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Current Situation and Future Prospects in India's Social Sciences

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Abstract: *As a reflection of India's ever-changing political and economic climate, the field of social sciences has developed considerably throughout the years. With a focus on the growing importance of empirical research, interdisciplinary approaches, and fast technological advancements, this article delves into the present trends and challenges encountered by the field in India. It takes a look at how local socio-cultural circumstances have shaped social science theories and procedures, as well as the increasing impact of global viewpoints. In addition, the article delves into the difficulties of obtaining resources, data accessibility, research inclusivity, and the social sciences' contribution to solving critical societal problems like poverty, inequality, and social justice. In its last section, the paper makes some suggestions on how the social sciences in India can have a brighter future, with an emphasis on the value of multidisciplinary work, government backing, and institutional changes.*

Keywords: Policy backing, socio-cultural factors, social problems, academic culture

1. Introduction

Though the concept of social sciences as an interpretive tool for human experience is not new, the question of whether or not the

available facts have rendered such an interpretation superfluous is central to the idea's modernity. Because social scientists today work with such a wide range of topics and contribute such different points of view to their work, it may be misleading to talk about the social sciences as a whole.

The social sciences are rudimentary because they rely on obvious facts or deductions from previously established facts. The absence of any concern with the logic of observation is extremely striking. The frontier appears to be falling as the clay aficionados playfully frolic between academic themes and a range of things that lack any semblance of scholarly rigor. As a result, only highly specialized scientists have been able to afford to employ methods that necessitate the highest level of theoretical speculative reasoning (V. Nadkarni & Joseph, 2014). If one wants to know how India's social sciences have developed over the years, they should look to the first 30 years of the central planning program. A system has evolved following a shaky start in the First Five Year Plan; it is akin to systems in many developing nations, albeit based on a limited human resources foundation and requiring little original research.

2. The Evolution of India's Social Sciences over Time

Indian social science research dates back to the days of oral transmission of information. Only a select few were educated on such matters, leaving the vast mass of people in the dark. Over time, written records of the information were created. As a result of this illuminating endeavour, India now has a long history of academic achievement that has been crucial in the development of the field of social sciences. The establishment of social science departments at various universities and research organizations throughout the ages transformed participatory observation into a formalized and structured method of inquiry in the quest for knowledge. Literature, history, the social and physical sciences, production, trading, and consumption are just a few of the many fields that Marathi and Konkani scholars have investigated. It is commonly believed that social scientists studying India, particularly those specializing in social anthropology of India, are engrossed in the country's rich cultural diversity, linguistic variety, and extensive

history of fieldwork that surpasses that of any other region in the world.

Norms, systems, values, classes, genders, interactions, and historical processes are all aspects of society that are important to examine. Indian society in its wide variety goes through different processes and changes. When faced with novel challenges, conventional wisdom and practice fell short. Traditionally, the four Vedas have stood as a repository for all wisdom and understanding. Then a diligent student could understand it. For many people, this wasn't enough. Oral knowledge was crucial to the development of many social standards. Those who were unable to study the Vedas nevertheless benefited from the knowledge that was transmitted verbally. India still uses this method of learning, which involves passing on information orally. According to V. Nadkarni and Joseph (2014), "oral knowledge" explains societal standards and ethics.

3. The Present Situation of India's Social Sciences

This article takes a close look at the social sciences in India right now, analysing its strengths and weaknesses as well as potential future directions for development. A sociologist's own experience as a professor at a social science research institution, as well as a survey of relevant literature and publicly available data, form the basis of the evaluation. Key fields including psychology, anthropology, and political science, as well as the present state of sociology, are described and their development paths are emphasized. Also discussed is the part played by a number of prominent universities and national research institutes in advancing social science studies, including the Indian Institute of Public Administration, the Indian Statistical Institute, the Tata Institute of Social Science, the Delhi School of Economics, and others. An effort is made to untangle the web of research foundations, trusts, and other institutions and their programs while evaluating the current system of funding and support for social science research. One of the few notable accomplishments of the newly independent India is the fast development of the social sciences (V. Nadkarni & Joseph, 2014). Established in the 1950s and 1960s in reaction to a renewed interest in studying Indian conditions by the

state and academia, social science research institutes and academic departments have laid the groundwork for a vast and intricate system of knowledge production and dissemination in India. Appointing committees and organizations to do study in nation-building programs was the first modest step the state took. Local scholars and social workers viewed the formation of the new nation as a fresh opportunity for risky experimentation in a more equitable society. Marxism, shaped by the Moscow School, made its way to India's urban centres and attempted to establish itself there. However, social science departments hardly ever used survey methods or conducted fieldwork in rural areas or slums. The first step was to define key concepts such as sociology, sociology of law, political sociology, etc. This is why, in 1961, the Indian Statistical Institute established a Committee on Social Sciences. The committee's focus was on both the big picture of defining social science's place in solving India's problems and the finer points of allocating funds to strengthen the field's research methods. For the purpose of coordinating research and instruction in this area of study, the University Grants Commission created an Inter-University Centre on Humanities and Social Sciences some sixteen years later. The third and fourth plans have finally provided a thorough blueprint for the advancement of India's social sciences.

