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Vol. - XX, No. - XXIII



Eds.

Subir Dhar, Ronan Paterson, Bryan Reynolds, Papia Mitra

A Special Publication of
Tagore Gandhi Institute /
The Shakespeare Society of Eastern India



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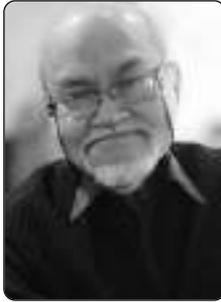
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In Memoriam

Shakespeare Society of Eastern India & Tagore-Gandhi Institute
mourns the passing away of



Amitava Roy
(1947–2024)

Professor Emeritus, Bankura University,
Former Shakespeare Professor & Head, Department of English,
Rabindra Bharati University,
Former Director, Shakespeare Centre for Advanced Research,
Rabindra Bharati University,
Executive President, Shakespeare Society of Eastern India,
Globally renowned Theatre Director and Actor.
You left thousands of students and admirers disconsolate
on 12th April, 2024
Farewell and Rest in Peace after your journey's end.

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Contents

From the Editor's Desk	i
1. Refuting Aristotle: The Rejection of Linear Plot in Bengali Drama – Tapu Biswas	1
2. “Can the Subaltern Speak?”: A Comparative Study on Rabindranath Tagore’s Dance Drama <i>Chandalika</i> and Nagraj Manjule’s Movie <i>Fandry</i> – Rituparna Chakraborty, Arunita Baul Guha and Riya Dutta	17
3. Idealising Beauty Standards: A Study of Mythological Characters in the World of Media – Shreyoshi Dhar	21
4. Women Empowerment and Communication: Unveiling the Nexus – Tapan Kumar Rana and Moupikta Mukherjee	28
5. The Impact of OTT Platforms on Traditional Broadcasting: Challenges and Opportunities – Natasha Chatterjee	34
6. Unveiling Disability and Body Politics: A Foucauldian Exploration through Media Lens – Agnidepto Datta	41
7. Conditioned Agency and Fluid Character Roles in Harold Pinter’s <i>The Birthday Party</i> – Debarshi Arathdar	46
8. Analysing Mental Health Representation in <i>Thirteen Reasons Why</i> on Netflix: Impact on Perceptions and Stigma – Sonakshi Mukherjee	51

9.	Forceful Making of a Woman: A Study of <i>Dhanyee Meye</i> from Feminist Angle – Anirban Banerjee	58
10.	Reconstructing the Social Imaginary: A Critique of Non-normative Identities in Rituparno Ghosh’s <i>Chitrangada: The Crowning Wish</i> and Sanjay Nag’s <i>Memories in March</i> – Tirna Sadhu	63
11.	Theories of Media and Culture: An Emerging Trend and Approach of those in the 21st Century – Anup Kundu and Shantanu Siuli	72
12.	De-Familiarizing the Familiar: The Strategies behind the Dystopian Narratives in the OTT Platform in India – Manidip Chakraborty and Shubham Bhattacharjee	82
13.	Narrative of Political Communication through opinion and Exit Poll: An Experience in West Bengal, 2014-2021 – Samadrita Mukherjee and Pramiti Roy	89
14.	The Role of Memes in Political Discourse and Public Opinion Formation: A Study – Pritha Misra	101
15.	The Rise of Citizen Journalism and User Generated Content: Implications for News Quality and Credibility – Mahendra Kumar Jena	109
16.	Impact of Social Media on Politics and Public Opinion in India: A Comparative Study – Moumita Chakraborty	122
17.	Gandhian Views on Freedom of Expression and Liberty of Press: An Analysis of Selected Texts of Young India from 1924 to 1931 – Srabani Das	132
18.	Environmental Risk: Communication and Comprehension of Youth and their Attitudes – Bhavya Katyal	143

19.	The Discourse of Aesthetics and Cognitive Elements of Culture in Rabindrasangeet – Subhrajyoti Kundu	174
20.	The Shift towards an Extreme Culture through the Apparent Reinforcement of Gender-based violence in media: A Study of Media Effects on Intimate Partner Relationships. – Srijani Bose	193
21.	Major Perceptions of Ideal Gender Roles Framed by Facebook Women Groups of West Bengal: An Application of the Backstage Theory – Subinita Paul	204
22.	Media, Culture and Tribes: An Analysis of Various Social Issues – Sayan Mukherjee	217
23.	Subverting History through Panegyrists: Interrogating Manipulation and Memory in <i>Oru Vadakkan Veeragatha</i> (1989) within the Framework of New Historicism – Harinandana R, Balagopan & Shibani Chakraverty Aich	228
24.	The White Saviour and the Black Help: Re-Drawing Racial Discriminatory Patterns in <i>The Help</i> – Sreedevi G & Shibani Chakraverty Aich	238
25.	Unveiling Cultural Diversity in Indian Literature: A Comparative Analysis – Sourav Chatterjee, Soumen Nath and Kallal Banerjee	248
	Editors note on TGI Manifesto on Education and Culture in India	268
	Our Contributors and Editors	271

From the Editor's Desk:

This issue is wideranging focusing on several themes. It takes traditional theatre and films into consideration, moves onto OTT platforms, explores impact of digital media on mass psyche, memes, and polls as new mediums of communication with the political public, Rabindrasangeet and how to tackle climate change. Nearly every topic that is of relevance today can be found here. Veritably a feast for the mind!

Dr. Tapu Biswas argues that in Bengal the first non-Aristotelian drama – rejecting Aristotle's theory of three unities – was created by Badal Sarkar. His first famous play *Evam Indrajit* was not a drama in the conventional sense; it was according to the playwright himself a collection of feelings and impressions. Other plays like *Baki Itihas* which can be regarded as a kind of sequel to *Evam Indrajit*, *Pagla Ghora*, *Nayan Kabirer Pala* bring out the theme that in today's world mere socio-economic or psychological explanation is not enough; the condition of modern man and insignificance of life in today's world comes into play. Dr. Biswas elaborately brings out these aspects of the plays.

Dr. Rituparna Chakraborty compares Rabindranath Tagore's *Chandalika* with Nagraj Manjule's Movie *Fandry*. Both focus on the plight of Dalits. The heroines are trapped in their castes and cannot escape, but they protest. They love men belonging to 'higher' castes/status but cannot have their dreams fulfilled. Chakraborty brings out how the sense of inferiority becomes ingrained among people traditionally treated as untouchables but revolt against oppression is possible when they gain self-realization.

Shreyoshi Dhar brings out how as beauty standards change through the decades, the entertainment industry also changes the way mythological characters are portrayed on screen. In earlier versions the heroes and heroines were more ordinary, as if they are our domestic

partners; but in later versions they are more cosmopolitan and sophisticated. Dhar points out that thanks to commercial demands, even mythological characters cannot escape the narrow standards set by the Beauty Industry.

Tapan Kumar Rana and **Dr. Moupikta Mukherjee** discusses how women can be empowered by communicating effectively, particularly in media. Movements like MeToo# brings out the pervasive nature of systematic gender oppression in everyday lives by providing women a platform where they can speak and share experiences. Thus, communication and empowerment are linked together.

Natasha Chatterjee explores the ways in which OTT platforms have challenged traditional broadcasting media. OTT content can be broadcast directly to viewers' device at a time of their choosing and location compared to movie or TV which cannot be enjoyed at will. The content is wide, offering access to many channels and different types of content while TV can offer limited number of channels. The middleman is removed since OTT is directly available to the viewer. Chatterjee observes that traditional media is in a crisis because of growing dominance of OTT, but they can take this as an opportunity as well.

Agnidepto Datta critiques the ways how disability and body politics is portrayed in media. The able body is regarded as normative and so the disabled body becomes a source of disturbance, even a challenge to authority. Datta takes the help of Foucault's theory to demonstrate how media portrays the disabled as one-dimensional characters, thus marginalizing them and even validating discrimination against them.

Debarshi Arathdar analyzes how Pinter's *Birthday Party* portrays the dilemma of modern man who tries to articulate his presence beyond passive conditioning. The characters suffer from insecurity and apprehension which paralyzes their will. Arathdar points out that Pinter denies them agency as such since they do not have the will and thus there is no definite ending to the play, only eternal deferment.

Sonakshi Mukherjee reviews the portrayal of mental health in the series *13 Reasons Why* on Netflix. The series deals with topics

like depression, self-harm, and how to treat them. Mukherjee concludes that the positive aspect is that such a series removes stigma from mental health problems while the negative aspect is that some viewers might find suicide, self-harms to be glamorously portrayed.

Anirban Banerjee carries out a feminist reconstruction of the 1971 film *Dhanyee Meye*. He shows how the female protagonist is used as a tool by her guardian and given in marriage to keep a lifeless valuable object within his control.

Dr. Tirna Sadhu discusses two works Rituparno Ghosh's "*Chitragada: The Crowning Wish*" and Sanjay Nag's "*Memories in March*" to show how social identities can be reconstructed. The first focuses on gender fluidity where the man's desire to experience motherhood challenges social norms; the second focuses on how shared grief can overcome communication barriers between 'straight' characters and homosexual characters. Both works focus on moving away from the normative while reflecting on complexities of social relationships.

Anup Kundu and **Dr. Shantanu Siuli** focuses on how the rise of digital media and accompanying digital literacy is gradually leading to homogenization of culture, globalization, instant gratification, and rebuilding of new social narratives that influence politics. Rise of newer technologies only enforce these trends.

Manidip Chakraborty and **Dr. Shubham Bhattacharjee** analyzes the strategy of Dystopian narratives on OTT platforms. Series like *Leila*, *Ghoul* brings out the propaganda of authoritarian states and the mechanism they use to impose control. Chakraborty and Bhattacharjee point out that such series also serve as a warning to the audience – they must not allow such a state of affairs to come to pass.

Samadrita Mukherjee and **Dr. Pramiti Roy** takes up a novel topic – opinion polls and exit polls in politics. They focus on the experience in West Bengal from 2014-2021. Their argument is that these polls are tools of political communication, different from standard political philosophies. Such polls are usually accurate though in some cases due to hidden factors they might not reflect reality in toto. But they tell us about the narratives of common people in real time.

Pritha Misra studies the comparatively new field of how memes in political discourse can influence public opinion. She analyzes certain memes and finds that they are of great use for individuals and parties to convey a message and that they simplify complex political issues and thus public can more easily digest them and share them.

Dr. Mahendra Kumar Jena questions how credible citizen journalism is. Traditional journalists are trained in their field and act as gatekeepers of information. Citizen journalism makes the profession more inclusive and democratic and authentic; but also brings in the issues of credibility and bias. User-driven content on social media must adhere to ethical standards and be transparent.

Dr. Moumita Chakraborty studies how social media impacts public opinion. In India digital content has influenced politics for a long time. Nowadays its influence is growing and thus it must be studied carefully.

Srabani Das analyzes selected portion of Gandhi's *Young India* to find out his views on freedom of expression and freedom of press. Her findings that Gandhi believed in them but he did not write much on them, particularly because desiring freedom of press during British Raj was equivalent of insanity.

Bhavya Katyal focuses on climate change and the risks it brings and how to communicate effectively about it to the youth. Young people were interviewed and while many argued that cultural shift is necessary to tackle environmental problems, others argued that preserving culture leads to respecting and preserving nature. Katyal concludes that culture, inequality, lived experience, urbanization, religion, different social experiences all intersect and interact to frame Climate Change as a matter of wider social concern.

Subhrajyoti Kundu discusses how Rabindrasangeet presents aesthetics and cognitive elements. He discusses Tagore's own opinion on the topics and analyzes songs to find out their aesthetic and cognitive appeal.

Srijani Bose discusses how media portrays affects intimate relationships. Women are disproportionately the victims of male violence,

whether at home or outside. Media portrayals often sensationalizes these aspects and can normalize them leading to escalation of such abuse and women's acceptance of them. Bose argues that there is a lacune regarding such studies and much more research needs to be done.

Subinita Paul focuses on another new topic – Facebook groups of women, specially in West Bengal. Social media platforms enable women to connect to each other, but also allows stereotypes to flourish. In her analysis of Facebook posts, Paul finds out that mothers in their roles as primary caregivers are idealized and women talk to each other focusing on such roles more. Such backstages provide social capital, friendship and self-esteem. Thus Facebook becomes a site to construct gender roles.

Sayan Mukherjee studies the condition of various tribes that live all over India. However general public is usually unaware of their experiences and problems. The media helps to bring out their issues to the mainstream. Particularly folk media and traditional media helps them to retain their cultural heritage.

Harinandana R, Balagopan and **Dr. Shibani Chakraverty Aich** demonstrate how in *Oru Vadakkan Veeragatha*, manipulation and memory play crucial roles in constructing historical narratives, reflecting the New Historicist perspective that views history as a product of various power struggles and interpretations. The film depicts the manipulation of historical events and characters' memories to serve specific agendas, highlighting the subjective nature of history. This aligns with New Historicism's emphasis on the interplay between literature, history, and culture, revealing how texts both shape and are shaped by their historical contexts.

Sreedevi G and **Dr. Shibani Chakraverty Aich** provide a vivid portrayal of racial discriminatory patterns in the context of 1960s Mississippi. Through the characters and their interactions, the film illustrates the systemic racism ingrained in society, particularly within the domestic sphere. It exposes how African American maids are marginalized, exploited, and subjected to degrading treatment by their white employers. The film also delves into the complexities of race

relations, power dynamics, and the courage required to challenge the status quo. Overall, *The Help* sheds light on the pervasive nature of racial discrimination and the resilience of those who resist it.

Sourav Chatterjee, Soumen Nath and Dr. Kallal Banerjee explore cultural diversity in Indian literature through a comparative analysis, offering a rich tapestry of perspectives, themes, and narratives reflective of the country's vast and varied landscape. From the intricacies of regional languages to the nuances of customs and traditions, Indian literature encompasses a multitude of voices and experiences. By comparing works from different regions, languages, and time periods, one can discern common themes such as identity, tradition, modernity, and social change, while also appreciating the unique cultural expressions of each literary tradition. This comparative approach not only illuminates the diversity within Indian literature but also highlights its role in shaping collective consciousness and fostering dialogue across cultures.

Happy Reading

Subir Dhar & Papia Mitra

REFUTING ARISTOTLE: The Rejection of Linear Plot in Bengali Drama

Tapu Biswas

ABSTRACT

The present paper argues that the real non-Aristotelian drama was born in Bengal not under the influence of Brecht, but through the experimentations of Badal Sircar, the most significant and innovative Bengali playwright since Tagore. It was a gradual rather than a drastic rejection of the Aristotelian idea of the unity of Action which entails the temporally linear growth of the ‘story’ element of a play. From *Evam Indrajit*, in which a montage-like treatment of the banality of middle-class life conceals a linear story-line relating to Indrajit’s life, Sircar had moved on towards incorporating alternate versions of stories in a play, and further on to combined fragments of several stories relating to several people, eschewing the unities of action as well as of the hero to convey his philosophy of love, life and death. His introduction of the unity of Theme rather than that of Action finally led him to such non-proscenium plays as *Michhil* and *Bhoma*, plays which wholly eschew the ‘story’ element in a play. The impact of his experimentation left a deep mark on Bengali theatre by encouraging later significant and powerful playwrights such as Nabhendu Sen and Manoj Mitra in their plays *Nayan Kabirer Pala* and *Kinu Kaharer Thetar* — both of them landmark plays in modern Bengali theatre.

Keywords : Aristotelian, myth, social, experiment, Third Theatre, montage, indigenous.

Like perhaps all theatres the world over, Bengali theatre, whether of content mythical, historical, or social, has been story-oriented from its birth. And significantly, the demand for neatly turned out stories was most urgent in realistic plays, although there is a universal agreement that real life does not take place like a story. Among the major modern western

playwrights, Luigi Pirandello was among the first to methodically challenge the notion of reality itself and thereby depreciate the relevance of neatly constructed story lines for the theatre. The first major wave of western dramatic influence on modern Bengali theatre came with several plays in translation, significantly including two plays by Pirandello: *Six Characters*, and *Henry the Fourth*. Moreover, the subsequent experience of the so called ‘Absurd Drama’— especially that of Beckett’s *Waiting for Godot*— did a lot to open the Bengali mind to the possibility of writing plays that do not cling to a storyline. The object of the present paper is not to trace western influences on Bengali urban theatre (which was modelled on the European theatre anyway), but rather to suggest how, through a series of indigenous explorations, Bengali drama, or a part of it, rose above these obvious influences, and came to eschew the story element altogether in the play.

In a sense, it all began with Badal Sircar’s *Evam Indrajit*. An interesting fact about this text is that the playwright himself was not certain whether what he had written was a ‘play’ at all. According to him, what he had written was neither poetry, nor narrative, nor a drama, but just a representation of some thoughts and feelings which could not be contained inside any specific format pertaining to this composition. Concealed behind this admission, however, there seems to be present an acknowledged preference for form over content, or presentational mode over story.

Evam Indrajit opens with an inverted echo of Pirandello, with an Author in search of some Characters, because the playwright lacks a ‘story’ to build a play upon. His helplessness comes from knowing nothing of the real, productive, and suffering lives that form the core of human existence: the hard-working masses constantly struggling to wrest a livelihood out of life. Therefore, he picks up four spectators at random, and tries to build a play out of the experiences of their middle class lives. But on further exploration he finds it all extremely banal – that there is nothing in their lives to write a play about. Every aspect of their lives — academic, conjugal, employment, career advancement, is stereotypical. The monotony is conveyed in this trial poem by the author:

এক— দুই— তিন
এক— দুই— তিন— দুই— এক— দুই— তিন
চার— পাঁচ— ছয়
চার— পাঁচ— ছয়— পাঁচ— চার— পাঁচ— ছয়
সাত— আট— নয়

সাত- আট- নয়- আট- সাত- আট- নয়
নয়- আট- সাত- ছয়- পাঁচ- চার- তিন- দুই- এক।

One—two—three

One—two—three—two—one—two—three

Four—five—six

Four—five—six- five—four—five—six

Seven-eight—nine

Seven-eight—nine—eight—seven-eight—nine

Nine—eight—seven—six—five—four—three—two—one

The characters are said to be Amal, Bimal, Kamal, and Nirmal, but it is soon clarified that the last person is not Nirmal, but Indrajit. He is only member of the group of four who sounds a discordant note in the otherwise drab orchestra of middle-class existence. He is a man who dreams of a different existence, aspires to change society, gets into a socially disapproved love-affair with his cousin, travels, and thinks in poetry:

ভেসে থাকি আশ্তিকের দৈন্য নিয়ে
কুটোয় এলিয়ে রাখি জীবনের ভার।
মুছে গেছে অন্য পার কুয়াশার সাদা দীর্ঘশ্বাসে।
মেঘের ওপারে যত সোনামোড়া রাজ্যপাট আছে,
আকাশে তারার কাছে যত স্বর্গ ভাসে,
এ প্রবাসে সবি মিথ্যে হলো।
জোলো সাস্ত্রনার বুলি ছেড়ে দাও,
কেড়ে নাও বিশ্বাসের অন্ধ ঠুলি
ডুবে দেখো কতখানি গেলে মেলে তল।
মানুষ সচল।
মানুষ আশ্চর্যতম প্রাণী :
ডুবো পাথরের ভিতে পাতালে সে পাতে রাজধানী।

I float with the poverty of a believer
Laying the burden of living on a straw.
The white sigh of the fog erases the other shore,
All the golden kingdoms beyond the clouds,
All the heavens floating near the stars in the sky
Prove false in this exile.
Leave off the jargon of watery sympathies

Rob me of the blinkers of faith,
Sink, and see how deep a dive brings you to the floor.
The mobile Man
The most wondrous Being
His kingdom he founds on sunken stones in Hades.

Indrajit changes jobs, travels around, eschews marriage — or perhaps, alternatively, he does get married — but keeps alive his love for Manasi (who, incidentally, doesn't marry). His failure to find meaning even in domesticity becomes a part of his spiritual crisis which is inaccessible to others. Finally, he is so tired and so convinced of his mediocrity that he contemplates giving up his objectless quest for the purpose of his existence and becomes a part of the drabness around him and as someone contemplating suicide. But he cannot achieve even that, because he is not Amal, Bimal, or Kamal, but is Indrajit.

Hence, what had begun with an expression of the impossibility of finding a story with a neat and coherent plot, does after all turn out to be the story of the life of Indrajit, who in despair hides behind the social identity of Nirmal. The name of the play itself (*And Indrajit*) is indicative of the centrality of this character in the play; and what had purported to be a pastiche of the lives of several people turns out in a bird's-eye view to be the somewhat romantic story of one person set against the banality of the life that the other characters embody. It is only the formal treatment of this story as a dramatic structure that gives the play its apparently fragmented appearance.

But the success of the play was phenomenal. After this epochal play one would have expected the playwright to follow it up with more plays along the same lines, having had found the 'true way' to write a modern play, so to speak. But contrary to popular expectation, Badal Sircar went on to write in the regular dramatic mode — witness his subsequent plays *Kabi-Kahini* and *Ballavpurer Rupkatha* — two of the richest and neatly turned out hilarious Bengali comedies. Both were great plays; but curiously, not nearly as commercially successful as Badal Sircar's later serious plays *Baki Itihaas* and *Pagla Ghora*, both produced by the theatre group Bohurupee, although Shambhu Mitra, the legendary actor associated with the group, appeared in neither. In the absence of this 'star attraction' on stage, the reason for this success must be sought for in the structure of the plays themselves.

The remarkable handling of the story line of *Evam Indrajit* was initially overlooked because it was regarded as being essentially a poetic drama

and altogether too startling an experience to encourage cool analysis. In fact, it was promptly dumped into the then fashionable category of ‘Absurd Drama’ at its first appearance. But *Baki Itihaas*, the play which Sircar considered to be a thematic sequel to *Evam Indrajit*, shows an even more blatant disregard of the Aristotelian ‘single action’ principle in dramaturgy. Here is the outline of the play in brief:

It is Sunday morning in a childless couple’s home. Saradindu is a college teacher, a Lecturer in the academic discipline of Bengali Literature, and an essayist; his wife Basanti who is professionally a school teacher, is an emerging story writer in search of a plot for a good story. They come across the news of the suicide of a man called Sitanath, whom they think they had once met for a few brief hours. This becomes the starting point of a story that Basanti writes; and as she reads it out to Saradindu, the following action of the story occupies the stage:

Sitanath’s wife Kana had spent her youth in extreme poverty. Her mother had died of consumption without medical care. Her eldest sister was worked to death at her in-law’s house. The second sister escaped a similar fate by becoming a rich man’s mistress. Kana, the youngest, is obsessed with the idea of possessing a house of her own. She idolizes her dead father, who, she believes, would have saved them from all this suffering. She is approached by Sitanath’s rich friend Nikhil who deeply loves her, but she disregards his advances.

Sitanath had one bought a piece of land for Kana, and is now saving up every bit of money to build a house on it, knowing of Kana’s compulsive desire for economic security. But it gradually becomes clear that the Kana’s apparently dead father had actually been long incarcerated in jail for theft. After his release, he had been bleeding Sitanath for money—blackmailing him with the threat of disclosing his dark history to his daughter. Sitanath had concurred in order to sustain his lie to Kana that her father was dead. But now his savings have petered out; his land is mortgaged, and as the court bailiff comes to his house, everything comes to light and his wife leaves him for Nikhil. Devastated, Sitanath commits suicide.

From this story-line strongly reminiscent of Ibsen’s *A Doll’s House* (and the characters of Engstrand in *Ghosts* and Mr.

Doolittle in *Pygmalion*), we return to the present. Saradindu thinks that Basanti's story does not adequately explain Sitanath's suicide which must have had a deeper psychological reason behind it. At Basanti's insistence, he writes his own version of the story, of why Sitanath had committed suicide.

Sitanath then appears onstage as a school headmaster. His repressed paedophilia has caused him to rusticate a student for reading Nabokov's *Lolita*: a vicarious punishment on himself for his latent sexual perversity. As he comes to understand the reason for his 'moral' fury, he also realizes that his present attachment to a beautiful girl child signals a resurgence of his long repressed perverse urges. He retracts his decree of rustication, and commits suicide to save both himself and the child. This story also reminds us of Hopkins' stirring psychological play *This Story of Yours*.

Coming back to the present again, before retiring to bed, Basanti asks what had caused the *real-life* Sitanath to commit suicide. Before the alone Saradindu now, the spirit of Sitanath appears. Apparently a mental projection, the spirit demonstrates that Saradindu's life had become a bundle of banalities under a veneer of a desperate make-believe that life is still meaningful and satisfying. This is the history of all men who continue living their empty self-satisfied lives like Amal, Bimal, and Kamal, although the 'remainders of history'—literally the *Baki Itihaas*—of mankind have been nothing but records of cruelty, torture, war, and murder. Sitanath insists that the question is not why he has committed suicide, but rather why Saradindu still has not. Saradindu has no answer to this; and as he is about to follow Sitanath's example, when reality suddenly intervenes in the form of the news of his promotion to Assistant Professorship. He is relieved and elated, but then a nagging awareness of the *Baki Itihaas* starts haunting him.

The playwright is clearly proposing here that socio-economic and psychological explanations of our actions are no longer adequate in the contemporary world. The awareness of the history and the situation of man in this world, an awareness of the insignificance of the lives that we live, is the major factor here. But to convey this idea cleverly used two plays within his play—two cameos of formal dramaturgy—both intense

pieces of social and psychological realism that cancel each other out by implication, and are finally negated by the *unreal* ghost episode that paradoxically reveals the *reality* of this historical dimension of our existence.

The theme of the finale too was not really an invented one. Consider the following lines from Jibanananda Das ‘আট বছর আগের একদিন’ (Once Eight Years Ago):

জানি, তবু জানি
নারীর হৃদয়, প্রেম, শিশু, গৃহ, নয় সবখানি।
অর্থ নয়, কীর্তি নয়, সচ্ছলতা নয়,
আরও এক বিপন্ন বিশ্বয়
আমাদের অন্তর্গত রক্তের ভিতরে
খেলা করে।
আমাদের ক্লান্ত করে
ক্লান্ত, ক্লান্ত করে।
লাশকাটা ঘরে
সেই ক্লান্তি নাই
তাই
লাশকাটা ঘরে
চিৎ হয়ে শুয়ে আছে টেবিলের পরে।

I know, yet I do know
That woman's heart, love, child, home, aren't everything.
Not wealth, achievements, not ease of life,
But a more imperiled wonder
Within our involved blood
Disports itself.
Tires us out
Tires, tires us.
In the dissection room
There is no such fatigue
And so
In the dissection room
He lies on his back on the surgery board.

What the playwright has added as the backdrop to this unearthly feeling of an undefined imperiled wonder is the sketchy background of

Saradindu's life, and the defined issue of human cruelty. The banality of Saradindu's life is demonstrated here by the re-enactment of snippets of apparently meaningful communication between husband and wife (which we have already seen earlier on the stage — and which, re-viewed now in the present context) suddenly appear banal: insignificant empty exchanges which sum up the substance of their conjugal life.

The interpretation of the play hinges on a curious question. Neither of the couple was sure that the reported suicide was the Sitanath they had previously met. But then, whose ghost is it that appears at the end of the play? Is the ghost a real one, or a projection of Saradindu's own suppressed awareness of the shared guilt of mankind? This question leads us to consider the crisis behind suicide as neither a material one, nor a psychological one, but rather a historical crisis that issues from one's awareness of the accumulated sins of inhumanity perpetrated on one's fellow beings; his historical inheritance and his responsibility.

As suggested earlier, *Baki Itihaas* defies the Aristotelian concept of the unity of Action in as much as it is built on three different stories built around the character of Sitanath (and Saradindu, by extension). This should have jarred upon the theatrical sensibility of the contemporary Bengali audience brought up on the tradition of witnessing 'a neat story' on the stage. But the fact that it did not do so indicates a great deal about the force that *Evam Indrajit* had exerted on the minds of contemporary theatre-goers who had been encouraged to look at theatre from a fresh perspective. This fact is attested to also by the huge popularity of *Pagla Ghora*, where even the unity of character was eschewed, causing an even greater fragmentation of the story line.

The popularity of *Pagla Ghora* was occasionally sardonically ascribed to the fact that the audience got to enjoy four love-stories at the price of only one theatre ticket. But while this may have been applicable for the appreciation of a certain small section of the audience, a deeper reason was perhaps that the play is grounded on a more profound unity — the unity of theme — which holds the play together and presents a more universal picture of human nature with all its illusions, vanities, failures, and memories of guilt that turn man's life into an organism of mechanical existence.

Pagla Ghora presents a similar but infinitely more complex structure than did *Baki Itihaas*. Structurally, it is a potpourri of the love experiences of four people: the elderly Kartik (a village compounder); the older but still

vigorous Satkari (a labour contractor); the youthful Himadri (a school teacher); and the middle-aged Shashi (the local Postmaster). Mutual acquaintances, they have come to cremate a rich man's young mistress expired under doubtful circumstances. They drink whiskey to keep themselves warm, play cards, and egged on by the spirit of the dead girl, gradually recall how they had betrayed the call of love in their own lives and caused tragedies in the lives of the women concerned.

If the immediate stage action consists of this quartet killing time by playing cards, and consuming alcohol, the stories come out through flashes of unconnected flashbacks from their lives — ordered in their apparent arbitrariness — with the spirit of the dead girl, eager for love stories, hovering in the background and urging them to disclose their various pasts.

A girl from high society had fallen hopelessly in love with Himadri, and he had rather cruelly rejected her on the ground that their statuses, and consequently their life-styles, would not match. As a man committed to his ideals, he had strongly disapproved of the girl's wealthy background. The heartbroken girl had crashed into a tree while drunkenly driving a car at full speed. Himadri had gone to cremate her.

Satkari had rescued a poor girl from some goons, and the girl had become a willing slave to him, asking not marriage, but only the favour of being his willing slave. But Satkari, fearing that such a permanent liaison might damage both his reputation and his business prospects, arranged for her to stay with a respectable family. There she was used, handed over to another, sold again and again, and finally dumped in a brothel. Here Satkari had discovered her dead in the room next to the one he himself was occupying the same night. Satkari had performed the last rites — the *mukhagni* — for her, as a husband would have.

The fiancée of Shashi's cousin had fallen in love with Shashi. Shashi was fully aware of his cousin's cruel and perverted nature, but he had refused to listen to the girl's pleas because of a mistaken sense of personal honour and integrity. Tortured by her jealous husband, the girl had finally immolated herself, and Shashi had gone to cremate her.

The story of the girl now being cremated (named simply as “the Girl” in the play) is revealed through tattered pieces of narration

— not scenes in flashback. She, the only child of a poverty-stricken father was married off to an insane scion of a rich family. She never saw her husband, was cooped up in a big house, and was desperate for a little air and light. Finally, she ran away from her in-law's place only to find her father bedridden at home. A local benefactor had helped them with money in exchange of 'favours' extorted from her. Finally, she had committed suicide, because she could not find any meaning in living life any longer. She desperately desired the frenzied horse of love, the 'Pagla Ghora', to play havoc with her life, even if it destroyed her like it did with the lives of the other three. But the frenzied horse had never come her way.

And finally, there comes the story of Kartik the compounder. To the other three he retells his personal story as the story of a cobbler who had loved a young girl, but couldn't even dream of talking to her. The girl had grown up, had been married off, and had returned home when the cobbler had once again seen her ... and there Kartik's story trailed off unfinished.

In the final movement of the play, we see in a flashback "the Girl" coming to Kartik to ask for a dose of lethal poison, and Kartik asking for a week's time to convince her that her life still has possibilities, if only she lives her life through. Actually, he needed time to steel himself for a declaration of love at the age of forty-nine. He had even promised to provide her with the requested dose of poison if he failed to convince her; but the girl was past having faith in such possibilities, and ended her life by hanging herself.

As the flaming pyre finishes its job offstage, Satu, Shashi, and Himadri go out to tidy things up there. Kartik brings out a packet of poison, dilutes it in his drink, and is about to swallow it, when the spirit of the Girl, an invisible witness to all the stories, suddenly realizes that she had, after all, been loved by Kartik, that the frenzied horse had indeed been at her door. She desperately begs Kartik to drag her remains out of the fire so she can feel the frenzied horse stampede her life— but in vain. Kartik cannot hear her ghostly pleas. About to swallow the poison, Kartik suddenly throws it away, wondering, whether it is true that everything is possible if one lives on.

While it is possible to talk at length about the intricate dramaturgy and the verbal texture of the play, there is space here to only point out that the central story of Kartik and the Girl, which occupies the smallest segment of time in the play, is mostly narration, and avoids all the emotionally wrought crises that characterize the other three stories. In effect, it is virtually empty. So one may reasonably ask: where does the dramatic core of the play lie?

What the play finally tells us is that none these stories — not even that of Kartik the compounder — are conclusive in a finite sense. What they indicate instead is that even if life is ultimately about suffering and death, it is better to die sucked into a vortex of passion than to decline ossified, clinging to given sets of conventions and ‘ideals’, refusing life its due. The central enigmatic proposition of the play remains almost a paradox to us — and therein lies its strength. And this, incidentally, may throw some light on the question of why Aristotle differentiated *mythos* from *praxis*: the plot from the action.

Evam Indrajit was not only highly appreciated in spite of its lack of a unified story, but it also inspired generations of playwrights to think differently about dramaturgy, and it made later theatre directors ask questions about the nature of the theatrical experience itself. Reviewing the play from the distance of nearly half a century, one is intrigued less by its achievement than by the question: was the play really as radically nonconformist as it was held to be? Whether it was because Sircar was at that time less mature as a playwright, or because of certain autobiographical strains suspended in the play, or because a good playwright can often unconsciously apprehend the expectations of his audience, the central story-line of *Indrajit* pivots on the theme of love: the perennial weakness (or perhaps the strength) of the Bengali middle-class mindset. The action of the play distracts our attention away from Indrajit’s dissatisfaction with the banality around him and his struggle to rise against it, and towards his unfulfilled love for Manasi, whom he proposes to marry, but who is too convention-bound to accept his proposal. In the end, it seems that Indrajit failed because Manasi did not marry him. In fact, Manasi herself once suggests so.

This issue is deliberately left unsettled, with no clear-cut conclusion drawn: but its emotional effect on the audience is unmistakable. One

should not forget that the play was written at a time when the first generation of youths born in independent India had come of age; when the idea of a 'love-marriage' was a living and vibrant myth which all dreamed of living up to (however few might actually have succeeded), and when the silver screen couple Uttam Kumar and Suchitra Sen ruled the waves of mass emotion. But from here to *Pagla Ghora* is like an epic quest in search of an non-Aristotelian drama.

A late example of fragmentation exemplified in Bengali theatre would be Manoj Mitra's *Kinu Kaharer Thetar* ('The Theatre of Kinu the Kahaar') — a dramaturgical exegesis in four parts — in which the present reality, historical reality, the life in the theatre, and the world of the dramatic story interact with each other to build up and break down the developing story repeatedly— a life, a reality, and a play set in a world that exists no more, but which backlashes onto our present reality with furious political satire. Though too complicated a play to handle within the span of a short essay, the play appears unique in its construction until one realizes that it actually has a predecessor: *Nayan Kabirer Pala*, Nabendu Sen's first play, which is arguably his greatest piece of dramatic construction. It cannot really be summarized, but a rough outline may be hazarded here at the risk of watering down its intense theatrical essence.

Kabir and Nayan, two played-out stage veterans now engaged as mere stage hands are waiting at the end of a play for the transport van to load the stage equipments, and to go home. But the van is delayed, and to kill time, they decide to put up a play in front of an imagined audience.

As usual, they search for a story, and when all types of stories fail, they settle for a dream that Nayan had once dreamt — about a strange man coming into his room and claiming to be his father. The man presented such incontrovertible arguments in his favour that Nayan was simply flabbergasted. On the verge of accepting the intruder as his father, Nayan had woken up to find it all a dream.

They improvise on this story, building arguments and probing the concept of identity, with Kabir impersonating Nayan, and Nayan the interloper in his dream. The story develops, is interrupted, is begun anew, and is carried to its dramatic climax to be suddenly dissolved because the dream had ended here. But the two continue improvising an end in which the dream-father and dream-son murder the other in alternate versions of the story, thereby demonstrating their skills in diverse types of formal acting.

However, all their versions of the ending remain undecided as Kabir, in the process of searching the son's dead body, discovers a copy of a letter that Kabir himself had written to his fiancée Manidipa. Furious at this, he kills Nayan with a single blow. Terrified at the thought of the consequences, Kabir breaks down weeping, when Nayan, who was merely 'acting' dead suddenly speaks. Now they are friends again, as they acknowledge that Manidipa had never existed in reality, and that both had been in love with the same *imaginary* woman. In their happiness, they enter into kind of trance. Suddenly the lights fail on the stage. In the semi-darkness, they begin to talk in a strange rhythmical poetry:

- কবির : মণির লেখা যে সব চিঠি আমার কাছে, সেসব কিন্তু
নয়ন : আপনারই লেখা।
কবির : কী আশ্চর্য! কী করে জানলে?
নয়ন : আমার কাছেও মণির অনেক চিঠি আছে কিনা, সেসব আমার নিজেরই লেখা।
কবির : কী আশ্চর্য!
নয়ন : আসলে একটা কথা বলি স্যার, আমাদের এই সবার ভিতরে এক একটা করে নরম সরম মেয়েছেলে আছে।
কবির : মেয়েছেলের মধ্যে তাহলে শক্তপোক্ত পুরুষ মানুষ?
নয়ন : সত্যি, সত্যি, আসলে কিন্তু সেই চিঠি লেখে, মণি তার নাম।
কবির : অথবা রমলা?
নয়ন : ঠিক বলেছেন। যে কোনো নামেই তাকে ডাকা যায়।
কবির : নিদাঘ দুপুরে অথবা রাত্রে কাঁটায় কাঁটায় বারোটা বাজলে কে যেন চ্যাঁচায়
নীলাম! নীলাম! দারুণ শব্দে হাতুড়ি বাজায়, নীলাম! নীলাম!
নয়ন : ভালোবাসা এক, ভালোবাসা দুই, প্রতারণা তারও দ্বিগুণ হাঁকে
কবির : প্রতারণা এক, প্রতারণা দুই . . . কে যেন ডাকে, হাতুড়ি বাজে
নয়ন : কারা সারি সারি দাঁড়িয়ে ডাকছে, মূল্য বাড়ছে দ্বিগুণ, ত্রিগুণ . . .
কবির : নীলাম! নীলাম! নিদাঘ দুপুরে, অথবা রাত্রে, প্রায় প্রতিদিনই . . .
নয়ন : অথচ কিন্তু কী নিলাম হয়, কারা যে কেনে, কিছুই বুঝি না
কবির : শূন্যতা এক, শূন্যতা দুই . . . ডাক বেড়ে চলে, কেউ তো কেনে না ...
নয়ন : শুধু ধমনীতে ভীষণ শব্দে হাতুড়ি শুনি। আমরা তবে কি নিজেকেই বেচি,
নিজেকে কিনি?
কবির : আমরা তবে কি নিজের মূল্য নিজেরাই গুনি?
দুজনে : আমরা তবে কি নিজেকেই বেচি, নিজেকে কিনি? নিজের মূল্য নিজেরাই
গুনি? আমরা তবে কি কেবলই ফাঁকি?

- Kabir : Those letters from Mani I have, are actually—
Nayan : —Written by you.
Kabir : Strange! How could you know it?
Nayan : I too too have lots of letters from Mani. I have written those myself.
Kabir : How strange!
Nayan : Let me say something, sir, inside every one of us there lives a tender, cuddly girl.
Kabir : Then tough guys too inside the girls?
Nayan : True indeed. In fact it is she who writes the letters. Her name is Mani.
Kabir : Or else Ramala?
Nayan : Right again. You may call her by any name.
Kabir : In the summer noontide or at night, exactly at twelve by the clock, someone shouts: Auction! Auction! With terrible bang he hits the hammer: Auction! Auction!
Nayan : Love One ! Love Two ! Now Perfidy doubles the bid.
Kabir : Perfidy One! Perfidy Two ... Someone bids, the hammer hits.
Nayan : Queued up strangers stand and bid, the price goes up by doubles and triples ...
Kabir : In the summer noontide or at night, nearly everyday.
Nayan : Yet, and But, we know nothing: what is bid for, who are the buyers.
Kabir : Void One! Void Two! The bid goes up, yet no one buys ...
Nayan : Only in the veins we hear the hammer with terrible noise. Do we then only sell ourselves and buy again?
Kabir : Do we ourselves then pay the price for our own selves?
Together: Do we then sell ourselves and buy again? Do we ourselves then pay the price for our own selves? Are we mere deceptions then?

They break out of their trance as the lights suddenly come on, and as they try hastily to finish their play, the transport van arrives. As they break off to load the van, the play remains unfinished.

What strikes one most in all these instances is the dramatist's unspoken acknowledgment that the neatly turned out realistic, logical, single story is inadequate to represent the multi-level reality that theatre ideally embodies. In other words, if a non-Aristotelian dramaturgy was at all formulated here in Bengal, it was not inspired by Brecht's linear treatment

of single stories, but independently by these Bengali playwrights who used alternate versions of a single story, or snatches of several stories, to construct the action of their plays. International influences need not be denied here; but the typical Bengali voice speaks out in the playwrights' concern with interpersonal relationships: in the love theme, for example, from *Evam Indrajit* to *Nayan Kabir Pala*. It is hard to imagine any modern western playwright writing a *Pagla Ghora*, that classic statement of love, life, and death. And as far as the so-called 'V-Effekte', 'estrangement', or 'distanced acting' is concerned, it must be acknowledged that both *Nayan Kabir* and *Kinu Kahaar* are far greater texts in this respect than any Brechtian play by virtue of their saddling together of multiple realities and their constant shifting of the actors from one level of reality to another.

Evidently, without these experiments the last major innovative wave in Bengali theatre known as the 'Third Theatre' movement initiated by Badal Sircar could not have produced successful plays with their typical patchwork of scenes and sequences — which we may safely consider as a more mature version of Badal Sircar's developing non-Aristotelian dramaturgy. It is possible to demonstrate the structural similarities between *Evam Indrajit* and typical Third Theatre plays like *Michhil* and *Bhoma*, but such a demonstration, demanding in-depth analysis and comparison, needs to be a subject for a separate discussion. For the present, we may say that the movement away from the proscenium in Bengali theatre had its dramaturgical roots in the proscenium, and that we need not necessarily consider our new wave something entirely imported from the west. It has its roots in the tradition— if such path breaking plays discussed above are accepted part of our theatre tradition now.

The fragmentation of the story-line as a technique was embraced by the dramatists as they came to realize that what happens on the stage is not just a story, but rather a theatrical event with story element/s thrown in merely as an adhesive to secure our attention. *Nayan Kabir* best demonstrates this, as the very process of fragmentation, rather than the story itself, becomes the focus of our theatrical interest. The technique of fragmentation, moreover, has been used to convey several ideas to us: the fragility of man's identity, the rationality of the absurd, the melodramatic nature of realism, and the fictional — in effect fictitious — nature of identity, love and death. One could find many other meanings in the play too if one looks for them, but the power of the play lies in the fact that it never lets us forget that life and theatre are mere games that we play— an idea introduced at the opening of *Nayan Kabir* through Nayan's hesitant request:

নয়ন : স্যার, একটু খেললে হত না?

Nayan: Couldn't we have a bit of play, Sir ?

And the play starts. What better way to make us feel that life and reality are after all games that we play out on a stage which we call the world?

Note: Translations from Bengali texts are by Professor Dattatreya Dutt. I am also indebted to Professor Dutt's exposition of playwriting in his book নাটক এবং নাটক লেখা.

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Endnotes

1. *Evam Indrajit*, p. 85.
2. *Mahaprithibi*, p. 152
3. *Nayan Kabirer Pala*, p. 207.
4. *Nayan Kabirer Pala*, p. 185.

**“Can the Subaltern Speak?” : A Comparative Study on
Rabindranath Tagore’s Dance Drama *Chandalika* and
Nagraj Manjule’s Movie *Fandry***

Rituparna Chakraborty, Arunita Baul Guha and Riya Dutta

I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, Senses, affections, passions? Fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer, as a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die? And if you wrong us, shall we not revenge?

Shylock (*The Merchant of Venice*, Act 3, Scene 1)

This pain of being outcast articulated by Shylock is ranging over from generation to generation. This pain is also voiced by Rabindranath Tagore, one of the major awakening stars of Indian Renaissance in his popular dance-drama *Chandalika*. *Chandalika* was published in 1933, a time when the Dalit-issue was becoming a major socio-political concern in India. It was the time when Mahatma Gandhi was leading the ‘pro-Harijan’ campaign to propagate the social equality. Tagore’s play *Chandalika* has a chandalini named Prakriti as its central figure. Prakriti, who was living a life of an untouchable and outcast till the day a Buddhist monk Ananda asked water from her. Despite of knowing the fact that she is a chandal girl, Ananda accepted water from her. This little incident made Prakriti realize of her self-value and self-worth and she could now boldly utter: “A religion that insults is a false religion. Everyone united to make me conform to a creed that blinds and gags.” The same kind of ‘united’ attempts to make an individual ‘conform to a creed that blinds and gags’ can be seen in the Marathi film *Fandry* written and directed by Nagraj Manjule. This film was released in 2013, exactly 75 years after the publication of *Chandalika* and

unfolds the pain of the 'subaltern' position of young Jabya. Though the protagonists of these two texts are of different sexes but their situations are more or less same—both of them are trapped within a caste-bound wasteland and it points finger at the fact that not much has been changed within the lapse of 75 years.

The term 'subaltern' was first used by Gramsci in his *Prison Notebooks*. The term refers to the lower classes of people who are marginalized. According to Gayatri Chakraborty Spivak's lecture "The Trajectory of the Subaltern in My works", 'subalternity' is a "position without an identity". Both *Chandalika* and *Fandryare* the evidences of the subaltern protest against the dominant classes of the society and both depict the subaltern attempts to break the shackles of hegemonic control.

Prakriti falls in love with the man who has taught her "If the black clouds of Sravana are dubbed chandal [...] It doesn't change their nature, or destroy the virtue of their water. [...] self-humiliation is a sin, worse than self-murder." (Tagore, *Three Plays*, 197-198). He has treated her with equality and this has awakened her understanding of self-hood and that has made her question about the 'Brahmin' and the 'Chandal':

Plenty of slaves are born of royal blood, but I am no slave;
plenty of slaves are born of Brahmin families, but I am no
chandal. (Tagore, *Three Plays*, 158)

On the other hand, in Jabya's life the school has become the space for change, a place that will eventually make India able to challenge the oppressive caste system. It is the school that has allowed Jabya and Shalu to inhabit the same space and it is where he has become enamoured of that girl. But both Prakriti and Jabya are unable to get their loves. Ananda is a Buddhist 'bhikshu' and thus is free from all worldly desires and aims at achieving 'nirvana' and Shalu is oblivious of Jabya's feelings for her and that possibility doesn't even cross her mind as she belongs to the dominant caste of the society. Amrit Sen points out that possessing Ananda becomes a desperate validation of Prakriti's new birth, her awareness of dignity and equality as he made her aware of her 'self' (Sen, 27). Possessing Shalu also becomes a goal in Jabya's life as he continuously tries to gain her affection in various ways. Both Prakriti and Jabya seek the aid of the higher powers to possess the persons of their affection. Prakriti tells her mother to cast a spell upon Ananda to drag him to her and we see Jabya throughout the entire movie is engaged in the hunt of

a black sparrow after Chankya tells him that sprinkling the ashes of the bird on the object of one's affections will ensure that they will fall in love with their admirer. This element of 'magic' can be seen as a part of 'subaltern' dream to miraculously end their sufferings. (Sen, 27)

Both Tagore and Manjule excellently showed how Subaltern is held in subjugation through its internal weakness and through its acceptance. The untouchables carry the burden of the identity constructed by the dominant classes. This is very evident in the character portrayals of Prakriti's mother Maya as well as Jabya's father who is nicknamed "kachru" (meaning garbage) by the dominant classes. Prakriti's mother rebukes Prakriti's newfound enthusiasm after her meet with Ananda:

Why do you get so excited, child? You were born slave. It's the writ of Destiny, who can undo it? (Tagore, *Three Plays*, 158)

On the other hand, Jabya's father rebukes Jabya when he comes to know that Jabya refused to remove a piglet from a well (only untouchables are allowed to touch pig). Just as Prakriti's mother's belief is that none can undo the destiny, Jabya's father also thinks that he has no other option but to take up the traditional job like pig-catching which the people of the lower castes are forced to do. Thus we see that this subjectivity is not only externally imposed but deeply rooted when the subaltern culture and consciousness.

Both Jabya and Prakriti fail to be united with their lovers. Prakriti at the end of the play realizes that her decision of dragging Ananda to her, spell-bound was erroneous. Dhriti Ray Dalai and Panchanan Ray Dalai have pointed out that the failure of the union between Prakriti and Ananda renders the fact that the caste-based discrimination still retains its power within the modern society. But Prakriti gets the self-realization and self-esteem as a woman through her sufferings. Jabya at the end of the movie is threatened by an upper-class boy who sees his interest in Shalu and doesn't approve of it. In the dramatic end, Jabya throws a stone towards that boy. The stone comes to the audience and the scene closes. Thus, the film ends only on screen igniting the thoughts in mind. Whereas the defeat of Prakriti to accomplish her desires authenticates the marginalization of the subaltern in terms of untouchability who are cast away from accessing the privilege, Jabya can throw a stone towards that caste system calling it the same thing which it calls him "Fandry" (meaning pig). The system of marginalizing the subaltern is same within both the texts.

But whereas Prakriti has the power of verbally revolting against the caste-system, Jabya gets more active by throwing the stone.

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Idealising Beauty Standards: A Study of Mythological Characters in the World of Media

Shreyoshi Dhar

Abstract: There has been a constant effort to define and redefine ‘beauty’ over and over again. The ignorant yet boastful modern society works hard to set body and beauty standards. This particular social construct seem to somehow exert an overbearing control over the lifestyles of the people in this ever-changing world. The Indian entertainment industry has always acted as a trend setter as well as the chief propagator of the current trends prevalent in the contemporary Indian society. Depiction of mythological series in the form of television shows and films has always been a traditional practice supposedly done to celebrate the rich cultural and literary heritage of our nation and at the same time to make it acquainted with the upcoming generations. The tales of our holy scriptures have been screened again and again, but each time we seem to notice a change in the choice of casting if we compare the earlier and the modern versions. This paper thus demonstrates how the characters of the mythological tales also cannot escape the acme of beauty of the modern era and the factors influencing them. Theories related to gender identity will be explored as an attempt to provide an explanation to the practice.

Keywords: Acme of beauty, Beauty, Indian entertainment industry, Gender identity, Mythological series, Mythological tales

Story telling is a significant practice since ancient times. They include subject matters like history of mankind, society, public affairs, daily events, etc. The main intention behind this practice is to conserve all types of knowledge. There has been a host of contrasting ideas regarding the difference between actual events and about stories that later recount those events. Hence, it has been commonly observed that ‘objective’

history is rather viewed as subjective in the sense that a “a failure to take into consideration the initial distinction between a physical event which simply occurs, and an event which has already received its historical status from the fact that it has been recounted in chronicles, in legendary stories, in memories etc.” (Ricoeur 276) Myths are central to every culture, i.e. there is no culture in the entire world, which is bereft of its own mythological stories that influence them to a great extent. Mythologies have been one of the most commonly used subjects depicted in the world of media. The tales of different myths are systematically reused again and again in advertisements, magazines, films, or T.V. programs. This helps the current generation to get acquainted with their tradition, culture, as well as their roots. Mythologies often contribute in the formulation of an ordered society and also at the same time construct a set of social code and conduct that will help to maintain decorum in the social environment. Nevertheless, often they negatively demean a certain social group or class by assigning a negative connotative meaning to its very existence.

Study of myths commonly use semiotics as it's most prominent tool, pronouncing the fact that common perception and comprehension of reality is articulated by words and signs. Therefore, it will not be an oversimplification if media products are referred as media texts. Charles Pierce (1958) and Ferdinand de Saussure (1974) are considered to be the main proponents of semiotics as for them the science of the significance of signs can be understood only through linguistics. The very individuality of a person including thoughts and experience along with his or her legal and religious status is constructed through a whole system of signs in a society. As a result, it can be concluded that formulation of signs must be the first step towards disseminating a society and thereby transforming it.

The lives and actions of Gods and Goddesses in every religion and culture play a very vital role in shaping the lives of every individual since the ancient civilization. The journey of their lives directly impacts the social and cultural lives of every man. Similarly, every mythological tale involves a hero or heroine, whose life-changing tale instigates the particular culture to deify him or her. Man has an inherent tendency to create such characters of the earth whose stories narrate their heroic voyage of being harbingers of life and finally the propagators of a particular culture and religion. Their adventurous encounters with several obstacles and their journey of overcoming them by retaining to the path of morality give

inspiration to every commoner. The self-sacrifice, love, and other superhuman virtues that they exhibit in every stride of their individual lives aid them to get epitomised.

The two types of most commonly known myths are the creation myths and coming-of-age myths. These myths entail narratives depicting how light gets separated from darkness, ultimately diffusing it; how a superhuman being has been conceived; and how an evil gets trapped and destroyed finally. The protagonist of most of these tales, be it God, Demigod, or human undergoes a quest for order, passing through a series of life-altering endeavours. The most surprising and exciting element of these stories is that the hero is irrevocably transformed by their voyage from a common member of the society to someone who is a renewed portrayal of perfection or eternal glory, being glorified from the banalities of normalcy by their ordeals. However, it is important to note here that an experience of suffering is central to every journey of a hero as this helps the hero to retain his humane aspect, which in turn helps him to both maintain his exalted position and at the same time to inspire his subscribers or onlookers.

In the Indian entertainment industry, the most well-known mythological series in television include - *Sampoorna Ramayan* (1987), *Mahabharat* (1988), *Luv Kush* (1989), *Shri Krishna* (1993), *Vishwamitra* (1995), *Jai Ganga Maiyya* (1998), *Vishnu Puran* (2000), *Mahima Shani Dev Ki* (2008), *Little Krishna* (2009), *Meera* (2009–2010), *Jai Jai Jai Bajrang Bali* (2011), *Devon Ke Dev...Mahadev* (2011), *Buddha: Rajaon Ka Raja* (2013), *Sankat Mochan Mahabali Hanuman* (2015), *Suryaputra Karn* (2015), *Santoshi Maa* (2015), *Siya Ke Ram* (2015), *Karamfal Data Shani* (2016), *Mahakali Ant Hi Aarambh Hai* (2017), *Vighanaharta Ganesh* (2017), *Mere Sai – Shraddha Aur Saburi* (2017), *Radha Krishna* (2018), *Jag Janani Maa Vaishno Devi- Kahani Mata Rani Ki* (2019), etc. Among them, the most popular and most revisited narratives are *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*.

