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InQuest

Student's Research Compendium



**SEVA MANDAL EDUCATION SOCIETY'S
SMT. MANIBEN M.P. SHAH WOMEN'S COLLEGE OF ARTS AND COMMERCE
(Autonomous under S.N.D.T. Women's University, Mumbai)**

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VISION

Empowerment of women through quality education to make them competent, self reliant , responsible home-makers , professionals & citizens

MISSION

Education for Living and for Making a Better Living

Objectives

All round personality development of students

Training students to be responsible citizens with awareness-raising programs and activities

To make higher education more relevant, need based and skill based To lay foundation for progressive and prosperous future of the students



From the Principal's Desk.....

Curiosity is one of the basic ludic motives leading individuals to the path of undertaking research. Research is an activity of paramount importance. It develops critical thinking skills, problem solving, decision making, communication skills and instils a scientific temper. Individuals learn how to evaluate information, identify patterns, and think independently. Research enhances the subject knowledge and an in-depth understanding of a subject may even spur some to go ahead and contribute to the existing body of knowledge.

Research is known to encourage self-directed learning. The students are required to independently search for relevant information, review literature, design experiments, collect and analyze data, and draw conclusions. This process fosters self-directed learning, which is an essential skill for lifelong success. Engaging in research provides students with a solid foundation for future academic pursuits and opens up diverse career opportunities. Research involves a very systematic approach and its scientific nature helps students to develop a vision that's sustainable and accountable. Engaging in the study, analysis and the findings of research helps students learn the rich heritage of the chosen topic and enhances their understanding about current status and what future holds in it.

We at Smt. Maniben M. P. Shah Women's College endeavour to give students the opportunities to enhance their overall growth and all-round development. Research projects are mandatory for post graduate students and encouraged wholeheartedly for undergraduate students too. The students are then also encouraged to convert their research dissertations into a research paper/article and we are proud to show case their work in a compendium - In-Quest. The students have been engaging in research with diverse topics that are close to their hearts and impactful on the society.

My Congratulations to Dr. Shital Mandhare and our team for yet another issue of In-Quest.

I am also grateful to the faculty members of the PG section for the encouragement and mentoring provided to the students for this endeavour of theirs.

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1/ C Principal

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Designed By

Ms. DEEPA MATKAR

Dept. of Mass Media

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A STUDY ON INSTAGRAM AS A MARKETING TOOL WITH REFERENCE TO LIFESTYLE PRODUCTS: CUSTOMERS' PERSPECTIVE

Ms. Muthulakshmi Konar

Smt. MMP Shah Women's College of Arts and
Commerce, Matunga, Mumbai,
konarm534@gmail.com, 9833186066

Dr. Shital Mandhare

Assistant Professor, Smt. MMP Shah
Women's College of Arts and Commerce,
Matunga, Mumbai,
shital2985.sp@gmail.com, 9987186695

ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to determine the impact that Instagram Marketing has towards the purchase decision of lifestyle products of consumers. In today's world, with digitisation coming into the picture and technology booming, shopping online has become an important activity for everyone. People have started leveraging the buying and selling service that Instagram has started providing through its business accounts for lifestyle products. The study is aimed at understanding the effect of celebrity endorsements, offers and discounts, appeal of the ads and price difference on the purchase decision of people for lifestyle products. According to the results from this study, in general, social media marketing relies heavily on Instagram and the purchasing behaviour of the consumers are more likely to have a positive effect for a business when using social media platforms for marketing strategies.

KEYWORDS: Social media, Instagram Marketing, Discounts, Online Shopping, Lifestyle products, Advertising, Influencer Marketing.

INTRODUCTION

Social Media has occupied an important position as a communication tool. It is all about facilitating people to express and share ideas, thoughts and opinions with others. People across the world use social media to connect other people or organisations. The latest trend in marketing is the introduction of social media. Now-a-days Social media had become very strong tool in influencing buying decisions of consumer. A large section of the audience gets to know your brand through the content that is distributed on social media, in this way people get to know about your product. The main aim of this study is to observe in what way social media will affect the final consumer behaviour among person who mostly uses social media websites. The study has also undertaken to analyse how Instagram is used as a marketing tool

in the buying decisions of general public and the factors that motivate them to shop through these social media platforms.

Marketing is a well-improved method or act that regularly changes the rules based on the necessity of promoting and marketing products and services. It makes the customers aware of your products or services, involves them, and helps them make the buying decision. Unlike the past, traditional marketing strategy such as television commercials and newspaper advertisements do not give much impact to the customers these days. The rising of these new technologies does not only affect our living style but also created a new marketing strategy for marketers to promote and sell their products.

Instagram is a photo and video sharing social networking service founded in Oct 6, 2010 by Kelvin Systrom and Mike Krieger and later acquired by American company. It is a mobile application, which allows users to share their photos and videos to their followers. Instagram allows users to snap photo or video anywhere they are at any time and share it with their followers nationally and also internationally. Instagram is a word combination of “instant” and “telegram”. In 2012, Facebook have offered 530m cash and 23million of its shares to Instagram and the deal was finalized very soon after the offer. Instagram is said to be 3rdmost popular social networking among the college students in US.

INSTAGRAM AS A MARKETING TOOL

As the marketing approach trend move from the traditional marketing strategy to social network marketing strategy, many companies have started to take part in promoting the company's brand through several social networking sites. Hence, the social networking site that best fit the marketing strategy is the “Instagram”. A lot of firms worldwide are using Instagram as a platform to promote and sell its products and services. Amongst the social networking sites which remain popular and currently being used, Instagram is a very major player and is widely used through mobile devices as an application. It has given marketers a unique platform to relate with their customers. The popularity of Instagram is rising day by day. Besides being well known among the young people who are active in social media, Instagram is also getting more popular in the business industry.

INSTAGRAM AS A FASTEST GROWING MARKET AMONG CONSUMERS

In the last few years, Instagram has become a very popular website today. Over half of all 18-30 years old are on Instagram. It is used by 48.8 per cent of brands by 2017 and now it is raised to 70.7 per cent in 2021. Instagram curved its features focus to creating a better consumer

shopping experience. 70per cent of shoppers look to Instagram for their next purchase. For various people on Instagram, shopping is an enjoyable way to get inspired and connect with new and interesting brands. Connecting people in an instant and effective way is what makes Instagram so powerful.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study different marketing tools especially digital ones available for marketing.
2. To evaluate the opinions and perceptions of consumers about Instagram as a marketing tool with reference to Lifestyle products.
3. To find out the impact of Instagram as a marketing tool on purchase decisions of consumers for Lifestyle products.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Present research paper reviews certain studies to gain a better understanding of how Instagram is used as a marketing tool. For secondary data researcher attempted to evaluate some e-journals, e-research papers and e-magazines. Some of the research articles are also reviewed. All this has helped the researcher to thoroughly understand the topic and pen down some important points for the present study. For gathering first-hand information, primary data will be collected through questionnaire methods. A structured questionnaire is used to administer responses of the consumers between the age group of 18-45 and above. The sampling method used for the study is Snowball and Convenience sampling. The primary data gathered from these respondents is statistical analysed and tested and will further be presented in the form of graphs and charts to make it more explanatory. Researcher have made an attempt to use descriptive analysis to represent the data in the study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Numila Mia (2015), in the article titled "Successful social media marketing on Instagram." exhibited about the focus on Instagram and how it can be used effectively as a part of the company's social media marketing strategy. Based on the results of the study, it is said that there are 65 per cent of the world's top brands that have Instagram accounts to increase its profits and to make more businesses out of the company. It also highlights that companies use Instagram not as a sales promotion tool but as an opportunity to show the brand and the company behind-the scenes. The findings deepened the knowledge about the subject of social media marketing and about Instagram in specific. The findings had most certainly come in handy in both personal and business use of Instagram. Hence, this research paper discussed

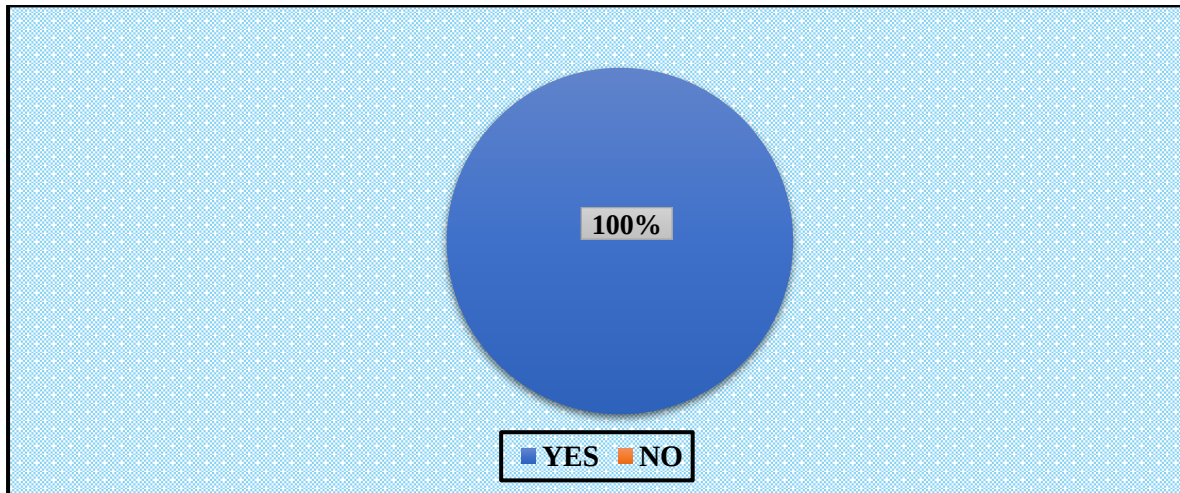
that how Instagram has become a favourable platform for marketers to market a product or service.

J. Holmes (2017), states that Instagram evolved from solely being a platform for social networking to a possible source of income. Using the concept of sharing on this popular forum issuing it in so many different ways. A lot of businesses gathered here to utilize their services and reach out to the user base of millions. Big brand names to small closet shops, you can find the whole lot amongst the thousands of user profiles that use Instagram for business. Brands have been using Instagram to market their product and make their presence valid on this using Instagram is an extremely convenient way to show your products to a huge potential customer base. People need to be able to see what is on offer in order to know if they want to buy it. It is like a free advertising tool for your products and services. This author stated that this will automatically reach out to more people if they are actually quality content and also this will then generate more customers for the business.

Sjöberg Annette (2017), the main purpose of this study is to use benchmarking to identify concrete actions that can be used to influence brand awareness in social media platforms Facebook and Instagram. Facebook and Instagram were selected to be investigated firstly, because both platforms are actively used for marketing purposes. According to latest statistics, brands are still getting three times more engagement in Instagram than in Facebook, which encourages marketers to put more emphasis on Instagram. Decision was supported by the fact that Facebook and Instagram are regarded as some of the most important social media platforms worldwide and actively used for marketing purposes by the case company and benchmarked brands.

DISCUSSION OF THE STUDY

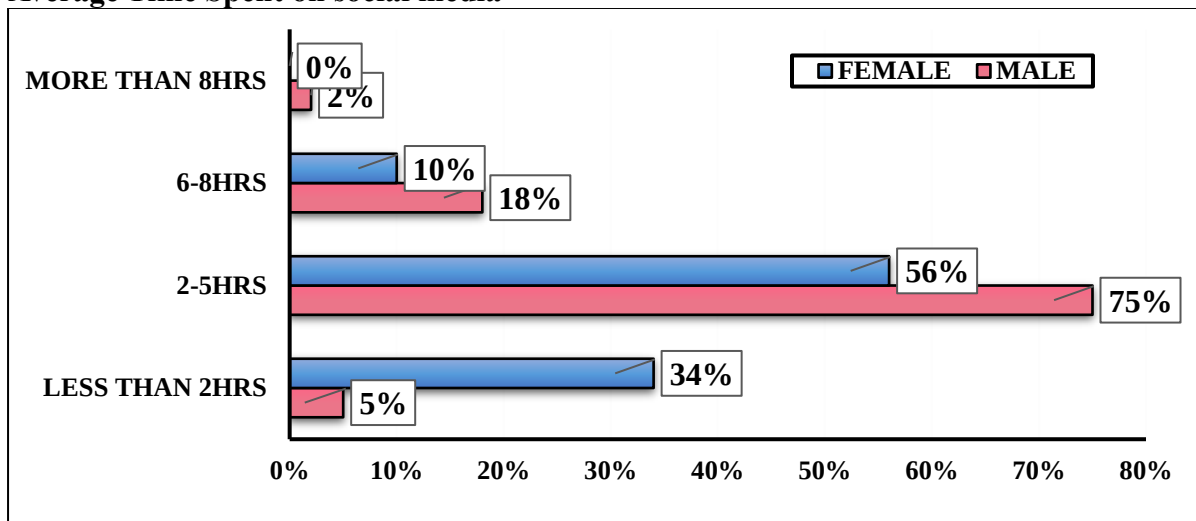
Chart 1.1
Use of social media



Source: Primary data collection 2023.

The social media economy is the fastest growing and changing phenomenon of our time. This has become one of the primary Internet usage goals of individuals, has become an important channel for various businesses adopting a customer-focused approach. According to the chart 4.5 shown above, all the respondents are using social media. All the respondents, i.e., 50 per cent male and 50per cent female have agreed that they use social media regularly for different reasons. Most of the people use social media either on their mobile phones or computers. So social media is very much popular among the people and almost everyone uses it for various purposes such as making friends, chatting, for information and for shopping etc.

Chart 1.2
Average Time Spent on social media

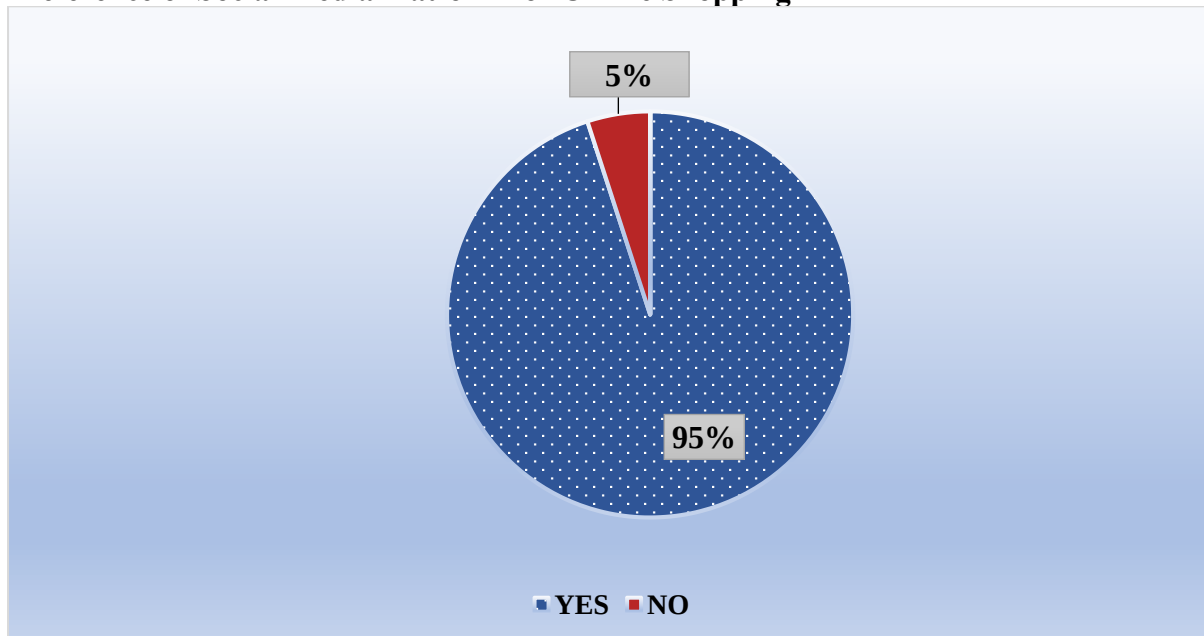


Source: Primary data collection 2023.

In this research study out of 120 responses it was observed that 5 per cent of male and 34 per cent of female respondents spend less than 2 hours on social media. 75 per cent of male and 56 per cent of female respondents spend 2-5 hours on social media. 18 per cent of male and 10 per cent of female respondents spend 6-8 hours on social media. Only 2 per cent of male respondents expressed that they spend more than 8 hours on social media. Looking at the figures we can say that both men and women are equally inclined towards the use of social media. An average time spent by individual on social media platforms is about 2-5 hours, hence it can be concluded that a large number of people spend a good amount of time using social media whether men or women.

Chart 1.3

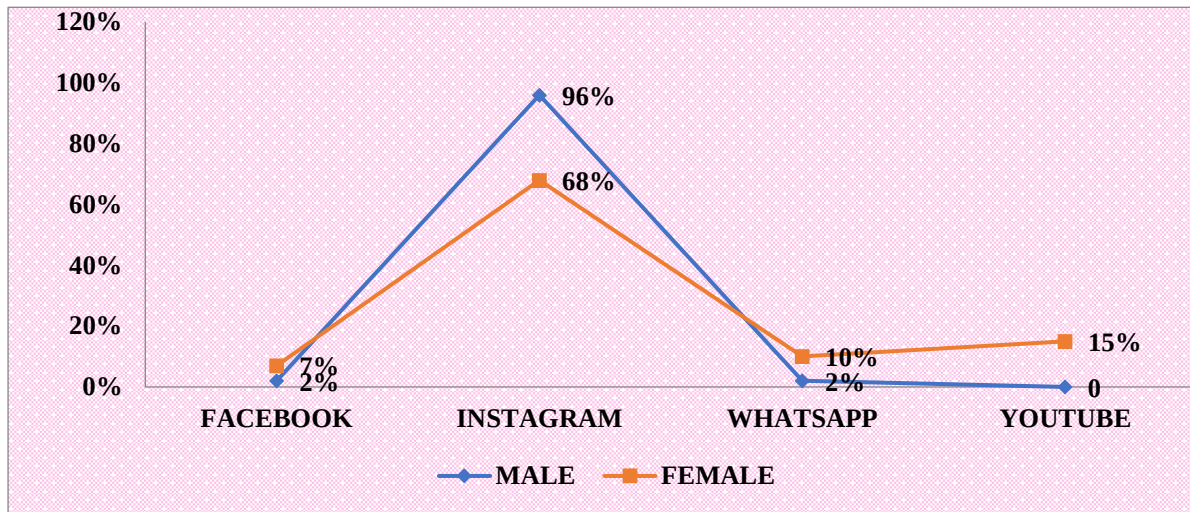
Preference of Social Media Platform for Online Shopping



Source: Primary data collection 2023.

Online shopping sites contain wide variety of goods both high quality and mild quality keeping in mind the level of people. According to the above chart 4.10, 95 per cent of the respondents prefer social media for online shopping whereas only 5 per cent of the respondents do not prefer social media for online shopping.

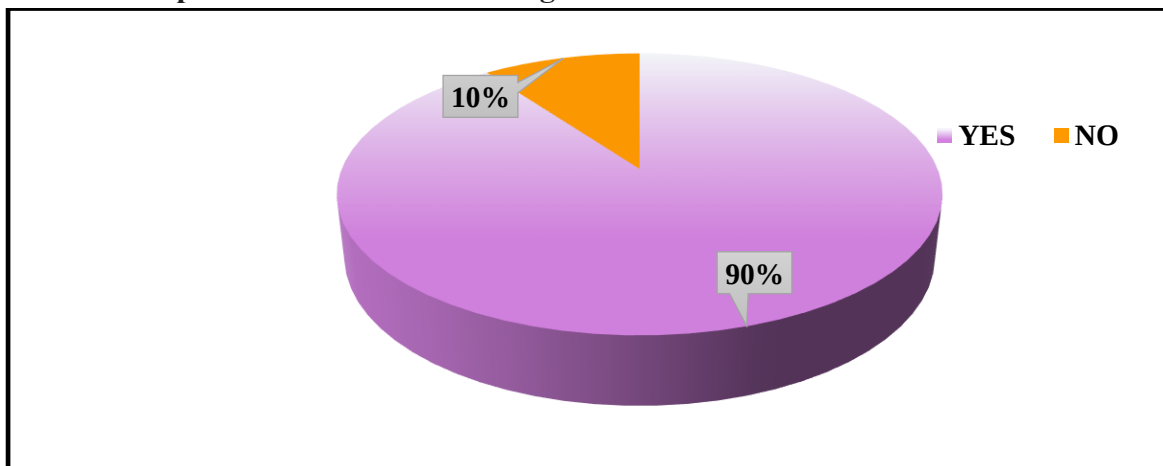
Chart 1.4
Social media platform used for online shopping



Source: Primary data collection 2023.

