

ISSN: 2091-0479

Volume 10, No. 4 | Serial No. 13 | 2024 October-December

BODHI

An interdisciplinary journal



Department of Languages & Mass Communication
School of Arts
Kathmandu University

BODHI: AN INTERDISCIPLINARY JOURNAL

(Peer Reviewed, Quarterly Journal)

Volume 10, No. 4 | Serial No. 13 | 2024 October-December

ISSN: 2091-0479

Advisory Board

Prof. Robert T. Craig, Ph.D.

Professor Emeritus, Department of Communication, College of Media, Communication, and Information, University of Colorado Boulder, USA

Prof. Yoshitaka Miike, Ph.D.

Department of Communication, Humanities Division, University of Hawai'i at Hilo, USA

Prof. Han Hong, Ph.D.

School of Politics and Public Administration, University of Electronic Science and Technology of China

Prof. Sukhnandan Singh, Ph.D.

Dean, Faculty of Communication, and Head, Dept of Journalism and Mass communication, Dev Sanskriti Vishwavidyalaya, Haridwar, Uttarakhand, Bharat (India)

Prof. Ajantha Hapuarachchi, Ph.D.

Journalism Unit, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka

Ms. Ekku Maya Pun

Associate Prof. and Acting Dean, School of Arts, Kathmandu University, Nepal

Editorial Board

Chief Editor:

Dr. Nirmala Mani Adhikary

Associate Professor, Kathmandu University, Nepal

Editors:

Dr. Kashi Raj Pandey

Associate Professor, Kathmandu University, Nepal

Dr. Aditya Kumar Shukla

Associate Professor, Amity University Madhya Pradesh, India

Dr. Shardha Purohit

Associate Professor, Noida International University, India

Dr. Sharada Poudel

Associate Professor, Lumbini Buddhist University, Nepal

Dr. Dinesh Kafle

Assistant Professor, Kathmandu University, Nepal

Dr. I Dewa Ayu Hendrawathy Putri

Lecturer, Universitas Hindu Negeri I Gusti Bagus Sugriwa, Denpasar, Bali, Indonesia

Dr. Ni Gusti Ayu Ketut Kurniasari

Lecturer, Budi Luhur University, Jakarta, Indonesia

Publisher

Department of Languages and Mass Communication

Kathmandu University School of Arts

Hattiban, Lalitpur, Nepal | Email: bodhi@ku.edu.np

Printed at: Digital Printlink, Kamalbinayak, Bhaktapur, Ph.: 01-6620555

Department of Languages & Mass Communication
School of Arts
Kathmandu University
Hattiban, Lalitpur, Nepal
P.O. Box: 6250, Kathmandu
Email: dolmc@ku.edu.np
www.kusoa.edu.np

CONTENTS

The Influence of Information and Communication Technology on the Natyashastra: A Digital Age Perspective Sathish K. Itagi, Ph.D, & Rubina Yeasmin	1-17
Application and Significance of the Sadharanikaran Model of Communication (SMC) in Foreign Language Pedagogy Su Zhengju	18-34
Devkota's Worldview: A Philosophical Analysis of Laxmi Nibandha Sangraha Komal Prasad Phuyal, Ph.D.	35-48
The Sadharanikaran Model of Communication within the Indigenous Knowledge System: An Appraisal Kajal Verma & Pawan Singh Malik, Ph.D.	49-64
Whole School Approach for School Improvement Dhundi Raj Giri, Bharat Prasad Neupane, Ph.D., & Dhanapati Subedi, Ph.D.	65-92
Exploring Patanjali Yoga Sutra from the Communication Perspective Aditya Kumar Shukla, Ph.D., Sukhnandan Singh, Ph.D., & Nirmala Mani Adhikary, Ph.D.	93-114
Is Ageism Natural, Biological, or a Social Construct ? Pradip Lamichhane	115-136

The Influence of Information and Communication Technology on the Natyashastra: A Digital Age Perspective

Sathish K. Itagi, Ph.D.
sathishitagi10@gmail.com
Rubina Yeasmin
ryeasmin466@gmail.com

[Note: A preliminary version of this article was presented as a paper at the International Seminar on Two Decades of the Sadharanikaran Model of Communication, organized by the Department of Languages and Mass Communication, Kathmandu University School of Arts (KUSOA), on 26 May, 2024.]

Abstract

The *Natyashastra* is a dramatic art form that includes a variety of elements like music, dance, dialogue, costume, tune, body language, and many more. It was envisioned by Bharata Muni, an ancient Sanskrit poet. The eight *rasas* are incorporated and have influenced contemporary art forms with integral cultural values. In the digital age, the *Natyashastra* finds itself in competition with a more communicative and popular mass culture, which includes a variety of new media tools like TV, radio, video, films, OTT platforms, and teleserials. These platforms not only entertain but also provide energetic infotainment by leveraging digital platforms to share experiences.

The *Natyashastra* has influenced changes in audience attitudes and behaviors and enhances affirmative action,

performance styles, and artistic amusement. It preserves the history, culture, traditions, and values of heritage in this digital era. Many theatre groups continue to keep dramatic culture alive in this satellite age. Today, all types of actors and audiences depend on various communicative tools to watch and perform the *Natyashastra*. Multimedia devices like laptops, tablets, smartphones, personal computers, digital cameras, tripods, video projectors, multiple software applications, social media, and more are now used to host live performances directly via several interactive platforms. SEO and other search engines are engaging with both digital and analog technologies.

Keywords: *Natyashastra*, Sadharanikaran model, modern theatre, mass media, communication technologies, artificial intelligence, relevance of *Natyashastra*

Introduction

Natyashastra is a Sanskrit treatise on the performing arts, attributed to Sage Bharata Muni. It consists of 36 chapters with a total of 6,000 poetic verses and is composed of two words—*Natya* and *Shastra*. In Sanskrit, the word *Natya* means *nata*—to act or represent. The word *Shastra* means rules, manual, book, or treatise, and is used as a suffix, i.e., practice with knowledge. The *Rasa* and *Bhava* theory is the core element of *Natyashastra*. Precisely, Bharata views that *rasa* is a kind of sentiment, and the audience receives the sentiment from a piece of creative work. The realization of *rasa* comes from a particular *sthayibhav*. According to him, *sthayibhav* (permanent emotion) transforms into *rasa* (aesthetic pleasure), or in other words, *rasa* manifests through *sthayibhav*. *Rasa* is an interaction between the work of art and the audience. It signifies aesthetic pleasure or the thrill of joy invariably

accompanying a skillful enactment of a play, rendered highly appealing through excellent poetry, music, and action (Adhikary, 2014).

Sage Bharata Muni mentions in *Natya Veda* the aspects of literature, food habits, art, costumes and ornaments, health, and nourishment. According to him, the *Natyashastra* was created by Brahma at the request of the gods. *Natya* was the fifth Veda, which was open to all. When *Natya Veda* was ready, the gods expressed their inability to receive and practice it, and Brahma passed it to Bharata and advised him to use it with the help of his 100 sons. Lord Shiva is considered the “Lord of *Natya*.” The present *Natyashastra* imbibes insights from all three schools: Sadashiva, Brahma, and Bharata. The sage allowed female characters to perform on the stage.

Definition

1. “There is no branch of science, no craft, no knowledge, no art, no wisdom, no endeavor which does not appear in a *Nataka*.”
— Sage Bharata Muni
2. “*Natyashastra* consists of invaluable information for the study of geography, ethnography, language, literature, costumes, ornaments, art, economics, and psychology.”
— M. M. Ghosh
3. “*Natyashastra* represents a discipline of knowledge that comprises a tradition rich in both theory and practice, that was systematized and condensed.”
— Nirmala Mani Adhikary

Natyashastra as a Communication Tool

Table1

Four Types of Language Mentioned in the 18th Chapter of the Natyashastra

SN	Type of Language	Communication Nature of the Language
1	<i>Ati Bhasha</i>	Superhuman language for the gods
2	<i>Arya Bhasha</i>	The noble language for kings
3	<i>Jati Bhasha</i>	The common language for stage forms
4	<i>Yonyantari Bhasha</i>	The language for other animals

Table 2

Nine Rasas Introduced in the Natyashastra

S N	Bhava	Rasa	English Meaning	Color	Deity
1	Rati	Shringara	Love-Erotic	Light Green	Vishnu
2	Hasa	Hasya	Laughter-Comic	White	Pramatha
3	Shoka	Karuna	Sorrow-Pathetic	Grey	Yama
4	Krodha	Raudra	Anger-Furious	Red	Rudra
5	Utsaha	Vira	Energy-Heroic	Yellowish	Indra
6	Bhaya	Bhayanaka	Terror-Terrible	Black	Kala Krishna
7	Jugupsa	Bibhatsa	Disgust-Odious	Blue	Shiva
8	Vismaya	Adbhuta	Astonishment-Marvelous	Yellow	Brahma
9	Santa	<i>Santa</i>	Silence-Tranquility	Kesari pink	-

Objectives of the Study

- To explore the relevance and influence of modern technologies on the *Natyashastra*.

- To analyze modern trends and the role of mass media and search engines.
- To examine the use of digital platforms in performing the *Natyashastra*.

Study Methodology

In this study, two types of secondary sources are used. One includes printed materials based on online sources; the other comprises digital platforms such as websites and electronic publications found on internet forums. All published materials on *Natyashastra* are reviewed, and the results are summarized qualitatively. This study applies the method of a systematic review to examine the secondary sources.

Limitations of the Study

This study was limited to collecting information and conducting analysis based on major prominent websites related to theatre, *Natyashastra*, and popular culture. Additionally, only selected online publications were reviewed for this content.

Sources for Reviews

Two comprehensive secondary databases were used to conduct the analysis. These included a wide range of online and offline sources. Over 8 to 10 websites and online publications were studied. A focused research and review were conducted based on the *Sadharanikaran* model of communication.

Sadharanikaran Model

Nirmala Mani Adhikary's SMC is one of the important theories of communication related to the *Natyashastra*. It is a dramatic model of communication from the perspective of *Bharatavarasiya* tradition. It was developed by the renowned scholar Nirmala Mani Adhikary

in 2003 (Adhikary, 2009, 2014). SMC represents the communication process from a Hindu philosophical perspective. It is a systematic description, in diagrammatic form, of a process for attaining mutual understanding, commonness, or oneness among people. The SMC envisions communication as communion. Bharata Muni's *Natyashastra* is a principal source for this model. Most of the concepts are drawn from *sadharanikaran*, *sahridayata*, *rasaswadana*, *sakshatkara* and related ideas.

Natyashastra to Modern Theatre

The fifth Veda is known as *Natya Veda*, which explains classical Sanskrit literature that comprises treatises on the art of dance, music, and drama. In the *Natyashastra*, Bharata Muni describes the purpose of such representation as one of imparting instruction to people to follow the moral code of life and living, as well as providing wholesome entertainment. The second chapter of the *Natyashastra* provides a detailed description of the theatre or the playhouse (*Rangamanch*). In ancient times, the *Natyashastra* was performed on theatre platforms, where both audience and actors communicated, watched, and enjoyed through offline means.

Modern theatre began in the second half of the 19th century. In the present-day scenario, theatre is competing with all popular mass culture and media, including television, video, music, and radio, which has aggregated the audience in India among the largest in the world. Therefore, materially and economically, the consumption also differs, and the definition of post-independence Indian theatre remains a historically demarcated field.

After the discovery of the internet, all audio and video content and other topics related to the *Natyashastra* are now accessible through mass media.

Table 3

Digital Adaptation of the Sadharanikaran Model of Communication

Sarani(Channel or Medium)	<i>Natyashastra</i> includes many topics such as the Rasa-Bhava Theory, Sanskrit drama, poetics, traditional dance, etc., and is now being shared with audiences through satellite communication technologies such as the internet, OTT platforms, search engines, mass media, digital libraries, internet archives, and more.
Dosa (Barrier or Noises)	In addition to personal, semantic, climatic, and organizational barriers, technical issues are widely observed in the modern era. Today, most actors and learners study the <i>Natyashastra</i> through online sources, where digital limitations can affect communication.
Pratikriya (Receiving Feedback)	The feedback process has evolved in the modern era, allowing audiences to submit their responses by filling out feedback forms either online or offline, with the help of satellite communication, after the performance.

Natyashastra and Modern Media

Earlier, people used to watch, learn, listen to, and enjoy *Natyashastra* performances through radio and television. All India Radio (AIR) was a very popular station where audiences listened to *Natyashastra*, which was

presented in the form of drama and music in an oral format. Doordarshan also telecast *Bhartiya Natyashastra* in the form of movies, dances, and other visual representations. This channel aired a well-known two-volume movie titled *Bhartiya Natyashastra*, created by Padma Subrahmanyam, an Indian classical Bharatanatyam dancer. Each volume contains a 13-episode series. *Natyopasana* is another example of a classical dance performance related to *Bhartiya Natyashastra*, performed by Leela Venkataraman.

Satellite communication is a remarkable achievement of science and information technology. The discovery of the internet has given rise to digital platforms, upon which audiences and educators have become increasingly dependent. Today, all of *Natyashastra*'s audio and video content is available through mass media. Educators in Sanskrit and literature departments are also using digital platforms and mass media sites to spread knowledge about *Natyashastra* across the globe. In this way, it is gaining popularity worldwide.

- www.natyastraonline.com: This website offers online lessons on *Natyashastra*, providing a platform for learners to explore various classical and traditional dances. Learners can participate in webinars and workshops and have 24x7 online access to personalized lectures, tutorials, classes, and performances related to Indian culture. The website aims to preserve India's rich art and cultural heritage for future generations.
- www.noopurabhramari.com: This website, related to *Natyashastra*, offers a variety of features, including the *Noopura* journal, academic courses, publication wings, awards and honors, as well as programs and conferences.
- Internet Archive: The Internet Archive is a non-profit organization based in the United States that operates as a digital library. Founded in 1996 by Brewster Kahle, it

offers free access to a wide range of digital collections, including websites, software applications, music, audiovisual content, and print materials related to *Natyashastra*. The Archive is committed to promoting a free and open internet.

- The Wayback Machine: The Wayback Machine is a web archive that contains billions of web captures. Additionally, it oversees many book digitization projects, making it one of the world's largest book digitization efforts. The archive also hosts a wide range of movies, including *Bhartiya Natyashastra* Volumes 1 and 2 by Padma Subrahmanyam. This film series, containing 13 episodes, is part of the Cultural Resources of India collection and was published in 2010.
- Other websites: Some other websites, such as In Arch Centre, Online Courses Swayam 2, and *Noopura Bhramari*, offer online certificate and academic courses on *Natyashastra*.
- YouTube: YouTube is another popular social media site that allows people to create and upload videos for others to watch. Numerous audio-video lectures, movies, dance, and music performances related to *Natyashastra* are available on the platform.

Communication Technologies and Natyashastra

In the digital era, platforms and media literacy have made learning the *Natyashastra* more accessible through hybrid modes. Virtual technologies have proven to be fast and effective, transforming into excellent tools for learning. Search engines such as Google, Yahoo, Bing, and Meta allow users to quickly locate information online. These engines have become vital in modern scholarship, including the study of *Natyashastra*. They help educators, students, and audiences navigate a wide range of resources related to the history, origin, authorship, and structure of the *Natya*

Veda, as well as concepts like the theory of *rasa*, types of playhouses, songs, acting techniques, body movements, ancient dance forms, makeup, costumes, and more.

Recent trends in the entertainment industry have led to the growing popularity of live streaming, enabling wider access to video content related to *Natyashastra*. OTT (Over-The-Top) streaming platforms such as Hulu, Netflix, Amazon Prime, HBO Max, Peacock TV, and BBC iPlayer are increasingly featuring content rooted in traditional performance arts. Many institutions and channels now regularly live-stream *Natyashastra*-inspired events. These include Vidya Mitra (2017), Doordarshan, Flame University, AMPA (Academy of Music and Performing Arts), AUMSYC, Handsdhwani, and the *Natyashastra* School of DMCE, among others. Additionally, numerous YouTube channels dedicated to Indian classical performance arts have gained millions of followers by producing episodic content based on the *Natyashastra*.

***Natyashastra*, AI, and Popular Culture**

A team of researchers from Anna University in Chennai has successfully used cutting-edge computer methods to identify and classify 108 fundamental Bharatanatyam dance poses. By employing machine learning techniques, they achieved a significant advancement in the field of human action recognition—particularly in the categorization of classical Indian dance forms such as Bharatanatyam. This innovative application of artificial intelligence holds promise for modeling and preserving other traditional performing art forms as well. The study not only deepens our understanding of Bharatanatyam but also has broader implications in fields such as healthcare, sports analysis, and animation, through the use of advanced computer vision and 3D modeling techniques.

Most of the Indian cinema are influenced by the rasa theory. The eight rasas play a vital role in Indian films, helping to establish an emotional connection between the audience and the performers. This connection enhances the artistic impact, emotional depth, and realism of cinema. Hogan (2003) observed, “The most common primary rasas in Indian cinema are the romantic and the sorrowful/pathetic.” He argues that the most fundamental human emotions are love and sorrow, which is why the dominant Rasas-Karuna (compassion) and Shringara (romantic love)-are prominently featured in Indian films, often expressed through melodrama and romance.

One of the earliest examples of this cultural influence is the film *Raja Harishchandra* (1913), directed by Dadasaheb Phalke. It was India's first silent film and was based on Hindu mythology. Advances in science and information technology have further contributed to the global dissemination of Indian classical arts and literature. In this way, *Natyashastra* has become an integral part of popular culture, spreading across the globe through satellite communication and digital media in the modern era.

Impacts and Influences of *Natyashastra* on Indian Arts

Indian classical dance and theatre continue to evolve but remain rooted in the principles outlined in the *Natyashastra*. The text is considered a comprehensive guide to the art of theatre, covering various aspects such as stage design, costumes, music, dance, and acting. It is a seminal work that has influenced the development of Indian classical dance forms such as Bharatanatyam, Kathak, Kuchipudi, Manipuri, and Odissi. It has also impacted popular cultural expressions such as cinema, television serials, and reality shows based on mythological content.

The *Natyashastra* influenced other arts in ancient and medieval India. Its principles have had far-reaching

effects. For instance, the 108 dance forms described in the *Natyashastra* inspired Shiva sculptures from the first millennium BCE, particularly in the Tandava style. The elaborate rituals of the *Brahmins* served as the foundational blueprint for various art forms, including architecture, sculpture, painting, music, dance, and drama. Artists interpreted and embodied these rituals by shaping them through stone, sound, line, or movement.

This centrality of emotion in Indian arts, including cinema, is directly linked to the *rasa* theory's significance in Indian tradition. The availability of international cinema through online and DVD access has further exposed Indian filmmakers—especially those in experimental and independent cinema—to alternate narrative styles. Notably, most of the lead actors in *Mahabharat* underwent acting workshops that introduced them to the acting principles outlined in the *Natyashastra*. Many successful television shows across popular genres—especially social and mythological dramas—reflect its influence. Every actor and director working in India is, consciously or unconsciously, following the prescriptions of Bharata Muni.

The Relevance of *Natyashastra*

The *Natyashastra* is a representation of the events taking place in the lives of gods, demons, kings, families, men, and sages who possess spiritual knowledge. A term used to describe this art form—one of the most famous Indian Sanskrit classical texts on the performance of arts—is *Natyashastra*. It not only explains the structure of drama but also covers dance techniques, acting, body movement, makeup, costumes, musical shells, instruments, etc. According to Bharata Muni, “Just as well-disposed persons, while eating food cooked with many kinds of spices, enjoy the taste, and attain pleasure and satisfaction, so the cultured people taste the dominant states as they observe them being

represented by an expression of the various states with words, gestures and temperament, and derive pleasure and satisfaction.”

In other words, it “deals with all possible subjects linked with drama—architecture, postures, movements and gestures of actors, songs to be sung, dances to be performed, speeches to be delivered, dresses to be worn, musical instruments to be played.” According to Thirumalai (2001), “This work is of great significance for fine arts too. It is a work of sociolinguistic information of the past and the present.” *Natyashastra* has relevance for the study of geography, ethnography, language, literature, economics, costumes and ornaments, arts, and psychology. In addition to dance, drama, and music, the treatise consists of insights for painting and sculpture too.

Natyashastra has relevance for the study of geography, ethnography, language, literature, economics, costumes and ornaments, arts, and psychology. In addition to dance, drama, and music, the treatise consists of insights for painting and sculpture too. The *Natyashastra's* scope includes linguistics, literature, arts and crafts, costumes and ornaments, mythology and legend, geography, as well as erotica, psychological sciences, and economics.

Significance of the Study

1. *Natyashastra* actively competes with various modern media platforms such as television, radio, video, films, OTT platforms, and teleserials. These platforms not only provide entertainment but also offer meaningful infotainment.
2. It contributes to changing people's attitudes and behaviors while preserving the history, culture, traditions, and values of heritage in the digital age.
3. Sage Bharata permitted female characters to perform on stage. Inspired by this inclusion, contemporary

theatre, screenplays, street plays, folk media, and teleserials have increasingly begun to allow female participation.

4. AIR (All India Radio) and Doordarshan (DD) channels remain popular among audiences for watching and listening to content based on the *Natyashastra*. These channels have broadcast *Natyashastra*-inspired content through episodic teleserials, movies, and dance performances.
5. Today, *Natyashastra* is accessible on major digital platforms such as YouTube, live streaming services, artificial intelligence-based applications, social media, and online learning platforms like SWAYAM.

Conclusion

Bharata Muni's *Natyashastra* is considered the first significant work in Indian performing communication. Its aim is to familiarize readers with Indian forms of communication, wherein the art of communication is mastered through *Natyashastra*. The SMC model, based on Bharata Muni's *Natyashastra*, was constructed and developed by Nirmala Mani Adhikary. The *Natyashastra* is the result of several centuries of theatrical practice and is regarded as the most comprehensive guidebook on theatre and dance, intended to preserve theatrical traditions for future generations. It is a living, classical text in aesthetics and the performing arts.

Nowadays, this art form is in fierce competition with popular culture and mass media. *Natyashastra* is widely regarded as one of the most influential tools in performance art. It offers entertainment, much like cinema, television, and OTT platforms. However, it also uniquely fosters shared experiences between the audience and the characters. Research shows that watching live performances based on the *Natyashastra* can influence the mood, tastes, interests,

lifestyles, mindsets, cultures, and behaviors of audiences. This ancient treatise and performance art is also being used as a medium for education, entertainment, awareness, and community empowerment.

[Dr. Sathish K. Itagi is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Journalism and Media Studies at First Grade College, affiliated to Bangalore North University, Doddaballapur, Karnataka, India.

Ms. Rubina Yeasmin is a State Aided College Teacher (SACT), at the Department of Sociology at Budge Budge College, affiliated to Calcutta University, Kolkata-700137, West Bengal India.]

