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Department of Languages and Mass Communication
Kathmandu University School of Arts
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Editorial

The Department of Languages and Mass Communication (DOLMC) at Kathmandu University School of Arts (KUSOA) has been offering Bachelor in Media Studies (BMS), Masters in Media Studies (MMS), and Ph.D. programs in three streams – Communication/Media, English, and Nepali. It is the editorial home of *Bodhi: An Interdisciplinary Journal* since 2007. It has been organizing various programs such as workshops, seminars and conferences at local, national and international levels. Besides, the Department offers a short-term training course on filmmaking. A short-term professional course on academic writing also has been launched. Recently, the Department conducted a refresher course, “Advanced Theoretical Foundations on De-Westernization and Reorientation in Communication” in which faculties, Ph.D. scholars and other researchers from 28 universities of five countries participated. The Department is organizing an International Seminar on Two Decades of the Sadharanikaran Model of Communication on Sunday, 26 May 2024.

From this issue, *Bodhi: An Interdisciplinary Journal* has become a quarterly. Thus, there will be four issues of the journal every year. This change in frequency of publication signifies our commitment to creating an academic forum for faculties, scholars and researchers across the disciplines and across the World. whereas the journal will continue to embrace the discipline of communication/media at its core, its scope and outlook towards multidisciplinary/interdisciplinary research will be further enhanced.

The Advisory Board and Editorial Board of *Bodhi: An Interdisciplinary Journal* is having direct participation from

Nepal, India, China, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, and the USA from this issue onwards. We are indebted to Prof. Robert T. Craig, Professor Emeritus, Department of Communication, College of Media, Communication, and Information, University of Colorado Boulder, USA; Prof. Yoshitaka Miike, Department of Communication, Humanities Division, University of Hawai'i at Hilo, USA; Prof. Han Hong, School of Public Administration, University of Electronic Science and Technology of China; Prof. Sukhnandan Singh, Dean, Faculty of Communication, and Head, Department of Journalism and Mass communication, Dev Sanskriti Vishwavidyalaya, Haridwar, Uttarakhand, Bharat (India), and Prof. Ajantha Hapuarachchi, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka, for their kind consent to be on the Advisory Board. Along with the esteemed professors, Associate Prof. Ms. Ekku Maya Pun, the Dean of KUSOA, is also on the Advisory Board.

Likewise, the Editorial Board of the journal has also been restructured. For the first time, Bodhi has got a designated Chief Editor, and the editorial board led by Dr. Nirmala Mani Adhikary includes faculties from the universities of Nepal, India and Indonesia. The diversity in the Advisory Board and the Editorial Board is also accompanied by broader participation of reviewers from across the international academia.

Bodhi (बोधि) is a Sanskrit word that means “enlightenment” or “awakening.” The term Bodhi is used in a number of philosophical schools of Vedic Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism to signify the quest for true and eternal knowledge. Since its first issue, the editors of *Bodhi: An Interdisciplinary Journal* have tried to uphold the journal's spirit as an open forum for the knowledge seekers across the world. We expect more multidisciplinary/interdisciplinary contributions from across the world in the future.

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Non-Verbal Communication in Indian Classical Dance Forms

Ankita Deshkar

This study delves into the intricate world of non-verbal communication within the rich mosaics of the Indian classical dance forms. The statement quoted by Noam Chomsky, “Language is not an inborn quality, it is creative and acquired”. The objective of this research is to analyse and focus on the need for humans to communicate, that too using non-verbal communication. Dance will not be relegated to simply a performance genre but will be treated as an essential ingredient of life. The focus would be on identifying the non-verbal elements of the dance that would communicate not just the stories but also social messages if needed through the gestures and other elements in Indian Classical Dance Forms. For this analysis, the researcher has considered, Bharatanatyam, Kuchipudi, Mohiniyattam, and Kathakali, the dance forms that trace their origin to the southern states of India namely, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, and Kerala. The research employs a multidisciplinary approach, combining elements of anthropology and performing arts to unravel the communicative nuances in the intricate hand gestures, facial expressions, body postures, and rhythmic footwork inherent in Indian classical dances. By examining the symbolism and cultural significance of gestures (mudras), the utilization of facial expressions (abhinaya), and the synchronization of movements with musical rhythms, the research seeks to unveil the deeper layers of communication that lie beneath the surface of these mesmerizing performances.

Keywords: Non-verbal communication, classical Indian dance forms, psychology, anthropology, cross-cultural communication, dance studies

Introduction

It has been claimed that communication is the most important field for the study of many key dimensions of social change. Communication is indeed divided into two parts, verbal communication which involves written or oral words, and language and non-verbal communication.

Non-verbal communication is a powerful aspect of human expression, transcending linguistic barriers to convey emotions, stories, and nuances. Rooted in centuries-old traditions, these Indian classical dance forms serve as a captivating visual narrative that weaves together or is an amalgamation of movement, expression, and cultural symbolism.

This paper embarks on a comprehensive exploration of non-verbal communication within the realm of Indian classical dance forms, which constitute gestures, rhythmic patterns, postures, facial expressions, and even try to convey certain stories through their costumes, makeup, or even music without the lyrics.

There are eight Indian classical dance forms, namely, Bharatanatyam, Kuchipudi, Kathakali, Mohiniyattam, Kathak, Odissi, Manipuri and Sattriya. However, taking the grammar of these dance forms into consideration, the researcher has chosen to undertake a critical analysis of the dance forms, Bharatanatyam, Kuchipudi, Kathakali, and Mohiniyattam. All these four dance forms belong to the southern states of India and hence, have some similarities in them.

The exploration of non-verbal communication in Indian classical dance forms not only sheds light on the aesthetic and artistic dimensions of the dance forms but also takes a look into how the past and present have shaped them.

This paper aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the communicative power inherent in the Indian classical dance forms. It also aims to highlight how the performers effectively communicate the stories and social messages, especially through the elements of non-verbal communication.

Communication

Keith Davis defines 'communication' as a process of passing information and understanding from one person to another. According to John Adair, 'Communication is essentially the ability of one person to make contact with another and make them understood. According to Louis Allen, 'Communication is a bridge of meaning. It involves a systematic and continuous process of telling, listening, and understanding. The origin of the word, 'communication' is 'communicate' or 'communis' which means 'to impart', 'to participate', 'to share' or 'to make common'. The sense of sharing is inherent in the very origin and meaning of communication.

Communication is a continuous process and it is all pervasive. While there are several types of communication, the two main types of communication are, 'verbal' and 'non-verbal' communication. Other types are one-way communication, two-way communication, and multiple-way communication and also, group communication, mass communication, and societal communication. One more type is interpersonal and intrapersonal communication. Communication is majorly a two-way process, which involves several elements of communication such as a sender, a message, a medium, a channel, a receiver, and response and feedback.

Noise

In some cases, the message may fail to produce the desired response because of a gap or a barrier between the sender and the receiver, which is also known as 'noise'. In the case of a classical

dancer, this can be because of a faulty representation of the character they are supposed to perform.

Feedback

The transmission of the receiver's response to the sender is called 'feedback'. In the case of Indian classical dance forms, where a dancer performs in the performing space, the feedback can be the reaction of the person who is a part of the audience. After witnessing a performance of the dancer, the feedback can be in the form of expressions that have invoked the 'rasa' of the 'bhava' which the dancer presented, or can be a simple gesture, such as 'clapping' or 'nodding'.

Verbal Communication

According to Penrose, 'Verbal communication consists of sharing thoughts through the meaning of words'. Verbal communication is the process that includes words, the use of sounds, and language to convey a message. In verbal communication, information is shared among more than one person using speech and language. The chief element here is 'words', which are organised properly in a sentence that makes sense, is spoken, and is heard in a language that is understood by both the sender and the receiver. According to Bovee, 'Verbal communication is the expression of information through language which is composed of words and grammar'.

Non-verbal Communication

Nonverbal communication refers to the ways in which humans convey information about their emotions, needs, intentions, attitudes, and thoughts without the use of verbal language (J.A. Hall, in International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences, 2001). Nonverbal communication is produced by some means other than words. The chief element of conversation here is everything

other than the words. Nonverbal communication includes vocal elements, which is referred to as paralanguage and includes pitch, volume, and rate, and non-vocal elements, which are usually referred to as body language and include hand and body gestures, facial expressions, and even eye contact, among other, numerous things.

Types of Non-verbal Communication

Oculesics

Communication that takes place using eyes as a chief communicating tool in any circumstance is 'Oculesics'. A communicator must ensure that the receiver is conversant with the eye movement. Hence, if an Indian classical dancer is considered in this case, the dancer being the communicator must ensure that the eye movements from the performing space are visible enough for the audience to make sense of it and understand those, for the process of communication to be successful.

Haptics

Haptic movement is a supplementary aid to fulfill, express or complete an emotion or an action in communication. It refers to the study of communication by touch. This can be done by the dancer using softer movements on stage and portraying the feeling of the touch in group or solo performances.

Kinesics

Kinesics refers to body movements and postures and includes gestures of arm and hand movements, head movements, and postures that include orientation of movements of our head and positioning of the body. This could also include facial expressions that convey strong emotions. A dancer's body posture and gestures are a perfect example of how the performer might convey the abhinaya being performed along with its meaning.

Vocalics

Vocalics refers to the vocalised but not verbal aspects of non-

verbal communication, including speaking rate, pitch, volume, tone of voice, and vocal quality. These qualities, also known as paralanguage, reinforce the meaning of verbal communication, allow us to emphasize particular parts of a message, or can contradict verbal messages. However, in the case of performances, this can be used particularly by the accompanying musicians; the pitch and the tone of the voice by the singer can help convey the situation the performer tends to present.

Proxemics

Proxemics refers to the use of space and distance within communication. Proxemics is a communication that is made either by going physically near to the communicatee or receiver or by choosing a receiver in a group.

Non-verbal Communication and Indian Classical Dance Forms

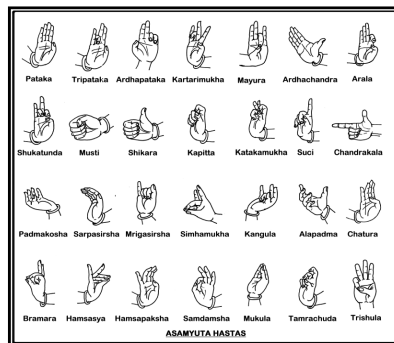
Non-verbal communication plays a vital role in Indian classical dance forms, serving as a profound means of expression that transcends linguistic barriers. Rooted in centuries-old traditions, these dance forms utilize intricate hand gestures, facial expressions, body movements, and postures to convey narratives and emotions. Each mudra (hand gesture) and bhava (expression) holds deep symbolic meaning, allowing dancers to communicate complex stories and sentiments without uttering a single word on the stage or sometimes even without the help of lyrics to a song. The precise synchronization of body movements, rhythm, and facial expressions in these dance forms reflects a rich cultural heritage and provides a captivating visual language that resonates with audiences on a profound level. Through the mesmerizing combination of grace, precision, and storytelling, Indian classical dance becomes a powerful medium for non-verbal communication, preserving cultural narratives and fostering a universal connection through the artistry of movement.

There are certain terms that are mentioned even in day to day activities of a performer suggesting the importance of non-verbal communication in the Indian classical dance forms. These terms are, 'abhinaya', 'rasa', 'bhava', 'vibhava', 'anubhava', 'vritti' etc. Even when these few terms are common for a dance guru and a practitioner, these terms may be new for those who do not practice any art form. Several adhyayas of the 'Natyashastra' too, a grantha attributed to sage Bharata also refer to the importance of several aspects of abhinaya in almost every adhyaya.

Hand Gestures in Bharatanatyam

The different hand gestures used in Bharatanatyam are Hastas / Mudras (hand gestures) primarily classified as 28 Asamyuta Hastas (one-hand gestures) and 24 Samyuta Hastas (two-hand gestures).

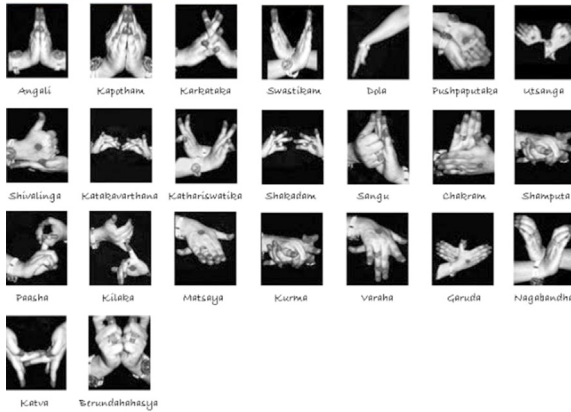
*Pathakas Tripathako Ardhapathakas Kartharimukhaha
Mayoorakhyo Ardhachandrascha Araala Shukathundakaha
Mushtischa Shikharakhyascha Kapitha Katakamukhaha
Suchi Chandrakhala Padmakosha Sarpasirshasthathaa
Mrigashirsha Simhamukhaha Kaangoolascha Alapadmakaha
Chaturu Bhramaraschaiva Hamsasyo Hamsapakshakaha
Sandamsho Mukulaschaiva Thaamrachoodas Trisoolakaha
Ithyaasamyukta Hastanam Ashtavimshati reerita*



(Picture 1. Asamyukta hasta mudras or single hand gestures)

Samyukta Hasta Mudras:

Anjalishcha Kapoashcha Karkata Swasthikashathaa
Dolahastha Pushpaputaha Utsangah Shivalingakaha
Katakavardhanashchaiva Kartari Swasthikashathaa
Shakatam Shanka Chakrecha Samputa Paasha keelakau
Matsya Kurmo Varaahashcha Garudo Nagabandhakaha
Khatwaa Berundakakyescha Ithyethe Sankhyaatha Samyukta
Karaaha



(Picture 2. Samyukta hasta mudras or double hand gestures)

Research Methodology

For the stated research topic I am applying a mix of research methodologies:

Qualitative Content Analysis: Analyzing textual descriptions, narratives, and interpretations of nonverbal communication elements in Indian classical dance forms from various sources such as academic literature, dance critiques, and historical texts, such as Abhinayadarpan and Natyashastra.

Observational Studies: Conducting direct observations of live Indian classical dance performances to observe and document

nonverbal communication cues including gestures, facial expressions, and body movements.

Interviews: Conducting interviews with experienced dance gurus, and dance practitioners in Indian classical dance to gain insights into their understanding and interpretation of nonverbal communication in dance.

Comparative Analysis: Comparing nonverbal communication patterns and practices across different styles of Indian classical dance to identify commonalities, variations, and unique features.

Scope/Focus of Analysis

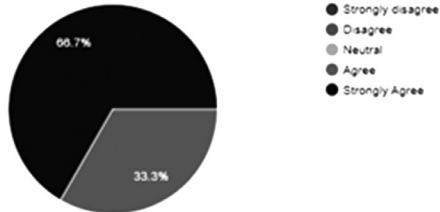
The scope of the topic "An analysis of nonverbal communication in Indian classical dance forms" would likely involve examining the various nonverbal elements employed in Indian classical dance forms such as Bharatanatyam, Kuchipudi, Kathakali, and Mohiniyattam. This analysis may delve into aspects such as hand gestures (mudras), facial expressions (abhinaya), body movements (angika abhinaya), eye movements (drishti bheda), posture, and other subtle nuances that convey meaning and emotion in these traditional dance styles. Additionally, the cultural and historical significance of these nonverbal communication techniques within the context of Indian classical dance could also be explored. Along with the stress on what both the practitioners of the dance form and the audience feel about the non-verbal communication in Indian classical dance forms.

What Do the Practitioners of the Art Form Say?

The research scholar follows a very basic research methodology, a survey method for the practitioners of the dance form, a survey method for those who have seen at least a few dance performances and can distinguish between the Indian classical dance forms, and the interviews of the gurus of Indian classical dance form.

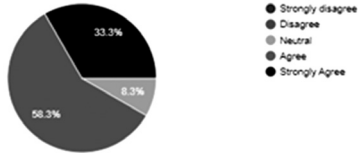
The research scholar connected with 20-odd dance practitioners from across the country. Here are a few answers that the practitioners gave:

3. In the absence of music and verbal communication (narration/commentary/dialogues/lyrics), the abhinaya and the gestures are still able to convey a message.



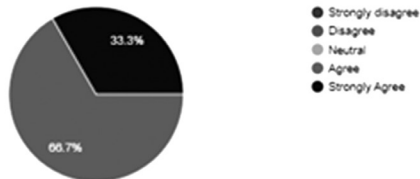
[Pie chart 1. A question answered by respondents: In the absence of music and verbal communication (narration, commentary, dialogues, or lyrics), the abhinaya and the gestures are still able to convey the message]

5. The variety of gestures and their combinations are able to bring out the intended meanings.



[Pie chart 2. The variety of gestures and their combinations are able to bring out the intended meanings]

6. Information, messages and ideas are communicated by the dancer's body to the audience.



[Pie chart 3. Information, messages, and ideas are communicated by the dancer's body to the audience]

Some other questions asked to the performers include: Whether they think information, messages, and ideas are communicated by the dancer's body to the audience or not. Whether Indian classical dance forms convey topics of social importance? Their thoughts on whether gestures, abhinaya, and other elements of non-verbal communication are similar in all Indian classical dance forms, to which over 25 % of the respondents disagreed. Similar such other questions were asked to all the respondents. The respondents selected, have at least been practicing their respective art forms for 5 years. These dancers practice any one of the four Indian classical dance forms namely, Bharatanatyam, Kuchipudi, Mohiniyattam, or Kathakali, owing to even the slightest of similarities between them and also the fact that they originate from the southern states of India.

The research scholar also connected with some eminent gurus of the dance field, that includes: Dr Neena Prasad of Mohiniyattam, Rama Vaidyanathan of Bharatanatyam and Sharmila Biswas of Odissi, and Dr Kishoree Hampiholi of Bharatanatyam. The respondent also aims to connect with the noted guru G Venu practicing, Kudiattam, Kathakali, and Mohiniyattam, the author of 'Mudra'. The questions asked to the gurus were open-ended, so as to benefit from their pool of knowledge.

In the words of Sharmila Biswas, "When we think about non-verbal communication, we first think about 'mudra'. We have stylised the mudra very much." When asked, what are important non-verbal elements according to her, Indian classical dance forms she informed that all elements are important, unless we take a holistic attitude. Biswas has recently also taught a few dance pieces on the music that do not have any lyrics, just the music, the pitch of the song changes according to the emotion of the nayika.

Rama Vaidyanathan and Dr Neena Prasad too shared the nuances of the abhinaya along with the research scholar in a one-to-one interview during a dance retreat. According to Rama

Vaidyanathan, “The mythological stories is the main message which is there to contain, the tenets of Hindu philosophy, along with these stories, we are also talking about the whole thing of Jivatma and Parmatma, which is the main part of Indian classical dance which we cannot take away. These are the main aspects of life in general which are conveyed using the non-verbal communication elements.” She was of the opinion that there is absolutely no message that cannot be communicated through dance. “We have to understand that the human body itself is very adept at communication. The Stone Age man communicated using various body parts before even the language was discovered. Communication through any limb of the body is possible. The race is like that. What dance does is it codifies it and gives it a structure and then we do all the hastas and all the movements required to communicate,” said Rama Vaidyanathan. She said, in non-verbal communication, the music which does not use sahitya, is very important for dance, after that everything else comes which includes, stage, lights, costumes, etc. Lights and props cannot be ignored even if they are new-age things. It is important in some contexts to use props and lights which can be used aesthetically.”

Dr Neena Prasad, Mohiniyattam guru said, “Our Indian philosophy reflects in Indian art forms where truth and beauty is established as Satyam, Shivam and Sundaram. All the issues, even the big social issues today can be conveyed using the Indian classical dance forms. In Indian classical dance forms, you have a technique to be followed. In Kerala art forms we have a rigid way for the application of Natya, and we have rigid bodily kinetics, including the usage of eyes and upangas. It has been prevalent in the region for over 2500 years. When you make a hand gesture there are also eyes supporting it and meaning will be enhanced through portrayal. More developed natya absolutely conveys the message. Dance is more than conveying the message. There is more anubhava within the portrayal that needs to be conveyed.”

Dr Kishoree Hampiholi, a Bharatanatyam guru too emphasized the importance of non-verbal elements in Indian classical dance forms. Her dance troupe has produced several dance dramas, such as Ramayana, Bhasmasur Mohini, Abhigyan Shakuntalam, Taj Mahal, Ritusamharam, etc. Every dance drama had a particular aesthetic setting and different makeup and costumes. She noted that in order to convey the message, these elements have to be taken into consideration, the Ravana must look like Ravan on stage, and this can be achieved only through the make-up and costume. The music too should then be supportive of the character; calm music representing spring may be good for the portrayal of Rama but cannot be used for the character of Rama.

All the gurus were of the opinion that non-verbal elements of communication such as music, make-up, stage setting, and props along with abhinaya, rasa, and bhava, do play an important role in all the Indian classical dance forms.

Language is a communication system consisting of formal units that are integrated through the process of a combination of components such as sound gestures and meaning that are expressed through the aspects of non-verbal communication. People convey meaning not only through spoken language but also through gestures, facial expressions, and body postures. This non-verbal communication makes use of gestures particularly facial expressions, and eye contact. This non-verbal communication also consists of unique and common behavioral patterns. And dance definitely has this language that goes hand in hand with gestures, facial expressions, and body postures.

In the year 1886 B.C -“La Society de Linguistique de Paris”, thought that language originated through:

- a. Imitation theory
- b. Reciprocating theory
- c. Gesture language theory

We are concerned majorly with the Gesture language theory. The gestural theory of language evolution states that the languages that humans speak today arose from an earlier form of communication that was expressed primarily through arm and hand gestures. This theory suggests that before languages were spoken today, the ancient man heavily relied on gestures. Hence a conclusion can be drawn that non-verbal elements of communication majorly are responsible to convey the message to the audience in the context of the Indian classical dance forms.

Potential Practical Applications of the Research Topic

Cultural preservation: Understanding the nuances of nonverbal communication in Indian classical dance forms can contribute to the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage. It can aid in the documentation and dissemination of traditional dance techniques and gestures, ensuring their continuity for future generations.