In 1987, *Ramayana* was first aired on a television channel named DD National in the name of Ramanand Sagar's *Ramayan*. The entire series was based on the original Sanskrit version of Valmiki's *Ramayana* and Tulsi Das's *Ramcharitmanas*, narrated by Ashok Kumar and directed by Ramanand Sagar. During its run, it has been known to be the most watched show in the world. More than twenty different channels across seventeen countries aired the repeat telecast. Arun Govil played the role

of Ram and Vishnu; Deepika Chikhalia depicted as Sita/Lakshmi, Sunil Lahri as Lakshman, Arvind Trivedi as Ravana, and Dara Singh as Hanuman. The other characters were also played by reputed actors and actresses of the time. A follow-up series of thirty nine episodes named *Luv Kush*, originally known to be *Uttar Ramayan* was aired on the same channel from 1988 to 1989, also created, written, produced, and directed by Ramanand Sagar, which focused mainly on the lives of his twins Luv and Kush. Most of the casting remained the same apart from the two main protagonists Swapnil Joshi and Mayuresh Kshetra made, who played the roles of Kush and Luv respectively. Later in 2008, a remake version of the story of *Ramayana* was produced by Sagar Arts as a reboot of the 1987 *Ramayana* television series of the same name, with a very little deviation in the plot. The series was aired on NDTV Imagine and later on Dangal TV. Even today, it can be watched on the Dangal Play app. The series involved Gurmeet Choudhary as Rama and Vishnu; Debina Bonnerjee as Sita and Laxmi; Rishabh Sharma as Kush; Perin Monish Malde as Luv; Ankit Arora as Lakshman; Vikram Mastal (Sharma) as Hanuman; and Akhilendra Mishra as Ravana. This time it not only surprised the entertainment world with its own popularity but the viewership of the channel reached the third position just after Star Plus and Zee TV. On 16th November, 2015, the same story of *Ramayana* was further portrayed as *Siya Ke Ram*, not only surprising but also fascinating the audience by interpreting the entire story from the perspective of Sita, thereby projecting the rapid progress of the position of women in the society in this era. Sita in the series took the center stage unlike the previous versions, where Ram was the main hero and the entire tale concentrated on his spiritual and heroic character.

Similarly, the other most frequently depicted epic on television is *Mahabharata*. In 1965, *Mahabharata* first appeared as a fantasy film starring Pradeep Kumar as Arjun, Padmini as Draupadi, Dara Singh as Bhim, Abhi Bhattacharya as Krishna and others. In 1983, it was remade in Gujarati as *Sampoorna Mahabharat*, which was later dubbed into Hindi, starring Jayshree Gadkar, Arvind Kumar and others. Indian television industry witnessed the portrayal of the narrative for the first time in a television series of ninety four episodes, being broadcasted on Doordarshan from 2nd October, 1988 to 24th June, 1990, produced by B.R. Chopra and directed by his son Ravi Chopra. The television show starred Nitish Bharadwaj, Mukesh Khanna, Arjun, Puneet Issar, Roopa Ganguly, Pankaj Dheer, Praveen Kumar, Gufi Paintal, and Gajendra Chauhan in different roles. Next in 1997,

another series named *Mahabharat Katha*, also directed by Ravi Chopra, brought forth the portions and narratives left out in the previous version, having casted Harish Bhimani as Samay, Rishabh Shukla as Krishna, Sagar Salunkhe as Balarama, Arjun as Arjuna, Bijay Anand as Babruvahana, Gajendra Chauhan as Yudhishthira, Praveen Kumar as Bhima, Roopa Ganguly as Draupadi, Puneet Issar as Duryodhana, Durga Jasraj as Ulupi, Mukesh Khanna as Bhishma and others. Much later again in 2013, the whole country witnessed apathetic depiction of the same Indian historical epic on StarPlus, also available digitally on Disney+ Hotstar, an adaptation of the renowned author Debdukt Pattanaik's version of the story. Its premiere had a viewership of more than 8 million and it tops the list of twenty TV series of all times in 2016. The casting included Saurabh Raj Jain as Krishna/Vishnu, Shaheer Sheikh as Arjuna, Pooja Sharma as Draupadi and others.

On observing the characters minutely, one can easily notice that there has been a change in the choice of casting. The characters chosen in the earlier versions have an image of that of a common domestic man; the male and the female characters projecting the traditional masculine and feminine appearances respectively. The characters in the earlier versions playing the roles of Gods and Goddesses gave an impression of being our family members. Nevertheless, with time, this has not been the case. The later versions of the series featured the characters with a cosmopolitan beauty. Even the postures, dialects, as well as the attires have incorporated a modern beauty code where the spirituality seems to have suffered. One can easily evince the influence of Bollywood stereotypes and Western ideals in this regard. In most of the posters of the early versions of these mythological series, the main protagonists portraying the images of Gods and Goddesses are seen to pose, raising their hands to bless, while in the later versions like *Siyake Ram*, the gesture of their hands have changed, which was meant to portray them not as supreme beings, but rather as someone with whom we can easily identify.

It is an undeniable fact that the beauty standards of the current society has gone through a transformation over time. Nowadays, Indian beauty is much more characterised by fair-skinned Eurocentric features. This can probably be an example of the colonial hangover. Therefore, to define beauty, one should consider the social scenarios, economic backgrounds, and also the history that impacts and influences the beholders. Social media has facilitated common people to glance the whole world with a

single touch and this has instigated an interesting emergence in the concept of beauty to gain a sudden momentum in the last decade. Obsession with a particular parameter of beauty is perhaps the consequence of this. The advent of digital culture has led to a demand in cosmopolitan culture and has attempted to ascertain the meaning of ‘perfection’ using fixed standards. “Beauty in India is multifaceted as the country is diverse – a happy, boisterous, co-existence of tradition, spirituality and ancient rituals on the one end of the spectrum, glossy Bollywood-inspired aspirations on the other and many fast-evolving variations in-between” – as wonderfully described by Nikita Seth in her article “Changing Perception of Beauty in India” (Seth 2).

In our society, the traditional perception of a man was always that of bread earner, while that of a woman was limited to be a homemaker and child bearer. Since media mainly functions as the means of reflection of the social and cultural belief system, the choice of casting across times was made with an effort to retain the accepted notions of the contemporary times. In the words of Hofstede, “Masculinity stands for a society in which social gender roles are clearly distinct: Men are supposed to be assertive, tough, and focused on material success; women are supposed to be more modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life” (Hofstede 297), while “Femininity stands for a society in which social gender roles overlap: Both men and women are supposed to be modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life.” (Hofstede 297). Nevertheless, over the last few years, the concept has undergone a stark transformation with the widespread of urbanization and globalisation. Men even few decades ago were projected with a beard and a hairy body, which was then considered to be a definite sign of masculinity, but in recent times, the concept is only linked with attitude, choice, and behavioural patterns of a man and this has nothing to do with the appearance. Currently, heroes have a shaved body and face along with a muscular body structure. Very similar to this, womanliness was earlier equated with a particular set of attitudes, behaviours, and roles – sensitive, demure, and nurturing as opposed to the ambitious, materialistic, tough, and assertive image of masculinity. The degree of being feminine or womanly was considered before judging the character of a woman at a particular point of time, but now it is rather related to gender identity. Every individual is free to define his or her masculinity or femininity respectively according to the gender theories and that has become an important area of study in current times. Gender

theorists stress on the fact that gender identities and gender expressions are individual constructs often influenced by society, religion, and culture, which often attempt to stereotype an individual in terms of gender identity. In this regard, Simone de Beauvoir has rightly claimed in her seminal work *The Second Sex* (1949) – “One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman.” (Beauvoir 283). Though the statement involves a feminist perspective, yet it can be generalised as well. In this postmodern world, the general tendency of breaking down the concept of privileging binaries is perhaps the most evident theory behind the transformations observed in society. Unrealistic ideals of beauty seem to be the current social expectation among the audience which drive the participants to undertake certain extreme measures and hence the mythological characters also cannot escape the posh acme of beauty of the modern era and the factors influencing them; the entire commercial media world being the chief contributor of this.

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Women Empowerment and Communication: Unveiling the Nexus

Tapan Kumar Rana and Moupikta Mukherjee

Abstract

This article explores the intricate relationship between women's empowerment and communication, shedding light on the transformative potential of effective communication in fostering gender equality and women's agency. In a world where gender disparities persist across various realms, this study delves into the ways in which communication can serve as a catalyst for dismantling oppressive norms, amplifying women's voices, and propelling them towards empowerment. The article critically reviews existing literature on the multifaceted dimensions of women's empowerment, considering economic, political, social, and personal aspects. It emphasizes the significance of communication as both a tool and an outcome of empowerment, highlighting how access to information and the ability to communicate effectively can shape women's aspirations, decision-making, and participation in public and private spheres. Drawing on theoretical frameworks such as feminist communication theory, social identity theory, and empowerment theory, the paper dissects the mechanisms through which communication perpetuates or challenges power dynamics. It investigates how media representations, language use, digital platforms, and interpersonal interactions can either reinforce traditional gender roles or facilitate the redefinition of gender norms. Moreover, the article examines case studies from diverse cultural and geographical contexts to illustrate the real-world impact of communication on women's empowerment. It discusses successful initiatives, campaigns, and policies that leverage communication strategies to enhance women's agency, leadership, and economic autonomy. Additionally, it addresses the challenges and barriers that persist, including digital divides, online harassment, and the need for culturally sensitive communication approaches. In conclusion, this study underscores the need

for a holistic approach to women's empowerment that integrates communication as a central pillar. By recognizing communication's role in shaping perceptions, disseminating knowledge, and fostering collective action, stakeholders across academia, policy, and civil society can contribute to dismantling gender inequalities and advancing women's rights. Ultimately, the article advocates for a transformative and inclusive communication framework that empowers women to shape their own narratives, participate meaningfully in decision-making processes, and forge a more equitable future.

Keywords: Empowerment, Communication, Development, Participation, Progress

Introduction:

Empowerment, a multifaceted concept denoting the ability of individuals to make choices, take control of their lives, and participate meaningfully in society, has gained significant traction as a critical goal for gender equality. To simplify it further, Women empowerment means giving women the tools, opportunities, and the freedom to make choices that affect their lives (Kabeer, 2005). Amidst this pursuit, communication emerges as a potent catalyst that not only amplifies women's voices but also dismantles deeply rooted patriarchal structures. This article delves into the integral relationship between women's empowerment and communication, highlighting the transformative potential of effective communication in fostering gender equality, dismantling oppressive norms, and creating an inclusive world. Communication, often viewed as the exchange of information, extends far beyond its functional definition. It shapes perceptions, informs identities, and influences behaviors. Within the realm of women's empowerment, communication serves as a multifaceted enabler, facilitating change at individual, societal, and global levels.

Breaking Stereotypes: Media Representation and Language Use

The media, with its wide-reaching impact, plays a pivotal role in shaping societal norms and perceptions. Unfortunately, it has historically perpetuated harmful stereotypes that limit women's roles and potential. Effective communication strategies are key to challenging and reshaping these narratives. Advocacy for diverse and authentic representations of women, both in media content and leadership positions, can deconstruct ingrained biases and inspire positive change. Language, too, is a tool of empowerment. It shapes our thoughts, constructs our reality, and influences

our interactions. Gender-inclusive language promotes equality by recognizing and valuing women's experiences. By addressing the linguistic biases that perpetuate gender inequality, communication contributes to a more inclusive discourse that empowers rather than confines.

In recent years, there has been a growing awareness of the power media in shaping societal perceptions, attitudes, and values. One area where media has immense influence is in the representation of women. The portrayal of women in media, including film, television, advertising, and digital content, often reflects and reinforces prevailing stereotypes. Language, as a vital component of media, plays a significant role in this representation. However, there is a growing movement to challenge and break these stereotypes, leading to a more equitable and inclusive media landscape. Media has the power to shape and reinforce societal norms, including those related to gender roles and identities. Historically, women have been subjected to narrow and limiting stereotypes in media, perpetuating harmful notions of beauty, behavior, and expectations. These stereotypes have far-reaching consequences, affecting not only women's self-esteem but also their opportunities and societal roles.

Language is a potent tool within media representation. The choice of words, phrases, and narratives can either challenge or perpetuate stereotypes. Media outlets that use language reinforcing traditional gender roles and objectification contribute to the normalization of harmful stereotypes. For instance, referring to women solely in terms of their physical appearance rather than their achievements or abilities is a common trope in media. Media Representation and Stereotypes can be classified into categories: Firstly, representing the women as the Damsel in Distress- the media has frequently depicted women as passive, helpless figures in need of rescue. This stereotype diminishes women's agency and reinforces the notion that they are incapable of solving problems independently. Secondly, The Femme Fatale- On the opposite end of the spectrum, women are sometimes portrayed as seductive and cunning, using their sexuality as a means of manipulation. This representation reduces women to one-dimensional characters defined solely by their attractiveness. Third, The Motherly Figure- Women are often cast in nurturing and caregiving roles, which, while important, should not be the only roles attributed to them. This stereotype can limit women's aspirations and contributions in diverse fields. Finally, the Body Image and Beauty Standards - Media frequently perpetuates unrealistic beauty standards, leading to body image issues

among women and girls. Such representations can erode self-confidence and lead to harmful behaviors.

Thankfully, there is a growing movement within media to challenge these stereotypes. Language plays a pivotal role in this endeavour: The first and most significant change that can be noticed in the representation of women is in the approach of inclusive Language-Media outlets are increasingly using inclusive language that respects gender diversity. This acknowledges that not everyone identifies strictly as male or female and ensures that everyone's identity is validated. Secondly, the positive role models- The media is showcasing more strong, independent, and diverse female characters that break away from traditional stereotypes. These characters inspire and empower women and girls by demonstrating resilience, intelligence, and agency. The portrayal of women in leadership positions in popular media has been linked to increased aspirations among women and girls to pursue leadership roles (Dasgupta & Stout, 2014). Thirdly, championing real beauty – the fashion and beauty industry is becoming more inclusive, with campaigns featuring models of all shapes, sizes, and backgrounds. This shift promotes a more realistic and accepting notion of beauty. Language is important for reframing narratives by placing women in traditionally male-dominated roles, such as leadership positions, STEM fields, and sports. This challenges preconceived notions about women's abilities.

Media representation of women and the language used in this representation have a profound impact on societal perceptions and expectations. While harmful stereotypes have been perpetuated for decades, there is a growing movement within the media industry to challenge and break these stereotypes. Language plays a pivotal role in this process, as it can either reinforce traditional gender norms or contribute to a more inclusive and equitable media landscape. By embracing inclusive language and portraying women as diverse, capable, and empowered individuals, media can help reshape society's perceptions and pave the way for a more inclusive future.

#MeToo as a Movement Unveiling the Nexus:

Communication acts as a driving force for collective action. Campaigns and movements that utilize communication effectively can mobilize masses, draw attention to critical issues, and demand change. From the #MeToo movement to climate activism led by women, the power of communication

in uniting individuals for a common cause is undeniable. Social media platforms provide spaces where women's voices can resonate globally, sparking conversations and igniting change across borders.

The #MeToo movement in India, which gained momentum in 2018, marked a significant turning point in the country's social and cultural landscape. Inspired by the global #MeToo movement, Indian women from various walks of life began to speak out against sexual harassment and assault, shedding light on the pervasive issue that had long been hidden in the shadows. The movement created a platform for survivors to share their stories, confront perpetrators, and demand accountability. It exposed the dark underbelly of power dynamics and gender-based violence in Indian workplaces, media, and the entertainment industry. While the movement faced challenges and resistance, it ignited crucial conversations about consent, gender equality, and the urgent need for systemic change in a society deeply entrenched in patriarchal norms. The #MeToo movement in India served as a rallying cry for justice, solidarity, and the dismantling of structures that perpetuate sexual misconduct and discrimination. It continues to inspire efforts to create safer and more equitable spaces for all.

The #MeToo movement can be seen as a powerful representation of women's oppression, as it brings to the forefront the systemic and pervasive nature of gender-based discrimination and harassment that women have endured for generations. This movement provides a platform for women to share their stories of sexual harassment and assault, revealing the extent to which women have been oppressed, silenced, and denied justice. At its core, the #MeToo movement highlights the ways in which women have been objectified, devalued, and disempowered in various spheres of life, including the workplace, entertainment industry, academia, and even within their own communities. The prevalence of harassment and assault demonstrates the deeply ingrained power imbalances and misogynistic attitudes that persist in society. The movement also underscores the complicity of institutions and individuals in perpetuating this oppression. It sheds light on how women's complaints have been dismissed, ignored, or retaliated against, further deepening their oppression. Moreover, the movement reveals the prevalence of gender-based violence and the urgent need for societal and systemic change. Ultimately, the #MeToo movement serves as a stark reminder that women's oppression is not a thing of the past but a harsh reality that continues to affect

women from all walks of life. It calls for accountability, justice, and a cultural shift toward gender equality, making it a powerful representation of the ongoing struggle against women's oppression.

Conclusion: Empowerment through Connection and Expression

Empowering women through effective communication is not merely a theoretical concept; it is a practical and ethical imperative. Communication, in its various forms, serves as the bridge between the marginalized and the empowered. By dismantling stereotypes, promoting economic and political agency, addressing challenges, and fostering collective action, communication becomes the vehicle for women's empowerment. Kabeer's (2001) in his empowerment-poverty framework highlights how the interaction between communication, agency, reduces the impact of poverty. It underscores how communication can be a catalyst for women's empowerment, enabling them to escape poverty and exercise greater control over their lives.

In a world marked by diversity, communication carries the potential to embrace differences, break down barriers, and create a space where women's voices are valued, heard, and acted upon. As we strive for a more equitable future, let us recognize the power of communication to not only amplify women's narratives but also reshape the trajectory of gender equality for generations to come.

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The Impact of OTT Platforms on Traditional Broadcasting: Challenges and Opportunities

Natasha Chatterjee

Abstract:

The new craze of entertainment is the “Over-The Top” platform popularly known as OTT which refers to the technology that broadcast streamed content over the internet. This platform came into existence with the onset of the global pandemic. Covid -19 forced us to maintain social distancing and the inception of total lockdown left the entire human population to be confined in their respective abodes. When people were forced to sit back at home, all of a sudden, they had a lot of time so they started to spend most of their free time on screen. At this juncture came the OTT platforms such as Voot, Prime Video, Hotstar, Netflix, Zee 5, Sony Liv etc, to name a few. These streaming platforms gained instant popularity because of their idiosyncratic and wide-ranging content. This eventually led to the fall of traditional broadcasting. As we know that people always yearn for the best, and with the rise of OTT platforms where more interesting contents are available the general population has lost their interest in television. Another major advantage of the OTT platform is the amount of revenue that it has generated. This factor of high revenue generation has definitely positively impacted the Indian economy. This paper will focus on the impact of OTT Platforms on the age-old traditional broadcasting with the challenges and opportunities that have come along with them.

Keywords: OTT platforms, Traditional Broadcasting, Pandemic, Masses, Television

Introduction:

In the past few years the entertainment industry has been transformed significantly with the introduction of Over-The-Top or OTT platforms.

Over -the -top streaming platforms have been introduced to the masses just 3 years back, after the onset of the global pandemic Covid-19, but the tremendous bloom it has shown in this short span of time is just remarkable. Nowadays viewers use different devices to watch movies, web series, news, documentaries, live matches, such as smart phones, tablets, smart televisions etc. The OTT platforms such as Netflix, Disney Hotstar, Zee 5, Amazon Prime, Sony Liv, etc, have posed challenges on the traditional broadcasting mediums. In the wake of the global pandemic, people were forced to sit at home, this situation posed challenges in front of the movie theatres. Movie theatres were shut down for long periods due to lockdown, at this point of time OTT platforms came into existence. Blockbuster movies were released on OTT and people started to pay for the subscriptions of OTT platforms and enjoyed different interesting contents at the comfort of their homes.

After the global pandemic was over it can be seen that though the masses still have the craze to watch movies in theatres, but with wide range of interesting contents that are available on OTT, market of movie theatres, traditional broadcasting of television through cable network has been on a downhill.

Difference between Over-the -top platforms and Traditional Broadcasting:

The OTT content is a media service that is streamed online directly to the audience through the internet, and the viewers of this platform pay the subscription directly to the OTT. Whereas the traditional broadcasting through television requires cable connection where limited content is available through various channels. OTT is a platform that can be accessed through many devices like smartphones, tablets, smart television setc whereas traditional broadcasting can be seen on television through cable networks.

The Rise of OTT platforms:

With the onset of the global pandemic, the entire human population throughout the world was terrorised by the deadly virus named Covid 19 and as a result everything came to a halt. With the outset of the lockdown throughout the world the masses were intimidated. When everyone was forced to sit back at home suddenly OTT platforms came as a sign of

relief. This Digital technological boom was welcomed by the masses who felt alienated in their adobes.

In this period of time Over the top (OTP) platforms gained immense popularity among the viewers due to its wide range of content. Due to total lockdown people were facing alot of challenges in their day to day lives, with the new OTT platforms like Netflix, Voot, Prime Video, Disney Hotstar, Zee 5, Sony Liv etc people started enjoying unique contents offered by them. The audience started spending more time on OTT platforms andthis led to the annihilation of the traditional television. The causes behind this shift of preferences are many, such as OTT platforms provides the audiences more intriguing and engrossing content, on the other hand traditional broadcasting through television comes up with similar shows and movies in each and every channel. This is the reason that the audience gets limited choices in television. OTT platforms comes with varied genres viz, horror, romance, comedy thriller, adventure, fantasy, war, crime, mystery, romantic-comedy, biographical, fiction, animation, drama, science - fiction, action, documentary etc. Today's generation mostly binge watch their favourite genre according to their preferences. Sadly, television doesnot provide this much variety with content having good essence. It is not only the content on the OTT platforms that makes it popular, but also the improvement in technology has crashed the market for traditional subscriptions of television. Though the audience has to pay more for subscribing these OTT platforms, still they prefer these due to its versatility. On these OTT platforms the viewers can watch shows, live sports, news etc. For instance, Sony Liv is an OTT platform which shows live sports. But in the pandemic period, when there was total lockdown on public demand Doordarshan retecasted shows like Ramayan and Mahabharata which people used to watch on television. This increase in viewership was short-lived. The main reason behind this was the nostalgia of the viewers to see the same serials that they use to see when they were in their youth or childhood. Traditional broadcasting such as channels on television only provide subscription of one channel at a time with a particular type of content like Zee cinema will show only limited movies, whereas if one subscribes Star Sports or ESPN then they can watch only sports. Whereas on OTT platforms viewers can see all types of contents in various languages with a single subscription. We can see that various content creators are gaining popularity on YouTube, Instagram etc. In future, there are major possibilities when content creators can be seen

creating various contents on OTT platforms and achieve popularity and monetary emoluments. During the pandemic the working professionals due to their work from home schedule have ample time for searching content on internet. The IT companies even after the pandemic are continuing with work from home. More and more people from different sectors are opting creating contents or Vlogging. This is the new trend which is becoming more and more popular. So, it can be said that the global pandemic has affected the traditional means of entertainment. These streaming platforms gained instant popularity because of their idiosyncratic and wide-ranging content. This eventually led to the fall of traditional broadcasting. As we know that people always yearn for the best, and with the rise of OTT platforms where more interesting contents are available the general population has lost their interest in television.

Change in Viewership Habits:

The audiences have now been addicted to the OTT platforms due to their new and unique concepts. The traditional television viewership has been altered by binge watching the different OTT services like Netflix, Voot, Disney Hotstar Prime Video etc. This shift is due to the unique shows and interesting contents offered by OTT services. Therefore, the Movie theatres and traditional television services have to revamp themselves if they want to compete with the hassle-free online streaming OTT platforms.

Disorganization of the Traditional broadcasting:

The dominance that the traditional channels have on the audience and entertainment platform were obstructed during the global pandemic. Suddenly the shift of interest of the audiences from these traditional distribution channels to OTT platforms were seen, which posed as a great shock for the cable tv operators, the intermediaries were suddenly thrown out of the market. With the advent of the OTT platforms in the entertainment industry, the independent content creators, actors, freelancers can exhibit their knack without any hurdles created by those intermediaries of traditional broadcasting.

Disruption of Traditional Distribution Channels:

OTT platforms have disrupted the traditional distribution channels that once dominated the entertainment industry. Previously, content creators relied heavily on television networks, movie studios, and cable providers to reach their audiences. However, with the advent of OTT platforms like

Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, and Hulu, content creators now have direct access to a global audience, eliminating the need for intermediaries. This has democratized the entertainment industry, enabling independent filmmakers, artists, and creators to showcase their work to a wide range of viewers without the constraints of traditional gatekeepers.

Diversification of Content available for the audience:

The OTT platforms have impacted the traditional broadcasting industry massively due to the ability of the former to create content having diversity and uniqueness. The traditional broadcasting platforms could not cater to the need of the audiences who craved for unusual content that can keep them glued in front of their streaming devices. OTT platforms provides the viewers with lots of options to choose from such as different genres of movies, diverse choices of languages. The OTT platforms also gives choices to watch a particular movie in many language audios to opt from the list. This can be seen that the dominance of the traditional media has been challenged by OTT platforms.

Removal of middlemen from the scenario of Content Creation:

The OTT platforms have posed disruptions in the way of traditional content developers. Previously it can be observed that Movie studios and various network monopolised the distribution process of content giving less freedom to the content creators, actors, producers as well as filmmakers. With inception of the OTT platforms the content creators are enjoying more freedom and they are now more induced to take risks and proceed with unique and bold storylines. Pool of new talents can be harnessed as the content creators are no longer dependent on the traditional intermediaries to approve their projects.

Commercialisation and incomedstreams:

As it can be observed that with the advent of OTT services in the market, a pool of opportunities can be explored by the content creators. Simultaneously a lot of challenges can also be faced by the traditional broadcasting platforms in context of the revenues or economical benefits. Previously the traditional platforms were sustained on the sponsorship from advertisements, however, this scenario has been changed as OTT platforms are sustained by subscriptions model. If the traditional broadcasting mediums have to coexist in this market they have to pose a tough competition by investing a substantial amount on good and original contents.

Conclusion:

It can be observed that the OTT platforms have remarkably impacted the traditional broadcasting industry in many ways, such as changing altogether the manner in which the content is devised, disseminated and absorbed by the consumers. There are many visible changes in the entertainment industry that can be observed. OTT platforms have tremendously obstructed the smooth functioning of the traditional broadcasting platforms, changed the viewing preferences of the viewers, augmented the content heterogeneity, entitled and gave power to the content creators and altered the revenue versions. It is very pertinent to note that there is a lot of positive influence of OTT platforms on movie business. A lot of filmmakers have started to develop contents only for the OTT platforms like Netflix, Prime Video, Zee 5 etc, as a result of this it can be seen that a variety of unique and bold contents are coming up in the entertainment industry. Audiences no longer have to worry about missing their favourite shows or movies as they use to when they were dependant on the traditional broadcasting. The new age OTT platforms gives the viewers the chance to choose from a wide variety of contents both old and new at any time from their libraries, so this is a great advantage as there is no worries to miss a particular movie or web series as every content is available 24x7. It can be observed that those content creators or filmmakers who did not got the chance to showcase their contents on the traditional broadcasting platforms have the chance to do that easily on OTT platforms. Since OTT platforms have shown greater acceptance for genuine contents, they are ready to invest on unconventional storylines. This is the reason that even the bigger stars of the film industry are keen to work on the OTT platforms. The reason behind this is quite simple, there has been a mass shift in the viewing preferences of the audience, and this trend is encouraging the stalwarts of the entertainment industries to work on this new platform, where they can connect in a better way with both the classes and the masses.

The traditional broadcasting platforms have to attune and accept the challenges as well as opportunities provided to them by the OTT platforms. However, the prospects that can be seen in future of the entertainment industry is in the right balance of OTT platforms and traditional broadcasting platforms. In other words, there must be some degree of coexistence and collaboration between the OTT services and the traditional broadcasting platforms for smooth functioning of the entertainment industry.

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Unveiling Disability and Body Politics: A Foucauldian Exploration through Media Lens

Agnidepto Datta

To unravel the intricate political dynamics that shape the multifaceted landscape of media, it is imperative to embark on an in-depth examination of the intricate interactions among disability, body politics, and media. This endeavour should be guided by the theoretical framework of Michel Foucault, which offers a valuable perspective for understanding these dynamics. Drawing inspiration from Foucault's concepts of biopolitics and disciplinary mechanisms, the study closely examines how media actively contributes to the shaping of the disabled body as an object subjected to control, normalization, and exclusion. To achieve this, we need to adopt a multidisciplinary approach that combines Foucauldian analysis with insights from media studies. In doing so, we dissect media content from various angles, including its visual, auditory, and linguistic dimensions. This multi-pronged examination allows us to uncover the intricate ways in which disability is portrayed and positioned within existing power structures. Our analysis involves scrutinizing media texts, advertisements, and news narratives to shed light on how the medical gaze, rooted in a quest for conformity to established norms, imposes a particular narrative upon individuals with disabilities. This narrative effectively reinforces ableist ideologies, perpetuating discriminatory beliefs and practices.

By anchoring our analysis in Foucault's key concepts of power/knowledge, surveillance, and governmentality, we unveil the mechanisms through which media operates as an oppressive force within the realm of disability. It becomes evident that media serves as a locus of power, where societal norms and values are reinforced, often to the detriment of marginalized groups, such as individuals with disabilities. Media, in its various forms, often operates as a potent tool for consolidating and perpetuating hegemonic power structures. As philosopher Noam Chomsky

astutely observed that media outlets often act in the service of intertwined state and corporate interests, moulding news stories and moulding public sentiment in accordance with prevailing socio-political narratives. (Chomsky 45). In this context, media outlets can wield their influence to shape public discourse, reinforce established norms, and propagate the ideologies of those in positions of power, thereby cementing the existing power dynamics within society. This phenomenon underscores the critical importance of scrutinizing media's role as a conduit for the dissemination of hegemonic ideologies, as it can significantly impact public perceptions and, consequently, the broader socio-political landscape.

One notable historical example of media serving as a tool of power to enable hegemonic control is the use of propaganda during Nazi Germany. Under the leadership of Adolf Hitler, the Nazi regime effectively utilized media, including newspapers, radio broadcasts, and films, to shape public opinion, manipulate perceptions, and consolidate their authoritarian rule. The infamous Nazi propaganda minister, Joseph Goebbels, orchestrated a highly coordinated media campaign that disseminated anti-Semitic, nationalist, and pro-Nazi messages. This propaganda machine not only played a pivotal role in advancing the regime's ideology but also contributed to the dehumanization of marginalized groups, particularly Jews, paving the way for the Holocaust and other atrocities. The Nazi-controlled media exemplifies how media can be harnessed to promote a hegemonic agenda and consolidate power by shaping the beliefs and attitudes of the population. In essence, media contributes to the perpetuation of ableism and the marginalization of disabled individuals, highlighting the urgent need for critical analysis and intervention in this domain.

In Lennard J. Davis's thought-provoking work, "Enforcing Normalcy," the author delves into the mechanisms by which societal norms and expectations are constructed and enforced. Davis's examination of disability and normalcy has significant implications for understanding how media can be a vehicle for the establishment of ableist hegemony (Davis 40). In the realm of media, the portrayal of disability has often been skewed and influenced by ableist ideologies. Mainstream media frequently perpetuates a narrow and idealized image of what is considered "normal," which, in turn, reinforces stereotypes and marginalizes individuals with disabilities. This process of enforcing normalcy through media serves as a powerful tool in upholding the hegemonic power of ableism, as it shapes public perception, reinforces discriminatory attitudes, and contributes to the

social exclusion of disabled individuals. Davis's work underscores the need for critical analysis of media representations of disability and the recognition of their role in perpetuating the power structures that marginalize and oppress disabled communities. Lennard J. Davis's seminal work, "Enforcing Normalcy," offers profound insights into the construction and imposition of societal norms, particularly in the context of disability. This perspective is invaluable when examining the pervasive influence of ableist hegemony through media. Media platforms have historically played a significant role in shaping and disseminating prevailing notions of what is considered "normal" in society. They often present a limited, one-dimensional portrayal of individuals with disabilities, reinforcing stereotypes and diminishing the diversity of human experiences. By consistently favouring a particular image of normalcy, media contributes to the maintenance of an ableist power structure, where disabled individuals are systematically marginalized. Davis's exploration calls attention to the vital role media plays in upholding this hegemonic power, highlighting the urgency of re-evaluating and challenging these prevailing narratives to promote inclusivity and equality for all.

The disabled body exists beyond the boundaries of normative discourse, causing challenges for those in positions of power who seek to control and confine it within their structures of authority. This normative power structure often perceives the disabled body as a source of shame, viewing it as something to be excluded, expelled, or discarded, much like how the colonial government dealt with bodies during the Bengal Famine of the 1940s and communal riots, where deceased bodies became a burden for those in power. This parallel can also be drawn to the Nazi Eugenic policy, which drew inspiration from Nietzsche's concept of the 'ubermensch' or super-human. In this context, German nationalist ideology aimed to establish a concept of a flawless, pure, and superior Aryan race, championing the 'Aryan supremacy theory.' Consequently, the disabled body remains outside the boundaries of what the dominant power discourse seeks to contain.

Michel Foucault's insights into power dynamics shed light on the exclusion and marginalization of the disabled body within the broader context of power politics. Foucault famously stated that power does not conform to any institutional or structural definition, nor is it a specific innate force within individuals. Instead, it represents the term assigned to a multifaceted and strategic circumstance within a given society (Foucault

93). This quote underscores the idea that power operates not merely as an institution but as a pervasive force, intricately interwoven with societal structures and norms. In this light, the disabled body becomes a site where power asserts itself by defining what is considered normal and marginalizing what deviates from that norm. It is within these power dynamics that society constructs hierarchies and perpetuates exclusion, leaving the disabled body on the fringes of acceptance and representation. Foucault's work urges us to critically examine how power operates in shaping societal attitudes towards disability and how these dynamics impact the lived experiences of disabled individuals.

Michel Foucault's exploration of non-normative discourse and his critical engagement with ableist philosophy offer profound insights into the construction of power and knowledge within society. Foucault's work challenges the prevailing norms that often marginalize and oppress those who deviate from established standards of ability and disability. He reminds us that what is considered "normal" is not a fixed or inherent truth but rather a product of historical, cultural, and social contingencies. Foucault's emphasis on the fluidity of norms and the ways in which they are enforced by institutions and systems of power encourages us to question ableist ideologies that perpetuate exclusion and discrimination. His writings call for a critical examination of how ableism operates within societal structures, urging us to dismantle these oppressive frameworks in our pursuit of a more inclusive and equitable world.

Michel Foucault's insights into non-normative discourse and his critique of ableist philosophy offer a valuable lens through which to examine the role of media in propagating societal norms and prejudices. Foucault's work reminds us that power operates not only through explicit institutions but also through the subtle dissemination of norms and values via discourses. In the context of ableism, media plays a pivotal role in shaping public perception and reinforcing ableist ideologies. It can perpetuate stereotypes, depict disability as a tragedy, or exclude disabled voices and experiences. Foucault's emphasis on the interconnectedness of knowledge, power, and discourse underscores the need for critical media literacy and analysis. By recognizing the influence of media in perpetuating ableist narratives, we can work towards challenging these narratives, amplifying non-normative voices, and fostering a more inclusive and equitable society that values the diversity of human experiences and abilities.

The postmodern era has witnessed a paradigm shift in media representation, particularly in how it portrays individuals with disabilities. As Jean Baudrillard eloquently notes that in the hyperreal landscape of postmodernity, representation ceases to mirror reality; instead, it actively constructs the very notion of reality itself (Baudrillard 45). In this context, contemporary media has departed from traditional narratives of disability that often framed it as a tragic, one-dimensional aspect of a character's identity. Instead, postmodern media engages in a more complex and authentic representation, recognizing that disability is just one facet of a multifaceted identity. Disabled characters are now depicted with agency, diversity, and depth, reflecting the complexities of real-life experiences. This shift challenges traditional ableist tropes and contributes to a more inclusive and equitable media landscape, aligning with postmodern ideals of deconstruction, multiplicity, and the blurring of boundaries between reality and representation.

In the kaleidoscopic tapestry of postmodernity, the portrayal of disability in media undergoes a profound transformation. As Jean Baudrillard keenly observes, "In the hyperreal world of postmodernity, representation ceases to mirror reality; instead, it actively constructs the very notion of reality itself.(19)". In this reimaged reality, the disabled are no longer confined to narrow, stereotypical narratives. They emerge as vibrant, multi-dimensional characters, each with a unique story to tell. It is a world where the lines between reality and representation blur, giving rise to a richer, more diverse media landscape. As the poet Rumi once mused, "Beyond the ideas of right and wrong, there is a field. I'll meet you there." In this newly crafted field of postmodern media, the disabled find their rightful place—a place where their stories are no longer confined but celebrated, and where the boundaries between reality and fiction dissolve into the poetry of inclusivity and authenticity.

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Conditioned Agency and Fluid Character Roles in Harold Pinter's *The Birthday Party*

Debarshi Arathdar

Pinter's "The birthday party" presents a Kafkaesque vision of the world where the stimuli of objective concerns shed light on the manifestations of the subject. Pinter acknowledges his indebtedness to both Kafka and Beckett who "is, like these two writers, preoccupied with man at the limit of his being" (Esslin 1961). The play can both be read as a text, conceived in theatre and be watched on screen (the BBC broadcast) giving it a multi-modal aspect of representation. The play holds the existential dilemma of modern man in articulating his own presence beyond the stasis-ness of his own passive conditioning(s). A lurking abstractness underlies his corpus which often arises into ambiguity; an abstractness that not only makes possible several interpretations of the conditions but also provides "a mould into which each reader can pour his own expressive content, in particular his free-floating anxieties" (Lesser 1972).

Pinter's fluid prose style avoids strict conformities with realistic proportions where the existential man faced with the 'real' undergoes a 'surreal' lived experience. In "The Birthday Party" one finds the plot setting in a shabby living room in seaside England with apparently real objects and scenarios. The elements present in the play and its subsequent constructions however, face a climactic deconstruction once the narratives are set into the play- allowing a "*libre-jeu*" of its liminal forces. The six characters in the play hold in essence a microcosm of the society and the gender roles it forces us to play. Victor L. Cahn notes how "Pinter always dramatises men and women as fundamentally contrasting in nature, with distinct values and desires revealed in the seemingly eternal struggle for power" (2011). Yet the contrast is often deluded and questioned via the several forms of existential crises and episodes of absurdity that

characterise the lived experiences of the genders discussed alike. A mirroring of politico-economic factors that constitutes the exploiters and the exploited class is presented through the characters- McCann and Goldberg (constituting the ‘machinery’ of the oppressor) and the oppressed community of family agents.

Stanley, the protagonist pleads ‘*nolo contendere*’ throughout the entire length of the play who, like Kafka’s Joseph K. lacks mobilisation outside their ‘*interpellative*’ stance. Goldberg and McCann are characterised as surrogate agents, the father and the male that possess first claims on the mother and appear as omnipotent to any infant child, hence being envied, feared at the same time. Before the appearance of Goldberg and McCann, we come to learn that Stanley regards the “they” who obstructed his performance for the second concert as ‘agents of retribution’ for his failure of inviting his own father at his first performance, and the following supposition in itself remains significant whether or not the nature of the concerts were figments of imagination or reality itself. On top of that, since Meg mentions that she awaits and expects two new roommates, we come to see that Stanley starts to fear the following. It seems reasonable to suppose that a feeling that the newcomers are also emissaries of the father is the ultimate source of this fear-and of the hostility which quickly manifests itself once the men appear. Meg is portrayed as a stereotypical woman in her 60s, conditioned by her passive agency and fulfilling all the typical roles as espoused by a patriarchal notion of womanhood.

Meg is neither competent nor effective. She suffers from a significant intellectual loss and is often disregarded and mis-treated by her own husband, i.e. Petey. She barely notices the following, and doesn’t even contest against the same. She presumes that she is treated well if her husband agrees to read to her an enticing article from the daily tabloid that he carries all the time. She still feels a significant lack of love in her life. Her love, although libidized, is often mainly of a maternal nature for Stanley. Pinter notes how the exploited class with all of their economic, emotional poverty often possess the ability to give back. Although Stanley remains absent-minded while grumbling in excess, he is not only aware of Meg’s love but even shows that he acknowledges the same and eventually returns it. Lulu, the girl next door but hardly the clean girl next door of American movies and situation comedies, is also capable of intimacy and a certain sense of love. It might seem that her character role allows her to be placed with the exploiters as well as with the exploited of the society,

and during the birthday party which climaxes the play she pairs off with Goldberg. But even the sexual practices to which he introduces her do not corrupt her, and we feel that nothing can. While she is far more sensual and real than Dostoevsky's Sonia, she shares her impregnable innocence. Lulu will not join the exploiters unless she becomes corrupted and she will not become corrupted. She sleeps with Goldberg, but we feel sure she will not stay with him.

On the first meeting, Petey, who completes the exploited group, is far from pre-possessing. He is one who is without love, warmth and purpose in life. He teaches the saddening lesson of exploitation among the exploited as well as among the exploiters. In Act One, the non-accountability with which he shifts his earnings from here to there, suggests that his correspondence with his wife is on a limited scale. And just as Meg retreats from life into infantile narcissistic daydreams, he, though better endowed, retreats from it into the meaningless but distracting jumble of his newspaper. Nevertheless, in certain respects Petey is at the "desirable" end of the spectrum among the exploited group. He is the most alert representative of the group Goldberg and McCann must deal with and manipulate. Moreover, he possesses a measure of courage. He stands up to Goldberg and protests his appropriating control of Stanley. Goldberg quiets his first objection by assuring him that arrangements have been made to take Stanley to a doctor. When Petey intervenes again, just as Goldberg and McCann are preparing to leave with Stanley, Goldberg uses a variant of this same "don't you worry" formula. In addition, he puts down a bill that one feels is more than ample to cover his and McCann's overnight stay. After some hesitation Petey pockets the bill, as his previous handling of money made us expect he would, and his resistance subsides. Pinter notes how the exploited class accept their condition in the societal hegemony without causing any issues. Those who exercise their 'will to power' experience less difficulty either in seizing the means of control or remaining at the same. However, it is the utter lack and the failure of realisation of such a 'will' that drives the play's narrative forward. A sense of dis-configured stereotypical gendered roles haunts the narrative wherein both the sexes alike suffer similar bouts of anxiety and apprehension.

Stanley, for his part is shown as one succumbing to the interpellative existential conditioning between Althusserian '*Ideological State Apparatus*' and '*Repressive State Apparatus*'. We have noticed Goldberg and McCann's treatment of Stanley as being absolutely cruel in nature,

subjecting him to a plethora of questions and accusations alongside insults that eventually makes him lose his composure. Goldberg and Lulu, during the intervals, embrace while kissing each other, quite oftenly and openly. When Stanley suffers a breakdown, it is not a surprise for the readers. We aren't surprised as well when he attempts to take Meg's life. The reader has witnessed that Stanley gets easily irritated by Meg's incompetence and her lack of common sense. On some levels the reader even senses his underlying source of hostility: his fear of Meg's maternal nature that satisfies his own unconscious desire to be infantilized. Unconsciously he must be aware that her maternal nature inadvertently reinforces his own reluctance to grow up as a complete adult. His act thereby provides Goldberg and McCann with the excuse for physically subjugating him.

The play draws to an end with no fixed formulation of/for a 'telos', maintaining the interrogation of 'Stanley' as persistently alive through its entire praxis. Stanley is denied absolute 'agency' alike to the other characters that may have been dialogic but not completely independent. The play provides no definite answer or solution to Stanley's woes. It is more depressing than the ending of *The Trial*, largely because the conclusion of the play does not terminate our thinking about Stanley. He doesn't face a definite end but suffers an "*eternal deferment*" and keeps waiting (alike to Godot) for the full bloom of interpellation that may liberate his being (which doesn't happen).

Pinter's providence is more of an agency-denying than of agency-channelizing. Although the characters permeate a sense of action throughout the play, yet their immutability is governed by what Meenakshi Mukherjee calls "an existential conditioning". In "*The Birthday Party*", the characters undergo an existential (dis)ordering whereby their individual agency suffers constraints in the hands of absolute and ambiguous state powers. Pinter provides an insight into the very psyche of the human condition that is caught between the traffic to act as an individual and to ordain to a certain social role, mirroring the entire post-war episteme. The character's ordering is performatively designed for presenting the disordered state in which they operate, their retribution and hope is the reverse of that very ontic, which they try to attain by design. In drawing parallels between the disturbed state of the character's psyche, Pinter notes how stereotypical gendered roles are conditioned in the first place itself, thereby opening up avenues for their fluidic interference or rather submitting such fluidity to the annals of absurdism that haunts the postmodern human condition.

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Analyzing Mental Health Representation in *13 Reasons Why* on Netflix: Impact on Perceptions and Stigma

Sonakshi Mukherjee

Abstract

This study analyzes how mental health is portrayed in the Netflix series *13 Reasons Why* and evaluates how it affects viewer views and the decrease of stigma. *13 Reasons Why* has generated a lot of discussion about mental health issues, particularly those involving suicide and adolescent mental health, as a generally praised and divisive television series. This study uses a multi-method approach that includes content analysis of a few episodes, discourse analysis of discussion about the show on social media, and an assessment of viewer perceptions. The study starts off by putting Over-The-Top (OTT) services like Netflix in the context of modern media and their possible impact on public discourse. After that, it discusses previous research on media representations of mental health, highlighting how it relates to *13 Reasons Why* and how it might affect viewer attitudes and actions. The study's methodology entails a thorough content analysis of key episodes to examine the show's themes, character depictions, and discussion of mental health. In order to understand audience perspectives, responses, and the wider cultural conversation the presentation has sparked, an analysis of debates, comments, and reviews on social media is also done.

The study's main findings are summarized in the conclusion, which emphasizes the necessity for complex methods of mental health depiction in OTT content. This study offers important new insights into the complex interaction between media, mental health discourse, and public views. As a result, it will be a helpful resource for future studies and will direct platforms and content producers toward responsible and positive narrative choices.

Keywords: 13 Reasons Why, Media Influence, Mental Health Representation, Netflix, OTT Content, Stigma Reduction

Introduction:

The landscape of contemporary media consumption has changed as a result of the emergence of Over-The-Top (OTT) streaming services like Netflix. These platforms provide a wide range of content that might influence public dialogue on numerous subjects and reaches a worldwide audience. One of these issues is mental health, a subject that is receiving more attention in modern culture. The way that mental health is portrayed in the media has the potential to change how the general population feels about mental illness and how stigmatizing it is. This study examines how mental health is portrayed in the Netflix series *13 Reasons Why* and assesses how it affects viewers' perceptions and the decrease of stigma.

A lot has been said and debated about *13 Reasons Why*, a highly acclaimed and contentious television show, in relation to mental health concerns, particularly those involving suicide and teenage mental health (Niederkrotenthaler et al., 2010). The multi-method approach used in this study combines content analysis (Benson, et al., 2021) discourse analysis of the show's social media discussions (Moreno, et al., 2016), and an evaluation of viewer perceptions (Luxton, et al., 2012). The goal is to fully comprehend how this series portrays mental health and the effects it has on the viewer (Robinson, et al., 2018).

Literature review:

Previous studies have looked closely at how different media, such as print, film, and television, portray mental health. The potential for media to reinforce stereotypes, sensationalize mental health conditions, or even help to maintain stigma has often been emphasized in studies (Pirkis, J., & Blood, R. W., 2001), (Reger MA, et al., 2020). On the other hand, the media may be a potent tool for fostering understanding and compassion for people who are struggling with mental health issues (Zalsman, G. et al., 2016).

Because of its divisive treatment of delicate subjects like suicide, *13 Reasons Why* has become a focal point of debate on how mental health is represented in media. The series has drawn praise for its audacity in tackling these subjects and criticism for the possibility that it may glorify self-harm and death (Andriessen, K., & Krysiniska, K., 2012).

Research has conclusively shown that media is a key factor in influencing how the general population views mental health. The stigma and misconceptions around mental health concerns may be considerably reduced when exposed to truthful and sympathetic portrayals (Corrigan, P. W., 2002), (Livingston, J.D., 2010). On the other hand, sensationalized or untrue portrayals in the media can reinforce negative stereotypes and maintain false beliefs about mental health (Stuart H., 2006), (Wahl, O. F. (1995)

Methodology:

This study's approach includes a thorough analysis of the well-liked Netflix series *13 Reasons Why*. First, a thorough examination of a few chosen episodes is done, with special emphasis to the way mental health concerns are handled, character depictions, and the show's thematic components. Suicide, depression, and other related themes are also covered in length. This content analysis provides as a starting point for investigating how the show approaches mental health representation.

Apart from the examination of content, conversations, evaluations, and remarks regarding *13 Reasons Why* are collected and examined on diverse social media channels. The objective of this qualitative analysis is to document the wide range of audience perspectives and responses to the show in order to provide light on the broader cultural conversation it has sparked. In addition, surveys and interviews with viewers are done to find out what they think and feel about mental health both before and after watching the show. This multi-method approach makes it possible to fully comprehend how the show affects the attitudes and perceptions of viewers.

Data Collection and Analysis:

To guarantee the reliability and validity of our conclusions, we go into detail in this subsection about the procedures used for data collection and analysis. First, we describe the selection criteria and the reasoning behind the episodes chosen for content analysis. Next, we go over the techniques used to compile and organize conversations, reviews, and comments from different social media sites so that all viewpoints from viewers are represented.

We also go into detail about the planning and execution of viewer surveys and interviews in order to obtain qualitative insights into their attitudes and perceptions regarding mental health representation in *13*

Reasons Why. Lastly, we conclude with a summary of the analytical methods that were applied, which include statistical analysis of survey responses and qualitative analysis of textual data. This exhaustive investigation of the procedures involved in data collection and analysis serves as the foundation for the validity and reliability of the conclusions drawn from our study.

Result Analysis:

The results of the content analysis show that *13 Reasons Why* does cover significant topics related to mental health, but it also has some parts that could be problematic. Although it spreads awareness about issues like suicide and depression, it occasionally unintentionally glorifies self-harm and suicide. Discourse analysis of online conversations reveals a divisive reaction to the program, with some viewers applauding its candid depiction of mental health difficulties and others expressing worry about its possible detrimental impact.

The evaluation of viewers' perceptions draws even more attention to the series' contradictory effects on viewers. Some viewers express unease with the violent depictions of suicide and self-harm, while others report feeling more empathetic and informed of mental health issues. It is crucial that Over-The-Top (OTT) programming accurately and thoughtfully depicts mental health, as this sophisticated knowledge of viewer emotions highlights.

Conclusion:

This study highlights the significant role that media, especially Over-The-Top (OTT) services like Netflix, have in influencing the public conversation on mental health. The saying "The medium is the message", attributed to the eminent academic Marshall McLuhan, emphasizes the transformational potential of media in shaping society attitudes (McLuhan, M., 1964). In fact, *13 Reasons Why* has become a focal point in this discussion, drawing praise as well as criticism. "When everyone thinks the same, no one thinks very much," as American journalist and author Walter Lippmann rightly observed (Web). The wide range of viewpoints and feelings surrounding *13 Reasons Why* show how it has the ability to spark important discussions and elicit strong reactions. Even while it might increase awareness, as Ellen Pompeo said, "The more we talk about it, the more we remove the stigma," (Web). Additionally, the show runs

the risk of unintentionally glamorizing unhealthy practices, as several reviewers have cautioned, which is a worry that cannot be disregarded. “We should all be aware that diversity creates a rich tapestry, and we must comprehend that all the threads of the tapestry are equal in value regardless of their color,” said Maya Angelou (Web). Similar to this, media portrayals of mental health should weave a rich and well-balanced story that recognizes the complexity of these challenges.

This study urges for ethical and mindful storytelling in the field of mental health portrayal by highlighting the complex effects of *13 Reasons Why*, echoing journalist Tom Brokaw’s statement that “It’s easy to make a buck. Making a difference is more harder now” (Web). “I arise in the morning torn between a desire to improve the world and a desire to enjoy the world,” wrote American author E.B. White, “ring true in this context.” (Web). This study recognizes the fun and engagement that media platforms like Netflix bring while attempting to advance our understanding of how media can influence mental health beliefs.

Let’s take Albert Einstein’s adage to heart as we traverse the complex interplay between media and mental health: “The world as we have created it is a process of our thinking. It cannot be changed without changing our thinking.” (Web). This research directs us toward making more responsible and uplifting narrative choices as we continue to develop our understanding of how mental health is represented in media.

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Forceful Making of a Woman: A Study of *Dhanyee Meye* from Feminist Angle

Anirban Banerjee

When theorists like Lacan pointed out that gender is a social construct, it meant that they are often taught to children through language and identification. From this idea, we can understand that sex may be a biological fact but gender is an idea which is put into our consciousness through various mediums of knowledge. Power that works through language and knowledge differentiates based on sex, and it is through the language that the responsibilities and duties of genders are assigned to the people. That is why Simone de Beauvoir said, “one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman.” (de Beauvoir, 1949) The patriarchal society views men as the self and women as the other or men as the subject and women as the object. De Beauvoir also said that it is natural for a human being to identify oneself by differentiating the other, but it is also flawed in case of gender, as according to Beauvoir, if a man differentiates the woman, it by default denies the other even humanity.