References

- Adhikary, N. M. (2009). An introduction to Sadharanikaran model of communication. *Bodhi: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 3(1), 69–91.
- Adhikary, N. M. (2014). *Theory and practice of communication – Bharata Muni*. Makhanlal Chaturvedi National University of Journalism and Communication.
- Admin. (2022, February 25). *Natya Shastra and its relevance in modern dramatics*. Kolahal. <https://kolahal.org/2020/02/25/natya-shastra-and-its-relevance-in-modern-dramatics/>
- Arelli, K. S. (n.d.). *The Natyasastra and Indian cinema: A study of the Rasa theory as a cornerstone for Indian aesthetics*. http://www.conference.iardo.com/IARDO_RACE-2020_India/246.pdf
- Bhosale, B. (n.d.). *Bharata's Natyashastra: Fundamentals of dramatics and aesthetics*. https://lkouniv.ac.in/site/writereaddata/siteContent/202004120632194475nishi_Indian_Aesthetics.pdf

- Bose, N. (2014). *Modern Indian theatre: A reader* (Review of the book by N. Bhatia). Academia.edu.
https://www.academia.edu/2420116/Modern_Indian_Theatre_A_Reader_edited_by_Nandi_Bhatia
- Das, S. K. (n.d.). *Role of meta search engines in web-based information system: Fundamentals and challenges*.
<https://ir.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/1944/1327/1/445-454.pdf>
- Detail study of Natyashastra, specially dance-related chapters and Sangita Ratnakar*. (n.d.).
https://onlinecourses.swayam2.ac.in/cec20_as02/preview
- Encyclopedia Britannica. (n.d.). *Encyclopedia Britannica*.
<https://www.britannica.com/>
- Ghosh, M. (1951). *The Natyasastra ascribed to Bharata Muni*. Asiatic Society of Bengal.
- Indian Aesthetics. (n.d.). <https://www.cnbdcollgegekadi.org/Content/Navigation/214.pdf>
- Inarch Center. (2022, October 21). *Certificate course in Natyashastra, by Talaashh Heritage*.
<https://www.inarchcenter.com>
- Jones, M. (2009). Bollywood, Rasa and Indian cinema: Misconceptions, meanings and *Slumdog Millionaire*. *Visual Anthropology*, 23(1), 33–43.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/08949460903368895>
- Malladi, S. (n.d.). *Indian performance spaces in texts, with a special focus on Natyashastra*.
https://ijariie.com/AdminUploadPdf/Indian_performance_spaces_in_texts_with_a_special_focus_on_Natyashastra_ijariie16755.pdf
- Murthy, C. (2012). Indian cinema as a model for de-westernizing media studies. *Asia Pacific Media Educator*, 22(2), 197–215. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1326365x13498167>

- Natyasastra and the body in performance.* (n.d.). Google Books. <https://books.google.co.in/books?id=nE9hBgAAQBAJ>
- Natyashastra.* (n.d.). <https://jambudveep.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/natyashastra.pdf>
- Natyashastra course material.* (n.d.). ePGP. https://epgp.inflibnet.ac.in/epgpdata/uploads/epgp_content/S000451PA/P001527/M016632/ET/1466143119P1M5TEXT.pdf
- Noopura Bhramari. (n.d.). *Circumnavigation to the world of performing arts.* <https://www.noopurabhramari.com/>
- Online classes. (n.d.). *Natyasutra Online.* <https://www.natyasutraonline.com/>
- Padma Subrahmanyam. (2010). *Bharatiya Natyashastra* (Vol. 1). [Publication information not available].
- Piyush Roy. (2016). *The aesthetics of emotional acting: An argument for a Rasa-based criticism of Indian cinema and television* (PhD dissertation, University of Edinburgh).
- Sanskrit Documents Collection. (n.d.). *Home page.* <https://sanskritdocuments.org/>
- Shandilya, S. (2022). *Natya Shastra in contemporary world.* *International Journal of Creative.* <https://www.nios.ac.in/media/documents/285-Natyakala/English/Ch-13T.pdf>
- The contemporaneity of Bharatamuni's Natyashastra.* (n.d.). Perspectives JDMC. <https://perspectives-jdmc.in/the-contemporaneity-of-bharatamunis-natyashastra/>

Application and Significance of the Sadharanikaran Model of Communication (SMC) in Foreign Language Pedagogy

Su Zhengju
allensu2023@163.com

[Note: A preliminary version of this article was presented as a paper at the International Seminar on Two Decades of the Sadharanikaran Model of Communication, organized by the Department of Languages and Mass Communication, Kathmandu University School of Arts (KUSOA), on 26 May, 2024.]

Abstract

This paper examines the Sadharanikaran Model of Communication (SMC) and its application in foreign language pedagogy. Rooted in Indian philosophy, SMC offers a holistic view of communication, emphasizing the interplay between the communicator, message, and recipient. It posits that communication is influenced by cultural and social contexts, which can enhance language teaching by promoting a learner-centered approach. By integrating SMC principles into language curricula, teaching materials, and classroom activities, educators can foster a deeper understanding of communication processes and adapt their methodologies accordingly.

The study highlights the benefits of using authentic materials and creating inclusive learning environments to improve language acquisition and cross-cultural understanding among students. It explores how SMC principles can facilitate language learning as a dynamic and

interactive process, encouraging educators to adopt strategies that value the unique experiences and perspectives of each student. By promoting cultural empathy and intercultural sensitivity, SMC provides a framework for cultivating communicative competence and enhancing the overall effectiveness of foreign language education.

Keywords: Sadharanikaran Model of Communication (SMC), foreign language pedagogy, communication skills, cultural empathy, intercultural sensitivity, language acquisition

1. Introduction

1.1 An Overview of the Sadharanikaran Model of Communication (SMC)

The Sadharanikaran Model of Communication emphasizes the communal and participatory nature of communication, focusing on mutual understanding and shared meanings (Adhikary, 2009). The concept is rooted in the ancient text *Natyashastra*, attributed to Bharata, with attempts to trace its history back to the Vedic period (Adhikary, 2014). The model outlines key components such as the sender (Pravakta), receiver (Shrota), message (Sandesha), medium (Madhyam), context (Parisar), and feedback (Pratibha). It presents communication as an interactive process where roles are fluid and meaning is co-created by both parties, emphasizing the shared cultural context that facilitates effective communication.

Philosophically, the model underscores the importance of empathy, commonality, and mutual respect, reflecting the collectivist ethos of Indian culture. It integrates aesthetic and emotional dimensions, recognizing the significant role of emotions and expressions in conveying messages. This approach advocates for inclusive and participatory communication practices, promoting dialogue and feedback to enhance mutual understanding.

Unlike individual constructs, Sadharanikaran explicates relational and social processes of communication (Kundu, 2014).

In practical terms, the Sadharanikaran model is particularly relevant in contexts requiring high levels of mutual understanding and shared cultural knowledge, such as education, interpersonal communication, and media studies. It encourages creating meaningful and impactful communication experiences by focusing on shared experiences and common understanding. Since the model integrates cultural, emotional, and interactive dimensions, it has great research value to apply it to foreign language pedagogy.

1.2. Context of Foreign Language Pedagogy

Foreign language pedagogy refers to the theory and practice of teaching languages other than one's native language. It encompasses various approaches, methods, and techniques used to facilitate language learning (McKay, 2012). In the 21st century, language education faces new challenges. Students need not only language proficiency but also higher-order skills like critical thinking, problem-solving, and digital literacy. The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) emphasizes the integration of these 21st-century skills into language courses (Betül & Margherita, 2020).

Effective communication is a cornerstone of language learning. It involves not only linguistic competence (grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation) but also pragmatic awareness (understanding social and cultural context) and strategic language use. Learners must be able to convey their ideas, negotiate meaning, and interact appropriately in real-world situations (McConachy, 2022). Effective communication skills enable learners to engage with native speakers, navigate daily life, and participate in

professional contexts. Language learning becomes purposeful when learners can use the language effectively in authentic situations (Brown, 1995). Effective communication involves understanding cultural nuances, idiomatic expressions, and nonverbal cues. This cultural awareness fosters empathy and promotes intercultural competence.

2. Literature Review

The Sadharanikaran Model of Communication (SMC) is deeply rooted in Indian philosophy and offers a unique perspective on communication that emphasizes mutual understanding and shared meaning. Adhikary (2014) outlines the model's historical roots in the ancient text *Natyashastra*, highlighting its focus on empathy, commonality, and mutual respect in the communication process. The philosophical foundation of the model aligns with the collectivist spirit of Indian culture and demonstrates the importance of cultural and social context in effective communication.

In the field of foreign language teaching, effective communication is not limited to language proficiency but also includes pragmatic awareness and strategic language use. McKay (2012) points out that language learners should effectively navigate social and cultural contexts. The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) also emphasizes the importance of integrating 21st-century skills such as critical thinking and digital literacy into language education (Betül & Margherita, 2020).

Recent research suggests that cultural empathy and cross-cultural sensitivity are essential in foreign language teaching. Byram (1997) and Kumaravadivelu (2006) argue that understanding cultural differences and developing cross-cultural competence are essential for effective communication in language learning. The SMC model

emphasizes a shared cultural background and provides a framework for incorporating these elements into language education, promoting a learner-centered teaching approach that values the unique experiences of each student. This study will be a new attempt that may significantly improve the effectiveness of foreign language education in the future.

3. Application of SMC in Foreign Language Pedagogy

Applying the Sadharanikaran Model of Communication (SMC) to foreign language teaching enhances both the learning experience and outcomes. SMC highlights shared understanding and emotional resonance, encouraging learners to appreciate cultural nuances and build connections with native speakers. By fostering active listening and empathy, SMC helps students grasp pronunciation and engage in meaningful dialogue. Incorporating SMC principles into teaching practices—such as using contextualized activities and interactive methods—supports deeper cultural understanding and boosts students' confidence and intercultural skills.

3.1. The Application of Principles of SMC

SMC emphasizes shared understanding and emotional resonance. In language learning, this translates to appreciating cultural nuances. Learners can benefit from understanding not only the language but also the cultural context behind it, which fosters deeper connections with native speakers. SMC also encourages empathy between communicators. In language teaching, this means promoting empathy toward learners' struggles. Teachers can create an environment where learners feel understood, valued, and motivated to express themselves authentically.

SMC underscores active listening and meaningful dialogue. Language learners can apply this by actively listening to native speakers to grasp pronunciation, intonation, and idiomatic expressions, and by engaging in

authentic conversations to practice speaking and build confidence. SMC's focus on shared emotional states aligns with language learning. Learners experience emotions related to language barriers (frustration, excitement, curiosity), cultural discoveries (surprise, appreciation), and language milestones (joy, accomplishment).

Language learners can benefit from SMC by forming language exchange partnerships. These partnerships allow learners to share experiences, learn from each other, and develop *Sahridayata* (shared understanding).

3.2. Specific Strategies and Methodologies

While specific strategies for applying the Sadharanikaran Model of Communication in foreign language pedagogy may be limited, educators can leverage its principles to create engaging and culturally relevant language learning experiences for students. By incorporating contextualized learning activities, interactive teaching methods, cultural sensitivity training, feedback mechanisms, and task-based learning approaches, educators can empower students to become confident and proficient communicators in diverse linguistic and cultural settings.

First, language learning activities should be designed to immerse students in authentic cultural contexts and real-life situations. By contextualizing the use of language in various scenarios, students can develop a deeper understanding of its application across different contexts. Interactive teaching methods such as role-playing, simulations, and group discussions should be implemented to encourage active participation and collaboration among students, promoting dynamic interaction and facilitating the exchange of ideas and perspectives. Integrating cultural sensitivity training into language teaching is an innovative approach to cultivate students' awareness and respect for diverse cultural perspectives. Discussions that integrate

cultural norms, values, and practices can help educators develop students' intercultural competence. Providing regular feedback on language use and encouraging reflection on communication experiences will enable students to understand their strengths and areas for improvement, thereby promoting continuous learning and development. Finally, task-based learning methods remain the mainstream approach for engaging students in meaningful, goal-oriented language tasks while developing practical language skills.

4. Significance of SMC in Foreign Language Pedagogy

The significance of applying the Sadharanikaran Model of Communication (SMC) in foreign language pedagogy lies in its potential to enrich language teaching practices and enhance student learning outcomes.

SMC offers a holistic framework that emphasizes the interconnections of the communicator, message, and recipient, providing students with a comprehensive understanding of language use and communication dynamics. By integrating SMC principles into language teaching methodologies, educators can promote cultural sensitivity and intercultural competence, enhance students' communication skills, foster critical thinking and reflection, and empower students to actively participate in communication processes. This integration facilitates a deeper exploration of language learning beyond mere grammatical structures and vocabulary acquisition. Students are encouraged to engage with the cultural and contextual nuances of language use, enabling them to navigate diverse linguistic and cultural settings with confidence and proficiency. Through contextualized learning activities such as role-plays, simulations, and authentic communication tasks, educators create immersive language learning environments that mirror real-life scenarios, providing

students with opportunities to apply their language skills in meaningful contexts.

Additionally, interactive teaching methods such as group discussions, collaborative projects, and peer feedback sessions foster dynamic interaction and collaboration among students, promoting a learner-centered approach to language learning. Cultural sensitivity training embedded within language instruction enables students to develop awareness and respect for diverse cultural perspectives, facilitating intercultural communication and fostering mutual understanding. Furthermore, SMC encourages critical thinking and reflection by prompting students to consider the multiple perspectives and interpretations inherent in communication processes. By engaging students in reflective activities and discussions, educators deepen their understanding of language and communication, fostering metacognitive skills and facilitating deeper learning. Importantly, the application of SMC principles in foreign language pedagogy empowers students to take ownership of their language learning journey, promoting a sense of agency and self-efficacy. By providing students with opportunities to engage in authentic communication experiences and express themselves creatively, educators cultivate intrinsic motivation and confidence in their language abilities.

5. Case Studies and Examples

Through research, we found that the application of SMC principles in foreign language subjects has great potential. By adopting specific strategies and methods, there are already many typical cases in foreign language teaching practice. Let us examine how SMC can be effectively integrated into language instruction to foster communicative competence, cultural empathy, and language acquisition processes among students through these cases.

5.1. Cultural Immersion Programs

In a language classroom setting, educators can organize cultural immersion programs that involve participating in activities and experiences that authentically reflect real-life cultural contexts, helping students deeply understand and experience another culture. These programs typically include interacting with locals, attending cultural events, visiting historical and cultural sites, and learning about traditional customs and practices. For example, in a Mandarin Chinese language class, students may participate in a Chinese cultural immersion day organized by their educators. Throughout the day, students are immersed in various aspects of Chinese culture, including language, cuisine, arts, and traditions.

The cultural immersion day begins with a Mandarin language lesson focusing on key phrases and expressions related to daily interactions, such as greetings, ordering food, and expressing gratitude. Students then participate in hands-on activities, such as cooking Chinese cuisine, where they learn about traditional ingredients, cooking techniques, and dining etiquette. This activity not only enhances students' language skills but also provides insights into Chinese culinary culture and social customs. According to the Sadharanikaran Model of Communication (SMC), these experiences facilitate *Sahridayata*, or shared understanding and empathy, by immersing students in authentic cultural contexts. Through these activities, students and instructors become *Sahridayas*, achieving commonality and deeper emotional engagement with the language and culture.

In addition to culinary activities, students also engage in cultural workshops, such as calligraphy and traditional Chinese painting, where they learn about the significance of these art forms in Chinese culture. Educators may also incorporate sessions on traditional Chinese

festivals, customs, and rituals, allowing students to gain a deeper appreciation for the cultural heritage of the Mandarin-speaking world.

The cultural immersion program is an excellent example of applying SMC's holistic approach to foreign language teaching practice. It provides students with a comprehensive and well-rounded understanding of the Mandarin language and the culture of China. By participating in a variety of activities—including language, gastronomy, arts, and traditions—students learn about the interconnectivity of different aspects of culture, emphasizing the interconnectedness of transmitters, messages, and receivers in communication.

5.2. Contextualized Language Learning

Educators can design language learning materials and activities that are contextualized to specific real-world situations. For example, in a Spanish language class, students engage in role-plays simulating everyday scenarios such as ordering food at a restaurant, making travel arrangements, or conducting business negotiations. Each language learning activity is carefully designed to reflect real communication situations that students may encounter in everyday life. For example, students can participate in role-playing, impersonating customers and restaurant workers, and practicing language functions such as ordering food, asking about menu items, and expressing preferences. This activity not only strengthens vocabulary and language structure but also familiarizes students with the cultural norms and etiquette of dining out in a Spanish-speaking environment. Engaging in language activities centered on travel arrangements—such as booking hotel accommodations, purchasing transportation tickets, or asking for directions—can also strengthen students' practical pragmatic skills. Through these activities, students not only

learn basic vocabulary and expressions related to travel but also gain practical communication skills necessary for traveling in Spanish-speaking countries. In addition, using real texts as language learning materials increases students' familiarity with authentic language resources such as menus, maps, and travel brochures, allowing them to interact with commonly used language in Spanish-speaking environments. Educators can also incorporate multimedia resources, such as videos or audio recordings featuring native speakers, to provide students with authentic language use and intonation patterns.

This teaching method contextualizes language learning within specific real-world situations, such as ordering food at a restaurant or making travel arrangements. By embedding language use within relevant cultural and social contexts, students gain a deeper understanding of how language functions in different communicative settings. This emphasis on contextualization aligns with the contextualization principle of the Sadharanikaran Model of Communication (SMC), which underscores the importance of understanding language within specific cultural, social, and situational contexts.

5.3. Cross-Cultural Communication Projects

In the practice of foreign language teaching, there are many examples of cross-cultural communication. One such example is the virtual pen pal exchange. In this program, educators organize a virtual pen pal exchange in which students from different countries or cultural backgrounds communicate with each other through written correspondence. The program begins with educators pairing students from diverse cultural backgrounds, taking into account language proficiency levels and shared interests.

Students are provided with guidelines on how to introduce themselves, initiate conversations, and share

information about their cultural backgrounds, interests, hobbies, and daily lives. They exchange letters or emails with their pen pals, discussing topics such as family life, school experiences, cultural traditions, and societal norms. Throughout the pen pal exchange, students practice writing skills in the target language, apply cultural knowledge, and develop intercultural communication competencies. They learn to navigate linguistic and cultural differences, express themselves effectively, and adapt their communication styles to suit their audience. As part of the pen pal exchange program, students may also engage in collaborative projects or activities with their pen pals, such as creating joint presentations, digital photo albums, or multimedia projects that showcase aspects of their respective cultures. At the conclusion of the pen pal exchange program, students may have the opportunity to meet their pen pals virtually through video calls or webinars, providing a culminating experience where they can interact face-to-face, share their experiences, and deepen their cross-cultural understanding.

By incorporating SMC's cultural sensitivity principles into foreign language teaching practices, students are exposed to different cultural perspectives and practices, thereby enhancing their cultural sensitivity and cross-cultural competence. Through interactions with pen pals, students gain insights into cultural norms, traditions, and values, developing empathy, understanding, and appreciation for cultural diversity.

6. Challenges and Limitations

While the application of SMC in foreign language pedagogy has yielded positive outcomes, its implementation in other cultural contexts presents certain challenges and limitations due to its strong ties to traditional Hindu philosophy. Students from diverse cultural backgrounds also possess varying interpretations of communication, often

resulting in outcomes that deviate from expectations in practical teaching settings. Evaluating the efficacy of this communication model poses a challenge as well, necessitating alternative assessment methods beyond conventional tests and examinations. Furthermore, disparities in language proficiency create obstacles to achieving meaningful communication.

One of the primary challenges in implementing SMC in foreign language pedagogy is the diverse cultural backgrounds of students. Within a language classroom, students may come from various cultural, linguistic, and ethnic backgrounds, each with its own communication norms, values, and practices. This diversity poses a significant challenge for educators, who must navigate cultural differences among students while promoting effective communication. Educators must also be mindful of potential variations in communication styles, preferences, and expectations among students to prevent misunderstandings and discomfort within the classroom.

In the field of foreign language teaching, one of the most prevalent issues is the uneven language proficiency among students. Within any given language classroom, there may be a wide spectrum of learners, ranging from absolute beginners with limited language skills to advanced students approaching native fluency. This disparity in proficiency levels complicates the facilitation of effective communication, as it becomes challenging for students to comprehend and express themselves across different levels. Lower-level students may feel intimidated and overwhelmed by verbal communication tasks, leading to frustration and disengagement. Conversely, higher-level students may experience impatience or disinterest when interacting with peers who struggle to communicate effectively.

To address the challenge of adapting to diverse environments, educators must adopt a contextualized approach to language teaching that recognizes and values students' unique linguistic, cultural, and educational backgrounds. By tailoring communication strategies to meet students' specific needs, preferences, and experiences, educators can create inclusive learning environments in which all students feel respected, valued, and empowered to engage in meaningful communication. Additionally, ongoing professional development and collaboration among educators can enhance their ability to apply SMC principles across varied contexts and support language learning success for all students.

7. Conclusion

In conclusion, the Sadharanikaran Model of Communication (SMC) offers a holistic framework for understanding and enhancing communication processes in foreign language pedagogy. By emphasizing the interconnection among the communicator, message, and recipient, SMC provides valuable insights into the complex dynamics of language learning and intercultural communication. Throughout this paper, the application of SMC principles has been explored in various aspects of foreign language teaching practices, including contextualized language learning, cross-cultural communication projects, and virtual pen pal exchanges. These examples demonstrate how SMC can be effectively integrated into language instruction to foster communicative competence, cultural empathy, and language acquisition among students.

Despite the challenges and limitations inherent in applying the Sadharanikaran Model of Communication (SMC) in foreign language pedagogy—including cultural variability, differences in language proficiency levels, and

the need for contextual adaptation—educators can still leverage the transformative potential of SMC to create dynamic, engaging, and culturally relevant learning experiences. By adopting a culturally responsive approach, providing differentiated instruction, and fostering inclusive learning environments, educators can empower students to become proficient and confident communicators who are capable of navigating diverse linguistic and cultural contexts with ease and fluency.

Moving forward, further research and exploration are essential to continue refining and adapting the principles of the Sadharanikaran Model of Communication (SMC) to meet the evolving needs and challenges of language teaching and learning in an increasingly globalized world. By embracing SMC principles and fostering effective communication exchanges in language classrooms, educators can better prepare students to communicate ethically and effectively within interconnected and multicultural societies. Ultimately, the application of SMC in foreign language pedagogy holds significant potential to enrich language learning experiences, promote intercultural understanding, and cultivate global citizenship among students.

[Su Zhengju is a student of Master in Media Studies at the Department of Languages and Mass Communication, Kathmandu University School of Arts, Nepal.]

References

- Adhikary, N. M. (2009). An introduction to Sadharanikaran model of communication. *Bodhi: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 3(1), 69–91.
- Adhikary, N. M. (2014). *Theory and practice of communication – Bharata Muni*. Makhanlal Chaturvedi National University of Journalism and Communication.

- Banks, J. A. (2017). *Cultural diversity and education: Foundations, curriculum, and teaching* (6th ed.). Pearson.
- Brown, A. V. (1995). Students' and teachers' perceptions of effective foreign language teaching: A comparison of ideals. *Foreign Language Annals*, 28(4), 479–494. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1944-9720.1995.tb00856.x>
- Byram, M. (1997). *Teaching and assessing intercultural communicative competence*. Multilingual Matters.
- Correa, D. (2011). *Foreign language teaching and the new technologies*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Garrett-Rucks, P. (2013). *Critical thinking and language learning: Pedagogical perspectives*. Routledge.
- Hall, E. T. (1977). *Beyond culture*. Anchor Books.
- Kumaravadivelu, B. (2006). *Understanding language teaching: From method to postmethod*. Routledge.
- Looney, D., & Lusin, N. (2018). *Enrollments in languages other than English in United States institutions of higher education, Fall 2016*. Modern Language Association. <https://www.mla.org/Enrollment-Report-Fall-2016>
- McKay, S. L. (2012). English as an international language. In J. C. Richards & A. Burns (Eds.), *The Cambridge guide to pedagogy and practice in second language teaching* (pp. 15–22). Cambridge University Press.
- Nandita, K. K. (2014). *Sadharanikaran: A theory for social & health behavior change*. Mental Health Innovation Network. <https://www.mhinnovation.net/innovations/sadharanikaran-theory-social-and-health-behavior-change>
- Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T. S. (2014). *Approaches and methods in language teaching* (3rd ed.). Cambridge University Press.

