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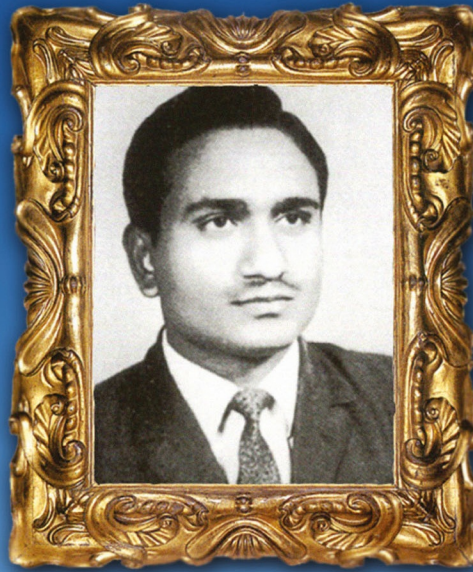
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A TRUE VISIONARY

*“You see things and you say **Why?** But I dream of things that never were and say **Why not?**”*

- George Bernard Shaw



Shri Jagannath Gupta
(1950 - 1980)

*Also a true visionary...who dared to dream!
He lives no more but his dreams live on....and on!*

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JIMS (Kalkaji)	-	1997
JIMS (Vasant Kunj)	-	2003
JIMS (Jaipur)	-	2003
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And more dreams to come!

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Editor's Desk

The world needs to reinterpret the ideals by which it has lived. If the pandemic is any disruptor, which very few will deny, it has shown that there is something grievously amiss with the way humankind has been living life. It beats human comprehension to see the world go into a protracted lockdown at the invisible assault of a 'lowly' virus out of a deep sense of insecurity in the face of this threat to life. In fact, for most people, it has been an existential threat. It must be conceded here that humankind responded to this challenge with a brave face by not just coming up with a vaccine in the shortest possible time but also devising ways of saving precious lives with the help of the existing medical scientific know how. But, despite all this, pandemic kept up its challenge like the proverbial sword of Damocles hanging over the heads of humankind. No wonder, buzzwords like 'the new normal' have entered the English language lexicon to describe the post-COVID19 world. But, what is missing in all these attempts at understanding the disruption is the limited and even restrictive reach of the purely mental response of the world.

Rooted in the Enlightenment philosophy of the sovereignty of human mind over all other faculties of human perception and realization of Truth, it has far outlived its due 'life cycle'. However, as it often happens, the old order changeth but with tardy steps of time. So, even when the hints of a new dawn of human civilization were announced in the Indian Renaissance led by the towering personality of Swami Vivekananda, it has taken the world pretty long to recognize the value of his universal and path breaking message to humanity. While reorienting the perception of the faith of the millions living in India, he drew attention to the usefulness of the esoteric content of the so-called 'Hindu' sacred texts for the progress and well-being of humanity, which has for long been held hostage by the narrative of 'other'. His very address to the delegates assembled in the Parliament of Religions at Chicago opened with the spiritually charged words, 'Brothers and Sisters of America'. In one fell swoop, he felled the wall of distinction raised by those who needed a foundation for the perpetuation of exploitation of the colonized by the colonizer in the name of religion, caste, creed and colour. It was not a Public Relations speech sculpted in the entrails of the human mind by reason, but a mystic message of Oneness that flowed from the fountain of his intuitive perception of reality in his sacred Heart. At the base of this address lay the universal wisdom of the Veda, which our learned Enlightenment historiographers had dismissed as 'the blabbering of a barbaric race'. This inability of the West to understand the value of Indian 'Darshan', not philosophy, owed to its inability to decode the mystic symbolism of the Vedic texts. In the process, the world remained deprived of the unifying and liberating force of their ideas.

The pandemic calls for a relook at our paradigms of cognitive human development so that the human race may survive in peace and harmony instead of wasting away its potentiality in internecine conflicts of interest between man and man, nature and man, and nation and nation.

(Ravi K. Dhar)

About the Journal

Mass Communicator: International Journal of Communication Studies has been conceived as an international quarterly peer-reviewed journal with the avowed objectives of stimulating research in communication studies in Indian academia of international level as also to publish research carried out abroad to serve as a window on the multi-dimensional aspects of media and communication research in countries beyond the Indian borders. To this end, the journal is a platform for the publication of outcomes of new and innovative thinking in the subject/profession that follow not only the rigours of academic research methodology but also non-conventional modes of expression such as perspectives and opinion, which often come from media and communication practitioners, be those journalists or development communicators self-interrogating their profession. The scope of research published in the journal is deliberately kept open-ended to facilitate an osmotic interchange of ideas across disciplines with a bearing on media and communication theory.

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MEDIA FRAMING IN 24X7 ENGLISH NEWS CHANNELS: AN ANALYSIS OF THE ROLE OF PANELISTS IN PRIME-TIME POLITICAL NEWS DEBATES

Ashwini Ramesh*

In India, television news reporting has changed ever since the advent of 24x7 news channels. More so, round the clock news channels are identified for their prime-time (9-10) pm news debates. It is observed that these debates prioritize propaganda over objective news discourse. The framed news debates are shrill, subjective, and lack diverse viewpoints. Anchors and panelists who form the crux of prime-time news debates choose personal involvement over responsible news discussion. Thus, the main objectives of the study were to analyze media framing and the role of panelists in prime-time news debates in three popular (based on BARC ratings) 24x7 English news channels. After quantitative content analysis, the findings have shown that 75.27% of political news debates are framed. Also, the number of panelists in each debate are more than adequate, time given for panelists to talk as compared to the depth of political news issue is miniscule, women representation among panelists is very low, work profile of panelists is not diverse, and panelists are selectively chosen based on their political party affiliation. Anchors being the editors of news channels form gatekeepers of information. Media frames are glaringly visible in every prime-time (9-10) pm political news debate in the chosen 24x7 English news channels.

Keywords: Framing, Prime-time news debates, Anchors, Panelists.

Television news has become an integral part of people's daily lives. Its audio-visual effects create a social intimacy that often leads viewers into an imaginative world. Television is one of the greatest *influencers* for public opinion formation. Media effects and political communication are an ever-growing area of research as they have the capacity to shape viewpoints, voting behaviour and identity of politics, politician and political party. (Navasky cited in Zelizer & Allen, 2002) has mentioned 'It is based largely on journalism that we make up our national mind'.

Political Communication

Political communication is an *interaction* among politicians, media and public. It is the process in which downward communication is from governing authorities to citizens, horizontal communication is among politicians, and upward communication is from opinion of public to the governing authorities. Political communication is central to electorate and policymaking. Media gives enormous *importance* to political news coverage. Exclusive pages in newspapers and prime time slots in television channels for political news are glaringly visible. (Kumar, 2013) stated that the relationship of media and political process is *intimate*. (Lippmann, 1922) stated that events concerning political affairs are 'out of reach, out of sight, out of mind' for citizens if the media doesn't take responsibility to cover them. In India, political reporting has grown enormously since its nascent stage in *first* Lok Sabha election in 1951. Some factors which have been influential in

political reporting in India are communalism, emergency, press censorship, mediatization, studio-based debates, paid news syndrome and media ownership.

Television and Mediatization

In 1991, proliferation of satellite television transformed Indian media. Penetration of foreign news channels influenced new ways of political news reporting. In 1991, STAR TV - the *first* satellite television was established in India. With this, 'Mediatization' was introduced to Indian media. As (Meyer, 2002) stated mediatization became an important concept in political communication. Defining the concept, he said, mediatization is about how media presents political information emphasising its own logic thereby elevating the role of journalists as interpreters of political news. From this phase, Indian election coverage began to frame political news. (Falasca, 2014) stated that election journalism is inclined towards framing politics as a game of strategy using analytical skill, independent perspective and control over news stories. (Stromback, 2008; Hajer, 2009) stated that the rising influence of media on society at large, and behaviour of political officials, their parties and administrative institutions in specific, are defined by 'mediatization'.

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Studio based debates

(Udapa, 2010) stated that political journalism was *enhanced* through studio debates. A political culture in India emerged with this introduction where not only the elite but also the middle-class citizenry began to participate by voicing their opinions for justice. This could be seen in issues like corruption, human rights, development etc. In 1998, Star TV introduced the *first* 24 hours news channel in India. (Downey, 2014) stated that that 24 hours news channels created a complex media with increased commercialization and abandoned ideals, issues and public concerns. (Datar, 2014) explaining the importance of studio debates stated that prime time television debates build *career* for politicians. The popularity of any politician builds either with grassroots level working or through TV. More a politician appears on TV during prime-time, higher is his/her brand value. This is the reason that political parties keep media cell that monitor spokespersons performance in media (mainly television debate). The author also mentioned that in the era of 24x7 news channels, there is always news being televised. People are well versed with news content from various sources. However, prime time television debates offer *newer* formats of news, rather than content. (Mehta, 2013) stated that 24-hour news channels have given fresh angle to politicians. They have introduced permanent publicity and have enabled politicians to acclimatize to newer forms of electronic mediation. These channels have given more *visibility* and *publicity* to politicians, in turn forcing them to be on campaign trail most of the times. 'The political reporting by the 24-hour TV channels has made politics also a 24-hour ritual (Ibid.)'.

Media framing

The study has used framing theory to analyze media frames in prime-time (9-10) pm political news debates. Framing theory was given by sociologist *Erving Goffman* in 1974 (Goffman, 1974). From that time, framing theory has taken enormous change in its structure, factors and process of analysis. Shanto Iyengar in the study '*Is Anyone Responsible? How Television Frames Political Issues*' highlighted on applicability of framing theory in television news. Episodic and Thematic frames were introduced by Iyengar (Iyengar, 1991). Episodic frames show specific, tangible and concrete news issues. While thematic frames illustrate general or undefined news issues. The present study has observed that every political news debate selected for analysis were thematic news issues. Defining the concept of framing, (Entman, 1993) said "frames are patterns of interpretation rooted in culture and articulated by the individual". (Edelman, 1993) said frames are derived by ideology and bias.

With all of these, the question arises that even when media organizations have freedom of speech and expression, why do

they frame news? Relating to this, (Gitlin, 1980) has mentioned - to fascinate readers, newsmakers have to select some intriguing slants in their stories. When certain facts/stories are highlighted and others are downplayed, journalists can hope to retain their audiences.

I. Review of Literature

Media frames and political communication is an intriguing area for research. As politics and governance are heavily dependent of media for any kind of communication, creating 'accessibility bias' comes in hands of media professionals. (Entman, 1993) in a study "*Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured paradigm*" stated that frames in political communication define political power. And, every frame witnessed in a news story is an imprint of that strength. It displays uniqueness of interests and are made to compete with text.

An extensive research by (Peter & Stefaan, 2016) on the usage of media by politicians in the study "*Information and Arena: The Dual function of the News Media for Political Elites*" elaborates two functions of media – source for information and a political stage. Thus, in both these functions of media, there exists attention of public, issue promotion, personal involvement through opinions and judgments. The author highlighted the concept of mediatization and delves into detailing of how even media is exploited by political actors. As per the study, mediatization is about the political power that media carries. Media being politically influential, politicians promote their message, and analyse how each of these messages get coverage.

Elaborating on the 2014 prime-ministerial elections in India, (Mudgal, 2015) in the study "*Framing the 2014 Elections: Curious Absence of Development*", the author describes how the two contesting political parties were covered by the Indian media. The two contesting political parties, namely, Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP) led by Narendra Modi and Congress that was led by Rahul Gandhi, received different levels of media coverage. The study found that maximum number of visuals, lead stories, live election coverage including rallies and political speeches, campaigns were of Narendra Modi and other leaders from BJP. Modi had more presence on TV including advertisements than Rahul Gandhi. Media favoured BJP over Congress party. Advertisements and electoral campaigns were given generic coverage. Personality driven media coverage was witnessed in 2014 prime-ministerial elections.

The study '*Media advocacy through talk shows: A study on NDTV (Hindi) India prime time show*' by (Sen, 2017) examined content quality in 'Prime Time: Ravish Kumar Ke

Saath' talk show. Analysis was on types of incidents covered, depth of each news coverage, and representation of news issues. Findings showed that –Repetition of topics were based on their importance, and justification of each debate was carried through meticulous debate and discussion. There was no favouritism seen in any debate aired. The author stated that news debates have impact on its viewers, particularly during election season.

In the study by (Ranganathan, 2006) titled '*Television in Tamil Nadu politics*', the author elaborated on effects of television reportage on Tamil Nadu elections in 2006, and repercussions of television news channels owned by politicians. The study mentioned that television channels played as a *tool for propaganda* and even during non-election times, ideologies of respective political party owning the TV channel was promoted. Television channels, particularly colour TV promoted political ideologies of its owners. And, this was a new concept for Tamil Nadu politics in 2006. A noteworthy trend was when television reporting swayed political decisions, and people from entertainment industry to align with a political party. The study stated that people from entertainment media began building television careers through the new phenomena during star-struck Tamil Nadu elections in 2006.

Significance of the study

News debates being an *important* part of prime-time slots have garnered much of viewer's attention for their tone, tenor, subjectivity and lack of diverse viewpoints. There is a *transition* from simple statement of facts to framed news discussions. Understandably, framing in political communication holds significance as it has the ability to create strong political stimuli among viewers.

Anchors being editors of news channels become *gatekeepers* of information. Panellists invited for news discussions during prime-time are tested for their knowledge, freedom of speech and resilience during heated arguments. Hence, the study holds its *importance* in understanding the role of panellists in framed prime-time (9-10) pm news debates. Questions like – How media frames prime-time (9-10) pm political news debates? Are panellists given appropriate time to express their viewpoints? Is panel size more than adequate as compared to the depth of news issue discussed? Is there women representation among panellists? Is there any political affiliation among panellists? And, overall treatment of political news debates will be answered.

Research objectives

1. To analyze media framing in prime-time (9-10) pm television news debates

2. To analyze role of panelists in prime-time (9-10) pm television news debates

II. Research Design and Methods

The researcher has used *quantitative* content analysis as a research method. Defining the same, (Riffe, Lacy & Fico, 2005) said quantitative content analysis is a systematic assignment of communication content to categorize according to rules, and the analysis of relationships involving those categories using statistical methods. Also, (Malhotra, 1999) stated that quantitative content analysis is used to observe and analyse words, characters, themes, space and time measures, or topics.

Analysis was performed on three prime-time English television news channels. Prime time is defined as the time when maximum viewership takes place. According to BARC survey, TV viewership starts at 6 am in the morning, rises gradually through the day, and peaks between 8.30 and 9.00 pm. Reach and impressions peak between 8.30-9.00 pm both on weekdays and weekends (BARC, 2018). According to the Television Rating Point (TRP) by Broadcast Council Research Organization (BARC), India, the weekly data (Week 14: Saturday, 1st April 2018 to Friday 7th April 2018), the popular four English news channels in India are:

Simple random sampling was used. (Kothari & Garg, 2014) explained that probability sampling ensures law of Statistical Regularity. In this, every English language 24-hour news channel had an equal opportunity of selection. However, to make the best possible representation of the universe, the above-mentioned TV channels (in terms of popularity and viewership) were chosen for analysis (Table 1).

It has to be noted that *the data collection period* was between November, 2018 to January, 2019. These three months were politically significant for India. Five states - Telangana, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Mizoram went for assembly elections. Campaigning for 2019 Lok Sabha elections had begun. Long standing political news issues Ayodhya dispute, triple talaq verdict, anti-Sikh riots verdict, Sabarimala temple issue, Citizenship Bill, Rafale deal controversy were addressed. Also, economic issues, quota and reservation issues, deaths of political stalwarts, films on politicians, and political movements were witnessed during this study period.