Enhanced pedagogy: Insights gained from the analysis can inform dance pedagogy by providing instructors with a deeper understanding of how to effectively teach and convey nonverbal communication elements to students. This can improve the quality of dance education.

Performance enhancement: Dancers and choreographers can benefit from the research findings by refining their performances through a heightened awareness and mastery of nonverbal communication techniques. This can lead to more expressive and impactful dance presentations.

Communication training: Professionals in fields such as education, counseling, and public speaking can benefit from insights into non-verbal communication gleaned from Indian classical dance. They can incorporate techniques learned from the analysis to improve their own nonverbal communication skills and better connect with their audiences.

Social and community development: Indian classical dance forms often serve as vehicles for social cohesion and community engagement. Understanding the role of non-verbal communication in these dances can facilitate community-building activities, cultural exchanges, and collaborative artistic endeavors.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the exploration of non-verbal communication in Indian classical dance forms, Bharatanatyam, Kuchipudi, Kathakali, and Mohiniyattam unveils a rich mosaic of cultural expression and storytelling. The intricate movements, gestures, facial expressions, and body language of the dancer or performer serve as a nuanced language that goes beyond verbal communication. This paper analysing the non-verbal communication in Indian classical dance forms underscores the significance of non-verbal communication in conveying emotions, narratives, and cultural nuances. Beyond just physical movements, Indian classical dance forms illustrate a connection between tradition and artistic expression. As we speak with several noted gurus from the field, and read further we gain a deeper understanding of the cultural heritage embedded with every gesture. The study contributes to the broader discourse on the power of non-verbal communication as a potent means of expression, providing insights into the profound beauty and communicative prowess inherent in the traditional dance forms of India.

Ankita Deshkar is a research scholar at the Department of Mass Communication, Rashtrasant Tukdoji Maharaj Nagpur University, Nagpur, India.

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K-Pop Fandom and Beauty Trends: Investigating the Engagement of Young Urban Indian Women with BTS

Fatema Bhaisaheb & Nidhi Shendurnikar, PhD

The Korean wave (Hallyu) has emerged as a global phenomenon spreading to many countries including India since the nineties. In the initial phase, Korean dramas attracted international attention, after which Korean pop music took the world by storm. With the rising popularity of K-pop in India (Jiju, 2023), it is essential to understand the influence it carries on Indian fans. This paper delves into understanding how K-Pop has influenced ideas about beauty among young adults in Vadodara, a cosmopolitan town located in the western Indian state of Gujarat. Three focus group discussions were carried out with fifteen youngsters who identified as K-pop fans, particularly of BTS (Bangtan Boys), a South Korean boy band formed in 2013. The research design adopted for this study was qualitative and exploratory. Theoretical underpinnings informed by *The Social Construction of Reality* (Berger & Luckman, 1966) and *The Juggernaut of Modernity* (Giddens, 1990) were used to examine the influence of K-Pop consumption on ideas about beauty in the context of fandom culture. The findings reveal no significant influence on beauty-related values and ideals. However, K-pop does have a positive bearing on other aspects of the lives of its fans such as challenging stereotypes, promoting self-love, addressing social problems, and positive impact on individual personality. In addition, a shift in fashion ideals is observed indicating a growing trend of Korean-inspired fashion trends.

Keywords: Beauty, BTS, culture, fandom, Hallyu, K-Pop, pop culture, South Korea

Introduction

In the era of cultural globalization, the Korean wave has emerged as a global phenomenon. The Korean wave or Hallyu, is a term coined by a Chinese journalist to describe the wave of Korean pop culture leading to heightened visibility of Korean culture in East Asia and many other parts of the world (Jung, 2015). This process started in the late 1990s when Korean television dramas (K-dramas) became popular in China and other neighboring countries, dubbed as the first Korean wave (Hallyu or Hanryu in Korean) (Shim, 2006). Following the regional success of K-dramas, the second and more recent Korean wave (Hallyu 2.0) is associated with the global export of Korean popular music culture i.e., K-pop (Seo, Cruz, & Fifita, 2020).

Korean popular music, also known as ‘K-pop’, is a style of South Korean popular music characterized by catchy assorted melodies, intricately choreographed dances, flashy music videos, and most importantly, the artists, commonly referred to as “idols” (Romano, 2018). The Korean Wave is dubbed as South Korea’s greatest export (Mahr, 2012). This can be seen through the wide acceptance of cultural products that have been exported by Korean entertainment companies in the form of dramas, music, and fashion (JoongHo Ahn, 2013). The export of Korean content witnessed a steady increase since 2005, but between the years 2015 and 2020, it has more than doubled, going from \$5.6 billion to \$11.92 billion (Johnson, 2023).

Indians became familiar with the Korean wave in 2012 when a humorous pop song 'Gangnam Style' from a South Korean singer and rapper named PSY hit the mainstream media (Sarkar, 2023). Thousands of versions and parodies of this global hit song

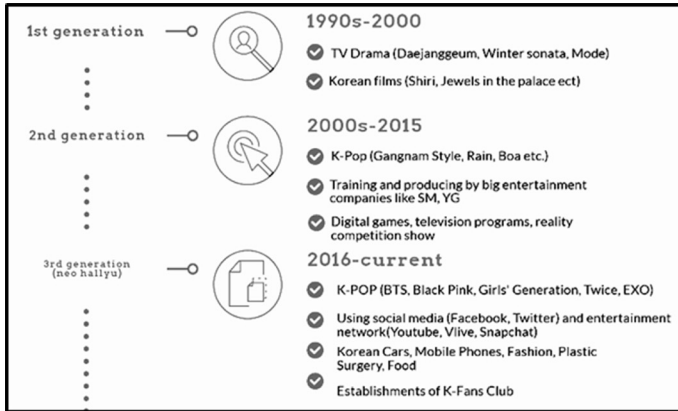
were created. In recent times, one of the prominent reasons for the spread of the Hallyu wave across India is the immense popularity of BTS, (Nag, 2023) a South Korean band with seven male musicians, managed by Big Hit Since June 2013. The abbreviation stands for ‘Bangtan Sonyeondan’ or ‘Bulletproof Boy Scouts’ and the group has seven members—three rappers and four vocalists (Lee & Nguyen, 2020). BTS debuted in 2013 and, although their success was not immediate, they have become the world’s biggest boy band, breaking down doors in Western markets for other K-pop artists to follow (Johnson, 2023). Four-time nominees and winners of the Top Social Artist award at the Billboard Music Awards, BTS were the first Asian artists with a non-English album to chart at number one on the Billboard 200 (McLaren & Jin, 2020). They also created history by becoming the only Asian act to win Artist of the Year at the American Music Awards and the first K-pop group to ever receive a nomination at the Grammys (Jayaratne, 2023). BTS’ fandom known as ‘ARMY’ (Adorable Representative M.C. for Youth), is known to be the most diverse fan base in terms of race, sex, gender, ethnicity, age, and religious beliefs (Chung, 2022).

Estimated to be in the millions, one of the most notable achievements of the BTS ARMY was when on June 6, 2020, BTS, donated \$1 million to the Black Lives Matter (BLM) campaign, after which ARMIes quickly followed and matched the million-dollar donation in less than twenty-four hours under the hashtag #MatchAMillion on Twitter (Kim & Hutt, 2021). In fact, ARMYs through the One-In-An-ARMY (OIAA) initiative¹, have organized

¹ OIAA (<https://www.oneinarmy.org/>) is “a fan collective comprised of volunteers across the globe” that believes in using their “collective power for global good”. The motto “I am ONE in an ARMY” suggests that “many people giving small amounts can create a substantial impact”.

and engaged in campaigns that address a range of human rights issues, including refugee crisis, LGBTQ, disability, and educational rights in the name of BTS. Therefore, the BTS fanbase is a significant factor in the band’s success as evidenced by their social media presence and other internet activities (Chang, 2019).

Fig 1: Hallayu timeline



(Image source: Uyuna, Zakaria, & Rahim, 2020)

Related Literature

A study titled "Malaysians’ Acceptance Towards Korean Beauty Standards Embedded in Korean Popular Culture", by Farah Alia Zaizakrani, (2021) provides an understanding regarding the media-generated behavior of a population exposed to Korean beauty standards and how they respond to them. The study employs a qualitative approach that includes content analysis based on library research. A total of sixty sources such as journals, theses, books, reviews, and conference papers within the recent ten-year time frame were examined and analysed. The study is carried out in the Malaysian context because Malaysians consume Korean pop culture in a big way and hence may be influenced by such mediated content. The author finds that Malaysians' acceptance of Korean

beauty standards is generally positive owing to celebrity obsession and idolization. They are changing their behaviors and attitudes due to Korean celebrity idolization. They try to imitate the makeup, hairstyle, and outfits of their favorite idols. They however reject beauty standards pertaining to cosmetic surgery due to religious obligations.

Another study titled "The Effects of South Korean Beauty Standards on Body Image, Self-Esteem, and Life Satisfaction Amongst Asian Americans", by Janessa Akemi Fong (2021), analyses the influence beauty standards have on body image, self-esteem, and life satisfaction with a focus on the perspectives of Asian Americans. Using a questionnaire, 178 Asian Americans were asked to complete several self-report measures relating to body image, self-esteem, and life satisfaction. The results demonstrated that the correlations between the key variables of the study i.e., western male beauty standards, South Korean male beauty standards, western female beauty standards, and South Korean female beauty standards were high but there was no statistical significance.

In their study titled "Role of Pop Culture in Popularizing Gender-bending Fashion and Ideals of Beauty and Makeup" Jaanvi Jairath and Rhea Daima (2021) explore the impact that pop culture and social media have had in introducing themes of beauty, makeup, and gender-bending fashion. In the context of the influence of media in pop culture, through movies, songs, TV series, YouTube videos, social media content, and celebrities, the authors used content analysis to study the influence of fashion, beauty, and makeup on common viewers. They conclude that due to the increased reach of social media platforms, people have begun to question what they previously believed about traditional gender roles and gender identity, resulting in an increasing number of people discovering and displaying their gender identities through beauty, makeup, and fashion.

Concepts of beauty, makeup, and gender-neutral fashion are gaining popularity and greater acceptability in society with the exponential growth of social media platforms. Abie Besman et al. (2018) in "The Change of Beauty Standard: A Korean Wave Phenomenon: Findings from Bandung City" identify changing beauty standards following the invasion of the Korean Wave in Bandung, Indonesia. A set of questionnaires was developed to collect respondent beauty values from 311 participants using an analytical descriptive approach. No significant change was found in beauty-related values among the respondents. The reason for this is the pervading influence of Western culture long before the Korean wave. Therefore, media exposure cannot always affect cultural values. In a study about the K-pop industry's influence on masculinity. In "Transition of the idea of masculinity in K-pop culture within Indian viewers" Teresa Devi Arambam (2019) examines how the idea of a 'new male' has emerged through digitalization. Using 'BTS' as an icon of the new K-pop trend, the researcher found out that there are men who acknowledge their feminine side. The paper elaborated on the concept of soft masculinity. The findings indicate that the influence of K-pop has led to better acceptance of gender fluidity among Indian viewers. Social media and digitalization have led to a transformation in traditionally held notions about masculinity. The growing K-pop fanbase in India has led to the acceptance of the 'new male' and a shift in perspectives about gender roles and expectations.

Research on Korean beauty standards also focuses on analysing and understanding how consumer zeal for Korean skincare routines and products has emerged. Yoo Jin Kwon (2018) in his work "The Emergence of K-beauty: Rituals and Myths of Korean Skin Care Practice", using a theoretical framework on consumption ritual concludes through a content analysis of web pages focusing on Korean skin care that three types of content dominate the web – 1)

articles on K-beauty written by various writers, 2) beauty blog posts, product reviews and skin care tutorials, and 3) retailer's shopping site. This conclusion is drawn after an analysis of sixty-one articles from thirty-one websites. In her thesis titled "The Impact of K-Pop on Social Media Among Malaysians Youth: A Study on the Influence of K-Pop Idols on the Beauty Standards, Fashion Trends and Lifestyle Habits of the Malaysian Youth in Kuala Lumpur and Selangor", Andrea Hue (2023) states how some studies highlight K-Pop's promotion of beauty diversity and self-confidence, however, they overlook challenges related to body image and appearance anxiety among fans.

Similarly, research on K-Pop's financial aspects exposes vanity-driven spending and scalper culture but fails to examine their interconnectedness and potential consequences. She emphasizes the need to look at the potential negative effects of K-pop culture and the influence of idols on young people's behavior. Her research offers useful advice on how the detrimental effects of K-pop fandom can be mitigated by involving a variety of stakeholders such as youth, parents, educators and schools, media professionals, and the government. The study employs a qualitative research approach by conducting in-depth interviews with five dedicated K-pop fans with a minimum of five years of active engagement with K-pop.

In "K-Beauty Effect on Health Behavior and Korean Cosmetics Purchasing in Indonesia" (2023) Rachmawati Widyaningrum, Khairunisa Ramadhani, and Budi Lestari demonstrate that some adolescents who worshiped Korean idols had a negative body image and did a strict diet, heavy exercise, took weight loss pills or did plastic surgery to meet their body goals. The study was conducted by reviewing relevant research articles between 2012 to 2022 on the topic through a Google Scholar search engine. Fourteen articles that met the inclusion criteria were reviewed. The researchers conclude that the emerging K-beauty trend

should be balanced with the knowledge about a healthy way to gain beauty and the understanding of halal cosmetics in the context of Indonesia. Yuri Seo, Angela Gracia B Cruz, and Ilaisaane ME Fifita's Research titled "Cultural Globalization and Young Korean Women's Acculturative Labor: K-beauty as Hegemonic Hybridity" (2020) points to manufactured naturalness, hyper-sexualized cuteness, and the 'harmonious kaleidoscope' as paradoxical characteristics of K-beauty. They study how young Korean women respond to the changing ideals of K-beauty, embodied by Korean pop celebrities when such ideals become exported as global cultural products.

Present Study: Rationale and Significance

Though K-pop has a fanbase all over India, their presence wasn't much noticed. In recent times, K-pop fever has multiplied due to India's growing internet population. Social media platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook, and OTT giants like Netflix and Amazon have made possible increased exposure to K-pop content for Indian audiences (Kanozia & Ganghariya, 2021). Therefore, it is critical to understand the wide-reaching effects of K-pop vis-à-vis Indian consumers. This study delves deep into understanding how K-pop has influenced ideas about beauty among young adults in Vadodara, a cosmopolitan town located in the western Indian state of Gujarat. BTS was chosen as the focus of the study since it is considered to be one of the most popular symbols of K-pop's rise in the globe. Through focus group discussions, we explored how BTS influences ideas about beauty among young K-pop fans in Vadodara. As a developing country, India's exposure to Korean content is a new phenomenon that is already expanding its wings into Indian society.

According to Reimeingam (2014), the effects of Korean culture through the propagation of different Korean cultural products are felt differently across societies and countries and the response of audiences to the Korean wave also varies from culture to culture.

Hence, from a societal standpoint, it is important to investigate the dissemination of another country's culture into our society. It is vital to comprehend how the culture of another country influences our society, culture, economy, and polity especially since India has a booming young populace. In the context of the influence of foreign cultures on India, the phenomenon of cultural imperialism should be studied as Indians increasingly consume cultural products from around the world. This study is significant in terms of contributing to the academic discourse emerging from India on K-pop fandom culture and its larger impact on India's socio-cultural landscape.

Conceptual Framework

In *The Social Construction of Reality* (Berger & Luckmann, 1966) sociologists Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann in argued that society is created by humans and human interaction, which they call habituation. They say that we construct the social world and our understanding of it through words, actions, and media products. Social construction of reality addresses the processes by which people jointly construct their understanding of the world. In this study, social construction helps acknowledge how standards and values around beauty differ from culture to culture. Beauty standards are influenced by a society's morals, values, and beliefs. A beauty standard is established when a group of people make it a reality. Therefore, there is no specific definition of beauty standards, as the concept of beauty itself cannot be standardized/defined. Thus, the social construction of reality helps understand Korean beauty standards developed collectively by Korean society, in which K-pop plays a significant role. K-pop emphasizes Caucasian features and standardizes beautiful to mean-fair, dewy, glass-like complexion, double eyelids, a high nose bridge, and red or pink tinted lips – beauty goals shared by most women in South Korea (Stone, 2013; Wang, 2024).

In *Juggernaut of Modernity* (Giddens, 1991), Anthony Giddens described the modern world as a juggernaut, an advanced stage of modernity. Like a powerful machine, modernity, if not controlled meaningfully, can be highly harmful to society. The juggernaut crushes those who resist it and while it sometimes seems to have a steady path, there are times when it veers away erratically in directions we cannot foresee. In the context of K-pop and beauty standards, the juggernaut framework helps to understand the influence that pop culture exerts. In his theory of structuration, Giddens (1991) argues that individuals and societies are mutually constituted, meaning that they are constantly interacting and influencing each other. This is relevant to understanding how the influence of K-pop works. Lastly, in his book, *The Consequences of Modernity* (1990), Giddens uses the example of a juggernaut to explain the immense power of globalization and technological advancement as forces so strong that they seem invincible and can affect our lives significantly, whether we like it or not. In this study, K-pop represents this juggernaut which some ignore and oppose, while some others embrace and adopt. Here, we explore what kind of choices do fans make to join or resist the K-pop juggernaut, particularly for the beauty standards they adhere to.

Methodology

The research design adopted for this study was exploratory and descriptive to acquire an in-depth understanding of the subject. Since K-pop and its influence on Indian masses remains a contemporary topic and individuals today are still grappling with it, an exploratory approach is best suited to understand if K-pop is influential with respect to beauty trends and ideas among young women and in what ways is this influence seen among them. Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was employed as the primary method of data collection. It is a qualitative research method designed to obtain a multitude of diverse views on

a topic, yielding a collective rather than an individual view (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Three FGDs with fifteen young adults were carried out in Vadodara city. The choice of the FGD method was natural since the researchers' aim was to elicit conversations around themes of K-pop fandom, BTS, beauty ideas, and societal impact. The FGD method allowed room for discussion to take place where participants contributed to a broader, deeper, and holistic understanding of the subject under study. Through FGDs, a discourse around what young women think of K-pop culture and beauty emerged facilitating the researchers in understanding their worldviews using an Emic approach (The Emic approach focuses investigation of a theme from the participant's viewpoint whereas Etic approach emphasizes the researcher's standpoint). An FGD guideline was developed to conduct the discussions and it was validated by an external expert who is a professor of sociology.

The FGD guideline comprised fifteen open-ended questions (Annexure 1) divided into two parts. The first set of questions focused on a general understanding of the interface between K-pop and BTS (nature of fandom, introduction to BTS, time spent, reasons for admiration, etc). The second set comprised questions specific to fashion, beauty, makeup, style, body shape, and skin complexion in reference to K-pop and BTS. Non-probability purposive and snowball sampling techniques were used to recruit participants in the FGDs before which informed consent was sought from them. The study comprised of fifteen young adults aged 18-24 years because this age group consumes South Korean cultural content in a big way (Statista, 2023). Owing to constraints of resources and time and the research being primarily carried out as a student project, the sample size was decided on the basis of proximity, accessibility, and availability of participants who identify as K-pop fans and who have been consuming K-pop content for at least three years. The sample size was kept limited owing to the deep, rich, and extensive textual data that is derived using

the FGD method which involves extended conversations on a topic with a group of people. The purposive sampling technique helped identify young women who considered themselves as K-pop fans and snowball sampling facilitated reaching out to a wider and more diverse group of respondents through already recruited participants. The data collected was primary, textual, and descriptive in nature. To assist in the subsequent analysis of data, audio recordings were made and transcripts were prepared. Codes and categories were generated through inductive coding, suited for exploratory research. Emergent codes and categories helped identify repetitive patterns in the data set which resulted in theme-based explanations using thematic analysis.

Table 1: Sample details

Sr. No.	No. of Participants	Mode of FGD	Age group (in years)
FGD 1	5 (M=0, F=5)	In-person	19-22
FGD 2	5 (M=0, F=5)	Online	18-24
FGD 3	5 (M=1, F=4)	In-person	18-24

Study Limitations

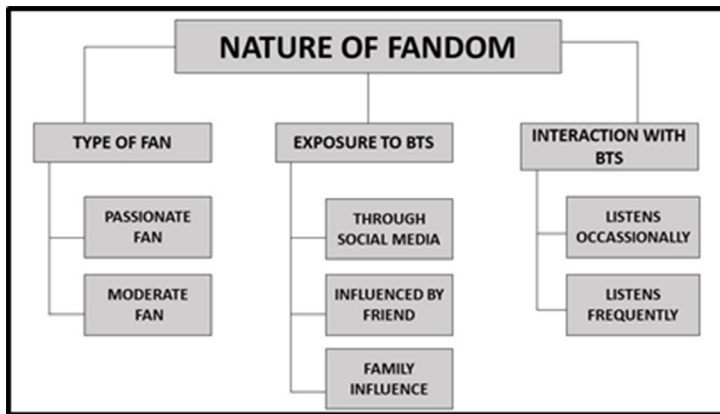
- The sample size in this study was small and it was confined to a single location owing to limitations of resources and accessibility to participants.
- Data was collected using a single method i.e., Focus Group Discussion. Hence insights drawn could not be compared and corroborated with the use of other methods.
- The study was executed in a limited time frame. Therefore, it focused only on K-pop, specifically on BTS. Other forms of Korean pop culture like dramas, movies, entertainment TV programs, and games could not be studied.
- Majority respondents who participated in the study were female. Male consumers of K-pop were difficult to find despite several consistent attempts.

Key Findings

This section summarizes the major themes derived from the Focus Group Discussions. Since the number of female participants was more compared to male respondents, we conclude that women are more regular and active K-pop consumers than men. In terms of region and age group, all the participants were equally distributed.