- Savignon, S. J. (2001). *Communicative competence: Theory and classroom practice* (2nd ed.). McGraw-Hill.
- Smith, L. T. (2012). *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and Indigenous peoples* (2nd ed.). Zed Books.
- Yamada, H. (2010). *Language learning and teaching as social interaction*. Multilingual Matters.
- Yates, S. J. (2018). Intercultural competence in foreign language education: Conceptual approaches and pedagogical considerations. *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, 31(3), 232–247.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/07908318.2018.1504397>

Devkota's Worldview: A Philosophical Analysis of *Laxmi Nibandha Sangraha*

Komal Prasad Phuyal, Ph.D.
ephuyal@gmail.com

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5928-3111>

Abstract

Pioneer modern voice in Nepali literature, Laxmi Prasad Devkota (1909–1959), places both Nepal and Nepali ways of life at the center in his essays that reflect on both the contemporary Nepali practices of his time and seek to identify the ways to address the lapses in the ethos of his time. As a modern Nepali essayist, he carries the voice of the 1920s and 1930s national awakening in his collection of essays titled *Laxmi Nibandha Sangraha* [Laxmi Collection of Essays] (1942–1943). All his thirty-seven essays present his reflection on his self, society, and the awakening of the nation. Often, Devkota takes a very vicarious road to the subject matter and hides the argument in his aesthetic ways of presenting the social reality: his harsh commentary on social development also finds due space in what he finds relevant to talk about the limits to the social and the political in his time. The modern essayist loves his people and his culture: he celebrates the ways of his people and his society, seeking out the strengths of his own culture and exposing the weaknesses of the imported set of values. The reading of his essays also reveals his ambivalent attitude toward what he sees in the world, in that he stands to denounce and appreciate specific values of the modern world, thereby letting himself stand in a much undecided intellectual mood as well. This paper discusses the worldview that Devkota

has developed in his essays in *Laxmi Nibandha Sangraha*.

Keywords: social awakening, Nepali literature, ethos of modernity, celebration of the old, rationalization

Introduction

A forerunner in modern Nepali literature, Laxmi Prasad Devkota (1909–1959) wrote extraordinary personal essays in the 1930s, later published in the collection *Laxmi Nibandha Sangraha* (referred to as LNS hereafter). As in his poetry, LNS establishes him as a pioneering modern Nepali essayist, reflecting on self, society, and the nation. His essays construct a world for the readers, taking them to great heights to observe the reality below. In the essays, the author's arguments refer to the contemporary cultural realities of the time, wherein the essayist identifies cracks in society that require philosophical intervention. In this sense, *LNS* serves as a philosophical intervention by a deeply thoughtful poet during a time of social transition in Nepal. Published in the early 1940s, the collection captures the worldview of intellectuals striving to transform societal consciousness. Devkota intertwines reflections on self and nation within a single collection and sets them against the backdrop of larger political upheavals in South Asia.

Devkota often retreats into his personal world to reflect on the nature of reality within his society. At times, he becomes a victim of adhering to a traditional way of life that he finds far more pleasant and scientific than any foreign practices recently adopted in the new social context. He pointedly opposes Western perspectives on humanity. Celebrating the hills of his nation, he aspires to ascend to the seventh sky, from where he can observe the ground reality and appreciate the ways of his people. For instance, he highlights the features of life in the hills as the most natural and ideal way of living. Moreover, secular occasions like the fifteenth of Asadha are transformed into special moments of

celebration. This paper examines six essays from *LNS*: “Hai hai Angreji” [Hail to English], “Ke Nepal sano chha?” [Is Nepal small?], “Nepali sahitayako itihasma savrashrestha purusha” [The greatest personality in the history of Nepali literature], “Pahadi jivan” [The life in the hills], “Shree Ganeshaya nama” [The beginning], and “Asadhako pandhra” [The fifteenth of the month of Asadha]. I have read the first five essays in original Nepali language of Devkota, while the last was translated by Mansfred Treu in 1993. I have translated and paraphrased the excerpts from the Nepali texts myself, while I have used Treu’s translation for “The fifteenth of the month of Asadha” in the textual analysis.

Devkota’s Worldview

Devkota grounds his worldview in his personal encounter with the world, which gradually expands to the more significant categories like society and the nation. He appreciates the origin and formation of ethos, challenging the irrational in the existing society and subverting the ways of looking at the prevailing practices. He exposes the fissures in the seemingly perfect spheres of society and asserts his preference for the primitive, nature, and the spontaneous. Like the voice of dissent, he challenges the people and practices at the center, takes them to locales beyond their regular access, and helps them realize the origin of classical values. He yokes together reason and intuition at the most critical hours of his argumentation when he searches for the glory of language, literature, culture, and nation. The examination of the most abstract concepts emerges in the most palpable way: he visualizes the argument, reaches the depth of the impulses of the culture to measure the size of the contemporary ethos, and fixes his perception of self, society, and nation there. As a critique of the prevailing practices, he never loses his ground

in excitement. As a visionary voice in the transition of his society, he identifies the lapses in society by using both *a priori* and *a posteriori* knowledge, resulting in a synergistic effect in forming his philosophical worldview.

Devkota explores the modern tenets of self, society, and polity through his personal and meditative essays in *LNS*. In the collection of thirty-seven essays written in and around the late 1930s and early 1940s, he explores his self as he openly states, "In some places in the essays, I have myself entered, coloring with my own personality to explore myself and establish myself. At other places, I am present – aloof from the essays – as the audience to study the drama of life and nature" (Devkota, 1967, *Preface*, p. i). He is both a participant and an observer of social reality, which provides him with critical and creative impetus. As Bhatta (2012) observes, Devkota's love for the nation transcends the quotidian reality (Bhatta, 2012). As Bhatta states, "This fact reveals Devkota's serious national consciousness. He argues no artist should despise his own folk; none should strive to be exotic and pose an expatriate in his own country..." (p. 71). Centrally focusing on the nation, his essays celebrate facets of nations from their geography to the people, their cultural and social practices, their aspirations and motivations, and their political ambitions. As the essayist, Devkota places himself somewhere between the observer and the observed and critically works on the content of the world in an attempt to explore reality beyond general perceptions.

Standing at the crossroads of Nepal's transition in the 1940s, Devkota observes the formation of a political self heavily influenced by Western values. The essayist critiques the impact of such values in contemporary times and argues that any society must understand the traditional cultural roots during rationalization. The raw form of rationalization

does not guarantee social welfare and satisfaction for the larger public. For instance, he states that Trichandra College, established in 1918, has been training the modern mind, which must also seek to balance between modern values and classical values of our society (Devkota, 1967, *Shree Ganeshaya*, p. 2). Highly politically motivated as the creative genius of his time, Devkota presents the vision of the political self when he reflects on the formation of modern polity. He "projects the picture of modern Nepali subjectivity that possesses firm moral values that do not allow wisdom to go astray, bliss that does not challenge the classically tested and traditionally accepted values and mores of the society" (Phuyal, 2011, p. 23). It may sound self-contradictory when he appreciates and even glorifies the origin and departure of the historical turn. Devkota's appreciation reaches its peak when the issue is connected with the formation of the national ethos and enhances the sense of glory of the people by developing a sense of political bond in this context.

He places the seeker between the self and the object sought and emphasizes the role of cultural context in attempting to develop comprehension in this way. Besides, he critically observes the growing influence of British culture in Nepal through his celebrated essay "*Hai hai Angreji*" [Hail to English]. Critically assessing the growing need for English for economic success in his time, the essayist sees the craze for the language in his society. As a young man, he wanted to bring about a massive transformation in the mindset of the people through English. As he presents,

I wanted reformation; I wanted to bring in a new age.
What type of new age? I wanted an age in which every
Nepali could speak English. They could write articles
in English; they could invent new things by reading the

books of physics and chemistry; they could readjust the social circumstances along the lines of Malthusian economics; the vaidya could know the formulas of chemistry; the people are promoted to a new class of happiness in the age; and Nepalis could beat the drums of their own significance in the way of advertisement with red sparrow-headed letters in the age. I cannot say what reformation I was attempting to bring about.

(Devkota, 1967, *Hai hai Angreji*, p. 47)

Devkota's worldview consists of an early fascination with Nepal gaining its salvation, having achieved knowledge from English education. At the heart of his critique, he mocks his novice ways of upholding foreign values: he critically assesses his immature self, seeking a certain type of reformation for his people and nation. Later, he is disillusioned with realizing that English is just a language—a way of communication, not the source of salvation. He debunks the grand perceptions formed in society through the invasion of foreign practices and the elites' fascination with them.

His critical remarks are scattered throughout the essay. Implicitly, the essay also presents the critical attitude of a Nepali intellectual towards the presence of the British Raj on India and its influence in Nepal. Simultaneously, he critiques the colonial form of education promoted in Nepal when he goes on to examine the loss of traditional values. Devkota insists on the appeal of the locals in the colonial context of South Asia. He writes that the modern educational system treats "Krishna as the king in an old story, Vyas as the conman, Pashupatinath as a stone" (Devkota, 1967, *Hai hai Angreji*, p. 49). Very conscious of his own identity, the essayist places his self at the center stage in his arguments. For instance, Lohani (2014) analyzes, "This is Devkota whose identity does not lie in

slavish imitation of others” (p. 39). As a critical observer of self and society, the essays treat Devkota's self as a challenger in the intellectual scene growing in Nepal in the 1930s and the 1940s. The essayist understands the implications of the growing ethos of the society as a nation on the whole. Such an attitude, as promoted in the colonial form of education, directly shatters the traditional faith and values of Nepal. The language of the empire intrudes into the Nepali scene as a means of earning a living for the people and begins to challenge the whole being of the essence of the society.

Devkota's personal exploration gains a nationalistic height as he contemplates the nation. His selection of the rhetorical question “Is Nepal small?” rejects the notion of size when one begins to think of a nation. He argues that Nepal is complete in itself as a nation. In Nepal's quest for a more substantial state in the 1930s and 1940s, he claims that “Nepal is the devotee of classicism, though the society shows some concerns for modernity” (Devkota, 1967, *Ke Nepal*, p. 51). Unlike Foucauldian modernity, which is often taken as an age corresponding to its spirit (Foucault, 1997, p. 309), Devkota sees modernity as a challenge to the contemporary way of living in a classically settled social order. He glorifies his nation, moving beyond the prevailing set of standards of size and geography. Rather than the area, he seeks to establish Nepali society's virtues for all the people to enjoy and use. Narrowing the form to content and then seeking after the essence of Nepal, the essays fly across the Himalayan landscape to appreciate the diverse geography that he thus telescopes in his writing:

Some people say Hindi is better, and others prefer Bangali. But I choose the letters that are infused with the natural voice of the blue mountains, the characters carrying the slopes of Amarbhallari and flying with the

birds. Though my language has not spread much, this is the song of the spring of my rainbow. (Devkota, 1967, *Ke Nepal*, pp. 52-53)

Devkota's preference for Nepali language, culture, and geography and his poetic treatment of size as the physical entity only celebrate Nepal as an awakening nation in the 1940s. In the quote above, he brings sound, sight, and colors together to create a unified effect that appeals to the people's hearts. Writing at the dawn of modern Nepali literature, he was committed to setting high standards for writing in the nation and celebrating the national identity as such.

Devkota distinctly catches the local themes and festivities in the essay collection. For him, the life of the people at the bottom of society counts a lot, like their festivities. The peasant festivities, like the mid-Asadha, become the greatest of the festivals in which he celebrates the toil and sweat of the people at the bottom. He introduces the festival in the following words:

By the command of God and through His mercy for His children, the earth has acquired youthfulness. We go to plant rice in the hope of a golden harvest; in our hands are the green rice seedlings, in our minds are joyfulness and longing, in our hearts is a light rhythmic quivering, and in our throats surge up the sweet songs of our hearts. Today, we enter the soft, swampy fields. Today is the planting of joy in Nepal, today is the fifteenth of Asadha. (Devkota, 1993, *The fifteenth of Asadha*, p. 155)

Devkota's humanistic approach to life manifests in his treatment of the issues of the common folks in his writings and the celebration of life as observed in the organic rusticity. The peasantry's raw festivities promise subsistence to the people at large: the people invent their

own food, music, and ways of having fun in the muddy paddy fields. The youths splash water and hit each other with swampy mud: the essayist finds the bliss of life embedded in such activities. Devkota's celebration of life continues from the paddy fields to the lives of people in the farthest corners of society.

Devkota's essays treat the hills and the inaccessible localities as the source of knowledge, highlighting the natural ways of living as the core of Nepali life. For instance, such treatment shows his inclination towards the issues of the subaltern people, as Devkota's writings embed subaltern consciousness (Phuyal, 2008, p. 56). The issues of the common folks and their consciousness enter Devkota's writings, as Phuyal (2008) argues:

Moreover, their basic qualities like honesty, meekness, and proximity to nature fascinate him. The only fear in him is to protect these qualities because the bourgeois-elitist education system propounded by imperialism always swallows up the beautiful aspects of the subaltern life and makes them rootless. (2008, p. 57)

Like his reflection on Nepal in "*Is Nepal small?*," "*Pahadi jiwan*" [Life in the hills] presents the voice of the ignored people, places, and practices beyond the access of the mainstream. However, Dhakal (2018) only sees the portrayal of the socio-political context in the lives of people outside mainstream locales. Her study concludes that Devkota firmly grounds himself in the rural context to write essays and depicts the issues from the places (Dhakal, 2018, p. 28). Moving beyond the implications of Dhakal's argument, Devkota's soul flies far away in search of the ruptures in the formation of consciousness. His travels acquainted him with the classical values that have lived constantly for years in distant human settlements, away from

the access of modern eyes.

The essayist treats his travels to such societies as an opportunity to reflect on the weaknesses of his life in the city and the strengths of living in such societies. A nature lover, he seeks to find a soothing balm for his soul, wounded in the city by the artificiality of modern ways of living. His essay "*Pahadi Jiwan*" documents his travel to Jhiltung to see how people live in the villages, where he realizes the presence of the source of knowledge in the most natural way. He falls so deeply in love with the hills that he wishes to spend his life there; however, he dismisses such a possibility because he finds town spaces more comfortable to live in (Devkota, 1967, *Pahadi jiwan*, p. 9). This visit completely changes his perceptions as he gets a real touch of the life of people in the farthest corners of the nation. He accepts that "he was properly acquainted with the life in hills after visiting Jhiltung" (Devkota, 1967, *Pahadi jiwan*, p. 11). Gadtula's reading (2018) asserts that Devkota's essays derive an understanding of life and the world from Eastern philosophy (p. 32). "*Pahadi Jiwan*" also views Jhiltung as the most original place, away from the intervention of the ways of the city. His ego dissolves when he sees such purity and begins to learn from the most primitive ways of Jhiltung and its people. He goes deep into the most pensive mood to see the formation of the mantras of the Vedas in such mountains in ancient times.

Devkota views Bhanubhakta as the initiator of modern Nepali literature. Bhanubhakta became the greatest modern Nepali mind as he contributed to forming the body of modern Nepali literature. He critically examines the ethos of the twentieth century in populist activities and states that the people have not put serious efforts toward forming the national ethos. Setting such context, he argues that Bhanubhakta's poetry promotes the spontaneity of Nepali

society and "awakens the true Nepal soul and takes us to the world of aesthetics" (Devkota, 1967, *Nepali sahityako*, p. 23). The essayist further explores the features of Bhanubhakta and his poetry:

He takes the language to the space where children are elated, Nepali is pure, and the mothers tell the old stories. He has neither complexity nor artificiality. He does not twist the word. He does not pretend to show off the refined perspectives. His pen runs smoothly. His poems do not fly away beyond Nepali hills. His language is just like those poets who do not write anything. We begin our education by reading Bhanubhakta and scorn him by finishing it. But those who can understand feel a unique magic in the light of their house. (Devkota, 1967, *Nepali sahityako*, p. 25)

Both Bhanubhakta's poetry and his simplicity carry the essence of nature around him and his world. As the lover of the natural, Devkota sees great meaning in fusing such spontaneity in language and his poetry. To him, Bhanubhakta's revolt against the contemporary use of Sanskrit in poetry refers to the greatest act of preparation for laying the ground for the Nepali language to emerge on its own. Reading Bhanubhakta through his poems and using Nepali vernacular to challenge the established authority of Sanskrit among the existing intellectuals was a great event at the time. In this sense, Bhanubhakta challenges the intellectual luxury of the "classy" scholars to benefit the masses: Nepali language and literature find their departure in Bhanubhakta as the first poet.

Devkota's world consists of his personal observations of self, society, and the nation, which he often brings into a single piece of writing. Beginning with the minute observation of bits and pieces of his surroundings, he

transcends worldly affairs to reach the domain beyond the access of the general public without the power of analysis and intuition. Often, the autobiographical content of his observation turns into the political treatment of himself as the exploration of his subjectivity. Symbiotically placing people and places, agents and nature, and people and nations in developing certain ethos in history, the essayist fuses analytical knowledge with intuition and personal observation with the political development of certain ideas in society. He delves into the space beyond the capture of any modern tools of understanding when he reaches the impulses of contemporary society, as present in his essays on Bhanubhakta, Nepal as a nation, or the celebration of labor and toil on the fifteenth of Asadha. He treats Bhanubhakta as the spontaneous development of Nepali as a tongue of the people and then of the nation; he measures the size of the national ethos in “*Ke Nepal sano chha?*” arguing for the spiritual depth of the people and society. Similarly, the most secular form of celebration gets a critical and creative response from Devkota in “*Asadhako pandhra*” in the most welcoming way. The peasants and the locales away from the center occupy the central space of the formation of knowledge in Devkota’s writing, for he aligns himself with such people.

Reflection on Self and Society

Laxmi Prasad Devkota (1909–1959) writes about people, power relations, and polity in his essays to make sense of the world and to intervene in the context with his vision. This paper attempts to explore how Devkota centers himself within the prevailing socio-political practices and how he seeks to address the lapses therein. Devkota examines Nepali society in the 1920s and 1930s, analyzing the ethos of the time. In *LNS*, his essays critique the intellectual and political awakening of the nation during these decades. His philosophical worldview centers on the formation of self and nation within the larger cultural and

political context. Devkota moves back and forth through time and space, searching for the intersections of self and nation in their formative stages. During the 1930s and 1940s, Nepal was intellectually preparing for a massive social transformation, and his essays are set against the backdrop of national political transitions, both within Nepal and in the global context.

On one hand, he takes responsibility for defining the national canon through his reflections on Bhanubhakta and Nepal as a nation, providing people with a reason to believe in Nepal as a political category. On the other, he expands his scope of observation to include themes ranging from festivities like the fifteenth of Asadha to human settlements in Jhiltung, requiring profound reflection to understand the essence of Nepali life. A true devotee of nature, he explores the most scholarly ideas among the people of Jhiltung and the most natural flow of language in Bhanubhakta's poetry. The whole nation speaks its voice through the tunes of the hills in both Jhiltung and Bhanubhakta. Devkota's worldview is grounded in the intersection of self, society, and nation, as he treats it as the subject matter for his essays. On the other hand, he turns himself into the observer and the observed: the expansion of the personal ego takes the shape of – in the most sublimated form, pure from any traces of arrogance – a collective form of polity that functions as the voice of the whole cultural setup in general. The analytic knowledge fused with the intuition of the poetic heart helps create a unique voice and the most authentic aesthetic voice in the tradition of modern Nepali essays.

[Dr. Komal Prasad Phuyal is an Assistant Professor at the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur, Kathmandu, Nepal.]

References

- Bhatta, L. (2012). Projection of nationhood in Devkota. *Devkota Studies*, 13(1), 70–74.
- Devkota, L. P. (1967). Hai hai Angreji [Hail to English]. In *Laxmi Nibandha Sangraha* (pp. 45–50). Sajha.
- Devkota, L. P. (1967). Ke Nepal sano chha? [Is Nepal small?]. In *Laxmi Nibandha Sangraha* (pp. 51–57). Sajha.
- Devkota, L. P. (1967). Nepali sahityako itihasma savrashrestha purusha [The greatest personality in the history of Nepali literature]. In *Laxmi Nibandha Sangraha* (pp. 22–26). Sajha.
- Devkota, L. P. (1967). Pahadi jiwan [The life in the hills]. In *Laxmi Nibandha Sangraha* (pp. 6–14). Sajha.
- Devkota, L. P. (1967). Preface. In *Laxmi Nibandha Sangraha* (pp. i–ii). Sajha.
- Devkota, L. P. (1967). Shree Ganeshaya nama [The beginning]. In *Laxmi Nibandha Sangraha* (pp. 1–5). Sajha.
- Devkota, L. P. (1993). The fifteenth of the month of Asadha (M. Treu, Trans.). *CNAS Journal*, 20(2), 149–164.
- Dhakal, R. K. (2018). Devkotaka nibandhama gramin saskritik chetana [Rural cultural consciousness in Devkota's essays]. *Devkota Studies*, 32, 21–29.
- Foucault, M. (1997). What is enlightenment? In P. Rabinow (Ed.), *Ethics: Subjectivity and truth* (pp. 303–319). The New York Press.
- Gadtaula, N. (2018). Devkotaka nibandhama baicharik paksha [Philosophical aspects in Devkota's essays]. *Devkota Studies*, 32, 30–37.
- Lohani, M. P. (2014). Devkota as multidimensional genius. *Devkota Studies*, 18, 37–40.
- Phuyal, K. P. (2008). Subaltern consciousness in Devkota. *Devkota Studies*, 3(2/4), 52–58.
- Phuyal, K. P. (2011). Devkota's vision of modern Nepali subjectivity. *Devkota Studies*, 11, 22–26.

The Sadharanikaran Model of Communication within the Indigenous Knowledge System: An Appraisal

Kajal Verma & Pawan Singh Malik, Ph.D.

[Note: A preliminary version of this article was presented as a paper at the International Seminar on Two Decades of the Sadharanikaran Model of Communication, organized by the Department of Languages and Mass Communication, Kathmandu University School of Arts (KUSOA), on 26 May, 2024.]

Abstract

Communication is a very wide and dynamic process involving many more elements than the information exchange like environment, mood, the satisfaction derived, and mutuality. Among Eastern Communication theories and models, the Sadharanikaran Model of Communication by Nirmala Mani Adhikary (2003) is a model based on Hindu communication perspectives. This paper focuses on understanding and reviewing communication from the perspectives of Sadharanikaran Model of Communication. For this, a systematic review has been conducted, including articles, research papers, and book chapters to reflect the information from fundamentals to contemporary scenarios of works concerning Sadharanikaran and Sadharanikaran Model of Communication. This study concludes that SMC must be studied from other angles like its application in different fields and contexts other than the comparative analysis. This model of communication shall be considered as the evergreen model of communication due to its

emphasis on the inclusion of non-cognition elements in communication.

Keywords: communication, Bhartiya knowledge system, sadharanikaran model, Hindu communication

Introduction

Communication is a broad and dynamic process involving many more elements than just the exchange of information, such as environment, mood, the satisfaction derived, and mutuality. It is considered effective when it is two-way, which means it includes feedback in the process. Mutuality—also referred to by terms such as commonness, oneness, and commonality—is of utmost importance for communication to occur effectively. Communication is a central part of the lives of all living beings. It is not just an urge but a need. If communication is to be defined and understood from the very basics, it refers to the process that increases the factor of commonality between those who communicate. The word that defines "communication" in the Bharatavarshiya context and language is *Sadharanikaran*. This word is derived from *Sadharan*, a Sanskrit word. *Sanchar* also relates to communication when translated into words of Sanskrit origin (Adhikary, 2014a).

In the context of human communication, effective communication has the power to overcome various boundaries such as culture and geography. Although these factors affect message delivery, interpretation, understanding, and feedback, they can be mitigated through effective communication. In countries like India, these factors tend to impact communication more significantly due to diversity across various grounds such as language, dialect, culture, region, and religious and social practices, in addition to physical, psychological, and technological factors. Among various types and forms of communication, transpersonal communication is of utmost importance at the

individual level. It is equally important to connect and communicate with oneself and the higher self to be guided on the right path and attain moksha, which is considered one of the highest goals.