3.1. Important Academic Fields

Sociology, sociology of religion, anthropology, geography, economics, politics, and social epidemiology are some of the most important branches of social science in India. Topics covered by sociologists include population growth, industrialization, demographics, mobility, inequality, social movements, and institutions. Research in the field of psychology aims to improve our understanding of the mind, brain, and behaviour; it also enhances our ability to treat mental diseases and promotes overall mental health. The plethora of languages, civilizations, traditions, and even shamanic or witchcraft can be explained by the fieldwork that anthropologists engage in. Income, poverty, employment, inflation, trade, and the establishment of states are all topics that economics may shed light on. A subfield of political science focuses on time-honoured issues with political violence, municipal and state governments, voting behaviour,

political parties, and other political institutions. According to Bisht et al. (2012), social epidemiologists focus on topics such as infectious illnesses, maternity and reproductive health, and health disparity. Much to the subject-specific reading lists, the majority of these topics really span more than one academic field.

But the so-called social science fields reveal interrelated and overlapping social, political, and economic phenomena. For example, the concept of family in anthropology and demographic change in geography both point to the same overarching issue: how society is supposed to be formed. Similarly, there is a meeting point between the developmental psychology issues and the management studies psychology issues within the field of psychology. In addition, fields of study are both bio-social and evolutionary. Anthropology, sociology, psychology, and social epidemiology all seek to understand biotechnological problems, which include divergent views of biology, nature, and the human body. It is not uncommon to see a great deal of methodological convergence in conferences and seminars held by different academic fields. Policy and development research, in the end, draws from a variety of academic fields. Linkages at the local, regional, and national levels are necessary for the development of infrastructure in settings with limited resources, as are linkages at the micro, meso, and macro levels. However, the concept of discipline is strongly ingrained and somewhat resistant to change in academic institutions, even while there is a range of research activity and overlapping consciousness. There have been numerous shifts in the focus of academic inquiry over the years. Because of the dynamic nature of Indian society and the constant emergence of new political and social issues, the field of social sciences has developed throughout the years. New or specialized problems within disciplines have therefore arisen, even while challenges pertaining to conventional science nefariously affect both industrialized and developing nations. While environmental issues certainly weren't ignored, more recent developments have brought to light fresh challenges related to things like bio-ethanol, urban ecology, waste management, state planning, and air pollution. Issues of inequality, such as those pertaining to the adivasi and dalit communities, the textile worker's movement, the

international labour convention, and the unorganised sectors, are also currently generating fresh discussions. Some new issues have emerged in the open, such as those caused by the World Trade Organization (WTO), patent laws, IT, or the politicization of castes.

3.2. Renowned Educational and Research Establishments

The field of social science in India is reflective of both national and international priorities. There are a number of ways in which western social science research and its Indian counterparts could diverge. Realities in India's social science field have their own boundaries, criteria, and aims. India is home to a dozen prestigious research institutions that are vital to the advancement of knowledge in the social sciences. They promote global social science themes and operate as knowledge providers, although some are more focused on vigilance due to their specialized role in maintaining peace and order. Some people have a more urban focus, are concerned with concerns of industrialization, and are neoliberal in their economic and social policy views.

The social science research institutions in India are world-renowned for their excellence. Both the quantity and quality of research in this field have grown substantially in the past 20 years. An indication of the Indian government's determination to raise the bar for research quality is its largest investments to date. The worldwide focus of social science research has its roots in a more superior demand—specifically, the demand that was anticipated throughout the process of nation-building following independence in 1947. Researchers in India started to uncover clear facts about the country after directing their attention to a variety of human and social science fields in an effort to gain an objective understanding of Indian society and communities. In the early 1960s, social scientists started looking further than India for data on what works when it comes to nation-building. They looked to the most developed nations for answers. The neoclassical theory's requirements and methods revolve around openness of information, which was a defining feature of that decade's research policies.

3.3. Finances and Assistance

Since its beginnings as a string of nineteenth-century criticisms of colonial policies, social science research in India has flourished thanks to a dedication to studying modern economic, social, and political concerns. It provides thorough examination of current situations, such as the displacement caused by liberalization in rural and urban India, and is characterized by the conception of critical thinking categories, such as the underserved idea of the quasi state. But some are worried that scientific understanding has not progressed fast enough. The inconsistent quality of research, deeper ethical concerns, the role of research in public culture, and the difficulty in understanding research as both an end in itself and as a routine component of a variety of practices that inform good governance are just a few of the research hurdles that have come to light during workshop discussions and meetings with scholars and institutions (Rajan, 2012). While these issues have research implications, funding institutions have tackled issues like educational and employment discrimination as well as the unique needs of women, tribal groups, and the disabled. This has led to the visibility of various initiatives, both successful and unsuccessful, that showcase the field of social science's remarkable potential and growth. An Indian analogue to the Dox Centre's Mapping the Ambedkar Memorial Trilogy would be a fresh examination of social science that tracks its evolution from the critical conceptual innovation prompted by disciplines as varied as Queer Theory to the regional and historical analysis that yields the well-crafted tales of Discontent (Pokhrel et al., 2011). This study would provide valuable insights into the impact of social science research on public culture in areas such as health, education, economic and political governance, and data-defined critique of social and economic conditions and trends in India during a period of widespread and continuous displacement. It would also help researchers, funding organizations, and funding advocating groups better understand the public's concerns and debates in this world's largest democracy.