Theme 1: Nature of fandom and admiration for BTS

Fig 3: Nature of fandom

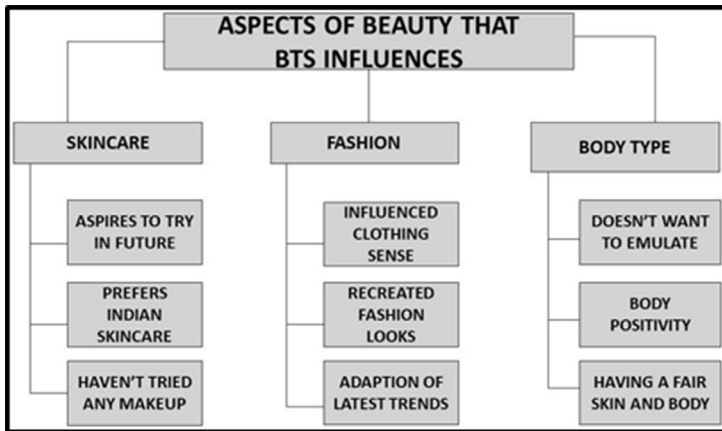


Findings indicate that respondents follow BTS passionately and are drawn to their music, dance, fashion, physical appearance, style, friendship, and chemistry. They also cherish the sense of belonging and community that being a BTS fan brings. One of the respondents shared, “According to me, this fandom is like a family. That’s why I love staying with all the armies”. Friends, family, and word-of-mouth information about BTS has played a vital part in introducing them to the group. Another major influence comes from social media platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and WhatsApp. When asked why they like BTS, participants mentioned ‘personal characteristics’, ‘dedication towards work’, and ‘genuineness’ reflected in BTS as primary reasons. One of them said, “I have

this idea of 'hum saath saath hai (all together)' for them and I love them because they behave like real people; they don't pretend to be someone else.” Another added, “... their dedication, their hard work, and most importantly, how genuine they are. I guess no other artists are like them”.

Theme 2: How BTS influences ideas about beauty

Fig 4: BTS and ideas about beauty



Under this theme, participants expressed opinions about the influence BTS carries on various aspects related to beauty such as skin care, fashion, and body type. They said they prefer Indian skincare products and have not used any makeup practices inspired by BTS, at the same time, they aspire to try BTS beauty routines in the future. The majority of them expressed interest in trying Korean skincare and beauty techniques, but could not due to perceived time and cost constraints. Two of them said, “I’m very interested in it, but I have not tried it because they have a ten-step skincare routine which consumes a lot of your time” ... “I haven’t tried it but once I am financially independent then I would definitely try it”. Participants also demonstrated a preference for Indian skincare

over Korean beauty techniques because of their familiarity with Indian skincare products and it being more suitable for their skin type and the environment they inhabit (“If given a choice between my grandmother’s beauty lessons and Korean beauty products, I would choose my grandmother’s”, “When it comes to skincare, Desi (Indian) skincare is my thing”). Thus, despite challenges of time and money and preference towards indigenous beauty ethos, Korean beauty standards are appealing owing to how BTS members carry a shimmering, natural look (“I wish to try the beauty products they use once in my life”).

Respondents expressed admiration for BTS’ fashion style. They were highly influenced by how band members carry themselves in public. Some respondents shared that their fashion sense and styling changed after they started following BTS and they often tried to replicate BTS’ famous looks. They looked up to BTS members as style icons and were impressed by the street style and oversized clothes that they wore. Responses below capture the same.

“There is a member named Jungkook whose style is kind of street style so it resembles my personality a lot. I dress like him only. When it comes to fashion, I follow him. He is my style icon”.

“And Korean culture has influenced me into, you know, wearing oversized clothes, baggy clothes. I am very much into their fashion sense”.

“I guess my fashion sense is a lot influenced because of BTS. I followed them a lot in fashion, so my fashion sense changed drastically in the last few years.”

“I had styled my brother and I don't know if it was some winter packages, they were getting this cheetah printout, so I tried to recreate that look on my brother”.

When asked about body type, respondents expressed a desire to have a body and skin like BTS', but were not willing to follow a strict diet and workout routine. They acknowledged that Koreans follow a strict diet to maintain their body type, however starving

oneself to achieve a specific figure is unnecessary. Participants also emphasized ideas of ‘body positivity’ and ‘self-love’ and while BTS motivated some to stay healthy, others emphasized the importance of loving oneself no matter what (“Personally, I never felt that I should also have the body like theirs, because I have learned from their leader RM, that you are unique and beautiful in your own way. So, I love myself and it is also because of them”, “I started exercising in lockdown because I got very fat. So, after watching them I got motivated to do exercise and yoga. Yes, they’ve influenced me, but I never wish to be them”).

Theme 3: BTS’ influence on individuals and society

Fig 5: Influence of BTS on individuals

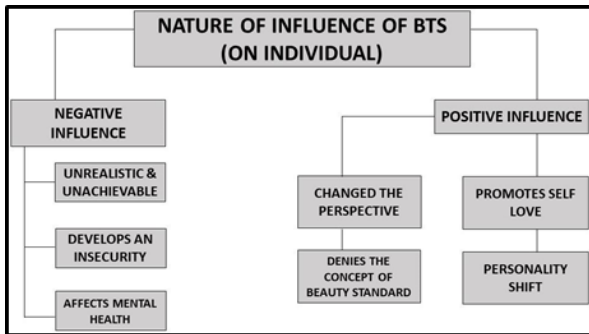
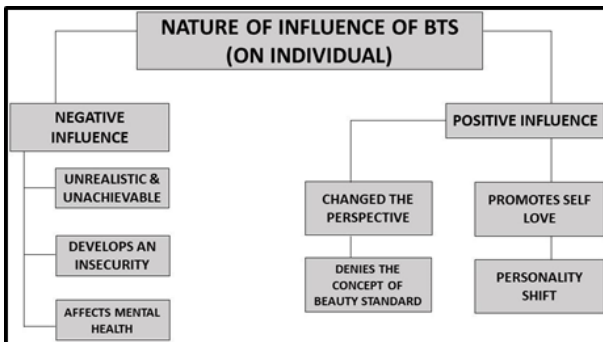


Fig 6: Influence of BTS on society



Examining the influence of Korean pop culture on fandom and society, it is found that the consequences can be both positive and negative. Beauty standards set by BTS are unachievable and unrealistic and many respondents expressed an unwillingness to invest time and money to fulfill it. One of them said, “Beauty standards in Korea are very different from the beauty standards of Indian culture. So, in an Indian context I think it’s unachievable”. Another added, “I think it’s not achievable because it is time consuming. You need an hour daily to do a 10-12 steps routine. So that is unrealistic”. Regular consumption of K-pop also infused insecurity about physical appearance, especially skin color among participants as a result of which they compared their own selves with BTS members, causing them to feel inadequate. This led to anxiety and low self-esteem, impacting their mental health. Sharing her experience, a respondent said, “So, when I got to know that they think fair skin is a sign of beauty... so, I used to not like my skin color. I developed insecurity about my skin color at that time and it affected me a lot”.

About positive influence on individuals, several respondents spoke about how BTS' message of "love yourself" had a significant impact on them. It encouraged them to love, appreciate, and accept their own selves. This shift in perspective extended not only to how they saw themselves but also to how they communicated with others. Instead of having a critical or judgmental perspective, they adopted a more optimistic and accepting attitude. Furthermore, they noticed prominent changes in their personalities, like becoming more self-confident, outgoing, and positive. The responses below reflect the same.

“I have started respecting people. If someone is fat or has dark skin, how to make them feel happy is what I have learned from BTS”.

“I will give credit to Jin as he made me love myself. Like I was very much under confident about myself about how I look or

what people will think ... But Jin taught me to be unique, not to listen to what others are saying and admiring what you are”.

“There is a change in my personality. I have become a little more open and accepting towards other people and my judgmental personality has lessened down”.

K-pop’s influence on society can be understood in both positive and negative ways. In the Indian context, beauty standards set by BTS are unachievable as they don’t reflect what is culturally acceptable in Indian society (“I feel it’s very difficult to achieve that level of beauty standards. Because as an Indian, we are brown people, our skin type is different so no matter how hard we try, it is impossible to achieve that fair skin”). Indian socio-cultural ethos is rigid and stereotypical in their own way, and hence Korean beauty values are incompatible with Indian society (“For Indian society if some guy is getting possessive about makeup and skincare then people will taunt him “ladki jaisa kyu kar raha hai” (why are you behaving like a girl. It will be very difficult for him”)). Moreover, many respondents expressed concern about young people who are obsessed with BTS and K-pop. They were worried that the pressure to look like them would make these youngsters unhappy and self-conscious. Due to this, their mental health may be affected, leading to depression, stress, anxiety, and insecurity. As affirmed by a respondent, “If you’re not able to achieve a glossy skin at the end, it will lead to depression and insecurity. They will not respect themselves and will become conscious all the time in front of people. So that is something that should not come into the society”.

On the positive side, some respondents stated that BTS has played an important role in challenging the stereotype of toxic masculinity through their distinct style and fashion choices. They questioned that men do not have to be strong, muscular, tall, or buff to be masculine. In doing so, they have contributed to a positive shift in how Indians perceive masculinity and while this change may

be slow and gradual, it is undeniably occurring. A respondent said, “So, I feel that BTS is reducing toxic masculinity across the globe. Because, you know some men can be overpowering. But BTS are trying to build a positive image by changing everyone’s perspective.” According to another respondent, “You would see on Instagram ... There have been a lot of men doing makeup. Even my own brother has started makeup. Earlier he would just wash his face but now he has a make-up kit”. Thus, BTS has also helped reshape market trends by normalizing practices such as men putting on make-up and following skin care procedures. This represents a larger shift in society as people are changing their attitudes toward men's self-expression and personal grooming.

Another positive impact of K-pop, particularly BTS, is its use of music and art to raise awareness of significant social issues. Fan communities applaud BTS for producing songs that address the challenges faced by young people today. Some respondents stated that their music is a source of support and comfort to them when dealing with mental health issues (“I really like their calming and soothing songs like Jimin's promise. So I used to play it before I sleep, so I could sleep without getting nightmares.”).

Discussion and Conclusion

This study about K-pop fan culture among young adults in a mid-sized urban town in western India reveals that the influence of pop culture on ideas of beauty can be evaluated from a social as well as commercial standpoint. In terms of societal values associated with beauty, K-pop’s influence on Indian cultural notions about beauty is limited. This is most likely because Indian society has its own firmly established beauty standards which are not easily affected by external cultural influence. However, K-pop does influence a variety of other aspects of their fans' lives positively. These include encouraging self-love, challenging toxic

stereotypes, addressing critical societal issues, and promoting a positive transformation in their fans' personalities. This shows that K-pop is a positive influence at times and K-pop stars are role models for their fans, even if they promote completely different beauty standards.

From the market aspect, it is noticeable that Korean culture has been accepted by Indian society through fashion, especially among the younger generation. Fashion trends have shifted to oversized clothing, streetwear, unisex fashion, and baggy clothing, all of which have gained considerable popularity in India. This Shift in fashion preferences indicates a growing trend toward Korean-inspired fashion patterns. This will most likely provide an impetus to the fashion market, with a greater number of customers exploring and accepting different designs, adding to the economic growth of the fashion industry. This development reflects India's adaptability to diverse cultures. It represents a change of mindset in which young people are breaking away from old-fashioned rules in favor of a more varied and international approach to personal style. This exhibits the power of cultural exchange in promoting economic progress and international cooperation.

It is clear that Korean culture, powered by the global phenomenon of BTS, may be compared to today's juggernaut of cultural change as discussed by Anthony Giddens in the concept 'juggernaut of modernity'. While some believe that K-pop will have a positive impact on the socio-cultural fabric, there are counter-views about the spread of Korean culture into other parts of the world, including India, though not just K-pop but other forms of Korean entertainment and its impact on indigenous cultures. The beauty standards found in the K-pop industry may not correlate with the diverse beauty values prevalent in Indian society but as the number of K-pop fans in India grows, there

is a chance that perceptions will alter significantly in the future. While the expansion of K-pop fandom in India provides exciting opportunities for cultural interaction and personal growth, and while cultural openness and diversity are key to a modern, progressive, peaceful future for the globe, it is also imperative to recognize the need to celebrate and preserve one's own cultural heritage and values.

Future Research

K-pop offers a wide expanse for research to be conducted in the future from a political, social, cultural, economic, anthropological and historical vantage point. Of specific interest is the economic impact of the Korean entertainment sector on Indian markets, enterprises, and cultural industry. Studies can be done to explore the influence of other K-pop groups and different forms of Korean entertainment media in the Indian landscape. Future studies can be carried out with a larger sample size and combination of a mixed method research design employing interviews, surveys, case studies, observation to derive useful and comprehensive insights about the current and future prospects of the Korean wave.

Fatema Bhaisaheb is a corporate communications professional with interests in media relations and brand building. She is an alumna of the Faculty of Journalism & Communication, The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, Gujarat.

Dr. Nidhi Shendurnikar, is an educator with a decade of teaching and research experience in media and communication studies. She is an assistant professor in the Faculty of Journalism & Communication, The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, Gujarat.

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A Comparative Analysis of Climate Change Framing in Nepali Newspapers

Yiqun Geng, PhD, & Tej Prasad Wagle

Nepal, because of its specific topographical and geographical characteristics, is at the epicenter of vulnerability to the impacts of climate change. This study investigates the way three Nepali newspapers, namely *Kantipur*, *Nagarik*, and *Nayapatrika* Daily framed climate change from January 1, 2023, to December 31, 2023. The research provides a comprehensive approach to investigating the framing ways used by these newspapers, identifying and evaluating five prominent frames: environmental impact, humanitarian, policy, and governance, economic, and global justice. Through rigorous examination of chosen reports and articles from the required timeframe, the study indicates a noticeable trend in framing preferences among these three publications. Significantly, the results highlight the centrality of the Policy and Governance Frame as the main focus, which comprises more than half of the total coverage, then following the Environmental Impact Frame. The research presented here provides vital insight into each of the methods applied by media sources to convey climate change in Nepal. The study highlights the significance of using a diverse framing approach for addressing the many facets of this complicated issue, acknowledging the nation's varied climate-related challenges. This research not only contributes to the scholarly knowledge regarding climate change communication but also has practical implications for professionals in the media, policymakers, and the general public. The need for a more varied and diverse framing approach is emphasized, showing

the potential for more successful communication tactics that are tailored to Nepal's particular context and challenges in the face of climate change.

Keywords: Climate change, framing strategies, Nepali newspapers, media coverage.

Introduction

Climate change is seen as an essential issue worldwide that extends beyond scientific research and policy considerations to the crucial arena of media discourse. The media, as an influential force in shaping the public's opinions and understanding, serves an essential part in the challenging story of climate change. The framing of climate change in the media might have an important influence on public opinion, policy formulation, and social responses, making it a crucial part of the broader socio-environmental dialogue. Despite generating far less global emissions of greenhouse gasses than industrialized nations (Ghimire, 2019), Nepal is more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. This vulnerability can be particularly acute in Nepal and the surrounding Himalayan region due to specific ecological and climatic shifts (Bhattacharjee, 2017). The urgency of dealing with climate change as a major problem in Nepal needs an in-depth study of how this complicated topic is represented in the national media landscape.

The present research proposes to explore the complications of climate change presentation in Nepali newspapers, particularly special focus on *Kantipur*, *Nagarik*, and *Nayapatrika Daily*. Understanding how climate change has been presented and conveyed in the news has significant repercussions for framing public discourse, influencing policy decisions, and motivating collective action in the face of the global crisis. Given Nepal's diverse landscapes, ecosystems, and cultures, a research investigation of how climate

change is presented in Nepali newspapers is very essential. The local context has an enormous influence on the transmission of this global issue and analyzing framing methods in Nepali media can provide important insights into the techniques at perform. Despite being a vulnerable country, Nepali communities are not well-informed about the causes and effects of climate change (Shrestha and Baral, 2018). For ownership of the policies and actions related to Climate Change mitigation, adaptation, etc. public awareness about those aspects is crucial.

Recognizing newspapers as effective agents in shaping public opinions, the main objective of this study is to delve into the way climate change is framed in Nepali newspapers so as to uncover potential influences on public understanding, perception, and attitude towards climate issues. By investigating into the specific frames used by *Kantipur*, *Nagarik*, and *Nayapatrika* this study aims to present an in-depth understanding of how climate change has been seen and presented in Nepal's media surroundings. The results of the research have the potential to enhance media practices, influence public discourse, and contribute to more informed decision-making in the face of Nepal's and other nations' severe climate change challenges.

Literature Review

Having its profound impact on the environment, society, and the economy, climate change is one of the most pressing problems humanity faces today. To increase public comprehension, action, and awareness regarding climate change, effective communication is important. Through their framing of the topic, the media, notably newspapers, greatly influence public perceptions and discourse surrounding climate change. The aim of this literature study is to investigate the framing of climate change in Nepali media. This review aims to provide insights into the present circumstances of

climate change communication in Nepali media and identify potential for future research through a review of existing research on media framing and climate change framing.

Research on Climate Change Framing

Study in this category includes a wide range of themes related to the framing of climate change, particularly the depiction of scientific viewpoints, the dynamics of legislative procedures, and the intricate interactions between public opinion and media discourse. Specifically, in the context of Russia, Rowe's (2013) seminal work demonstrates the complex relationships among scientific perspectives, policy-making processes, and media depictions. By exploring these distinctions, Rowe's work clarifies the intricate connection between scientific contributions, media discourse, and policy findings. By doing this, it offers a fundamental understanding of climate change framing that cuts beyond geographical boundaries and provides insights into how it presents itself in various socio-political circumstances.

For the purpose of developing existing quantitative content studies, Eskjaer (2009) calls for a paradigm shift toward a more qualitative analysis of global variances in climate change coverage. This demand for the qualitative research method is a result of the discourse on climate change being recognized for its essential complexity. Eskjaer emphasises the need for qualitative approaches in capturing the complex nature of media approaches and framing climate change, underscoring the importance of nuanced knowledge. Broadbent et al. (2016) present a thorough investigation of the discourse in the global media regarding climate change, providing a thorough study that explores its complex character. As a result of their thorough research, they are able to identify a number of opposing aspects of this discourse, demonstrating the complexities that surround global climate change framing. The multi-dimensional

framework proposed by Broadbent and others is an essential component of the conceptualization of climate change and offers a rich basis for further research. Their study clarifies the complex terrain of climate change framing and helps us understand it deeper. It also serves as an outline for future scholarly endeavors to further explore and disassemble the topic.

Research on Climate Change and Media Framing

This category of studies emphasizes the critical role that the media play in framing issues relating to climate change. Particularly, the studies aim to illuminate how some narratives survive, why framing strategies vary between regions, and how alternative media platforms affect the conversation. The study conducted by Seelig, Deng, and Liang (2022) highlights the persistent use of familiar terms and imagery in the representation of climate solutions in traditional news sources as well as online media. Their work makes a significant contribution to the continuing discourse about how the media affects people's opinions and responses to climate-related issues by demonstrating its persistence. Their results also emphasize the need for deeper studies on media framing methods and the need for careful analyses of how these practices change over time. Boykoff and Boykoff (2004) shed light on regional differences in scientific representations in Western and Indian media contexts through a comparative analysis. Through their investigation, they provide insightful information about how cultural and contextual elements impact and how climate change is framed in various geographical areas.

This comparative approach emphasizes the significance of taking into account various socio-cultural contexts in media study, while also deepening our understanding of the dynamics of climate change framing. The frame analysis of COP21 coverage in Chinese, American, and British news media by Pan, Opgenhaffen, and Gorp (2019) adds to our understanding of variations by region

in climate change framing. Their findings show how Western and Chinese media outlets frame stories in various ways, highlighting the significance of political and cultural circumstances in shaping media narratives. Their research has significance because it demonstrates the importance of conducting context-specific analyses in order to find the slight differences that exist in the ways individuals frame climate change in different parts of the globe.

Gaps in Literature

There is a noticeable gap in the analysis of climate change framing in Nepali newspapers, despite the large corpus of literature on the subject. Our knowledge of how climate change is portrayed in Nepali media is lacking because the majority of studies to this date have been conducted in Western contexts. The previously mentioned gap highlights the significance of specialized studies aimed at Nepali media to bridge this divide and offer perspectives on the distinct limitations and prospects in climate change communication within the Nepali context.

To illuminate this exploration, the research formulates the following questions:

- What were the key focuses of Nepali newspapers' (Kantipur, Nagarik, and Nayapatrika) coverage of climate change issues?
- What are the distinct frameworks employed by Kantipur, Nagarik, and Nayapatrika to present climate change?
- What are both distinctions and similarities between Kantipur, Nagarik, and Nayapatrika framing strategies regarding reporting on climate change?

Theoretical Framework

This research adopts a theoretical framework rooted in media framing theory to scrutinize the representation of climate change in Nepalese news media. Framing theory, as elucidated by Tankard et

al. (1991), encompasses the selection of story angles, serving as the central organizing idea for news content. This framework supplies context and implies the issue through the deliberate use of selection, emphasis, exclusion, and elaboration. As posited by Entman (1989), the slant in news significantly influences public opinion, revealing that media not only provide information but also proffer perspectives on issues (McCullagh, 2002; Zeng Li & TahatKhalaf, 2012).

Framing, as conceptualized by Goffman (1974) in his seminal work on Frame Analysis, involves both inclusion (emphasizing) and exclusion (de-emphasizing), allowing media outlets to prioritize certain aspects over others, consciously or unconsciously promoting specific interpretations of events (McQuail, 2005).

Framing theory posits that the presentation of information influences audience perceptions and decision-making. According to Tankard and Paluck (2016), framing theory offers a lens to unveil underlying assumptions, values, and ideologies that shape news coverage. Within the context of climate change, this theory becomes particularly relevant as it facilitates an exploration of cognitive structures or frames employed by the media to make sense of this intricate issue (Entman, 1993). These frames serve to define the problem, attribute responsibility, propose solutions, and mold public opinion and policy responses (Entman, 2007).

By employing framing theory, this study aims to uncover patterns, biases, and discourses inherent in the framing of climate change as a social, political, and environmental issue (Carvalho, 2007). Furthermore, framing theory allows for an exploration of how various stakeholders strategically frame climate change to advance their interests and agendas, be they governmental, non-governmental, or industry actors (Nisbet, 2009).

