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Editor's Note

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EDITOR'S NOTE

The media performances which at times slide into the stature of mere contrivance raises the question of its spontaneity. Lack of genuineness, thus intermittently checked by making textual interrogations, marks it as an issue of content. But actually appalled inquiries of that sort, questions the very method of such an investigation which is not often identified. So such inquiries need to be elevated as a probe to the context of inquiry, not restricting it to the textual fringe.

Media theorist Freidrich Kittler, who was so sure of the Media's role as a qualifier of the situation shares the idea of such an inquiry in his work 'Gramophone, Film, Typewriter' that doesn't limit itself to the contentful object, but the subject's participative magnitudes. "The beginning of our age was marked by separation or differentiation. On the one hand, we have two technological media that, for the first time, fix unwritable data flows; on the other, an 'intermediate' thing between a tool and a machine,' as Heidegger wrote so precisely about the typewriter" (Kittler, 1999)

This obviously questions the existing reality of the device in between. So it pushes the inquiry beyond the traditional Subject—Object duality. There are articles in this issue, which clemently engages such debates.

Curriculum aspects of Media education and Digital mediated reality and Content generation issues are some which take a step in this direction. The inquiry on Television News Debates triggers a high voltage discussion with precision in the scale and method. Though speaking of the texts, articles on Kierkegaard's notion on Faith and Trembling extending the inquiry further to the idea of Silence, and Narendra Jadhav's novel which discusses beyond text as it is hinting of the communicative reverberations on society. Design in which the contemporary communication works is the major concern in the Virtual Reality inquiry engaged. Delineating the trajectory of Digital media campaigns is also an effort to calibrate the research design.

Attempts to go beyond the routine domain are seen in Communication studies even so feeble. Hefty attempts and results are cited in the global environment, which accelerates researches of the area to be called as 'the qualifier of the situation'.

Lalmohan P., PhD
Chief Editor

Integrating Digital Media into Journalism Curriculum: Responses from South Indian Media Academia

■ **MUHAMMADALI NELLIYULLATHIL***

Abstract

Digital disruption has become a reality not in media industry alone, but in media academia as well. Despite many impediments specific to their academic and social contexts, media schools across the world, more or less, are realigning their curricula and syllabi as well as pedagogical approaches and strategies to incorporate the latest trends to equip their both faculty and students for new generation media industry. Eliciting qualitative data from three level stakeholders such as faculty, students, and media practitioners this study explores how south indian media academia responded to this digital disruption. Though limited itself as small part of a larger study, this paper problematizes some ground realities such as scope and limitations of pedagogical approaches, the gap between industry expectations and academia contributions as well as the issues of institutional limitations.

Keywords: digital journalism, media curriculum, media education, South Indian media

Introduction

In response to the impact of digital revolution and the emergence of newsroom convergence, media schools started to realign their curricula and syllabi to keep their graduates abreast of what the industry expects from media academia though they are fully aware that these expectations could not be met completely. In this process, integration of digital media techniques and strategies into the syllabi has become a significant priority. At the same time, faculty at media academia started to utilize digital media as a platform for teaching journalism. How this reciprocity contributes to each other is a worth

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exploring question when the integration of social media into media teaching has now been recognized as a norm and social media as such, and in some cases digital media at large and in some other cases online journalism or web journalism and the like, has become a critical element of the media curricula. This process of integration has undergone various ups and downs and trial and error with varying pedagogical approaches and experiences in different social contexts characterized by differential stages of digital penetration and varying degree of adaptability.

Despite this aspect, at least at the infancy, the social media were found to be more fitting to teaching news reporting than any other subjects. But, the trend gradually changed over time when other subjects also made forays into digital platforms imbibing lessons from their practical experiences in the industry. For example, public relations and advertising practitioners, at the very beginning of this trend, found social media as a better platform for their operations as it ensured them maximum reach with minimum cost. Later, other domains such as Marketing Communication, Corporate Communication, Health Communication, and the like entered into web based platforms creating new pathways offering more advantages for both sending and receiving ends. When digital transformation is considered, media education is at a crossroads whereas pedagogical theories already focused curricula must be responsive to the changing contexts to maximize their results. The changing contexts cannot be confined to technological context alone, rather it naturally extends to social, cultural, academic, and industry contexts as well, which might have been implicated by the basic transformations in the technology and economy like digitization or globalization respectively.