Consumers state that they are most likely to make purchases on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, WhatsApp, etc. According to the above chart 4.11, 96 per cent of the males and 68 per cent of the females use Instagram for making online purchases. 10 per cent of male and 2 per cent of the females prefer WhatsApp for shopping online. 7 per cent of the male and 2 per cent of the females follow Facebook for online shopping whereas only 15 per cent of the females follow YouTube for shopping online.

Chart 1.5
Purchase of products followed on Instagram

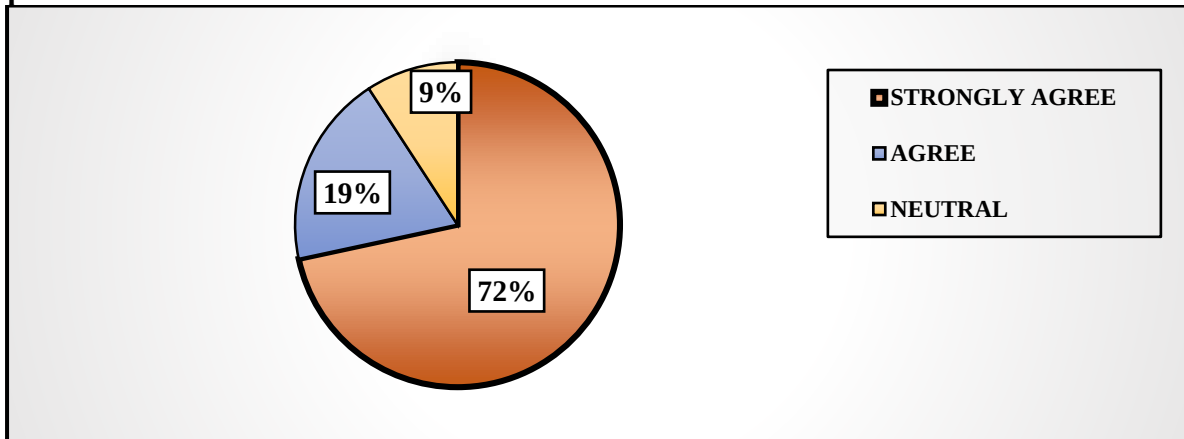


Source: Primary data collection 2023.

According to the above chart 4.13, 90 per cent of the respondents agreed that they make purchase of the above products listed in the chart 4.12 since they follow them on Instagram. Only 10 per cent of the respondents said that they don't make purchases of the products that they follow.

Chart 1.6

Influence of advertisements/blogs/posts/user reviews of Instagram on trying new brands, products or services

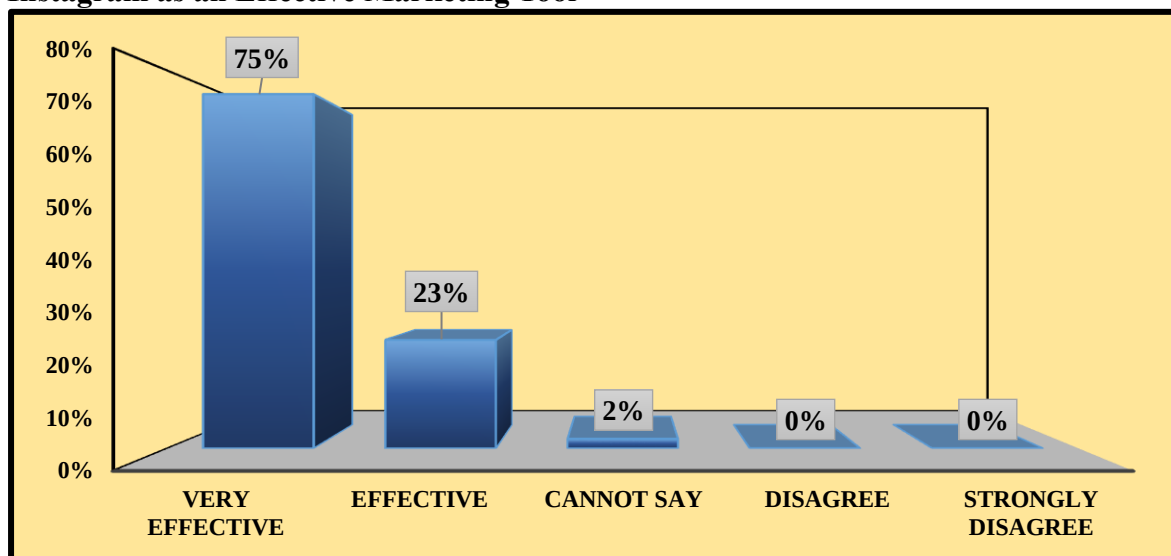


Source: Primary data collection 2023.

Consumers knowingly or unknowingly are being influenced by the various techniques of the influencers; thus, it is crucial to take both the influencers into account in order to deeply analyse the subject. According to the above chart, 72 per cent of the respondents strongly agree that they get influenced to try new brands and products through reviews on Instagram. 19 per cent of the respondents agree that they get influenced by the reviews posted on the Instagram. Only 9 per cent of the respondents have no specific opinion to express about the influence of Instagram to try new brands.

Chart 1.7

Instagram as an Effective Marketing Tool

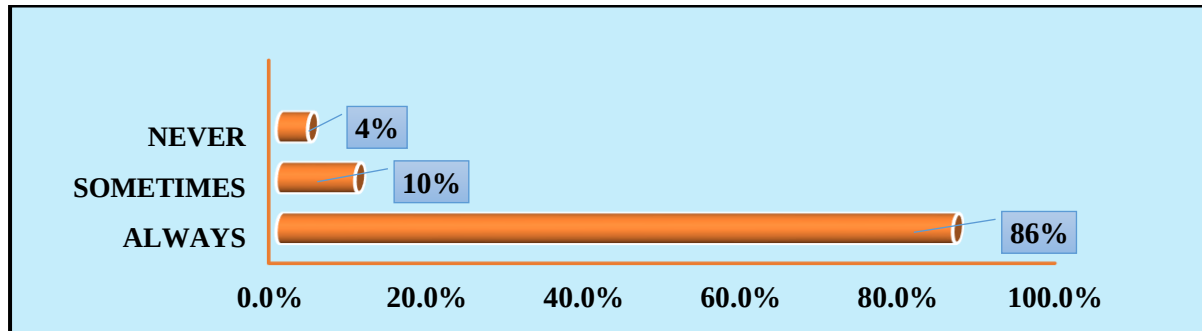


Source: Primary data collection 2023.

Visual content is the best way to connect with the customers, and Instagram focuses solely on a high-end visual experience. According to the above chart 4.16, 75 per cent of the respondents said that Instagram is very effective as a marketing tool. 23 per cent of the respondents said that Instagram is an effective tool for marketing. Only 2 per cent of the respondents stated that they do not have an opinion regarding effectiveness of Instagram as a marketing tool.

Chart 1.8

Reading of reviews posted on Instagram before purchasing a product online

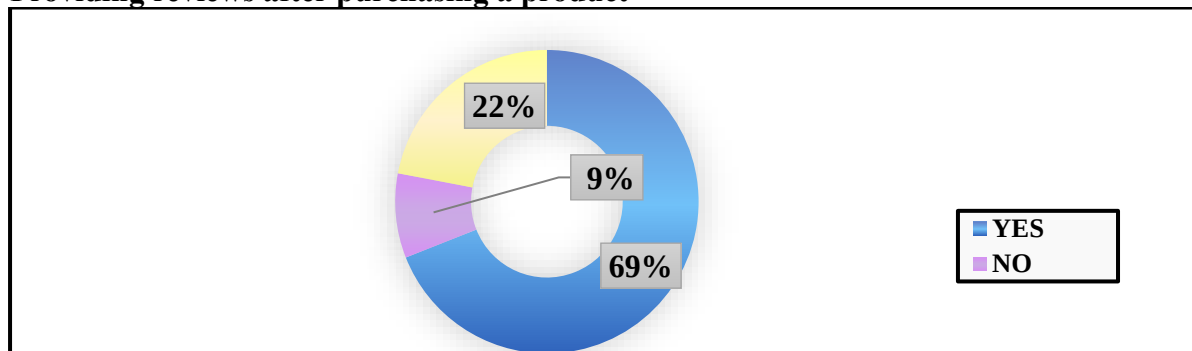


Source: Primary data collection 2023.

People read online reviews before they shop and also pay more attention for the products of a brand with good reviews. As per the chart 4.17, 86 per cent of the respondents said that they always read the reviews posted on Instagram before making a purchase. 10 per cent of the respondents said that they read the reviews sometimes. Only 4 per cent of the respondents mentioned that they never read the reviews as they feel it may not affect or influence their purchase decision.

Chart 1.9

Providing reviews after purchasing a product



Source: Primary data collection 2023.

Collecting customer reviews will help product growth, customer success, customer support, and marketing teams to understand or modify the product as per consumer demand. According to the above chart 4.18, 69 per cent of the respondents said that they provide reviews after purchasing a product online. 22 per cent of the respondents are not sure about providing reviews

after purchase. Only 9 per cent of the respondents said that they are not interested in providing reviews after making a purchase of a product online.

HYPOTHESIS TESTING

Null Hypothesis (H_0): There is no significant association between the use of social media and the number of purchases made online.

Alternate Hypothesis (H_1): There is a significant association between the use of social media and the number of purchases made online.

Variables:

Use of social media- Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, YouTube.

Preference of social media for online shopping- Yes, No

Calculation of chi-square test:

Table no. 4.1
Observed Frequencies

Use of social media	Preference of social media for online shopping		Grand Total
	Yes	No	
Facebook	04	0	04
Instagram	95	04	99
WhatsApp	6	01	08
YouTube	06	03	09
Grand Total	112	08	120

Table no. 4.2
Expected Frequencies

Use of social media	Preference of social media for online shopping		Grand Total
	Yes	No	
Facebook	3.73	0.27	04
Instagram	92.4	6.6	99
WhatsApp	7.47	0.53	08
YouTube	8.4	0.6	09
Grand Total	112	08	120

P value of Chi Square test is calculated by applying following excel formula.

P Value= CHITEST (actual_range,expected_range). P Value=0.00795

Thus, the obtained p value by applying above formula is 0.00795. Since the P value (0.00795) is smaller than the value 0.05, we reject the Null Hypothesis. Thus, we can conclude that there is a significant association between the use of social media and the number of purchases made online.

SUGGESTIONS

1. According to researcher, Instagram marketing enables marketers to build relations with customers and prospects, helps to promote their businesses as Instagram is mostly based on communication through visual elements like images and videos as it creates a totally new way for marketers to communicate to customers.
2. It should also try to encourage the small entrepreneurs or startups who have started their business newly by allowing them to promote their brand and business through Instagram and also by cooperating in bringing the customers to their doorstep with different ideas.
3. Advertisements on social media (Instagram) should be made more attractive and innovative so that more people will be paying attention towards it.
4. Through the research study, it is found that offers and discounts available on Instagram is the factor that motivates consumers to shop through social media platforms hence, many offers and discounts should be made on products and services in these platforms, so that many of the people will be motivated to shop through these media.
5. Instagram is understood to be a very useful marketing tool in this period it also faces some disadvantages as this platform is not a private, as the comments between the customer and marketer are shown on the page so some precautions must be taken on this criterion.
6. Government should provide guidelines on fake pages circulating on Instagram, so the user will know about the authenticity of the fake pages during online shopping.
7. Government should also prevent consumers from influencers sharing misleading endorsements, fake reviews of products, to influence consumers on these social media platforms. It should be made compulsory that the product and service must actually been used or experienced by the endorser or influencer.
8. Businesses have started to increasingly put importance on social media marketing. Yet, very little research has been conducted on Instagram marketing for business purposes.

9. In terms of the future research there is no doubt that having a successful and strong social media marketing strategy will get tougher.

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded from the study that there are Instagram plays a vital role in online businesses while majority of the respondents are of the view that Instagram has a great role in buying and selling things, people were enjoying online shopping, they like the marketer's strategy to promote brands through social media networking. The impact of social media marketing on the general public has been seen in different phases of life. Firstly, it changes the state of mind of the community, they are now into online shopping rather than traditional shopping they find new trends and fashion through social media sites so this reliable social media network has completely changed the way of thinking of the general public.

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AWARENESS AND IMPORTANCE OF LABELS (EXPIRY & NUTRITION) WITH REFERENCE TO FOOD AND COSMETIC PRODUCTS

Ms. Sheetal Misar

Smt. MMP Shah Women's College of Arts and Commerce, Matunga, Mumbai,
Misarsheetal10@gmail.com, 8451059293

Dr. Shital Mandhare

Assistant Professor, Smt. MMP Shah Women's College of Arts and Commerce, Matunga, Mumbai,
shital2985.sp@gmail.com, 9987186695

ABSTRACT

This research paper extensively explores the pivotal role of labels in shaping consumer purchase decisions for food and cosmetic products. It emphasizes the comprehensive nature of labels, spanning packaging and labelling variables, as essential mediums of communication. The study highlights the multifaceted purposes of labels, ranging from legal compliance to advertising and product identification.

Particularly, the paper underscores the significance of food labels in direct communication between buyers and sellers, fulfilling legal requirements for consumer health and safety. Food labels are recognized as crucial tools for disseminating nutrition information, empowering consumers to make informed and healthier choices. The research extends its focus to cosmetic products, acknowledging their impact on mood, appearance, and self-esteem. It emphasizes the challenges consumers face, such as allergies, and stresses the role of clear labelling in alleviating concerns during the purchasing process.

Furthermore, the study acknowledges the potential of labels to serve as powerful sales tools, influencing consumer decisions and fostering brand loyalty. The problem statement emphasizes the critical importance of labels in the marketing strategy of food and cosmetic products. The research aims to investigate the impact of packaging and labelling variables on customer purchasing behavior, with a specific focus on expiry and nutrition information. The paper proposes a comprehensive study to understand the awareness and importance of labels, shedding light on their role in shaping consumer choices within the dynamic market landscape.

KEY WORDS: Labels, Packaging and Labelling Variables, Consumer Purchase Decisions, Food and Cosmetic Products, Nutrition Information

INTRODUCTION

Present study explores the intricate role of labels in the context of packaging and labelling variables, particularly within the realm of food and cosmetic products. Labels, whether composed of paper, polymer, cloth, metal, or other materials, are integral components attached to containers, conveying a plethora of information such as ingredients, expiry date, batch number, calories, product and company names, pricing, and nutritional content.

The study underscores the diverse functions of labels, ranging from legal compliance to advertising and product identification. Emphasis is placed on the importance of labels in providing authentic information, although they do not reveal details about working techniques or machinery used. Some labels incorporate protective measures like overcoats, laminates, or tape. Despite the challenges of application, companies often employ label machines for efficiency.

Labelling is recognized as a form of communication, fulfilling legal requirements for consumer health and safety. The focus extends to food labels, deemed crucial for disseminating nutrition information and aiding consumers in making informed, healthier choices. The text stresses the impact of labels on pre- and post-purchase decision-making, creating a favorable environment for healthy choices within communities.

The exploration extends to cosmetic products, acknowledging their influence on mood, appearance, and self-esteem. Clear labelling is deemed essential, particularly for consumers with allergies. The text highlights the role of labels as sales tools, influencing consumer decisions and fostering brand loyalty.

The problem statement underscores the critical importance of labels in the marketing strategy of food and cosmetic products. The research aims to investigate the impact of packaging and labelling variables on customer purchasing behavior, with a focus on expiry and nutrition information. The proposed study seeks to understand the awareness and importance of labels, shedding light on their role in shaping consumer choices in the dynamic market landscape.

Beyond physical health, the text delves into the role of cosmetics in enhancing mood, appearance, and self-esteem. It addresses challenges faced by consumers, such as allergies, emphasizing the need for clear labelling to alleviate concerns during the purchasing process. The study recognizes the potential of labels to provide crucial information, aid in product differentiation, and enhance living standards.

Study strives underlining the importance of labels as a useful sales tool, with advancements in label manufacturing facilitating cross-brand marketing, recipe information, couponing, sweepstakes, and gaming. Overall, it advocates for coherent labelling to improve consumer learning and commitment, aligning with the paramount importance of food welfare and allergen-avoidant consumer preferences.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the awareness and importance of labels among people (Expiry & Nutritional) with reference to food and cosmetic products.
2. To study the impact on purchase decisions of people with respect to expiry dates and nutritional facts.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

In this research, a dual approach will be employed for data collection, encompassing both secondary and primary data sources. The researcher sourced secondary data from various platforms, including internet sites, books, e-research papers, and e-journals. For primary data collection, a structured questionnaire was developed and administered to respondents. The questionnaire, crafted with both open-ended and close-ended questions, was implemented using Google Forms and disseminated through email and social media channels. The sample for the study was selected using a combination of convenience and snowball sampling methods. There were total 80 respondents divided equally according to their age and gender. To derive meaningful insights from the collected data, a comprehensive analysis was conducted using statistical techniques such as the Chi-square method, alongside descriptive frequency analysis, graphs, diagrams, and interpretations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In a study conducted by **Raja M Shankar Anand, N. Anisha, and Divya (2019)**, food labels were identified as crucial tools for promoting a stable diet and community health. The research aimed to create awareness among consumers to discern the link between diet and disease. Findings revealed that 75 percent of respondents focused on food labels, with only 1 percent utilizing nutritional data. Marital status, education level, age, gender, and household size were identified as factors influencing nutritional label use. Women exhibited greater health consciousness, often considering weight and appearance in their food choices. The study also highlighted concerns about firms hiding nutritional values, emphasizing the need for easily understandable nutritional information, with the Multi Traffic Light (MTL) system proving

effective. **Dharchana S. and Kanchanadevi P. (2019)** explored changes in Indian consumers' food consumption behavior, emphasizing the importance of comprehensive and accessible information on labels. Government intervention in food labelling was discussed in the context of improving health, safety, and minimizing environmental hazards. The study also delved into organic food labeling guidelines and emphasized the significant relationship between food habits and reading nutritional labels.

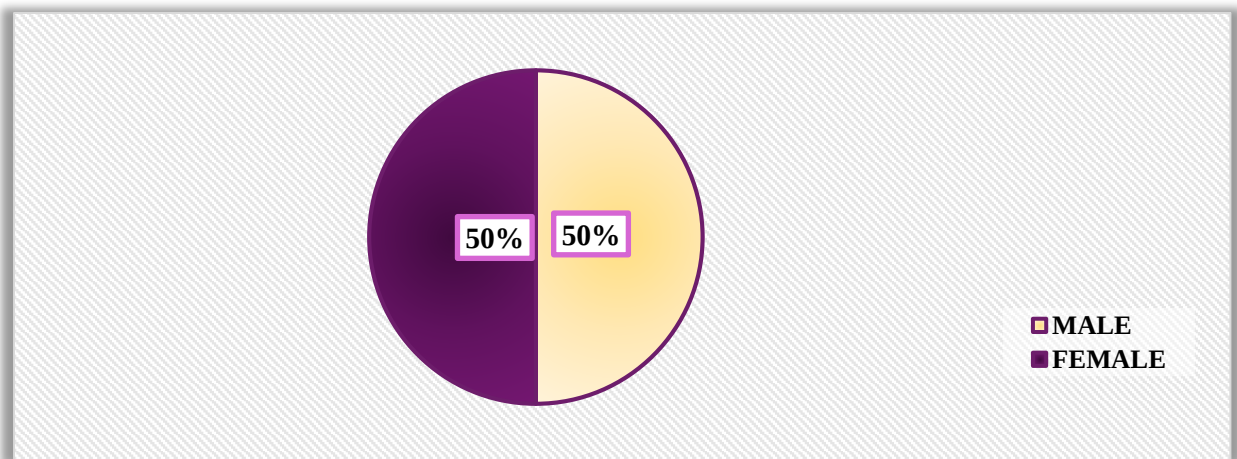
In her research dissertation, **Dudhate Uttamrao Ayodhya (2017)** focused on food regulation in India, aiming to safeguard consumer health and maintain dietary quality. Food labels were found to influence both pre-purchase and post-purchase decision-making. The study highlighted numeric and non-numeric formats for presenting nutrition information, with authorized nutrition claims identified. The research also explored consumer attitudes toward food labels, revealing that a majority (55.9%) read labels most of the time, emphasizing compliance with FSSAI regulations in the Indian biscuit market.

DISCUSSION OF THE STUDY

Demographics of an individual carry a lot of importance when it comes to making retail purchases. The present study too tries to understand if the gender as an important element of demographics has any relevance with regard to awareness and importance of nutritional labels of food and cosmetic products.