III. Results and Discussion

Analysis of three popular 24x7 English TV news channels from (Table 2) showed that a total of 47 political prime-time (9-10) pm debates were selected for the study. NDTV has the

highest number of prime-time political news debates with 20. This is followed by India Today with 14 and Republic TV with 13 prime-time political news debates. The (9-10) pm prime-time news slot in which these debates are broadcasted consist of *headlines time, advertisement time and discussion time*. It has to be noted that headlines and advertisement time are **not** included for analysis.

Analysing the total discussion time of news debates, 29 hours, 32 minutes and 15 seconds were recorded. It is observed that NDTV is *highest* with 19 hours, 29 minutes and 28 seconds. This is followed by Republic TV with 9 hours, 53 minutes and 59 seconds. And finally, India Today with 9 hours, 8 minutes and 48 seconds. The average (mean) discussion time (Discussion time/Number of debates) of the selected political debates were 37 minutes, 42 seconds leaving behind headlines and advertisement time. Republic TV shows the *highest* average (mean) discussion time with 45 minutes, 41 seconds. This is followed by India Today with 39 minutes and 12 seconds and lowest in NDTV with 31 minutes and 28 seconds. With this, it can be stated that the number of political news issues covered within one hour of prime-time slot is *highest* in NDTV. Many a time, NDTV includes two political news issues for discussion within the prime time (9-10) pm slot.

Furthermore, analysing the panel size, it is evident from (Table 2) that a total of 255 panellists participated in prime-time (9-10) pm political news debates during the study period. Republic TV has the *largest panel size* with the number of panellists being 105. This is followed by NDTV with 93 and India Today with 57 panellists. But, it is interesting to further analyse if the panellists are given appropriate time to speak in prime-time debates. Disappointingly, Republic TV shows the *lowest panellist time* with 4 hours, 36 minutes, 9 seconds. This is followed by NDTV with 7 hours, 2 minutes, 19 seconds and finally, India Today with 6 hours, 19 minutes and 7 seconds. It has to be noted that India Today shows an *encouraging* time duration of 6 minutes, 39 seconds to each of their panellists for expressing their opinions. But, it is discouraging to see Republic TV with only 2 minutes, 38 seconds given to each of their panellists to talk. And, NDTV shows a relatively better time duration for their every panellist with 4 minutes and 32 seconds.

From (Table 3), it is evident that the *highest* number of panellists are politicians (42.23%). This is followed by journalists (16.73%), then political analysts (9.41%) and finally, advocates (8.37%). Percentage of panellists from other professions is miniscule. Thus, it can be inferred from the data that prime-time news debates are evidently between politicians and journalists *lacking diversity* in discussion/viewpoints of panellists from various professions.

Also, analysing the political party affiliation of panellist shows inclination of TV channels towards a particular political party. (Table 4) shows *highest* percentage of politicians from Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP) with (37.82%). This is followed by Congress party (33.61%), and other political parties have minor participation percentage in prime-time (9-10) pm political news debates. While NDTV had highest percentage (44.44%) of panellists representing BJP, India Today had highest percentage (37.5%) of panellists representing Congress party.

Chi-square test was conducted to understand if there is any association between panel size and participation of politicians in prime-time (9-10) pm political news debates in 24x7 English news channels. From the Chi-square result, it is observed that p-value is 0.000 (chi-square – 74.522) which is lesser than the significant alpha level of 0.05 (at 95 percent confidence level). Statistical evidence concluded that - *higher is the panel size as one moves from regional party to national party debating on political news*. This is supported by the percentage of representation in each class interval of number of panellist. Inference drawn is that there is a *need for more panellists from regional parties just like national political parties to participate in prime-time (9-10) pm TV debates*.

Further, assessment of women representation among panellists in prime-time (9-10) pm political news debates shows a disappointing 11.37%. As seen in (Figure 1), Republic TV shows lowest (4.76%) of women representation among panellists. This is followed by India Today (15.79%) and finally, NDTV (16.13%).

Independent t-test was performed to analyse if there is significant difference in gender representation of panellists on prime time (9-10pm) political debates in the study period (November, 2018 – January, 2019). The results showed that p-value is 0.000 which is less than the significance alpha level of 0.05. Accordingly, as the mean number of male panellists (mean = 5.00) was higher than female panellists (mean= 1.00), it was concluded that *there is absolutely a higher representation of male panellists with an average of about five male panellists in any given debate, and only one woman panellist during the study period*.

As per Table 5, it is disappointing to see 75.27% of prime-time (9-10) pm political news debates are framed. In this, Republic TV shows the *highest* (80.79%) of media framing. This is followed by NDTV (75.38%) and lastly, India Today with (68.91%) media framing. Average (mean) frame time of three channels is 28 minutes, 01 second.

In this, the *highest* average (mean) frame time is in Republic TV with 36 minutes, 55 seconds, followed by India Today

with 25 minutes, 54 seconds and lastly, NDTV with 23 minutes and 44 seconds average (mean) frame time. With such an extended frame period in each news debate, TV news channels depict *subjectivity and bias*. The main objective of journalism towards fair reporting seems lost.

Framing analysis in prime-time political news debates

After analysing 47 prime-time (9-10) pm political news debates from three popular (as per BARC readings) in the study period between (November, 2018-January 2019), it can be said that television news channels have *lost* journalistic objectivity in its news debates and do not stand by fair analysis of political news issues.

Republic TV – The Debate

Republic TV prime-time (9-10pm) debate is called ‘*The Debate*’ hosted by editor and majority owner Arnab Goswami are shrillest, longest and highly framed. *For example*, a news debate in Republic TV aired on (3 December 2018) on caste politics in election campaigns was made over proportional when the then Congress Party President Rahul Gandhi asked PM Narendra Modi – ‘*What kind of a Hindu you are?*’ The entire news debate took *anti-congress slant* and framed 54.27% of the debate contributing to 23 minutes, 17 seconds framed discussion time.

The editor began the debate with personal opinions and judgments. Introduction phrases were ‘*congress party is making a big mistake. They are making being a Hindu, a greater Hindu, a wiser Hindu into a number one election issue, and I feel that’s a mistake. It is making religion and religion-based affiliations a reason to cast your vote. In my view its max or a nothing political strategy which can boomerang. It’s a defensive attitude for a political party which is known to make its success through 90% of Muslim votes. So now to change this public perception, wherever Rahul Gandhi goes, he says he is a better Hindu*’.

This entire thematic news debate was directed by the editor in which there was a deliberate attempt to scrutinize congress party representative. Frames of conflict and issue-agenda are viewed when the editor gave unfavourable slants towards congress party. ‘*Is Rahul Gandhi in kindergarten to fall in trap, Rahul Gandhi is rarest of rare species, my version of Hinduism is not I’m a better Hindu, wiser Hindu. In fact, Rahul Gandhi’s great grandfather stood against reconstruction of Somnath temple, abused PM’s parents, and attacked them with words, is this a better Hindu?*’

News value in *The Hinduism* debate was not seen in the entire programme. Neither did the editor nor panellists presented facts or statistics. In many incidences, 2-3 panellists were shouting together which seemed unlikely to understand the

issue of discussion. In the presence of numerous panellists, the editor Arnab Goswami failed to take diverse points of view, prioritized political affiliations, and showed favouritism towards BJP.

NDTV– Left, Right and Centre

NDTV prime-time (9-10pm) debate is called ‘*Left, Right and Centre*’ hosted by the editors Prannoy Roy, Sreenivasan Jain, Nidhi Razdan, Vishnu Som, and Sunetra Choudhary. Analysis show that the news debates in NDTV do not have loud voice or shrill noise. Viewers can understand what panelists are speaking about. However, their prime-time debates *lack* vigor and proper research. They do *not* have conclusions. An hour-long debate without any conclusion, suggestion or feedback is a vain attempt.

A news debate aired in NDTV on 22 January 2019 on Hackathon in which Hacker & IT expert Syed Shuja claimed that EVM machines in India are used against Congress party and specifically against its leader Kapil Sibal. The entire news debate took *pro-congress slant* and framed (65.7%) of the debate contributing to 23 minutes, 26 seconds framed discussion time. ‘*Congress leader Kapil Sibal was the only one who took up the invitation for Hackathon press conference. Not a single claim made in the conference by IT expert and hacker Syed Shuja were substantiated with evidences. BJP says it was a conspiracy against Congress and have accused the party of embarrassing the country and EC internationally.*’

Instead of starting the debate by introducing the issue and claims of Syed Shuja, the anchor preferred to point out the participation of Congress leader Kapil Sibal. Usage of words like- *embarrassing the country, Kapil Sibal was the only leader, conspiracy against BJP denote a deliberate attempt to tarnish the image of Congress party* bringing in *anti-social responsibility frame*.

The anchor directed questions to panellists prioritizing Congress party’s involvement in the issue. When one of the panellists preferred to talk about credibility of EVMs, the anchor redirected the question seeking his agreement against Congress party. Deliberate attempts to direct panellists to framing track by the anchor was visible in the news debate. A total of 5 panellists participated in the hackathon news debate among which 2 were politicians, 2 advocates and 1 professional. There was an *equal* representation of political parties with 1 politician from BJP and another from Congress. However, it should be noted that there was *no* women panellist in hackathon debate.

Some claims made by panellists and supported by the anchor include – ‘*It was a deliberate and designed attempt by*

Congress party to manufacture false narrative and spread the lie which it is doing from past 2-3 years since the government has come. They do not have narrative; they do not have substance. Journalistic code of ethics state that no news should allow *personal motives* to influence or colour views in a way that it would affect professional integrity. Prime-time (9-10) pm news debates witness personal involvement, selectivity and single sided viewpoints.

India Today – News at 9

India Today prime-time (9-10pm) debate is called ‘*News at 9*’ hosted by editor Rajdeep Sardesai. Analyzing the same, there was a news debate aired on 18 January 2019 about 100 Congress MLAs from Bengaluru held in Eagleton resort. And, why is Karnataka important for 2019? The entire thematic news debate took anti-BJP slant and framed 74.67% of the debate contributing to 34 minutes, 18 seconds framed discussion time.

The editor began the debate with personal opinions and judgments. Introduction phrases were; ***‘First major political flashpoint of 2019. This is the Natak of Karnatak in which Congress fear poaching from BJP. Is BJP desperate to topple Karnataka government, have the politicians of Karnataka let down the state?’***

Evidently, there is a one-sided viewpoint in introduction. It is well known that introduction of any news story establishes the thought process for viewers. Thus, the debate aims to frame the viewers mind by slanting the introduction. Further, various questions were posed to panellists by the anchor. Incidentally, the questions targeted BJP. They include, ***‘The entire aim of BJP here is to show that Mahagathbandhans are unstable. It seems that Amit Shah and Modi are also remote controlling this operation? What explains the BJP to be so desperate to bring down the government? There seems that BJP doesn’t want this government to remain before general elections – 2019? BJP is accused of giving bribes to other party leaders? In Karnataka all you (BJP) are doing is to induce efforts to poach MLAs? Why is Yedyurappa jumping every month to become CM? Has his astrologer told that this is the right time to become a CM?’***

Whenever the panellists brought their ideas to justify BJP’s action or hold Congress responsible for any wrongdoings, the anchor made sincere efforts to direct the discussion *against* BJP. Words *usage* by the anchor to redirect the discussion were ***‘No, No, I do not agree, of course you would, are you denying on this programme that BJP has not offered money to Congress-JD (S) MLAs? Is this not true, Modi-Shah fear that their numbers will come down in Karnataka – this is the real story. They (BJP) is desperate, you (BJP) need these cash rich states to fund your election campaigns.’***

There were four panellists in the show. Among them 2 were political party spokespersons, 1 journalist and 1 women activist. Among them, 1 spokesperson was from BJP and 1 from Congress party. Also, there was an *equal* representation of male-female panellists with 2 male and 2 female panellists. It should be noted that in India Today, excluding the particular poaching debate, the Prime Time (9-10pm) debates do *not* encourage women panellists much. The study showed only 15.79% women panellist participation in prime-time debates.

Below are the statements given by panellists and encouraged by anchor were, ***‘Since the day Yedyurappa resigned as CM in disgrace there is ploy to try and topple the government. After CLP meeting, a lot of MLAs not only brought offers through inducement of cash but also threats and coercion. The only way that BJP can come to power is through unconstitutional means, it will be through horse-trading.’***

Gatekeeping bias (also called selective bias) is visible here. The anchor supports single sided viewpoint without facts. When the panellists mention about offers, inducement etc. there are no clear numbers of what the offer was, was it in cash or kind, inducement in which way, and so on. As compared to Republic TV and NDTV, India Today news channel do not have loud voices, screaming or fights among panellists. Debates are organized well with equal chance for every panellist to talk. Though, the questions direct the panellist to answer what the anchor wants to, yet the idea can be understood well. In conclusion to poaching debate, the anchor said, ***‘For Lok Sabha elections, Karnataka becomes a prototype. BJP wants to show every state the repercussion of shaky coalition in power. Amit Shah and Narendra Modi want numbers to come up in Karnataka.’***

IV. Conclusion

The prime-time (9-10) pm political debates in 24x7 English news channels is a *conscious effort* for political propaganda, speculation, and selective use of quotes and words. There is often personal involvement of journalists while reporting an issue bringing in partisanship and bias towards a political party, person or event. Panelists are *not* given freedom to talk or express their ideas. They are forced to take sides and agree to what anchor claims. Study shows that politicians as panelists are the *highest* in news debates. Also, politicians representing BJP is higher. It has to be noted that none of the panelist come with proper research, facts or information to debate in the prime hour of news viewership. Disappointingly, women representation among panelists is negligible. *Factors* affecting prime-time (9-10pm) debates are political affiliations, political ownership, journalists’ personal bias, corporate funding and the pressure to deliver news 24x7. In

the urgency to provide news every hour, TV news is getting vulnerable to sensationalism. Media framing is a *dominant* part of prime-time (9-10) pm news debates. Framed news discussions on a prime-time television show is an indication of *demeaning* standards in television journalism.

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Table 1: Top television news channels as per TRP.

Serial No.	News channel name	TRP (000's sum)
1	Republic TV	629
2	India Today Television	356
3	NDTV 24x7	328

Table 2: Number of prime-time (9-10) pm political news debates, panel size, classification of discussion and panellist time selected for the study.

TV Channel	Debates	Discussion Time (Hr:Min:Sec)	Mean discussion time (Hr:Min:Sec)	Number of panellists (panel size)	Panellist Time (Hr:Min:Sec)	Mean panellist time (Hr:Min:Sec)
Republic TV	13	09:53:59	0:45:41	105	4:36:09	0:02:38
NDTV	20	10:29:28	0:31:28	93	7:02:19	0:04:32
India Today	14	09:08:48	0:39:12	57	6:19:07	0:06:39
Total	47	29:32:15	0:37:42	255	17:57:34	0:04:14

Note 1: hh:mm:ss – hours : minutes : seconds

Note 2: Advertisement time and Headlines time are not included for analysis

Table 3: Work type of panellists participated in prime-time (9-10) pm news debates.