4. Shaping the Future of the Social Sciences

Researchers in the social sciences are at a loss as to what the best course of action is for modern societies and how to lay the groundwork for this future (Tarman, 2017). Meanwhile, there are still many different types of challenges that communities have had to deal with, including things like poverty, starvation, deforestation, resource destruction, and ecological adaptation issues. However, this in no way disproves the idea that the social sciences may produce future-proof innovations. Contrarily, a lot can be gained by trying to figure them out.

New trends and research themes have been investigated, allowing us to navigate the world of science. It followed the rising tide of research that sought to bridge the gap between the social sciences and other branches of science. In addition, new quantitative and qualitative methods for data collecting, processing, and analysis, as well as other interpretive tactics, were considered in light of the impact of digitalization and associated revolutionary technologies.

Here, we looked at how the big data problem has just emerged and how it might be used in social science studies. The advent of big data has been revolutionary in the scientific community, casting doubt on long-held beliefs and practices. However, this tendency is proving especially challenging for the social sciences to respond to because of how specific it is. This led to discussions about how the field of social science can change to better aid in the (re)building of societies that are more interdependent and responsible to one another. The converse is also true: this paper centered on the difficulty of centralizing big data and its dissemination, thus resolving the contentious debate over whether it will be liberating or oppressive, a debate that is relevant only to the present globalized capitalist economy (Carmela Catone, 2023). With this goal in mind, we also dropped some big hints that might inspire new kinds of social research, based on fresh patterns of cooperation and participation across different fields of study, within the same scientific area, the public sector, and other social players. In addition, the role of community engagement and participatory research methods in social research was highlighted. These approaches are becoming more well-known, in part because new methodologies are being adopted that are unbiasedly informed by the

broader and booming debate surrounding the open data paradigm. The most important result is the possibility of highly original social research, which has the ability to elevate the importance of social scientific fields in the hunt for better, more understandable answers to the complex questions surrounding the origins and development of modern society. However, investing in recruiting for skill development and training must accompany new challenges for this to be functional.

4.1. Approaches that span disciplines

Without acknowledging the importance of multidisciplinary approaches, any discussion regarding the status of India's social sciences will be lacking. Recent years have seen an explosion of ground-breaking multidisciplinary social science research in India. They have helped to break down barriers that existed before in the social sciences, as well as in the fields of biology, ecology, and technology. Presently, AGRIMA has been deliberating and has released a collection of articles that will demonstrate successful interdisciplinary research projects in addition to speculating on the advantages of integrating social disciplines such as anthropology, economics, geography, history, psychology, politics, and sociology. The various and intricate social science components of the programs and the issue as a whole have been better understood via these endeavours. As a result, the main focus is on demonstrating the benefits of interdisciplinary collaboration for social scientists and outlining the obstacles to integrating different research approaches and theoretical frameworks (Fretts, 2013).

This asserts, with great urgency, that the government and educational institutions should support, financially and otherwise, interdisciplinary social science research in order to benefit society as a whole, the research community specifically, and the world at large. It aspires, therefore, to a radical change in the way social scientific research is conducted. Also covered is the pressing question of whether or not universities encourage an atmosphere that values and promotes collaboration across disciplines. Many social scientists who focus on one area of study find it challenging to successfully conduct

research that draws from other fields. Publishing in more conventional venues is challenging, and finding reliable partners is an additional time-consuming issue. On the other hand, it is helpful to work in a setting that encourages social science research across disciplines. Thus, the case is made for the continued existence of such workplaces both within and outside of formal institutions.

4.2. Technological Advancements in the Digital Domain

New technology and the rise of the internet have completely altered the landscape of social science study in India. The use of new digital tools has altered data collection, analysis, and dissemination practices in the scientific community. Numerous facets of social research have been impacted by technological advancements, including but not limited to data collecting and analysis, study execution, and result distribution. There are ways in which technology has facilitated data accessibility, but there are also ways in which it has compromised data privacy and accessibility. Big data, machine learning, and smart mobile phones are just a few examples of the new data sources made possible by recent technology breakthroughs. Because of this, there have been major shifts in how surveys and experiments are carried out. India has recently made significant strides in digital innovation, which has been well-received.

The social insights of research, which are presently limited to urban regions, may also become more accessible through digital innovation. In spite of this, a big issue with equal access and digital literacy is the digital divide. When it comes to big data analytics, many labs just don't have what it takes. Researchers have a wealth of unexplored resources at their fingertips, including social insights gleaned from online surveys conducted on platforms like Twitter and Facebook, which are based on extensive and deep interaction and localization context (Mehrotra & Musolesi, 2017). Additionally, there is a problem with the ethics of gathering and analysing data from the internet. Concerns about privacy or identity blurring, the use of observational data, and the need for informed consent are all part of this, regardless of whether the study is public or private. Methodologies in the digital realm require constant innovation to keep up with societal shifts. Research

that takes advantage of technical affordances, such as creating experiments and spreading the use of electronically mediated forms, is essential if researchers are to engage publics in an increasingly technologized world.