Methodology

Ylä-Anttila, Eranti, and Kukkonen (2021) have contributed

significantly to this line of research by analyzing climate change frames used by NGOs, governments, and experts in Indian and US media. Their methodology, utilizing topic modeling, provides valuable insights into frame analysis of public debates. This study adopts a qualitative content and analytical approach to explore the framing of the issue of climate change in three Nepali newspapers in 2023. Elo & Kyngäs (2008) define qualitative content analysis as a systematic approach to investigating written content with the objective of uncovering patterns, themes, and discourses. The employing of framing theory for analyzing the contents of *Kantipur*, *Nagarik*, and *Nayapatrika* in 2023 helps with the identification of comparison and contrast between specific stories and pieces. 180 reports in all, 54 from *Kantipur*, 67 from *Nagarik*, and 59 from *Nayapatrika* have been collected for this research. These reports, which represent the time frame from January 1, 2023, to December 31, 2023, provide the primary dataset employed for this research. In carrying out a comprehensive analysis, the researcher specifies the following frames:

Environmental Impact Frame

The Environmental Impact Frame focuses on the impact of climate change in Nepal, particularly glacier melting, irregular weather patterns, and hazards to biodiversity. It shows the pressing requirement for actions to reduce these effects and protect Nepal's natural resources.

Humanitarian Frame

The Humanitarian Frame highlights the effect of climate change in Nepal on vulnerable populations including farmers, the countryside, and marginalized populations. To address humanitarian issues, emphasis is placed on adapting strategies, preparedness for disasters, and global support.

Policy And Governance Frame

The Policy and Governance Framework analyzes the implications of government policies, global commitments, and regulatory actions on climate change in Nepal. It analyzes the impact of present policies, governance gaps, and the significance of political leadership in building sustainable development and climate adaptation resilience.

Economic Frame

The Economic Frame analyzes the way climate change impacts Nepal's livelihoods, agriculture, tourism, and infrastructure. It also explores the costs of mitigation and adaptation approaches, the potential for green growth, and the role of capital from the private sector in climate resilience.

Global Justice Frame

The Global Justice Frame bears into consideration the global impact of climate change and the imbalanced effects of industrialized nations on developing countries like Nepal. It highlights the significance of climate justice, equity, and international collaboration in addressing the main drivers of climate change and helping vulnerable countries like Nepal.

This study is going to employ framing theory to analyze how these three mainstream media outlets portrayed and framed the climate change issue, resulting in a deeper comprehension of media dynamics and their roles in shaping public perceptions of this crucial global crisis.

Data Analysis And Findings

Data for this study were systematically collected through the utilization of an electronic database search engine employing specific keywords related to news reports on climate change within

Kantipur, *Nagarik*, and *Nayapatrika* daily newspapers. Employing this search engine, the identified news outlets were meticulously compiled. A total of 180 reports were retrieved for analysis, with 54 originating from *Kantipur*, 67 from *Nagarik*, and 59 from *Nayapatrika*. These reports which span the time frame from January 1, 2023 to December 31, 2023, constitute the primary dataset for this investigation.

A comprehensive overview of the sample distribution across these three newspapers is presented in Table 1. The categorization of news reports into distinct genres such as News, Features, Editorials, and Articles further contributes to a nuanced understanding of the framing of climate change within the Nepali media landscape during the specified time period.

	Kantipur	Nagarik	Nayapatrika
News	26	48	33
Features	9	10	12
Editorials	3	3	0
Articles	16	6	14
Total	54	67	59

Table 1: Extend of Coverage

Dominant Frames in Climate Change Reporting

The analysis of climate change framing in Nepali newspapers, namely *Kantipur*, *Nagarik*, and *Nayapatrika*, revealed the presence of five dominant frames: Environmental Impact Frame, Humanitarian Frame, Policy and Governance Frame, Economic Frame, and Global Justice Frame.

Distribution of Frames

The distribution of frames across the three newspapers varied significantly. The following percentages represent the prevalence of each frame in the overall reporting:

Policy and Governance Frame: 54%

Environmental Impact Frame: 23%

Humanitarian Frame: 10.5%

Global Justice Frame: 10.5%

Economic Frame: 9.5%

The results show that the Policy and Governance Framework gets the most focus, representing more than half of all climate change coverage in all three newspapers. The Environmental Impact Frame is the second predominant frame.

Frame-wise Breakdown

To provide a more nuanced understanding, a breakdown of each frame's representation in the individual newspapers is presented below:

Environmental Impact Frame

Kantipur: 9 stories

Nagarik: 5 stories

Nayapatrika: 14 stories

The Environmental Impact Frame is well-represented across all newspapers, with Nayapatrika featuring the highest number of stories in this category.

Humanitarian Frame

Kantipur: 7 stories

Nagarik: 5 stories

Nayapatrika: 7 stories

The Humanitarian Frame is depicted consistently across all three newspapers, with a comparable number of stories in each.

Policy and Governance Frame

Kantipur: 28 stories

Nagarik: 44 stories

Nayapatrika: 25 stories

Policy and Governance Frame emerges as the most prevalent frame in all newspapers, with Nagarik showcasing the highest number of stories in this category.

Economic Frame

Kantipur: 7 stories

Nagarik: 8 stories

Nayapatrika: 6 stories

The Economic Frame is relatively evenly distributed with Nagarik having a slightly higher representation.

Global Justice Frame

Kantipur: 3 stories

Nagarik: 5 stories

Nayapatrika: 7 stories

The Global Justice Frame is less prevalent but Nayapatrika again stands out with a higher representation.

Frames of story	Kantipur	Nagarik	Nayapatrika	Total No. of stories	% of the stories
Environmental Impact	9	5	14	28	15.5
Humanitarian	7	5	7	19	10.5
Policy and Governance	28	44	25	97	54
Economic	3	8	6	17	9.5
Global Justice	7	5	7	19	10.5
Total	54	67	59	180	100

Table 2: News Frame

Comparative Analysis Of Framing Strategies

Policy and Governance Dominance

The clear dominance of the Policy and Governance Frame in all three newspapers indicates a strong focus on government policies, international agreements, and institutional responses concerning climate change. This suggests a collective media emphasis on the role of governance in addressing climate challenges in Nepal.

Varied Emphasis on Environmental Impact

While the Environmental Impact Frame is consistently the second most prevalent, the variations in the number of stories across newspapers suggest nuanced differences in how each outlet covers the direct environmental consequences of climate change. *Nayapatrika*, in particular, appears to prioritize this frame more extensively.

Humanitarian, Economic and Global Justice Considerations

The lower representation of the Humanitarian, Economic, and Global Justice Frames indicates a potential gap in media coverage of the human dimension, economic implications, and global justice aspects of climate change in Nepal. Further exploration into these frames may reveal untapped narratives that could contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the issue.

Implications for Climate Change Communication

The dominance of the Policy and Governance Frame suggests a potential need for diversification in reporting to encompass the broader spectrum of climate change impacts. By giving more prominence to frames that address the human, economic, and global justice dimensions, newspapers can contribute to a more holistic public understanding of climate change and foster a well-informed discourse.

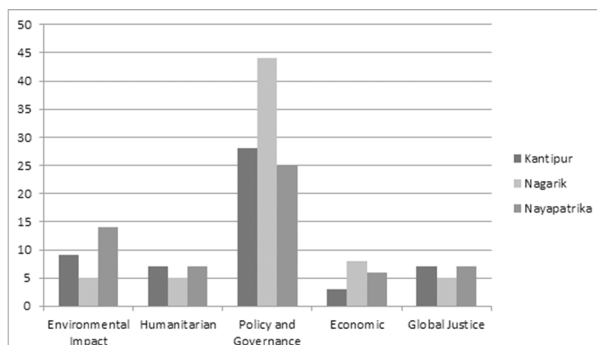


Figure 1: Distribution of Frames

This data analysis provides a foundation for understanding the framing strategies employed by *Kantipur*, *Nagarik*, and *Nayapatrika* in reporting climate change issues in Nepal. Further research and exploration into audience reactions and the effectiveness of these framing strategies could offer valuable insights into shaping more impactful climate change communication strategies in the future.

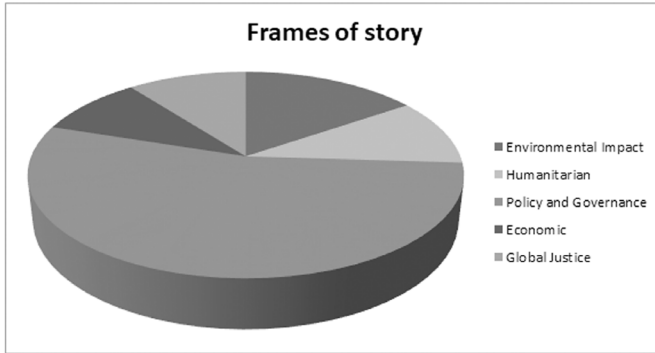


Figure 2: Percentage of Distribution of Frames

Analysis of Framing of News Coverage

The comparative analysis of climate change framing in Nepali newspapers reveals intriguing insights into the prioritization and representation of various frames in the media landscape. The dominance of the Policy and Governance Frame, comprising 54% of the coverage, underscores a strong emphasis on the role of government and institutional mechanisms in addressing climate change. This finding suggests a notable focus on policy interventions and governance strategies in the newspapers studied, possibly reflecting the perceived significance of regulatory measures in tackling the climate crisis.

Furthermore, the prominence of the Environmental Impact Frame as the second most prevalent suggests recognition of the immediate ecological consequences of climate change.

The distribution of frames across newspapers highlights nuanced variations, with *Nagarik* leading in the Policy and Governance Frame and *Nayapatrika* featuring prominently in the Environmental Impact and Global Justice Frames.

The research, which shows Nepal's vulnerabilities to climate change, stresses the pressing need to address concerns like a rise in natural disasters, decreasing groundwater supplies, and rising carbon emissions, which complies with the qualitative content. Nepal's distinct position as one of the most affected countries points out the strong connection between the appeal for international aid and climate financing. As the debate continues, it is essential to examine the consequences of these framing strategies and explore how media narratives in the context of climate change might affect public opinion, the creation of policies, and global collaboration.

The study identifies five dominant frames used in reporting climate change: Environmental Impact, Humanitarian, Policy and Governance, Economic, and Global Justice frames. The dominant frame across all newspapers is the Policy and Governance Frame, followed by the Environmental Impact Frame. The Policy and Governance Frame constitutes the majority of coverage (54%), indicating a strong emphasis on government policies and institutional responses. The Environmental Impact Frame follows with 23% of coverage. *Kantipur* features a significant number of stories on Policy and Governance and Environmental Impact. *Nagarik* shows a higher emphasis on Policy and Governance, with a balanced representation of other frames. *Nayapatrika* emphasizes Environmental Impact and Global Justice Frames, alongside Policy and Governance. The strong focus on Policy and Governance suggests a collective media emphasis on governmental policies and institutional mechanisms. While Environmental Impact is consistently represented, there are nuanced differences across newspapers, with *Nayapatrika* prioritizing this frame more extensively. Less frequently used frames

are humanitarian, economic, and global justice, implying possible gaps in media attention to Nepal's impact of climate change on people's lives, the economy, and global justice.

Conclusion

The present research provides a detailed analysis of climate change framing in Nepali newspapers, particularly *Kantipur*, *Nagarik*, and *Nayapatrik*. The leading position of the Policy and Governance Frame shows an overall emphasis on governmental policies and institutional solutions, highlighting the vital function of governance in solving climate concerns. While the Environmental Impact Frame always comes in second, variations between newspapers reveal nuanced differences in coverage. The insufficient presence of the Humanitarian, Economic, and Global Justice Frames indicates potential gaps in media discourse, emphasizing the significance of a broader approach to climate change reporting. This study serves as a basic examination that caused future research into audience emotions and the effectiveness of framing strategies with the goal of enhancing climate change communication.

It is suggested that media outlets extend their narrative techniques to include a wider range of climate change impacts, such as issues related to global justice, economics, and humanitarian concerns. In order to increase public understanding of climate change policies and programs, government agencies should strengthen their communication strategies. Policies from the government should fill in the gaps in the media's coverage, especially when it comes to issues of global justice, economic impacts, and humanitarian concerns. The general public should examine media coverage and use a wide range of information sources to stay up-to-date on climate change issues. Media organizations, public officials, and lawmakers can help make better decisions and take collective action to address the current climate crisis by implementing these suggestions.

Prof. Dr. Yiqun Geng teaches at the Institute of Communication Studies, Communication University of China.

Tej Prasad Wagle is a PhD student at the Institute of Communication Studies, Communication University of China.

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Literacy in the New Media Age: What Has Changed ?

Sudhamshu Dahal, PhD

Media landscape has seen remarkable changes over the decades because of new technological inventions globally. Technological inventions have multiple impacts in media landscape that has been differently shaping the traditional one-way communication practice. The concept of media literacy interpreted earlier has also been shifting, and there are issues with the arrival of new interactive media in the world. This article deals with media literacy: its basic concepts and theoretical assumptions and the shifting of the traditional definition guided by the changing media technology and media consumption pattern in Nepali context. It examines the changing Nepali media literacy landscape through a critical approach and analyze how the content generation has been impacted by the changing media climate.

Keywords: Media literacy, interactive media, critical media literacy

Introduction

Mass media as a subsystem within the greater social system has been continuously offering various contents to the targeted audience to satisfy their curiosity of what is going on in the world. In this attempt, they offer diverse types of information; however, their roles are mostly defined as a tool to provide information, education, entertainment and persuasion or motivation. Media literacy

encompasses a spectrum of competencies ranging from adeptly navigating both traditional and contemporary media technologies to cultivating a discerning and critical engagement with media content. This spectrum is particularly pertinent in an era where the media exerts substantial influence, standing as one of the effective forces shaping societal dynamics.

Proponents of media literacy view increased media knowledge in society as contributing to participation, active citizenship, competence development and lifelong learning (Horton, 2007).

Over the years, mass communication scholars have developed different models for the systematic study of communication process, technology as medium and impact of the mass media. The traditional non-interactive era has been dominated by the newly emerged interactive media and it has equally shifted the way people received the message. Scholarly arguments on media literacy as one of the prerequisites for the audience to understand the media message is now transforming along with the nature of the media.

Our literacy journey had started through the stone age via writing on a stone tablet. Now we are at the age of screen-touch writing in an advanced form of interactive media. To achieve this position, we have struggled a lot and came across distinct stages of literacy development.

Media literacy is also called mediacy; is in-depth knowledge of how the media work and how they might influence audiences-like literacy and the ways in which literacy permits people to better understand written texts in all their dimensions including psychological, social, etc. (Danesi, 2009). Media literacy is a fundamental tool to understand the media message without which the message might be meaningless, and it can further case misunderstanding and confusion among the audience. The scholars have differently defined media literacy however there are some commonalities within those definitions. Baran and Davis (2010)

define media literacy as an ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and communicate media messages. The European Commission (EC) defines media literacy as the ability to access, analyze and evaluate the power of images, sounds and messages which we are now being confronted with daily, and are an important part of our contemporary culture (Shapiro & Celot, 2011).

Media literacy encompasses a broad spectrum, encompassing various forms of media such as television, film, radio, recorded music, print media, the internet, and emerging digital communication technologies (Jenkins, 2006). The overarching purpose of media literacy lies in cultivating awareness of diverse media messages, facilitating the recognition of how media channels filter perceptions and shape beliefs, influencing popular culture and individual choices (Hobb & Frost, 2003). Furthermore, media literacy empowers individuals by nurturing critical thinking skills and fostering problem-solving capabilities within the realm of media consumption and interpretation (Buckingham, 2003). This multifaceted approach to media literacy plays a pivotal role in enhancing individuals' abilities to navigate the complex landscape of media, thereby contributing to a more informed and discerning society.

According to Adams and Hamm (2001), media literacy is the ability to create personal meaning from the visual and verbal symbols we take in every day from television, advertising, film, and digital media. Barton and Hamilton (1998) as cited in Mackey (2002) defined literacy as “primarily something people do; it is an activity, located in the space between thought and text. Like all human activity, literacy is essentially social, and it is located in the interaction between people” (p.3). Similarly, Hobbs (2001) relates literacy with “the ability to access, analyze, evaluate and communicate messages in a variety of forms” (p.7). For Sholle and Denski (1995) conceptualize media literacy within a critical pedagogy and thus “it must be conceived as a political, social, and cultural practice” (p.17).

Development of Media literacy

The Roman statesman Julius Caesar had used Acta Diurna in 59 B.C. to inform to his mercenaries and soldiers about the wars. Mass Media scholars believed that Acta Diurna was the first mass media in the history of the world (Palmer, 2023).

While Julius Caesar is often attributed for developing the concept of Acta Diurna, which is considered an early form of mass media, it is important to note that historical evidence supporting its existence during Caesar's time is limited. The Acta Diurna, or "Daily Acts", is believed to have been a daily official gazette or bulletin in ancient Rome, containing news about government proceedings, legal decisions, and other relevant information. However, the exact nature and usage of Acta Diurna during Julius Caesar's rule remain speculative (Rosenstein, 1995).

One primary challenge in establishing Acta Diurna as the first mass media is the scarcity of direct historical documentation. A number of references to Acta Diurna come from later sources, such as the works of Roman historians like Suetonius and Dio Cassius. These accounts provide insights into the existence of official daily announcements but lack specific details regarding Caesar's use of Acta Diurna for communicating with mercenaries and soldiers (Tranquillis, 1957).

It is crucial to approach this historical claim with a degree of caution due to the gaps in direct evidence. While Acta Diurna is considered an important precursor to modern mass media, attributing its use to Julius Caesar specifically for informing mercenaries and soldiers in 59 B.C. lacks concrete historical verification (Cassius & Cary, 1927).

The print was the first means of mass communication in which history started with Gutenberg printing press in 1440 A.D. Gutenberg printing press was introduced. After 1500 years only human beings started printing on paper.

Printing was used for universal literacy and education as McLuhan states. The traditional definition of literacy applies only to print, “having a knowledge of letters; instructed; learned.” (Silverblatt et.al., 2014).

After the First World War in the first quarter of the 20th century, radio appeared as an effective means of communication. The military in war could learn, understand and interpret the listening to their fellow soldiers in war. This could also be one type of literacy that was brought from the invention of radio because the message of the radio could be understood, interpreted, and known (Burns, 2004).

In this digital age, aspects like medium and knowledge to locate the source play a critical role in receiving the information. There are several channels even within the online sphere as they can be through apps, platforms, intranet, email, subscriptions etc.

Initially, the issues of media literacy were solely confined to print literacy which is gradually embedded with radio and audio-visual literacy including television and film literacy and now it is gradually accepting the terms of new media literacy that is mostly based on information and communication technology (ICT) termed as computer literacy or internet literacy. Sonia Livingstone has explored key areas of literacy in the electronic era including cyber literacy (Livingstone, 2010).

There are various theoretical bases for the study of media literacy. According to the uses and gratifications theory audience members are indeed active, but they are not necessarily varying aware of what they do with media (Baran, 2010). Critical cultural studies consider the needs of the audiences and opportunities which are constrained by access to media and their content while social cognitive, social semiotic, semiotic interaction, cultivation and framing theories urge that media content can both implicitly and explicitly guide action. On the other side information processing

theory is based on the belief on the fact that people have various levels of understanding ability and that affects the uses of media and their ability to receive the message. Mass communication scholar Silverblatt (2013) provided one of the first systematic efforts to place media literacy in audience and culture-centered theory and frame it as a skill that must and can be improved (Silverblatt et al., 2014).

The conventional understanding of literacy traditionally pertained solely to print, involving the ability to comprehend and manipulate written letters through instruction and learning. However, contemporary media landscapes have expanded significantly beyond print, now encompassing a diverse array of channels such as print, photography, film, radio, television, and cyberspace. This evolution necessitates a broader and more inclusive perspective on literacy that acknowledges proficiency not only in traditional written formats but also in various visual, auditory, and digital mediums (Kress, 2003). Potter (1998) takes a slightly different approach and includes literacy as a field which need to be developed which is multidimensional in nature with four distinct levels of skills- cognitive, emotional, aesthetic and moral.

As pointed out by Sonia Livingstone (2010) there are various terms used to explain the circumstances of 'Literacy'. According to her argument there are new forms of literacy in the electronic era and the entire issues of literacy cannot be confined within the traditional forms of literacy like print literacy, audiovisual literacy, and critical literacy, and visual literacy, oral literacy cultural and social literacy. The new terminologies are the byproduct of the latest technology that includes computer literacy, cyber-literacy, internet literacy, network literacy, digital literacy, information literacy and still changing the area of discussion based on the technology and uses of media. Media literacy has passed four different eras initiated from classical era where oral and gestural communication was common whereas the second era was renaissance, first industrial revolution which was

observed by the printing text. Likewise, the Appearance of electronic media: telephone, film, radio, and television considered as third era and digital media and internet is the fourth and latest phenomena of media literacy (Tornero, Celot & Varis, 2007).

All of the definitions of media literacy have pointed out four basic components of media literacy as follows:

1. Access:

Access to the medium is very crucial to perceive the media message. The dynamics of access has been changing over the time with the arrival of different media platform; initiated from printing outlets including book and newspapers/magazine, moved to electronic era and now already on the way to converge media of cyber space. Earlier, access to print and audio-visual media were limited but the new technology has completely changed the phenomena. In relation to new media, the digital divide is the main barrier for access (Livingstone, 2010).

2. Analysis

Having access is not sufficient for media literacy. Audience meaningful engagement over the symbolic text depends upon their understanding and analysis of the provided message. Readers and viewers must be literate in the sense of being competent in and motivated towards relevant cultural traditions and values (ibid.). In order to analyze the media content, they need to be aware about media technologies and language with setting.

3. Evaluation

Evaluation of the media content is another crucial factor of media literacy. It is important to evaluate the flooded message from pluralistic media landscape and equally complex for the general people to distinguish dated, biased, or exploitative sources from World Wide Web.