Chart 1.1

Gender-wise classification of the respondents



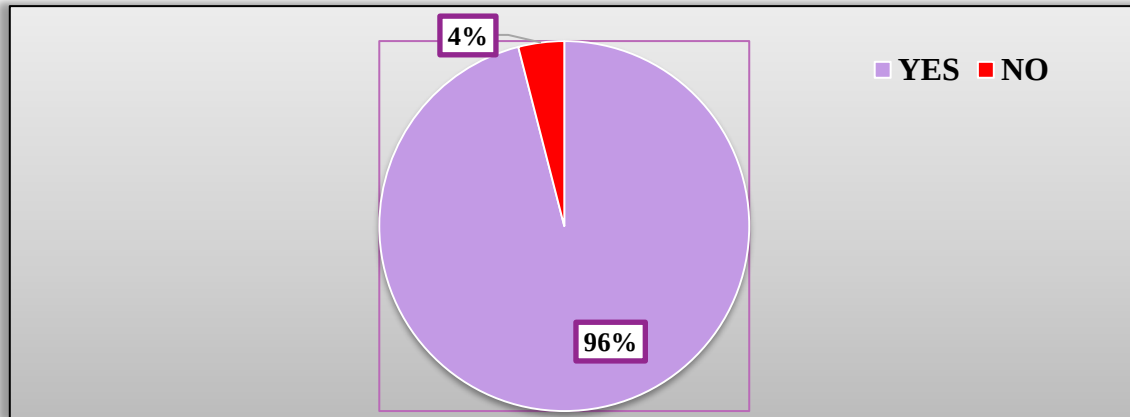
Source: Primary data collection 2023

From the above chart 1.1, it can be observed that the present research has equal number of respondents selected according to the gender. It includes 50 per cent of male respondents and 50 per cent of female respondents. Respondents seem to be aware about the importance of

nutritional value and expiry dates on labels of food and cosmetic products irrespective of their gender.

Chart 1.2

Importance of label on packaged products

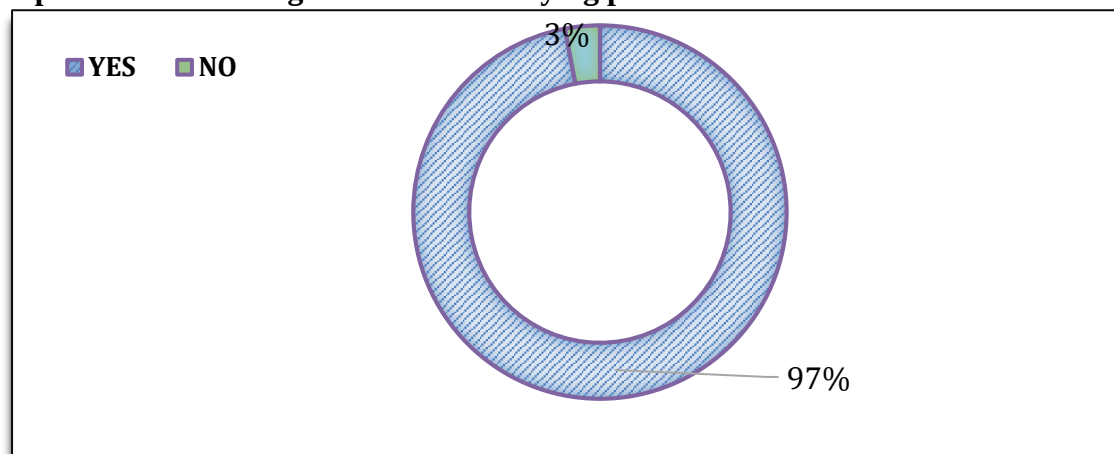


Source: Primary data collection 2023

The label on a product allows the customer to know what is in the food they are consuming or the product they are using. This allows the consumer to know how healthy, or unhealthy, the product is. It's also important to demonstrate the ingredients for those who may be allergic to certain ingredients. According to chart 1.2, 96 per cent of the respondents mentioned that labels on packages of food and cosmetic products are important while the remaining 4 per cent of the respondents felt that labels on products do not seem to be important

Chart 1.3

Importance of reading a label before buying products



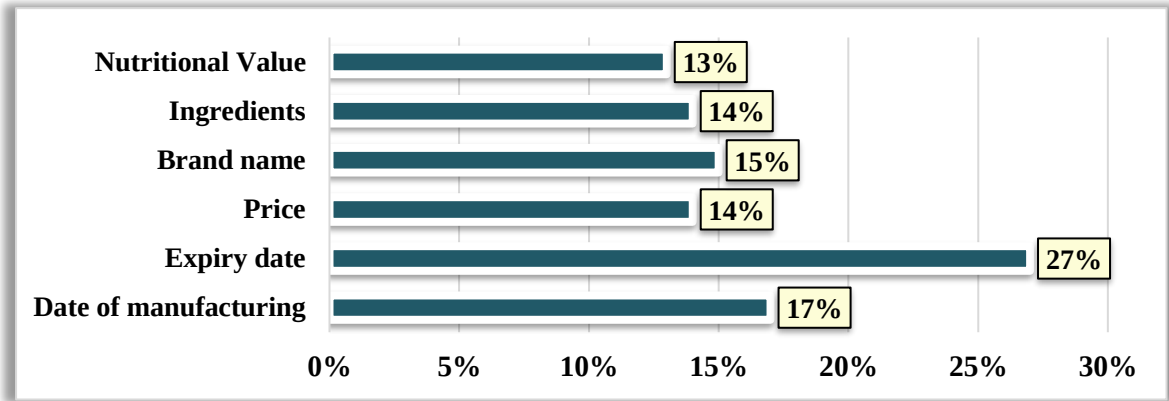
Source: Primary data collection 2023

Labels help us make learned decisions towards choosing good, nutritional, and healthy products. Knowing how to read food labels also assures that we get more value for our money and protects us from incorrect claims on the product packs. From the above chart 1.3 it can be

understood that 97 per cent of the respondents read the label on food and cosmetic products while 3 per cent of respondents do not read labels of products they buy.

Chart 1.4

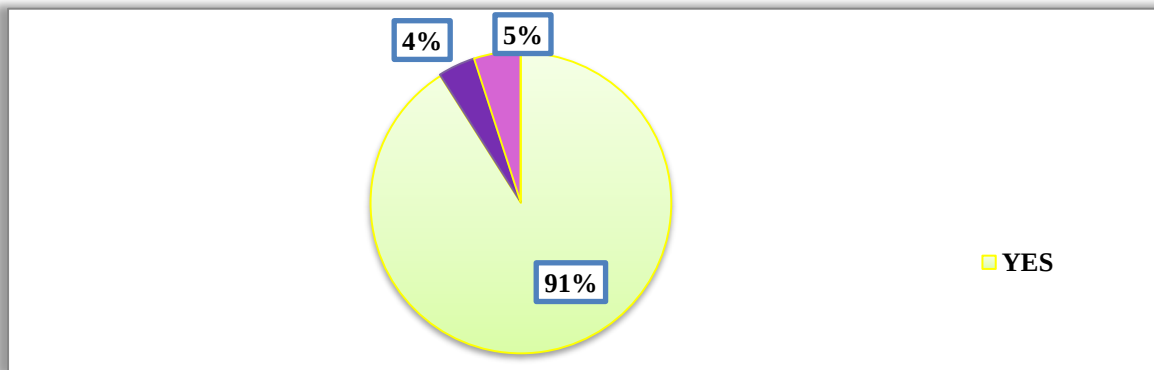
Awareness about type of information on products



Source: Primary data collection 2023

The information provided on the label should be comprehensive and exact so the consumer can easily read and understand it. The main purpose of the ingredient label is to inform consumers about what is in the product because of health concerns. If a product is not labelled properly, it could potentially cause serious health issues. People are allergic to many different ingredients in a product, so they can make sure that nothing contained within can trigger an allergic reaction. The ingredient label is also needed for people on strict diets or those who try to avoid certain ingredients for personal reasons. An information label contains details about the product such as its ingredients and nutritional values, health and safety warnings, instructions for use, manufacturer, or supplier details, contact information, product data in a barcode format. From the above graph 1.4, it was found that highest numbers of 27 per cent respondents look for expiry date on labels, 17 per cent of respondents look for date of manufacturing of product, 15 per cent of respondents look for brand name, 14 per cent of respondents look for price, 14 per cent of respondents look for ingredients, and 13 per cent of respondents look for nutritional value of the food products.

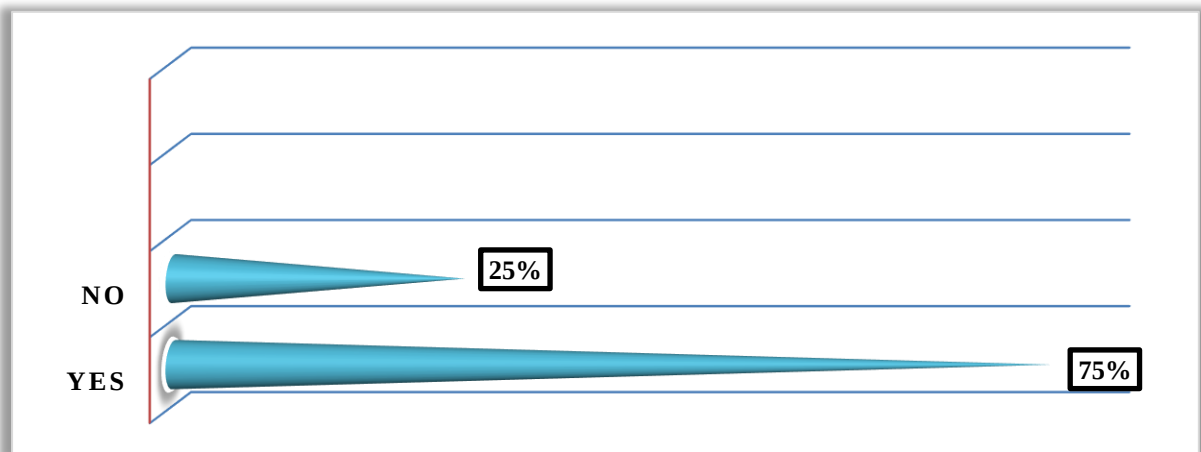
Chart 1.5
Importance of expiry dates



Source: Primary data collection 2023

Expiration dates are the most important aspect on which consumers should pay attention. Product expiration dates confirm the time during which the product is acknowledged to remain stable, which means it retains its strength, quality, and purity when it is stored according to its labelled storage conditions. From the above graph 1.5, it was found that 91 per cent of respondents felt that an expiry date on label of food and cosmetic products is important to be mentioned while 4 per cent of the respondents felt it was not important and 5 per cent of respondents were not sure about the importance of expiry date on labels.

Chart 1.6
Awareness about nutritional values



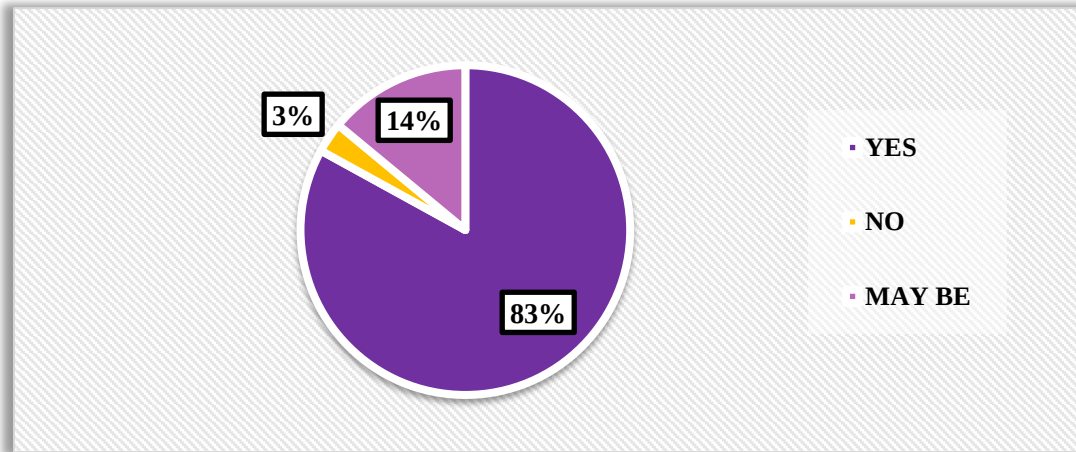
Source: Primary data collection 2023

Nutritional awareness is also related to knowledge of interrelations between nutritional values and individual's lifetime which may influence a person's life. Nutritional awareness necessitates being conscious of the category of foods an individual consumes and the reasons for eating such foods. From the above chart 1.6, it was initiated that 75 per cent of the respondents had awareness and looked for nutritional values on food products, while 25 per

cent of the respondents did not have awareness and did not look for nutritional values on food products.

Chart 1.7

Impact of labels on purchase decisions



Source: Primary data collection 2023

Information regarding different important product attributes can be broadly divided in two categories, “product specification” and “product quality.” The final decision to purchase a product based on the food labels varies significantly based on the consumer’s gender, age, food habit and residential locality. From the above graph 1.7, it is concluded that 83 per cent of respondents had an impact of label on their purchase decision while 3 per cent of respondents had no impact of label and other 14 per cent of the respondent were not sure of influence of labels on their purchase decisions.

HYPOTHESIS TESTING

The following hypothesis is selected for the purpose of inferential analysis.

Statement of Hypothesis:

Null Hypothesis (H₁₀): There is no significant association between awareness about nutritional value on labels of food and cosmetic products and gender of the respondents.

Alternate Hypothesis (H₁₁): There is a significant association between awareness about nutritional value on labels of food and cosmetic products and gender of the respondents.

In the above hypothesis an attempt is made to identify significant association between gender and awareness about nutritional value on labels in food and cosmetic products. To test the above hypothesis, researchers have made an attempt to use the Chi- square test. Chi – Square is a non – parameter test. The Chi-square statistic compares the observed values to the expected values. This test statistic is used to determine whether the difference between the observed and

expected values is statistically significant. The present hypothesis in the study has been tested with the Chi-square test to evaluate the dependency of one variable on the other.

Variables:

Gender of the respondents is Nominal variable, asked in two categories Male and Female.

Awareness about nutritional value is Nominal variable, asked in two categories Yes and No.

Calculation of chi-square test:

Table No. 1.1

Observed frequencies

Gender of the respondents	Awareness of respondents about nutritional values on labels		
	Yes	No	Total
Male	12	08	20
Female	28	32	60
Grand total	40	40	80

Expected Frequencies

Table No. 1.2

Gender of the respondents	Awareness of respondents about nutritional value on labels		
	Yes	No	Grand Total
Male	10	10	20
Female	30	30	60
Grand total	40	40	80

CHITEST (actual range, expected _range)

P Value - 0.30170

Since the P value (0.30170) is greater than the significant value 0.05, thus we accept null hypothesis and state that there is no significant association between the two variables.

CONCLUSION

The study revealed that 75 per cent of respondents had awareness and looked for nutritional values in food products, while 25 per cent of the respondents did not have awareness and did not look for nutritional values on food products. It was also confirmed that 97 per cent of the

respondents read the label on food and cosmetic products while 3 per cent of respondents do not read labels of products they buy. The study further found that 91 per cent of respondents felt that an expiry date on label of food and cosmetic products is important to be mentioned while 4 per cent of respondents felt it was not important and 5 per cent of respondents were not sure about the importance of expiry date on labels.

SUGGESTIONS

1. Correct and relevant information provided on the labels helps customers to be safe and make healthy food choices. If not read carefully, it may lead to health issues and skin or any other allergies.
2. It is essential to read the warning words about the hazard, instructions for safe use which includes a warning, caution or special direction on certain products, as they may be hazardous to health. The names of ingredients in the order of percentage of content should be compulsory.
3. Labels should be standardized in the country and should be printed in the local or regional language, making it feasible for the customers to read easily and conveniently.
4. The government of India should make it mandatory for packaged goods of food and cosmetic products that are imported into the country to be correctly labelled as per regulations.
5. According to the food laws, labels must tell the truth and manufacturers must not represent foods in a false, misleading, or deceptive way.
6. FSSAI labelling rules should be mandatory and should mention the details related to the calories of the food product on the label.

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A COMPARATIVE STUDY BETWEEN ZOMATO AND SWIGGY WITH REFERENCE TO THEIR PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES

Pooja Dhukle

Smt. MMP Shah Women's College of Arts
and Commerce, Matunga, Mumbai,
Shital2985.sp@gmail.com, 83693020

Dr. Shubhangi kulkarni

Assistant Professor, Smt. MMP Shah
Women's College of Arts and Commerce,
Matunga, Mumbai,
Shubhnagikulkarni@gmail.com, 9892328078

ABSTRACT

Promotions are helpful and successful techniques in restaurant marketing. They can be utilised to expand your audience, interact with current clients, and foster loyalty. To accomplish your company objectives, it is critical to pick the appropriate promos for your restaurant.

Apps that deliver food act as intermediaries between customers and restaurants. An online ordering and delivery system provides a complete sales channel for the restaurant. This implies that the restaurant can utilize it as a tool to increase earnings and improve organization. It also allows restaurant owners to save on labour costs and restaurant space needed to serve such customers.

KEYWORDS: Zomato vs. Swiggy, Importance and Liking towards Food Apps, Market Demand

INTRODUCTION

A food delivery app that delivers food in a timely manner and with the best packing to your door. Food delivery businesses have been covered by jobs that provide services to its consumers because the epidemic is far from being over, Swiggy and Zomato are two of the biggest sites for food delivery. As of the current scenario, these two brands have been regarded as two of the most fiercely competitive industries in India. This includes their online presence and the user persona they have created for the target audience. What now distinguishes these firm's growth, and how have their promotional strategies been sufficiently effective to maintain clients logically?

Online delivery food apps (Top 10)

- 1) Zomato
- 2) Swiggy
- 3) Faasos

- 4) Deliveroo
- 5) Grubhub
- 6) Potafo
- 7) Pizza Hut
- 8) Eat Fit
- 9) Domino's
- 10) Dunzo

Swiggy and Zomato (Comparison, Reviews, Market Demand)

The Indian food delivery industry, which is expected to breach the \$10 billion GMV mark by 2025, is once again going through a major shift in strategy. The two market leaders — Swiggy and Zomato — who virtually command a duopoly are targeting a new segment that could eventually dictate their future market shares.

Zomato vs. Swiggy

Based on consumer review preference information. Swiggy has 109 reviews and a rating of 4.0/5. Zomato, in comparison, has 115 reviews and a rating of 4.3/5. To assist you in choosing between these two alternatives and determining which one is ideal for your company needs, the scores for each product are computed using real-time information from verified customer evaluations. Reviewers said Zomato met their demands more effectively than Swiggy. According to reviews, Zomato is the best choice when considering the level of continuous product support. Our reviewers liked the direction for product upgrades and roadmaps more than of Swiggy over Zomato. Zomato continuously focuses on both growth and unit economics. Its three businesses—dining out, meal delivery, and Hyper pure—help it develop and diversify its products. The meal delivery service platform continues to develop a strong consumer brand that is recognizable throughout India while investing in new goods and technology.

Swiggy

Swiggy's success is a small component of a larger trend in the startup ecosystem: businesses who have managed to fully control the customer experience value chain have outperformed pure marketplaces. Swiggy did a lot of things well, but its strong logistical operations are what really make the company successful.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- 1) To study awareness about various food ordering apps among respondents.
- 2) To evaluate promotional strategies adopted by Zomato and Swiggy.

- 3) To find out comparative opinions of respondents about promotional strategies of Zomato and Swiggy.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research paper review is intended to help readers understand the current research and discussions that are pertinent to a particular subject or field of study and to communicate that understanding in the form of a written report.

A comparative study between Zomato and Swiggy with reference to their promotional strategies has been the subject of numerous studies. Although the literature includes a wide range of these studies, this analysis will concentrate on promotional tactics that recur often in the literature under consideration. These tactics include buy two get one free, Free home delivery, savings, and a stellar online menu Send alerts about exclusive deals and promotions, although there are numerous examples of these tactics in the literature, this research will mainly focus on how they apply to online food apps Zomato and Swiggy.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Aaditya Jain (2022, December), Online food ordering apps such as Zomato and Swiggy have captured 95% market share of the Indian market and have become more popular as people's schedules become busier and they have less time to cook or go out to eat. As they both provide the same services to their customers, their app services differ in terms of feature offered and customer value system. Online promotions and advertisements done by Zomato and Swiggy influences the willingness of a customer to buy greatly. Most people prefer Zomato over Swiggy for every factor in concern and in the current market space Zomato has an advantage over Swiggy and thus is the best company in the food delivery space as of 2022.

Barsha Singh (2022), Food delivery has proven to be a huge opportunity for Indian e-commerce businesses. The online food delivery market in India, which includes internet fusion and kitchen service providers, has grown significantly in recent years. "It helps students manage their time better. It also shows that easy access to the internet at the same time as having access to the desired groceries always is the main reason for using this service."

