SOCIAL DISCOURSE IN CHALLENGING TIMES

The International Interdisciplinary Scientific Conference 2023
Proceedings and Book of Abstracts

Edited by
Anetta Čaplánová & Ľubomír Darmo

Social Discourse in Challenging Times

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ODDEA

OVERCOMING DIGITAL DIVIDE
IN EUROPE AND SOUTHEAST ASIA

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Social Discourse in Challenging Times - The International Interdisciplinary Scientific Conference 2023 - Proceedings and Book of Abstracts

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FOREWORD

In the light of current digital advancements, the discourse surrounding digitalization has increased in importance, and the International Scientific Conference "Social Discourse in Challenging Times" reflected upon this trend. Coordinated by the University of Economics in Bratislava, this event was organized within the ODDEA project, at the University of Economics in Bratislava, between May 17th-20th, 2023. A significant attribute of the conference was its hybrid form, utilizing both face-to-face interaction at the University premises, and MS TEAMS for virtual involvement.

This conference focused on the exploration of two fundamental areas of study. The first explored interdisciplinary topics of the current discourse, while the second dived into the digital transformation occurring within the EU and Southeast Asian countries. The second area was specifically devoted to presentations of research findings from the first work package of the ODDEA project. This not only brought to the forefront the work of the project's researchers, but it also fostered synergies within the consortium, enhancing the project's implementation.

The recent global health crisis has heightened the role of digitalization in our daily lives, underlining the need for resilience in the digital realm as the world copes with the challenges imposed by the pandemic. With a focus on developing a robust digital economy and society, the digital decade has been put forward by the European Commission. However, this initiative reaches beyond the boundaries of Europe, extending its potential benefits to associated and developing countries such as Montenegro, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand.

Being implemented within this transformative period, the ODDEA project aims to stimulate research and develop knowledge in the domain of digitalization, namely in the understanding of overcoming the digital divide between digitally more and less developed nations. A critical aspect of the project is its ability to foster sustainable research partnerships, which would significantly contribute to global digitalization initiatives. Another project's important asset is its collaboration between academic staff and doctoral students, which results in the creation of original outputs.

The value and impact of the ODDEA project are also reflected within this volume. From discussions around current discourses to the exploration of the digitalization pathways, this collection represents a milestone in our journey towards a digital society research that would be both inclusive and resilient.

These presentations provide insights into the selected problems of digital transformation and are invaluable contributions to the understanding of digitalization during these challenging times. Our sincere appreciation goes out to the researchers, contributors, reviewers and the academic community who have made this significant contribution possible. We hope that this volume will fuel further discussions, inspire additional research, and drive innovative breakthroughs in digitalization and interdisciplinary studies.

Anetta Čaplánová

PART A

DIGITALIZATION WITHIN THE EU AND SOUTHEAST ASIA

ABSTRACTS

DIGITIZATION EFFECTS ON ECONOMIC SECTOR: COMPARISON OF CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE COUNTRIES AND MONTENEGRO

Borislavka Golović Kažić, Ivana Ognjanović, Roland Z. Szabó[1]

Abstract

Digital technologies are currently one of the main drivers and orientation of most nations towards growth and technological development. However, depending on the strength of the economy, available capacities, knowledge and resources, countries have different progress and indicators of success. The COVID-19 pandemic has especially accelerated the digitization process, both in terms of rapid development and launching of new digital platforms and services, as well as acceptance and daily usage by the general population. If we consider that Montenegro is a country in the process of joining the European Union, with the already published S3 strategy that defines national priorities in the digitization of priority areas (sustainable energy, medical tourism, agriculture), it is particularly illustrative to perform an analysis in relation to Central and Eastern Europe countries. The analysis is expected to provide clear indicators of key challenges facing the countries during the digitization process in relation to their key economic and development assessment factors.

JEL classification: O3, O1, C5,

Keywords: digitization, economy, cross-matching

Acknowledgment

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DIGITAL PERFORMANCE OF PUBLIC SECTOR INSTITUTIONS IN SOUTH-EAST ASIA

Sophia Dimelis and Anetta Caplanova[2]

Abstract

The goal of this paper is to provide an assessment of the digital performance of the public sector institutions in the South-East Asia region, more particularly in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand. The paper provides a literature review to justify the need for the digital transformation in governance and regulation on the part of National Authorities to support the new digital ecosystem. The analysis also includes an overview of the main stylized facts that characterize the three economies under study: Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand. The assessment of the performance of public authorities in these economies is based on evidence provided by the reviewed studies and, most importantly, on a number of Government Digital Transformation indicators compiled by the UN, the OECD, the World Bank, and other institutions. A comparison of the performance among countries is provided and policy recommendations are derived based on the previous analysis.

JEL classification: O33, O38, O53

Keywords: digital transformation, public sector, Southeast Asia

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COMPARISON OF DIGITALIZATION METRICS: A QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS PERSPECTIVE

Agnieszka Choczyńska, Justyna Tora, Septia Rani[3]

Abstract

Digitalization has drastically changed numerous aspects of society. It has also raised some concerns, among which is the digital divide between countries. There are a number of metrics that have been developed to measure the progress of digitalization, and this can be a tool to start overcoming the digital divide. In this study, we compared three digitalization metrics, namely the Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI), the ASEAN Digital Integration Index (ADII), and the Digital Intelligence Index (DII). Each metric has its own characteristics, such as different key performance indicators and geographical coverage. Based on the qualitative comparison, we hypothesized that different metrics do not give consistent scores for measuring digitalization. We tested this hypothesis by using quantitative analysis: computing the Pearson correlation coefficients and performing a cluster analysis. Our main finding is that the considered metrics are highly comparable. However, this may be mainly due to the fact that digitalization metrics tend to include indicators of overall economic development.

JEL classification: O30

Keywords: digitalization, metrics, quantitative analysis

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DIGITAL PAYMENT: A BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS USING VOSVIEWER

Nor Irvoni Mohd Ishar[4]

Abstract

Digital payment refers to the transmission of funds or money between parties via digital or electronic channels, such as the internet, mobile devices, or other electronic payment mediums. It enables businesses and individuals to conduct transactions swiftly and securely without the need for cash or cheques. Scholarly interest in digital payments has been on the rise due to changes in consumer payment habits. However, there is a dearth of review studies on this subject. To fill this void, this study examines existing literature on digital payment. The main aim is to have a deeper understanding of the present body of knowledge on the topic. This study extracted data from the Scopus database and employed bibliometric technique and VOSviewer software to analyse publication patterns. Initially, 756 titles dealing with electronic money transfers were identified. Using publishing year parameters (2018–2023), the study was able to narrow the list down to 652 titles. After further narrowing the search to articles and proceedings exclusively, 564 titles remained. Using VOSviewer, this data was then mapped, connected, and visualized. Findings indicate that digital payment remains of scholarly interest and significance. Authors from countries like India, the United States of America, Indonesia, Malaysia, China, and the United Kingdom are among the major contributors to the area of study. The keyword clustering analysis reveals that seven prominent themes pervaded the digital payment research.

JEL classification: M30, M39

Keywords: digital payment, digital payment behavior, bibliometric analysis, VOSviewer

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A COMPARATIVE ANALYTICAL STUDY OF THE DIGITALISATION GAP IN THE BALKAN COUNTRIES

Hussein Mkiyes[5]

Abstract

In a world of speed and transformation from tangible to intangible, as a result of the Internet revolution and remarkable technological development and the subsequent prosperity and growth of individuals and companies. In order to upgrade developed countries, developing countries had taken serious steps towards the digitization of society and the economy. Serbia, for example, is a Balkan State that has strengthened the role of digitization in its governmental and commercial activities, as well as being one of the main indicators of GDP growth, as well as an important factor in the European Union's accession and enhanced market competitiveness. Like Serbia, most Balkan States have tended to embrace digitization in their activities aimed at bridging the digital divide between the Balkan States and the developed countries of the European Union, on the one hand, and at achieving the European Union's accession standards and conditions on the other.

This paper provides a comparative analysis of the digital divide and the degree of the Balkan States' reliance on digitization in their organizations. It also aims to demonstrate the consistency of the Balkan States' trend towards digitization with EU countries through several factors: Embrace digitization in public services (digital government), enhance digital culture skills and knowledge among individuals, promote digital literacy, and stimulate the creation, promotion and financial and legal financing of digital platforms in accordance with funding packages, legal frameworks and regulations aimed at promoting digitization between the Balkans and developed countries.

JEL classification: O31, O32, O33

Keywords: Balkan countries, digitization, information technology, economic development, internet.

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EMBRACING DIGITALIZATION IN SOUTH-EAST ASIA. THE MALAYSIAN EXAMPLE

Ilona Papp, Zoltan Szegedi [6]

Abstract

Malaysia has taken several steps to position itself as a digital leading edge country. It invested heavily into the Digital Infrastructure and the government has launched a program of "Digital Economy" (with a Digital Free Trade Zone (DFTZ) and the "Digital Economy Blueprint").

In their digital country strategy, they have been focussing on the Fintech industry, on Smart city solutions (such as a smart city master plan in Kuala Lumpur) and on the Digital Talent program. (including a pool of digital talents, coding lessons in schools, digital upskilling programs, or attracting foreign tech talent), etc.

In our secondment program we have identified some research areas for co-operational work such as: a.) the future of international supply chains from SE Asia to Western Europe. How will the digitalisation and the turbulences on the global World change these SC-s? Will SE Asia and CE Europe be competitors or cooperating partners? b.) How to create a joint teaching case study on the comparison of industrial parks of all ODDEA countries?

JEL classification: E 44

Keywords: digital country strategy, co-operation, supply chain, industrial parks

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DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION OF PUBLIC SERVICES: THE CASE OF THE DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT APPLICATION

Borbála Szedmák, Roland Z. Szabó[7]

Abstract

The public sector has to fulfill the needs of its „customers" – namely, the citizens, furthermore, it is a dominant employer worldwide. Thus, its efficiency and effectiveness really matter. This article focuses on how digital transformation can be implemented in the sector and what its effects are. We have reviewed the digital transformation of the whole Hungarian municipality system, and as a single case study, we introduce the effects of the document management application of the Application Service Provider (ASP). We drew conclusions based on the longitudinal analysis of more than 1300 public entities (meaning more than 3000 municipalities). Our results suggest that digital transformation creates a significant value for citizens, and radically reduces the lead-time of administration. Public administration becomes also transparent, benchmarkable and more efficient. By having a benchmarkable system, practices are easier to be developed. Our article also highlights that centralized digitalization enables more efficient public services.

JEL classification: M15, O33, O38

Keywords: public services, digitalization, document management application, lead time, municipality system

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IDENTIFICATION OF DIGITAL DIVIDE ACROSS INDONESIAN PROVINCES: ANALYSIS OF KEY FACTORS

Dwi Ana Ratna Wati, Anetta Caplanova, Lubomir Darmo[8]

Abstract

Information and communication technology (ICT) has brought many economic and societal benefits through digitalization and digital transformation. However, the digital gap or digital divide in terms of infrastructure, skills, and outcomes mean that every individual, community, or country does not share these benefits equally. For this reason, there is the need for a comprehensive effort to overcome existing divide. Therefore, it is necessary to map a country's digital condition to formulate an effective strategy. The state of the digital divide needs to be measured periodically to monitor progress and determine continuous improvement. This research identifies current situation in the digital divide among provinces in Indonesia. Based on the data from the Ministry of Communication and Informatics and data from the Bureau of Statistics of Indonesia spatial regression modelling is applied to analyze some key factors of the divide. The results show three types of the digital divide across Indonesian provinces, i.e., in the form of ICT access, usage and outcomes. This study reveals the key factors that significantly affect the digital divide across Indonesian provinces are Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP) per capita, Proportion of Formal Labour and Size of the Working Age Population.

JEL classification: C 38

Keywords: digitalization, digital divide, spatial regression model, Indonesia

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PART B

INTERDISCIPLINARY TOPICS OF CURRENT DISCOURSE

FULL PAPERS

REPRESENTATION OF NATION IN WAR FILMS: A STUDY OF HINDI CINEMA IN CONTEMPORARY TIMES

Sachin Bharti and Ravi Sehrawat[1]

Abstract

War films have been a popular genre in Hindi cinema for many decades, with numerous films portraying the theme of a nation at war. These films are often characterized by patriotic themes, emotional storytelling, and powerful performances that capture the courage and sacrifice of soldiers and civilians in times of conflict.

The portrayal of a nation in war films is significant because it reflects the values and identity of the society that produces it. War films serve as a cultural expression and can shape public perception of a nation's history, values, and aspirations. Through depicting heroic figures and nationalistic themes, war films can evoke a sense of pride, unity, and patriotism in audiences, strengthening the bond between individuals and their nations.

Moreover, war films can also provide a medium for critical reflection on the consequences of war. They can serve as a reminder of the importance of peace and the need for diplomacy and dialogue to resolve conflicts.

The paper via literature review and discourse analysis describes the portrayal and representation of our Nation in selected war films of Hindi Cinema over the course of five years.

The war films in Hindi cinema offer a unique perspective on the nation's history, values, and identity, providing a platform for storytelling and cultural expression while encouraging reflection on war's human cost and its global challenges.

JEL classification: Z10, Z11, Z13

Keywords: Hindi Cinema, Films, Nation, India, War

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1. Introduction

1.1. Cinema in India

The medium of Cinema is one of the most potent and effective mass media, which has a deep penetration among the masses, irrespective of age, gender, caste, etc., and further acts as a catalyst for social change which is the core of any developing society. The medium of Cinema has socialization functions (Aggarwal and Gupta, 2001) which allows people, the masses to adopt values, culture, behaviors, and learning matters. Since Cinema is an effective audio-visual medium it creates a profound impact on the minds of the masses and the message conveyed creates a bond sharing between the masses creating a common space among the people and uniting them. Cinemas create a sharing experience and are an essential factor in cultural exchange. Cinema exposes new languages, cultures, beliefs, representations, and portrayals that lays the foundation of social change.

In India, Hindi Cinema is a crucial source of entertainment for the masses, it has a superficial status provided to it by the masses, altogether making it quite the dominant medium. Hindi Cinema, through its representations of values, ideas, and beliefs, represents and showcases daily lives and is a commentary on the functioning of the society itself. Cinema and Society are closely related and go hand in hand as Cinema itself is a representation of the world around us.

Hindi Cinema is known for its entertainment value but in recent times it has progressed as a medium of education and awareness for the masses too. (Dwyer, 2010) Hindi Cinema has acted as a guiding force for modern India by representing society, promoting cultural identity, promoting national integration, producing education and entertainment, and also providing a significant economic boost. Hindi Cinema has portrayed the social, economic, and political issues and challenges faced by this country. It has shown the struggles and aspirations of women, middle-class farmers, and the common man of the nation. The storytelling art and narrative of Hindi Cinema had developed for years and segregated its genres deeply into the lives of masses giving it an informational as well as a shared experience which in turn brings people closer to each other.

Hindi Films in recent times specifically post-globalization (Schaefer and Karan, 2011) have proven to explore much deeper issues and building of cultural identity with the aim of unifying people and practicing cultural coexistence. India is a nation of many, it has many different religions, cultural practices, faiths, and beliefs, and for effective growth and development of the nation, it is essential that growth comes to all and in all forms. Development on all levels of human development is what makes up

a strong nation. Post-globalization economic factors strengthened the foundation of the Indian film industry which allowed the filmmakers to explore more the issues tormenting contemporary reality. There was a significant rise in modern infrastructure, technological development, motherland nationalism, and the refining of popular cinema in India.

1.2. War Films and Nation

War films are a genre of movies that focus on war and its impact on individuals, communities, and nations. They typically feature battle scenes, military operations, and the experiences of soldiers and civilians during wartime. War films can be fictional or based on true events and may focus on different aspects of war, such as heroism, sacrifice, values, or the human cost of conflict.

War films have a unique bond with the representation of a Nation. War films showcase the bravery and courage of the military might of the nation and make its association through audio, visuals, and symbolism in the minds of the masses. These films portray and represent the nation as a collective entity that results in creating a sharing of the bond between the masses.

These kinds of films also reflect the kind of values, culture, and beliefs a nation is born with and helps in creating and building a national identity (Jain 2018) among the people of the nation. India being a land of many cultures and religions, has a huge diversity in its people. It is this diversity, these different values, and cultures of people that altogether make up a common sharing of experience that is being an Indian. And it is these films which bring people into that common sphere of acknowledgment and cultural coexistence with each other, and this is the true development for a nation such as ours.

Ravi S. Vasudevan describes the genre as "a powerful mode of cultural representation that encapsulates the nation's experience of war and its effects on individuals and society." (Vasudevan, 1995)

The Nation is progressing and developing at all times, it's a continuous and everlasting process, and hence tracking down the representation and portrayal of "India" in Hindi Cinema has gradually changed over time. It is like a roller coaster ride that takes many twists and turns. Hindi Cinema can be used to understand the paradigm shifts in the trends, development, and progress of a nation. (Metaxas, et al., 2016) Hindi Cinema as the economic and social indicator has been responsible for the rapid development and technological growth of India as a Nation. It is not only these external factors but the art of filmmaking, narrative representation, and storytelling forms that have also evolved and changed over time. It is this change that

is at its own pace taking place and bringing the vast diversity of the Indian population binding them together and making a strong nation.

War films have the ability to implement nationalistic themes, patriotic elements, and feelings of belongingness. These types of films have a significant impact on public opinion, narratives, and the nation's identity.

