the existence of subtle energies that influence human experiences and surroundings. The survey findings underscore the significance of spiritual and metaphysical concepts in shaping individuals' worldviews and interpretations of reality.

A considerable portion of respondents express belief in religious practices as a means to evade negative energy. This finding reflects the intertwining of religious and cultural beliefs in addressing perceived threats to well-being. The diversity of responses, including uncertainty among some participants, underscores the complex relationship between faith, culture, and superstition in navigating life's uncertainties.

The survey indicates a mixed stance on the belief in scientific causality among respondents. While a majority acknowledges the scientific underpinnings of phenomena, a significant proportion

remains uncertain or skeptical. This ambiguity highlights the coexistence of traditional beliefs and modern scientific rationality in individuals' conceptualizations of the world.

The survey findings reveal a range of reported supernatural experiences among respondents, including ghost sightings, psychic experiences, and encounters with apparitions. These experiences are often associated with emotional responses such as fear, amazement, or confusion, reflecting the profound impact of supernatural encounters on individuals' psychosocial well-being.

Interestingly, a vast majority of respondents deny capturing any evidence (photos, videos, audio recordings) during supernatural encounters. This discrepancy between reported experiences and documented evidence raises questions about the reliability and verifiability of supernatural claims. It also underscores the

elusive nature of paranormal phenomena, which often defy conventional modes of empirical investigation.

The survey findings offer valuable insights into the complex interplay of belief systems, cultural practices, and individual experiences shaping perceptions of the supernatural in Jharkhand. The prevalence of supernatural beliefs and experiences underscores the enduring influence of tradition and spirituality in the region.

However, the diversity of responses also highlights the heterogeneity of perspectives within the population, ranging from steadfast belief to rational skepticism.

This diversity reflects the dynamic nature of belief systems in response to socio-cultural, economic, and educational factors. Moving forward, further research is warranted to explore the underlying mechanisms driving individuals' beliefs and experiences of the supernatural. Longitudinal studies and cross-cultural comparisons could provide deeper insights

into the cultural dynamics and psychological mechanisms underlying supernatural phenomena.

Additionally, interdisciplinary approaches integrating anthropology, psychology, and religious studies could offer holistic perspectives on the role of the supernatural in shaping human cognition, behavior, and societal norms in Jharkhand and beyond. Such endeavors are essential for fostering mutual understanding and cultural sensitivity in diverse communities grappling with the complexities of belief and disbelief in the supernatural.

The correlations between sub-scales of the Revised Paranormal Belief Scale and personality characteristics provide intriguing insights into the interplay between individual traits and beliefs in the supernatural. Notably, positive correlations were observed between extraversion and various paranormal beliefs, suggesting that individuals with higher levels of

extraversion tend to also hold stronger beliefs in paranormal phenomena.

these differences were not statistically significant.

Similarly, correlations between psychoticism and belief in psychic phenomena, witchcraft, and precognition indicate a tendency for individuals with higher levels of psychoticism to endorse supernatural beliefs. These findings align with previous research highlighting the role of personality traits in shaping individuals' susceptibility to paranormal explanations for unexplained phenomena.

The absence of significant differences suggests that, despite variations in environmental, social, and cultural contexts between urban and rural settings, individuals in both groups exhibit similar tendencies towards paranormal beliefs and personality traits. This finding underscores the universality of human cognition and belief systems, transcending geographical boundaries and socio-cultural contexts.

The comparison of mean scores for paranormal beliefs and personality characteristics between urban and rural populations provides valuable insights into the cultural and contextual factors influencing belief systems. While some differences were observed in mean scores between urban and rural residents, such as slightly higher scores for traditional religious beliefs among urban individuals,

These findings have implications for understanding the psychological mechanisms underlying belief in the supernatural and personality characteristics across diverse populations. Further research could explore the role of cultural factors, such as religious practices and community norms, in shaping individuals' beliefs and experiences of the paranormal.

Additionally, longitudinal studies could investigate the stability of paranormal beliefs and personality traits over time and their implications for mental health outcomes and coping mechanisms. Such research could inform the development of culturally sensitive interventions aimed at promoting critical thinking skills and mental well-being in populations with varying belief systems.

Moreover, comparative studies across different regions and cultural contexts could provide deeper insights into the universality versus cultural specificity of paranormal beliefs and their relationship with personality traits. By elucidating the complex interplay between individual differences and socio-cultural factors, future research can contribute to a more nuanced understanding of human cognition and belief systems in diverse societies.

The statistical findings shed light on the intricate relationships between paranormal beliefs, personality characteristics, and

cultural contexts. While differences exist between urban and rural populations, the overarching similarity in belief systems underscores the fundamental human propensity to seek meaning and explanations for the unknown, transcending geographical and cultural boundaries.

The thematic analysis of the open-ended survey responses provides valuable insights into individuals' lived experiences with paranormal phenomena and their cultural, religious, and psychological implications. For instance, childhood experiences of encountering supernatural occurrences are prevalent among respondents. These encounters often involve tragic events, such as drownings, and subsequent attempts to communicate with or appease the spirits involved through religious rituals. These narratives underscore the significance of cultural beliefs and practices in interpreting and coping with paranormal encounters.