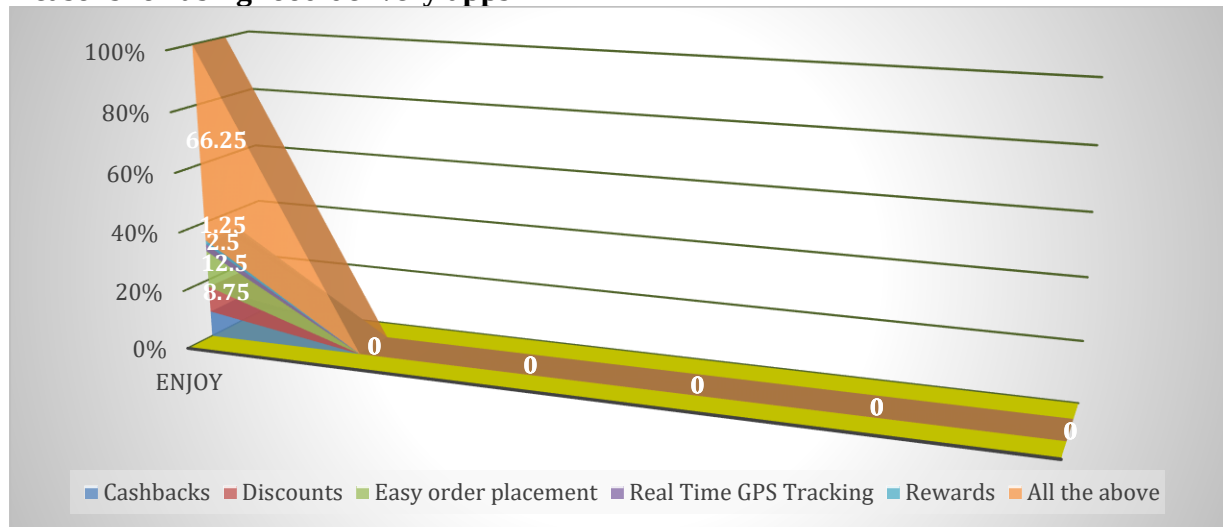
Rahul Dass (2022, September), both businesses' target audiences serve quite different types of customers. Age 18 to 35 is a crucial demographic for the companies. People that prefer to order things in are the target market that Swiggy mostly serves, whether it is for food, groceries, medications, etc. That function is important on Zomato as well, but it also caters to those who

prefer eating out. Both services are available for enrollment in their Zomato Gold programme. Additionally, they have overseen social media efforts on websites like Facebook, Pinterest, Twitter, and Instagram. Zomato's Instagram reach is much bigger and more effective than Swiggy's because of their more audience-engaging promotions that include things like online tournaments and more.

DISCUSSION OF THE STUDY

Chart 1.1

Reasons for using food delivery apps

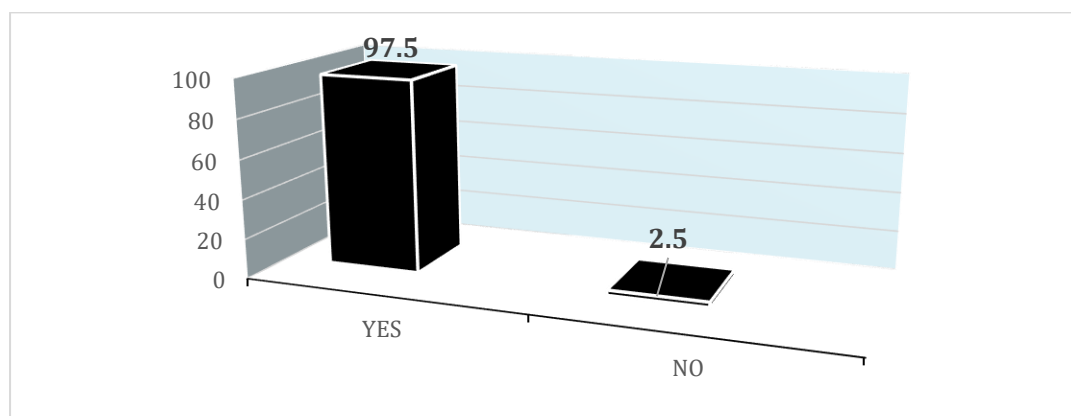


Source: Primary data collected, 2023

The above Chart 1.1 states that 8.75 per cent used online delivery apps because of Cashbacks 8.75 per cent used because of discounts, 12.5 per cent used because of Easy order placement, 2.5 per cent used because of Real Time GPS Tracking, 1.25 per cent used because of Rewards and 66.25 per cent used it for All the above.

Chart 1.2

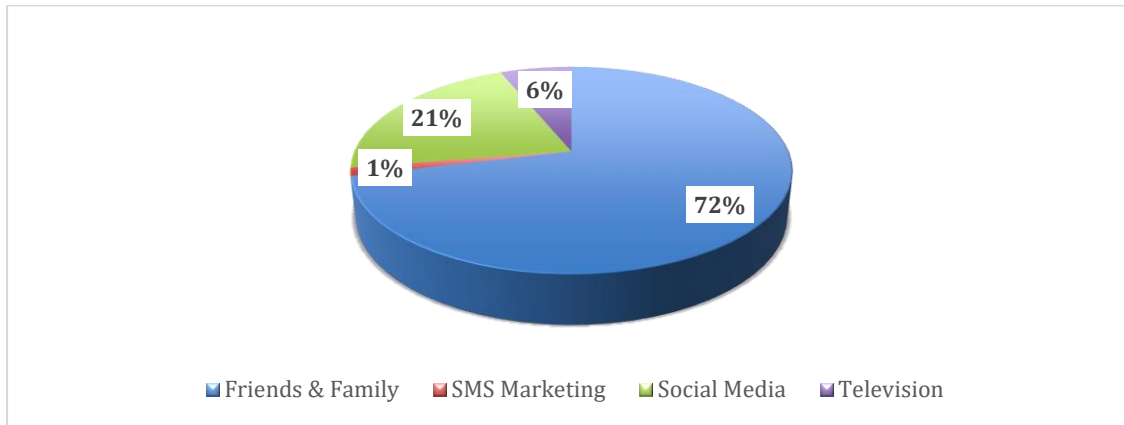
Use of online food apps



Source: Primary data collected, 2023.

The above Chart 1.2 states that 97.5 per cent respondents use food delivery apps while 2.5 per cent respondents do not use it.

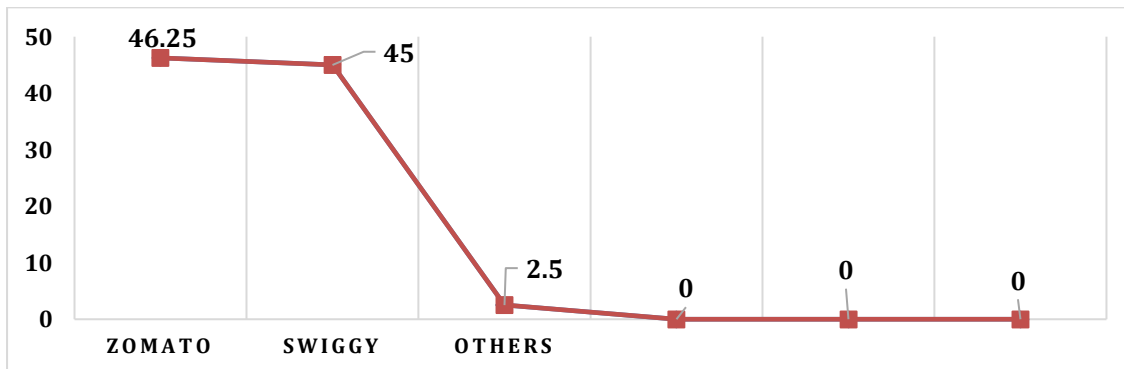
Chart 1.3
Information about Zomato and Swiggy



Source: The primary data collected, 2023.

The above Chart 1.3 states that 72 per cent respondents got to know through friends and family, 21 per cent respondents through social media, 6 per cent through television and 1 per cent through SMS marketing.

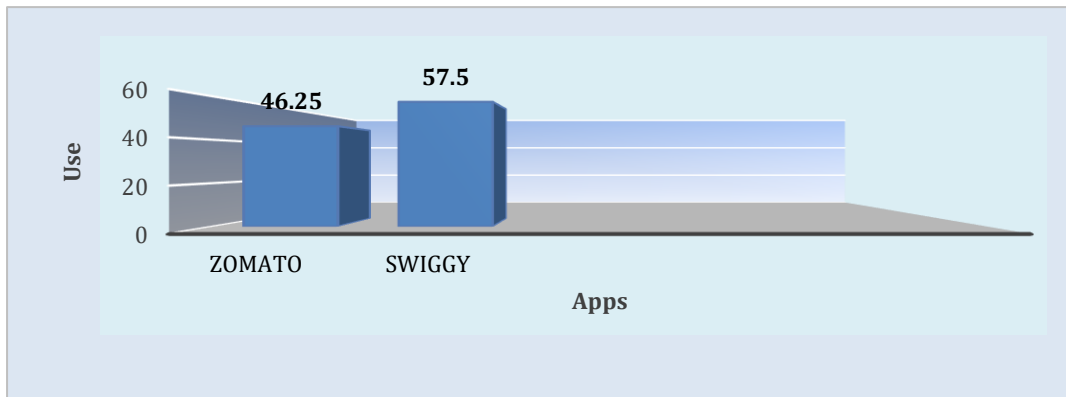
Chart 1.4
Better Services – Zomato Vs Swiggy



Source: The primary data collected, 2023.

The above Chart No.1.4 states that 47.5 per cent respondents prefer zomato because it offers better services, 50 per cent respondents prefer Swiggy and 2.5 per cent prefer other better services.

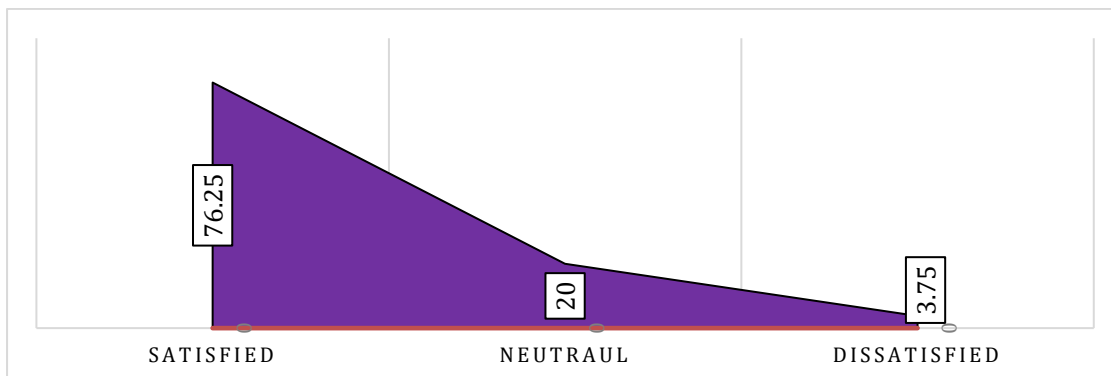
Chart 1.5
Promos and Offers- Zomato Vs Swiggy



Source: Primary data collected, 2023

The above Chart 1.5 states 46.25 per cent feel Zomato offers maximum promos and offers and 57.5 per cent feel that Swiggy offers better offers.

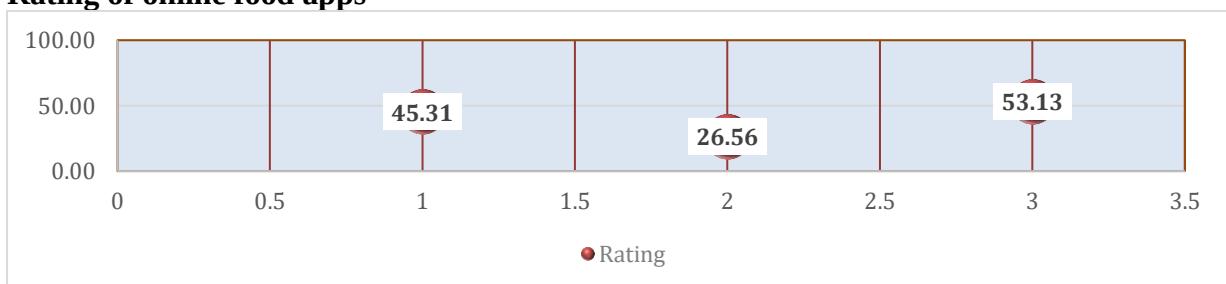
Chart 1.6
Satisfaction Level



Source: Primary data collected, 2023.

The above Chart 1.6 states that 76.25 per cent of the respondents are satisfied, 20 per cent respondents are Neutral and 3.7 per cent are dissatisfied with online food delivery apps.

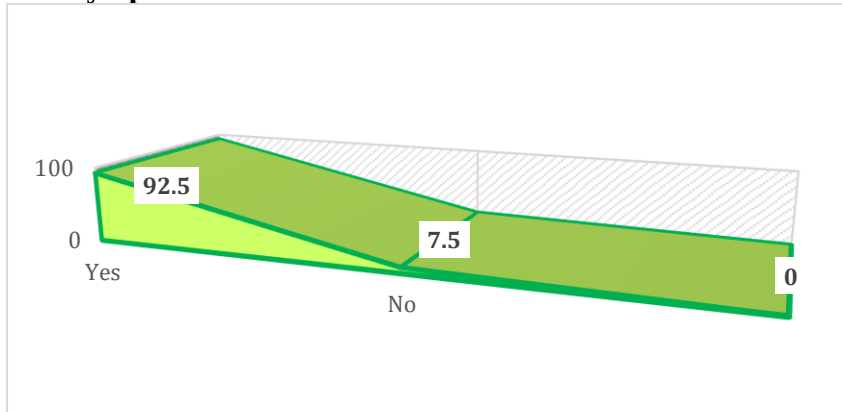
Chart. 1.7
Rating of online food apps



Source: Primary data collected, 2023

The above Chart 1.7 shows that 53.13 per cent rated online food delivery apps as Excellent, 45.31 per cent rated it as Good and 26.56 per cent rated it as Average.

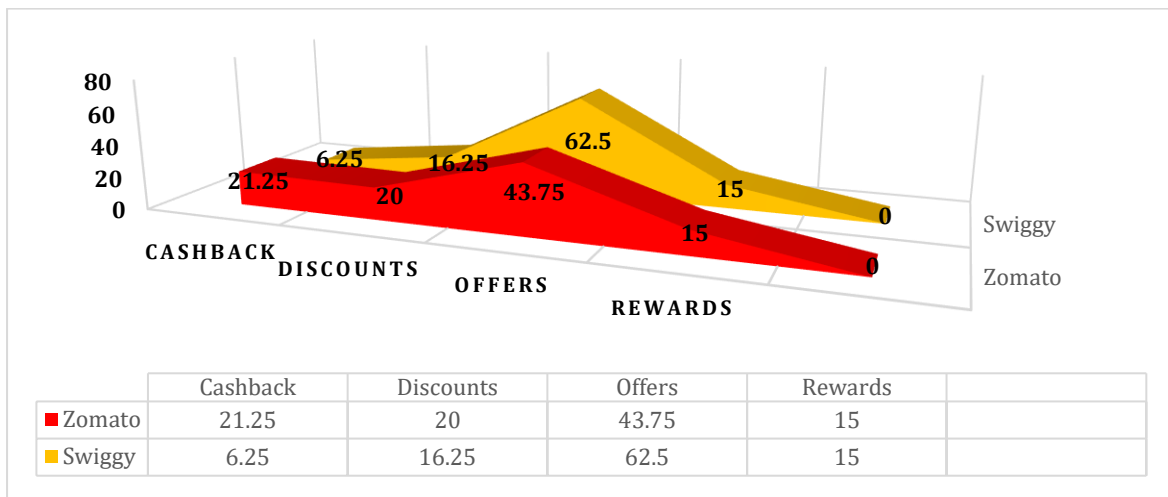
Chart 1.8
Timely updates



Source: Primary data collected, 2023

The above Chart 1.8 shows that 92.5percent respondents think that timely updates are provided and 7.5percent respondents think that timely updates are not provided.

Chart 1.9
Reasons for Preferences



Source: Primary data collected, 2023.

The above Chart 1.9 shows that 21.25 per cent respondents prefer Zomato because it offers cashbacks, 20 per cent respondents prefer discounts, 43.75 per cent prefer offers and 15 per cent prefer rewards. Similarly, 6.25 per cent respondents prefer Swiggy because it offers cashbacks, 16.25 per cent respondents prefer discounts, 62.5 per cent prefer offers and 15 per cent prefer rewards.

CONCLUSION

Equal number of male and female respondents use online food delivery apps such as Zomato and Swiggy. All the respondents in each age group taken in equal numbers; 18-25 years, 26-35 years, 36-45 years, and 45 years and above use online food delivery apps. Most of them used online delivery apps because of offers are provided on the apps, then they are preferred because of rewards, and then Cashbacks and Discounts and few of them used it for Real Time GPS Tracking. Majority respondents used food delivery apps while a smaller number of respondents did not use online food apps. Many respondents got to know about Zomato and Swiggy through friends and family, few of them knew through social media, still few through television and a very minimal number of respondents said it's due to SMS marketing. Maximum number of respondents prefer Swiggy, the average number of them respondents prefer Zomato because it offers better services, and the minimum respondents prefer other better services. Large number of respondents feel that Swiggy offers better offers, and a small group of them feel Zomato offers maximum promos and offers. Most of the respondents are satisfied, an average number of respondents are Neutral and a small group of them are dissatisfied with online food delivery apps. Similarly, many prefer Swiggy because it offers, less than respondents prefer discounts, less than that respondents prefer cashbacks and a very small i.e 15 per cent of them prefer rewards.

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NEED FOR COGNITIVE DISCLOSURE, FEAR OF NEGATIVE EVALUATION AND APPEARANCE ANXIETY

Ms. Aqsa Khatib

PG Scholar, PG Dept. of Psychology,
Smt. MMP Shah Women's College of
Arts and Commerce, Mumbai.

Ms. Vaishnavi Kamat

Assistant Professor, PG Dept. of Psychology,
Smt. MMP Shah Women's College of Arts
and Commerce, Mumbai.
vaishnavi.verma1086@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Human beings are social by nature, we all seek affirmations from our communities because we thrive in them, and therefore we have a strong desire to be part of them. We may observe that as society is emerging the ideas of these imaginary standards and norms are constantly changing which at times might make an individual feel overwhelmed to fit in. As we all are evolving the definition of beauty is no longer based on physical attractiveness. The overly self-conscious thoughts of what other people might think can be constructively formed into acceptance of oneself and appreciating the individual differences. The tendencies of world will continue to change, it would be beneficial to be self-aware and self-reflective about what an individual like about themselves, what they enjoy, what makes them happy and what provides peace of mind. The present study aimed to study the relationship between need for cognitive closure, fear of negative evaluation and appearance anxiety. The demographic for the study were females between the age range of 20-30 years. The study was carried out using the Need for cognitive closure scale, Fear of Negative evaluation scale and appearance anxiety scale. Multiple Regression analysis was used to analyse the obtained data.

Keywords: Physical appearance, Fear of negative evaluation, ambiguity, Need for cognitive closure.

INTRODUCTION

Women's body image and cognition are significantly influenced by societal factors such as comparisons of appearance and the fear of rejection. These comparisons may take place in various contexts via publications, social media, or in person. Fear of negative evaluation and appearance anxiety is significantly influenced by the need for cognitive closure. Emerging evidence sheds light on the effects that social media usage may have on users. On the one hand, using social media may be advantageous since it promotes greater connections with others, which boosts wellbeing (Tiggemann & Miller, 2010). On the other hand, social media use may

result in a preoccupation and attention on physical appearance, such as participation in appearance-related picture activities (Cohen, Newton-John, & Slater, 2017), which may induce appearance concerns and poor body image and self-esteem (de Vries, Peter, Nikken, & de Graaf, 2014). A tremendously popular type of internet communication over the past ten years, particularly among young people, is social networking (Perloff, 2014). Accessible through a computer, smartphone, tablet, and other types of technology, Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat are some of the most popular social media sites currently available (Perloff, 2014). Social media, as opposed to traditional mass media, are interactive, enabling people to make their own personal profiles and share content with other users of their social network (Stefanone, Lackaff, & Rosen, 2011). In a nationwide poll conducted by the Pew Research Center, it was discovered that women are more likely than males to use social networking (or social media) sites among Americans aged 18 to 29 who have access to the Internet (Duggan & Brenner, 2013). More than 95% of college students consistently update and manage their social media accounts (Perloff, 2014; Stefanone et al., 2011). Specifically, it has been discovered that women spend more time updating, monitoring, and maintaining their personal profiles on social media than males do (Stefanone et al., 2011). In conclusion, earlier research shows a positive correlation between social media use and concerns about appearance. Furthermore, research indicates that selfie taking and photo-editing, which are widespread social media habits, are linked to lower body image and self-esteem in young women. Selfies that have been edited and uploaded may make concerns about looks worse (de Vries et al., 2014). Numerous studies on the relationship between appearance anxiety and fear of negative evaluation have found a favourable correlation. However, little is known about the relationship between the appearance anxiety and the fear of negative evaluation and the need for cognitive closure.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Aim:

To understand the relationship between Fear of Negative Evaluation, Appearance Anxiety and Need for Cognitive Closure.

