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Missing Links in Adaptations: An Analysis of Steven Spielberg's Film Adaptation of Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*

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Alice Walker's The Color Purple is an epistolary novel which tells the story of Celie, a black woman who faces repeated abuse in a patriarchal and racist American South. This was made into a motion picture by Steven Spielberg in 1985. This study attempts to show the variations that occur in the text and the movie and highlights the time period, societal acceptance, audience response, and commercial expectations which could have contributed to it. It examines the film keeping various paradigms in mind and at the same time analyses the existing theories and paradigms of film adaptation. It also tries to explore how the usage of African-American dialect that forms such a unique part of the text has been rendered in the movie. In addition it looks at the way a black narrative is appropriated by a white director for a larger and mixed audience. In this analysis of adaptation, the study also intends to underline the attributes that might have played a significant role in negotiating the differences of expressions in both the narratives.

INTRODUCTION

Films have become one of the most important media of entertainment. When one aims to talk about this form of art then one is referring to a wide range and variety of films. In this variety, one type that is increasingly being made and appreciated is the film adaptation of a popular novels or plays. What a novel does in days the film does in hours. Above all, the latter-medium of entertainment reaches a larger audience. The salient question is whether the film really is parallel in terms of satisfaction after reading the same novel. Does it have the same impact? Film

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adaptations have always been scrutinised and authors are often asked whether they agree to the adapted version of their text. Directors are about questioned how important they feel it is, to remain faithful to the text. Different authors and directors have different answers to these questions.

This study attempts to examine the different theories of film adaptation and how scholars advocate the application of these theories when analysing any motion picture based on a particular text. It studies the distinction between the two media of narration, where the first medium is books while the other is film adaptations of these books.

Literature review

Talking of film adaptations, Andrew (1999) rightly states that “making a film out of an earlier text is virtually as old as the machinery of cinema itself”. Adaptations have become a fact of life. Hence, their presence should be accepted and respected. It is seen throughout this study that the scholars argue that adaptations should be treated as a different form of art and should not be compared to its mother text. But at the end of the discussion the study aims to say that after all film is an adaptation and the baby cannot be detached from its mother i.e. the precursor.

It should not be forgotten that the two media of art are very different and require distinct levels of representation. For Chatman (1999), one of most basic features in which they are distinct is the way in which they assert themselves. For a novel every single detail can be written and described but a film requires special efforts to assert a property and for that reason director often employs various techniques to do so or sometimes (intelligently or unintelligently) s/he doesn't take the pains to do so. Where on the one hand special efforts are required for assertion, on the other hand film narrative “possesses a plentitude of visual details” which acts in the favour of this form of art.

“Adaptation theory, the systematic study of films based on literary sources, is one of the oldest areas in film studies” (Leitch, 2007). McFarlane (1996) in his work commented on the origin of adaptations by saying “as soon as the cinema began to see itself as a narrative entertainment, the idea of ransacking the novel—that already established repository of narrative fiction—for source material got underway, and the process has continued more or less unabated for ninety years”.

Thus, it is seen that adaptations are almost as old as the film industry itself but somehow novels have been comparatively more popular amongst filmmakers than other forms of literary texts. John Harrington (1977) once estimated that one-third of the films made are adapted from novels. Since they are adaptations of a work of art already in existence, comparison between the two is inescapable. Thus the issue of adaptation has been a matter of debate for a long time now. Film critics or viewers pronounce their judgment on the basis of their assessment of the adaptation. There are always contradictory opinions about the effective adaptation of a text depending upon the critics' respective idea of the adaptation of a text. In fact, there have been contradictory opinions on the very idea of adaptation itself.

As mentioned above many scholars believe that cinema and novels are different media of representation and therefore are incomparable; however, for some if a piece of art is being copied, the comparison is inevitable and would always follow because the moment a work is referred to as "adaptation" that very moment its relationship is built with another work. Showing his dislike towards adaptations Michael Winterbottom has given the reason behind the lack of appropriateness in film adaptations. He says, "if you're making the film of the book it's because you like the book, but that gives you all sorts of problems in trying to produce a version of it. So there's always something a bit restrictive, a bit second hand about them" (As quoted by Spencer, 2006 and cited in Welsh & Lev, 2007).

Rabindranath Tagore (1929) once said that "Cinema is still playing second fiddle to literature" and the true lovers of literature would always believe so. Virginia Woolf called film a "parasite" and literature its "prey" and "victim" (quoted in Hutcheon, 2006, p. 2). Thus, it is seen that there are various opinions about the idea of film adaptations. While many critics dislike adaptations, others advocate the need for it. It should always be kept in mind that there are a large number of audiences who do not read and for them the idea of adaptation does not exist. A best-selling book reaches a few million readers but a cinema has potential for a much bigger and more varied audience.

While defending the art of adaptation and discussing film narrative Metz (1977) has stated, "film tells us continuous stories; it 'says' things that could be conveyed also in the language of words, yet it says that differently. There is a reason for the possibility as well as for the necessity of adaptation". Adaptations are often regarded as secondary work culturally inferior to its original text, and Hutcheon

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(2006) in her paper tries to question this notion. She believes they would never have been so omnipresent had they been secondary or inferior. Rather adaptations are increasing in number and this shows that they are more than welcome in the society. She says “why would any filmmaker want to adapt a work, if their efforts are ridiculed in the court of audience who believe that their own imagined version was much better”. Filmmakers’ reasons for such phenomena appear “to move between the poles of crass commercialism and high-minded respect for literary works”. Whatever be the filmmakers’ reason, this fact cannot be denied that people do largely watch adaptations. Even though they complain of violation they definitely want to see a moving picture of their beloved book and love to compare their imagination with that of the filmmaker’s.

It is when their mental image of the characters and the scenes do not match with that of the director, then the film turns out to be a disappointment and hence comes the obvious comment “the novel was better”. The other reasons for such a generalised view could be that the novel was actually better or may be the director failed to include everything in the film and his/her aim was to appeal to a particular set of the audience. Moreover film does not allow the same freedom a novel does—“to interact with the plot or characters by imagining them in their own minds” (FITC Adaptation, 2011). It should be kept in mind that inclusion of every single detail in a film is not possible as the filmmaker has to shrink the whole plot into about two hours which otherwise has no time constraint. It has been a matter of debate how successful the filmmakers have been in portraying the true essence of the novel being adapted and how faithful they have been to the writer and to the plot. The most important question is how important “fidelity is in reality” (Welsh & Lev, 2007).

“The act of adaptation always involves both (re-)interpretation and then (re-) creation; this has been called both appropriation and salvaging, depending upon the perspective” (Hutcheon, 2006). The given statement gives room for experimentation with the plot of the text. McFarlane (1996) believes that the adapted films have been haunted by the fidelity issue; the reason that he gives for this is the fact that the novel comes first and that there is an ingrained sense of respect for traditional literature. According to him “fidelity criticism depends on a notion of the text as having and rendering up to the (intelligent) reader a single, correct ‘meaning’ which the filmmaker has either adhered to or in some sense violated or tampered with”. Such a belief assumes that the filmmaker’s version of the novel will match with

that of the other readers. Since such coincidences are next to impossible, where does the scope of fidelity criterion for analysis of films lie?

“The morally loaded discourse of fidelity is based on the implied assumption that adapters aim simply to reproduce the adapted text (e.g. Orr 1984, p.73). Adaptation is repetition, but repetition without replication. And there are manifestly many different possible intentions behind the act of adaptation; the urge to consume and erase the memory of the adapted text or to call it into question is as likely as the desire to pay tribute to copying” (Hutcheon, 2006).

Fidelity criticism has been regarded as the most orthodox way of analysing a film and many scholars try and move beyond fidelity and look into various other aspects. It is understood that while studying adaptation, fidelity should not be the only scale on which the adaptations should be measured. Leitch (2004), when dealing with film adaptations has talked about twelve basic fallacies of adaptation theory and fidelity, for him, is one of them. Although some critics do criticise the adoption of fidelity theory but many critics are not against it and regard it as a viable choice which can be regarded as one of the criteria for analysis. There is no denying the fact that fidelity is hard to achieve in its purest form but the concern is not with the degree but with the way it is embraced. Many researchers believe that the “idea of fidelity” is not even a matter to understand adaptations. Talking about faithfulness, Chris Columbus, the director of the film *Harry Potter* and the *Philosopher’s Stone* said, “people would have crucified me if I hadn’t been faithful to the book” (quoted in Whipp, 2002, p.114). Thus, fidelity cannot be neglected. The ardent reader who becomes disappointed when s/he doesn’t find the film adhering to his/her version of the novel should not be forgotten. Thus, fidelity is not the main theory of analysis but is definitely one of them.

Directors are often accused of omitting some portions of the text in their version of story. But one should keep in mind that the focus should not be on the eliminated parts but rather on the fact that what importance those scenes had in forming the plot. A change in adaptation is not only unavoidable but also mandatory keeping the concerns of time and medium in mind. In fact many researchers believe that cinema has a separate identity and separate aesthetic principles and thus should not be compared with the novel. But on other hand it is believed that fidelity is not desirable but admirable and faithfulness to text must be kept in mind when dealing

with the text. Considering the plot to be of utmost importance Robert Eberwein (1979) has quoted Semiotician Christian Metz, saying that “‘cinematographic language’ is first of all concerned with plot”.

It is seen that when dealing with fidelity it must be kept in mind what can be transferred and what cannot be. The focus should be on the fact that the plot isn't altered beyond a point and the essence of the story is retained. Orr (1984) remarks, “the issue is not whether the adapted film is faithful to its source, but rather how the choice of a specific source and how the approach to that source serve the film's ideology”.

Scholars such as Wagner (1975), have come to the conclusion that before analysing an adaptation one must understand what kind of adapted work they are dealing with. Wagner (1975) divides the adaptations into three categories which should be kept in mind. Deciding the category before analysis would prevent them from crucifying the film and the filmmaker. The three categories are:

a) Transposition – where there is minimal interference by the director and he tries to replicate the text as much as he can. Kline (1996) calls it the “translation paradigm”, according to which “the novel is the privileged artistic work, while the film exists to serve its precursor”. Critics following this paradigm judge a film on the basis of its fidelity to the text.

b) Commentary – here the original text is altered to some extent. Kline's “pluralist paradigm” would fall under this category where critics “value the film's ability to present a coherent fictive world within itself which bears significant traces of the novel”. Andrew (1980, 1999) is one of the critics who follows such a paradigm and believes that such films have the “spirit” of the novel.

c) Analogy – in this category there is a considerable variation from the original text. Here the director has attempted to bring his originality and create a new piece of art. This is very similar to Kline's “transformation paradigm”. Bluestone (1957) would be regarded as the critic who believed in this. In his work *Novel to Film*, which is regarded as the founding text in adaptation study, he mentioned the filmmaker as an independent artist and is “not a

translator for an established author but a new author in his own right.”

Thus the paradigms given by Kline in the year 1996 are quite similar to Wagner’s categories. Kline has given one more paradigm which keeps the “audience” in mind. This paradigm would be discussed later. It should be kept in mind that none of the theorists try to term any particular category or paradigm superior or inferior to the other. They just believe that critics should adopt different paradigms for evaluating the film adaptation depending upon the type of adaptation.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study is qualitative in nature and attempts to maintain a balance between positivism and interpretivism in its approach. The comparisons drawn between the original text and its film adaptation are descriptive. The contents of the film adaptation are analysed in terms of socially constructed reality. There is an attempt to understand the intended meaning of the film in relation to the original text. Explanations for such deviations as evident in the adapted version of the text are sought with the descriptions of social meanings.

The following section attempts to understand and explain the film version of the text.

Analysis

With this background research, this study attempts to analyse Steven Spielberg’s adaptation of Alice Walker’s *The Color Purple*. This epistolary novel was turned into a motion picture by Steven Spielberg in 1985. This adaptation has been analysed keeping in mind the above discussed objectives. The movie is seen with a particular objective. Andrew (1999) states that “adaptation is both a leap and a process”, and incorporating this idea, the study keeps a neutral point of view. It attempts an academic criticism of the movie, trying to understand the director’s approach. The movie is weighed against the different paradigms mentioned above in order to decide to which paradigm it belongs. Spielberg’s movie was a blockbuster in terms of commercial success. But does a blockbuster status certify a movie to be perfect? The movie, though received various awards and several Oscar nominations, failed to handle the seriousness of the plot and ended up in becoming a mere commercial success. Early (1986), in his paper discusses the mixed reviews of people about the

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film. He says that for some, a hit status frees the film from all sorts of allegations but for some the movie was a hit because it showed the people what they wanted to see. Given these two propositions the latter one remains the prime concern of the study.

From here we move on to examine how close Spielberg has been to Walker's story of Celie, a Southern African-American Girl. Alice Walker is an African-American author born in the 20th century. Her work *The Color Purple* has been widely read. This study attempts to see to what extent has Spielberg been successful in turning Celie's letters into a motion picture and how far has he done justice to Walker's characters. In the similar context the study also examines the socio-political constraints Spielberg may have had while treating the original plot and what led to subsequent reconstructions.

"You better tell nobody but God. It'd kill your mammy".

The very opening lines of the novel were said to Celie, the protagonist, by the man whom she considered to be her Pa and this one piece of advice from him she followed throughout her life. Finding no one to talk to about her problems, Celie started writing letters to God and these letters gave the novel its unique form of being epistolary. The whole novel has been written in the form of letters. Most of them are Celie's letters addressed to God and later to her sister Nettie while the novel also has some letters which are written by Nettie to Celie.

Synopsis of the film

The Color Purple is the story of Celie, a African-American girl, and her transformation from a suppressed, ill-treated, barely literate girl to a strong independent woman, who learns to be assertive and protective of herself. As a young girl of fourteen, Celie was repeatedly raped and abused by her father. She bears two children from him but they were taken away from her. She is then forced into a loveless marriage to Albert who is known to Celie as Mister. Mister, who is a father of four children, was in love with Shug Avery, a Blues singer. Celie's life after marriage is worse than before as she is nothing but "merely a servant and occasional sexual convenience for him" (Watkins, 1982). Celie's life improves with the help of the women who come into her life because it is through them she gains a sense of self identity and also finds the courage to fight for herself.

Shug Avery, who was previously the love of Mister, is now the love of Celie's life. Shug is the one with whom Celie consumes her physical desires for the first time. Although Shug is in an on and off relation with Celie as she keeps changing boyfriends and husbands but still the love and support that she gets from her act like a catalyst. Mister's son, Harpo's wife Sofia is another strong woman, representing woman power, who influences Celie. There are other women, like Mister's sisters, who try to help Celie but in vain. Amongst all these, what keeps her strong is the love and affection that she feels for Nettie, her sister. Celie would have died long before had she not felt Nettie's presence somewhere in the world. And then the letters, which come from Nettie make her even stronger and these letters act as a true catalyst in making her revolt against Albert, her husband.

These things give her enough strength to move on in life and believe in herself. She starts her own business of sewing pants on the advice of Shug. Sewing pants symbolises her new found strength as anything that had to do with pants was a man's job but now Celie was wearing the pants.

Thus, seeing the new belief which Celie had in herself made Albert think differently and reassess her character. The end of the novel finds Celie, Albert and Shug, who have finally become good friends sitting together when Nettie comes home with her family, which includes Celie's two children, to be with her sister.

Although it seems to be simply a story of a Southern girl, not a fair-skinned one's journey through life but it is much more than that. The plot opens up many discourses like African-American colonial discourse; patriarchy and gender discourse; white nationalism and alienated black detachment. It also captures multiple themes like that of women oppression; the importance of women's education; the condition of African-Americans; the connection of Southern Blacks with Africa and finally the search for God.