In fact, it is a new normal when viewing from traditional pedagogical prism that always kept a continuum of extending strategies from the past to the present to meet the educational requirements. Possessing oral and written skills for professional media environment were the expected outcome of traditional journalism or media pedagogy. Now a journalism student is to be equally competent in both traditional communication skills like content creating, content editing, and oral communication as in media technology that is relevant to the existing media operation and its minute segments ranging from news programming to web analytics. Convinced of this imperative shift media educators and curriculum developers thoughtfully responded to this paradigm shift from multiple angles, including cultural and technological perspectives. The targeted outcome of this natural adaptation was to equip the students to harness the

digital opportunities available for media sector. But, how media faculty adapted this pedagogical realignment in their perspective and practice is not fully unearthed. Likewise, the perceived pedagogical effect of this shift warrants a deeper analysis, because such an inquiry will offer pointers to the pros and cons of existing media education and its contextualization in the techno-cultural environment in communication sector triggered by digitization.

Literature Review

The research on using digital media as a pedagogical tool as well as integration of them into curricula at large started at the very infant stage of the emergence of new breed in mass media (Bista, 2015; DiVall & Kirwin, 2012; Xi, Hui,   de Pablos, Lytras, & Yongqiang, 2016; Lin, Hoffman, & Borengasser, 2013). But their focus was on how to use the physical possibilities of the medium as a teaching aid rather than incorporating its theory and practice into pedagogical approach. (Alzouebi & Isakovic, 2014; Bista, 2015; DiVall & Kirwin, 2012; Evans, 2014;). Other areas explored were how digital media can use to widen professional development including the skill development (Romero-Hall, 2017), how these tools can be used for form and content creation for teaching and learning (Guidry & Pasquini, 2013), how to integrate learners to widened social media community without changing their attributes as learners (Atkins, Koroluk, & Stranach, 2017), how to use them as knowledge sharing platforms (Greenhalgh, Staudt Willet, Rosenberg, & Koehler, 2018), how to create newer types of learning experiences specific to the subjects taught (Evans, 2014; Myers, Jeffery, Nimmagadda, Werthman, & Jordan, 2015) and the pedagogical dilemma felt by the academics who use these new digital tools (Kimmons & Veletsianos, 2016), among other discourses.

Digital revolution transformed news experience in a massive way and it has impacted the newsroom culture tremendously demanding new theoretical approaches and multi-skilled practitioners. Pew Research Centre's Report (2013) observed that social media was fast becoming an integral part of the new experience and it reported that in 2012 in the US alone 184 news media organizations appointed social media editors. This indicates how digital media redefines the work culture and news consumption patterns. Though started in 2012 itself, in 2017, Facebook announced a massive project with news media organizations (Facebook, 2017).

"Facebook wants to do our part to enable people to have meaningful

conversations, to be informed, and to be connected to each other. We know that our community values sharing and discussing ideas and news, and as a part of our service, we care a great deal about making sure that a healthy news ecosystem and journalism can thrive. That's why today we're announcing a new program to establish stronger ties between Facebook and the news industry. We will be collaborating with news organizations to develop products, learning from journalists about ways we can be a better partner, and working with publishers and educators on how we can equip people with the knowledge they need to be informed readers in the digital age."

How journalism is impacted by digital media revolution is well described in a Facebook official announcement. The ways are mainly three: new storytelling formats, hyper-local coverage, new business models. Though they were identified very early, these issues continue to be discussed even today since the trajectories of the digital disruption in traditional storytelling and business models take unpredictable turns day by day. Digital media business models are more centered on the entrepreneurships in journalism. In the very beginning of multimedia journalism, Deuze (2004) observed that continuous analysis of this churning out is essential particularly from the point view of entrepreneurial journalism perspective.

The curricular realignment to digital integration in journalism schools shall be studies from this perspective. It means that continuous evaluation of the trends is to influence the pedagogy and its academic outcomes. Only then the industry will get enough human resource. Also, in this process, a reciprocity involved that necessitates give-and-take approach between academia and media industry. Specifically saying, media experience will help academia to integrate digital journalism into curricula and in turn, academia will produce adequately skilled human resource to the industry. Cooper and Tang (2010) explored the attributes for career success in mass communication industries. In their study they identified 42 attributes assessed by current media professionals (N = 1,122) and upper-level mass communication majors (N = 268). T-tests revealed significant differences between current and aspiring professionals on twenty of the forty-two attributes measured, including nine of eleven attributes rated highest by professionals. These findings offer insights into the abilities needed to navigate dynamic mass communication industries, while positioning future inquiry on enhancing preparation for future professionals. This is very much applicable in media landscapes where rapid changes redefine every stage of news production. In his study Carpenter (2010) observed that fast changing trends in

career attributes are reflected in career advertisements in relation to journalism jobs due to the impact of digital disruption.