The study focuses on three elements that are crucial to Nation and its portrayal and representation. The chosen values and elements to be studied are

- The military power of the Nation - War films in Hindi Cinema is a common genre that has prevailed in India for a long time. The films showcase the true war incidents, courage, and sacrifice of soldiers, showcasing the weaponry and technological advancements in warfare, and re-telling of historical narratives which promotes the history and cultural elements. (Dwyer, 2010)

- Cultural Coexistence - India is a land of diversity, there are many cultures, values, religions, and practices which are followed in India. The heart and core of a nation are its people, and films are a medium of entertainment and awareness in our country. The beliefs and values of different cultures, practices, art, and heritage are harmonized and utilized for promoting cultural coexistence. (Thussu, 2016)

- Nationalism - Hindi films are well known for their artistic themes and symbolic use of the national flag. These themes in films provide a sense of belonging, unifying people, and sharing experiences of bonds. The promotion of nationalism in films is a way of preserving culture and tradition, contributing to national unity and encouraging the masses to unite for the development of the nation. (Malhotra and Alagh, 2010)

These elements help in understanding the representation of the nation in contemporary times when India is gaining a global status for its defensive abilities and cultural diversity and ushering into an era of development and power.

1.3. Significance of the Study

Hindi Cinema is a dominant as well as an effective medium that contributes to and is a catalyst for social change and representation of beliefs. India being a developing nation with progressive advancements in every field has evolved its representation and social status globally.

Understanding the recent films and their discourse in recent times will help understand as well as better portray the representation of the nation.

1.4. Methodology

This research work is a qualitative study that examines 5 War films in Hindi Cinema made in the year 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, and 2021 respectively. The time period of five continuous years has been chosen to better understand the pattern and one film from each year has been chosen respectively.

The selected films have been chosen because of their context and as they portray nations in times of war in different time periods which helps the study to understand how our nation has been represented, and what it stands for in different time periods.

In this study, Discourse Analysis has been used to analyze the films focusing on the relevant selected elements of the study which are the Portrayal of Military Ability, Cultural co-existence of values and beliefs, and Nationalism in the selected films.

This method helps in understanding the context of the films on numerous levels of understanding as well as the message that is given to the audience by the film. It looks at the general meaning of the language with the social, economic, and political background of the discourse generated. This method is most suitable for this study as this research intends to look at and analyze the films with their implication of discourse beyond the literal meaning of the language. (Dijik,1997)

The sample studied five war films made in Hindi Cinema from the year 2017-2021, which are

- The Ghazi Attack

- Parmanu: The Story of Pokhran

- URI: The Surgical Strike

- Tanhaji: The Unsung Warrior

- Shershah

2. Data collection and Analysis

2.1. The Ghazi Attack (2017)

It is a war film written and directed by Sankalp Reddy. It is based on the true events of the Indo-Pakistan war of 1971, the sinking of the PNS Ghazi,

a fast attack submarine of the Pakistan Navy. The film released on 17 February 2017 and was distributed by Dharma Productions. The film grossed ₹34.5 crores (US$4.3 million) and had a star cast of Rana Daggubati, Kay Kay Menon, Tapsee Pannu, and Atul Kulkarni in lead roles. The story is about an Indian Navy submarine and its crew with a mission to patrol and protect national waters.

The film showcases the bravery, valor, and courage of the Indian navy and is a re-telling of the sinking of PNS Ghazi by Indian forces at the time of the war of 1971. The film portrays the power and might of Indian Naval forces for their country. The film also subtly explores and represents the values of cultural co-existence and harmony with the intent of a unifying message and nationalistic theme throughout the film (Chadha, 2021). The film also addresses the peace initiative and civil assistance of the Indian armed forces, when the characters of Menon and Duggabati help and aid the refugee character of Tapsee Pannu from East Pakistan.

The use of the national anthem and patriotic elements through visuals, and dialogue communicates and showcases the valor and pride of Indian forces in turn implementing national pride in the minds of the viewers (Desai, 2017). The film also beautifully acknowledges the no-first-attack policy of our nation which is the pride and core value of our nation.

The film also sheds life on the lives and personal sacrifices made by armed personnel that plays a vital role in generating respect and admiration for such efforts by the people of the nation.

2.2. Parmanu: The Story of Pokhran (2018)

It is a historical war film directed by Abhishek Sharma and produced by Zee Studios and KYTA Productions. The film was released on 25 May 2018 with a box-office collection of ₹91.38 crore. The film is based on 1998 testing of nuclear bombs by India in Pokhran, Rajasthan.

The film had a strong cast with John Abraham, Diana Penty, and Boman Irani in lead roles. The film shows India in light of rising military power with the ability to defend itself from any and all external threats. It shows the growing progressive pace of technology and strength through the storytelling narrative of the film. It highlights the sacrifices of the scientist and army personnel working in secrecy for the nation with almost no recognition until the rest had been proven successful. India after successfully testing all the warheads on 13 May 1998, Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee declared India as a full-fledged nuclear state. The film extensively addresses and explores the growing rise of Military might and increasing sense of national pride. The musical sequences and the symbolic

use of the national flag, symbols, and uniform integrate the idea of unified diversity among the Indian population. This is done to address the cultural harmony that is needed by a nation for peace and prosperity as it progresses through the age of advancement. The idea and importance of national security on all fronts are highlighted by the film through its use of dialogue and the social context that it addresses. The film successfully imprints the idea of change and self-reliance in our nation through critical times. Needless to say, the film also does portray India as a growing power ushering into a new era of development and global recognition.

2.3. URI: The Surgical Strike (2019)

The film was directed and written by Aditya Dhar and was produced by Ronnie Screenwala. The film has Vicky Kaushal, Yami Gautam, and Mohit Raina in the lead roles. It was a re-telling of the true incidents of the 2016 Uri attack which happened on 18 September 2016, in the Baramulla District of Jammu and Kashmir. The film was released on 11 January 2019 and went on to become the 29th highest-grossing Indian film. The film received global recognition and also won four National Film Awards. The screenplay, plot, and storytelling of the film were exceptionally gripping and realistic. It represents the military and technological advancements made by India in the field of warfare.

It expresses the emotion and sacrifices of the armed personnel for their country. The film's visuals and musical elements capture the essence of Indian values of sacrifice and valor and courage for their county. It also creates a rippling effect of nationalism and a patriotic sense among the viewers. The film is a new step into presenting a self-reliant nation that will no longer tolerate acts of aggression and announces retaliation for such elements causing harm to our Nation (Chowdhary, 2022). The film uses "Naya Bharat" to describe and represent the new technologically advanced and self-sufficient nation that is rising to power in the world. (Maniar & Srinivas, 2021)

The film is a milestone for war movies made in Hindi cinema with improved action sequences for realism and sets new standards for war films with no romantic or unnecessary story plots, both in terms of content and context the film excels at the portrayal and representation of India in a new light.

2.4. Tanhaji: The Unsung Warrior (2020)

It is a historical war film directed by Om Raut and was released on 10 January 2020. The film had Ajay Devgan, Saif Ali Khan, and Kajol in the lead roles. The film is set in the 17th century and is based on the life of

Maratha warrior General Tanaji Malusare and his historically successful retaking of the Kondana Fortress in Maharashtra from the Mughals.

The film was a box office success with earnings of ₹367 crore and it was the highest-grossing film of 2020. The film also won three National film awards for Best Entertainment film, Best Actor, and Best costume design.

The film was also screened at the 78th Golden Globe Awards as one of the best foreign films. The film is a celebration of Indian culture and beliefs. The film showcases India as a land of brave and courageous warriors throughout history.

The film showcased cultural and communal harmony by highlighting different cultural elements through visuals, dialogues, and design. It is the sacrifices and struggles of Indian warriors that have been carefully crafted through storytelling. The film also focuses on the freedom and richness of India in terms of culture, values, beliefs, and above all the rich diversity and is successful in giving out a nationalistic message which creates a shared experience among the viewers. The film in its social context conveys the message of cultural harmony and co-existence in contemporary times.

2.5. Shershah (2021)

Shershah which translates to 'Lion King' is a 2021 war film by Vishnuvardhan based upon the life of martyred soldier Captain Vikram Batra in the Kargil war 1999. The film had Sidharth Malhotra and Kiara Advani in the lead roles. The film premiered on Amazon prime on 12 August 2021.

The film led the 67th Filmfare awards with 19 nominations and bagged 7 awards making a name for itself globally.

The film highlights the bravery of the Indian armed forces and is a celebration of National pride. The film reinforces India as a land of brave warriors with pride and integrity for their nation. The film also showed improved military and defensive abilities through the use of air and artillery warfare.

The film is a tribute to Captain Vikram Batra who was later awarded Param Vir Chakra the highest military decoration in India. The film serves as an inspiration to the audiences marking the sacrifices made by armed personnel during times of war. The film addresses and caters to the sense of belongings in one's nation through the subtle use of music and dialogue that mesmerized the viewers. The film, through the story of a National hero, inspired the upcoming future to pursue and achieve their dreams while contributing to the national good of their country. The film beautifully

explored and expressed the patriotic theme which is an important part of Indian Culture exhibiting pride and valor of the Indian army.

3. Conclusion and results

In Conclusion, War films of Hindi Cinema as a genre have exponentially grown both in terms of making and penetration of these films among the Indian population. The main goal of the study was to analyze and understand the representation and portrayal of our nation in the selected war films. The results of the analysis of the selected films are as follows:

3.1. The Ghazi Attack

The film depicts the Indian Navy's bravery and valor during the war and the sacrifices made by its personnel. It showcases the technical expertise and strategic planning of the Indian Navy in carrying out a mission to neutralize the enemy's submarine threat.

The movie's cultural importance lies in its portrayal of the Indian Navy's contribution to the country's defense and the importance of naval power.

It shows the courage and determination of the naval personnel and their unwavering commitment to protecting the nation's sovereignty.

The desire for peace and cultural harmony and coexistence in human society has been subtly hinted towards. Lastly the film also highlights the political tensions and diplomatic manoeuvring that often accompany military conflicts, adding a layer of complexity to the story.

The film also has a strong build up of feeling Nationalism which is generated owing to the perfectly executed storyline and a soldier's emotions for his homeland.

The representation of India during the 1971 war in this film has a balanced hold of portrayal of Military valour and Nationalism. The Cultural elements of co-existence and harmony are present and embedded carefully into the story which depicts a strong, resilient and virtuous nation in times of war.

3.2. Parmanu: The Story of Pokhran

The film portrays the story of the unsung heroes of the nuclear tests and their efforts to make India a nuclear power. The cultural and nationalistic importance of "Parmanu: The Story of Pokhran" is significant. The movie highlights India's scientific and technological achievements, particularly in the field of nuclear technology, and celebrates the country's quest for self-reliance and national security.

The film also showcases the country's resolve and determination to achieve its goals despite obstacles and opposition. The movie highlights the bravery and dedication of the scientists and engineers who worked tirelessly to carry out the nuclear tests and make India a nuclear power.

Furthermore, the film is a reminder of the importance of national security and the need for strategic planning to ensure it. It shows how a strong and capable defense can deter potential threats to the country's sovereignty.

"Parmanu: The Story of Pokhran" is a patriotic film that instills a sense of pride and admiration for India's scientific achievements and military strength. It underscores the importance of national security and self-reliance, making it a culturally and nationally significant movie

This film is a patriotic film which represents India during 1998 ushering into a new era of power and making a global status for itself. The film has depiction of Military strategies, expertise and strong portrayal of Nationalistic understanding to it for building national security. It also gracefully uses the elements of different music, languages, artforms, costumes and cinematic shots to portray the rich and diverse cultural values.

3.3. URI: The Surgical Strike

"Uri: The Surgical Strike" is a 2019 Indian Hindi-language film that depicts the 2016 Uri attack and the subsequent surgical strike by the Indian Army against the militants in Pakistan. The film became a blockbuster hit in India and received critical acclaim for its technical aspects and patriotic fervor.

The cultural importance of this film lies in its representation of the bravery and sacrifices of Indian soldiers and the depiction of the country's response to terrorism. The film showcases the meticulous planning and execution of the surgical strike, highlighting the army's strategic planning and their determination to protect the nation.

The film also portrayed the strong leadership of the Indian government and its unwavering support for the armed forces, which resonated with the public and garnered widespread appreciation.The film's release came at a time when tensions between India and Pakistan were high, making the movie a symbol of national pride and unity. It helped to create a sense of solidarity among the people and fostered a sense of patriotism, making it more than just a movie.

"Uri: The Surgical Strike" holds immense cultural importance in India as it depicts the country's response to terrorism, honors the sacrifices of

Indian soldiers, and celebrates the nation's unity and patriotism. It sets a stage for an India in a new light that is firm in its resolve, advocates for peace and has a strong response to the terrorism.

This film is a milestone in the genre of war films in Hindi Cinema representing the rise of an empowered nation - India.

3.4. Tanhaji: The Unsung Warrior

This film is based on the life of Tanaji Malusare, a Maratha military leader who played a pivotal role in the Battle of Sinhagad in 1670. The film depicts Tanaji's bravery and valor in the battle against the Mughal Empire and celebrates his contributions to Maratha history.

The cultural importance of "Tanhaji: The Unsung Warrior" lies in its portrayal of the rich cultural heritage of India, particularly that of the Maratha Empire. The movie showcases the Maratha culture, traditions, and history, and highlights their contributions to India's rich past.

The film's military significance lies in its depiction of warfare and strategy during the seventeenth century. The movie highlights the tactical skills and bravery of the Maratha soldiers and their unwavering commitment to protecting their homeland, showing India as a proud land of warriors with great valor and courage.

Furthermore, the film emphasizes the importance of unity and cooperation among different communities to protect the country from foreign invaders. It celebrates the Maratha ethos of "Honor, Courage, and Sacrifice," which continues to inspire people to this day.

The film represents and celebrates the rich cultural heritage and military history of India with a balanced yet entertaining approach and storytelling narrative. It highlights the bravery and valor of the Maratha soldiers and their contributions to Indian history and culture, making it an important cultural and military film.

3.5. Shershah

This film is a 2021 Indian Hindi-language biographical war film based on the life of Captain Vikram Batra, a Param Vir Chakra awardee and an officer in the Indian Army who sacrificed his life in the Kargil War of 1999. The film depicts Captain Batra's bravery and courage in the battlefield and his dedication to the nation.

The military importance of the film lies in its depiction of the Kargil War and the tactics used by the Indian Army to recapture the strategic heights occupied by the Pakistani Army. It showcases the challenges faced by the

Indian Army in the high-altitude terrain and the bravery and sacrifice of the soldiers in defending the nation.

The cultural importance lies in its portrayal of the rich cultural heritage and diversity of India. The movie highlights the secular ethos of the Indian Army, which comprises soldiers from different regions, religions, and backgrounds, working together to protect the nation's sovereignty.

The nationalistic importance of "Shershah" lies in its portrayal of the sacrifices made by Indian soldiers in defending the nation. The film celebrates the spirit of patriotism and the commitment of Indian soldiers to the country, inspiring the audience to recognize and honor the contributions of the armed forces to the nation.

It is a film that celebrates the military heroism of Captain Vikram Batra and the Indian Army. It highlights the importance of national security and the sacrifices made by the soldiers to protect the nation, making it a significant military, cultural, and nationalistic film.

3.6. Results

The historical narrative and cultural values of peace, harmony and cultural coexistence have been carefully embedded into the storytelling narratives in all of the selected films, which is very essential in the social context of the Indian population having a rich diversity of culture and beliefs. These core values bring a sense of shared experience among the population breaking the social barriers which prevent the progress of a nation. The retelling of the war through these films have showcased strong defensive capabilities and technological advancements in the field of warfare.

The genre of war films have been prevailing in Hindi cinema for long but slowly and gradually it is moving into a new light of addressing the cultural values to be transferred and communicated to the nation. However, more is to be done to address the issue of Cultural and Communal coexistence in war films.

Hindi cinema has portrayed India as a diverse and dynamic nation that is rapidly changing and evolving, showcasing India's rich cultural heritage, vibrant cities, and diverse population, highlighting the country's strengths and challenges. These films have also highlighted India's diverse and inclusive culture, showcasing the country's different religions, languages, and traditions with the aim to promote a sense of unity and harmony among different communities and emphasize the importance of respect and tolerance for diversity. These selected films have celebrated India's technological advancements and achievements, highlighting the country's

prowess in science, engineering, and space exploration. These movies showcase India's quest for innovation and excellence and inspire the audience to take pride in the country's accomplishments.

India has been represented as a nation with a strong military power. These films have portrayed the Indian armed forces as skilled and powerful, capable of defending the country's borders and defeating its enemies and inducing the spirit of Nationalism. Films such as "Uri: The Surgical Strike," "Tanhaji: The Unsung Warrior," and "Shershaah" have showcased the bravery and tactical skills of the Indian Army, Navy, and Airforce, respectively. These films have highlighted the challenges faced by the Indian armed forces in defending the country's sovereignty and the sacrifices made by the soldiers to protect the nation. Furthermore, "Parmanu: The Story of Pokhran" and "The Ghazi Attack" have portrayed India as a nuclear power and showcased the country's scientific and technological achievements in the field of defense. India has been represented and portrayed as a strong military power, capable of defending its borders and protecting the country's sovereignty. All these films have celebrated the bravery and sacrifices of the Indian armed forces, inspiring the audience to recognize and honor their contributions to the nation.