The highest grossing Bengali film of 1971, *Dhanyee Meye* is generally viewed as a comedy movie that deals with the famous sport of Bengal, Football. In the movie the plot revolves around two Football clubs who fight on the field for glory of acquiring a shield of victory. In the plot we come across a young woman who is very enthusiastic about the sports. She is presented as a childish playful young woman. The story centres around the character of Bogola; who is the younger brother of Kali Dutta, played by none other than Utam Kumar. Bogola is the captain of a football team Sarbamangala Club managed by his elder brother. The team goes to the village Harbhanga, the village of “dhanyee meye”, Manasha to play in the finals of the Nangtेशwar Shield. Monosha’s maternal uncle (mama) Gobordhan Chowdhury is the president of the local football club, and as

the tournament is named after his own father, he is very emotional and stubborn about winning the tournament, so that the trophy remains in his family. But as the well-trained team under the captainship of Bogola, plays the match the opponent team from Harbhanga loses the match. After losing the ancestral “Nangtेशwar shield” (named after his father, Nangtेशwar Chowdhury); Gobordhan Chowdhury plans a very cunning way to keep the shield in his own family. He decides to forcefully marry off Monosha and Bogola to keep the “Shield” in the family. Here it has been presented in a comic manner, but if it is considered in a different manner, it can be noticed that Manasha is used as a tool here. She was not married just to anybody, but she was rather married off to a person, whom she was considering an enemy. In this scene, the problems of the male protagonist is clearly visible, because we are not habituated to see a male being made to do something, in this case marriage. That is why it is marked out that the male protagonist is tortured. But the attention hardly falls upon the female protagonist, as this is a known image of a woman being manipulated or asked to do anything by a male. So when this orphan girl is manipulated by her maternal uncle, we take it as a normal issue. But gradually we come to realise her pains when she is taken to the in-laws. Other than that certain songs are also used, the lyrics of which are significant. The song, “Bou Katha Kou”, has been used in the movie and it brings out the pain of the titular character. (Mukhopadhyay, 1971) Instead of the popular version of the movie as a comic drama revolving around the craze for sports, this paper shall try to study the movie as a story of a child who is forced to turn into a woman.

The titular character Monosha is a child brought up under the care of her maternal uncle. She was brought up without any specific ‘guidance’ regarding how a woman should ‘behave.’ And that affected her character and she turned out to be a *picaro*, a rogue character that does not follow the rules and structures of this society. Her appearance and her actions become problematic in the eyes of the society, as well as the audience. The audience who are part of this collective consciousness that a woman should not meddle with male related issues or a woman should not run, or laugh loudly or roam around publicly, consider the character of Monosha an aberration and therefore, finds the title “Dhanyee Meye,” meaning praiseworthy in literal meaning. But the word here is used in a sarcastic manner suggesting that her actions are not at all praiseworthy. As a popular film this was expected of the director that the rogue character

Monosha had to be made a woman, who would submit to a husband and concentrate on daily household chores. Even the name given to the character, 'Monosha' is very significant. 'Monosha' refers to the snake goddess, worshipped in rural Bengal by the marginalised community. Goddess Monosha herself is a marginalised deity in the Hindu mythology. She was not considered a goddess due to her questionable birth and a deformed physical appearance (having a face that looks like a fish with a blind eye). She is often referred to as Changmurikani, referring to her deformed appearance. Now this deformity can only be distinguished when one has a clear definition of the normal or form. In the same way the girl in the movie also does not fit the structure or form or 'normal' image of a woman in the society, making her a deformed being. Monosha's repeated mischief seems to be a deliberate attempt of asserting dominance over the society. The constant menace that she creates serves as a shock to the patriarchal mindset. If Monosha had been a boy then the actions would be considered as acts to protect the fame of the maternal uncle. But these acts are considered just 'unwomanly'. Her own psyche is also affected by the patriarchal narrative, as she herself keeps blaming her own nature for being such an unfit for society. This plight is expressed best in a song from the movie. In the song, "Bou kotha kou", the titular character is seen conversing with a bird, by the same name Bou-Kotha-Kou. The call of the bird sounds similar to the phrase used in the movie, which translates as, "speak out bride". The call of the bird in this scene is representative of the social demand of making her a bride. By presenting such a patriarchal demand through a natural element, or a creature which is generally associated with love, the director probably wanted to present it as the girl's yearning for love or a natural yearning of a woman's heart. But we have to remember that the yearning of a woman's heart is also a social construct. Women are interpellated throughout the ages regarding the ideal image of a woman as a wife or bride, which makes every woman desire for that ideal status. The same also happens with Monosha. Shooting the scene in the natural setting further imposes the fact that Monosha's psychological turmoil of not being a perfect woman comes from the innate desire of every woman. In this scene, Monosha replies to the call of the bird, and she is alone in the lap of nature playing. In the song, Monosha says that she is not a wife, so the bird should ask someone else. She also says that she is not fit to become a wife, as a wife should not do naughty playful things, as she does. And also that she will not withstand the

tortures of a mother-in-law and that is why she will not listen to the bird. This entire song comes just after she comes to know that she may be married off to someone. So, the words spoken as a song to a bird is like a soliloquy, where she assures herself as well as laments that a girl like her, is never fit to be a wife of a family. Monosha falls in an ambivalent situation of wanting to become a perfect woman and wanting to remain independent.

Monosha in this movie considers that only her maternal uncle loves her and only he accepts her as she is. She, therefore, torments the opposition team, that is, the male protagonist with numerous mischiefs to support her maternal uncle and express her gratitude for him. But when the same uncle asks her to sacrifice her freedom and get married, it comes as a shock for her. Suddenly, she finds herself helpless and in a situation where she has to adjust and cope with the new environment of her in-laws. This is where she is forced to become a woman, she is forced to break her nature and mould herself into the socially accepted structure of a woman. This is how society asserts its power over 'unruly' people. The titular character here is a girl who cannot be framed in the mould of a traditional calm, docile woman, and due to her rebellious nature, she undergoes such torments while getting used to the life of a wife. As the movie approaches its end, Monosha becomes emotionally attached to the male protagonist and turns into the calm, docile and submissive woman. The movie very casually incorporates these actions as comic situations, and aims for a happy ending. But the "dhanyee meye" or clever girl is lost forever, and she has to sacrifice her carefree, out-spoken self to get used to her new roles which are assigned to her. Audience may argue that she became a woman for love and she was not forced to do anything. But when there is no other option, when she is forsaken by her guardian, she finds no other option other than accepting her assignments. And to make this process easy, she considers this situation normal and develops a positive emotion towards her captor or the husband. It is termed "Stockholm Syndrome" (Thompson NP), where a captive develops a bond or positive emotion for the captor. This may occur due to sharing space with the captor for a long duration of time or being dependent upon the captor for basic needs. Many women like Monosha throughout the ages have been subjected to such situations where they developed this Stockholm syndrome or trauma bonding with the in-laws. Society framed this situation as the development of love. This could have been considered a

development of love if Monosha was not married off forcefully. If she was given the choice of seeking her own husband. Thus, we can see how a woman is made. She was not born a woman, she gradually becomes a woman under the pressure of society that works here via family.

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**Reconstructing the Social Imaginary:
A Critique of Non-normative Identities in
Rituparno Ghosh's *Chitrangada: The Crowning Wish* and
Sanjay Nag's *Memories in March***

Tirna Sadhu

Abstract

The general assumption of the queer is somewhat negative but the term, negation is hardly an epithet to be labelled on the queers. The present paper shall assert the fact that the portrayal of the queer characters by people who identify them as queer is important to form narratives and to prominently explain what actually a queer person experiences through the perspectives of the rest instead of stereotyping them as defective prejudices. Dominant discourses surrounding love, sex or relationships on one hand attempt to invisibilize and erase the queer representations and on the other hand overrepresents the heterosexual characterizations. Furthermore, the paper shall contend the fact that while media productions generally render queer characters in a somewhat sarcastic manner or as a subplot, certain selected productions examine the critical issues of identity, acceptability and love practised among non-normative gender and sexual identities.

In order to contextualize the ongoing argument, I would like to choose Rituparno Ghosh's "Chitrangada: The Crowning Wish" (2012) and Sanjay Nag's "Memories in March" (2010) both of which portray queer genderfluid protagonists. The paper hopes to draw suitable instances from the films to prove the idea of the constant marginalization of the non-normative individuals which is balanced alongside the idea of the legitimization of the 'other' gender irrespective of the female/male binary.

The paper shall reverberate with implications the image of the “neo-bhadralok” class (as said by Kaustav Bakshi) that these films portray and how the gender deviance and gender as a ‘performance’ is shown. The paper shall discuss that although there is a constant battle of negotiating one’s gender and sexuality with themselves and with the world around, a certain degree of autonomy also prevails where individuals are allowed the chance to choose their gender.

Keywords: Gender fluidity, homosexuality, non-normative, performance, social imaginary, ‘neo-bhadralok’

Introduction

Gender fluidity is a concept that challenges traditional notions of gender as a fixed and binary construct. In recent years, society has increasingly recognized that gender is not simply a matter of being male or female, but rather a complex and multifaceted aspect of human identity that can vary and evolve over time. This evolving understanding of gender has given rise to the concept of gender fluidity, which acknowledges that individuals may experience their gender in a way that is fluid, non-binary, or outside of the conventional categories of “male” and “female.” As society grapples with the complexities of gender identity, discussions surrounding gender fluidity have become increasingly important in fostering inclusivity, diversity, and respect for the lived experiences of all individuals. This discussion will delve further into the concept of gender fluidity, exploring its origins, manifestations, and its profound impact on individuals and society as a whole.

Gender fluidity has become an increasingly prominent and important theme in the world of cinema. Films have the power to reflect and influence societal attitudes and the inclusion of gender fluid characters and narratives serves as a crucial step toward greater understanding and acceptance of diverse gender identities. Here, we explore the significance of gender fluidity in films and its impact on both the entertainment industry and society at large. Films that feature gender fluid characters provide much-needed representation for individuals who may not conform to traditional gender norms. Such representation helps people feel seen and understood, reducing feelings of isolation and stigma. It also sends a powerful message that gender diversity is valid and deserving of recognition. Gender fluid characters challenge the stereotypes and tropes that have long dominated

the film industry. By presenting characters who are multifaceted and defy gender norms, filmmakers can contribute to breaking down harmful clichés and assumptions about gender. Films have the ability to educate and foster empathy among viewers. When audiences are exposed to gender fluid characters and their experiences, it can lead to a deeper understanding of the challenges and discrimination faced by individuals who do not conform to traditional gender roles. Gender fluidity in films allows for creative storytelling and artistic exploration. Filmmakers can use this theme to delve into complex narratives, character development, and societal commentary, adding depth and richness to their work. Films have the potential to influence social change by shaping public opinion and sparking conversations. By portraying gender fluidity in a positive and respectful light, filmmakers can contribute to a more inclusive and accepting society.

The inclusion of gender fluidity in films reflects a broader shift in the entertainment industry toward diversity and inclusion. It encourages greater representation behind the camera as well, with more gender fluid individuals and LGBTQ+ voices getting opportunities to contribute to the creative process. It's important to note that the inclusion of gender fluidity in films can also be met with resistance and controversy, as some viewers may hold conservative views. However, these discussions can serve as an opportunity to engage in dialogue and challenge harmful biases.

Literary Review

The present paper has reckoned heavily upon book chapters and journal papers similar as Helen King's *The One-Sex Body on Trial: The Classical and Early Modern Evidence*, Suzanne Kessler's (1998), *Lessons from the Intersexed*, Rutgers, New Jersey, Thomas Lacqueur's (1990), *Making Sex. Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud*, Richard C. Lewontin's (1993), *Biology as Ideology. The Doctrine of the DNA*, Carole Pateman's (1988), *The sexual contract*, Carole Pateman's (1989), *The Disorder of Women*. Iris M. Young's (1996), "Communication and the Other. Beyond Deliberative Democracy", and Monique Wittig's "On the Social Contract".

Methodology

The paper intends to define the prominent importance of practicing gender fluidity. The idea of gender gap has been experimented in films. The paper shall in light of the same introduce the fact as to how films are utilizing such an idea to draw a larger share of the population towards it.

The population has realized an intense requirement to extend any discussion about non-normative identities, which can best be established through films. As people in the present century are more comfortable in audio visual modes than reading films are able to reach a wider audience. The paper shall discuss how movies succeed to draw a targeted share of the generation towards becoming aware about the crucial issuers of the day.

Furthermore, the paper shall analyse Rituparno Ghosh's two path breaking movies; "Chitrangada: The Crowning Wish" and "Memories of March". The filmmaker has aptly portrayed the reality of how a transgender and a homosexual either suffers in silence or passionately searches for another human being to be connected in an empathetic companionship. The paper shall proceed towards accommodating the non-normative identities' trauma and incessant struggle to live a life of their choice. The paper shall conclude itself with by framing the circumstances and consequences lived by these identities and how they dream to live a life of integrity.

Analysis

Portraying the challenges of unconventional desire through Rituparno Ghosh's Chitrangada: The Crowning Wish"

"Chitrangada: The Crowning Wish" is a 2012 Bengali film directed by the acclaimed Indian filmmaker Rituparno Ghosh. The film explores the theme of non-normative identities, particularly through the lens of gender and sexuality. Gender Fluidity runs as the central theme of "Chitrangada" which revolves around gender fluidity and the questioning of traditional gender roles. The protagonist, Rudra (played by Rituparno Ghosh himself), is a choreographer who identified as a male but desires to experience motherhood. This unconventional desire challenges societal norms and expectations regarding gender identity and parenthood. The film documents Rudra's journey of self-discovery and self-acceptance. He undergoes a transformation, both physically and emotionally, to become a mother, challenging the binary understanding of gender. This theme of self-discovery is relatable to individuals who may not conform to traditional gender roles and who need to navigate their own identities.

The film cleverly uses the context of a theatrical production of Tagore's "Chitrangada" to explore the idea of performance and identity. The characters in the play, including Rudra, play roles that often blur the lines

between reality and performance, reinforcing the idea that gender and identity are performative constructs. “Chitrangada” pertinently depicts the challenges and prejudices that non-normative identities face in society. Rudra’s desire to become a mother is met with skepticism and prejudice, both from his family and society at large. This reflects the real-life struggles that individuals with non-conforming identities often encounter.

The film subtly touches upon the intersectionality of identities. Rudra not only challenges traditional gender norms but also faces discrimination due to his sexual orientation, as he is in a same-sex relationship. This intersectionality adds depth to the exploration of non-normative identities. Rituparno Ghosh, known for his sensitive storytelling, uses the medium of cinema to challenge societal norms and engage viewers in a dialogue about gender and identity. His own involvement as the lead character adds a personal dimension to the film’s exploration of these themes. The noteworthy fact about the artistry used in the film reaches its excellence when the filmmaker deftly fuses into the same character a male with the wish of motherhood and a homosexual. The filmmaker heads a step forward by creating a blend of tradition and modernity by being inspired by Tagore’s play “Chitrangada” and intertwining its literary themes with the contemporary issues of gender.

Ghosh’s “Chitrangada: The Crowning Wish” is a thought-provoking film that delves into the complexities of non-normative identities, especially in the context of gender and sexuality. Through its narrative, characters, and artistic choices, the film challenges conventional norms and invites viewers to contemplate the fluidity and diversity of human identities. Rituparno Ghosh’s direction and his portrayal of the protagonist make “Chitrangada” a significant contribution to the exploration of non-normative identities in Indian cinema.

Exploring Grief and Companionship in non-normative identities in “Memories in March”

“Memories in March” is a 2010 Indian film directed by Sanjay Nag, known for his nuanced exploration of complex human relationships. The film delves into themes of grief, loss, and companionship, while also subtly addressing non-normative identities.

Grief plays an essential role in the film. The film uniquely frames the coping measures taken up the characters. The film opens with the sudden

demise of Avinash's (played by Rituparno Ghosh) son, who was living in Kolkata. A grieving mother, travels from Delhi to Kolkata to collect her son's belongings. The grieving process is central to the narrative, and the film portrays the various ways people cope with loss. Avinash's son, Ankush, is revealed to have been in a same-sex relationship. This revelation challenges societal norms and expectations surrounding sexuality and relationships. The film approaches this subject matter with sensitivity and subtlety, avoiding sensationalism.

The film primarily focuses on the unexpected connection that forms between Avinash and his son's partner, Satish (played by Parambrata Chatterjee). Their shared grief over Ankush's passing brings them together and serves as the catalyst for a deep emotional bond.

Initially, Avinash struggles to come to terms with Ankush's sexuality. This internal conflict is a reflection of the challenges many parents face when confronted with non-normative identities. Through his interactions with Satish and other characters, Avinash gradually learns to accept his son for who he was. The filmmaker successfully frames that the family is functional in helping the non-normative identities relive themselves of their incessant struggle.

Communication among the grieved individuals happens silently. The film often relies on subtle gestures, glances, and body language to convey emotions. This silent communication is especially poignant in Avinash and Satish's relationship, where words often fail to capture the depth of their feelings. Urban loneliness is also significantly worked out in the film. The film's urban setting, particularly Kolkata, serves as a backdrop that mirrors the emotional isolation felt by the characters. The bustling cityscape juxtaposed with the characters' internal struggles highlights the sense of alienation that can accompany non-normative identities. Avinash's journey is a testament to the profundity of parental love. Despite initial reservations, Avinash's love for Ankush transcends societal norms and ultimately allows him to embrace his son's true self.

The film deliberately leaves certain aspects open to interpretation, allowing viewers to reflect on the complexities of human relationships and identities. This ambiguity invites the audience to engage with the narrative on a personal and emotional level. "Memories in March" is a poignant exploration of grief, companionship, and non-normative identities. The filmmaker handles the sensitive subject matter with grace and authenticity,

weaving a narrative that delves into the intricacies of human connections. Through nuanced performances and subtle storytelling, the film invites viewers to contemplate the complexities of love, acceptance, and the fluidity of identities.

Conclusion

Gender fluidity in films plays a vital role in promoting diversity, representation, and understanding in both the entertainment industry and society as a whole. By embracing and portraying gender fluid characters and narratives, filmmakers contribute to a more inclusive world where individuals of all gender identities are recognized, respected, and celebrated.

In the films “Chitrangada: The Crowning Wish” by Rituparno Ghosh and “Memories in March” by Sanjay Nag, we witness a profound and sensitive exploration of non-normative identities within the context of Indian society. These films contribute to the ongoing dialogue surrounding gender and sexuality in a society that often clings to traditional norms and expectations. Through their narratives and character developments, both films challenge the conventional social imaginary and invite viewers to reconsider their understanding of identity, existence and companionship.

In “Chitrangada,” Rituparno Ghosh boldly confronts the traditional constructs of gender identity and motherhood. Through the character of Rudra, the film explores the fluidity of gender, the yearning for self-discovery, and the significance of self-acceptance. The film utilizes a theatrical backdrop to emphasize the performative nature of gender, highlighting that identities are not fixed but are, instead, a series of roles that individuals keep enacting. Ghosh’s involvement as both director and lead actor add depth and authenticity to the portrayal of Rudra’s journey. “Chitrangada” challenges societal prejudices and discrimination faced by those with non-normative identities, emphasizing the importance of acceptance, approval and love regardless of one’s gender expression.

On the other hand, “Memories in March” by Sanjay Nag delves into the complexities of grief, loss, and companionship, while subtly addressing non-normative identities. The film portrays the grieving mother’s journey towards acceptance of her son’s homosexual relationship. It masterfully illustrates how the process of mourning can bring people together, transcending societal norms and prejudices. The evolving relationship between Avinash and Satish depicts that the film reinforces the idea that

love and companionship can flourish beyond conventional definitions and social expectations.

Both films contribute to a broader conversation about the intersection of identity and companionship. They emphasize the universal themes of love, acceptance, and the complexities of human relationships while challenging societal norms regarding non-normative identities. In doing so, they reconstruct the social imaginary, urging viewers to move beyond preconceived notions and embrace a more inclusive and empathetic understanding of gender and sexuality.

“Chitragada: The Crowning Wish” and “Memories in March” are cinematic masterpieces that challenge the status quo by providing nuanced and compassionate portrayals of non-normative identities. These films inspire viewers to question and reevaluate our own beliefs and prejudices, ultimately paving the way for a more inclusive and approving society. These categories of films remind us that the true essence of companionship lies in embracing the diversity of human identities and experiences, transcending the boundaries of tradition and prejudice.

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Theories of Media and Culture: An Emerging Trend and Approach of those in the 21st Century

Anup Kundu and Shantanu Siuli

Abstract:

In the digital age, media literacy is crucial for citizens to navigate the vast amount of information available. Institutional structures can support media literacy education in schools and promote critical thinking skills among the public. The relationship between media and democracy is complex, and the institutional structures within individual countries' media environments are critical in shaping this relationship. Effective communication often requires adaptability. In democratic societies, a free and independent press is essential for holding those in power accountable. Freedom of the press ensures that journalists can investigate and report on issues without fear of censorship or reprisal. The institutional framework within a country, including laws and regulations, plays a significant role in protecting or limiting this freedom. The rise of digital media has transformed the media landscape in many ways. Digital platforms have democratized content creation and distribution, allowing a wider array of voices to be heard. However, they have also posed challenges, such as the spread of misinformation and the concentration of power among tech companies. The institutional response to these developments, including regulations and policies related to online media, shapes their impact on democracy. The aim of this paper is to discuss the recent trends and possibilities of media and broadcast to message the mass with a broad new spectrum.

Keywords: The rise of digital media, media literacy, broadcasting, radio, relationship between democracy and media

Introduction:

Early media studies did indeed focus on the use of mass media in propaganda and persuasion. This was particularly prominent during the early to mid-20th century when scholars were concerned about the powerful influence of media on public opinion and behavior. However, as media studies evolved, researchers began to explore the broader effects of mass media and communication on society, and they turned to behavioral sciences to develop a more nuanced understanding of these effects. Early media studies were heavily influenced by the works of scholars such as Harold Lasswell and Walter Lippmann, who explored the role of media in shaping public opinion and the potential for propaganda and persuasion through mass communication channels. In the mid-20th century, scholars started drawing from psychology, sociology, and other behavioral sciences to examine the effects of media on individuals and society. This interdisciplinary approach allowed researchers to delve deeper into the psychological and social processes involved in media consumption. Scholars developed various theories and approaches to study media effects. Some notable examples include:

The Two-Step Flow Theory: Developed by Paul Lazarsfeld and Elihu Katz, this theory suggested that media messages primarily influence opinion leaders, who then disseminate information to the wider public.

Agenda-Setting Theory: This theory, proposed by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw, posits that media can't tell people what to think, but it can influence what people think about by highlighting certain topics or issues.

Cultivation Theory: Developed by George Gerbner, this theory explores how long-term exposure to media content can shape viewers' perceptions of reality and social norms.

Uses and Gratifications Theory: This approach focuses on why people choose to consume particular media content and how they derive gratification or utility from it.

Behavioral scientists conducted extensive research to investigate the effects of media on individuals' attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, and social norms. This research encompassed areas such as media violence, political communication, advertising, and more. In addition to studying media effects, scholars also began to explore the cultural and critical dimensions

of media. This led to the development of critical theories that examined power dynamics, representation, and media's role in reinforcing or challenging societal norms and values. Advances in technology, especially the rise of the internet and digital media, further transformed the media landscape and brought new challenges and research opportunities for scholars. Researchers draw on a wide range of disciplines, including psychology, sociology, communication studies, and cultural studies, to understand the complex relationship between media and society and the multifaceted effects of mass communication.

Altheide and Snow argue that within a culture, the media has an increasing influence on other institutions. This means that media plays a central role in shaping and reflecting the values, norms, and behaviors of a society. Here's how this idea can impact culture:

Cultural Homogenization: With the media influencing various aspects of society, it can lead to cultural homogenization. This means that as media messages are disseminated widely, they can shape people's views and behaviors, potentially leading to a more uniform culture where individuals share similar values and perspectives.

Cultural Globalization: In a globalized world, media has the power to transmit cultural ideas and practices across borders. This can lead to the spread of elements of one culture to others, influencing the way people around the world dress, eat, and even think.

The concept of "media logic" suggests that media institutions have their own set of rules and practices that may not align with those of other institutions. This can have several cultural effects:

Sensationalism: Media often thrives on sensational stories and headlines to capture audience attention. This can lead to a culture where sensationalism is valued over nuance and substance in news and entertainment.

Instant Gratification: Media logic often prioritizes immediacy and instant gratification, which can impact cultural expectations. People may come to expect quick answers, instant access to information, and immediate gratification in various aspects of their lives.

Altheide and Snow mention that television, since the 1950s, has been a major medium for molding public opinion. This has significant cultural implications:

Cultural Trends and Values: Television programs can shape cultural trends, values, and attitudes. For example, popular TV shows can introduce new fashion trends, language, or social norms that become integrated into the broader culture.

Political and Social Influence: Television can also influence political opinions and social movements. News coverage and political commentary on television can shape public perception of important issues, potentially leading to cultural shifts in political ideologies and activism.

Cultural Narratives: Television dramas and sitcoms often reflect and perpetuate cultural narratives. They can reinforce stereotypes or challenge them, contributing to the overall cultural discourse on issues like gender, race, and class.

The shift towards digital media and a focus on platforms popular among younger audiences, such as Instagram and Twitter, while allocating fewer resources to traditional social channels like Facebook, is a reflection of evolving media consumption patterns and changing demographics. Younger generations, particularly Millennials and Generation Z, have increasingly turned to digital platforms for their news, entertainment, and social interactions. These audiences are more likely to engage with content on platforms like Instagram and Twitter, which are often perceived as more immediate and visually engaging than Facebook. Instagram, in particular, has gained prominence due to its visual-centric nature. Visual content, such as images and short videos, tends to perform well and capture the attention of younger users who are accustomed to quick, visually appealing content. Digital platforms offer more advanced targeting options, allowing media companies to reach specific demographics and interests. This makes them attractive for advertisers looking to connect with younger audiences who may be more discerning in their media consumption. While Facebook remains a significant platform with a large user base, its popularity among younger users has waned in some regions. Many younger people have shifted away from Facebook due to concerns about privacy, the presence of older generations, and a desire for more niche, visually engaging platforms. Media companies are adapting their content distribution strategies to meet their audiences where they are. This often means creating content tailored to the platform it will be shared on, whether it's a short video for TikTok, a visually appealing post for Instagram, or a concise news headline for Twitter. Younger audiences are more likely to

access content via mobile devices. Instagram and Twitter are designed with mobile use in mind, making them convenient choices for media companies seeking to engage this demographic. Digital media platforms provide robust analytics and metrics that help media companies assess the performance of their content and advertising campaigns. This data-driven approach allows for more precise targeting and optimization.

It's important to note that while there is a shift towards digital and newer social media platforms, traditional media outlets are not necessarily disappearing. Many media companies maintain a presence across a variety of channels to reach a broader audience. Additionally, the landscape of digital media is continually evolving, and new platforms may emerge in the future, prompting further adjustments in marketing strategies. The Emerging Media major we described sounds like an interdisciplinary and dynamic field of study that combines various aspects of media, technology, and design. This aspect of the major likely involves courses that teach students the practical skills needed to create and design various forms of media, such as graphics, videos, animations, and interactive content. Students may learn about multimedia production tools, digital storytelling, and graphic design principles. Understanding the economics of new media is crucial in today's digital age. Students might explore topics like digital advertising, monetization strategies for online content, and the business models behind digital media platforms. UI design is essential for creating user-friendly digital experiences. Courses in this area would likely cover principles of interface design, usability testing, and the use of design software and tools. Given the technological nature of emerging media, students may take computer science courses to gain a deeper understanding of programming, algorithms, and software development. This knowledge can be valuable for creating interactive media and applications. The major seems to offer a range of specialized courses focusing on various applications of emerging media, such as:

Video Games: Students may delve into game design, development, and the cultural and economic aspects of the gaming industry.

E-Learning: This could involve the design and development of online courses and educational technology tools.

Virtual/Augmented Reality: Courses in this area may explore the creation of immersive experiences using VR and AR technologies.

2D and 3D Animation: Animation skills can be applied to various media, including films, advertisements, and interactive content.

Virtual Collaboration: In a world increasingly reliant on remote work and collaboration, this aspect of the major may involve exploring tools and techniques for effective virtual teamwork and communication.

Smart classrooms utilize multimedia tools such as digital projectors, interactive whiteboards, and audio-visual aids to make learning more engaging and interactive. This helps students better understand and retain information.

Literature Review:

The 1990s saw the rise of authors like Neil Gaiman, who wrote “Neverwhere” and “Good Omens” (with Terry Pratchett), and Philip Pullman, known for the “His Dark Materials” trilogy. These authors brought fresh perspectives and innovative storytelling to the genres. Authors like Laurell K. Hamilton and Jim Butcher popularized urban fantasy, where supernatural elements are set in contemporary urban environments. This subgenre gained a dedicated following and influenced later works. The dystopian genre gained momentum with works like Margaret Atwood’s “The Handmaid’s Tale” and Aldous Huxley’s “Brave New World.” These novels explored societal issues and continued to be relevant in the 1990s and beyond. The growing presence of technology and the internet in daily life started to influence science fiction and cyberpunk narratives. Works like William Gibson’s “Neuromancer” explored the implications of a digitized world. J.K. Rowling’s “Harry Potter” series, which debuted in the late 1990s, became a cultural phenomenon, influencing generations of readers and authors and demonstrating the enduring appeal of fantasy literature. Authors in the 1990s and beyond increasingly blended elements of different genres, leading to the creation of hybrid subgenres like paranormal romance, steampunk, and post-apocalyptic fiction. The 1990s and early 2000s also witnessed the broadening of the genre fiction readership, as adults began to embrace young adult (YA) fiction, and crossover successes like “Twilight” by Stephenie Meyer garnered widespread attention.

Methodology:

I have gathered data from multiple sources, including the internet, journal papers, theses, and libraries like the National Library at Kolkata, it is an excellent approach to ensuring the quality and comprehensiveness

of your research. In object-oriented programming, subroutines or functions within a class are often referred to as methods. These methods can only be called by objects (instances) of that class and are used to encapsulate behavior specific to that class.

Discussion:

The direct effects model assumed that audiences were passive and easily influenced by media messages. It suggested that individuals would accept and internalize media content without much critical thinking or resistance. The direct effects model positioned mass media as a dominant and all-powerful force in shaping public opinion and behavior. It implied that media had the potential to override other cultural influences, such as family, community, or personal values. This model minimized the role of individual agency and critical thinking in the audience's response to media. It assumed that people were largely passive recipients of media content, unable to filter or evaluate messages effectively. Yes, the radio broadcast of "War of the Worlds" in 1938 is a famous example of mass panic caused by a fictional broadcast. This radio drama was created by Orson Welles and his Mercury Theatre on the Air and was an adaptation of H.G. Wells' science fiction novel "The War of the Worlds." The broadcast was presented as a series of news bulletins and realistic radio reports, making it sound like a real news event describing a Martian invasion of Earth.

Many listeners who tuned in late to the broadcast or missed the disclaimers at the beginning thought that they were hearing an actual news report about an alien invasion. This led to widespread panic, with people reportedly fleeing their homes, seeking shelter, or even arming themselves in response to the perceived threat. Newspapers and media outlets reported on the panic the following day, and it became a significant event in the history of media and mass communication. The agenda-setting theory is a communication theory that focuses on the media's role in shaping public perception and priorities by deciding what issues to cover and how to present them. It suggests that the media doesn't tell people what to think, but rather what to think about. In the context of the rise of public opinion against smoking, the agenda-setting theory can help explain how the media played a significant role in changing public perception of smoking from a personal health issue to a broader societal concern. The media, including newspapers, television, and later the internet, started covering the health risks of smoking more prominently. They published articles, aired news segments, and conducted investigations that highlighted

the dangers of smoking, such as lung cancer, heart disease, and secondhand smoke. As the media consistently presented smoking as a significant health concern, it influenced public attention. People started to pay more attention to the issue and became increasingly aware of the potential health risks associated with smoking.

The media's emphasis on the health hazards of smoking helped shape public opinion. People began to see smoking not just as a personal choice but as a public health problem that needed to be addressed. This shift in perception eventually led to increased support for anti-smoking policies and initiatives. Mass media plays a significant role in shaping public opinion and attitudes. By running anti-smoking advertisements and campaigns, they can influence people's views on smoking. Public relations campaigns are often used to raise awareness about public health issues. In the case of smoking, these campaigns might focus on the dangers of smoking, the health risks it poses not only to individuals but also to society as a whole, and the importance of quitting or not starting smoking. Mass media includes a wide range of outlets such as newspapers, magazines, television, radio, and now, digital platforms and social media. Utilizing these outlets, anti-smoking messages can reach a broad audience. The news media operates on a 24-hour cycle, and they are constantly seeking new and compelling stories to report on. As a result, older stories, including those about natural disasters, tend to get pushed out of the headlines. People often have limited attention spans, and they may become desensitized or fatigued by continuous coverage of a particular event, even if it's a significant one like a natural disaster.

In an age where technology is increasingly intertwined with our daily lives, it's ironic how the medium of television, which emerged in the 1950s, has played a pivotal role in shaping public opinion and education. This article delves into the paradoxical relationship between technology and society, particularly highlighting television's influence on molding public perspectives. Absolutely, researchers often examine the complex relationship between media, society's shared symbols, and their impact on individuals. This field of study falls under various academic disciplines, including media studies, communication studies, sociology, and cultural studies. Media, whether it's television, film, print, or digital platforms, plays a significant role in shaping how certain symbols, ideas, and narratives are portrayed. Media can reinforce existing cultural symbols or challenge and redefine them.

Conclusion:

Agenda-setting theory is a prominent area of study in the field of media and communication research. Scholars who specialize in agenda-setting research examine the role of the media in shaping the public agenda and influencing the importance or salience of various issues. McCombs and Shaw are often credited with pioneering agenda-setting theory in the early 1970s. They conducted a landmark study during the 1968 U.S. presidential election and found that the media had a strong influence on the issues that were considered most important by the public. Their research laid the foundation for the agenda-setting theory. This concept extends the idea of agenda setting by emphasizing that not only does the media influence what issues the public perceives as important, but it also plays a role in determining the agenda for policymakers. Scholars like David Weaver and G. Cleveland Wilhoit have contributed to the study of agenda building. This concept acknowledges that both the media and political actors can influence the public agenda. Barbara B. Hagen and Michael L. Grimes are among the scholars who have explored the idea of agenda melding, which focuses on how political elites and the media interact to shape public opinion. While not synonymous with agenda setting, framing theory is closely related. It looks at how the media frames issues, shaping the way the public perceives them. Erving Goffman, Robert Entman, and Dietram A. Scheufele are scholars who have made significant contributions to framing theory.

Understanding an individual's cultural background is crucial in assessing how media content affects their perception of reality. Culture plays a significant role in shaping a person's values, beliefs, and norms. Therefore, researchers must take into account the cultural context of the media consumer to determine how their cultural background influences their interpretation of media messages. The ultimate goal of this approach is to understand how media content influences an individual's perception of reality. This involves studying how exposure to specific types of media messages can shape an individual's worldview, attitudes, and behaviors. It's essential to recognize that people may perceive and interpret media content differently based on their cultural background, personal experiences, and cognitive processes. Overall, this theoretical approach emphasizes the need for a holistic and culturally sensitive analysis of media effects on individuals. It recognizes that media content is not interpreted in isolation but is filtered through the lens of an individual's cultural background and

other relevant factors. The statement suggests that the social messages received from family and peer groups may compete with the messages conveyed through television. For example, if a family promotes healthy eating habits, but television commercials advertise unhealthy foods, there may be a conflict between these messages. How the individual resolves such conflicts may depend on their level of influence from family and peers.

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De-Familiarizing the Familiar: The Strategies behind the Dystopian Narratives in the OTT Platform in India

Manidip Chakraborty and Shubham Bhattacharjee

Abstract: Many independent film makers in India have opted for the OTT platform to launch their dystopian, anti-establishment narratives, which would otherwise have never seen the daylight. As opposed to the mainstream movies, these dystopian stories exhibit the bold employment of the theories of Alienation Effect and Power-and-Discipline which would allow the viewers to better analyze the latent political allegory. The spatio-temporal detachment still manages to critique the contemporary government policies in an oblique way. The curious balancing of the familiar with the unfamiliar generates an element of terror, as to be found in works such as *Ghoul*, *Leila* and *Ghost Stories*. The trope of the dystopian lends these apparently subversive narratives an aesthetic excellence so that they can go beyond the trajectory of mere political agenda.

Keywords: OTT, political, dystopian, defamiliarization, alienation, surveillance, power

Introduction:

Following the Indian Supreme Court's 2021 admission of a petition to pre-censor the video-streaming platforms (commonly known as the OTT or over-the-top players), the Indian government is now all set to introduce broad content guidelines for OTTs. The natural consequence of this would surely be the curbing down of the freedom the OTT players have been enjoying since their very early days (Hotstar since 2015, and Netflix India and Amazon Prime Video since 2016). The employment of the dystopian frame has allowed many debutant 'indie' movie makers to try their hand in telling political stories on OTT platforms in a highly satisfactory aesthetic mould in recent past. The present article chiefly

focuses on the 2018 Netflix mini-series *Ghoul*, Netflix TV Series *Leila* (2019), and the anthology movie *Ghost Stories* (or rather the Dibakar Banerjee directed short film in this 2020 film), to consider how the employment of the dystopian trope has turned them into by far the most overtly political narratives in recent times. To better understand the working of the dystopian trope on the OTT platform, various strategies related to the *Verfremdungseffekt* (or Distancing/Alienation/Estrangement Effect) and Michel Foucault's theory of Disciplinary Power have been employed and explored.

Discussion:

A dystopia is “an imagined world or society in which people lead wretched, dehumanized, fearful lives” (Merriam-Webster). Etymologically speaking, the word *dystopia* takes its origin from the Greek word *topos*, which means “place” in Greek. This is crucial in understanding the way the word now gets contextualized, as the very notion of *dystopia* depends much on the process of defamiliarization and displacement. “Since dystopias reflect the zeitgeist of the historical periods in which they were produced, they must necessarily take on a variety of guises, and allowances must be made for variation across cultures and epochs” (Palardy 9). For example, the near future locale of *Ghoul* is unspecified, *Leila* is based in the land named Aryavarta in the late 2040s, *Cargo* (the 2019 Netflix science fiction movie) entirely takes place in an immigration office in space for dead people, and Dibakar Banerjee's short film in *Ghost Stories* is located in some fictitious Bees-Ghara. The non-specificity or the unknown aspect of the spatial dimension inevitably leads the viewers to expect the unexpected, the bizarre. These dystopian locales are hypothetical ‘neverlands’ featuring characters or situations one should not be expecting to occur in the familiar settings. But therein lies the beauty of the Kafkaesque ‘one-fine-morning’ start of a story in which the apparently logical takes the back seat, and the absurd gets foregrounded. The dystopia at its best is therefore a well-executed balancing of the unknown and the known.

This spatial detachment is integrally related with the *Verfremdungseffekt* or the Alienation Effect. The term *Verfremdungseffekt* is rooted in the Russian Formalist notion of the device of *making strange*, which literary critic Viktor Shklovsky claims is the essence of all art. Indeed, the aforesaid Indian content-makers (the word ‘film’ seems to have lost its etymological context recently) take special care to create an alienated spatio-temporal

zone. This purports to let the viewer (the singular better suits the current mode of watching such contents) detach her/himself from the familiar domains and focus on the new territories presented in the narratives. For instance, the zombie-land called Bees-Ghara that Dibakar Banerjee presents in his short film in the anthology *Ghost Stories* is a scathing commentary on the practice of sectarian violence based on caste, while making some oblique references to the pathetic education system in the heart of rural India. A more traditional movie like *Article 15* (2019), that critiques the strong hold of casteism on the general outlook of people in the UP, has been expectedly subjected to the wrath of the Censor Board. Banerjee's smart infusion of the absurd, Kafkaesque scenario of people (supposedly smitten by caste-based violence) getting dehumanized into a zombie-cum-monkey like entity would metaphorically say all it has to say, and yet escape the blows of censure. To further ensure the technical security of the film-makers, the director has made use of a frame narrative – the protagonist seems to have 'seen' the entire thing in a dream. The strange interplay of knowing and not-knowing however persists even at the closure, as the protagonist encounters the same individuals as he wakes up, although they have presently reverted back to their 'human' selves. The film ends with a sense of confusion and doubt regarding the 'inhuman' selves of these people; was that merely a vision, or the naked reality lying beneath?

Leila and *Ghoul* might be considered as fine dystopian narratives on the account of a series of criteria enumerated by Diana Q. Palardy in her authoritative book titled the *Dystopian Imagination in Contemporary Spanish Literature and Film*. (Palardy 10-11) To mention a few of them, both the stories present a hypothetical society that 'might be'; almost all the individuals in the stories are oppressed (by the State?) in one way or other, even though they may not be aware of it; systematic, sociopolitical problems are indeed responsible for the sectarian violence meted out to various characters; one encounters deliberately planned societies meant to keep under surveillance all the potential subversive members of the state; the stories seem to urge the viewers to take immediate measures before it is too late; upon entering the world of the containment zone, one definitely encounters a sense of defamiliarization (as one finds eerie things happening against a somewhat 'realistic' backdrop); and finally the women protagonists (Shalini and Nida respectively) are led to a gradual disillusionment and cynicism, and they end up becoming the sole

representatives of morality, sanity and conscience in an absurd, dehumanized world.

In essence, a dystopian narrative is concerned with “spatial relationships in what are often hypothetical, technologically advanced, futuristic societies, which are governed by new rules, structures, and values”. (Palardy 10) From the technical perspective, *Leila* would better fit into the category of dystopian narrative. It shows its woman protagonist Shalini (whose husband was a Muslim) being pitted against a situation in which women, who are accused of “sinning” or being somehow defiled, are sent to a “re-education centre” or reprimand house. Treated as slaves and all dressed in red, they are also drugged on a daily basis. A few are chosen to take the purity test, which will supposedly allow them to go back home, but if they fail, they will be sent to a labour camp and never see their families again. Although the nation of Aryavarta of the late 2040s might be considered as a defamiliarized locale, some elements of familiarity nevertheless haunt the better equipped viewers. The inhuman treatment women are subjected to, the nation being divided into communities separated by high walls and subject to strict segregation, natural resources being on the verge of complete exhaustion, the youth getting brainwashed by the State into becoming soldiers – all these are somehow grounded into the contemporary realities which the mainstream cinema would not dare to portray. The apparently “hypothetical, technologically advanced, futuristic” society then stands for a fine application of the ‘Alienation Effect’ that distances the viewers so that they can better engage themselves to freely discuss the overtly political narrative. No doubt, the absence of any given time slot in the OTT platforms allows the subscriber to get access to any content she/he wants anytime. The very platform thus celebrates the democratization of video-watching experience from both the ends. And the dystopian backdrop also creates an artistic detachment that might provide the creators a certain amount of safeguard.

The spatial and temporal distancing (or in other words, transferring the locale of the story to a specific point of space-time) is not a compulsion. In a web movie like *Ghoul*, a somewhat allegorical representation of the alarming rise of sectarian violence in current India, there is no specificity regarding the whereabouts of the containment zone Meghdoot 31 where the events take place. The faithful observance of the so-called ‘Aristotelian’ Three Unities of Action, Time and Place in effect contributes to the “Oppressive, claustrophobic” atmosphere that the director Patrick Graham

has confessed to have created. And then again, despite the opening credit reminding the viewers that the entire series of events is happening in the 'near future', one cannot escape the uneasy feeling that the story *does* speak of our own time. Beneath the trope of the horror movie, there is a strong undercurrent of anti-establishment which demands justice for authoritarian victimization and persecution on the basis of communal discrimination. It *is*, and also it *is not*, a dystopian movie then. But that is the whole point of a dystopian story – to disengage the reader/audience temporally and spatially for a more comprehensive engagement.

Reminding one of the chief ideas propagated by the French philosopher Michel Foucault in his 1975 book *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, all these web movies or series do focus on the state-endorsed persecution, imprisonment, surveillance and disciplining of the subjects with the intention of having full control over their mind-body. As per the Foucauldian understanding of the Western penal system, the social and theoretical mechanism has never been motivated by humanitarian concerns of the reformists. Since all disciplining mechanisms (schools, hospitals, military barracks etc.) are theoretically prison houses of sorts, the State hereby enforces its power over its subjects (both loyal and rebellious) to ensure its ideological as well as physical colonization. Physically imprisoning the subjects is therefore the most convenient measure for the state to ensure its Orwellian surveillance over their activities. The criteria (ethnicity, gender, caste etc.) basing upon which the subjects are often put to prison almost always reveal the urge of the privileged to dominate over the non-privileged (though not necessarily the minority). The free-play of thoughts might be seen reflected in the comparative independence enjoyed by the OTT platforms so far. The government policies intending to curb down this freedom is ironically the natural reaction of a democracy which in effect restricts the flourish of the truly able (or the 'expertise', as Plato would call it in his *Republic*) in one's own rights. The unidirectional flow of power accentuates the fact that the dystopia for one sect of people (usually the repressed one) is bound to appear as the utopia for the other (usually those exerting power).

It is all then a matter of perspectives and a story like *Ghoul* charts the growth of the protagonist Nida's perception as she starts seeing the well-advertised utopia to be nothing but a dystopia in actuality. The revelation comes only when she defies to be used as a state apparatus and asserts her own individuality. Unfortunately, that is the moment when she gets

branded as a potential threat for the smooth working of the state, and it is followed by the natural ramification; i.e. her imprisonment. Beneath the supernatural garb, *Ghoul* is a strong critique of the ‘rehabilitation’ of people with anti-government mentalities for ‘cleansing’ in secretly set up detention facilities across India. The ‘backdated’ but at the same time ‘more effective’ measures employed in Meghdoot 31 might have some bearing upon the torture techniques used after 9/11 and at Camp X-Ray and the reports of military centres in Kashmir. In contrast to the popular expectation that a futuristic society must resort to high-tech torturing instruments, *Ghoul* depicts the use of simplistic, terror-inducing torturing methods, as if to underscore the primitive brutality associated with the whole process. The ulterior motive is to form a strictly regimented, loyal, sub-human species of subjects, and *Ghoul*, not unlike *Leila* and *Ghost Stories*, portrays the state taking up desperate measures to achieve that end.

Finally, it is the element of terror that allows the dystopian story to further play the engage-disengage game with the viewers. *Ghoul*, at least on the surface level, is a horror story with its focus on the eponymous Arab folklore monster. Yet, it is a horror movie not because what it shows, but because what it implies. The ruthless aggression and violence meted out by the state to better control its citizens is a theme treated in both *Leila* and *Ghost Stories*. It is interesting to note that Dibakar Banerjee’s brutal portrayal of the violence engendered by caste-based discrimination is anything but a ‘ghost’ story; therefore, it is wrongly labeled as such. Yet it manages to terrify the viewers in its own rights. The purpose of these stories is to get the viewers acquainted with the element of terror, repression and violence underlying the false notion of the ‘benign’ state ceaselessly working for the empowerment and betterment of its subjects.

Conclusion:

The success of the dystopian trope depends much on the OTT platform which most often provides content to the subscriber following a WhatsApp-like end-to-end encryption. Unlike the mainstream political satires (such as 2017 movie *Newton*) the OTT content-makers do not have to resort to the mould of comedy. Although comedy happens to be another powerful device to generate Alienation Effect, it might just lighten the terrifying atmosphere that the concerned dystopian narratives have carefully built up. The dystopian stories are self-conscious of their own

gravity which they carefully attempt to preserve at any cost. The OTT platform is integrally related to the dystopian narrative also because both endeavour to challenge and thereby expose the constant surveillance of the state over creative content. Self-reflexive in their own way, the dystopian narratives are therefore best fitted and exclusively meant for the OTT platform which engages the viewers with its bold content as well as unique treatment. The Censor Board, the self-proclaimed watchdog of the authorities of all societies in all ages, have not yet been capable to put such 'free' contents under their scrutiny for the lack of any clear-cut rule to delimit the freedom of the OTT platforms. The prospect of the implementation of new broadcasting rules regarding the OTT content will definitely affect the strategies of the content-makers in the country. It is perhaps the dystopian format which will allow the free thinkers to keep delivering anti-establishment contents without being explicitly critical of the contemporary controversial issues.

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Narrative of Political Communication through Opinion and Exit Poll: An Experience in West Bengal, 2014-2021

Samadrita Mukherjee and Pramiti Roy

Abstract: Exitpoll is a survey of thousands of voters just after they have cast their ballot. Constituencies are chosen to be demographically representative of the country or state, balanced between rural and urban seats, and weighted slightly in favour of marginal areas. The same constituencies are surveyed from one election to the another, for consistency and for reliability. Exit pollsters or media houses base themselves at a selected polling station in a chosen constituency. Voters emerging from polling station are waylaid at regular intervals – every tenth, for example. Sample space is a major factor that is the number of people surveyed in a constituency. Influence of a party, in a subspace of a sample space also plays a major role here. This paper is to find how accurate the exit poll goes from marketing by the political parties to the real votes turning out to be the results from the political scenario of west Bengal in between 2014 to 2021. The paper includes a mixed methodology approach. For Secondary data, the paper would look into the comparative study between the exit poll of different media, pollsters, and the election results. For primary data, In-depth interviews of eminent psephologist in West Bengal, will enhance the observation.

Keywords: Political communication, Exit poll and Opinion poll, West Bengal election, General election, Loksabha, Assembly election

INTRODUCTION

Political communication earlier was meant for production, dissemination and perception of political information for the purpose of achieving a reach to the target group regarding political action (Chekunova et al, 2016). Political communication from the very beginning used as a mechanism

of one way information exchange. It is a popular tool to ensure the process of inculcating political decisions. Political communication actually began with the study of democratic discourse by Aristotle and Plato. Both Aristotle and Plato threw light on political discourse. What Plato found, “.....many of the early dialogues raise important political problems....., the Republic is usually held as Plato’s first major work related to political theory.”(Dellinger et al, 2012).¹

While Aristotle “fleeing from Plato, believed that practical sciences should be based on empirical data and taxonomy.”(Bose et al, 1715)² So we can found an approach of using data along with opinion in Political communication back in Aristotle – Plato era.

Method of political communication has always been of crucial importance. “...Indeed many long running debates in the study of political communication have hinged on questions of methodological approach. Issues of method and measurement, for example, are at the root of both the disagreements about the effect of political advertising on voter turnout and the debate about the extent to which exposure to news media affect political positions.” (Krupnikiv et al, 2018).³ So to measure voter turnout, advertising had been emphasized from early political communication.

In India Mahatma Gandhi is believed to be the early user of political communication. Gandhi was very particular while approaching his listeners or readers, through media. He always emphasized on “...understand popular opinion and give expression to it.” Gandhi like Aristotle believed in rousing emotions amongst audience.

Communication to make political bridge was first largely used by Nehru and Indira Gandhi. Nehru was great believer of using radio like Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose (as Netaji could not be a part of electoral democracy, so not mentioning his use of media).

Indira Gandhi also used the power of television and radio as her political tool. She is in fact much remembered for muzzling the press and using it for propoganda during the Emergency period from 1975-77. While Rajiv Gandhi is known for his cool, in handling media. In fact Rajiv Gandhi believed strongly the need to modernise and liberalise and in quick solution. Media became more popular tool in his time.

Since 1945 political communication, as observed by Pippa Norris in his ‘Political Communication’, has undergone a process of modernisation

which has transformed the relationship between parties, citizens and the media in democratic societies. Where he stated, one of the changes as, from cleavage-based and issue based conflict towards the character-based 'personalization' of politics. (Follesdal, 2006).⁴

Gradually media become more powerful in political communication, especially audiovisual media as the concept of prime time was introduced. Viewers developed a habit of watching political debates every evening. Speculation started on who would win. They are more keen on knowing tomorrow. The first ever media survey started in the year 1980 by Prannoy Roy to find out the mood of the Indian voters. By 1990s the election surveys and exit polls by different media house became popular. Since last two decades pre-election surveys and exit polls have become regular practice. With a large number of competing news channels, papers, pollsters, the race of conducting exit polls and airing them before the rivals has become new normal in India. Market research agencies like AC Nielson, ORG-Marg, C-Voter got involved in evaluating voting behaviour of India.

Both Plato and Aristotle, in the focus of their research, had research from the field of political philosophy. They both are interested in politics, the state, the forms of governance, the various categories of definition for justice, gender relations, and so on. So Plato in "... many of the early dialogues raise important political problems ..., the Republic is usually held as Plato's first major work related to political theory" (Mc Lean, 1996, p. 439). While Aristotle "fleeing from Plato, believed that practical sciences should be based on empirical data and taxonomy. Together with a group of students, she studied the political structure and history of 158 constitutions, but we have just left the Constitution of Athens. However, some of the results of these searches can be found in his most famous political work, the Politics, which, with his analysis, advice and descriptions, gives us a number of constitutions, including Sparta, Crete and Carthage" (Ibid, p. 23).

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Election polls are of different kind. One is pre poll that is called opinion poll. And the other one is exit poll. The purpose of an exit poll is to find out which party is likely to win over and with how many seats. The logic behind exit polls is that if you ask voters about whom they voted right after they come out of a polling booth, their memory is fresh and they are likely to tell you the truth. Exit poll has becoming more accurate as the methodology improves. Although many of the recent election results are correctly predicting by exit polls, but still there are margin of errors. There are several instances where exit polls went awfully wrong. For example the biggest miss where exit polls are concerned has to be the 2004 elections. Almost every media and pollster had predicted landslide victory for the ruling NDA alliance led by the BJP and a second term for Atal Bihari Vajpayee. But when the results were announced the NDA was reduced to 189 seats, against the predictions of anything between 230 and 275 of the total 543 seats.

But with improving methods now-a-days, which we can observe from 2014, rather than opinion poll before the voter actually votes, the exit polls right after the voting becoming more accurate.

Here we must understand the difference between opinion poll and exit poll. Opinion poll is a method through which one can assume what is going to happen in the next election. It involves a sample of respondents, drawn to represent a larger relevant population. It always has a risk of going wrong. But exit polls are likely to be more appropriate as they are based on poll after polls. Exit polls are recorded just after a voter walks out after casting his or her vote. Results of exit polls are usually considered to be more trustworthy than that of opinion poll. Though according to psephologist Subhamoy Maitra, Professor of Indian Statistical Institute, opinion poll and exit poll both are actually inexact science. Statistics based on surveys, according to him cannot be called an exact science. It is rather an endeavour in quest of future. Though he opines that serious survey can bring efficacy, can portray the real political scenario. But it involves huge manpower along with investment. And he doubts if the pollsters or media are sincere in the whole process.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In 2014 Praveen Rai from Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, Delhi, in his research titled STATUS OF OPINION POLLS: MEDIA GIMMICK AND POLITICAL COMMUNICATION IN INDIA, tried to find out the reasons behind the inaccuracies of exit poll. But the work is bearing general opinions of the researcher. It was not focussed on any state, thus it failed to address problems in particular. Also it lacked with the observation of any psephologist. Praveen Rai found it more like a gimmick than news content. Though agreeing with him on the point of risk as manipulation of sample size may happen, with all experience of 15 years in political news on national channels, beg to differ based on the advancement of technologies and the theory of survival strategy.