5. Difficulties Encountered by India's Social Science Community

Trends and difficulties in India's social sciences are identified and analysed in this article. Among these tendencies, we can observe an increase in the importance of interdisciplinary research, particularly in connection to environmental, technological, and scientific policy, a wider availability of funds for social science research, and the potential utilization of research results through collaborations with non-governmental organizations, international organizations, or government agencies. There are a lot of obstacles to overcome, such as the following: the funding of social scientists, both now and in the future, the freedom to choose and complete research projects, the public's appreciation of social science research, the nature of social science career changes, and how to deal with government and corporate demands on data and information. Understanding and responding to societies, as well as people's behaviours, relationships, and organization within communities, institutions, and networks, is mostly accomplished through the social sciences. The phrase, when used broadly, encompasses fields as diverse as neurology and political science, as well as subjects like language diversity, market behaviour, and demographic changes and voting patterns. According to Walker and Wilsdon (2015), there is a growing consensus among professionals, academics, and policymakers that the social sciences offer crucial resources for solving many modern problems.

Amidst the piercing, angry arguments of geneticists and biologists, the social narrative cries out. Charlie, the policy's influence, is dwindling. Modern cultures are confronted with fast-paced changes in economics, society, and the environment, which are exacerbated by the increasing links and differences brought about by globalization. Social institutions and homes around the globe have been impacted by novel and as-yet-unpredictable combinations of circumstances. Studying and acting upon issues of well-being, trust, identity, esteem, social

cohesiveness, and broader socio-cultural values is crucial. These and other structural and/or socio-cultural developments have prompted a plethora of social science research programs, which in turn have used a wide variety of methodologies. The worldwide assessment of the FASID social science program in 1998 acknowledged these tendencies and difficulties. They have been front and centre in the countless private and public discussions between social scientists and politicians, especially in the last several years.

5.1. Scarce Resources and Funding

Obtaining sufficient funding to complete a study cycle has been a key concern in the social sciences. Obtaining optimal financing assistance is fraught with multiple obstacles for various research institutions and individual researchers. As an academic field, social science is essentially defined by the Indian government. In this region, the bulk of academic institutions and individual academics rely heavily on state funding and political backing. When funding for academic programs is cut or eliminated, not only does it limit its independence to a certain degree, but it also makes it much harder for it to do research (Bast, 2018). Inadequate funding has clear consequences for young researchers in the social sciences. The new liberal mobilities may instantly standardize the research's scope through its desired objects and fields, in addition to re-producing academia through the same volume of research re-cycling with the same intellectual schemes and conceptual paraphrases under other institutional addresses (Rajan, 2012). This implies that research that meets the current standards, norms, and selection criteria can only be conducted by a small number of highly regarded academic institutions. When the political and economic climate solidifies the establishment of neoliberalism "democracy" (where liberal means market democracy), it is difficult to understand the role of private money and philanthropic contributions in supporting the social science subject. So, the hegemonic trade agreements and accords between the European Union and developing nations like India only benefit the general and vegetative branches of science, which require expensive infrastructure and money. Exploring the present political-economic trends in India's and the world's academic environments, new initiatives are emerging

to tackle pressing problems in social science research in India, particularly those pertaining to research opportunities and scopes. While this is not meant to be an essay, it does attempt to sketch out some important points or questions that should be addressed. Above all else, we need a united front to fight this ridiculous policy that aims to "demolish education" and "intellectualism." Additionally, sociology departments and instructors must work to shift public perception of sociology away from its narrow view as a field that primarily trains people to earn a living wage. Instead, it's time to evolve into a platform that can actually address society's problems and offer tangible solutions. Now is the moment for the Multi-disciplinary Social Science Research Centre and for interdisciplinary degrees. Interns from different departments are required to participate in certain scholarship programs. Faculty collaboration is likely to occur if feasible research ideas in each subject serve as a competitive issue for securing funds from the SESRTCIC and the University. In order to keep the academically supportive atmosphere running smoothly, departments and teachers can simply arrange for students to participate in video conferences via broadband with Turkish academics at Diyanet or other Turkish universities. Academics from India have recently mushroomed online, with a plethora of websites advertising conferences, scholarships, and other academic opportunities. But it is quite difficult to gain these in this competitive environment, and as a third world country, neither of those things are offered. Researchers are strongly encouraged to not rely solely on academic web-resources, but rather to actively seek out as many alternative opportunities as they can, both individually and collaboratively. Undergraduates may find reasonable support and motivation through their partial involvement and contributions to a department-based special monthly issue of an interdisciplinary academic publication. Coordinating best the essential beneficial chances and directions could boost the active quality of research opportunities. It may be feasible for young researchers to obtain post-MA/MSc level practical sessions relating to nanotechnology at a lower cost. For graduate students looking to conduct research, the city is home to a plethora of consultancies, study firms, and development concern offices from which they can draw resources, such as databases

and infrastructure. Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) would also participate in development research projects, much as they do in the West. Thesis advisors have the authority to disseminate a thorough plan that addresses all aspects of the proposal's preparation and defence to students who are interested in pursuing a doctorate degree. Included in this category are recommendations and suggestions from related periodicals, as well as contemporary theoretical viewpoints, discussions of particular research situations, research and drafting process suggestions, and other ad hoc items.