It is true that knowledge of social media and convergence journalism provides media persons countless opportunities to widen their profession by writing impactful stories using effective tools which are more useful in a digital environ unlike in the traditional media environs.

Method

The present work seeks to problematize the issues of the realignment of mass communication curricula to digital trends in low-income countries like India. Given the field manageability the study is limited to context of media schools in selected South Indian universities and colleges.

For this study, the researcher used qualitative approach and the data was collected through telephonic and direct in-depth interviews (IDIs) with participants including teachers and students from Universities and colleges in Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Karnataka and Focus Group Interview (FGI) with media persons in the three states. All the members of the FGIs were in charge of online media platforms in their respective organizations, which included television channels, newspapers and exclusive web portals. In addition to that, qualitative data was derived from a random content analysis of the syllabi and curriculum frameworks. The scope of the study is limited to the syllabi of postgraduate programmes. IDIs were held on different dates between February 2017 and September 2018 following COPE directions on research data collection. Anonymity of the respondents is kept as part of securing confidentiality ensured in the interview schedule.

The objective at large of the study was to elicit stakeholder perceptions of the integration of digital media theory and practice into media school curricula in South India. Though the complete study covered a number of issues, this particular article generated from the data concentrates on the following themes:

- Scope and limitations in terms of contextualized pedagogical approaches for integrating social media theory and practice into journalism curricula.

- Industry demands and expectations of digital media practitioners for the coming years in the light of fast changing digital disruption trends in the field.

- Infrastructure wise limitations faced by media schools in incorporating digital media teaching.

- Human resource wise limitations faced by media schools in incorporating digital media teaching.

Discussion

In-Depth Interview was conducted at different points subject to the availability of appointment of the respondents. Three separate schedules were prepared for Faculty, Students and Media Practitioners. No change was made in between. The discussion based on the data elicited from IDIs and FGIs is arranged thematically.

Scope and Limitations of Pedagogical Approaches

Pedagogical response to digital disruption in media schooling is a critical theme in the discourses of contemporary journalism training. Scholars observed that pedagogical response has been determined by different factors such as social context, digital policies, educational policies and resources and many more. Developed nations where digital technologies born and disrupted other sectors massively took steps very early to integrate them into curricula imbibing lessons from the experiences in related domains, and their open policy toward digital shift. However, other nations including India lagged behind for a variety of reasons. This line of argument is well reflected in the responses of higher education faculty participated in the IDIs.

A professor from Karnataka said: "Bangalore is one of the forerunners that responded positively to digital transformation with clear vision and policy from the part of the government. But, this response was limited to industry demands, and failed to foresee the scope of its integration into academia, particularly into media academia with special focus on media technology. Resultantly, we lost an entire generation of multi-skilled media persons". From this, it is clear that policy wise lacuna caused the delayed response to digital transformation and subsequent delayed realignment of curricula.

Editor of a web exclusive portal in Tamil Nadu observed: " When we approached well known Universities for campus recruitment of multi-skilled digital media team, the response from the academia was shocking. 'We don't focus on technology,' We train people for journalism, how to write news, not how to programme,' 'Our syllabus doesn't cover digital journalism,' Note, this was the story of 2015." In fact, this was due to the lack of proper research and literature to equip

the curriculum planners to respond to technological transformation.

"Only recently, we started to adopt a policy of multi-disciplinarity in media education. We have been teaching journalism as an exclusive subject though the elements of it were borrowed from other subjects like Law, Politics, Psychology, Literature and so on. This traditional approach that we continued for many decades stopped us from taking a positive, out of the boundary approach towards digital integration, said a senior professor from Tamil Nadu. How to approach media education from a multi-disciplinary perspective is still a troubling question in Indian scenario. Still, a single-disciplinary perspective regulates teacher appointment at least in Government colleges and universities. Two respondents, one from a private university in Karnataka and the other, a senior editor of a Malayalam newspaper in Kerala, who is also holding the charge of in-house training in the organization opined that they were free to integrate digital content to media syllabus and they did it successfully. It means, private educational institutions are free from regulatory constraints as we see in the government settings. It points to the fact that recruitment policies impact pedagogical approach directly or indirectly and it is very much evident in the contrasting situations in government and private settings in all the three states, as indicated by the responses from all the three states.

"Research on media pedagogy is still in nascent stage and if anybody does, it only replicates the phenomena in western contexts. India needs its own media pedagogy that can instantly respond to media industry trends and technological transformations. For this, we need a media education research fund that covers the academic demands from both media and academia. I mean in service training of journalists in service and academic training of journalism students," observed by a college teacher in Kerala, who also served as a journalist for more than a decade before starting his academic job.