Work type of panellists	India Today		NDTV		Republic TV	
	Number of panelists	Panelists %	Number of panelists	Panelists %	Number of panelists	Panelists %
Politician	30	52.63	46	49.46	30	28.57
Journalist	13	22.81	14	15.05	16	15.24
Political analyst	3	5.26	4	4.30	13	12.38
Advocate	3	5.26	8	8.60	10	9.52
Activist	2	3.51	3	3.23	5	4.76
Entertainment	2	3.51	0	0.00	3	2.86
Professional	1	1.75	9	9.68	0	0.00
Academician	1	1.75	1	1.08	8	7.62
IAS officer	1	1.75	0	0.00	0	0.00
Retired Army officer	0	0.00	0	0.00	11	10.48
Economist	0	0.00	3	3.23	0	0.00
Author	0	0.00	2	2.15	6	5.71
Political strategist	0	0.00	0	0.00	3	2.86
Psephologist	1	1.75	0	0.00	0	0.00
Actor	0	0.00	1	1.08	0	0.00
Doctor	0	0.00	1	1.08	0	0.00
Delhi resident	0	0.00	1	1.08	0	0.00
Total	57	22.35	93	36.47	105	41.18

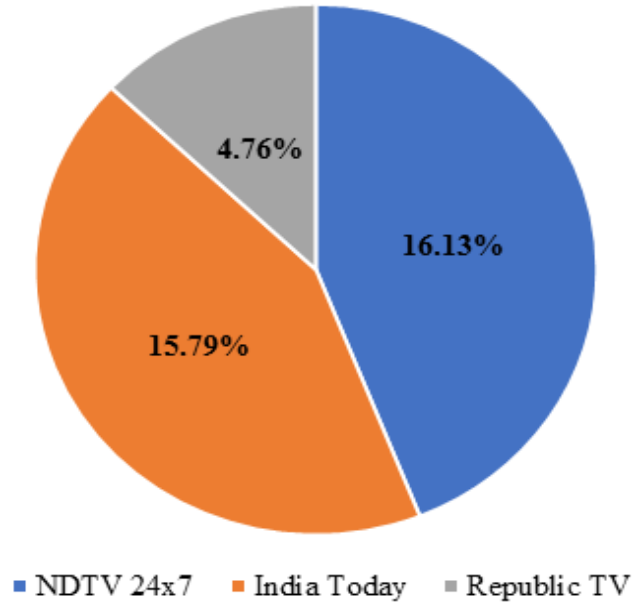
Table 4: Political party affiliation of politicians participated as panellists in prime-time (9-10) pm political news debates.

Political Party	India Today		NDTV 24x7		Republic TV		Total	%
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%		
BJP	11	24.44	20	44.44	14	31.11	45	37.82
Congress	15	37.50	14	35	11	27.50	40	33.61
JD(U)	-	-	2	33.33	4	66.67	6	5.04
SP	1	25	2	50	1	25	4	3.36
Swaraj India	1	25	3	75	-	-	4	3.36
AAP	-	-	2	50	2	50.00	4	3.36
SAD	-	-	1	25	3	75	4	3.36
CPI	-	-	-	-	3	100	3	2.52
JD (S)	-	-	2	100	-	-	2	1.68
CPM	-	-	1	50	1	50	2	1.68
TDP	1	100	-	-	-	-	1	0.84
TRS	1	100	-	-	-	-	1	0.84
AIMIM	1	100	-	-	-	-	1	0.84
DMK	-	-	1	100	-	-	1	0.84
BRSP	-	-	-	-	1	100	1	0.84
Total	31	26.05	48	40.34	40	33.61	119	46.67

Table 5: Media framing in prime-time (9-10) pm political news debates.

TV Channel	Total number of debates	Frame Time (Hr:Min:Sec)	Average (mean) frame time (Hr:Min:Sec)	Framing percentage
India Today	14	6:02:32	0:25:54	68.91
NDTV 24x7	20	7:54:33	0:23:44	75.38
Republic TV	13	7:59:53	0:36:55	80.79
Total	47	21:56:58	0:28:01	75.27

Figure 1: Women representation among panellists.



CONTEXTUALIZING TELEVISED RAMAYANA: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF CHARACTERISATION IN TWO SERIALS ON RAMAYANA

Puja Kumari* Dev Vrat Singh**

The Epic Ramayana occupies a central space in the consciousness of India. It has been one of the favourite topics among Indian cinema producers and television content producers. The first televised Ramayana broadcast on the national broadcaster Doordarshan in 1987 made this epic a national classic reaching to the masses and gaining immense popularity. Since then, the Ramayana serial has been reproduced multiple times with the same plot. However, the unique style of the director, expectations of the audiences and the contemporary socio-cultural ambience had its influence on the visual narratives in these epic serials, more visible specifically in characterisation. In this research, analysis of the characterisation of five prominent characters in televised Ramayana applying the technique of qualitative content analysis is conducted and a comparison among the characters of the epic serials to identify differences and the similarities has been drawn. The findings indicate that characters in the Ramayana serial have changed with remake at a level of physical appearance more specifically in attires, make up and casting. The televised version of the textual Ramayana created Ramayana of its own kind with cinematic idol Rama and other characters that hold characteristics of contemporary relevance but yet carrying the traditional soul of the Ramayana.

Keywords: Ramayana, Characterisation, Television serial, Rama, Sita, Ramanand Sagar.

India is one of the oldest civilizations of the world and it has enormously contributed to the spirituality and ethos of universal brotherhood. India's rich traditions are deep rooted in the *Vedas*, *Upanishads*, *Puranas* and many other ancient scripts like the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*. During ancient times, India had a well-organized education system responsible for a robust social value system prevalent in the society. Since India has a very rich culture of storytelling, there has been strong evidence of the fact that ideals and characters infused in *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* have visible and deep-rooted impacts on the content of folk culture, contemporary theatre and popular culture in India. Moreover, these two epics are used by the common people in India as frequent reference points in their day-to-day interaction.

The *Ramayana* has been narrated in almost every language in India and has central space in the consciousness of India. The spiritual, philosophical and moral essence of the *Ramayana* has existed among the people of India and still exists in the traditions of India. India is a country that holds a strong concept of family and the epic has a very detailed work on the human relationship that exists in family and how each character tries their best to take it to ideal height. The characterization of *Ramayana* is deeply rooted in the parental teaching of values and also is often marked as an example of how a person needs to be. The cultural sensitivity towards this epic is more or less faith-driven and usually the Indian society doesn't appreciate alterations and experimentations in the

characterisation and treatment. However, televised *Ramayana* seems to be implanting multiple visual changes keeping the central theme the same. The new form of image building and visual treatment has created a new form of *Ramayana* on screen.

The Ramayana – An Introduction

Ramayana is one of the largest ancient epics in the world literature and is among two major epics of ancient India. The epic has a total 24000 verses divided into 6 sections (*kandas*). In Hinduism, it is considered as "Adi-kavya (first poem). Originally composed in Sanskrit, the authorship of *Ramayana* is ascribed to *Valmiki*. However, there are multiple versions of the *Ramayana* found in many parts of India and south Asian countries like Cambodia, Indonesia, Thailand, China, Burma and Malaysia. *Ramayana* has been written by various scholars belonging to Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism traditions in India. In Hindu tradition, it is considered to be ancient history (*Itihasa*) along with *Mahabharata*. The epic is basically a story of King Rama of *Ayodhya*, who is considered

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to be the incarnation of Lord *Vishnu* born in the form of a human on earth. Being the elder son of the family Rama was to be sworn in as the natural King of *Ayodhya* but his step-mother wanted to see her son as the king, hence she reminded the King *Dashrath* about her promise. Rama's exile to the forest for fourteen years resulted from the promise given by his father King *Dashrath* to Rama's step-mother *Kakeyi*. *Sita*, his wife and younger brother *Lakshmana* join him all the way to the forest exile. It is followed by *Sita's* kidnapping by demon king *Ravana* in the forest and finally *Rama's* victory by killing *Ravana* and establishing peace in Lanka.

The *Ramayana* depicts an idealism in relations and characters, for example *Rama* to be the ideal son or a king, brother and husband, *Sita* to be an ideal wife, *Hanuman* the ideal devotee, *Lakshman* and *Bharat* the ideal brothers and so on. Valmiki's *Ramayana* is a character oriented epic and divides the epic characters into four major parts that are Humans, Demons, Vanaras and Saints. The prominent characters are *Rama*, *Lakshmana*, *Sita*, *Ravana*, *Hanuman*, *Dasharath*, *Kushalya*, *Kaikeyi*, *Bharat*, *Shatrughan*, *Janak*, *Vasishtha*, *Kaikeyi*, *Kaushalya*, *Sumitra*, *Manthara*, *Urmila*, *Vibhishana*, *Kumbhakaran*, *Meghnath*, *Marich*, *Hanuman*, *Vishwamitra*, *Parshuram*, *Sabri* and *Jatayu*.

Ramayana in Theatre and Cinema

The *Ramayana* originally is in the textual form hence it could reach a limited literate section of the society. The common people could learn the stories of *Ramayana* only through their folklore or someone who would read it out to them. The folk theatrical form of Ram Leela increases the spectrum of viewership by including common people acting and narrating the textual *Ramayana* to the illiterate viewers. This form was richer and more interesting as it used many elements of folk culture. Across the country this epic is presented even in many regional dialects and languages. It created a form of images among the people about the characters and visually establishing the characters of the epic. The Indian theatre holds an important space for epics including *Ramayana*. There exists a number of *Ramayana* theatres form around different parts of India. Ram- Lila is a famous form of theatrical *Ramayana* in Central and Northern India based on Valmiki *Ramayana*. It has been amongst the most popular forms of theatre and is one of the reasons (Rangacharya, 1980) for *Ramayana* to turn into the televised and the cinematic form.

Since inception, cinema in India used popular themes inclined towards religious or spiritual contents like *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*. We can find numerous movies and characters based on the themes of *Ramayana*. Films like Dada Saheb Phalke's *Lanka Dahan* (1917) and G.V. Sane's *Ram Janma* (1920) are some of the earliest ones. Vijay Bhatt Hindi /

Marathi bilingual *Bharat Milap* (1942) and its sequel *Ram Rajya* (1943) are regarded as the most successful screen adaptations of the *Ramayana*. *Ram Rajya* has the unique distinction of being the only film to have been seen by Mahatma Gandhi in his life. Among the popular feature films made by Dadasaheb Phalke in early of Indian cinema, *Lanka Dahan* was based on the incident in which *Hanuman* destroys the kingdom of *Ravana* that is Lanka. Some of the movies made on the epic *Ramayana* includes; *Lava Kusha* (1963) in Telugu), *Kanchana Sita* (1977) in Malayalam, *Ramayana: The Epic* (2010) – Warner Brothers, Indian animated movie, and *Sri Rama Rajyam* (2011) in Telugu based on *Uttara Kanda* of the *Ramayana*. The visual *Ramayana* created a new form of epic for people in India. However, the reach was still limited due to cinema being an expensive medium for the common audiences (Chinchani, 2013).

Ramayana on Indian Television

Television was introduced in India on September 15, 1959 in Delhi, initially focused on educational purposes. Gradually, its reach increased and by 1976 the network consisted of eight television stations covering a population of 45 million spread over 75,000 square kilometres. There were three ignition points that triggered the phenomenal growth of television in India from the mid-1970s. The INSAT-1A, India's first communications satellite was launched in 1982 which made it possible to network all the regional stations *Doordarshan*. Now the *Doordarshan* originated a nationwide feed dubbed the "National Programme" and fed from Delhi to the other stations. The television revolution created a new world for the viewership and multiple programs in India. With these the entry of film directors and their interest shifted towards television which resulted into the production of many creative television shows (Kohli-Khandekar, 2003, Singh, 2012, Ghose, 2005, Singhal & Rogers, 2001).

The first Hindi televised *Ramayana* directed by Ramanand Sagar was broadcast during 1987-1988 in 78 episodes. The story was broadly based on *Valmiki Ramayana* and *Ramcharitamanasa*. It turned out to be a great hit creating its space in *Limca Book of Records* as the world's most viewed mythological serial (1987 till 2003). The cast included Arun Govil as Rama, Deepika Chikhalia as Sita and Dara Singh as Hanuman. *Ramayana* introduced the concept of Hindu epics to Indian television and went on to become a national classic. Interestingly, the epic of *Ramayana* still remains as a topic of interest for the directors.

Whereas the remake of *Ramayana* serial was directed by Anand Sagar son of Ramanand Sagar and produced by Sagar Arts and was aired on NDTV Imagine in 2008 in 300 episodes. It was broadly based on *Valmiki Ramayana* and *Ramcharitamanasa*. It came after around two decades from

the first with many remarkable differences and changes. The 2008 series came with a team of cast including Gurmeet Chaudhary as Rama, Debina Bonnerjee as Sita and Vikram Sharma as Hanuman. The television made the reach of *Ramayana* to heterogeneous masses of India without any barrier of time and space unlike in *Ramleela*. The audiences found the televised epic very realistic, appealing and engaging narrative. This was a kind of rebirth of this epic.

Characterization in Ramayana

As per Cambridge dictionary “character includes the particular combination of qualities in a person or place that makes them different from others”. Characterization deals with how the characters are described by their physical appearance, thoughts and feelings; by the way they speak etc. Characterization focuses on characters of film or the book in order to develop a perception about him or her. It is broadly of two types: direct and indirect. Direct characterization is more common in books rather than in cinema this is because it requires narration or introducer for the characters. Indirect characterization includes the kind of costume the character is wearing, his/her attire, body language, dialogue delivery style, the way s/he is interacting with other people, the way s/he is reacting to certain situations. Characterisation and character development exist parallel along with these elements.

- **Personality traits:** It is the character’s attributes to be shy, brave, selfish, generous etc.
- **Internal conflict:** The situation dilemma that the character is struggling internally at the level of emotion and mental status.
- **External conflict:** the visible conflict that occurs between characters. This could be expressed through fights, conversation etc.
- **Character relationships:** It includes the way the character behaves and treats people around him/her.

Both the televised epic serials vary a lot in terms of characterization; specifically, the indirect characterization costumes, makeup, cast, body language and treatment of the character. The gap of around a decade and the popularity of both serials brings the focus on its characterization factor. Each element has its own meaning in case of costumes and makeup say- colour or texture. The cast for a particular role decides the impact of character on the audience especially when the case is of an epic like *Ramayana*. The overall treatment brings out an overall purpose for the character in a plot/story/narration.

I. Review of Literature

The article *Siya Ke Ram* or Ramanand Sagar’s *Ramayana*? puts forth a brief comparison of the *Ramayana* serial on

Indian television and the changes that took place from the time 1986 to 2015 based on casting, set and costumes. The article concludes that humongous changes in the production technologies and socio-cultural environment has influenced the sets, costumes and characterization. Although, the sources of reference are the *Valmiki Ramayana* and *Tulsidas Ramcharitmanas* for both the epic serials but the recent *Ramayana* series like *Siya Ke Ram* is taking full liberty with content bringing *Ramayana* from Sita’s perspective (Shrivastava, 2016).

The paper “The *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*: A study through the revisionist texts” explored the mythical narratives of the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* as reflected in select revisionist texts of – Devdutt Pattanaik’s *Sita*, Vayu Naidu’s *Sita’s Ascent* and Pratibha Ray’s *Yajnaseni*. She states that “Rework on these two epics by revisionist writers display their significant features and values in our lives” (Srivastava, 2018).

The book “The Indian Theatre” provides a detailed work on the India theatres covering up the theatrical emergence and its development till date. It puts forward different traditional theatrical forms in India and defines numerous features and relevance of epic narratives like *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*. It puts emphasis on the Sanskrit Drama and its struggle with the introduction of the western theatre and the era of Renaissance of the Indian folk theatre. (Rangacharya, 1980). But why are these two epics so popular among the television and film producers? The paper “Iconography of violence in television Hinduism: the politics of images in the *Mahabharata*” states that the Epic stories such as the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana* have been popular choices among television moguls attempting a portrayal of Hindu mythology through iconography and representation (Sengupta, 2016).