This beautiful story was changed into a motion picture by the famous director Steven Spielberg who was known for making great films, though they belonged to a different genre. Prior to the release of *The Color Purple*, Hollywood movies saw very few Black characters but this film was truly dominated by them. Not only the number, but the way in which the Blacks were represented in Hollywood Cinema also changed. Talking about the existence and representation of African-Americans

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in Hollywood movies, Hughey (2009) has said that by the end of 1940s “racially aware” cinema came into existence and by the mid 1970s even if Black characters got space in movies, “the humanity of those people were denied”. It was by the late 1990s that conditions changed and there was a “utopian reversal” where “black characters entered a new stage of racial representation”. These films glorified black characters and put them in powerful positions but only as long as they were placed in “racially subservient positions”. He believes that “positive (Black) characters are welcome only if they observe certain limits imposed upon them by mainstream, normative convention”. Regarding the film, it can be said that Spielberg took a great step in selecting a novel with a Black theme and specially the one which was apart from his forte. But it is believed that the White Americans have often failed to handle the plot with a Black theme with an insider’s perspective and Spielberg was no exception to it. He has omitted some of the most powerful scenes of the novel in order to appeal to a larger audience which greatly comprised of White Americans. As cited in Early’s (1986) work a black nationalist said that “whites have been unable to portray their own history in American films, so why do we expect them to handle anyone else’s differently.” The reality is that characters in Spielberg’s film version are no doubt “big and vibrant, but beyond that they resemble Walker’s barely at all” (Watkins, 1982).

In order to appeal to a large section of the audience, Spielberg significantly altered the plot. He did make a film on a Black theme but the poignant tale of a Southern Black girl was changed into a sweet turbulent journey. Gross (2001) has pointed out, “when previously ignored groups or perspectives do gain visibility, the manner of their representation (will) reflect the biases and interest of those powerful people who define public agenda”. Proving it to be true it is observed that the expressions used in the novel are situated in a context and the “realism and grit” of the original plot find no expression in the film. The selective omission of Celie’s subaltern voice creates an unnecessary gap.

Firstly, Spielberg has sufficiently muted the homosexual relations of Celie and Shug. Although in one scene the audiences do get a subtle hint of their relationship but that looks more like an emotional act in the heat of the moment. The intense passion and desire which they have for each other, especially on Celie’s part, have been significantly toned down. By suppressing the intensity of her strong sexual desire, the director achieves a patriarchal domination that keeps him politically correct.

In the film, Celie is first introduced to Shug when Mister i.e. Albert brings her home but in reality she was in awe of Shug's charm much before she had seen her before her marriage. We find her staring at Shug's picture in an initial part of the novel. For Celie, Shug was the most beautiful woman she had ever seen, a queen about whom Celie wondered. Moreover, even at the time when Albert mechanically makes love to her, she thinks of Shug. Rather than being jealous, Celie is happy and excited when Albert brings her home. In the novel it is shown how willingly Celie serves Shug and feels like a man when she bathes Shug. For her the act of bathing her queen is like praying and she has to work hard to keep her desires in control. But the depiction of this in the film has been more like an act of nursing. The powerful text of the original plot turns into an ordinary act in the visual representation of the same. The emotions captured in the movie look like a strong friendship between two girls who accidentally get involved in the act of love making in the heat of the moment.

Bluestone (1957) while talking about the constraints on a filmmaker is of the opinion that no matter whether the film is an adaptation or not but the director has to keep a lot of things in his/her mind, like the conditions within the film industry along with the social and cultural climate at the time of the filmmaking. Thus, the director must have muted the strong relationship to avoid the raised eyebrows that could have come from the audience of the 80s. Still the bond the two shared was too integral a part of the plot to be done away with and the intensity of their relationship could not have been gutted out. Although it is believed by scholars that the directors do have a right to "refashion the spirit of the story with their own vision and tools" (FITC Adaptation, 2011) but still the change of one of the most important themes of the story is not favoured. Kline's fourth paradigm deals with this school of thought where a film is examined as "the product of cultural-historical processes". Here the literary source isn't disregarded, but its influence is reduced keeping in mind "the world from which [the film adaptation] comes and the one toward which it points".

Celie is shown to be almost illiterate in the movie, till the time Nettie comes to stay with her. But the novel shows that Celie went to school and had a basic education. When Pa decides to marry her then both the sisters start studying harder because they are smart enough to know that being better educated would help them in facing the challenges of the world. In the movie Nettie is found teaching Celie very basic stuff like spellings and names of body parts. The director may

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have intended to add fun through those childlike scenes in which he utterly fails. Moreover, he does not take cognizance of the fact that Celie has been writing letters to God since the age of fourteen. These are the letters on which he made his blockbuster movie. Spielberg has used the imagery of a letterbox to show the importance of letters in Celie's life but those letters are from Nettie. The narrative technique has been altered in a positive way in the adaptation. Celie narrates the events rather than writing them in the form of letters to God. The filmmaker has all the right to play with the technique of narration but the impact which the letters had is lost somewhere. "The letters were her way of maintaining sanity in a world where few others ever cared to listen to her" (Ebert, 2006). But when she comes to know that her sister, Nettie is alive then instead of addressing her letters to God she starts writing to Nettie. But still the relation which Celie and God had, is important and cannot be overlooked.

The scene of Nettie being thrown out of Albert's house has been overtly dramatised and altered. Nettie is not thrown out of the house by Albert but is rather asked to move by Celie, so that she could be safe and have a better life. Celie is rather glad to do that. The scene probably was inserted to add some spice to the drama and also to highlight the brutal nature of Albert, which was an integral part of his character. The director's play with the script over here irks because it showed a strong and considerate side of Celie's character where she prefers to stay away from her sister than to have her in pain and misery. So, the scene could have been more harrowing had the unnecessary music not taken the seriousness out of it. It is true that filmmakers often add music and other such devices to highlight the importance of the scene. This is one of the ways in which they assert themselves. But, the drum beats as the background music are too loud which is obviously added with the idea of adding some dramatic effect. Spielberg has employed the non-linguistic sound code to highlight the scene but sadly it has the reverse effect.

Being a White director he has added scenes to show the brutality of Albert but has deleted the brutal act of torture done towards Sofia by Whites. Sofia is shown in jail but what she goes through over there has been simply omitted. To add to the shame Mary Agnes, Harpo's mistress is also raped by the Jail's officers but that doesn't even find a mention in Spielberg's adaptation. We also find Sofia talking about the way she is treated in the Mayor's house as a slave. She says that the Whites "have the nerve to try to make us think slavery fell through because of us... Like us didn't have sense enough to handle it". What has been shown in the film is

a refined slavery, sugar coated with the love of Mayor's wife who was actually a heartless figure in the novel. We see Sofia and her master sitting side by side when she drops her to her place for Christmas but in the novel we find the Mayor's wife saying that "have you ever seen a white person and a colored sitting side by side in a car..."

The treatment meted out to her is so inhuman that she starts hating White people and dreams of killing them. In reply to that Celie says that there are "too many to kill off... us outnumbered from the start". The director might have done away with these dialogues because he was aware of the fact that a major part of his audience would be White Americans and in order to appeal to them he could not portray them in a dark shade vis-a-vis Blacks who have been demonised since ages. Hughey (2009) has described that in Hollywood "there is a form of color blind racism that.....transmits the ideology of White supremacy and normatively but in a subtle, symbolic and polite way".

Adhering to the Marxist and other social theories who believe that "our consciousness doesn't open the world but filters the world according to the shape of its ideology". Andrew (1999) says, "no filmmaker and no film respond immediately to reality itself, or its own inner version. Every representational film adapts a prior conception." This is true of Spielberg's movie version of *The Color Purple* where the director is trying to represent something that would be pleasing to the people who would be watching his work. The scenario is somewhat similar to Ashutosh Gowariker's *Lagaan* (2001) where every British person is on the side of Aamir Khan, the protagonist, who is a petty farmer except for the British captain and his team. This sweet natured attitude of the British was quite hard to digest but the director probably did not want to offend any particular nationality through his film. The film may not have reached so far in Oscars had he openly criticised the British. Rather than being realistic the director wanted to be politically correct. Danny Boyle's *Slumdog Millionaire*, a British Film that released in 2008 was probably such a big hit because it showed the developed nations what they want to see in developing and underdeveloped nations: poverty, treachery and theft. And such a film was hugely acclaimed and also won Oscars.

What is positive about the film is the way he has shown Africa through Nettie's letters. The letters from Nettie are more like a description of African history which look like unnecessary detailing in the novel. But Spielberg has skillfully covered

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Nettie's experiences through her letters. At the same time through Nettie's lines he has also touched upon the theme of Colonialism. Here Spielberg has shown through Olivia's remark that "Africans/Olinkas are like white people at home who don't want colored people to learn" (Walker, p. 162) which counter balances the act of suppression. Just as the Whites did not want the coloured to progress similarly the African patriarchal society did not want the women to learn and progress, suggesting the condition of Black women was even worse. The director has beautifully summarised Nettie's life in Africa by using cultural codes to show Africans and their culture. But Adam's sacrificed mark (a scar made on African women's faces as an orthodox custom) is shown being made celebrating African rituals in the adaptation, but in reality he got the mark to answer Tashi, his beloved's, insecurity.

One of the most important parts that have been done away within the film is Albert and Celie's friendship. By the end of the novel Celie and Albert become great friends because he is the only one who truly understands her feelings. It is Shug's rejection that brings them close to each other. They both have the same love and passion for Shug and Albert is the only one who understands the pain of rejection. Shug's multiple boyfriends have not been shown in the film and thus Celie's attempt to catch her between husbands eventually finds no space in the film which is obviously justified. The end of the story sees Albert or Mister who is a changed person, but Spielberg's story portrays him to be an angel who sacrifices his lifelong savings to help Celie meet her sister which was too good to be true. The movie ends with Celie and Nettie hugging each other with Mister watching from a distance as compared to, in the novel where they are found sitting together as friends and welcoming Nettie. The reason behind this change is hard to guess but probably he wants the audience to leave the theatre with sympathy for Mister which he certainly did not deserve. He tried to show a positive side to his character so that he could appeal to the African-American audience as the change wasn't a threat to the image of Whites at all. After all "strong depiction of blackness are acceptable as long as they served white identities" (Hughey, 2009). It served the dual purpose of appeasing Blacks without harming the pride of Whites.

The connection with God is a very important part of the novel. Shug, who does not seem to be very religious in the beginning of the novel, turns out to be a believer in God. She tries to explain to Celie that "God off if you walk by the color purple in the field somewhere and don't notice it" (Walker, 1980, p.203).

When Celie starts hating God she teaches her that it is bad to hate God at the same time shattering the age old belief that God is a man. She says “*God ain’t a he or a she, but a It.*” The movie adaptation has been very vocal about Shug’s religious sentiments and her urge to be accepted in the church by her father finds a special place in the film.

The scene however takes us to Du Bois’ (1903) *Of The Faith of The Father* where he talks about the fact that religion was very important for the African-American people. Post emancipation almost every slave was a member of some or the other church. Du Bois says that the “Negro church was the social centre of Negro life in the United States, and the most characteristic expression of African character”. If this is taken into consideration then the director was possibly attempting to give his viewers her journey to the African-American’s religious life. The language or the variety used by Celie has been the matter of a great discussion across the world. The language variety she uses is considered to be very different and incorrect. Even African-Americans have accused Walker of using a language which is not African-American English at all. But Celie’s language is the result of the limited education she has had. Walker defends herself by saying that her grandmother used this dialect. We also find Darlene, Celie’s assistant at the sewing shop teaching her how to speak. The language was the feature which made the novel unique and it is Celie’s use of the dialect which helps us in getting attached to her.

Green (2000) has talked about the different language strategies used by filmmakers to mark the language of Black characters. As the film was an adaptation of a novel written in African-American Vernacular English, Spielberg had no option but to incorporate the dialogues as it is in the film. Still he overlooked Celie’s linguistic features totally which made her language unique, unsophisticated and totally different from others. As pronunciation is best conveyed through spoken language therefore the movie could have been a better medium (as compared to the text) to highlight the difference between Celie’s and others’ language. The difference in her language was not only in terms of her pronunciation but her grammar was also significantly different. In the novel, Celie is found being taught by a co-worker to speak properly but she resents changing herself and this denial is seen with respect as the language she used was a part of her identity.

Spielberg is not being accused of playing with the plot. It was an adaptation

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and the director has every right to alter the plot to an extent. But at times the story has been altered so much that it loses its significance. Even Walker has given the novel a happy ending but Spielberg has wrapped the whole story in a glossy cover where everything inside is sombre and filled with grief but the cover is painted with bright colours to drive the attention away from the gross reality.

Walker should be thankful to Spielberg in some cases as his adaptation apart from removing some major scenes and themes of the novel also hid a major flaw in her novel. The change in the medium of narration saved the plot from a major flaw of gap in the chronological order of the events. Weisenburger (1989) has been the first one to bring forth the serious flaw in the chronological order of this Pulitzer Prize winning novel. In narrating the story through letters Walker has failed in adhering to the dates. The most erroneous being the incidence when Nettie describes the pitiful condition of a lady through her letters. She saw her working for the Mayor's wife and this was before she left for Africa. Later it is learnt that the lady was no other but Sofia, Mister's son, Harpo's wife. But when Nettie would have left for Africa, Celie would have been in her early twenties and Sofia just ten or eleven years. So how is it possible for her to be working for the Mayor's wife at that time which was an incidence that happened around fifteen years later? Moreover if we go according to Celie's letters then Sofia gave birth to four children in a time span of eight to nine months. Something that is biologically and practically not possible. Thus, Spielberg's movie saved Walker from some basic chronological problems.

Even Walker's novel has been accused of not showing the true condition of the African-Americans. Apart from the female oppression, that also majorly at the hands of Black males, the novel doesn't discuss other major problems suffered by them. The characters of the novel do not seem to be a part of the history of America and what African-Americans have suffered during the past. Albert's life is never affected by politics as a Black Southern farmer. Only Celie seems to have lived a life of sacrifice as for a long time she was the one not to own a new dress. It is when Mister's sisters take her out to buy a dress of her own; it is then for the first time in her life that Celie's owns her own dress.

The movie also does not mention any poverty. In Spielberg's adaptation the only one person working for the Whites is Sofia but in the novel we find Mary

Agnes giving the reason of family reunion on 4th July. It was because the Whites were busy celebrating their independence and they got a day free from work which indirectly hints that in one way or the other, almost all of them had to work for the Whites.

Thus, it is seen in the movie that there are small problems which get sorted out eventually and finally end on a happy note. “Realism and grit, the signal qualities of Miss Walker’s story are all but absent here” (Watkins, 1982). Early (1986) has rightly said that “the film is like a very expensive card; and a card, after all, has no meaning except in the experience of receiving it. *The Color Purple* has meaning only in experience of watching it.” The movie became a huge success and Spielberg was applauded as the director. But what needs to be questioned is whether this applause was on the grounds of the quality of the film or on the revenue that it earned. The whites appreciated the film for obvious reasons. But why were the African-Americans so happy? They may be happy because before this movie featuring Blacks were modest budget films and never received nationwide release as they were considered to be too specialised a subject (Pearson, 1987). They were happy because they got to see themselves as they want to see and not the way they really are. The reason why Blacks enjoyed the movie was that “it allowed them a certain luxury they had never truly experienced before.... The absence of real folk only intensified the enjoyment for these blacks who liked the film because they were not reminded of their greasy, soiled and messy past” (Early, 1986).