Folklore and beliefs play a significant role in shaping individuals' interpretations of supernatural events. Stories of sacrifices, rituals, and encounters with spirits highlight the intertwined relationship between cultural traditions and paranormal experiences. These narratives reflect the cultural richness and diversity of belief systems prevalent in the community.

Reports of shadow figures, apparitions resembling deceased loved ones, and unexplained movements evoke a sense of fear and intrigue. These experiences challenge conventional explanations and invite contemplation on the nature of reality and consciousness. The vivid descriptions of paranormal encounters contribute to the mystique surrounding such phenomena.

Sensations of being observed or followed evoke feelings of unease and vulnerability.

Whether experienced in familiar settings like swimming pools or seemingly

ordinary spaces, these encounters blur the boundaries between the known and the unknown, heightening individuals' awareness of their surroundings.

Accounts of experiencing fear in otherwise familiar environments highlight the subjective nature of fear and its association with perceived paranormal activity. The juxtaposition of mundane settings with inexplicable occurrences underscores the unsettling nature of paranormal encounters.

Learning about past incidents of tragedy, such as drownings, adds a layer of historical context to paranormal experiences. The resonance of past events in present-day encounters suggests a potential link between collective memory and supernatural phenomena, shaping individuals' perceptions and responses.

Feelings of discomfort and unease, particularly in proximity to places

associated with death or burial, raise questions about the influence of environmental factors on paranormal experiences. These narratives highlight the interplay between psychological states and external stimuli in shaping individuals' interpretations of perceived paranormal activity.

Accounts of visitations from deceased loved ones offer solace and reassurance amidst the uncertainty of life and death. The vividness and emotional intensity of these experiences challenge conventional notions of mortality and suggest the enduring bonds between the living and the departed.

Residual hauntings, characterized by recurring apparitions or phenomena linked to past tragedies, suggest a lingering imprint of traumatic events on physical spaces. The presence of residual energy or entities evokes a sense of connection to the

past and raises questions about the nature of time and memory.

Accounts of entities "inside" the narrator and subsequent removal evoke themes of possession and spiritual intervention. These narratives blur the boundaries between internal and external realities, reflecting individuals' attempts to reconcile personal experiences with cultural interpretations of paranormal phenomena.

Experiences of sleep paralysis, characterized by hallucinations and sensations of being immobilized, challenge individuals' perceptions of reality and consciousness. These episodes blur the line between waking and sleeping states, prompting reflections on the fragility of human perception and the mysteries of the mind.

Accounts of paranormal experimentation, such as playing the Charlie pencil game, highlight individuals' curiosity and

skepticism towards supernatural phenomena. The outcomes of these experiments, ranging from skepticism to astonishment, underscore the subjective nature of belief and the complexity of interpreting paranormal experiences.

Therefore, the thematic analysis of open-ended survey responses provides a rich tapestry of individuals' encounters with the paranormal and their cultural, religious, and psychological significance. These narratives offer glimpses into the human experience of navigating the mysterious and unexplained, inviting further exploration into the intersections of belief, culture, and consciousness.

Synthesizing the insights gained from the survey results, statistical findings, and thematic analysis provided a holistic understanding of individuals' encounters with the supernatural in Jharkhand. Likewise, the survey findings shed light on the prevalence of paranormal beliefs and experiences among rural and urban

citizens of Jharkhand. They reveal a diverse range of beliefs and experiences, with a significant portion of respondents expressing belief in supernatural phenomena.

Furthermore, the survey highlights the emotional responses associated with paranormal encounters, including fear, amazement, and confusion. Additionally, the survey explores individuals' perceptions of the supernatural, such as the existence of positive and negative energies and the efficacy of religious practices in warding off negative energy. The statistical analysis provides quantitative insights into the relationship between paranormal beliefs and personality characteristics among urban and rural populations. It reveals correlations between various sub-scales of paranormal belief and personality traits, indicating nuanced associations between belief systems and individual dispositions.

Furthermore, the analysis examines mean differences in paranormal beliefs and personality traits between urban and rural groups, offering insights into potential variations based on geographical context. The thematic analysis delves into the qualitative narratives of individuals' experiences with the paranormal,

uncovering recurring themes and patterns across diverse encounters. It explores the cultural, religious, and psychological dimensions of paranormal experiences, from childhood encounters and cultural beliefs to sensations of being watched or followed.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the comprehensive analysis of survey responses, statistical correlations, and thematic narratives provides a nuanced understanding of supernatural experiences among rural and urban citizens of Jharkhand. While the survey highlights the prevalence of paranormal beliefs and the varied emotional responses to supernatural encounters, the statistical analysis reveals complex relationships between paranormal beliefs and personality traits, with subtle differences observed between urban and rural populations. Furthermore, the thematic analysis uncovers the cultural,

religious, and psychological dimensions of individuals' encounters with the supernatural, enriching our understanding of how beliefs and experiences intersect within the socio-cultural context of Jharkhand. Together, these integrated insights underscore the multifaceted nature of paranormal phenomena and emphasize the importance of adopting a multidisciplinary approach to studying and interpreting such experiences, paving the way for future research and exploration into the mysteries of the supernatural realm.