The paper “*Ancient Epic on Lord Rama*” takes reference of the epic *Ramayana* and puts forth the entire story with the consideration of character Rama. The paper focuses on different sections and the changes of role of Rama in the Epic *Ramayana*. (Grover, 2015). The paper “Women in Indian Television Serials: Issue of character, representation and acceptance” puts light on the impact and reality of the serials character representation and how television overshadows the social and educational background of its viewers by giving birth to a mass culture through television serials (Kumar J., 2020).

In an article titled “*What Is Mise-en-Scène? Pt I: Setting & Costume*” a detailed description of costumes and makeup with context of sets in a fictional story or cinema has been discussed. It tries to develop the understanding about the

importance of costumes and makeup in defining a role and enhancing the story. Going further in details it brings out specification in the colour and texture and other parameters during a costume making and makeup too (Smith, 2016). Another article titled “*The TV show that transformed Hinduism*” narrates about the “Limca book record” journey of Ramanand Sagar’s televised *Ramayana* in India. According to this, the serialised version of the epic is credited to be the catalyst in sparkling Hindu awakenings across India. The screen worship and the recorded popularity is enough to describe the impact. The author puts forward the political effect of the serial and the changes those took place. Relating the contemporary popularity, he quotes that “It also showed that ancient Hinduism was compatible with modernity, ready for a new technological and consumer age, with India on the cusp of major market reform and economic liberalisation in the early 1990s (Verma, 2019). There are a lot of studies and work on visual content analysis on the representation and characterisation. The epic and mythological textual analysis holds a long list of work and also women representation associated with it. However, a visible gap could be identified when we talk about the characterisation analysis of televised epic characters in India. Reviewing the sources related to this research, there seems to be a general agreement on the contemporary relevance of the *Ramayana*. However, the major focus of the researchers revolved around the textual analysis with focus is on first *Ramayana* with reference to its impact on the people and the politics of the country. A gap of study on the changes taking place in different remakes in epic serial is visible which is being explored through a qualitative content analysis in this research.

Significance of Research

India is the country of spirituality and the story of epics holds a very important space in its culture. Not all of the masses read the mythological texts. Illiteracy and accessibility of the text is another deterrent. Television is the key source of entertainment for the common audiences in India. It is interesting to note that the *Ramayana* had been made multiple times yet coming up with something new even after the plot/story being the same. The question still lies on how characters are depicted and presented by different producers and directors. The characterization is one such parameter that differentiates the two forms of *Ramayana* produced in 1987 and 2008 by Sagar Arts. This analysis would help develop an understanding on the changes in the characterisation, identify the level of experimentation in the characterisation and to evaluate the emerging new perceptions on the epic *Ramayana* at the level of characterisation.

Research Objective

To critically analyse the nature and treatment of characterization in two *Ramayana* serials produced

respectively in 1987 and 2008 and identify similarities and dissimilarities between the characterization of the *Ramayana* serials.

Research Questions

- What makes each *Ramayana* serial different in the context of costumes and makeup?
- How does body language of characters vary in both the *Ramayana* serials?
- How does the casting differ with sequences of the *Ramayana* serials?

II. Research Design and Methods

A qualitative content analysis of all the episodes of two *Ramayana* serials produced by Sagar Arts and broadcast in 1987 and 2008 has been undertaken focussing on the characterization of key characters i.e., *Rama*, *Sita*, *Ravana*, *Hanuman* and *Lakshmana*. Five main characters were selected on the basis of broad classification of Rama and his family members and allies and the enemy that is *Ravana* and the importance of characters in the narration. The key parameter for the analysis is – costume, makeup, casting, body language and the treatment of characters. For analysing the content, all the episodes were extracted from the YouTube channels and *Doordarshan* archive. All episodes were watched by the researchers many times during the coding process. Each character's comparison is event centric and their journey throughout the serial. However, Rama is also analysed on the basis of different stages of life because casting has been changed during these. The division of the events varies for each character depending upon the relevance and the relation of the character with that part. For example, Rama's life can be divided broadly into the phase of childhood, the gurukul phase, marriage to Sita, the exile period, kidnapping of Sita, the journey of finding *Sita*, the killing of *Ravana* and the return of Ram to *Ayodhya*. The final conclusion brings out the differences and the experimentation which has been added in the recent *Ramayana*. Considering the factor of a gap of two decades between *Ramayana* serials undertaken remarkable changes were expected. However more than changes we could identify a lot of similarities between the two. Since both the serials were produced by the same production house and the reference point of story being the same, it could be a justifying point for more similarities in comparison to dissimilarities. As per the observation and analysis, the differences, similarities and the zone where changes were traced through the study in characterization are enlisted below.

The Presentation of Rama

Rama's characteristic is internal but the major focus in the serial is on the external and physical characterisation. For

example – the Rama’s presence is considered to be of heart-stealing and attractive, which is for his internal characters he holds. Though his good characteristics are established but also the cast being represented as Rama is a very well-groomed and handsome man as the society justifies a good-looking man. The Rama in *Ramayana* (2008) is more like a hero of any movie. The characterization of Rama in the older one is also not free from this effect. The dominant social image of a hero is visible in the serial too symbolizing perfect physique and good looks. Comparing both the serials, it is found that contemporary understanding of external characteristics seems to be influencing the treatment of *Ramayana* characters.

The fair-skinned Rama

The contradiction of skin colour is traced in both *Ramayana*. Rama, the incarnation of Vishnu is narrated through song to be “*Shyama Sundar*”, which means dusky and beautiful. However, we don’t find our character Rama to be dusky in any ways but they are rather handsome, fair-skinned and well groomed. The contradictions again mix the richness and being fair together or maybe a perfect and idol Rama could not be accepted to be dusky! As how could a dusky be beautiful, idol and perfect? The approach remains the same even after a gap of nearly two decades.

The justification could be based on the fact that the producers are of the same production. The point here is the casting choice for Rama somewhat revolves around these physical parameters. The gap of twenty years boosted the concept of depicting the new Rama even more like a model. The contemporary socio-cultural parameters and the television content, both influences each other which is reflecting in the *Ramayana*.

Also, a kind of biased approach of presenting and depicting characters could be traced out in all the characters. The demons need to be dark-skinned but the heroes and each of the people associated with him are fair, establishing a certain group in the society as heroic and others as demons. Surprisingly, the exception here is the *Ravana*, he is shown as fair unlike his troops. The king and richness are established in one colour and the lower people in one shade. Both the serials hold this factor with them.

The Concept of Hero

The medium of narration of the epic has changed from oral to video form. The medium also influences the depiction of any character. The meaning of hero has been changing since the era. The mesmerising effect used in war zones and the music are some of the key features to bring out the concept. The expectation of heroes to look extraordinary is accomplished via the special effects, music and the camera movements. In the latest version of *Ramayana* (2008), the dramatic touch is more visible which is used to establish his power and impact.

The Beard and Moustaches

Both the heroes - *Rama* and *Lakshman* are portrayed as clean-shaven men in both the serials. This seems quite unnatural, since though being in forest for 14 years there is no beard and moustaches on faces. Interestingly the villain – *Ravana* and his colleagues had broad moustaches. The saint had the full-grown beard and moustaches. We can easily find the meaning the director tries to define. The heroes are clean-shaven like the modern man whereas the villain tends to have broad moustaches and the saints would wear white whole beard and moustaches. Apart from this, a more important point is, how far the depiction of an ancient character as clean-shaven like today’s young men can be called logical? The television very smoothly replaced the traditional image of the mythological leads without making anyone feel offended. Moreover, it seems that the beard and moustaches are used as props in order to establish positive and negative characters.

The Body Language

The body language of five main characters except *Laxmana* and *Ravana* is a mix and match of the *Ramayana* serial under consideration. The characters of Rama, Sita and Hanuman tend to hold the elements of being modest and kind throughout the serials in their gestures and facial expressions. More specifically the smiling face they hold on in almost the entire serial, sometimes seems to be quite dramatic more in the second *Ramayana*. The Lakshmana is mostly portrayed with his angry expressions. Whereas *Ravana*’s loud and bold voice is used to establish him being evil, powerful and egoist; Sita is all-time soft spoken in both the *Ramayana*; the Rama in is quite soft spoken but it is more in second *Ramayana*. However, while his act is of a warrior, louder voice is used to establish his power and strength. Hanuman being a zoomorphic character is shown as dedicated, active and playful which symbolizes his stamina and strength. The godly aura of Rama is established through a unique style of dialogue delivery at a smoother pace. He is also depicted as a godly persona, who always carries a unique gesture and does not react spontaneously on something emotionally.

Ravana: The Villain

The choice of cast for *Ravana* and the treatment remains near about the same in both *Ramayana*. However, the richness is a bit more in the case of the second *Ramayana*. The man with a fat belly, loud heavy voice and big moustaches is what makes the character of *Ravana*. The *Ravana* remains so very familiar, adding to the point that the concept of villain doesn’t seem to change even after a decade. However, the second *Ramayana* tries to highlight his power with the help of visual effects making him look powerful and interesting. But the samples in the content supports the fact that the character of the villain in *Ramayana* is more or less fixed and experimentation is expected to be less in his case.

Sita: The Ideal Woman

The years gap didn't contribute to Sita's character, she remains nearly the same. It seems that the second *Ramayana* tries to fit the cast into the previous one. The idol lady of Rama gains similar treatment like decades ago. The only changes are visible in the costumes making her look wealthier with loud and heavy attire and jewellery.

Costumes

The patterns of dressing of *Rama*, *Lakshman* and *Ravana* are similar in both *Ramayana* which includes *Dhoti*, *Kayabandh* and *Uttariya*. However, changes could be traced at the level of embroidery and colours experimentations. The second *Ramayana* (2008) portrays more vibrant and multiple colours in comparison with the previous one. *Hanuman's* attire is similar in both *Ramayana* that includes short *dhoti* in orange colour with golden borders. *Sita's* attire holds maximum experimentation at level of embroidery, colour and some basic pattern change. This includes *Mekhala* (a long piece of plain cloth used as a lower garment wrapped around the waist), *blouse*, *dupatta* and *uttariya*. The jewellery were mostly gold in both *Ramayana* however the second *Ramayana* depicted bold and prominent use of gold.

The Concept of Royalty

After careful screening it was found that despite a gap of around 20 years, the concept of royalty has also changed. The very heavy embroidery attire, golden heavy jewellery and different gems and dramatic touch are the symbols of new royalties and richness. The very prominent and glittering sets of palaces, one could easily with golden touch is the new royal. This could also be traced in the costumes, jewellery and props as well. And gold remains the favourite element to be used. However, considering the context of narration it is a new form of entire space indeed. The palaces' richness is overdone if compared to the real Indian palace traced out around the country. The loudness could be traced to the modern second *Ramayana*. Gold and treasury being the symbol of richness is put all over on the screen from floors to the ceiling. Gold, as a visual symbol, has quite prominent place in the entire *Ramayana*, especially the second *Ramayana* has shown a lot of gold in the entire serial; from jewellery to sets, everything is presented in the golden colour. The cultural significance of gold and its being the symbol of richness and wealth boosts up the impact of visual presentation making it even more glorified.

The Ram Leela effect

Before cinema and television, the stage theatre was the place where people would watch the enactment of the *Ramayana*. Whatever may be the form of theatre, it has to have a unique style of presentation and this theatrical narrative style was traceable in both the serials too in the form of loud dialogues,

make-up, hair style, costumes, sets and body language. However, this is more visible in the first *Ramayana*. The direct characterization by using musical *Chaupai* is done in most parts of both of the *Ramayana* which is borrowed from the format of Ram Leela. The godly aura of Rama is much highlighted in the second part unlike the first one. At many moments, the Rama being the incarnation of God Vishnu is depicted in more dramatic manners. However, in the first *Ramayana* the presentation of Rama was simple and this God's aura has been created through background music and *bhajans*.

III. Results and Discussion

With the passage of time, a shift is visible in the physical characteristics of the epic characters and physical ambience. The director has also used many elements of contemporary fashion in the serials based on mythological and religious theme created for the masses. Attire of the characters except *Hanuman* is all in the shades of recent designs, patterns, embroideries and jewellery. The use of the makeup like eye shadows, lipstick, mascara and blush brings up *Sita* like any modern heroines of the time. Adding to the trend in second *Ramayana* a visible makeup of lipstick and shiny face of the male characters could be marked. Even the body language seems to follow daily soap pattern of time. The dramatic presentation of godly image of Rama is one such example. Interestingly the time had an important role as the trends were to set via the epics attires and set designing.

The experiments were psychological too that unknowingly implanted some concepts, like the heroes of the new era in epics too, the beauty concept, the perfect man and women concept, the demon, the royalty and it changed the narration somewhat unknowingly. Modern mythology is visually very unique from the earlier forms. The televised version of the textual *Ramayana* had created *Ramayana* of its own kind with cinematic idol *Rama* and other characters that hold characteristics relevant to the today's world. The director seems to be treating it like any other daily soap of the time or maybe the television ratings and pressure of audience engagement push the producers to add newer elements. If we rely on the similar logic, it appears to be quite possible that after 50-60 years or more these visualised versions of epic might turn up into entirely a new visual imagery.

IV. Conclusion

It was found that the portrayal of lead characters in both the epic serials went through notable changes specifically in terms of casting, looks, attire, makeup and body language. However, both the televised versions of *Ramayana* have many similarities as well. The main reasons for so many similarities

may be the similar plot of story and production by the same house. Comparatively the choices of cast are younger and well-groomed in the second *Ramayana* serial. Also, in the second production, the trends of contemporary society could be traced out on the attire and jewellery of each character. More or less, the characters have been treated in a similar manner in both serials however, the glorification of Rama, as a God and a role model, is much more noticeable in the second *Ramayana*. The richness and royalty of *Ravana* has also been depicted profoundly in the second *Ramayana* serial. Sita gains the similar kind of attention from the director as it received two decades ago. The changes are at the level of costumes only, making her look wealthier with louder and heavier attire and jewellery. The second *Ramayana* serial seems to be more dramatic in its presentation and treatment of each character. To conclude with, it can be said that the characterisation of five lead characters reflects the contemporary fashion trends in both serials on *Ramayana* and accordingly despite being the same mythological plot, many dissimilarities are visible in both the productions.

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COMMUNITY RADIO IN INDIA – A CASE STUDY OF SARATHI JHALAK

Shilpa Kalyan*

Communication is the quintessence of empowerment. By providing voice to the voiceless, community media addresses the challenge of voice poverty which hinders the process of development. Therefore, it is imperative to understand the journey and the road ahead for Community Radio stations in India. This study is more reflective in nature and is an effort to understand the story behind one such Community Radio, Sarathi Jhalak. The stories of struggle for survival, success and failure, challenges, achievements, aspirations and motivation of the radio station have been explored. Sarathi Jhalak Community Radio, 90.4 FM, is located in Anugondanahalli, Hoskote Taluk, and Bangalore rural district in the state of Karnataka in India. The Study aims to understand the functioning of Sarathi Jhalak station in terms of structure and operations and the extent of community participation in the entire communication process, also the perception of members of the community towards the role of the community radio in empowering them, analyse challenges faced. The study has used mixed research methods. Case study method has been used along with in-depth interviews and focus group discussion with programme producers to understand the quality and level of community participation.

Keywords: Community radio, Sarathi Jhalak, participation, development, community empowerment.

Community Media stands by the principle of free expression, participatory communication to enhance community relation and promote solidarity. Development of community well-informed, educated and participative, undoubtedly contributes to development of a country. Community broadcasting, as an alternative media, facilitates ‘public access television and radio stations serving a small area, run by and for local people. They can be financed by commercial, non-profit or government organisations but are subject to a county’s regulation. Equipment is provided and local people are trained to use it. By providing voice to the voiceless, community media addresses the challenge of voice poverty which hinder the process of development. Community radio (CR) can be explored to facilitate empowerment of women in rural landscape. CR is a platform for bringing accountability to the development process, ultimately making the system more transparent and ensuring good governance. CR ensures participation of the community, along with community ownership and control.