Neeraj Kumar from Lucknow University in his work 'ROLE OF INDIAN MEDIA: COVERING GENERAL ELECTON', tried to discuss the efficacy of opinion poll and exit poll. But discussion on accuracy was not profound there. He emphasized on opinion poll and it's loopholes, stating the history of the then Election Commissioner of India S.Y Quereshi's interest on banning opinion poll in 2009. But the work didn't throw light on the

errors of exit polls. Though cited some example of exit poll taken randomly from any state. It is not a focussed case study which can address the ground reality. Specially there is no research on exit polls, its errors, and the reasons behind the error based on socio political environment of West Bengal.

METHODOLOGY

These findings are based on facts and figures collected from election commission of India website. Also collected the exit poll results from the respective pollster's web page and news publication. Followed by a detail discussion on exit poll success and failure by providing comparative statistics. Besides the in depth interview with Professor of Indian Statistical Institute, Subhamoy Maitra enhanced the observation. The article begins with a brief discussion of the theoretical issues and history involved in political communication. The emergence of the new approaches and the challenges it faces. The article concludes with a discussion of the implications and findings presented here.

DISCUSSION

How accurate the exit polls are?

Accuracy of exit polls depends upon some factors. It may vary, and it is no difference for West Bengal during the periods from 2014 to 2021. Exit polls are conducted by various media organizations and polling agencies and their target is to provide an idea of the election result based on the responses of voters exiting polling booths.

However, there are certain limitations. Exit polls are not always accurate and can sometimes deviate from the final election results. Especially in predicting seats. Several factors are there, including the sample size, methodology, timing of the poll, and the ever-changing dynamics of political campaigns.

In West Bengal, there are instances when exit polls accurately predicted the results. But there are instances of divergence also. It is crucial to exercise caution when considering exit poll results, as they are not definitive and are subject to variation. It is also worth mentioning that the accuracy of exit polls can vary across different elections and regions depending on the political scenario.

- For example, in the 2014 general elections, the exit polls predicted a considerable seat share for the Trinamool Congress (TMC) in West Bengal, which was in line with the actual results. TMC went on to win 34 out of 42 seats in the state.

	AITC	BJP	LEFT	CONGRESS
TIMES NOW –ORG	20-40	2	16	4
ABP NEWS	24	1	12	5
INDIA TODAY	25-29	0-2	7-11	4-6
ACTUAL RESULTS	34	2	2	4

So here all the exit polls predicted that TMC will be the top gainer. Which came true to the reality but only Times Now-Org predicted seats correctly for TMC, though they failed in prediction for the left front.

- However, in the 2016 West Bengal assembly elections, the exit polls failed to predict accurately. They all showed the victory of the TMC. Most exit polls indicated a close contest between TMC and the Left-Congress alliance, but TMC won with a majority of seats beyond the imagination of the pollsters.

	AITC	LEFT + CONGRESS	BJP	OTHERS
ABP ANANDA	178	110	1	-
C-VOTER	167	120	0	-
ABP – NIELSON	163	126	1	-
TODAY’S CHANAKYA	210	70	14	-
INDIA TODAY	233-253	38-51	1-5	-
ACTUAL RESULT	211	76	3	4

So In 2016, all predicted TMC as winner but could not assume such huge seats. Today’s chanakya and India Today went close to the result. No one could predict the exact seats.

- Similarly, in the 2019 general elections, while most exit polls predicted a significant number of seats for TMC, the final results showed quite same seat share. TMC secured a significant number of seats.

	AITC	INC	CPI (M)	BJP	OTHERS
C- VOTER	29	2	-	11	-
NEWS18-IPSOS	37	1	-	4	-
TODAY'S CHANAKYA	23	1	-	18	1
INDIA TODAY AXIS	21	-	-	21	-
TIMES NOW VMR	28	2	1	11	-
ACTUAL RESULT	34	4	2	2	0

General election in 2019 is an example that the pollsters, with the use of new technologies are going too close to the results. Almost every exit pollster were quite close in predicting seats for TMC but only NEWS18 – IPSOS predicted BJP won't go for two digit figure. While no one saw hope in CPI (M), they bagged two seats. Though negligible but errors are there.

- In the 2021 assembly elections, the exit polls again predicted a close contest between TMC and the BJP, but the TMC won a landslide victory, securing a majority of seats.

	TMC	BJP	LEFT + CONGRESS
ABP – C VOTER	152-164	109-121	14-25
REPUBLIC-CNX	128-138	138-148	11-21
TIMES NOW – C VOTER	158	115	19
INDIA TODAY AXIS	130-156	134-160	0-2
ACTUAL RESULT	213	77	0 (ISF - 1)

Here no one predicted TMC above two hundred seats. Though exit polls predicted TMC to retain the power but no pollster could apprehend such huge seats. Whereas Republic – CNX and India Today could not at all understood the political vibes in West Bengal. Even no pollsters apprehended that BJP will not touch the three digit figure. In case of left and congress only India Today predicted such huge fall that can bring a big question to their existence.

Overall, while exit polls can provide some insights into voter trends and preferences, it is important to interpret them with caution, as they may not always accurately predict the final election outcome. The actual results depend on various factors, including the behaviour of voters on election day.

However, it is important to note that exit polls are typically conducted by various polling agencies and media organizations and are not directly influenced by political parties. The cause of variations in West Bengal is likely for following reasons.

- **BIASED SAMPLES** - Polls are built on minuscule sample size and coloured by the media house's own personal bias for or against the party. This can create a distortion in their final analysis. It is not that they are using fake samples but they will organise the samples to create an image before the voter that they are winning. As professor Subhamoy maitra says, he has every doubt how seriously pollsters collect the samples. According to him it is very costly and time taking process if one wants to get accurate result without biased effect.
- **FEAR OF VIOLENCE** - Owing to the unprecedented political violence, the reluctance of voters to openly state their political support in a state like West Bengal is fairly well known. So, much of the poll is actually deductive in nature. Fear of being targeted by opponents can hold them back from stating original opinion.
- **HIDDEN BIASED SAMPLES** - Here comes the issue of hidden biased factor. Though fear of error comes down to 5 to 10 percent with the logistics those are being used now a days. As they are so accurate, the samples – they are so accurate, it's more scientific. There are tools that can analyse where polls could reach. It is not a scholarly attempt, it is a database attempt. In 2014 the overall mandate was given that the BJP was coming to the power. It is not possible to focus how many seats BJP will get. That BJP will come to the power and will come to the power alone that was concluded in exit poll. So BJP will cross the mark 272. That itself is enough. Then it could be any number. Here the difference of seats from exit poll to the real outcome doesn't matter. The main focus is how much error is conceptualised by the pollsters. That is very important. How much is being matched is not important. The error behind predicting exact number of seats could be hidden biased samples.
- **NON RESPONSIVE SAMPLES** - It also can be a factor. There are reasons to believe that the people who respond to the surveys are different from people who don't in terms of their political preferences.

People may differ to state the actual scenario; they may avoid telling the truth about who they voted for. In other words, when asked by pollsters they are likely to place themselves on the safer side, as exit poll is a sensitive topic. A good pollster will put such reactions as negative. Pollsters always keep such errors in mind while surveying.

- **THE SILENCE THEORY** – People may not reveal their true thoughts to the media as they believe media has an inherent bias. Fear of reprisal or fear of isolation may haunt them to clear their stand publicly. This may also hinder estimate calculation of pollsters.

CONCLUSION

Even with all these errors the interesting feature of exit poll is that rather than predicting about a future action, it records a reaction that has just happened. Though Professor Subhamoy Maitra thinks exit polls have more entertainment value than efficacy. As they use numbers and statistics attractively for the viewers or readers. Intention is to attract the viewers and readers, to make them happy. To make them sit in front of the channel or to compel them to peep in the website or buy the newspaper. Here he gave example of 2014, when no one could predict such huge seats for BJP throughout the country. And in 2021, every pollster predicted BJP to hold pretty decent seats, but BJP could not even reach to the three digit figure. Even in 2021 assembly election pollsters were predicting a close fight between TMC-BJP, but TMC had blown the predictions by single largest majority. Though Professor Maitra believes predicting poll results are not a rocket science. With appropriate sincerity pollsters can predict exact results.

Here also we can't ignore the theory 'survival of the fittest'. Pollsters have to survive in a competitive scenario. If they play with the samples or give biased predictions, it will be absurd for them to retain reliability. Some of the media house though still predicts keeping political inclination in mind, but that too with a negligible difference from the reality, as we all know viewers have the last word.

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The Role of Memes in Political Discourse and Public Opinion Formation: A Study

Pritha Misra

Abstract:

With the advent of digital communication platforms and social media, memes have emerged as a potent medium for political expression, enabling citizens to engage in both humorous and critical commentary on political matters. This study delves into the ever-evolving landscape of political discourse and public opinion formation, shedding light on the influential role played by memes in shaping contemporary political narratives. This research investigates five key aspects of meme-driven political discourse: creation, dissemination, impact, regulation, and ethical considerations. The creation of political memes involves a dynamic interplay of culture, ideology, and humor, providing individuals with a unique outlet for political expression and identity construction. Memes' dissemination on social media platforms amplifies their reach, leading to viral trends that can significantly impact public opinion and political discourse. The study assesses the impact of political memes by analyzing their ability to mobilize and engage diverse audiences, as well as their potential to reinforce existing biases or challenge prevailing narratives. Moreover, it explores the challenges of regulating political memes, considering issues such as misinformation, hate speech, and the erosion of political discourse norms. Ethical considerations in meme-based political communication are addressed, emphasizing the need for responsible meme creation and sharing. The study concludes by highlighting the evolving role of memes in shaping political discourse and influencing public opinion, emphasizing their potential to democratize political communication while raising concerns about their impact on the quality of political discourse in the digital age.

Keywords: Memes, Political Discourse, Public Opinion, Social Media, Ethical Considerations.

Introduction

In 1976, Richard Dawkins introduced the term “meme” in his book “The Selfish Gene” as a means to elucidate the mechanisms underlying the spread of cultural information. Memes serve as vessels for conveying cultural concepts, symbols, or behaviors from one individual’s mind to another’s through various channels such as writing, gestures, rituals, or other imitable occurrences encompassed within a particular mimetic context. This concept of “Amplification by Simplification,” (McCloud, 1994) aptly characterizes the capacity of memes to distill complex political realities into formats that resonate with a broad and diverse audience. The political meme is a well-liked kind of media among internet users since they also emphasize real-world issues. Early research demonstrates that political memes enable citizens to express their political beliefs and participate in debates and discussions in ways that are not possible through more conventional channels (Shifman, 2013). According to Jameson and Christou, “Memes have emerged as a formidable force in contemporary political communication, transcending traditional boundaries and playing a pivotal role in shaping the public discourse (Jameson & Christou,, 2020)”. The role of memes in contemporary political discourse has grown exponentially with the widespread adoption of social media platforms. Memes, typically humorous or satirical images or videos accompanied by text, have become a powerful tool for political communication and public opinion formation. They offer a unique medium for conveying political messages, often simplifying complex issues into easily digestible and shareable content. This paper aims to investigate the role of memes in shaping political discourse and influencing public opinion, focusing on two major social media platforms: Facebook and Twitter.

Depending on their substance and the audience’s receptivity, memes have the capacity to either support or contradict preexisting political opinions. The study of political opinion formation is given a fascinating new dynamic by the dual nature of memes. Beyond the specific political and social circumstances under which a slogan is formed, the study of political campaigns has focused relatively little on what determines whether or not a particular slogan becomes popular in the first place. Therefore, if the campaign slogans are not just conceptualized as political slogans

but as viral memes, a fresh and profound understanding can be attained. Though the term “meme” is now frequently used to refer to amusing images made for the internet, it was first used in the study of evolutionary anthropology (memetics). In a nutshell, a meme is a group of gathered and saturated ideas that propagates culture through imitation. Meme research has thus far primarily been conducted in the domains of anthropology and popular culture, and even within these fields, it has gotten relatively little attention. Additionally, although offering a potent analytical lens, the use of memes as campaigning tactics is largely untapped.

Literature Review

● Memes in Political Communication

Memes have evolved into a potent form of political communication. They enable political actors, whether politicians, interest groups, or individual citizens, to engage with a broader audience by using humor, satire, and simplicity to convey their messages effectively (Dahlgren, 2020). Memes can condense intricate policy discussions into concise visual or textual formats, making them more accessible to a wider audience. Its role in the creation of meaning has been covered in earlier studies on political memes. In Brian E. McClure’s research, titled “Exploring the Language of Internet Political Memes,” conducted at the University of Georgia, Internet Political Meme (IPM) posts were characterized as akin to individual panels in comic books or political cartoons. This comparison draws inspiration from McCloud’s concept of “amplification by simplification,” as described in his work (McCloud, 1994, p 30). In this concept, the objective is to enhance comprehension for a broader audience by concentrating on particular details and distilling an image to its fundamental essence.

● Public Opinion Formation

Public opinion formation is a complex process influenced by various factors, including media, social networks, and political discourse. Memes have emerged as a new and influential factor in this process. Research has shown that memes can quickly spread across social media, reaching millions of users and affecting their perceptions and attitudes (Bakshy et al., 2015). Memes can either reinforce existing beliefs or challenge them, making them a powerful tool for shaping public opinion. According to research by Dr. Anushka Kulkarni of Amity University in Madhya Pradesh titled “Internet

meme and Political Discourse: A Study on the Impact of the Internet Meme as a Tool in Communicating Political Satire,” internet memes are used as a tool of political discourse but do not significantly affect the audience, despite increasing political engagement among digital natives. The widespread use of memes for comedic effect, cultural resonance, and identity representations in general suggests that using cyber culture for localized political purposes does have the potential to socialize people to become critical of the status quo as part of a wider network of political action (T. T. & Vadrevu, 2013).

The Agenda Setting Theory is a related communication theory that describes how memes affect communication. “The press may not succeed very often in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about,” said Bernard Cohen in 1963.

Theoretical Framework

This research also makes use of the agenda setting theory. Media corporations utilize memes to develop their opinions. The media corporations propagandize and promote their ideology through the use of these memes since they provide the audience with information while also critically analyzing it and offering their opinion. Theoretically, these media firms utilize memes to inform people on what to think about rather than merely telling them what to think. Here, a subtheory of framing is relevant, where reality is distorted and our mental images are nothing more than the messages that media outlets aim to spread.

Methodology

To examine the role of memes in political discourse and public opinion formation, we employed the approach, including content analysis and sentiment analysis. We collected data from three popular and widely spread memes focusing on political discourse posted during a specific time frame.

- Case Study 1: ‘Inka koi galti nahi hai, Theek hai?’

Context:

Sonia Gandhi is a prominent politician from India and the leader of the Indian National Congress (INC), one of the main political organizations in the nation. From 2004 to 2014, Manmohan Singh, an economist by training, led India as prime minister. Sonia Gandhi, the INC’s leader throughout his administration, was instrumental in the establishment of the government.

Explanation of the Meme:

The episode that inspired the meme happened under Manmohan Singh's leadership as prime minister. Despite the INC's victory in the 2004 general elections, it is commonly thought that Sonia Gandhi was initially hesitant to become prime minister herself due to reservations about her Italian ancestry. Manmohan Singh was proposed by her as a replacement, and he was appointed Prime Minister. In the hypothetical situation depicted in the meme, Sonia Gandhi, who is portrayed as the decision-maker, is seen asking "Inka koi galti nahi hai, Theek hai?" This means, basically, "They are not at fault, okay?" It suggests that Sonia Gandhi is absolving Manmohan Singh of all blame or culpability in this scenario. The ridiculousness of such a statement in a political setting where leaders are expected to take accountability for their actions is what gives rise to the meme's humor.

In order to humorously shift blame or accountability, the expression "Inka koi galti nahi hai, Theek hai?" has become a catchphrase that is frequently used in a tongue-in-cheek manner. It's crucial to note that this meme is not a true reflection of the actual circumstances or feelings that led to Sonia Gandhi nominating Manmohan Singh. Instead, it takes a humorous look at how political leadership and decision-making work.

- Case Study 3: 'Please do remember us at least when you are hungry'

Context:

The meme is a reflection of the widespread farmers' protests that began in India in late 2020. These protests were primarily in response to three controversial agricultural reform laws introduced by the Indian government, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. In the context of the Indian farmer protests, the meme with Narendra Modi and farmers became increasingly popular. It is humorous and politically charged.

Explanation of the meme:

The declaration is a moving plea from farmers to those in authority, especially Narendra Modi. It sends the message that farmers are the backbone of the country and deserve support and care, particularly during trying times because they provide sustenance for the entire population. The irony of the meme is that it urges those with great power and influence, such as Narendra Modi, to remember the sufferings of the

farmers who toil to provide the country with food while they are basking in the benefits of their positions. It suggests that rather than implementing measures that can negatively impact farmers' lives; the government should give priority to the welfare of farmers and address their concerns. Political opinion and criticism are expressed through this meme. It recommends that the government should be more attuned to the requirements of the country's agricultural sector, which is essential for ensuring the security of its food supply. The emotion of many demonstrators who believed their views were not being heard by the government is also reflected in it.

- Case Study 3: 'Modi 's New India

In this meme, Mukesh Ambani is pictured standing next to Narendra Modi, who is waving at Ambani. The four most important demands of the population are mentioned below the image, and Mukesh Ambani is the owner of each one. "And fools think Modi is working for India," it says at the bottom, demonstrating how Modi just serves Ambani's interests. The meme's main point is to draw attention to the striking contrast between the government's idealistic portrayal of a prosperous and progressive India and the frequently challenging realities experienced by common people. The meme uses humor to emphasize its point by using amusing comments and deft image pairings to highlight the discrepancy between the promised vision of the "New India" and the realities that many Indians are forced to live with. It also plays on the idea that political leaders, not just in India but globally, are often skilled in crafting a carefully curated image for public consumption, which may not always reflect the on-ground reality.

Findings

- Use of Memes in Political Discourse

Our analysis of two very popular memes revealed that political actors, including politicians and political parties, frequently use memes to convey their messages. Memes allow them to connect with a younger and more diverse audience, as they are more likely to engage with meme content. Memes often simplify complex policy issues into memorable and shareable content.

- Dissemination Patterns

On both platforms, we observed that memes with humorous or satirical elements tended to have higher engagement levels. Users were more likely

to share memes that elicited an emotional response, whether through humor or outrage. This contributed to the rapid spread of political memes across social networks.

- **Effects on Public Opinion**

Our sentiment analysis indicated that memes on both platforms had a mixed impact on public opinion. While some memes reinforced existing beliefs and garnered support from like-minded individuals, others sparked debates and discussions, leading to a more nuanced understanding of the issues. Memes played a role in agenda-setting, drawing attention to specific topics and framing them in particular ways.

Discussion

The findings of this study underscore the significant role that memes play in contemporary political discourse and public opinion formation. Memes offer a unique blend of entertainment and political messaging, making those effective tools for reaching and influencing a broad audience. However, their impact is not uniformly positive, as they can also contribute to polarization and the spread of misinformation.

Conclusion

The study on “The Role of Memes in Political Discourse and Public Opinion Formation” has shed light on the profound impact that memes wield in shaping contemporary political landscapes and influencing public opinions. As the digital age continues to evolve, memes have emerged as powerful tools for political communication, mobilization, and persuasion. They serve as both a reflection and a catalyst of societal attitudes and beliefs, making them a crucial aspect of modern political discourse.

One of the key findings of this study is the ability of memes to simplify complex political issues and distill them into easily digestible and shareable content. Memes often employ humor, satire, and irony to convey messages, making them not only accessible but also engaging to a wide range of audiences. This accessibility has democratized political discourse, allowing individuals from diverse backgrounds to participate in discussions that might have seemed intimidating in traditional formats. Memes, therefore, serve as a bridge between political elites and the general public, fostering a more inclusive and participatory political culture.

Furthermore, memes have the power to influence public opinion by framing issues and candidates in specific ways. They can reinforce existing beliefs, challenge dominant narratives, or introduce new perspectives into the public discourse. Memes are adaptive at tapping into emotions, be it through humor, outrage, or empathy, and as a result, they have the potential to sway public sentiment.

In conclusion, this research paper has explored the role of memes in political discourse and their impact on public opinion formation. Through case studies of three very popular memes, we have demonstrated that memes are a powerful tool for political communication, with the potential to shape public perceptions and attitudes. As the use of memes in politics continues to evolve, it is essential to understand their dynamics and implications for democratic discourse and public opinion.

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The Rise of Citizen Journalism and User Generated Content: Implications for News Quality and Credibility

Mahendra Kumar Jena

ABSTRACT

This study delves into the transformative impact of citizen journalism and user-generated content on the traditional landscape of professional journalism. In an age where information dissemination has become more accessible and decentralized, the contrast between these two forms of journalism has become increasingly prominent. This paper explores the implications of this shift for news quality and credibility. The study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining content analysis of news articles and social media platforms with interviews and surveys of journalists, news consumers, and citizen journalists. The findings reveal a multifaceted transformation in the media ecosystem, with significant consequences for both news producers and consumers. First, the rise of citizen journalism and user-generated content has democratized news production, enabling individuals to become active contributors to the news cycle. This newfound inclusivity has broadened the diversity of voices and perspectives in news reporting, challenging the traditional gatekeeping role of professional journalism. Second, the study uncovers varying levels of news quality associated with citizen journalism and user-generated content. While these sources often provide real-time, eyewitness accounts of events, they can also be susceptible to misinformation, bias, and lack of editorial oversight. This presents challenges in maintaining the credibility and accuracy of news in an era marked by the rapid spread of false information. Third, the research assesses the evolving relationships between professional journalists, citizen journalists, and news consumers. It highlights the need for collaboration and fact-checking mechanisms to ensure the reliability of user-generated content while maintaining the ethical standards and expertise

of traditional journalism. Lastly, the study examines the changing dynamics of audience trust and credibility perception. As news consumers navigate an information landscape inundated with user-generated content, their reliance on traditional news outlets for verification and context has evolved. This has prompted news organizations to adapt their strategies for engaging and retaining their audience's trust.

Key words: Citizen Journalism, Digital Age, Media Landscape, User-Generated Content, Social Media, News.

INTRODUCTION

In an era characterized by the rapid dissemination of information facilitated by digital technology and the proliferation of social media platforms, the landscape of journalism is undergoing a profound transformation. The advent of the internet and the rise of citizen journalism and user-generated content have challenged the traditional norms and structures that once defined news production. This shift has not only democratized the process of news dissemination but has also raised critical questions about the quality and credibility of the news in the digital age.

The traditional role of journalism as the gatekeeper of information, entrusted with the responsibility of providing accurate, balanced, and well-vetted news, has faced a formidable challenger in the form of citizen journalism. Enabled by the ubiquity of smartphones and digital connectivity, individuals from diverse backgrounds and corners of the world have become active participants in the news cycle. They document events, share eyewitness accounts, and offer unique perspectives, contributing to a cacophony of voices in the media landscape. This democratization of news production has been celebrated as a means of diversifying voices, fostering inclusivity, and challenging the hegemony of established media institutions.

Nevertheless, the process of making something more democratic presents its unique set of difficulties and challenges. While citizen journalism and user-generated content offer immediacy and authenticity, they also bring forth issues of credibility, misinformation, and bias. The absence of traditional editorial oversight can lead to the dissemination of unverified or misleading information, raising questions about the reliability of news sources in an era where misinformation can spread like wildfire.

This research study explores the intricate interplay between citizen journalism, user-generated content, and traditional journalism. It seeks to understand the implications of this evolving landscape on the quality and credibility of news. By employing a mixed-methods approach, combining content analysis, interviews, and surveys, this study aims to provide insights into how these two forms of journalism coexist, compete, and collaborate in the digital age. Furthermore, this research addresses the changing dynamics of audience trust and the ways in which news consumers navigate this complex information ecosystem. It examines the role of professional journalists in verifying and contextualizing user-generated content, the impact of collaboration between these two groups, and the strategies employed by news organizations to retain audience trust.

The purpose of this study is to examine the implications of this transformation on the quality and credibility of news. As the boundaries blur between professional journalists and citizen reporters, questions arise regarding the impact on news accuracy, reliability, and trustworthiness. Can user-generated content uphold the rigorous standards of traditional journalism, or does its proliferation come at the cost of information integrity? This research aims to provide insights into these critical questions

Objective of the Study

- To understand, how has the emergence of citizen journalism and user-generated content reshaped the dynamics of news production and consumption?
- Understand what the implications of this shift are for the quality and credibility of news?
- Analyze strategies employed by traditional news organizations to adapt to this changing landscape and maintain audience trust.
- Identify the challenges and opportunities arise in the collaborative efforts between professional journalists and citizen reporters.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Gillmore, “The rise of citizen journalism has empowered individuals to become active contributors to the news ecosystem.” In the modern digital age, the landscape of journalism is undergoing a profound

transformation, redefining the way news is produced, disseminated, and consumed.

Traditional journalism, characterized by its editorial oversight, professional gatekeepers, and adherence to established journalistic principles, has long held the role of the primary source of news for the public. However, in recent years, a disruptive force has emerged, challenging the traditional hierarchies of news production—the rise of citizen journalism and user-generated content.

This research study delves into the seismic shift occurring within the realm of journalism, where anyone with a smartphone and an internet connection can become a news contributor.

Citizen journalism, often facilitated by social media platforms, has democratized news production, allowing individuals to report events, share personal perspectives, and engage in real-time conversations about unfolding news stories. The proliferation of user-generated content, ranging from eyewitness videos to blog posts, has brought new voices to the forefront, diversifying the media landscape.

Citizen journalism represents a new and critical form of civic participation in our digital age.” - Bowman et al. (2003).

Historical Evolution of Journalism

The evolution of journalism is intricately linked with the development of communication technologies and societal changes. Traditional journalism, characterized by professional news organizations with trained journalists adhering to ethical standards, has a long history dating back to the print era. Newspapers, radio, and television served as the primary means of mass communication, and news was typically produced and disseminated by a limited number of authoritative outlets.

Traditional Journalism

Traditional journalism operates under a set of well-established principles, including accuracy, fairness, objectivity, and editorial oversight. Professional journalists undergo rigorous training, adhere to ethical codes, and engage in fact-checking processes to ensure the reliability and credibility of their reports. The role of traditional journalism as a gatekeeper of information has been pivotal in shaping public discourse and maintaining trust in news.

Emergence of Citizen Journalism and User-Generated Content

According to Bruns and Highfield, “Citizen journalism has challenged traditional gatekeepers by introducing diverse voices into news reporting.” The advent of the internet, coupled with the widespread adoption of smartphones and social media platforms, has facilitated the rise of citizen journalism and user-generated content. Ordinary individuals, often referred to as citizen journalists, now have the means to capture, report, and share news events in real time. Social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube have become powerful tools for user-generated content, enabling anyone to become an active participant in the news cycle.

News Quality and Credibility in Traditional vs. Citizen Journalism

The proliferation of user-generated content has brought both opportunities and challenges to the realm of news quality and credibility. On one hand, citizen journalism offers immediacy, diversity of perspectives, and the ability to cover events that traditional journalists may not reach in a timely manner. However, this new found inclusivity raises concerns about the accuracy, reliability, and bias inherent in user-generated content. Studies have shown that misinformation and unverified information can spread rapidly on social media platforms, potentially eroding trust in news. User-generated content provides immediacy but often lacks the editorial oversight and verification processes of traditional journalism.” - [Domingo et al. (2008)]

Impact of Technology and Social Media

In 2017, in a study Wardle and Derakhshan highlighted the need to reassess the standards for determining the quality and credibility of news due to the constantly changing nature of how news is produced and consumed. They argued that traditional criteria may no longer be sufficient in today’s evolving media landscape, which includes digital platforms, social media, and diverse sources of information. This reevaluation is essential to ensure that consumers can discern reliable news from misinformation in this rapidly changing environment.

Technology and social media have acted as catalysts for the transformation of journalism. The speed at which information can be disseminated and the ease with which it can be shared have created an environment where news is constantly evolving. Additionally, algorithms and filter bubbles on social media platforms can reinforce confirmation

bias and echo chambers, influencing how news is consumed and perceived by audiences.

DISCUSSION

Amidst the democratization of news production, concerns about misinformation and credibility have become paramount.” [Hermida et al. (2012)]. The democratization of news production is a key aspect of the changing media landscape in the digital age. This phenomenon refers to the shift from a traditional, centralized model of news production, dominated by professional journalists and media organizations, to a more decentralized model where individuals, often referred to as citizen journalists, actively contribute to the creation and dissemination of news content.

Several important points characterize this democratization:

Inclusivity: Citizen journalism allows individuals from diverse backgrounds, regions, and perspectives to participate in news production. Anyone with access to a smartphone and the internet can report on events, share personal experiences, and voice their opinions, contributing to a more diverse and inclusive news ecosystem.

Real-Time Reporting: The immediacy of citizen journalism enables the rapid dissemination of news. Events can be reported in real time, often before traditional news outlets can arrive at the scene. This can be especially valuable during emergencies and breaking news situations.

Diverse Voices: Citizen journalism amplifies voices and stories that may be marginalized or overlooked by traditional media. It provides a platform for underrepresented communities to share their experiences and concerns, promoting a broader understanding of societal issues.

Challenges: While democratization brings numerous benefits, it also poses challenges such as verification issues, potential biases, and the risk of misinformation. Unlike traditional journalism, citizen journalism lacks the same editorial oversight and fact-checking mechanisms.

Collaboration: In some cases, professional journalists collaborate with citizen journalists, combining the strengths of both to provide comprehensive and accurate coverage. This collaborative approach can enhance the credibility and depth of news reporting.

News quality in citizen journalism: Citizen journalism, with its democratized approach to news production, introduces a complex landscape

where the assessment of news quality becomes paramount. This section explores the dimensions of news quality within citizen journalism:

Evaluating Credibility and Reliability

- **Source Verification:** Citizen-generated content often lacks the formal editorial oversight associated with traditional journalism. As a result, assessing the credibility of sources becomes crucial. Readers must discern whether citizen journalists are reliable and have a track record of accurate reporting.
- **Fact-Checking:** The absence of formal fact-checking processes in citizen journalism can lead to the spread of misinformation. Exploring how citizen journalists and audiences address fact-checking and accuracy is essential.

Bias and Objectivity

- **Subjectivity vs. Objectivity:** Citizen journalists may have personal biases and perspectives that influence their reporting. Examining the role of subjectivity in citizen journalism and how it compares to the objectivity traditionally expected in journalism is important.
- **Diverse Voices:** Citizen journalism's strength lies in its ability to present diverse viewpoints. Investigating how different perspectives impact news quality and whether a diversity of voices is seen as an asset or a challenge.

Ethical Considerations

- **Privacy and Consent:** Ethical dilemmas may arise in citizen journalism, particularly concerning privacy and consent when reporting on individuals or sensitive situations. Exploring how citizen journalists navigate these ethical issues is crucial.
- **Responsibility and Accountability:** Traditional journalists are held to established ethical standards. Assessing how citizen journalists perceive their responsibilities, and whether they are accountable for their reporting, sheds light on the ethical dimensions of citizen journalism.

Comparative Analysis with Traditional Journalism

- **Benchmarking News Quality:** Contrasting citizen journalism with traditional journalism in terms of news quality, examining areas where each excels, and identifying potential shortcomings.

Collaborative Journalism

According to Broersma and Graham, “Collaboration between professional and citizen journalists can harness the strengths of both to produce more comprehensive news coverage.” Collaborative journalism represents a pivotal point of interaction between citizen journalism and traditional journalism. This section we will delve into the dynamics, benefits, and challenges of collaboration journalism.

Partnerships and Synergy

- **Professional and Citizen Journalists Collaborations:** Investigating instances where professional journalists and citizen journalists work together on news stories or projects, highlighting how their complementary skills and resources contribute to comprehensive reporting.
- **Crowdsourced Reporting:** Analyzing the utilization of crowdsourcing by traditional media to involve citizen journalists in gathering information, images, or eyewitness accounts, leading to more inclusive and extensive reporting.

Fact-Checking and Verification

- **Professional Oversight:** Examining the role of professional journalists in verifying and fact-checking user-generated content, and how this contributes to maintaining the credibility of news stories that incorporate citizen-generated materials.
- **Challenges in Verification:** Identifying the challenges that arise when traditional journalists collaborate with citizen journalists, particularly in verifying and corroborating information and how these challenges are addressed.

Maintaining Ethical Standards

- **Ethical Guidelines and Protocols:** Investigating whether collaborations between professional and citizen journalists adhere

to established ethical standards and guidelines, and how they navigate ethical dilemmas such as privacy concerns and consent.

Audience Engagement and Trust

- **Impact on Audience Trust:** Assessing whether collaborative journalism initiatives enhance or diminish audience trust in news, and exploring how transparency and communication with the audience contribute to trust-building.

Methodology

This research employs a mixed-methods approach to comprehensively investigate the impact of citizen journalism and user-generated content on news quality and credibility in contrast to traditional journalism.

Data Collection: To understand the dynamic relationship between these forms of journalism, the study will conduct content analysis of news articles and social media platforms to assess the prevalence and characteristics of citizen-generated content. Additionally, interviews with professional journalists will provide qualitative insights into their perspectives and experiences in working alongside citizen journalists. Surveys distributed to news consumers and citizen journalists will gather quantitative data on perceptions of news quality and credibility.

Sampling Methods: The content analysis will involve a purposive sampling of news articles and social media posts from various sources and platforms. Interviews will be conducted with a diverse group of professional journalists, while surveys will target a broad cross-section of news consumers and citizen journalists.

Data Analysis: Content analysis will employ coding techniques to identify themes and patterns. Qualitative data from interviews will undergo thematic analysis, and survey data will be statistically analyzed using relevant software.

Case Study

Mahsa Amini, a 22-year-old Iranian woman, died on September 16, 2022, in police custody after being arrested by the morality police for allegedly violating Iran's strict hijab laws. According to eyewitness accounts, Amini was beaten by the morality police while in custody. Iranian authorities have denied these allegations, claiming that Amini died

of a heart attack. However, her family and friends say that she was healthy and had no prior medical conditions. Amini's death sparked widespread protests in Iran, with women and girls taking to the streets to burn their hijabs and demand an end to the morality police. The protests have since spread to other countries, including the United States, Europe, and Canada. The Iranian government has responded to the protests with a crackdown, arresting hundreds of people and using violence to disperse crowds. At least 83 people have been killed in the protests, according to human rights groups. The death of Mahsa Amini has highlighted the issue of violence against women in Iran. Women in Iran are subject to a number of discriminatory laws, including the mandatory hijab law. The morality police are responsible for enforcing these laws, and they often do so in a violent and abusive manner. The protests following Amini's death are a powerful statement of solidarity among women in Iran and around the world. They are also a reminder of the importance of fighting for women's rights and gender equality. In addition to the protests, Amini's death has also led to international condemnation of the Iranian government. The United States, the European Union, and other countries have imposed sanctions on Iran in response to the government's crackdown on the protests. The Mahsa Amini case is a tragedy, but it has also sparked a movement for change in Iran. Women and girls in Iran are refusing to be silenced, and they are demanding an end to violence and discrimination against women. Digital media has played a vital role in the Mahsa Amini case as a medium of communication and information. It has helped to spread the news, organize protests, document human rights abuses, and raise awareness internationally. Social media platforms such as Instagram, Twitter, and Telegram have been used by Iranians to share news and images of the protests, as well as to coordinate and mobilize demonstrators. Digital media has also been used to document police brutality and human rights abuses. In the face of government censorship, digital media has provided a platform for Iranians to have their voices heard and to connect with each other. It has also helped to raise awareness of the case internationally and to put pressure on the Iranian government to respect human rights.

- Spreading the news: Social media has been the primary way for Iranians to learn about the death of Mahsa Amini and the subsequent protests. Videos and images of Amini's arrest and of the protests have been shared widely on social media, helping to raise awareness of the case and to inspire people to take action.

- Organizing protests: Social media has also been used to organize and mobilize protests. Activists have used social media to share information about upcoming protests, to coordinate logistics, and to call for support. Documenting human rights abuses: Digital media has also been used to document police brutality and human rights abuses during the protests. Videos of police beating and arresting protesters have been shared widely on social media, helping to expose the government's crackdown on dissent. Raising awareness internationally: Digital media has also helped to raise awareness of the Mahsa Amini case internationally. News articles, social media posts, and hashtags about the case have been shared by people all over the world, helping to put pressure on the Iranian government to respect human rights.

Case Study 2

According to the Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI), there were 1,345 cases of violence against dogs reported in Kerala in 2022. This is a significant increase from the 989 cases reported in 2021. The most common forms of violence against dogs in Kerala include beatings, stabbings, and poisoning. Dogs are also often abandoned or tied to trees and left to starve. There are a number of reasons why violence against dogs is so common in Kerala. One reason is that there is a widespread lack of awareness about animal welfare laws. Another reason is that many people view dogs as pests or a nuisance. The AWBI has been working to raise awareness about animal welfare laws and to educate the public about the importance of treating dogs with kindness. However, more needs to be done to address the problem of violence against dogs in Kerala. Digital media has played a significant role in spreading information about violence against dogs in Kerala, India. Social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram have been used to raise awareness of the issue and to mobilize people to take action. A group of animal rights activists in Kerala launched a social media campaign called #StopDogViolenceKerala. The campaign used a variety of tactics, including sharing videos and photos of dogs that had been abused, writing blog posts about the issue, and organizing online protests. The campaign was successful in raising awareness of violence against dogs in Kerala and in mobilizing people to take action. For example, the campaign helped to organize a protest march in Kochi, Kerala, that was attended by hundreds

of people. In addition to social media, other forms of digital media, such as news websites and online blogs, have also played a role in spreading information about violence against dogs in Kerala. For example, in 2022, the Indian news website The Hindu published a series of articles about the issue. The articles highlighted the prevalence of violence against dogs in Kerala and the challenges faced by animal welfare activists. Digital media has also been used to document and share evidence of violence against dogs in Kerala. Such as, in 2022, a video of a man beating a dog to death in Kerala went viral on social media. The video sparked outrage and led to calls for the man's arrest.

Conclusion

The transformation of the media landscape driven by the ascendancy of citizen journalism and user-generated content has fundamentally reshaped the dynamics of news production and dissemination. This study has illuminated the complex interplay between these emergent forms of journalism and the traditional journalistic paradigm, shedding light on their implications for news quality and credibility. The democratization of news production, characterized by the active participation of individuals and the amplification of diverse voices, marks a significant shift towards inclusivity and immediacy. However, this democratization also underscores the pressing need for robust mechanisms to assess credibility and reliability. Collaborative journalism emerges as a promising approach, bridging the expertise of professional journalists with the grassroots reporting of citizen journalists, fostering comprehensive and balanced news coverage. Amidst these developments, the evolving landscape of audience trust underscores the importance of ethical considerations and transparency. As the media landscape continues to evolve, the findings of this study highlight the imperative of responsible reporting practices, ethical guidelines, and adaptive strategies to ensure the enduring quality and credibility of news in the digital age.

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Impact of Social Media on Politics and Public Opinion in India: A Comparative Study

Moumita Chakraborty

Abstract

The new media serves as a backdrop to our daily lives and is the primary channel through which we engage with popular culture. Social media has become a crucial tool since it serves several purposes in addition to its main ones of networking, disseminating information, and sharing social images and videos. For instance, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and WhatsApp groups are all utilized to connect consumers and sellers. Today social media, platform has also become a hub for political discussion. Politics has a direct or indirect influence over all spheres of life. In social media, Twitter is very famous for writing blogs on political issues and people share their political opinion by writing microblogs there. The last ten years have seen the publication of thoughtful literature examining the impact and consequences of social media on politics. Social media may have both advantages and disadvantages, but it amplifies human intent in general—both good and evil. The social media revolution is real, present, and accelerating in Indian politics. In order to connect with the public, political parties and elected officials are becoming more visible on social media sites like Twitter and Facebook. This research aims to provide insight on political participation on social media and how social media impacts forming public opinion about politics in the country.

Keywords: New media, social media, politics, political activity, political participation

Introduction

Since it began as a military experiment more than 50 years ago, the internet has developed into a general-purpose technology (John Naughton,

2016). According to Kahn et al. (1997), the greatest technological revolution in history has been the transition from the idea of the “Galactic Network” to the wide-area packet switching network ARPANET and finally to open architectural networking using the protocol suite known as the INTERNET. The internet has permeated every aspect of life and changed it in every way imaginable.

Individuals interact with one other by like, commenting on, and sharing content, as well as by sharing their thoughts, views, photos, videos, articles, activities, events, and interests. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) define social media as “a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content.” In addition to providing you with information, social media engages and interacts with you. This interaction can take many different forms, such as requests for likes, shares, and comments, polling, survey participation, or even just a simple question about your interests. In this way, social media allows users to freely express themselves to a wider audience. Individuals enjoy voicing their thoughts and opinions. With time, social media changed to fulfill a variety of functions, including promoting businesses, bringing buyers and sellers together through groups, marketplaces, education, healthcare, and even entertainment thanks to the introduction of TikToks, or “Reels,” on Facebook and related platforms. One of the world’s most active social media users is estimated to be Indian.

Over the past ten years, social media has changed many aspects of our lives and developed into a crucial political instrument. People debate and even fight online about politics, discuss politics, and express their political ideas. Through social activism and earlier internet revolutions, social media has a significant impact on global politics. To shed light on the political landscape in India, it can be said that since people there are accustomed to talking openly about politics, social media platforms have developed into a political hotspot. The ‘Avaaz’ campaign for the Anna Hazare’s anticorruption Lokpal Bill, the activism of student communities in the Telangana movement which led to the formation of the state, online political campaign of CM Naveen Patnaik in Orissa, BJP’s social media usage in the central elections of 2014 are some popular examples in Indian politics. Irrespective of the platform and its primary feature of networking or sharing information, political discussion is everywhere. Facebook posts, live webinars, political groups, and event invitations are some of the ways

that people debate politics. Hashtags and political tweets are used on Twitter. More image and video sharing is made possible via Instagram and YouTube, which encourages activism and political discourse. Political views and ideologies have even been shared via the viral app TikTok. Through their websites, political parties initially used the internet as a one-way means of public contact. Social media became an even more potent political instrument with the latter development of social media and technology, which changed communication patterns to a two-way street (Emruli & Baëa, 2011). All political parties in the current Indian political landscape, along with its numerous candidates, are active on social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, as well as individual websites and blogs. Political parties are using social media in addition to on-the-ground political activity now that they have recognized its significance. Pages for political parties, elected officials, the electoral commission, decision-makers, and governments of various states continue to share their work on social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Party members and elected officials frequently poke fun at rival parties and their leaders or criticize them seriously. Including the present Prime Live streaming is available for Minister Narendra Modi's "Mann kiBaat," where he expresses his opinions on DD Channel and All India Radio on Facebook and YouTube. Before elections, there is a spike in political engagement on social media. Online campaigns, the posting of promises and manifestos on social media, polls conducted by media outlets and outside groups, live social media broadcasts of on-the-ground events, and a great deal of citizen political discourse are all present.

Social media and the internet have shown to be essential resources for disseminating political information (McAllister, 2015). In contrast, as demonstrated by European nations and the 2016 US Presidential Elections, this phenomenon also poses a challenge to democracy. As was already mentioned, social media is one of the most popular places for individuals to obtain information, but it also carries a significant risk of spreading false information, propagandizing, and swaying public opinion. A country's political fabric can be impacted by social media and the active participation of its population. Power is a key component of politics, and it's no secret that people will do whatever it takes to gain power. There has been a noticeable increase in the number of IT Cells lately. These are groups/pages/individuals that operate under the cover of organizations to magnify the impact of political action on the internet. These political party-affiliated

IT cells propagate fake news and spread misinformation in an effort to sway public opinion. The amount of fake news that is spreading and its effects on residents have prompted the creation of a new phrase, “WhatsApp University,” which parodies those who trust whatever they read on social media without doing any research. This study tries to find the influence in the millennial era and in a changing political environment, despite the fact that there is already literature on the impact of social media on politics and numerous researches talking about the effect of social media in Indian political situation. This study is important from an academic and practical standpoint. From an academic perspective, it helps to grasp the significance of social media as a political instrument; from a practical standpoint, it might aid in future political marketing.

Review of Literature:

With the aid of posts, tweets, sites, groups, channels, events, and interaction through likes, comments, and shares, the internet and social media make political activity more accessible online. Political engagement on social media and its impact on political efficacy and actual political participation were highlighted by Bimber and Copeland (2011). According to Schulz’s (2005) research, social media users are engaged in political debate and the platform provided a forum for political discussions. Social media has increased public awareness of politics and sparked people’s interest in them. Social media influences citizens’ political views and opinions, and political social media activity affects both offline and online political engagement. Social media has become a catalyst for political efficacy and in-person engagement; the internet and social media have raised public awareness of political campaigns and voting. Social media is beneficial for both voting and political campaigning; in fact, it increases voter turnout in elections (Larson, 2004). According to research by Abdu, Mohamad, and Muda (2017), there is a positive relationship between Facebook use and political participation. The study examined how Facebook’s characteristics facilitate political discourse and engagement. Online political groups and offline political participation are strongly correlated, despite the weak relationship between online political groups and political knowledge (Conroye, Feezellb, &Guerrero, 2012). Political efficacy is impacted by Facebook postings made by politicians encouraging people to participate; these posts “have a positive impact on individuals with high external and collective efficacy traits and low cynicism traits” (Heiss and Matthes, 2016). Research on the role of social media in political

activities was done by Chan and Guo (2013), who discovered that social media enhances civic and political involvement, particularly among those who believe they have little knowledge of politics and are unable to participate. Social media and the internet increase people's political understanding, which in turn increases political engagement and participation. "Online campaigning directly connects and engages internet users before and after elections," according to a study on the internet, political engagement and involvement, and the impact of information, discussions, and political campaigning online (Cantijoch, Cutts, & Gibson, 2012). Comparable results regarding political views and engagement among Spanish persons have been noted, and the findings indicate a noteworthy distinction between the cognitive and effective components of attitude (De Marco et al., 2017). In their study of the relationship between social media and political participation, Rainie, Smith, Schlozman, Brady, and Verba (2012) found that "one in eight adults used social media for civic and political purposes, and 39% of adults in the United States used social media." Real-life political participation was impacted by the new political communication patterns that social media brought forth. Social media serves as a platform for social relationship building, which is its main application, but it is also utilized for political and other forms of communication (Siluveru, 2015). Elections bring out the best in political participation on social media. Politicians utilize social media to stay in touch with the public and to update their agendas, promises, manifestos, and actions, according to Rustad and Saebø (2013). According to Borah's (2014) analysis of Facebook usage during the presidential campaign, "individuals whose party affiliation is congruent with the post increased political participation in the candidate's favor." Facebook was utilized by Mr. Obama's 2012 presidential campaign as a marketing tool and to further his persona (Gerodimos and Justinussen, 2014). As was already mentioned, there is a ton of literature on the subject of social media's influence on politics, although the most of it comes from industrialized nations. This study sheds light on the political landscape of developing nations like India and shows how social media serves as a catalyst for citizens' political ideas and views. Since 2014, there has been a significant increase in the participation of all stakeholders in politics, including politicians, political parties, governments, policy makers, election commissions, and voters. As a result, the dynamics of political influence on people have changed quickly, and this study offers new insights that are pertinent to the current context.

Objectives

- I. To study the effect of social media in forming public opinion about politics of a country.
- II. To study how politicians, use social media for campaign
- III. To study the effect of false political news on public.

Social Media and C-Governance

The amalgamation of social media and Citizen Governance (C-Governance) has been progressively apparent in actual situations, symbolizing a paradigmatic transition in the relationship between the government and its constituents. For example, the Indian government's MyGov platform uses social media to involve the public in policy discussions, gather feedback on governance projects, and offer a collaborative platform for citizens and government officials. By using this platform, the public can actively engage in the process of making decisions and help shape policies and initiatives. Government organizations all over the world use social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter to communicate directly with the public and to share emergency information and real-time updates. In addition to improving transparency, this dynamic engagement makes sure that the public is informed and has a say in determining public policy. Even if these programs demonstrate the promise of social media in C-Governance, there is still work to be done to fully realize the advantages of these platforms in fostering inclusive and responsive governance because of issues like disinformation management and privacy protection. Social media was used to spread the word about Anna Hazare's anti-corruption campaign and the protests that followed the rape by the Nirbhaya gang. The involvement of the average person in these activities led to tremendous national and international support.

Social Media and World politics

Global politics have seen a number of incidents recently in which social media was crucial. Social media caused a significant change in global politics. Long-standing dictatorial governments were overthrown by revolutions driven by internet connectivity on the one hand, and social media campaigns on the other hand influenced voters.

Social media has grown to be a powerful influence in global politics, influencing everything from public conversation to diplomatic relations.

The use of Twitter in international diplomacy is one prominent instance. Presidents and prime ministers among other political figures utilize Twitter as a direct line of communication for sharing decisions, announcing events, and practicing public diplomacy. With his extensive use of Twitter, former US President Donald Trump served as an example of how a world leader may connect directly with a worldwide audience while eschewing traditional media channels. But this also brought up worries about the possibility of tense diplomatic relations brought on by rash or divisive tweets. Real-time interactions and social media's ability to spread messages quickly have changed the diplomatic environment, making it an essential instrument in the toolbox of contemporary statecraft. Moreover, social media has been instrumental in enabling and magnifying international movements and demonstrations. The 2010 Arab Spring showed how social media sites like Facebook and Twitter might be used to organize people against repressive governments. Social media was used by activists to plan demonstrations, disseminate information, and enlist backing from around the world. The worldwide reaction to issues like social justice and climate change has also been propelled by hashtag movements on social media sites like Instagram and Twitter, which have the power to transcend national boundaries and promote a sense of global solidarity. Social media's rapid information and image transmission has sped up the recognition and response to global events, radically changing the dynamics of world politics and the role that citizens play in determining the worldwide agenda. The aforementioned instances demonstrate how social media has evolved into a crucial component of international politics, impacting diplomatic strategies, molding worldwide dialogue, and acting as a spur for cross-border activities.

Social Media and Indian politics

What effect does social media have on politics in a democracy such as India? The political parties have now realized how important social media is, given the "buzz" that it is creating and the increasing number of young people using it. Everyone is realizing that this is a new and effective way to engage the public, encourage participation, and improve communication. Indian politicians of all ages have begun to feel the effects of social media in one way or another. Nowadays, practically all political parties use social media to spread their message to the general public. For politicians to connect with their voters, political campaigns involve much more than just buttons and posters. Campaign ads, blog entries, and hundreds of tweets abound in the modern political landscape.

Politicians may now interact with the public, see direct reactions to their acts on Facebook or Twitter, and continuously broadcast their message through endless advertising thanks to social media (Foley, 2013). A new political discourse is generated by social media. It solidifies the influence of political messaging in peer-to-peer public discourse, removing it from the mass media paradigm. The strongest kind of advertising is word-of-mouth—a referral from a person you can trust—and social media builds relationships-based, multi-level trust.

The Indian National Congress and Bhartiya Janta Party, two significant national parties, have been engaged in an online political feud in recent decades. Internet propaganda is utilized aggressively against one another. Every possible media is employed in the verbal combat. One tweet prompts an instant response from the other. The most well-known tweets from both parties were when the Congress referred to Narendra Modi as “Feku” and the BJP referred to Rahul Gandhi as “Pappu.” Both sides attempt to minimize one other’s successes and highlight each other’s shortcomings. Both sides assert that they have sizable fan bases.

Political parties now have their own websites, something that wasn’t the case a few years ago, and some of them communicate with voters on other social media platforms. The fact that each party has a website and that its leaders are present on various media platforms gives the impression that the people can approach them. It is no longer necessary to make appointments or wait for them to speak. You can reach the leaders with just a single button click.

Rahul Gandhi, a prominent figure in Indian politics, When it comes to interacting with people, especially other young people, Indian youth have used nearly every social media platform available. Social networking sites have been used by him such as Facebook to communicate with individuals, and both well-known personalities and regular people engage at the same time. In order to express his opinions, he also writes blogs. LK Advani, a man from It is the blog of Bharitya Janta Party. One of the Congress Party’s Mr. Shashi Tharoor was lawmakers who began tweeting first. Gujarat’s chief minister, Mr. Narender Modi, has engaged with the public through various forms of media. He has been communicating with India’s youth and spreading knowledge through social media in an efficient manner. He has frequently stated that young people should be included in the democratic process by utilizing social media’s potential. His strategy is seen in the results of the Gujarati elections.

Public opinion formation by Social media

Social media has transformed the way information is shared, absorbed, and engaged with globally, making it a powerful catalyst for opinion formation. Social media sites such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter are dynamic forums where people share content, have conversations, and voice their opinions. The impact of social media on public opinion during the Arab Spring revolutions is a prime example. Social media sites like Facebook and Twitter were vital for planning demonstrations, spreading news, and gaining support from the general public during these movements. The establishment of collective opinions against oppressive governments was made possible by the quick distribution of user-generated material, demonstrating the large-scale facilitation of the emergence of shared feelings through social media. Opinion formation is greatly influenced by social media platforms' algorithmic personalization. These algorithms customize material according to users' interests, historical actions, and exchanges. Although this improves the user experience, it may lead to filter bubbles that restrict exposure to different points of view. For example, the algorithm might strengthen and magnify a user's persistent engagement with content that expresses a certain political attitude, which could result in the entrenchment of beliefs within echo chambers. Furthermore, social media information that becomes viral has the power to draw attention to particular problems or points of view, which can change public opinion. Hashtag movements, like #BlackLivesMatter, are prime examples of how social media can change public opinion, amplify voices, and bring attention to social issues. The extensive distribution of content pertaining to social justice and equality received backing from throughout the globe, cultivating a collective alteration in public opinion. Social media's influence on the creation of opinions is not without problems, though. Rapid information transmission can also result in the propagation of false information and the development of beliefs based on erroneous or inadequate data. It will take continual work to advance media literacy, transparency, and the responsible use of these potent communication tools in order to strike a balance between the advantages of social media's role in opinion formation and these obstacles.

Conclusion

With the introduction of social media, the "aamaadmi" has never been able to voice their political thoughts with such empowerment and

involvement. The introduction of social media has led to a beneficial development in that young people are now discussing political problems. Before, only people who read newspapers, watched news channels, or took part in talks in clubs or the nukkad of a hamlet could engage in political discourse. However, social networking has forced India's youth to engage in political discourse. They take their time to consider and debate politics. They now have opinions on current political events and have a say in how administrative decisions are made. However, organizing young people to vote in elections and leveraging social media as a platform to support political parties remain pipe dreams. India may need several decades to catch up to the United States in terms of voter impact and social media campaigning. The use of social media in Indian politics is causing a real, palpable, and swift transformation. Even while there might not be any significant changes right away, it will still have a significant impact on raising political knowledge, which is a significant advancement for a developing nation like India.