4. Content creation

The traditional definition of media literacy puts the readers

as more passive receivers of the media message and they have no role in content creation. However, computer-based media have crossed the traditional notions of passivity and audience can react, create, and post the message (Jenkins, 2006). Similarly, the degree of awareness of the audience about content creation process may determine the media literacy in large scale.

Literacy and the Nepali Media Landscape

According to the National Literacy Policy of Nepal, a literate person is, ...who is able to read and write short and simple sentences related to daily life in his/her mother tongue or national language... The literacy in Nepal has been linked with the school education, adult education and non-formal educations (Comings, Shrestha & Smith, 1992). The later on two types of education in Nepal has been done to gain certain skills to improve life-skills, gain trainings and become self- dependent. Basic literacy, post literacy, alternative schooling and the life and livelihood skills training program targeted towards income generating aiming at improving quality of lives, especially of socio-economically deprived groups and reducing poverty (GoN/MoES, 2007).

Regardless of the types of education, it is clearly marked that "able to read and write" can be interpreted in the same ways as "literacy in print". This does not specify only books, but also of any types of print like newspaper, magazine, and other forms.

The definition ensures the space of Media Literacy especially in print. The press has been playing an undeniable role in promoting literacy in society. The first publication of the press, Gorkhapatra was started in 1958 BS, which has crossed a century in print and publication. We cannot underestimate the role of Gorkhapatra in developing the literacy level of people, in forming opinions and in creating the understanding of policies, provisions and other norms and values of the society. However, the Gorkhapatra is the press,

which crossed different hurdles in different periods of political upheavals. Now it has been providing publications in multiple languages. Exception to English and Nepali languages, we cannot find multilingual features still today in other national dailies.

After the 2007 BS (1951) revolution for democracy, for the very first time in broadcasting radio was started. Then, many private media emerged in Nepal, both in print and in broadcasting. Radio Sagarmatha is the first community radio station in South Asia (Dahal, 2020). Lately, televisions emerged, and now we have online broadcasting which is called "webcasting." The objective of the mass media has always remained to create awareness in people about the policies, state mechanisms, and other social and political information. If we analyze our history, we can find mass media played a key role in creating awareness in people for the change of the state political sphere. The mainstream media played (has been playing) a crucial role in educating people, forming their choices, and opinions and instilling democratic values in their society and the nation as a whole (Dahal & Khatri, 2021).

On the other hand, if we analyze the history of internet technologies in Nepal. For the very first time, IBM 1401, a generation Mainframe computer, was introduced in 1971 for the census purposes (Karki, 2019).

From the time computer technology was introduced in Nepal, the medium of literacy has been changed. It was further strengthened through the introduction of the Internet in 1994 by Mercantile.

In January 2000, there were 11 licensed ISPs. It has been estimated that Internet subscribers were 9000 in January 2000. So, until 2000 AD, there was a minimum internet internet-literate people. On the other hand, seeing the growing internet literacy, the IT Policy 2000 was enforced to make it accessible to the public, building a knowledge-based society and establishing knowledge-based industries (Turin, 2001).

Currently, if we look, according to the Nepal Telecom Authority report internet penetration in the country has reached 55 per cent as of October 2023 (NTA, 2023) and the number is growing. This means more than half of the population of the nations are connected through the internet. We now have a requirement of internet proficiency in every job description. So, the types of literacy that we are demanding are internet knowledge to recognize the information in the virtual environment in addition to the knowledge of the just able to read and write and interpret simple sentences.

The history of Nepali journalism has been dominated by the contemporary political system. The print era emerged during the Rana regime and flourish with new democratic system. The first printing technology was installed in 1851, the publication of the first newspaper *Sudhasagar* in 1889 and the publication of *Gorkhapatra* in 1901 are the historical milestones of Nepali journalism. Similarly, the electronic era started in 1951 with the establishment of Radio Nepal and Nepal Television in 1985. The restoration of the democratic system in 1990 and the promulgation of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal in 1990 that ensured the rights of the press shaped the direction and created the basis for free and independent media in Nepal. It took more than 200 years for the introduction of print technology, and 50 years for radio and television in Nepal however, in the case of internet-based media they came to the Nepali media landscape quickly. *Kantipur* and *The Kathmandu Post* appeared in the Nepali media market from the private sector in 1993 with a professional approach for the first time. The Internet was introduced in the country in 1993, and a newspaper's print edition was first available online in 1995. In 1995, *The Kathmandu Post* put online its print content. Other early birds were himalmag.com (1997) and nepalnews.com (1998). The latter was the first news-only portal launched by Mercantile Communication, a private IT company. Initially, the website served to host digital

versions of several print (Shapiro & Celot, 2011) newspapers. News portals of most "legacy" media houses, such as kantipuronline.com (2000), thehimalayantimes.com (2001), gorkhapatra.org.np (2002), newsofnepal.com (2003) began as electronic platforms of their print content. Only gradually did some of these sites start to publish web-exclusive content as well (Media Foundation Nepal, 2012). Interestingly another form of media i.e., social media has emerged as strong tool for the exchange of information in our context.

New Literacy Landscape

The first point for the discussion is the increasing number of Nepali internet users that determines the access of the media. The numbers of telephone users have rocketed in Nepal with the arrival of mobile technology and currently one in two Nepali uses internet. There is total 34 million telephone users in Nepal as present and among them 97.5 percent are the mobile service users (NTA, 2023). Ncell Axiata is the largest service provider accounting 51.4 percent followed by Nepal Telecom with coverage of 48.59 percent. On the other side, there are 20 Internet Service Provider (ISP) offering various levels of internet service across the country. The total percentage of Nepali population reached by internet is 55. These figures indicate the numbers of people linked with internet and telecommunication facilities, but the state run NTA has not revealed the data related to the volume of data surfed by the user. The largest service provider, NTC has 8.4 million internet subscribers according to its recent annual report and the increase rate is around 10% (NTC, 2017).

The second point is the increasing number of social media users in our context which is also escalating. Facebook, Twitter and YouTube are the widely used social media sites. A recent statistics claims that there are 15 million Facebook users in Nepal as of December 2023. Similarly, the user base for Twitter in the

same period is 5.5 million (Social Media Users in Nepal -2023, 2023). These values refer to the growing numbers of people using social networking sites which are becoming the prominent sources information. Similarly, the traditional established media brand has already been using the social media sites for the sharing of their professionally produced content. *Kantipur*, the largest selling newspaper of the country has about 3.5 million followers on Facebook page. Similarly, *Nagarik* has about 2 million followers which is followed by *Setopati online* accounting 1.2 million likes and followers. These facts and statistics indicate that the media access pattern has already shifted and internet-based media literacy is increasing rapidly.

Interestingly, there are some media critic sites and blogs that frequently point out to the misleading information shared from the mainstream media outlets. For example, www.mysansar.com has more than 57,000 followers and this blog identifies itself as fact-checker and media literacy disseminator. Similarly, www.mediakurakani.com is another platform for discussing media messages and its dimensions. It not only prioritizes the impactful content missed out by the mainstream media but also does critical reviews on the doings of the media themselves. For example, recently it has been extensively reporting on the plight of journalists in Kantipur Media Group. Of course, there are other such platforms and social media is the most prominent among many.

Earlier, analysis and evaluation of the media content were scattered and often they were reflected as feedback of the readers to the editors. But these contents were censored by the editorial department of the concerned newspapers and were unable to establish a critical approach. For example: *Kantipur* remained silent over 15 years about the issue of Dr. Rasendra Bhattarai, the so-called billionaire and the story on him that was appeared in leading broadsheet daily as main news on 19 October 2003. The whole story

was focused on the miracle journey of Bhattarai, a self-claimed billionaire. The story was widely criticized by the public based on the authenticity of the provided information; however, *Kantipur* did not offer any explanation on the issue. But in a sudden turn of the event after 15 years of the silence the editor in its silver jubilee special edition, accepted the fault in its reporting. In 19 February 2018 as *Kantipur* published a note from its editor saying, “News editing process may have errors and the scandal of Rasendra Bhattarai is an example”.

Now the critical question can be raised on why the newspaper did not consider its error for such a long time? Have they encountered an ethical question from academia about their silence on such crucial information offered to its readers? Did they realize that media literacy over the years have been changed and it is high time for them to accept the past mistakes in order to continue the readers trust over them? This example clearly establishes the notion that the critical approach of the recipients can influence editorial judgment and compelled to accept the shortcomings.

Furthermore, the analysis and evaluation are guided by several factors including social values, customs, traditions, understanding level and more importantly by political and economic interest in our context. The vested interests of various groups including media itself are some of the crucial factors in determining content creation. The case cited below is one suitable example for the argument.

The series of news published by *Kantipur* daily newspaper on the issue of Ajaya Raj Sumargi, an infamously famous Nepali businessman is widely discussed by social media platforms but the competitors of *Kantipur* are silent on this topic. According to the media reports, they had a land deal in June 2013 and *Kantipur* started its series of news in December 2018. While presenting the news, *Kantipur* quoted the joint reports of the Department of Money

Laundering Investigation (DMLI) and the Central Investigation Bureau (CIB) of Nepal Police. On the other side, Sumargi summoned a petition to the district administration office in Kathmandu to protect his life and blamed Kantipur Publications that it has created pressure to return the purchased land at the same cost.

Media Society Nepal, a club of media investors came to the forefront and issued a press statement stating that “a complaint filed by businessman Ajay Raj Parajuli Sumargi at District Administration Office, Kathmandu, against the chairperson of Kantipur Publications Kailash Sirohiya, demanding protection of his life and property was a ploy to tarnish the image of the media house”. Other newspapers gave short coverage if this statement while interestingly, Nepal *Samacharpatra* and *Annapurna Post*, the member institution of the society, covered the news and also included the viewpoint of Sumargi. A blog (Mediakurakani.com) has compiled all this information and presented it with a critical approach. These series indicate the content creation process and possible biases in editorial judgment. A couple of questions to be dealt with this issue for the audience like why this is a serious issue for *Kantipur* and not for its competitors? is there corporate interest in newspapers? why DMLI and CIB have not addressed these issues since it has created hype in the political and media arena? Isn't the reader deprived from getting accurate, unbiased information about the issue and where is pluralistic media? However, the series is believed to be continued and over time it will be resolved either in the way *Kantipur* has been advocating or will dismiss the issue, but one thing is very crucial in this case i.e., questions, interpretations and analysis in social media platform that has pressurized the *Kantipur* for independent, neutral and unbiased information.

From a theoretical point of view, the reader's need for accurate news is constrained by the limited coverage (Single media coverage)

in this regard. If other newspapers would have some sorts of coverage, it could support the opinion formation process. Access was not an area of focus, but content is the driving forces in this case.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that media access in Nepal is growing fast which is the result of the new technological developments although digital divides is still a problem if we talk about media literacy. The growing numbers of educated audience who can analyze and evaluate the context of the media content has an effect in content generation process. But the mindset of the content creator is still a matter for study. During content creation, whether they pay adequate attention towards audience or not is the question for research. As a country of political transition, it is an important aspect for the audience to look the political, financial, and personal influence in the newsroom which could further support to strengthen the critical media literacy and can support for the well function of the political system.

Dr. Sudhanshu Dahal is an associate professor at the Department of Languages and Mass Communication, School of Arts, Kathmandu University.

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Revisiting Representation in South Asian Modernity

Komal Phuyal, PhD

South Asian modernity critiques colonial representation through recreation and rewriting and develops a new way of dealing with the colonial discourses of the past. The colonial rulers employed violence to establish their domination upon narratives to rule the people of India. After its Independence in 1947, historians, literary critics, and academicians began to approach the colonial past from the domains of their expertise to explore the wrongs committed therein. Such intellectuals sift through the established discourses of the empires to examine the methodological validity of their claims by turning the lens upon Eurocentrism itself. This study critically surveys studies by Dipesh Chakrabarty, Gyan Prakash, Gayatri Chakraborty Spivak, and Partha Chatterjee to examine the issues they have raised about India and its colonial past. Deriving the critical insights from the studies, I interpret two texts by English novelist, short story writer and poet Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936)—the short story “The Other Man” (1886) and the poem “Gunga Din” (1890). These texts depict the colonized subject at the service of the colonial master. By analyzing two cases from Kipling, this study concludes that South Asian modernity faces the unique challenge of revisiting representation in the context of its colonial past.

Keywords: Modernity, South Asia, postcoloniality, representation, critique

Introduction

As a major postcolonial society, South Asia is still embedded with the colonial past, its memories, and its coping strategies in uneven times. As a region, it has undergone various historical jolts in which the mainstream authority has claimed to have represented the aspirations of the people for a long time. The colonial bureaucratic structure has presented itself as the most benevolent force serving the people. In this paper, I have discussed the issues that have arisen in the plains of South Asia in the wake of the twentieth century because the people across the Himalayan slopes were away from access to the imperial forces of the empire. This paper examines how South Asian societies read their historical journey of locating themselves in the narratives of the empire in the first half of the twentieth century.

Critique of Representation

In the study, I have revisited ‘representation’ as one of the major dynamics of South Asian modernity. Colonial administration produced and promoted certain images about the colonized world and circulated them through various social and political discourses. The real was distorted and what they wanted to project was celebrated in such an image: the corresponding reality of the image exits nowhere as twisting and turning heavily change the shape, size, and colors of the picture. Still, the colonial officers interestingly promote the picture as knowledge of the colonized world, treating it as one of the instrumental ways to interpret the world. For instance, Sen (2005) has argued that such images of/about India are extremely affected by colonial rule, and Guha's conceptualization of domination and subordination in India is derived from his analysis of the colonial power structure that promoted the bogus images of India (Sen, 2005, p. 168). The analysis of pre-Independent Indian societies requires considering the colonial context and the functioning of the power network accordingly. In contemporary times, South Asian

modernity approaches 'representation' through the tension brought about by the colonial presence on the one hand and its critique after the Independence on the other.

The colonial masters believed that their presence added meaning to the colonized space, resulting in the representation of the other as a location of lack. It served two purposes: firstly, they could legitimize their presence as an agent of reformation; and secondly, such representation would satiate their ego as the center of the universe. It presents the native land without any possibility of regenerating any reformist agenda and policies. Sen (2005) has further explored that the justifications of such representation are misleading and hyperreal. Critiquing the British representation of India in their discourses, he argues that the colonial approaches were biased and hallowed out (p.180). On the same basis, he points out that such history requires a thorough rereading since it has naturalized and justified the cruelties imposed on the colonized. New historians should pay attention to critiquing the representation of the native people in colonial history and reconstructing the world appropriated in colonial discourses.

Outsider's perceptions distort the Indian image in the historical annals. After the Independence in 1947, the revisionist approach was adopted to reread the historical narratives and reconstruct the image of self. The postcolonial societies devise strategies to critique their colonial past: they require tremendous energy and critical attention to social forms and power structures that emerged during colonial rule. One of the fundamental challenges lies in selecting the mode of self-representation in South Asian modernity. In such circumstances, the social agency plays a vital role in fighting against the depiction of distorted images in foreign discourses and promoting one's own image rooted at the base of society. Regional modernity has to undergo multiple challenges to cope with the questions of self-representation. The European

approach to modernity assumes that the West is the center of the universe: modernity generates there and diffuses to the margin. The critique of such Eurocentric modernity pays attention to the distortion of peripheral societies and their attempts to reconstruct their image. South Asian modernity critiques Western representation and reconstructs their proper image from the distortion through self-representation.

The West asserts its arrogance to function as the grammar for a specific path to modernity. Furthermore, the colonial expansion beginning in the eighteenth century contributes to its false sense of superiority of comprehensively representing 'all' societies. However, postcolonial critical scholarship has explored multiple instances to question the Western ability to carry the spirit of modernity in the non-Western societies authentically. The Western method of social organization fails to delve into the roots of other societies and capture the true spirit lying therein. Spivak (1999) also argued against Kantian modernity, which only explores the inner tenets of Europe. She says that Kantian morality imposes a certain degree of restriction on the use of reason. As Spivak has presented,

The human being is moral only insofar as he cannot cognize himself. Kant does not give cognitive power to the subject of reason, and indeed, he makes his own text susceptible to the system of determined yet sometimes wholesome illusions he seeks to expose. This may be called a tropological deconstruction of freedom. (1999, pp. 22-23)

In her analysis, Spivak has examined the contradiction embedded in the Kantian version of modernity: Kant argues for both freedom and restriction to check freedom.

When the imperial structures attempt to represent the colonized societies, they fall into methodological traps of Western understanding of modernity. The Western theoretical designs cannot address the distortion that has occurred in the history of colonized societies. Chakrabarty (2002) has stated that European frames of

reference do not suffice to address the challenges of representation in colonial societies, for the colonizer and the colonized have their unique intellectual traditions. As he critically observes, “Capital and power can be treated as analytically separable categories. Traditional European-Marxist political thought that fuses the two is therefore always relevant but inadequate for theorizing power in colonial-modern histories” (2002, p.13). Intertwining capital and power into a single entity, the Western approach to modernity fails to distinguish between them. The methodological inadequacies do not allow colonized spaces to stand in their distinct ways. Reading Indian history, Chakrabarty (1992) has explored that only the hyperreal constructions of the Empire gauge Indian modernity (p. 1). After the Independence, Indian scholarship was focused on rereading the historical representation of India in colonial discourses by sifting through the biases that defined India as the location of 'lack,' 'absence,' and 'inadequacy.' Hence, he proposes that self-representation has to practice the strategies of “provincializing Europe” (1993, p. 26) by bringing their societies to the center of the discourse of representation.

The colonizers employed knowledge as a tool to rationalize the principle of domination in the colonial context. The native people were never treated as the source of knowledge; rather, it was created by the outsiders and imposed upon them. Chatterjee's analysis (1983) centers on Indian peasants who are presented in colonial history as people who have no ability to change their circumstances. Analyzing the mode of domination in colonial bureaucracy, he argues that the ruling people passed statements about the ruled and it served as a form of knowledge for them, serving two purposes: firstly, it justified their domination; and finally, it helped maintain their order. Chatterjee state:

The process of domination produces its own requirements for knowledge about the dominated... this knowledge about

the social conditions of the dominated locates the fact of their subjugation within a framework of causality where the 'limitations' of subaltern consciousness, its 'archaic' and 'pre-modern' character, its very emptiness - the 'lack' of consciousness becomes the explanation for their subjugation. (1983, p. 62)

Devoid of any volition, the peasantry turns into a force to serve the ruling elites and justify the order. The colonial narratives represent peasants as hollowed-out people who live at the mercy of their colonized masters. In the narratives of the binary between the master and the slave, the negative portrayal of the slaves helps establish a positive image of the masters and dehumanizes the ruled. In the colonial mindset, distortion of the image becomes an absolute necessity as it weakens the ruled and strengthens the image of the rulers. While Chatterjee has analyzed peasantry, Viswanathan (2003) has historically read the issues associated with the construction of Hinduism in India. She identifies that people had heterogeneous practices involved in giving shape to Hinduism during the imperial rule in India (p. 33). By focusing on Sati and caste practices, European scholarship promoted the image of Christianity as a way of redemption in India. Implicitly, the production of such knowledge embedded a political goal to show Indian culture as inferior.

The homogenizing tendency of singular modernity distorts the picture of the colonized people and their society. Firstly, the West assumes that it is the measure of modernity. Secondly, the colonized societies must exhibit their features to attain a modern state. Sen (2005) argues that the singular perspective of Western modernity does not allow one to highlight the heterogeneity of Indian society because Western rationality celebrates oneness and singularity as a rule (p.168). Differences among societies result from time, space, and cultural norms in practice. They have different historical experiences in quest of better social organization; they

encounter various unique experiences; and they experience their own form of modernity. Chatterjee (1997) has stated that different social circumstances produce different types of modernity that vary from one place to the other (p. 8). The colonial representation of the colonized has distorted the inner qualities of the people and their society. Postcolonial readings must revise the picture.

Distortion of the image also occurs through the exercise of biopower. A singular approach to modernity places Europe at the center and treats the colonized societies as its satellites. The methodological apparatus of the West helps the bureaucratic institutions to scribe a particular set of codes in the body and inner conscience to inculcate ideology to support their rule. As Prakash argues, “Indeed, colonial governmentality was founded on the notion that the body in India was a peculiarly complex effect of the environment, habits, beliefs, and knowledges” (2000, p. 206). Besides, he has pointed out that Western colonial discourses claimed the colonized societies to have turned into disabled agents that produce “pale copies of their metropolitan original” (p. 191). The colonial administrators injected negative attributes into the body of the ruled and promoted a weak self-perception, robbing away from the possibility of rising as the agent of change. Denial of agency serves the colonial rule as the exercise of biopower forecloses the colonial subject. In other words, it functions as a way of legitimizing through denial. Spivak (1999) has also treated the colonial subject as a native informant who is trapped in foreclosure of discourses. Such an act meets two purposes: firstly, it creates the colonial subject; and finally, it helps the colonizers to establish themselves (Prakash, p. 4). Though the creation of native informant also refers to representation, it reveals the Western attitude to the colonized societies. The source of data is treated as a nullified subject who passively transmits data to the master.

Colonial encounters have seriously impacted Indian societies. The structural limitations set and the misreading of the

people and their quest have resulted in the depiction of cultural values and social organization in the most negative ways. The colonial discourses also viewed Indian people as anthropological objects that represented the European past: actually, India had become a victim of European nostalgia. Indian people have appeared as the construction of European imagination, losing their agency in the historical narratives from India. Postcolonial reading of the colonial past reveals the biases that South Asian modernity have to sift through in contemporary times. Modern historians and social scientists have approached minor historical events in a new light to examine the agency and quest of people for human liberation. Such design rejects the transcendental analysis of European singular modernity that treats modernity outside Europe as other and assumes that people residing in non-European locations are devoid of any agency. The peasants and lower-class people have contributed to the formation of modern India; however, they are never duly treated in the historical annals of the colonial masters. South Asian modernity require rewriting the colonial history and revisiting representation in the colonial discourse.