5.2. Relevance and Impact of Research

Social science research can play a significant role in addressing and finding answers to different urgent challenges in society. Unfortunately, in many nations, there is a lack of direct communication and interaction between social science researchers and individuals tasked with implementing the findings, so the conclusions of these studies do not reach the people who might benefit the most from them. The failure to communicate across the two groups is due, in part, to disparities in training and engagement with the various issues under different conditions. In social science, it is common for researchers to make assumptions and propose solutions without fully investigating the issues at hand. Researchers are the primary target audience for this study. Instead of hearing from people in the field, we hear from academics.

Disagreement over the importance and relevance of diverse social science research on any given subject is the primary shortcoming of this type of study. Research in the social sciences is believed to be less suitable for tackling important problems and less accurate. Consequently, the focus is often narrowed to only those issues that a select set of executives deems crucial (Glover, 1970). Funding from outside sources, such as governments and philanthropists, affects how a research program evolves and expands. Many developing nations' social scientists have taken comfort in the fact that national priority topics might receive funding for research, even while their countries' research budgets are heavily skewed toward donor interests. National demands and problem urgency are not the determining factors in the

selection and funding of such priority research fields in many nations. Instead, they are chosen and funded according to the donor's priorities or the country's national interest. The conventional wisdom holds that a country should not prioritize the advancement of its social sciences until it has attained a certain degree of material prosperity, broad education, and consumption. People in the social sciences often look to Western examples for guidance because of this. However, social scientists in many developing nations disagree with the idea that their society's current degree of occupational, environmental, administrative, and technical complexity warrants and permits research on that society. Independent research initiatives on subjects dictated by national circumstances are limited in creation and pursuit due to the formation of a very specific research agenda that was prompted by external influences.

5.3. Access to Data and Its Collecting

Although the field of social sciences in India has grown substantially in recent decades, it still confronts numerous challenges. Some of these challenges are specific to the country's political and social climate, while others are similar to those that the physical and biological sciences have encountered globally for the past 300 years, but which are only now being addressed by the field of social and behavioural sciences. New issues are also cropping up, and social scientists in other parts of the world are starting to tackle them as well. This places the current state of Indian social science inside the global social science framework, identifies 12 overarching proposals to tackle common problems in the field, and then develops 20 more context-specific recommendations (King, 2014).

Access to and acquisition of data presents a significant challenge for social scientists. Data collection is challenging and becoming more so every year. Almost all social science research relies on data gathered by third parties, such as agents, fieldworkers, secondary analysts, analysts at government or statistics organizations, or other entities beyond the control of the investigator. This is because very few types of social science study can reject a randomly formed sample. Numerous logistical, bureaucratic, and other significant hurdles may

be encountered when gathering new data. Even without publications, data is necessary for non-publication research, and there are few reliable methods for collecting published data. Yet gathering data is not an easy task. Existing depositories retain very little of the social scientific data that is of interest, leaving individuals interested in paper trails as their only feasible choice. The author notes that, historically, social scientists have seen data as an exclusive commodity, a private resource that serves to validate their research. This is a deeply ingrained mindset across all fields of study, and it's not easy to brush off. However, that mindset leads to inefficient data management practices, and a significant portion of the data enterprise's financial, intellectual, and time resources are either lost or hidden in inefficient protocols and practices that could be easily changed for better efficiency (Srivastava, 2014).

6. How Can the Social Sciences Help Resolve Social Problems?

When it comes to academic research in India, the social sciences have taken the brunt of the criticism and scrutiny (Giulianotti & Thiel, 2023). Why is poverty problematization in India's social sciences, considering how demanding the political economy of knowledge production and science policymaking are? This is in relation to trends in the field that have emerged since India's independence, such as research rewards from the government for addressing social "problems." When the social sciences are underfunded in developed nations and frequently struggle to fund themselves, how valuable is the field as a whole, and what practical applications of this knowledge might actually make a difference? Who exactly is economically disadvantaged in this context—difference and tactics for creating difference, or both? When it comes to addressing issues like poverty, 'we are all poor,' social care and concern, more sustainable futures, debatable "investment" in "development," and the crisis at hand, how can the "choices" of social scientific discourses collaborate with political decisions? Along with the topic of "poverty and development," other recent social concerns are discussed, such as female foeticide, dowry, gender sensitivity and awareness, population and productivity, agricultural changes following the green revolution, agricultural changes and rural women, additional caste reflections, and

the evaluation of reservations. Potential combinations of interdisciplinary study and "multi-disciplinary" perspectives arising from social circumstance, studies outside of, and even within, the "social sciences," are highly pertinent to the social scientists' roles in the aforementioned areas.

6.1. Economic Disparity and Poverty

In India, the field of social sciences has achieved significant strides in comprehending and resolving issues of poverty and inequality. There has been a marked shift in the national discourse toward poverty reduction as an overt goal. Studies in economics and sociology, among other social science fields, have shed a lot of insight on different parts of the inequality and poverty issue. Thorat (2010) notes that there has been extensive research on both the causes and effects of poverty and inequality. Anthropologists and social scientists in India have recently published extensively on the topic of poverty and its many manifestations, reflecting this interest. The depiction of regional disparities in poverty, the emphasis on the elderly, and the marginalization of girls all reflect this.