In conclusion of all, these selected films of Hindi cinema have portrayed the representation of a self-sufficient, self-reliant and militarily powerful nation along with the cultural diversity and values of peace and harmony being made more and more in synchronization with the growing social, political and economic status of India and its recognition for its efforts throughout the globe.

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PARĀŚARA-MĀDHAVA: MĀDHAVĀCHĀRYA'S TREATISE ON SOCIAL AND POLITICAL THOUGHTS IN 14TH CENTURY-INDIA

Sachin Daware[1]

Abstract

Mādhāvachārya was the founder and Political Advisor of Vijayanagara Empire which was a Sovereign state established in 14th century C.E. The rule of this state was in South Indian peninsula and has been considered in between 1336 C.E. to 1646 C.E.; more than three centuries. After the establishment of this state Mādhāvachārya became first Political Advisor serving three successive Vijayanagara Rulers. They were Harihara 1st, Bukkarāya 1st and Harihara 2nd. He served this state in between 1336 to 1372. Afterwards Mādhavāchārya took renunciation from his political life and became Śaṁkarachārya of Śṛngeri Peetham.

Mādhavāchārya's life and his work elaborates his scholastic approach in almost in each and every school of thoughts known at that time. He has authored more than 30 books. Among those books Parāśara-Mādhava is remarkable. This book provides a digest of social and religious regulations. Its study elaborates how social order was going through transformation from rigid values to liberal values.

JEL classification: B 00

Keywords: Parāśara-Mādhava, Mādhavāchārya, Vijayanagara-Empire

1. Introduction of Parāśara-Mādhava

Smṛti Literatures are known for their Rules and Regulations for Society in ancient and medieval time in India. Manusmṛiti is widely recognized as the original and largest Smṛti Text. It has 2,685 verses. Manusmṛti has great influence on other Smṛti-Texts as well. There are more than 20 Smṛti Texts which are available.

Among these Smṛtis; Selection of Parāśara-Smṛti by Mādhavāchārya, is significant. Because it elaborates the transformation of social norms from rigid to liberal values. Original Parāśara-Smṛti has 512 verses, which

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Mādhavāchārya has explained in three Volumes.

The Parāśara-Mādhava contains 1,730 pages in modern printed size of book. The reason for selection of Parāśara-Smṛti by Mādhavāchārya for his treatise might be, he must have observed the changes in social behaviour and he must have considered these social norms have to be revised into new framework of Social Codes. To frame this new social codes Mādhavācharya found Parāśara-Smṛti was more appropriate for new social order. He wrote this treatise in three volumes.

Parāśara-Mādhava

Sr. No.	Name of Volume	Pages
1	Code of Conducts (Āchāra-Kāṇḍa)	796
2	Penance (Prāyaśchitta-Kāṇḍa)	538
3	Economy (Vyavahāra-Kāṇḍa)	396

Each volume has significant role to understand the transformation which was gradually taking place in the Society at that time.

2. Significance of Parāśara-Mādhava

Significance of Parāśara-Mādhava can be seen in Social and Politcal aspects.

2.1. Code of Conducts (Āchāra-Kāṇḍa)

Mādhavachārya was a Vedic Scholar. He was the follower of Orthodox Vedic System. At the beginning of his treatise, he tried to Explain the definition of Dharma.[2] Instead of making his new definition he quotes other Smṛti Writers' definitions about Dharma. Among those Smṛti Writers are Manu, Vaśiṣṭha, Kaśyapa, Gārgeya, Gautama, Auśanasa, Atri, Viṣṇu, Dakṣa, Aṁgirasa, Śatātapa, Hārita, Yājnavalkya, Āpastamba, Śaṁkḥa, and Kātayāyana. All these are 16 Smṛti Writers who have their own definition of Dharma.

Mādhavāchārya concludes their views and accepts Dharma as the duties prescribed to four castes[3]. These duties are considered Code of conducts (Āchāra). He considers this Code of Conducts is important in Kaliyuga. Concept of Kaliyuga is the time period explained in Parāśara-Smṛti as the era where Sins are more than Virtues. Sins were considered as the acts which were not according to Prescription of Religious texts. And these sinful acts can be repented to bring back an individual to righteous path. These sins

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[2] Parāśara-Smṛti Volume I Page 74

[3] Parāśara-Smṛti Volume I Page 133

can be cleansed by repentances which later on Mādhavachārya describes in Second Volume on Penance.

After completion of this treatise Mādhavāchārya has written other text Jaiminīya-Nyāyamālāvistaraḥ where he explains Ideal Code of Conducts which is Dharma in its pure form as per Vedic principles.4 But at his time he must have observed the declension of Vedic Dharma, that's why he wrote this treatise as General code of conducts for common people. The First Volume the Code of Conducts written by Mādhavāchārya was rigid framework of social order. This Code of Conducts was strict for Vedic Followers.

Penance (Prāyaśchitta-Kānda)

At the beginning of this Volume on Penance; while describing penance Mādhavāchārya revises , that injunctions and prohibitions which were described in Code of conducts. An ac2.t of a person which is not according to Prescribed Code was considered as sin. Individual who has followed the act, which was out of prescribed code , has to perform penance. Penance is repentance of sinful act. Repentance shall be performed by sinner with determination like an injunction. [5] Few examples are given further.

2.2.1. Killing of animals

If an Individual kills the animals; For him Penances prescribed e.g. One day fast (Ahoratra Fast), Eating at night only (Naktabhojana), Eating uncooked raw food (Apakvashi), Doing Pranayama, Worshiping Lord Shiva (Shivapuja)[6] etc.

2.2.2. Killing of cow

If a person kills a cow, then Penance Prājapatya-Vrata has been prescribed for him, which has four types. In this penance various fasting rituals were prescribed. These penances are associated with hardship through fasting.[7]

2.2.3. Eating meat and beef

If an individual consumes meat or beef he can be repented by Chāndrāyaṇa Vrata. Chāṇdrāyaṇa Vrata is a penance of fasting associated

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[4] Jaiminiya-Nyāyamāla

[5] Parāśara-Smṛti Volume II and III Page 3

[6] Parāśara-Smṛti Volume II and III Page 152

[7] Parāśara-Smṛti Volume II and III Page 62

with lunar calendar. In this penance an Individual has to reduce food intake day by day in waning phase of the moon and to increase in waxing phase of moon. On new moon day no food intake is permissible for the individual. It is based on waxing and waning phases of moon.[8]

2.2.4. Adultery:

Penances for adultery were different for Men and Women. If an adultery is committed by men of any caste they have to perform Chāndrāyana Vrata.[9]

And if a woman commits an adultery she has to confess in front of Committee of 10 Brahmaṇas and she shall perform harsh penance with their permission.

In such penance she has to stay submerged in water till neck for a day, then having food, she shall do fasting for three days, on fourth day she shall stay submerged in water, and on fifth day she shall drink water with medicinal herbs, then she shall observe her penance till her next menstrual discharge. She shall stay outside of the home while observing this penance. And after performing this penance she will be considered pious again.[10]

2.3. Economy (Vyavahāra-Kaṇḍa):

Mādhavāchārya has written an independent volume on Economy which has no reference in Parāśara-Smṛti. In this Volume Mādhavāchārya introduces Political and administrative system and The Rules of Law. While writing on Economy Mādhavāchārya seems realized the independent existence of Economy. And he tried to frame these Economic Rules as per Dharma. He knows Economy cannot be run on Religious Principles. Religious rules have limits to ensure the justice. [11]

To define Economy Mādhavāchārya explains, when conflicts of opposite views occurs in society, then the decision shall be made which ensures Justice, with the help of learned authority. This process is considered as the Economy or Vyavahāra. Mādhavāchārya insists that when such Justified decisions are made, the religious rules must be considered by the authority.[12]

In Parāśara-Smṛti there is no independent thoughts on Vyavahāra. But while describing duties of Kṣatriya Parāśara says, "Kṣatriya shall rule the

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[8] Parāśara-Smṛti Volume II and III Page 299

[9] Parāśara-Smṛti Volume II and III Page 238

[10] Parāśara-Smṛti Volume II and III Page 278

[11] Parāśara-Smṛti Volume II Page 4

[12] Parāśara-Smṛti Volume II Page 6

people and land with Dharma"[13]. Here Mādhavācharya elaborates the concept of ruling the people and land; as the Code of conducts of Rulers. Ruling the land means preventing antisocial elements and protecting learned class and preventing them from harm. Mādhavācharya quotes from Manusmṛti – "In anarchy people run away in chaos, Thus to protect the people the God created the Ruler"[14]. He also quotes from Bṛhaspati that the purpose of Ruler is to take care of commerce. Rulers must have quality to take care of people and land. While taking care of people and land, Ruler shall observe the Dharma which Mādhavāchārya calls Vyavahāra[15]

2.4. Thoughts on Shudras:

Mādhavācharya believed in four caste system. He believed that people should perform their duties according to their castes. People of first three castes Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya and Vaiśya have given high status and comfort. The Shudras were not given liberty from their manual hardship. He describes shudras with negativity, which was normal at that time. While describing Shudras Mādhavāchārya lacks humanitarian approach.[16]

2.5. Thoughts on Heterodox system:

In Parāśara-Mādhava, Mādhavāchārya denied the authority of Buddhism, Jainism and Charvak System. But in his other book Sarvadarśanasaṁgraha, he has given them independent status. And he accepts their system as an Independent Schools of Thoughts. [17]

2.6. No reference of Kautilyiya-Arthaśāstra:

While studying Mādhavāchārya's Work, it is vivid to see Mādhavāchārya has given abundant references of many scholars who had done the same work on Social Rules. However it is astounding to realize Mādhavāchārya didn't mention Kautiliya-Arthaśāstra in his work. Then question rises that, Was Mādhavācharya aware of Kautiliya-Arthaśāstra?

This question is striking because Kautilya and Mādhavāchārya played same role in Indian History. Both of them had established new soverign states from scratch. And both were Political Advisors of their concerned states. Both of them have written treatises on Social and Political order. Kautilya was prior to Mādhavācharya. Then how is it possible that

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[13] Parāśara-Smṛti Volume II Page 4

[14] Parāśara-Smṛti Volume II Page 5

[15] Parāśara-Smṛti Volume II Page 7

[16] Parāśara-Smṛti Volume I Page 151-156,174

[17] Sarvadarśanasaṁgrahaḥ -Chārvāka-Darśanam

Mādhavācharya was unaware of Kautilyiya Arthaśastra? Is a striking question.

Sr. No.	Smṛti-Texts
1	Atri-smṛti
2	Āpastamba-Smṛti
3	Auśanasa-Smṛti
4	Kātyāyana-Smṛti
5	Kāśyapa-Smṛti
6	Gautama-Smṛti
7	Dakṣa-Smṛti
8	Devala-Smṛti
9	Nārada-Smṛti
10	Nārāyaṇa-Smṛti
11	Parāśara-Smṛti
12	Pulasya-Smṛti
13	Baudhāyana-Smṛti
14	Manu-Smṛti
15	Yama-Smṛti
16	Yājnavalkya-Smṛti
17	Vasiṣṭha-Smṛti
18	Viṣṇu-Smṛti
19	Vedavyāsa-Smṛti
20	Śaṁkḥa-Smṛti
21	Śātātapa-Smṛti
22	Sambarta-Smṛti
23	Hārita-Smṛti

3. Other Literary work on Social and Religious Codes:

There are 23 Smṛti Texts available so far. While studying them we can see the similarity and differences among them. And the rules of social orders were changed as time went. Mādhavāchārya was aware of all these Smṛti-Texts. He could have also written his new Smṛti, But instead he has written a concluding texts based upon all these Smṛti texts. All these Smṛti-Texts are listed below.

4. Mādhavāchārya's other work:

Mādhavāchārya has written his work on almost each and every School of Thoughts available at his time. He has written books on Sanskrit Grammer, Astrology and Philosophies etc.

Sr. No.	Title of Work
	Sarvadarśansaṁgrahaḥ - (Compendium of 16 various schools of thoughts)
	Jīvanmuktavivekaḥ - (Text on Advaita Vedanta)
	Jaiminīyanyāyamālavistaraḥ - (Work on Mīmāṁsā School of thoughts)
	Kālamādhaviyaḥ - (Work on Jyotish or Astrology)
	Pañchadaśī – (Work on Vedānta school of thoughts)
	Parāśaramādhava – (Text on Code of Conducts and Rules for society)
	Smṛtisaṅgrahaḥ - (Collection of various Smriti Texts)
	Dṛgdṛśyavivekaḥ - (Verses)
	Prāyaśchittasudhānidhiḥ - (Text on Philosophy)
	Vivaraṇaprameyasaṁgrahaḥ - (Text on Sanskrit Grammer)
	Mādhaviya-Dhatuvṛtti – (Text on Sanskrit Grammer)
	Rigvedavyakhya – (Commentary on Vedic Mantras)
	Vaiyāsik-Nyāyamālā-Vistarah.
	Manusmṛti-Vyākhyā
	Kurukshetra-Māhātmyam
	Sūtasamhitā-Advaita-Prakatana-Patiyasi-Vishada-Tika
	Puraṇasāraḥ
	Mādhaviya-Jyotiṣam
	Tithi-Nirṇayaḥ
	Laghu-Jātaka-Ṭīkā
	Sūrya-Siddhānta-Ṭīka
	Shri-Vidyārtha-Dīpikā
	Saṁgīta-Sāraḥ
	Anubhūti-Prakāśaḥ
	Aparokṣānubhūti-Ṭīka
	Brahmavidāśirvādaḥ
	Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Vārtikasāraḥ
	Aitareyopaniṣad-Dīpikā
	Kaivalyopaniṣad-Dīpikā
	Taittiriyopaniṣad-Dīpikā
	Nṛsimhottaratāpaniyopaniṣad-Dīpikā
	Chhāndogyopaniṣad-Dīpikā
	Puruṣārtha-Sūdhānidhiḥ
	Śaṁkara-Digvijay

5. Conclusion:

While studying the treatise of Mādhavāchārya in critical point of view; the transformations in society at that time can be understood. This study can analyse how the evolution of liberal values took place in medieval India and how rigid values gradually became unimportant in society. While writing this discourse Mādhavāchārya gives references of wide range of texts such as Vedic Texts, Smṛti Texts, Various schools of thoughts, Vedic Scholars, Epics etc.

Looking at Mādhavāchārya's life and work, one can realize that various

scholastic approaches are needed to discover and innovate new ideas in Mādhavāchārya's entire literary work. Apart from being a Vedic Scholar, he was a founder and a political advisor of a sovereign state; which was prospered and developed as time went. Prosperity of this state was at its peak in the Rule of Kriṣṇdevarāya in between 1509 to 1529 C.E.

Kiṣṇadevarāya, was the The Great Ruler in 16th Century. Apart from being the great ruler, he was a Great Military General, Administrator, Eminent Statesman and a Writer. He patronaged the art and culture in his rule and the state became prosperous. History of Vijayanagara is inspiring for many individuals. To know that how this state and the people progressed to a rich and powerful society, the study and analysis of Mādhavāchārya's work becomes inevitable

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THE INDIA-EUROPE CONNECTION IN THE SOCIAL REFORMIST DISCOURSE IN MARATHI THEATRE: CONFIGURATIONS OF INDIAN REFORMERS, EUROPEAN INFLUENCES, AND PERFORMANCES IN MARATHI THEATRE

Joshi Rohit Ramchandra[1]

Abstract:

The theatre- the most famous art form in Maharashtra, one of India's leading states- stands as the mirror to the state's socio-political movements led by reformers from different sections of society and, thus, naturally represents the social reformist discourse, i.e., the acts, debates, arguments and thoughts that led to the resistance against social evils and in favour of socio-political reforms. In the challenging times of social disconnect, Marathi experimental/mainstream (the boundaries are too subtle) theatre has been revisiting the reformers in the last ten years, focussing on the plays written about them through performances/reperformances. Prominent playwrights, directors, and actors working for different social causes thus dug into the plays written by eminent playwrights from the nineties to now. They brought them on the stage for contemporary times. From the plays written on the lives and struggles of well-known names such as Dr Ambedkar, Gandhi, Tilak, Agarkar, and Phule to the ones hardly discussed, such as Prof RD Karve, who fought for the introduction of sex education to society; the attempt here is to connect the dots between the reformers and between their reforms as they are related and somewhat entangled to each other.

1. Introduction

The world faces hard times of misinformation, jingoism and irredentism today. Thus, the exchange of ideas between the Occident and the Orient resulted in social (and not religious) reform in India, which needs to be discussed to bridge the divide. Gopal Ganesh Agarkar, Maharashtra's most radical social reformer of the nineteenth century, was greatly influenced by

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the Age of Enlightenment in Europe and the works of intellectuals Voltaire, Rousseau, Auguste Comte, John Stuart Mill, and Herbert Spencer. Lokmanya Tilak, Agarkar's rival and India's political reformer, was impressed by Lenin's land reform. Gandhi, the world's peace ambassador, was significantly affected by vegetarians such as Arnold Hill and Thomas Allinson. India's fiercely rational leader and the messiah of the oppressed, Dr B. R. Ambedkar, frequently cited Gabriel Tarde, a French sociologist, in his assessment of caste inequality. Jotirao Phule, whom Dr Ambedkar considered *Guru* and a political crusader for women's emancipation through education, was influenced by Thomas Paine, an English-born American political activist who wrote *The Rights of Man(1791)*. The ground-breaking work of Prof. RD Karve in sex education, which encountered opposition from the orthodox community and backing from Dr Ambedkar, was inspired by Marie Stope's efforts to build the country's first birth control clinic in England.