Colonial discourses also blur the image of women. As they become a mere native informant, colonial discourses derive data about them and their society from them and treat them as objects. Analyzing the case of Bengal, Chakraborty (1993) has addressed the question of the representation of gender in colonial reform programs that aimed to equip women with autonomy. He works on biased perceptions of the colonial discourses as he finds that Bengali women enjoyed a greater degree of autonomy in the past. As he has claimed, "... there is evidence to suggest the existence of relatively autonomous domains for women which the coming of a print-culture may have significantly eroded" (1993, p. 3). Nonetheless, the colonial system of knowledge employs misrepresentation to politically dominate and justify the acts of colonial masters. In

addition, Prakash (2000) has located the epistemic violence at the kernel of colonial modernity: the empire rewrites the colonial self while producing knowledge about the colonized society. As he has critiqued, “Colonial modernity was never simply a 'tropicalization' of the Western form but its fundamental displacement, its essential violation” (2000, p. 190). The misrepresentation of Indian people emanates from the imperial setup of colonial modernity: it wants to resize the people in the image it desires to see.

The issue of misrepresentation lies in the European demarcation between pre-industrial and industrial order. After the industrial revolution in the nineteenth century in Europe, the people used a different kind of schema to view social development: they began to treat the revolution as a point of departure for a new order. In addition to it, the study of sociology also has been instituted in the same period in Europe. European sociology and the rise of imperialism collide with each other, supporting each other's mission. However, the practice of postmodern reading that values the local began in the 1970s did not pay much attention to the role of grand narrative in approaching modernity. Bhambra (2011) has viewed that the 1970s brought about a break in the approach to Eurocentric modernity. It challenged the grand narrative structure of the West that was produced and propagated right from the nineteenth century. Therefore, Bhambra concludes:

Since the 1960s and 1970s, knowledge claims in the social sciences and humanities have been under pressure from the rise of subaltern positions and an explicitly recognized politics of knowledge production that has questioned the possibility of objective knowledge. This pressure has been expressed in terms of suspicion toward positivist explanatory paradigms and their presumed associations with power, with a shift from causal explanation to reflexivity, deconstruction, and interpretation and with arguments for the necessary demise

of grand narratives. (2011, pp. 653-4)

Postmodern ways of viewing reality posed a direct challenge to the ethos of colonial discourses because representation was diversified now. People began to explore multiple ways to look at the issues of representations of self and others: the Eurocentric approach of singular modernity just became one of the multifarious ways of dealing with the ways of societies coming to the evolving spirit of the present. South Asian modernity now begins to seek new approaches to analyze history and social development to recreate and rewrite their self.

Postcolonial societies sift through the violence used upon them to create knowledge about them. In this process, the colonial rulers treated them as mere native informants and applied force at two levels. Biologically, the people have become sites to apply force and give a new direction, as Prakash (2000) would call it 'biopolitics.' Epistemologically, they are objectified in the colonial discourses, and narratives are circulated. By applying such kind of coercion, the ruled are (mis)represented in the narratives of the empire. The people lose real social agency and volition to action. Such depiction does not allow them to take up any means to fight back against them. By inculcating a particular type of picture about themselves, the rulers could justify their presence in India and also pacify the native people. As one of the most effective strategies, othering helps the empire to segregate the natives and push them to the margin: it safeguards the imperial interests. The fundamental challenge for South Asian modernity lies in identifying the historical spots where violence has been used to create a prototype image of the locals. South Asian modernity applies the contextual reading of history, society, and literature to rescue misrepresented people through rewriting and recreation. In this paper, I have read two literary works by Rudyard Kipling: "The Other Man" (1886) and "Gunga Din" (1890).

The Colonized in Kipling's Writings

English novelist, short story writer, and poet, Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936) has written extensively about colonial India. His writings present how the native people were othered in the colonial discourses. The present analysis has taken his short story "The Other Man" (1886), and his poem "Gunga Din" (1890). "The Other Man" tells the story of a native man and woman who cannot marry each other and happily settle for themselves. Ms. Gaurey and the nameless man fall victim to poverty, while British Colonel Schriederling marries the girl who is thirty-five years junior in age. The short story demonizes the colonized subject, while Kipling's "Gunga Din" raises the glory of native people to a great height. Gunga Din helps everybody in the army, and he is not afraid to sacrifice himself to serve the colonial masters. The colonial discourses on the colonized distort the real self and turn them into unearthly ones.

Kipling's "The Other Man" (1886) dehumanizes the colonized subject by presenting him in the most destitute state of life. Set in the 1870s, Kipling weaves the narrative of two native youths falling in love. However, their relationship breaks when the beloved marries a British army officer. As Kipling narrates,

... her parents made Miss Gaurey marry Colonel Schriederling. He could not have been much more than thirty-five years her senior; and, as he lived on two hundred rupees a month and had money of his own, he was well off. He belonged to good people, and suffered in the cold weather from lung-complaints. (1890, p. 87)

The author names both the mother and the daughter with "Gaurey"; still, he does not provide the background information to understand the context of the marriage. The story indicates that she is from a poor family, and her parents are ready to get her married to Colonel Schriederling for his money. The story tells of a nameless native Indian who loses his beloved. The author discusses Gaurey's

mental state by saying that she was not happy. As the story unfolds, Still, Mrs. Schreiderling was not happy. They married her when she was this side of twenty and had given all her poor litter heart to another man. I have forgotten his name, but we will still call him the Other Man. He had no money and no prospects. (1886, p. 87) The first man in Gaurey's life is named the Other Man, while the second man (Schreidering) occupies the position of the primary person in her life.

Kipling's poem "Gunga Din" (1890) presents a water-carrier at the service of the British army. The poem divinizes Gunga Din for his service to the Crown. Also, Isani (1977) has argued that Kipling's Gunga Din must have served the Sepoy mutiny of 1857 in India. As he has written, "The poem appears to have emerged from an account of the brave conduct of the native 'followers' of European regiments during the Indian Mutiny of 1857" (1977, p. 83). Isani indicates the political function of the narrative of the colonizer in that such narratives inspire other people to equally serve the cause of the colonial master. Kipling introduces Gunga Din as the finest man he has ever seen. He writes that while he was working in India's hot climate, he found Gunga Din serving the Crown in the capacity of water carrier. As he further describes, "Of all them blackfaced crew/ The finest man I knew/ Was our regimental bhisti, Gunga Din" (1890, lines 10-12). The inner virtue and the outer form do not match in the person when the poet begins to portray him as a beggar. Gunga Din appears in the most piteous way when Kipling states,

The uniform 'e wore
Was nothin' much before,
An' rather less than 'arf o' that be'ind,
For a piece o' twisty rag
An' a goatskin water-bag
Was all the field-equipment 'e could find.
When the sweatin' troop-train lay

In a sidin' through the day,
Where the 'eat would make your bloomin' eyebrows crawl,
We shouted 'Harry By!' (1890, lines 18-27)

Just like “The Other Man,” the poem delves into the lack of an Indian subject who does not have property. He lives a poor life. The negative portrayal helps the colonial master establish their domination by rationalizing that they have come to implement reformation programs to rescue the people suffering in the circumstances of their lives.

The short story indicates that both lover and beloved most intensely suffer the tragedy. The sweeping presentation treats as though it was a farce that had happened in their life. Kipling quickly covers the story of the marriage between Colonel Schreiderling and Miss Gaurey when he says:

The daughter did not take after her mother. She never cried.
Not even at the wedding.

The Other Man bore his loss quietly, and was transferred to as bad a station as he could find. Perhaps the climate consoled him. He suffered from intermittent fever, and that may have distracted him from his other trouble. He was weak about the heart also. Both ways. One of the valves was affected, and the fever made it worse. This showed itself later on. (1886, p. 88)

The story shifts its focus on the perception of the British Colonel rather than on the parting lovers who seem to be unable to live in the absence of each other. The colonial discourses spotlight the masters, thereby ignoring the pains and suffering of the native people. The whole story appears to uphold the narration about Mr. Schreiderling. As Kipling has narrated, “When she ceased being pretty, he left her to her own devices, and went back to the liars of his bachelordom” (1886, p. 88). The Colonel is not happy with the ways of his wife because “Schreiderling said that if he had known that she was going to be a such a scare-crow after her marriage,

he would never have married her” (1886, p. 89). The story fails to explore the most telling aspects of human life by emphasizing the irrelevant Colonel’s perceptions of life, for the colonial discourses cherish the master’s experience.

“Gunga Din” also presents the perception of honesty and dedication in the native people. The master’s perceptions explore the inner being of the colonized in the poem. As Schirato (1994) has claimed,

GUNGA DIN is a classical Orientalist text, then, precisely because the binaries and markers of difference that have been discussed, and the valuations that are tied to them, are never in any way probed or problematized. On the contrary, the basic tenets of Orientalist discourse (the moral, physical and intellectual superiority of the West over the Orient) inform virtually every aspect of signification in the film, which ensures that the main narrative (the suppression of an outbreak of 'Orientalism') is played out without any significant recourse to notions of the politics of colonialism. (p. 49)

Through the innocence of the native people, the superiority of the colonial masters is established to perpetuate domination. When the persona is hit with a bullet, Gunga Din carries him to a place of safety. As the poem shows,

I shan’t forgit the night

When I dropped be’ind the fight

With a bullet where my belt-plate should ’a’ been.

I was chokin’ mad with thirst,

An’ the man that spied me first

Was our good old grinnin’, gruntin’ Gunga Din.

’E lifted up my ’ead,

An’ he plugged me where I bled,

An’ ’e guv me ’arf-a-pint o’ water green. (1890, lines 52-60)

Though the words seem to depict a savior through Gunga

Din, he has simply appeared through the imagination of the colonial master who celebrates the service of the native people. Rather than praising Gunga Din, the poem attempts to establish a narrative about what makes the master happy.

In “Gunga Din,” the water -carrier dies while serving the British Crown. He is portrayed as the most obedient helper in the battle. He serves the British force, sacrificing his life. The persona says that Gunga Din takes him to a place of safety after he is hit with a bullet. As he further writes, “’E put me safe inside, / An’ just before ’e died, / I ’ope you liked your drink,’ sez Gunga Din” (1890, lines 72-74). Mrs. Schreiderling finds the dead body of the Other Man in a tonga. As Kipling narrates, “Sitting in the back seat, very square and firm, with one hand on the awing-stanchion and wet pouring off his hat and moustache, was the Other Man -dead” (1886, p. 89). Mrs. Schreiderling loses her mind in the shock of losing the Other Man. She rides on her horse hoping to see him again. After two years, she also dies (p. 91). In both texts, the native people die, serving the colonial masters. The colonized people are turned into functions in the master narratives of the colonial discourses in which the image of native people is distorted and deformed.

As examples of dehumanizing the colonized subject, “The Other Man” and “Gunga Din” showcase the ways of dealing with the native people in literary writings. The colonial masters occupy the center stage in both texts and marginalize the native people. The texts illustrate the principle of domination embedded in the imperial ideology. Since singular modernity has always cherished the marginalization of the natives and distortion of their image, South Asian modernity encounters the major challenge of identifying the wrongs committed upon the native people during the colonial period and fixing them through the recreation of self-image and rewriting the historical narratives. Neither the Other Man nor Gunga Din are depicted with an agency that can enforce change in their society

and their lives: they appear in the texts to serve the master and die completing their assigned duty. The colonized subject has turned into a function in the colonial discourses.

Conclusion

As a web of complex value systems, literature allows the play of divergent values to emerge and interact with each other. Since colonial rule has shaped a large portion of the South Asian value system, a greater complexity is observed in its modernity as well. As Mohanty (2011) has explored, South Asian modernity has faced greater complexities because the social phenomena have been greatly shaped because of the presence of the empire. Hence, he has argued,

Instead of identifying modernity with what colonial rule brought with it—and choosing to either accept it in its entirety or reject it outright—many in the colonized world defined modernity for their times through their complexly mediated critiques of their own social traditions, both the old and the newly invented ones. (2011, p. 3)

Without a complete evaluation of the challenges that emanate from the system and the traditional values playing pivotal roles, South Asian modernity cannot be approached from the right angle. The colonial representation requires critique to examine its methodological limitations and contextual biases since South Asian modernity requires that it overcome both factors to reconstruct a new narrative of self-representation in a new light.

South Asian modernity evolved to fight with the sense of loss from its colonial past. On the other hand, the cultural productions also sought the purity of the past, which was free from any type of cultural contamination from colonial encounters. Implicitly, it indicates that South Asian modernity reapproaches the past through the contemporary lens to critique both methods and resources as

available in the annals of colonial history. The colonial narratives establish that the Other Man and Gunga Din did not have any voice of their own to fight against the masters. However, contemporary reading rejects such claims and questions about the political goal of the texts by giving them contextual reading. Also, such reading helps to reconstruct a new narrative by explaining the reasons for the creation of a particular type of people in the 1880s and 1890s in Kipling's story and poem.

Furthermore, the tradition becomes a resource to celebrate in the postcolonial context, for it allows a review of the colonial narratives to examine the use of violence. Das (2000) has analyzed Satyajit Ray's movies as she stated, "Geeta Kapur has critiqued Ray's position as characteristic of a subjectivity that is suffused with romantic nostalgia in which value is only in the past, while it resides in the present only as private sensibility" (p.186). South Asian modernity revisits the colonial past on the one hand and its own tradition on the other because it seeks to balance its critique of both ends while seeking to establish its own image, immune from the misrepresentation of the colonial past and narcissistic obsession with its own past as the repository of all kinds of knowledge as well. Rewriting history takes into account the people who have been pushed to the margin in the past. As they move to the center with voices, the subaltern challenges the authority of the elite. New approaches adopted by South Asian modernity celebrate the presence of the subaltern people in the analysis and interpretation of texts. Chatterjee (1983) points out that serious critical attention is necessary to locate an autonomous domain for subalterns while rewriting Indian history. As he has claimed,

To deny autonomy in this sense and simply to assert that the subaltern classes are 'deeply subjugated' is to deny that they represent a distinct form of social existence; it is to merge their life into the life-history of the dominant classes. (1983, p. 59)

The shift in understanding of historiography enhances South Asian modernity by exploring autonomous categories that can independently challenge prevailing notions about class, history, and social order.

When South Asian modernity is approached through representation, it demands us to revisit how it was practised in the past. The singular modernity enforces Eurocentrism as a rule to view the development of societies that lie outside its geographical boundaries. Such interpretations end up producing invalid explanations. In heterogeneous contexts of South Asia, modernity embraces certain fundamental questions related to methodology as well. The colonial inadequacies demand serious attention for two reasons: firstly, the prevailing understanding has been shaped by the discourses; and finally, acceptable methodological apparatuses have to be employed to generate a new form of knowledge about self and reject hitherto established claims. South Asian modernity revisits representation in colonial discourses of the past to reconstruct a narrative about itself at present through recreation and rewriting.

Dr. Komal Phuyal teaches at the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, Nepal. He is engaged in research on transmodernity and resistance in South Asia.

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Representation of Social Issues in Indian Graphic Novels

Punyaprada Singh & Mercy George, PhD

This study investigates the dynamic relationship between Indian graphic novels and the country's geopolitical environment. The study intends to uncover the significant commentary these works offer on current themes like gender dynamics, caste discrimination, governmental corruption, religious tensions, and the challenges of modernity, by analyzing a varied spectrum of graphic novels coming out of the subcontinent. We shed light on how these graphic novels not only represent the socio-political environment of India but also question and modify narratives by combining qualitative content analysis and in-depth case studies. Our research highlights the importance of graphic novels as effective social critique mediums in India, echoing wider global trends where visual storytelling goes beyond just amusement to provide insightful social commentary.

Keywords: Social commentary, graphic novels, Indian literature, narrative analysis, visual storytelling, cultural representation

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of Graphic Novels Globally

In terms of visual narrative, graphic novels have a long history that crosses eras and civilizations. The modern graphic novel, which has its roots in ancient pictorial traditions, has developed into a powerful medium that blends the complexity of narrative literature

with the vividness of visual art. In the 20th century, graphic novels gained popularity not only as light amusement but also as serious writing, delving into a variety of topics ranging from intimate social problems to simple memoirs. This was especially true in North America and sections of Europe. Works like Art Spiegelman's "Maus" or Marjane Satrapi's "Persepolis" serve as examples of this change, in which moving tales express social commentary and subvert accepted beliefs.

1.2 Evolution and Significance of Graphic Novels in the Indian Context

An important transition in the development of narrative has been the popularity of graphic novels as a forum for debating contentious social and political issues. Combining visual images with narrative text, graphic novels provide a deeper comprehension of complex topics than other literary styles. Using both pictures and words, the stories of graphic novels reach the reader right where they are, emotionally and intellectually. Graphic novels, however more lately, have found a place in the enormous canon of Indian literature.

The graphic book found fertile root in India because it emerged from a society with a long heritage of visual storytelling, from ancient temple sculptures to lively folk arts. Indian authors and artists used this media to both reflect on and critique the societal landscape in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. Famous works like Sarnath Banerjee's "Corridor" or Amruta Patil's "Kari" reflect the urban Indian zeitgeist by blending the personal and the political for readers. In India, graphic novels have evolved beyond simple stories to serve as a mirror of the country's complex sociocultural complexities.

1.3 Statement of the Research Problem

There aren't many thorough studies that go deep into the

socio-political commentary of Indian graphic novels, despite their growing popularity and significance. What conventional narratives in India are being interpreted and challenged by these graphic novels? How do they compare or contrast with current worldwide trends in graphic storytelling? With the goal of presenting a comprehensive understanding of the ways Indian graphic novels negotiate, depict, and impact the sociopolitical discourses of the country, this research aims to fill up these knowledge gaps.

This introduction establishes the scene for the reader by first providing a global framework, then focusing on the Indian situation, and then stating the problem that the study is trying to solve.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Previous Studies on Graphic Novels as a Medium for Social and Political Commentary

Academic interest in graphic novels and their ability to offer social and political commentary has grown over the past few decades. According to Chute (2010), works like "Maus" serve as examples of how the graphic novel may provide a multi-dimensional prism through which to examine historical trauma. In his discussion of the medium's semiotic power, Groensteen (2007) makes the case that its sequential structure may deftly reveal intricate societal narratives. Furthermore, Hatfield (2005) stressed the graphic novel's ability to democratize storytelling by giving platforms to underrepresented perspectives.

2.2 Specifics of Indian Graphic Novels and Their Themes

Despite being a more recent development, Indian graphic novels have already established themselves as a vibrant forum for reflection and criticism. Using Banerjee's "Corridor" as an example, Mukherjee (2011) emphasized the medium's versatility by expressing the complex realities of Indian urban life. Rao (2013) examined

Patil's "Kari"'s examination of gender and sexuality, contending that the visual medium enables a richer portrayal of such delicate subjects. On the subject of history and memory, Krishnan (2015) examined how graphic novels like "Delhi Calm" challenge and muddle popular historical narratives by providing alternate viewpoints.

2.3 Gaps in Existing Literature

The amount of knowledge about Indian graphic novels is expanding, yet there are still some gaps. First, there hasn't been any cross-referencing with international graphic novels to see how Indian works may resemble or differ from them. Second, most studies frequently ignore the larger tapestry of social commentary prevalent throughout multiple works in favor of focusing on individual graphic novels or particular themes. Additionally, there is a lack of research on how these narratives are received by the audience and how they could affect or be affected by wider public discourses in India. This study aims to fill these knowledge gaps by providing a more thorough understanding of Indian graphic novels in both a national and international context.

3. Historical Context

3.1 Brief Overview of India's Social and Political Landscape

India exhibits a tapestry rich in socio-political evolution due to its millennia-long past. India's social structures have been influenced by a wide range of cultural and religious influences, from prehistoric Vedic cultures to numerous powerful empires like the Mauryas, Guptas, Mughals, and Marathas. Significant changes were made during the colonial era, which was characterized by British control from the middle of the 19th to the middle of the 20th century. Western education and administrative institutions were introduced, and a complex interplay of resistance and adaptation was started.

After gaining its independence, India started its road toward

becoming a democratic republic, facing difficulties like the pain of the partition, linguistic and regional conflicts, and economic planning. Milestones including the Emergency phase in the 1970s, liberalization in the 1990s, and the emergence of regional and identity politics have left their marks on the nation's trajectory. The socio-political environment of India is knitted together with problems like caste-based discrimination, religious strife, gender inequality, and socio-economic inequities.

3.2 How Historical Events Might Have Influenced the Narrative of Graphic Novels

In India, graphic novels frequently serve as palimpsests, leaving traces of the country's extensive sociopolitical past in its pages. For instance, graphic books like "This Side, That Side: Restorying Partition" that offer moving narratives of displacement, identity, and memory evoke the anguish of Partition, one of the most important events in South Asian history.

Graphic tales have also been affected by the Emergency, a time of political upheaval and restricted freedoms. Works like "Delhi Calm" employ the medium to not only critique and question the greater consequences of such political maneuvers on democracy and freedom, but also to document this chaotic time.

Numerous graphic novels that portray the shifting urban landscapes, the clash between tradition and modernity, and the issues of identity in a fast globalizing world reflect the liberalization of the 1990s, which led to increasing urbanization and globalization.

In addition, many graphic novels frequently center on the persistent problems of caste and religion tensions, which are firmly ingrained in India's past and offer a visual and narrative space for exploration, critique, and occasionally alternate viewpoints to dominant discourses.

In essence, the historical occurrences in India actively

influence the stories of graphic novels, allowing for a richer, more complex examination of topics, events, and identities.

4. Methodology

4.1 Criteria for Selecting Specific Graphic Novels for the Study

The following standards were created for the selection of graphic novels in order to guarantee an extensive and representative study.

Graphic novels that discuss important historical occurrences or periods in Indian history, such as the Partition, the Emergency, or the liberalization era, are said to have historical relevance.

Works that address a variety of social and political issues, from gender and caste to governmental corruption and religious tensions, are characterized by their diversity of themes.

Geographical Diversity: A representation from different regions of India to capture the differences in social criticism and cultural subtleties.

Temporal Spread: Novels from various eras in India's graphic novel history, guaranteeing a balance of pioneering and modern works.

Author diversity: Including works by both well-known and up-and-coming writers, while also balancing caste, gender, and religious origins to capture a range of viewpoints.