Community Radio in India

With the government opening up non-commercial community radio broadcasting in India, voluntary groups are effectively leveraging the power of communication for community development. India is on the threshold of development, on one hand the government focuses on digital India; on the other it is trying to address fundamental issues concerning development of literacy, employment, poverty, rural backwardness, infrastructure concerns and many more. The CRs provide a mechanism for enabling individuals, groups, and communities to tell their stories, share experiences and

become creators and contributors of content. Moreover, the programming is as per the need and requirement of the community it serves. Community Radio offers third model of radio broadcasting beyond commercial and public service. Community radio stations can serve geographic communities and communities of interest. They broadcast content that is popular and relevant to a local/specific audience. Community radio stations are operated, owned, and driven by the communities they serve.

Community radio, distinct from public service broadcasting, serves to bring small communities together, focuses on the common man’s day to day concerns and help in realizing local aspirations. In this sense, it aims in contributing to the lives of the local community by creation of content by the people and for the people of that community. As in 2016, about 196 Community Radio Stations were operational as per the compendium released by the Government during the 6th National Sammelan of CR Stations. The government, as part of the 12th Plan scheme of “Supporting Community Radio Movement in India”, has allocated Rs 100 crore to strengthen community radios in India.

Sarathi-Jhalak FM 90.4 MHz, Community Radio Station went on air on August 23rd 2012 with a 50 m high transmission tower in Anugondana Halli Hobli, Hoskote. It is in the eastern

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periphery of Bangalore and is initiative of Sarathi, a Bangalore based non-profit organization. The official website of Sarathi Jhalak claims to be a 'knowledge based organization' which 'strongly believes in information and knowledge as tool for change in society.'

Sarathi Jhalak is reachable to about 100 odd villages in Malur and Anekal taluks, Sarjapura, ITPL, White Field, Marathalli, Kundalahalli Gate areas. The catchment area has a significant population of educated, semi-urbanized, and predominantly young people. The station has tried to capture the young listeners alongwith the other age groups.

Programmes on Sarathi Jhalak

The radio programme focus on development issues, public health, agriculture, folklore, legal matters and social issues.

ShubhaMunjane – 7.00 – 7.30 am

Chittara –covers local, national and worldwide news updates. It attempts to localise news in relation with the local need and analyse similar situation. Local incidents like accidents, role of the police, localities intervention, mobilising people when need arises, schools, drainage, pensions, law and financial guidance, about agriculture tips. It is aired from Monday to Sunday between 8:00 AM to 9:00AM.

Munjaane Raaga – spiritual and devotional programmes are aired in this slot. It has discussions and Indian classical music. It is aired from Monday to Sunday between 6:00 AM to 7:30 AM.

Savi Nenapu – is an interactive programme with Quiz and Puzzles. It is predominantly agriculture based programme. Issues related to women and family are also covered in this slot. It is aired from Monday to Saturday between 9:30 to 12:30 AM.

Atmeeya Gelaya - this program consists of 2 segments, Atmeeya Gelaya between 1 to 2PM and Sumadura Samaya between 3 to 4PM. It is an Informative programme covering agriculture, health, finance, grooming etc. It deals with topics like importance of Green Vegetables, Go Green campaign, vegetarianism, ancient sports, neighbourhood etc.

Sanje Savigana – a medley of evening news and kannada Light music, folk songs, gazals, devotional songs and film songs are aired from Monday to Sunday 7:00 PM to 8:00 PM

Mussanje Maatu gives information about agriculture, law, health, women and childcare, employment, education, current affairs and socio-economic issues are discussed in detail from Monday to Sunday between 8:00 PM to 9:00 PM

Manasina Maatu & Nimminda Nimagaagi is a platform for the audience to share their personal struggles with the RJ. It is aired from Monday to Sunday 9:00 PM to 10:00 PM

The objectives of the study are to understand the following:

- functioning of Sarathi Jhalak station in terms of structure and operations.
- extent of community participation in the entire program production process.
- perception of the members of community towards the role of community radio in empowering them.
- analyse challenges faced the CR station.

I. Review of Literature

Call it by any name - community radio, rural radio, cooperative radio, or development radio -- its proponents feel that radio holds the key that will unite India's linguistic and ethnic diversity and improve the economic disparity and the huge rural-urban divide. "Imagine having your own radio station where you can walk in any time to ask for your favourite music, share about some important local event or chat with your neighbour who's now become a celebrity," says media advocacy campaigner Ms. Sucharita S. Eashwar from Bangalore. Recent studies suggest that radio in India potentially reaches up to 98.5% of the population.

In the CIMA Research Report of 'Community Radio in the developing world', Author Mary Mayers points out on the boon of crowd funding. This report also emphasizes the boom in community radio has been due to increasingly liberalized media environments, access to more affordable and appropriate broadcasting technologies, and people-based movements that have fought over many years for changes in legislation and for community voices on the airwaves. International aid agencies are showing ever greater interest in community radio's ability to inform and empower. The study conducted by Rashmi Kumari A NagarajaS on impact of Radio Siddhartha community radio station on the integrated development of Tumkur Taluk - a sociological study indicates that community radio is playing a very important role in development of Tumkur taluk. Keeping in mind the multifaceted role a woman has to play within the realms of a family and ultimately in the extended society, a research community radio – participatory communication tool for rural women development - A Study' was conducted by K.C. Siva Balan and SelvinJebaraj Norman to nominate and disseminate the value and importance of Community Radio as a participatory communication tool for rural women development and thereby reflecting on the most accurate framework that could play the best test tube a researcher could ask for – Puduvaivani Community A qualitative study was conducted on 'Exploring the Subaltern Voices: A Study

of Community Radio Reporters (CRRs) in Rural India' by Dhanraj A. Patil. Findings suggest that CR's can be seen as means of developing capabilities among the subalterns through equitable inclusion not merely as participants but as active producers, partners and managers. Beyond those who consist of the report to those who actually make them – one must not forget the horrendously intricate and equally challenging task of the journalists. Looking for the answers with Sangham Radio and Radio Bundelkhand as the landmark for research orientation, methodology and live examples, it is evident that in dominant media journalism, one finds reporters as a professional wage-labour class that is confronted with corporate and political pressures, journalistic production conditioned by power processes, and the accumulation of journalistic status capital. The model of community journalism, in which one finds the independence of writers from corporate and political influences and pressures, challenges this production model where anybody can be content producer without specific training or expertise. Ordinary citizens can become journalists, so journalism is citizen-controlled. Individuals or groups that are affected by certain problems become journalists where consumers become producers the audience becomes active.

Yalala Nirmala in her study on 'the role of community radio in empowering women in India' explores the contribution of community radio in facilitating women empowerment. *Namma Dhwani* programs not only created awareness among its listeners, but it enhanced the leadership qualities/behavior in women. It has much more impact on women when it comes to creating awareness about health and sanitation, education, savings, food habit and family system, etc. and it brought about significant changes in the life of the people in Budikote. Hence, it played a catalytic role in changing the life of the rural people.

II. Research Design and Methods

In case study research, Yin (2009: 98) identifies six sources for collecting data, namely, "documents, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant-observation, and physical artifacts". Yin (2012: 10) further argues that researchers "may use these six in any combination, as well as related sources such as focus groups (a variant of interviews), depending on what is available and relevant for studying your case(s)". The study adopts both quantitative and qualitative methods. For the case study approach, in-depth interviews and focus group discussion with the stakeholders of the station was conducted to understand the quality of community participation. A structured questionnaire was administered to the listeners to understand their perception towards community radio. In depth interviews of the Station Director and team members of Sarathi Jhalak was conducted. This

study has been conducted in the district of Bangalore Rural and Kolar. Three talukas where the signals of Sarathi Jhalak reach –Bangalore East, Hoskote taluk of Bangalore Rural district and Malurtalukas of Kolar district have been covered. Structured interviews with the listeners were conducted in 16 villages– Medimallaandra, Muthkur, Gangalur, Channasandra, Belkere, Valepura, Kadumuthsandra, Obalapura, Valagerepura, Lakkur, Marasandra, Medahatti, Malur, Rampura, Bhodanahosahalli, Doddadunnsandra.

Sample Design

The Hoskote taluka has population of 56,980, Malur – 10,050 and Bangalore East - 102,607. A sample of 400 respondents was chosen for the study. A structured questionnaire was administered to the respondents. For the survey method, non-probability sampling method was adopted. Since the study intends to gather data from the listeners, purposive sampling method has been adopted. probability sample that is selected. The independent variables used for the study are Age, Gender, Education, Occupation and Family size, frequency, level of satisfaction and level of participation

Questionnaire Design

For the survey, a structured questionnaire with 25 questions was designed to cover both dependent and independent variables. Most of the questions were close ended. Two questions were open ended. The field investigators conducted the interview with the respondents and recorded their responses in the questionnaire forms. The field investigators also recorded their observation of the respondents' body language during the interview. These observations have contributed to the analysis in the study.

Qualitative methods

Focus Group Discussion involved 6 participants – Ms Shamanta, Station Director, Mr Sunil, full time RJ and programme producer, Mr Ishwar H.C, Part-time RJ, Ms Ramsha, Intern and RJ Mr BopaVenkatesh , Listener and Mr Srihari , technical /online support For the focus group discussion, the questions were semi structured. Responses were recorded in both writing and audio versions. The records of the station were also observed. SMS, call records of the callers on the station's mobile phone, letters by the listeners to the station, minutes of the meetings book, programme schedule chart were the documents examined by the researcher.

Theoretical Framework

The global structural imbalances paved way for exploring newer models for development. The top down approach to development was criticised for its failure in addressing the root cause for the problems of the developing countries. Lack of participation at the grass root level was blamed by scholars

and development agents for the failure of most development projects (Melkote, 1991). Imbalances in development process paved way for deliberations on participatory approaches. Development communication was redefined as “the systematic utilization of communication channels and techniques to increase people’s participation in development and to inform, motivate, and train rural populations mainly at the grassroots” (Waisbord, 2000: 17). The bottom up communication model was conceptualised to tap the indigenous knowledge, beliefs and social systems and integrate the same in the process of development. Participatory communication is the by-product of participatory processes and participatory communities.

Community Radio as a manifestation of the participatory development project employs participatory approach to decision making processes and enable marginalized people to define their own development path through the identification and implementation of projects that are initiated by them. Participatory communication gives the local community a right to freely share or exchange information and to reach a consensus on what they want to do or to be done and how to do it. The process and content of communication is owned by community; communication gives a voice to previously unheard community members; communities become their own change agents; the communication process is characterized by debate and negotiation on issues that affect community; emphasis is placed on outcomes that go beyond individual behaviour to widely recognized social needs (Figuerola et al., 2002).

III. Results and Discussion

Regarding accessibility of the respondents to media, most all the respondents have access to mobile phones. Therefore, listeners can access radio on their mobile phones. Though the study indicates that majority of the respondents have access to television and radio, it may be noted that their interest in newspapers is not very promising and majority of respondents rely on television and radio for information. However, mobile phone has been one of the significant platform for receiving both television and radio content. Another finding shows that the community under the study was well versed with the digital technology. Newspapers are considered one of the most reliable and credible sources of information. Minimum accessibility to newspapers is a clear indication of excessive dependence on alternative communication platforms for news and information which also means that there is plenty of scope of community radio intervention for development communication.

Frequency of Listening to radio stations

It has been found that among the three models of radio broadcasting, the private FM broadcasting emerges as clear

winner with the respondents in terms of listening habits. About only 20% respondents listen to Sarathi Jhalak everyday as against 39% listening to private FM stations. But if we look at the overall frequency of listenership, about 56% of them listen to Sarathi Jhalak frequently as against 64% listening to private FM stations. which clear indication of the listener preference. Private FM stations are entertainment centric. The commercial nature of these outlets cannot to be ignored. Further, these stations are not community centric. Their content is most of the times not even relevant to the community. In spite of these factors it is interesting to note how though an alternative is available, private FM stations are a clear favourite in terms of audience listenership. We may observe how the respondents spend about an average of 22 minutes per day on a weekday and a bit more on a holiday. It is very evident from the analysis that a majority (30%) respondents listen to music and entertainment programs. Interestingly, about 11% respondents have stated that they also listen to children’s programme. This gives us an interesting perspective that in the CR most of the children’s programmes are done by children from the community. Further, the respondents reply on programs pertaining to education which is directly related to community development is dismal. This could either be because that the listeners’ are disinterested or the station has failed to capture listener’s interest in these programs or we should also examine if there is dearth of such programmes.

Audience recall of programme RJ

We may notice how very few respondents could actually recall educational programmes like Arogyakanaja (health based), KaanoonuBelaku (issues related to law) and yashassinaguttu (motivational programmes). This clearly reflects the extent to which the station’s programs have created an impact on the audience. The analysis indicates the audience recall of names of the RJs from the station. RJ Sunil, who is the only full time RJ and programme producer at the community station is preferred by only about 15% respondents. RJ Ishwar and RJ Ramsha are the most preferred RJs by the respondents. When the field investigators probed for qualitative responses on this, most of the respondents reacted that they get to listen to RJ Sunil in most of the programmes and this tends to get monotonous. This could be one of the reasons why respondents have chosen RJs who are not over exposed. Surprisingly some of the respondents have chosen RJ Kala though she no longer works with the station. This instance of recalling an RJ who was working earlier indicates that these listeners have not updated themselves about this. Or the other reason could be the impact and popularity of RJ Kala which continues to linger on in the minds of listeners even in her absence from the station. Audience satisfaction and expectation of programmes from Sarathi Jhalak. The study has revealed that only 37% are

satisfied with the programmes. About 20% of them have specified that they are not satisfied with the programs. Interestingly, a majority of respondents have stated that they are not sure if they are satisfied. This trend of uncertainty could be linked to the nature of programmes preferred by the listeners. Since most of them have admitted to be preferring entertainment programmes, there is not much of a differentiation factor between Sarathi Jhalak and other private FM stations. The respondents would not have found anything unique to express their satisfaction level clearly. This point will need to be analysed also with the qualitative responses that has been recorded in the open ended question segment. We may note that majority of the respondents, over 60% expect entertainment programmes from the CR station. Further, in terms of education based content, health, environment and women related programmes are the next most expected programs with 27% and 30% respondents choosing this. We may also note that career; job related programmes which ideally will be community specific are expected from a small percentage of respondents. This expectation can be analysed in relation to what the respondents listen to on the station. Community Radio is a model towards participatory development communication. The working of the station and the expectations from the community members indicate that there is a difference in the way they perceive the station. This could be either because of the apathy from the listeners towards content related to development or the failure to produce interesting educational content by the station. These forms vital discussion points for understanding the ground reality of community radio model.

Community contribution to programmes /content

As per the analysis a majority of (85%) of the respondents are passive listeners only. The very essence of community radio lies in community participation which clearly indicates that the station is facing challenge with minimum community participation. The reasons also have been very indicative of lack of structured approach. Most of them lack the awareness about the possibility or availability of opportunity to contribute towards content. Also some of them were very clear about their lack of interest towards the same. This indicates non involvement of listeners and the lack of sense of belongingness about the station. Some of the responses revealed that the listener perceived their illiteracy as a barrier. This response defeats the purpose of community radio. The initiative is intended to overcome all barriers, bring them out of their inhibitions and empower people to voice their opinion.. Some of the responses indicated helplessness of the listeners when they said that they did not know how to contribute. This reflects poorly on the efforts of the station to reach out to the people or encourage them to participate. There is a lot of effort required in this direction. The focus should be to tap the interested listeners by providing

orientation on the station's purpose and help them understand the opportunities available and motivate them to be active contributors. We may also note that some of the listeners feel that though they are willing to contribute, they were bound by work pressure. This leaves with an interesting observation that some of the respondents are yet to realize the significance of the station being part of their work in the community. This issue can be addressed by coming up with programmes which addresses issues related to work atmosphere.