Through the interdisciplinary perspective of social reformist discourse, the researcher intends to look at the necessity and the impact of the production of these plays. The researcher also wants to elucidate the connection between the Indian reformers and their European influencers of this reform that liberated the marginal sections of Indian society through this paper.

2. Reform in the Archives of History of Marathi Theatre:

The theatre industry has played a significant role in the entertainment sector in India, serving as a medium for promoting enlightenment. Maharashtra, a prominent state in India, boasts a rich theatre tradition and is recognized as one of Southeast Asia's most dynamic theatre scenes. The theatre has served as a platform for reflecting socio-political changes in the region, particularly when individuals are marginalised based on their gender identity, sexual orientation, and dietary preferences. In response, there is a pressing need to reenact social movements and revitalise the need for consistency in social reform. Theatre is a testament to societal changes, with Maharashtra as a prime example. Maharashtrians were instrumental in spearheading political and social reform movements that contributed to the Indian Independence movement.

The present analysis examines the discourse of social reform in Maharashtra, which encountered significant opposition from the traditional ruling elites. It also intends to look at the European influences that contributed to the emergence of social reform in India. The reformers and their reforms are reflected in Marathi theatre, and the current study seeks to establish a connection between them and the Enlightenment period and

reformers in Europe. The social changes witnessed in the modern social system and those that have occurred over the past two centuries can be attributed to Indian reformers' exposure to the world outside India. The colonial past of India introduced Indian leaders who stood against social evils such as untouchability based on caste, opposition to sex education, and opposition to education for women in the Indian orthodox society. The term 'discourse' is included to account for the debates and discussions surrounding social reform and resistance to social evils. Furthermore, the analysis aims to explore the dialectic of the positioning and sequencing of social and political reform in Maharashtra. In this dialectic, some reformers disagreed with others regarding the positioning of political reform before social reform, owing to the influence of the European Age of Enlightenment in the Seventeenth Century on them.

This study uses the following five plays as a case study: Vishram Bedekar's *Tilak Ani Agarkar (1980)* [Tilak and Agarkar], Premanand Gajvee's. *Gandhi-Ambedkar (2013),* G.P. Deshpande's *Satyashodhak(1992)* [The Truth Seeker], Sushma Deshpande's *Vhay, Mi Savitribai(1990)*, and Ajit Dalvi's *Samajswasthya (2018)*[The Public Health].

This study examines the cultural exchange between Europe and Maharashtra, focusing on the socio-political reform that resulted in the modern Marathi theatre. The Enlightenment ideas of Rousseau, Voltaire, and Herbert Spencer significantly impacted the Indian minds, particularly in crucial states like Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Bengal. This research aims to analyse the interdisciplinary perspective of the 'Social Reformist Discourse' in Marathi theatre plays written at different times but revisited in the last ten years.

Marathi experimental theatre has seen a resurgence of interest in the reformist movement through plays that highlight the ideas of the Enlightenment era. Directors working for various social causes have delved into plays written by eminent playwrights from the nineties to the second decade of the Twenty-first century, bringing them back to the stage in recent years. This study seeks to connect the dots between these various plays and explore why repeating their production in the current socio-political climate was necessary.

Through a comprehensive analysis of these plays, this research aims to shed light on the impact of the social reformist discourse on Marathi theatre and its influence on the betterment of future society. By examining the cultural exchange between Europe and Maharashtra, this study hopes to offer a new perspective on the socio-political movements that shaped Marathi theatre and its continued relevance in contemporary times.

India's first national leader, whose influence kindled the passion for the fight for independence among the masses, who had extensively travelled and crisscrossed the different corners of the country, i.e., Lokmanya Tilak, had much to disagree with his friend and staunch modernist Gopal Ganesh Agarkar. Agarkar believed in social reform as a primary necessity than Indian independence, a stance that is also popular with Jotiba Phule, Mahadev Govind Ranade and Ramakrishna Bhandarkar. Agarkar spoke about religious reformation and *Satyashodhan*, i.e., seeking the truth behind the prevailing caste systems and women's bondage to patriarchy, among many other issues. The conflict between Tilak and Agarkar is about their ways of looking toward social reform. Vishram Bedekar's play *Tilak Ani Agarkar (1980)* captures it and makes it more relevant today. Much to Agarkar's dismay, Tilak called him a *pseudo-reformer* who had sold his consciousness to Western thought. Agarkar was influenced by the writings of Rousseau, J S Mill and Voltaire and had developed a liking for the unpopular radical reform in society. Tilak was a mass leader who knew the pulse of the masses. He couldn't oppose social evils, including that of the *chaturvarnya* system, the division of society based on four occupations. Lenin's Land Reform inspired Tilak, and Lenin held Tilak in high esteem for his part in the fight against British colonialism and imperial control, which had a devastating effect on India. The conflict here is between a radical reformer and a populist one.

Agarkar's notion of seeking truth, i.e., *satyashodhan,* is the term first used by Jotirao Phule in India. Jotirao's work in women's education, the Infanticide Prevention Centre and his criticism of caste are the founding step of reform in Maharashtra. He defined *'Satya'*: the truth, as the one that does justice to all. He further questions the Brahminical notions and points toward the roots of casteism among different sections of society. *Satyashodhak (1992)*, a play written on the life of Jotirao Phule at the behest of Safdar Hashmi, is GP Deshpande's masterpiece and an attempt to keep the discourse of reform alive.

Considering Savitribai Phule's (Jotirao Phule's wife) work and the hard times she faced after Jotirao's death to sustaining the legacy of reform, it needs an independent study. Her calibre and courage in leading the battle against the evils of *keshavapan*, exploitation of the widows and infanticide in Jotirao's absence are well expressed in Sushma Deshpande's *Vhay! Mi Savitrib*ai *(1990)*. It's not a tale of a wife in awe of her husband's work. Instead, it's a story of a woman's developing mind, liberating itself from the dogmas and social evils.

Jotiba and Savitribai Phule both sacrificed for the Bahujans' struggles. They protested the marginalisation and maltreatment of Shudras and

women by Brahmins and their allied classes. Because the English-born American philosopher Thomas Paine (1737-1809) significantly impacted Jotiba, it will be interesting to contrast Jotiba's views on religion with Paine's. Both are from the lowest classes of the areas they believed in serving. Paine and Jotiba opposed the many philosophies that justified keeping people in service. Paine denied the biblical account of creation, made fun of seemingly contradictory passages in the Old and New Testaments, and said that the three central tenets of religion—mystery, miracles, and prophecy—were all hoaxes. Jotiba, on the other hand, disproved Brahmanism with a well-thought-out argument. Both believed in a loving God who made everything and moved everything, despite their opposition to superstition and primitive customs.

Dr BR Ambedkar comes as a giant leap from his predecessors in all the social reform movements. Society could not have digested the rationalist, practical, scientific, straightforward and no-nonsense approach of Dr Ambedkar. But Maharashtra is blessed to have Phule, Agarkar and Vitthal Ramji Shinde as the precursors of these movements. They laid the foundations of *dharmachikitsa,* i.e., criticism of religion and pointing out the evil called caste.

Dr Ambedkar needs to be understood in two significant aspects. First, the *Ambedkarite* version of social reform of caste eradication conflicts with Mahatma Gandhi's view of traditional society. Gandhi was a religious man who advocated reform without much questioning or an attack on religion. Gandhi was against untouchability but insisted on continuing the caste structure with Brahmins as *gurus*. Premanand Gajvee's play *Gandhi-Ambedkar (1987)* is a verbal slugfest between these reformers that sees no end. It continues the legacy of the battle between radical reform vs populist reform of the Tilak-Agarkar conflict. Jotirao's view of attacking religion for updating it provides a different paradigm to the element of faith in the reform movements. Ambedkar builds his ideas on the foundations of Jotirao's thoughts, giving them a more rational touch.

Gandhi was both: Tilak's political enemy and his political successor. The commonality of their approach is how they disapproved of questioning religion and its traditions, more so in the case of Lokmanya Tilak, who supported political reform and not social reform till the ruler of a foreign religion ruled the country. At the same time, Agarkar's legacy is taken forward by Ambedkar with merciless introspection of the faith and its offshoots: patriarchy and Brahminism. Agarkar and Ambedkar represent the legacy of European reform that questioned religion and the validity of the age-old customs that didn't stand the test of time.

These two plays, i.e., *Gandhi-Ambedkar(1978)* and *Tilak Ani Agarkar(1980),* point out two interesting facts: Tilak and Ambedkar remained respectful toward Agarkar and Gandhi throughout their life and were mindful of their wisdom that contributed to the reform. Dissent and not dissidence was the key to change. The debate theatre explores these ideas effectively in *Gandhi-Ambedkar (1978)* and *Tilak Ani Agarkar (1980).* Another important aspect is that 'radical reform' is an ideal situation. But its acceptance rate and, thus, success quotient has consistently remained low because people do not like fierce questioning done to the systems they are accustomed to. Therefore, Agarkar and Ambedkar may sound more progressive, but people followed Tilak and Gandhi because they touched upon reform, keeping the religious sentiments unhurt. And one of the most important things that we need to take into consideration is, irrespective of their radically liberal or moderately liberal views towards social reform, the European education that Gandhi and Ambedkar had received and Agarkar, Tilak and Jotirao Phule were influenced by, had brought in an atmosphere of 'agreeing to disagree' where democratic values developed into the dialectic of reform and the harmonious exchange of ideas.

The other instance where Ambedkar's rational and scientific demeanour was put to the test was when he fought RD Karve's case in court. Karve was the first Rubber Man of India. He started India's first birth control clinic in 1921 in Mumbai. A former professor of Mathematics at Karnataka College, Dharwad, Karve, was the son of Bharat Ratna DK Karve. DK Karve founded institutions for educating women. DK Karve's approach was very limited to educating women about household chores. This is again the way Tilak wanted it to be. But his son RD Karve went many steps ahead and talked about the human reproductive system, women's sex life and the problems people face relating to sex, gender and sexuality. He wanted women to be free of unwanted pregnancies and enjoy sex life. He wrote on a wide range of issues consulting sex and gender, ranging from homosexuality to masturbation, in his magazine *'Samajswasthya',* inviting the wrath of the traditional Brahmin society. Tilak and Gandhi both opposed his scientific work. Dr Ambedkar fought his case and lost it. Karve's contribution in questioning the Brahminical patriarchy and a courageous attempt to educate the masses about the human body and sexuality had found an audience in the progressive and rational minds, including Dr Ambedkar. *Samajswasthya* (2018), Ajit Dalvi's play, tells us a tale of these two heroes. RD Karve was asked to resign as a professor at Wilson College Mumbai. Karve died bankrupt, fighting the legal battles against him. *Samajswasthya (2018)* is on the struggle RD Karve and his lawyer Dr B R Ambedkar, fought in the court against the charges of obscenity levied by a section of the orthodox Hindu community in court.

Dr Ambedkar studied at Columbia University and the London School of Economics; American and European education changed his views towards society. He had the herculean task cut out for himself: uplifting his people out of untouchability and social ostracising. Dr Ambedkar's views on Dalit emancipation contradicted Gandhi's views, resulting from Ambedkar's fierce questioning of religion. Europe's Age of Enlightenment and Ambedkar's years in London significantly impacted Ambedkar's views. It was also an attempt to take Agarkar's legacy forward.

The wind of reform that the American land and Europe had seen in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth centuries also influenced Karve's work in the field of Sex Education. Austrian Neurologist Sigmund Freud's *Essays on Sexuality (1905)* and the entire movement of authors, including George Bernard Shaw, that supported sexual freedom had blown the winds of sex education in India. Karve's founding of the magazine *Samajswasthya* was a part of the same effort in India. Dr Ambedkar's rational and scientific approach that he must have attained through his understanding of the reform in the European and American world resulted in Ambedkar fighting RD Karve's case in court. It contrasted with Tilak's view of women's education. Instead, it toed the line of *Agarkarite* discourse of reform, where Agarkar had advocated women's education equivalent to that of men and had focused on skill-based education that would generate employment opportunities for them. Karve's battle against the orthodoxies of the society was on the line of debate between Tilak and Agarkar on the 'Age of Consent Act (1891)' passed by the British regime.

3. Plays Connecting the Dots of Enlightenment in Europe and India:

A) The Great Dilemma in *Tilak ani Agarkar (1980)*: Political Reform or Social Reform?

When possession of beef becomes a reason for lynching someone, it's essential to remind Agarkar to the society: He said that Hindus never cared about cutting the calves when there was nothing readily available in the market to feed the guests. This love for the cow is too new for the Hindus. Atheist Agarkar asked people to believe that god does not exist, should be their default position, and that all godmen are frauds. He asks, "If donkeys were to paint their god, what would you think the picture would be like?"

Tilak was an established political leader with similar influence and respect throughout the country. Tilak opposed Agarkar- his dearest friend and put the movement of political reform before the religious reformation. Tilak pioneered political reform but preferred slighter modifications over radical reform. At the same time, Agarkar was a radical progressive. The

beef issue, women's education, the age of consent for marriage and other reforms in the Hindu religion remained the bone of contention between the two. The play *Tilak ani Agarkar (1980)* focuses on women's educational rights, where Agarkar fiercely defends educating women.

It's commonly believed that men must get educated while women should stay home and raise children; that men should be in charge while women ought to be submissive; that men should be free whereas women should be the property of the men; that men should be accorded absolute autonomy whereas women should be controlled as enslaved people; that women should have no alternatives apart from marriage and be restricted to the domestic realm; and so on. So-called "great men" who hold orthodox religious and social ideas serve what purpose? To express his disagreement with his former mentor and comrade Lokmanya Tilak, Agarkar launched a publication titled Sudharak. The question posed by Agarkar in "If the donkeys had to paint their god, how would he look like?" is reminiscent of a contention made by Rousseau in *The Social Contract (1762)* that religious believers do not always produce good citizens. The radical thought of Agarkar certainly had this European connection. The debate from all its angles, including the reforms' applicability, is more relevant today than ever.

B) When Rationality Fights/Contradicts the Intuition: Father of the Nation Versus the Father of the Constitution:

> Gandhi takes forward Tilak's legacy of no fierce questioning of the religion, whereas the Agarkar's rebel grows multiple folds in Ambedkar. Premanand Gajvee's play *Gandhi Ambedkar (1998)* is sheds light on the debate of the century that draws on Gandhi's intuition and nuanced understanding of the Indian psyche against Ambedkar's rational, no-nonsense, scientific approach and his experiences as someone coming from the exploited sections of the society.

Gandhi was influenced by Gopal Krishna Gokhale, who had influences from JS Mill and Edmund Burke; the English statesmanship and the democratic traditions of the British had a significant impact on Gandhi. Gandhi derived his non-violent means of struggle for political reform from Jainism and his knowledge of the British legal tradition, on which his political Guru Gokhale firmly believed. Gandhi's faith in socialism and native practices, including Hindu vegetarianism, was cemented by his involvement with the London Vegetarian Society and its British faces Arnold Hills, Henry Salt and Thomas Allinson. These European influences on Gandhi can't be neglected. At the same time, Ambedkar leans on Agarkar's legacy and criticises many Hindu religious practices. To explain the Hindu ban on beef, Dr Ambedkar cites the French Sociologist Gabriel

Tarde. According to Gabriel Tarde, cultural diffusion occurs when the lower class of a community adopts the habits and customs of the upper-class people. The rhythm of this mimicry is so regular that it may be mistaken for an instance of natural law. Gabriel Tarde discusses imitation's rules in his talk. The power of this theory is reflected in the lower classes copying the upper classes.

This research thus examines the reformers behind their larger-than-life images - as sparring politicians and quarrelling husbands. The two are provoked into the discussion probing the questions of social reform, making deep inroads into the issues of caste, religion, Brahmanism, Islam in world affairs and untouchability and taking the debate of Tilak-Agarkar of political versus social reform to another level. *Gandhi-Ambedkar* continues Tilak Ani Agarkar's legacy in keeping the reformers' dissent alive and the heresy at bay. It should be noted that it's a very respectful presentation of a disagreement over achieving the same goal of social reform: a milestone in the Indian tradition of debates over reforms.

C) Jotirao, Savitribai and the Stories of Multiple Marginalities:

GP Deshpande's *Satyashodhak (1992)* was a relatively late attempt to bring Jotirao Phule to the Marathi theatre platform. GP Deshpande wrote this play at the request of Safdar Hashmi. The workers of Pune Municipal Corporation performed it as a tribute to Jotirao in 2012. Jotirao was Agarkar's contemporary and had arranged a rally in support of Agarkar when he came out of prison. Agarkar and Tilak had led a movement against the Peshva of Satara, who was torturing the Chhatrapati Shivaji IV. Agarkar and Tilak lost the case of defamation filed against them and were jailed. *Satyashodhak* delves deep into Jotirao's work in different fields. His initiatives in running schools for women, the Infanticide Prevention Centre, his support for using Marathi over Sanskrit and calling Marathi a language of the oppressed: a tool of their empowerment are a few of the themes of the play. His religious views and his review of history are different from others. He did not restructure history. Instead, he was interested in denying history: the Brahminical perspective of history, which had always benefited the upper castes, which is very similar to Jotirao's influencer, Thomas Paine, an English-born American philosopher. When asked to elaborate on his theological beliefs, Paine said:

> "I believe in one God and no more, and I hope for happiness beyond this life. I believe in the equality of man, and I believe that religious duties consist in doing justice, loving mercy, and endeavouring to make our fellow creatures happy" (Ingersoll,120)

He believed that God is one, and by eliminating priestcraft and human

inventions around religion, we can "return to the pure, unmixed and unadulterated belief of one God, and no more." Jotiba offered his thoughts on the concept of God, saying:

> "There is only one authentic Creator, and all human beings are one. The sovereign truth is his royal insignia. He has created all mankind…The Creator has created this earth (the Universe) which sustains us all… Like a kind father, he never discriminates among human beings and makes us all quite happy and contented. There should be only one religion for all human beings, and they should always follow the path of Truth" (86, Phule)

Jotirao founded *'Satyashodhak Samaj'*: formulating the foundations of questioning the religion to seek the truth, the truth: that doesn't exploit anyone and is everyone's natural and inherited right. Dr Ambedkar considered Jotirao Phule as his Guru.