4.2 Analytical Framework and Methods Used

The study uses a multifaceted analytical strategy to explore the subtleties of the chosen graphic novels:

Qualitative content analysis: Analyzing the text and images systematically to find recurring themes, symbols, and motifs is. This aids in comprehending both the graphic novels' overt and subtle messages.

Analyzing a story's structure, storyline, and development

in order to comprehend how social issues and historical events are intertwined into the story. This will give you an understanding of how graphic novelists organize their social criticism within the plot.

Semiotic Analysis: A thorough investigation of the graphic novels' visual components. Studying how colors, symbols, character designs, and spatial layouts are used in a piece of art will help you comprehend how they affect the overall message and tone of the piece.

Comparative Analysis: Investigating distinctive Indian viewpoints and cross-cultural resonances in overseas graphic novels with similar topics.

Reception analysis: A quick examination of reader input, sales statistics, and review data to ascertain the influence and reception of graphic novels in general society. Which will provide us with insight into how readers view and respond to the sociopolitical commentary in the books.

The study employs this methodology in an attempt to provide a full understanding of the social commentary found in Indian graphic novels, encompassing both the overt and hidden meanings presented in the text and images.

5. Major Themes Addressed in Indian Graphic Novels

5.1. Gender and Feminism

Amruta Patil's "Kari" is a moving story that explores urban isolation and the nuances of gender and sexuality.

Srividya Natarajan and S. Anand's "Bhimayana: Experiences of Untouchability": Although predominantly caste-focused, it also mentions gender in the context of the Dalit community.

Analysis:

Graphic novels like "Kari" present a multi-layered analysis of LGBTQ+ identities in urban India while challenging heteronormative notions. These stories also contain feminist themes,

such as the agency of women in patriarchal settings. They participate in a conversation to rethink gender standards in the Indian setting as well as reflecting cultural sentiments.

5.2. Caste and Class Issues

"Bhimayana: Experiences of Untouchability" is a graphic biography of B.R. Ambedkar that emphasizes his struggle against caste prejudice.

Srividya Natarajan's "A Gardener in the Wasteland" It mentions Jotirao Phule's life and his fight against caste-based prejudice.

Analysis: Caste-related graphic novels from India provide a visceral depiction of ingrained prejudices and underprivileged people's hardships. By highlighting the real-life struggles of Dalits and other oppressed groups, these works expose conventional narratives. The visual medium makes the portrayal of discrimination more intense, which makes the commentary more powerful and vivid.

5.3. Political Corruption and Governance

"Delhi Calm" by Vishwajyoti Ghosh: Set during the Emergency, it critiques political decisions and the erosion of democratic values.

"Kashmir Pending" by Naseer Ahmed: An insight into the political unrest in Kashmir and its impact on individuals.

Analysis:

These graphic novels are stark portrayals of the political climate at various points in Indian history. The narratives explore the grey areas of governance, ethics, and individual rights. By humanizing political events, these novels urge readers to question and reflect on the nature of power and governance in the nation.

5.4. Religious Tensions and Secularism

Malik Sajad's "Munnu: A Boy from Kashmir" describes the conflicts between Hindus and Muslims against the backdrop of the Kashmir dispute.

Anthology documenting the aftermath of the India-Pakistan Partition, "This Side, That Side: Restorying Partition" was edited by Vishwajyoti Ghosh.

Analysis:

Graphic books poignantly depict religious strife, a recurrent issue in Indian history. These narratives delve into the human stories within communal divisions, moving beyond surface analysis. They oppose binaries by giving multiple viewpoints and promote a more peaceful, secular society.

5.5. Modernization and its Discontents

Sarnath Banerjee's "Corridor" is a representation of the urban middle class and its problems in contemporary Delhi.

AmrutaPatil's "AdiParva: Churning of the Ocean" Despite having mythological roots, it makes connections to the difficulties and changes we face today.

In these books, the interaction between tradition and modernity is beautifully depicted. They are a reflection of the social upheaval brought on by the fast urbanization, globalization, and alteration of cultural standards. These texts encourage readers to contemplate the nature of progress and its effects on Indian society by contrasting traditional values with modern difficulties.

The depth and complexity with which Indian graphic novelists navigate the geopolitical context of the country are further shown by these subject studies, which also highlight how adaptable the graphic novel format is in addressing a variety of themes.

6. Case Studies

6.1. "Munnu: A Boy from Kashmir" by Malik Sajad

Summary and Relevance

The dramatic coming-of-age story "Munnu: A Boy from Kashmir" is set amid the turbulent Kashmir conflict. Readers are provided with a first-person description of growing up in a war-torn area by Malik Sajad via the eyes of the main character Munnu. Its importance comes from its capacity to humanize the much politicized story of Kashmir by focusing light on the challenges and traumas experienced by its citizens on a daily basis.

In-depth Analysis of Social and Political Themes

Sajad's story is not solely focused on the geopolitical struggle. It delves deeply into Kashmiri identity, how militarization affects day-to-day living, and the emotional and psychological costs on the youth of the area. The typical Kashmiri deer is used to symbolize the trapped and hunted environment of the locals. Armed Forces Special Powers Act, encounters, and the underlying theme of the search for "Azaadi" (freedom) are just a few of the topics that Sajad dwells on. The graphic novel depicts lost innocence and the steadfast spirit of optimism in the face of misfortune via Munnu's journey.

6.2. "Corridor" by Sarnath Banerjee

Summary and Relevance

A busy graphic novel set on Delhi's streets, "Corridor" is frequently credited as being the first of its kind in the country. Banerjee provides a peek into middle-class living in metropolitan India through the lives of its characters, such as Jehangir Rangoonwalla, the philosophical owner of a bookstore in Connaught Place, and Digital Dutta, who struggles between his love for philosophy and his IT work. Its significance lies in its exploration of the everyday

yet challenging lives of city dwellers as they grapple with the discrepancies between tradition and modernity.

Exploration of the Narrative and its Reflection of Indian Society

The stories in Banerjee's novel are all interconnected and come together at Rangoonwalla's bookstore. The graphic novel explores themes such as urban loneliness, the monetization of culture, the alienation brought on by rapid industrialization, and the search for personal meaning in a consumerist world through these characters. The episodic, dispersed structure of the story is a reflection of the dispersed lifestyles of city dwellers. The film "Corridor" depicts urban India as a microcosm, emphasizing the clash between the nation's rich cultural past and aspirational present and the ensuing identity dilemma.

These case studies highlight the breadth and depth of sociopolitical research possible in Indian graphic novels with their unique themes and tales. These writings give readers a thorough insight of the complexities of Indian society and its numerous difficulties through their distinctive lenses.

7. Impact and Reception

7.1 Audience Reception of These Graphic Novels

Indian graphic novels initially had a small but devoted readership, despite being considered specialized. The response has been varied:

Reviews: Critics have lauded books like "Munnu: A Boy from Kashmir" and "Corridor" for their perceptive depictions of difficult subjects. Their original fusion of storytelling and art has been praised for enhancing the Indian literary scene.

Public Resonance: Readers have been moved by personal narratives like Munnu's account of her time in Kashmir, which has helped them become more sympathetic to events in real life that they

may not have directly encountered. On the other hand, tales that are set in metropolitan settings are more relatable to the lives of city inhabitants, mirroring their own problems and experiences.

These graphic novels have been included into academic courses to support discussions of socio-political concerns because of their visual appeal and compelling stories.

Mixed Reactions: Some graphic novels have come under fire or encountered backlash, as with any media that deals with delicate subjects. The portrayals could polarize some audiences because they are perceived as being too harsh or biased.

7.2 Influence on Public Discourse and Policy

Raising Awareness: Through their visual storytelling, graphic novels have opened up complicated and frequently underrepresented problems to a wider audience. For example, "Bhimayana" has contributed to raising awareness of caste discrimination's reality in modern India.

Creating Conversations: By putting a human face on historical figures and contemporary political challenges, these books have sparked debates. They frequently act as conversation starters, especially among young people, which opens the door to more in-depth and compassionate debates on issues like the strife in Kashmir or urban alienation.

Influence on Policy: Given the nature of the medium, direct influence on policymaking might be restricted. However, these books indirectly influence the environment in which policies are discussed and created by encouraging a more knowledgeable and attentive populace.

International Notoriety: Novels like "Munnu: A Boy from Kashmir" have attracted attention from around the world, changing how people throughout the world view particular regional issues. Policymakers may occasionally feel pressure from this global conversation to address particular issues.

In conclusion, although being subtle, Indian graphic novels have had a significant influence on culture. They not only amuse, but also instruct and enlighten, increasing readers' awareness of India's sociopolitical realities. Through their stories, they affect debate and occasionally the path of policy, making waves in the public awareness.

8. Comparisons with International Graphic Novels

8.1 How Indian Graphic Novels' Social and Political Commentary Compares with Those from Other Regions

Layering & Complexity: Both Indian and foreign graphic novels explore complex sociopolitical problems. In contrast to Indian graphic novels that cover the Partition or the Kashmir issue, works like Art Spiegelman's "Maus" discuss the Holocaust.

Historical investigation: Indian graphic novels frequently base their plots on key historical events, revealing insights into their long-term societal ramifications, much like Marjane Satrapi's "Persepolis," which explores Iran's history and the influence of the Islamic Revolution.

Personal Narratives: Personal accounts are used in international graphic novels like Joe Sacco's "Palestine" to explore more significant political topics. This strategy is also used in Indian graphic novels like "Munnu: A Boy from Kashmir."

Visual Styles: The aesthetics vary greatly, despite the fact that the fundamental narrative techniques are frequently similar. International works may draw from their own regional artistic traditions, whereas Indian graphic novels may combine aspects from traditional art styles like Madhubani or Warli.

8.2 The Uniqueness of the Indian Perspective

Cultural Depth: Indian graphic novels frequently incorporate folklore, mythology, and cultural aspects into their stories. For

instance, the Mahabharata serves as the backdrop for AmrutaPatil's "AdiParva," which offers a distinctively Indian mix of the ancient and the modern.

Landscape Diversity: The diversity of India's sociopolitical environment is apparent. Indian graphic novels frequently address this diversity, whether it be in terms of language, religion, caste, or area, creating fascinating tapestry of many viewpoints.

Colonial Legacies: Many Indian graphic novels make significant mention of colonialism's history and its continuing effects, both positive and negative. Despite being used in works from other formerly colonized areas, the postcolonial lens has particular subtleties in the Indian setting.

Spiritual Underpinnings: Many Indian graphic novels have strong spiritual and philosophical undertones, even those that deal with intensely political subjects. These undertones provide a depth that is derived from India's long-standing philosophical traditions.

Societal Tensions: While international graphic novels examine societal tensions, Indian graphic novels frequently concentrate on caste and sectarian conflicts, reflecting the particular difficulties faced by that nation.

In essence, while there are similarities in narrative strategies and thematic issues between Indian and foreign graphic novels, the Indian ones offer a special perspective fashioned by the country's rich history, complex culture, and deep socio-political fabric. They distinguish themselves by successfully fusing traditional and modern elements, which reflects the complexity of the Indian experience.

9. Limitations and Challenges

9.1 Limitations Encountered During the Study

Choosing a representative sample can be difficult given the enormous number of graphic novels published in India. Due to possible biases, this study might not account for all regional

differences and viewpoints. The accessibility and availability of some graphic novels, particularly lesser-known regional ones, can limit the scope of the study.

Since graphic novels are a relatively new literary genre in India, it may be difficult to have a thorough understanding of some of them because there aren't many secondary sources, reviews, or scholarly papers available. India's sociopolitical environment is ever-changing. A research done at a certain point in time can miss future developments or changes in the graphic novel genre.

9.2 Challenges of Interpreting Art and Narrative in Graphic Novels

Art is inherently interpretable due to its subjective nature. The identical artwork or story may have very different interpretations for two readers. It can be difficult to reach conclusions that are generally applicable because of this inherent subjectivity. Indian graphic novels may contain symbols, motifs, or narratives that have deep cultural origins that can be overlooked or misunderstood by those who are not familiar with the setting.

Graphic novels are a visual medium, and occasionally the sheer volume of images can dominate the story, making it difficult to extract underlying themes or messages. Because of the urge to draw out deeper meanings, there is a chance of doing so to the point that one reads too much into particular sections of the graphic book, which may not have been the author's intention. Balancing Graphic novels combine art and narrative in their design and content. Making sure that neither side dominates the other and that both are given equal weight is difficult when interpreting.

Any research study must be aware of these constraints and difficulties in order to ground the results in a spirit of humility and highlight areas that may need improvement or additional research. Taking on these difficulties also highlights the difficult process of

evaluating graphic novels, where story and art combine to convey deep socio-political implications.

10. Conclusion

Indian graphic novels produce vibrant narratives that dive into the heart of the country's sociopolitical landscape, making them powerful canvases. Readers are given a window into the complexities of Indian society through the pages of these novels, whether it is through the long-standing battles against casteism, the changing perspectives on gender and feminism, or the complicated political debates that are reshaping the country.

The depth and variety of subjects that Indian graphic novelists address are highlighted by the study. These novels cover a wide range of experiences, from the busy streets of urban India, sensitively represented in books like "Corridor," to the eerily beautiful valleys of Kashmir, as revealed in "Munnu: A Boy from Kashmir." They give voice to the voiceless, portray the plight of the common person, and aren't afraid to criticize the strong.

Comparatively, while graphic novels from other countries use similar storytelling devices, those from India stand out for their distinctive weaving together of the country's varied cultural, historical, and philosophical tapestries. They create tales that have resonance on a local and international level by weaving myths with modernism, tradition with current struggles.

Interpreting these graphic novels presents some difficulties, though. Since art and narrative are interwoven, a rigorous and nuanced examination is necessary to prevent the essence from being lost in translation. The study, while thorough, clearly acknowledges the project's inherent limitations, highlighting the enormous potential for further investigation in this field.

In India, graphic novels serve as more than just forms of pleasure; they also serve as sociopolitical compass points that lead

readers through the complex web of Indian society. They force readers to contemplate, inquire about, and participate by holding up sometimes uncomfortable mirrors. Graphic novels have solidified their position as indispensable instruments for discourse, bridging barriers, and building understanding in a country as diverse and vibrant as India. This study has brought attention to their significance, which makes them an essential component of India's literary heritage.

Punyaprasad Singh is a research scholar at the Department of English, Hemchand Yadav Vishwavidyalaya, Durg, Chhattisgarh, India.

Dr. Mercy George is an assistant professor at the Department of English, Govt. V.Y.T. PG Autonomous College, Durg, Chhattisgarh, India.

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A Bibliography of Articles Published in Bodhi: An Interdisciplinary Journal

Smriti Dhungana

This article is a bibliographic review, analysis, interpretation and discussion of *Bodhi: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, published by Kathmandu University (KU) from 2007 to 2023. During its 16-year journey, Bodhi, over nine issues, published 119 articles by scholars and researchers from various disciplines, particularly Humanities and Social Sciences.

Keywords: Bibliography, *Bodhi* journal, Kathmandu University, bibliographic review

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Smriti Dhungana is a PhD candidate at the Department of Languages and Mass Communication, School of Arts, Kathmandu University.

Psychotherapy in Shreemad-Bhagwad-Geeta (Krishna-Upachaar for Arjun-Rog)

Ajay Risal, PhD

Shreemad-Bhagwad-Geeta (The Geeta) is the most influential scripture not only in the cultural, religious and theoretical aspects, but also in the academic, philosophical, and practical phases of individual and social lives. Currently, there are discussions among academicians, philosophers, and mental health practitioners to utilize this discourse also for psychological treatment. Krishna-Arjun communication in the Geeta is almost similar to the client-therapist relationship in the modern day clinical practice. The Geeta's dialogue transpired in the battlefield (Kurukshetra) of the famous Mahabharat war, when one of the most influential warriors of the Pandav side, Arjun, became psychologically disturbed (melancholic), and decided to flee. His charioteer, Krishna, then assumed the therapist's position and provided the essential counseling (therapy) to bring Arjun back to the war. The Krishna-Arjun conversation during that time can be easily interpreted in the modern psychotherapeutic procedures: supportive, cognitive, behavioral, grief-resolution, motivational enhancement, hypnosis, etc. Krishna used an eclectic approach to heal Arjun's mind and motivate him towards his Kshetriya duty. Thus, I see the Geeta as a form of Krishna's treatment to heal Arjun's mind, i.e., Krishna-Upachaar for the Arjun-Rog. This paper tries to establish this proposition.

Keywords: Communication, counseling, grief-resolution, hypnosis,

mental health, psychotherapy, supportive

Introduction

Shreemad-Bhagwad-Geeta (The Geeta) is the eighteen-chapter (adhyaaya) scripture extracted from the Chapters 25 to 42 of the Bhishma Parva of the Mahabharat, considered the fifth Veda (Shreemad-Bhagwad-Geeta & Vishnu-Sahashranaam, 2009). The Geeta is not only a holy book for the Hindus (sanatana dharmawalambee), but also an ideal work, with the academic, philosophical, social, cultural, and practical significance, to all the mankind (Risal, A., 2023a; Swamy Chinmayananda, 2002).

The Geeta has been translated into almost all the languages of the world; explanations and commentaries have been written by many academic, religious, and spiritual intellectuals. This one text has been interpreted in such a way that great scholars of different levels and sects have commented and explained the Geeta as they see appropriate (Jeste, D.V. & Vahia, I.V., 2008; Kalra, B. et al., 2018; Kalra, S. et al., 2017; Pattabhiram, B.V. & Deekshitulu, P.V., 2017; Shukla, S., 2018).

Being an academician and clinician (psychiatrist), I have taken the Geeta as an important reference material not only to understand the psyche or the ‘mind’ (mana) of an individual person (patient or client), but also to recognize my ‘self’ (atma-anusandhaan) (Risal, A., 2023a).

Studying the Geeta, I feel that I am going through a psychological case-history, and reading the dialogues between a psychologically-disturbed client (Arjun) and an experienced therapist (Krishna). Hence, some veteran spiritual masters, researchers, academicians, and practitioners have considered the Geeta to be the Krishna-method of treatment (Krishna-Upachaar) of the Arjun-disease (Arjun-Rog) (Balodhi, J.P. & Keshavan, M.S., 2011; Bhatia, S.C. et al., 2013; Dhakad, M.K., 2018; Dillbeck, M.C.,

1991; Pandurangi, A.K. et al., 2014; Reddy, M.S., 2012; Swamy Chinmayananda, 2002; Yogananda, P., 2007). I have also brought forward this concept in many academic discussion forums (Risal, A., 2021, 2022a, 2022b, 2023b), and publications (Risal, A., 2020-21, 2022-23, 2023a).

Debates and dialogues (communication) are of great significance in the Hindu (sanatana dharma) culture. Vade Vade Jayate Tattvabodha is a well-known saying, which means ‘an elemental perception (cognition or insight) arises from efficient communication, dialogues and discussions (or arguments)’. Therefore, each of the Puraans, Upanishads and Kathaa-Bhaashyas (holy story books) in this culture appears in the form of a dialogue between at least two people; e.g., Shiva-Parvati dialogue in Ramayan, Shukadev-Parikshit dialogue in Shreemad-Bhagavatam, Guru-disciple, and King-Minister dialogue in many other scriptures (Risal, A., 2023a; Swamy Chinmayananda, 2002; Yogananda, P., 2007). Similarly, the Geeta also begins as a conversation between Dhritarashtra (the King) and Sanjay (the Minister) and continues in the discussion between Shri Krishna (the Charioteer) and Arjun (the Prince).

The hidden agenda of the Geeta Krishna-Arjun dialogue, however, was to solve Arjun's doubts by Shri Krishna, and lead him to the Mahabharat war by explaining his Kshetriya duty (Shreemad-Bhagwad-Geeta & Vishnu-Sahashranaam, 2009). It is this dialogue that ultimately makes Arjun (the Prince) of Pandavas, the winner of the Mahabharat war.

However, if we go through the Mahabharat epic, Arjun's victory was not so simple. He was under a terrible stress at the beginning of the war, and was in such a psychologically weakened state, that he declared to give up the war. This psychological state of Arjun is explained as Arjun disease (Arjun-Rog).

In fact, if we reciprocate this state of Arjun in our life, we may suffer from Arjun-Rog at any point of our everyday business,

in the moments of struggle in our life, in ups and downs. The same truth has been revealed in the Geeta. But, with the treatment of Krishna (Krishna-Upachaar), Arjun is again motivated to go to war with refreshed mind and a clear insight. We can also move ahead in our life if we are also lucky enough to get the therapist like Krishna.

I have considered the Krishna-Arjun dialogue (approximately 45-60 minutes long) in the Geeta, which appears in the seven hundred stanzas (shlokas), over the eighteen chapters, to be the metaphor for our modern-day psychotherapeutic practice (role-play). I have tried to establish this psychological interpretation in the present paper.

Arjun – Personality

In the background of the Mahabharat, Arjun is a Prince, the beloved grandson of patriarch Bhishma, a worthy disciple of Acharya Drona, a person who has earned the title of "best archer" (sarvashrestha dhanurdhar), who won the Draupadi-Swayambar (chosen by beautiful Draupadi), blessed by Mahadev, the hope of all the Pandavs, and the beloved friend and brother-in-law of Shri Krishna.

In this context, pride and arrogance might have been invisible in some corner of his mind. On the one hand, due to the injustice done by the Kauravs, the defeat in the gambling duel (game of dice), the disrobing of Draupadi (cheer-haran), the suffering during the twelve-years' exile (vana-baas) and one year incognito exile (agyaat or gupta-baas), his obsession with victory reached its peak due to the feeling of repressed frustration and revenge. On the other hand, due to the truthfulness of his eldest brother Yudhishtir, the integrity of his revered uncle Vidur, and his respect for Bhishma, Drona, etc., resisted him from fighting for the legitimate right. Although Draupadi's on and off remarks towards Pandav's unexplainable resistance would further attack his self-esteem, his psyche was probably waiting for the appropriate time and situation, to surge. However, being a supporter

of justice and dharma, no matter how much injustice or tyranny he (and Pandavs) suffered, Arjun must have an abundant sense of love, respect, and brotherhood towards Dhritarashtra and his sons.