Bluestone (1957, 1971) believed that “when a film becomes a financial or commercial success, the question of its faithfulness is given hardly any thought”. This may be true for the wide set of audience who never read a novel because for them an adaptation is no different than any other film. However, intelligent novel readers should not be forgotten. For Bluestone the filmmaker is not a translator but a new author, if he is a new author why doesn’t he write his own story? Filmmakers who call their film “adaptation” should rather call it “inspiration”. If they wish it to be labeled as an adaptation it must be faithful to the core essence of the text and be true to the author who wrote the story through which they earn money and fame. But “each medium has its own properties, for better and worse usage, an intelligent film viewing and criticism, like intelligent reading, needs to understand and respect both the limitations these create and also the triumph they invite” (Chatman, 1999).

CONCLUSION

That is what is discussed in this study, where it is maintained that film adaptations are a treat to the audience and also much appreciated form of art. Had they not been good works then why are most academy awards given to them. The idea of adaptation is respected and so is the idea of innovation on the directors' part. Cinemas like novels and other forms of texts represent culture. The appeal to the director is just to be true to all cultures and not show his/her bias towards any particular one. Stereotypes should be done away with and appeasing a particular section of audience should be avoided. The only thing which is expected by the director/filmmaker is to maintain a basic fidelity and to remain true to "the spirit" of the text. In the end it can be summed up by saying that "cinema is wonderful, and film can be entertaining, but pedagogically it needs to be approached carefully. Fidelity, accuracy, and truth are all important measuring devices that should not be utterly ignored or neglected in the evaluating a film adapted from a literary or dramatic source" (Welsh & Lev, 2007).

In the novel, Celie's voice echoes the consumed experiences of Alice Walker and all the letters addressed to God aptly capture this swift transformation. Spielberg being a White male director fails to capture this unison of voices and very conveniently appropriates the original plot for the consumption of a wider audience comprising of mainly White Americans. Talking about this attitude of Whites, Bobo et al (1996) have said that "whites outwardly favour equality but disapprove programs that force its achievement and often exhibit anti Black attitudes when feeling forced". In adhering to the feelings of Whites the true colour of *The Color Purple* gets lost in the movie. He tries to show the importance of the colour through those purple flowers in the very first shot. Lindgren says that "first shot is like an establishing shot" in which a long shot is shown in the very beginning and the shots that follow establish an interrelationship with that first shot (As quoted in Andrews, 1999).

The purple flower fields in the first shot are very promising but that promise is not kept throughout the film. The audience keeps looking for the pain which the colour symbolises: the pains which Celie undergoes when she is brutally beaten by

Albert, her husband and the colour of her skin becomes purple. Purple is the colour of Celie's genitals which symbolised her sexual violation. But purple at the same time is the colour of beauty and happiness, a colour which was so unattainable for Celie that when she goes to buy herself dress, she doesn't buy that colour because it was too happy for her. She settles for a sober colour, curbing the longing she had for the colour she left in the shop. But later when Celie becomes an independent, strong woman then her room is totally dominated by happy colours like red and purple. Spielberg conveniently muted the expressions that the colour may have invoked. Thus, Spielberg has used purple flower fields to create an imagery to justify the novel's title but still what has been missing most in the movie is the importance of *The Color Purple*.

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Voices of the “People of the Field”: Reflections About Oppression in the Pulaya Agrarian Folk Songs of Kerala, India

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The study examines the labour or “working folk songs” of the Pulaya community of the Southern state of Kerala, India, and explores whether ideas of oppression are questioned and reaffirmed through the songs, while reflecting upon the relevance of these songs, among the Pulaya community today. The “Youngian” framework based on the writings of Iris Marion Young (2004), that focuses on the ways in which people experience oppressive conditions in their daily lives, is used for analysis.

INTRODUCTION

In the Brahmin house – Writing

In the Kunbi house – Grain

In the Mahar house – Singing!

Marathi proverb (English translation from Guru, 2001, p. 163)

India is a land of heterogeneous castes and cultures. The caste system and its hierarchies in India are very strongly etched in its ethos. In the caste hierarchy, the Dalits represent the marginalised social groups. According to Sadangi (2008), the term Dalit has its root in the Sanskrit word, *dal* meaning broken or crushed.

Positioned at the bottom of the caste pyramid, they are termed “untouchables” or “outcastes”. Vikalp (2005) is of the view that disparate treatment meted out to the Dalits manifests itself in the social cultures of marginalisation, discrimination, humiliation and oppression. Zelliott (1992) quotes Gangadhar Pantawane, founder

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editor of *Asmitadarsh*, the pioneer journal on Dalit literature, thus: “Dalit is not the caste. He is a man exploited by the social and economic traditions of this country” (pp. 18-19).

The Dalits themselves are sub-divided according to their labour practices. The agricultural labourers of Central Kerala of India originate from the Pulayar and Parayar castes. Oomen (1996) proposes a nomenclature difference between Dalit and caste consciousness. He terms the Dalit consciousness as stemming from a need to revolt against dominance and oppression. Caste consciousness on the other hand is defined by him as a response to material penury and destitution. Table 1 highlights the caste and agrarian hierarchy in the traditional Kerala society.

Table 1: The Caste and Agrarian Hierarchy in the traditional Kerala society (Issac & Tharakan, 1986)

Occupation	Land Rights	Caste
Priests, Rulers and Administrative Officials	<i>Jenmom</i> (ownership) rights	Brahmins, Rajas and Aristocratic Nairs
Militia in charge of Law and order, Petty Officials	<i>Kanom</i> (superior lease) rights	Nairs and Nambiars
Petty producers, Traders, Artisans, Dry land labour	<i>Verumpattom</i> (inferior lease) rights	Non-aristocratic Nairs, Ezhavas, Christians and Muslims
Wel-land labour	Agricultural labour	Ezhavas, Pulayas, Cherumas

There were very few instances of gender discrimination in Dalit communities. Both men and women shared the work equally.

“This world is ill divided. Them that work the hardest are the least provided”
– from the *Jute Mill Song* by Mary Brookebank

The above lines by Brookebank (2013), a Scottish mill worker, socialist and trade unionist capture the essence of life of the jute mill workers in Scotland during the 80’s. The mill workers sang such songs to lessen their burden of work and to

mirror the struggle and poverty that they faced. The life of the Pulayas of Kerala seems no different.

The Pulayas: Nomenclature and social structure

The etymological bases for the word *pulaya* are varied: *pulam* means the paddy field; the Pulaya thus signifies "man of the field". The word *Pula* means pollution; thus *Pulayas* also means polluted. According to an article in *Shodhganga* (2008) it was a customary belief that their "pollution" was so terrible, that even their shadow polluted the caste Hindus. It is interesting to note that the word "Pula" was not used in this sense, till the period when the Namboothiri domination over Kerala society was established² (Chendarasserry, 1980).

The Pulayas were landless agriculture labourers—owning land was the prerogative of the upper castes. According to Oomen (1996), the Pulayas had to stand at a pre-ordained distance from those higher in the caste hierarchy (ninety feet from the Brahmins and sixty-four feet from Nairs). Self-degrading speech was enforced on them: the use of *adiyan* (your slave) instead of "I", *karikadi* (dirty gruel) for rice etc (Oommen, 1996).

The Pulayas were also called *Cherumans* or *Cherumakkal*—children of the soil - (from the words "Cheru" meaning soil and "makal" meaning children in Malayalam) till the early part of the nineteenth century (Logan, 1951). While agriculture was instrumental in bringing the upper and lower caste in close contact, it also perpetuated caste and power hierarchies with both communities transacting their association with each other through agricultural folk songs (Jose, 1983).

According to Kunjan (1961) the word *Pula* also meant, "knowledge". Thus the word *Pulachi* (Pulaya woman) meant "one who has knowledge"; it also meant "virgin". This probably points to why the Pulaya women were given a very high position in the traditional society, corresponding to the position held by their men in the period before the Namboothiri domination.

According to the 2011 Census data of Kerala the following is the occupation distribution:

Table 2: Occupation distribution in the state of Kerala, India

Category of Workers (Main and Marginal)			
Cultivators	Agricultural Labourers	Household Industries	Others
7,40,403 (7.2 percent)	16,53,601 (16.1 percent)	3,64,770 (3.5 percent)	75,32,484 (73.2 percent)

(Source : http://censusindia.gov.in/Tables_Published/SCST/dh_sc_kerala.pdf)

The Pulayas form 3.27 percent of the entire ethnic Hindu population in Kerala.

Literature review

Under the influence of urbanisation and industrialisation that has introduced a “homogeneous macro-culture”; the diverse heterogeneous folk culture of India has suffered attrition and erosion. While reviewing literature for this study, it was found that there has been a lack of detailed research in the oral folk tradition of the Pulayas. Many Western scholars have faced similar situations while researching their indigenous folk songs. Researchers such as Gilbert (2007) claim their research motivation as arising from the urgent need to fill the vacuum that exists in detailing the predominantly informal and unprofessional South African freedom songs. Sherinian (2005) also found a gap in the literature on Tamil Dalit folk music. The introduction to the book “Poisoned Bread” (Dangle, 1992)—an anthology of Dalit poems translated from Marathi to English—claims that it is the first ever published anthology of Dalit poetry.

Oral tradition

According to Marshall (1998) the term traditional society is, in sociological parlance, judgemental and is often associated with negative connotations of primitiveness, attaching a backward, non-scientific and emotional meaning, although sometimes associated with close-knit community values.

The word "tradition" as defined by *The Oxford English Dictionary* is "the action of handing (something material) to another" and as "an ordinance and institution orally delivered". Thus "tradition" means both a process and a product. The "products" i.e, oral messages are transmitted through a process over time. Oral literature is said to be a communal product without any individual authorship or standard forms.

Another stream of thought on forms of oral criticism, particularly from scholars such as Olabiyi Yai (1986), raise important questions on classifying oral poetics as a "product". Yai is of the view that rather than giving oral poetics a feature of "finitude and closure", one should talk about what goes on during an oral performance which is as important as what happens before and after. Yai says that oral poetics should not be described, it should be known by its practice and contribution to its meaning.

Oral tradition and culture are transmitted orally from one generation to another sometimes in the form of tales, songs, ballads etc. This allows us a window into their past cultures and civilisation and is also a source of entertainment.

According to Namboodiri (2008), folk songs have a symbiotic relationship with life closely associated with the land and the socio-cultural group which creates them. It is part of the distinct cultural identity of many social and ethnic groups and forms a major part of their expressions. They articulate issues such as caste hegemony, sexual and economic exploitation as well as the frustrations and aspirations of the marginalised which do not find expression elsewhere.

The Pulayas have a rich collections of myths. Their Pottan-theyyam thottam³ is a discourse on their discrimination in the hands of the upper castes. One such myth translation by Roshan Baa (2012) reads thus, "when you are wounded what gushes out is blood, when we are wounded what oozes out is blood, why do you then speak of caste difference" (p. 6).

Most folk songs are related to agriculture, worship, war and other day-to-day activities. Often they depicted the sorrow and hardship of a particular social group. "working songs" are those whose rhythms are synchronised with the rhythm of the work, e.g., *Jhumur* of the *Oraons* and *Mundas* are sung at the time of planting

paddy and “craft songs” dealing with the actual technique of the craft. Mat making, ploughing, basket making etc are described in simple folk songs.

Labour/working songs of Kerala

Labour songs of Kerala are sung by labourers during work time to reduce the tiresome effort of work, though the content of the songs may not be related to labour. The movement of the body or the agricultural tools used by the labourers makes these songs rhythmic. Hunting songs, agrarian songs, fishing songs, weight pulling songs and boat paddling songs, etc. come under the labour songs.

Beaton (2004) observes that labour songs represent the earliest and most primitive form of folk song. Sowing songs, songs of weed plucking, reaping songs, harvesting songs, songs of irrigation, songs of the wheel, etc. are the significant agrarian folk songs. There are also folk songs on different methods of cultivation and variety of seeds. Agrarian folk songs are mainly sung by the Pulaya community.

Most of the agrarian songs represent caste-class difference. Modernisation and colonisation are also themes of such songs.

Pulayas ploughed the land, sowed the seeds, irrigated the fields, cut the crops, separated the corn from the stalk and winnowed it. They were forced to work in the fields day and night, with no respite from the rains or the hot sun. While working in the fields they sang the “working songs” in order to relax themselves and to lessen the workload. Their poverty, helplessness and injustice became the main themes of such songs. These songs, sung in the open spaces tells about the day-to-day life of the people, came to be known as folk songs meaning “the songs of the folk (people)”.

Theoretical framework

The five faces of oppression

The most prevalent themes in folk music are those that have their roots in despair, adversity, struggle and oppression. The inspiration for such songs is neither time bound nor place bound, and finds an echo over time. The themes of “oppression”

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carry varied manifestations such as the tyranny, domination, subjugation and suppression of one culture, class or caste over another. Such themed songs are sung when there is an irrevocable need to "tell a story to expose the lies, share the misfortune or 'set the record straight'" (Carrol, 2012).

Payyanadu (2000) points out one of the main responsibilities of folk songs thus, "whatever you feel, depict it strongly; through that make your mind either satisfied or dissatisfied" (p. 146).

The majority of the folk songs of the Pulayas are a protest against the social discrimination and inequality of the time. They question the very existence of the caste system. They are reflections of the emotions against casteism and untouchability. They are not individual expressions but of a society's uncontrolled reactions to social injustices. The language of the common man is used in all the songs.

According to Young (2004), members of a marginalised social group are exposed to often five "faces" or types of oppression: exploitation, marginalisation, powerlessness, cultural dominance/imperialism and violence. Other forms of oppression identified in literature are sexual oppression, classism (the oppression of the "have nots" – the less wealthy or influential people by the "haves") colourism (a social pattern in which people marginalised based on the colour of their skin) etc.

Exploitation

When the fruits of the labour of one group are steadily transferred to another group that benefits from it, because of pre-determined structures of "power" and "inequality" we see instances of exploitation.

Young (2004) talks about exploitation as taking on a gendered face as well. In her words, "women's oppression consists not merely in an inequality of status, power, and wealth resulting from men's excluding them from privileged activities. The freedom, power, status, and self-realisation of men is possible precisely because women work for them. Gender exploitation has two aspects, transfer of the fruits of material labour to men and the transfer of nurturing and sexual energies to men" (p. 45).

Marginalisation

In a society, where one's value is measured by one's earning power, those who are "dependent" on others or "non-productive" are marginalised, and denied economic or political independence.

Powerlessness

The dimension of "status", when applied to class, divides working people on the basis of power and autonomy, making them powerless.

Cultural dominance

Cultural dominance puts one group on a superior level to another in terms of its cultural and historical experiences. The culturally dominant group then controls the interpretation, production and reproduction of cultural artifacts. The "culturally inferior" group then becomes deviant or exotic, sometimes even in terms of gender, skin color, ethnicity, etc. These differences are rarely represented in the mainstream cultural space.

Violence

Some people are subject to random violence aimed at humiliating them for belonging to a certain social group.

Objectives of the study

From the literature reviewed and initial interviews conducted with academicians of folklore, the following objectives were defined for the study:

- To analyse Pulaya (agriculture-based) folk songs of Kerala and ascertain the presence of oppression related themes in the Pulya folk songs.
- To analyse how ideas of oppression are questioned and reaffirmed through these songs.
- To study the intensity of acceptance and popularity of these songs as reflections against oppression among the older and present generation Pulaya labourers in Kerala.