Research on adivasi (tribal) poverty, the characteristics and situation of refugees in poverty programs, the impoverishment of urban and rural areas and the effects of globalization on these two spheres have all contributed to a deeper understanding of the intricacies of poverty. A large amount of literature on poverty and welfare programs has thus been produced. But this has not led to a robust development of the area where social science research meets policy and practice. It is true that there are still many cases when it is difficult to make projects for the poor more effectively implemented. Conversely, there are instances of well-planned programs that have utilized research results from the poverty domain. A further trend that has emerged in the years following the Economic Reforms is a push for more concrete policies to address poverty, with the goal of closing the knowledge gap between academic studies and real-world solutions.

There have been numerous changes to, or additions to, existing programs and policies. Upon closer examination, it becomes evident that there are both significant challenges and opportunities associated

with addressing poverty in India. Because these social concerns are generally treated as though they can be solved independently of the greater social nexus in which they are situated, the impact of internationally established programs is often partial or short-lived. Incorporating a thorough exploratory analysis of the prevalence of related social problems makes attempts to alleviate poverty less theoretical and more effective. An method that promotes more equitable growth for social networks and the communities they engage with could greatly benefit the field of program design. This approach would be community-driven and interdisciplinary.

6.2. Status of Women

Progress Towards Gender Equality in India: Current Practices, Future Directions, and Relevant Social Science Research

In recent years, gender inequality in India has sparked heated discussions and policy initiatives (Devi Ningombam & Devi Ningombam, 2017). The government has made gender equality a top priority through a series of policy shifts that began in 2005. At the same time, studies in the social sciences have contributed significantly to our knowledge of gender inequality and the assessment of programs that aim to close the gap.

This study delves into what is now known about the cultural, social, and economic aspects that shape gender norms and behaviours in India. For the purpose of informing the discussion on shifts towards gender equality, it also looks at what is known to work and finds policies and initiatives that have improved women's status and reduced gaps. Included in this is a concise analysis of the gender gap in India, as well as important cultural, economic, and social obstacles that donors and policymakers may need to tackle in certain areas. The article also details research-informed policies and initiatives that have helped some of the most marginalized people achieve basic human rights, such as the ability to own their own property. In addition, it delves into the significance of involving males to address societal conventions and behaviours that limit women's autonomy and opportunities. The paper wraps up by discussing some of the most sensitive and important issues that must be addressed in order to

achieve real equality, such as the need to examine regional differences in violence against women, the rise of discriminatory practices in the workplace that go against labour laws, and the pervasiveness of caste-based discrimination. The article finishes by showing how grassroots movements spearheaded by women can be a significant force for change, both in terms of transferring research and advocating for women's gender rights.

6.3. Sustainability in the Environment

The advancement of India's social science arena. - Federal and state governments should work together to disseminate information about parliamentary practices and education in the social sciences through various media outlets. This will help the public understand the government's programs, goals, and strategies, and evaluate policies more critically. 7. Impact of social science research on ecological preservation. The social sciences provide light on the monetary and social effects of environmental problems like global warming and resource depletion, and they provide advice on how people can behave to combat these problems in a way that will last. Economic and biophysical systems interact in intricate ways in the broader context. Findings from this study have important ramifications, such as calls for more conservative resource management, new regulations to save wildlife and revitalize rural areas, and assessments of how different communities are making use of their natural resources. More and more research is highlighting the value of community engagement and argues that participatory methods are preferable to a didactic model of information exchange when it comes to promoting sustainable habits. When it comes to environmental protection, some measures have relied on solid science, while others have been more selective. One of these initiatives is a government-run tree-planting program. Among the indigenous peoples of eastern India, trees serve an important cultural function that defies economic and behavioural incentives, according to a social anthropology research. To avoid unfavourable outcomes and maximise good ones, it is critical to comprehend the local social and cultural variables impacting environmental behaviour, according to the results. This article provides a positive case study of how research might influence policy improvements in fisheries

management in India. An encroachment restriction was achieved between 1991 and 1995 by a fisherman's union using a set of basic geo-referenced procedures. A court order quickly overturned the injunction, and more discharge gears were quickly put into use, leading to the systematic overfishing of newborn species. The establishment of marine sanctuaries and the subsequent prohibition of fishing were the results of multidisciplinary study that had the backing of influential politicians. Integrative and equitable solutions to the region's environmental, social, and economic problems should be the focus of any study on India's environmental sustainability. (Hart and Bell, 2013)

7. Possible Paths Ahead and Possibilities

7.1. Partnerships on an International Scale

International cooperation could greatly enhance the transformative potential of new social sciences research in India, as well as the creative methodology and theoretically informed interdisciplinary work that is being established (Dua et al., 2022). Opportunities for Indian scholars to collaborate with international organizations are expanding, providing them with access to data sets, resources, and expertise, or even allowing them to build their own platforms for exchanging information. There is a great chance to try out new kinds of cross-disciplinary and non-academic representation thanks to the funding and provision of various research projects in India. There has been a marked growth in measurements and a trend toward more multidisciplinary work in social science academic research. Complex transdisciplinary and multi-epistemological approaches, as well as rigorous qualitative procedures, will be required to realize its promise in addressing common global concerns. As a multi-level, multi-perspective, ethnographically dense research effort on social processes that are both homogenizing and distinguishing, there is a case for showing that experimental work has been a feasible answer to the issue of providing new insights. If the social sciences are to prove their worth in the public, globally relevant discussions on adaptation to climate change and urbanization, they must embrace novel experimental research procedures and approaches.