Lenin praised Tilak in 1908. Europe was in awe of Tilak's pan-Indian leadership. Tilak became a reason for the Hindu-Muslim alliance. Gandhi's way of communicating: *samvada*, visible in his book *Hind Swaraj (1909)*, is a replica of Phule's style of using the language for reform. The radical reformer Jotirao supported a ban on cow slaughter. The other space, where the reformist Phule is closer to Gandhian thought than Agarkar and Ambedkar, continued his legacy in an absolute sense.

The play also discusses Mahadev Govind Ranade and his relationship with Jotirao Phule. It is essential to mention Mahadev Govind Ranade because he was an inspiring figure for Gandhi, Ambedkar and Agarkar simultaneously. Continuing the criticism, Ambedkar hailed Ranade as a reformer better than Gandhi.

Sushma Deshpande wrote the play *Vhay Mi, Savitribai* (1990): a monologue play that delves deep into Savitribai's mind. It is a tale of a *to-be* social reformer contesting the mountains of dogmas and sustaining the fight against stigmas after her husband's death. Savitribai's take on the battle against the evil called 'ignorance' that bereaved millions from education and their natural right to be respected citizens. Jotirao's funeral procession was led by Savitribai chanting 'Jai Satya Adi Satya' (Hail the Truth, The Eternal Truth); Savitribai's continuing Jotirao's thought and his work resonates in this monologue play, and thus it is the only famous play written on her in Marathi! Mahatma Jotirao Phule and his European influences certainly had a significant role in Savitribai's understanding of the social evils in India.

Ms Deshpande has been single-handedly managing the performances of her play *Vhay, Mi Savitribai,* for social change in rural areas for the last 30 years.

D) R D Karve: The Father of India's Family Planning Programme.

Tilak believed that women's education should be limited to handling kitchen affairs. It was challenging to hurt Tilak and continue any social work in Maharashtra. So, D K Karve, R D Karve's father, established an educational institution for women, focusing on the same aspects of women's education Tilak wanted: the degrees could only benefit women in household chores. His son turned out to be very progressive. R D Karve broke away from many taboos and stigmas. He started a magazine named *'Samajswasthya'* to spread the message of birth control and sex-related issues. He was slapped with three cases for spreading vulgarity. All the problems for which Karve and his lawyer Dr Ambedkar fought in the court are as relevant today as they were a century ago; they include religious intolerance, opposition to rational thought, denying the right to sexual pleasure, and the condition of women, hatred towards homosexuals and much more. *Samajswasthya (2018)*, a play by Ajit Dalvi, hinges upon Dr Ambedkar's scientific and rational view of society and Karve's courage to take on the taboos purposefully seeded in society to control female sexuality. Karve takes the legacy of the Agarkarite rebellion for reform to another height. Marie Stopes, a British writer, palaeobotanist, and advocate for eugenics and reproductive suffrage, co-founded Britain's first birth control clinic with her husband, Humphrey Verdon Roe. Stopes compiled and penned the weekly Birth Control News, which provided direct, actionable guidance. Her 1918 sex guide, *Married Love*, was controversial and essential, and it helped bring the topic of contraception into the mainstream. Sigmund Freud's *Essays on Sexuality (1905)* had reached India by then. These European influences played a significant role in the movement led by RD Karve. More importantly, Tilak and Gandhi disapproved of Karve's work. Especially, Gandhi's religious thoughts are in total contrast with Karve's. Self-restraint; Karve refuted Gandhi's tool for population control measurement. In the series of reperformances, this play is an exception. This play is written recently to add to the continuance of the drama about a social reformer, this time, a relatively unsung one!

4. The European Idea with Native Forms of Performances

The format of the plays, i.e., the monologue theatre, debate theatre, courtroom plays, agitprop theatre, and Indian pre-theatre designs such as *Jalsa* and *Mela,* help enhance the efficiency of the propagation of the message. The concept of social reformist discourse is meant to combine the acts, thoughts and debates about reform.

The non-aesthetic aspects of drama written on the lives of social reformers: The technical craftsmanship, the form and the performative

aspect of the drama enhance its ability to keep the audiences glued to their seats. It's an attempt to know from the authors of the plays- their intentions of presenting reform through the plays than the other forms of literature. The primary focus is also on their strategies and different formats while writing a play. E.g. *Satyashodhak* is a play written in the structure of *satyashodhaki jalsa*, one of the earliest forms of theatre in Maharashtra: the non-proscenium agitprop form of theatre. Proscenium theatre was born in India after the British established their colonies in India. This loose form of theatre differed from the proscenium theatre that English theatre introduced to us. It's also on the line of Agitprop drama that Jotirao used in his play *Trutiya Ratna* (1855). These formats include monologue plays, debate plays, and courtroom plays. It's essential to understand the innovative use of different forms of theatre that is responsible for making these plays a good watch. They remain entertaining with audiences than becoming art pieces for the academic elites.

5. Conclusion and Relevance:

Reform, as an area, has been quite popular with the theatre. But reformers who single-handedly (at least in the initial stages) managed to revolt against the masses or convince them have rarely been made the topics of drama in Marathi. The relevance of the Social Reformist Discourse in theatre has been limited. It has also depended on other factors such as reperformances, historiography, and the Enlightenment. Creating a study of the exclusive interaction of Marathi theatre with the notion of Social Reformist Discourse will be, thus, one of the major concerns of my inquiry. The study of reform in Marathi theatre has been limited to known figures or certain plays written in a specific period, and certain forms and formats of the theatre should be broken down. A uniform reformist discourse narrative should be analysed to be fully acquainted with the idea and how it updates or contradicts and thus connects the works of the successive social reformers or successive trends in the theatre. This interaction across forms and periods of drama written by reformers and the need for their performances and reperformance in the current times will help analyse the various facets of the urge for constant reform in the contemporary Marathi society, in which theatre forms an integral and inseparable part. Moreover, such research would lead to social transformation, countering orthodoxies and creating awareness of dissenting voices for and on social reform.

The European philosophers, statesmen and academicians significantly impacted the sociopolitical reform in India. The Indian reformers who invested their lives in achieving the goals of a just and equal society in India certainly drew inspiration from the reformers of the land of Europe. These reforms should be repeatedly brought to the fore through different art

forms to keep the tradition of soul-searching for reform alive. Marathi theatre witnessed this reform that we partially inherited from Europe. The proscenium form of theatre the Indian urban audience is lured to is also part and parcel of British colonialism in India. This article initiates a discussion of the exchange between Europe and India in the context of reform, theatre and influences, hoping to continue this connection along the exchange of good social practices in Europe and Asia in reducing the digital and psychological divide in the most divisive times ever.

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PRIORITIZING THE PRESENT AND THE FUTURE OF INDIA-EUROPE COLLABORATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Joshi Lalita Ramchandra[1]

Abstract:

This paper relies on the 'secondary research method' where existing data was used to critically examine the entire course on 'higher education collaboration' in Europe and India. This paper found it sensible to look into the perspectives of developing and developed countries and how this can be a win-win situation. Questions were raised about how massification, internationalization and transformation can lead to more significant results with the strategic cooperation between Europe and India. It was found that the quality of cross-border provision needs to be clearly defined and followed in educational services. It is critically important to note that international cross-border quality assurance standards and national cross-border quality assurance are framed concerning each other and not independently.

JEL classification: I21, I23, I25

Keywords: Education, Research, Education and Economic Development

1. Introduction

One of the excerpts from Sir John Daniel's work on education says, 'Who's Afraid of Cross-Border Higher Education?'. The annual conference in Wellington, New Zealand, at the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education finds an answer to it – The Developing World. The conclusion drawn at the summit was that developing countries find cross-border higher education a scary area. This paper focuses on looking into the perspectives of developing and developed countries and how this can be a win-win situation. A question is being raised about how massification, internationalization and transformation can lead to more significant results with the strategic cooperation between Europe and India. The instrument of cooperation is being evaluated to explore the enabling factors which make higher education profitable in both parts.

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2. Research Methodology

This paper relies on the 'secondary research method' where existing data would be used to critically examine the entire course on 'higher education collaboration' so far in the context of Europe and India. Unlike primary research, comparisons and differences will be highlighted here through existing data in public and private domains. The desktop research method, also known as secondary research, would analyze print and published data from various credible sources such as government reports, newspapers, journals and conference papers. Nadeem and Sauermann have commented that secondary research is beneficial in identifying 'trends' out of vast data across different timelines, which is often not possible with primary research (p. 211). This paper, therefore, depends on 'secondary data' to think conclusively about the challenges with higher education and how this has been addressed collaboratively by India and Europe.

3. Research Aim and Objectives

- To look into the perspectives of developing and developed countries and how this can be a win-win situation.

- To question how massification, internationalization and transformation can lead to more remarkable results with the strategic cooperation between Europe and India.

- To evaluate the instrument of cooperation for exploring the enabling factors which make higher education profitable in both parts.

4. Literature Review-Challenges with the higher education system in India

Despite the country's relentless efforts, the education system faces an overwhelming number of obstacles. Higher education in India is in a precarious position due to several difficulties, the two most prominent of which are internationalization and perception. This can be seen with the institutions under the IIT umbrella, known for having "the toughest entrance exam anywhere on the globe." Because of this, there is no room for international students to consider joining an educational institution in India on a compelling basis. India's literary production over the past five years has been pitiful at 17% compared to the world's top institutions. When it comes to educational institutions in the country, it is evident that there are still unexplored frontiers regarding international collaboration and research that spans national borders. Even within the country, the supply-to-demand ratio is highly unbalanced. Compared to other industrialized

nations, the Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) for institutions of higher learning in India is merely 15%, a deficient number. When over eighty per cent of educational institutions fall short of meeting the basic standards established by the UGC, there is reason to worry about the nation's competence to participate in internationalization. Unsurprisingly, none of India's educational institutions is ranked among the top one hundred institutions globally. However, one cannot ignore the fact that India has the potential to become an enormous marketplace for higher learning. Despite its vast population, the country boasts the world's second-largest education system, serving more than 150 million young people aged 18 to 23. It has been stated that higher educational institutions in India have the most significant potential for international and private investments as it offers significant prospects in both licensed and non-regulated segments. This has led to the assertion that it is one of the areas with the most outstanding prospects for overseas and private capital investments.

First and foremost, it is essential to question India's inegalitarian education system. There are indeed tremendous opportunities for collaboration both nationally and internationally, but without any significant systemic reforms, it is going to be of no use. The governments and independent bodies have, time and again, talked about capacity building and strategic engagement. They have made recommendations about the international qualifications framework, international credit recognition, quality assurance and systemic reforms . Especially for a country like India, where wealth and income disparities are very high, higher education can be a powerful tool for bringing equality . However, the problem is that India lacks a coherent system for delivering a uniform quality of education. The impediment of the 'class divide' overrides any other contributing factor to higher education. On one end, India has international quality schools with English as their primary language, excellent facilities and heavy donations and fees. On the other hand, there are the typical government schools with Hindi (or vernacular) as their primary mode of instruction and lack of training in proficiency in English, derisory resources and severe malfunctioning. Arguably, this divide between the privileged and the less privileged has seriously affected the social setup for higher education in India. This has had its implications on the employability of the graduates as they lack the 'transferable skills' when they move from schools to higher education.

5. Data Analysis

5.1. Massification of Education

In the context of India and Europe, it needs to be questioned whether

India really achieves the actual levels of massification and transformation in higher education to make collaboration a likelihood. Apparently, internalization would only be a remote possibility, and any number of bilateral relations would serve no purpose if the challenges were not addressed. In the 1st India-EU Summit in Lisbon, it was therefore said that shared values and aspirations would characterize the new strategic partnerships and multi-faceted cooperation in higher education. Apparently, Europe has actively pursued its Jean Monnet Program and Mundus Program for a higher externalization of European policies in higher education. Global distribution of talent and 'the knowledge economy' has been central to these policy initiatives. Europe has virtually opened a structural policy window to external opportunities in external relations. The critics, however, argue that the framework of interest in these policies fails to embrace higher education in particular.

One of the challenges for these policy initiatives is to make India more transparent through international collaborations, despite a fragmented Indian educational system. Similar to Europe's policy, India too is slowly inching towards increasing its scope of internalization, but there is an apparent disparity between the levels of internalization between the two entities. Europe successfully creates higher and better European University Alliances by enhancing competitiveness and visibility of global perspective. Europe is powerful in its strategic partnerships and agenda-setting processes compared to India. India's recent National Education Policy (NEP) works both ways. On the one hand, major global universities can come to India. On the other hand, Indian universities are being encouraged to establish their campuses in other countries. Still, there is an apparent disparity in the development of transferable skills, enhanced mobility and quality of higher education. Innovation and Research Exchange action, Global Fellowships under Horizon 2020 and Erasmus+ are highly successful in bringing Indian students and education staff to EU programmers. However, the problem is that there has been a 'shift' in Europe's strategy with higher education cooperation. Van Haaftan has argued that the EU's interests have slowly gained a more prominent position over joint mobility and shared mutual interest. Europe's rationale behind higher education cooperation is to access the world's best talent, knowledge and resources. It is for countries like India to 'expand out'.

5.2. Expand Out

'Expand out' is how India needs to respond to the evident challenges of collaboration for higher education. It relates to India's positioning on shared mutual interest, joint mobility and competence development. This is expected to prepare India for research-based curricula, which genuinely help

the country to attain its objectives with the 'massification of higher education'. Also, it is crucial to realize that collaboration for higher education must make education a mass rather than an elite experience.

Cross-border higher education needs to be examined through two lenses; one of the foreign institutions/ promoters and the second of the traditional domestic stakeholders. UNESCO addresses this dichotomy by stating that 'it is for all to find their own 'good' with globalization by framing policies and mechanisms that meet international standardization and are monitored and regulated by key aspects of licensing, registering and quality assurance mechanisms for both the providers and programmes. Most promoters would claim that such inclusions in cross-border higher education aim to help developing countries like India elevate the education level towards higher prosperity and development. Still, the reality is that 'prosperity' is the least that cross-border higher education programs have delivered; instead, profits have gained the most attention of the promoters. Altback has argued that 'the need will remain for level playing fields if cross-border higher education needs to meet the grounds on trade agreements. Economists also say that trade is mutually profitable only between two or more equal partners. In the case of education, this is not just the case. For example, the USA has exploited its educational advantage in recent years purely for economic gains. In 2001, the US spent only USD 2.4 billion on its students in foreign countries, while it earned USD 11.5 billion by exporting education services.

5.3. Components of Higher Education Business

Cross-border education has immense possibilities for profitability. Europe has mainly been successful with its 'franchising' model by exploiting a significant component of this form of business. However, one needs also to understand that the model has led to unethical power-play of education. There have been instances of professional fraud, financial corruption and distorted practices . OECD has frequently mentioned the malpractices in cross-border education that reflect the gravity of unethical conduct in this type of education. Mainly the non-binding international guidelines facilitate such malpractices between countries. Europe, too, has been a victim of this. There have been times when non-binding international guidelines superseded the individual country's authority to regulate the business. This is especially visible in four policy areas:

- Student/Learner's protection from the perils of qualifications of limited validity, low-quality provision and risks of misinformation

- Portability and validity of qualifications so that they be made

more transparent and readable for making them more significant globally

- Resurrecting a reliable, fair, coherent and transparent recognition procedure so that it puts little pressure on the mobile students

- Setting up accreditation agencies and quality assurance systems for intensifying bilateral cooperation between countries towards a greater mutual understanding

One of the most significant concerns must be addressed: "Who acknowledges and grants the authority to bestow the qualifications within the host nation and at home?" This is because one of the most critical issues that need to be answered is "Who allows the authority to offer the qualifications?"

In this regard, the role of the government becomes essential in the following areas:

- The provision of quality control and accreditation for domestic and international educational services.

- Procedures for regulation and licensing of providers located in other countries.

- Methods for Recognizing Previous Education and Training and Transferring Credits

- Procedures for obtaining financial support could encompass grants for operations, financial aid, and subsidies.

To promote its growth, the relevant authorities or governments in nations are recommending the establishment of a comprehensive regulatory structure for institutions of higher learning.

5.4. Problems with Internationalization

According to reports, the number of suppliers operating beyond international borders is increasing daily. Despite this expansion, there is a cause for worry that more than one-third of these schools are neither authorized nor recognized in their home nation. Consequently, most of these educational institutions either have an inferior standing or are not even recognized as being in the top division within their nation. The students are the ones who will have to deal with the repercussions, as neither the licensing for franchises nor the branch educational institutions will improve their opportunities for the future. We often witness situations where

students spend their last year in their nation of origin and remain there to secure jobs.