Methodology

The present paper aims at examining the labour or "working folk songs" of the Pulaya community of Kerala, culled from an anthology of folk songs by Nair (1980), Payyanad (2000), Elayavoor (2002), Namboodiri (2009), Clari (2010) and also from a personal collection of songs sourced by the researcher from Mr. C.J Kuttappan, former Chairman of Kerala Folklore Academy.

The following anthology of folk songs apart from recorded versions of other songs sourced from Mr. C.J Kuttappan's personal collection⁴ was taken as a sample for studying Pulaya (agrarian themed) songs with strong instances of oppression in them:

- 1) *Kerala Bhasha Ganangal*
- 2) *Vadakkan Pattu Padanangal*
- 3) *Folklore Prabandhangal*
- 4) *Malayalathile Nadan Pattukal*
- 5) *Keralathile Nadan Pattukal Oru Samagra Padanam*

Taking instances from the songs that have a primarily agrarian theme, the voices against the many faces of oppression (Exploitation, Marginalisation, Powerlessness, Cultural Dominance and Violence) are sought to be highlighted. The "Youngian" framework based on the writings of Iris Marion Young (2004) that focuses on experiences of oppressive conditions in the daily lives of people is used for analysis, along with contemporary theories of folklore.

The study explores how ideas of oppression are questioned and reaffirmed through the songs. Translations of lines from the songs that have themes of oppression in them have been attempted with the help of a multi-lingual academician and a content analysis has been done.

The study is also a reflection on whether the relevance of these songs has diminished among the Pulaya community today.

To achieve the above, in-depth interviews were conducted with a representative of the older generation of Pulayas, who actually sang the songs and one from the younger generation for whom these songs are no longer an everyday form of self-

expression. This allowed for the study of differences in the intensity of acceptance and popularity of these songs as reflections against oppression.

Analysis

Ancient rhythms as reflections of everyday life “then”

From the anthology of folk songs taken as a sample for studying Pulaya (agrarian themed) songs with strong instances of oppression in them, sixteen songs were identified as appropriate for the study. In consultation with Prof K. Mohandas⁵, an attempt has been made to translate into English, the lines from the songs that talk about the various faces of oppression identified in the literature review:

1) The lord and the Pulaya girl: A weed plucking song

The lord stares at the Pulaya girl named Chattunna irrespective of time. Obviously, she does not like it. Also the lord gives her certain commands. However, the girl does not like his approach, though he is the lord. According to the girl the stare is untimely and uncultured and thus she protests against this attitude of her lord (landlord).

*It's too late, it's too late
My dear lord...
Don't stare at me but at the time
My dear lord...*

2) The lord and the Pulaya woman: A planting song

This is a conversation between the lord and the working Pulaya woman. The landlord is so fond of the woman that he wants her to be with him. The woman refuses to go with him saying that she has a small child at home. But her excuses are in vain and she is forced to obey the landlord.

*Come early tomorrow morning Pulaya woman
But My Lord, I have a six month old infant
----- (refrain)
Let the father look after the child the Lord says!*

3) Lord's invitation to the Pulaya girl: A planting song

The lord invites Kali, the Pulaya girl to his home. But she gives the excuse that she has a baby. He insists she has to obey his command. She asks the permission from her husband. He allows her to go saying he will give some kind of a sleeping pill to the child so that it won't trouble him. The landlord suggestively gives Kali oil and soap for bathing.

My children are calling dear lord

That doesn't matter my dear Kali

.....

The lord gave oil to the woman

And a piece of soap for bathing

4) The young master and the young Pulaya girl: The harvesting song

This song is a reflection of sexual exploitation that Pulaya women are subjected to by the upper caste men. The young landlord is engaged in a conversation with sexual overtones with Nili, a young Pulaya girl, who is morally upright and holds her honour dear. Nili does not succumb to the landlord's pressurising tactics (asking sexual favours in exchange for money) and stands up for her self-dignity. Shielding herself with the harvest sickle, Nili indignantly threatens the landlord of extreme consequences.

"The young lord took a money from his pocket"

"Slowly, he stretched it out"

"Resentful Nili girl said"

"See the harvest sickle is in my hand, run for your life"

Analysis of song translations: 1 to 4

These lines showcase gendered exploitation of Pulaya women. They are evocative of the fact that Pulaya women were objectified by the upper caste landlords as a medium to satiate their sexual pleasures. Alexander (1987) argues that gender typical stereotyped jobs of nurturing and caring, that are sometimes given sexual overtones, are usually to comfort or please men.

5) The withered green manure: Weed plucking song

The workers inform the lord that the green manures are withered but it is not their fault. It happens due to the lack of coordination between the workers. Now, they are unable to carry on the farming further.

*Withered the green manures spread in the field
Not punish us, Lord
For we are not responsible for this, now
We sing the song for we are sorry about it*

6) The measuring officer: Song sung after harvesting

At the arrival of the measuring officer, the tenants are worried as the yield was not so good this time. Everything had been destroyed due to the decayed fallen leaves.

*Here comes the officer
With his measuring vessel
Tensed are the tenants
For the fallen leaves cause low yields*

7) The Lord is calling: A reaping song

The song explains the relationship between the lord and the workers. The Lord visits each of the workers houses early in the morning and calls them to start work as early as possible. No one is excused from the work including mothers with infants and the elderly women.

*The lord is calling
Before the dawn break
The lord is calling
With the umbrella in hand*

Analysis of song translations: 5 to 7

The above three paragraphs from the songs depict the powerlessness and marginalisation that the Pulaya farmers face in the wake of their yield having

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withered and their becoming an "unproductive lot". Social divisions are rampant in these lines that show the powerlessness of the tenants who execute the labour and their fear of punishment from the powerful landlord/measuring officer who has planned the labour.

8) Untouchability of Lords: A harvesting song

The poem talks about Pakkanar—one of the twelve children born of a Brahman father and a Dalit mother. The poem describes the unnecessary untouchability practiced by the higher caste people. The "outcastes" are black in their skin colour. Thus they are facing colour discrimination along with untouchability. But their touch won't turn the lords into black. Their untouchability like the sown salt is sprouting and the arrow that is shot, piercing into the sky.

What kind of untouchability is this?

The untouchability of the lords!

Go away, go away

The stumbling block, go away...

Go away, go away

Even Pakkanar has to go away!

9) Untouchability: A harvesting song

This describes the situation of untouchability. The lord and his men keep the Pulaya workers at a distance. Strangely, the product of their work is not untouchable. Despite their hard work the lord is still angry with them.

All the grains have been harvested

No untouchability while filling the granaries!

After the harvesting is done

The Lord calls us Untouchables

When we enter his gate!

10) Caste and untouchability: A transplantation song

This has a refrain that points to the constrained life of the Pulayas within the limits as prescribed by the superior caste people. The song is an expectation of a Utopian

future, when there will be no separation between the haves and have-nots, the oppressor and the discriminated, the upper caste and the lower caste. The song indicates the segregation and discrimination of one community from other.

*Did you not break open the coconut we grew?
 Didn't you see the insides – the core and the flesh ?
 When you are injured, the same blood flows
 When we are injured, the same blood flows
 Then why do you talk of caste supremacy?
 Why do you talk of untouchability?*

Analysis of song translations: 8 to 10

These songs hint strongly at the isolation and out-groupist tendency of one community from the other. The lines hark at the culturally dominant norms of the powerful landlords over the Pulayas due to the colour of their skin and delimiting social structures that they are forced to live in. The universalisation of untouchability marking the Pulayas as the “other” is the “stumbling block” described in the song “untouchability of lords”.

11) A story of defamation: A planting song

The Pulaya girl and her children work in the fields every day. But their wages have been reduced on the grounds that the Pulaya woman and her children had been involved in adultery. When she approached the landlord to know who has spread these lies, he answers that it is the potter. But the Pulaya woman knows that it is not the potter who is to blame and she investigates the truth about this.

*In the Pulaya abode
 The Pulaya children got corrupted
 Who spread this gossip, my dear lord?
 The potter has done this, people!*

12) Pulaya women in the rain: A planting song

The rain is lashing down heavily. It strikes turbulently on the roof tops. In spite of the adverse weather conditions the Pulaya women are forced to work in the fields

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every day from morning till evening.

*The rain lashes heavily
Turbulently over our rooftops*

*The Lord speaks thus:
Let all women with children
Line up on the edges of the field!*

Analysis of song translations: 11 and 12

The above two paragraphs from the poem are descriptive of the exploitation and powerlessness of the Pulaya women due to the cultural dominance of the landlords. The difficult circumstances and precarious existence of a socially neglected Pulaya woman labourer is the focus of these songs. These songs are also ironically a showcase of her resistance against an oppressive society.

13) The chain that cannot break: A planting song

This symbolically talks about the Pulaya people working in the fields. They are bonded labourers and are in chains for generations. They are unable to break and come out of this chain which hampers their freedom. The hands that sow are in chains.

*In chains for generations
Difficult times for us!*

14) Levels of exploitations: A planting song

The Pulaya workers face different levels of exploitation. Apart from the lords the middlemen are also exploiting them.

*Gold and money for Chacko the middleman!
He has taken away our due.
We don't know the calculations
So he cheats us!*

15) The Pulayas and the forest: A planting song

This describes the situation of those going to the forest for collecting wood for their livelihood. But there are so many hidden dangers in the forest. This poem has significance about the threats to the life of the Pulayas, both hidden and seen.

*Collecting wood in the forest
Wild animals accost us
The weather is against us!*

Analysis of song translations: 13 to 15

The above paragraphs from the lines are reflections of economic and social marginalisation of the Pulayas, who are “dependent” on the upper caste landlords and are denied economic or political independence

16) The fate of Pulaya mother and baby: A ploughing song

The Pulayas are depicted as lacking even the basic needs of a roof over their head for their newborn, who is laid under a tree’s shade, where the ox and the buffalo have been tethered. Having little room for rest after her delivery, the mother has to continue to toil under the hot sun. The song conveys the lack of economic independence and the sacrifices made by the Pulaya women labourers. It also conveys the Pulayas’ strong bond with nature that they deem as protective as a mother.

*The mother put the six-day-old baby
Under the tree
Where the ox and the buffalo
Were tied together for land ploughing*

Analysis of song translation: 16

These lines hark back to the time when the ruling class were stifling the aspirations of Pulaya women labourers. These lines vividly showcase the harsh reality of the so-called “economic independence” of the Pulaya women. In reality, her vulnerable life as a compromise is revealed.

One of the objectives of this article was to study the intensity of acceptance and popularity of the Pulaya agrarian folk songs as reflections against oppression among the older and present generation Pulaya labourers in Kerala.

Ayyamma, a 70-year-old Pulaya woman living in Mala in Thrissur, was identified with the help of Mr. Ramesh Karinthalakootam, Head of Karinthalakootam, an organisation that helps preserve folk songs and folk literature, and an in-depth interview was conducted with her, to garner her experiences of oppression and her reflections of those oppressions through singing folksongs.

Ayyamma: A case in point

The meeting with the Kerala Folklore Award winning Ayyamma was as exciting as it was challenging. Age had withered her body, but her mind was still fresh enough to recollect the folk songs she sang, working in the fields as a bonded labourer for more than thirty years. She has only one child who allegedly is also a bonded labourer. Unable to recollect many of her life experiences, her excitement grows when asked about the folk songs. She claimed the songs were orally transmitted from her parents. She still sings these songs, though no longer working in the fields. She is trying to handover it to the next generation.

Ayyamma recollects how they sang in protest against the stand of lords of giving fewer wages to workers. The songs were sung in protest against the caste system that existed at that time when the gap between the upper and lower castes was so wide. When asked about the behaviour of lords towards the Pulaya workers, Ayyamma suddenly bursts into a song. Folk song was the main form of expression for Pulayas then, she says. They even resorted to strikes.

According to Ayyamma, the children of the present generation no longer sing these songs. The present generation is no more interested in such songs but attracted towards film songs and television.

Ayyamma recollects one very unpleasant personal experience of oppression from the landlords. She remembers the time when the Pulaya people conducted a strike (that lasted six months) for the right to own land. The higher caste landlords had laid human faeces in the place where the Pulayas used to sit for the strike. They indignant Pulayas shouted slogans against the landlords and in protest sang thus:

*If you do not have a rope to hang yourself with
Use your sacred thread⁶*

Ayyamma bemoans the fact that the lower caste people had no voice of their own then. Their lives were decided by the landlords. If a Pulaya family wanted to marry off their daughter, they had to ask the permission of the landlords. They could not even visit the house of their in-laws without the permission of landlords. Also the Pulaya women were not allowed to cover the upper part of their body when they went to the landlords to receive wages. They were forced to work in the fields day and night irrespective of the weather condition, or else face the wrath of the landlords. The Pulayas were forced to obey the higher caste people.

Ayyamma also shyly acknowledges the appreciation she got from some Namboodiris for preserving the agrarian folk songs of protest. She laments about the present generation's lack of interest in the songs, even among the very few working in the fields today.

Present ruminations as a reflection of “everyday life now”

To study the intensity of acceptance and popularity of these songs as reflections against oppression among the present generation Pulaya labourers in Kerala, an in-depth interview was done with Kitta, allegedly a Pulaya bonded labourer, working in Pudussery, Palakkad.

Kitta: Changing modes of reflection

A fifty six-year-old man from the Pulaya community of Pudussery village in Palakkad, Kitta, allegedly is a bonded labourer working in the paddy fields of Pudussery. He has been working in the fields for more than thirty years. His children are no longer agricultured labourers. They are engaged in other works like painting, carpenting, etc. The generation of Kitta no longer sings folk songs while working in the fields and he is doubtful of anyone still singing these kinds of songs.

Kitta and his generation of agrarian labourers still face various forms of oppression. They are forced to work for longer hours at a very low rate, and are treated as obedient slaves by the land owning upper castes.

Kitta says that the few Pulayas who still work in the fields have protested many times against the oppressive approach of the land owners. Their fights against the injustice was in the form of strikes, retraction from work, approaching the land owners directly and demanding their rights to an unoppressive life etc. But their efforts were in vain. So they are no longer willing to fight.

The Pulaya women are faced with double marginalisation, first as Pulayas and second as women. Organisations such as the Pulaya Samajam are not ready to help their people. They are idle in taking decisions regarding their well-being, he says.

When asked to compare the lives of Pulayas then and now, he says that there are a lot of differences. The earlier life was full of difficulties and problems. They were forced to go to distant lands for work, wages were less.

The current situation is entirely different, he says. Now they are financially uplifted. Their children go for other jobs. The number of people working in the fields is less. They are no longer interested in agriculture, having lost the affection towards the land. The present generation of Pulayas is interested in other fields like carpentry, painting, etc. Also they are no longer ready to obey the land owners. The Pulayas lived in great poverty earlier, but at present the condition has slightly improved.

Women who work in the fields are less in number. They work in companies where there is not much need of hard work. Literacy rate of Pulayas has also increased. Most of the Pulaya children have studied till the 10th standard. The older generation was illiterate.

The Pulayas are still a lower caste. They are still being discriminated against. They are a marginalised section in the society. The government's promises to them are still on paper. They have not got their complete rights till now, Kitta says.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The study had its main objectives as analysing Pulaya (agriculture-based) folk songs of Kerala and to ascertain the presence of oppression related themes in them.

The translation of the songs reveal the reflections of the Pulayas of their existence and the oppressive society in which they lived. The songs express all faces of oppression except violence. They articulate issues such as caste hegemony, sexual and economic exploitation as well as the frustrations and aspirations of the marginalised Pulayas who could not find an outlet for such expressions elsewhere.