Through international collaborative social science research projects, Indian partners have been able to strengthen their research capabilities and develop shared analytical frameworks. They have given us the chance to do new things with narrative writing and to try to comprehend the world's problems from a variety of angles and locations. The author offers this reflection in the hopes that it might shed light on how to improve social science research for more extensive funding campaigns. Meanwhile, academics in India need to be smart about forming partnerships with international organizations that share their values and can be a "good fit" within the framework of analytical projects that are critically reflective and theoretically ambitious. In this brief, we will go over the methods and details of creating fruitful international research collaborations, as well as the advantages of working on research projects together. Finally, the importance of international funding agencies in establishing and maintaining a conducive environment for social science projects is highlighted, along with the importance of navigating various research landscapes and academic frameworks while adhering to established norms and best practices. In the end, it might be possible to establish lasting connections between prosperous worldwide social science initiatives and networks by creating a proactive plan for social science researchers from different institutions.

7.2. Positioning and Support

This article examines the impact of lobbying and policy on the development and survival of India's social science sector. The social sciences can increase their return on investment, gain a more prominent position on the national agenda, and have a greater impact on public discourse and funding priorities with well-planned and executed policy advocacy (Burchell, 2009). Promoting a national research culture that may bring about significant social regeneration and transformation and ensuring that high-quality research informs high-quality decision-making are both tremendously aided by the active participation of social scientists with lawmakers. Research by social scientists who are involved in policymaking is frequently more concerned with disseminating findings than with really informing policymaking (Kallçiu & Rapti, 2013). Those working to improve the

dissemination and use of research findings in the public sphere often employ the following tactics: (1) better informing policy-makers of their findings; (2) forming alliances between researchers and advocacy groups to amplify their voices and expand the pool of possible policy targets; (3) making more strategic use of the media to showcase findings with high policy relevance; (4) presenting results to policy-makers at the outset of their discussions; and (5) ensuring that the discussion of results is consistently on the agenda of decision-making bodies. The Right to Information Act and the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act are two examples of right-based legislation that the Parliament has recently passed. These laws are based on convincing research and demonstrate how good policy can be when grounded in solid social science research. But new legislative measures can't provide a lasting answer to ensure the social sciences in India stay strong and healthy. Since few issues of significant social importance can be adequately addressed by the combined efforts of any one academic field, an interdisciplinary approach is likely to yield the best results. By working together, all of the social sciences can maximize the effectiveness of their advocacy efforts and provide the best possible answers to a wide range of complicated topics. Here, we take a look at how several academic institutions and advocacy groups worked together to make the idea of a research policy network more widely known and put it into action.

7.3. Fresh Approaches to Research

In recent years, India's social science community has seen two main developments: first, the rapid expansion of the country's university system and the social science field as a whole; and second, a movement toward greater adherence to global trends in higher education and academic research, particularly a marked shift toward a more entrepreneurial approach to knowledge production. Few concerns have been posed concerning the patterns of this expansion in India's social sciences, which are expanding at a quick pace and becoming more globalized. One such question is: what forms does social scientific information primarily take, and how does it become circulated? What does it do? In what ways does it receive funding? What ties does it have to the business world, nonprofits, and

universities? The rise of the state as arbiter of many facets of Indian and the world's political, social, and economic affairs is strongly related to the development of social science in India and around the world. Policies associated with globalization and neoliberal restructuring are the current expressions of this.

When social scientists from India and other countries got together in the early 90s to discuss the potential of looking at natural resource management "through the lens" of common property, rather than just focusing on economics and biological laws and bivariate analyses to find "correlates" (Sullivan & Brockington, 2004), it signalled a change towards paying more attention to the larger social and normative contexts of economics. Because of this, it became more clear that existing research methods can't explain complicated, multi-scale social phenomena, particularly because they can't "capture" process or time as a variable. In this context, it is suggested to take a close look at the research landscape in India related to this. Environmental anthropologies, ethnobiology, and contentious mathematical and experimental modelling are some of the new fields that social scientists in India and elsewhere are investigating, with a focus on the Amazon rainforest. Qualitative research is advancing social science, thanks to academics in disciplines like gender studies and development sociology.

So far, very little of this has made it into Indian classrooms and policy books. Despite a rising understanding of the value-laden and ideological roots of most research, the majority still favours a detached positivist approach that emerged from a mix of British colonial expansion, Weberian state practices, and late European industrialization. The current educational climate is centered around instilling critical rationalist thought, which in turn fosters an atmosphere where quantitative methods and statistical testing are regarded as the "gold standard" in social research, and where responsibility and thoroughness are confused with the careless use of technical terms and formulas. Departmental and disciplinary barriers, as well as a lack of support for or funding for non-specialist or unconventional research methods, are also impeding implementation.