Willingness to participate

The respondents have expressed their willingness to participate in the discussion if opportunities are provided. A good majority of 49% respondents have expressed their willingness to participate. However, about 24% respondents feel they may rarely go which means they might still be influenced to go. About 14% respondents were very clear that they do not wish to participate. Also another 14% were not sure where to go for participation. This uncertainty again could be because of the respondents' conviction about how their participation would add value or how it even matters to the station. It is these respondents who are not clear of their role as a community listener. Any successful media content or programme measures its success based on the impact of the program and the analysis shows poor satisfaction level of the programs aired. This is further reiterated in this response analysis which indicates that the programs have not triggered adequate discussions among the community members. In terms of audience perception, the audience have probably not attached too much importance to the station for them to discuss or deliberate on anything. This is a not so promising trend for the popularity of the station.

The analysis derived from the focus group discussion and in depth interviews;

- The programme producers and the station director are passionate about their involvement with the community radio station.
- The station teams with the community members for local activities like outreach programmes, women's day celebration, etc. There is active participation from the members in the discussions and planning. Community members are invited regularly to discuss and give their inputs.
- There has not been any formal training imparted to the team members. They have picked up the requisite skills on the job. For most of them this is a secondary job.
- Efforts are made to stay relevant to the community by ensuring that the RJs speak in their local dialect and regional flavour. Further, they have been trained to do research for content development.
- The station has built its individuality which has definitely added to the confidence of the team members.

- The station faces financial constraint.
- It has been observed that there is lack of diverse voices and the dearth of RJs.
- Further, it has been pointed that there is limited reach/weak signals in some areas. And it is suggested that the signals should be strengthened.
- It has been noted that data storage is an issue. The station has no structured approach to store programmes audience feedback or any other relevant content.
- The station looks forward for a structured capacity building from the government

IV. Conclusion

We may note that there is significant difference in the perception of the audience and the programme producers about the station. The Station Director and the programme producers have given a very positive impression of the entire process of the community radio effort. Starting from ideation, research, scripting, producing programs, taking audience feedback, there is a significant effort in coming up with meaningful content. However, from the audience perspective, it can be assumed that there is a casual take on the entire process as per the observations from both qualitative and quantitative findings. The station has instances of producing programmes which are aimed at empowering community members. However, again, this lacks endorsement by the audience which means that the efforts have either gone unnoticed or there the quality of the output is questionable. The study indicates that development communication purpose of the community radio concept is clearly not realised through this particular station. It has been observed that though there are development oriented programs which are relevant to the community on Sarathi Jhalak but have gone unnoticed or have failed to create impact. One of the reasons that can be attributed for this is lack of sustainable efforts. There needs to be a structured approach towards managing the station. Be in terms of skill management, documentation, training, it is important to have a clear management perspective. Sustainability can be brought in through training. It has been observed that there was no formal training given to the RJs reflected in the audience perspective of the RJs. The community listeners are followers of both private FM stations and AIR along with community radio station. There is a certain expectation from the audience in terms of quality of programs. Though the audience are aware that it is community effort, they expect some standardisation in the programs. Also here the community members are mostly passive listeners. There is lack of active involvement from the community to contribute to the programs and can again be attributed to lack of information about their role as a community. The program producers can go to villages and have discussions on field with community members. This will

ensure participation of the community members. Financial sustainability is also one of the challenges that faced by the station. The station has not got itself empanelled with the Directorate of Audio Visual Publicity. Though there is provision to do so, the station has not moved in that direction due to the elaborate procedure for empanelment. The station can explore this possibility more seriously and focus on financial stability.

On the positive side, it was noticed how the RJs (Sunil, Ishwar, Ramsha) who hail from the community have acquired tremendous self-confidence and individuality. They feel they are prepared to face the challenges of the competitive world. This is evidence of the fact that community radio has the potential to mould its members into better personalities. It is important to create more opportunities in this direction. Some of the recommendations are that community radio is a development communication effort which focuses on inclusiveness. The case study of Sarathi Jhalak provides evidence of how community radio effort in practice is different from theory. Community participation, development oriented content, sustainability, empowerment, grass root communication, bottom up communication in theory is a fool proof concept. However, there can be community specific challenges that a community radio station faces. Sustainability and staying relevant to the community is a constant struggle. The Government can explore partnership of the community radio stations with the academia. Every station can be tagged to a UGC recognised University/College. The educational institution can provide constant support to the station. Support can be given in terms of training the program producers in research, skill development and technology. Further, support can be extended in the documentation process. But the front runners of the station will always have to be the community. This model of managing a station can be experimented. This should not be confused with the campus radio.

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ROLE OF PUBLIC HEALTH COMMUNICATION DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN INDIA

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The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) speedy spread created a state of panic across the nations both at the level of government and people. Media became the major source of information about the novel coronavirus and significantly contributed in awareness creation. However, some of the news related to the coronavirus published in last one year has induced fear and anxiety causing psychological stress among all sections of society. The present study focuses on the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on psychological health of people which resulted in suicidal deaths in states of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana in India. The study found that most of the suicidal deaths during the COVID-19 pandemic happened because of the reasons such as stress due to corona virus infection, loss of family head due to corona infection leading to loss of bread earner and financial crisis caused due to loss of livelihood because of the mobility restrictions and lockdowns. The study identified that people in the age group covering 20 - 50 years is the most affected due to the pandemic situation in the study areas. The study concludes with the policy framework suggestions required for effective public health communication during pandemics.

Keywords: Public healthcare, Public health communication, COVID-19, Suicides, Media.

The COVID-19 (Coronavirus Disease) pandemic cases were reported in Wuhan city of People's Republic of China (PRC) in November, 2019 when the Government of China officially intimated the World Health Organisation (WHO) that there are a few people admitted in hospitals with pneumonia symptoms. Subsequently, the virus spread rapidly to other provinces of China and other countries in February/March 2020. On 11th March, 2020, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 outbreak as a pandemic. Since then the world has been passing through unprecedented times. The COVID-19 had spread to over 221 countries and regions or territories with 11, 19, 62, 853 confirmed cases, and 24,78,165 confirmed deaths worldwide as on 22 February, 2021 (Worldometer, 2020). The pandemic has had its impact on people all over the World from all walks of life and age groups. The COVID-19 pandemic transformed the lives of people by creating substantial changes in many ways including the way people work, connect, interact and socialize. The impact of COVID-19 was not only on the socio-economic development of people in the countries, but also on psychological wellbeing of the populace who are directly or indirectly affected by the disease.

With technological advancements in the 21st century, the communication media (print, broadcast and social media) are playing an important role in raising awareness regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. Social media platforms are the most widely used sources of information in the globally for updates on the pandemic. The information circulating the advisories and video clippings regarding the pandemic on social media platforms were accessed by individuals. In early days of the corona virus outbreak, many news items and video clippings

circulated over showed the authorities taking measures for institutional quarantine, lockdowns with very strict mobility restrictions. The social media platforms played a pivotal role in dissemination of information with both positive and negative. The positive impact includes quick communication during the pandemic, circulation of important scientific findings, sharing of covid related protocols on diagnosis, treatment and follow-up, presentation of different approaches undertaken globally to fight the virus. The major negative impacts it had on people were psychological well-being of the people. The consequences of traumatic event of COVID-19 pandemic caused in aggravating stress and psychiatric sufferings during the lockdown and its aftermath among the general public and health care workers. As the news related to COVID-19 spread, it created a considerable degree of fear, worry and concern among the people for not combating with the situation that pronged to a spectrum of mental health issues beginning from depression and sometimes resulting or ending with suicide. In the study conducted by Pathare, S., et al, examined the suicidal behaviour during COVID-19 lockdown in India, found that there was a 67.7 per cent of increase in reports of suicidal behaviour. The study revealed that there were 369 suicide cases during the COVID-19 lockdown in India compared to a total of 220 suicide reports during the corresponding dates in 2019 (Pathare, S. et. al, 2020). It was reported in the newspapers that there were many incidents of suicide attempts by the frontline workers working

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for COVID such as health care workers (HCW), journalists, government officials, etc. and individuals. As per the study conducted by a group of researchers comprising of Thejesh GN, Kanika Sharma and Dr. Aman, suicide was the leading cause for 338 non-COVID deaths which occurred during the period from March 19 to May 2, 2020 due to distress resulted by the nationwide lockdown (Saxena A. and Gautham S.S., 2020). Many of the studies also reveal that the main reasons of committing suicide during the lockdown included were the fear of getting corona virus infection or being corona positive causing at times loneliness and restrictions on mobility movement during lockdown, unavailability of alcohol, depression due to financial insecurity and anxiety due to uncertainty.

I. Review of Literature

Health communication is a broader term, which may be defined as a communication strategy aimed to improve and enrich personal and community health behaviours and health practices that can have impact on the individual and community decisions. The Society for Health Communication defines health communication as a multidisciplinary field of study and practice that applies communication evidence, strategy, theory, and creativity to promote behaviours, policies, and practices that advance the health and well-being of people and populations (SHO, 2017).

In last one year of crisis situation, caused by COVID-19 pandemic the health communication has been documented by the media for behavioural change among the general public and health practitioners to fight against the ill effects of COVID-19 pandemic. It had a significant positive impact by circulating information for awareness creation among the general public to control the spread of the infection, however, it also created anxiety, stress, pressures among the public. The COVID-19 pandemic and its economic impact has negatively affected the mental health of many people. Mental health is “a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his other community” (WHO, 2004).

II. Research Design and Methods

The present study attempts to review the psychological well-being concerns of the people during the COVID-19 pandemic and the approach adopted by the government health care system in India. It also aims to propose a conceptual framework and recommendations for effective health care system in India to tackle the pandemics in the future. Since there is no updated information available on suicides in the national surveillance system i.e., National Crime Records

Bureau (NCRB) in India, the present study utilizes the media reports of suicide cases in India during COVID-19. The present study has taken into account the data published in media on suicides related to COVID-19 pandemic in India during with reference to Andhra Pradesh and Telangana States.

The researchers used a systematic approach to search online news reports (online versions of print media, magazines, etc) using a purposive sampling method via google news search to collect the press media reporting of suicide cases. The news was searched using keywords of English, which included (i) suicides in India during COVID-19; (ii) suicides during lockdown; (iii) suicides in Andhra Pradesh during COVID-19; and (iv) suicides in Telangana during COVID-19. The data published in the online portals of newspapers (The Hindu, Times of India, Hindustan Times, Indian Express, Eenadu, Sakshi, etc), television channels (tv9hindi, Catchnews, Indiatvnews, etc) and other national and international agencies was also analysed to understand the scenario. The articles in regional languages (Telugu and Hindi) were translated and included. The duplicate news articles of news reports identified in multiple news agencies and the suicide attempt reports which are not related to COVID-19 were excluded.

Further, the study also classified news reports into different categories based on the main reasons for suicide or attempting suicide:

- Fear of having contracted COVID,
- Infected with COVID and undergoing treatment,
- depression due to COVID positive family members,
- due to loss of family head with COVID,
- Due to stigma after recovery from COVID,
- Financial crisis due to COVID lockdown,
- unavailability of alcohol during lockdown,
- Infected with COVID and undergoing treatment and loss of children, and
- Police humiliation the data is summarised and presented as frequencies in tabular format.

III. Results and Discussion

During the course of study of Google search engine, a total of 213 relevant news articles related to the subject were identified. These news stories were from the entire country and out of these, it was observed that 48 news items published were related to suicide attempts made from states of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh and 23 were from news agencies. Out of these 48 news, it was noticed that there of these 24 news published (13 are related to Andhra Pradesh and 11 are related to Telangana states) that are related to the

study area after excluding the repeated/ duplicate news publications. The news items were then thoroughly examined to draw out the demographic data which includes name of the person, gender, age, domicile state, no. of suicides cases, and reason for committing suicide and name of the news agency which reported the news story.

There were news reports of noticeable number of suicide attempts in the initial days of the COVID-19 pandemic all over the country. Many of the studies summarized that the suicide cases were reported due to fear, anxiety and other issues related to health, psychological and financial problems due to the COVID-19 and subsequent lockdown imposed by Government. As per the data of WHO, India is one of the worst-affected countries in terms of the number of people affected by the COVID-19 and deaths. In India, the first COVID-19 infection was confirmed on 30th January, 2020 in Thrissur district of Kerala state where a 20 years old female student who returned to her home town from China on January 23, 2020 owing to COVID-19 outbreak situation in China reported to be the first case of the virus.(The Hindu, 2020). The first suicidal case was reported from a village in Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh state on 12th February, 2020. The deceased was a 50-year-old man and a father-of-three who was not well and suffering from some illness, which he erroneously correlated to corona virus as per the information he got from the newspapers and videos browsing on his mobile. It was also reported by his family members that the deceased was in a state of panic and hanged himself to protect his family by assuming that the virus would spread to his family members and its effects (Hindustan Times, 2020).

Chart-1 presents the details of the suicide cases reported in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana States. The data reveals that a total of 35 suicide cases were reported during the COVID-19 period from February, 2020 to February, 2021 due to the effect of COVID-19 in Andhra Pradesh (20 cases) and Telangana (15 cases) states. Out of these 35 suicide reports, 20 suicides were committed by male and remaining 15 by female. An equal number of 10 people each in male and female categories committed suicides in Andhra Pradesh whereas, 10 male and 5 female committed suicides in Telangana state. It is observed that highest number of suicides was in the age group of 30-40 years with 7 suicide cases in both the states. The second highest is in the age group of 50 - 60 years with 7 cases, followed by 4 cases in the age group of 20 - 30 years and 3 each in the age groups of below 20 years, 40-50 years,60-70 and 70-80 age groups.

Table-1 presents the major reasons for the suicides during COVID-19 in both the selected states for study. The data reveals that most of the people who were in isolation and undergoing treatment for COVID-19 (9 people) committed

suicide. The second highest number of suicides happened because of the reasons that included loss of family head due to Covid and fear of having contracted the infection/disease with 6 cases each. In addition to these, financial crisis caused because of the pandemic and subsequent lockdown is the major reason for suicides with 5 cases. Non-availability of liquor has also played an important role in suicide cases in the selected states with 3 cases registered because of unavailability of liquor. The other reasons cited for suicides are depression due to family members who tested COVID-19 positive (2 cases), due to stigma after recovery from COVID-19 (2 cases), police humiliation (1 case) and tested COVID-19 positive and loss of the children (1 case).

The Table-2 presents the data related to the gender-wise and state-wise number of suicides reported during COVID-19 in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana as per the reasons picked up for the study. The data reveals that the persons below 20 years of the age group, all the 3 (2 in Andhra Pradesh and 1 in Telangana) were of the females. The major reason for the death caused by suicides included both the loss of family head because of COVID and the financial crisis caused due to the lockdowns. In the age group of 20-29 years, 2 persons (1 male and 1 female) committed suicide due to loss of family head. Out of the remaining suicide deaths, 1 male from Andhra Pradesh committed suicide because of police humiliation while his return from Chennai to hometown on foot during the lockdown and 1 female from Telangana committed suicide because of the fear of contracting corona virus infection.