The translations provide a historic reconstruction – a “mirror of the past” when these songs were used as a natural outpouring against exploitation and oppression in their everyday lives “then”.

The reflective nature of these folk songs finds an echo in Bascom’s (1954) definition of the four main functions of folklore as being: escape from individual frustration and suffering; validation of the customs and rituals of society; educating societal values, and finally social control. They also support the Anthropological and Psychoanalytical view of the release of socially repressed anxieties through oral literature.

Semblances of Propp’s (1928) classification of the hero and the villain are also seen in these folk songs, without the limitations of gender classifications – the oppressor being the villain and the oppressed (often women) who raise their voices against injustices seen as the heroes.

Another objective of this article was to study the intensity of acceptance and popularity of the Pulaya agrarian folk songs as reflections against oppression among the older and present generation Pulaya labourers in Kerala. To this effect, in-depth interviews with Ayyamma and Kitta reveal that while the folk songs were the main form of expression against oppressive atrocities by the upper caste landlords for the older generation of Pulayas, who had no other voice against the system, the folk songs are a thing of the past for the present generation Pulayas, who have no recollections of them.

For the present generation, their fight against the injustice was in the form of strikes, retraction from work, approaching the land owners directly and demanding their rights to an unoppressive life etc. They get no support from organisations meant for their upliftment such as the *Pulaya Samajam*.

The present generations of Pulayas are no longer interested in agriculture, having lost the affection towards the land, and have moved on to other occupations.

The interviews reveal that the Pulaya folk songs – rich in their expressions against oppression, their mode of reflection of their everyday existence – are losing their importance in the everyday lives of the present day Pulaya labourers, but attempts are on to preserve this rich legacy by a few academicians and organisations.

Numerous uplifting measures and reform movements dot the social history of the Pulayas – from individual attempts (of Ayyankali⁷), organisational welfare measures (e.g Kerala Pulaya Maha Sabha⁸) to Government interventions (land reform acts⁹).

Have these measures affected the Pulayas positively in the sense of giving them a voice against class and caste oppressions and helped bring some relief to their erstwhile “bonded” lives, lives that women such as Ayyamma led? Have these measures been the reason for the folk song’s deterioration as a means of communication and reflection against oppression?

Among the twentieth century folklore theories, the folk-cultural theory evolved out of the folk life movement in Scandinavia and later on in Great Britain and the US (Lopez, 2006). This theory posits that changes and deterioration of rural folk cultures may happen due to industrialisation-led urbanisation. This theory can be clearly used to describe the deterioration of the folk songs – the only active forms of expressions against oppression of the Pulayas then. Industrialisation has taken its toll, but all is not yet lost...there is hope – for the preservation of the agrarian songs. But is there hope for the Pulayas? This is a burning question that seeks answers.

NOTES

1. The Brahmins, Kubis and Mahars referred to the hierarchy of the Hindu caste system in India. The Brahmins were considered the intellectual members of the community, the Kunbis, primarily farmers, owned land and conducted husbandry, while the Mahars were of the lowest social class, often termed “untouchables”. They were given ‘lowly’ duties.
2. The Namboothiris are Kerala Brahmins who claimed priestly origins. They established their superiority over other castes, and considered themselves above even the Tamil and Tulu Brahmins. All other castes were termed lower castes.
3. *Pottam Theyyam Thottam* is a ritual art form of Kerala, performed annually in temples. It is believed that God talks through the performer. The lower castes believe that the performance of the ritual would dismiss their troubles and bring them riches. Today it has taken on the form of a social satire against the caste system.
4. These anthologies were sourced from The University of Calicut Library, Kerala, with the assistance and guidance from Dr. E.V Govinda Varma Raja, Head of Department, Folklore Studies, at the University. Mr C.J Kuttappan was also kind enough to share his personal collections of songs with the researcher.
5. Prof K. Mohandas is retired Deputy Director of Collegiate Education and Professor of English Literature, M.G University, Kerala.
6. The sacred thread is a collection of strands of consecrated cotton worn by Brahmins to denote their higher spiritual levels in the caste hierarchy.
7. Ayyankali, a Pulaya himself, was a nineteenth century labour leader and social reformer who fought for the collective conscience of the Dalits.
8. The Kerala Pulaya Maha Sabha formed in 1913, is a Dalit organisation that takes up social issues and through its activism showcased early forms of resistance to the hegemony of the upper classes.
9. After the formation of the Kerala State in 1949, the Communist Party came to power in the first general elections. Land reforms were the focus for the social and economic upliftment of the state. The Kerala Agrarian Relations Bill (1957) was one such attempt.

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Perspectives on Framing Effects: Implications for Journalism

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The concept of frames and framing is defined and reviewed in the present paper. Different types of frames identified in the literature are listed and discussed. Framing effects as defined in the literature are assessed and elaborated. Different types of framing effects have been reviewed with an emphasis on the methodology used. Moderators and mediators of framing effects are defined and reviewed based on past research. Also, recent models proposed for studying framing effects have been elaborated upon.

INTRODUCTION

Gregory Bateson's 1955 paper "A Theory of Play and Fantasy" laid the foundations of a concept that half a century later has been applied across disciplines. Framing is the art of engineering messages that are guided by meta communicative messages to shape and guide the meaning-making process of individuals. The philosophical groundings of the concept of framing by the British anthropologist were constructivist in nature. In constructivist theory, individuals have a central role in processing information they encounter through cognitive processes. Thus, framing effects have been based on constructivist and social constructivist epistemologies. Psychological mechanisms that affect an individual's judgment, attitude, or opinion are studied through framing effects. In this paper, we review the definition of frame used by elites and/or journalists to influence public opinion as applied in public discourse (with an emphasis on frames in media) along with individual level frames.

Definition of a frame and their classification in literature

There are varying definitions of frames that can be found in the vast literature

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covering the subject. Kinder and Sanders (1990) explain that frames prevail in two important domains – (1) in public discourse advanced by political elites, and (2) internal structures of mind that help individuals in giving meaning to and organising events to make sense of them. Brewer and Gross (2010) offer distinctions between two main definitions that have prevailed in the framing literature and are widely used. The first defines frame as “a central organising idea or story line that provides meaning to an unfolding strip of events, weaving a connection among them. The frame suggests what the controversy is about, the essence of the issue” (Gamson & Modigliani, 1987). The second definition that is widely used has been provided by Druckman (2001a, p. 228), which identifies the role of frames as casting ‘the same critical information in either a positive or negative light’ causing individuals to have different preferences. Cappella and Jamieson (1997, p. 42) offer yet another definition of a frame, according to which, framing provides context which activates “preexisting set of knowledge, including concepts, procedures, and, most important, their interconnection”, that gets cued and is brought into conscious awareness. Providing an example of a detached text from its context (1997, p. 42), they show that an understanding of an event cannot take place when a text and its context are isolated. Instead, they argue that only when the context is provided to a text, that its meaning can be interpreted, judgments rendered and information recalled. Thus, “framing then serves as an explicit context within which texts are interpreted”, but is not limited to interpretations made based on the application of a single/a few frames.

Instead, the applicability of frame/frames provides a base that can alter the kinds of inferences made. The inferences are made on the basis of already established knowledge structures that can be activated by certain cues in the text. These inferences can form a communication loop that provides for things unmentioned in the text but supplied by the reader, in certain instances. In others, they may be misleading, misdirected, or simply false (Cappella & Jamieson, 1993). This definition is well suited to the definition of individual frames as explained below.

Dietram A. Scheufele (1999) disintegrates frames into two kinds: media frames and audience frames. The definition of media frames has been best articulated by Gamson and Modigliani (1987). Entman’s (1993) definition of a frame emphasising salience and selection along with Tuchman’s (1978) definition of a frame that organises everyday reality and reconstrues the world, falls in this

domain. However, Scheufele (2000) counters this conceptualisation of framing working through the emphasis of salience by stating that framing does not work by making aspects more salient to the audience but by “influencing the way audiences think about an issue by invoking interpretive schemas that influence the interpretation of incoming information” (p. 309). Media frames may help in setting the terms of debate among citizens but they have to be integrated with frames that are contrived in the minds of the citizens through personal experiences and conversation (Nisbet, 2010).

Frames can also be divided on the basis of being categorically limited to an issue or transcending thematic boundaries, namely–issue-specific and generic frames respectively. De Vreese, Peter and Semetko (2001) offered a typology according to the nature and content of the frames. They differentiated between “issue-specific news frames’ and generic news frame”. Issue-specific news frames belong to certain topics or news events. They help in analysing and understanding an issue under investigation with a “profound level of specificity and detail” by particularising it. This advantage is also a drawback as it refrains the frame to be generalised, compared or used as empirical evidence for the purpose of theory building. Generic frames transcend thematic limitations; can be identified across topics, time and even culture (de Vreese, 2003, p. 28). They are not bound by a specific topic and can be generalised to other contexts and issues.

We have up till now discussed the rooting of framing effects in the social constructivist paradigm, considered various definitions of frames and the classification of frames as provided in the literature. Framing effects have been studied with a methodological perspective along with various theoretical approaches and models defining framing effects. In this section, we also discuss the existing gaps in framing effects research.

Scheufele and Tewksbury (2009) note that in the present state of framing research, there has been a wide range of studies exploring the effect of distinctive frames on audiences – which has led to a categorisation of “unique sets of frames”. This inductive approach to identifying frames and their effects has led to a limited knowledge of generic frames – frames that could probably be present or are applied across issues. Thus, framing research needs to be directed towards identifying a set of potentially generic frames.

Scheufele and Iyengar (2012) call for shifting the focus in framing research from emphasis framing effects to equivalence framing effects by including non-verbal, visual cues as potential frames, especially while studying broadcast media. The four-tiered model of studying visual frames proposed by Lulu Rodriguez and Daniela V. Dimitrova (2011) can provide a theoretical base to empirically study visual frames. Thus, visual frames – whether the unit of analysis is media frames or the effect of visual media frames on audiences – can be studied on the four recommended levels of examining frames i.e. (1) visuals as denotative systems, (2) visuals as stylistic-semiotic systems, (3) visuals as connotative systems and (4) visuals as ideological representations (Rodriguez & Dimitrova, 2011).

Even though, what makes for strong frame i.e. essential features of a strong frame have been speculated in the literature, yet there has been no empirical study conducted on the subject. Thus, future research must address this gap in the existing research. Moreover, Druckman (2011) points out that further research needs to be undertaken to study the reasons as to why certain frames are more compelling to people while the others are not. In other words, what are the factors that strengthen a frame or make a frame more strong/persuasive while others (frames) are considered as weak need to be studied in detail since there are important implications of the same, especially in political discourse.

Framing effects

Framing effect can be termed as occurring when a message causes an individual to form a specific judgment, attitude or opinion due to the emphasis in the message on a subset of potentially relevant considerations (Druckman, 2001). Framing effects research attempts to understand the impact of frames on individual opinion (individual-level framing effects) or at aggregate levels. The frame that a decision-maker adopts is controlled partly by the formulation of the problem and partly by the norms, habits and personal characteristics of the decision maker (Kahneman & Tversky, 1981). Elsewhere (Slothuus, 2008) it has been contended that the effect of a frame depends largely on the receivers' cognitive schemata.

Problem 1 : Presented to the first group of participants (N=152)

Imagine that the US is preparing for the outbreak of an unusual Asian disease, which is expected to kill 600 people. Two alternative

programs to combat the disease have been proposed. Assume that the exact scientific estimates of the consequences of the programs are as follows:

If Program A is adopted, 200 people will be saved.

If Program B is adopted, there is 1/3 probability that 600 people will be saved, and 2/3 probability that no people will be saved.

Which of the two programs would you favor?

(Kahneman & Tversky, 1981)

From the above statements it is clear that in the experiment the number of people that would be expectedly saved is 200 people in both the programs – making the choice formulations logically equivalent. However, the difference between the programs lies in the risk-averse and risk-seeking formulation of the choices presented. Program A is risk-averse in nature (riskless prospect and the outcome is presented with sure chance) while Program B is risk-seeking in nature (risky prospect and the outcome is presented without sure chance). Of the respondents, 72% chose Program A over Program B (opted by 28%). They found that the respondent preferred the prospect of saving 200 lives with certainty more than the prospect that has risk involved, even when the expected value of lives being saved is the same ($1/3 \times 600 = 200$) in the gains frame.

Problem II:

The second group of participants (N=155) was presented with alternatively articulated choices of the same problem: in a group of 600 people,

If Program C is adopted 400 people will die.

If Program D is adopted there is 1/3 probability that nobody will die, and 2/3 that 600 people will die.

Which of the two programs would you favor?

(Kahneman & Tversky, 1981)

Again, it is clear that expected value of people who would die in both the cases is 400 (logically equivalent choices). However the difference again lies in the formulation of programs as risk-averse and risk seeking. Programs C and D are akin to Programs A and B, the only difference lies in the frame being applied – i.e. loss frame which means that the problem is formulated in terms of the number of people dying. It was found that 78% of the respondents chose Program D, the risk-seeking alternative. The experiment demonstrated that with the application of gains frame, respondents choose the risk-averse alternative while when loss frame is applied, respondents choose the risk-seeking alternative. Even when the problems are logically equivalent there are inconsistent responses to both the problems which are due to the “conjunction of framing effects and contradictory attitudes towards risks involving losses and gains” (Tversky & Kahneman, 1981).

The interpretation derived from the reception of any message is a simultaneous function of both the message (and how it is framed) and the knowledge the audience brings to bear during the process of interpretation (Cappella & Jamieson, 1993, p. 44).

Price and Tewksbury (1997) offered a knowledge activation model of framing effects making distinctions between accessibility effects and applicability effects. Applicability refers to “activations arising from matches or overlaps between a stimulus event and some stored knowledge construct” (Chaiken & Chen, 1999, p. 83). Applicability effect occurs when the key notable features of a construct correspond to the salient features of the stimulus and they then result in activated knowledge and formation of linkages between the knowledge structures and the constructs in the stimuli (here, a media frame in a news story). Drawing on Higgins (1996), they suggest that there is a link between the knowledge structures in an individual’s mind, the stimulus and the activated constructs. Thus, they argue, the greater the overlap between the attended attributes of a stimulus and the salient features of knowledge structures in an individual’s mind, the greater will be the applicability of the stored knowledge to the stimuli and the higher the chances the knowledge would be activated when in contact with the stimuli. According to Price and Tewksbury (1997), framing is,

...an applicability effect that occurs during message processing. A framing effect is one in which salient attributes of a message (its organization, selection of content, or thematic structure) render

particular thoughts applicable, resulting in their activation and use in evaluations. (as cited in Johnson-Cartee, 2005, p. 28).

Chong and Druckman (2007a) identify two pre-requisites that are to be met in order for applicability to occur: (1) motivation to engage in conscious evaluation and (2) competitive context (when an individual is exposed to conflicting considerations) (p. 110).

Accessibility, on the other hand, “is a temporary state that is produced by prior processing of a stimulus and thus activates knowledge” (Forster & Liberman, 2007). Once activated, a memory residue remains, making it more likely that when news consumers attend to a given issue frame, past salient attributes and their evaluations will be reactivated for the news consumers’ present use, can be termed as accessibility effect (as cited in Johnson-Cartee, 2005, p. 28). Framing has been perceived as the first-order effects that occur during the initial message processing (as cited in de Vreese, 2010).