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Gandhian Views on Freedom of Expression and Liberty of Press: An Analysis of Selected Texts of Young India from 1924 to 1931

Srabani Das

Abstract: There are several characteristics of Indian freedom movement which were reflected by the nationalist newspapers of that time. Several nationalist leaders were actively attached with the nationalist newspapers. They nurtured strong belief in their minds that newspapers had grave impact in day to day life of common men. The notion of freedom of expression and liberty of press was a far cry from the reality in British dominated India. Several instances were set by the British to take away the freedom of press by the way of passing ordinance in this regard. But the fight to secure the freedom of press was in full swing. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi edited Young India which was made illicit by the government in 1930 through the passing of ordinance. M. K Gandhi was one of the brightest luminaries of the national movement of India. This research work wants to analyze the journalistic soul of M. K Gandhi. Gandhi took the charge of editing Young India in 1919 after returning to India in the year of 1915. The researcher would like to analyze the subject-matter of his writing on the freedom of expression, liberty of press, press acts etc which were published in Young India. The objective of this research work is to find out the opinions of Gandhi regarding free press and free speech in British-ruled India and his struggle to ensure that through the content analysis of his articles published in the aforesaid newspaper.

Keywords: Mahatma Gandhi, Young India, Liberty of press, Freedom of expression, Colonial India.

Introduction

The period from the battle of Plassey in 1757 and subsequent initiation of British rule in India to the independence in 1947 was one the most checkered and colorful historical periods in India. Whenever we put considerable amount of light on the history of India's struggle for independence, we easily come across two sides of that. First was the international one in which nationalist leaders were much keen to attain freedom the British subjugation. The other one was societal one in which those leaders tried to bring about various social reforms and build moral values along with freedom struggle. All these efforts were clearly reflected on the pages of then-published nationalist newspapers (report of second press commission, 1954). The core of this research work is Gandhi that is why the period after Gandhi's returning to India is discussed here. Gandhi wrote in his autobiography about the duty of the newspapers "One of the objects of a newspaper is to understand the popular feeling and give expression to it; another is to arouse among the people certain desirable sentiments; and the third is fearlessly to expose popular defects". Gandhi was very much reliant on the efficacy of the newspapers. He opined that Satyagraha would not have been possible without the Indian Opinion (Gandhi, Autobiography). He shouldered the responsibility of publishing the Young India after returning back to India in 1919. He took this charge when he was asked by the syndicate of the Young India after deportation of Mr. Horniman. (Gandhi, 1919). Gandhi explained the need of free press to build a progressive nation in his various articles of Young India and at several public meetings.

M.K. Gandhi was arrested on 10th of March, 1922 for writing three seditious articles in the Young India (Roychoudhury, 2018). Though he was sentenced to jail for six years but he was set free for his poor health condition (Guha, 2018). He again took the charge of editing the Young India since 3rd April, 1931. The newspaper continued to be published till 31st December, 1931. He was once again arrested on 5th of May 1930 and was set free on 26th of January 1931. The reason for the arrest of this time was Salt Satyagraha and Civil Disobedience. Gandhi wrote total of four articles on Freedom of Press, Freedom of Expression and Press Act in the Young India during the period from 3rd April 1924 to 31st December 1931. Those four articles has been analyzed in this stage of research. This work tries to understand the writing technique of Gandhi as a journalist and the relevance of journalist Gandhi by analyzing his writing. Moreover the

ideals and thought of Gandhi regarding the Freedom of Press and Expression in colonial India is being understood.

Review of Existing Knowledge

‘MY DAYS WITH GANDHI’, written by Nirmalkumar Bose, is a well-known and well researched book. A view of the mighty Himalaya from only one side does not present the beauty and enormity of it to the fullest. It is not possible to view the Himalaya from all the directions simultaneously. In the same line a luminary like Gandhi cannot be explained or viewed from all the aspects at the same time (Bose, 1953). The researcher desires to explain mainly the journalistic soul of Gandhi through his writings published in Young India in this research paper. Eight chapters relating to journalism and Gandhi are there in the book titled ‘Mahatma Gandhi: The journalist’. The book explained journalist Gandhi as a whole. The preface of this book said that this book is very much essential for those who want to build a career as a journalist (Bhattacharyya, 1965). This recent research work is aimed at understanding Gandhi’s struggle to secure the freedom of the newspaper through his articles published during 1924-1931 in Young India. How the literary works were influenced by the inner soul of Gandhi has been aptly described by the book as ‘Gandhi the writer’. Though this book contains twenty seven chapters yet this book has not discuss the area of freedom of expression and liberty of press. Moreover the book is unable to analyze how the content of his writing for Young India were selected by himself and the presentation style of Gandhi’s writing which influenced others. The writer has brought forward the genesis of ‘The Indian Opinion’ and the struggle for keep running. The reason behind the genesis of ‘The Harijan’ has also been described (Bhattacharyya, 1969). There are seven chapters in the book named M.K.Gandhi, Media, Politics and society. The editor of the book has upheld Gandhi’s thought and analysis about utilizing technology and media. Besides that opinion of various journalists, political figures and intellectuals regarding Gandhi have also been reflected in this book (Kaul, 2020). The book does not put light on whether Gandhi raised his voice in favor of freedom of press and speech or not and if did then how. The book named ‘Mahatma Gandhi and Mass Media Meditating conflict and social Change’ has mainly put light on the mass media system of eighteenth and nineteenth century. This book also explains how Gandhi used mass media to establish a distinct communication strategy of his own and to spread his own message among the mass (Joseph, 1922). At the same time the book lacks describing Gandhi through

his writing relating to the freedom of press and speech. On the contrary the present research work is interested to present and criticize the journalistic soul of Gandhi through the analysis of his article in the pages of Young India.

Methodology

Gandian View on Freedom of Expression and Liberty of Press: An Analysis of Selected Text of Young India from 1924 to 1931 is a qualitative study. The articles written by M. K Gandhi has been selected from Young India during aforesaid time span. Researcher put faith in the index of Young India for selecting particular articles. Researcher developed some idioms like press freedom, free speech, liberty of press for better selection of articles. These articles have been analyzed through the content analysis method. This research would like to find philosophical and epistemological help from the writing of M. K Gandhi in the pages of Young India to understand his stand on liberty of press and freedom of speech.

Objectives

1. To know the thoughts of M. K Gandhi as a journalist on freedom of speech and freedom of press.
2. To know whether Gandhi's writing was driven by his political ideology or journalistic soul.
3. To find out the journalistic technique of writing of Gandhi through the analysis of his articles in Young India.

Historical overview on freedom of expression and liberty of press in Young India

Free speech and freedom of press can only develop in a democratic atmosphere. How the freedom of press was severely trampled upon by the British rule can be easily known from various books of history. The journey of modern newspaper was started when James Augustus Hickey published the Bengal Gazette for the first time in 1780. Newspapers not only narrate the present scenario but develop the mass by giving information and insight on various issues of national and international importance (Rai, 2015). Bal Gangadhar Tilak was of the same opinion. Tilak wrote in January 1881 in Marathi newspaper named Kesari that newspapers were the mirror of society in England. People of England got to know about various political activities and actions of government from the newspapers.

There was no public grievance as everything entailed much transparency. Sycophancy increased with the passage of time under Imperial rule in India. That is why Tilak wanted to write about the action and mis actions of the Imperial government without partiality and fear. A nation can progress when journalists write boldly and impartially about government and its officials (report of second press commission). Gopal Krishna Gokhale also opposed the restriction imposed by the government on the newspapers. He believed that press is responsible to the public like government. Newspapers work for the benefit of the people just as the government works for the welfare of the people. Mr. Gokhale opined that any hindrance to the freedom of the press will also hurt the interests of people (Natesan,1916). Gandhi a political disciple of Gokhale also expressed annoyance against these press acts of 1910 of British government. Gandhi faced no opposition to publish the Indian Opinion in South Africa (Bhattacharyya, 1965). It is known from the articles of Young India written by Gandhi and his associates that government put ban on various newspapers and even punishment like deportation of editors did happen. It was tried to the largest possible extent so that the information of British oppression in India could not reach England. Press acts were meant to gag the voice of the newspapers (Sonwalkar,2015).

B.G Hornieman was a bold journalist who used to criticize the British government by his sharp writing. As a result he was deported to England very shortly (Gandhi,1919). BabuKalinath Roy who was the editor of The Tribune, put behind the bars for his alleged seditious writing (Gandhi,1919). Mr. George Joseph, the editor of the newspaper named the Independent, was arrested and his security money was confiscated (Young India,1921). It is known from the article titled “Thus we go merrily on” that Stj. Mohanlal Bhatta, the printer and publisher of both Navjivan and the Young India was arrested (Mira, 1930). The article of the Young India titled “Freedom of the press” informs that Syed Abdullah Brelvi and SohrabPalanji Kapadia who were respectively the editor and the publisher of the Bombay Chronicle were jailed for no illegally (Kumarappa,1930).

Gandhi’s view on Freedom of Expression, Liberty of Press in Young India

Gandhi wrote about freedom of expression on 16th May, 1929 in the article titled ‘PanditSunderlal’s Book’. The book named ‘History of English Rule’ written by Sunderlal was banned by then United Province government. Even those who got copies of that book before being banned

were not beyond doubt. Gandhi opined that possessing a volume of the book was not at all a moral breach. It was obvious that those who considered that confiscation a wicked act of robbery not only would not assist the government in this confiscation but also would thwart the authority from this satanic act of confiscation regarding the conflict between the British Government and the book. Even the publication of the extract of this book could have brought dire action from the British Government. Gandhi believes that this information could not be true if it is then he suggested to each and every newspaper should have published the truth and thus it would make the action plan happen in favor of the Civil Disobedience movement. Gandhi did not discuss about the content of the book 'History of English Rule' written by Sunderland in his article. Gandhi wrote in his article about how the right of citizen to express their free opinion was destructed and finely connected his political agenda with this event of book-ban in very articulated manner. It is to be noted here that he also did not publish the extract of this book in the Young India but observed his duty by requesting others to publish that.

Gandhi's second writing on the freedom of expression was published on 13th June 1929. Sri Ramananda Chatterjee was arrested by the Bengal Government on sedition charge. Dr. Sunderland's book was on British Rule in India. Reverend Sunderland spent a considerable period of time in India. He came to India as a member of 'British National Unitarian Association' in 1895-1896. This organization was entrusted with submitting a report on religion, society, education, popular demand after examining the Indian society under his leadership. He came to India for the second time as a member of British and American Unitarian Association in 1913-1914. He wrote this book on the basis his personal experience and information collected from various Indian Newspapers (Sunderland, 1929). Ramananda Chatterjee was arrested for the publication of the book written by Sunderland. Gandhi mentioned the event in his writing titled "Dr. Sunderland's Volume" but could not show any pathway for any movement opposing the government. Gandhi started this article with a quotation of Rabindranath Tagore and ended up with saying that "This arrest is forcible proof of Dr. Sunderland's indictment of British rule" though Gandhi appreciated his book in the last paragraph. This writing does not reveal the degree of his eagerness for the freedom of expression. This article is only the representation of Dr. Sunderland's thought through his letter. It only wrote about the keystone of the book.

Gandhi wrote about the ordinance of press act on 8th of May 1930 in the article titled 'Veiled Martial Law'. Gandhi observed that the new Press Act was more disastrous and tyranny than the previous ones. Amid that tumultuous time he, being optimistic, wrote for the journalist and press that he hoped people would not panic the ordinance. Moreover he suggested that pressmen would be the worthy representative of popular opinion only when they would stop being fringed by the ordinance. He urged to the publishers and the press to deny depositing the security money. If they had to stop publishing their newspapers then they would challenge the authority. He believed that type and machine could be banned but not the speech and pen. He opined that entire India was very much keen to topple the British rule from India. Gandhi told to the press what to do in this article also but never stopped publishing his own newspaper. He wrote in his article named 'No Security' at the time when the Young India first unveiled no security was deposited and the paper was publishing continuously. He was not happy to publish the papers in an abnormal situation because some obnoxious features of press ordinance of 1930 continue to contort the press (Bhattacharyya, 1965). Though he was in an anxious mental condition in this regard but asked others to be bold journalists through his writing. His articles did not put light on the condition of other newspapers after the enactment of press ordinance of 1930.

Gandhi's concept of democracy laid faith on non-violence. He believed that weaker sections of the society do not get same opportunity as the strongest and it could be only ensured by non-violence. The western type of democracy was not flawless as with the passage of time it created the widely condemned Nazism and Fascism. The western democracy time and again laid faith on violence for its own benefit, as for example the bagging of India by imperialist Britain (Gandhi, 1961). Gandhi answered that Non-violence was the sole way to attain democracy when he was asked what the way was to get the democracy. He further said that Satyagraha will be achieved by running Charkha, handicrafts would be the medium of primary education and would make the way for rural industry and would wipe away untouchability (Gandhi, 1961). If Gandhi's article named 'Dangers of Democracy' is discussed in the light of his own concept of democracy then it will be clear that Gandhi used to write to spread his own ideal and views. Explaining the democracy he wrote in the Young India on 7th of May 1931 "Democracy is a great institution therefore it is liable to be greatly abused". Goondaism is one of the inconveniences of democracy

as identified by Gandhi but editor and journalist Gandhi did not elaborate how goondaism was a problem of democracy. What kind of events happened across the society due to goondaism was not mentioned in this writing. No reader of this article would understand why Gandhi mentioned Satyagraha, Non-violence, to explain goondaism by only reading this article. Gandhi used to presume that the readers of the *Young India* were well aware of his ideal. He did not feel the need to explain the previous context in order to uphold any issue before the readers. In this article he advised to appoint volunteers for Congress very cautiously to avert goondaism that was a matter of concern for democracy. That was his opinion about how to remove goondaism and thus he wanted to bring about a kind of social reform also. Gandhi wrote “People gradually do not take to goondaism for the love of it. It is a symptom of a deeper- sealed disease in the body politic” (Gandhi, 1931).

Findings

Gandhi wrote two articles on freedom of expression and one each on democracy and press act in the period from 1924 to 1931. It can be easily understood by analyzing his writing that subjectivity was given more importance than objectivity in his way of journalistic writing. Gandhi put light on the necessity of freedom of speech and focused on tyranny of British government through the analysis of these two articles on Pandit Sundarlal and Dr Sunderland’s book. Those two articles clearly shows that he was considerate in using his language and his entire writing on “Dr. Sunderland’s volume” article revolved around the extraction of Sunderland’s writing. Gandhi’s article did not uphold the social impact of the book or the emotion of the readers about the book. He himself decided the subject of the writing. He wrote on the subjects in the *Young India* what he thought important (Gandhi, 1925). Though he wrote a considerable number of articles on subjects like Khadi, National Language, Untouchability, Vegetarianism but his articles on Freedom of Press and speech were only a handful. Though it is a qualitative study yet quantity of articles grab the attraction of the researcher. No information regarding other newspapers and their editors can be gained from his writing due to the press ordinance of 1930. Though he mentioned goondaism in his article titled “Dangers of Democracy” but did not say anything about its impact or remedy.

Conclusion

To crave for freedom of press and speech in India under British domination was like insanity. The initiation of gagging the voice was marked by the regulation put forward by Lord Wellesly (Sonwalkar, 2015). Thenceforth one act after another hindered the freedom of expression. M. K Gandhi is one of the greatest representatives of modern India. Though he wrote in Young India on several social, political and economic subjects but his writing on freedom of speech and press are were only a few. It can be understood from his article published in the period between 1924 and 1930 that he was very much cautious about using language in his writing. He was incarcerated on 10th of March,1922 being accused of seditious writing published in Young India (Narain, 1965). For this reason he may kept aloof from criticizing government afterwards. He kept writing on all other subjects like Hand Spinning, Khadi, Swaraj, and Education System etc. except critical writing about government. He gave advice to other journalists and editors in almost all of his writing. He described how to avoid any untoward circumstances and it reflects his authoritativeness. He remained in discomfort in the same situation and it was relating to paying security money for the Navajivan and the Young India. There are differences of opinion regarding the duality of Gandhi's character and these differences will persist. Thus Gandhi is still relevant through analysis and critique.

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Environmental Risk: Communication and Comprehension of Youth and their Attitudes

Bhavya Katyal

Climate change is said to be the most overwhelming challenge antagonizing the most complex systems such as the social, political and economic order. The multi directional conundrum holds massive risks and uncertainties in the future; the economics is notorious, science and psychology inundated. Nations have been transforming how they act and are reinventing their entire process of economic, social as well as political activities to deal with the colossal issue of climate change. The impact of climate change across developed and developing countries alike intensify the imperative need to address the fundamental issues of climate change. This has left citizens bewildered; the social systems have no immediate problem-solving mechanisms to deal with severity and complexity of climate change. Problems continue to reveal in newer and monstrous ways, in order to adapt and prevent newer consequences; social, economic and political systems need to learn to respond to the climate crisis. This paper draws on discourses from different youths and their social milieu of understanding climate change. This paper is part of a larger study conducted on analysis of risk perception and youth's attitude towards climate change. This qualitative study aimed to understand, analyse and examine the risk perception of youth, how they construct and participate in discourses related to Climate change and hazardous events in the National Capital region. The research aims to do this through systems learning and interviewing students from various disciplines.

Keywords: Climate Change, Risk perception, Development communication, Science communication

Introduction

“Men argue. Nature acts.” – Charles Darwin (1871)

How unusual is that for any observation to be useful it must be for or against a viewpoint? Humans have indulged in discussions about every little-big thing. Nature, on the other hand, is a much more powerful source and acts on its whim. This does not mean arguments are a waste of time, if the joint ideas, concepts, perceptions through which meaning is constructed in any social and physical phenomenon can be used sensibly. It can help in providing solutions and further action.

Discourse analysis helps in making sense of the pre-existing biases through which public problems are addressed. Any theory of language, discourse, or communication will convey with it some hidden suspicion about how it is identified with the world. In philosophical terms, it's anything but a specific epistemological position. Michael Foucault viewed discourse analysis as knowledge construction or a system of thought that constructs our experience of the world (Foucault, 1972). It is difficult to envision a hypothesis of human discourse that doesn't have some perception about how the world, henceforth knowledge is accessed and is related to other perceptions or fragments of information. The chapter intends to elucidate and understand the discourses and discursive practices around Climate Change and how it is perceived by the youth.

The social construction of reality and the meaning of Climate Change is not a sufficient variable to understand the effects of Climate Change. How people perceive their surroundings and then further communicate and engage in discourses about the same is also key. As Hajer and Versteeg explain discourse analysis and how it helps when actors position themselves and further try to shape the public image. These actors include advocacy groups from industry, environmental NGOs, they use text symbols and images to shape discourses around the issues. They focus on how discourse analysis can help in understanding how different stakeholders position themselves in order to conceptualise and help for the cause of nature and the environment (Hajer & Versteeg, 2005).

The need for this discourse analysis arises in an attempt to understand the phenomenon of Climate Change, its adaptation, and mitigation with risk perception. Ludwig von Bertalanffy explained general system theory as the general science of wholeness. The systems theory says that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts (Bertalanffy, 1968).

Methodology

The researcher will undertake a mixed method on the basis of specific disciplines. It's an additional Qualitative and Quantitative study. The research not only collects, analyses and interprets data from both qualitative and quantitative methods but integrates conclusion as a unified whole. It's an explanatory design, partly embedded in a two-phase process where the quantitative phase comes first. Explicitly, Phase 1 involves collecting quantitative data for e.g., in a survey, post facto study or an experiment. Phase 2 is for Collecting qualitative data as follow up where a sample of phase 1 participants are asked to elaborate on their answers of survey questions or asked to broadly engage in discourses around them, mostly helps in giving researcher matter and meaning to the numbers (Leedy & Ormrod, 2016). The sequence of methods undertaken is a preliminary contribution with qualitative research. Quantitative Survey as a priority in phase 1 to answer the first objective of research and selecting the sample for phase 2 of the study. The questions were framed both as close and open ended keeping it descriptive. Phase 2 of the study was entirely qualitative and descriptive through interviews. It helped in gaining an understanding of underlying and unknown reasons, opinions and motivations. As the sample size is typically small, the researcher can be fully attentive toward the issue. More than analysis, it's about observation, empathy and understanding the situation simultaneously asking questions in making the lives of vulnerable communities comfortable. The setting of the study was various college campuses offer multiple disciplines and engage in issues of Climate Change in the National Capital Region. Sample of the study was college going youth, age group 17-25 years old.

<i>Research Objective</i>	<i>Quantitative/ Qualitative</i>	<i>Data Collection Method</i>	<i>Data Respondents Tool</i>	<i>Number of collection</i>
To analyse the risk perceptions of youth related to Climate Change and hazard events.	Quantitative	Survey (Descriptive)	Google Forms- Open and close ended questions	118
To examine the processes by which youth construct and participate in pertaining discourse to Climate Change	Qualitative	In-depth Personal Interview	Semi-structured, open-ended questionnaire	24

To examine the nature of discursive practices the youth engage in respect to Climate Change.	Qualitative	In-depth Personal Interview	Semi-structured, open-ended questionnaire	24
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Discourse and Dialogues

Discourse analysis starts an inquiry about the definition of problems that exist, the chosen policy solutions for the same, how the general public reacts to them and how they are interrelated. In order to answer the question of what needs to be done and how it needs to be done and the discourse around a said issue is majorly reliant on the concepts and matter used to discuss the existing problem and how knowledge is mobilized through masses and further discussed to get complex messages disseminated. It's also seen how a few discourses become dormant and few dominant, depending on the structuration and institutionalization of discourses (Hajer & Versteeg, 2005). The themes which emerge from the interdisciplinary study of the system are discussed below, as they associate with each other in a much more complex system.

Culture and its shift

Culture can be defined as the symbols expressing meaning, including beliefs, values, lived experiences that can create joint outlooks and behaviours to strategize and respond to problems (Swidler, 1986; Hays, 1994). Jacob Bronowski a Polish-British mathematician and historian observed that humans are the only species who aren't locked in the environment and can accept or change it through their imagination, reason, emotions, etc. (Bronowski, 1973). Culture and its shift can be understood as changes in norms, ideologies, and behaviors of a community/society usually over decades or much longer periods (Varnum & Grossmann, 2017).

Culture is imperative to understand mitigation and adaptation to Climate Change, it is rooted in the prevailing modes of production and consumption contributing to the rise of emissions of greenhouse gases. Douglas states how these consequences are given meaning to the impacts of Climate Change through the perception of science and risk (Douglas & Wildavsky, 1982). Cultures are dynamic and instinctive and thus can be shaped by the phenomenon of Climate Change. It acts as a mediator in the identification of risks, their responses, etc.

The sub-themes which emerge out of culture are the sustainable indigenous practices locally or through religious beliefs. Indigenous practices are the knowledge confined to a specific culture or society. Sometimes called local knowledge, traditional wisdom. This knowledge is created and transmitted by communities to their people, over the long haul, with an end goal to adapt for the betterment of agro- ecological and social conditions (Fernandez, 1994). Traditional knowledge is passed down from generation to generation, usually through overhearing people's conversations and social ceremonies, and has long been the basis for farming, food planning and preservation, medical services, education, and a variety of other activities that support the general public and its current situation in many parts of the world. It is created through systematic observation of noticing local conditions, exploring different avenues regarding arrangements, and readapting identified solutions with other ecological, financial and innovative situations. Culture and its shift also help in adapting and mitigating Climate Change through natural resource management.

Alan Watts, a British writer noted that our most private thoughts and emotions are not necessarily our own, as humans tend to think in terms of language and images surrounded around them and manufactured by society. Subramanian Swamy in an interview with 'The Quint' on how BJP managed to win elections in 2014 outrightly said that elections aren't won on the basis of variables like governance, economic performance, or fulfilling promises. He mentioned that elections are won on emotions. Emotions can be invoked on the basis of caste, religion, etc. This tells us a lot about the society we live in and how it influences our actions. Nobody is moved by a presentation or a pie chart, their decision of how to live can definitely be changed by a story. A story touches, inspires and gives hope to people. Martin Palmer, the Secretary-General, Alliance of Religions and Conservation, when asked about what difference it would make if religious groups were involved in talks related to Climate Change and the environment, made a very interesting observation that Science presents facts but religion, religious leaders can motivate people to communicate those facts and further take action and offer hope while communicating the depressing alarming facts. People go to lengths to defend the absolute value of high culture over popular culture but it's important that one is suspicious of false dichotomies. One doesn't have to choose between one or the other. The more varied and plural the human cultural jungle is it will

allow for as many perspectives and discourses to exist together. It is the same for religion and climate. Religious leaders and organizations can positively make a difference through mobilizing followers in a certain direction; however, it's mostly seen in baffling audiences in regard to Climate Change through their rejection of scientific ideas and approaches.

One cannot observe climate action/inaction without understanding the role of such cultural influences on an individual. Hajer and Versteeg in the Oxford Handbook of Climate Change and Society state that stories hold the power to motivate people towards social action (Hajer & Versteeg, 2005). The Psychology of Climate Change Communication also asserted that stories can be used as an efficient strategy to make people believe in Climate Change and further enable action. Many other social scientists also believe that stories and the right description of narratives can mobilize people towards a social movement and attribute to their success (Dryzek et al., 2011).

Cultural theory insinuates that the particular views on an issue by any individual are shaped by the social groups of which they are parts of. Such groups can be community organizations, peer group influences, or anything through which individuals feel connected to larger social groups. Thus, it becomes important to understand that attitudes and judgments about risks and how to communicate and further perceive that communication is all set-in cultural relationships. This perception of risk can be about patterns of social justice, ethics, moralities, responsible government; all these expectations and values belong to certain groups.

Thus, it becomes important to understand how both culture and people shape each other. As Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie in her book "We should all be Feminists" asserts that Culture does not make people, but people do make culture. And if people are responsible for the culture, so are the discourses around it. There is no denying that in Indian society religion has a great role to play in shaping action towards Climate Change. No doubt that scientists do a great job at understanding Climate science and finding solutions but in order to mobilize towards collective Climate action, science alone is insufficient. A young B. Pharma and perfumery student asserted his thoughts in this regard as –

"We are following the western concept of using things, resources, people and discarding it once your purpose is fulfilled. Like for example when we eat prasada and if it falls down, we pick it up and either put it

under a tree, in a planted pot, or feed it to a bird or an animal. So, the idea that it shouldn't come under our feet means that nothing should go to waste. And this is our culture. Like we pray to trees of various kinds. If you view the Hindu panchang (almanac), it states months and it also states trees, plants and animals of whom to pray. So, if you see in Sanatana Dharma the Indian flora and fauna has its own place. Like for example the culture of putting laung (clove) and Tulsa (basil) under the tongue while praying. So, in our culture, we deify and have a platonic affection towards nature and environment in our religion which we don't get to see in other religions, so often. Because it's the only pagan religion left. Pagan religion actually means to pray and show affection to the environment around you. And now that the culture of paganism has ended, so has the care for the environment. And this is because of the human cultural shift and it is so huge that the human mindset has also changed."

Another young student saw it in the same regard –

"People have started judging these relationships by the material goods they get out of them. People don't understand how much money our parents will have and how educated my parents will be. It is a simple chance. So basically, when you get distant from respecting your culture and your elders you also start disrespecting nature, it's the idea of owning new things and not preserving the things you already own. When you pray to Tulsa at your home, internally and affection and respect emerges for other trees also because even they are living beings. Feeding birds and animals from waste food so it teaches us to not waste food and throw it. Its purpose is to feed and not go in the garbage fields."

A few students also talked about how overwhelming it is to make people talk about Climate Change and realized that it was part of a problem that could be solved by mobilizing Climate Action relating it with the moral action based on the community you live in. Religious groups have the power to surround individuals to take action by following one's faith and following the culture and tradition. It can be as simple as religious institutions like mosques, churches and temples try alternative power modes to incorporate climate action in the lives of their followers. When our leaders incorporate action in their own story, it becomes the lived experience of that community and thus not only becomes easier for members to follow the action/change but acts like second nature to them. Douglas

and Wildavsky while exploring the consequence of centre weakening reason it to the sect. 'Sect' is a term used for religious organizations like the Amish. Douglas and Wildavsky claimed that these religious groups shared a lot of structural similarities with environmental groups (Douglas & Wildavsky, 1982). Mathew Nisbet in his Article on 'Communicating Climate Change' elucidates that there is nothing as unframed information (Nisbet, 2009). These discourses framed by individuals and communities frame the conversation around an issue which further embed those discursive practices for change and action.

Nisbet also explained that when issues are framed, they behave as interpretative storylines which move and understand thoughts in a specific direction and thus communicating why an issue might be problematic, its causes, people responsible for it, and future action can be done with a more specific thought (Nisbet, 2009). Thus, such framed discourses by these groups can help young people make associations regarding moral and ethical issues in response to Climate Change.

The students saw this cultural shift in terms of discarding one's own culture or religion to be able to become more westernized and acceptable in society. They believed it was more than just propagating a certain religion. A student firmly asserted that when a child inherently follows and inculcates such actions, they unknowingly help in preserving the existing resources and help in Climate Change. To its contrary, another young female law student believed in educating more and how with developing times and an uncontrollable cultural shift –

"I do think industries and major metropolitan cities have affected Climate Change. But I have also observed that people who are educated and see Climate Change as an issue and are not emotionally attached to an ideology help pave the way for a better environment. Not to offend anyone but I do think that a lot of resources go to waste in order to bind those customs and rituals."

A student doing her Ph.D. in Industrial Engineering understood it in terms of political action towards Climate Change. He observed how politicians manifested religion in the entire process and a major cultural shift was noticed –

"Now how many people vote for Climate Change; how many people are voting for air pollution? They are not voting for those reasons. That

is the main issue. That is why Delhi does so well. The political parties here know very well that what are the issues for which they can get votes, so they do not spend the time, money and energy to make legislations regarding pollution or environment or Climate Change.”

It is not new to observe that religion mobilizes political action. The majority of vote share depends on it and a lot of other variables like Climate Change and its action depend on how political parties mobilize resources and further communicate. This cultural shift arises for the gain of power rather than governance.

Another very interesting Cultural shift seen is due to the policies made by the government. He analyzes how certain policies if not checked for environmental concern can highly affect Climate Change. This was described by a young media scholar as –

“It’s because of the government’s policy. Punjab was known as the wheat bowl of India and not the rice bowl of India. Because they have to grow rice, they burn the old stubble to clear out the land. It’s the timing which is wrong to increase productivity. We grow rice in southern India because it’s a plateau, rivers are flowing whereas north India has water scarcity. And then stubble burning happens and half the city/ country has to breathe in that pollution. It’s completely lacking on the part of the government.”

Here it was noticed how a certain sustainable practice was changed due to a political motive bringing a huge cultural change. Cultural Shift is not just seen in politics but in a diverse and different field such as fashion. The fact that people are making the choice of going towards sustainable fashion and losing interest in fast fashion also shows the cultural shift in the market and how it can affect Climate Change. Fast Fashion brands are known to have unsustainable practices in procuring, manufacturing, and processing products like releasing chemical effluents in rivers/seas, breeding animals. A communications student observed –

“I have seen people, brands getting conscious, and I have seen people getting concours of high fashion and people not buying stuff not all of clothes because it also adds up to global emissions because of the synthetic dyes and not natural dyes, I have seen people using plant based leather and are going towards 100% cotton and avoiding polyamides, polyester so I think fashion industry is also getting conscious of it and

also more than legislations , I think on individual level how do we connect with the environment matters.”

Drivers of collective action has claimed that psychological demands for emotional security, social acceptability, and recurrence are overseen. Some argue that social institutions remain unchanging due to the unavoidable desire for “ontological security,” as this portrays society as conservative and social structures as the result of human emotional fragility (Giddens, 1991). Douglas pointed out the cultural shift caused by religion when she says that religion does not explain but has to be explained (Douglas, 1986, p. 36). Mythological and religious texts have been available to us for a long time, and as we have progressed, we have interpreted religion in different ways to either gain power over a community or to preserve an existing culture.

The concept of ontological security refers to a stable mental state which stems from a continuous set of events in one’s life. Culture allows people to give meaning to their lives. If an event occurs that is not consistent with the meaning of an individual’s life, it tends to threaten their ontological security. Climate Change poses danger to people’s regular lives and thus ontological security. Kari Norgaard, a sociologist describes in her book, “Living in Denial: Climate Change, Emotions, and Everyday Life” explains how Climate Change has impacted the ontological security of Norwegians which further leads them to deny responsibility (Norgaard, 2011). Ulrich Beck terms it in a society as an inescapable exposure to risk which further threatens people’s ontological security, destroys social networks, and increases risk perception (Beck, 1986). A few students in the interview had said in the same regard about how the ban of crackers during Diwali brings up heated debates on television. The judgment from community and locality is very high if asked to not burst crackers and celebrate green Diwali. The ban causes people to question how things will be in the future or if Climate Change is real. Such disruptions in cultural norms affect people’s beliefs, their self-identity, and an overall sense of culture. Rather than taking responsibility for their own actions, people tend to play the blame game with other religions. A law student put it as–

“Although Delhi had a blanket ban on crackers but there were a few people who were constantly burning crackers. Now, me being a girl I couldn’t say anything considering my own safety and judgement. I also try to share my views on social media to do my bit and to my surprise

I noticed posts being shared about how nobody would ask a Muslim man to not celebrate Bakr Eid as it was harming the planet. And with such arguments, you really prefer to keep your views to yourself.”

This ontological security can be held up in the case of Climate Change if an individual’s tolerance is increased in relative functioning and how they process emotional experiences. Collectively this process also enables strong social networks which can accustom themselves and respond through action in dealing with the threat.

Knowledge construction

Knowledge construction is a combined process aimed at producing better understanding or knowledge through shared ideas and thoughts. Constructivism is the theory explaining that learners construct knowledge rather than engage in passive information presented to them. This knowledge is embedded in discourses, as people experience things around them and then further reflect on them, constructing new knowledge mixing new experiences with pre-existing knowledge and prior experiences. The presupposition here is that the knowledge acquired in the past influences not only what we learn, but also how we learn. For every individual, this process hugely differs in order of style and preferences.

In order to understand how youth constructs and participates in pertaining discourse to Climate Change, identifying how they construct knowledge seems like an important part. The sub-themes which emerged were about the understanding and knowledge of both scientific and social science terms by the students. This entailed how individuals understood reality and objective facts based on their past learnings and experience. Berger and Luckmann asserted that the sociology of knowledge is concerned due to the bond of human thought and the social context in which it takes place (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). A pattern was seen where participants believed that revenue generation was possible with the help of local knowledge and new innovative solutions.

A research work published by the National Research Council for the Inquiry and National Science education standards observed that students learn when they connect new knowledge with existing knowledge and concepts and further constructing newer meanings (NRC, 2000). Nancy Kober in her book “Researching Students: What research says about effective instruction in understanding Science and Engineering” that students learn better when they are open to negotiating interactions,

concepts, and ideas (Kober, 2015). In order to understand how youth constructs knowledge through different disciplines and further interact with pre-existing knowledge about the subject of Climate Change, it is key to learn how this symbolic interaction takes place within individuals and society. A history student observed that knowledge construction majorly depends on the discipline you study, where you come from and the networks you are part of. She believed that the ability to analyse facts and certain other things was only possible because the above-mentioned things allowed her to be nuanced in her approach-

“That is something I learnt from my discipline and which is something that I now apply to all other aspects of my life.”

From a contemporary perspective, pollution due to stubble burning has been one of the biggest issues. A polymer science student mentioned that all her knowledge about the issue comes from her childhood. She said that she had heard that it is important to burn that to maintain the fertility of the soil.

According to the sociology of knowledge, the study of the relationship between how humans think and the social context in which it takes place has effects on how societies perceive ideas. It puts forward how social influences and discourses occurring around individuals can increase or limit the socio- cultural source of an individual’s knowledge about the world. It is important to note that in order to identify, examine or analyze how students perceive the risk perception, the probability of which Climate Change is occurring and is probable for the severe consequences in the future. Not only this but also, to apprehend if they understand the basic terminology like the difference between what weather, climate, and environment is. Although, it’s important to note that the concept of climate has meaning on its own but is not self-evident. According to The Oxford Handbook of Climate Change and Society, during the former part of the twentieth century, the climate was seen as an accumulation of the mean of local weather and thus the distinction between weather and climate was considered artificial (Dryzek et al., 2011). This perception started to change in the latter half of the twentieth century, the term shifted its meaning from aggregation of local weather to an integrated system as an ontological whole (Miller, 2004, p.85).

Thus, it is necessary to acquire some knowledge regarding the variables associated with the term. It was seen in the fieldwork conducted that

majorly only a few science students grasped these terms well with a few exceptions from non-science students. The non-science students who understood these terms had either taken a course on Climate Change, environmental science or were involved with some NGO. Thus, it's imperative that knowledge about Climate Change has been seen by students and is generally concerned as "a cognitive aspect of risk judgments" (Sundblad et al., 2007). It remains unclear when trying to understand how people predict risk perception and cognitive understanding can explain Climate Change. This happens as there is a disparity in an individual's subjective knowledge/understanding and the actuality of the reasons Climate Change stands for. It can be understood as the inconsistency between what individuals might think is true and something where a clear scientific definition is available or has been reached to a collective consensus on the basis of facts. This distinction has gained attention but has been the cause of major confusion. The discourse around knowledge construction during interviews and surveys also reported this inconsistency.

A vast number of studies on Climate Change, risk perception and knowledge construction have tried to evaluate the accurate knowledge people have about the issue. It has been noticed that knowledge caters as a substantial variable of Climate Change risk perception (O'Connor et al., 1999; Sundblad et al., 2007). Whereas other major studies find no significant or a negative relationship or between knowledge and risk perception (Brody et al., 2008; Kellstedt et al., 2008). Whereas Kaiser and Fuhrer observed that function of knowledge is concealed as no discrepancy conceptually is noted between diverse forms of knowledge (Kaiser and Fuhrer, 2003).

One of the most prominent scientific progress over the last decade is the inquiry of climate as a complex system. As it shows unexpected behavior change where an apparently small change can be a forcing variable in triggering an unexpected and irreversible change in the climate as known as the 'tipping element' (Lenton et al., 2008). Such a phenomenon is deeply triggering and precarious in the circumstances aroused by anthropogenic Climate Change due to a fluctuating change of a safe variable like carbon dioxide increase in the atmosphere which has the further ability of catastrophic consequences for all flora, fauna, and humans. An M. Tech student of Atmospheric Sciences explained the environment as a turbulent phenomenon. One cannot determine which process will trigger another process.

“The chaos story defines that a butterfly flapping its wings in Antarctica can cause a thunderstorm in the Arctic, which means that it grows. So, because of chaos, the disturbances increase. It is also known as the Butterfly Effect.”

He went on to explain how such small processes like the cold waves in Germany have become a little extreme at this point of time. Because of which, the pattern of wind (which usually occurs around October) has shifted very slightly. Hence caused winds to strike Himalayas earlier. Delhi usually used to face cold waves around the end of November, but this time it came in October. This is something one cannot assess before happening. He also went ahead and explained how such knowledge construction and understanding of the topic was only possible because of his own curiosity to know more about the topic and his disciplinary knowledge. He further added another technical concept about how most of the wind forecasting projects are declaring bankruptcy this year. He explained this complex system through El-Nino and La Nina which causes monsoon and the wind patterns in India, which is defined by what is happening around the belt of El Nino and La Nino and is situated around Australia. So, whatever happens in Indian Ocean, that causes the flow of air. If the flow of air is eastern, it's El Nino and when it is western is La Nina.

“Because It's a La Nina Year. Usually, El Nino and La Nino reverse in 5-6 years. But this year, it suddenly reversed in the 3rd year which caused very low wind discrete throughout the year. Now, power plants were supposed to generate 100 megawatts throughout the year, but it only generated 60 megawatts throughout the year. And, they cannot operate at such low frequencies as their financials will be affected very much. This is also a cause of Climate Change that a major industry where people have invested like a thousand of crores rupees and due to a single phenomenon, it can get bankrupted very easily.”

Knowledge construction is inexplicably challenging and important as it's an ever-growing field with newer cause-and-effect phenomena to study. Another reason being legal and institutional frameworks are inadequate in coping with complex systems such as Climate Change.

While understanding and making sense of what impacts Climate Change holds for us the science graduates also related to this same chaos theory. The first major concern was extreme events, their occurrence, and their dependence on human survival. An Electronics student mentioned-

“If taken as an average of the past 30 years, you’ll see an increase in the intensity and occurrence of the extreme events. Let’s say, cold waves used to get till 5 degree Celsius, and now it goes to 3 degree Celsius and suppose in the coming 10 years, if it goes up to – 15 degree Celsius in Delhi, it won’t be a survivable condition. Similarly, heat events like the kind of humidity and temperature that Delhi is facing is already not a good environment to live in. And, if it gets more extreme next year, obviously this will cause certain damages which will be irreversible. The second concern is ground water. There’s something I didn’t connect earlier that with increasing pollution, more water can be suspended in it and there will be less saturated water. So, as the pollution is increasing and the climate is changing, the water which is suspended in air is increasing and the groundwater is decreasing which is saturated. This is a concerning issue because if it keeps on increasing, it will have consequences of its own.”

Such links by students showed that their disciplinary knowledge had a huge role to play in the knowledge construction and understanding about the phenomenon of Climate change. An Industrial Engineering PhD student tried to connect how disciplinary knowledge if provided at the right stage to individuals/ students or children can play a major role in bringing a change –

“For example, there is one subject in Mechanical and Electrical which is renewable and non-renewable sources of energy. That should be made compulsory in all courses. In my course in IIT, I have not seen renewable energy courses in my department as such. It is there but that should be made compulsory at the BTech level at Electrical and Mechanical level. Then, what will happen is that people will know about it. This should also be there at the M.Tech level at all the IITs and NITs. When people will study it, jobs will also open up and we will have trained people in renewable energies.”

Another major issue seen in knowledge construction was the lack of understanding of both social science and scientific concepts in the participants or the examples they used of the people around them. A student pursuing a Ph.D. in a science discipline observed how problematic it was that families still think of Engineers and Doctors as successful professionals but not people who study art. He also noticed that such people didn’t come from poor families but the upper-middle class. He commented –

“If you look at India, for example, up to 2010 environment education was a compulsory subject in my school up to class X but it has not been so since the past 5 to 6 years. That is how it changes, right? Parental pressure where people think of what will happen upon studying about the environment.”

“We also need people like you who are working on these topics. We need people from social sciences as well. You know Gandhiji’s important statement in 1925 where he said that humanities without science are lame and science without humanities is blind.”

The lack of belief in other disciplines shown by parents discourages students from indulging in social science-driven concepts. It has also been observed that there is no platform for social science disciplines to interact with science disciplines.

A science graduate gave a fitting example of how discipline and his internship helped him understand that watching OTT platforms for longer hours at a stretch, storing emails, etc contribute to carbon emissions. He mentioned that this was possible only through the scientific journals provided in their college. Whereas none of the social science graduates found these activities alarming for emissions. The examples stated by them were majorly about using sustainable methods but a vast unclarity was seen in what those sustainable methods could be. Fascinatingly, a Pharma student when asked about consumerism as an attribute to unsustainable practices chose to answer by completely rejecting the term and insisted on calling it Entropy instead. He explained it as followed –

“I call this entropy, not consumerism. Because resources are readily available to us and we don’t have to work towards it. Everything comes at our doorstep. So, our habit of working towards getting something is going away. We get plastic, petrol freely and easily which means at a rate where we don’t think about how much resources we are consuming. If you go to a rural area, the things, the products we use don’t get it. Those resources aren’t available to them, so the wastage is also less. Also, the income is less. They have to come to the city to buy it, so they work towards it and then only want to buy products of their utility. So, when I talk about entropy, it’s a principle of thermodynamics and it means when someone as in human or a product gets the energy, they exhaust it as soon as it is made available to them. So that’s why I make this analogy here.”

It's worthy to note how the analogy made is about consumption but the word consumerism is rejected, and Entropy is accepted. Consumerism stands for a social and economic order which urges the user to purchase goods and services in ever-growing volume whereas Entropy refers to a scientific concept that is related to randomness and uncertainty. Both the concepts are open to interpretation and not limited to their own disciplines. The turmoil arises when the complex systems arising out of the social and economic order such as modern capitalism, growth imperative, overconsumption, reinforcing barriers through inequality and class; if recognized are rejected by calling it human nature.

Driscoll examined that knowledge only existed inside the human mind and it is not required to correspond to any real-world reality according to the constructivist theory (Driscoll, 2000). Learners are constantly attempting to develop their own unique mental model of the real world based on their perceptions of it. The idea that one does not tell you what to think but what to think about i.e. someone can tell what to think about but the cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957) will force the individual to interpret and construct knowledge based on past experiences, ideas, beliefs and values. One of the Humanities graduate in this regard observed that in order to know about the issue, the journalist can at best provide sufficient knowledge to someone so that they can make up their own mind. It will become very ideologically driven journalism if journalists start to give an opinion on these as the duty of the journalist is not to provide solutions to anything in order for a nuanced knowledge constructed and impeccable understanding. A few mass communication students believed that the issue would get politicized and ideologically driven if opinions were to become a major source of communicating Climate Change and knowledge construction. In the end, the Climate Change is an issue where everyone needs to unite so we can tackle it together –

“If you provide sufficient information to people, they are smart enough to understand what is good and what is bad. Problem is people in power thinking that other people are dumb, we have to tell people/inform them. We have to remove politicians and give a fair chance to experts to explain climate change to people. It will clean up the conversation around it, we have an example of the USA where we have these huge climate change deniers.”

“We need to let experts from around the world come together and explain to people about the effects of climate change.”

Another graduate pursuing polymer science understood knowledge construction in terms of sustainability, availability of the product, and capitalism. As plastic is cheap compared to other materials, it is extremely difficult to wipe off plastic from the commercial market. There is a need to carry out extensive research on biodegradable plastics that are relatively cheap. Single-use plastic should be minimized.

The discursive practice embedded in it shared by science students is of carbonization Technologies. Capturing carbon or using pollution to build products for e.g. making ink from pollution and using it as a resource. As claimed by a BTech student two out of three start-ups are in this field. It's a great practice to follow but rejects the idea of ethical practices at the first stage but only propagates using emissions as further resources. Another science student observed that with the emerging increasing discourse about cattle producing most emissions. The data in 2020 tells us that India alone consumed the most all over the world, drinking over 81 million metric tons of cow milk (Statista, 2020). With this, the discursive practice being adopted is of companies growing and hugely advertising for lab-grown meats. According to a study published by Oxford in 2011, it estimated that lab-grown meat products could dramatically reduce up to 96% global greenhouse gas emission, use half energy and 98 percent reduced land use. With such statistics in favour and with the ability to help climate, the market is adapting to newer practices faster.

With the issue of stubble burning, a lot of students both from science and social science backgrounds gave examples of smoke generating electricity, better waste management, young inventors who are creating innovative products and services like the machine which converts the plastic particles into tar which is further built to use roads.

Communicating Climate Change at the national level is mostly done by official sources like the government and thus plays the biggest role in the knowledge construction of people. Media is responsible for further communication and information for people to take part in discourses and discursive practices.

Communicating climate change

Communicating Climate Change refers to educating, informing, mobilizing masses into solving the issue. It can be said that at a much deeper level this communication is shaped by individual experiences,

values, and beliefs. In the mid-late 1980s when Climate Change first emerged as an issue, the question of how to appropriately and most effectively communicate has been on the rise. The students were majorly concerned about the media's and government's role in communicating Climate Change. How framing of messages happens by top informants. Framing as an idea comes from various social science disciplines. Frames are interpretive storylines that set a particular line of reasoning in motion, conveying why an issue may be an issue, who or what may be answerable for it, and what ought to be done about it. Framing is an unavoidable reality of the correspondence cycle, particularly as applied to public undertakings and policy. There is nothing of the sort as unframed data, and best communicators are skilled at outlining, regardless of whether utilizing outlines deliberately or naturally. During the 1970s, psychologists Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky applied framing in exploratory plans to comprehend risk perceptions and customer decisions and won the Nobel Prize for 'perception is reference dependent', also known as prospect theory (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979). People use frames provided by the media as interpretive alternate routes however incorporate these media introductions with prior experiences produced through personal experience, partisanship, belief system, social identity.

International environmental agreements are the most important apparatuses through which a nation-state directs and controls natural resources and provides solutions for the environment that is greatly varied across the geographical boundaries at times. Unquestionably, there are so many issues that are common to nation-states and can be seen and understood without boundaries. Anyway, these agreements accredit and empower nations to look for solutions that are fair and efficient while understanding the convergence of Climate Change issues that exceed the national boundaries.

A mass communication graduate understood it as the primary political unit which deals with the issue of Climate Change and called them the nation-states. These nation-states also deal with the problems of land use, issues of migration, and governance issues arising because of these problems. All of these issues raise the importance and the requirement for more international environmental agreements in the future amidst all the issues dealt with by the nation-states.

It's crucial for nation-states to implement the existing agreements, especially as the need for international cooperation and support increases

in regard to global environmental change widely known as Climate Change increases. This increase in Climate Change has been noticed with higher accordance and convolution of the environment globally and within the economic and political systems. As an increase can be witnessed in the International environmental agreement and treaties, it becomes important to look for tools that would help and encourage to devise more unprejudiced and structured solutions to address the real issues of Climate Change.

The already prevailing international environmental treaties and agreements working towards the cause of Climate Change issues can be altered and worked for by giving importance through national policies, devising response strategies and collective action plans in the nation-state. On the other hand, the inclusivity and strong interest of a nation-state can drive an issue towards the international agenda as well. The actors and stakeholders, here citizens, build that entire narrative and not just scientific facts. It's high time for nation-states to realize the significance and the gravity of the issue of Climate Change and not only provide solutions for it but also work for a participatory action approach. A law graduate observed that –

“Nation states are one of the most important actors globally which are capable of addressing the impacts of Climate Change in the near future. The importance of nation states at the international level makes it crucial to track and gather natural resource data at the national level.”

Lots of environmental issues are often examined and understood in terms of the conduct clustered and increased to a national level and then moderated by the nation-states. Thus, it becomes the responsibility of nation-states to tackle the issue of global environmental change by acting locally and thinking globally.

To understand the discourse around Climate Change and the global perspective, one needs to understand the variables which affect Climate Change like land use, economic, biodiversity and population information, socio-economic data. Such variables can further offer important insight into the environmental status of individual nation-states. The above-mentioned variables allow researchers to trace data relevant to global Climate Change.

While Climate Change was in its nascent stage of science, the number of logical distributions on environmental change had begun to develop

dramatically (Stanhill, 2001). Also, gradually creating a lion's share assessment of the danger of environmental change was adequately genuine to require strategy activity. The epoch-making of this period is the diminishing nature of the nation-state and its inability to neutralize the existing issue with the current forces of the 21st century. Another is the devastating loss of influence over what humans are going through at the moment. The decline in national political authority can be globally witnessed and as naïve as it sounds, we don't know of any other sort of political authority. An Industrial Engineering Ph.D. student observed –

“The political parties here know very well that what are the issues for which they can get votes, so they do not spend the time, money and energy to make legislations regarding pollution or environment or Climate Change. That is the main problem. The only period in India during which environmental laws were made, specifically related to wildlife, air pollution or water pollution, were in Indira Gandhi's time because if you read Jairam Ramesh's book on Indira Gandhi's love for environment, that is the major thing. And I think you know about the 1972 Stockholm conference on environment. There were only two world leaders, heads of the state, one was of course the Swedish head because the conference was held in Sweden and the other was Indira Gandhi, there was no one else. This was one good quality that she had that was her concern for the environment or wildlife. I don't think any other Indian leader had that anywhere. You just see it going down in recent years, I don't think anyone has done anything substantial for the environment and now also there is no concern at all.”

The national political authority seems like the most important and that is the reason why this predictive nationalism is so widely accepted. This also shows how important it is for everyone to know of the politics of identity, language and culture. Noticing the present conditions of politics, the idea of Trump's wall-building and the increasing Xenophobia, or the right wing's idea of saving the mythology and the race promised as being the national restoration from the immigrants. It's stupid of us to consider all of these as cures and not symptoms of the complicated state in which nation-states are. As the nation-states slowly are decaying politically and morally from which individually extricating themselves would be hard and impossible.

There is a dire need to link Environmental treaties and agreements with National-Level Indicators and resource indicators to better understand the

impact and for collective action to take place. National-level data is considered important in coexistence with international environmental treaties and agreements. When presented together, this data can allow researchers to find out the nature of states to follow global environmental treaties and agreements. To have a better understanding of the nation-state and its behavior to formulate better foreseeable future agreements which are more viable and easier to implement. Nation-states can also have resource indicators to check and measure the effect and impact of ongoing environmental treaties to be tracked over a period of time. A mass communication graduate mentioned-

“There are things in the Paris agreement that say everything about how it can be solved. We cannot let the temperature go beyond 2 degree Celsius in 2050 and create an additional carbon sink or 2.5 to 3 billion tons of CO₂ for additional quality to recover but there was more legislation to achieve this target. But I don't see a lot being done. That's why I said I can trust government information on this.”

It's interesting to note what Dumanski (1995) mentioned about how the Pressure-State-Response framework is modified, how it is a convenient method and globally used to understand the interrelatedness and the given links between environmental treatise and resource indicators. Such as the pressure indicators like population pressure and land use are considered factors for inter-governmental negotiating committees for treaties regarding Climate Change. Treaties give the idea for identifying and forming state indicators that further measure the change in the quality of the resource or the climate.

While Climate Change was in its nascent stage of science, the number of logical distributions on environmental change had begun to develop dramatically (Stanhill, 2001). Also, it gradually is creating lion's share assessment that the danger of environmental change was adequately genuine to require strategy activity.

Exploration of everydayness

Lefebvre called the city as the locus where the concept of everyday life can be realized to its full potential. He considered everyday life as an urban phenomenon, where people are victimized due to capitalism as a system, and the self-realization of inescapable alienation (Lefebvre, 2003). The narratives on Climate dystopia arose from such feelings of self-

alienation, lifestyle changes, and lived experiences. Felski understood everydayness as the lived experience of routinisation experienced by all actors (Felski, 2000).