Objectives:

1. To understand whether Need for Cognitive Closure predicts Fear of Negative Evaluation among females.

2. To understand whether Need for Cognitive Closure predicts Appearance Anxiety among females.
3. To understand whether Fear of Negative Evaluation predicts Appearance Anxiety.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Many research has been conducted on the need for cognitive closure, fear of negative evaluation and appearance anxiety. The relevant research will be recognized and assessed by the study's literature review.

Need for Cognitive Closure and Fear of Negative Evaluation:

Individuals with social anxiety (SA) interpret uncertain social events adversely. However, it is unclear whether this prejudice is brought on by social anxiety or general suffering (such as melancholy and general anxiety). In the study conducted by Amir (2005) he used movies in two tests to examine interpretation bias in SA people. Compared to non-anxious people, SA people judged the value of uncertain social encounters as being more negative. When compared to a high trait worried and dysphoric control group, SA people also kept this bias. These results showed how social anxiety plays a special role in the skewed interpretation of ambiguous social encounters.

A fear of social or performance circumstances where one might feel embarrassed or humiliated is the hallmark of social phobia (social anxiety disorder), which is characterized by a strong and persistent social anxiety (American Psychiatric Association 2000). Social phobia ranks fourth among mental disorders in terms of lifetime prevalence rate, after major depressive disorders (16.6%), alcohol misuse (13.2%), and specific phobias (12.5%). (Kessler et al. 2005). Only 37% of people with social anxiety heal naturally over a 12-year period (Bruce et al. 2005). It is well recognized that social phobia symptoms persist and worsen over time unless a person takes action to overcome them and receives the necessary care (Rapee 1995). A study by Kanai et al. (2009) evaluated the adjustment for the effects of depression and investigated whether high socially anxious individuals view other people's ambiguous conduct in a more negative or threatening manner compared to low socially anxious persons. Participants (N = 31) with high and low social anxiety each presented a speech.

Appearance Anxiety and Need for cognitive closure:

According to cognitive models of anxiety, negative attitudes affect how socially anxious people interpret ambiguous social cues. However, such assumptions have not been addressed by paradigms used to evaluate interpretation bias in social anxiety. Being human includes having this awareness of oneself as a social object (Cooley, 1902/1964; Duval & Wicklund, 1972; James, 1890/1981, Vol. 1, Chapter 10; Mead, 1934 as cited by Calogero & Jost 2011). We "perceive in another's mind some concept of our look, manners, goals, deeds, character, friends, and so on," according to Cooley (1902/1964). (p. 184). However, researchers have also shown that adopting such an objective stance toward oneself when viewing oneself primarily through an objectified social lens can have significant psychological and social costs (e.g., Allport, 1954; Bartky, 1990; Deaux & Major, 1987; de Beauvoir, 1952; Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997; Gibbons, 1990; Jost & Hamilton, 2005 as cited by Calogero & Jost 2011). The cultural environment that encourages girls and women to adopt an objectified perspective on their bodies, eventually leading them to view and "treat themselves as objects to be looked at and evaluated," is of particular interest in the current research (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997, p. 177, as cited by Calogero & Jost 2011).

Fear of Negative Evaluation and Appearance Anxiety:

An essential psychological phenomenon that has an impact on everyone's life is anxiety. In other words, anxiety of some kind affects everyone on a daily basis. Speaking in public often causes nervousness in many people. The majority of people, and students in particular, have sensations of nervousness prior to speaking, which last throughout the speech, but disappear right after it is finished. While others could feel faint and nauseous, others might merely feel a little bit anxious. Fear of receiving a bad grade is another significant psychological component that has a poor impact on students' performance, much like anxiety. In light of this, the current study made an effort to fully comprehend the interaction between these individuals' psychological characteristics. At VIT University-Chennai, a study was conducted by Kumar et al. (2015) with 64 students majoring in various engineering fields. The findings demonstrated a strong correlation between anxiety and fear of a critical assessment. In other words, there is a link between anxiety about state traits and the fear of negativity quite positively.

Myers et al. (2012) conducted a research on the impact of appearance-focused social comparisons on body image disturbance in the naturalistic environment: The roles of thin-ideal

internalization and feminist beliefs. Ecological momentary assessment, which enables evaluation of these events in their natural environment, was utilized in the study to examine the association between upward appearances focused social comparisons and body image distress. The results showed that upward appearance-focused social comparisons and disturbed body image are positively correlated. For those who internalized the thin-ideal more deeply, upward appearance-focused social comparisons were linked to greater body image disturbance, while for those who held fewer feminist ideas, they were linked to increased body checking. These results shed more light on the nature of the link between social comparisons and disturbed body image.

In the study done by Levinson et al. (2013) a strong relationship between social appearance anxiety and fear of negative appraisal was discovered. It was shown that eating problems and social anxiety are very closely related. Perfectionism, generalized fear of negative evaluation, and social appearance anxiety have all been identified as risk factors for both social anxiety disorder and eating disorders.

Social media (SM) can create an environment of peer pressure and obsession with outward appearance, which increases the risk of emotional disorders like depression and social anxiety.

METHOD

Research Problem

1. Does need for cognitive closure predict fear of negative evaluation?
2. Does need for cognitive closure predict appearance anxiety?
3. Does fear of negative evaluation predicts appearance anxiety?

Hypothesis

Null Hypothesis -There is no relationship between need for cognitive closure, fear of negative evaluation and appearance anxiety.

Alternate hypothesis – There is a significant relationship between need for cognitive closure, fear of negative evaluation and appearance anxiety.

Participants - The target population for the study were 100 females in the age group of 20-30 years, who had social media accounts. The data was collected from females living in Mumbai city, Maharashtra India.

Inclusion Criteria

1. Females with social media accounts on platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and WhatsApp.
2. The study included females between the ages of 20 and 30.
3. Women living in Mumbai City were chosen as the sample population for this study.
4. Females with at least minimum English proficiency.
5. Females irrespective of them being active or not so active on social media platforms were included in the study.
6. Women who have lived in Mumbai for more than a year despite being migrants were counted.
7. This study included women regardless of marital status.

Exclusion Criteria

1. Females with any physical or mental ailments were excluded.
2. Frequent alcohol or recreation drug use/ smoking/ tobacco etc. were not taken.

Sampling Method

The selection of female participants was primarily done through purposive and snowball sampling in the research.

Variables

Variable 1 - Need for cognitive closure.

Variable 2 - Fear of Negative Evaluation.

Variable 3 – Appearance Anxiety.

Tools

1. **Consent form**
2. **Demographic sheet**
3. **Need for Cognitive Closure Scale (NFCS)**

Need for Closure Scale-Short Form (NFC-SF) Developed by Roets and Van Hiel, this scale measures the need for closure and consists of 15 items and one dimension. The items are marked on a 6-point

Likert scale from “totally agree” (6 points) to “never agree” (1 point). Total scores range from 1 to 90, and higher scores are interpreted as greater need for closure.

4. Fear of Negative Evaluation Scale (FNES)

The Fear of Negative Evaluation (FNE) instrument measures discomfort and distress in interpersonal interactions. Specifically, this instrument is used to measure apprehension in subjects when negatively evaluated. The Fear of Negative Evaluation (FNE) test includes 30 items with a true-false response format. The test takes approximately 10 minutes to complete and is mainly given to adults. Low scorers (0–12): Low scorers are typically relaxed in social situations. Average scorers (13–20): People who score in this range may be fearful in some social or evaluative situations. High scorers (21–30): High scorers are generally apprehensive about what other people think of them

Appearance Anxiety Inventory - AAI

The Appearance Anxiety Inventory is a 10 question self-report scale that measures the cognitive and behavioural aspects of body image anxiety in general, and body dysmorphic disorder (BDD) in particular. It was developed by Veale, D., Eshkevaria, E., Kanakama, N., Ellisona, N., Costa, A., and Werner, T. (2014).

Research Design

A correlational design was used in the study to understand the statistical relationships between the variables. A correlational research design investigates relationships between variables without the researcher controlling or manipulating any of them.

Procedure

Based on the decided criteria, potential participants were selected. Females between the age 20-30 years across Mumbai were chosen with the help of purposive sampling. Informed consent was taken and they were briefed with the aim and objectives. Demographic sheets along with questionnaires were distributed through collective administration individually and in an offline mode in the classroom or social gatherings. Researcher's contact information were provided. After collecting sufficient data, it was analyzed.

Data Analysis

After obtaining the required data, a multiple regression analysis was carried out to study the relationship between the two predictors and one criterion variable. Microsoft Excel was used for analysing the obtained data.

Results

The study was carried out to examine the relationship between female's Need for Cognitive Closure, Fear of Negative Evaluation and Appearance Anxiety. The data for the study was collected from Indian females who were between the age of 20-30 having active social media accounts. The data of the participants was analyzed with the help of multiple regression analysis. This analysis was done by considering need for cognitive closure and fear of negative evaluation as predictor variables and appearance as the criterion variable.

Table 1

Descriptive statistics for Need for Cognitive Closure, Fear of Negative Evaluation and Appearance Anxiety in females.

	Mean	Standard deviation	N
Need For Cognitive Closure	58.31067961	11.76404386	103
Fear Of Negative Evaluation	14.48543689	7.513209384	103
Appearance Anxiety	17.04854369	9.633864536	103

Table 1, depicts the descriptive statistics, i.e., the mean and standard deviation scores for the variables of Need for Cognitive Closure, Fear of Negative Evaluation and Appearance Anxiety. In terms of need for cognitive closure, the mean score was 58.31 with a standard deviation of 11.26. Whereas the mean score for fear of negative evaluation was 14.48 with a standard deviation of 7.51. In terms of appearance anxiety, the mean score was 17.04 with a standard deviation of 9.63. The number of participants in the study was 103.

Table 2

Correlation for Need for Cognitive Closure, Fear of Negative Evaluation and Appearance Anxiety in females.

Correlation

	<i>NFC</i>	<i>FNE</i>	<i>AAI</i>
NFC	1		
FNE	0.19	1	
AAI	0.34	0.33	1

Table 2 depicts the correlations and the significance values for each combination of variables. The correlation value between need for cognitive closure and appearance anxiety was found to be 0.34, which was significant. Figure 1 depicts the scatter plot for the relationship between need for cognitive closure (predictor on the x-axis) and appearance anxiety (criterion on the y-axis), which shows definite but small positive relationship between the variables. Whereas, the correlation for fear of negative evaluation and appearance anxiety was found to be 0.33, which was significant at 0.001 level. Figure 2 depicts the scatter plot for the relationship between fear of negative evaluation (predictor on the x-axis) and appearance anxiety (criterion on the y axis), which shows a slightly upward direction. This indicates that there is a small positive relationship between the need for cognitive closure and appearance anxiety, wherein the predictor, need for cognitive closure, leads to an increase in the criterion, appearance anxiety.

Table 3

Multiple Regression Analysis of Need for Cognitive Closure and fear of negative evaluation in Females Predicting Appearance Anxiety

	R	R square	F	Significance value	df
Model	0.438756218	0.192507019			
Summary					
ANNOVA	-	-	-11.9	-<001	-2

Discussion

People are pushed to comply by their desire for stability and social approval. Higher cognitive closure is also affected by stereotypes. Our cognitive closure is affected by our fear of being criticized and ridiculed by others. The subjective experience of being scrutinized by others and being concerned about the consequence of their criticism, putting ourselves in challenging, unclear situations may result in forced decision-making and sense of wellbeing in our overall decisions. As a result, we must discover the gaps in our reasoning.

Hence, the aim of this research was to understand the relationship between the need for cognitive closure, fear of negative evaluation and appearance anxiety. Females between the ages of 20 and 30 from

Mumbai, Maharashtra, who are active on social media sites such as Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat, and Whatsapp were considered the demographic.

The sample consisted of 103 female participants. As seen in the figure 3, 22 % of the population belong to the age group of 20-25 and 78% belong to the population of 26-30. The sample population was taken by participants residing in Mumbai (Maharashtra).

In addition, a few significant factors associated to appearance anxiety were taken into account, even though it was not the primary goal of the study, it had an impact on the final result. According to the data, 58 participants were active on Facebook, 98 participants were active on Instagram, and 100 participants were active on Whatsapp. 44 of the participants used all four social media sites regularly. When the population's use of online photo sharing was examined, figure 6 depicts that 64 females stated they did so, while 29 indicated they did not. Also, in the figure 7, choosing to use editing programme and filters on image before posting was a crucial factor that significantly contributed to appearance anxiety.

Upon uploading, 69% of females were found to employ little effects and filters, while 31% uploaded raw images. Further, in figure 8, 59% of women reported using skin care products, 24% reported doing so frequently, 7% reported doing so always, and 10% reported never doing so.

Figure 9 shows physical conditions for which 84 female participants reported having PCOS or PCOD. Only 9 people reported having an eating disorder, and very few others reported having other health issues such as high or low blood pressure, depression or generalized anxiety.

Considering the main goal of the study, which was to determine whether the need for cognitive closure and the fear of negative evaluation predicts appearance anxiety, the results of the multiple regression analysis conducted provided a significant regression model which indicated that need for cognitive closure and fear of negative evaluation together predicts appearance anxiety in females. Both these variables, together account for 19% of total variance in appearance anxiety. Although there are no published study who has previously tried to examine how these two variables predict appearance anxiety, studies showing the relationship between need for cognitive closure and appearance anxiety as well as fear of negative evaluation and appearance anxiety was found.

It was seen that the regression model predicts appearance anxiety, but it has been observed that there is only a slight positive connection between the individual outcomes. The level of education and the backgrounds of the girls may be contributing factors. The sample population was drawn from Mumbai and consisted of woman pursuing masters, Graduated from Universities and working women.

A deeper grasp of the aspects that can have an impact on appearance was made possible by paying particular attention to small details. Correlation of need for cognitive closure and appearance anxiety as well as fear of negative evaluation and appearance anxiety on females practicing makeup and doing skin care on the basis of Always, Sometimes, Often and Never was studied. For females practicing skin care and make up the correlation for need for cognitive closure and appearance anxiety was 0.44 and for fear of negative evaluation and appearance anxiety was also 0.44 which showed moderate relationship. Proceeding to females doing skin care and makeup sometimes showed a negligible relationship between need for cognitive closure and appearance anxiety with a correlation of 0.13 and low correlation between fear of negative evaluation and appearance anxiety by 0.33. Females practicing make up and skin care often showed a low correlation between need for cognitive closure and appearance anxiety by 0.27 and slight, almost negligible relationship of 0.05 between fear of negative evaluation and appearance anxiety. Further it was seen that the relationship between need for cognitive closure and appearance anxiety was 0.77 and 0.82 between fear of negative evaluation and appearance anxiety which depicts high correlation among females who said they never use makeup or practice skin care. The possible reasons can be that the survey was a self-report measure and there is no evidence of the reasons to use skincare and makeup. Some females could have given a socially desirable answer. Focusing on the above correlation it can be seen that females never using makeup or skincare had the highest correlation and females practicing skincare always to sometime had comparatively less relationship which depicts that indulging in skincare and makeup helps reduce the appearance anxiety.

Females uploading raw pictures on social media showed a moderate relationship of 0.45 and 0.41 between need for cognitive closure and appearance anxiety and between fear of negative evaluation and appearance anxiety. It was seen that females using filter and effects on pictures before uploading it on social media showed a low correlation of 0.29 among need for cognitive closure and appearance anxiety and 0.30 between fear of negative evaluation and appearance anxiety. The possible reasons could be that using filters and editing apps helps enhance the pictures and modify them according to the trends by using brightness, tones, visual effects, body structuring etc. which makes it more socially desirable and less ambiguous to appearance anxiety and fear of negative evaluation.

Limitations:

The research is subjected to a few limitations. The data cannot be generalized to females in other sections of the city or state with various social and political contexts because the study

is limited to females in Mumbai, which has a different social and political context. Second, because all the scales being utilized in this research are self-report measures, individuals could give false information or answers that are deemed to be acceptable by society. Another drawback is that the study does not generalize to all females beyond the age criterion and other parameters because it only evaluates females who meet certain inclusion criteria. The study cannot be applied to men because it is largely focused on women, even though identical results may have been produced or data could have been compared to increase the variety of the study.

Conclusion

The research aimed to understand the relationship between need for cognitive closure, fear of negative evaluation and appearance anxiety. More specifically, whether need for cognitive closure and fear of negative evaluation predict appearance anxiety was examined using multiple regression analysis. The results provided a significant regression model, which indicates that need for cognitive closure and fear of negative evaluation together predict appearance anxiety. A small amount of relationship between need for cognitive closure and appearance anxiety as well as fear of negative evaluation and appearance anxiety was found.

Figure -1 Scatter plot of appearance anxiety by need for cognitive closure.

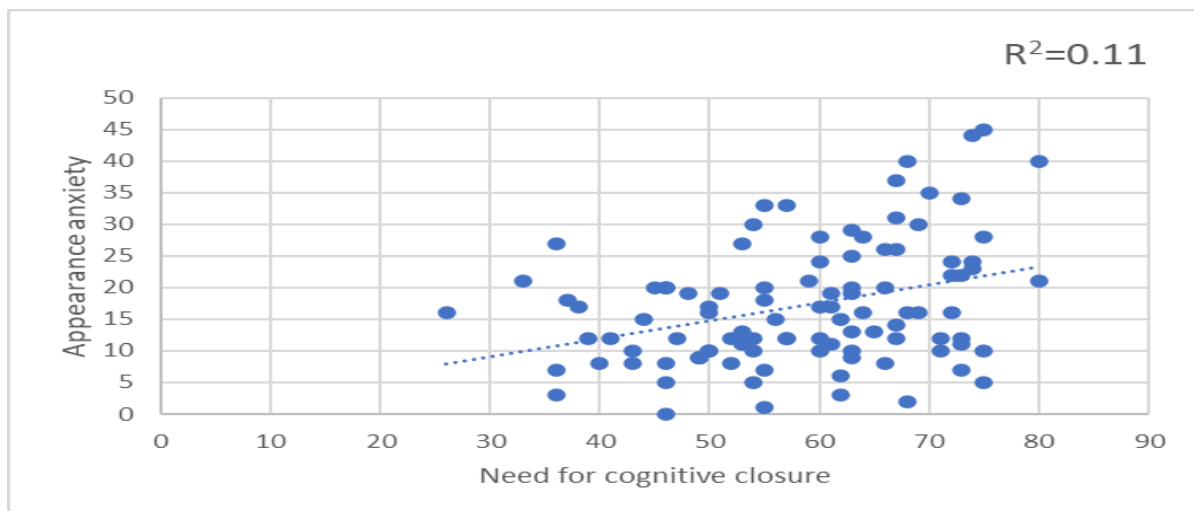


Figure -2 Scatter plot of appearance anxiety by fear of negative evaluation.

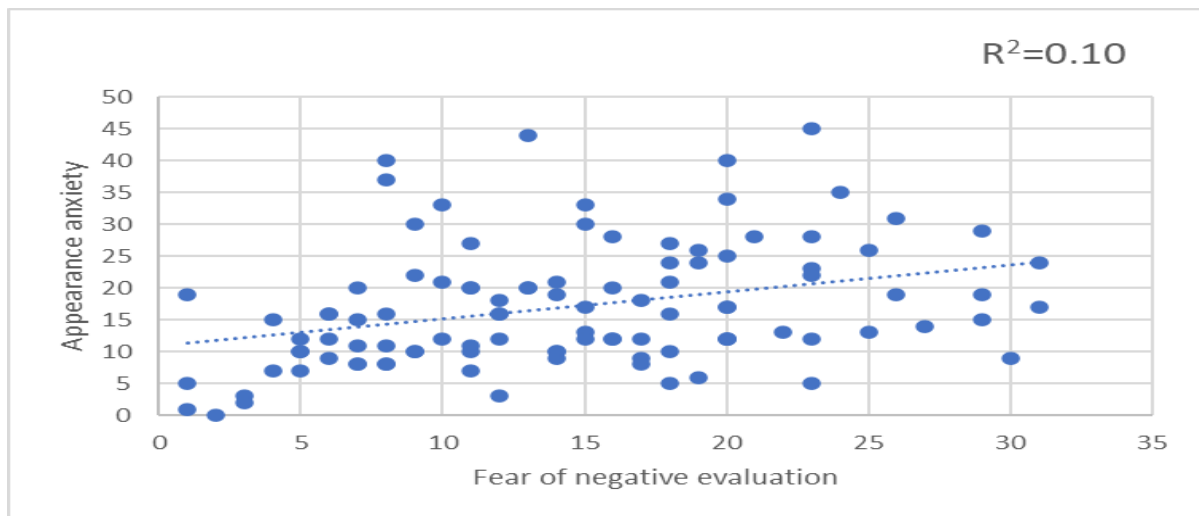


Figure -3 Sample population in different age groups.