James Druckman (2001) describes two types of framing effects that have been studied in framing theory – (1) Equivalency framing effects and (2) Emphasis framing effects. *Equivalency* framing effects are the effects produced by altering the same set of logically equivalent information in positive or negative ways to alter individual preferences (Levin, Schneider & Gaeth, 1998). Equivalency framing effects have been studied through a large body of research (Kahneman & Tversky, 1981; Meyrowitz & Chaiken, 1987) and are studied when objectively equivalent information is presented in a positive or negative manner. *Emphasis* framing effects occur when a message is so framed that the subset of all the potentially relevant considerations that feature in the message leads the audience to evaluate an issue in terms of those subsets. Emphasis framing effects work in two ways. Firstly, it can be studied by looking at the way different itemised frames lead to message interpretation and opinion formation based on the different itemised considerations with less attention to the overall opinion. Secondly, it can be studied through an assessment of the change in overall opinion by different frames with less attention to underlying consideration.

Equivalency framing effects are best suited for studying individual level rationality, judgment, and decision-making when confronted with choices. There

is a rather “narrow range of choices” in which equivalency framing effects are applicable (Sniderman & Theriault, 2004, p. 135). This type of framing effect is not the most widespread in the policy discourse and political news reaching most citizens due to the fact that competing elites and news reporters cannot limit themselves to presenting the same bit of information in logically equivalent ways, without adding a new consideration, information or symbol, if that is possible at all (Slothuus, 2008). Indeed, the nature of political discourse and encompassing political matters are diverse, multifaceted and complex (Slothuus, 2008) which requires the communicators to suggest the problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and/or treatment/ recommendation about an issue (Entman, 1993).

Druckman (2001) develops a critique on the labelled pervasiveness of equivalence framing effects and emphasis framing effects. He argues that while equivalence framing do have effects under certain conditions, they do not occur in others. The limiting factors on equivalence framing include individual level variables, procedural and problem characteristics and contextual circumstances. In the experiment conducted to study the effects of equivalence framing in the presence of contextual cues, he conducted two experiments. In the first experiment, he presented a variation of Kahneman and Tversky’s Asian disease problem which chartered advice by the political parties (Democrat’s and Republican’s) through program endorsements. The experiment provided for six experimental conditions – the first two replicating Kahneman and Tversky’s Asian disease problem, while the next four provided the basis for a critical test between the two hypothesis. The third – sixth problems introduced party endorsements for risk-seeking or risk-averse alternatives of the problem in terms of gains and losses frame¹.

The experiment computed “preference reversal” which is the difference between the percentage of respondents who opted for risk-seeking alternative when provided with the losses frame and those who opted for risk-averse alternative when provided with the gains frame. If the preference reversal rate is high, it would indicate that the framing effects are strong; while if the preference reversal is low, it would indicate that the framing effects are not as strong/have been diminished via party endorsements. The results of the experiments demonstrated that framing had a strong effect when the respondents were provided with no program endorsements i.e. levels of preference reversal as high as 46% (for risk-averse alternative) and 41% (for risk seeking alternative). But when party endorsements were provided, the reversal statistic dropped from 46% to 21% for the Democratic respondents seeking

risk-averse alternative; it dropped to 15% for the Republican respondents seeking risk-averse alternative; it dropped to a marginal 4% for the Democratic respondents opting for risk-seeking alternative and 5% for the Republican respondents opting for risk-seeking alternative. For the independents, the preference reversal when provided with party endorsement was not significantly different from when they were not provided with the same. The experiment showed that party endorsements did not vitiate the framing effects of the Independents, while they did vitiate or dampen the framing effects of Democratic and Republican respondents when party endorsements were provided.

Using a similar methodology of laboratory experiments to assess media effects of differently framed news stories of anarchist demonstrations, McLeod and Detenber (1999) found that the extent of status quo support (high, medium and low)² in news stories results in altered cognition of the same social protest. It was observed that the participants who watched high status quo bias news had different evaluations of the protesters, the police, the public support, the protest, the effectiveness of the demonstration among other than the participants exposed to medium-or low-status quo bias news. High status quo bias news viewing participants were found to be more critical of the protesters and less critical of the police, perceived the protest as less effective and garnering low public support.

Sniderman and Theriault (2004) through two experimental surveys demonstrated that the individual-level effects of framing gathered through experimental studies that tend to study framing effects by providing alternative frames to different experimental groups are over stated precisely because the socio-political environment in the real world is much more complex. The framing effects have largely been “a function of examining how citizens make choices when they are artificially sequestered and their attention restricted to only one side of a public issue”. Such experiments suffer from external validity considerations. In the competitive political environment, elites (wherever they posit on a political continuum) frame an issue in distinct ways and individuals are exposed to a number of competing frames in their daily life. The authors maintain that the argumentation between elites (the manifestation of which resides in their sponsored frames) has been a missing link in framing effects research. Frames encountered by individuals in the real world get cancelled out and the individuals prefer to choose the frame that is consistent with their underlying principles and values.

Sniderman and Theriault tested this proposition by providing the individuals with a “dual-frame” condition – wherein the subjects are exposed to competing ways of framing an issue. In the rally experiment, they found that when the subjects were introduced to both the frames – “free speech” and “violent risk”, participants who preferred to side with the value of individual freedom tended to opt for the free speech frame whereas those who sided with the value of maintaining law and order in society, consequently, tended to opt for “violent risk frame”. However, Chong and Druckman (2007a) speculate that the results are so applicable only when individual preferences on the concerned issue are based on “a core value dimension such as freedom versus social order in civil liberties issues” or when a novel issue is integrated in an ongoing agenda due to which the stakes of the public are still ambivalent to it (p. 113). Even though it has been demonstrated that exposure to dual frames may inhibit or “cancel out” framing effects, leading citizens to opt for choices that are in consonance with their underlying values; the nature of competition between two sides in politics accords that there may exist unequal resource allocation between them (Pan & Kosicki, 2001) and the extent to which individuals may be exposed to the messages of either side is uncertain (Chong & Druckman, 2007a).

In a study conducted to assess the impact of value frames on content and quality of citizen’s thought, Brewer and Gross (2010) concluded that the presence of either pro-school voucher frame or anti-school voucher frame or the presence of both of them led the participants to focus on the value of equality in their responses on the issue of school vouchers³. In contrast, the participants who received neither of the frames tended to draw weak associations between egalitarianism and support for school vouchers. Also, the exposure to either frames or both frames induced a limited number of thoughts in the participants by directing their attention to a particular value to the detriment of a host of others, thus, restricting the audience’s perspective. An interesting finding of the study is that when participants were exposed to both the frames, the two frames had an independent and an additive effect on the probability such that the responses would in turn be predominantly centered on the value of equality.

In an experiment to study the impact of news frames on respondents recall Valkenburg et al. (1999) found that the presence of certain frames diminished recall, while the presence of others strengthened it. The human interest frame which tends to dramatize an event and produces a certain degree of emotional empathy in the

audience, leads them to compensate on factual information. In general, however, the experiment demonstrated that frames can exert influence in the recollection of information in the short term.

Levin, Schneider and Gaeth (1998) provide a taxonomy of different types of valence framing effects in order to comprehend the way in which differences in valence of information affects our understanding of the information, the direction in which the information is understood and as a result, the behavior it produces. There are three types of valence framing effects, which include – (1) risky choice framing effects, (2) goal framing effects and (3) attribute framing effects. *Risky choice* framing involves presenting logically equivalent information in either positive or negative light. The most cited example in framing literature – Kahneman and Tversky's (1981) Asian disease problem – lies in the risky choice framing. Thus, depending upon the perception of risk when presented with positively or negatively framed information leads to difference of choice. *Attribute* framing effects arise when object or event attributes/characteristics are the focus of framing manipulation which in turn leads to item evaluations. Here, only one attribute is contingent to framing manipulations and attribute framing allows for a forthright test of positive or negative framing effects. It is distinct from risky choice framing as the information being framed is not the consequence of risky choice but of the characteristic of the object/event that is detrimental to the framing effects.

When the concern rests with enhancing the consequence or implied goal of a behavior that one adopts, the information framed produces a *goal* framing effect. Thus, the message is so framed so as to enhance either the good consequence of performing an act (gains frame) or a negative consequence of not performing an act (loss frame). The important thing here is that both the frames provide the same result but the focus of attention is that which frame would be more persuasive.

However, there are certain constraints on who exactly can frame to have relevant effects. In two experiments conducted by James Druckman (2003), which focused on the impact of source credibility on framing effects, he demonstrated that an ostensibly credible source can alter overall opinions by modifying belief importance (as opposed to changes in belief content, which occurs in persuasion). This occurs as a frame upheld by a perceived credible source alters the weight attached to a consideration in the overall opinion on an issue, and the lack of this effect when the source is not perceived as credible.

A major shortcoming of much of framing effects research (barring a few) is that it focuses on creating artificially tailored environments to assess the specific effects of a frame/frames that are mostly presented in the form of a statement/ one story to assess particular effects soon after as the subject is exposed to the frame. Of course, real world situations are much more complex than laboratory environments. And if a frame is so presented in one story/ a statement, it would never be able to assess the holistic impact of time, citizen conversation, deliberation, a host of competing frames, a host of consonant frames, the frequency of exposures to frames, and various dispositional factors, the prevalence of one frame over another due to differential power relations of frame sponsors that amounts to a specific effect, in a certain group of people.

Framing effects: A study

To test framing effects an experiment was carried out by the authors. The authors interested in looking for the effect a stimulus (two news stories) had on the audience and whether the effect indeed varied when different stimuli were presented to different subjects.

Hypothesis

A linear relationship is predicted between the appearance of frames in the cognitions of subjects and the frames they are exposed to in the news story.

H: The frames appearing in the responses of the subjects will be in consonance with the frames present in news stories that subjects are exposed to.

Research question

The effects of different frames appearing in two news stories on audience perceptions, was examined.

RQ: Will the appearance of frames in the audience vary according to the frames present in the news story?

Research methodology

Sampling Method

The sampling method used was convenience sampling. The sample was 60 graduate

students, studying at Apeejay Institute of Mass Communication, Dwarka, Delhi. They were divided into two groups of 30 subjects each. Both the experimental groups were presented with two news stories on the findings of a survey conducted by the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS) on the state of farmers in India.

Stimuli

The news story titled *Farming Happiness* dated March 13, 2014 which appeared in The Hindu Business Line was presented to Group A, while the story *Nationwide survey finds Indian farmers in bad shape* dated March 12, 2014 which appeared in The Times of India, was presented to Group B. The subjects were then asked to read the news stories and list their opinions on the state of farmers in the country in the form of statements. A total of 105 responses were gathered from Group A and 110 responses were gathered from Group B.

The news story titled *Farming Happiness* published on March 13, 2014 employs 5 main lines of reasoning in the frame “improved condition of farmers” and are listed below:

1. Farmers who are not happy with their profession should be encouraged to take up jobs in other sectors.
2. Majority of the farmers are happy with their profession.
3. Condition of the farmers has improved in the past years.
4. Satisfaction level of the farmers with their jobs has increased.
5. Methods of farming have improved

The news story titled *Nationwide survey finds Indian farmers in bad shape* by Vishwa Mohan, published on March 12, 2014, employs 5 main lines of reasoning in the “dismal state of the majority of the Indian farmers” frame and are listed below:

1. Rich farmers are the ones benefitting from the Governments’ schemes.
2. There is a lack of awareness among farmers.
3. The majority of the farmers are dissatisfied by the Government.
4. The Government has failed in passing on the information to the farmers
5. Farmers are unorganized.

Results

In Group A, the coded responses of the subjects predominantly used the “improved condition of farmers” frame when the respondents were asked to list their views on the state of farmers in the questionnaire. 78% of the responses of the coded responses reflected these five frames when the respondents were asked to list their views on the state of farmers in the questionnaire, whereas 21% responses used frames not used in the news story.

Out of these 78% of responses, 91% were in congruence with the frames employed in the news story while in the remaining 9% there was discordance with the frames employed. That is to say, while 91% of the responses agreed positively with the frame employed by the journalist, the rest argued against the line of reasoning employed by the journalist. However, it is to be noted that even though 9% of the responses argued negatively with the frame, they nevertheless used the frame in their responses. This implies that the presence of the frame guides thought formation.

An example of positively conferring with the frame would be that the respondent agrees that the condition of the farmers has improved in the past years. An example of a disagreement with the frame would be when the respondent says, “if the condition of the farmers has indeed improved then most of the farmers should be happy, which is not the case”.

In Group B, 84% of the coded responses used the “dismal state of the majority of the Indian farmers” frame when the respondents were asked to list their views on the state of farmers in the questionnaire, whereas only 16% responses used frames not used in the news story. Out of these 84% of responses, 93% were in congruence with the frames employed in the news story while in the remaining 7% there was discordance with the frames employed. That is to say, while 93% of the responses agreed positively with the frame employed by the journalist, the rest argued against the line of reasoning employed by the journalist. However, it is to be noted that even though 7% of the responses argued negatively with the frame, they nevertheless used the frame in their responses. This implies that the presence of the frame guides thought formation.

CONCLUSION

The experiment conducted demonstrates that the manner in which a story is framed affects the cognitive process of the respondents. Frames present in a news story have the power to direct the thoughts of individuals in accordance with them.

The results of the study clearly establishes that the frame present in the stories guided the thought formation process of the subjects, since the frames present in the stories also arise in the majority of the responses of the subjects that read those stories. This has major implications for journalists, who have the ability to build narratives on issues of importance.

NOTES

- 1 In the study conducted by Druckman (2001), he replicated the framing effects study conducted by Kahneman & Tversky using a variant of the Asian Disease problem presented in the questionnaires that evaluated either – (1) risk-seeking, or (2) risk-averse preferences when contextual cues about political parties endorsing the program (Democratic or Republican) were provided and they were contrasted with the experiment wherein risk-seeking or risk-averse preferences were evaluated based on arbitrary information. The findings of the experiment were that contextual information plays an important role in vitiating framing effects.
- 2 The low and medium-support stories showed protesters in a direct conflict with Minneapolis police. High status quo support stories presented protesters as a threat to civil society and the police as the protectors of the peace.
- 3 The pro-school vouchers equality frame portrays vouchers as promoting equality whereas the anti-school voucher frame, criticizes vouchers as undermining equality. Participants who were exposed to either of these frames or both these frames in a story, were more likely to think about the issue in egalitarian terms. The experiment indicated that frames, and counter-frames, had the ability to direct the respondents' thoughts according to the frame they were exposed to.

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Communication Model of Polio Eradication in India

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This study discusses the role played by communication in maintenance of public health. The emergence of media and social advertising as a partner in the field of public health has also been analysed. The classical success story in India is the complete eradication of Polio disease which has been made possible only through the vital role played by media. This study highlights all the factors behind the success of the communication model of the pulse polio campaign in India. A communication plan has also been suggested for a sound maintenance of public health.

INTRODUCTION

In the 21st century, the rigid compartmentalisation of subjects has given way to interdisciplinary studies. Communication and health which were earlier studied separately in schools of communication and medicine are now found together as “health communication” in many institutions.

Earlier, there was a general perception that communication was required only for the propagation of the findings of public health scientists. Fortunately things have changed now, most public health professionals realize that for promoting health and protecting the public, what is required is a fusion of science and efficient public health communication.

Public health communication aims to promote and protect health through change at all levels of society. When well conceived, carefully implemented, and sustained over time, public health communication programs have the capacity to

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elicit change among individuals and populations by raising awareness, increasing knowledge, shaping attitudes, and changing behaviours (Hornik, 2002). Public health communication goes much beyond the medical parameters of health; it targets social, physical and environmental aspects of well-being as well. Health communication campaigns have sometimes been criticized as paternalistic, and concerns have been raised about the use of one-way communication from “beneficent” experts to passive audiences. (Guttman, 2000).