Communication has undergone various changes. The existence of technology, its advancements, and the increasing use of social media are some of the elements responsible for easing and transforming the landscape of the communication process. The growing use of the internet and social media tools for communication has also resulted in increased cross-cultural communication. Communication without feedback and confirmation is considered incomplete and ineffective. Technology has made the communication process more effective through the inclusion of quick feedback and real-time interaction on a wide scale and at a fast pace. Communication studies have reoriented different fields, including academics, and have been influenced by existing technologies over time.

Communication models and theories provide a base and framework for understanding the process and elements of communication. In this context, it is due to the efforts of various scholars and theorists from different perspectives and fields that defining and understanding communication as a term, concept, process, and element has become easier, even though it remains one of the most dynamic and complex processes. Initial credit for the study of communication from an intercultural context is given to E. T. Hall (Acharya, 2011).

Explaining Western and Eastern perspectives of communication is important to better identify key elements for meaningful communication, broader understanding, and contributions to the communication field. One of the main points to be noted among communication models and theories is their Western roots. This perspective considers

communication as an external concept with an individualistic approach and focuses on the sender as active and the receiver as passive, emphasizing the former's dominance or persuasion for communication to be considered effective. In contrast, Eastern communication works have focused on cultural identity consciousness, considering communication an internal concept involving equal exchange of emotions, understanding, and respect between both the sender and the receiver.

Western works are attributed to Aristotle for introducing a linear, one-way communication model focused on the principle of rhetoric. Western communication theories and models have originated in and dominated the communication arena. However, the concepts presented in Western works related to communication are also present in Hindu society, its practices, and the Bhartiya (Indian) Knowledge System. Among Eastern communication theories and models, Indian communication approaches are drawn from Hindu philosophies and perspectives, Indian culture, Indian texts, aesthetic traditions, and the *Sadharanikaran* concept. The *Sadharanikaran Model of Communication*, proposed by Nirmala Mani Adhikary (2003), is one such model based on Hindu communication perspectives. The communication model studied is referred to as SMC throughout this study.

SMC: Variations and Applications

The Bharatavarshiya Knowledge System is a storehouse of knowledge across all disciplines (Adhikary, 2014a). Among various literature reviews, one prominent angle is the comparative study or analysis of SMC with other communication models such as Aristotle's model, David Berlo's SMCR model, the Shannon-Weaver Mathematical Model of Communication, and James W. Carey's Ritual Model of Communication. Comparative

studies of communication theories and models are important not only for understanding communication more deeply but also for improving, progressing, and updating the communication discipline. Since communication as a concept and field has been largely developed from Western perspectives, it has continued to flow in that direction. However, it is equally important to understand it from non-Western perspectives to enable broader understanding and further contribute to the communication field.

SMC in Comparative Framework

Communication, along with its patterns and practices, varies among nations based on several factors, including socioeconomic, political, and cultural influences. Shaw (2019) conducted a comparative study between SMC and the Shannon-Weaver Model of Communication, which is considered a mathematical model, to explore differences in communication patterns with a special focus on social media and its relevance in technological communication.

Describing both models individually, the researcher noted that *doshas*, referred to as "noise" in the Shannon-Weaver Model, hamper the effectiveness of communication. A similar concept exists in Hindu poetics as *rasa-bhanga*, which refers to the disruption in receiving, decoding, and interpreting a message. The Shannon-Weaver Model is known as the Mathematical Model of Communication. Among its seven elements—sender, receiver, message, channel, etc.—*noise* is the invented element, along with *destination*, which is different from the receiver. According to this model, the receiver is not the person who ultimately receives the message, but rather the transmitter that converts the signal into a message. The destination is the actual receiver of the message.

The researcher drew comparisons based on the aim of communication, linearity, communication type, context,

and feedback. Regarding SMC, non-linearity leading to two-way communication, as well as inter- and intrapersonal communication, has been highlighted. Both the sender and receiver are taken into consideration, with a focus on their ability to mutually understand each other. The Shannon-Weaver Model focuses on communication from a mechanical context, controlled by the sender.

The researcher noted that SMC also emphasizes the importance of emotions, referred to as *bhavas*, while sending the message, and that *sandharbha* (context) becomes the foundation for initiating communication. Prior knowledge of the topic is also considered important. According to SMC, the accomplishment of *sahridayata* leads to successful and effective communication. This model emphasizes emotional involvement—elements that are absent in the Shannon-Weaver Model of Communication.

In practice, feedback becomes important to determine whether the receiver(s) has received and correctly understood the message. Interpersonal communication typically involves two people and allows for instant feedback. Referring to the relevance of the studied communication models in technological contexts—particularly in relation to social media—the researcher mentioned that interpersonal communication now occurs in real time due to technology, the internet, and various applications.

Pun (2023) conducted a comparative analysis of the SMC and SMCR models of communication, developed by Adhikary and Berlo respectively, to examine their differences and similarities by referring to the elements, structure, and scope of the studied models. Both models were described individually, wherein the researcher identified eight elements in SMC and five in SMCR. According to the study's observations, SMC has a non-linear

structure, whereas SMCR follows a linear structure. SMCR emphasizes conceptual improvement of communication skills.

In terms of structure, SMC focuses on achieving *sahridayata*, which refers to an equal and mutual exchange of understanding between the sender and the receiver. In contrast, SMCR focuses on fidelity or the accuracy of the communicated message. While SMCR is a general model applicable in various situations and fields, SMC can be considered, to some extent, a model specific to cultural contexts due to the inclusion of *sahridayata*. The latter has a comparatively broader scope than the former, as it can be applied to communication ranging from interpersonal to intrapersonal, transpersonal, and even spiritual levels.

The SMCR model considers intentional influence by the sender toward the receiver to elicit the desired response and feedback. In contrast, SMC, while recognizing asymmetry in human relationships and communication, still emphasizes shared understanding and emotional connection (*sahridayata*) between individuals.

Acharya (2011) conducted a comparative study between SMC and the Ritual Model of Communication, developed by Adhikary and Carey respectively, based on their scope, structure, communication goals, human relationships, and implications. Both models exhibit unique similarities and individual characteristics. Holistically, the two models are similar, but when examined individually, they differ in significant ways.

In the context of the structure of the studied communication models, although both models are non-linear—leading to two-way communication—only SMC has explained the complex concepts in a diagrammatic format. Both models emphasize commonness between communicating parties; however, the difference lies in the

placement of this element. While the Ritual Model places commonness at the beginning of the communication process, SMC considers it the successful outcome achieved from communication.

Regarding cultural communication, both models emphasize its inclusion, but only SMC provides an explicit explanation. On one hand, the Ritual Model focuses on the physical aspect of communication, whereas SMC addresses both physical and spiritual aspects.

In terms of communication goals, the researcher identified significant differences between the models. The Ritual Model aims to achieve and maintain equilibrium and commonness. In contrast, SMC identifies three levels of goals: at the worldly level—harmony even in asymmetrical relationships; at the mental level—*bhavas* or mutual sympathy among communicators; and at the spiritual level—the attainment of *moksha*.

All communication models and theories have originated from Aristotle's communication model. To understand the conceptual differences between SMC and Aristotle's model—particularly in terms of goals, scope, structure, and human relationships in the communication process—Adhikary (2008) conducted a comparative analysis of the two models. The models were purposefully selected to represent Eastern and Western perspectives. The researcher explored communication from Hindu perspectives and emphasized that theories from Eastern traditions are rooted in cultural identity consciousness, owing to their focus on intercultural communication. Exploration of communication from Hindu perspectives requires a broader outlook, as it is closely connected to religion and philosophy. Various sources within the Vedic Hindu tradition are available to theorize and develop models in the field of communication.

In terms of structure, Aristotle's model of communication presents a linear format wherein only the sender of the message, referred to as the speaker, is considered an active participant. In contrast, SMC offers two-way communication due to its non-linear structure. Regarding scope, the former model is well-suited for public speaking scenarios that require persuasive power over passive receivers or audiences. The latter model, however, possesses an integrated approach applicable to various contexts—from human to spiritual communication—and ranges from interpersonal to transpersonal levels. In relation to human interactions within the communication process, Aristotle's model emphasizes the persuasive power of the sender. In contrast, SMC focuses on *Sahridayata* between the sender and receiver, which leads to satisfaction and effectiveness in communication, even within asymmetrical relationships. In terms of goals, the former aims at influencing passive receivers and treats communication as a static event. The latter, however, regards communication as a dynamic process involving all elements present in any social setting, ultimately aiming for shared understanding and emotional connection, referred to as *bhāvas*, along with worldly, mental, and spiritual goals.

SMC Application in Health and Behavior

The communication tradition in the Eastern world is credited to the *Nāṭyashastra* of Bharat Muni. In every aspect of the social context where human communication takes place, *Sadharanikaran* is applicable, as it provides a base for examining and evoking emotions from the receiver(s). To empirically test the Indian communication theory for behavior change, Kapadia (2014) studied the SMC in the context of social and health behavior change by applying its concepts and constructs in a community intervention activity. The study focused on promoting handwashing after

defecation among rural women in the Maharashtra state of India.

The following elements were applied: *Sadharanikaran*—simplification, universalization, emotional response (*rasa*), and asymmetrical human relations—where children were involved to educate and inform rural women. The researcher discussed the uniqueness of the *Sadharanikaran* model in terms of placing non-cognitive elements at the center of behavior change, offering a new perspective beyond the rationality emphasized by other theories. Emotional responses play a vital role in promoting behavior change. The study also mentioned the successful application of *Sadharanikaran* in other programs, including the counseling of nurses on HIV/AIDS and the development of a strategy for health communication by the National Rural Health Mission in the Uttar Pradesh state of India.

The study mentioned the connection between *Sadharanikaran* and *Rasa* theories based on their elements. On one side, *Rasa* theory includes the elements—*bhavas* (emotions), *rasa* (mood), *sadharanikaran*, and *sahridayata* (mutual rapport and compassion). *Sadharanikaran* is based on simplification, universalization, asymmetry in relationships, arousal of emotions (*rasa utpatti*), and mutual compassion among the people who communicate.

Khadka (2024) studied the application of SMC in health communication. The author mentioned that this field often struggles to engage diverse populations due to cultural differences and varying levels of health literacy. In such cases, the *sahridayata* element of SMC plays a practical role, as it presents a viable and culturally attuned framework for improving communication in health settings. Through the simplification of complex medical information and its alignment with the cultural values and experiences of

patients, health practitioners can foster more meaningful interactions that promote adherence to health recommendations. Promoting patient-centeredness and community engagement can lead to enhanced health literacy, better patient satisfaction, and improved public health outcomes.

SMC and Spatial-Temporal Communication

Adhikary (2015) studied space and time from the perspective of Hindu philosophy. The author described Hinduism as a vast and complex yet precise and unified entity. It considers three dimensions of life and four goals as interconnected: life in physical, mental, and spiritual dimensions, and the four goals of *dharma* (righteousness), *artha* (material prosperity), *kama* (desire), and *moksa* (liberation). The concepts of time and space were related to communication, as both elements affect the content and context of any communication. The study mentions that, according to Hinduism, the concepts of time and space are cyclical, which leads to non-linear communication. Efforts in communication studies must include existing knowledge systems like Hinduism, along with an understanding of these concepts from different cultural perspectives.

SMC and Cultural Communication

Bharadwaj and Singh (2024) studied the application of the *sahridayata* element of the Sadharanikaran communication model by referring to Hanumanji—a Hindu god. Respect and empathy lead to trust and understanding between communicating parties. Hanuman has been regarded as an exemplary messenger and communicator. The studied interaction of Hanumanji with Lord Rama and Sita showcases his ability to transcend hierarchical boundaries and foster trust, highlighting the qualities of clarity, respect, and empathy within his dialogues. These interactions exemplify the essence of *sahridayata*,

emphasizing its role in effective communication. The study stresses the relevance of *sahridayata* in fostering inclusive dialogues in contemporary multicultural contexts.

Culture plays a crucial role in maintaining community cohesion and identity. In this context, Shakya (2024) explored the intricacies of Mataya—a Buddhist festival—as a communication medium. The study applied the Sadharanikaran communication model and its elements, along with the sign and signifier concepts of Ferdinand de Saussure. It noted that the festival exemplified the power of cultural events as communicative practices that reinforce social bonds and shared values. Recognizing and revitalizing traditional festivals is important, as they are vital components of cultural communication, which is essential for fostering social harmony in a diverse and evolving cultural landscape.

Das (2024) contextualized the communication of Gandhiji by referring to selected publications from *Young India*, highlighting the application of the Sadharanikaran communication model (SMC). The strategies employed by Gandhiji in communicating with the masses were deeply embedded in the cultural and moral values of Indian society. Incorporating cultural references and nuances, respecting diverse perspectives, fostering participative dialogue, and encouraging reciprocal engagement with the public were identified as fundamental aspects of Gandhiji's communication strategy. The findings suggest that Gandhiji's communication methods resonate well with contemporary communication challenges. By embracing his ethos of understanding and empathy, communicators can work toward establishing more inclusive and effective dialogues in an increasingly diverse society where cultural sensitivity and emotional intelligence are paramount. Das concluded that Gandhi's methods serve as a timeless

reminder of the importance of mutual respect, cultural sensitivity, and emotional resonance in effective communication.

SMC and Indigenous Knowledge System

The Indian Knowledge System (IKS) is defined through various elements—philosophies, *vidya* (knowledge), *kala* (arts), epics, festivals, traditions, culture, language, dialect, cuisine, and more. In essence, it encompasses all those components that foster a sense of connection with one's rooted self and the knowledge system originating in India. These elements hold significance in nurturing community identity, social values, and the continuity of knowledge across generations in contemporary society. The reviewed studies, along with the Sadharanikaran model of communication, reflect and incorporate various aspects of the Indian Knowledge System by integrating traditional philosophies, cultural practices, and communication theories. The application of IKS principles in contemporary communication scenarios holds great importance in facilitating cross-cultural communication while upholding the Indian values of respect and empathy.

Conclusion

Ancient sanskrit literature has approached communication as a holistic rather than an isolated concept. The discipline of communication continues to evolve by broadening its scope to include non-Western perspectives. Exploring and describing both Western and Eastern perspectives of communication is essential to derive insights for meaningful dialogue, enhanced understanding, and the enrichment of the communication field. Comparative studies of communication theories and models are crucial not only for comprehension but also for the advancement and refinement of the discipline.

In the context of this study, it is equally important to examine the Sadharanikaran Model of Communication (SMC) from multiple dimensions, including its application across various fields and contexts. Aristotle is often regarded as the father of communication, while the Shannon-Weaver model is considered the mother of all communication models. In this framework, the SMC may be regarded as the evergreen model of communication due to its emphasis on the inclusion of non-cognitive elements, which are of critical importance when communication is viewed in practical terms. As society evolves through technological advancements, the principles of the Indian Knowledge System (IKS) ensure that communication remains grounded, offering guidance for navigating contemporary complexities while honoring traditional values.

[Kajal Verma is a Research Fellow at the Department of Communication and Media Technology, J.C. Bose University of Science & Technology, YMCA, Faridabad, Haryana, India.

Dr. Pawan Singh Malik is an Associate Professor at the Department of Communication and Media Technology, J.C. Bose University of Science & Technology, YMCA, Faridabad, Haryana, India.]

References

- Acharya, A. (2011). *The Sadharanikaran model and ritual model of communication: A comparative study*.
https://www.academia.edu/6979536/THE_SMC_AND_RITUAL_MODEL_A_COMPARATIVE_STUDY_1_THE_SADHARANIKARAN_MODEL_AND_RITUAL_MODEL_OF_COMMUNICATION_A_COMPARATIVE_STUDY

- Adhikary, N. M. (2008). The Sadharanikaran model and Aristotle's model of communication: A comparative study. *Bodhi: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 2(1), 268–289. <https://doi.org/10.3126/bodhi.v2i1.2877>
- Adhikary, N. M. (2014a). *Theory and practice of communication: Bharata Muni* (1st ed.). Makhanlal Chaturvedi National University of Journalism and Communication.
- Adhikary, N. M. (2014b). Mahatma Gandhi and the Sadharanikaran model of communication. *The Journal of University Grants Commission*, 3(1). https://www.researchgate.net/publication/371275740_Mahatma_Gandhi_and_the_Sadharanikaran_Model_of_Communication
- Adhikary, N. M. (2015). Space and time in Hinduism: Implication for the model of communication Sadharanikaran. *Media Mimansa*. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/370861514_SPACE_AND_TIME_IN_HINDUISM_IMPLICATION_FOR_THE_MODEL_OF_COMMUNICATION_SADHARANIKARAN
- Bharadwaj, M., & Singh, P. (2024). Exploring Lord Hanuman's communication in Tulsi's *Ramcharitmanas* through the lens of *Sahridayata*. *Bodhi*, 10(2), 143–150. <https://kusoa.edu.np/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/bodhi-10-no-2-2024.pdf>
- Das, S. (2024). Understanding M. K. Gandhi's strategies of communication through the lens of the Sadharanikaran model of communication: A study of *Young India*. *Bodhi*, 10(2), 45–60. <https://kusoa.edu.np/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/bodhi-10-no-2-2024.pdf>
- Kapadia, N. (2014). *Sadharanikaran: A theory for social & health behavior change*.

- <https://www.mhinnovation.net/sites/default/files/content/document/Sadharanikaran%20March%202015.pdf>
- Khadka, U. (2024). Exploring the Sadharanikaran model of communication from a health communication perspective. *Bodhi*, 10(2), 79–90.
<https://kusoa.edu.np/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/bodhi-10-no-2-2024.pdf>
- Kumar, K. J. (2010). *Mass communication in India* (4th ed.). Jaico Publishing House.
- Pun, S. J. (2023). The Sadharanikaran model and Berlo's model of communication: A comparative analysis. *Jugjali*. <https://jugjali.wordpress.com/2023/07/31/the-sadharanikaran-model-and-berlos-model-of-communication-a-comparative-analysis/>
- Shakya, S. (2024). Study of Mataya festival from communication perspective. *Bodhi*, 10(2), 91–111.
<https://kusoa.edu.np/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/bodhi-10-no-2-2024.pdf>
- Shaw, P. (2019). Sadharanikaran model vs mathematical model: Analyzing their relevance in context of social media. *Bodhi*, 7, 105–126. <https://doi.org/10.3126/bodhi.v7i0.27906>
- Shrestha, N. (2017). Sadharanikaran model of communication and Shannon and Weaver's model of communication: A comparative analysis.
<https://nehakubms.wordpress.com/2017/06/24/sadharanikaran-model-of-Communication-and-shanon-and-weavers-model-of-communication-a-comparative-analysis/>

Whole School Approach for School Improvement

Dhundi Raj Giri, Bharat Prasad Neupane, Ph.D., &
Dhanapati Subedi, Ph.D

Abstract

The Whole School Approach (hereafter WSA) has emerged as one of the effective approaches for the holistic improvement of schools, creating a secure and meaningful learning environment through effective leadership, policy guidelines, continuous professional development, and improving teaching and learning involving all the stakeholders. This thematic review explores and presents an in-depth understanding of the WSA as a holistic and sustainable approach for school improvement. We reviewed articles and policy documents on WSA downloaded from databases and publishers like Scopus, Sage Publications, Routledge, Taylor and Francis, and other influential journals relating to school improvement. Likewise, dissertations from university databases and reports from well-acclaimed organizations in education and leadership were reviewed to explore the deeper layers of WSA and its implementation in whole-school improvement. The research emerged with five major themes relating to whole school improvement: school improvement framework, current trends in education, WSA and its core dimensions, implementation of WSA, benefits, and challenges. This research implies that policymakers, practitioners, and teacher educators focus on the multiple aspects of WSA, including teaching and learning, effective leadership, continuous professional development, community involvement, school-based policy guidelines,

creating a positive school culture, monitoring and evaluation, and reflection on the improvement for overall school transformation.

Keywords: whole school approach, school improvement framework, continuous professional development, community involvement, leadership, school culture

Introduction

During the uncertain, unpredictable, complex, and constantly changing times of the 21st century—complexity, globalization, and rapidly increasing knowledge economy—the urgent call for school improvement has been inevitable. Mogren et al. (2019) claim that traditional pedagogical practices cannot foster awareness of the complexities and uncertainty of the surrounding world. Despite the several educational plans and policies executed by the Government of Nepal, placing high priority on educational transformation (Singh & Allison, 2016), the anticipated results have not been so satisfactory. According to the ERO norm and standard, the status of community schools is that only 0.2 percent of schools fall into outstanding schools (ERO, 2020, p. 53), except for some outstanding ones. Therefore, it is urgent to establish high-performing schools to enable learners to address the growing complexity and ever-changing challenges. Generally, school improvement (hereafter SI) refers to a systematic way of making change and development within the school to enhance student achievement through focusing on the teaching and learning process and conditions that support this process (Kalman, 2020). Likewise, Hopkins (2001) defines SI as “a distinct approach to educational change that aims to enhance student outcomes as well as strengthening the school’s capacity for managing change” (p. 13). In the words of Koh et al. (2023), school improvement means “fostering students’ academic,

social, and emotional growth in keeping [with] ever-changing societal needs” (p. 298), and to achieve this, school needs to engage its stakeholders and work on multi-dimensions, such [as] teacher professional development, resource development, community involvement, etc. Therefore, SI is a systematic, ongoing process and collaborative effort to make the school leaders and teachers more capable of achieving the school's national and local objectives (Bjorkman, 2008).

Various educational programs and activities are instrumental for school improvement, including shared vision, effective leadership, teacher professional development, pedagogical innovation, and students' well-being. In addition, engaging the learners in various meaningful activities, resource management, promoting a positive school culture, and community involvement are also essential. Likewise, leadership practice, availability of resources, stakeholders' participation, and pedagogical practices are other school components that determine the success or failure of the school improvement initiatives (Barber & Mourshed, 2016). The above discussion implies that school improvement initiatives require joint efforts of all stakeholders and focus on the multiple aspects of school life as a framework for whole system redesign, which is associated with sustainable school improvement through holistic, systematic, and reflexive efforts that are collectively introduced by all stakeholders (Tulbury & Galvin, 2022).

However, several efforts in the past show that the central aim of the school improvement program is distracted while focusing on single or partial aspects of the school (Jamtsho, 2015). In such a context, the whole school approach can be one of the practical approaches for holistic and sustainable school improvement. Besides, to meet the

21st-century uncertainty and complexities, today's learners need to be equipped with a broad set of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values, e.g., collaboration, critical thinking, communication, research and technology, problem-solving, creative thinking, leadership and management, learning to learn and self-regulations, developing social and emotional skills, rather than just knowledge acquisition (OECD, 2018). Therefore, the primary concern of most education institutions today is how effective their education system is in preparing learners and making them competitive in the advanced job market and advanced studies. As there is a close connection between education and economic production, it has grasped the attention of policymakers worldwide (Smith III & Sandvik, 2015). As a result, most competitive educational institutions focus on learners' readiness for the competitive job markets and entering into the best universities in the world for advanced studies.

Therefore, it is necessary to intervene in schools for the whole school transformation, shifting from conventional teaching-learning practices to digitalized individualized learning to address the current trends in education. Moreover, the formation of learning circles for the continuous professional development of all stakeholders and the promotion of a broad set of knowledge and entrepreneurship skills in learners is necessary to prepare the learners for the 21st-century competitive job market and higher education. However, the reality is different.

With the aspiration of improving the quality of education and grasping the pace of recent trends in education, the Government of Nepal has made and implemented several plans and policies: Basic Primary Education Master Plan (BPEMP) (1997–2002), School Sector Reform Plan (SSRP) (2009–2015), and the School Sector Development Plan (SSDP) (2016/17–2022/23).