It is broadly perceived that human data handling is guided by feeling and influence (Damasio, 1994) both the “empirical influence” has gotten powerful in portraying and understanding public danger insights and the “risk as-sentiments” speculation (Loewenstein et al., 2001). The expression “influence” here is intended to demonstrate a more unpretentious type of feeling, characterized as a good or negative assessment inclination towards an outer boost (Slovic et al., 1991).

In spite of the fact that environment patterns are pretty much past the extent of the lay eyewitness, environmental change has pervaded the spaces of the ordinarily in manners that are exceptionally politicized and challenged, and which support individual, aggregate and institutional reactions (Brace & Geoghegan, 2011). Almost all the participants in the interview could relate to the lived experiences of staying in Delhi or could relate the same through the experiences faced by their family. Such information is socially arranged and social; that is, environmental change becomes significant for people according to different sorts of natural and socially striking issues as opposed to as an issue in itself (Clifford & Travis, 2018; Boykoff, 2009).

Subsequently, a developing assortment of studies essentially from natural science, humanities and social science, have analyzed the climate-related understandings and reactions of people and networks in better places (Barnes & Dove, 2015; Norgaard 2011). A more straightforward way to build up instinctive concern depends on close-to-home involvement in danger or risk (Weber, 2006), as immediate encounters can inspire compelling feelings, making them more critical and prevailing in handling (Loewenstein et al., 2001). To be sure, individuals’ enthusiastic responses to hazards frequently rely upon the distinctiveness with which unfortunate results can be envisioned or experienced (Loewenstein et al., 2001; Weber, 2006). Be that as it may, since environmental change (as a danger object) can’t be capable straightforwardly (Whitmarsh, 2008), emotional assessments of a dangerous atmospheric deviation are frequently affected by the well-known media (Swim et al., 2011). A science graduate mentioned–

“The air quality of Delhi 20 years ago was quite clear and better than it is today and the water quality. So, the Yamuna water which comes and

the water supply... and that water supply has to be treated for a lot of time and quality is being deteriorated.”

However, another ongoing exploration has shown that a great many people can identify expansive changes in neighbourhood climate designs (Howe et al., 2013). Moreover, individuals can likewise encounter environmental change by implication through its effects albeit the idea of this relationship relies on the understanding that individuals quite characterize their involvement in outrageous climate occasions to environmental change (Helgeson et al., 2012).

Although an expanding measure of proof currently proposes that individual involvement in outrageous climate occasions can truly impact hazard views of environmental change (Brody et al., 2008). Also, the contention could be made that rehashed encounters with specific sorts of outrageous climate (e.g., hefty downpour or snowfall) may indeed diminish the hazard view of an unnatural weather change. Participants showed an enhanced dystopia around human life ending and a grave extinction of flora and fauna. An engineering student mentioned-

“You know life expectancy is decreasing for example if you are eating fruits, earlier my mother used to force feed me the peel of the apple because it has micro nutrients and is considered healthy. But now they remove the peel because it has pesticides and has lost its efficiency. It’s all because of unsustainable unethical practices and has started affecting our everyday lives.”

It is significant, in any case, that previous investigations have centred around experience with flooding as an outcome of Climate Change. However, this may not precisely catch a person’s full scope of involvement in an outrageous climate. As needs be, to additionally expand on this exploration, this investigation embraces a more extensive way to deal with individual experience, estimating a respondent’s involvement in both floodings just as different sorts of outrageous climate occasions (e.g., heat waves, freak/blizzards, dry spells and so forth).

The ‘regular’ shapes a critical idea in social examinations and is comprehensively characterized as the site of unsaid information and continuous commonplace practices shared by conventional individuals (Eriksen et al. 2011). The challenges of noticing the regular, remarking that it involves a glorified development for the reasons for noticing society on

the ground, wherein the ordinary approximates to some sort of genuine material reality. Fiske (1992) noticed the epistemic unpredictability and ephemerality of regular day-to-day existence. Looking at the above researchers view point, it shows that an effort to problematise the idea of regular day-to-day existence, whereupon such a lot of social investigation is based has been taken. Accordingly, it is composed by its status as ‘other’ to the scholarly eyewitness. In opposition to its redundant, settled nature, A science student mentioned that in order to make our living conditions better and justify it as development, India as a country isn’t ready to sacrifice lifestyle changes, they are ignorant towards their own lived experiences:

“The conversation is more mature in the UK and Europe because people don’t judge each other on the basis of money and brands. Breaking hierarchy is important and the idea of oneman ship. Hierarchy leads to hypocritical nature. Change will only occur when you change your lifestyle genuinely, use EV, don’t waste, don’t use plastic etc. Morality of an individual would show the perseverance about an issue.”

While the ordinary remaining parts are a challenged space, researchers have commented on the significance of the regular as a site where social thoughts and practices are standardized and change statements stay unchallenged (Bourdieu,1977). De Certeau (1984) mentions how ordinary practices can cover examples of disparity and abuse that are underestimated. It is consequently through the perspective of regular day-to-day existence that the government issues and force relations of culture are uncovered (Gram-Hanssen, 2011). Clashes among adapted and more informal viewpoints underline the significance of considering the sifting impacts of nearby settings and imparting experiences about environmental change. It has shown how environment applicable connections between information, practice, and ordinary spaces deliberately trait duty regarding resolving Climate Change issues.

While climate and environment remain completely different marvels, tactile experience of climate is an essential manner by which individuals come to know the environment (Hulme, 2016). Outrageous climate occasions, occasional changes, and related changes in the actual scene, greenery show environment changes for lay onlookers, however, the climate is consistently in transition (Hulme, 2016). Studies have recorded huge degrees of conflict in perceptions of climate between various spectators

and mistakes in lay perceptions of climate (Manandhar et al. 2011). A social science student said in this regard-

“We are already seeing that the harms that we have caused to the environment are coming back to us. Every day we have to.. when we are going out, we have to put a mask due to air pollution. We have to use air purifiers when we are indoors. The air is itself not clean. The most basic thing that we need for our being and for survival that is also not clean. We have to put on a mask everyday all day.”

Individuals may likewise know the environment differently, including the media (Boykoff et al., 2009), environmental governmental issues and ordinary practices. For instance, everyday lifestyle choices of choosing transport medium, time to travel are influenced by meteorological boundaries. All such factors in the everyday life and spaces overwhelm the daily schedules and further impact environment understandings (Kothari & Arnall 2019). In rundown, its important for us to approach and understand environment and its issues of prime importance bringing change in everyday spaces, so additionally these practices shape awareness and understanding based on the grounded reality (Clifford & Travis, 2018). To change practices and in order to bring in action, both the group of students mentioned how sustainable lifestyle practices could help-

“I try to not spend unnecessarily on myself and lead a lifestyle where I consume a lot or waste a lot. I try to avoid personal transport and use public transport on a personal level. I walk a lot and do not use two-wheelers and four-wheelers. I do not drive or ride, even in a city like Delhi. I prefer to walk and can walk 5 to 6 kilometers easily, I do not mind it. That is a very good option. I think this minimalist lifestyle is important because of the lesser resources we use. It is also very inherent in our culture that we are a very minimalist civilization, so we did not consume a lot of things. We knew how to go about it in meagre terms.”

“Apart from that there are other technological innovations which we can utilize and put to use to bring about a change whether it’s our own lifestyle changes or you know as a society.”

Such discursive practices can help in making a huge difference in daily life and Climate Change action. A science student mentioned that the individuals who are all the more ecologically connected would in general feel that it is minimal that they can do to have an effect on the climate

through activities in their own lives, even at the neighbourhood level. This was countered by a social science student while observing the recent phenomenon in Delhi when the air quality levels improved drastically in the lockdown.

Settling Dialogues

Climate Change is projected to have a variety of impacts on societies. The dangers are widespread: few communities will be immune to the effects of Climate Change in the coming decades, whether in developed cities or resource-dependent subsistence economies. Cultural change is not just a phenomenon of marginal societies; in fact, some assessments claim that post-materialist values are most threatened by environmental change (O'Brien, 2009).

Culture plays an important role in understanding and implementing adaptation: culture influences risk identification, response, and implementation methods. Climate change shapes cultures because they are dynamic and responsive. As a result, understanding the causes and consequences of Climate Change, as well as human responses to it, requires a thorough understanding of culture and its meaning.

Experience of climate and its material and mental impacts condition individual and aggregate responses and acclimations to air and environment in socially and spatially arranged ways that become important and routinised in the ordinary (Ingold, 2007). World-class and grass roots social developments for and against activity on environmental change are key to social reactions (Fisher, 2008). Considering elective, more-than-market-based answers for the challenges of metropolitan environment transformation. These methodologies try to rethink the urban adaptation plan as a possible reason for socio-biological reallocation and pay. Asian urban areas have fuelled monetary development and thriving in the district. This has carried intricacy and dynamism to the urbanization interaction itself.

Culture is tied with physical spaces, as they have increasingly transnationalized through globalisation processes, culture is frequently tightly linked to physical areas that are given meaning by people (Hays, 1994). As a result, because culture and community are often established in place, from metropolitan regions to remote rural settlements, Climate Change impacts in these places may transform cultures and communities, often in

ways that people perceive as a loss (Kirsch, 2001). These factors are influenced by the intersection of issues like inequality, lived experience, urbanization, and other different social experiences. Each interaction based on a different situation plays its part in framing Climate Change as a phenomenon of concern to society.

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The Discourse of Aesthetics and Cognitive Elements of Culture in *Rabindrasangeet*

Subhrajyoti Kundu

Abstract:

Literature represents the functioning of various philosophies, questioning human existence and consciousness. Literature as an art is the organization of words to give pleasure; through them, it elevates and transforms experience and functions in society as a persistent symbolic criticism of values. Art forms are often considered to be the imitation of reality with different mediums in practice. Literature culminates the imitation through linguistic associations of common information. Aesthetics is the philosophical scrutiny of beauty and art which can be described as the ideal of creating artworks that renounce any purpose or meaning other than their refined beauty. The application of aesthetics to literature is quite complicated because it calls for organizing specific aesthetic elements while highlighting literary traits. Other creative forms, like painting and cinematography, where the connection between the two is more clear in terms of perception or sensory or visual experience of the artwork, make this process less difficult. But since words are the only means used in writing, it is feasible to write about the aesthetics of literature if one values literature for its own sake or as art for various purposes. Monroe C. Beardsley (2014) provided an excellent example of this idea when he claimed that to consider an artwork to be good, “we must be ascribing some form of value to it and that this must be a distinctive and special form, properly labelled “aesthetic”. Philosophers of various theoretical persuasions (Burge, 1986; Kitcher, 1985; Millikan, 1993) have convincingly argued that the nature of mental states can only be fully understood by reference to the external environment. D’Andrade (1995) emphasizes that we should conceptualize the relationship between culture and cognition

as essentially reciprocal in nature: the psyche is influenced by cultural representations, which themselves are selected and modified in terms of the capacities of the human cognitive system. In a similar vein, researchers in cognitive psychology have begun to direct their attention to the situated nature of human cognition (Clark, 1997) as it occurs in real-world environments (Hutchins, 1995). Under such a backdrop the present paper tries to find the aesthetics and cognitive elements of culture in *Rabindrasangeet* through narrative discourse analysis.

Keywords: Aesthetics, Cognitive elements, Culture, Rabindrasangeet, Narrative Discourse

Introduction

Man's actions are translated and governed by culture, which also lends meaning to the things that he does or purposefully avoids doing. Man is a cultural animal by nature, and he desires to live in a social system that stands out from other cultures or social groupings. (Jalibi, 1984). A society's distinctive worldview is a result of its culture. The dynamic character of the human being, which is continually destined for change in both himself and his environment, keeps his culture shifting. The definition of "culture" has been a topic of intense debate. The British scholar E.B. Tylor defined culture as a complex whole made up of knowledge, religion, art, values, law, tradition, and any other skills and habits that a person acquires as a member of society in the 19th century, which is one of the earliest definitions that is frequently cited today (Naibei, 2014). This interpretation has, however, repeatedly drawn criticism for being both overly unclear and neglecting the relevance of how different cultures are from one another.

Understanding Culture and Cognition

According to Shavitt et al. (2008), culture comprises elements shared by individuals from comparable linguistic, historical, and geographic origins and that establish standards for thinking, feeling, judging, speaking, and behaving. According to Markus and Kitayama (2010), "culture" is rooted in the real world, in the shapes that beliefs, practises, institutions, goods, and artifacts take, and the term "culture" is merely a shorthand for a disorganised and broad-ranging collection of material and symbolic ideas that give behaviour structure and meaning. These widely accepted definitions include elements that are both internal and external to individuals,

such as an independent/interdependent self-construal or other trait (Markus & Kitayama, 2010), social practices (Nisbett & Masuda, 2003), and artifacts (Hofstede, 1991; Schwartz, 1992; Soares et al., 2007), including the underappreciated element of language. (Ambady & Bharucha, 2009; Ross et al., 2002). Culture and society have different cognitive perspectives, although both concepts are fundamentally quite similar. A society is a web of ties that holds individuals together. All communities are connected by the way that each culture structures the social relationships among its members. Communities are necessary for traditions to exist. However, without culture, no civilization would be conceivable. If it weren't for culture, we wouldn't be "human" in the sense that we usually use the word. Our ability to think clearly and rationally would be severely limited, we wouldn't be able to communicate with one another, and we wouldn't have self-consciousness. (Giddens, 2005; Itulua-Abumere, 2013).

Psychologists and anthropologists have both done extensive research on the relationship between culture and the mind, including Semin & Zweir (1997), Serpell & Boykin (1994), Bloch (1998) and D'Andrade (1995). The pattern and method of memory reconstruction were shown to be influenced by cultural knowledge, which is encoded in schemas, in Bartlett's (1932) study on the nature of human memory. Recent studies have confirmed the influence that cultural factors can have on a variety of cognitive processes, such as memory and reasoning (D'Andrade, 1995), attribution style (Morris & Peng, 1994; Semin & Zweir, 1997; Triandis, 1989), knowledge structures, (Serpell & Boykin, 1994), and value hierarchies (Smith & Schwartz, 1997).

According to D'Andrade (1995), we should view the link between culture and cognition as primarily reciprocal in character. Cultural representations impact the psyche, but they are also chosen and altered according to the capabilities of the human cognitive system. In a similar line, cognitive psychology scholars have started to focus on the situated aspect of human cognition (Clark, 1997) as it takes place in actual surroundings (Hutchins, 1995).

The idea that the human mind is particularly sensitive to the sociocultural contexts in which it naturally occurs was put forth by three well-known theories with a lengthy history in psychology and the social sciences. The father of experimental psychology, Wundt held that cultural practices affected higher cognitive functions and that cognitive processes vary as

civilizations and histories did. He proposed a cultural psychology he named “völkerpsychologie” or “folk psychology” as a complement to experimental psychology. The problem comes with those ideas formed by human groups, like language and religion, which are inexplicable from a purely individual awareness perspective since they rely on the reciprocal activities of many. Because it is restricted by a past that it is unable to tell us anything about on its own, individual consciousness is utterly incapable of giving us a history of the evolution of human cognition. (Wundt, 1916)

Aesthetic Culture

Although aesthetic experiences are common in contemporary life, no complete scientific theory explaining what psychologically defines such experiences now exists. (Leder, et al., 2004) The cognitive obstacles posed by abstract art as well as other conceptual, complex, and multidimensional stimuli were also explored, and a stage-by-stage model of information processing for aesthetic perception was presented. The five steps of the paradigm are perception, explicit categorization, implicit classification, cognitive mastery, and assessment. The approach distinguishes two forms of output: aesthetic feeling and aesthetic judgements.

The processing of aesthetic information is frequently characterised as a multi-stage process. The idea that the process begins with the input of the stimulus, proceeds through multiple processing stages that are related to deeper memory instances, and concludes with the final decision-making, which is an evaluation of the stimulus, is shared by many models. Ognjenovic (1991) proposed that aesthetic information processing occurs in three phases, with the last stage focusing on a more in-depth semantic component of the object. The first two stages are concerned with two different types of stimulus qualities (symmetry and complexity). This paradigm explains the variety of aesthetic tastes (e.g., preference for simplicity vs. desire for complexity) by claiming that an aesthetic response may be realised at each level of processing.

Based on the examination of interviews, Parsons (1987) suggested a model for processing artistic creations. He outlined five approaches to approaching artworks, or five stages of aesthetic processing that might be viewed as developmental stages: Favouritism (content- focused preference and personal taste), (a) preference for beauty and explicit realism, (b) expressiveness (empathy with the artist’s sentiments), (c) a concentration

on style and form, (d) and autonomy (evaluation of the underlying ideas and the autonomy of the artwork) are examples of expressiveness.

Literature and Aesthetics – An Interdependence Phenomenon

Literature depicts the operation of numerous ideas that cast doubt on human existence and consciousness. Through the organisation of words to create pleasure, literature elevates and alters experience and serves as a constant symbol of value criticism in society. Many times, art is seen to be the replication of reality via the use of various media. Through linguistic linkages of common knowledge, literature reaches its climax in imitation. Aesthetics is the philosophical examination of beauty and art, and it may be defined as the goal of producing works of art that have no other significance or purpose than their exquisite beauty. It explores issues like aesthetic experience, aesthetic objects, and aesthetic judgements and incorporates both concerns about beauty and questions about art.

The aesthetic fingerprints left by the many art forms can help us comprehend how art connects human insight, society, and nature. Art is frequently examined as an abstract of human intellect. The area of philosophical discourse known as aesthetics is devoted to conceptual and theoretical research into art and aesthetic experiences in daily life. Interpretation, expression, representation, and form are among the concepts covered by art philosophy, which examines the aesthetic character of art. It has strong ties to aesthetics, the philosophical study of taste and beauty.

It is difficult to apply aesthetics to literature since doing so calls for combining certain aesthetic components and emphasising literary components. Other creative mediums, like painting and cinema, make this process easier since there is a clearer connection between the two in terms of how the viewer experiences the artwork visually or aurally. But what can be stated about writing because it simply uses words? The concept of gratitude permits this. It is feasible to talk on literature's aesthetics if one values literature for its own sake or as art for a variety of reasons. A great illustration of this concept was given by Monroe C. Beardsley (2014), who stated that in order to judge an artwork as good, "we must be ascribing some form of value to it and that this must be a distinctive and special form, properly labelled "aesthetic"." Here, we emphasise a certain set of values that might arouse feelings of interest and desire. According to Beardsley, reading a work of literature with such aesthetic worth gives the

experience a pleasing aesthetic character. Its value is increased by this feature. Any literary genre may be used to provide an experience with aesthetic elements. (Beardsley, 2014)

The purpose of art revolves around the ideology of delivering pleasure and satisfaction to the audience. The Indian concept of creative aesthetics in art has its roots deep in the Vedas. It is known, that Brahma while originating the drama, has borrowed several specific aspects from each *Vedas*. The *Rig Veda* supplied him with speech, *Sama Veda* the music, from the *Yajurveda* He has taken the dramatics, particularly the acting and ultimately, He has to take *Rasa* from the *Atharva Veda* (Bhattacharji, 1988). This is interesting from the viewpoint of a study of aesthetics. The four *Vedas* thus give us the ultimate unity and coherence that has given rise to the fifth Veda, that is *Natya Veda*. And one must not forget at the same time that Vishnu and Shiva had their specific areas of action to formulate the entire process of creation. While full credit goes to Brahma in conceiving the *Natya Veda*, Vishnu has been conspicuously present as the originator of *Vrittis*, that is various forms of action and Shiva has created the practice of dancing. The entire process is one of awakening and fusion, which has led to the concept of creativity in all its dimensions.

Tagore on Aesthetics

Along with creating a variety of literary works in a range of genres, Tagore also wrote a number of essays on the subject of aesthetics and the arts. As he travelled to many places around the globe, he also delivered countless talks on the subject of art and its appreciation. Important writings by *Sunderjer Sombondho*, *Kabber Tatparja*, and *Sondorjo Sombondhe Santosh* can be found in his *Bichitra Prabandha* (Tagore, 1907). He gave numerous talks in English during his trips to the UK and the USA. Additionally, because he covers a wide range of subjects, including poems, literature, art, music, value, originality, ethics, relevance, beauty, and criticism and critique, among others, his collections of Bengali essays, such as *Sahitya*, *Sahityer Pothe*, *Sahityer Swarup*, and many others, are significant. One must first understand what art means to Rabindranath Tagore in order to understand his artistic philosophy. In *What is Art*, one of his articles from *Personality: Lectures Delivered in America* (1917), he discusses the significance of art through the lens of human personality, notably via his interaction with the outer world. According to him, interactions between man and the cosmos can take many different shapes based on his physical

and mental needs. Both the body and the soul need to be fed. Food sustains the body, whereas reason, logic, arithmetic, facts, rules, etc. sustain the intellect. According to Tagore, this is a Physical man. He is busy fulfilling his physical needs like hunger, and thirst. Within this physical man resides another man called 'personal man' who "has its likes and dislikes, and wants to find something to fulfill its need of love."

According to Tagore (1917), a poem is "a sentence or words containing juices, which excite the juices of emotion. It provides us with thoughts and aspects of our nature. If a work of art lacks feelings, it is not art. It becomes an object if it has no emotions. Consequently, art cannot exist without sentiments and emotions. To put it another way, sentiments are the source of all forms of art. On this, he says "When our heart is fully awakened in love; in other great emotions, our personality is in its flood tide. Then it feels the longing to express itself for the very sake of expression. Then comes Art..." (Tagore, 1917). Thus, art remains incomplete without feelings; every part of an artistic creation should be wholesome.

Cultural Elements in *Rabindrasangeet*

Before even turning twenty, the young Rabindranath affirmed with the greatest certainty –

*Gāyakēra saṅgīta kē yē āsana dēn, āmi saṅgīt
kē tadapēkṣā ucca āsana dī'; tāhāra saṅgītakē
katakagulā cētanāhīna jaṛa surēra upara
sthāpana karēna, āmi tāṁhākē jībanta amara
bhābēra upara sthāpana kari
(Tagore, 1966)*

I place more value on music than I do on vocalists. They base music on some impersonal sounds, whereas I base it on timeless, essential emotions.

The first indication of our artistic approach to Tagore music can be found in this very claim. At the same time that he exposed his extraordinary inventiveness even at such a young age, he harshly criticized average classical singers, particularly professional ones, running the risk of backlash from purist quarters. This helped Bengali music progress. Not that Tagore completely disapproved of classical music. He used different examples of

classical music as inspiration for a sizeable portion of his original works. In addition, he naturally intuitively understood the substance of different Indian classical melodies (*ragas* and *raginis*), which he occasionally used in his works. Tagore outright refused classicism, including its use of acrobatics, grimaces, repeats, excessive lengthening, note-juggling, rhythmic exploits, etc. In his *dhrupad*-based songs, he avoided rhythmic manipulation (*laykari*), and in his *kheyal*- and *tappa*-based songs, he avoided too much tone improvisation and variety, which, if used at all, must come at the expense of poetic precision. Songs by Tagore have very planned and controlled tonal ornamentation. After all, rather than using traditional pedagogic intricacy, his compositions instead focus on the artistic fusion of beautiful lyrics and straightforward music. Not only in Bengal but throughout India and the rest of the world, his melodies developed into a crucial component of the artistic and cultural environment. But he had some reservations about Bengali music. He referred to the development of Bengali songs, particularly *Vaishnava* songs and *Nidhubabu's* works, where the lyric and melody had a close relationship. In his works, he consistently struck a fair middle ground between the two radical viewpoints mentioned above. He stressed repeatedly that Bengali music shouldn't imitate Hindustani styles. It must continue to be uniquely innovative. The finest instances of this are Tagore compositions, even those with a classical foundation.

If one takes into account the musical metaphors Tagore frequently used in almost all of his literary genres, the aesthetic approach to his compositions will be more supported and comprehensive. Since Tagore's personality was musical, the sensitivity expressed through musical words in these analogies cannot be dismissed as simple rhetorical devices. Music and living experiences were combined in Tagore's creative nature. Consequently, instrumental metaphors started to appear. For example, the metaphor of *veena* (harp) can be found in an innumerable number of songs, like *Āmārē karō tōmāra bīṇā lahō gō lahō tulē* (Do make me your veena, take hold of me and let my strings resonate with your lovely fingers), *Mōra bīṇā oṭhē kōn surē bāji* (To which tune my lute starts ringing to which restless rhythm), *Tōmāra bīṇā āmāra manōmājhē kakhanō śuni, kakhanō bhuli, kakhanō śuni nā yē* (Your veena is in my mind, I occasionally hear, sometimes I forget, and occasionally I don't hear *Bājila kāhāra bīṇā madhura sbarē* (Whose Veena is it that rings out With such a sweet melody), *Biśbabīṇārābē biśbajana mōhichē* (The entire populace

bewildered by the sound of veena), *Bājē bājē ramyabīṇā bājē* (Captivating veena plays and plays). Similarly for the metaphor of *banshi* (flute), for example, *Sakhī, o'ī bujhi bāmsī bājē* (Beloved, There sounds the flute), *Rājapurītē bājāyā bāmsī bēlāsēṣēra gāna* (In the king's palace, the flute plays the late tones), *Āmāra aṅgē aṅgē kē bājāyā bāmsī* (Who plays that flute touching my whole being?). reference of other musical instruments can also be traced such as *mandira* (cymbals) - *Du'ī hātē kālēra mandirā yē sadā'ī bājē* (Time tinkles its cymbals, to the heartbeat of eternal music).

The utilization of the dancing metaphor in *Rabindrasangeet* is intriguing. Reading the songs attentively reveals that, despite what would initially appear to be the case, the dancing metaphor has been employed primarily to fit into a deeper, fundamental thematic consonance across the entire omnibus. What makes the songs stand out is the overture of liberty and free will that plays throughout. The writings call for or celebrate emancipation from all forms of institutionalized or conservative belief. It seems sensible that the metaphor of dancing would be the best fit for expressing the notion of freedom and its celebration in body, mind, and spirit. Tagore builds the dance metaphor by using the *Shiva* trope and portraying *Shiva* as the Ultimate manifestation of nature in its passionately agitated and violent elements, conveyed via dance motions. Songs such as *Nṛtyēra tālē tālē, naṭarāja* (To the beat of the dance, Nataraj), *Pralāya-nācana nācalē yakhana āpana bhulē* (When you unmindfully perform the deluge dance), *Mama cittē niti nṛtyē kē yē nācē tātā thaithai* (I wonder, who is that dances in my mind The eternal dance, rhythmically), *Rāṅjyē diyē yā'ō yā'ō yā'ō gō ēbāra yābāra āgē* (Leave me be painted, O dear, before you depart), *Hārē rē rē rē rē*, *āmāya chērē dē rē, dē rē* (Free me, like the untamed birds) and so on.

This allows for the viewing, reviewing, and correlating of many important sections of the collection of Tagore songs and writings. A greater comprehension of Tagore's compositions, nay, all of his creative works, will be enriched by such an aesthetic approach. A style known as *Tagorean* emerged as a result of Tagore's extreme attention to detail when it came to the way his compositions were performed. But the style itself cannot consist of a fixed collection of elements. Since music is a transient and moving art form, it is, in fact, very flexible. Regarding his own assessment of the artistic quality of his compositions, Tagore mentions it in a letter written to Dhurjatiprasad Mukherjee, dated 13th July, 1935–

*Prathama bhāyasē āmi hṛdayabhāba prakāśa
karabāra cēṣṭā karēchi gānē, āśā kari sēṣṭā
kāṭiyē uṭhēchi parē. Pariṇata bhāyasēra gāna
bhāba-bāṭlābāra jan'yē naṣa, rūpa dēbāra
jan'ya. (Tagore, 1966)*

Songs I composed when I was younger were essentially an outpouring of my emotional heart, but as I grew older, I started to pay much more attention to the aesthetic shape that my lyrical-musical creation.

Culture and Cognition in *Rabindrasangeet*– A Few Examples from various *Parjays*

Parjay: Puja

*Āmāra māthā nata karē dā'ō hē tōmāra caraṇadhulāra talē.
Sakala ahaṅkāra hē āmāra ḍubā'ō cōkhēra jalē.
Nijērē karitē gauraba dāna nijērē kēbali kari apamāna,
āpanārē śudhu ghēriyā ghēriyā ghurē mari palē palē.
Sakala ahaṅkāra hē āmāra ḍubā'ō cōkhēra jalē.
Āmārē nā yēna kari pracāra āmāra āpana kājē,
tōmāri icchā karō hē pūrṇa āmāra jībanamājhē.
Yāci hē tōmāra carama śānti, parānē tōmāra parama kānti,
āmārē āṛāla kariyā dāṁṛā'ō hṛdayapadmadalē.
Sakala ahaṅkāra hē āmāra ḍubā'ō cōkhēra jalē.*

Help me bow my head under the dust of your feet.
Help me submerge all my vanity under modest tears.
I only humiliate myself in course of earning dignity,
I only incur losses going around myself.

Help me submerge all my vanity under modest tears.
May I not project myself in my own activities,
It is your intentions that I carry out in my life.
I desire ultimate peace in your world with your idol
radiant in mind.
Stand firm on the lotus of my heart and protect me.
(Translated by Anjan Ganguly)

Though the song belongs to *Puja Parjay*, it does not reflect the influence of a particular religious or spiritual culture. It emphasizes themes of humility, devotion, and surrender, which are often central values in many cultural and religious traditions. Different cultures have unique ways of expressing and practicing devotion, and this passage reflects one such cultural perspective. The reference to the lotus in the heart is culturally significant. In many Eastern cultures, particularly in Hinduism and Buddhism, the lotus symbolizes purity, enlightenment, and spiritual growth. This cultural symbol adds depth to the passage's meaning. The song delves into the cognitive process of surrendering one's ego and desires to a higher power. It involves a mental transformation where the individual seeks to align their thoughts and intentions with those of the divine. This cognitive aspect of surrender is central to the song. It reflects the cognitive and emotional state of desiring inner peace. The individual's thoughts and aspirations are centred around achieving a state of tranquillity and harmony, which is a common cognitive goal in many spiritual and cultural contexts. It prompts the reader to examine their own vanity and ego, which involves cognitive processes of self-awareness and self-assessment. The idea of carrying out the intentions of the divine in one's life involves cognitive processes related to decision-making and goal-setting. It requires the individual to consciously align their actions with their understanding of the divine will. In summary, the song reflects cultural values and practices associated with devotion and humility while exploring the cognitive processes of surrender, self-reflection, and the desire for inner peace within a cultural and spiritual context.

Parjay: Prem

*Nā cāhilē yārē pā'ōyā yāya, tēyāgilē āsē hātē,
dibasē sē dhana hārāyēchi āmi--pēyēchi āmdhāra rātē.
Nā dēkhibē tārē, paraśibē nā gō, tāri pānē prāṇa mēlē diyē jāgō--
tārāya tārāya rabē tāri bāṇī, kusumē phuṣibē prātē.
Tāri lāgi yata phēlēchi āsrūjala
bīṇābādīnīra śatadaladalē karichē sē jalōmala.
Mōra gānē gānē palakē palakē jhalasī uṭhichē jhalakē jhalakē,
śānta hāsira karuṇa ālōkē bhātichē nayanapātē.*

You need not ask for, you're gifted when
renounced,

The trove I had lost during daytime, found it
again at night.

Not to look at, nor touch, keep awake with
senses extended,

Stars beam her words, blooming flowers in the
morn.

Tears that I've shed for it wobble on the lotus
petals of Saraswati.

All its expressions flash through my songs
every now and then,

My eyes lit up with the timid light of generous
smile.

(Translated by Anjan Ganguly)

The mention of *Bīṇābādīnī* (Saraswati) and references to stars and blooming flowers evoke cultural and symbolic imagery. Saraswati is a Hindu goddess of knowledge, music, and the arts, and her association with lotus petals is culturally significant. Additionally, stars and flowers are often used as symbols in various cultural contexts to represent beauty, inspiration, and celestial elements. The idea that *tēyāgilē āsē hātē* (you're gifted when renounced) suggests a cultural perspective on the value of selflessness and giving without expecting anything in return. This could

be rooted in cultural norms or philosophical teachings. The line *dībasē sē dhana hārāyēchi āmi—pēyēchi āmdhāra rātē* (The trove I had lost during daytime, found it again at night) reflects a cognitive process of memory and rediscovery. It implies that something was forgotten during the day but remembered during the night, which is a common cognitive experience. The line *nā dēkhibē tārē, parasībē nā gō, tāri pānē prāṇa mēlē diyē jāgō* (Not to look at, nor touch keep awake with senses extended) alludes to heightened sensory awareness. It implies a cognitive state of alertness and attentiveness, where one is consciously engaged in perceiving their surroundings. The song mentions *yata phēlēchi aśrujala* (tears shed) indicating an emotional aspect of cognition. Emotions like sadness or nostalgia are part of the cognitive and emotional experience of recalling lost or cherished things. The reference to *sānta hāsira karuṇa ālōkē bhātichē naṅanapātē* (My eyes lit up with the timid light of generous smile) suggests a cognitive process of imagination and creativity. The mind is creating a mental image associated with a smile, which is an imaginative act. In summary, this song combines cultural elements such as symbolism and poetic tradition with cognitive aspects such as memory, sensory awareness, emotion, and imagination. It weaves together cultural aesthetics and the cognitive processes involved in experiencing and expressing emotions and thoughts.

Parjay: Prakriti

*Āmāra dina phurālō byākula bādalasām̃jhē
gahana mēghēra nibiṛa dhārāra mājhē.
Banēra chāyāya jalachalachala surē
hṛdaya āmāra kānāya kānāya pūrē.
Khanē khanē ō'i guruguru tālē tālē
gaganē gaganē gabhīra mṛdaṇa bājē.
Kōn dūrēra māmuṣa yēna ēla āja kāchē,
timira-āṛālē nīrabē dām̃ṛāyē āchē.
Bukē dōlē tāra birahabyathāra mālā
gōpana-milana-amṛtagandha-dhālā.
Manē haṅga tāra caraṅēra dhbani jāni--
hāra māni tāra ajānā janēra sājē.*

The day of mine is slowly fading out to a
passionate eve of drizzle

Accompanied by the cosy flow from deepest
clouds.

Splashes in the depth of woods

My heart fills to the brim.

The sky rumbles every now and then

Like the *Mridanga* in a rhythm profound.

A distant person has come close, it appears,
Waiting silently under the veil of darkness.

Flaunted across His chest, a garland, stringed
sores of an estranger

Soaked in divine aroma of a secret union.

The sound of His steps – seems well-known
His unfamiliar attire deceives me.

(Translated by Anjan Ganguly)

The song begins with natural imagery, including references to the day fading into evening, drizzle, clouds, woods, and the sky. These elements can be associated with cultural interpretations of nature's beauty and its symbolism in various cultures. The comparison of the rumbling sky to the *Mridanga*, a traditional Indian percussion instrument, introduces a cultural element. The *Mridanga* is often associated with Indian classical music and cultural festivities, bringing a cultural context to the song. The mention of a garland worn by the distant person with *birahabyathāra mālā* (stringed sores of an estranger) carries cultural symbolism. Garlands are used in various cultures as symbols of honour, respect, or adornment, and their specific design can carry cultural significance. The song conveys an emotional response to the natural and sensory experiences described, such as the heart filling to the brim at the splashes in the woods. This emotional reaction reflects the cognitive processing of sensory stimuli and feelings. The reference to a distant person coming close and the description of familiar and unfamiliar elements (sound of steps, attire) suggest a cognitive process of perception and recognition. The speaker is trying to make sense of the person's identity and intentions. The song engages in imaginative and interpretative processes as it describes the scene and the

mysterious figure. It invites the reader to imagine and interpret the significance of the encounter. The description of the drizzle, aroma, and sound of steps indicates a heightened sensory experience. Cognition plays a role in processing and interpreting these sensory inputs. In summary, this song blends cultural elements related to nature, symbolism, and rhythm with cognitive processes involving perception, emotion, imagination, and interpretation. It presents a vivid sensory and emotional experience within a cultural context, inviting the reader to engage both intellectually and emotionally with the scene and its symbolism.

Parjay: Swadesh

*Ō āmāra dēsēra māṭi, tōmāra'parē ṭhēkā'i māthā.
Tōmātē biśbamaṣīra, tōmātē biśbamāyēra āṁcala pātā.
Tumi miśēcha mōra dēhēra sanē,
tumi milēcha mōra prāṇē manē,
tōmāra ō'i śyāmalabarana kōmala mūrti marmē gāṁthā.
Ōgō mā, tōmāra kōlē janama āmāra, maraṇa tōmāra bukē.
Tōmāra'parē khēlā āmāra duḥkhē sukhē.
Tumi anna mukhē tulē dilē,
tumi śītala jalē juṛā'ilē,
tumi yē sakala-sahā sakala-bahā mātāra mātā.
Ō mā, anēka tōmāra khēyēchi gō, anēka niyēchi mā--
tabu jāni nē-yē kī bā tōmāya diyēchi mā!
Āmāra janama gēla bṛthā kājē,
āmi kāṭānu dina gharēra mājhē--
tumi bṛthā āmāya śakti dilē śaktidātā.*

O' the soil of my motherland
My forehead touches your feet.
Universal mother's veil wraps

Your surface and reprieve
You integrate with my body,
You unite with my soul,
Your tender green image, thus,
My mind remains infused with.
My birth on your lap,
My death on your bosom.
Each of my moves is on you,
Whether in joy or in sorrow.
You nourish with food,
You quench with cool water,
Omni-absorbent, Omni-bearing,
O' Mother of all mothers!
I've consumed a lot from you,
Taken away even more, O' mother –
I know not, what in return,
I have ever produced!
My life goes in vain
(Translated by Anjan Ganguly)

The use of the term *āmāra dēśa* (motherland) is a cultural reference that symbolizes a deep connection to one's homeland. It's a common cultural motif to personify the homeland as a mother figure who provides, nurtures, and protects her children. This cultural theme often signifies patriotism and love for one's country. The use of *sakala-sahā sakala-bahā* (Omni-absorbent, Omni-bearing) suggest religious or spiritual cultural influences. These references convey a sense of universality and spirituality. In many cultures, *tōmāra'parē thēkā'i māthā* touching someone's feet, especially those of an elder or respected figure, is a sign of deep respect and humility. It reflects cultural norms related to showing deference and reverence. The song is filled with emotions and sentiments, such as love for the motherland and a sense of unity with it. These emotional responses are products of cognitive processes related to attachment, identity, and affection. It reflects a strong sense of identity and belonging to the motherland. This sense of identity is shaped by cognitive processes of

self-awareness and cultural identity. The song employs metaphorical language and symbolism *tōmāra'parē thēkā'i māthā* (forehead touches your feet), *tōmāra kōlē janama āmāra* (My birth on your lap) that require cognitive interpretation and comprehension. Metaphors often engage cognitive processes associated with abstract thinking and symbolism. The song ends with a reflection on the speaker's life and what they have given back to their motherland. This reflects cognitive processes related to self-reflection and evaluation of one's actions and contributions. In summary, this song weaves together cultural elements related to motherland symbolism, spirituality, and respect with cognitive processes involving emotions, identity, metaphorical thinking, and self-reflection. It portrays a deep emotional and cultural connection to the land and reflects on the individual's relationship with their homeland.

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The Shift towards an Extreme Culture through the Apparent Reinforcement of Gender-based Violence in Media: A Study of Media Effects on Intimate Partner Relationships

Srijani Bose

Abstract

What we see is what we learn remains at the nucleus of significant theories in contemporary social sciences. The attitudes and beliefs of people are largely shaped by the content being broadcasted through different mediums. These attitudes further regulate human behaviour and frequently determine the nature of complex human actions. In this context, studying the changing dynamics of intimate partner relationships is not completely unwarranted. The portrayal of violence against any gender projects growing attitudes of favour towards intimate partner violence (IPV). Society's hyper normalisation of these problematic behaviours leads to a steady percolation of negative values in our culture resulting in a penultimate state of altered cultural beliefs and practices. This current study focuses on media depiction of the perpetration of violence against women within relationships, the acceptance of such behaviour and the potential impact of it on intimate partner relationships. This study aims to develop an analytical lens to explore the evident shift in culture and practices resulting from problematic media portrayals and critically analyse them, suggesting potential directions for further research to guide more attention to the issues of problematic media trends, and a potential paradigm shift in the modus operandi of media operations.

Keywords: media violence, intimate partner violence, cultural change, problematic portrayals, normalisation

Introduction

The relationship between media and its impact on society has been a subject of ongoing debate since its inception. With each technological advancement in the realm of media, experts and scholars have raised questions about the advantages of these emerging platforms. This has given rise to paradoxical perspectives and discussions regarding the influence of media. While media has undoubtedly brought numerous benefits to the world, an increasing body of evidence indicates that early exposure to media violence contributes to the development of aggressive behaviour (Huesman et al., 2003). Especially in times when violence against marginalised communities and genders is on the rise, media plays a crucial role in influencing attitudes and beliefs concerning violence. The media has the potential to wield considerable influence, whether it reinforces or confronts societal norms and attitudes that tolerate violence against women. Modern forms of media can serve as a stage for the sexualization and dehumanization of women and girls, presenting them in consistently hyper-sexualized and one-dimensional ways, sometimes even depicting explicit violence (UN Women, 2014). Previous research has focused on the depiction of sexual violence to illustrate how, by treating women's bodies as commodities; media content played a role in normalizing sexual assault and various other forms of sexual violence. Additionally, these studies highlighted how media representations reinforced gender inequalities. These investigations were characterized by their interdisciplinary approach. Influenced by psychoanalysis, Laura Mulvey's concepts of the male gaze and sexual objectification provided evidence of the patriarchal hierarchy present in the film industry and how it marginalized women in society. Sociologist Gaye Tuchman, guided by questions such as "How are women portrayed in the media?" and "How do these portrayals restrict women's opportunities?" drew attention to the symbolic exclusion of women in media discourse, achieved through practices such as omission, trivialization, and condemnation (Montiel, 2018).

At the same time, violence in media has a profound impact on intimate partner violence. While intimate partner abuse can affect individuals of all genders, women face a greater risk of experiencing such abuse, particularly those between the ages of 18 and 34. Furthermore, statistics suggest that around 25% of women and 14% of men will encounter violence perpetrated by an intimate partner at some juncture in their lives (Truman & Morgan, 2014). The United Nations Commission on the Status of Women has noted

a significant rise in media portrayal of violence against women. Current studies indicate that women are frequently shown as both victims and objects of sexualization in media content (UNCSW, 1996). Additionally, the portrayal of women in pornography and the wide-scale commercialisation of the same lead to distorted attitudes towards women. Studies have shown the significant influence of violent pornography on intimate partner relationships in the form of sexual coercion and intimate partner violence. The way in which the mainstream news media covers incidents of violence against women holds importance in the effort to decrease and eventually eradicate such violence. Media reporting serves as a crucial gauge to assess advancements in altering societal and cultural norms that either support or confront the prevalence of violence against women in our community (Sutherland et al., 2019).

Comprehending the impact of media violence on an individual's views regarding gender-based violence can provide insights into the factors that contribute to one's inclinations toward such violence. It can potentially aid in finding ways to mitigate such tendencies. Furthermore, it is possible to pinpoint the varying degrees of influence that different forms of media exert on these perceptions (Gavin & Kruis, 2021). This study intends to examine the available evidence concerning the negative depiction of violence against women and the evolving trends in how the media portrays such violence. This shift in portrayal methods over time represents a significant change in perspective. Consequently, this research seeks to outline the possible consequences of such depictions on society by utilizing various theoretical perspectives that offer a structured framework for comprehending these issues in a constructive manner.

Background

News and informational media play pivotal roles in moulding public discourse by presenting ongoing events and offering a context for their comprehension. While audiences of news media aren't merely passive receivers of information, the choices made about who or what gets featured in the news and how these individuals and occurrences are depicted can significantly shape people's mindsets, convictions, and actions. While the direct connection between media reporting and behaviour isn't firmly established, research on audience reception highlights the media's potential to expose myths and disseminate accurate information regarding the actual scope of the issue of violence against women. Regrettably, media reporting that challenges prevailing cultural and gender norms remains the exception

rather than the norm. Gaps in our understanding persist, necessitating further research into how news coverage influences public perceptions, attitudes, and conduct, as well as how to craft media messages more effectively to foster positive social change (Sutherland et al., 2015).

The apparent regularisation of unwarranted sensationalism of violence against women in any context leaves scope for speculation consequently leading to negative attitudes towards victims of violence and victim blaming. Sensationalist news reporting, while subject to some subjectivity, can influence news selection, fact presentation, emphasis, omissions, and language usage. Reporting on the most sensational aspects of violence against women may offer a provocative but unrepresentative perspective to the public. Research by Sutherland et al. (2015) further suggests that recent trends in journalism and media have shown positive bias towards certain violence which are more newsworthy than others. They report that the media tends to prioritize reporting on homicides involving intimate partners, creating a “murder-centric” focus, while giving less attention to other forms of violence against women, such as emotional abuse. The wrong or insufficient portrayal of reality by the media to the society only leads to the further trivialisation of the other forms of violence or as Sutherland and colleagues state “The “murder-centric” focus of news and information media is problematic because it may result in erroneous assumptions in the community that violence against women often ends in death.” In actuality, women and marginalized groups can experience various forms of violence and harassment that may manifest subtly, such as intimate partner coercion, dominance, sexual objectification, and sexual violence. Frequently, these issues are overshadowed by other matters considered more significant by media organizations.

Another recent study by Gavin & Kruis (2021) revealed that studies indicate that the way violence against women is depicted in the media has contributed to a greater acceptance of attitudes that support domestic violence. While previous research has explored the link between exposure to violent media and violent crimes, there has been minimal research examining the connection between particular types of exposure to violent media and engagement in intimate partner violence. In their study, the most significant predictors of engaging in intimate partner violence were found to be the acceptance of beliefs supporting domestic violence and personal experiences of victimization. Furthermore, Malamuth and Check conducted a study exploring the impact of exposure to movies featuring

high levels of violence and sexual content, particularly content that was misogynistic in nature. They observed that individuals who viewed such content were more prone to adopting attitudes supportive of rape compared to those who did not watch such movies (Malamuth & Check 1981). Additionally, Simpson Beck and colleagues conducted research that revealed individuals who engaged in video games that objectified and demeaned women were more likely to hold rape-supportive beliefs. These individuals were more inclined to accept the idea that rape is an acceptable behaviour and to blame the woman if she is raped, in contrast to those who did not play such video games (Beck et al., 2012). Exposure to both violent and nonviolent pornographic content has an impact on laboratory-induced aggression which was found in a study conducted by Malamuth & Ceniti (1986). These findings were discussed in relation to media effects analysis that underscored the temporary stimulation of ideas within the minds of the audience. Furthermore, it was observed that ratings indicating a higher likelihood of engaging in rape were predictive of laboratory aggression.

Another raging issue that significantly impacts attitudes towards genders is that of Victim Blaming. Victim blaming in media is a pervasive issue which is highly nuanced, particularly when it comes to cases of violence against women. Women are often depicted as responsible for the crimes committed against them, reinforcing harmful stereotypes and societal norms. Media narratives sometimes scrutinize the actions, attire, or behaviour of female victims, insinuating that they somehow provoked the violence. This portrayal not only perpetuates gender inequality but also deters victims from reporting abuse and seeking help due to fear of judgment and stigma (Surana, 2023). Such victim-blaming narratives not only fail to hold perpetrators accountable but also contribute to a culture where violence against women is trivialized and excused. The Hindi motion picture film “Pink” is an exemplar where victim blaming is highlighted majorly throughout the movie. The film “Pink” serves as a potent form of social critique. It effectively brings to light the deeply ingrained patriarchal beliefs and prejudices that sustain violence against women in India, while also questioning the idea that women bear the responsibility for their own safety. In particular, the courtroom sequences in the movie provide a stage for the characters to express their perspectives on topics like consent, holding victims accountable, and the fairness of the legal system (Surana, 2023). In reality, such practices are highly prevalent whereby victims are judged and blamed for the harassment they had to undergo and the

majority of the time it is women who are on the receiving end. These practices manifest themselves in overt ways which was evident not so long ago during the infamous *Nirbhaya* rape case where the victim of gang rape and consequential murder, Nirbhaya herself was questioned for the time of the day when she was travelling alone and her choice of attire, implying that these factors could have led to her condition. These questions and attitudes of people are rampantly put forward by media outlets which requires immediate prioritization. What is further required is responsible reporting that places blame squarely on the perpetrators and refrains from perpetuating stereotypes that undermine the credibility and rights of victims.

This research studies the potential impact of these issues together on the future of the audiences through a theoretical narrative. It assesses how media might influence an entire cultural shift from unbiased journalism to one that leads to the marginalisation of a particular group based on social constructs such as gender and sex.

Methodology

Theoretical Analysis

“Research without theory is blind, and theory without research is empty.” (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992)

This study has selected theoretical analysis as a method to predict the outcomes of the above-mentioned anomalies that have been prevalent in recent decades. Theoretical analysis serves as a robust methodology for research papers by providing a structured framework for examining complex phenomena and phenomena. This approach involves the comprehensive examination and application of existing theoretical frameworks, concepts, and models to interpret, explain, and draw conclusions about the subject under investigation. It allows researchers to delve into the theoretical underpinnings of their chosen topic, enabling a deeper understanding of the underlying principles and relationships. Theoretical analysis aids in critically evaluating and synthesizing existing knowledge, contributing to the development of new insights, hypotheses, or refinements of existing theories. Ultimately, it equips researchers with a powerful tool for making informed interpretations and offering meaningful contributions to their respective fields of study (Sandelowski, 1993).

Following this approach, this study utilises the following two theories to analyse the impact of media violence and its mass acceptance.

Social Cognitive Theory

Bandura's (2001) Social Cognitive Theory of mass communication is a comprehensive framework that examines how individuals interact with and respond to media messages. At its core, this theory emphasizes the active role of the audience in processing and interpreting media content. According to Bandura, people are not passive recipients of media messages but rather engage in a dynamic process of observational learning. They observe the behaviour, attitudes, and values portrayed in the media and incorporate these observations into their own belief systems and behaviours. Hence, the concept is that what we see is what we learn. This theory highlights the significance of role models and how media can shape social norms and behaviours by presenting certain individuals or characters as role models to emulate or avoid. Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory also underscores the role of self-regulation, as individuals assess the consequences of media-influenced behaviours and adjust their actions accordingly. In essence, this theory provides valuable insights into how mass media can impact individuals' cognitive processes, behaviours, and the broader societal context in which media operates (Bandura, 2001).

Cultivation Analysis Theory

Cultivation Analysis Theory, developed by George Gerbner and Larry Gross, is a prominent communication theory that focuses on the long-term effects of television exposure on individuals' perceptions of reality. It argues that prolonged exposure to television content, especially from mainstream sources, can gradually shape viewers' beliefs, attitudes, and perspectives, influencing how they perceive the world around them. The theory introduces the concept of "mean world syndrome," suggesting that heavy viewers of television tend to see the world as a more violent and dangerous place due to the prevalence of violent and negative content on television. Cultivation Analysis Theory has been instrumental in the study of media effects, shedding light on the role of television in shaping our collective understanding of social issues and reinforcing certain societal norms and values (Gerbner, 1998). A significant theoretical viewpoint in communication revolves around the notion that individuals who consume more media, especially television, tend to adopt and mirror the attitudes and behaviours they have encountered through media exposure. Cultivation theory places emphasis on the shared perceptions and knowledge that people acquire through media consumption, specifically examining how television shapes viewers' perceptions of the social world.

Analysis and Discussion

Social Cognitive Theory, proposed by Albert Bandura (2001), explains the internalization of violence against women in media through the process of observational learning. According to this theory, individuals learn behaviours, attitudes, and beliefs by observing and modelling the actions of others, particularly those portrayed in the media. In the context of violence against women, viewers may internalize these behaviours and attitudes when they are consistently depicted in media content. For example, if movies or television shows frequently portray male characters as aggressive or controlling towards women and depict such behaviour as acceptable or even desirable, viewers, especially those who identify with these characters, may come to see such actions as normative. When media outlets sensationalize content and events, audiences often form misconceptions and focus only on the specific aspects that are highlighted. They may overlook the broader context and could potentially adopt and internalize biases based on the selective information presented to them. Similarly, when the mass media engages in blaming victims in any situation, it stays with the community shapes their cognition and may lead to distortion of their beliefs. This may lead to the internalisation of negative beliefs and attitudes towards particular genders or groups. Social Cognitive Theory highlights the role of media as a powerful source of influence, shaping viewers' perceptions and behaviours by presenting certain patterns of interaction as standard or acceptable.

Cultivation Analysis Theory, developed by George Gerbner (1998) and his colleagues, focuses on the cumulative and long-term effects of media exposure on individuals' perceptions of reality. This theory argues that heavy viewers of television, particularly those exposed to a steady diet of violent or misogynistic content may develop a skewed perception of the world that mirrors the portrayals they see on screen. In the case of violence against women, constant exposure to such depictions can lead viewers to overestimate the prevalence of such violence in society and perceive it as a more routine and less shocking occurrence.

Cultivation Analysis suggests that media's power lies not only in its immediate impact but also in its ability to shape a viewer's overall worldview over time. This theory underscores the need for critical media literacy and awareness of the potential effects of prolonged exposure to violence against women in media, as it can contribute to the normalization of such behaviours in society.

These two theories suggest that media not only serve as sources of behaviour modelling but also contribute to the cultivation of collective perceptions and beliefs about the world and women in this context, ultimately influencing how individuals interpret and respond to social phenomena. Finally mass media, as a powerful tool for disseminating information and shaping public discourse, can influence cultural change in several ways. It can reinforce existing cultural hierarchies by promoting certain forms of culture as superior or desirable. Alternatively, it can challenge these hierarchies by showcasing marginalized or alternative cultural practices. Taking the examples set by Pierre Bourdieu, it can be said that media representations can impact how people perceive culture, ultimately leading to changes in societal norms and values, positive or negative. For instance, inclusive and diverse media portrayals can contribute to more equitable cultural norms by challenging traditional hierarchies and promoting greater cultural acceptance (Bourdieu et al., 2021). It can be argued that with the prevalent media practices where a certain gender and a certain group are portrayed in a negative light, it can be convenient for an entire generation to formulate negative associations and attitudes towards them. The rampant sexualisation and objectification along with the practices of victim blaming in films and other entertainment channels can lead to a harmful reality of being accepted as the “new normal.” This can further impact intimate partner relationships, whereby, issues such as subtle or more aggravated forms of sexual or physical coercion can become hyper-normalised and in turn become a part of our collective consciousness at large. Going back to the previous point, violence against women and other vulnerable groups can become more rampant as already predicted by studies (Beck et al., 2012; Gavin & Kruis, 2021; Malamuth & Ceniti, 1986; Malamuth & Check, 1981).