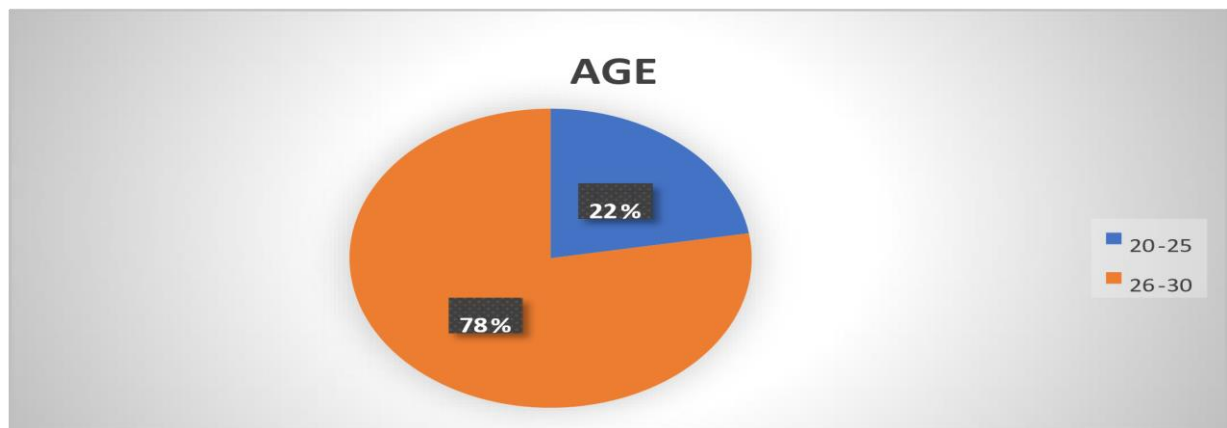


Figure – 4 Sample population of marital status.

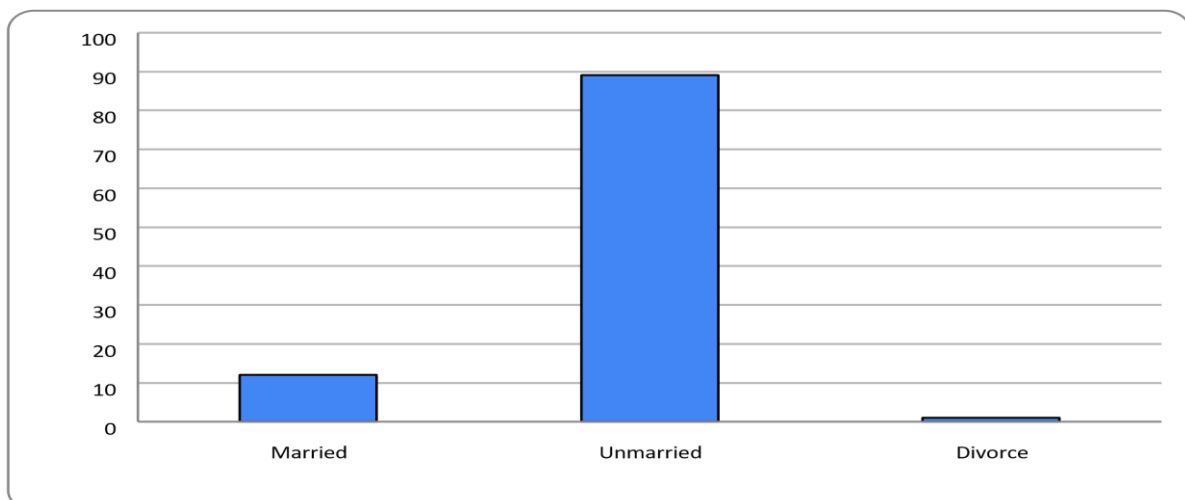


Figure 5 - Social Media accounts

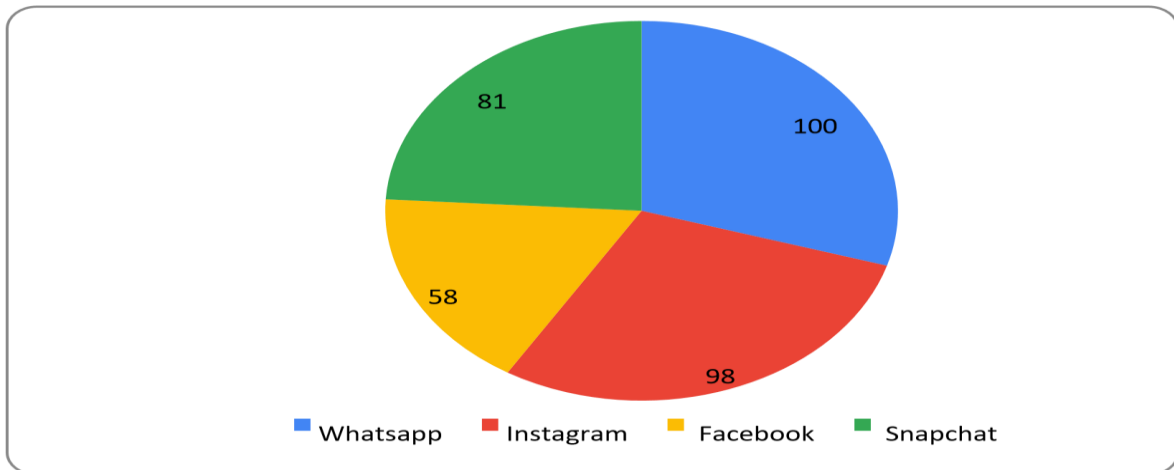


Figure - 6 Sample population of females uploading pictures

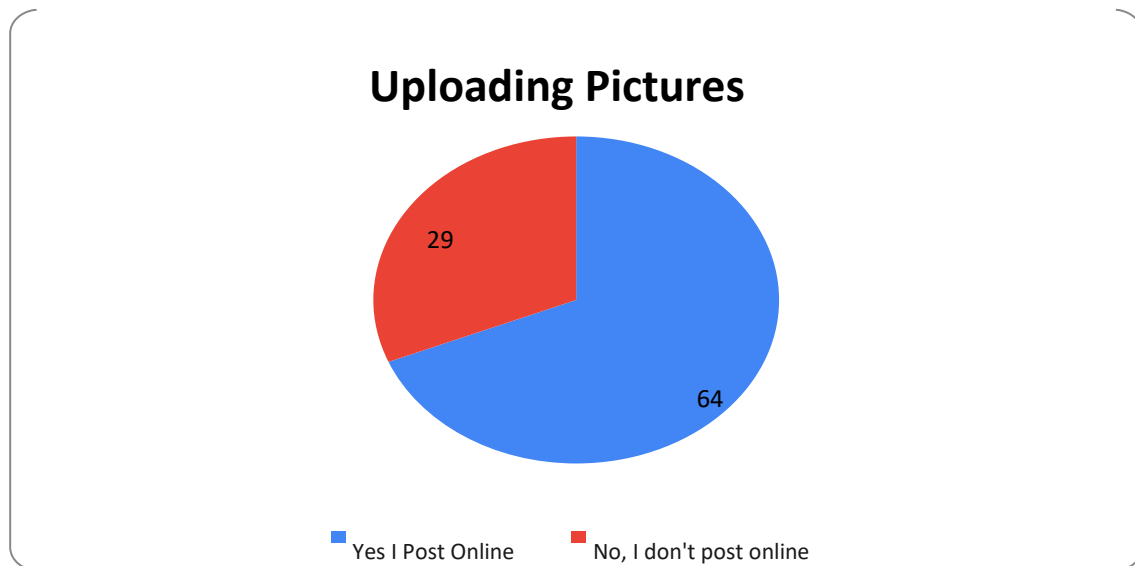


Figure 7 - Percentage of females using editing apps and filters for enhancing their pictures

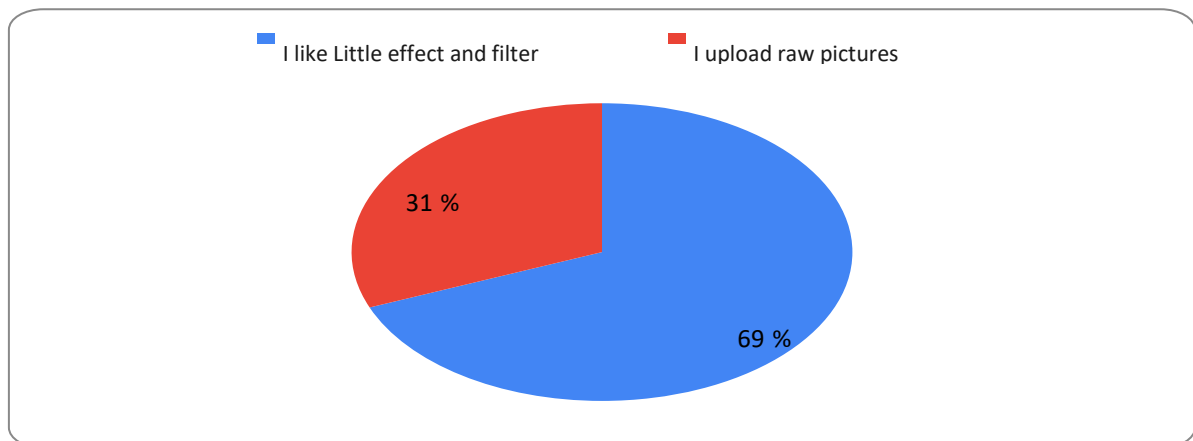


Figure 8 - Percentage of female users of skin care products

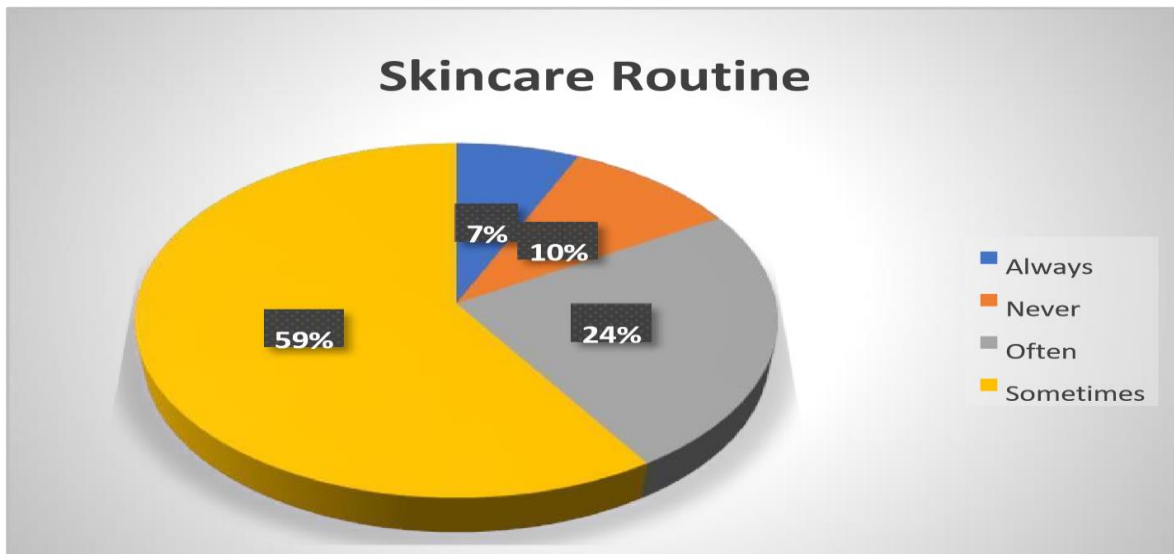
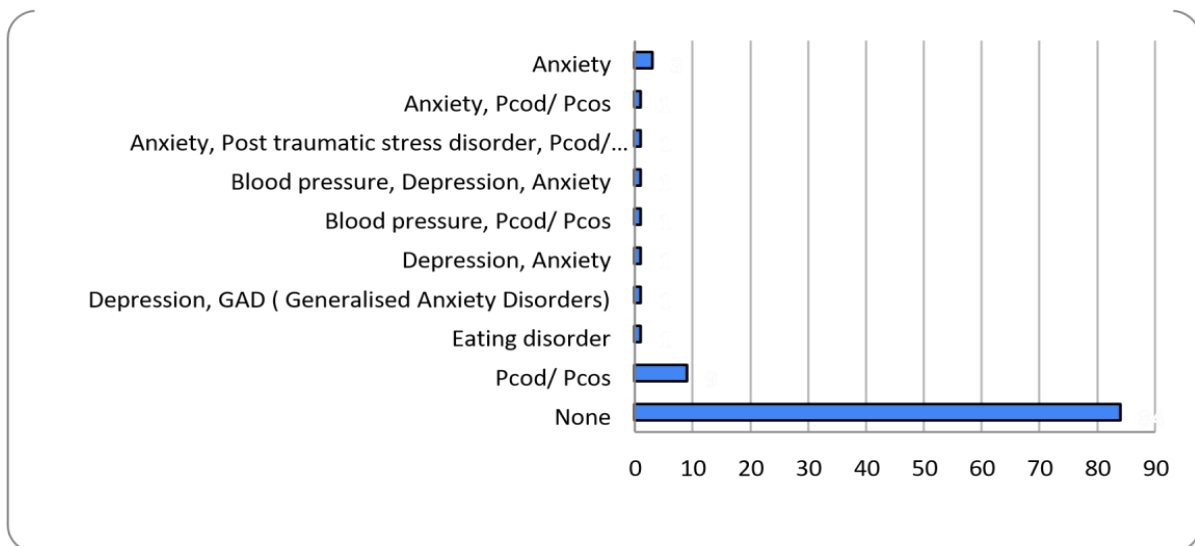


Figure 9- Population of females having psychological ailments.



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‘अब और नहीं’ कविता संग्रह में चित्रित दलित चेतना

कु. पूजा तिगाया शोध विद्यार्थी, स्नातकोत्तर हिंदी विभाग, श्रीमती मणिबेन एम्.पी शाह विमेंस कॉलेज ऑफ आर्ट्स एंड कॉमर्स, माटुंगा, मुंबई.

tigayapooja67@gmail.com

डॉ. प्रशांत देशपांडे, हिंदी विभाग, श्रीमती मणिबेन एम्.पी शाह विमेंस कॉलेज ऑफ आर्ट्स एंड कॉमर्स, माटुंगा, मुंबई.

शोध सारांश :

दलित का अर्थ होता है – निचला, दबाया हुआ, कुचला हुआ, रौंदा हुआ आदि। दलितों को हिंदू समाज व्यवस्था में सबसे निचले पायदान पर होने के कारण न्याय, समानता, सम्मान तथा स्वतंत्रता आदि मौलिक अधिकारों से भी वंचित रखा गया है। उन्हें तो अपने ही धर्म में अछूत और अस्पृश्य माना जाता था। ओमप्रकाश वाल्मीकि जी ने जो जीवन जिया, भोगा और देखा है, वही उन्होंने अपने साहित्य में अभिव्यक्त किया है।

‘अब और नहीं’ इस चर्चित कविता संग्रह में ओमप्रकाश वाल्मीकि ने दलितों के जीवन के भोगे हुए यथार्थ को बखूबी तरीके से व्यक्त किया है। दलित समाज हमेशा से अपने हक के लिए लड़ाइयां लड़ते आया है। हजारों वर्षों से दलितों को सत्ता, संपत्ति और प्रतिष्ठा से वंचित रखा गया। लेकिन दलितों के शोषण का यथार्थ ओमप्रकाश वाल्मीकि जी ने अपनी कविताओं के माध्यम से लोगों और समाज के सामने एक आईने के रूप में प्रकट किया है। दलितों का यथार्थ ओमप्रकाश वाल्मीकि जी ने अपनी कविता संग्रह में चित्रित किया है और समाज को उनके ऊपर हुए दुर्व्यवहार को जिस तरह प्रकट किया है ऐसा बहुत कम लेखकों के साहित्य में दिखाई देता है। ओमप्रकाश वाल्मीकि जी का मानना था कि दलित ही दलित की पीड़ा को अच्छी तरह समझ सकता है। इतिहास में देखेंगे तो पता चलता है कि दलितों ने हमेशा सिर्फ सहा है लेकिन उसका विरोध नहीं किया है।

ओमप्रकाश वाल्मीकि का व्यक्तित्व प्रामाणिक, अध्ययनशील, साहसी, कलाप्रेमी, अंधश्रद्धा के विरोधी, यथार्थ के हिमायती और समाज में बुरी स्थितियों के परिवर्तन की आत्मीय भावना से ओतप्रोत दृष्टिगोचर होता है। चूहड़े जाति में जन्म होने के कारण उन्हें बचपन से लेकर जीवनभर अनेक जातीय दंश, पीड़ा, यातना, अपमान तथा उपेक्षा का सामना करना पड़ा है। बचपन में गंदगी भरे माहौल से किसी तरह उपजे, प्राथमरी स्कूल में शिक्षा की जगह सफाई का काम, मास्टर्स की दहशत और बच्चों द्वारा ‘चूहड़े’ का कह कर चिढ़ाना हमेशा उन्हें दस्तक देता रहा। जाति के कारण लोगों का उनके प्रति स्नेह भरा व्यवहार अचानक चमत्कार की भांति बदलता था। लेकिन ओमप्रकाश वाल्मीकि ने अपने जीवन में कभी हार नहीं मानी। उन्होंने अपने नाम के साथ ‘वाल्मीकि’ सरनेम जोड़ा ताकि जान बुझकर कोई इनसे जाति न पूछे। आजादी के बाद भी कहीं न कहीं पर दलितों पर अन्याय हुआ और आज भी हो रहा है जिसको हम नकार नहीं सकते। वाल्मीकि जी ने दलितों की पीड़ा को अपने गहन अनुभव की विस्तृत परिधि में प्रस्तुत किया हुआ परिलक्षित होता है।

ओमप्रकाश वाल्मीकि ने दलित जीवन कितना दर्दनाक, दुखदायी, भयानक और क्रूर होता है, इसे भोगा भी है और वही चित्रित भी किया है। उनकी गहरी सुझ-बुझ दलित साहित्य को सशक्त और विकसित करती परिलक्षित होती है। विषमतापूर्ण सामाजिक वातावरण में उन्हें कभी चैन से जीने नहीं दिया। ‘सत्य’ और

‘प्रामाणिकता’ के दो पग लेकर चलनेवाले ओमप्रकाश जी ने बहुत कुछ बर्दाश्त किया है और इसी बर्दाश्त कर लेने की आदत ने उनसे बहुत कुछ छिना है।

ओमप्रकाश वाल्मीकि का व्यक्तित्व संघर्षशील, कर्मशील, महान विचारक, संवेदनशील, बहुमुखी प्रतिभावान, यातनामय एवं कष्टों से ही बना हुआ परिलक्षित होता है। ओमप्रकाश वाल्मीकि को अनेक पुरस्कारों से सम्मानित भी किया गया है। उनके जीवन के विविध पहलू उनकी मौलिकता को मजबूत बनाते हैं। उनका व्यक्तित्व प्रगतिशील विचारक, गहन अध्येता, मनुष्य की यथार्थता को सार्थक रूप देनेवाला जाति के बवंडर में फंसकर भी अनेक तूफानों का सामना एवं संघर्ष कर अपने जीवन की कशती को आदर्शमय दिशा देनेवाला दृष्टिगोचर होता है।

बीज शब्द :

दलित विमर्श, ओमप्रकाश वाल्मीकि के काव्य में विद्रोह, नकार और आक्रोश, जाति एवं वर्ण व्यवस्था का विरोध

उद्देश्य:

‘अब और नहीं’ कविता संग्रह के माध्यम से ओमप्रकाश वाल्मीकि के काव्य में दलित विमर्श की चर्चा करना प्रस्तुत शोध का उद्देश्य रहा है। उनके काव्य में अभिव्यक्त भोगा हुआ यथार्थ को समझना तथा उनकी भाषा शैली को जानना भी शोध का उद्देश्य रहा है।

प्रस्तावना:

शोध मेरे लिए हमेशा जिज्ञासा का विषय रहा। दलित साहित्य में मेरी रुचि होने के कारण तथा मुझे दलित साहित्य पसंद होने के कारण मैंने दलित साहित्य पर शोध करना तय किया था। इसलिए विषय के लिए मैंने पहले कुछ दलित साहित्य के बारे में जानकारी ली, तो कुछ नाम सामने आए जैसे – सूरजपाल चौहान, मोहनदास नैमिशराय, सुशीला टाकभौरे, जयप्रकाश कर्दम और ओमप्रकाश वाल्मीकि आदि उनसे जुड़े हुए दलित साहित्य को मैंने पढ़ा। लेकिन इन सब में सबसे ज्यादा ओमप्रकाश वाल्मीकि जी के साहित्य ने मुझे प्रभावित किया। ओमप्रकाश वाल्मीकि का कविता संग्रह ‘अब और नहीं’ जब मैंने पढ़ा, तो उस कविता संग्रह ने मुझे अंदर से झकझोर दिया और इसी कारण मेरी जिज्ञासा दलित साहित्य में और बढ़ गई और मैंने इसलिए ओमप्रकाश वाल्मीकि की कविता संग्रह ‘अब और नहीं’ को ही अपने लघुतर शोध प्रबंध का विषय चुना। इस कविता संग्रह का शीर्षक ‘अब और नहीं’ मुझे बार-बार अपनी ओर आकर्षित कर रहा था, इसलिए इस विषय को चुनने में मैंने ज्यादा समय नहीं लगाया और इसे अपने शोध कार्य के लिए चुन लिया।

शोध प्रविधि:

मैंने प्रस्तुत शोध के लिए विवेचनात्मक शोध प्रविधि का प्रयोग किया है साथ ही विश्लेषणात्मक, व्याख्यात्मक एवं तुलनात्मक शोध प्रविधि का प्रयोग किया है।

निष्कर्ष:

ओमप्रकाश वाल्मीकि जी ने अपनी कविताओं के माध्यम से दलित जीवन के यथार्थ को समाज के सामने रखा है। इनकी कविताओं में समस्याओं को हमने बहुत अच्छे से देखा और समझा है। ओमप्रकाश वाल्मीकि की कविताओं में चित्रित सबसे बड़ी समस्या जातिभेद ही है। दलितों का शोषण, असमानता, अपमान और दलित चेतना आदि को बहुत ही विस्तार से वाल्मीकि जी ने अपने साहित्य में जगह दी है और उसका यथार्थ रूप प्रस्तुत किया है।

ओमप्रकाश वाल्मीकि जी की भाषा-शिल्प बहुत ही प्रभावी और तथ्यपरक रहा है। 'अब और नहीं' कविता संग्रह में ओमप्रकाश वाल्मीकि जी ने दलितों की सामाजिक स्थिति, परिवेश तथा उनका भाषिक संपर्क आदि के अनुरूप भाषा का प्रयोग किया है। उनके भाव भाषा के कारण सजीव प्रतीत होने लगते हैं। वाल्मीकि जी के लेखन की भाषा इतनी सहज, सरल तथा कहीं-कहीं जटिल भी होती है। शब्दों के माध्यम से की पाठक को अपनी मनोदशा की ओर खींच लाती है। वाल्मीकि जी की भाषा उनके भावों में प्रकट उन शब्दों से पता चल जाता है, कि भाषा के शब्द कैसे हैं ? तत्सम है, तद्भव है, वर्णनात्मक है जैसे शब्दों का प्रयोग दिखाई देता है।

ओमप्रकाश वाल्मीकि एक ऐसे लेखक का नाम है, जिनका ऐसे परिवेश में बचपन बीता जहां सांस लेना भी मुश्किल था। वहां से ही उन्होंने अपने जीवन यात्रा की शुरुआत की। इस जीवन सफर में उन्हें सायेदार रास्तों से अधिक कांटेदार, हृदय को कचोटने वाले तथा पैरों को लहू-लुहान करने वाले रास्ते ही अधिक मिले। तभी भी वाल्मीकि जी ने हार नहीं मानी और अपने अधिकारों के लिए आगे बढ़ते रहे। वाल्मीकि जी को सबसे अधिक सवर्णों द्वारा बनाए गए उन खोखलें नियमों का सामना करना पड़ा। एक समाज में रहते हुए भी दलितों को समाज से बहिष्कृत किया गया था। ऐसे परिवेश से ही उन्होंने अपने जीवन को सशक्त बनाने के लिए संघर्ष करने लगे। सवर्णों द्वारा बनाए गए उन बेबुनियादी नियमों का विरोध करने लगे। उनके भीतर पनप रही दलित चेतना को अपने जीवन में आगे बढ़ाने के लिए उन्होंने शिक्षा को अपनी ताकत बनाई और दलित साहित्य में अपना स्थान बना लिया। आज जो ओमप्रकाश वाल्मीकि जी का नाम एक विशाल वृक्ष के रूप में सामने आया है, उसका कारण है — विरोध, अन्याय, शोषण, प्रताड़ना, उत्पीड़न आदि से वे अपने आप को और भी मजबूत बनाते रहे।

ओमप्रकाश वाल्मीकि जी के व्यक्तित्व की बात करें तो उनका पूरा जीवन तमाम संघर्षों से भरा रहा है। वह बचपन से ही जातिभेद के शिकार होते आए हैं, बचपन से ही लोगों के जाति आधारित ताने और शोषण को सहते आए हैं। बचपन से ही इतना कष्ट झेलने होने के बावजूद भी एक चीज में कभी नहीं पीछे हटे वह थी — शिक्षा। हर तरह के संघर्ष तथा मेहनत से उन्होंने शिक्षा को प्राप्त किया और अपनी इस शिक्षा को दलितों को समाज में अधिकार दिलाने का प्रमुख केन्द्र बना लिया। शिक्षा ही वाल्मीकि जी के लिए एक शक्तिशाली शस्त्र बना, जो दलितों की इस नर्क जैसी व्यवस्था को खत्म कर उन्हें समाज में अपना स्थान, अपना अधिकार दिला सकती है। वाल्मीकि जी के व्यक्तित्व से ही उनके कृतित्व की स्थापना हुई है। उन्होंने अपने जीवन में जो भोगा-देखा और समझा इन्हीं अनुभवों को अपने साहित्य का विषय बना कर उसे साहित्य में उतार दिया। फिर चाहे — आत्मकथा, कहानी, कविता, नाटक आदि हो। वाल्मीकि जी के साहित्यिक परिचय कि

शुरुआत उनकी आत्मकथा — 'जूठन' से होती है। 'जूठन' इसमें वाल्मीकि जी ने अपने जीवन का यथार्थपरक चित्रण किया है, जिससे लोगों को दलितों के यथार्थ जीवन का परिचय दिया कि किस तरह एक ही समाज में रहकर भी दलितों को अपने ही अधिकारों से वंचित रहना पड़ता था। वाल्मीकि जी अपनी आत्मकथा 'जूठन' में अपने जीवन के यथार्थ अनुभवों को समाज के सामने प्रकट करते हैं।

ओमप्रकाश वाल्मीकि जी ने कविताएं दलित जीवन के संघर्ष, शोषण, अपमान तथा उनके साथ हुए अन्याय को ध्यान में रखकर प्रस्तुत की है। इनकी कविताएं जो दलितों की उत्पीड़न, शोषण, दुर्व्यवहार तथा अन्याय का विरोध करते हुए दलितों की चेतना को यथार्थ प्रस्तुत करती है। ओमप्रकाश वाल्मीकि जी की 'अब और नहीं' कविता संग्रह जिस पर मेरा शोध कार्य है, वह कविता संग्रह अपने कथ्य और शिल्प के कारण तो हमारा ध्यान खींचता ही है, साथ में अपने सरोकारों के कारण भी हमें हृदय दहलाने देने वाली यथार्थ स्थितियों से गुजरने पर मजबूर करता है। इस कविता संग्रह में स्थित दलित वर्ग की बात करें तो, उनका जीवन जो है सिर्फ जीने की जद्दोजहद में ही कट जाता है तथा इसी रूढ़िवादी परंपरा के विरोध में दलित चेतना को प्रकट करती है।

'अब और नहीं' कविता संग्रह में ओमप्रकाश वाल्मीकि जी ने दलितों की समस्याओं का यथार्थ रूप प्रकट कर उनमें उभर रही दलित चेतना को प्रस्तुत किया है। जैसे — जातिभेद, छुआछूत, धर्म, सवर्ण, निम्न वर्ग, अशिक्षा, शोषण, अंधविश्वास हीनता ग्रन्थि, रूढ़िवादी परंपराओं का विरोध आदि इस कविता संग्रह की कविताओं में चित्रित करते हैं। जातिभेद – छुआछूत यह तो हर दलित व्यक्ति के लिए सबसे बड़ी समस्या मानी जाती है और इसी के आधार पर अन्याय किया जाता है। दलित समाज को उन्हें जातिभेद के नाम पर रौंदा गया था। उनके हाथ का खाना नहीं खाना, सवर्ण वर्ग के किसी भी वस्तु को भी अगर दलित व्यक्ति छू भी ले तो ऐसा व्यवहार करते की जैसे किसी की हत्या कर दी हो। दलितों को प्रताड़ित किया जाता था कि ये क्या कर दिया ? मेरे सामान को छू कर उसे अपवित्र कर दिया। समाज में हर कोई व्यक्ति एक समान दिखता है, सभी लोग जीवित है, तो फिर ये दलितों के साथ ही जानवरों जैसा इतना दुर्व्यवहार कैसे कर सकते हैं? ये हक सवर्णों को किसने दिया? क्या किसी एक व्यक्ति का दूसरे व्यक्ति को छू लेना पाप है ? इस तरह से प्रताड़ित किए गए दलित वर्ग को न्याय दिलाने के लिए वाल्मीकि जी ने अपना हर संभव प्रयास किया हैं और अपनी कविताओं में इन्हीं भावनाओं को शब्द दिए हैं। वाल्मीकि जी ने कविता संग्रह में दलितों में उभर रही चेतना के यथार्थ को समाज के सामने प्रस्तुत किया और तर्क के साथ सिद्ध किया है कि जिससे दलितों में एक शक्तिशाली और दलित जीवन को सशक्त बनाने वाली इस चेतना का निर्माण हो जो दलित समाज एक प्रबल रूप प्रदान कर सकता है। ओमप्रकाश वाल्मीकि जी ने अपनी कविता संग्रह में ज्यादातर दलित चेतना को यथार्थ रूप में प्रस्तुत किया है। तथा समाज में दलितों की स्थिति प्रस्तुत की है।

वाल्मीकि जी की भाषा — शिल्प की बात करें तो उन्होंने सहज, सरल, तथ्यपरक, तथा कहीं जटिल शब्दों का प्रयोग अपनी भाषा में किया है। उनकी भाषा दलितों की मनोदशा, परिवेश और स्थितियों को ध्यान में रखकर प्रस्तुत की जाती है। वाल्मीकि जी की साहित्य की भाषा इतनी सहज और सरल तथा प्रभावशाली होती है कि लोगों को आसानी से समझ में आ जाती है कि उन्होंने क्या कहा ? वाल्मीकि जी की अध्यनशीलता अधिक थी, इसलिए उन्हें भाषा का भी अधिक ज्ञान था और शब्दों का भी। तत्सम, तद्भव, यह वह शब्द है

जिन्हें वाल्मीकि जी को औचित्यपूर्ण ढंग से अपने साहित्य में प्रस्तुत किया है। ओमप्रकाश वाल्मीकि जी ने अपनी शिक्षा को अपनी ताकत बनाई और दलित साहित्य में दलितों के अधिकारों को समाज में स्थापित कर अपने साहित्य को समृद्ध किया है तथा अपने जीवन को भी सफल सिद्ध किया है।

संदर्भ एवं सहायक ग्रन्थ तथा पत्र-पत्रिकाएँ:

- मूल ग्रंथ –
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- संदर्भ ग्रंथ –
 - 1) हिन्दी दलित साहित्य विमर्श के विविध आयाम – डॉ. रश्मि चतुर्वेदी, सरस्वती प्रकाशन, कानपुर-21, प्रकाशन वर्ष – 2013
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वेब लिंक - <http://ir.unishivaji.ac.in> > jspui > bitstream

इतिहास और वर्तमान का ताना-बाना 'कलि-कथा:वाया बाइपास'

आरती शर्मा, शोध विद्यार्थी, स्नातकोत्तर हिंदी
विभाग, श्रीमती मणिबेन एम्.पी. शाह विमेंस
कॉलेज ऑफ आर्ट्स एंड कॉमर्स, माटुंगा, मुंबई

डॉ. वृषाली चौधले, लेक्चरर, हिंदी विभाग, श्रीमती
मणिबेन एम्.पी. शाह विमेंस कॉलेज ऑफ आर्ट्स
एंड कॉमर्स, माटुंगा, मुंबई

शोध सार:

आधुनिक हिन्दी साहित्य में अपनी महत्वपूर्ण रचनाओं के कारण अलका सरावगी का स्मरणीय स्थान है। इनकी रचनाओं में वैविध्य है। सभी अपने समय की महत्वपूर्ण दस्तावेज हैं उन सब में एक विशिष्ट स्थान है इनका सबसे चर्चित उपन्यास 'कलि-कथा:वाया बाइपास'। जिसके लिए इन्हें पुरस्कार भी प्राप्त हुआ है। इस उपन्यास में जो समस्याएं चित्रित हैं वे केवल मारवाड़ी समाज तक ही सीमित नहीं हैं बल्कि सम्पूर्ण भारत की समस्या का यथार्थ चित्रण 'कलि-कथा:वाया बाइपास' उपन्यास में हुआ है।

अलका जी ने 'कलि-कथा:वाया बाइपास' उपन्यास में पारिवारिक समस्याओं को भी चित्रित किया है। जब परिवार में लड़ाई - झगड़ा, मन-मुटाव होता है तो उसमें बच्चों को भी बहुत कुछ देखना व सहना पड़ता है इससे बच्चों के मन में बहुत बुरा असर होता है। परिवार में आर्थिक समस्या का भी वर्णन देखने को मिलता है जहाँ परिवार में नौकरी करने वाला एक ही व्यक्ति है परंतु घर में बहुत से लोग रहते हैं। जिसके कारण परिवार की आर्थिक स्थिति खराब हो जाती है। दाम्पत्य जीवन में विवाहबाह्य संबंधों का बहुत बुरा असर होता है जिसमें पति या पत्नी दोनों का एक दूसरे पर पूरा भरोसा न होने के कारण मन में एक प्रकार गांठ पड़ जाती है। इस उपन्यास में विवाहेतर संबंध की समस्या को बखूबी दर्शाया गया है। किशोर बाबू के मामा का संबंध किसी और अन्य स्त्री के साथ होता है जिस कारण उनकी मामी को बहुत सी परेशानी का सामना करना पड़ता है।

उपन्यास में धार्मिक समस्या पर भी प्रकाश डाला गया है कि कैसे पहले हिन्दू और मुस्लिम दोनों ही धर्म के लोग एक साथ प्रेम से रहते थे परंतु अंग्रेजी शासन आने के बाद दोनों ही पक्षों में विवाद होने लगा क्योंकि अंग्रेजों ने एक नीति अपनाई 'फूट डालो और राज करो' इस नीति के कारण हिन्दू और मुस्लिम आपस में लड़ते रहे।

उपन्यास में अंग्रेजी शासकों की दमनकारी नीतियों के प्रति आक्रोश प्रकट किया गया है। जिसमें बंगाल के अकाल में भी राजनीति हुई थी। अंग्रेजों ने राजनीति के चलते चावल की सप्लाई बंद कर दी थी जिस कारण लोग भूखमरी का शिकार हो रहे थे। प्लासी के युद्ध का भी वर्णन देखने को मिलता। बंगभंग कानून लगने के कारण कोई भी सामने से विरोध नहीं कर पाता था क्योंकि अंग्रेज

उन्हें जेल में डाल देत थे इसलिए लोग इसका विरोध छुप छुप कर करते थे | इस प्रकार कई ऐतिहासिक घटनाओं पर प्रकाश डाला गया है |

बीज शब्द:

मारवाड़ी समाज में स्त्रियों की समस्या, पारिवारिक समस्याएं, धर्मभेद, ऐतिहासिक परिदृश्य|

प्राक्कथन :

‘कलि-कथा:वाया बाइपास’ उपन्यास के माध्यम से अलका जी ने उपभोक्तावाद और बाजारवाद के चक्र में फंसे सामान्य आदमी का यथार्थवादी चित्र प्रस्तुत किया है | उदारीकरण तथा निजीकरण के फलस्वरूप जन्मे बाजारवाद ने पूरी दुनिया पर अपना कब्जा कर लिया है | सिर्फ आर्थिक क्षेत्र में ही नहीं सामाजिक और सांस्कृतिक क्षेत्र पर भी अनेक प्रकार के परिवर्तन आए हैं | पहले बाजार मनुष्य की आवश्यकता के अनुसार बनता था परंतु आज हमें बाजार की आवश्यकताओं के अनुसार ढाला जा रहा है | उदारीकरण, निजीकरण, भूमंडलीकरण आदि के नाम बहुराष्ट्रीय कंपनियों ने भारतीय बाजार पर अपना अधिकार जमा लिया है | प्रस्तुत उपन्यास में बढ़ते हुए उपभोक्तावाद के कारणों की पड़ताल भी की गयी है | भूमंडलीकरण के इस दौर में हमारी संस्कृति का हास हो रहा है और सामाजिक मूल्यों में परिवर्तन आ रहा है | ‘कलि-कथा:वाया बाइपास’ अलका सरावगी ने बदलते समय के साथ हो रहे मूल्य परिवर्तन का अंकन बखूबी किया है |

इस उपन्यास में किशोर बाबू की पाँच पीढ़ियों के इतिहास को दर्ज किया है और इसके माध्यम से उन्होंने आजादी के पहले और बाद के कलकत्ता के लगभग 300 साल के परिवेश को साकार किया है | किशोर बाबू की बाइपास सर्जरी उनके दिल के साथ-साथ दिमाग की भी बंद नली खोल देती हैं और वे अपने पूर्वजों की जड़ें खोजते हैं | प्रस्तुत उपन्यास में व्यापार के लिए कलकत्ता में आए मारवाड़ी समाज का व्यापक चित्र अलका जी ने प्रस्तुत किया है | ‘कलि-कथा:वाया बाइपास’ केवल मारवाड़ी परिवार की पाँच पीढ़ियों की कथा नहीं है बल्कि स्वातंत्र्यपूर्व और स्वातंत्र्योत्तर कलकत्ता का पूरा चित्र उपन्यास में उपस्थित हुआ है | प्लासी के युद्ध से लेकर बाबरी मस्जिद के दंगे जैसी कई तात्कालिक घटनाओं का उल्लेख उपन्यास में किया गया है साथ ही इन घटनाओं तत्कालीन समाज पर पड़े प्रभाव का बखूबी अंकन किया है |

शोध का उद्देश्य:

1. उपन्यास में चित्रित कलकत्ता के 300 वर्षों के इतिहास से परिचय करना |
2. तत्कालीन सामाजिक समस्याओं से अवगत करना |
3. मारवाड़ी समाज में स्त्रियों की स्थिति को जानना |

शोध प्रविधि:

ऐतिहासिक घटनाओं से अवगत होने के लिए वर्णनात्मक और विवेचनात्मक विधि का प्रयोग किया गया है। सामाजिक तथा स्त्री विषयक समस्याओं के चित्रण के लिए विश्लेषणात्मक तथा समीक्षात्मक विधि का प्रयोग किया गया है।

2.1 मारवाड़ी समाज में स्त्रियों की समस्या:

अलका सरावगी का पहला उपन्यास 'कलि-कथा:वाया बाइपास' सन् 1998 में प्रकाशित हुआ। जिसमें मारवाड़ी समाज में स्त्रियों की समस्या का यथार्थ चित्रण देखने को मिलता है। आधुनिक सामाजिक परिवेश में नारी की अस्मिता एवं मनःस्थिति, जो कि इस समाज के रुढ़िवादी विचारों एवं मान्यताओं के कारण लगने वाले प्रतिबंधों से आहत है, अपनी लेखनी के माध्यम से अलका सरावगी जी ने चित्रित किया है। अलका जी के उपन्यास में नारी जीवन से जुड़ी अनेक समस्याएँ सामने आई हैं। उन्होंने नारी के प्रत्येक रूप माँ, बहू, पत्नी एवं सास के दुःख, संघर्ष, संवेदना एवं अन्तर्मन को शब्दबद्ध किया है।