Arjun Melancholy (Arjun-Vishaad Yog)

The above-mentioned psychological reactions—suppressed pre-conceived feelings, preoccupation with victory and arrogance of superiority—in Arjun, came to the fore when the conch sound was produced (shankha-naada) in the battlefield from both his side (Pandavs) and the opposition (Kauravs), and Shri Krishna placed Arjun's chariot between the two armies as per his request [The Geeta 1(24)].

In the battlefield (Kurukshetra), seeing his own relatives (ancestral, maternal, paternal), teachers, and friends on the opposite side, ready to destroy own brothers and kith-kins, Arjun became simultaneously anxious and fearful. Additionally, it may not be true to claim that there was no fear of defeat in the inner heart (mind) of Arjun.

Arjun, ultimately started to behave like a psychologically-disturbed patient due to the admixture of untimely compassion and grief, in front of Shri Krishna on the battlefield (Kuruksetra). If one studies the stanzas of the first chapter of the Geeta from the 28th verse onwards, it will not be so difficult for anyone to portray Arjun as a psychologically-disturbed individual. Arjun was actually suffering from situational melancholia or depression. Therefore, Maharshi Vyasa has portrayed an excellent nosology by naming the first chapter of the Geeta as Arjun- Vishaad Yog (Shreemad-Bhagwad-Geeta & Vishnu-Sahashranaam, 2009).

The following stanzas from the Geeta typically reveal the symptoms of fear/anxiety in Arjun:

1. *Siddanti mama gastrani mukham cha parishushyati
Vepathushcha sharire me romharshascha jaayate* [The Geeta 1(29)].

Meaning: My limbs are aching, my mouth is dry, the body is shivering (trembling) and the hairs are erect.

2. *Gandivam sanshrate hastattwakchaika paridahiyate
Na cha shaknomyawasthatum bhramatiwa cha me mana* [The Geeta 1(30)].

Meaning: My Gandiva (bow) falls from my hand, my skin is burned, I am unable to get up, and my mind is confused.

The following stanzas depict syndromal melancholia:

1. Opposite thoughts:
*Na kangkchhye bijayam Krishna na cha rajyam sukhani cha
Kim no rajyena Govinda kim bhogairjivitena waa* [The Geeta 1(32)]

Meaning: I don't want victory, nor do I want kingdom or happiness. What is the purpose of all this?

2. Repentance/sin:
*Aho bata mahatpaapam kartum byawasita bayam
Yadrajyasukhalovena hantum swajanamudhyataa* [The Geeta 1(45)]

Meaning: It is so sad that we are prepared to commit a great sin by killing our own relatives just for the sake of this state pleasure.

3. Desire to die/ death-wishes and discouragement/ despair:
*Yadi mamapratikaramashastram shastrapaanaya
Dhaartarashtraan rane hanyustanme kshemataran bhavet* [The Geeta 1(46)]

Meaning: Even if I get killed by the sons of *Dhritarashtra* (*Kauravs*), it will be beneficial.

In fact, the arguments and illustrations given by Arjun in the stanzas 31 to 44 of the First Chapter sound like the arguments of a scholar. But those escapist voices expressed in frustration and sadness after the initiation of the war (*shankha-naada*) in the battlefield were untimely.

But Shri Krishna listens to all those arguments calmly.

Arjun further talks about bad omens, sin of killing the relatives or friends. He argues that the death of the male warriors result in the corruption of the clan women, resulting in the birth of cross-breeds (hybrids) and disruption of patriarchy, destruction of clan culture (swa-dharma), and all of the patriarchs and themselves would end up in hell [The Geeta 1(31-44)].

Finally, he announces: "I will not fight". Then, he leaves his bow (Gandiva) and arrows over the floor, and sits behind the chariot [The Geeta 1(47)].

Psychotherapy Process (Initiation of Krishna-Upachaar)

Throughout the first chapter, Shri Krishna remains silent. In fact, this also appears as an excellent art of psychotherapy. Giving the clients (patients) full opportunity to speak means helping them to express their pain, suffering and feelings. Similar to the opening of window in a hot room during the summer, resulting in cool breeze entering the room gives a pleasant feeling, providing an opportunity to express the frustrations, latent desires and feelings of a psychologically disturbed individual helps to win the trust of the patient and the patient opens up all his secrets in front of the doctor, this is called ventilation process. In fact, psychotherapy can be successful only if the patient is active and the doctor is passive.

In the first chapter, Krishna calmly listens to all the feelings expressed by Arjun. He identifies Arjun's mental status; melancholy which is filled with regret, tempered by the possible death of relatives and repressed inner feelings, eagerness for victory and

anxiety of defeat, overflowing with inferiority complex, driven by impulsiveness and escapist thinking.

Although it is difficult to establish the possible diagnosis of Arjun's mental health situation retrospectively, the differential diagnoses of 'Acute Stress Reaction' or 'Adjustment Disorder, mixed anxiety (panic) and depressive (predominant grief) reaction' could be considered on the basis of modern diagnostic classification system (WorldHealthOrganization, 1992).

Therefore, Krishna might have assessed the possible crisis on the battlefield and planned the most suitable psychological treatment method "crisis intervention" to resolve it.

Objectives of Krishna-Upachaar:

The two main objectives of Krishna's treatment (Krishna Upachaar) plan are:

1. To remove Arjun's worries of regret and sin, and
2. To make Arjun eager to fulfill his Kshetriya duties (to motivate him for action: the war) again

Psychological Treatment Approaches

The approaches were eclectic- an integrative strategy, or a therapeutic framework that draws upon multiple theories, techniques, and practices in order to create a tailored treatment for individuals. According to the modern psychological terminology, supportive, cognitive, motivational enhancement, grief-resolution, role transition, catharsis and ventilation, and hypnotherapy were the various techniques used by Krishna for Arjun's treatment (Ajinkya, S.A. et al., 2015; Balodhi, J.P. & Keshavan, M.S., 2011; Bhatia, S.C. et al., 2013; Pandurangi, A.K. et al., 2014; Pattabhiram, B.V. & Deekshitulu, P.V., 2017; Reddy, M.S., 2012; Sharma, N., 2014; Shukla, S., 2018; Sugumaran, S. & Hareesma, A.V., 2017; Verma, N. & Singh, A., 2014).

Supportive Approach

Initially, Arjun was not psychologically-minded; he was not fully ready for psychotherapy. He still considered Krishna as a friend/charioteer who had promised not to use any weapon in the war. So, to cheer up the tearful and distraught Arjun, and for bringing back his psychological courage, Shri Krishna smiles and says:

*Kutastwaa kashmalamidan bishame samupasthite
Anaryajushtamswagryamakirtirkamarajuna* [The Geeta 2(2)].
*Klaibyam ma sma gama partha naitattvayupapadhyate
Chhudram hridaya daurbalyam tyaktwottistha parantapa* [The
Geeta 2(3)].

Meaning: Do not be infatuated, do not be cowardly and impotent, do not act contrary to this Arya conduct, wake up, wake up.

In fact, if you find a friend who listens or talks when you are suffering from mental pain, you will think of that friend as a great support. The above-mentioned words of Krishna does the same thing. This provided a good opportunity for Arjun to express his grievances.

Arjun, then started telling, “How can I kill Bhishma and Drona? I shall beg for alms rather than this...” Tears started rolling over his face.

Therapeutic Alliance

However, after a while, as a result of constant persuasion by Krishna, Arjun ultimately decided to take shelter of Krishna. The past childhood and adolescent stories of Krishna’s courage and greatness also came to his mind; which probably helped Arjun to think of giving ‘a chance’ to Krishna. Arjun then pleaded Krishna to accept him as a disciple and requested him to demonstrate the correct path:

*Karpanyadoshopahata svavabah
Prichchhami twam dharmasammudhacheta*

*Yachheyasya nischittam bruhi tanme
Shishyastyeham shadhi maam twam prapannam* [The Geeta
2(7)]

In this way, Arjun took refuge with Krishna, giving him the position of the Guru or advisor above his friend or a relative. From here, the client-therapist relationship between the two of them was initiated. This was the actual establishment of therapeutic alliance between them. This is also the perfect example of Guru-Shishya (Chela) Relationship, in which the client has immense belief in the therapist and considers him a friend, philosopher, or guide (Neki, J.S., 1973; Vincenzo Di, N., 2022). Ultimately, Krishna treatment (Krishna-Upachar) of Arjun's disease (Arjun-Rog) started.

Cognitive Approach

First of all, Krishna deems Arjun's untimely grief unjustified considering his dilemma and duty-derelicted state. Arjun's seemingly scholarly argument was unparalleled to his inappropriate grief. Krishna states that the Pandits neither care about the living nor the dead.

*Ashochyaananvashochastam pragyaavadansha bhashase
Gatasoonagatashunscha nanushochanti pandita* [The Geeta 2(11)].

Then, Krishna presents the parables of previous births and rebirths in order to alleviate Arjun's possible regret, fear and anxiety of sin related to fratricide. Life and death happen in every individual, and the birth-death cycle is the truth of nature. We all were yesterday, we are today, and we shall be tomorrow, as well.

*Nah tvevaaham jatu nasan na twam neme janaadhipaah
Na chaiva na bhavishyaama sarve vayamathaparam* [The
Geeta 2(12)].

Just as the body keeps changing in childhood, youth and old age, but the individual remains the same, so the body keeps on taking birth and dying.

Then Krishna starts giving many allegories saying that the body is impermanent and the person should not worry about it. After explaining in many verses that the body is imperishable and unreal, Krishna begins to explain the importance of the imperishable, eternal and true soul.

Na jayate mriyate wa kadaachit, nayam bhutva bhavita wa na bhuyah

Ajo nitya sashvatoyam purano, na hanyate hanyamaane sharire
[The Geeta 2(20)].

Vasaansi jirnani yathaa vihaaya, navani grinhati naroparaani
Tathaa sharirani vihaaya jirna, anyani sanyaati navaani dehi
[The Geeta 2(22)].

Nainam chhindanti shastrani, nainam dahati paawaka
Na chainam kledayantyaapo, na shoshayati marutah [The Geeta 2(23)].

Avyakto yamachintyo yamavikarya yamuchyate
Tasmadevam viditvainan nanu shochitumarhasi [The Geeta 2(25)].

In this way, Krishna tried to alleviate Arjun's guilt regarding the thought "I am the killer", anxiety of sin, and untimely compassion or grief, showing the importance of an incorruptible, eternal soul. Krishna says, "Arjun! You are never a killer because the soul cannot be killed or destroyed by weapons, fire, water, or air".

Arjun remained silent even after Krishna's discourse on the immortality of the soul. Then, Krishna tried to explain from a philosophical point of view. He says that since birth and death happen in a regular cycle, it is completely inappropriate to grieve over this inevitable matter.

Jatasya hi dhruvo mrityurdhruvam janma mritasya cha
Tasmad apariharyerthe na twam sochitu marhasi [The Geeta 2(27)].

Later, Krishna reminds of the secret fact that since individuals are always latent before birth and will remain latent even after death, it is futile to worry about the body that comes into manifestation only for a short period of time. In the physical world as well, although the action is expressed, the cause cannot always be expressed. In the same way, meta-physically, the soul is the unexpressed cause and the body is the expressed action. In this way, Krishna considers Arjun's grief to be unreasonable even on the basis of the modern day “cause and effect relationship” [The Geeta 2(28)].

Motivational Approach

Even after presenting these cognitive-based theories; both physical and meta-physical, Arjun remained silent.

Now, Krishna moves from knowledge to action; the motive being to try to remove Arjun's untimely grief and direct him towards war, through a series of different arguments. While giving a lesson on self-righteousness, Krishna says that for the Kshetriyas, there is no greater virtue than war, the door of heaven opens on it.

Swadharmapi chawekshya na bikampitu marhasi..... [The Geeta 2(31)].

Sukhina Kshetriya partha lavante yuddhamidrisham [The Geeta 2(32)].

Further, explaining it in detail, Krishna describes the disadvantage of fleeing without engaging in the battle. “If you don't fight against self-righteousness and fame, it will be a sin. This dishonor shall be greater than death” [The Geeta 2(33-34)]. Adding to that, Krishna shows the fear of cowardice if he does not go to war, of being talked about by fugitives, of having to listen to the unruly, etc. [The Geeta 2(35-36)].

Then he mentions about the double benefit of going to war; “If you die in the war, you will get the heaven. If you win, you will get the entire kingdom”.

*Hato wa praapsyasi swargam, jitvaa waa bhokshyase mahim
Tasmaduttishtha kaunteya yuddhaaya kritanischaya* [The Geeta
2(37)].

Perhaps considering Arjun's inner fear of war and the hidden anxiety of defeat etc., Krishna then begins to preach equanimity:

*Sukhadukkhe same kritwaa laabhaalaabhau jayaajayau
Tato yuddhaaya yujyaswa naivam paapamavaapsyasi* [The
Geeta 2(38)].

Behavioral Approach (Karma Yog)

The teachings of Karma Yog and deterministic wisdom to become knowledgeable and develop a well-adjusted personality (sthita-pragya) with positive mental health (Kumar, A. & Kumar, S., 2013), with an ability to control the senses, and practice of proper meditation etc. come in the subsequent verses [The Geeta 2(39-46)].

The following stanza is still considered to be the most famous. It displays the importance of desire-less action (nishkaam karma) with an intention of removing the desire-prone anxiety in Arjun.

*Karmanyevaadhikaraste ma faleshu kadaachana
Ma karmafalaheturbhurmatesangostyakarmani* [The Geeta
2(47)].

In order to advance this theory, Krishna stresses upon the significance of Yog.

*Yogastha kuru karmaani sangam tyaktva Dhananjaya
Siddhyasiddhyo samo bhutva samatvam Yoga uchyate* [The
Geeta 2(48)].

While Krishna was talking about all these things, Arjun also gradually gets interested in the conversation. Arjun, who remained silent until the 53rd stanza, finally asks about the characteristics of a well-adjusted personality (sthitapragya) [The Geeta 2(54)]. Positive changes are thus slowly visible within Arjun.

Then Krishna starts talking about the importance of self-restraint, control of the senses and self-observation, in order to develop a well-adjusted personality (sthitapragya) [The Geeta 2(55-61)].

In the 62nd and 63rd stanzas, Krishna explains the probable cause and path of any person's downfall.

Dhyaayato vishayanpunsha sangasteshupajayate

Sangat sanjayate kaama kaamaatkrodhobhijayate [The Geeta 2(62)].

Krodhaadbhavati sammoha sammohaatsmritivibhrama

Smritibhranshaad buddhinasho buddhinashaad pranahsyati [The Geeta 2(63)].

Meaning: If someone always indulges in sense-pleasure, it leads to undue interest in the pleasurable things and activities. Excessive desire for pleasure may not be always fulfilled or satisfied, which will bring anger. Anger leads to infatuation, which ultimately makes the person deluded. Deluded individual will have loss of his intellect and then there will be destruction in his personality.

The second chapter, actually appears as a summary of the Geeta. Krishna has tried to give psychological treatment through various means to destroy Arjun's doubts, anxiety, grief and indolence through psychological counseling, complemented by beautiful examples and constructive arguments. First of all, he provides reasoning to increase Arjun's enthusiasm to listen. He tries to prove the immortality of the soul, which is subtler than the five senses. Then, Krishna works to remove the fear of death and pain of sorrow present in Arjun. He explains, Arjun's duty as per his Kshetriya tradition, at that time, was to take part in the war. In the same way, he has advocated the infallible principle of progress, saying that it was useless to worry about defeat, advised to live only in the present, and to give up vain sorrows and worries of the past and the future. He also suggests to sacrifice everything to God. Within this Chapter (adhyaya), there is Shaankhya Yog, Gyaana Yog, and Karma Yog.

The importance of meditation is also touched.

All these aspects (Yog) have been elaborated in detail in the subsequent chapters (adhyaaya) of the Geeta.

Humanistic Approach

Krishna also gives special emphasis on the power and capabilities of the individual self, and illustrates how the person alone will be responsible for his actions, growth or otherwise.

*Uddharedaatmanaatmaanam natmaanawasaadayet
Atmaiba hyaatmano bandhu ratmaiwa ripuraatmana* [The Geeta 6(5)].

Therapeutic Hindrances

Despite all these efforts of Krishna, Krishna-Upachar was not being productive; some hindrances were affecting the therapeutic relationship. Above steps were not successful in resolving the ongoing crisis situation at Kurukshetra, and to completely cure the Arjun-Rog. The reason for these interferences was the ambivalent situation of Arjun. He was questioning inside his mind: “Is Krishna really the God? Isn’t he the same Gopal (my aunt’s son; my cousin Kanhaiya)? Will he be able to eliminate my ‘sorrow’?”

Arjun had expressed ‘doubt’ regarding Krishna’s discourse at many places in the Geeta.

It was the real situation of the trust-mistrust dilemma, which was deterring the therapeutic growth.

Achievements Till Then

However, Krishna-Upachar had achieved so much in the due course of the therapy.

Indirect associative focusing: Krishna (the therapist) had raised several relevant topics in the previous chapters (2-9) without directly forcing them on to Arjun (the client): Shaankhya Yog, Karma

Yog, Gyaana Yog, Dhyaana Yog, and many more. Thus, Krishna was successful in inducing ‘hypnotic state’ in Arjun.

In the Chapter 10 (Bibhuti Yog), Krishna declares: “I am the best of everything - Omnipotent, Omnipresent....”

Arjun was actually in the hyper-suggestible state and Krishna had already established the authoritative position. These two situations are the most important and favorable conditions for hypnotherapy which Krishna was planning to apply in order to make Krishna-Upachar fruitful and successful (Ajinkya, S.A. et al., 2015).

Hypnotherapy

In the start of the Chapter 11 (Vishwaroop-Darshan-Yoga), Arjun was already in the suggestible state. He admits Krishna to be the ‘God’, and is convinced by the Lord Krishna’s philosophy imparted upon him till now. He then wishes to see Krishna’s universal form (Vishwaroop) [The Geeta 11(1-4)].

Krishna then provides direct authoritative suggestion: “See now my opulence, hundreds of thousands of my divine forms” [The Geeta 11(5)]. He, further says; “You may see ‘whatever you wish to see’ within me” [The Geeta 11(7)]. “But you cannot see me with your present eyes, therefore I shall give you the divine eyes (divya drishti)” [The Geeta 11(8)].

Through the process of creative visualization, Arjun was encouraged to envision his desired goal at the battlefield, in the hypnotic state. Krishna declares: “Your dreaded enemies (Bhisma, Drona, Karna, Jayadratha) have already been destroyed. So, you wake up and enjoy your kingdom.....”[The Geeta 11(33-34)].

Arjun was at first in the altered state of consciousness. He gets awed and terrified by visualizing Krishna’s vishwaroop, and requests him to come back to his original form [The Geeta 11(45)].

Krishna then responds: “You have been perturbed and bewildered... Now let it be finished...With a peaceful mind, you can now see the form you desire” [The Geeta 11(49)]. Later, Arjun is relieved: “Seeing your (Krishna’s) original form, I am now composed in mind; and I am now restored to my original nature” [The Geeta 11(51)].

In the therapeutic process, post-hypnotic suggestions given to a client under hypnosis, affects the client’s behavior in a desired manner; action or the feeling or an internal physical changes may occur in the client, after the hypnosis session. Those forms of suggestions help in increasing adherence to therapy and to carry out the assigned tasks. Thus, Krishna says: “Oh Arjun! Whoever does his work for me, being devoted to me, devoid of attachment, and free from enmity towards all beings, he surely comes to me, or becomes me.”

*Matkarmakrinmatkarmo madbhakta sangawarjita
Nirbaira sarwabhuteshu ya sa maameti Pandava* [The Geeta 11(55)].

Trust and Faith (Bhakti Yog)

Trust with the treating physician is the most important element for maintaining the therapeutic relationship. So, Krishna declares, “Oh Arjun! Leave everything and trust me, I will rescue you from all the problems. Do not worry.”

*Ananyaashchintayato mam ye janaa paryupasate
Tesdaam nityabhiyuktaanaam yogakshemam wahaamyaham*
[The Geeta 9(22)].
*Ananya chetaha satatam yo mam smarati nityasha
Tasyaham sulabha paartha nityayuktasya yogina* [The Geeta 8(14)].

*Sarwa dharmaan parityajya maamekam sharanam wraja
Aham twa sarvapaapebhyo mokshayishyaami maashucha* [The
Geeta 18(66)]

Therapeutic Outcome

Ultimately, all these efforts of Krishna becomes fruitful; Krishna-Upachar is successful. Arjun says: “Oh Lord! My delusion is now dissolved, I received the insight. No doubt that I will carry out my responsibility, and do whatever you direct me to do.”

*Nashto moha smriteerlabdhwaa twatprasaadaan mayaachyuta
Sthitosmi gatasandeha karishye bachanam tava* [The Geeta
18(73)].

Hence, Mahabharat battle is fought; providing grand victory to Arjun and the Pandavs.

Conclusion

“Psychotherapy is the treatment, by psychological means, of the problems of an emotional nature, in which a trained therapist deliberately establishes a professional relationship with the client, with the object of: removing, modifying, or retarding existing symptoms; mediating disturbed patterns of behavior; and promoting positive personality growth and development” (Wolberg & Lewis, R., 1988).

Looking at the above-mentioned modern definition of Psychotherapy, Krishna (the therapist) has done every effort in removing the melancholy (vishaad) of Arjun. Arjun’s disturbed behavioral patterns are well taken care of, and his personality growth has been promoted to develop into the well-adjusted (sthitapragya) state. Hence, these seven hundred stanzas of the Geeta discourse can be well-fitted into the modern version of eclectic form of Psychotherapy.

It can be a useful tool for an experienced therapist, if individualized for a suitable client. However, it requires judicious application and needs to be tailor-made for an individual client with specific problems of distress.

Prof. Dr. Ajay Risal teaches at the Department of Psychiatry, Kathmandu University School of Medical Sciences (KUSMS), Nepal.

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