This issue, in which overseas suppliers in India have begun turning this enterprise into a one-sided business, has to be addressed by Europe as soon as possible. It is common knowledge that "in India, globalization of institutions of higher learning has achieved a business-like form, where academic principles have been forced to take a backseat." Several studies and reports support this argument. The "selling/ marketing of degrees" by non-recognized schools, and even by certain doubtful colleges of dubious standards, is the source of the issue at hand. No one can cite a single valid argument for the idea that foreign institutions should aim to attract students to pursue higher education outside of India. This is true both in principle and in practice.

Institutions of higher learning, both within and beyond the nation, must exercise extreme caution concerning any cross-border activities that may occur there. On the other hand, the laws are not explicitly stated or have exact definitions. Both the 1956 University Grants Commission (UGC) Act and 1987 All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) Act do not make it illegal for international institutions to conduct business in India. A famous scientist named CNR Rao was appointed to head the special committee established by the previous administration (the Ministry of Human Resource Development [HRD]). This committee's mission was to assist the Government of India (GoI) with the operations of foreign institutions within the nation. The HRD Ministry was in charge of this committee. This was done as part of the follow-up to the AIU recommendations from the 1999 All Indian Universities (AIU) guidelines.

6. Conclusion

Ideally, cross-border education should create a win-win situation for the domestic receivers and the foreign providers. This should be in anticipation of mutual benefits on both ends. However, it also needs to be realized that the measures cannot be the same as not every nation can respond in the same way as other countries that are better placed. Still, there has to be a reasonable return. This is missing in the present bilateral relations between Europe and India. The weak partner is apparently at a loss in this knowledge transmission. Exporting goods or services sounds more like a business than a fair trade. Therefore, the quality of cross-border provision must be clearly defined and followed in educational services. Most importantly, the international cross-border quality assurance standards and the national cross-border quality assurance must be framed near each other, with a principal focus on backgrounds and country priorities. One might conclude

that if the components of cross-border education between India and Europe are properly regularized, this must yield results on reciprocity and mutual recognition.

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NAVIGATING 'SHARP POWER': BUILDING DEMOCRATIC RESILIENCE THROUGH MEDIA LITERACY FOR INDIA'S ELECTIONS IN 2024

Durgesh Tripathi and Surbhi Tandon[1]

Abstract

India, one of the world's oldest civilizations and one of the world's youngest democracies, is preparing to hold general elections in 2024 to choose the members of the lower house of parliament. The media frequently refers to Indian elections as the largest democratic exercise in the world because of the magnitude of the electorate. 879 million eligible voters made up the electorate in the 2019 elections. However, most political parties in India are using web 2.0 tools for their campaigns, raises concerns about potential interference by "Sharp Powers" through deceptive information campaigns, fake news, and misinformation to undermine democracy. The International Forum for Democratic Studies at the National Endowment for Democracy coined the term "sharp power" to characterise how authoritarian governments exploit the internet to suppress political diversity and freedom of speech. Information is manipulated by such regimes to downplay the importance of democratic political systems. These nations, especially China and Russia, weaponize information and exploit ideas to undermine the attraction of democracies. An essential part of the arsenal utilised by such forces to suppress the political environment is fake news, misinformation, and disinformation. The American accusations that Russian hackers meddled in their 2016 presidential election and the power of the tweets that sparked attacks on Capitol Hill, a significant representation of the most stable democracy in the world, have already been felt by the rest of the world. The term "democratic recession" was coined by Larry Diamond to describe the declining public confidence in democratic institutions and systems. He asserts that authoritarian regimes are on the rise and that democracies are losing faith in their ability to compete with them in the realm of ideas, beliefs, policies, and norms. Therefore, media literacy is essential for every democracy to grow and progress. We must acknowledge the consequences of growing internet usage, and as a result, news media literacy should be a key ability for the populace to have

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in order to form educated opinions and make informed political decisions. The study examines the requirement for media literacy in democracies, particularly considering the exponential rise in fake news close to elections. The study examines how deceptive information campaigns can undermine confidence in democracies and democratic institutions, why media literacy appears to be the only safeguard against them now.

Keywords: Sharp Power, Media Literacy, Indian Elections 2024, Fake News, Misinformation

1. Introduction

The terms "hard power" and "soft power," which have been employed traditionally in international relations, have their origins in the Cold War era. Both topics have a long history in international politics and security. Nevertheless, political groups have long attempted to sway both allies and adversaries (Skoneczny & Cacko, 2021). According to John G. Stoessinger, who defines "state power" as "(...) the ability of a state to use its resources (...) in a way that will influence the behaviour of other states," such endeavours fall under this category.

The terms "hard power" and "soft power" were both created by American expert Joseph S. Nye, challenging the earlier and widely-accepted idea put forth by Zbigniew Brzezinski that views international relations as an interaction between three crucial factors: military might, economic hegemony, and soft power. While Nye described "hard power" as the ability to use geopolitical and economic force in international affairs as a threat and an incentive. The United States imposed economic penalties or China's military threats to its neighbouring nations are two examples of the apparent proof of the deployment of hard power. Hard power is the use of direct tactics to compel compliance from the target nations through economic and military might. Nye (2007) identifies three essential components of soft power as culture, political principles, and foreign policies. "Winning hearts and minds" are the essential concept that best describes the idea of soft power. Through a variety of approaches and procedures, it tries to increase the appeal of their cultural values on a broad scale, and frequently, these cultural values are propagated as universal values. Nye warns against confusing soft power with mass culture, claiming that it is a means for widely disseminating ideas and values associated with a specific culture. Soft power can be attained through a variety of non-state actors, such as the media, scientific communities, business chambers, the entertainment industry, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), among others. If an authoritarian regime has total control over these social entities, it could have serious repercussions for liberal democracies (Skoneczny & Cacko,

2021).

2. Origin and nature of the term 'Sharp Power'

Christopher Walker and Jessica Ludwig were the first to identify the phenomenon in which authoritarian regimes attempted to infiltrate the political environments of liberal democracies or targeted countries in order to discredit democratic institutions and values through manipulation and coercion, thereby enhancing their own attractiveness or image on the international stage (Skoneczny & Cacko, 2021). Walker and Ludwig first conceptualised the phenomenon and coined the term in their 2017 article "The Meaning of Sharp Power" and later elaborated on it in their 2018 article "How Sharp Power Threatens Soft Power." The right and wrong ways to respond to authoritarian influence" Both researchers noticed the phenomenon in the context of the 2014 Ukrainian Conflict.

Sharp power was also characterised as a strategy for 'political warfare' or 'influence operations' in a report published by the US National Endowment for Democracy.Sharp power, according to the report, is a strategy that "pierces, penetrates, or perforates the political and information environments in the targeted countries" (Cardenal et al., 2017). The report explains that the political strategy is based on manipulation and diversion rather than attraction or persuasion, making it a distinct opponent to the concept of'soft power' in international relations. However, the American expert Joseph S. Nye believes that Sharp Power is merely a new name for the term 'information warfare' and another scholar, Xin Liu, believes that it is neither a unique nor qualitatively novel phenomenon. According to her, sharp power is the imperfect combination and application of elements of both soft power and hard power. Scholars such as Skoneczny and Cacko (2021) acknowledge that Sharp Power is a recognised new term and phenomenon used by authoritarian regimes to undermine the social legitimacy of democratic institutions in targeted countries; however, they believe that information manipulation remains one of the most essential components of sharp power. Robert Rajczyk (2016) describes information warfare as a range of tactics used over time to communicate an agenda. An informational advantage over rivals or adversarial countries is sought through public diplomacy and other means of communication, such as shaping the perceptions of foreign audiences and encouraging conformity in a hostile society. Disinformation and false news are part of a larger pattern of hostile information campaigns and operations aimed at undermining trust in institutions crucial to a well-functioning democracy.

According to Walker (2018), "sharp power" is a novel term and strategy in international relations that thrives on censorship and information

manipulation and attempts to discredit and erode the credibility of independent institutions and democratic values. It attempts to restrict freedom of speech and expression in democracies and suppress the political climate. It is believed that such regimes seek to exacerbate the conflicts within societies, leading to increased polarisation and the destruction of harmony and consensus. Undermining the legitimacy of elections, which has a direct and significant impact on democratic norms, is an essential strategy. Walker (2018) asserts that Russia has persistently interfered in foreign elections in Europe and the United States in order to undermine the health and credibility of liberal and democratic regimes. Many believe that China has a history of political meddling in the Asia-Pacific region, particularly in Australia and New Zealand.

As they attempt to suppress the domain of ideas, sharp power poses a significant threat to democracies worldwide. In liberal democracies, they are targeting the primary socialisation agents that help citizens make sense of their world, such as the media, cultural organisations, publishing houses, and academia. According to a 2018 report by Benner, China has an extensive and complex set of influence tools that include both overt and covert operations that specifically penetrate across three important arenas in a society: political and economic elites, media and public opinion, and civil society and academia. The report elaborates that China takes advantage of the unilateral character of the openness of liberal democracies, while authoritarian regimes attempt to control the narratives about their own countries and remain insulated from foreign media. Sharp power consists of offensive and aggressive actions initiated and sustained by authoritarian regimes or states that employ soft elements and instruments to undermine the reputation of a country or political system and destabilise its socio-political system.

3. Reasons for Rise of Sharp Power

The rise of networked societies in modern times, accompanied by increased Internet penetration and accessibility, presents an opportunity for authoritarian regimes to stifle the public image through information and communication technology (Skoneczny & Cacko, 2021). Citizens' increased reliance on information and communication technologies for interpersonal communication makes it feasible and possible to reach a large audience with a specific message via social networking sites, discussion forums, and message boards, among others, at a low cost and while maintaining the source's anonymity. Increasing the effectiveness of sharp power methods are factors such as the anonymity of the aggressor, the low cost of conducting information warfare, and the use of technology such as 'bots' to disseminate the message widely. According to Jackson (2016), tech-savvy

and digitally connected citizens who are increasingly dependent on social networking sites to access information and news have contributed to the rise of such a power, including the algorithms that drive social media platforms, which also play a key role in analysing users' emotions, prejudices, and biases, thereby facilitating the dissemination of misleading content or disinformation.

According to Walker (2018), there has been a significant and visible rise in authoritarian regimes around the world, from Hungary to Turkey, including the resilience and dynamism exhibited by existing major powers, such as Russia and China. He believes that both traditional authoritarian regimes are gaining momentum as they extend their influence beyond their own borders, thereby posing a threat to democracies and independent institutions. Walker (2018) has enumerated three causes for the emergence of sharp power in the modern era:

1. Democratic Recession is a term coined by Larry Diamond, who believes that democratic traditions and governments have lost credibility and legitimacy due to the resurgence of authoritarian regimes. Diamond believes that they are competing with democracies in the domain of ideas and opinion formation, whereas democracies are not providing stiff opposition to the influence and information operations being conducted.

2. Autocratic powers have increased their efforts to undermine the ideals, principles, and standards of democratic norms through manipulation, deceit, and even censorship of the liberal and open ambiance of democratic nation-states. Using digital technologies, they tend to dominate narratives and information to create favourable external political and cultural influences for themselves.

3. The hybrid state-capitalist systems of Russia and China are advantageous for harnessing the potential of sharp power because they use their economic affluence to compel others to play by their rules, while isolating their own countries and permitting limited freedom of expression to various social agents. This is especially pertinent for media companies and technological giants, which must comply with the laws of these nations in order to operate within their systems.

4. Strategies and Tactics utilized by Authoritarian Regimes

Traditionally the strategies and techniques employed for Information warfare have been hacking/cyber-attacks on governmental websites, making sensitive information about government officials or military secrets public or bringing such sensitive information into public domain, utilizing social networking sites for trolling particular individuals or organizations (it

may involve using bots for trolling), creating, funding and nurturing pressure groups, opinion-makers, news makers, creating content to manipulate the image of the targeted country through mass media which can be both traditional or digital mediums and in extreme circumstances it may even involve destroying the telecommunication infrastructure or harming the optic fibres.

However, some of the novel and unique tactics and the context for utilizing Sharp Power are:

Flip the Script Strategy: On the one hand, autocratic regimes use manipulation and coercion techniques to disregard democratic values, whereas on the other hand, they try to dictate the narratives on their own controversial issues using digital tools and technologies. Sharp Power encompasses neutralising independent and credible democratic institutions, thereby having repercussions for a free and open political environment in liberal democracies. An example of such a strategy was reflected in an investigation conducted by the BBC in October, 2019. The report said that the edits on the Wikipedia pages discussing the 1989 Tiananmen Square incident had more than 1000 edits, which do not seem to be organic or random in nature. These edits tried to showcase the massacre as "the June 4 incident" or attempts to quell the counter revolutionary riots. The BBC report also indicated that articles related to Taiwan have been edited to showcase the country as a part of the People's Republic of China. Thus, the "flip the script strategy aims to change the narratives and discourses related to the controversial issues faced by the autocratic regimes themselves, such as human rights, Tibet, Taiwan, and Uighurs, among others.

Penetrating "CAMP" through institutions and alliances: Walker (2018) believes that autocratic regimes penetrate and perforate the CAMP (culture, academia, media, and publishing) sectors in a democracy. Shar Powers are conscious and aware that organisations and institutions involved in these 'CAMP' sectors are open and accessible, thereby becoming easy and ripe targets for the sharp powers to be utilised to stifle socio-political environments. An example of the setting up of more than 500 global networks of Confucius Institutes, especially on university campuses across the globe. The USA has more than 100 such institutions, among them those located in Europe, Africa, and the Asia-Pacific. These institutions are utilising soft power elements to make Chinese language and cultural aspects more acceptable on the campuses of various democracies, however, these institutions are portrayed as a corollary of France's Alliance Francaise or Germany's Goethe Institut, but the nature and the funding structure of the Confucius Institutes are different. The staffers at Confucius Institutes make efforts to block debates, discussions on sensitive topics like Taiwan or Tibet

on these campuses, thus, trying to control the realm of ideas and the spread of information. They may be utilising the alliance with the university campuses to exert influence and force them to give up on such projects that discredit or bring disrepute to their own country.

Pretext of Information Sovereignty: In the name of information sovereignty, autocratic regimes control the dissemination of information in their country's cyberspace and even legitimise their technology controls. An example of this is when Cambridge University Press in August 2017 decided to remove about 300 articles from China Quarterly that were being accessed from Chinese websites as China threatened to remove access to their website if such articles persisted. Even Springer Nature removed articles in September, 2017 that dealt with issues like Taiwan or Tibet. Though Sharp powers are manipulating the discourse outside their borders, they have learned methods and strategies to control the information realm in their native country.

5. Undermining the Credibility of Elections in a democracy

According to Skoneczny and Cacko (2021), one of the most important strategies employed by sharp powers is the creation of an environment in which the social legitimacy of one of the most significant and visible democratic activities, i.e. elections, is undermined or degraded in the minds of the citizens. The authors believe that undermining the credibility of the elections is an effective strategy, particularly if one can persuade others that the outcome of such a crucial political and democratic engagement was fabricated. The methods described may include inciting social protests denying election results, cyber-attacks or hacking the election infrastructure, utilising the critical opinions expressed by proxy social agents such as NGOs to discredit various political actors, including political parties and candidates, spreading fake news and disinformation campaigns, and even attacks by the media that propagate the agenda of the manipulator states.

According to the US Department of Justice's 2019 report on the investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 presidential elections, there were indications that Russia interfered in those elections and supported Donald Trump over Hillary Clinton. In addition, the report indicated that Russia was attempting to disseminate propaganda against the American political system.

While the Facebook report titled "Threat Report: The State of Influence Operations 2017-2020," which was published in May 2021, acknowledged that Russia remains the largest disinformation transmitter in the world, including its extensive attempts to interfere in the 2016 Presidential Elections and the Brexit referendum, the report claims that since 2017,

Russia has worked to spread false information in more than 50 countries. These deceptive strategies utilised social media and black public relations aggressively.

6. Indian Elections, 2019 and Fake News

Due to India's large electorate, the media frequently refers to its elections as the world's largest democratic exercise. There were 879 million eligible voters in the 2019 general election. The elections were conducted in seven phases between April 11 and May 19, 2023. On May 23, 2019, the election results were announced, and the incumbent government and national party Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) won by a landslide. Mr. Narendra Modi, the incumbent prime minister, returned to power with 303 seats in the lower house of parliament, securing a second term. However, the use of web 2.0 tools for campaigning by most political parties in India gives rise to the fear of intervention by the 'Sharp Powers' via malicious information campaigns, false news, and disinformation to sow discord and scepticism in democracies.

In April 2019, the BBC website published an article titled "India election 2019: The debunked fake news that keeps coming back" Examples of popular misinformation pieces that continue to be shared on social networking sites and WhatsApp included: Mrs. Sonia Gandhi, the principal opposition leader for the Indian National Congress, is wealthier than Her Majesty the Queen of England; Mr. Narendra Modi, the incumbent leader and public face of the Bhartiya Janta Party for the position of prime minister, has not completed education beyond tenth grade, despite holding both undergraduate and graduate degrees; Mr. Narendra Modi has been named the best prime minister in the world by UNESCO, along with rumours that prosthetic fingers will be used to vote in the upcoming election. Even fictitious polls conducted by reputable media outlets, such as the BBC, foretold the BJP's victory. The article asserts that widespread dissemination of misinformation and false news is because many political parties themselves place such information in the public domain to gain traction, algorithms encourage algorithm bias, and we hold the belief that "seeing is believing."