However, the students' outcomes, especially in the Secondary Education Examination (SEE) and Basic Education Exam (BEE), show that the anticipated result is not so satisfactory. A school improvement plan requires a variety of activities. Several past efforts show that the school improvement program's central aim is distracted while focusing on single or partial aspects of the school (Jamtsho, 2015). Therefore, it is essential to focus on the whole school approach in school improvement projects and involve all stakeholders—school leaders, teachers, parents, students, and community members—for its sustainability. It is because providing a certain level of responsibility to the stakeholders makes them feel valued and respected, which increases the level of motivation in the workplace (Sauer, 2011).

Despite all these efforts from the government, several studies also show that students' academic performance is below a satisfactory level (Chapagain, 2021), which depends on the existing teaching-learning practices in the country. The GoN (2010), in the *National Framework of Child-Friendly School for Quality Education* (2010), reports that "most of the schools in Nepal are still being run traditionally with teacher-centered, textbook-based, chalk-and-talk method of rote learning. The whole school environment is focused on encouraging children to get text by heart" (p. 7). It indicates that teaching-learning practices are still limited to rote memorization of the contents of the textbooks in the name of preparing for exams and scoring higher grades, which do not ensure developing necessary life skills that are also known as soft skills or 21st-century skills as expected by the curriculum.

Similarly, the School Sector Reform Plan (SSRP; 2009–2016) has focused on three pillars of access, inclusion, and quality by promoting a child-friendly school

environment. However, the reality is different, which can be realized in the government report on the SSDP (2016/17–2022/23). Despite some exceptions, it reports that most schools still follow traditional methods of rote learning and regurgitation. It further reports that instructional materials provided by the center are the only sources for learning, whereas teaching materials made locally available are hardly used in the classroom. As a result, the Nepalese education system is blamed for adopting conventional pedagogies that are ritualistic, preparing for exams rather than life, and producing educated jobless youths. The report mentioned above clearly implies that educational policies and plans brought into practice to transform the poor quality of education are not adequately materialized.

As a result, the current scenario of educational practices and students' learning achievements raises several questions: Is there a problem with the practices of academic policies and plans? Or is there a problem in leadership practices? Or did the concerned authorities fail to participate with other stakeholders? Or did leadership practices fail to build the commitment and capacity of the different school personnel? Or is it due to the school's lack of management and allocation of adequate resources? We believe all these questions need to be answered, and corrective measures need to be taken as soon as possible to ensure academic improvement and better career opportunities for millions of students by promoting high-quality education in Nepal. However, the question arises regarding how to improve the school or the practical framework for school improvement.

Method

In this thematic paper, we critically reviewed articles, reports, books, and policy documents, focusing on the whole school approach for school improvement and synthesized the central tenets to draw themes. We collected

articles by using keywords and phrases such as “whole school approach and its key dimensions,” “school improvement,” “teaching-learning practices,” “teacher professional development,” “positive school culture,” “policy guidelines,” and “stakeholders’ involvement.” We searched articles and educational reports, including articles, books, policy documents, dissertations, and reports published by well-acclaimed publishers, universities, and organizations. We also explored books and journal articles from databases such as Scopus, Sage Publications, Routledge, Taylor and Francis, and other influential journals relating to school improvement. Likewise, dissertations and reports from different universities’ databases and reports from well-acclaimed organizations in the field of education and leadership were also reviewed. We downloaded articles, dissertations, books, and reports, of which only thematically relevant articles and theses were included for thematic review. Altogether, we reviewed fifty documents, including twenty-six journal articles, twelve reports, six dissertations, four books, and two policy documents. First, we read through those materials, highlighted important lines and paragraphs, and annotated articles. Then, we conducted the thematic synthesis of the findings.

School Improvement Framework

It is the widely accepted idea that every school is unique in terms of its context, administrative structure, vision and mission, level of resources available, school culture, etc., which determine the success or failure of the school improvement activities in the particular school. Regarding the school improvement framework, Hopkins (2001) mentions some parameters comprising leadership, teacher professional development, curriculum, learning environment, vision–mission, resource management, school culture and climate, student engagement, and high standards

expectations. Similarly, Lee and Louis (2019), Newman (2020), and Prenger et al. (2021) highlight the five key factors for school improvement: effective leadership, cultivating learning culture, teacher professional development, learning environment, and vision and mission of the school. The School Sector Development Plan (herein, SSDP) (2016/17–2022/23) also highlights seven cross-cutting themes that include teacher management and professional development, school governance and management, institutional capacity development, disaster risk reduction and school safety, monitoring, evaluation and assessment, examination and accreditation, and application of ICT in education for holistic development of the schools for improving the quality of education (MoE, 2016).

The above discussion implies that a school improvement project is an ongoing and complex process. It demands a collaborative effort of all the stakeholders to improve all aspects in a parallel way by developing the school as a learning organization. From the above discussion, school improvement discourse revolves around creating a shared vision, effective school leadership, continuous teacher professional development, promoting positive school culture, conducting need analysis, designing and implementing improvement strategy, monitoring and evaluation, and reflecting on the improvement process.

A shared vision is regarded as one of the integral components of school improvement efforts and the change process that unites the whole school community by providing a common picture of the future (Tikka & Tarnanen, 2024). School vision is normally based on the philosophy or principle on which the school was established that guides school improvement initiatives. Without a well-crafted and compelling shared vision based on the philosophy of the principal on which the school was

founded, school improvement efforts can easily create confusion and dissolve the programs and activities (Tran, 2021). Therefore, the whole school community needs to be engaged in crafting a compelling shared vision that can communicate through different channels, empower all the stakeholders, appeal to them to contribute, and remove the obstacles (Kotter, 2011).

Research shows that school leadership, as one of the key agents in the school improvement process, has become a priority in school education that plays a vital role in holistic school improvement, such as improving students' academic performance, motivating and empowering stakeholders, as well as creating a learning environment in the school (Pont et al., 2008). So, effective school leadership has long been recognized as crucial to any school improvement process. Effective leaders create and sustain conditions for quality education and drive and lead their schools through cultural change. For successful school improvement, challenging their status quo, as Kirtman and Fullan (2016) argue that influential leaders have a high sense of urgency for improvement, have a commitment to continuous improvement, focus on team over self, build trust through communication and empowerment, set high expectations for change, develop ownership of the plans for success, and build external networks and partnership for holistic school improvement.

“The quality of education cannot be higher than the quality of teachers” (Bautista & Ortega-Ruiz, 2015, p. 242). Therefore, there is a common understanding among policymakers, scholars, and educators that enhancing teacher professional development (TPD) is a cornerstone to achieving the goals of school improvement (Desimone et al., 2002). As a result, it is found that several countries around the globe are investing in the continuous learning of their

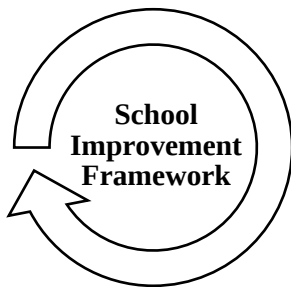
teachers as a significant engine for the improvement of both teacher competency and student academic success. Therefore, it is necessary to create the conditions for continuous TPD and motivate and empower the entire team of teachers for their life-long learning, which is one of the fundamental requirements of the school improvement process (Niemi, 2015).

It is popularly said that real motivation for improvement comes not from outside but ‘within’ the school culture, which comprises deep patterns of values, beliefs, traditions, and norms built over time (Matti et al., 2023). Culture at large refers to social and power relationships and emotions, vision and mission statements, open communication, trust, collegial relationships, orientation towards learning, sentiment, and sense of belonging (Schein, 2010). Hinde (2004) compares the importance of hydrogen in water with the school's culture. He argues that as hydrogen is a major ingredient of water, so is the culture in the school, which plays a significant role in shaping the school. Various studies show that healthy and positive school culture is correlated strongly with increased student achievement and motivation (Stolp, 1994), which promotes productivity, improves collegial relationships, building commitment by focusing attention on what is essential and valuable for school (Jerald, 2006). Therefore, it is crucial to cultivate a child-friendly, home-like, welcoming, and conducive learning culture in the school.

Identifying the areas of improvement is essential to clearly understand where the school is regarding students’ achievement, pedagogical practices, availability of resources, effectiveness of leadership, community involvement, etc. Once the baseline areas of improvement are identified, it is also important to set priorities, realistic expectations, and realistic timelines (Tran, 2021) for the

improvement. In addition, it is also important to consult, evaluate, and share the improvement plans with all stakeholders for successful implementation (Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation [CESE], 2014).

Similarly, based on the data analyzed, it is also necessary to design and implement improvement strategies involving all stakeholders and break (if needed) the priorities into more specific and achievable goals for successful school improvement (Tran, 2021). For successful school improvement, Tran (2021) further suggests monitoring and evaluating the improvement efforts regularly and reflecting on the improvement strategies to identify the challenge that occurred, the impact of the improvement process, and the lessons learned.



- Developing a Shared Vision
- Effective Leadership
- Teacher Professional Development
- Promoting Positive School Culture
- Conducting Need Analysis
- Design and Implement Improvement Strategies
- Monitoring & Evaluation
- Reflection on Improvement Strategies

From the above discussion, it can be understood that school comprises multiple aspects, and the school improvement process is a long-term, non-linear, multilayered, and multidimensional process. Therefore, it is necessary to focus on a holistic approach rather than focus on the partial component for successful school improvement.

Whole School Approach: Core Dimensions

As the whole school approach infers the active and collaborative participation and commitment of all stakeholders, the joint efforts of each member of the school

community—e.g., school leaders, teachers, parents, students, and the local community—are essential in school improvement (Gaillard et al., 2018). There is no uniformity regarding the core dimensions of the whole school approach (WSA). Based on the Council of Europe (2018), it includes teaching and learning, leadership and management, continuous professional development, positive school culture, community involvement, monitoring and evaluation, and policy guidelines as its core dimensions.

Teaching and learning comprise all curricular and extracurricular activities to ensure that each learner gets equal opportunities to cultivate knowledge, skills, and a positive attitude through formal teaching and learning practices. The primary concern of WSA is to promote students' learning (Gericke & Torbjörnsson, 2022) and equip them with broader knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values that are attained through WSI in a private school in Nepal. Therefore, following the democratic principle and human rights, students' learning is ensured by creating opportunities for learners to participate in their learning—for example, through peer assessment, student-centered learning (Gaillard et al., 2020), forming different group work, promoting student-teacher collaboration as co-learners, and giving equal access to the teaching. It ensures that the classroom is a safe space where learners feel comfortable expressing their views openly by creating an open, participative, and respectful classroom environment that allows all the learners to share their experiences, opinions, and emotions (Council of Europe, 2018).

Under leadership and management, school leaders need to demonstrate themselves as visionary role models who can encourage the participation of all stakeholders; respect human rights, democratic principles, equal treatment, participatory decision-making, and responsible

accountability (Gaillard et al., 2020); to promote community involvement in school improvement activities. Moreover, leadership plays a vital role in encouraging all stakeholders to participate in the review of the whole school environment and its capacity to promote democratic extracurricular activities and school governance through multiple means—e.g., observations, surveys, feedback from multiple stakeholders, and review meetings (Gaillard et al., 2020). Regarding the participation of multi-stakeholders in the school improvement initiative, Cilliers (2002) argues that recursive interactions between the multiple layers of systems improve it. Therefore, organizational/leadership power needs to be distributed among other stakeholders, shifting from single-authoritative to distributed, multiple leadership practices, as there is distributed (network) control rather than centralized, hierarchical control (Keshavarz et al., 2010). Each school community member is considered an essential contributor to overall school improvement. The purpose of education is not merely to deliver subject matter but to prepare learners for their future professional careers as 21st-century citizens who are expected to be active, self-directed, confident, and concerned learners—responsible and cognitively, socially, emotionally, and technically competent (Bautista & Ortega-Ruiz, 2015). This is not achievable through conventional, teacher-centered methods based on rote memorization of content. Since “the quality of education cannot be higher than the quality of teachers” (Bautista & Ortega-Ruiz, 2015, p. 242), there is a common understanding among policymakers, scholars, and educators that enhancing teacher professional development (TPD) is a cornerstone for achieving the goals of school improvement (Desimone et al., 2002). Therefore, continuous teacher professional development is essential, supported through

various training programs and workshops to meet educational goals.

Moreover, in accordance with democratic principles and human rights, school-based policies, values, beliefs, rules, and regulations should be formulated based on the school's needs to create a safe and inclusive learning environment. It is necessary to foster a non-toxic and welcoming school atmosphere where all staff maintain harmonious and cooperative relationships (Gaillard et al., 2020). Everyone should feel like a valued member of the organization. All stakeholders must be encouraged to work collaboratively in building a positive school culture that promotes equity, democracy, and inclusion—regardless of individual differences.

The sustainability of school improvement initiatives is essential and entails the involvement of the broader community (Filho & Brandli, 2016). Therefore, schools need to collaborate with a wide range of stakeholders, such as individuals, organizations, businesses, NGOs, and local authorities, to promote students' social, emotional, physical, and intellectual development (Strickland, 2016). For the sustainable development of the organization, partnerships with local agents—such as social or volunteer organizations, youth clubs, entrepreneurial groups, corporate entities, media, health professionals, and higher education institutions—are encouraged to support and sustain the school (Gaillard et al., 2020). Sustainability should thus be considered an ongoing process of seeking new and improved solutions rather than a fixed notion of predefined outcomes. The involvement and active participation of multiple stakeholders—including school leaders, teaching and non-teaching staff, students, parents, community members, and local agencies—significantly contribute to the long-term success and sustainability of school improvement efforts

(Nicdao & Ancho, 2019). Therefore, stakeholder involvement is a critical dimension of the Whole School Approach (WSA), as it strengthens mutual relationships and generates reciprocal benefits.

A democratic and positive school culture—where every individual feels part of the organization, their human rights are respected, and they have a meaningful role—is one of the core dimensions of the WSA (Gaillard et al., 2020). Gaillard et al. further explain that the WSA supports the introduction of operational rules within schools that ensure equal treatment and access for all stakeholders, regardless of ethnicity, cultural identity, lifestyle, or ideology. Matti et al. (2023) argue that genuine motivation for improvement originates not from external forces but from within the school culture itself, which consists of deep-seated values, beliefs, traditions, and norms developed over the course of a year-long school improvement initiative. Therefore, the inclusive participation of school administration, teachers, students, parents, and other stakeholders is essential in fostering collaborative decision-making and formulating context-specific school policy guidelines. Furthermore, in encouraging multi-stakeholder engagement, the WSA promotes youth participation in dialogues on issues that affect their lives, supporting critical reflection and fostering transformative learning and empowerment (Leite et al., 2024).

Preparing and implementing school improvement plans and policies alone is not sufficient; regular monitoring and evaluation are also necessary to ensure that tasks are completed on schedule and that challenges arising during implementation are promptly addressed.

Implementing the Whole School Approach

From the above discussion, we came to understand that WSA is a practical approach to whole school

improvement that emphasizes the democratic participation of all school communities as well as broader community members in the overall aspects of school life. The notion of community involvement in the education of young children is rooted in the distant past. As schools are perceived as active change agents for community development (Annual Report of the Director of Public Health, 2020), the role of the community is taken as a vital pillar in shaping, directing, empowering, and strengthening the educational activities of schools.

So, while implementing WSA, various strategies need to be applied to involve the whole school community (Hargreaves, 2008) for sustainable school improvement, where everyone feels respected and valued. Likewise, fostering a shared vision, mutual trust, and participatory leadership is essential for school–community partnership, which motivates all the stakeholders in their collective and valuable contribution to school improvement. In this regard, Minniss and Stewart (2009) state that sharing robust and positive communication, working together, building trust and support for families, and respecting their values contribute to promoting a sense of connectedness between staff and families in the school environment. Therefore, making them feel valued, respected, and recognized for their support is necessary.

Community participation is improved when their voices are heard and their support is praised. The Annual Report of the Director of Public Health (2020) reports that stakeholders' involvement develops a sense of ownership among the students, school staff, and parents. As a result, the quality of education is improved by promoting schools to create better teaching and learning processes and enhancing learning outcomes.

According to Gaillard et al. (2020), WSA is guided by five essential principles when implementing WSA. These principles include respecting the local context, empowering stakeholders to develop solutions to challenges, encouraging the participation of all stakeholders, integrating capacity building, and supporting long-term local projects. It indicates that the execution of any new ideas or pedagogical practices and the creation of school-based policy guidelines depend on the school's local context.

Moreover, it is also significant to empower the whole school community, equip them with the required resources, and enable them to participate in the collective decision-making process for school improvement, following democratic participation to create a safe and supportive learning environment for the school's sustainability (Dudu, 2019).

To make it possible, a multi-dynamic, visionary, transformative school leader is required—one who can involve all the concerned stakeholders in decision-making and policy formation and enable them to take ownership of creating a safe learning environment in the school for its sustainability.

Moreover, Gaillard et al. (2020) suggest five stages for successfully applying WSA. These stages include conducting a situation analysis, which is also known as a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Challenges (SWOC) analysis, to identify the possible areas of change in terms of school context, availability of resources (human, physical, financial, and informational), effectiveness of leadership, stakeholders' participation, school culture, and the school philosophy and ethos on which the school is founded, and to develop an action plan.

The next steps include executing the action plan involving stakeholders, evaluating progress, assessing the

work's impact, and sharing outcomes with the concerned school community for school improvement initiatives to create a positive learning environment for sustainability.

Opportunities Vs. Challenges

As two sides of the coin, the Whole School Approach (WSA) bears opportunities and challenges in implementing it in the natural context. Various literature shows that WSA is a practical approach to the holistic and sustainable improvement of the school, as it incorporates all dimensions of the school beyond teaching and learning, putting the learners at the center (Haber, 2020). As all the stakeholders share their partnership for school improvement, it promotes their democratic participation—from decision-making to policy development, implementation, and the sharing of outcomes. Haber (2020) further reports that school programs that are integrated and inclusive, in comparison to just informative and class-based programs, are likely to promote better learning and health outcomes. In other words, WSA intends to build a complete school through its holistic improvement—making it more inclusive, improving its physical facilities, empowering stakeholders through continuous professional development, and formulating required school-based policies with democratic participation. In this context, Leite et al. (2024) suggest that the WSA entails the collaboration of various elements and stakeholders within the school system to achieve shared objectives. These include improving student outcomes, establishing a safe and inclusive learning atmosphere, nurturing positive relationships, supporting teacher well-being, and actively involving both students and the community in the educational journey.

Gaillard et al. (2018) highlight the benefits of implementing WSA at the individual, school/classroom, and community levels. At an individual level, WSA helps

increase empathy, improve cooperation among students and teachers, and develop a stronger sense of responsibility, civic-mindedness, and mutual respect. At the school level, teachers feel more confident about applying democratic citizenship and human rights education, using interactive instructional methodology, creating a positive learning environment based on openness and trust, and improving collaboration among students, teachers, administrative staff, parents, and community members. Similarly, at the community level, it helps promote partnerships with various local agents like NGOs, local authorities, corporate and media houses, and youth clubs to provide expert support required for the whole school's improvement. Thus, WSA can provide an experience of how democracy works in practice (Gaillard et al., 2020).

However, some studies also reveal several obstacles and complexities to successfully implementing WSA (Jamstho, 2015). This approach demands active and democratic engagement and the obligation of all stakeholders to manage extra time and resources (Haber, 2020), which are serious matters to address for the effective execution of the WSA. However, having a “sarkari kaam, kahile jala gham” (“Government job is like a pastime.”) kind of job mentality among school personnel, the lack of transparency and accountability of stakeholders, and political interference in schools in Nepal—besides some exceptional cases—make it difficult to find dedicated school leaders and teachers in Nepalese schools. Similarly, finding multi-dynamic professional leaders who can create a farsighted shared vision, motivate all the stakeholders, and engage them in the collective effort for school improvement is a serious challenge for leading such a school.

Similarly, in the words of Khan et al. (2011), a lack of professional knowledge and training for empowering

learners in applying interventions, focusing on creating a positive school culture, and promoting community participation can be regarded as distractors for teachers, primarily when they work under pressure to meet the expected educational standards. Further, it requires increased partnerships among school leaders, teachers, students, parents, and the broader community, which demand additional resources, time, and energy to implement the WSA successfully—something very difficult in the Nepalese context. Therefore, the lack of available resources and synergy among school stakeholders can be another problem in the successful execution of WSA.

Conclusion

The spectrum of pedagogical practices has extensively changed due to the growing use of digital technology in education, which significantly impacts educational practices in 21st-century classrooms, making it possible for learners to access lots of information for their learning. The school improvement process is a systematic, ongoing, complex, multidimensional, and multilayered process, which demands a collaborative effort from all the stakeholders to improve all aspects in a parallel way by developing the school as a learning organization. It is necessary to focus on multiple aspects of school life because the central aim of the school improvement program is distracted when focusing on single or partial aspects of the school. In such a context, WSA can be one of the practical approaches for holistic and sustainable school improvement, involving all the members of the school community, like school staff, parents and caregivers, learners, and the broader community that is building and refining a thriving, positive culture so they can feel a sense of belonging. WSA ensures overall aspects of school life, e.g., curricula, instructional methods and resources, leadership and

decision-making processes, policy guidelines, behavior and relationships of the stakeholders, extracurricular activities, and links with the community.

WSA intends to build a complete school through holistic improvement, making it more inclusive, improving its physical facilities, empowering school staff (teaching and non-teaching) through continuous professional development, and formulating required school-based policies with democratic participation. In other words, the school is designed and standardized according to the needs of the learners regarding their particular context, with the collective endeavor of the whole school community. There are several benefits to implementing WSA at individual, school, and community levels that can provide an authentic experience of democratic culture to the whole school community in the workplace.

As WSA is guided by five essential principles that include respecting local context, empowering stakeholders to develop solutions to challenges, encouraging the participation of all stakeholders, integrating capacity building, and supporting long-term local projects, it is essential to focus on these principles when implementing WSA in school improvement initiatives. In addition, it is also crucial to follow the five stages: conducting a situation analysis or SWOC analysis to identify the possible areas of change, executing the action plan involving stakeholders, evaluating progress, assessing the work's impact, and sharing outcomes with the concerned school community to create a positive learning environment for sustainability while implementing WSA in the school improvement project.

However, there may be several obstacles and complexities to successfully implementing WSA. This approach demands active and democratic engagement and

the obligation of all stakeholders to manage extra time and resources, which are serious matters to address for the effective execution of the WSA. Similarly, finding multi-dynamic professional leaders who can create a farsighted, compelling shared vision, motivate all the stakeholders, and engage them in the collective effort for school improvement is a serious challenge for leading such a school.

Additionally, a lack of professional knowledge and training for empowering all stakeholders and creating a positive school culture, promoting community participation, a lack of collaboration among the whole school community, and a lack of adequate time, resources, and synergy among the stakeholders can be other possible challenges in the successful implementation of WSA.

[Dhundi Raj Giri is a Ph.D. Scholar at Kathmandu University School of Education (KUSOED).

Dr. Bharat Prasad Neupane is an Assistant Professor at Kathmandu University School of Education (KUSOED).

Dr. Dhanapati Subedi is a Professor at Kathmandu University School of Education (KUSOED).]

References

Annual Report of the Director of Public Health (2020).

Whole-school and community approaches to health and wellbeing in Richmond upon Thames:

Celebrating and building on success. *Annual Public Health Report /Richmond on Thames*.

Barber, M. & Mourshed, M. (2016). *How the world's best-performing school systems come out on top*.

Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

Bautista, A., & Ortega-Ruiz, R. (2015). Teacher professional development: International perspectives and approaches. *Psychology, Society and Education*,

- 7(3), 240-251.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.25115/psye.v7i3.1020>
- Björkman, C. (2008). *Internal capacities for school improvement: principals' views in Swedish secondary schools* (Doctoral dissertation), Umea University.
- Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation. (CESE). (2014). *School improvement frameworks: The evidence base*. Sydney: NSW Department of Education and Communities.
- Chapagain, Y. (2021). School student academic performance in Nepal: An analysis using the School Education Exam (SEE) results. *International Journal on Studies in Education*, 3(1), 22-36.
<https://doi.org/10.46328/ijonse.34>
- Cilliers, P. (2020). *Complexity and postmodernism: Understanding complex systems*; Routledge: London, UK.
- Council of Europe (2020). The reference framework of competences for democratic culture in brief.
- Desimone, L. M., Porter, A. C., Garet, M. S., Yoon, K. S., & Birman, B. F. (2002). Effects of professional development on teachers' instruction: Results from a three-year longitudinal study. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 24(2), 81-112.
- Dudu, A. (2019). A whole school approach in implementing inclusive education in one province in Zimbabwe: A case study. [Doctoral dissertation] North-West University.
- Filho, W. L. & Brandli, L. (2016). *Engaging Stakeholders in Education for Sustainable Development at University Level, World Sustainability Series*, Springer International Publishing Switzerland,
http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-26734-0_21

- Gaillard, P. M., Barrett, M., Black, L. B., & Byram, M. (2018). *The reference framework of competencies for democratic culture*. Council of Europe, 3(no.). www.coe.int
- Gaillard, P. M., Barrett, M., Black, L. B., & Land, H. V. (2020). *The reference framework of competencies for democratic culture: Guidance for implementation*. Council of Europe, 3(no.). www.coe.int
- Gericke, N. & Torbjörnsson, T. (2022). Identifying capital for school improvement: Recommendations for a whole school approach to ESD implementation, *Environmental Education Research*, 28(6), 803-825. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13504622.2022.2045256>
- Government of Nepal (2010). *National framework of child-friendly school for quality of education*. Ministry of Education, Department of Education.
- Haber, J. (2020). *A whole school approach to well-being in secondary school: The perceptions of the senior leadership team*. [Master's dissertation] University of Malta.
- Hargreaves, L. G. (2008). The whole school approach to education for sustainable development: from pilot projects to systematic change. *Policy and practice: education for sustainable development (book chapter, p. 69 – 74)*.
- Hinde, E. R. (2004). School culture and change: An examination of the effects of school culture on the process of change," *Essays in Education*, 12(1), 1-12. <https://openriver.winona.edu/eie/vol12/iss1/5>
- Hopkins, D. (2001). *School improvement for real*. London: Routledge Falmer.
- Jasmtsho, S. (2015). Implementing a whole-school approach to student well-being: a study examining the implementation experience of Bhutanese and

- Australian teachers in well-being leadership roles. (Doctoral dissertation), University of Melbourne.
- Jerald, C. D. (2006). School culture: The hidden curriculum. *The Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement*.
- Kalman, M. (2020). School improvement and contextual factors: A qualitative case study on educators' perceptions and experiences. *Pedagogical Research*, 5(4), 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.29333/pr/9134>
- Keshavarz, N., Nutbeam, D., Rowling, L. & Khavarpour, F. (2010). Schools as social complex adaptive systems: A new way to understand the challenges of introducing the health promoting schools' concept. *Social Science & Medicine*, 70(2010), 1467-1474. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2010.01.034>
- Khan, R., Bedford, K., & Williams, M. (2011). Evaluation of the mind matters buddy support scheme in southwest Sydney: Strategies, achievements and challenges. *Health Education Journal*, 71(3), 320–326. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0017896911398818>
- Kirtman, L., & Fullan, M. (2016). *Leadership: Key competencies for whole-system change*. US: Solution Tree Press.
- Koh, G. A., Askill-Williams, H. & Barr, S. (2023). Sustainable school improvement initiatives: Advice from educational leaders. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 34(3), 298-330. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09243453.2023.2190130>
- Kotter, J. P. (2011). *On change management*. Boston: Harvard Business Review Press.
- Kurchacikova, A, & Tokarcikova, E. (2016). Use of participatory methods in teaching at the university. *The Online Journal of Science and Technology* 6(1) 82 – 90

- Lackeus, M. (2015). *Entrepreneurship in education, what why, when and how: Entrepreneurship 360 Background Paper*. OECD
- Lee, M., & Louis, K. S. (2019). Mapping a strong school culture and linking it to sustainable school improvement. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 81(no.), 84–96.
- Leite, C., Monteiro, A., Sampaio, M., & Silva, A. (2024). The whole-school approach and transformative learning: The case of a Portuguese school. *International Journal of Instruction*, 17(2), 635-650.
- Matti T., Aini-Kristiina, J. & Kari N. (2023). Understanding the essential elements of school culture in global contexts: Exploring the TALIS 2018 data on school principals, *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, no(no), 1-24.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13603124.2023.2234859>
- Matti, S., Uta, R., Miriam, C. & Andrea, V. (2023). Planned relocation due to landslide-triggered tsunami risk in recently deglaciaded areas. *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction*.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijdr.2023.103536>
- McKinsey & Company. (2007). *How the world's best-performing school systems come out on top*. Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).
- Minniss, R. & Stewart, D. E. (2011). Promoting connectedness through whole-school approaches: Key elements and pathways of influence. *Emerald Groups of Publishing Ltd*. 111(1). P. 49- 65.
- Minniss, R. & Stewart, D. E. (2011). Promoting connectedness through whole-school approaches: Key elements and pathways of influence. *Emerald Groups of Publishing Ltd*, 111(1). P. 49- 65.

- MoE (2016). School sector development plan, Nepal. 2016/17 – 2022/23: Kathmandu, Ministry of Education Government of Nepal.
- Mogren, A., Gericke, N. & Scherp, H. (2019). Whole school approaches to education for sustainable development: a model that links to school improvement, *Environmental Education Research*, 25(4), 508-531.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13504622.2018.1455074>
- Nicdao, M. F. & Ancho, I. V. (2020). Practices of the stakeholders' involvement in formulating the school improvement plan. *Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences Studies* 20(1), 220 – 246.
- Niemi, H. (2015). Teacher professional development in Finland: Towards a more holistic approach. *Psychology, Society and Education*, 7(3), 278-294
- Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (2018). The future of education and skills, Education 2030: *OECD*.
- Pont, B. Nusche, D. & Moorman, H. (2008). Improving School Leadership: Policy and Practice, Volume – 1. *OECD*.
- Prenger, R., Poortman, C. L., & Handelzalts, A. (2021). Professional learning networks: From teacher learning to school improvement? *Journal of Educational Change*, 22(1), 13 – 52.
- Sauer, S. J. (2011). Taking the reins: The effects of new leader status and leadership style on team performance. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 96(3), 574-587. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0022741>
- Schein, E. H. (2010). *Organizational culture and leadership* (4th ed.). Jossey-Bass.

- Singh, S. B. & Allison, D. J. (2016). School leadership practices of head teachers in Kathmandu. *ISEA*. 44(3), 75–92.
- Smith III, M. & Sandvik, T. (2015). Four global trends in education (And why they matter). *MetaMetrics Inc.*
- Stolp, S. (1994). *Leadership for School Culture*. ERIC Digest.
- Tilbury, D., & Galvin, C. (2022). *European Commission input paper: A whole school approach to learning for environmental sustainability*. Expert briefing paper in support of the first meeting of the EU Working Group Schools: Learning for sustainability.
- Toikka, T. & Tarnanen, M. (2024). A shared vision for a school: Developing a learning community, *Educational Research*.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00131881.2024.2361412>
- Tran, L. (2021). *School Improvement: A Technical Report, July, 2017*. The Link, Bridging the Research to the Practice Gap, 8(no), 1-5.
- Waite, D. (2013). Thinking about school improvement. *Education and Society*, 31(1), 7-16.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.7459/es/31.1.02>

Exploring Patanjali Yoga Sutra from the Communication Perspective

Aditya Kumar Shukla, Ph.D., Sukhnandan Singh, Ph.D., &
Nirmala Mani Adhikary, Ph.D.
dr.akshukla26@gmail.com

Abstract

Patanjali Yoga is the primary school of thought in the Indian philosophical system known as *Shad-darshan*. It is known for its scientific and practical approach. *Patanjali Yoga*, as such, does not deal with communication directly. Though it is a spiritual treatise, it addresses the behavioral aspects of the Yoga aspirant, thus holding profound ethical significance from the perspective of interpersonal communication. The *Patanjali Yoga Sutra* provides deep insight into the communication process at different levels, leading the aspirant to the ultimate state of consciousness, or Self-realization, liberation, peace, freedom, and bliss. This research aims to describe the intrapersonal, interpersonal, and transpersonal aspects of communication, as well as obstructions and aiding factors, as envisioned in the *Patanjali Yoga Sutra*.

Keywords: Patanjali Yoga Sutra, intrapersonal communication, interpersonal communication, transpersonal communication, communication

Patanjali Yoga Sutra: The Systematic Approach to the Conscious Evolution of Human Beings

Patanjali Yoga is a significant school of thought within the Indian philosophical system known as *Sad-darshan* (the six systems of philosophy). Yoga has been practiced in India since ancient times, with traces found in

early Vedic texts. Its development continues in the *Upanishads*, which are considered the culminating portions of the *Vedas*. As Swami (1991) noted, “References to yoga practices—spiritual disciplines and meditation techniques, which enable humans to achieve unitive knowledge of the Godhead—are to be found already in the *Katha*, *Svetasvatara*, *Taittiriya*, and *Maitrayani Upanishads*” (p. v).

Sage Patanjali later systematized and organized the study and teachings of yoga. While he was neither the first yoga teacher nor the originator of yoga science, he is regarded as its codifier. Patanjali’s approach was both practical and insightful; he was not merely a religious preacher or priest, but a philosopher and a scientist who deeply understood the complexities of life. As Rama (2019) noted, Patanjali was a great yogi who practiced yoga, conducted experiments, and possessed profound knowledge. He was an enlightened sage who offered yoga science for the benefit of all humanity. *Patanjali Yoga* is considered the most practical and applied form of Indian philosophy, characterized by deep psychological insight and spiritual implications. As Acharya (2011) emphasized, its methods are not tied to any sect, belief, or religion; rather, they offer a universal approach that leads human beings toward their ultimate goal (p. 4).

Patanjali Yoga Sutra is regarded as the most precise and scientific text ever written on yoga. It is divided into four chapters and 196 *sutras*: *Samadhi Pada*—this chapter on yoga and its goal consists of 51 *sutras*; *Sadhana Pada*—this chapter on the practice of yoga consists of 55 *sutras*; *Vibhooti Pada*—this chapter on psychic powers consists of 56 *sutras*; and *Kaivalya Pada*—this chapter on oneness consists of 34 *sutras*.

Yoga is a systematic method for exploring the self, gradually leading to a state of liberation or freedom. It is

founded on action and reflection—like the two wings of a bird—neither of which, alone, can take us anywhere. Yoga always pairs philosophical thought with deliberate effort and succinctly outlines the art and science of yoga for self-realization. It is a process of gathering, examining, and reaching beyond the gross and subtle levels of false identity until the jewel of the true self lights up (Acharya, 2011, p. 4). Different modes of communication lead an aspirant to that state of self-realization.

***Patanjali Yoga Sutra* and Communication**

The *Patanjali Yoga Sutra* does not directly refer to communication, but by observing its verses (*sutras*) closely, one can discern profound implications from a communication perspective. Communication, in its various forms, serves as a means to reach the highest state of human consciousness described in the *PYS*. Furthermore, communication in its transpersonal form becomes the ultimate state of human interaction, which will be elaborated on later.

It is the humble yet clear conviction of the researchers that the *Patanjali Yoga Sutra* holds deep significance from a communication perspective. However, to the researchers' knowledge, the topic remains largely unexplored in depth. Previous communication scholars have provided only sporadic mentions and subtle references. A review of their insights is presented below.

Communication Insight in *Patanjali Yoga Sutra*: The Journey So Far

The interest of communication scholars in the *Patanjali Yoga Sutra* and its exploration can be traced back to the end of the 20th century. Saral (1983) stated that there is always an ongoing process of intrapersonal communication between the inner and outer self. According to Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras*, when the seeker or *yogi* achieves

Siddhi or *Ritambhara Pragma*, they can engage in transpersonal communication beyond both interpersonal and intrapersonal levels (PYS, 1.48).

Kirkwood (1994), while referencing Patanjali's *Yoga Sutra*, explained how "mental stillness" is required for both communication and spirituality. He claimed that avenues of research remain open to scholars interested in the intersection of communication and spirituality. Kirkwood (1997) further discussed the intrapersonal consequences of speaking from the perspective of Indian thought and derived its implications for ethics in communication. Based on *Shankya-Yoga* philosophy, Kirkwood concluded that speech affects not only the listener but also the speaker; it also influences the speaker's process of self-realization and liberation.

According to Dissanayake (1987), Indian communication theories are reception- and interpretation-oriented, rather than expression-oriented like Western models. The Indian definition of communication is that it is an inward search for meaning. The Indian model of communication is intrapersonal rather than interpersonal, and this intrapersonal process must lead to transpersonal communication, in which the oneness of the world is ambiguously perceived.

Sitaram (2004) discussed the importance of self-realization in the communication process. He explained that the *Yoga* school of Hindu philosophy describes how to acquire knowledge about the inner self and interpret that knowledge to others. He concluded that the primary purpose of communication is to know the inner self and attain *moksha*.

In the words of Kumar (2005a), the intrapersonal dimension of communication holds greater importance than the interpersonal in the Indian approach, as individualism

and manipulation have no place in it. Kumar (2005b) stated that the Indian tradition of public communication is deeply rooted in intrapersonal and transpersonal communication.

Adhikary (2007, 2010a, 2010b, 2014) has discussed verbal communication as a tool for attaining *moksha*. Extending the scope of the communication discipline to Vidya as envisioned in Hinduism (Adhikary, 2010a, 2010b, 2024), and drawing on the Sadharanikaran Model of Communication (SMC) and the Sancharyoga theory, he has explained that communication could also be considered *Sancharyoga*, alongside *Jnana-yoga*, *Bhakti-yoga*, and *Karma-yoga* (for further discussion on the SMC and the *Sancharyoga* theory, see: Adhikary, 2009, 2010a, 2010b, 2014).

Stroud (2009) has stated that in Hinduism, communication is a means for self-realization. In Hindu traditions, narratives are used in such a manner that they help the reader or listener move beyond assumed illusions into a more enlightened state. Singh (2014) has discussed communication from the Indian scripture *Sri Madbhagavad Gita* and its intrapersonal, interpersonal, and spiritual aspects, which lead the aspirant to excellence in worldly life and perfection in inner life. Singh (2017) explored the Indian communication perspective with particular reference to the Vedic spiritual tradition. He examined intrapersonal, interpersonal, and mass communication from a spiritual angle and emphasized the role of communication in self-realization and social welfare.

Thus, it can be observed that communication in the Indian spiritual tradition and the *PYS* is an inward search for truth, freedom, and the ultimate goal of life. Furthermore, there are three levels of communication leading to that state: yogic interpersonal communication builds the foundation, intrapersonal communication guides the inner journey

further, and ultimately leads to the highest state of consciousness in *samadhi*. In this state, transpersonal communication becomes a reality.

From the above literature review, it is clear that all these stages are mentioned in one form or another. However, detailed references and discussions regarding these stages of communication, their logical sequence, and their interconnections are lacking. Furthermore, there is little mention of the process, obstructions, and supporting aids.

The present article aims to shed light on this direction. However, before discussing the communication aspect in detail, it is appropriate first to explore the meaning of *Yoga* and the goal of life in the Indian yogic tradition and the *Patanjali Yoga Sutra*.

The Goal of Life in Bharatavarshiya Yogic Tradition & Patanjali Yoga Sutra

Communication is the basis of human existence and is directly linked to life. The purpose of communication is also directly related to the meaning of life. In the Indian spiritual tradition, the goal of life is to reach the state of our Real Self—a divine reality called *moksha*, *kaivalya*, *nirvana*, self-realization, God-realization, or liberation—associated with the state of inner freedom and the realization of the ultimate truth. The self and *God* in the Indian tradition are ultimately equitable (Dasgupta, 2018). In this view, the human being exists in a transformed inner state. This is not merely a theoretical assumption, but the supreme goal for spiritual aspirants and truth seekers—one that has been achieved by some and is currently pursued by many. It is also the highest goal and ideal embedded in the psyche of followers of the Indian spiritual tradition.

According to Shastri (1976), “the word *Yoga* means union, but the special import of the word is the union of the individual soul with the Great divine soul” (p. 202). *Yoga* is

for all and is universal. It is purely spiritual and does not contradict anyone's sincere faith. *Yoga* is union with God—union with all. According to Vidyaranya (1996), “the practice of concentration or union with the Supreme Spirit—*yukti*—is *Yoga*” (p. 87).

Thus, *yoga* implies a state of the *atman* (Radhakrishnan, 2004, p. 532). *Yoga* means “yoking.” It is the yoking of the mind and body and the internalization of mental activities to achieve equilibrium of the mind, body, and intellect. One could call this the internalization of the macrocosm within the microcosm. According to Bartley (2011), in Indian culture, any discipline of physical and mental self-cultivation and self-transformation aimed at freeing one from rebirth is called *yoga*.

In the *Srimadbhagavad Gita*, equanimity amid success and failure is described as *yoga* in the phrase “*Samatvam Yoga Uchyate*” (Geeta 2.48). Elsewhere, it states, “Severance of contact with sorrow is called *Yoga*; and *yoga* has to be practiced with perseverance and an undepressed heart” (Geeta 6.23).

In the words of Aurobindo (1999), “the aim of our *Yoga* is *Jivanmukti* in the universe; we have to live released in the world, not released out of the world” (p. 104). Further, he says that the complete practical aim of *yoga* is “to rise into divine existence, force, light and bliss and recast in that mold all mundane existence” (p. 102). For him, *yoga* is a means to arrive “at union with the Truth behind things through an inner discipline which leads us from the consciousness of the outward and apparent to the consciousness of the inner and real” (p. 327). He defines *yoga* as “the science, the process, the effort and action by which man attempts to pass out of the limits of his ordinary mental consciousness into a greater spiritual consciousness” (p. 327). It is a “methodized effort towards self-perfection”

(p. 6). Thus, *yoga* is the means by which one becomes connected to, identifies with *Isvara*, *Brahman*, or *Paramatman*, or attains *moksha* or self-realization.

This inner discipline or methodized effort is directly linked to interpersonal and intrapersonal communication, leading to the stage that PYS calls abiding in one's real nature (PYS, 1.3). It is the knowledge of *atman* (PYS, 1.1).

Patanjali defined *yoga* as “*yogascittavrittinirodhah*” (PYS, 1.1). *Yoga* is the restraint of mind–body adjustments. Patanjali explains that once the mind is appropriately restrained, the “seer,” or the “soul, the true self,” can rest in its true nature (PYS, 1.3). Furthermore, if the mind is not under control, it continues to assume the form of the “*vrittis*,” or the perturbations of the mind, and these *vrittis* become the cause of human suffering. This state of self-realization, or *moksha*, is the primary aim of Patanjali *yoga*.

Steps to Self-Realization

There are three approaches for reaching this state of consciousness, as described by Sage Patanjali, based on the different levels of aspirants.

For advanced practitioners, it is the practice of non-attachment (*abhyasa-vairagya*; PYS 1.12). This method is not for those grossly attached to the world but rather for highly evolved souls who are earnestly and single-mindedly pursuing self-realization. Through practice and non-attachment, the thought waves (*vrittis*) are controlled (PYS, 1.12). It is a repeated effort (PYS, 1.13) and an uninterrupted discipline maintained over a long period that gives permanent control over the mind's thought waves (PYS, 1.14).

For medium-level practitioners, who are advanced aspirants in between, the *Patanjali Yoga Sutra* prescribes *kriya yoga*, which includes: *tapa*, *swadhyaya*, and *ishwarapranidhana* (PYS, 2.1). *Tapa* means enduring the

ups and downs of life with equanimity and adopting a life of austerity. *Swadhyaya* refers to self-study, self-awareness, and self-refinement in the light of spiritual scriptures.

Ishwarapranidhana means devotion to God, performing one's duties to the best of one's ability, and offering the fruits of *karma*, whether good or bad, to God.

For beginners, it is *Ashtanga Yoga*, or eightfold Yoga (PYS, 2.29). This path is intended for those at the initial stage who wish to follow the yogic way and realize their true nature. The eight stages are:

- *Yama*, or abstention from harming others, falsehood, theft, incontinence, and greed (PYS, 2.30).
- *Niyama*, or observances such as cleanliness, contentment, mortification, self-study, and devotion to God (PYS, 2.32).
- *Asana*, or physical posture, provides a stable base for prolonged meditation practices.
- *Pranayama*, or control of the *prana*, purifies the subtle *pranic* channels, increases vitality, and fosters a stabilized mental state.
- *Pratyahara* is the withdrawal of the mind from sensing objects and its redirection toward the inner self.

These first five stages are called *bahirang yoga*, dealing with the external preparation for Yoga. The following three stages are called *antarang yoga*, which address the internal aspect of Yoga. The first five stages serve merely as preparatory steps for the final three.

Dharana is the sixth stage. It means focusing the mind on a single point (i.e., an object of meditation). It is the concentration of the mind on a particular object (PYS 3.1). It is the steadfastness of reason (Radhakrishnan, 2004, p. 537).

Dhyana is the seventh stage. *Dhyana* means the uninterrupted continuity of awareness of the object of meditation. It is an unbroken flow of knowledge toward that

object (PYS 3.2; Swami Vivekananda's translation). When concentration on a particular object of knowledge becomes continuous, providing an explicit understanding of the same, it is known as *dhyana* or meditation (PYS, 3.2).

Dhyana culminates in *samadhi*, where the sense of ego is lost. It is the state of absorption in the *atman*. In this state, the mind is so deeply absorbed in the object of contemplation that it becomes one with it. It represents a state of absolute identity among the subject, the object, and the process of meditation. This stage is considered one of total transformation or self-realization.

The Process of Self-Transformation

It will be proper here to highlight and discuss the basic philosophy of *Patanjali Yoga Sutra* to understand the process of self-transformation and self-realization that takes place through the above steps, and further, its relation to the communication process.

PYS is based on the philosophical foundation of the *Sankhya* school of Indian philosophy, which holds *Purusha* and *Prakriti* as the two basic building blocks of the universe and human existence. *Purusha* is the witness self, while *Prakriti* is the cause of creation and comprises three *gunas* (*satwa*, *rajas*, and *tamas*). In the primordial state, when *Prakriti* is at rest, the three *gunas* are in a state of balance or equilibrium. With their agitation or disturbance, the evolution of *Prakriti* begins and manifests as worldly existence. Different levels and combinations of *gunas* determine the various mental states of human beings.

Its five stages are: disturbed (*ksipta*), stupefied (*mudha*), restless (*viksipta*), one-pointed (*ekagra*), and well-controlled (*niruddha*). When *rajas* and *tamas* are predominant, the mind becomes disturbed (*ksipta*). When *rajas* dominates, the mind becomes hyperactive, and when *tamas* dominates, the mind loses its ability to distinguish

good from evil. It moves quickly from one object to another without pause. It is constantly agitated by external stimuli but lacks the discernment to distinguish right from wrong. In this state, the mind jumps from one thing to the next, never remaining focused, and represents an imbalanced and dysfunctional condition.

In the second stage (*mudha*), *tamas* dominates the mind and is characterized by inertia, vice, ignorance, lethargy, and sleep. In this state, the mind is so sluggish that it loses its capacity for sound reasoning and becomes hostile and dull. In the restless stage (*viksipta*), *rajas* is predominant.