In the age group of 30-39, a total of 12 suicide attempts were reported in both Andhra Pradesh (5 numbers) and Telangana (7 numbers). In Andhra Pradesh, out of the 5 suicides reported, 4 reports were of females with reasons that included loss of family head with, stigma after recovery from COVID, financial crisis due to COVID-19 lockdown and infected with COVID-19 and undergoing treatment and loss of her twin children. The remaining one case of a male who committed suicide because of the reason that he was infected with corona virus and was undergoing treatment. In Telangana, out of the 7 reported cases of reported suicide, 3 male committed suicide due to the fear of having contracted COVID, 3 other committed suicide due to unavailability of liquor during the lockdown and 1 female who committed suicide because of the financial crisis as a result of the lockdown.

In the age-group of 40-49, 3 persons, 2 from Andhra Pradesh and 1 from Telangana committed suicide. Both the two reported cases from Andhra Pradesh were male and reasons cited was one each due to stigma after recovery from COVID and financial crisis due to the lockdown. The single case of suicide from Telangana was due to the financial crisis as a result of the lockdown. In this age group, the major reason

cited for the suicide attempts is financial crisis which resulted because of the lockdown.

In the age group of 50-59, 2 females from Telangana committed suicide because of depression and anxiety of their family members who tested COVID positive. Further, 2 male in Andhra Pradesh committed suicide because of the fear and trauma of having contracted COVID and also, 2 male (1 each from Andhra Pradesh and Telangana) committed suicide because the reasons that they were infected with COVID and they were undergoing treatment in isolation. A single case from Andhra Pradesh (1 female) committed suicide due to the loss of family head because of COVID was reported. In the age groups of 60-69 and 70 and above, the main reason for suicide is that the persons were infected with COVID-19 and they were in isolation and undergoing treatment. In Andhra Pradesh, 2 female in 60-69 age group and 2 male in 70 above age group committed suicide during the period of study because of the pandemic. In state of Telangana, 2 male, 1 each in 60-69 and 70 and above age groups committed suicide in one year caused due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The limitation of the study is that it was conducted based on the suicides reported and published in the online editions of the newspapers and that the data was compiled with the secondary sources which cannot be verified. The data also may not be representative of the nationwide situation and a few of the reports related to the suicide attempts may not be available in media due to non-reporting of the suicide cases. The other potential limitation is unavailability of government data on suicide cases all over country in general and the area of the study are in particular. It is worth mentioning here that as per a news report published in the online version of a national English newspaper that there were more than 20 suicide cases reported from across the Andhra Pradesh state by second week of August, 2020. However, the number of news available in Google search is lesser than the report published by the national English newspaper. Despite the limitations, the study findings highlight that psychological well-being of people during COVID-19 pandemic is of concern and provides insights for policy framework for policymakers regarding need for promoting mental health.

IV. Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted every walk and aspect of life including the health, economy, environment, media, innovation, and technology, etc.. In the era of information and communications technology (ICT), especially during the pandemic situation, the communities all over world have started using the digital platforms which offer faster access and up-to-date information related to the COVID-19, for awareness creation and dissemination of knowledge about

public health and the role of media regarding raising awareness has been important. It has also helped the governments for dissemination of information on institutional efforts and other critical issues. But it also witnessed circulation of information in excess sometimes not evidence based or not verified for facts. WHO cited excessive circulation of news as *infodemics*.

WHO had issued guidelines to countries on maintenance of essential medical services including that of mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic? It also recommended for sufficient allocation of resources for mental health component as part of the strategies for recovery of patients. The premier medical institute of India, All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi, also released guidelines on tele-psychiatry, which were made accessible to the medical practitioners, for providing better mental health services covering the methods for psychiatric evaluation, therapy, medical management, counseling and education. The institute also started an OPD services for people recovering from COVID for post COVID symptoms. However, the people in rural areas are more vulnerable as the healthcare services are not in very good shape. The reports of suicides and attempted suicides in rural areas are major cause of health concern during the COVID-19 situation. It is observed in the study that family members of the victims of the COVID-19 patients were mostly affected by multiple health as well mental health issues during this pandemic. The data reveals that the reasons for people to commit suicide were primarily getting the infection or illness caused by the corona virus, anxiety, fear and stigma as an aftermath of COVID-19. The Economic Survey 2020-21, in the chapter titled "Healthcare takes Centre Stage, finally!", elucidated the poor conditions of the public healthcare system in India and highlighted the importance of more budget allocation to healthcare (Economic Survey 2020-21, 2021).

In India, Governments at Centre and State levels have responded very well to the COVID-19 crisis with various measures to deal with the worsening of the pandemic in the country. The pre-call COVID-19 awareness messages, a 30-second audio clip on coronavirus as caller tune on the mobile phone users, have played critical role in awareness creation. However, the spread of fake news and rumours that were forwarded over the social media platforms created anxiety and stigma which could have been regulated by the governments in a more effective way. The messages are not simply designed on the basis of impressions and pre-conceived notions, they are embedded in analytical concepts and evidence based conclusion. The government may rework on media strategy by looking at the ground realities to address the issues of fear and anxiety related to the COVID-19. More stress should have been on the sets of standardized procedures

applied by medical practitioners on the preventive measures of COVID-19. When suicides were reported in media, the success story of the first patient of COVID-19 from Kerala should have been added in subsequent messages to counsel others who had contracted the disease. Similar to the callertune on prevention from COVID-19, messages should have been designed as per the "audience" because statistics are different across the states. Once media reported the suicides due to stigma, the pattern of messages could have included high recovery rates. When the sole earning member of the family died due to COVID and other reports of suicide attempts, messages could have been customized to address the suicide attempts with initiatives taken by both the central and state governments such as free ration under Public Distribution System (PDS), increase in man-day work provided under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), etc. Apprehension and anxiety in the people often also led to increased number of cases of depression.

In view of the implications of COVID-19 pandemic on psychological well-being of the people, governments should focus on policy responses to the pandemic situation in future. The policy measures proposed below will help the governments to work towards achieving the vision and objectives of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The following inter-connected measures of policy framework will ensure the psychological well-being of all which shall remain a cause of concern for times to come.

- Strengthen the public healthcare system in rural and urban areas with sufficient financial allocations and manpower deployment.
- Major focus should be on primary healthcare within the healthcare system. Primary Health Centres (PHC) should be made accessible to the rural people by increasing the number of PHCs in India. Further, the PHCs to be equipped with the required infrastructure and manpower required for prevention and control.
- Training should be provided to the health care professionals and general public at regular intervals on socio and psychological issues related to the pandemic.
- Health and emergency management committees should be created at all levels including rural areas and these committees should work together for development and dissemination of evidence based resources related to the psychological health during the pandemics.
- There should be restrictions on circulation of fake news and mechanism related to monitoring on the pandemic to be explored.
- The media should play a proactive role in awareness creation among the general public by reporting the public health communication material during the pandemic

crisis. The media should take necessary steps while reporting the news about the pandemic crisis and sharing over the electronic media.

- Develop and promote public health communication material that can help general public during the difficult time and regularly provide the updated information about the support services offered by government and non-governmental organizations with their contact details any emergency.

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Chart-1:
Age and Gender wise details of the Suicides cases in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana

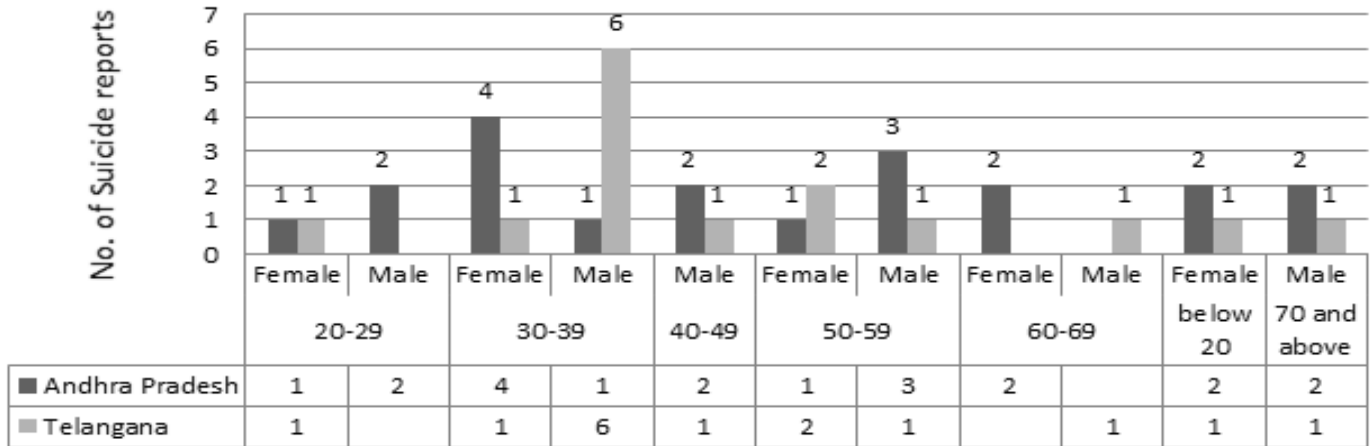


Table-1: Details of the reasons for suicides during COVID-19.

S. No.	Reason for Suicide	No. of suicides cases
1.	Depression due to testing COVID-19 positive of family members	2
2.	Due to loss of family head with COVID-19	6
3.	Due to stigma after recovery from COVID-19	2
4.	Fear of having contracted COVID-19	6
5.	Financial crisis due to COVID-19 lockdown	5
6.	Infected with COVID-10 and undergoing treatment	9
7.	Infected with COVID-10 and undergoing treatment and loss of her twin children	1
8.	Non availability of liquor	3
9.	Police humiliation during lockdown	1
	Grand Total	35

Table-2: Gender-wise and State-wise No. of Suicides reported during the COVID-19 with reasons.							
Age Group and Reason	Gender-wise No. of Suicides						Grand Total
	Andhra Pradesh			Telangana			
	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total	
1) below 20	2		2	1		1	3
i) due to loss of family head with COVID-19	2		2				2
ii) Financial crisis due to COVID-19 lockdown				1		1	1
2) 20-30	1	2	3	1		1	4
i) due to loss of family head with COVID-19	1	1	2				2
ii) fear of having contracted COVID-19				1		1	1
iii) Police humiliation		1	1				1
3) 30-40	4	1	5	1	6	7	12
i)) due to loss of family head with COVID-19	1		1				1
ii) Due to stigma after recovery from COVID-19	1		1				1
iii) fear of having contracted COVID-19					3	3	3
iv) Financial crisis due to COVID-19 lockdown	1		1	1		1	2
v) Infected with COVID-10 and undergoing treatment		1	1				1
vi) Infected with COVID-10 and undergoing treatment and loss of her twin children	1		1				1
vii) non availability of liquor					3	3	3
4) 40-50		2	2		1	1	3
i) Due to stigma after recovery from COVID-19		1	1				1
ii) Financial crisis due to COVID-19 lockdown		1	1		1	1	2
5) 50-60	1	3	4	2	1	3	7
i) depression due to positive of family members				2		2	2
ii) due to loss of family head with COVID-19	1		1				1
iii) fear of having contracted COVID-19		2	2				2
iv) Infected with COVID-10 and undergoing treatment		1	1		1	1	2
6) 60-70	2		2		1	1	3
i) Infected with COVID-10 and undergoing treatment	2		2		1	1	3
7) 70 and above		2	2		1	1	3
i) Infected with COVID-10 and undergoing treatment		2	2		1	1	3
Grand Total	10	10	20	5	10	15	35

CONTENT ANALYSIS OF WEB SERIES MIRZAPUR AND THE FAMILY MAN ON AMAZON PRIME

Shruti Chopra* Priyanka Tyagi** Harsh Datt***

The outspread of Covid-19 resulting into a lock-down in the country has brought many lifestyle changes with it. India as a country has relied on Television as a source of entertainment but in the past few years, with the advent of Smartphone and other digital devices, the situation is quickly changing. With the growth in number of Smartphone users, people (especially the younger population) are shifting towards “web series” as a source of entertainment. Against the given backdrop, the study has been conducted with the following objectives – a) to find out whether or not web series are indirectly demeaning the cultural values of the Indian society, b) to find out whether or not an effort is being made to glorify violence and other negative activities through web-series, and c) to find the increase in consumption of streaming services after the pandemic. The study is qualitative in nature using content analysis and analysis the effect of web series on our society. Two Amazon Prime original web series were selected for the study: Mirzapur (2018) and The Family Man (2019). This analysis was conducted by studying different parameters from each web series. It was inferred that web series are demeaning the Indian morals and the culture by inculcating certain negative elements and abusive language. Thus it be inferred that web series are promoting violence and bringing out a more harsh and brutal culture in the society.

Keywords: Web Series, Cultural Values, Violence, Consumption.

The coming of internet has changed the pattern of communication globally as information can be accessed in a few seconds as virtual has become reality. In the virtual world, everything is possible with the help of internet and mobile gadgets. People use internet every time not only for communication but also for entertainment and other activities. Internet provides with loads of opportunities but with these people come with few challenges also in terms of the effect/impact it has on society especially when it comes to young people. The studies have shown that the younger population has been found glued to the screens of their gadgets, which can interpreted as “internet addiction”. Indian youth nowadays follow OTT platforms like Netflix, Amazon prime, Hotstar and YouTube. In October 2018, India reported its first case of Netflix addiction by the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS) in Bengaluru, which involved a 26-year-old unemployed man who turned to the video streaming platform to escape from reality for over six months. People not only enjoy their time while watching shows but they also learn specific ideas, which stay in their mind.

Web series can be entertaining as well as educational. It gives people the opportunity to travel around the globe, learn about new ideas/information, situations, socio-cultural context, etc. The study analyzes content of the two very popular web series, Mirzapur and Family Man on three parameters- a) display of violence, b) use of harmful substances c) use of abusive language and dialogues.

I. Review of Literature

The detrimental effect of web series have been analyzed by various scholars. In the paper titled Analysis of Various Effects of Web Series Streaming Online on Internet on Indian Youth by Vinod S. Koravi (2019) analysis of the effects of web series and other online shows on the youth of our country has been done. The research covered adults in the age group of 18 to 30 years who were viewers of web series from city of Kolhapur. The study showed that young people are highly influenced by the content of the web series and other shows on the internet. They pay more attention and time to web series as compared to other activities. In fact, the analysis also shows that majority of these also get psychologically affected.

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These are not only changing instrumental in changing their behavior in terms of making them more aggressive. It is also affecting their use of language whereas culturally language is strength of any culture. Web series can be watched for entertainment but excessive viewing can lead to life style changes which can cause anxiety, affect sleep due to lack of physical activity. Also, suggest that web series is perceived by the young people against the societal ethics, culture and values can have a detrimental effect both physically and mentally.

Dhanuka and Bohra (2019) in their study to understand the relationship between demographic parameters implied to youth and binge-watching of the web-series analyzed the variables of occupation, gender, and the age whether- student or working professional affects their behaviour of binge-watching or not. Findings reveal that youth in Bombay prefer binge watching regardless of their age group or gender, depending upon their work demands. They were also struggling to overcome with their addiction of consumption of digital media and also would like to change their impulsive behaviour towards the whole web-series consumption.

Afzaal Ali Khan in a study done in Pakistan on An Increasing Trend of Web Series & Their Effects on Youth has analyzed the effects of the web series and other online shows on the youth. The findings show that viewing of OTT content may lead to changes in behavior which can be both aggressive and violent as society becomes immune to violence and some of the viewers may try to follow and imitate what they have viewed depicted online. Also the blur images of evil can be imitated. They may feel normalized to violence on watching content that is violent in nature. The negative threads can be picked up from other platforms also but certainly, television leaves an impact that is much more long lasting as compared to other medium. Watching web series at a stretch is also leading to sleep disorders in them. The findings by Matrix (2014) on the study on The Netflix Effect: Teens, Binge Watching, and On- Demand Digital Media Trends reveal that Netflix has series/shows on different genres and these are very popular with the millennial's who also comprise as majority of the subscribers and also viewers. It has also been observed that they comprised of the first viewers of the seasons released which also required marathon viewing and also posted their reviews on social media platforms of the shows watched. Also the original shows produced by Netflix establishes two emerging patterns - media engagement on demand of the popular shows and also binge watching of rising viewing which is of high quality, original and as per the choice of the viewer.