The University of Oxford's Oxford Internet Institute published a report on the prevalence of false news and misinformation during the world's largest democratic exercise, the 2019 Indian Elections, on May 13, 2019. The report called the trends regarding the prevalence of junk news "disturbing" and stated that the study is crucial because the number of Indians accessing social media for news and information has surpassed the number of Indians accessing print media, an industry that is prospering in

India's context. The study examined 130 public Facebook pages and 116 public WhatsApp groups associated with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the Indian National Congress (INC), the Samajwadi Party (SP), and the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP). The report revealed that approximately 28% of the news links shared on the pro-BJP Facebook pages were for fake news and information, while 21% of the INC Facebook pages exhibited the same behaviour. A public WhatsApp group associated with the BJP disseminated one-third of the divisive and conspiracy-fuelling visual content, particularly photographs. A comparable analysis of the INC revealed that the principal opposition party held 28.5% of the vote. The report made no mention of the impact and influence of such a high prevalence of misinformation and false news on the 2019 election results. Especially in modern democracies, it is essential to comprehend the significant function social networking sites play in the formation of public opinion.

7. Building Democratic Resilience through Media Literacy

Walker, Kalathil, and Ludwig (2020) contend that the openness of the democracies has been turned against them, a concept and proposition that was realised after years of material and political investment in most liberal democracies. Sharp powers cause damage on the social fabric by discouraging pluralism, silencing independent voices, including those of institutions, and attempting to neutralise any sense of accountability. The academicians argue that protecting democracies from the assault of sharp powers requires creative thought and a long-term approach. Walker, Kalathil, and Ludwig (2020) have provided the following recommendations for strengthening democratic resilience:

It seeks to recognise the strengths of a democracy and strengthen the credibility, role, and integrity of civic institutions by bolstering democratic principles. In the case of India, it could be the Election Commission of India, a constitutional body whose powers, functions, and responsibilities are derived directly from the Indian constitution itself.

Autocratic regimes flourish on divide-and-conquer strategies; therefore, it is necessary to develop and defend shared values and the institutions that represent such unity. The isolation and targeting of institutions, including university publications, by strong powers should be minimised.

New expertise must be cultivated in order to comprehend and assess the challenges posed by non-democratic regimes. They should build local capacity to monitor and analyse activities with local actors. Experts in specialised technologies from different nations could collaborate and establish joint initiatives.

In order to meet the technological challenge, there must be more debates about the development, control, and use of technology by authoritarian governments. State-sponsored investments and initiatives should be robust in order to meet technological challenges.

According to Pew Research (Wike et al., 2016; Raine and Anderson, 2017), a variety of factors, including digitization and commoditization, have contributed to a global increase in distrust of media and institutions in democracies. It has caused global fluctuations in the level of trust. Due to the unequal distribution of power in the hands of political elites as well as established business houses and the environment where misinformation spreads easily, there is an increase in mistrust of the information provided by the media and institutions in western democracies (Dahlgreen, 2018; Fisher, 2018). Khan (2019) argues in his research paper Negotiating (dis)trust to Advance Democracy through Media and Information Literacy that media and information literacy may not only contribute to raising awareness and sensitivity regarding media choices and information consumption, but it may also strengthen and empower political stability. Khan has utilised the UNESCO Media and Information Policy and Strategy Guideline to illustrate a framework for empowering citizens and restoring faith and confidence in institutions that maintain democratic norms and standards.

Rising citizen mistrust poses a grave threat to democracies, and media and information literacy can nurture independent media and an enlightened citizenry capable of making well-informed decisions for the greater good. Citizen's ought to be capable of coordinating their knowledge, media messages, and actions (Bradshaw and Howard, 5; Vaidyanathan, 2018). To discuss and debate ideas and issues, they would require information from multiple sources (Vaidhyanathan, 2018).

Media literacy enables citizens to critically participate in and meaningfully contribute to debates and discussions within a civil society, as well as develop opinions based on reliable sources (Hobbs, 2013). However, citizens alone lack the capacity to assess risks, challenges, and threats, necessitating additional institutional support systems from reliable sources (Bulger and Davison, 2018), necessitating significant contributions from state and non-state actors, including state and corporate sectors, for training and awareness campaigns (Bulger and Davison, 2018).

UNESCO coined the term "media and information literacy" in 2007 in response to the rise of digital culture and the shifting media landscape. It is determined to promote freedom of expression and broaden the scope of knowledge societies through a meaningful expansion (Wilson, 2012). Some of the key components of media literacy include: responsible

comprehension and sharing of the materials, information, or ideas; analysing the media messaging, i.e., checking the source, author, purpose, as well as the credibility and quality of the content; developing competencies to create media for expressing opinions and ideas from diverse perspectives; and reflecting on one's own conduct from an ethical standpoint and the social responsibility that one must uphold. Hobbs (2016), on the other hand, has emphasised the critical and reflective aspects of media literacy and believes that the concept can help revitalise civic life in democracies.

Due to the development of networked societies and the increasing digitization of our lives, UNSECO believes that media and information literacy should be considered a basic human right. It believes that media and information literacy can considerably contribute to the protection of freedom of expression, press freedom, and information freedom. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) believes that media and information literacy as a human right would not only promote freedom of expression, but also contribute to development and good governance. It believes that this framework would align with Sustainable Development Goal 16, which relates to harmony, justice, and robust institutions.

8. Conclusion:

In conclusion, as India prepares for its 2024 general elections, it confronts the challenge of preserving the integrity of its democratic process in the face of potential interference from "Sharp Powers." China and Russia have demonstrated a propensity for exploiting web 2.0 tools to manipulate information and undermine democratic systems. The weaponization of false news, misinformation, and disinformation poses a substantial threat to the political climate and public confidence in democratic institutions. In this light, media literacy arises as an indispensable instrument for the growth and development of any democracy. It is essential to acknowledge the repercussions of widespread Internet usage and to prioritise news media literacy as a critical skill for the population. Media literacy empowers individuals to make well-informed political decisions by equipping them with the ability to evaluate information critically and develop informed opinions. To protect the democratic process, stakeholders must prioritise programmes that increase media literacy at all societal levels. Educational institutions, media organisations, civil society, and the government must work together to develop comprehensive media literacy programmes. By doing so, India and other democracies can strengthen their electoral processes, maintain public trust, and combat the influence of "Sharp Powers" attempting to undermine the appeal of democratic ideals. In conclusion, media literacy is an essential pillar of democratic resilience and

a defence against misleading information campaigns.

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AN INDIC PERSPECTIVE FOR IMPROVING BEHAVIOURS WITH GUIDED MEDITATION ALONG WITH AN AWARENESS OF COLOURS

Sunita Sunil Wadhawan and Madhusudhan Penna[1]

Abstract

Behavioural Science is concerned with human actions and cognitive processes hence the role and function of the human mind cannot be forgotten. Meditation is an accepted contemplative practice as a means of quieting, focussing and transforming the mind. Colours invade life and each colour has a particular significance and electromagnetic wavelength that impact mental functioning.

The main objective of the study was to give a Indic perspective for improving mental and emotional health to improve behaviour. The two factors used were guided meditation along with an awareness of colours as an adjunct therapy. The meditation technique (i.e. MIRT - Mind Imagery Technique)was a unique Indian one used with colourful forms of Vishvarupa (i.e. Cosmic form of the Divine) and ShriYantra (i.e. geometrical forms indicating Divine power) to have a soothing effect on the mind. The research study was quantitative based with a sample of 225 respondents to study the interplay of mediation and colours.

The overall research finding was that meditation enhances our mental health. Frequent practice of meditation coupled with colour therapy acts as a booster for an individual's mental and emotional health. The two factors used provided an Indic perspective to psychology and in turn to the field of behavioural science. The opportunity to use and exploit both mediation and colours jointly as scientific tools for facilitating desired behavioural outcomes should be exploited.

JEL classification: B11,B3,C14,D91,G41,I-11

Keywords: Meditation, Chromo therapy, Psychology, Behavioural Science, Yoga.

1. Introduction

Behavioural Science is concerned with human actions. It is a cross-disciplinary, open-minded field which cross-fertilises and uses insights and methods from a variety of fields and disciplines. The insights can come from

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streams such as cognitive psychology, biology, neuroscience and even behavioural economics. As behavioural sciences explore the cognitive processes the role and function of the human mind cannot be forgotten.

In the world of today perceived or real threats or uncertainty or the unknown take a toll on mental health of humans irrespective of age, colour and nationality. Meditation is looked at as a Complimentary and Alternative Medicine to deal with stress triggered disbalances in emotional health which have become part and parcel of human life. Meditation is an umbrella term, which subsumes a huge number of diverse practices. However, it could be sufficient to state that meditation is a contemplative practice, engaged in across various religious and spiritual traditions as a means of quieting, focussing and transforming the mind. There are a lot of different types of meditation which take the support of soothing musical tones, chants or mantras, visualisations of scenery and forms, aromas or fragrances.

Life is made of different colours and science informs us that each matter when it reflects the external energy from light is perceived as colourful. Newton's experiments of passing light through a prism lead to the identification of the ROYGBIV colours(red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet) that make up the visible spectrum. The visible spectrum is the narrow portion within the electromagnetic spectrum that can be seen by the human eye. The cells in our eyes called cones are sensitive to the wavelengths found in the visible spectrum and allow human beings to see all the colours of the rainbow. Each colour has a particular significance and electromagnetic wavelength. In the Indian Yogic tradition, there is a big emphasis on colour and its association with the energy centres or chakras that run from the base of the spine to the crown of the head. Each chakra plays a pivotal role in our physical, mental, and spiritual well-being.Interestingly the energy centres have an associated colour that corresponds to the rainbow colours.

The researcher was inspired to conduct the study from her personal experience of the benefits of a meditation technique (i.e. the Mind Imagery Technique (MIRT)), pioneered by leading and world renowned Indian Yoga Institution (i.e.Swami Vivekananda Yoga Anusandhana Samsthana (SVYASA) coupled with her passion for visual arts and painting.

2. Review of literature

The aim of literature review is to summarize and synthesize the arguments and ideas of existing knowledge in a particular field. From this review it surfaced that there were many studies on the impact of meditation on mental and emotional health and well-being and also studies on the impact of colour therapy on health. A sample glimpse from the many

literature reviews is given below.

From the literature review, the researcher got a precise clarity about the research gap, research question and the research methodology that could be adopted in this study. The literature review helped the researcher to frame the topic of the study by considering whether there is an joint awareness of two approaches towards health i.e. meditation and colour therapy.

2.1. Joseph Thenet. Al. (2007)

Red light stimulates the sympathetic nervous system, and white and blue light the parasympathetic nervous system, according to research. Some colours stimulate hormone production, while others hinder it. Colours can also affect certain disorders. A room with red windows alleviated measles and chickenpox symptoms. Flashing bright and colourful lights treat depression and pain. These treatments contributes to improving brain neurochemical production. Scientists believe that the brain responds differently to different colour frequencies. This approach can often solve sleep issues in a day. Treatments take one to two weeks to change the mood.

2.2. Hye-KyeongKo et. Al.(2019)

The study examined stress and developed a plan to reduce stress by utilising smartphone colours used for lengthy periods. This study created a smartphone-based colour therapy system that measures user stress and gives appropriate colour therapy. The service-based mobile app was designed to be user-friendly. The established emotion colour therapy system will need to be improved by studying stress improvement and system efficiency in future investigations. Intelligent emotion systems that leverage non-smartphone IoT devices must also be studied.

2.3. Olga Klimecki et.Al. (2019)

While meditation may be a viable intervention for healthy ageing, research with high sample sizes, active control groups, and long-term follow-up are rare. Mindfulness-based therapies frequently do not outperform active control groups in terms of psychological health and well-being. Future research should also incorporate biological measures in addition to self-reports, and examine the influence of meditation based training on elderly people.

2.4. DomiceleJonauskaite et.Al.(2020)

A commercial relaxation-through-colour regimen reduced stress and anxiety in the study. Colour-blind subjects had the same impact. These

reductions occurred within and between sessions, and both conventional and reduced routines showed within-session decreases. Eliminating colour terms in the accompanying text could test whether colour visualisation could explain our observed reductions. Consider other explanations. Consider music, guided breathing, and body awareness. It would be useful to compare colour-based therapy to other mind-body interventions (e.g., mindfulness, guided imagery, meditation, progressive muscular relaxation, etc. 57) or to changes in psychological states over time.

2.5. Dr. Rakesh Guptaet. Al. (2021)

The study examined colour therapy in different cultures. Colour therapy reduces physical and psychological diseases, improves working conditions, industry, creativity, and medical and hospital environments. Colour therapy has many benefits, but an improper application can harm it. Colour therapy may only be temporary, according to some doctors and psychologists. However, colour therapy as a supplement may promote mental health and well-being.

2.6. Gerhard Blascheiet. Al.(2021)

Vacationers who practised meditation at their own discretion had stronger medium-term increases in mindfulness, mental and emotional well-being than vacationers who did not practise meditation. The differences between daily meditation retreats and vacations with only a few hours of meditation practise each week were negligible. Decreased weariness and increased well-being ten weeks following leisure episodes with meditation were compared to "ordinary vacations" without meditation. Theoretically, this validated prior findings on the benefits of mindfulness training for mental health. Consistent with the findings, incorporating meditation into vacations may assist to prolong the favourable effects of vacations on fatigue and well-being.

2.7 Chuloh Jung et al. (2022)

This article examined the association between resident bedroom colour preference, utilizing colour images as stimuli, and depressive symptoms using physiological and psychological reactions. The Seniors' Happiness Centre's colour planning considered the psychological and physiological sensitivities of elderly UAE residents 65 or older. The Geriatric Depression Scale and mood alteration (GDS) test divided participants into groups A and B. Psychological and physiological reactions to the two groups' single-color and twelve color-matching stimuli were measured and analysed. Twelve colour-matching models were created from one achromatic colour

(Neutral Grey), single and contrast colours of warm colours (Yellow, Red, and Yellow/Red), and cool colours (Blue and Green/Yellow). The semantic response to the colour picture was mediocre. A five-point Likert scale was used to quantify and examine the prefrontal cortex's EEG alpha wave asymmetry value.

3. Objective of the Research study

The main objective of the study was to give a new perspective for improving mental and emotional health to improve behaviour. The two factor to be used were guided meditation along with an awareness of colours as an adjunct therapy.

Meditation, the essence of which is now spread worldwide, Christian tradition too is believed to have originated from India with its roots essentially embedded in the Hindu philosophical system of Yoga. Meditation today is a global concept that is being adopted for its wide ranging implications in mental development/enhancement. Mediators experience calmness, more enjoyment in life, empathy and better acceptance of self and others. As a tool of psychology meditation can said to be a key factor in behavioural science.

The meditation technique (i.e. MIRT - Mind Imagery Technique) used by the researcher for this purpose of the study was a unique Indian one developed by Swami Vivekananda Yoga Anusandhana Samsthana (SVYASA), Bangaluru. The MIRT meditation technique was with the use of forms like Vishvarupa (i.e. Cosmic form of the Divine) and ShriYantra(i.e. geometrical forms indicating Divine power) but these forms were made colourful with the used of various colours as an adjunct to meditation.

Colours surround us everywhere and many industries use colours in their design logos to attract or influence people in some way. Colours can be interpreted by their general occurrence, mental association, direct association, objective and subjective impressions. Colours are also gaining popularity due to the development of psychosomatic medicine. Colours used as chromotherapy cannot be ignored since they have a very soothing effect on the mind and has effects on relaxation. It can be noted that in the Indian Yogic tradition the above colours are associated with the Energy Centres or Chakras located on the spine as follows:

Red colour with the Root Chakra(Muladhara)

Orange colour with the Sacral Chakra(Svadhishthana)

Yellow colour with the Solar Plexus Chakra(Manipura)

Green colour with the Heart Chakra(Anahata) and

Blue colour with the Throat Chakra(Vishuddhi)

After reviewing the literature and research gap, the researcher strived to conduct the study to address the following objectives :

Objective 1: To study the relationship between the awareness of meditation and the awareness of colour therapy among the respondents.

Objective 2: To study the relationship between the frequency of meditation and the impact on mental and emotional health due to colour therapy among the respondents.

Objective 3: To study the awareness among respondents for each colour used in the therapy specially colours Red, Orange, Yellow, Green and Blue which are used in meditation therapy to improve mental and emotional health.

4. Research Methodology

The research study was quantitative study based on primary data. A sample of 225 respondents was obtained for the present study. During the study although images and forms where shared in the process of meditation various colours were displayed in these images and forms. The colourful imagery was intended to create balance and calmness which further strengthens overall health and well-being. There is energy flow and there could be a possibility that the nervous system gets alert and stimulated with these colours, and they may have an impact on mental health direct or indirectly.

The questionnaire method was used for collection of primary data. Data was analysed using the SPSS software and the Friedman, chi-square test, ANOVA & F-test, and correlation test were applied to test the hypothesis.

In the analysis of primary data, respondents were classified according to their demographics, such as gender, experience, and qualification of the respondent.

The information on the classification of data is presented in Table 1. Table 1 indicates that from a total of 225 respondents, 70 were male and 155 were female. For experience, there were 36 respondents with up to 30 years of experience, while 31 respondents were from 31 to 40 years old. There were 64 respondents with experience between 41 to 50 years and 94 respondents with above 50 years of experience. It also indicated that 14 respondents were undergraduate, 102 were graduate, 16 were post-graduate and the remaining 93 had professional qualifications.