These first three stages of the mind act as impediments on the path of inner growth and self-realization. At this level, one experiences pain, misery, and unpleasant emotions. However, the following two stages are calmer and more peaceful. Thus, all the modifications of the mind (*vṛttis*) are found in the earlier three stages. In the one-pointed and well-controlled states, there is no such modification. In the lighter aspect of *Prakṛti*, there is a predominance of *sattva*, which characterizes the one-pointed state of mind (*ekagra*). In this tranquil state of near-complete stillness, one can perceive the fundamental nature of things. This fourth state is conducive to concentration, and the Yoga system aims to cultivate and sustain this state of mind for as long and as consistently as possible.

In the well-controlled state of mind (*niruddha*), there is no disturbance, only a pure manifestation of *sattvic* energy. In this state, consciousness reflects its purity and entirety in the mirror of the mind, and one becomes capable of exploring one's true nature. Only the last two states of mind are positive and supportive for meditation. The eightfold path and other practices described in the *Patanjali*

Yoga Sutra gradually evolve the aspirant toward attaining these states.

When all the changes stop and the state of perfect stillness is reached, *Purusha* (pure consciousness) sees its true nature reflected in the mind. As *Samadhi*, this is the cherished state of the super-conscious mind (Vivekanand, 1947, p. 181). *Samadhi* is the state of complete transformation.

Communication Insight from Patanjali Yoga Sutra

With the above-discussed process of self-transformation, it is now appropriate to discuss communication from the *Patanjali Yoga Sutra* point of view. Intrapersonal communication is the key to the conscious self-evolution defined by the *Patanjali Yoga Sutra*. However, it is not possible for a scattered mind. A minimal level of mental stability and concentration must be present for its functioning. This foundation is laid by yogic interpersonal communication based on the *bahirang* aspect of Yoga.

Yogic Interpersonal Communication

Patanjali Yoga Sutra is the process of self-discipline gradually sublimating human nature from gross to subtler level, and the real work starts after *Pratyahara*. Till then, it is all as if the preparatory phase. Our outer, behavioral, physical, vital, and psychological aspects must be disciplined and stabilized to the extent; it is ready for *Antarang yoga*, advancing with *Dharna*, *Dhyana* & *Samadhi*.

Yama-Niyama, *Asana*, *Pranayama* & *Pratyahara* take care of this outer aspect. Some of them affect our communication directly, and others indirectly. The values and practices directly affecting our interpersonal communication are:

In *Yama*, nonviolence, truthfulness, and continence in thought, word, and deed give behavioral integrity and mental stability to the communicator. In *Niyama*, *Shaucha* gives the necessary purity and poise to the communicator. *Santosha* provides the essential insight and patience with the least expectation from others. *Tapa* gives the strength to endure the opposing currents of life with equanimity. *Ishwara Pranidhana* gives the divine faith to hope for the best and face the worst as a communicator. Besides these, the rest of *Yama*—non-stealing and non-possessiveness—and *Niyama*, *Swadhyaya*, directly refine and strengthen the communicator. *Asanas* and *Pranayama* also indirectly affect communication by providing physical strength, mental stability, and vitality.

Yama-Niyamas have further higher potential regarding communication. According to the *Patanjali Yoga Sutra*, the prolonged and sincere practice of *yama-niyama* with perfection empowers the aspirant with some unique qualities, having profound significance concerning communication.

With the perfection of *Ahimsa*, all living creatures will feel no enmity in his presence (PYS, 3.35). Truthfulness gives the power of blessing and curse (PYS, 3.36). With *Brahmacharya*, one acquires spiritual energy (PYS, 3.38). With *Aparigraha*, one gains knowledge of his past, present, and future existence (PYS, 3.39). With *Shoucha* (cleanliness), there arises indifference towards the body and sensual pleasures (PYS, 3.40). Moreover, one achieves purification of the heart, cheerfulness of mind, the power of concentration, control of the passions, and fitness for the vision of the *Atman* (PYS, 3.41). With *Santosha* (contentment), one gains supreme happiness (PYS, 3.42). With *Tapas* (austerity), impurities are removed, and special powers come to the body and the sense organs (PYS, 3.43).

With *Swadhyaya* (self-study), one obtains the vision of that aspect of God that one has chosen to worship. With *Ishwarapranidhana* (devotion to God), one achieves *Samadhi*, the state of absorption, leading to the highest form of communication (PYS, 3.4).

Besides *yama-niyama*, *asana*, *pranayama*, and *pratyahara* have their own impact on maturation. With the perfection of *asanas* (postures), one is no longer troubled by the dualities of sense experience (PYS, 3.48). As a result of *pranayama*, the covering of the inner light is removed (PYS, 3.52). The mind gains the power of concentration (*dharna*) (PYS, 3.53). With *pratyahara* arises complete mastery over the senses (PYS, 3.55).

The above-said results of yogic interpersonal communication, even to some degree, prepare the practitioner for effective intrapersonal communication and higher self-awareness.

Yogic Intrapersonal Communication

After achieving minimal mental stability and inner and outer harmony through yogic interpersonal communication, the aspirant is ready to delve deeper into the next steps of intrapersonal communication. The chief components of this process can be mentioned as follows:

1. *Swadhyaya*: Self-study prepares the aspirant for deeper self-exploration, analysis, and awareness.
2. *Tapas*: Its fire sublimates the *gunas* and further clears the psychological blockages at a deeper level.
3. *Ishwara Pranidhana*: It leads to self-transformation at the deepest level through the sublimation of the ego at the altar of the Supreme Self.
4. *Pratyahara*: Here, outward awareness is drawn to inner reality and can be considered the preparatory phase of the journey of inner exploration.

5. Dharna–Dhyana (Concentration–Meditation): The inner journey advances with concentration and meditation on the spiritual reality. "Patanjali's technique of meditation is the evolution in reverse. It is a process of devolution. With the beginning at the surface of life, the meditative mind goes inward, always seeking the path of reality" (Swami, 1991). It results in inner transformation through the state of *samadhi*.

With *samadhi*, the next level of communication—i.e., transpersonal communication—becomes a reality.

Yogic Transpersonal Communication

Transpersonal communication dawns with the maturity of *Samadhi* and its ultimate fruits of *KaivalyaGyan*, *VivekaKhyati*, and *RitambharaPragya* (PYS, 1.48). The knowledge of the ultimate truth leads to a state of complete peace, freedom, and bliss.

Along the way, and after *Samadhi*, come the *vibhuties*, supernatural powers, and ESP (extrasensory perceptions) (PYS, 3.37). They are not miracles, but essential qualities associated with the evolving super-conscious state on the way to *Samadhi*. Though they are considered obstacles on the path to ultimate realization, from a communication point of view, some of these are worth mentioning.

When these three—(*dharna*) concentration, (*dhyana*) meditation, and (*samadhi*) absorption—are brought to bear upon one object, they are called *samyama*, and with mastery of *samyama* comes the light of knowledge (PYS, 3.4). *Samyama* on the three kinds of changes obtains knowledge of the past and the future (PYS, 3.16). By making *samyama* on the sound of a word, one's perception of its meaning, and one's reaction to it—these three things which are ordinarily confused—one obtains an understanding of all sounds

uttered by living beings (PYS, 3.17). By making *samyama* on previous thought waves, one gains knowledge of one's past lives (PYS, 3.18). By making *samyama* on the distinguishing marks of another man's body, one understands the nature of his mind (PYS, 3.20). By making *samyama* on the heart, one gains knowledge of the contents of the reason (PYS, 3.36).

One develops the powers of these qualities by making *samyama* on friendliness and compassion (PYS, 3.24). By making *samyama* on the inner light, one obtains knowledge of what is subtle, hidden, or distant (PYS, 3.26). One acquires supernatural powers of hearing by making *samyama* on the connections between the ear and the ether (PYS, 3.42). One can make *samyama* on the discrimination between the *sattva guna* and *Atman* to gain omnipotence and omniscience (PYS, 3.50). By making *samyama* on the independence of *Atman*, one gains knowledge of the *Atman* (PYS, 3.36). Hence, one achieves the ability due to spontaneous enlightenment and obtains supernatural powers of hearing, sight, taste, and smell (PYS, 3.37).

From the spiritual point of view, these powers are obstacles, as the aspirant may get stuck in them or be tempted to misuse them for selfish ends. According to *Patanjali Yoga Sutra*, they are powers in the worldly state but obstacles to *Samadhi* (PYS, 3.38). The seed of evil is destroyed by giving up even these powers, and liberation follows (PYS, 3.51). However, the liberated or illumined soul possesses these powers as a master. They do not make a show of them and use them most discriminately in selfless ways. From a transpersonal communication point of view, these powers explain the phenomenon of thought reading and communicating without words at *para* and *pashyanti* levels.

These *vibhuties* explain the wonder of spiritual communication we see in the lives of great spiritual masters like Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Telanga Swami, Swami Vivekananda, Maharshi Raman, Sri Aurobindo, Pt. Sri Ram Sharma Acharya, and many more.

Thus, communication from the *Patanjali Yoga Sutra* point of view is a process of conscious self-evolution and inner growth, involving the transformation of lower nature into higher nature and ultimately becoming established in our fundamental nature as the witnessing self (*Purusha*).

According to Richard Garbe (1897), "The ultimate goal of human aspiration according to *Yoga Sutras* of Patanjali is not the union with or absorption in God; instead, it is absolute isolation (*Kaivalya*) of the soul from matter" (p. 15). The methodical performance of yogic practice not only helps humans acquire supernatural powers but is also the most effective means of attaining knowledge of the self. With the help of yogic practices, the mind is purified and begins to merge into *Prakriti*, from which it has emerged. *Purusha* also realizes its relationship with the reason—it was due to ignorance. In this way, *Purusha* dissociates from *Prakriti* and recognizes its true nature. It now ceases to identify with *Prakriti* and her evolutes and comes to know that it was isolated from *Prakriti* for eternity.

Thus, communication in *Patanjali Yoga Sutra* is not merely the transmission of a message to others but a process of conscious self-evolution, self-growth, and self-transformation, leading to peace, freedom, harmony, and bliss—both inner and outer. It is a state of blessedness and of living as a blessing to the world. It is the ideal of human excellence and perfection. All saints, sages, and illumined masters represent this lofty height of human evolution. The obstructions to this state are also minutely dealt with in *PYS*.

Obstructions on the Way to Human Evolution

- Nine obstacles mentioned by Patanjali include disease (*Vyadhi*), lack of interest (*Styana*), doubt (*Samshya*), delusion (*Pramada*), lethargy (*Alasya*), reluctance to give up sensual pleasure (*Avirati*), erroneous conception (*Bhranti-darshana*), non-attainment of any level of concentration (*Alabdha-bhumikatwa*), and inability to retain a level of attention once attained (*Anavasthitatwa*) (PYS, 1.30).
- Four physical and mental disturbances caused by an un-concentrated mind are grief (*Dukha*), despair (*Daurmanasya*), involuntary nervous trembling of the body (*Anga-mejayatwa*), and irregular breathing (*Shwasa-prashwasa-vikshepa*) (PYS, 1.31).
- Five more subtle obstructions recognized by Patanjali are ignorance of one's inherent divine nature (*Avidya*), egoism (*Asmita*), attachment (*Raga*), aversion (*Dwesh*), and clinging to life (*Abhinivesha*) (PYS, 2.3).

Helping Aids to Counter the Obstructions

To counter these obstructions, in addition to the eightfold practice of Yoga and yogic communication, some specific techniques have been prescribed in the *Patanjali Yoga Sutra*. These are listed below:

- The practice of concentration upon a single truth (PYS, 1.32).
- Expulsion and retention of the breath (PYS, 1.34).
- Four golden principles of behavior or communication: friendliness (*Maitry*) towards the happy, compassion (*Karuna*) towards the unhappy, delight (*Mudita*) in the virtuous, and indifference (*Upeksha*) towards the wicked (PYS, 1.33).

- Cultivating thoughts of an opposite kind when distracting thoughts arise in the mind (PYS, 1.33).
- Cultivating virtues such as faith, willpower, recollectedness, absorption, and the power of discrimination (PYS, 2.20).
- Fixing the mind upon the inner light, which is beyond sorrow (PYS, 1.36).
- Meditating on the heart of an illumined soul free from passion (PYS, 1.37).
- Fixing the mind upon a dream experience or the experience of deep sleep (PYS, 1.38).
- Fixing the mind upon any divine form or symbol that appeals to one as good (PYS, 1.39).
- Energetic effort: The speed of the yoga aspirant's progress depends on the intensity of their action. The rate can be mild, medium, or intense. The improvement is remarkable for the intensely energetic (PYS, 1.22).

Conclusion

Thus, communication from the *Patanjali Yoga Sutra* perspective is a process of self-exploration, self-realization, and conscious self-evolution. Intrapersonal communication plays a vital role through tools such as contemplation and meditation on spiritual reality. Yogic interpersonal communication lays the foundation through the *bahirang* aspect of Yoga, including *Yama* and *Niyama*. This entire process of eightfold Yoga, when practiced with consistent and prolonged effort, leads to the state of *Samadhi*, transforming consciousness and realizing the oneness of existence—where transpersonal communication becomes a reality. It is the blessed state of human existence in which a person becomes a blessing to the world. All saints, sages, and enlightened souls represent this lofty state of human potential.

[Dr. Aditya Kumar Shukla is an Associate Professor at Amity School of Communication, Amity University Madhya Pradesh, Gwalior, India.

Professor Dr. Sukhnandan Singh is a Professor and Dean at Dev Sanskriti University, Haridwar, Uttarakhand, India.

Dr. Nirmala Mani Adhikary is an Associate Professor at the Department of Languages and Mass Communication, School of Arts, Kathmandu University, Nepal.]

References

- Acharya, P. S. (2011). *Sankhya evam yog darshan*. Yug Nirman Yojna Vistar Trust.
- Adhikary, N. M. (2007). *Sancharyoga: Verbal communication as a means for attaining moksha* (Unpublished M.Phil. dissertation). Pokhara University.
- Adhikary, N. M. (2009). An introduction to sadharanikaran model of communication. *Bodhi: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 3(1), 69-91.
- Adhikary, N. M. (2010a). Communication and moksha-in-life. *Ritambhara*, 14, 183–195.
- Adhikary, N. M. (2010b). Sancharyoga: Approaching communication as a vidya in Hindu orthodoxy. *China Media Research*, 6(3), 76-84.
- Adhikary, N. M. (2014). *Theory and practice of communication – Bharata Muni*. Makhanlal Chaturvedi National University of Journalism and Communication.
- Adhikary, N. M. (2024). Is communication a vidya or an avidya according to Hinduism? *Bodhi: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 10(3), 106-125.
- Aurobindo, S. (1999). *The complete works of Sri Aurobindo* (Vols. 12 & 23). Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust.
- Bartley, C. (2011). *An introduction to Indian philosophy*. Bloomsbury Academic.

- Dasgupta, S. (2018). *History of Indian philosophy* (Vol. 2). Rupa Publications.
- Dissanayake, W. (1987). The guiding image in Indian culture and its implications for communication. In D. L. Kincaid (Ed.), *Communication theory: Eastern and Western perspectives* (pp. 151–160). Academic Press.
- Garbe, R. (1897). *Philosophy of ancient India*. The Open Court Publishing Company.
- Kirkwood, W. G. (1994). Studying communication about spirituality and the spiritual consequences of communication. *Journal of Communication & Religion*, 17(1), [Page range not provided].
- Kirkwood, W. G. (1997). Indian thought and the intrapersonal consequences of speaking: Implications for ethics in communication. In J. A. Daly & J. M. Wiemann (Eds.), *Intrapersonal communication processes* (pp. 220–226). Sage.
- Kumar, K. (2005a). *Mass communication in India*. Jaico.
- Kumar, K. (2005b). Indian/Hindu theories of communication. *Journal of the Asian Research Center for Religion and Social Communication*, 3(2), 90–104.
- Radhakrishnan, S. (2004). *Indian philosophy* (Vol. 1). Oxford University Press.
- Rama, S. (2019). Darshana and seeing reality. *Swami Rama Teachings*.
<https://sites.google.com/site/swamiraamateachings/swami-rama-darshana-seeing>
- Saral, T. B. (1983). Hindu philosophy of communication. *Communication—East and West*, 8(1), 47–58.
- Shastri, M. (1976). *Outlines of Hindu philosophy*. Bhartiya Book Corporation.

- Singh, S. (2014). *Bhagavad Geeta—a manual of spiritual communication: The way to excellence & perfection*. *China Media Research*, 10(2), 29–34.
- Singh, S. (2017). Communication from Indian perspective—with special reference to Vedic spiritual tradition. *Dev Sanskriti: Interdisciplinary International Journal*, 10, 35–41.
- Sitaram, K. S. (2004). South Asian theories of speech communication: Origins and applications in ancient, modern, and postmodern times. *Human Communication: A Journal of the Pacific and Asian Communication Association*, 7(1), 83–101.
- Stroud, S. (2009). Hindu communication theory. In S. L. Foss (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of communication theory* (pp. 476–477). Sage.
- Swami Prabhavananda. (1991). *Patanjali yoga sutra*. Sri Ramakrishna Math.
- Vidyaranya, S. (1996). *Jivan mukti viveka*. Advaita Ashrama.
- Vivekananda, S. (1947). *Complete works* (Vol. 1). Ramakrishna Math.

Is Ageism Natural, Biological, or a Social Construct ?

Pradip Lamichhane
pradip_phd2024@kuso.edu.np

Abstract

This paper focuses on the study of ageism, a widespread and pervasive form of discrimination based on human age. Ageism, like racism and sexism, is practiced and performed mostly toward older adults through negative stereotypes and discriminatory language, behavior, and perceptions. Systematic inquiry, close observation, and extensive study are essential to identify, explore, and describe the roots, development process, and global spread of ageism. We cannot escape from the rampant consequences of ageism by taking it as a natural process or a social construct alone. This research paper, using qualitative data based on content analysis, aims to create knowledge on age-based discrimination by reviewing the existing literature. It redefines and interprets ageism in detail, including the types, causes, and consequences of ageism, and also suggests some measures to address the issues of ageism. As a research work, it concludes that ageism is stretching its roots in society, as intergenerational discrimination is evident in human language, socio-cultural practices, human roles and identities, and institutional practices in perceiving and treating adults.

Keywords: ageism, age and aging, stereotypes, discrimination, social construct, personal ageism, institutional ageism

Introduction

Ageism is a widespread and global form of discrimination practiced against older adults, mostly by younger individuals. In his article published in *The Gerontologist*, “Age-Isms: Another Form of Bigotry,” Robert N. Butler (1975) defines ageism as “prejudice by one age group toward other age groups” (p. 243). *Merriam-Webster* defines ageism as “prejudice and discrimination against a particular age group, and especially the elderly” (*Ageism*, n.d.). Sorgman and Sorensen (1984) write, “The rationale for a study of ageism comes from the growing concern for the number of people affected, how little is understood about the elements of aging, the misconceptions about aging, and how one deals with his/her own potential” (pp. 122–123). Ageism is a lens through which human beings of various age groups are observed and analyzed, as each group holds prejudice against others. Helen Dennis and Kathryn Thomas (2007), authors in *Generations Journal* based in San Francisco, write, “Ageism is pervasive and evident in the media, healthcare, and advertising” (p. 84). Discriminatory treatment and behavior toward elderly people are not merely an individual concern; rather, it is an increasing global issue.

This paper aims to explore and explain suitable answers to the following questions: What is ageism? Why is ageism prevalent across the world? Is ageism a common social practice or unique to specific cultural groups? How is ageism related to the social values and cultural conditions of social settings? Is ageism multifaceted in its types and forms, or something else? Are there any measures to control and reduce the impacts and consequences of ageism? Through an extensive review of the available literature, scholarly papers, and research works, this paper aims to provide reliable and evidence-based answers to the diverse issues surrounding ageism. The scholarly books, articles,

and research papers by prominent theorists and researchers in gerontology serve as the primary framework for content analysis in this paper.

Ageism: A Form of Global Discrimination

For Butler (1975), ageism is a form of age discrimination: “Ageism reflects a deep-seated uneasiness on the part of the young and middle-aged—a personal revulsion to and distaste for growing old, disease, disability, and fear of powerlessness, ‘uselessness,’ and death” (p. 243). According to W. Andrew Achenbaum (2015), “the term ‘ageism’ was coined in 1969 by Robert N. Butler, M.D., then a 42-year-old psychiatrist” (p. 10). While talking about the origin and practice of age-based discrimination in human society, Achenbaum (2015) considers ageism a global issue: “Butler was not the first to identify a seemingly universal, widespread contempt for old people. Negative attitudes toward age and aging have been and remain deeply rooted in global history” (pp. 10–11). As ageism is a widespread and deeply rooted collective expression of disapproval and dislike for older people, “the question of ageism is deserving of attention because it is woven into the woof of our social fabric” (Hendricks, 1994, p. 5).

Hendricks (1994) emphasizes the need for sincere attention to ageism, as it is deeply rooted in our social system and its underlying values. In an article, published in the special issue of the *Journal of Social Issues* in 1980, Butler (1980) expands his definition of ageism, relating it to various problems like that of racism and sexism:

There are three distinguishable yet interrelated aspects to the problem of ageism: 1) Prejudicial attitudes toward the aged, toward old age, and toward the aging process, including attitudes held by the elderly themselves; 2) discriminatory practices against the elderly, particularly in employment, but

in other social roles as well; and 3) institutional practices and policies which, often without malice, perpetuate stereotypic beliefs about the elderly, reduce their opportunities for a satisfactory life and undermine their personal dignity. (p. 8)

Ageism rests on institutional policies and practices and preserves its prejudices not only towards the elderly and old age but also towards the aging process. As a prejudiced principle, ageism further weakens and frightens ageing people. In the words of Achenbaum (2015), “Ageism preys on vulnerability—fragility, frailty, and dependency at advancing ages—especially as dread of dying and death mounts” (p. 14). Ageism is a discriminatory behavior that targets the elderly and the frail, the dependent, and the susceptible to societal changes. While analyzing ageism and its evolution in human culture and daily life, Butler (2005) states, “Over the years, my conception of ageism has continued to evolve. I have come to understand that it is more than images, words, actions, or attitudes. It is deeply embedded in society in many areas” (p. 86). Butler (2005) takes ageism as an irrational prejudice and relates it to racism and sexism while exposing its impacts on elderly people:

It occurred to me that this prejudice against older people was not different from the discrimination blacks and women experienced in society. This experience was the catalyst for my introduction to the word ageism. I wanted the word to have the same impact as the terms racism and sexism, . . . (p. 85)

The history of human civilization is the history of various types and forms of discrimination among humans by themselves. In such a context, ageism is a prejudice beyond religious, cultural, or ethnic boundaries or identities.

Iversen, Larsen, and Solem (2009) introduce ageism as “negative or positive stereotypes, prejudice, and/or discrimination against (or to the benefit of) aging people because of their chronological age” (p. 4). Towards obtaining a much clearer framework on ageism, this definition does not seem to be the most reliable one, but an explicit and complex one. Though the term ‘ageism’ is commonly used and understood regarding prejudice and discrimination against children and adolescents, it is predominately used to observe and locate how older people are treated: “Ageism includes categorization, stereotyping, and prejudice, but the most crucial aspect is exclusionary behavior” (Calasanti, 2005, p. 8). Because of ageism, people of one generation are viewed and taken negatively by others, mostly the older ones. According to a global report published by the World Health Organization in Geneva in 2021, ageism is multiple in its forms and existence:

Ageism refers to the stereotypes (how we think), prejudice (how we feel) and discrimination (how we act) directed towards people based on their age. It can be institutional, interpersonal, or self-directed. ... Ageism often intersects and interacts with other forms of stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination, including ableism, sexism, and racism. Multiple intersecting forms of bias compound disadvantage and make the effects of ageism on individuals’ health and well-being even worse. (as cited in Gutterman, 2021, p. 2).