Conclusion

There remains a huge lacune not only in media platforms but also within the scientific community in addressing these raging issues. More research needs to be conducted on the gradual shift in our culture towards a more toxic and harmful ideology-led society, that can potentially be dangerous to not just women but also an entire generation to come. Although media has its advantages, research has repeatedly proved that overexposure to media violence may lead to aggressive behaviour, particularly concerning violence against marginalized communities, and this requires further more serious attention. Media’s representation of

violence against women is a significant factor in influencing people's attitudes and beliefs, either upholding or questioning societal norms. The theories presented emphasize how powerful media is in shaping how people perceive and act in the world, leading to the adoption of specific behaviour patterns and shared beliefs. Furthermore, media plays a role in driving cultural change by both reinforcing or challenging established norms and values. To address these issues, it is essential to promote critical media literacy and awareness, fostering a fairer and more inclusive society.

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Major Perceptions of Ideal Gender Roles Framed by Facebook Women Groups of West Bengal: An Application of the Backstage Theory

Subinita Paul

Abstract:

Women have historically been underrepresented in various aspects of society, including media and online platforms. Social media has given individuals the power to represent themselves and voice their concerns, leading women to use these platforms to raise awareness about gender roles and advocate for gender equality. In many cultures, women are still expected to fulfil traditional gender roles, which can include caregiving, domestic responsibilities, and maintaining family harmony. Social media might offer a platform for women to navigate these expectations and challenge harmful stereotypes, and culture and West Bengal is not exclusive. Social media can provide a sense of community and support for women who are challenging gender norms or seeking to empower themselves and others. Women may find like-minded individuals and form online networks to share experiences and resources. The research aims to explore how women perceive ideal gender roles from their Facebook posts. For the purpose of the study, two different Facebook women groups, of women majorly from West Bengal, have been considered. *Belle Tales* and *The Earthy Ways* are two such groups, where women can post their problems, openly or anonymously, and other women can share suggestions and opinions. After collecting regular posts for nearly two months, a word cloud creation followed by qualitative discourse analysis has been used to achieve the purpose of the study.

Keywords: *Backstage Theory, Gender roles, Facebook, Digital discourse*

Introduction:

Gender stereotypes can be defined as beliefs regarding specific attributes that differentiate between the characteristics of women and men, either as descriptive beliefs about how they are or prescriptive beliefs about how they should be. These stereotypes often encompass qualities, physical traits, roles, and occupations (Johar et al. 2003, Leaper 2015). Some of these prescriptive stereotypes group together to form gender ideologies, which are essentially philosophies about the expected behaviours and characteristics of women and men (Perry & Pauletti 2011). These gender stereotypes and ideologies wield considerable influence and impact various aspects of our psychological functioning, including our perceptions, attention, memory, social behaviours, interests, and self-perceived abilities (Ruble et al. 2006).

Like other belief systems, young people acquire their society's expectations for gender norms from various sources, such as their parents, teachers, and friends. Mainstream media plays a particularly influential role in shaping these gender norms for several reasons. Firstly, the media present a vast array of role models—far more than what young individuals may encounter within their families or peer groups. Additionally, media characters often exhibit traits like attractiveness, confidence, and power to a greater extent than the average person, making them aspirational role models (Greenwood 2016). Secondly, the media directly and indirectly influence norms by showcasing individual models and shaping the values adopted and transmitted by parents, peers, and educators (Brown et al. 2005). While media isn't the sole source shaping gender stereotypes, it is likely a significant contributor.

Research suggests that stereotypes, which stem from the social context and societal structures, play a significant role in fostering and perpetuating sexism and gender inequality (Morgenroth & Ryan, 2018; Stewart et al., 2021). Psychologists have identified several mechanisms that contribute to the persistence of discrimination. Firstly, according to gender-role theory (Eagly & Wood, 1991), women and men are portrayed differently in various social roles. Women, due to their biological capacity to bear children, are often perceived as vulnerable and in need of protection, leading to the perception that men should be strong and responsible for them (Hollander, 2001; Koenig, 2018).

Secondly, the nature of inter-group relations, specifically between men and women as social groups, plays a crucial role. Inter-group relations are characterized by two fundamental criteria: the distribution of power and the valence of the relationship (whether it is characterized by hostility or benevolence). The theory of ambivalent sexism (Glick & Fiske, 2001; Connor, Glick & Fiske, 2017) posits that gender discrimination encompasses both negative and positive biases against both men and women. For instance, women may be seen as needing nurturing and patronage, a phenomenon referred to as “protective paternalism” (Salomon et al., 2020). This duality in perception can have both desirable and undesirable consequences for women, ultimately reinforcing gender inequality.

When it comes to these perceptions, it’s important to acknowledge the significant role that social media, specifically Facebook, plays. Facebook, in particular, serves as a platform where women’s groups often function as valuable sources of information for their members.

Objectives of the paper:

The research objectives the researcher has outlined are focused on examining Facebook users’ perceptions of the portrayal of fathers and mothers in idol roles and investigating how these perceptions correlate with the framing of gender roles. To be specified:

- To delve into how Facebook users perceive the depiction of fathers and mothers in idolized roles.
- To explore the relationship between Facebook users’ perceptions and the framing of gender roles.

Brief Literature Review:

This chapter delves into the findings of significant studies conducted in various countries. According to www.statista.com, Facebook holds a prominent position in the realm of social media, exerting substantial influence. Given that Facebook plays a pivotal role in shaping communal relationships and may prompt individuals to conform to external societal norms, it is intriguing to scrutinize how social media depicts gender. These portrayals, whether intentional or unintentional, wield a discernible impact on people’s lives and their sense of identity (Gauntlett, 2008).

The dissemination of information has granted individuals a significant increase in power. People from diverse corners of the world now have

access to a continuous stream of information, enriching their knowledge base (Scott, 2015). By examining how Facebook impacts a society's culture, we can gauge its widespread adoption. Facebook facilitates global democratic discussions, allowing individuals from various backgrounds to engage in discourse (Lippmann, 2017). Moreover, it has simplified cross-cultural communication and established decentralized channels for interaction (Amedie, 2015).

In discussions surrounding women's involvement in decision-making and the role of new media in enhancing political participation, there is recognition that the advent of new media may contribute to a digital divide. Nevertheless, numerous studies highlight the potential positive influence of new media, particularly for young women.

One significant advantage of new media is its capacity to enable women to connect and network with other women. This highlights women's awareness of the factors that can propel them towards empowerment. As evidenced by Sonia (2018) in her study titled "A Study on the Role of Media in Women's Empowerment in India," new media can play a crucial role in various aspects of empowerment. Additionally, the study found that in the realm of economic empowerment, many respondents were empowered in different roles across various professions.

Dasgupta's study, titled "Gender Portrayal in the Age of Social Networking Sites: An Analytical Discussion" (2018), underscores the significant role of social media in shaping gender representation. The study argues that the advent of the internet has ushered in a gradual shift in the stereotypical depiction of gender in media content.

In contemporary society, fathers are increasingly utilizing social media platforms to document and preserve their experiences of fatherhood. They also turn to these platforms to acquire knowledge about effective parenting and to access social support networks. This transformation signifies an evolution in the roles of fathers over time, transitioning from the traditional roles of moral mentor and breadwinner to more multifaceted roles as caregivers and emotional supporters.

Theoretical Framework:

Social Capital and Gender Identity:

Social media provides a virtual space that offers the opportunity to connect beyond geographical boundaries. According to research by Ellison

et al. in 2007, Facebook primarily serves as a means to maintain and preserve social capital. It has become a vehicle for cultural exchange, blurring traditional boundaries. This has led to the emergence of new phenomena that spark debates and discussions. Additionally, it facilitates social gatherings and the establishment and reinforcement of social relationships and phenomena. Facebook is often referred to as a source of social capital and contributes to psychosocial development. Social capital encompasses the advantages of interpersonal connections, and Ellison et al. (2007) also found that self-esteem plays a moderating role in the relationship between Social Networking Site (SNS) usage and social capital.

Bauer's (2018) characterization of gender identity entails perceiving it as an individual's internal understanding and innate recognition of themselves as male, female, or neither gender. This concept is integral to a person's conventional interpretation of gender, distinct from their biological sex, and typically adheres to the binary framework of sexuality. In the social realm, it becomes challenging to discern the influence of both nature and culture on one's sexuality. As we attempt to define the shifting roles of masculinity and femininity, the notion of gender identity is evolving into a more fluid and unstable concept. Consequently, sexual identity has been predominantly shaped by the perceived authenticity of the divergence between masculinity and femininity, surpassing the confines of the natural binary system typically associated with gender identity specifications.

Erving Goffman's Backstage Theory:

Goffman's concept distinguishes between two key areas: the front stage (or front region) and the backstage (or back region), as well as what occurs on stage versus behind the scenes. Goffman's work, outlined in his 1959 book, underscores that individuals can be found in both front and back regions, while the audience is limited to the front region, and outsiders are generally excluded from both areas (Goffman, 1959, p. 144). When individuals are in the front stage, they are cautious, acutely aware of not projecting undesirable impressions to the current audience. Performances typically unfold in front of an intended audience, and individuals not part of this audience are unwelcome. However, they may be welcomed into the front stage in different situations. This distinction between back and front regions parallels the separation between private and public life. The front stage represents the social and public arena where individuals perform in

front of an audience. In contrast, the backstage serves as a private realm or informal space where individuals can unwind, shed their public persona, and be themselves without an audience. Additionally, the backstage is where individuals rehearse and prepare for their performances. People exhibit different behaviours in each region; we observe both backstage and front stage behaviours. Onstage, individuals conform to rituals and roles, while suppressed and informal behaviours are typically reserved for the backstage. Goffman suggests that backstage conduct permits minor actions that might be interpreted as symbolic of intimacy and disrespect towards others present or the context, whereas front region conduct discourages such potentially offensive behaviour (Ibid., p. 129).

A significant connection can be drawn between the theories of Goffman, Durkheim, and Antonio Gramsci, particularly regarding the concept of “spontaneity” and its implications for social interaction and change. In Goffman’s work, spontaneity plays a crucial role in the presentation of self. It is seen as an element of the performance where actors aim to create a front that appears genuine and uncontrived. Spontaneity allows individuals to express their “true” selves, enabling them to achieve the desired social image or face. Durkheim, in his macro-sociological model described in “The Division of Labor in Society,” also touches upon the notion of spontaneity. He envisions a finely organized social structure where each social value is appreciated at its true worth. While Durkheim primarily focuses on labour, his model implies a form of social interaction that, like Goffman’s framework, reinforces the existing social order through the concept of “truth.” Each individual is connected to the contemporary social organization while striving to attain a sense of freedom in expressing their truth. Antonio Gramsci’s concept of hegemony further extends this connection by highlighting the subtle, unconscious acceptance of existing social institutions. Gramsci suggests that change occurs through a transformation in human consciousness since the control exerted by dominant institutions is internalized in the minds and hearts of individuals. Counteracting this control requires a change in self-identity and socialization.

Hegemony, according to Gramsci, forms a “moving equilibrium” through the assimilation of cultural values and norms as part of common sense. In the context of Goffman’s work, hegemony represents the definition of an “idealized” performance and the pressure to conform to established standards. It embodies the “ideas of the ruling class” and provides the

norms, values, and laws that impact concepts such as stigma, line, face, and Durkheim's anomie. Therefore, hegemony serves as a vital link between the macrostructure of social institutions and the micro-sociological phenomena observed in face-to-face interactions. In essence, these three perspectives converge on the idea that spontaneity, the expression of truth, and the negotiation of social roles and norms are intricately intertwined in the complex web of social life and change.

Research Methodology:

Definition of data:

In communication research, data refers to the information collected, analysed, and interpreted to gain insights into various aspects of communication processes, behaviours, and phenomena. This data can encompass a wide range of sources and formats, including texts, images, audio-visual content, surveys, interviews, observations, and more. The primary purpose of collecting and analysing data in communication research is to uncover patterns, trends, and relationships that contribute to a deeper understanding of communication dynamics.

Research Philosophy:

The research follows pragmatism research philosophy. The pragmatist researchers use materials and methods to build the paper and to find answers to the research question arise before. The research approach used here is inductive, as from sample inferences are drawn for generalization.

Methodology:

Selection of Facebook posts:

The process for post selection will involve three distinct stages:

- a) Initial stage: The time span from June 2023 to August 2023 has been considered for the purpose of the research. Total numbers of days are Ninety Two (92).
- b) Subsequent stage: Within each month, there will be a division for every 4 days.
- c) Finale stage: Therefore, one post will be chosen for every four days, using random sampling approach.

Total No. of posts = 92 days/ 4 = 23 days

Hence, 23×1 post = 23 posts (Approx.)

Disclaimer: In every four days, posts have not been found with significant portrayal of ideal gender roles. And for some divisions there were more than one significant post. Those sections should be taken as an exceptional.

Creation of Word cloud:

Word clouds offer more than just an aesthetically pleasing way to depict words; they hold significant value in a wide range of assessments. A word cloud, also known as a tag cloud, serves as a “visual presentation of a set of words, often tags, wherein text attributes like size, weight, or color are employed to signify characteristics (e.g., frequency) of the associated terms” (Havley and Keane, 2007). Typically, a word cloud highlights the most frequently utilized words, presenting them in an engaging visual format that distinguishes key terms through variations in size and color, based on their frequency of occurrence. By scrutinizing the word frequencies within a word cloud, educators can discern specific word and phrase patterns or their absence in text data, facilitating various types of analysis and assessment.

Narrative Discourse Analysis:

Narrative discourse encompasses the way stories are formed and exhibited, including the arrangement of events, characters, settings, and themes in a coherent and captivating fashion. It involves techniques that convey a narrative, such as structure and style. The emphasis is on how a story is narrated, encompassing elements like narrative perspective, pacing, dialogue, description, and other factors that enhance the overall storytelling encounter.

Findings:

From the collected data, the word cloud has been created, after preliminary thematic analysis.

culture, the maternal body has evolved into both a symbol and a means of achieving the ideal physique and the concept of “perfect” motherhood, as reflected in the trend of portraying maternal bodies on social media that adhere to conventional standards of feminine beauty. Nevertheless, it’s crucial to recognize that the connection between feminine beauty and motherhood has a historical precedent predating the contemporary display of maternal beauty on social media.

The prevalence of visual content on social media platforms seems to significantly influence how the audience interacts with this content, creating opportunities for comments and discussions about the physical appearances of individuals featured in the photos. Comments like “*Tomar maa kee khono koto bachcha lage*” convey a sentiment of admiration and compliment the mother’s youthful and graceful physical appearance in the mother-daughter photo.

Lack of Friend to talk to:

The ongoing debate surrounding the impact of social media on social interaction continues. Many believe that social media platforms may be contributing to a decline in face-to-face socialization. An interesting perspective is that, especially for women, online groups where anonymity is allowed can provide a space for genuine connections to flourish, as anonymity removes the need for pretension and allows individuals to be their authentic selves.

The issue with social media lies in its potential to foster a misleading perception of genuine social connections. While individuals may accumulate numerous followers or friends on these platforms, the depth of these connections is often questionable. Many may experience a sense of belonging to a vast online community, concealing the reality that they lack close, intimate relationships in their offline world. Studies have indicated that individuals who allocate more time to social media tend to have fewer close relationships and receive lower levels of social support compared to those who spend less time engaging with these platforms. Women are seeking advice and recommendations on topics related to women’s issues that they may not feel comfortable openly discussing on their public social media profiles. Indeed, this dynamic can transform social media into a platform for connectivity, fostering bonds among individuals who share common interests and creating a shared network of like-minded individuals.

Grief and Regret:

While a significant portion of the content revolves around sharing advice and exchanging thoughts, there are also posts that reflect deep feelings of sorrow and remorse. These expressions of grief often center around family losses. In addition, some posts discuss the difficult decisions women make, such as leaving their careers behind in order to prioritize family and childcare responsibilities. Childcare being predominantly considered a woman's responsibility is a common societal norm in many parts of India, including Bengal. Mothers are often expected to be the primary caregivers for their children, and their ability to handle childcare efficiently is often taken for granted. In contrast, if a father chooses to be actively involved in childcare, it is sometimes viewed as a virtue or an additional responsibility that earns him praise and recognition. This disparity in expectations and recognition can place a significant burden on mothers when it comes to childcare. Many women quit career, and start being a housewife, and lament afterwards.

Childcare and tips:

As mentioned earlier, childcare is often perceived as a responsibility in many societies, including those in India. This responsibility is traditionally associated with mothers, and it can involve various aspects of caring for and nurturing children, such as feeding, clothing, educating, and ensuring their overall well-being. However, it's worth noting that societal norms and expectations around childcare are evolving, and there is a growing recognition of the importance of shared parenting responsibilities between mothers and fathers.

Social media is a common way for mothers to seek advice about their infants. With the content analysis it is known about how low-income urban mothers use social media to obtain infant health information. Becoming a mother is a significant life transition that leaves many women feeling uncertain about their abilities and seeking answers to questions on topics such as nursing, over-the-counter medication and sleep training. Even the most innocuous new-mom queries can be met with condescension and outrage. Mothers' Facebook group interactions in the context of an infant care intervention revealed that when mothers posed direct questions regarding infant health, their peers generally gave answers, which are scientific and even socially acceptable.

Conclusion:

The study highlights the significant and influential role of Facebook as a medium that reflects various social, cultural, and gender-related issues within society. It emphasizes that Facebook provides users with a platform to share their social capital with the wider public, enabling the dissemination of information and fostering communication.

Furthermore, the study underscores the importance of examining how social networking sites like Facebook provide information to the public. It specifically focuses on the application of the Backstage theory within the context of Facebook, suggesting that this could play a pivotal role in shaping and constructing new gender roles. Additionally, the study recognizes Facebook as a vital source of social capital, facilitating communication, knowledge sharing, creativity, self-expression, self-esteem, and personal identification.

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Media, Culture and Tribes: An Analysis of Various Social Issues

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Abstract: India is a land of various tribal communities. Since time immemorial the tribal communities have been trying to conserve their cultures, practices, customs and ethics through painstaking efforts. A culture cannot be preserved until and unless it is normally transmitted from one generation to another generation. Neither it can be preserved if serious steps are not taken by respective authorities. But with the passage of time lots of tribal communities are moving on the verge of endangerment across the globe. Some are already extinct. India is not exception to that. Media is of the pillars that can take active role in preserving the culture of such tribal populations. But do the media play their role neutrally in preserving cultures? Or they marginalise such issues raised by the people of such communities? This paper tries to focus on such issues regarding the role of media on preserving the cultures of tribal communities as well as measures that media should take in reality for doing so.

Keywords: Tribes, culture, marginalization, media, awareness

Introduction

India is a land of diversity. People live here amicably irrespective of caste, class and religion. The Constitution of India has recognized various communities of the tribes in India under 'Schedule 5' of the constitution. So, the tribes recognized by the Constitution are known as 'Scheduled Tribes'. As per Census 2011 of India, Scheduled Tribes are notified in 30 States/Union Territories. There are around 702 distinct ethnic groups, notified as Scheduled Tribes in India. Around 10.42 crore Indians are notified as 'Scheduled Tribes' (ST), of which 1.04 crores live in urban areas. STs constitute 8.6 per cent of the country's total population. As per

Census 2011, Tribal population is 52, 96, 963 in West Bengal, which is about 5.8% of the total population of the State. A number of 40 ethnic groups has so far been notified as Scheduled Tribes in West Bengal. However, in India there are several tribes or sub-tribes that are at stake owing to various political, social and economic reasons. Tribal people over the years have been considered exploited and neglected in our society. In fact, they are the most disadvantaged class of the society since they are often deprived of the social status as well as the other privileges that a community should avail. Most of the tribes used to live in forests or surrounding area. With the passage of time most of them tried to civilize themselves. But still many of the communities are under privilege. One of the major problems that they face is of the establishment of their roots. Since past ages, their deep rooted problems are completely unexposed, historically ignored and unnoticed. Various tribal communities suffer from various problems and experience with different form of marginality. Marginalisation refers to a process where different communities face trouble in accessing equal opportunities. India is identified to all as a nation having a number of social groups and each group continues culturally homogeneous and distinct social character.

Apart from different social groups in any region, tribal communities share common languages, distinct ethnic character, observing uniform rules, living together and for collective identity. Such communities possess uniform culture or way of life and a tradition of common descent. They, in most of the cases, are found to live at the margin such as in hilly areas, forests. So they are considered as the most backward and underdeveloped. They are often marginalized historically, which is a different form of marginality is visible over a period of time. Villagers are supposed to be repositories of their cultural traditions. Those traditions become identity of the local people. Cultural identity is the representative of indigenous form of communication. The local traditions and oral form of communication practiced by the people at village level particularly in tribal areas require more attention. Communication as a social phenomenon has well integrated into people's everyday life, but received less attention into the habits of analysis by the marginalised tribal community. On the effects of the theories of Media and long- term social and cultural change, Denis McQuail has submitted that:

“The theories of mass communication ... in some way posit a variety of significant social and cultural effects The influence of media is generally

likely to be indirect. They work to change public expectations, the possibility for meeting needs, and especially, the way things are done in other social institutions” (McQuail, 2010).

Thus, the present paper emphasises to understand and analyse the emergent patterns of communication and information that tribal community use in their day-to-day life and consequent changes in the culture and communication along with social structure, how these processes help to empower tribal community or emancipate from the process of marginalization. This paper also throws light on the role of media. It shows whether the role of media is significant enough to save the tribal communities from being deprived.

Now some questions arise: how communication plays its role and exerts its influence on life of tribal community, how it brings changes in their life style and the process of development. Thus this research paper not only attempts to explore the nature and process of marginalisation among the tribal community but also it examines the process of social change takes place over a period of time. Simultaneously this paper seeks to explore and analyze both positive and negative influence of media on several tribal communities in India.

Methodology

The present research study follows a qualitative approach. A document analysis method has been adopted for the study. The researcher uses mostly secondary sources of data for the study. The researcher has used many reference books, journals, government documents, theses and websites. In order to analyze the facts in a specific timescale, a descriptive methodology has been adopted. For the purpose of this study, the facts and goals decided at the time of framing the policy were also taken into consideration. Hence, mainly secondary sources were used for the study. Data collected from different sources were cross-checked for maintaining authenticity and trustworthiness. Research ethics is an important issue in qualitative research. Maintaining anonymity and confidentiality is a vital point in qualitative research.

The Indian Constitution and the Perspectives of Tribal Education

In the post-Independence era in India, various initiatives were taken for the development of the tribal communities by replacing and modifying the earlier policies. The Government of India advocated a policy, which

could combine the welfare as well as the socio-economic upliftment of the tribes. With the adoption of the constitution, the Government has given emphasis on the promotion of the education of tribes. It has become the prime responsibility of the Government. The framers of our Constitution have paid attention to the given certain special facilities and securities to the tribes.

These services are often said to create some protective discrimination between the tribes and the non-tribes. The creation of scheduled areas for tribe's performance in admissions to educational institutions and public services and the provision of incentives for education are some of the mechanisms visualized to fulfill the constitutional directions. Article 45 of the Constitution, should, in this context, be mentioned as more specific regarding obligation of the state. It directs the state to strive to provide with a period of 10 years from the commencement of the constitution free and compulsory education up to the age of 14 years. Apart from this, Article 46 of the Constitution directs to promote the education and economic interest of the weaker sections of the society and in particular scheduled caste and scheduled tribes with utmost care. Beside the Constitutional provisions, various educational policies in India are recommended and later on implemented by different commissions and committees appointed from time to time to suggest reforms in the educational system so as to meet adequately the emerging educational needs and demands of the country.

Trend of Literacy of Several Tribes in India

Literacy rate is an important indicator which shows the status of progress among tribal groups. The percentage of literacy of tribes was only 8.54% in 1961 which has increased to 63.1% in 2011. But female literacy of tribes is only 54.4% compared to male literacy of 71.7%.

During the post-Independence period, there are several instances that the Indian government implemented legislation and allocated funds to facilitate access to enrollment in primary education (grades I-V) in India. Consequently, both literacy rates and gross enrollment ratios of boys and girls all over India among the tribal population have increased substantially during the past 50 years.

However, there are still certain areas of difficulties and complications that resist the rate of progress of literacy among the tribal people. Some of these challenges are:

The tribal people are usually very unstable with regard to their financial conditions. Thus, the parents usually do not motivate their children to go to schools. Instead, they refrain their children from going to schools as they require more earners to run their family and to survive.

In most of the cases, the tribal people reside at a very remote and secluded areas with very limited scope for or no means of transportation. Hence, they are deprived of the opportunities of education.

Nowadays, many NGOs and social groups are taking initiative to work for the upliftment of the tribal communities. Apart from them, various organizations who are doing research works on the tribes are also getting involved in activities required for the development of the tribal communities and also trying to bring their culture, lifestyles, economic and social status, educational status and struggles to the society. They are trying to build up schools in remote tribal villages, where the children can not only study in their own languages, but also stay and have a square meal daily. They are also helping the tribal adults to earn their living by teaching them a few basic farming and handicraft skills. In 1978, the Tribal cooperative-marketing development federation of India (TRIFED) was established under the Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act, 1984 to work for the social and economic upliftment of the tribal people of the country. The tribal people are a very important part of the Indian culture. Therefore, the government should take more steps to conserve them and uplift their living conditions by providing them with proper education.

List of Major Tribes in India:

India is a land of confluence where several tribes are living together with their own cultures, customs, beliefs and shared emotions. While discussing several issues of the tribal culture in light of the role of mass media in casting both positive and negative influence upon the tribal culture, we should have a glance at how diverse the list of tribal communities living together in different parts of India. A list containing names of several tribal communities from different states of India is given below:

Andhra Pradesh: Andh, Gadabas, Gond, Goundu, Jatapus, Kammara, Kattunayakan, Kolawar, Kolam, Sadhu Andh, Bhagata, Bhil, Chenchus (Chenchawar),

Arunachal Pradesh: Apatanis, Abor, Dafla, Mishmi, Idu, Taroan, Tagin, Adi, Monpa, Wancho, Galong, Momba, Sherdukpen, Singpho, Nyishi,

Assam: Chakma, Chutiya, Dimasa, Borokachari, Kachari, Sonwal, Miri, Rabha, Garo, Hajong, Garos, Khasis, Gangte, Karbi, Boro,

Bihar: Asur, Baiga, Birhor, Birjia, Chero, Gond, Parhaiya, Santhals, Savar, Kharwar, Banjara, Oraon, Santal, Tharu

Chhattisgarh: Agariya, Bhaina, Bhattra, Biar, Khond, Mawasi, Nagasia, Gond, Binjhar, Halba, Halbi, Kavar, Sawar,

Goa: Dhodia, Dubia, Naikda, Siddi, Varli, Gawda.

Gujarat: Barda, Bamcha, Patelia, Dhanka, Dubla, Talavia, Halpati, Kokna, Naikda, Patelia, Rathawa, Siddi, Bhil, Charan, Dhodia, Gamta, Paradhi,

Himachal Pradesh: Gaddis, Gujjars, Khas, Lamba, Lahaulas, Pangwala, Swangla, Beta, Beda Bhot, Bodh.

Jammu and Kashmir: Bakarwal, Balti, Beda, Gaddi, Garra, Mon, Purigpa, Sippi, Changpa, Gujjar.

Jharkhand: Birhors, Bhumij, Gonds, Kharia, Mundas, Santhals, Savar, Bedia, Ho, Kharwar, Lohra, Mahli, Parhaiya, Santal, Kol, Banjara.

Karnataka: Adiyana, Barda, Gond, Bhil, Koli Dhor, Marati, Meda, Naikda, Soligaru, Iruliga, Koraga, Patelia, Yerava, Hasalaru,

Kerala: Adiyana, Arandan, Eravallan, Kurumbas, Malai arayan, Moplals, Uralis, Irular, Kanikaran, Kattunayakan, Kurichchan, Muthuvan.

Madhya Pradesh: Baigas, Bhils, Bharia, Birhors, Gonds, Katkari, kharia, Khond, Kol, Murias, Korku, Mawasi, Pardhan, Sahariya,

Maharashtra: Bhaina, Bhunjia, Dhodia, Katkari, Khond, Rathawa, Warlis, Dhanka, Halba, Kathodi, Kokna, Koli Mahadev, Pardhi, Thakur,

Manipur: Naga, Kuki, Meitei, Aimol, Angami, Chiru, Maram, Monsang, Paite, Purum, Thadou, Anal, Mao, Tangkhul, Thadou, Poumai Naga.

Meghalaya: Chakma, Garos, Hajong, Jaintias Khasis, Lakher, Pawai, Raba, Mikir.

Mizoram: Chakma, Dimasa, Khasi, Kuki, Lakher, Pawi, Raba, Synteng, Lushai

Nagaland: Angami, Garo, Kachari, Kuki, Mikir, Nagas, Sema, Ao, Chakhesang, Konyak, Lotha, Phom, Rengma, Sangtam,

Odisha: Gadaba, Bathudi, Bathuri, Bhattada, Bhumij, Gond, Juang, Kisan, Kolha, Kora, Khayara, Koya, Munda, Paroja, Saora, Shabar, Lodha, Ghara, Kharia, Khond, Matya, Oraons, Rajuar, Santhals,.

Rajasthan: Bhils, Damaria, Dhanka, Meenas(Minas), Patelia, Sahariya, Naikda, Nayaka, Kathodi.

Sikkim: Bhutia, Khas, Lepchas, Limboo, Tamang

Tamil Nadu: Adiyar, Aranadan, Eravallan, Irular, Kadar, Kanikar, Kotas, Todas, Kurumans, Malayali,

Telangana: Chenchus.

Tripura: Bhil, Bhutia, Chaimal, Chakma, Halam, Khasia, Lushai, Mizel, Namte, Mag, Munda, Rieng,

Uttarakhand: Bhotias, Buksa, Jannasari, Khas, Raji, Tharu.

Uttar Pradesh: Bhotia, Buksa, Jaunsari, Kol, Raji, Tharu, Gond, Kharwar, Saharya , Parahiya, Baiga, Agariya, Chero

West Bengal: Asur, Khond, Hajong, Ho, Bhutia, Chik Baraik, Kisan, Kora, Lodha, Kheria, Khariam, Mahali, Mal Pahariya, Oraon, Parhaiya, Rabha, Santhals, Savar, Bhumij.

Andaman and Nicobar: Oraons, Onges, Sentinelese, Shompens.

Importance of Media in Social issues of Tribes

When we try to look into the role played by media in tribal society in a broader perspective, we certainly pay attention to genuine issues encountered by tribal societies in modern day context that require to be addressed through mass media. While addressing such issues, we have to keep in mind certain realities – the changes and transitions of various components of media. With globalization, the character of traditional media too, has been drastically changed - from ‘serving the society’ to a ‘profit-making industry’. Even the print media has been shrinking regularly mainly as advertisement industry and is gradually shifting from print to electronic and digital media making it difficult to survive. These have tremendous influence on securing desired “space” for genuine issues not only of a tribal society, but people’s issues as a whole that needs to be focused. For their survival, a number of print media houses have gradually shifted to digital media. The market driven electronic media have also been facing crisis for survival. Hopefully proliferation of online journalism on the

digital platform is being witnessed, which can also be termed as “convergent media” along with all components of print and visual media as a sustainable alternative media to connect people’s issues with rest of the world.

According to the Directorate of Advertising & Visual Publicity (DAVP), Government of India, in 2011, two newspapers were published in Tribal languages in the central indigenous belt. The names of the two newspapers were “Johar Sahiya” which is now discontinued. It was a monthly newspaper in the Nagpuri language. The second newspaper was “Disom Khobor”, a fortnightly newspaper in the Santali language with circulation figures of 5317 and 6669 copies respectively. Both of these newspapers throw light on contemporary Tribal issues and primarily create awareness and solidarity for bringing about economic, political and social justice.

Many serious initiatives were taken for maintaining regular publication of the newspapers. Despite various serious and sincere initiatives, many Tribal publications, funded by local Tribal groups, are facing severe obstacles. Such difficulties are related to poor distribution network, poor marketing infrastructures and lack of financial resources. Consequently, publication of many Tribal newspapers, such as Bij Biinko and Dhumkuria, published in the Kurukh language, have been stopped.

Nowadays, this is very tragic that Media has become a corporate entity with an intention for profit making business only. In most of the cases their primary focus has been on publicity of their own business through advertisements. In the competition to make profit, they often eliminate various major and critical issues of marginalized communities. They even forget to report the stories of endangered tribal communities, their struggles, their difficulties, and hoe they are being subjugated and ill-treated by the upper class, the government and corporate intrusions leading to gross infringement of human rights and so forth. Media should be socially responsible to do checks and balances on power mainly on the abuse of power.

Traditional Folk Media and Indigenous Communities

Traditional folk media is often considered the indigenous equivalent of exogenous mass media and facilitates change and progress in tribal societies by communicating socio-economic change. It is a common practice that tribal community members, irrespective of their education and religious

affiliations, turn to traditional folk media for consolidation and integrity. Traditional media i.e. the traditional medium of communication and expressing one's views existed before the advent of modern mass media. Traditional folk media leads to the process of enculturation and increases acceptance of new messages and incorporate outside symbols in its forms and presentations. The meaning of 'tradition' lies in the facts of handing down of beliefs, experiences, and customs from generation to generation especially in oral form or by a process of traditional performance and communication. Since ancient time, the tribal people engage themselves in folk songs and dances, arts and crafts, rituals and festivals etc. that are part of their daily life. Traditional media is found expression in the daily social life of the people. Traditional media are indigenous channels of communication with its in-built features of entertainment, which was made for expressing socio- ritual, moral and emotional need of the folk such as folk songs, folk arts, folklore, etc. Folk media is a genuine means of communication and a true carrier of culture amongst various people. It inspires people to perceive the message or information more effectively. Folk media serves as a means of achieving the ultimate reality. "Folk media represents the people in their natural habitat, with all their contradictions and multifarious activities. It gives a glimpse of their style of speech, music, dance, dress and wisdom. It contains a rich store of mythological heroes, medieval romances, chivalric, social customs, beliefs and legends. In order to understand the colorful diversity and unity of India, it is important to see the folk theater in its natural settings." (Gargi, 1966)

Media Life and Social Change among Tribal Community

Change is the universal thing in human society. Every society has experienced change internally or externally. Social change is any change that had taken place in a society. According to New World Encyclopedia "Social change is a general term which refers to change in the nature, the social institutions, the social behavior or the social relations of a society, community of people, or other social structures; any event or action that affects a group of individuals that have shared values or characteristics; acts of advocacy for the cause of changing society in a normative way".

Conclusion

Thus, social change is an ever-lasting phenomenon in every society. The medium of communication can be retained through mass form, indigenous form, cultural form or traditional form etc. Based on different

experience in the international arena in the field of communication for development and social change, Professor Jan Servaes concluded that (2009): “UN agencies deploy different elements of communication strategies because they adhere to different mandates, objectives and methods. Distinct development communication approaches and communication means used can be identified within organizations working at distinct societal and geographic levels.” Even if social scientist, researches and media scholars had the opinion that new media such as mobile, internet, social networking sites and all digital forms have become integral part of our everyday life. Deuza opined that nowadays, people live with media. Media has become part and parcel of student life as well. For the marginalised community in general and in India particular, it has been found that people spend their quality time with their culture and social structure. These are also taken under consideration as media life among Santal tribal community since they almost spend their life with culture and receive information through oral tradition and inter personal communication among the members of the indigenous community. Thus, there was the need for understanding the media life, its importance and the process of social change among these communities. Thus, this paper tries to explore media life and understand it in the context of communication through culture and society rather than mere examining modern and new media. This has been contextualised from the perspectives of communication, irrespective of modern and cultural form and it is overlapping context. This paper on the exploration of media life and margin particularly among Santal community is critically described through the communication and indices of change.

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**Subverting History through Panegyrists:
Interrogating Manipulation and Memory in
Oru Vadakkan Veeragatha (1989) within
the Framework of New Historicism**

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Abstract: This paper delves into the complex interplay between history, manipulation, and memory as depicted in the Malayalam epic film *Oru Vadakkan Veeragatha* (1989), within the framework of New Historicism. Directed by T. Hariharan, the film serves as a lens through which to examine the ways in which historical narratives are constructed, distorted, and appropriated by panegyrists to suit their ideological agendas. Through a close analysis of the film's narrative strategies, character portrayals, and visual aesthetics, this study explores how *Oru Vadakkan Veeragatha* not only reflects historical events but also actively engages in the process of subverting and reimagining them. At the heart of the film lies the character Chandu, a skilled warrior whose exploits are celebrated by panegyrists, thus shaping his legacy within the annals of history. However, the film complicates this traditional hero narrative by interrogating the motives behind Chandu's actions and the consequences of his choices. Drawing on the principles of New Historicism, this study situates *Oru Vadakkan Veeragatha* within its socio-political context, examining how the film both reflects and critiques the power dynamics of its time. Through its visual language and narrative structure, the film exposes the inherent biases and contradictions embedded within historical accounts, highlighting the selective nature of memory and the fluidity of historical truth. Ultimately, this paper argues that *Oru Vadakkan Veeragatha* serves as a poignant example of how cinema can be used as a tool for challenging dominant historical narratives, offering alternative perspectives that invite audiences to reconsider established truths and engage critically with the process of remembering and interpreting the past.

Keywords: New Historicism, Panegyrists, established truths, historical truth.

Introduction

A panegyrist is an individual who composes or delivers formal praises or panegyrics. These individuals hold a role in shaping historical narratives by presenting individuals, events, or ideologies in a positive light. Their speeches, poems, essays, and even social media posts can influence public opinion, shape collective memory, and contribute to the formation of myths. Their words hold the power to highlight achievements and virtues, often presenting leaders or movements in a heroic and idealized manner. By emphasizing certain qualities and downplaying flaws or controversies, panegyrists can shape the public's perception of historical figures and events. Through their persuasive and emotive language, they can create a lasting legacy for their subjects, solidifying their place in history as noble and admirable figures. In this way, panegyrists have the power to shape historical narratives and influence how future generations remember and interpret the past.

The film *Oru Vadakkan Veeragatha* (1989) takes a similar approach in its portrayal of historical figures, painting them in a heroic and idealized manner. The protagonist, Chandu, is depicted as a noble and valiant warrior who overcomes numerous challenges and adversaries to achieve his goals. The film emphasizes his bravery, loyalty, and unwavering commitment to his cause, while downplaying any flaws or controversies in his character. Through its persuasive and emotive storytelling, *Oru Vadakkan Veeragatha* creates a lasting legacy for Chandu, solidifying his place in history as a legendary and admirable figure. The audience is swept away by Chandu's inspiring journey, rooting for him every step of the way as he faces insurmountable odds with grace and determination. The film's grandiose and visually stunning depiction of battle scenes further enhances Chandu's epic stature, cementing his status as a timeless hero in the hearts of viewers. *Oru Vadakkan Veeragatha* ultimately succeeds in immortalizing Chandu as a symbol of honor, courage, and selflessness, leaving a profound impact on those who witness his legendary tale. The manipulation of historical events and figures in film and literature has long been a subject of fascination and debate. By studying how memory and perception can be influenced through artistic mediums, one can gain a deeper understanding of how narratives shape our understanding of the

past. This research is significant in exploring the power of storytelling to create and perpetuate cultural myths, as well as the ethical implications of distorting historical truths for the sake of entertainment or propaganda. The ways in which the stories of Chandu and other legendary figures have been altered and embellished over time are uncovered by shedding light on the complex relationship between fact and fiction in shaping collective memory.

Literary Analysis of panegyrics in *Oru Vadakkan Veeragatha*

Oru Vadakkan Veeragatha (A Northern Ballad of Valour) is a 1989 Indian Malayalam-language epichistorical drama film directed by Hariharan, written by M. T. Vasudevan Nair, and starring Mammooty, Suresh Gopi, Balan K. Nair, Captain Raju and Madhavi. The film won four National Film Awards (1989) including Best Actor (Mammooty), Best Screenplay (M. T. Vasudevan Nair). This movie is based on the Chekavar warriors who practice the martial art form Kalaripayattu. The author brings a diversion from the Vadakkan Pattukal, the traditional folk songs of Northern Kerala. In the original ballads, the character Chandu cheats his cousin Aromal out of sheer jealousy and kills him. Analysis of existing research on panegyrics and historical manipulation in film and literature reveals a rich body of scholarship that delves into the complexities of storytelling and its impact on society. Scholars such as Hayden White and Michel Foucault have explored the ways in which narratives can shape our understanding of the past, highlighting the power dynamics at play in the construction of historical narratives. Additionally, studies on propaganda and media manipulation have shown how stories can be used to manipulate public opinion and reinforce certain ideologies. By building on this existing research, one can gain a deeper insight into the role of storytelling in shaping cultural memory and historical consciousness.

Examination of memory and its role in shaping historical narratives can provide valuable insights into how collective memory is constructed and maintained over time. Memory is not simply a passive recollection of past events but rather a dynamic process influenced by various factors such as social, political, and cultural contexts. Understanding the ways in which memory intersects with storytelling can help us to unravel the complexities of historical narratives and shed light on the ways in which they are shaped and reshaped over time. By critically examining the relationship between memory and storytelling, individuals can begin to uncover the

underlying power dynamics and ideologies that inform our understanding of the past.

This analysis will delve into the portrayal of history in the film “Oru Vadakkan Veera” and how it has shaped popular perceptions of historical events. An insight into the broader cultural and political ideologies that inform our understanding of the past is gained through the examination of the ways in which the narrative is constructed and the themes that are emphasized. Memory and storytelling often intersect in this film and this intersection influences the way in which history is remembered and interpreted by audiences. This critique is an attempt to shed light on the complexities of historical narratives and the power dynamics that shape our understanding of the past.

The key scenes that are central to the overall storyline and character development are identified to conduct a thorough analysis of the film’s narrative and themes. By selecting specific moments that highlight important plot points or character arcs, we can delve deeper into the underlying messages and motifs present in the film. This methodology will allow us to closely examine how the filmmakers use visual and narrative techniques to convey their intended messages and evoke emotional responses from the audience. Even though both the characters are physically strong, they are easily manipulated and defeated mentally by the ones they love and trust. MT Vasudevan Nair takes a fresh approach to the popular myth and restructures the image of Bhima and Chandu. By focusing on these key scenes, we can better understand the film’s overall impact and significance within the context of historical storytelling. Analyzing key scenes also helps us appreciate the director’s artistic choices and how they contribute to the overall cinematic experience. Through a close examination of these pivotal moments, we can gain insight into the characters’ motivations, relationships, and growth throughout the film. Additionally, dissecting key scenes allows us to uncover hidden layers of meaning and symbolism that may not be immediately apparent upon first viewing. Ultimately, delving into these critical moments enhances our appreciation for the art of storytelling and the power of film as a medium for conveying complex narratives and emotions.

By applying New Historicism and historiography to analyze the manipulation of memory in film, we can uncover the ways in which the past is shaped and reshaped to fit certain narratives. By looking at how

filmmakers use specific moments to portray historical events or figures, we can see how these depictions are influenced by the biases and agendas of those in power. This critical approach allows us to question the authenticity of the stories being told and to consider how they may be used to manipulate our understanding of the past. By scrutinizing these aspects of the film, we can gain a deeper insight into the ways in which history is constructed and the implications this has for our collective memory.

One key aspect of analyzing historical films is the identification of primary and secondary sources for comparison and analysis. Primary sources, such as documents, artifacts, and eyewitness accounts, provide firsthand information about the events or figures being depicted. These sources can offer valuable insights into the context and nuances of a particular historical moment. Secondary sources, on the other hand, include scholarly interpretations, analyses, and critiques of primary sources. By examining both primary and secondary sources in relation to a historical film, we can gain a more comprehensive understanding of the accuracy and interpretation of the events portrayed. This multi-faceted approach allows us to critically evaluate the film's portrayal of history and consider the implications of its narrative choices.

New Historicist Reading of M.T.Vasudevan Nair's Representation of History

In order to analyze the accuracy of the historical events portrayed in *Oru Vadakkan Veeragatha*, it is essential to deconstruct the panegyrics present in the film. Panegyrics are speeches or writings that praise someone or something, often in an exaggerated or insincere manner. In the context of a historical film, panegyrics can distort the true nature of events and characters, leading to a biased or inaccurate portrayal. A better understanding of the complexities of interpreting history through a cinematic lens can be reached by examining how panegyrics are used in the film and their impact on historical accuracy. Examination of how memory is portrayed and manipulated in the film can also provide valuable insights into the construction of historical narratives. Memory, both individual and collective, plays a crucial role in shaping our understanding of the past. In "Vadakkan Veeragatha," the filmmakers may choose to highlight certain events or characters in order to evoke specific emotions or convey a particular message. However, this selective representation of memory can

sometimes lead to a distorted or incomplete version of history. By analyzing the ways in which memory is portrayed and manipulated in the film, we can uncover the underlying biases and agendas that shape the narrative. By critically examining the construction of historical narratives in “Vadakkan Veeragatha,” we can gain a deeper appreciation for the complexities of storytelling and the power of memory in shaping our perception of the past. Through a close analysis of the film’s portrayal of characters and events, we can uncover the underlying ideologies and perspectives that influence the storytelling process. Ultimately, by interrogating the ways in which memory is presented in historical narratives, we can develop a more nuanced understanding of the complexities of history and the ways in which it is interpreted and represented in popular culture.

Comparison of the film’s depiction of history with historical records and accounts reveals discrepancies and omissions that highlight the selective nature of memory and storytelling. By examining the gaps between the film’s version of events and the historical truth, we can gain insight into the motivations and biases of the filmmakers. This critical analysis allows us to challenge the dominant narratives that shape our understanding of the past and encourages a more critical approach to interpreting historical texts. In doing so, we can move beyond surface-level interpretations and uncover the deeper layers of meaning that are often overlooked in mainstream depictions of history. By acknowledging the complexities and nuances of historical storytelling, we can begin to appreciate the multiple perspectives and voices that contribute to our understanding of the past. This deeper understanding not only enriches our knowledge of history but also prompts us to question the authority and legitimacy of dominant narratives. Ultimately, by engaging in a critical examination of historical texts and media, we can strive towards a more nuanced and inclusive understanding of the past that reflects the diverse experiences and perspectives of all individuals involved.

One of the key implications of historical manipulation and memory in film is its potential to shape public understanding of history. When filmmakers take creative liberties with historical events, they run the risk of distorting the facts and perpetuating inaccurate or biased narratives. This can have far-reaching consequences, as the films we watch often serve as our primary sources of information about the past. If these sources are unreliable or misleading, they can shape our perceptions of history in ways that are not grounded in reality. As such, it is crucial for

audiences to approach historical films with a critical eye and to seek out additional sources of information to gain a more accurate and comprehensive understanding of the events depicted.

One way to critique the portrayal of history in films is to examine the accuracy of the events depicted. Historical inaccuracies can distort our understanding of the past and perpetuate myths or stereotypes. For example, a film may inaccurately portray a certain historical figure as a hero when, in reality, they had a more complex or controversial role. By critically analyzing the historical accuracy of a film, audiences can better understand how the past is being represented and question the narrative being presented. Additionally, it is important to consider how the film's portrayal of history impacts cultural memory. Films have the power to shape our collective memory of certain events or time periods, influencing how we remember and interpret history. If a film perpetuates a biased or inaccurate portrayal of history, it can contribute to the spread of misinformation and shape public perceptions in harmful ways. By critically engaging with historical films, audiences can challenge dominant narratives and ensure a more nuanced and accurate understanding of the past.

Suggestions for future research on panegyrics and historical depictions in film include examining the ways in which filmmakers choose to depict certain historical figures or events, as well as the impact of these portrayals on public perception. Additionally, researchers could explore the role of funding sources and political agendas in shaping historical narratives in film. By delving deeper into these areas, scholars can better understand the complexities of historical representation in cinema and its implications for cultural memory. This research could ultimately help guide filmmakers in creating more accurate and nuanced portrayals of history while also empowering audiences to critically analyze and question the narratives presented to them. Moreover, examining the ethical considerations involved in historical filmmaking can shed light on the responsibility that filmmakers have to accurately represent the past. By considering the perspectives of marginalized groups and ensuring their stories are included and given proper weight, filmmakers can create a more inclusive and truthful historical narrative. Ultimately, this research could lead to a more informed and conscientious approach to historical storytelling in cinema, fostering a greater appreciation for the complexities and nuances of the past.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the research presented in this paper highlights the importance of representation and accuracy in historical storytelling through filmmaking. By giving voice to marginalized groups and incorporating their perspectives into narratives, filmmakers can create a more inclusive and truthful portrayal of the past. This approach not only enriches the historical narrative but also fosters a deeper understanding and appreciation of the complexities and nuances of history. Moving forward, it is crucial for filmmakers to continue to engage with diverse perspectives and strive for accuracy in their storytelling, ultimately contributing to a more informed and conscientious approach to representing history on screen. This research contributes to the field of historical studies by emphasizing the impact of film in shaping our understanding of the past and the responsibility that filmmakers have in accurately representing it. By incorporating various viewpoints and ensuring historical accuracy, filmmakers can not only entertain audiences but also educate and challenge them to think critically about the complexities of history. Through diligent research and thoughtful storytelling, filmmakers have the power to shape public perceptions and create a more inclusive and accurate representation of the past. As such, it is imperative that filmmakers approach historical subjects with integrity and a commitment to presenting a multifaceted and truthful narrative.

Filmmakers have a responsibility to not only entertain but also to educate and challenge audiences with their portrayals of history. By presenting a more accurate and inclusive representation of the past, they have the power to shape public perceptions and foster a deeper understanding of the complexities of history. It is crucial that filmmakers approach historical subjects with integrity and a commitment to presenting a multifaceted and truthful narrative in order to promote critical thinking and a more nuanced appreciation of the past. This can involve showcasing perspectives that have been marginalized or overlooked in traditional historical accounts, as well as addressing the complexities and contradictions that exist within historical events. By interrogating historical narratives in popular media, filmmakers can encourage audiences to question the dominant narratives they have been taught and to think critically about how history is constructed and interpreted. This, in turn, can lead to a more informed and nuanced understanding of the past, ultimately contributing to a more just and equitable society.

Some potential areas for further research and study in this field include examining the ways in which marginalized groups have been portrayed in historical films, analyzing the impact of historical inaccuracies in popular media on public perceptions of the past, and exploring the role of filmmakers in shaping collective memory. Additionally, researchers could investigate the ethical considerations involved in representing historical events on screen, the challenges of balancing artistic license with historical accuracy, and the potential for historical films to serve as a tool for social change. By delving deeper into these topics, scholars can continue to push the boundaries of historical filmmaking and contribute to a more inclusive and accurate representation of the past. This deeper exploration can not only enrich our understanding of history but also challenge us to critically analyze the narratives presented to us in mainstream media. By examining the complexities of historical filmmaking, researchers can shed light on the power dynamics at play in shaping public perceptions of the past and encourage a more nuanced and informed approach to storytelling. As the field of historical filmmaking continues to evolve, it is crucial for scholars to engage with these questions in order to ensure that the stories we tell accurately reflect the diversity and complexity of human experiences throughout history. This will ultimately lead to a more inclusive and accurate representation of history for future generations. By questioning the dominant narratives and exploring alternative perspectives, historical filmmakers can help to rectify past misrepresentations and bring marginalized voices to the forefront. Through thoughtful and critical analysis, researchers can contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the past and pave the way for a more just and inclusive society.

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The White Saviour and the Black Help: Re-Drawing Racial Discriminatory Patterns in *The Help*

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Abstract: *The Help* (2011), a movie based on Kathryn Stockett's novel, set in the high volatile atmosphere of Jackson, Mississippi in the 1960s can be viewed as a prime example for perpetuating elements of the White Savior Complex. The White Savior Complex is a term used to describe a narrative trope where a white character steps in to 'save' people of colour from their struggles, reinforcing a patronizing and often problematic dynamic. This study aims to find the prevalence of a White Saviour complex that sidelines the grave issue of racism, through a character study of the white female character against the black female characters.

Keywords: White Savior complex, racism, African American, help, white privilege

Introduction

The White Savior Complex is the narrative thread where a white character assumes the role of a benevolent rescuer or helper to people of colour, an 'altruistic self' often perpetuating a patronizing and problematic dynamic, "the enlightened altruistic saviour seeks to promote progress and development while, on the other hand, the person of colour is victimised, de-rationalised and contrasted to the heroism of the 'White Saviour'." (Willuweit). This complex is embedded in the historical and colonial pathways of American mentalism, similar to the European psyche where powerful nations, at different junctures of history, packaged their colonial activities by dressing it up as a mission to 'civilize' and uplift the supposedly inferior population they discovered in resource rich lands. In recent narratives, the White Savior Complex manifests itself in various genres, including literature, film, philanthropy and everyday life. The white

saviour is seen to generally adopt a benevolent attitude, unassuming in his/her role of authority and exercises a subtle mode of superiority over the marginalized group. This, in turn, can result in an act of disempowerment, as the marginalized community is being 'saved' and it creates and nurtures a sense of dependency. Narratives that portray the White Savior Complex often causes oversimplification of complex issues such as racism, poverty, abuse or social inequality by highlighting the positive changes, underway in the deplorable lives of the oppressed community, to the actions of a single white individual; such glorification of the violence perpetrator can detract attention from grave matters of importance. The narrative tends to centre around the experiences, growth, and heroism of the white saviour, even in stories meant to address the struggles of people of colour, this reinforces the idea that the lives and tribulations of marginalized individuals are secondary to the privileged lives and actions of white characters. The Black people are often tokenized and objectified in narratives that have an undercurrent of the White Savior Complex, their stories and experiences are reduced to a mere narrative tool used for the personal development or redemption arc of the white saviour character. Oftentimes, the prevalence of the White Savior Complex in narratives that portray racism can unintentionally reinforce harmful stereotypes about Black people being helpless, passive, or incapable of improving their situations without intervention from a white benevolent figure. Rather than challenging existing power structures, the White Savior Complex can uphold them by positioning white individuals as the ultimate flagbearers of change, facilitating a sense of pseudo hierarchy and social inequality. Narratives with undertones of the White Savior Complex prioritize the perspectives, personal and emotional journey, and experiences of white characters, sidelining black voices from the African American communities represented. Narratives that map the incidence of White Savior Complex focuses on individual acts of heroism, and it often ignores the need for a wide structural change in areas of racial discrimination. An analysis using Black Feminism and Critical Race theory shows that it is essential to deconstruct narratives that reinforce the White Savior Complex and question the linearisation of diverse experiences, oppression of marginalized voices, and systemic issues of racism.