Through the monitoring of viewer 'hits,' web-postings, chatroom chats, conference-listserves, etc., a digital online analogue of the text-based social environment that researchers are 'experiencing' may be conceivable. Websites containing textual, audio, and graphic data can be built using free tools for collaborative web page production. Thus, study would centre on processes of inquiry or representation that make use of the mediated qualities of the online medium. At the same time, research may combine online and "off-line" methods, such as observing a "chatroom" user.

8. Conclusion

When it comes to solving the problems that strengthen Indian society, I believe the social sciences are indispensable. The social sciences can help alleviate poverty, inequality, and environmental degradation by giving a more comprehensive understanding of economic processes, social formations, and cultural and political activities. Nevertheless, modern India's social science history is defined by distinct processes, such as the British emphasis on "hard sciences," the Bengali babus' acquisition of "soft disciplines," and the subsequent estrangement of newly formed social science departments from any practical or vocational relevance. As a result, the area is stifled by structural limits imposed by established centres of advanced study and information production, as well as by demographic and geopolitical considerations that limit its maturation. By reassembling sociological predictions for the future, we can better see how current research can tell the field's story and shape its future, as well as how trends in the field can be described and even prescribed by scholars (Giulianotti & Thiel, 2023). As a result, a parallel metanarrative must be acknowledged in this developing field. First, there's the official consolidation of undergraduate, graduate, and research studies, as well as an internal record that summarizes the development of the organization. As a replacement for the ongoing festivals on forcefully "Indian" landscapes, the novels begin with an outline of how Ambedkar's planned cast library came to be in Dalit households. They then go on to explore the socio-religious creation of "nation-bound" anti-caste middle class celebrations. However, according to Kallçiu and Rrapti (2013), there has been an external perspective on the changing

dynamics between government agencies, professional organizations, academic institutions, and civil society in relation to current policies and advocacy initiatives aimed at democratizing statistics and/or phenomenological studies of informal entrepreneurship. The ongoing desirability of doing research and engaging in educational adventures at the interfaces of many fields, institutes, and networks is bolstered by the fact that both the convergence and counterpoints axiomatize an emerging integrative foundational reinterpretation. The objectives of social sciences include not only the pursuit of knowledge but also the application of this knowledge to enhance societal well-being. Social scientists strive to identify patterns of inequality, study the impact of policies, and contribute to the development of informed strategies for addressing social problems. Through empirical research and theoretical frameworks, social sciences aim to foster a deeper comprehension of human behaviour and societal structures, facilitating the formulation of evidence-based solutions for contemporary challenges (Hans 2024).

People in India are always bemoaning the fact that the social sciences do not have a strong academic tradition. There are a number of interconnected signs that point to the absence of a scholarly culture, which is defined as the presence of journals, publications (including edited volumes), and academic networks. Faculty and students at universities and other research institutions do not publish jointly, despite the fact that they build significant and long-lasting networks of collaboration there. The lack of "industry-academia-labour" linkages in social science research and publishing exacerbates this separation (Mahajan & Kumar, 2017). In addition, many libraries are underfunded, so students cannot get their hands on even the most fundamental texts, much alone supplementary reading materials like journals or novels.

The social sciences in India are epistemologically closed, according to another set of indicators; in other words, researchers there care little about the merits of competing views. Rather, arguments are evaluated according to a set of criteria: Vox India, vox Dei. The rupee represents the official seal of approval for a piece of work. Nothing is considered accomplished until the Indian people are involved. Or, to put it another

way, the people who rip the biggest holes in resources are the ones who can study them the best. Not much is done with the copious amounts of data that are freely available in newspapers, government publications, regional media, Indian statistical abstracts, etc., with the exception of census data. The work of a European is still thought of being rigorously empirical if the author cites the same sources. Future social science predictions are contingent on a number of factors, including but not limited to technological advancements within the social sciences, the degree to which these fields collaborate or compete with one another, and societal shifts that impact the social sciences' place in society (Brainbridge, 2003).

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Indigenization and the Decolonization of Social Sciences: Normative Visions and Structural Pathways

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Abstract: *Indigenization in the social sciences has emerged as a critical response to epistemic dependency and the dominance of Western frameworks in formerly colonized and peripheral societies. In the Indian context, it seeks to counter Eurocentric dominance by fostering theories and methods rooted in local histories, cultures, and lived experiences. This paper examines the rationale for indigenization, distinguishes it from decolonization, and explores strategies for its pursuit amid globalisation. Drawing on seminal contributions by Yogesh Atal, Krishna Kumar, Syed H. Alatas, Syed F. Alatas, Oommen, A. K. Saran, and others, it argues for a pluralistic and flexible indigenous sociology that enriches global discourse without lapsing into parochialism. Atal underscores the normative dimensions of indigenization—self-awareness, alternative perspectives, cultural specificity, and resistance to both false universalism and false nationalism—while Kumar complements this vision with an analytic typology of structural, substantive, and theoretic forms that reshape institutions, research agendas, and conceptual frameworks. Together, these perspectives reveal indigenization as both an intellectual project and a practical agenda: liberating scholarships from borrowed consciousness while building institutional capacities and locally grounded theories.*