Limitations of the Study

Despite its contributions, this study is subject to several limitations that warrant acknowledgment. Firstly, the relatively small sample size, particularly after data loss, may limit the generalizability of the findings to the broader population of Jharkhand. Additionally, the use of convenience and purposive sampling techniques may introduce sampling bias, potentially skewing the representation of rural and urban populations and affecting the reliability of the results. Furthermore, the reliance on self-reported measures, such as the Paranormal Belief Scale and the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire, may be susceptible to response biases and social desirability effects, leading to inaccuracies in the assessment of paranormal beliefs and personality traits. Moreover, the cross-sectional nature of the

study design precludes causal inferences and longitudinal examination of changes in paranormal beliefs and experiences over time. Additionally, the thematic analysis of qualitative data is inherently subjective, and while efforts were made to ensure rigor and consistency, interpretations may be influenced by the researchers' biases and perspectives. Finally, the study's focus on Jharkhand may limit its applicability to other cultural contexts, necessitating caution in extrapolating the findings to diverse populations. Addressing these limitations through larger sample sizes, randomized sampling methods, longitudinal investigations, and cross-cultural comparisons would enhance the robustness and validity of future research on supernatural experiences.

Implications of the Study

Firstly, it offers valuable insights for mental health professionals and practitioners working in Jharkhand, highlighting the significance of culturally sensitive approaches in addressing individuals' beliefs and experiences related to the supernatural. Understanding the cultural and societal factors influencing paranormal beliefs can inform therapeutic interventions aimed at promoting psychological well-being and resilience among rural and urban populations. Additionally, the study underscores the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration between researchers in psychology, sociology, anthropology, and cultural studies to further explore the

complex interplay between cultural beliefs, personality traits, and supernatural experiences. Furthermore, the findings have implications for public health initiatives, emphasizing the need for educational campaigns and community-based interventions to promote critical thinking skills and foster a better understanding of the naturalistic explanations behind paranormal phenomena. Ultimately, this study contributes to the broader discourse on the intersection of culture, psychology, and belief systems, fostering greater awareness and appreciation for the diversity of human experiences in the face of the unknown.

Recommendations for Further Research

Future studies should aim to recruit larger and more diverse samples from both rural

and urban communities in Jharkhand to improve the representativeness of findings

and enable more robust statistical analyses. Employing random sampling techniques, such as stratified or cluster sampling, can help mitigate sampling bias and ensure a more accurate reflection of the population demographics. Conducting longitudinal research would enable tracking changes in paranormal beliefs and experiences over time, providing deeper insights into the stability and development of these phenomena within different socio-cultural contexts. Combining quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews or focus groups can offer a more comprehensive understanding of individuals' beliefs and experiences, allowing for richer insights into the cultural, psychological, and social dimensions of supernatural encounters. Validating the survey instruments used, such as the Paranormal Belief Scale and the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire, within the specific cultural context of Jharkhand will ensure their reliability and validity. Taking into account the cultural nuances and belief systems prevalent in

Jharkhand when designing research protocols and interpreting findings, acknowledging the diverse cultural perspectives on supernatural phenomena would be recommended. Developing and implementing educational programs aimed at increasing awareness and critical thinking skills regarding paranormal beliefs, particularly among younger populations, to foster a more balanced understanding of these phenomena is essential. Encouraging interdisciplinary collaboration between researchers in psychology, anthropology, sociology, and cultural studies is recommended to explore the multifaceted nature of supernatural experiences and their implications for individual and societal well-being. Extending similar studies to other regions of India and across different cultural contexts to compare and contrast the prevalence and nature of supernatural beliefs and experiences, contributing to a broader understanding of these phenomena globally is essential. Ensuring ethical



practices in research, particularly when investigating sensitive topics such as paranormal experiences, by obtaining informed consent, protecting participants' confidentiality, and minimizing potential distress or harm is recommended.



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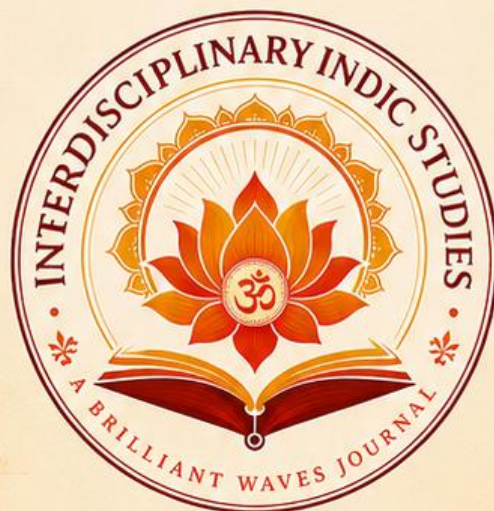




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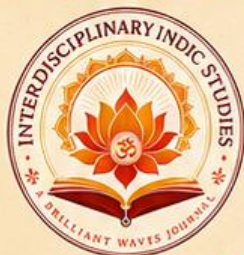
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