Table 1 Classification of data

Demographics		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Female	155	68.9
	Male	70	31.1
Experience	Up to 30 years	36	16.0
	31 to 40 years	31	13.8
	41 to 50 years	64	28.4
	Above 50 years	94	41.8
Qualification	Undergraduate	14	6.2
	Graduate	102	45.3
	Post-graduate	16	7.1
	Professional	93	41.3

Source: Author's own

5. Research study and analysis

5.1. Research study on Objective 1:

To study the relationship between the awareness of meditation and the awareness of colour therapy among the respondents.

Null Hypothesis H01A: There is no significant difference in the awareness of meditation and the awareness of colour therapy.

Alternate Hypothesis H11A: There is a significant difference in the awareness of meditation and the awareness of colour therapy.

To test the above null hypothesis, F-test was used. The results are as follows.

ANOVA					
Table 2 Awareness of Colour therapy					
Between Groups	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	p-value
Within Groups	10083.871	3	3361.290	9.993	.000
Total	74335.685	221	336.361		
	84419.556	224			

Source: Author's own

Interpretation: The above table indicated that the calculated p-value is 0.000 and less than the standard p-value of 0.05. Therefore, F-test is rejected, the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternate hypothesis is accepted.

Conclusion: There is a significant difference in the awareness of meditation and colour therapy.

Findings: To understand the finding of the hypothesis, the mean scores were obtained and presented in the following table.

Descriptive

Table 3 Awareness of Colour therapy

Awareness of Meditation	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Not aware	3	33.3333	13.33333
Partly aware	46	36.2319	16.66828
Mostly Aware	98	39.1837	18.81398
Completely Aware	78	51.9658	18.77516
Total	225	42.9333	19.41322

Source: Author's own

The above table indicates the mean score of awareness of colour therapy by awareness of meditation. 33.33%of respondents were unaware, while 51.96% were completely aware of the therapy.

Conclusion: As awareness of colour therapy increases the awareness of meditation also increases.

Null Hypothesis H_{01B}: There is no impact among the respondents on the awareness of meditation and the awareness of colour therapy.

Alternate Hypothesis H_{11B}: There is an impact among the respondents on the awareness of meditation and the awareness of colour therapy.

For the testing of the null hypothesis, Pearson's correlation test was applied. The results are as follows.

Table 4 Correlations

		Awareness of Meditation	Awareness of Colour therapy
Awareness of Meditation	Pearson Correlation	1	.319**
	p-value		.000
	N	225	225
Awareness of Colour therapy	Pearson Correlation	.319**	1
	p-value	.000	
	N	225	225

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

Source: Author's own

Interpretation: Above results for a sample of 225 responses used for analysis indicated that Pearson's correlation value between the awareness of meditation and the awareness of colour therapy is 0.319. The corresponding p-value is 0.000, less than the standard p-value of 0.05. Therefore, the correlation test is rejected. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted.

Conclusions: There is an impact among the respondents on the

awareness of meditation and the awareness of colour therapy.

Findings: The awareness of meditation of the respondents has a significant relationship with the awareness of colour therapy. The result implies that if the awareness of meditation increases, the awareness of colour therapy will also improve.

5.2. Research study on Objective 2:

To study the relationship between the frequency of meditation and the impact on mental and emotional health due to colour therapy among the respondents.

Null Hypothesis H_{02A}: There is no significant difference in the frequency of meditation and the impact of colour therapy on mental and emotional health.

Alternate Hypothesis H_{12A}: There is a significant difference in the frequency of meditation and the impact of colour therapy on mental and emotional health.

To test the above null hypothesis, F-test was used. The results are as follows.

ANOVA

Table 5 Impact of colour therapy on mental and emotional health

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	p-value
Between Groups	64775.363	4	16193.841	54.284	.000
Within Groups	65630.192	220	298.319		
Total	130405.556	224			

Source: Author's own

Interpretation: The above table indicates that the calculated p-value is 0.000. It is less than the standard p-value of 0.05. Therefore, F-test is rejected, hence null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted.

Conclusion: There is a significant difference in the frequency of meditation and the impact of colour therapy on mental and emotional health.

Findings: To understand the finding of the hypothesis, the mean scores were obtained and presented in the following table.

Descriptive

Table 6 indicates the mean score of frequency of meditation by the impact of colour therapy on mental and emotional health. 19.71%of respondents do not at all do meditation while 66.66% always do. The

conclusion is as the frequency of meditation increases the impact on mental and emotional health due to colour therapy also increases.

Table 6 Impact of colour therapy on mental and emotional health

Frequency of meditation	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Not at all	52	19.712	19.3880
Rarely	27	27.778	14.4338
Sometimes	62	38.710	18.4865
Mostly	51	57.843	15.4031
Always	33	66.667	16.1374
Total	225	41.444	24.1282

Source: Author's own

Null Hypothesis H_{02B}: There is no impact among the respondents on the frequency of meditation and the impact on mental and emotional health due to colour therapy.

Alternate Hypothesis H_{12B}: There is an impact among the respondents on the frequency of meditation and the impact on mental and emotional health due to colour therapy.

To test the above null hypothesis, Pearson's correlation test was applied. The results are as follows.

Table 7 Correlations

		Frequency of Meditation	Impact of colour therapy on health
Frequency of Meditation	Pearson Correlation	1	.696**
	p-value		.000
	N	225	225
Impact of colour therapy on health	Pearson Correlation	.696**	1
	p-value	.000	
	N	225	225

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

Source: Author's own

Interpretation: Above results for a sample of 225 responses used for analysis indicated that Pearson's correlation value between the frequency of meditation and the impact of colour therapy on mental and emotional health is 0.696. The corresponding p-value is 0.000. It is less than the standard p-value of 0.05. Therefore, the correlation test is rejected. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternate hypothesis is accepted.

Conclusions: There is an impact among the respondents on the frequency of meditation and the impact on mental and emotional health due to colour therapy.

Findings: The frequency of meditation of the respondents has a significant positive relationship with the impact on mental and emotional health due to colour therapy. This implies that if the frequency of meditation increases, the respondents' emotional health will improve due to colour therapy.

5.3. Research study on Objective 3:

To study the awareness among respondents for each colour used in the therapy.

Null Hypothesis H_{03}: There is no significant awareness of each colour used in the colour therapy.

Alternate Hypothesis H_{13}: There is a significant awareness of each colour used in the colour therapy.

To test the above null hypothesis, Friedman's test was used. The results are as follows.

Table 8 Test Statistics(a)

N	225
Chi-Square	6.417
Df	4
p-value	.170

Source: Author's own

a. Friedman Test

Interpretation: The above results indicate that the calculated p-value is 0.170. It is greater than the standard p-value of 0.05. Therefore, Friedman's test is accepted. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted, and the alternate hypothesis is rejected.

Conclusion: There is no significant awareness of each colour used in colour therapy.

Findings: To understand the findings of the hypothesis, mean ranks were obtained for awareness of each colour and presented in the following table.

Table 9 Ranks

	Mean Rank
Awareness Red Colour	2.88
Awareness Orange Colour	2.87
Awareness Yellow Colour	3.03
Awareness Green Colour	3.13
Awareness Blue Colour	3.10

Source: Author's own

The above tables indicate that the mean rank for awareness of the green colour used in therapy was 3.03 and for awareness of the orange colour was 2.87, implying there is no significant difference between the mean ranks. The conclusion is there is equal awareness of each colour used in colour therapy.

Emotions greatly influence human behaviour and specific colours can elicit specific reactions. In the context of mental and emotional health, colours blue and green are cooling, relaxing, releasing stress, balancing and minimizing the thoughts. Whereas warm colours like red, yellow, orange stimulate the system, excite the visionary nerves and create impulses that increase the thought flow, blood flow with the stimulation. For example, in case of a depressed or sad practitioner lacking in energy, and with heaviness, lethargy or inertia, the stimulation with orange, yellow and red colours can change / re-charge the mind, mood and mental frame work. But in case there is too much of excitement, hyperactivity, anxiousness, overthinking over stimulation, the colours blue and green can play a role in pacifying, relaxing, easing emotional imbalances. This is the magic of colours and its awesomeness which can be used by all.

6. Conclusions

As a key element of behavioural sciences the cognitive processes and the functioning of the human mind has to be considered. Meditation is an age-long spiritual practice traced to the Indian sub-continent and now known worldwide for its inherent ability, effectiveness and utility that span varied dimensions like physical, emotional, spiritual, mental, social in a human being. Meditation practices for clinical, mental, and emotional health impacts behaviours and actions. Colours are gaining popularity due to the development of psychosomatic medicine and colours used as chromotherapy cannot be ignored since they have a very soothing effect on the mind and has effects on relaxation.

The present research focused on identifying the awareness of colour therapy with meditators. The study's findings were that respondents with low awareness of meditation also had less awareness of meditation therapy. The respondents who were aware of meditation were also aware of colour therapy. According to respondents, regular meditation practices significantly positively impact mental and emotional health. The overall research finding was that reason is that meditation enhances our mental health and frequent practice of meditation coupled with colour therapy acts as a booster for an individual's mental and emotional health. The respondents equally were aware of each colour such as red, orange, yellow, green and blue that are frequently used in the colour therapy. An awareness

of colour therapy is low and it needs to be substantially improved.

The two-factor used in the study i.e. guided meditation along with an awareness of colours as an adjunct therapy provide an Indic perspective to psychology and in turn to the field of behavioural science. The opportunity to use and exploit both mediation and colours jointly as scientific tools for facilitating desired behavioural outcomes should be exploited.

Acknowledgment

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CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

The International Interdisciplinary Scientific Conference
Social Discourse in Challenging Times
The Conference is organized within the implementation of the project
Overcoming Digital Divide in Europe and Southeast Asia (ODDEA)

Project 101086381
Call: HORIZON-MSCA-2021-SE-01-1

Program
Date: May 18th – 19th 2023
Venue: University of Economics in Bratislava, Dolnozemská cesta 1, 852 35, Bratislava, Slovakia
Room: Meeting Room 5B26 / 5B19 / Hybrid via MS Teams, 5th floor, building of the Faculty of National Economy
Contact persons: Dr. Eva Sirakovová; e-mail: eva.sirakovova@euba.sk, phone: +421 910 569 442

Program: Thursday, May 18th, 2023

PLENARY SESSION 1
Moderator: prof. Anetta Čaplánová
Room: 5B26 / MS Teams
Please connect here: LINK

9.00 – 9.45	Registration of participants
9.45 – 10.00	Opening of the Conference Welcome of the participants. Introduction of the ODDEA project. (Anetta Čaplánová – project coordinator; University of Economics in Bratislava, Slovakia)
10.00 – 10.30	Keynote address 1: *Indian Knowledge System: Challenges and Opportunities in Contemporary Society* (Prof. Penna Madhusudan; Kavikulaguru Kalidas Sanskrit University, Ramtek, India)
10.30 – 11.00	Keynote address 2: *Digital convergence of EU countries in 2015-2020* Dr. Tomasz Kusio (Cracow University of Economics)

11.00 –   Coffee break
11.20

SESSION 1: Interdisciplinary topics of current discourse
Moderators: Ľubomír Darmo; Joshi Lalita Ramchandra
Room: 5B19 / MS Teams
Please connect here: LINK

11.20 – 11.40	*The India-Europe Connection in the Social Reformist Discourse in Marathi Theatre: Configurations of Indian Reformers, European Influences, and Performances in Marathi Theatre* (Joshi Rohit Ramchandra; The Central University of Karnataka, Kalaburagi, Karnataka, India)
11.40 – 12.00	*Prioritising the Present and the Future of India-Europe Collaboration in Higher Education* (Prof. Joshi Lalita Ramchandra; Kavikulaguru Kalidas Sanskrit University, Ramtek, India)
12:00 – 13:00	**Lunch break**
13.00 – 13.20	*Parāshara-Mādhava : Mādhavāchārya's Treatise on Social and Political Thoughts in 14th Century-India.* (Sachin Daware; Kavikulguru Kalidas Sanskrit University, Ramtek, India)
13.20 – 13.40	*An Indic perspective for improving behaviours with guided meditation along with an awareness of colours* (Sunita Wadhawan, Kavikulguru Kalidas Sanskrit University, Ramtek, India)
13.40 – 14.00	*Representation of Nation in war films: A study of Hindi Cinema in Contemporary times* (Dr. Sachin Bharti; University School of Mass Communication, Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University, New Delhi, India)
14.00 – 14.20	*Navigating 'Sharp Power': The Importance of Media Literacy in India's Elections in 2024* (Dr. Durgesh Tripathi & Surbhi Tandon; University School of Mass Communication, Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University, New Delhi, India)

Note: Please continue the conference programme with participants of Session 2

SESSION 2: Digitalization within the EU and Southeast Asia (will be specified later)

Moderators: prof. Anetta Čaplánová

Room: 5B26 / MS Teams

Please connect here: LINK

11.20 – 11.40	*Measuring the digital economy in Europe and Southeast Asia - is it possible to develop a common indicator?*
	Prof. Jerzy Duda, PhD. – Assoc. Prof. Joanna Duda, PhD. (AGH University of Science and Technology, Poland)
11.40 – 12.00	*Comparison of Digitalization Metrics: A Quantitative Analysis Perspective*
	Septia Rani (Universitas Islam Indonesia, Indonesia), Agnieszka Choczyńska, Justyna Tora (AGH University of Science and Technology, Poland)
12:00 – 13:00	**Lunch break**
13.00 – 13.20	*Identification of Digital Divide across Indonesian Provinces: Analysis of Key Factors.*
	Dwi Ana Ratna Wati (Universitas Islam Indonesia, Indonesia) Dr. Ľubomír Darmo, prof. Anetta Čaplánová, PhD. (University of Economics in Bratislava)
13.20 – 13.40	*Embracing Digitalisation in South-East Asia. The Malaysian Example.*
	Prof. em. Dr. Zoltan Szegedi, Associate Prof. Dr. Ilona Papp (Szechenyi University of Gyor)
13.40 – 14.00	*Digitisation effects on economic sector: comparison of Central and Eastern Europe countries and Montenegro*
	Borislavka Golović-Kažić (Institute of Modern Technologies Montenegro)
	Assoc. Prof. Ivana Ognjanović, PhD. (University of Donja Gorica), Dr. Roland Szabo (Széchenyi István University)
14.00 – 14:30	Closing remarks on ethical issues in the ODDEA project - Lusine Fljyian, ODDEA Quality Expert (TBC)
14.30 – 14.45	**Summary of Conference day 1**
	(Prof. Anetta, Čaplánová, Dr. Ľubomír Darmo)
14.45 – 15.00	**Picture taking (onsite Conference participants)**

Social programme

16:00 – 17:30	Guided city tour with tour guide (meeting point to be announced)

18:00 – 20:00   Conference Gala dinner (Restaurant Leberfinger, Address: Viedenská cesta 257, 851 01 Bratislava-Petržalka-Petržalka, https://www.leberfinger.sk/)

Program: Friday, May 19th, 2023

PLENARY SESSION 2
Moderator: prof. Anetta Čaplánová
Room: 5B26 / MS Teams
Please connect here: LINK

9.00 – 9.30   Coffee, Registration of participants
9.30 – 11.30   Conference open lecture:
                     How to publish in peer review journals with special focus on open access journals
                     (prof. Ibrahim Sirkeci; Salford Business School, University of Salford, Manchester, United Kingdom & External Expert of the ODDEA project)
                     Discussion
11:30 – 11:50   Coffee break

SESSION 3: Digitalization within the EU and Southeast Asia (will be specified later)
Moderators: Dr. Andrej Přívara
Room: 5B26 / MS Teams
Please connect here: LINK

11.30 – 11.50   *Digital transformation of public services: The case of the document management application*

                     Borbála Szedmák (Corvinus University of Budapest), Dr. Roland Z. Szabó –(Széchenyi István University)

11.50 – 12.10   *Digital Performance of Public Sector Institutions in South-East Asia*

                     prof. Sophia Dimelis, PhD.,prof. Anetta Čaplánová, PhD. (University of Economics in Bratislava)

12:10 – 12:30   *Digital Payment: A Bibliometric Analysis using VOSviewer*

                     Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nor Irvoni Mohd Ishar (Universiti Teknologi MARA, Malaysia)

12.30 – 12.50   *A comparative analytical study of the digitalisation gap in the Balkan countries*

                     Ing., Mgr., Hussein Mkiyes, BSc (University of Economics in Bratislava, Slovakia)

12.50 – 13.00	Closing remarks and the way forward
13.00	**End of the Conference**
13.00 – 14:00	**Farewell Lunch (Onsite Conference Participants)**

SOCIAL DISCOURSE IN CHALLENGING TIMES
The International Interdisciplinary Scientific Conference 2023
Proceedings and Book of Abstracts

Edited by Anetta Čaplánová & Ľubomír Darmo

This conference focused on the exploration of two fundamental areas of study. The first explored interdisciplinary topics of the current discourse, while the second dived into the digital transformation occurring within the EU and Southeast Asian countries. The second area was specifically devoted to presentations of research findings from the first work package of the ODDEA project. This not only brought to the forefront the work of the project's researchers, but it also fostered synergies within the consortium, enhancing the project's implementation.

The value and impact of the ODDEA project are also reflected within this volume. From discussions around current discourses to the exploration of the digitalization pathways, this collection represents a milestone in our journey towards a digital society research that would be both inclusive and resilient.

These presentations provide insights into the selected problems of digital transformation and are invaluable contributions to the understanding of digitalization during these challenging times.

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