The Help (2011) is a film adaptation of Kathryn Stockett's novel of the same title, set in the racially segregated and prejudiced society of 1960s Jackson, Mississippi. The narrative unfolds against the backdrop of the

civil rights movement, a period marked by significant racial tensions and struggles for equality. The film explores the lives of Black maids, referred to as 'helps', who work for white families, shedding light on the state sponsored racism and oppression faced by the black women of Jackson. The film vividly is a window to a shameful period in human history time that shows the strict racial segregation rules prevalent in the Southern states of the USA during the 1960s. Black maids are shown to be employed, or rather 'owned' in a sense by white affluent families, that subject them relegated to discrimination in ways that make their lives miserable. Economic disparities, prevalent in the great social divide, are highlighted through the contrasting living conditions between the affluent white families and the Black maids struggling to make ends meet. The maids often serve as the center of the white households by taking care of every household duty which even involves raising of the white kids, yet they are undervalued and underpaid. The film dives deep into the limited opportunities available to Blacks, both in terms of employment and education. The maids, despite their intelligence and skills, as seen in the creative writing skills of Aibileen, are confined to domestic work with few chances for upward mobility. The movie mainly focuses on Aibileen, a widowed Black help, and Minny, a victim of domestic and racial abuse. The film is set against the backdrop of the civil rights movement, capturing the unrest and desire for change the spread like fire within the Black community. The film is more of an exploration of the expectations and entitlement of white families, showcasing their ingrained belief in racial superiority, and less about the racial segregation. The movie lays bare the power dynamics between white families and their Black maids, who are expected to conform to lesser roles, and any form of resistance is met with grave consequences. The white families are the centre of economic and social power, making them capable of reinforcing extra privilege and racial hierarchies. The peak of action in the film is the courage of Black maids who, despite the risks, participate in telling their stories through Skeeter's book, this act of resistance seems to challenge the systemic oppression and is aimed at contributing to the broader narrative of social change.

Skeeter Phelan as the dominating White Saviour

American movies have been using the trope of the White Saviour since a long time, *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1962) and *The Blind Side* (2009) are but two among the many movies where a White Saviour is set against the grave issue of racism and black characters to seemingly portray the

requirement of a White character for a Black oppressed character to achieve empowerment. In *The Help*, Skeeter Phelan, portrayed by Emma Stone, can be interpreted as embodying certain elements of the White Savior archetype. Her character plays a central role in the narrative, as she hopes to tell the stories of Black maids in Jackson, Mississippi, during the racially charged 1960s. Skeeter becomes a catalyst for change by deciding to write a book that exposes the experiences and perspectives of Black maids working for white families. Her actions that challenge the established social structure and aims to give a voice to the marginalized Black community reflects a classic thread within the White Savior narrative. Even though Skeeter's efforts can be seen as a way of helping the Black women, her primary intention was to secure a story that would cement her position as a journalist of value among the big names in the profession. Skeeter's initiative gives the Black maids a platform to share their stories, which is an empowering act. On a simple glance, however, the empowerment is shown as happening through Skeeter's actions, raising questions about who controls the narrative. Skeeter, despite her good intentions, may be seen as having a benevolent White attitude toward the maids as she feels that it is her duty to 'help' them secure a platform to stage their grievances. The act of telling their stories is built up as a form of assistance, and she assumes a position of authority by deciding how these stories should be presented to the wider public, even though it is Aibileen, a Black help with no formal education, who writes the book that challenges the racial offenses prevalent in Jackson. The narrative often focuses on Skeeter's personal growth and transformation as she confronts her own biases and prejudices, her motivation to write the book is a mixture of many things that involves her love life, her enmity with Hilly, her professional ambitions, and amidst all this the desire to make a change in the lives of the Black women of Jackson features only in a lesser quantity. The film allocates significant screen time to Skeeter's personal journey, potentially centring the white character's development over the experiences of the Black characters. Skeeter's actions contribute to the oversimplification of systemic racism, by contributing the solution to racial issues as an individual white person who took the lead to 'save' the Black community. The film downplays the broader structural problems in racism and collective responsibility. Skeeter's relationships with the maids, particularly Aibileen and Minny, can be analysed within the context of power dynamics. Despite her efforts to bridge gaps, the socially conferred disparities in their positions (white employer vs. Black employee) are not fully dismantled, which further

reinforces existing social hierarchies, whilst doing nothing to change them. A critical analysis of Skeeter's role in *The Help* highlights the complexities and the racial appropriation that can happen with the portrayal of white characters in narratives addressing racial issues.

Hilly Holbrooke and Racial Extremism

Hilly Holbrook, portrayed by Bryce Dallas Howard, is the focal point of white privilege in the movie. Hilly embodies the racial entitlement or the White superiority and privilege of the elite class in 1960s Mississippi. She is shown as a staunch supporter of racial segregation and is always at the forefront to enforce radical racial boundaries in her community. Hilly is a typical portrayal of the prevalent white employer who mistreats and exploits the Black maids working in her household and exercises unjust control over most of them by influencing the social circle of Jackson through her parties and 'bridge games'. Her attitude stands as testimony to the dehumanizing nature of racial prejudice, as she views the maids as inferior and subject to her authority, it is worth mentioning a scene where she advocates for separate toilets for the helps, as she believes they carry several deadly diseases. She advocates for the implementation of the 'Home Help Sanitation Initiative', which requires separate bathroom facilities for the helps, reinforcing reductionist and segregationist practices. Hilly fires Minny for using the toilet inside the house on a stormy night that made Minny unable to use the outside toilet specially built for the coloured help, and make sure she is not hired anywhere else using her social position and power. Hilly's character symbolizes the resistance to change and the perpetuation of discriminatory social norms by showing her to go to any lengths to cover her mistakes and to oppress the black women, be it sending an innocent help to jail by framing her for rubbering, or avenging her former help, Minny for refusing to come back to work for her or trying to make Aibileen a thief for 'daring' to write. It is worth noting that both Skeeter and Hilly represent contrasting aspects of the racial dynamics in the film, while Skeeter attempts to challenge the established social norms and empower the Black maids by an act of 'white benevolence' with the primary intention being personal gain, Hilly embodies the unjust white privilege and discriminatory patterns that serve towards the direct racism in the film.

Celia Foote, a subtle practitioner of ‘White Benevolence’

Celia Foote, portrayed by Jessica Chastain, is an interesting character who can be seen as an embodiment of the White Savior Complex in subtle variations. While her intentions may be different from characters like Miss Skeeter, there are several junctures in her storyline that raise questions about power and racial dynamics. Miss Celia is an outsider in the social circle of Jackson, Mississippi, not accepted by the white elite, particularly Hilly, and her efforts to fit into their social circles are met with ridicule and rejection. Her character begins to gain significance when she hires Minny, Hilly's former maid, without conforming to the established norms of the community, which is seen as an act of ‘white benevolence’, when in reality she hires Minny out of sheer necessity. Celia's character can be interpreted as an attempt to challenge the racial norms of the society in which she lived, on the surface, but it is her absolute need for a maid that made her hire Minny. Celia is shown as treating Minny with kindness and humanity, as an equal, in contrast to the racial prejudices of the white elite and is glorified as an exceptional act of kindness, when it was the bare minimum. Minny, employed by Miss Celia, experiences a different dynamic than the traditional employer-maid relationship she experienced with Hilly, this is mostly because Celia was largely inexperienced in household matters and the only way to secure her position as a capable wife was to learn from Minny. Celia's behaviour does have a positive impact on Minny's life, offering her a more humane and respectful working environment compared to the other white families, but it becomes an act of white saviour mentality.

However, despite Celia's attempts to challenge racial norms, there is still a significant power imbalance, Celia holds economic and social privilege, and her relationship with Minny is inherently hierarchical. While Celia provides a more compassionate and humane treatment for her maid, her actions are limited in terms of addressing broader systemic issues of racism, she does not challenge the deeply ingrained racist structures within the society, her actions begin and end within the needs of her household matters. Celia's approach is more individualized and doesn't involve questioning or challenging the broader societal norms. The impact of her actions is limited to her personal relationships rather than contributing to significant social change. Minny's character becomes a tool to show the expression of the ‘White Benevolence’ of Celia and her husband. Therefore, while Celia's character may deviate from the overt racism of the white elite in Jackson, her role in the narrative exposes the limitations of individualized

efforts in addressing systemic racism, and contributes to the White Saviour Complex in an individualised structure.

Sidelining the Black Perspective

Patricia Hill Collins in her *Black Feminist Thought* says, “when an individual Black woman’s consciousness concerning how she understands her everyday life undergoes change, she can become empowered. Such consciousness may stimulate her to embark on a path of personal freedom, even if it exists initially primarily in her own mind” (10). *The Help* has failed to convey exactly this capability by potentially sidelining Black characters by centring the narrative on the perspectives and experiences of white characters, particularly Skeeter. While the movie attempts to shed light on the struggles of Black maids in 1960s Mississippi, the structure of the narrative and the prominence of white characters raises concerns about representation and prioritisation. Skeeter is the focal point of the narrative, even though the film is about addressing racism through the dangerous act of creating a book that exposes Jackson from the perspective of the maids, the narrative revolves around Skeeter’s journey of self-discovery and emotional growth. While the maids are central to the storyline, their characters are not explored profoundly or with a certain level of gravity that it demands, as the white characters. The film does not go into the nooks and crannies of their lives, aspirations, dreams and relationships outside the scope of their roles as domestic workers. The Black woman is shown as gaining a voice through Skeeter’s project, and their stories are framed within the context of a white character’s initiative, building a dynamic where White validation is deemed celebratory. The empowerment of the Black characters, particularly the maids, is facilitated through the actions of a white character. This dynamic reinforces a narrative where significant change is only achievable with the involvement of white individuals, reflecting aspects of the White Savior Complex. The white character taking a leading role in telling the stories of Black characters, stands a risk of enforcing stereotypes within novel structures of racism and limiting the choices of representation. The film commits the error of framing the maids within predefined roles and narratives, the distribution of screen time and character development favours the white characters over the Black characters, effectively spending more time exploring the personal lives, challenges, and growth of the white characters. Thus, the film is not thoroughly able to explore the systemic issues of racism and segregation in 1960s Mississippi. While it addresses personal stories, the

broader context of the Civil Rights Movement and the structural dimensions of racial discrimination does not receive as much attention as it should. The film fails to depict authentic and nuanced representation of Black female characters and a community which has time and again empowered itself in awe-inspiring ways.

Over-simplification of Racism

Richard Delgado and Jean Stephancic in *Critical Race Theory* says, “racism is ordinary, not aberrational- “normal science,” the usual way society does business, the common everyday experience of most people of colour in this country ... ordinariness, means that racism is difficult to address or cure because it is not acknowledged” (7,8). *The Help* can be criticized for potentially oversimplifying the complex issue of race by celebrating individual heroism rather than addressing broader systemic problems. The narrative of the movie is centred around individual acts of heroism and personal growths of White characters, primarily Skeeter’s initiative to write a book exposing the mistreatment of Black maids. The film makes the mistake of overlooking the systemic issues within racism that contribute to social inequality by making the struggles of the Black characters a tool to measure and evaluate the growth of the elite White community. The civil rights movement, a crucial historical context for the film, that involved collective efforts and organized activism to challenge systemic racism, was brushed over by only allocating merely a single scene that cares to mention it, focusing more on individual heroism rather than exploring the strength and impact of collective movements. The celebration of individual heroism, through Skeeter’s and Celia’s actions, inadvertently overshadows the collective struggle of Blacks during the civil rights era. This focus on individual heroism places the focus away from the communal spirit which was instrumental in tackling racism, it even gives an optimistic colouring to the grim racist struggle. This approach oversimplifies the diversity of experiences within the Black community and runs the risk of reinforcing harmful stereotypes. There is a little to very little exploration of historical realities which adds the grim realities of the lives of Black women in 1960s Jackson, Mississippi. While it touches on some aspects of racism, the narrative does not capture the depth of institutionalized discrimination and violence that characterized the era, especially the double oppression faced by Black women, in terms of gender and race. The narrative focus on Skeeter’s personal and professional journey as a writer, and Celia’s personal journey as an

emotionally secure wife of a rich man, places the experiences of white characters over the marginalized Black women characters. By presenting individual heroism as the primary driver of change, the film creates a feel-good narrative that, while emotionally resonant, does not fully confront the harsh realities and ongoing challenges of racial injustice.

Conclusion

Narratives in the media have a strong influence on public perceptions and notions, these narratives cause the buildup of persistent social realities, influencing how individuals perceive different races, cultures, and issues; it can perpetuate pseudo stereotypes, either through intentional biases or unconscious portrayals. A re-writing of these portrayals helps to identify and deconstruct biased or stereotypical portrayals that contributes to preconceived opinions, allowing for a viewer to recognize when stereotypes are being reinforced and to question these portrayals, and in the process, it enables them to break existing racial structures to portray more accurate and original representations. Critical Race theory and Black feminism are vital tools that can challenge persistent stereotypes and helps in a more accurate portrayal of race in media. Therefore, it is vital to generate a structure independent of cultural and racial stereotypes that can change narratives in the future. Even in the year 2024, the Black community is facing racial prejudice and systemic oppression, so that it is all the more vital that a deconstruction of pre-existing narrative tropes be examined to dismantle structures that oppress.

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Unveiling Cultural Diversity in Indian Literature: A Comparative Analysis

Sourav Chatterjee, Soumen Nath and Kallal Banerjee

Abstract:

Purpose – The prosperity and variety of the Bharatiya literature depends on the cultural and linguistic variation of the country. In this paper, we want to analyse selected works in different languages to study the cultural diversity of Bharatiya literature. We will look at these pieces' motifs and literary forms to scrutinise the comparison of Bharat's rich cultural traditional heritage.

Design/methodology/approach – We will choose literature in Bengali, Tamil, Kannada, Malayalam, Telugu, Hindi, and Marathi, among other Indian languages, for this study. To identify the recurrent cultural themes and motifs in each of these works, we will analyze them using qualitative research methods such as content and discourse analysis.

Findings and Implications – The study's findings will shed light on the vast cultural diversity present in Indian literature and how it contributes to preserving and enhancing the country's cultural legacy. It will also emphasize the value of intercultural communication and draw attention to the important contributions regional languages have made to the growth of Indian literary tradition.

Key Words: Indian literature; religious diversity; cultural diversity; cultural heritage; literary styles; cultural themes

Introduction

India is one of the oldest civilizations in the world with a rich cultural heritage and several unpatrolled literary treasure. It has 22 scheduled language and several more local languages spoken regionally. The cultural

heritage of India is vast and diverse, and it includes literature, art, music, and various other forms of expression. Indian literature has a long and rich history, dating back to the ancient Vedic period. It is a treasure trove of wisdom, knowledge, and ideas that have shaped the Indian society for centuries. The cultural heritage of India is reflected in its literature, which has a long and illustrious history dating back thousands of years. Indian literature is known for its diverse themes, ranging from mythology, philosophy, and spirituality to history, science, and literature. The integrity of cultural heritage in Indian literature is crucial to understanding and preserving the essence of India's cultural heritage.

The great treasure of literature starts from Veda, Upveda, Upanishad, Puran, Darshan, poetry, prose, novels and stories. The language of all ancient scriptures are Sanskrit, whereas poetry, prose, novels etc. are written in different language as per region. These all compositions are respect worthy and add the treasure of Indian literature. The Indian literature in different language developed by regional rulers, who were fascinated to leave some kind of written memories for coming generations. Such approaches, encouraged the authors to contribute their best, and of course many authors have created history. Tulsidas, Ravindranath Tagore, Bankimchandra Chatterji, Nagarjuna, Surdas, Kahirdas, Rahman, etc. are famous contributor towards uplifting of Hindi as national language. Another popular literature, Tamil literature has a rich literary tradition Spanning over 2000 years, and is particularly known for its poetic nature in the form of epics, and philosophical and secular works. Other great literary works, which marked the golden era of Indian literature, include 'Abhigyanam Shakuntalam' and 'Meghdoot' by Kalidasa, 'Mricchakatika' by Shudraka, 'Svapna Vasavadattam' by Bhaasa, and 'Ratnavali' by Sri Harsha, Chanakya's 'Arthashastra' and Vatsyayana's Kamasutra'.

However, like any other cultural heritage, Indian literature is also vulnerable to threats such as misappropriation, and misinterpretation. Therefore, it is essential to preserve the integrity of Indian literature to ensure that it remains a source of inspiration and knowledge for generations to come.

Aim of the Research

Aim of the research work focuses on preservation of Indian traditional art and craft practices by contextualizing the practice and increasing the connection with society. The paper discusses a method of paradigm shift

from traditional art forms to contemporary mass media to reduce the isolation of tradition from society. The design process emphasizes adapting the visual language of traditional painting into new media to reach a wider target audience. The aim was to establish the potentiality of virtual new-media to digitally preserve the tangible traditional paintings after transferring into new paradigm and create an avenue to preserve craft-guilds, along with their socio-cultural context, represent India's intangible cultural heritage in colloquial speech. The aim of the research is to revive traditional art and craft, as well as rejuvenate the craft-guilds.

Methodology

The methodology for writing the Exploring the Integrity in Cultural Diversity of Indian Literature A Comparative Study would involve several steps. Firstly, the researcher would need to identify the research question and objectives of the study. This would involve defining the scope of the study and selecting the appropriate literature to review. Secondly, the researcher would need to select the appropriate comparative method to analyse the literature. This could involve comparing literary works from different regions, languages, or time periods. Finally, the researcher would need to draw conclusions from the data and present their findings in a clear and concise manner. The study would need to be grounded in theory and work historically without falling into uncritical positivism.

Indian literature:

Indian literature is as vast and diverse as the country itself. It encompasses various languages, such as Sanskrit, Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Bengali, Urdu, and many others. The literature of India is a treasure trove of wisdom and knowledge that has been transferred from one generation to another generation.

Indian literature is divided into two categories, namely, ancient and modern literature. The ancient literature of India includes the Vedas, Upanishads, Puranas, and epics like the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. These texts are considered the foundation of Indian culture and civilization. They contain valuable information about Indian history, philosophy, religion, and spirituality.

The modern literature of India includes works of fiction, poetry, and drama written in various Indian languages. It reflects the contemporary social and political issues faced by the people of India.

The integrity of Indian literature is essential because it helps us understand the cultural, social, and historical context in which it was created. It also helps us appreciate the creativity and craftsmanship of the writers who created it. The integrity of Indian literature is maintained through various means, including textual criticism, philology, and literary analysis.

Indian literature covers a wide range of themes, including philosophy, religion, mythology, history, politics, and social issues. It has been a source of inspiration for generations of people and has influenced literary traditions across the world.

Integrity in cultural heritage of Indian literature:

Integrity in cultural heritage refers to the authenticity, accuracy, and reliability of cultural artefacts, including literature, art, and music. The integrity of cultural heritage in Indian literature is essential to preserve the essence of Indian culture and civilization. It means that the original text or manuscript should be preserved without any alteration, deletion, or addition. Any changes made to the original text could lead to a loss of cultural and historical significance.

The integrity of cultural heritage also means that the translation of the original text into other languages should be accurate and faithful to the original text. The translation should not change the meaning or tone of the original text.

The integrity of cultural heritage in Indian literature also means that the authenticity of the authorship of the text should be maintained. It is essential to attribute the text to the correct author and not to someone else. Misattribution of authorship could lead to the loss of cultural and historical significance of the text.

The integrity of cultural heritage is essential because it helps us understand the cultural, social, and historical context in which it was created. It also helps us appreciate the creativity and craftsmanship of the artists, writers, and musicians who created it.

Challenges to the integrity of cultural heritage in Indian literature:

Despite the efforts to preserve the integrity of Indian literature, there are several challenges that it faces. The first challenge is the preservation of the original text or manuscript. Many ancient texts were written on palm

leaves or paper, which are prone to decay and damage. The preservation of these texts requires proper care and maintenance.

The second challenge is the translation of the original text into other languages. The translation of ancient texts requires expertise in both the source language and the target language. Any mistranslation could lead to a loss of cultural and historical significance.

The third challenge is the authenticity of authorship. Many ancient texts were transmitted orally before they were written down. The attribution of authorship can be challenging in such cases. Many texts are also attributed to multiple authors, and it can be challenging to determine the correct authorship.

The fourth challenge is the interpretation of the text. Many ancient texts are open to multiple interpretations. The interpretation of the text can be influenced by the reader's cultural, social, and political background. It is essential to interpret the text objectively and without bias.

Measures to preserve the integrity of cultural heritage in Indian literature:

Various measures can be taken to preserve the integrity of cultural heritage in Indian literature. The first measure is the digitization of ancient texts. Many ancient texts have been digitized, which makes them easily accessible to scholars and researchers. Digitization also helps in the preservation of the original text.

The second measure is the translation of ancient texts into other languages. The translation should be done by experts in both the source and target languages. The translation should be faithful to the original text and should not alter the original texts.

Textual Criticism: Textual criticism is the practice of examining texts to determine their authenticity and accuracy. In the context of Indian literature, textual criticism involves examining manuscripts, editions, and translations to ensure that the text is accurate and reliable. Textual criticism helps to identify errors, omissions, and interpolations in the text, which can be corrected through scholarly analysis.

Philology: Philology is the study of language in its historical and cultural context. It involves the analysis of the structure, evolution, and usage of languages throughout history, as well as the examination of the social, cultural, and political forces that have influenced their development.

Philology encompasses a wide range of disciplines, including linguistics, literary studies, anthropology, archaeology, and history. It seeks to understand not only the grammar, syntax, and vocabulary of languages but also their cultural and literary significance.

One of the key objectives of philology is to establish the authenticity of literary texts and to understand the historical and cultural contexts in which they were produced. By analyzing the language and style of a text, philologists can determine its age, origin, and authorship, as well as its relationship to other texts of its time and place.

Philology has played an important role in the study of classical literature, particularly in the analysis and interpretation of ancient texts written in Greek and Latin. It has also been instrumental in the study of medieval literature, where it has helped to shed light on the development of the English language and its literature.

In recent years, philology has become increasingly interdisciplinary, with scholars drawing on a range of methods and approaches from across the humanities and social sciences. This has led to new insights into the role of language in shaping culture, society, and identity, as well as the ways in which language reflects and responds to historical change.

Overall, philology remains an important field of study for anyone interested in the history, culture, and literature of languages. By exploring the intricate relationships between language, culture, and society, philologists offer us new ways of understanding the world around us.

Literary Analysis: Literary analysis is the practice of examining literary texts to determine their meaning, themes, and literary techniques. In the context of Indian literature, literary analysis involves examining the text to understand its cultural, social, and historical context. Literary analysis helps to identify the themes and ideas that the writer was trying to convey, as well as the literary techniques used to express them.

Culture and Religion

Cultural diversity has been a significant influence on Indian literature for centuries. Indian literature is deeply rooted in culture, religion, and religious texts have served as a source of inspiration for many Indian writers. The influence of culture can be seen in various forms of Indian literature, including poetry, drama, and prose. Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism,

and Sikhism are also the primary religions that have influenced Indian literature.

One of the most significant contributions of cultural diversity to Indian literature is the use of mythology. Indian mythology has been a rich source of inspiration for writers, and the epic poems, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, have been the basis for many literary works.

Religious themes are also prevalent in Indian literature. Indian writers often explore themes such as karma, reincarnation, and the cycle of birth and death. These themes are central to Hindu and Buddhist philosophy and are often woven into the narrative of Indian literature.

Religious symbolism and imagery are also used extensively in Indian literature. For example, the lotus flower, which is a symbol of purity and spiritual enlightenment, is used to represent the awakening of the human spirit in Indian literature.

KAUTILYA'S ARTHASHASTRA

Nothing vindicates belief better than reality. During Mauryan period, Kautilya authored the Arthashastra and with it he proved to be a king maker as he enabled the initiation of the Mauryan dynasty. The Arthashastra endured the test of time and it has since resisted the test of credibility. The workshop of Kautilya encompasses an vast area which offers veritably vital information similar as governance, polity, politics and development linked to the weal of the people. Interestingly, near to recent times, Abraham Lincoln said, "Republic is for the people, by the people and of the people". The Arthashastra's reverberative theme holds indeed nay moment and it's the upholding of this principle that stands at the core of attaining development. Kautilya wrote 15 books on all motifs applicable for a state. These all books directly or laterally touch the variety of conception of Arthashastra, in ultramodern period. The summaries of each book are mentioned below–

BOOK I: Concerning Discipline

BOOK II: The Duties of Government Superintendents. BOOK III: Concerning Law

BOOK IV: Removal of Thorns BOOK V: Conduct of Courtiers

BOOK VI: The Element of Source of Sovereign States BOOK VII: The Six-fold Policy

BOOK VIII: Concerning Vices and Calamities BOOK IX: The Work of an invader

BOOK X: Relating to War

BOOK XI: The Conduct of Corporations BOOK XII: Concerning a Powerful Enemy

BOOK XIII: Strategic Means to Capture a Fortress BOOK XIV: On Esoteric Practices

BOOK XV: Organisation of Scientific Treaties

Famous Sanskrit authors

Sanskrit is an ancient language that has played a significant role in the development of Indian culture and religion. Having been used as a philosophical language in Buddhism and Jainism, it is the primary sacred language of Hinduism.. Sanskrit has a rich tradition of philosophical and religious texts, as well as poetry, music, drama, scientific, technical, and others. Although other scripts have been used and are still in use, Sanskrit is commonly written in the Devanâgarî script, which is a descendant of the Brâhmî script. Around 500 BCE, the scholar

Panini standardized Vedic Sanskrit into Classical Sanskrit when he defined its grammar. Vedic Sanskrit is the language of the Vedas, which are the oldest scriptures of Hinduism. During and after the Vedic Period, knowledge of Sanskrit became a symbol of high social class. Sanskrit is an extraordinarily complex language with a vast vocabulary, and it is still widely used today in the reading of sacred texts and hymns. Sanskrit has been written both in Devanâgarî script and in various regional scripts, such as Ūârâdâ from the north (Kashmir), BâEglâ (Bengali) in the east, Gujarâtî in the west, and The Grantha alphabet, along with several other southern scripts, was specifically developed for writing Sanskrit texts.. Sanskrit is a language that has played a significant role in the development of Indian culture and religion, and it continues to be an important language in the study of ancient Indian texts and traditions.

Panini : PâGini was a Sanskrit grammarian and linguist who lived in ancient India, variously dated between the 6th and 4th century BCE. He is known for his work on Sanskrit grammar, particularly for his formulation of the 3,959 rules of Sanskrit morphology, syntax, and semantics in the grammar book Ashtadhyayi. PâGini's work is considered one of the most

important contributions to the development of the Sanskrit language and is still studied today. His comprehensive and scientific theory of phonetics, phonology, and morphology in Sanskrit was a significant achievement in the field of linguistics. PâGini's work on Sanskrit grammar has had a profound influence on the development of linguistics and language studies in India and beyond. He is considered the greatest linguist of antiquity and is revered as a scholar in India.

Valmiki : Valmiki was an ancient Hindu sage and author of the epic Ramayana. The Hindu sloka, a verse form utilized in the composition of epics, is believed to have originated from him. The Valmiki Ramayana tells the story of Lord Rama, his wife Sita, and their battle against the demon king Ravana. He is celebrated as the poet harbinger in Sanskrit literature and is revered as a saint in Hinduism. Valmiki's contribution to Sanskrit literature is significant, and his work has had a profound influence on Indian culture and society. He is also believed to be the author of Yoga Vasistha, a philosophical text that explores the nature of reality and the human condition.

Ved Vyas : Vyasa, also known as Krishna Dvaipayana or Vedavyasa, is a legendary Indian sage who is traditionally credited with composing or compiling the Mahabharata, a collection of legendary and moralistic poetry worked around a central heroic narrative. He is also regarded as the author of the Puranas and the Vedas, some of the most important works in the Hindu tradition. Vyasa is a central and revered figure in most Hindu traditions and is celebrated as a saint and a guru. His birthday is celebrated as Guru Purnima, on Shukla Purnima day in the month of Ashadha (June–July). Vyasa's contribution to Hindu literature is significant, and his work has had a profound influence on Indian culture and society. He is considered one of the greatest sages in Indian history and is revered as a saint in Hinduism.

Kalidas : Kâlidâsa was a Classical Sanskrit author who is often considered ancient India's greatest poet and playwright. He lived in the 4th-5th century CE and his plays and poetry are primarily based on the Vedas, the Râmâyaga, the Mahâbhârata, and the PurâGas. His surviving works consist of three plays, two epic poems, and two shorter poems. Kâlidâsa's poetry represents the height of the *kavya* style, which his epic poem Raghuvamsha and his play Shakuntala are considered the finest examples of literature. Kâlidâsa is known for his exquisite use of language,

his vivid descriptions of nature, and his ability to convey deep emotions through his writing.

REGIONAL INDIAN LANGUAGES

India is a country with a rich linguistic diversity, and it is home to several language families. The major language families in India are the Indo-Aryan languages and the Dravidian languages. The Indo-Aryan languages are spoken by 78.05% of Indians, and the Dravidian languages are spoken by 19.64% of Indians. The remaining 2.31% of the population speaks languages belonging to the Austroasiatic, Sino-Tibetan, Tai-Kadai, and a few other minor language families and isolates. India has the second-highest number of languages in the world, with 780 languages according to the People's Linguistic Survey of India, and 456 languages according to Ethnologue. Some of the major regional languages in India include Assamese, Bengali, Bodo, Dogri, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Konkani, Maithili, Malayalam, Meitei, Marathi, Oriya, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Santali, Sindhi, Tamil, Telugu, and Urdu.

Telegu : Telugu is a Dravidian language spoken in the Indian states of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. It is the third most spoken language in India and the 15th most spoken language in the world. Telugu literature can be broadly discussed into six ages, and Nannayya Bhattaraka is considered the first and greatest among modern times who used literature to suppress social evils and superstitions. Other renowned Telugu authors includes Rayaprolu Subba Rao, Gurazada Appa Rao, Viswanatha Satyanarayana, Jashuva, and Devulapalli Krishna. Volga is an eminent Telugu writer who has edited a collection of Telugu literature. Telugu script evolved from ancient Brahmi scripts and closely mirrors that of Kannada. Telugu is a rich language with a vast vocabulary and a rich literary tradition.

Kannad : Kannada is a language mainly spoken in the state of Karnataka. The earliest available work in Kannada was Kavirajamarga, written by King Amoghavarsha in the 9th century. Kannada literature is divided into three linguistic phases: Old (450–1200 CE), Middle (1200–1700 CE), and Modern (1700–present). The literary characteristics of Kannada are categorized as Jain, Lingayatism, and Vaishnava. The initial literary works in Kannada were primarily authored by the Jains, who received enthusiastic patronage from the Chalukya, Ganga, Rashtrakuta, Hoysala, and Yadava monarchs. Pampa, who authored Adipurana, is regarded as one of the

most exceptional Kannada writers. Other eminent Kannada writers include Bhima Kavi, Padmanaka, Mallanarya, Singiraja, and Chamarasa. Kannada literature has a rich tradition of poetry, drama, and prose, and it has contributed significantly to Indian literature. Adikavi Pampa, Sri Ponna and Ranna, jointly they are called the “three gems of Kannada literature”.

Malayalam : Malayalam mainly spoken in the Kerala and the union territories of Lakshadweep and Puducherry. It is one of the 22 scheduled languages of India and has official language status in the state of Kerala and in the union territories of Lakshadweep and Puducherry. Malayalam is spoken by approximately 38 million people across the world. The language has a rich literary tradition, and some of the eminent Malayalam writers include Vaikom Muhammad Basheer, Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai, O. V. Vijayan, M. T. Vasudevan Nair, and Kamala Surayya. Vaikom Muhammad Basheer is considered one of the greatest writers in Malayalam literature, and his works are known for their simplicity, humor, and social commentary. Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai is another prominent Malayalam writer who is known for his realistic portrayal of the lives of the common people. M. T. Vasudevan Nair is a prolific writer who has won several awards for his contributions to Malayalam literature. Kamala Surayya, also known as Madhavikutty, was a prominent feminist writer who wrote about the struggles of women in Indian society.

Sangam Literature : Sangam literature is the earliest known literature of South India and is considered to be the historic evidence of indigenous literary developments in parallel to Sanskrit. According to Tamil traditions and legends, three literary assemblies were held near Madurai and Kapâmapuram, which were the capitals of the Pandyas. The first assembly took place more than 4,440 years ago, the second over 3,700 years ago, and the third over 1,850 years prior to the start of the Common Era. Scholars consider the Sangam literature to have been produced over six centuries, from around 300 BC to 300 AD, by Tamils from very diverse social backgrounds. The corpus of poems known as Sangam literature provides valuable insights into the social, economic, and cultural life of ancient Tamil Nadu. The poems are classified into two categories: akam (interior) and puram (exterior). The akam poems deal with the themes of love, separation, and union, while the puram poems deal with war, politics, and governance. The Sangam literature is a source of evidence on India's trade and cultural contacts with the outside world

Hindi Language and Literature : The Hindi language has its roots in Sanskrit, which was developed around 1800 BCE in North-Western India. The evolution of Hindi started in the 7th to 8th century, and it is written in the Devnagri script. Hindi was not used in literature before 1800 A.D., and its effective literary employment started after 1850. Earlier, Tulsidas wrote Ramcharitmanas in Awadhi, and Surdas wrote his Sur Sagar in Braj. Kabir wrote several proses using local languages like Awadhi, Braj, and Bhojpuri in the 12th and 13th centuries, which was also called Bhaktikal.

They inspired Mirabai, who sang in Rajasthani language, and Raskhan. Nandadasa was an important bhakti poet. Rahim and Bhushan were great Hindi poets, and Bihari wrote his Satsai in the seventeenth century. In literature, Hindi was used in combination with several regional languages like Braj, Awadhi, Bhojpuri, Magahi, Maithili, Rajsthani, etc.

Bengali Literature : Bengali literature encompasses the collection of written works in the Bengali language, which includes Old Bengali, Middle Bengali, and Modern Bengali, reflecting the changes brought about by time and the patronage or lack thereof by different dynasties. Over a span of approximately 1,300 years, Bengali literature has progressed, and the Charyapada, a compilation of Buddhist mystic songs in Old Bengali dating back to the 10th and 11th centuries, is the earliest surviving work in Bengali literature. The literature is categorized into three phases: ancient (650–1200), medieval (1200–1800), and modern (after 1800). Raja Ram Mohan Roy wrote in both Bengali and English, giving impetus to Bengali literature. Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar (1820-91) and Akshay Kumar Dutta (1820-86) were two other writers of this early period. Bengali literature is famous for its short stories, and some of the famous short story writers are Rabindranath Tagore, Manik Bandopadhyay, Tarashankar Bandopadhyay, Bibhutibhushan Bandopadhyay, Rajshekhar Basu (Parasuram), Syed Mujtaba Ali, and Premendra Mitra. Rabindranath Tagore is an evergreen Bengali author, famous for his collection of 2230 poems, 2000 songs, 8 novels, 40 plays, and several essays. In 1913, he was awarded the Nobel Prize in literature for his work “Geetawali.” Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay is another prominent Bengali writer who is known for his novels, including Anandamath and Devi Chaudhurani. Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay is another famous Bengali writer who is known for his novels, including Devdas and Parineeta.

As British exploitation increased, new trends emerged to spread awareness and patriotism among the people through literature, expressed by Subrahmanyam Bharti in Tamil and Qazi Nazrul Islam in Bengali. The impact of these two writers on stirring up patriotic emotions in their readers was enormous, and their poetry was translated into various other Indian languages.

Assamese : Assamese is spoken primarily in the state of Assam. It is also the official language of Assam and one of the 22 scheduled languages of India. The language has a rich literary tradition, dating back to the 7th century AD, with notable contributions from writers, poets, and scholars over the centuries.

One of the most eminent writers in Assamese literature is Lakshminath Bezbarua, who is often referred to as the “father of modern Assamese literature.” Bezbarua played a pivotal role in the modernization of the Assamese language and literature, and his works are widely regarded as classics of Assamese literature.

Some of Bezbarua’s most famous works include his novel “Mirijiyori” and his collection of short stories “Burhi Aair Sadhu.” His works are known for their simplicity, realism, and deep insight into the lives and culture of the Assamese people.

Another renowned writer in Assamese literature is Jyoti Prasad Agarwala, who was a playwright, poet, and filmmaker. Agarwala was a pioneer in the field of Assamese cinema and was the first person to make an Assamese film, “Joymoti,” in 1935. He was also a prominent figure in the Assamese independence movement and used his writing to inspire and mobilize people to fight for their rights.

Other notable writers in Assamese literature include Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya, Homen Borgohain, Indira Goswami, and Arupa Kalita Patangia, among many others. The contributions of these writers have helped shape and enrich the literary tradition of Assamese language and continue to inspire new generations of writers and readers alike.

Oriya : Odia, also known as Oriya, is an Indo-Aryan language spoken primarily in the Indian state of Odisha. It is also one of the 22 scheduled languages of India and has a rich literary tradition that dates back to the 10th century AD. The language has a distinctive script, which is written from left to right and has 13 vowels and 33 consonants.

One of the most eminent writers in Odia literature is Fakir Mohan Senapati, who is widely regarded as the father of modern Odia prose. Senapati's works are known for their realistic portrayal of the social, cultural, and economic conditions of Odisha in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Some of his most famous works include "Chha Mana Atha Guntha" and "Mamu."

Another renowned writer in Odia literature is Gopinath Mohanty, who was a prolific novelist, short story writer, and essayist. Mohanty's works are characterized by their realistic portrayal of rural life in Odisha and their insightful commentary on human nature and social issues. Some of his most famous works include "Paraja," "Amruta Phala," and "Andha Diganta."

Other notable writers in Odia literature include Sarala Das, who wrote the "Mahabharata" in Odia in the 15th century, Kabi Samrat Upendra Bhanja, who is known for his poetry, and Pratibha Ray, who is the first woman to win the Moortidevi Award, India's highest literary honor, for her novel "Yajnaseni".

The contributions of these and many other writers have helped shape and enrich the literary tradition of Odia language and continue to inspire new generations of writers and readers alike.

Punjabi Literature : Punjabi is an Indo-Aryan language spoken primarily in the Punjab region of South Asia, which includes parts of India and Pakistan. It is the official language of the Indian state of Punjab and is also recognized as a minority language in several other states of India.

One of the most prominent writers in Punjabi literature is Waris Shah, who is best known for his epic poem "Heer Ranjha." The poem is a tragic love story between Heer, a beautiful young woman, and Ranjha, a poor shepherd. The poem is considered a masterpiece of Punjabi literature and has been adapted into numerous plays, films, and television shows.

Another renowned writer in Punjabi literature is Amrita Pritam, who was a poet, novelist, and essayist. Pritam's works are known for their feminist themes and their exploration of the human condition. She was the first woman to win the Sahitya Akademi Award, India's highest literary honor, for her magnum opus "Ajj Aakhaan Waris Shah Nu" (Today I Invoke Waris Shah).

Other notable writers in Punjabi literature include Shiv Kumar Batalvi, who is known for his poetry, and Saadat Hasan Manto, who wrote in both Punjabi and Urdu and is considered one of the greatest short story writers in South Asian literature.

The contributions of these and many other writers have helped shape and enrich the literary tradition of Punjabi language and continue to inspire new generations of writers and readers alike. The Punjabi language is a rich and vibrant language that has a deep connection to the culture and history of the Punjab region.

Gujarati Literature : Gujarati is an Indo-Aryan language spoken primarily in the state of Gujarat in India. It is also spoken in some parts of Maharashtra and Rajasthan. Gujarati is the official language of Gujarat and is recognized as a minority language in several other Indian states.

One of the most prominent writers in Gujarati literature is Narmad, also known as Narmadashankar Dave. He is considered the father of modern Gujarati literature and was a poet, playwright, essayist, and reformer. His works include the epic poem “Jai Somnath,” which tells the story of the famous temple of Somnath and its destruction by invaders, and the play “Nootan Gujarat,” which promotes the idea of a united and progressive Gujarat.

Another renowned writer in Gujarati literature is Jhaverchand Meghani, who was a poet, writer, and folklorist. Meghani’s works often celebrated the lives of ordinary people, and his poems and stories are known for their simplicity and emotional depth. His most famous work is the epic poem “Saurashtra ni Rasdhar,” which explores the cultural and historical richness of the Saurashtra region of Gujarat.

Other notable writers in Gujarati literature include Govardhanram Madhavram Tripathi, who wrote the famous novel “Saraswaticandra,” and Kanaiyalal Maneklal Munshi, who was a novelist, historian, and politician.

The contributions of these and many other writers have helped shape and enrich the literary tradition of Gujarati language and continue to inspire new generations of writers and readers alike. Gujarati language is a vibrant language with a rich cultural and historical heritage, and its literature reflects the diversity and complexity of the region and its people.

Marathi Literature : The Marathi language is a language mainly spoken in the state of Maharashtra. It is also spoken in some parts of neighbouring states such as Goa, Karnataka, and Madhya Pradesh. Marathi is the official language of Maharashtra and is one of the 22 scheduled languages of India.

Marathi literature has a long and rich history, dating back to the 13th century with the works of the saint-poet Dnyaneshwar. However, it was during the 19th and 20th centuries that Marathi literature saw a significant transformation and expansion, with the emergence of many notable writers and poets.

One of the most prominent writers in Marathi literature is Kusumagraj, also known as Vishnu Vaman Shirwadkar. He was a poet, writer, playwright, and humanist, whose works often dealt with social issues and the human condition. His most famous works include the poetry collections “Vishakha” and “Natsamrat,” and the play “Shakuntal.”

Another renowned writer in Marathi literature is V.S. Khandekar, who was a novelist, historian, and literary critic. Khandekar’s works often explored the themes of Indian mythology and history, and he is best known for his novels “Yayati” and “Don Dhruv.” He was also a recipient of the Sahitya Academy Award.

Other notable writers in Marathi literature include P.L. Deshpande, who was a humorist, playwright, and music composer, and Sane Guruji, who was a children’s author and social activist.

The contributions of these and many other writers have helped shape and enrich the literary tradition of Marathi language, and continue to inspire new generations of writers and readers alike. Marathi literature is a diverse and dynamic field, with a rich cultural and historical heritage, and its writers and poets have made significant contributions to the literary and cultural identity of Maharashtra and India as a whole.

Kashmiri Literature : Kashmiri is an Indo-Aryan language spoken primarily in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir. It is also spoken in some parts of neighbouring states such as Himachal Pradesh and Punjab. Kashmiri is one of the 22 scheduled languages of India and has a rich literary tradition.

One of the most prominent writers in Kashmiri literature is Akhtar Mohiuddin, who was a poet, writer, and translator. He is considered to be one of the most important figures in contemporary Kashmiri literature and was awarded the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1997 for his book of poetry, "Aalav."

Another renowned writer in Kashmiri literature is Ghulam Nabi Khayal, who was a poet, writer, and literary critic. His works often explored the themes of nature, spirituality, and the human condition, and he is best known for his collection of poems, "Zind Taariq." He was also a recipient of the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1975.

Other notable writers in Kashmiri literature include Abdul Ahad Azad, who was a poet and writer, and Mohammad Yusuf Taing, who was a novelist, short story writer, and playwright.

The contributions of these and many other writers have helped shape and enrich the literary tradition of Kashmiri language, and continue to inspire new generations of writers and readers alike. Kashmiri literature is a diverse and dynamic field, with a rich cultural and historical heritage, and its writers and poets have made significant contributions to the literary and cultural identity of Jammu and Kashmir and India as a whole.

Though the list of Modern Indian languages can have many more, the constitution of India has originally about 22 languages as national languages i.e. Assamese, Bengali, Bodo, Dogri, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Konkani, Maithili, Malayalam, Manipuri, Marathi, Nepali, Odia (Oriya), Punjabi, Sanskrit, Santali, Sindhi, Tamil, Telugu, Urdu. Three more languages i.e. Nepali, Manipuri and Konkani have been added now to the list. In brief, India is a country, where numbers of languages are in use as per territory: but essence of all these are similar.

The influence of cultural diversity in Indian literature is profound and far-reaching. Religious texts, mythology, themes, symbolism, and imagery have all played a significant role in shaping Indian literature. Indian literature reflects the rich cultural and spiritual heritage of India, and cultural diversity continues to be a source of inspiration for many Indian writers.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the comparative study of Indian literature has shed light on the importance of exploring the integrity in cultural diversity. As a country with a rich history and diverse population, India's literature reflects the unity in diversity that binds its people together. The concept of Indian literature underscores the irony of a unified collection of literary works composed in numerous languages, each with its distinct and developing literary customs. Managing cultural diversity is crucial in a global workforce, and this study provides recommendations for doing so. Comparative literature in India has been explored in depth, and it is clear that it plays a significant role in understanding the country's cultural diversity. Investing in cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue is essential for cultural change itself, and this study contributes to that effort. Overall, this study emphasizes the importance of embracing cultural diversity and recognizing its value in literature and beyond.

Acknowledgements

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Editor's Note on The TGI Manifesto on Education and Culture in India

I met Guenter Grass for the first time through S. V. Raman of Max Mueller Bhavan, when the renowned novelist-playwright-poet and political activist, came to spend some time in Calcutta in early 1986. He insisted that I play the main role of the Boss (based on Brecht) when we decided to translate his *Plebeians* into Bangla from the German. To my amazement Grass and I became working partners in our theatre project *Biplaber Mohora* based on his play *The Plebeians Rehearse the Uprising* which has now become part of our cultural history, volumes being written on it till date. Our partnership soon turned to intimacy. We, in fact, became part of each other's families. Grass often spoke to me of how the younger generation of students, writers and intellectuals (those that he met in India) disappointed him with their self-seeking dreams of instant success and disorderly lifestyle. He told me that he found a great sense of responsibility, a remarkable quiet dignity, and an unflinching, un-utopian practical idealism in the Older and Elder generations of Indians close to his age that he met. He gave me three examples of such extraordinary Senior Citizens; the great writer and activist Annada Shankar Ray, Kalyani Karlekar of Calcutta Social Project, and my father Ajit Roy, ex-officer of the British Indian Army during World War II. He found these three new-found friends of his to be his inspiration and role models during his visit.

Grass also found the young people in our theatre groups (*Theatre Arts Workshop* and *Shakespeare Society*) deeply impressive in their selfless commitment to theatre and collective action. So inspired was he that Grass urged me that we (he, I and us) should do something to build a great nation, like he and his colleagues of "Gruppe 47" did build from the ruins of a devastated Germany after World War II. His heartfelt suggestion was that we, in India, must wed the experience and the idealism of the old to the rampaging energies of the young.

These ideas germinated in us even after Grass left India in 1987, and was reviewed and sustained through many discussions with me whenever

I was in Germany after that. Then he came to Kolkata in 2003 and helped give shape to the following manifesto by working with my colleagues and my wife Shreela. Here Grass himself read this out, in front of a packed gathering in the rooftop space in our home as the *Manifesto* that the newly-formed *Tagore Gandhi Institute (TGI)* should attempt to actualize and put into practice.

—Amitava Roy

The TGI Manifesto

The Tagore Gandhi Institute for Service Learning and Culture Studies is committed to an ideal - the belief that education should empower, touch, transform, not only the lives of the educated, but also have the power to reach out and change for the better society at large. First thought of a few years back, the *Tagore Gandhi Institute* is fundamentally the outgrowth of an ideal that was sowed in the minds of its conceivers by interaction with a number of living seminal thinkers in the world, the most notable among whom was Herr Guenter Grass.

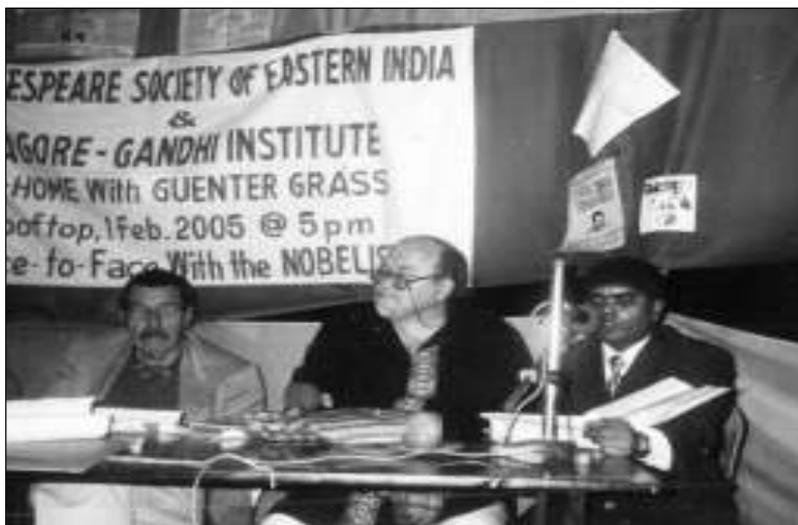
What emerged for the founders of TGI through long and frequent interactive encounters with *Herr Grass*, out of many many sessions of creative and intellectual ‘*adda*’, from the close camaraderie of translating and putting on stage Grass’s play *The Plebians Rehearse the Uprising (Biplaber Mohora* in Bengali), of friendly argument and debate was a vision (or simply a perspective) of India that we citizens of this great country tend to lose sight of, situated as we are, too close to the realities that surround us everyday. This was the vision of a mighty culture holding together a diversity of people, language, religions and customs. It was a vision too of India as a repository of values and value systems enshrined and *embodied especially in its senior citizens*, in their cumulative experience and collective wisdom.

Today, these attitudes and commitments are all the more necessary, important and relevant, given the pervasive erosion of human values caused by the temporary forces of *globalization, rampant consumerism and commodification*. Integrity and honesty, compassion and service, are ideals that the younger generation today is gradually being distanced from, the children of our time not having appropriate role models to learn from.

It is in this scenario of despair that the *TGI* wants to make an intervention, however small the effort may initially be. The concept we envisage is the building of bridges between the elderly and the young, the generation of our fathers and that of our children, the initiation of a learning curve by which the future adults of tomorrow's world may learn lessons about a fulfilling life and a meaningful existence from the old in wisdom. The ultimate quest is the expression in action of the realizations of the young purified in the crucible of experience.

This project of *Tagore Gandhi Institute* is part of its wider object of engaging in socially and culturally constructive work. Members and associates of *TGI* are currently involved in studies and researches in the areas of Dalit literature, Gender issues, Culture and Performance and Service Learning. The objective now is to help in the creation of a human focus in which enlightened reason will be informed by a creative imagination, passion will be fused with a critical and questioning attitude. The *TGI* desires in short to develop thinking young minds that will not hesitate to interrogate the likes of Guenter Grass and Amitava Roy, who will not stop at but rather transcend the bounds of narrow self-interest and constrained ideologies.

–Subir Dhar, Tapu Biswas and Core committee of TGI



Guenter Grass with Amitava Roy and Tapu Biswas at SSEI-TGI rooftop

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Sonakshi Mukherjee currently serves as an Assistant Professor in the Department of English at Swami Vivekananda University, Barrackpore. She earned her Bachelor's degree from Chandernagore Govt. College, affiliated with The University of Burdwan. Furthermore, she holds a Master's degree with first-class honours from IGNOU and a B.Ed. degree with distinction from Magadh University alongside an UGC-NET JRF. In addition, Ms. Mukherjee successfully completed the DOEACC A' level course at NIELIT, Jadavpur University, and excelled in Voice and Accent Training (VNA) at The Orion Institute, Kolkata. At present, she is pursuing her PhD degree from North Bengal University. With a teaching experience spanning eight years, she has contributed her expertise as a TGT-English faculty in both national and international educational boards. Her scholarly work is well-regarded, with numerous publications in various national and international journals, many of which are listed by UGC-CARE. Additionally, Ms. Mukherjee has presented her research in several national and international seminars and conferences. Her research interests encompass diverse fields such as Posthumanism, Transhumanism, Cultural studies, and Gender studies.

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Srijani Bose is a student of Psychology and recently completed her postgraduate degree in Clinical Psychology from Newcastle University, United Kingdom. Her main focus area of study has been gender-based violence and its psychological impact on society. Recently, she worked with His Majesty’s Prison and Probation Services on a research focusing on Women in Prisons. She currently works as a Special Educational

About the Contributors

Needs and Disabilities Educator in the UK and firmly believes that media portrayals can impact its audience in numerous ways and its influence can be profound on an individual's life. As a student ambassador at Newcastle University and as an educator she has advocated against consumption of violent media productions and she hopes that this piece of research is going to put forward her narrative and commence elaborate discussions on the topic that has been long overdue.

Subinita Paul is currently working as the Assistant Professor of Journalism and mass communication, University of Kalyani, West Bengal, India. She was a first class first awardee from Calcutta University, in her bachelor degree. She has done her master's from St.Xavier's University, Kolkata. and has cleared UGC-NET in 2019. Since then she has made her presence in different international seminars and conferences, and acclaimed best paper awards many times. She also has UGC CARE listed publications in her account. Till date she has already published 3 international papers, and has chapters in 6 books. She has also presented in total 16 international conferences.

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Late Amitava Roy Founder Advisor, Tagore-Gandhi Institute & Founder Editor of this journal.

Late Günter Grass (Germany), Founder Advisor, Tagore-Gandhi Institute, Nobel Laureate in Literature.

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Sr.No.	Journal Title	Publisher	ISSN	E-ISSN	Action
1	International Journal of Cultural Studies and social Sciences	Avantgarde Press, Tagore-Gandhi Institute/Shakespeare Society	2347-4777	NA	View
2	Theatre International	Avantgarde Press, Tagore-Gandhi Institute/Shakespeare Society	2278-2036	NA	View

≡ **UGC-CARE List, 2022**

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159	International Journal of Cultural Studies and social Sciences	Avantgarde Press, Tagore-Gandhi Institute/Shakespeare Society	2347-4777	NA	View
400	Theatre International	Avantgarde Press, Tagore-Gandhi Institute/Shakespeare Society	2278-2036	NA	View

≡ **UGC-CARE List, 2024**

165	International Journal of Cultural Studies and Social Sciences	Avantgarde Press, Tagore-Gandhi Institute/Shakespeare Society	2347-4777	NA	from January - 2020 to Present	View
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