If elderly people fail to assimilate into and remain incapable of utilizing the available resources, new cultures, and modern technology, they will receive prejudice and avoidance from the people of younger generations. Both racism and sexism have already been acknowledged,

understood, and addressed, while ageism is still left to be checked and studied in detail.

Age Stratification

Palmore (1999), an American gerontologist and Professor at Duke University, identifies age stratification and age norms available in human society, which results in age conflict, prejudices, and discrimination:

Age stratification is the system that stratifies or ranks people by their age. The ranking of people because of their age is a form of ageism. Age norms are the expectations about the proper behaviors, obligations, and privileges of the age strata. When these norms are based on prejudicial assumptions, they are a form of ageism. Age conflict is an extreme form of ageism in which two or more age strata conflict with each other. (p. 18)

Every society has certain beliefs, ideologies, and expectations regarding people of different age groups. Age studies focuses on how people of different age groups are defined and what sorts of attitudes, practices, and discrimination are practiced against old people, middle-aged people, teenagers, and children. There are several forms of age-related biases, such as adultism, jeunism, adultocracy, adultcentricism, gerontocracy, chronocentrism, etc. Jeunism is discrimination against older people in favor of younger ones. All these age-based concepts give priority to one age or stage of human life over others. Adultcentricism studies and defines the egocentrism found in adults, whereas adultocracy places adults in a dominant position over young people. As a biased concept or prejudice, chronocentrism supports the belief that a certain stage of human age remains dominant and superior to other stages and periods. The World Health Organization (2021) defines ageism in such a way:

Ageism is the stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination against people on the basis of their age. Ageism is widespread and an insidious practice which has harmful effects on the health of older adults. For older people, ageism is an everyday challenge. Overlooked for employment, restricted from social services and stereotyped in the media, ageism marginalizes and excludes older people in their communities. (as cited in Gutterman, 2021, p. 26).

Keeping aside various other forms of age-related biases, WHO too compares ageism with racism and sexism and states that ageism has not been widely encountered, but it is an everyday challenge for older people as it is a socially normalized prejudice. In the book, *Ageism: Negative and Positive*, Palmore (1999) introduces ageism as a burning issue of a new era:

Racism became a burning issue in the 19th century and was attacked by the abolitionist and civil rights movements. Sexism became a burning issue in this century and was attacked by the suffrage and equal rights movements. Ageism is the third great 'ism' of our society. It is now being attacked by gerontologists and the aged themselves (p. 4).

Like sexism and racism, ageism creates unfavorable and inequitable living circumstances for the elderly. In human society, different words and terminologies are used to refer to old people or aging people. In the book, *Ageism: Negative and Positive*, Palmore(1999) collects some words that are used to address the elderly in a derogatory way:

"Ageism is reflected in such colloquialisms for elders as 'coot,' 'crone,' 'geezer,' 'hag,' 'old buzzard,' 'old crock,' 'old duffer,' 'old fogey,' 'old goat,' 'old maid,' 'old-fangled,' 'old-fashioned,' 'out to pasture,' 'over the hill,'

and ‘washed up’” (p. 5). All these terms that are used to refer to the old people make a sense that society is not ready to respect the older generations and their members.

Ventrell-Monsees and McCann assert that “policy makers and the public have viewed age discrimination as less pervasive and less insidious than race or sex discrimination” (as cited in Palmore, 1999, p. 10). Age-based discrimination is still out of legal recognition, and it is not a punishable or sinister crime as people easily pass age-based prejudices frequently.

Age vs. Aging

The meaning of age is still unclear and primarily ambiguous. Age is frequently used as a synonym for "old." In his attempt to define and explore the meaning of age, Palmore (1999) poses some serious and equally complex questions: “What does ‘old age’ mean to the average person? When does it begin? Who identifies themselves as ‘old’? What are the connotations of ‘old’?” (p. 47). Undoubtedly, there is disagreement over a specific chronological age at which someone turns elderly. Regarding “old age,” human society and social groups differ greatly. There is no doubt that almost all societies keep and practice some sort of discrimination and prejudice against old people.

Human age has been defined in various and differing ways while viewed from biological, sociological, functional, legal, and other perspectives. In his attempt to define the meaning of age, Palmore (1999) identifies a problem in the definitions of the terms *age* and *old*: “The basic problem here is the confusion between ‘old’ in the sense of chronological age and ‘old’ in the sense of worn out, useless, outmoded, obsolete, or discarded, . . .” (p. 48). Palmore (1999) does not find any chronological age to stipulate any agreeable definition of age. He finds himself

trapped in trouble while searching for a legal definition of age:

Thus, there is no legal consensus on when old age arrives, just as there is no popular consensus... On the contrary, most people change slowly as they age, and the rates of change vary greatly between individuals. Therefore, any chronological definition of old age must be arbitrary and of limited usefulness. (p. 50)

Even people of similar ages or age groups do not match their physical, mental, social, political, and other abilities.

Chronological age may have some impacts on human functional ability, but to a large extent, “old people” too greatly differ in their functional abilities. In such a context, it is hard to have a reliable functional definition to refer to the meaning of age. Likewise, sociological and legal theories—even biological gerontologists—do not find and agree on a common satisfactory definition of aging.

According to Morris Rockstein and Marvin L. Sussman, authors and researchers on human gerontology, aging is “any time-dependent change, common to all members of a species, which occurs after maturity of size, form, or function is reached and which is distinct from daily, seasonal, and other biological rhythms” (as cited in Palmore, 1999, p. 51). Human ageing is a consistent natural process, and no force or biological factor interrupts it. In the words of Palmore (1999), social practices and values are always there to distinguish one stage of human life from others:

However, there are more generally used markers of life periods. In all societies, the differences between infants, adults, and elders have been recognized, and typical characteristics have been ascribed to each period. In modern society, life periods have been

increasingly differentiated. . . . It has been found that perceptions of such life periods tend to vary by age, sex, and by social class. (p. 52)

In all human societies, life periods have been differently defined, and at every stage, society expects unique characteristics in its members different from other stages. Robert C. Atchley, an American sociologist and gerontologist, in his popular book *Social Forces and Aging*, defines old age on the basis of human characteristics and draws a distinction between old age and middle age:

Old age is characterized by extreme physical frailty Mental processes slow down, and organic brain disease becomes more common. The individual in old age feels that death is near. Activity is greatly restricted. Social networks have been decimated. . . . Institutionalization is common. (Atchley, 1997, pp. 7–8).

Along with ageing process, people begin to lose physical and mental power and social networks, which causes them to worry about death.

Types and Causes of Ageism

Defining and stipulating common and satisfactory types of ageism is a difficult task. Undoubtedly, in different communities or social groups, ageism has been categorized, interpreted, and practiced in different forms and structures based on variations in social ideology, cultural practices, and institutional structures available in communities. We generally take ageism as an age-based social prejudice, discrimination, concept, and understanding regarding older people. Prominent researcher and thinker on ageism, Palmore (1999) categories ageism based on existing social prejudices, stereotyping, and discrimination practiced and constructed regarding older people: “Ageism may be negative (against elders) or positive (for the aged). Ageism

includes both prejudice (beliefs and attitudes) and discrimination (actions). Thus, there are four basic types of ageism: negative prejudice, negative discrimination, positive prejudice, and positive discrimination” (p. 45).

While exploring and stating such major stereotypes, Palmore (1999) writes, “There are at least nine major stereotypes that reflect negative prejudice toward elders: illness, impotency, ugliness, mental decline, mental illness, uselessness, isolation, poverty, and depression” (p. 20). It is often argued and claimed that almost in all human communities, elders lack physical and mental powers, which make them look ugly and drive them towards separation or isolation from family members, colleagues, and known others.

Along with biological decline and loss of active physical life, elders are often blamed for losing mental and sexual power, suffering from poverty, developing mental illness, entering impotency, and suffering from depression. With the increasing number of dependent older people in the total population, every nation is under pressure to invest a large portion of the budget in their health care: “Older people are always singled out as the most expensive demographically defined group of healthcare users” (Kane & Kane, 2005, p. 50). In the medical field as well, ageism is clearly evident: “The systematic exclusion of older people from clinical trials is a flagrant example of ageism” (Kane & Kane, 2005, p. 51). Even if they do keep and exercise any mental and sexual powers, people often take them and react unusually as if they had no right to them. While talking about the impacts of ageism, the World Health Organization draws relations between human health and growing life expectancy:

Ageism can change how we view ourselves, can erode solidarity between generations, can devalue or

limit our ability to benefit from what younger and older populations can contribute, and can impact our health, longevity and well-being while also having far-reaching economic consequences. . . . Ageism also increases risky health behaviors, such as eating an unhealthy diet, drinking excessively or smoking, and reduces our quality of life. (World Health Organization, 2021, para. 7).

While talking about the types of ageism, it has been categorized on multiple grounds and perspectives. Ageism is also an evolving term and concept in human society, as society keeps on introducing new perspectives to look at and define both age and ageism. While most writers and critics define ageism with negative stereotypical terms relating it to human traits, living conditions, and social psychological attitudes, there are some others who don't ignore the positive stereotypes related to older people. Interpersonal ageism, self-directed ageism, and institutional ageism are some public forms of ageism. Like feminism, sexism, and racism, ageism too includes multiple forms, and there are many determinants of human aging:

The WHO active aging policy framework outlines six sets of variables ("determinants") that impact active aging across the life span, which are considered to be particularly relevant to older people as they age. These six determinants are: (1) economic conditions (sufficient income, social security, and opportunities for employment); (2) health and social services (promoting health and preventing disease, ensuring access to health services and continuous care); (3) behavior (healthy living, such as engagement in physical activity, healthy eating, oral health, appropriate medication use, and avoidance of smoking and excessive alcohol intake);

(4) personal characteristics (these refer to biological, genetic, and psychological factors); (5) social situation (sufficient social support, education and literacy, and freedom from violence and abuse); and (6) the physical environment (living in safe environments, such as safe housing, few environmental hazards, and environmental cleanliness). (Swift, et al., 2017, p. 196)

Economic conditions, health status, physical environment, social situation, personal characteristics, etc. determine the aging process in people. Social thinkers and researchers do not agree on the types and categories of ageism. While differentiating personal ageism from institutional ageism, Palmore (1999) states: “Personal ageism is prejudice or discrimination by individuals, while institutional ageism is a policy of an institution or organization that discriminates for or against elders, such as a compulsory retirement policy” (p. 44). Unlike youths, older people are often avoided, uninvited, and put aside in many segments of social life by other people in human society in a clearly visible form. We cannot agree that every individual from all types of society and living conditions equally and similarly keeps and practices discrimination and prejudices against older people. However, some stereotypes have been identified in a global context that speak up for negative prejudice towards elders. In the words of Chang E-Shien et al., “the term ‘individual ageism’ includes the impact of culture-based negative age stereotypes and negative self-perceptions of aging on the health of older persons...” (as cited in Gutterman, 2021, p. 5). The influence of ageism is not common among all members of human community as some people are more discriminatory and intolerant of older people than others.

While talking about the causes of ageism, personal factors of a person play a significant role. One of the instructors at the University of California, Rouxi Zhao (2023), writes: “Individual determinants include age, sex, years of education, cultural background, ethnicity, study area, better physical and mental health condition, socioeconomic status, living in an urban or rural area, and marital status” (p. 1273). Guttermann (2021) states:

Personal ageism is determined by the attitudes about old age that are learned from childhood as young people witness how others react to it and is further influenced by external factors such as media messages. Personal ageism is not only applied to others but also to one’s own aging process” (p. 18).

The more we begin to grow old, the more we begin to take ourselves negatively. When society, culture, religion, and governmental laws and policies come to define old people from different perspectives than those of other groups of people, it results in the origin of structural or institutional ageism:

At the institutional and cultural level, the availability of social resources, the percentage of older people in a country, and cultural attitudes are directly and closely related to ageism. With the increase of resource scarcity, especially in the face of the increase in the number of elderly people, the tension over resource allocation is often triggered, which leads to a higher rate of age discrimination. (Zhao, 2023, p. 1276)

With the increasing number of older people in demographic statistics, society and governments often fail to allocate all the necessary facilities and resources to such old people on equal grounds, which results in structural ageism. In the words of Chang E-Shien et al., “‘Structural ageism’

refers to the explicit or implicit policies, practices, or procedures of societal institutions that discriminate against older persons; it can also include the age-based actions of individuals who are part of these institutions . . .” (as cited in Gutterman, 2021, p. 5). Social and legal rules construct and continue ageism to provide new identity, facilities, and privileges to the older populations: “Institutional ageism refers to established rules, missions, and practices that discriminate against older individuals or groups based on age. Mandatory retirement at a particular age is an example” (Dennis & Thomas, 2007, p. 84). Economic resources, cultural practices, and policies invented and practiced upon the elderly deliberately construct prejudices against them: “Institutional determinants include three components, which are available economic resources, the percentage of older people in the country, and different cultural dimensions” (Zhao, 2022, p. 1275). Except institutional and individual factors, there are some other interpersonal factors that cause ageism: “Interpersonal and inter-group determinants include frequency of contact with the elderly group, target’s age, target’s sex, quality of contact with the elderly group, frequency of contact with grandparents and other relatives and voluntary and paid experience with older people” (Zhao, 2022, 275). In the presence of existing social, cultural, and institutional practices, attitudes, laws, and policies, people can’t overcome the long-kept and neutralized prejudice stored in them against the elderly population. However, they also construct and continue ageism with deliberate intention: “Intentional ageism is attitudes, rules, or practices that are held, implemented, or engaged in with the knowledge that they are biased against older people” (Dennis & Thomas, 2020, p. 84).

Discriminatory attitudes, beliefs, and rules that people hold in them against older people give birth to

intentional ageism. In the words of Levy (2022), “Ageism operates across multiple levels of impact: the structural level (i.e., in which societal institutions reinforce systematic bias against older persons), dyadic level (i.e., seeping through day-to-day social interactions), and the individual level (i.e., the effect of older persons’ views of aging on their health)” (p. 335). Levy (2022) argues that ageism that exists in the individual level turns into structural one becomes systematic when people participate in social interactions (p. 335).

It is an agreed-upon reality that there is an increasing impact of ageism on human relations and social structure: “It is likely that other factors also contribute to the increase in negativity, such as modernization with its associated industrialization, urbanization, and mobilization that reduces the number of children growing up near older role models” (Ng, Allore, Trentalange, Monin, & Levy, 2015, p. 5). The more human society is heading towards advancement driven by industrialization, urbanization, and technological changes, the younger generations seem prejudiced toward the aging people. Increment in life expectancy, on the ground of advancement in medical science research and progress, has given birth to further expansion and global spreading of ageism:

With populations around the world becoming older, the risk of ageism spreading is greater and the impetus to design strategies to tackle it is stronger. Global population ageing can be expected to result in ageism receiving more attention in research and policymaking. (Jecker, 2020, p. 2).

Ageism is strongly rooted in the human mind, and it is often reflected in the exchange of behavior with the people of other groups. In the words of Ouchida and Lachs (2015), “Older adults who believe pain, fatigue, depressed mood, dependency upon others, and decreased libido are a

normal part of aging are less likely to seek healthcare” (p. 51). Once older adults start taking their aging process naturally, they don’t see healthcare and health facilities rather they start showing detachment to their longer living.

In every social institution, organization, agency, and sector, the presence and function of ageism are more or less visible. In the examination of the World Health Organization (2021), “Ageism seeps into many institutions and sectors of society, including those providing health and social care, in the workplace, the media, and the legal system”. Age based prejudices often appear in human language, deeds, the exchange of behaviors, thoughts, and social ideology while dealing with people of varying age groups. The World Health Organization (2021) states, “Ageism arises when age is used to categorize and divide people in ways that lead to harm, disadvantage, and injustice. It can take many forms, including prejudicial attitudes, discriminatory acts, and institutional policies and practices that perpetuate stereotypical beliefs.” Nelson considers the industrial revolution as a leading factor in causing shifting attitudes towards older persons:

The industrial revolution demanded great mobility in families—to go where the jobs were. . . . Older people were not as mobile as younger people. These jobs tended to be oriented toward long, difficult, manual labor, and the jobs were thus more suited to younger, stronger workers (as cited in Gutterman, 2021, p. 12).

Age-based negative stereotypes are a part of everyday social behavior and human learning in the present scenario, as media, social discourse, advertisements, and public policies are unfair while incorporating older people into social sections of society.

As a contagious disease, ageism is to engulf the human mind and cultural practices in the days to come unless interventions work out against such prejudices. “Ageism is a primitive disease, and, unfortunately, our fears about aging are so deep that ageism will probably never totally disappear. But there are interventions we can make now to treat its painful assault” (Butler, 1989, p. 146).

Measures to Reduce the Impacts of Ageism

Butler (2005) argues that elderly people can fight and boldly stand against the prejudice of ageism only when they are supplied or guaranteed resources available in the human community on equal ground: “Attention must be paid to the fair and equitable allocation of resources among the generations. People must be made to understand that efforts to deal with ageism are not intended to give older people a leg up over others, but only to ensure that elders receive an equitable share of society’s resources” (p. 86).

Instead of upholding the biased ideologies developed for them, the elderly need to be industrious in the fields of their capabilities, interests, and choices: “Older persons themselves need to be productive and develop a philosophy on aging if we are to fight ageism” (Butler, 1989, p. 146). To counter the prevailing and expanding effects of ageism, it is a must to generate intergenerational human relations on the grounds of human empathy, attachment, respect, and distinct values of each generation:

Policy and law can address discrimination and inequality on the basis of age and protect the human rights of everyone, everywhere. Educational activities can enhance empathy, dispel misconceptions about different age groups and reduce prejudice by providing accurate information and counter-stereotypical examples” (World Health Organization, 2022).

It is essential to introduce and practice new laws, moral principles and social values to reduce the impacts of ageism and its darker effects on human welling, social adjustment and interpersonal relations.

Conclusion

The growing influence of ageism is a global threat, as people still consider age-based discrimination practiced toward older adults to be a natural social practice. At present, people are aware and sensitive enough to refrain from practicing racism, sexism, and other forms of discrimination against individuals in evolving and progressive societies. However, ageism remains unidentified and is deliberately ignored in terms of legal recognition and protection in many societies across the world. The injustice, ill-treatment, and social exclusion that older people experience in social contexts—simply because of their declining age and the aging process—must come to an end, because social segregation, isolation, and divisions among people on the grounds of increasing age and its consequences fall outside the boundaries of globally acknowledged human rights and their premises.

Personal ageism is difficult to understand and control; however, institutional ageism is deeply rooted in cultural practices, social relations, gender roles, and the development and functioning of social institutions. Negative stereotypes created and disseminated about older adults result in intergenerational conflict and hatred, which seem to weaken the foundations of both humanity and civilization in democratic or civil societies. The common social values and principles—such as social welfare, protection of human rights, social justice, legal protection, and humanity—begin to crumble when older adults feel rejected, excluded, and uninvited from social settings by the younger generation.

Like other discriminatory 'isms', there should be legal, social, cultural, and institutional protections against ageism. Our society, culture, systems of governance, legal frameworks, and human behavior should stand firmly against such age-based discrimination, as this form of prejudice is both baseless and unjustifiable.

[Pradip Lamichhane is a Ph.D. Research Fellow at the Department of Languages and Mass Communication, Kathmandu University School of Arts.]

References

- Achenbaum, W. A. (2015). A history of ageism since 1969. *Generations: Journal of the American Society on Aging*, 39(3), 10–16.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/26556123>
- Atchley, R. C. (1997). *Social forces and aging: An introduction to social gerontology*. Wadsworth Pub. Co.
- Butler, R. N. (1980). Ageism: A foreword. *Journal of Social Issues*, 36(2), 8–11. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4560.1980.tb02018.x>
- Butler, R. N. (1989). Dispelling ageism: The cross-cutting intervention. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 503, 138–147.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/1047223>
- Butler, R. N. (2005). Ageism: Looking back over my shoulder. *Generations: Journal of the American Society on Aging*, 29(3), 84–86.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/26555422>
- Calasanti, T. (2005). Ageism, gravity, and gender: Experiences of aging bodies. *Generations: Journal of the American Society on Aging*, 29(3), 8–12.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/26555396>

- Dennis, H., & Thomas, K. (2007). Ageism in the workplace. *Journal of the American Society on Aging*, 31(1), 84–89. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26555516>
- Gutterman, A. S. (2021). Ageism: Where it comes from and what it does. *Social Science Research Network*. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3849022>
- Hendricks, J. (2005). Ageism: Looking across the margin in the new millennium. *Generations: Journal of the American Society on Aging*, 29(3), 5–7. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26555395>
- Iversen, T. N., Larsen, L., & Solem, P. E. (2009). A conceptual analysis of ageism. *Nordic Psychology*, 61(3), 4–22. <https://doi.org/10.1027/1901-2276.61.3.4>
- Jecker, N. S. (2020). Ageism. In *Encyclopedia of life sciences* (pp. 1–7). John Wiley and Sons. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470015902.a0028976>
- Kane, R. L., & Kane, R. A. (2005). Ageism in healthcare and long-term care. *Generations: Journal of the American Society on Aging*, 29(3), 49–54. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26555410>
- Levy, B. (2009). Stereotype embodiment: A psychosocial approach to aging. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 18(6), 332–336. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8721.2009.01662.x>
- Merriam-Webster. (1994). *Webster's new collegiate dictionary*. Merriam-Webster, Inc.
- Merriam-Webster. (2023, August 29). *Ageism*. In *Merriam-Webster.com dictionary*. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ageism>
- Ng, R., Allore, H. G., Trental Ange, M., Monin, J. K., & Levy, B. R. (2015). Increasing negativity of age stereotypes across 200 years: Evidence from a database of 400 million words. *PLoS ONE*, 10(2),

- e0117086.
<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0117086>
- Officer, A., & de la Fuente-Núñez, V. (2018). A global campaign to combat ageism. *Bulletin of the World Health Organization*, 96(4), 295–296.
<https://doi.org/10.2471/blt.17.202424>
- Ouchida, K. M., & Lachs, M. S. (2015). Not for doctors only: Ageism in healthcare. *Generations: Journal of the American Society on Aging*, 39(3), 46–57.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/26556135>
- Palmore, E. (1999). *Ageism: Positive and negative* (2nd ed.). Springer Publishing Company.
- Sorgman, M. I., & Sorensen, M. (1984). Ageism: A course of study. *Theory Into Practice*, 23(2), 117–123.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/1476440>
- Swift, H. J., Abrams, D., Marques, S., Vauclair, C.-M., Bratt, C., & Lima, M. L. (2017). The risks of ageism model: How ageism and negative attitudes toward age can be a barrier to active aging. *Social Issues and Policy Review*, 11(1), 195–231.
<https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/77067146.pdf>
- World Health Organization. (2021, March 18). *Ageism is a global challenge: UN*. <https://www.who.int/news/item/18-03-2021-ageism-is-a-global-challenge-un>
- World Health Organization. (2021, March 18). *Ageing: Ageism*. <https://www.who.int/news-room/questions-and-answers/item/ageing-ageism>
- Zhao, R. (2022). *Identifying reasons for ageism in the context of aging*. In *Proceedings of the 2022 6th International Seminar on Education, Management and Social Sciences (ISEMSS 2022)* (pp. 1272–1277). https://doi.org/10.2991/978-2-494069-31-2_150



Department of Languages & Mass Communication
School of Arts
Kathmandu University
Hattiban, Lalitpur, Nepal
P.O. Box: 6250, Kathmandu
www.kusoa.edu.np