Jacobsen, W.C. and Forste, R. (2011) in the study on The Wired Generation: Academic and Social Outcomes of

Electronic Media Use Among University Students, *Cyber psychology, Behaviour, and Social Networking* Jacobsen and Forste (2011) found that electronic media use is negatively associated with grades. It also found that about two-third of the students reported using electronic media while in class, studying, or doing homework. This multitasking likely increases distraction, something prior research has shown to be detrimental to student performance. Choices entered in the logs incorporated the accompanying: adding to or understanding sites, week after week grounds discussion, in class, cleaning loft, club meeting or action, eating or getting ready food, email, exercise or sports, Facebook, lobby or floor meeting or movement, hanging out, schoolwork/concentrate alone, schoolwork/concentrate with others, IM/visit, out on the town, web based game, on the web or disconnected shopping, joy perusing, strict gathering or action, strict investigation, shower/get ready for day or bed, dozing, chatting on a PDA or text informing, taking a test, voyaging, TV or films, computer games, charitable effort or administration, work, other online action, and other disconnected action.

II. Research Design and Methods

Content analysis method has been used for the study of the web series streamed on Amazon Prime Original in Hindi namely Mirzapur (2018), The Family Man (2019). Content analysis has been widely used in social science to examine patterns in communication, which can be applicable easily.

The two web series were selected from the top 50 Amazon prime web series (Google) through random sampling. The parameters of analysis included – a) display of violence, b) use of harmful substances c) use of abusive language and dialogues.

III. Results and Discussion

Mirzapur (2018) became very popular as original work with the viewers. The storyline was set in background the of town in state of Uttar Pradesh known for carpet industry and the struggle to remain in power of the family in business through other unfair means which involved guns and drugs leading to killings and violence. The series came into criticism for its language, of words demeaning to the Indian culture and promoting the use of profane words (See clip 1, Table2). Mirzapur is one of the first few web series that displayed violence and gore throughout the series (See clip 1, Table1) and has promoted violence. Many scenes in the series display the use of drugs (See clip1, Table3) which includes smoking, drinking alcohol, and even drugs like cocaine which is demeaning to the Indian culture and promotes negative activities. The popularity of the web series led to release of season II in 2020.

The Family Man (2019) is action thriller of a middle class family man working as undercover agent with national investigative agency. The story revolves around situations of his personal and professional life. But the web series includes some severely vulgar dialogues that are demeaning to the Indian culture and tradition (see clip2, Table 2). The show is entertaining on the surface but at the same time has lot of violence throughout the episodes, which in a way glorifies and promotes violence (See clip 2, Table 1). The series also contains the use of harmful substances like tobacco and alcohol, which in a way promotes smoking and drinking (see clip 2, Table 3). The popularity of the web series led to release of season II in 2021.

Table 1 provides a wide classification of the first parameter, violence in web series. It has been presented here with the name of the character, duration of the clip and the explanation of the scene.

Table 2 presents analysis of the second parameter, impact of dialogues in the web series. It has been presented here with the name of the character, duration of the clip and the explanation of the scene.

Table 3 provides a wide classification of the third parameter, use of harmful substances in web series and is presented with the name of the character, duration of the clip and the explanation of the scene.

Table 4 provides a brief explanation about certain terms and gives the details of categories that have been mentioned in the analysis above.

IV. Conclusion

The findings of content analysis of the two web series Mirzapur (2018), The Family Man (2019) on the three parameters - the depiction/display of violence, use of harmful substances, and use of abusive of dialogues shows that these two web series depicted excessive violence by lead characters and also consumption of substances like tobacco and alcohol. Such kind of situations in story telling can lead to adoption of promoting these kinds of behaviors.

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Table 1: Display of Violence.

S.No	Web Series	Character	Duration	Explanation
1	Mirzapur	Guddu Pandit	35:25-37:10 (S-1, episode- 4)	A lot of bloodshed, gore and violence. In this clip, a gunshot wounds exposes the intestines of a character. Guddu and Bablu Pandit get his first assignment from Kaleen Bhaiya and the assignment is to kill an enemy. Guddu shoots the man without any hesitation and while doing that, the intestine and the internal organs of the character come out.
2	The Family Man	Officer Jayesh	29:30-30:04 (S-1, episode- 6)	The scene contains a lot of bloodshed and violence. The terrorist enters the hospital and finds officer Jayesh alone in the washroom and tries to shoot the officer. While fighting with the officer, the terrorist stabs the throat and the neck region of the officer several times and a lot of blood gushes out.

Table 2: Use of Abusive Language and Dialogues.

S.No	Web Series	Character	Duration	Explanation
1	Mirzapur	Ramakant Pandit	19:33- 20:12 (S-1, episode- 1)	The clip contains continuous use of Hindi expletives by the character. The scene is of a district courtroom in India, the character is having his lunch and a goon tries to threaten him with a knife and then the character in his defense pulls out his gun and starts abusing him while beating him at the same time.
2	The Family Man	Srikant Tiwari	35:22- 36:44 (S-1, episode- 2)	The scene contains use of abusive words by the main lead. The main lead chases a potential terrorist and while chasing he abuses his partner and the terrorist several times in the clip.

Table 3: Use of Harmful Substance.

S.No	Web Series	Character	Duration	Explanation
1	Mirzapur	Munna Tripathi	17:18-17:41 (S-1, episode-7)	The character is clearly visible smoking cigarettes and consuming alcohol in the clip. The characterization is in a state of depression and anger and he consumes drugs and alcohol with his friend in order to reduce his agony.
2	The Family Man	Srikant Tiwari	43:30-44:00 (S-1, episode-1)	The main lead or the character is visible consuming alcohol in the scene. The scene is of a bar in Mumbai and the main lead is visible consuming alcohol with his partner.

Table 4: Categories of analysis and their explanation.

Categories	Explanation
Physical Violence	Physical violence is when a person uses physical force and tries to hurt or tries to hurt a partner by hitting, kicking.
Mental Violence	Mental violence or mental abuse is a form of abuse, characterized by a person subjecting or exposing another person to behavior that may result in psychological trauma, including anxiety, chronic depression, or post-traumatic stress disorder.
Abusive Language	Abusive language means the use of remarks intended to be demeaning, humiliating, mocking, insulting, or belittling that may or may not be based on the actual or perceived race, color, religion, sex, national origin, sexual orientation, or gender identity of an individual.
Expletives	Expletive is a profane or obscene expression usually of surprise or anger, curse, curse word, oath, swearing, swearword, cuss, profanity - Vulgar or irreverent speech or action.
Gore	Gore is referred to the blood that has been shed, especially as a result or because of violence.
Harmful Substances	Harmful substances generally refer to tobacco, alcohol, drugs.

INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON THE SOCIAL SKILLS OF YOUTH- A CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

M. Anuradha*

A decade ago, when a person visited a university/college campus he/she could observe group of both boys and girls sitting in a group or groups and talking/ laughing and having fun with friends. But currently the scenario has changed with one can find boys and girls sitting together but not talking or discussing with each but engrossed their smart phones with their heads down and communicating with the people they might or may not know or have never met. This is not the situation across one or two colleges/universities but across the states where students have accessibility to internet and smart phones. The coming of internet has seen shift in the way we interact with family, friends and , especially more so with young people. With the advent of social media, they are becoming more social and interactive with people they barely know, than actually spending time with their friends. In this context it becomes necessary to analyze the definition of interpersonal communication in the current scenario. Studies have proved that only six percent of messages in interpersonal communication are understood based on the written or verbal word and 94 percent of it is conveyed through nonverbal communication. With this 94 percent of our communication context missing we are now attempting to develop and improve relationships through the social media. Though the social media users justify that emoticons do the job of non-verbal cues, in reality they may or may not be accurate representation of the truth. As more generations are born into the social age, and tech-savvy they are, it might affect their ability to properly communicate in person with peers. Hence the study tries to analyze the influence of social media on the social skills of college going youth Tamilnadu.

Keywords: Social media, interpersonal communication, mediated communication, Emoticons.

The rapid growth of new digital devices like smartphones, tablets and laptops have made social media accessible to everyone. These communication tools have become an integral part of our social lives mainly for social interaction. In the fast paced internet-based communication environment, social media have facilitated a different mode of communication with many people at the same time. They provide a platform for the users to make friendship, share information, exchange photos, videos, to create discussion forums and to facilitate conversation, there has been a shift in the way they interact in society. In India, there are 71 million active Facebook users. Among them more than 60 percent of social media users are youngsters and their age group ranges from 25-34 years. Tweeting and texting are not only the predominant but also the favorite forms of communication for many youngsters today. Social media have helped them to connect to multiple audiences from various cultures and background under one platform, ultimately enabling new forms of social interaction (Claudia Nir, 2012).

In the contemporary technology dominated life-style, many youngsters find it difficult to express their feelings to one another in the written form of communication. Too often at events or parties, guests are glued to their smartphones, not truly engaged or in conversation with the people in physical spaces. There is a growing tendency to speak to friends and

family through electronic devices than meet them face-to-face. This is not the scenario in communication with friends and family but is also reflected in communication with colleagues at their workplaces. Electronic communication has surpassed face-to-face communication and many official communications are now done through e-mails, texts, instant messaging, intranets, blogs, websites and other technology-enabled media platforms. This shift could probably affect their ability to properly communicate in person with peers. As more generations are born into the social age, and tech-savvy they are, it might affect their ability to properly communicate in person with peers. Hence the study tries to analyze the influence of social media on the social skills of college going youth in our region.

Social media vs Interpersonal communication

Social technologies have broken the barriers of space and time, enabling users to interact 24/7 with more and more people than ever before. But like any technology, it has bred a set of new barriers and threats. We are in a paradoxical situation where social media have opened up new channels for socialization; at the same time have made us less social when

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it comes to physical interaction. With the advent of social media, many college students and young adults have become more interactive with others-people they barely know, than actually spending time with their friends. Before the dawn of social media, one would be inclined to strike up a conversation with a stranger and practice her/his conversational skills. Today nearly everyone is on cell phones as they walk around, window shopping or waiting for someone. Studies suggest that there is a decline in the quality of interpersonal communication among the younger generations.

Social media such as Facebook, and Twitter give people a sense of interpersonal communication that they might be lacking. However just with a social media identity tag anyone can text, e-mail, post any message they want to and create an impression they wish to project. They can become anyone they want to be. Another concern lies in the addiction to these communication technologies: when individuals spend more time interacting online it is definitely detrimental to their face-to-face relationships. While emails and text messaging are a very convenient way to communicate, they are losing the personal touch specific to human interaction. These lack emotions and therefore can often be misinterpreted. Studies have proved that only six percent of message in interpersonal communication is understood based on the written or verbal word and 94% of it is conveyed through nonverbal communication. With this 94 percent of our communication context missing they are now attempting to develop and improve relationships through the social media. Though they try to justify by saying that emoticons do the job of non-verbal cues, in reality they may or may not be accurate representations of the truth. In this context it becomes necessary to analyze the definition of interpersonal communication in its true sense.

Review of Literature

“People increasingly prefer quick and frequent engagement with instant updates on news than a prolonged chat and are also finding new ways to catch up with friends from the comfort of their sofa” said Yazino founder Hussein Chahine in The Telegraph. A study conducted for online casino Yazino found that one in four people spend more time socializing online, via sites such as Facebook and Twitter, than they do in person. The study also found that even when there was an opportunity to see people face-to-face, on weekends for example, up to 11 percent of adults still preferred to stay at home and communicate on their devices instead. One in four people spent more time online than they do in person.

“People tend to want to show others that they are having fun than actually having fun themselves,” said University of

South Florida graduate Mark Clennon. “There’s a greater desire to share with other people we barely know, than actually hanging out with friends and making memories,” he added. According to the Keller-Fay’s TalkTrack research, our conversations in person are much more powerful than those online. The study also suggested that 90% of the influential conversations that we have every day, happen offline, while only eight percent are online. They noted that the decisions we make are based on true interpersonal influence. Social media is big and growing, but it is still dwarfed by the analog world in which people live and interact, explained Keller and Fay.

Building on interpersonal relationships has been taken away by technology from us; it has moved our younger generation also away from us in to a world where they are more attached to the technology than the people around them. They seem to be building on losing on the social skills that our culture has given us. Good social skills are critical to successful functioning in life. These skills enable us to know what to say, how to make good choices, and how to behave in diverse situations. The extent to which we possess good social skills can influence our academic performance, behavior, social and family relationships, and involvement in other activities.

The lost Social Skills

The major harm done to our next generation by technology is the loss of important interpersonal and social skills. Communication is a package of verbal and non-verbal signals. When there is a contradiction between the verbal and non-verbal cues, the latter are to be believed. Micro momentary expressions reveal the real intentions of the speaker wherein the major component is the *eye contact*. Though the interpretation of non-verbal cues differs in different cultures, they are basics of understanding an interpersonal or group communication throughout the world. It is an important element that gives credibility to the source and it also serves as first vivacious social tool.

The tendency to text everything has ended up in the usage of a lot of abbreviations and acronyms without much consideration for the grammar, spoiling the charm of the language which is reflected during their telephonic conversation also. Talking over phone is an art whether it is a formal or informal communication. During business/official communication one has to introduce oneself with a brief interesting note, continue the conversation giving all the details in a short time, maintaining the interest on the other side and ending up with a polite note. This is possible only when we indulge in such conversations regularly and which do not happen among the youth now-a-days. Thus we are losing another significant social tool- the skill of *speaking over phone*. Being a skilled conversationalist doesn’t mean talking alone. It involves

asking questions about others, listening to them with involvement, being able to recognize their non-verbal cues and responding to them. Without these qualities, one does not give the impression that they are interested in the present conversation. Neither can they impress upon the listener that the communication is important. While text messaging is the easiest way to say something short without having to say it in conversation, the lack of human interaction is becoming more apparent. Hence this social *tool of conversation* is slowly getting side lined by the use of social media.

Another component of non-verbal communication is the space we maintain in our interpersonal and social communication. There had always been personal and public sphere in everyone's life. Now those boundaries seemed to have vanished or merged. It is a common sight now, to notice a person in a departmental store, office cafeteria, cinema house or walking on the pavement, chatting or texting. This kind of behavior can be exasperating at any situation. When we are immersed in the virtual world, we tend to forget about the present world. This obliviousness to our surrounding, in other words-*spatial awareness* is another social skill we are losing in the present digital era.

An important factor we have to remember in this era of social media, not everything could be conveyed through texting/messaging. We need to be more focused in order to survive in an office or to do justice to our roles played at home. Knowing when to focus and how, needs more attention that is lacking in the present younger generation. Short attention span is a problem faced by youngsters of today.

They have to concentrate more on increasing their *attention span* which again is an important social skill.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that technology, especially social media is making us restless and impatient. When social media have technical difficulties with uploading pictures/ posting status etc., the users become so irritable and anxious which is reflected in their real world. On the other hand, traditional face-to-face communication will resolve conflict situations in a better way. We'll gain much more from having an in-depth conversation with a friend, rather than tweeting back and forth with them. Undoubtedly, social influence happens most often and most powerfully by face-to-face communication.

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