The data elicited from various stakeholders reveal that pedagogical policy change is highly dependent on institutional policy. Limited individual autonomy for faculty, traditional recruitment policy, lack of multi-disciplinary approach, dearth of pedagogical approach, and failure to contextualize media pedagogy in Indian contexts are some of the issues identified by the respondents.

Yet another issue on which majority of the faculty members agreed was the lack of research in India in this domain and dearth of literature on pedagogical strategy on how to integrate digital media into journalism education. The later case is a worldwide phenomenon while the former is specific to India in their opinion. But, when

global scenario is considered, research is in its full throttle to explore multiple impacts the digital media may make on education and to explore the ways of its integration into curricula including journalism academic. In India, as they observed, research in this area is lagging behind and to be addressed urgently.

Industry Expectations

Industry- academic interaction is always intensified when massive disruption is felt in industry operations. Such a situation is evident in the case of digitally driven transformations in media, particularly in Indian media. Because this disruption, Indian media industry face two-pronged challenges. While the first is how will traditional media survive the second is how will the new media thrive finding its on business models. Unlike in the West where media culture and business enjoy a liberal market economy and a secured freedom of expression landscape and innovative patterns of media consumption, in the countries like India conservative systems prevail in all phases from capital accumulation to income generation, media production to consumption. So, industry-academia collaboration takes a new turn in this setting, which is no way comparable with that of the developed nations.

Interestingly, a senior editor of a leading national English newspaper observed: "We can't expect anything in this direction from our government owned media schools. I have been collaborating with some of such educational institutions for a long time as an invited faculty in a particular specialization. I know, still they follow the traditional media framework in syllabus. One this I can ensure that for traditional media culture and industry standards, their training standard is high at least in some cases, if not all, but, in the case of digital media, they are yet to start from scratch."

His observations are self-speaking and they confirm what others in the industry expect from media schools. " News production culture is fast changing. We are in a situation where we have to depend more on auxiliary partners like web designers, interactive specialists, specialized programmers and such supplementary elements to operate our newsroom in its full-fledged form. Ours is a generation fast being obsolete in the industry, but new journalists shall have all the skills that we now outsource from allied domains.   What media industry expects is how to fill this gap " , opined a lady news coordinator who is in charge of convergence news section in a leading Englsh news organization based out in Bangalore.

This observation is validated by the job postings published recently. In the West, this trend started way back in 2005. Wenger and Owens' longitudinal study in this regard aptly pointed out that increased emphasis on web/multimedia skills for broadcast newsrooms an the emergence of social media and mobile content delivery as desired skills. They observed, " Journalism outlets are moving quickly to embrace mobile technology as a means of gathering and disseminating news content. At the same time, journalism educators are ramping up to prepare their graduates for jobs that include the need for mobile skills. This mixed-methods research includes content analysis of more than 700 job postings from the Top 10 TV and newspaper companies in the United States, as well as interviews with news executives. The researchers found that a broad range of broadcast journalism positions require mobile skills, including producers, anchors, and reporters. Regardless of media platform, journalism employers want new hires to understand how to gather news with mobile devices, use them to interact with the social media audience, and how to format content appropriately for the medium. This research offers guidance to journalism programs looking to revise or create courses to provide graduates with these skill sets."

Even students from many institutes before their admission expected that their syllabi would cover all this, but failed. A student from a university from Kerala, who is so keen to grab a job in the emerging digital media segment said, " My expectation was that the academia are equipped to cater to the needs of the industry as well as students. I am so depressed. I want to complete the programme, and soon to join a diploma in multimedia course. Only then can I achieve what I wished to get."

The curious part is that its not just the expectation of the industry from the academia is not fulfilled, but the expectation of the students based on their career prospects is not also fulfilled by the media schools.

Faculty has different reasons to justify the situation while they unanimously agree with this aspect of digital integration into media academia. Their main accusations lie in two themes: lack of infrastructure and irresponsive human resources.

Lack of Infrastructure

Digital media demands expensive infrastructure. Many media schools under universities and colleges are now preparing proposals for setting up their digital labs and studios. One teacher from Tamil

Nadu sarcastically said: " We are yet to get a television studio, let alone the multimedia facilities! We are one generation behind in capacity building be it infrastructure or human resources."

It is true, 90 percent of the university departments and colleges have no exclusive multimedia facility on their entire campuses. A student from Kerala lamented, " we still use our laptops. We have a limited common facility with three computers for 15 students. But, we miss proprietary software like Adobe. Its because of government policy to use open software only. How is it possible for us to open software for training to make students industry ready?