2.1.1. स्त्री-भ्रूण हत्या की समस्या:

इस उपन्यास में मारवाड़ी समाज की स्त्री-भ्रूण हत्या का यथार्थ चित्रण देखने को मिलता है। 'कलि-कथा:वाया बाइपास' में किशोर बाबू की बड़ी बेटी तीन बार गर्भपात करवा चुकी है। वह हर संभव प्रयास करती है कि वह बेटे को जन्म दे सके। किशोर बाबू की पत्नी उसके लिए कहती है- "आज बड़ी लड़की ने दो लड़कियों के बाद तीसरा गर्भपात कराया है। इस जमाने में बेचारी पाँच बार माँ बन गई। बच्चा आधा हो या पूरा औरत का शरीर तो बराबर खराब होता है। इस बार भी पेट से पानी निकालकर परीक्षा कराई, तो लड़की ही निकली, जबकि इस बार तो बच्चा पेट में इंजेक्शन से डाला था, जिसमें खाली लड़का पैदा करने वाले कीड़े थे। हजारों तो रूपए खर्च हो गए और शरीर का इतना नुकसान हुआ सो अलग।"¹ किशोर बाबू के माध्यम से अलका जी ने ऐसे लोगों पर अपना क्रोध व्यक्त किया है जो कि किशोर बाबू की बहु माँ नहीं बन सकती है परंतु दूसरे का गर्भपात कराने चली जाती है। किशोर बाबू गुस्से में अपनी बेटी को अपने घर आने से भी मना कर देते हैं। वे कहते हैं कि "और सुनो, तुम्हारी बड़ी दीदी जब ठीक होकर घर आ जाए, तो मेरी तरफ से उसे एक संदेश दे देना। मैं अपने बच्चों को मारनेवाली उस हत्यारी औरत की शक्ल नहीं देखना चाहता। आज से वह इस घर में पाँव न रखे"²

2.1.2. दहेज की समस्या:

दहेज प्रथा केवल मारवाड़ी समाज की समस्या नहीं है अपितु सम्पूर्ण भारत की समस्या है जिससे प्रत्येक माता पिता को गुजरना पड़ता है। यह प्रथा समाज की उन गरीब बेटियों के लिए श्राप है तथा माता पिता को अपनी बेटियों के विवाह कराने के लिए पैसों के लिये अनेक प्रकार की मुश्किलों

का सामना करना पड़ता है। किशोर बाबू की पत्नी अपनी पाँच बेटियों के विवाह के लिए अपना सब कुछ जमा करती रहती है “ऊपर से पाँच-पाँच लड़कियाँ पैदा होती गईं एक-के-बाद एक सारी जवानी तो लड़के की आस में उन्हें पैदा करने में निकल गई फिर सबके लिए दहेज जुटाने में अपने लिए कभी कोई चीज रख पाई ? जो खरीदा, लड़कियों के लिए रखती गईं।”³ किशोर बाबू की पत्नी को भी दहेज की समस्या का सामना करना पड़ता है तथा किशोर बाबू को भी इसी बात की चिंता रहती है कि बेटियों को पढ़ाऊँ या उनके दहेज के लिए पैसे बचाऊँ। अलका जी ने दहेज की समस्या को बड़ी ईमानदारी से उपन्यास में चित्रित किया है।

2.1.3. रूढ़िवादी एवं परंपरावादी सोच में जकड़ी स्त्री:

रूढ़ियों और परम्पराओं में जकड़ी स्त्री के जीवन का दर्द अलका जी के इस उपन्यास में देखने को मिलता है। धर्म, संस्कार और परम्पराओं के नाम पर स्त्री का शोषण किसी न किसी रूप में हो रहा है। समाज में सदैव स्त्री को सुरक्षा के पर्दों में सीमित दायरे में रखा जाता है। अलका जी के प्रथम उपन्यास 'कलि-कथा:वाया बाइपास' में किशोर बाबू के स्कूल में मदनमोहन सिंघानिया की पत्नी को सारे दिन घूँघट ओढ़कर बैठे रहना पड़ता था। “किशोर बाबू को अपने स्कूल के मदन मोहन सिंघानिया की बातें याद थीं कि किस प्रकार उसकी नई-नवेली पत्नी सुबह से रात तक भारी जरीदार ओढ़नी ओढ़े पीछे पर अपना पूरा मुँह ढके बैठी रहती थी, जिससे रात को उसकी पीठ में दर्द हो जाता था और खाना खाते समय घूँघट के कारण उसका कौर मुँह की जगह कभी-कभी नाक में लग जाता था।”⁴ उसी प्रकार से किशोर बाबू की माँ भी हमेशा घूँघट में ही रही तथा अमोलक के ननिहाल में भी यही घूँघट प्रथा चली आ रही है। अलका जी ने मारवाड़ियों में स्त्री के घूँघट ओढ़ने का कई स्थानों पर उल्लेख किया है।

2.1.4. विधवा समस्या:

इस उपन्यास में विधवा समस्या को भी अंकित किया गया है यह समस्या भी सिर्फ मारवाड़ी समाज की नहीं है अपितु पूरे भारत की समस्या है। एक विधवा स्त्री का जीवन अनेक प्रकार की कठिनाइयों से भरा होता है। कदम-कदम पर लोग उसे निराश, हताश करते हैं। यदि विधवा स्त्री जवान हैं तो लोग उसके चरित्र पर कीचड़ उछालने से पीछे नहीं हटते हैं। बहुत कम ऐसा होता है कि विधवा स्त्री को लोग सम्मान की दृष्टि से देखते हैं। 'कलि-कथा:वाया बाइपास' में विधवाओं की समस्या पर व्यापक प्रकाश डाला है। किशोर बाबू की भाभी जो कि विधवा होने के कारण सफेद साड़ी पहना करती थी, वह एक बार उनके रंगीन साड़ी पहन कर आने पर किशोर बाबू का क्रोध विधवा नारी के जीवन की समस्या को दर्शाता है। “तुम्हारा दिमाग क्या अब एकदम ही खराब हो गया है भाभी? उम्र बढ़ने के साथ-साथ आदमी की अकल बढ़ती है, पर मुझे लगता है यू०पी० (उत्तर प्रदेश) वालों की अकल कम होने लगती हैं यह क्या इतने चटक-मटक रंग की साड़ी पहनी है। क्या कहेंगे लोग देखकर कुछ तो मर्यादा रखी होती समाज में।”⁵ उपन्यास में कई नारियों के

विधवा जीवन को दर्शाया है। किशोर बाबू की माँ, भाभी के माध्यम से उनके कष्टों पर प्रकाश डाला है। छोटी उम्र में ही विधवा बनी शांता भाभी का दुख उनके देखा नहीं जाता। मारवाड़ी समाज में उनके पुनर्विवाह का कोई नियम नहीं। विधवा जीवन की यह विडम्बना ही है कि ससुराल में उसका अपना कोई होता नहीं जिससे वह अपना दुःख बाँट सके वह सदैव अकेलेपन में अपना जीवन व्यतीत करती है।

2.2. पारिवारिक समस्याएं:

अलका जी के उपन्यासों एवं कहानियों में अधिकांशतः संयुक्त परिवार ही देखने को मिलते हैं। वे स्वयं एक सुसंस्कृत संयुक्त परिवार का हिस्सा रही हैं। इसी कारण अपनी पुरानी पीढ़ियों एवं नयी पीढ़ियों के मध्य सामंजस्य, प्रेम-भाव, भावनात्मक जुड़ाव एवं मन-मुटाव का अत्यन्त स्वाभाविक वर्णन देखने को मिलता है। परिवार से जुड़ी कुछ समस्याएँ अलका जी के इस उपन्यास में देखने को मिलती है।

2.2.1. पारिवारिक झगड़ों का बच्चों पर प्रभाव:

हर परिवार में लड़ाई-झगड़े होते रहते हैं फिर वो परिवार बड़ा हो या छोटा लड़ाइयाँ होती ही हैं। और इन बड़े लोग की लड़ाई में बच्चों के मन में एक बहुत बुरा असर होता है। बच्चे बहुत संवेदनशील होते हैं। आसपास के माहौल का उनके मन पर गहरा असर पड़ता है। संयुक्त परिवार में सबके अपने अलग-अलग विचार, जीवन शैली, दिनचर्या, पसंद-नापसंद होने के कारण वैचारिक मतभेद होते हैं। घर में विवाद होने पर के बच्चों के कोमल हृदय पर इसका सबसे गहरा प्रभाव पड़ता है और वह हृदय आघात कभी-कभी उनके लिए अत्यधिक नकारात्मक साबित होता है। 'कलि-कथा:वाया बाड़पास' उपन्यास में किशोर के बड़े भाई ललित का अपने मामा द्वारा मामी को दिया गया कष्ट अत्यंत दुख दे जाता था।

2.2.2. दाम्पत्य जीवन की समस्या:

मारवाड़ी समाज में अधिकतर लोग धन कमाने तथा व्यापार करने अपने परिवार को छोड़ कर अन्य शहरों में जा कर बसते हैं। किशोर बाबू के दादा और परदादा धन कमाने कलकत्ता आ गए। धन कमाने और अपने परिवार का पालन-पोषण करने हेतु उन्हें जी-तोड़ मेहनत करनी पड़ी। किंतु इसका परिणाम यह हुआ कि वह अपने परिवार को समय नहीं दे पाए और न ही अपने बच्चों को बड़े होते देख पाते हैं। बड़ा परिवार, भिवानी में हवेली बनाने का सपना लिए वे दिन-रात काटते रहे।

जब परिवार में किसी व्यक्ति का दाम्पत्य जीवन प्रारम्भ होता है, नववधू परिवार का एक अहम अंग बन जाती है। अधिकांशतः नारी को ही परिवार में अपना स्थान बनाने हेतु प्रयास करने पड़ते

हैं | जिस प्रक्रिया में पहले से चले आ रहे कुछ रिश्तों को समझने में उन्हें समय लगता है। 'कलि-कथा:वाया बाइपास' में किशोर बाबू की पत्नी को भी अपने पति का अपनी भाभी से अत्यधिक आत्मीयता का रिश्ता प्रारम्भ में कुछ अखरता है - “जब किशोर बाबू की पत्नी ब्याह कर आई, तब तो भाभी से पूछे बिना पता तक न हिलाते थे।... शुरु में उन्हें यह भाभी -पुराण अखरा भी था यह क्या रात-दिन भाभी - भाभी | माना कि भाभी बहुत अच्छी है बेचारी भरी जवानी में विधवा हो गई, पर हर एक चीज की एक हद तो होती है सिनेमा जाएँ, तो भाभी साथ में, विक्टोरिया जाएँ तो भाभी के बिना क्या मजाल जाएँ।”⁶

2.2.3. विवाह बाह्य संबंध:

पति और पत्नी से ही परिवार का निर्माण होता है यदि इन दोनों के बीच में कोई तीसरा व्यक्ति आ जाता है तो परिवार टूटने की कगार पर आ जाता है। 'कलि-कथा:वाया बाइपास' उपन्यास में अलका सरावगी ने विवाह बाह्य संबंधों पर प्रकाश डाला है। जहाँ किशोर बाबू के बड़े मामा का मैना ठकुराइन से अवैध संबंध रखना बड़ी मामी के जीवन के सपनों के शुरु होने से पहले ही समाप्त कर देता है। ललित की मामी बहुत परेशान रहती कि इनका बहु बाजार जाना कैसे बंद करे परंतु कोई उपाय काम न आया | अंत में मामी को राजयक्ष्मा की बीमारी हो गई थी। और इसी में उनकी मृत्यु हो गई | पर वे जीते जी मामा को वहाँ जाने से नहीं रोक पाई | बड़े मिल्टन साहब के भी हिन्दू लड़की से विवाह बाह्य संबंध बनते हैं।

2.3. धर्मभेद:

समाज में मनुष्यों द्वारा विभिन्न समुदायों में बँटकर, प्राचीनकाल में कर्म, जाति के अनुसार तो आज मात्र व्यक्ति के अनुसार धर्म के आधार पर आचरण करता है | आज धर्म के आधार पर ही हमारे देश में विभाजन देखने मिलता है जैसे - हिन्दू, मुस्लिम, सिख, ईसाई, जैन, बौद्ध, आदि। इन धर्मों में भी आन्तरिक विभाजन विद्यमान है धर्म को मानना, उसके अनुरूप सदाचरण करना, मानवीय मूल्यों को अपने जीवन का अंग बनाकर दूसरे का कल्याण करना, इसमें कभी कोई दोष नहीं, किन्तु धार्मिक समस्याएँ प्रारम्भ होती हैं, जब मनुष्य अपने धर्म का अंधानुकरण करने लगता है धर्म, जाति, सम्प्रदाय के बीच जब आपसी मतभेद बढ़ने के कारण दंगे भड़क उठते हैं |

2.3.1. विभाजन की त्रासदी:

अलका जी के उपन्यास 'कलि-कथा:वाया बाइपास' में आजादी के समय, बंगाल विभाजन के समय के साम्प्रदायिक दंगों का वर्णन है | उस समय हिन्दू-मुस्लिम विवाद इतना अधिक बढ़ गया था कि चारों ओर दोनों धर्म के लोग एक दूसरे के धर्म के लोगों को बेदर्दी से मारे गए थे | दोनों एक दूसरे के खून के इस तरह प्यासे हो रहे थे कि उनके मानवीयता और संवेदना बिल्कुल समाप्त हो गयी थी, उन्हें पुरुष, महिला, बच्चों, बुर्जुगों किसी के प्रति कोई दया भाव नहीं था |

2.4. ऐतिहासिक परिदृश्य:

बंगाल और कोलकता से संबंधित ऐतिहासिक घटनाओं का चित्रण अलका जी की रचनाओं में देखने को मिलता है ।

2.4.1. बंगाल का अकाल:

बंगाल का अकाल सन् 1942 में हुआ था वास्तव में अकाल इंसानियत पर एक धब्बा है । भूख के कारण लोगों में मानवीयता नष्ट हो गयी थी एक वक्त की रोटी के लिए लोग सब कुछ बेच रहे थे । इन सबका बुरा असर स्त्री एवं बच्चों पर ही अधिक पड़ा । पैसे के लिए औरतों एवं लड़कियों को वेश्यालयों में बेचा जाने लगा उस समय घरवालों के पास पैसा कमाने का और कोई चारा भी नहीं था । दिन-पर-दिन लोगों की हालत बिगड़ने लगी थी । उस समय गली-गली लाशों से भरी पड़ी थी । लाशों को ठिकाने लगाना सरकार के लिए भी मुसीबत बन गई थी इसलिए लाशों को नदियों में फेंका जाने लगा । जिसकी वजह से नदी प्रदूषित होने लगी फिर भी लोग उसी से पानी पीते थे । उस वजह से लोग मलेरिया जैसी बीमारियों के शिकार हो जाते थे । भूख मिटाने के लिए लोग भीख भी माँगते थे । अलका जी ने अपने उपन्यास 'कलि-कथा:वाया बाइपास' में इस घटना का चित्रण किया है । अमोलक किशोर का दोस्त है वह किशोर से कहता है “कलकत्ते की सड़कों पर भीख माँगने वाले गाँव के लोग रोज किस तरह बढ़ रहे हैं? मेरे पिताजी के मित्र हैं न संपत चाचा- वे कह रहे हैं कि बंगाल के गाँवों के लोगों के पास खाने को है अपने सारे बर्तन -भाड़े बेचकर ये लोग चावल खरीदकर खा चुके हैं और अब भूख कुछ नहीं के मारे गाँव छोड़कर कलकत्ता आ रहे हैं । सब सूख-सूखकर कंकाल हो रहे हैं ।”⁷ अमोलक और संपत चाचा भूख से पीड़ित लोगों की मदद करने की कोशिश करते हैं ।

2.4.2. प्लासी की लड़ाई:

सन् 1757 में सिराजुद्दौला और अंग्रेजों के बीच हुई की प्लासी की लड़ाई के बाद भारत का इतिहास बदल गया । अलका जी ने 'कलि-कथा:वाया बाइपास' में इस ऐतिहासिक घटना का जिक्र किया है । सन् 1757 जून 23 को प्लासी की लड़ाई शुरू हुई । कुछ ज़मीनदारों एवं व्यापारियों ने रॉबर्ट क्लाइव से हाथ मिला लिया । सिराजुद्दौला को उनके ही लोगों ने धोखा दिया था वे अंग्रेजों के खिलाफ लड़ते रहे लेकिन अन्त में वह हार गया और मुर्शिदाबाद की तरफ भाग गया । उनके लोगों ने ही उन्हें मारा था इस प्रकार सिराजुद्दौला का बड़ा दुखद अन्त हुआ और अंग्रेजों ने प्लासी की लड़ाई जीत लिया । भारत को अपने कब्जे में लेने के लिए भारत पर हमला करने के लिए और दुनिया वालों के सामने भारतीयों को बर्बर दिखाने के लिए अंग्रेजों ने इस घटना में मारे जानेवाले लोगों की संख्या बढ़ा-चढ़ा कर बता दिया था । अंग्रेजों ने धोखे से बंगाल का सत्ता नवाब

से छीना लिया था | अलका जी ने इस ऐतिहासिक घटना का चित्रण करके बंगाल के इतिहास को प्रस्तुत किया है |

2.4.3. बंग-भंग:

'कलि-कथा:वाया बाइपास' में भी बंग-भंग संबंधी ऐतिहासिक घटनाओं को अलका जी ने प्रस्तुत किया है | लॉर्ड कर्जन ने बंगाल में बंग-भंग का कानून लागू कर दिया था इसके खिलाफ पूरे बंगाल में विरोध प्रदर्शन हुआ और सशस्त्र क्रांति की भी चेष्टा हुई थी इसका चित्रण उपन्यास किया गया है |

2.5. अंधविश्वास की समस्या:

'कलि-कथा:वाया बाइपास' में हमें कई जगह अंधविश्वास देखने को मिलता है। मनुष्य अपनी कमजोरियों का, समस्याओं के निवारण का हमेशा कोई आसान मार्ग खोजना चाहता है इसी कारण यह राशिरत्न आदि भी कहीं न कहीं अंधविश्वास ही दर्शाते हैं | जबकि रत्न धारण करने वाले व्यक्ति की जिंदगी जैसे थी उससे भी बदतर होती जाए | उपन्यास में किशोर बाबू का बेटा अंधविश्वास के कारण हाथ में कई प्रकार की अंगुठियाँ पहनता है | 'कलि-कथा:वाया बाइपास' में बड़े मामा का वेश्या मैना ठाकुरानी के पास जाने के बारे में उसकी माँ का यह कहना कि उस पर जादू किया गया है, मात्र एक अंधविश्वास ही है | किशोर बाबू की नानी टोटके को ही मामी के मरने का कारण मानती थी | "बड़ी जो टोटका- टोना करवा रही थी वही उसके उलटा पड़ गया इसीलिए उसे मरना पड़ा |"⁸ किशोर की बहन जब बीमार थी तब उसे डॉक्टर के पास ले जाने की बजे नज़र उतारने झाड़ा देने वाले को बुलाया जाता था |

निष्कर्ष:

अलका जी ने 'कलि-कथा: वाया बायपास' उपन्यास के जरिए मारवाड़ी समाज का यथार्थ चित्रण किया है | उन्होंने मारवाड़ी समाज में स्त्रियों की स्थिति का वास्तविक चित्र प्रस्तुत किया है | साथ ही कलकत्ता के ऐतिहासिक परिदृश्य को भी बखूबी साकार किया है | समसामयिक समस्याओं पर उनकी बारीक नजर थी | अलका सरावगी ने बाजारवाद और भूमंडलीकरण के कारण बदलते सामाजिक मूल्यों का अंकन 'कलि-कथा: वाया बायपास' में यथार्थ धरातल पर किया है | प्रस्तुत उपन्यास में उन्होंने आर्थिक, राजनीतिक, धार्मिक समस्याओं का सूक्ष्म चित्रण देखने को मिलता है।

संदर्भ सूची:

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SEVA MANDAL EDUCATION SOCIETY'S
SMT. MANIBEN M.P. SHAH WOMEN'S COLLEGE OF ARTS AND COMMERCE (Autonomous)
Smt. Parmeshwari Devi Gordhandas Garodia Educational Complex,
338, R. A. Kidwai Road, Matunga, Mumbai - 400019
Tel No: 2409 5869 Fax: 24013964, Website : www.mmpshahcollege.in
Email : mmpshah@rediffmail.com, 021.mmpshah@gmail.com