An effective public health communication recognizes that for programs to be both ethical and effective, information from and about the intended audience should inform all stages of an intervention, including development, planning, and implementation, to ensure that the program reflects the audience’s ideas, needs, and values (Guttman, 2000). Areas of particular interest include the audience’s health literacy, culture, and diversity (Institute of Medicine, 2002).

Public health communication: An overview

Health communication has been defined as “the art and technique of informing, influencing and motivating individual, institutional and public audiences about important health issues” (US Department of Health and Human Services ,2010). Public health has been defined as “what we, as a society, do collectively to assure the conditions in which people can be healthy” (Institute of Medicine, 2003). Thus, it can be said that public health communication is the scientific development, planned propagation and thorough evaluation of relevant, accurate and accessible health related information communicated to and from intended audiences to ensure that the public remains healthy.

According to Bernhardt (2004), public health communication intertwines with various other disciplines like mass communication, health education, journalism, sociology, psychology and informatics. Multilevel communication such as tailored messages at the individual level, targeted messages at the group level, social marketing at the community level, media advocacy at the policy level and media campaigns at the population level are a characteristic feature of public health communication.

The aim of public health communication is to keep people healthy and fit and deliver messages to them through the media. The International Communication Association officially recognised health communication in 1975; in 1997, the American Public Health Association categorised health communication as a

discipline of Public Health Education and Health Promotion (Thompson et.al., 2011). Lucid communication is essential for a successful public health practice at every level of the ecological model; intrapersonal, interpersonal, group, organizational, and societal. There must be careful deliberation concerning the appropriate channel for messages to best reach the target audience (Parvis, 2002). With the advent of the internet, communication technologies, health websites have sprung up, online support groups, web portals, tele-health programs, electronic health records, social networking and mobile devices. Thus, the media for communication have increased manifold.

The messages in health communication are intended to reach selected audiences accurately and quickly. The public health communicators must have a thorough understanding of the target audience. Tailoring a health message is one strategy for persuasive health communication (Noar et.al., 2007).

In India where diversity runs across the country, it is very important for public health communicators to carefully choose the medium and the time of delivery of the message. The constant study and interaction with scholars of other disciplines like health, medicine, psychology and sociology is important for devising a broad based strategy for effective public health communication.

According to Robertson and Currey (2004), focus has to be on the following three goals :

1. Demystification : By increasing the accessibility of medical knowledge to the public and making physicians more approachable.
2. Encouragement : To suggest ways to alter one's lifestyle to stay healthy and encourage early disease detection.
3. Skills development : To make people aware of alternative medicine and procedures to select their health care partners.

Media as a public health partner

The health care news reaches the public through the traditional media newspapers, magazines, radio and television and along with them Internet based media or New Media as they are often called play a major role in dissemination of information. With the use of media as an educational tool, the practical aspects of health can be spread among the people.

Working with the media can help health professionals educate patients and those in the community about various topics in health care. To maximize the effectiveness of media, issues important and relevant to the target audience must be selected at the outset.

Media can lead to demystification of various medical facts by increasing the accessibility of medical knowledge to the public. The promotion of symptoms for early disease detection, suggesting ways to alter one's lifestyle to stay healthy and cure in case of a disease can be done only through active participation of media in health programmes (Heldman et.al.2013).

However, the greatest challenge of working with the media is that time is a limited commodity. Sometimes, a medical researcher or practitioner would have an opportunity of less than a minute to get his point across in a live radio or television show. Even print media experiences space constraints. Blogs or articles for the web must be apt, concise and crisp.

In the 21st century, communication has emerged as a key tool to maintain public health. Communication has built a strong movement against HIV in India. A new realm of advertising- social advertising has given a huge impetus to public health campaigns. The 'Red Ribbon Campaign' has targeted all the vulnerable sections of the society. Moreover, all forms of media have always given umpteen spaces to AIDS related information. The social stigma attached to being HIV +v has been somewhat reduced with celebrities appearing in AIDS advertisements and calling for an empathic attitude for the affected (Misra, 2007).

Social advertising through media has played a pivotal role in any campaign which involves the community (Jethwaney & Jain, 2012).

Social advertising

Advertisements play a fundamental role in creating awareness about services or products in the target audience. Advertisements are essential to promote the product, service, brand or corporate image. In the post-globalization era, a new area of advertising is social advertising. (Mahra & Mondal, 2015). However, social advertising is not new to India. Earlier the government use to release social advertisements, now even corporate advertisers show their brand associated with social messages. Some social advertising campaigns are as follows:

- Save Trees from Idea Cellular
- Red Ribbon Campaign by the Govt. of India
- Pulse Polio campaign
- Iodine salt campaign
- Lead India from Times of India
- *Jaago Re* from Tata Tea

Young India expects changes in the advertisements and social causes are their calling. The internet is a big platform for expression and sharing of ideas. Social advertising tries to bring change in the perception of the society and in turn usher in a revolution. People want to be a part of a good cause. Social advertising gives them direction and motivation. It has been widely found that the social advertisements are influencing all segments of people and making them take action (Heldman et.al., 2013). In the case of Iodized salt campaign, people started using iodized salt to cook food and the incidence of goitre reduced drastically in India (Kumar & Pathak, 2013).

Communication model for polio eradication

Polio is caused by a human enterovirus called the poliovirus. Wild polioviruses are those that occur naturally. The pulse polio immunisation programme was launched in 1995 in India as a result of World Health Organisation Global Polio eradication initiative. The WHO started the Global Polio Eradication Initiative in 1988 across 200 countries with 20 million volunteers backed by a total investment of US \$ 3 billion. At that time polio was widespread in India. However after the launch of the immunisation programme in 1995 the share of reported polio cases reduced to 46.4% of the world. Ultimately India was declared polio free country by World Health Organization in 2012 (Mahra & Mondal, 2015).

India faced challenges in reaching a huge population that required sophisticated, data-driven and targeted communication campaigns. The assessment of communication tools were done periodically by independent bodies.

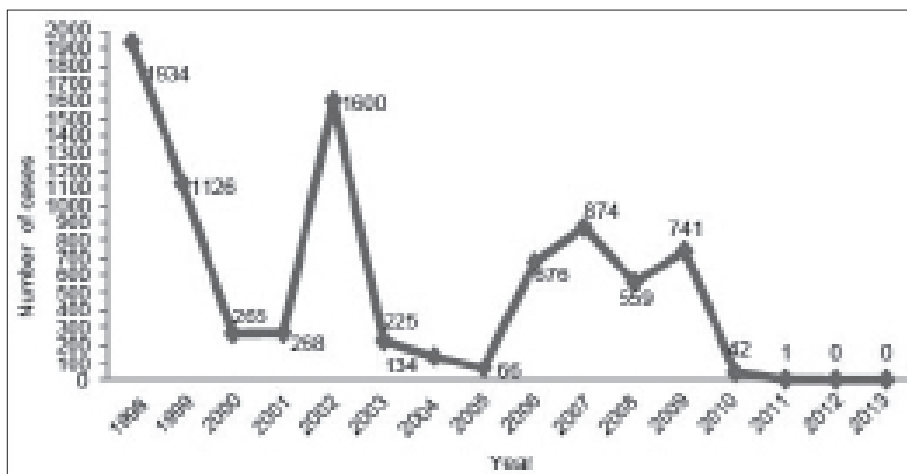
Polio eradication has been successful in India due to the intensive interpersonal communication, social mobilisation, media campaigns, political and national advocacy. Here public health communication can be defined as the strategic design, application and evaluation of communication interventions (i.e. social mobilisation, interpersonal communication, mass or local media and advocacy) to achieve public

health objectives, (Haidar, 2005; Hornik, 2002). Social mobilisation is defined as “a broad-scale movement to engage people’s participation in achieving a specific development goal through self-reliant efforts”, (McKnee et.al., 2000). This often demands the participation of different social factors including community organisations, national, local and state governments, professional organisations and the media (Athar et.al., 2007).

Challenges

Despite the colossal task of synchronising logistics, health workers and volunteers at polio booths and during house-to-house visits, India made tremendous progress towards reducing the polio disease burden since 1995. By 2005, India was immunising 170 million children with oral poliomyelitis vaccine (OPV) during National Immunisation Days at least twice a year and approximately 100 million children multiple times a year during Sub-National Immunisation Days, (Galway, 2005). India had to put up with setbacks when the number of polio cases increased from 268 in 2001 to 1600 in 2002 (Fig. 1) and from 66 in 2005 to 874 in 2007. Eighty percent of the cases were concentrated in Uttar Pradesh, where polio affected the poorest communities.

Fig. 1. Wild polio cases in India



(Source: National Polio Surveillance Project)

On 13th January 2012, India passed one year without detecting a single case of wild polio virus. India had traditionally been considered one of the toughest places in the world to eradicate polio. In 2009, India reported 741 polio cases, more than any other country in the world. In 2010, India reported just 42 cases out of 1,352 cases reported globally (National Polio Surveillance Project, 2015).

Typically, polio cases in India were among children aged less than two years (75%) who lived in mostly poor neighbourhoods, lacked access to basic sanitary services, were often missed in OPV rounds, and thus were more likely to receive fewer doses (UNICEF, 2003). While most parents were aware of the need for polio drops to protect their children, many did not understand the rationale for repeated rounds, (AIIMS, 2001). There were widespread misconceptions about OPV and suspicions about motives behind the campaign. To add to these, were the infrastructural problems of understaffed clinics, poor roads, illiteracy and other diseases. Misconceptions included: OPV caused illness in children, was ineffective, caused infertility and was part of a plan to curb growth of Muslims and scheduled Hindu castes. One of the most difficult challenges for India has been reaching the huge population spread across diverse geographical locations separated by social and economic barriers. Reaching and engaging populations living in areas prone to the spread of polio virus was the need of the hour.

Social mobilisation

While widespread mass media campaigns ensured national visibility and public awareness of the pulse polio campaign, interpersonal communication, opinion leaders and social mobilisation were important to reach unreached populations. In India, the campaign relied on the trained health workers and communicators to address the context in which the wild poliovirus increases. A social mobilisation network was created where local health authorities involved coordinators working at different levels: the sub-district, block (covering about 100 villages) and community mobilisation coordinators. They teamed up with vaccination teams for routine follow-up of families. India conducted two National Immunisation Days (NIDs) in 2011. During each NID, almost 2.5 million polio vaccinators sought to vaccinate roughly 172 million children under five throughout India's 35 states and union territories. In 2011, NIDs were followed up by seven smaller, more focused Sub-national Immunisation Days (SNIDs). During these immunisation days, up to 2 million community health workers conducted

massive mobilization drives and communications campaigns aimed at high risk areas (Global Polio Initiative, 2015).

Activities included planned, intensive and repeated interpersonal communication in selected sites using house-to-house visits as well as systematic and sustained mobilisation of community and religious leaders and influencers e.g. local doctors, Imams (UNICEF, 2003). Moreover, by roping in celebrities in social advertisements the appeal for immunisation became widespread and caught the immediate attention of the people.

The communication strategy targeted women/mothers through interpersonal communication with an emphasis on oral poliomyelitis vaccine (OPV) safety and its benefits for the children. Trained female health workers spearheaded communication efforts. They communicated directly with female caregivers or indirectly through females in the community, with support from male community and religious leaders. The female teams were effective in influencing caregivers shown by reports of improvements in attitudes towards OPV and perceptions of risk of polio in target areas. A study conducted by the UNICEF in 2005 in high-risk and four low-risk areas in India (categorized by poor campaign indicators and/or poor coverage; n = 2143 households) showed that in districts with intensive social mobilisation (n = 808 households), 78% of respondents reported that OPV protected their children from polio, compared with 71% in areas without these activities (n = 1335 households) caregivers. While men remained important opinion leaders and information gatekeepers, female caregivers played a primary role in the decision-making regarding immunisation of their children in 55% of households.

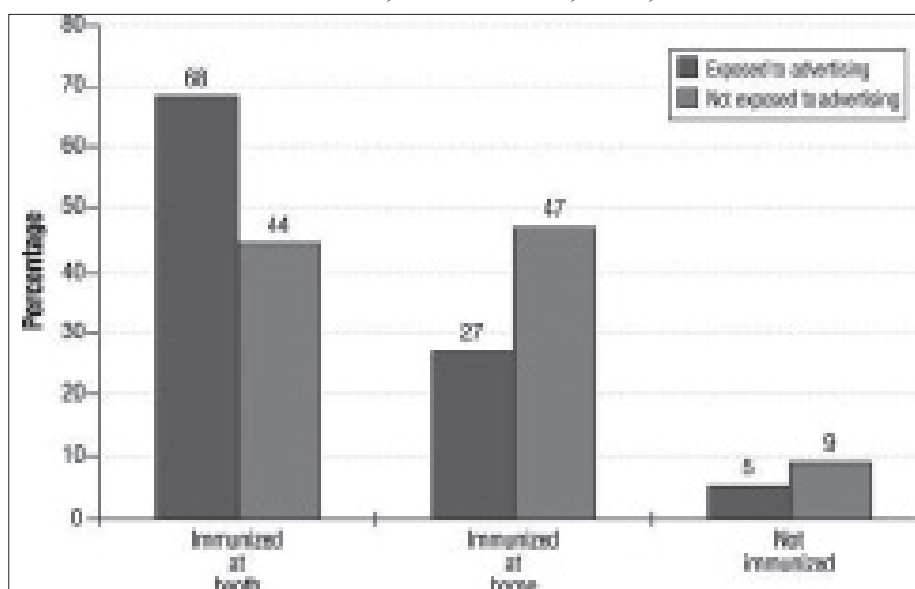
Role of media and advocacy

In India, large-scale mass media campaigns involving movie and cricket stars and political figures focused on dispelling rumours about OPV and encouraging caregivers to bring their children to vaccination booths. An evaluation in the year 2003 by UNICEF showed that nearly 92% of 9370 respondents cited television and radio spots as “very influential” or “influential” in their decision to take children to vaccination booths, while “9 out of 10 respondents,” said they had come to the booth largely due to the TV and radio spots”, (Cheng, 2004). Entry and exit polls following exposure to messages on local media among 2552 randomly selected respondents showed a 60% increase in awareness of the next National Immunisation Day’s date and a 20% increased intention to get their children immunised at the booth. Puppet/theatre shows, video vans and other folk media activities held in

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more than 3500 villages in Uttar Pradesh, contributed to a 20% increase in booth attendance,(Galway, 2005; Cheng, 2004). Data from 2004-2005 showed that 68% of respondents exposed to polio radio and television spots reported taking their children to the booth for vaccination, compared with only 44% among those not exposed to the advertising (Fig. 2) (Galway, 2005).

Fig. 2. Exposure to polio radio and television advertising and polio immunisation rates, Uttar Pradesh, India, 2004-2005



(Source: Global Polio Eradication Initiative)

Branding of polio information, education and communication (IEC)

Branding of all polio information, education and communication (IEC) material with bright colours like yellow, pink and blue, consistently in every state gave a distinct and unique identity to the programme. Social advertising was done across all media. Logos and taglines for the programme were tailored to the changing times. The first tagline being *do boond zindagi ki* (two drops of life) highlighted the importance of the two drops of polio vaccine. The underlying message was

that how two drops of the vaccine could secure your child's future. The aim of the *har bachcha har bar* (every child every time) tagline was to reinforce the need for repeated doses. The present *aapka bachcha har bar* (my child each time), creates a sense of responsibility in the parents to protect their child against the dreaded disease. (Mahra & Mondal, 2015). Social advertising campaigns had a stirring effect on the people across all sections of society.

Outdoor communication was done through billboards and posters focusing on the migrant and mobile populations. The tagline for outdoor communication/advertising was "where ever you go where ever you stay, ensure polio immunisation" (*jahan bhi jao, jahan bhi raho, polio ki khurak zaroor pilao*). Posters and banners of the pulse polio campaign were strategically displayed at international borders posts and in States where migrant labourers come in search of livelihood from the polio endemic areas.

Before each polio round, polio posters were put up in huge numbers in the high-risk polio areas to ensure that the community is made aware of the polio immunisation booth and the day of administering the drops. Moreover, opinion leaders like *sarpanches* and *anganwadi* workers also played a crucial role in drawing people to polio immunization booths and dispelling myths. Advertisements were played in cinema halls about the pulse polio campaigns (Goswami, 2007).

In 2002, UNICEF appointed Bollywood star Amitabh Bachchan as the ambassador for the polio programme in India. His appeal to the masses through TV and radio spots helped muster the community to the polio booths. His picture in newspapers drew immediate attention to the cause. The mass media campaign also had a number of other Bollywood stars and cricketers like Sachin Tendulkar who spread awareness about the pulse polio campaign among the people. Social advertising with celebrities first caught attention and then instilled confidence in the target population.

Media was no doubt, a critical partner for the programme. Media took the pulse polio campaign at the national, state, district and block levels. Moreover, it also helped in analysis and observation. Electronic media, especially radio, helped to get across the message of immunisation to migrant and mobile populations (Rogers, 1962). Health messages were carefully woven into existing entertainment programmes covering all private and public radio channels across India. During

polio immunisation campaigns, radio jockeys reminded parents of the ongoing round of pulse polio immunisations while they entertained their audiences with jokes and songs.

A hands-on communication approach and efficient feedback mechanism helped build the credibility and success of the pulse polio programme.

Factors behind the successful model of Polio campaign

The model of Communication targeting polio amalgamates social mobilization, interpersonal communication, gender–and culturally-sensitive involvement and uses mass/folk media to reach populations in challenging socio-economic and geographic situations in India. According to Leach and Fairhead (2008), the principles underpinning communication strategies in India were:

- i) use of epidemiological, social and behavioural data to assess social/individual constraints, such as knowledge gaps and resistance, to develop effective interventions to reach underserved groups;
- ii) development of innovative and intensive interpersonal communication/social mobilization strategies;
- iii) engagement of community and religious leaders.

According to International Budget Partnership (2012) the communication plan for public health must keep in mind the following points:

- Execution of communication plan based on monitoring of economic, social and behavioural data of the affected populations;
- Wide spread use of interpersonal communication and social mobilization;
- Involvement of opinion leaders, community leaders, communication and relationship-building with the target population;
- Using faith-based folk media to reach community members;
- Thorough grassroots mobilization to reach and communicate with marginalized communities;
- Tackle social/gender customs to improve interpersonal communication and increasing access to hard-to reach groups;

- The language used in media/social advertising must be simple and easy to understand;
- The social advertisements must be played repeatedly to put across the message in the minds of the audience.

CONCLUSION

Communication is an important partner in public health. The contribution of strategically planned communication in creating widespread support and understanding, as well as accessing unreached populations and overcoming resistance is invaluable. The victory in the battle against polio in India is an apt example of how an effective communication model can deliver positive results. Medical approaches alone cannot address certain community concerns. These challenges can be faced only by an effective communication action.

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Book Review

**BLUR: How to know what's true in the age
of information overload**

**Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenetiel (2010)
Bloomsbury, New York
Price \$26, Pages 237.**

M R Dua¹

Though this book's title is somewhat enigmatic, it is an interesting read. The authors imaginatively and knowledgably grapple with some of the most significant and labyrinthine predicaments that confront journalism today. The book handles this complex, multi-dimensional subject quite realistically. It single-mindedly focuses on the dilemmas, and conundrums that challenge the readers, and the newspaper establishments for more than two decades, regarding the contents, utility, relevance, and above all, the survival of the daily newspaper in an abundant media environment in the twenty-first century.

Thanks to the omnipresent and omniscient Internet, computer and diverse other means of communication and information, we are inundated with kaleidoscopic electronic gadgets to acquire knowledge and learn about the latest breaking news and developments in almost any area of human endeavour in any corner of the globe in nanoseconds. Most of these recently unexplored sources have helped fill a huge paucity of basic data and dearth of dependable information. So much so, that the daily newspaper seems to be losing its niche in the scheme of human beings' intellectual crusades. But, despite this media deluge, truth seems to be the casualty. It seems this is the provocation that has given birth to this book. Truth seems to be getting blurred fast.

There was a time in our recent history when media persons, media content producers, and media consumers were handicapped by innumerable hardships

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in making their media products richer and significant for the common people. Newsmen and writers who needed to build their stories and columns, and also to accurately perceive what exactly was happening, where, and to what effect, in this world, felt disadvantaged due to an extreme scarcity of relevant material.

Now, hardly a generation later, courtesy, the enduring presence of Internet, computer, umpteen other media gadgets, we have a glut of information, as the authors of this book, Bill Kovach and Tom Rosentiel, reflect on. It's hard to imagine the kind of 'orderly or homogenous process of information' we have available at our fingertips. This statement is by the winners of the Harvard University awards for their earlier books, such as 'Elements of Journalism' and 'Warp Speed', and senior journalists who worked, respectively, for prestigious American daily newspapers, The New York Times and The Los Angeles Times, they point out that this deluge of information available today places us in a rather unusual quandary: 'how will we understand even day-to-day events that play out more incrementally? How will we decide what information to believe, and what sources to trust? And, what, increasingly, will be the role of the old press? In other words, what's the future of truth, and how as citizens are we to discuss it? And, whether truth matters any more?'

That is precisely what this book deals with.

Meanwhile, it is true that in the present information-saturated age in which we live, 'reality is simply a matter of belief, not anything objective or verified;' for there's the red truth and blue truth, saffron truth or green truth; red media or blue media, and so on. It looks as if media outlets have 'already decided for us... we have already moved from the age of information to the age of affirmation.'

As the authors opine, while 'the Internet has decoupled advertising from news...old journalism's problems have much more to do with a loss of revenue due to technology than loss of audience'. Therefore, the authors' contention is that as we have so many means of learning news, we should make sure that 'our understanding of the news is based on facts'. How? The authors respond: by 'skeptical knowing' as it's called in the USA today. The reader should identify the contents and find out how complete these are by going into news sources,

proof, evidence, etc. And, finally, by questioning: ‘are we getting what we need?’ This decision will have to be made by readers, as they are being incessantly fed by more and more information day in and day out by the internet, cable, citizen journalists, blogs, and more instantly. Today it’s doubly important since readers are their ‘own journalists’; with no gatekeeper, no editor,’ around.

This book makes yet another daring observation; the ‘news’ has always been changing; and therefore the journalism in the 20th century was termed ‘New Journalism.’ In the 21st century, we will soon discover the ‘Next Journalism.’ The questions encountered will be: What’s True? Can we trust it? This then, the book argues, will be the journalism of verification; of assertion; of affirmation; of interest groups--public interest; of aggregation. The New hybrids of blogs and social media will make their presence felt in the ‘Next Journalism’, feel the authors.

The reader will have to learn to discriminate, to discover the norms and motives, and will be expected to find out the completeness of the news, all its sources, proof, evidence, and more truth about the news, by themselves.

The authors aver that with a view to reaching the truth, some other important factors in the ‘trustworthiness’ of the news will be: how do we determine if what we are learning matters? Is it something that can improve our lives? The authors present a six-step criteria that readers can employ to discover all this, and also decide whether the news they are getting is useful, and they need it; did the news advance their knowledge? Was the quality of reporting this news comprehensive? The reader will then question: What is it that I do not understand? Where can I find that? As we read our daily news, many more questions will crop up. The onus will entirely be on us, the readers, to find the answers, which will then be helpful in determining the value of the news.

Finally, the authors’ strong contention is that ‘journalism must shift from being a product to being a service that can answer audiences’ questions, offer resources, provide tools, and become a public dialogue... in future the press will derive its integrity from what kind of content it delivers and the quality of its engagement, not from its exclusive role as a sole information provider or intermediary between newsmakers and the public.’

With this end in view the authors have presented an eight-point formula that the ‘new news consumer requires from journalism.’ These eight functions define the idea of journalism as service, which include: the press as authenticator of truth and reliability supported by documents and transparency about sources; journalism’s other function will be of a sense maker, to enable the reader ‘to decide what the news means to him; for, when there’s too much information on hand, the reader finds it hard to sift the grain from the chaff; journalist’s verification must help do that to the reader. The journalist’s investigator function will be to serve the ‘watchdog role’ for the reader. Being a ‘witness bearer’ to the events will be a crucial function of the journalist of the future. The other functions of the journalist will include: that of the empowerer; smart aggregator; forum organizer; and that of a role model.

The authors also offer a list of some fifty diverse elements that the print journalists should keep in mind in telling a story. ‘The New Newsroom’ of the future, the authors aver, should be different and should be equipped to ‘develop a more rigorous and diverse culture.’ The New Newsroom of the future must be able to offer a higher level of proof of the story; should be more transparent; must develop or access more expertise; in fact, the newsroom must be re-organized and new skills brought in; the editor will have to be more important, and so, the definition of news must change.

If some of the suggestions put forth in this book are given practical shape in the times to come, news organizations, and all their products will become more valuable, cherished in every possible manner, and today’s news establishments will function as a veritable treasure trove and be deemed as sources of knowledge creators and disseminators. One tends to agree with the authors’ statement that in the envisioned scenario, as information and telecommunications are playing an important role in our daily life, it is critical that we use the promise offered by emerging communication technologies to create a journalism that joins journalists and citizens in a journey of mutual discovery.’

Meanwhile, though this appears to be an ideal panorama, one remains unsure of its taking any concrete shape. One thing, however, is certain that this

book should go a long way in creating a lot of fresh thinking among the next generation of journalists, about their role and functions in the brave new world of print journalism, particularly the new media, that are instrumental in shaping our new world. As a matter of fact, this book should be made a prescribed reading for every student, teacher, and practitioner of newspaper journalism, particularly in developing countries where print media are awarded the status of enablers of empowerment, huge respect and honour.

Communicator 2012 - Abstracts

Taking Stock of Media/Communication Studies in India: North South Divide

Mira K Desai

After the first World Journalism Education Congress of 2007 in conjunction with The Asian Media Information and Communication Centre (AMIC) annual conference at Singapore, UNESCO's model curriculum for journalism education for developing countries and emerging democracies in the same year, University Grants Commission (UGC), model curricula for Journalism and Mass Communication (JMC) in 2001 and 2013 Press Council of India committee for 'qualifications' for journalists, media/communication education is witnessing attention both at the global and local levels. This study is based on personal observational analysis (being a media student herself and media/communication teacher over the last two decades) besides a variety of secondary sources. It argues that there is a north-south divide even within Indian media/communication education reflected in the inception, curricular trends and disciplinary locations, research practices, and media organizations. India also has multiple histories of journalism spanning over two centuries with north-south differences. Whenever Indian media/communication education is discussed, these differences and divides are barely paid attention to, leading to national generalizations which lack an accurate representation of reality.

Journalism Education, Profession and Research in Bangladesh: Finding a Way Out

Mohammad Sahid Ullah

University based journalism education in Bangladesh has been subjected to a number of constraints while keeping pace with the fast-moving situation in the profession and media. Journalism departments have incorporated broadcast production and new media courses in their curricula to address the needs of media after the emergence of private TV channels and proliferation of online journalism. However, these inclusions still could not meet the demand of the

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market due to the lack of adequate lab facilities for practical classes, as well as resources, particularly books and teaching staff with the knowledge of technical know-how, and research constraints in the departments. Through an investigation into the infrastructure, curricula, pedagogy, and research abilities of different journalism departments across Bangladesh, this study has found that teaching, research, and expansion activities are yet to be organised properly. In conclusion a set of recommendations is made in order to find a contextual solution in regard to strengthening the capabilities of journalism departments to face the numerous challenges.

African Countries and the Challenges of Lobbying for a Permanent Seat in the UN Security Council

Aniefiok Udoudo, & Chukwuemeka B Iroham

Lobbying in Africa, is subject to various interpretations, among which is the most resented interpretation by the common man that lobbying is bribery. This kind of interpretation is not unexpected given the kind of society many African countries are known to be made up of. Corruption as the leading factor and bribes in the name of lobbying by African leaders inform an average African of his wrong impression about lobbying. But lobbying as a tool in public relations, international relations, national and international politics is devoid of the popularly held anti-social interpretation. The objective of this article is to show lobbying as a standard function of public relations and international relations that can afford the lobbyist an opportunity of acknowledging the crucial importance of those lobbied in order for an achievable purpose. Africa needs sincere lobbying to enable it to have a fair representation in the Security Council's permanent seats. To do this, implementing reforms of the UN and the Security Council is crucial. This article has highlighted challenges facing Africa in its bid to have at least a permanent seat in the Security Council. Among others, Africa is faced with constant instability which gives the industrialised nations advantage over African nations. Also mentioned is the issue of lack of development in the

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countries that make up the continent. Prospects of African countries having permanent representation in the Security Council have also been discussed. Among suggestions made, African countries must be committed to one another to enable them have a common front while lobbying for permanent seat(s).

Visual Persuasion in Print Advertising: An Inquiry into the 'Incredible India' Campaign

Shubhda Arora

The omnipresence of a consumerist culture requires an inquiry into the persuasive forces which mobilise consumers into making a choice. Needless to say, communication theories have come a long way from the effects or the functionalist paradigm to the nuanced understanding of audiences as active participants. They are no longer looked at as passive people who could be easily persuaded. At the same time, companies are allocating huge marketing budgets to advertising their products and services with the aim to persuade consumers to purchase. The advertising industry spends an enormous amount of time and effort to figure out the best strategies for getting consumers to buy products. To study these dynamics, it is important to revisit the propaganda theories of communication. It is imperative to understand the techniques that are being employed to capture attention of consumers and the persuasive elements which are being employed. This study specifically looks at the visual architecture of print advertisements and deconstructs it into its various elements. The reason why a particular colour, form or design has been used and what it symbolises is of primary concern. The study examines the print advertisements of the "Incredible India" campaign launched by the Ministry of Tourism in India in order to understand the intricacies of visual persuasion.

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Journalism and the Pursuit of Sustainability

Aleida Rueda

Sustainability, following the classical concept of the United Nations, refers to the process that we can meet our present needs with the current resources without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs with the resources we have left. The concept is based on two essential components: “needs” and “resources”, so that a sustainable process is achieved when there is a balance between both in the present that ensures the same balance and the future. Although the concept lacks practical methodologies to make this possible, there has not been an obstacle for its indiscriminate use in public policies and speeches, international agreements, marketing and the mass media. In this context, and without delegitimising the ultimate goal of the sustainable development, it is worth asking: How to cover sustainability? Do we need a journalism specialised in sustainable topics? Does it make sense in developing countries where most of the attempts to be sustainable are frequently unsuccessful? Is it enough to talk about the environment to be sustainable? What characterises the stories focused on sustainability? This article raises the convenience of having sustainable journalism not only for the relevance of having stories related to sustainability in the mass media but also the need to include scientific information and a sufficiently specialised news making process to make citizens actively involved in public decisions and social transformations. In this sense, rather than a journalism that is sustainable only because it covers sustainability issues the author proposes a journalism that is sustainable itself for its ability to meet the citizens’ needs of the present with current resources—and scientific information- without compromising the ability of future generations—of journalists—to do the same.

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