The question is valid since there is a contradiction between government policy and industry realities.

" We have only a limited budget. And, even if we set aside a small portion for developing multimedia facility, who will take care of the facility is a haunting question among the faculty. In many cases, no faculty is ready to take up the responsibility of the technical equipment. It is because of the lack of institutional regulations. The authorities are not convinced of the fact that media teaching is fast becoming technology oriented and getting '*scientified*'. I feel that media teaching shall be considered as science teaching permitting lab hours and providing lab technicians", said a faculty member from a university from Karnataka.

When going through the qualitative data, which specially focuses on the arguments raised by the faculty and expectations kept by the students, there is a gap between them. Bridging this gap will take time since the digital integration is now in a churning out period.

Irresponsive Human Resource

The expectations of the industry and students are met only when faculty is equipped to train students on the state-of-the art platforms. In the past, when traditional media ruled, the media institutions were ahead of the industry in the case of updated infrastructure and human resources. Now the things are turned around.

"I am from traditional media generation and no time to catch up with new media. More so, personally I am not interested in it, I mean the technology behind it. I feel it is not our cup of tea. As information platform new media are superb. You don't expect equipping existing faculty for technology of the new breed. Rather, you have to intergrade digital team to journalism teaching, I mean a interdisciplinary approach is needed," said a senior faculty who is about to retire from the service in two years.

Her observations put forward many issues: interdisciplinary integration and generation shift. But, both are to be studied separately, not in this case alone, but in a wider perspective. One thing is sure that the existing faculty is not sufficiently responsive to digital disruption in media academia.

An adjunct faculty who recently joined a university department in Kerala opined: "Our batches were exposed to digital skills, but not in a meaningful way. I learned some skills from private institution on my own. But, the skills I have are limited. In my personal view, it is not possible for a media student to learn all the required multimedia skills to operate a professional entity. We need to redefine the media schooling in its totality."

Her observation is worth mentioning since it advances many serious issues like imminent steps to take to make the media pedagogy interdisciplinary.

From the analysis, it is clear that the issue of digital integration of media curricula warrants a detailed academic intervention.

Conclusion

Given the fact that in Indian context, integration of digital media into media pedagogy is hardly studied, the conclusions of this study assume significance as they points to some ground realities in the actual instructional experience. Though the present work is contextualized in South India and the findings of the study can be termed as context specific, many of them are applicable to media and journalism programmes in higher learning institution in wider contexts of low income countries including India because the socio economics settings as well as human resource patterns are similar in all these regions.

It is acknowledged that the present article is only a part of a large study, so exact background could not, sometime, be reflected in this work since the responses from the subjects were collected in the context of that large study. This is acknowledged as a limitation of this work. The study focused on a qualitative analysis, however a quantitative study has immense scope particularly in the case of capacity building and human resource preparation. The issues like irresponsive human resources and lack of infrastructure will be solved over time, but the gaps between industry expectations and academia contributions, and the issue of scarcity of research in pedagogical approach, both in the case of theory and practice, in low income settings will continue or must continue. A significant line of thought

that is emerged out of this discussion focuses on the pressing need of developing pedagogical approaches for communication studies at large in the context of digital transformation trends in low-income nations.

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Is Raising the Voice Raising the Bar? An Analysis of News Debates on Television Channels

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Abstract

In this quasi-experimental study, 40 news debates are chosen from four Indian television channels and tested on 162 university students, to analyse the characteristics of the television news debates and measure their effects. A factor analysis of the characteristics of the debates indicates three major patterns prominent in the Indian television channels: in the first type of debate, there is more personal attacks, interruption and sensationalisation and fewer equal opportunities for the debaters; in the second type, there is more diverse debaters, diverse opinion and equal opportunities but less abusive languages; and in the third type of debate, there is more diverse debaters, equal opportunities for the debaters to express their opinion, abusive language and rising of voice. Only the second type of debate has a favourable impression on the audience. Factors used to measure the effects are recall, perceived informativeness, value, credibility and opinion change.

Keywords: television, news debates, media effect, content analysis

Introduction

Debate is an inclusive space where an exchange of views takes place, manifesting and broadcasting disparate surmises and sentiments regarding an issue, which in turn, helps in exposing alternative ideas apart from dominant ideas or prejudices (Coleman, 2013). A debate is also presented as a valuable learning activity for teaching critical thinking and improving communication skills (Garrett et

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al., 1996). Studying current affairs debate programmes is intriguing since they consciously depict themselves as significant, timely and imperative (Örnebring, 2003).

Debates have to be conducted with a meticulous organisation to be fruitful, and television is considered as an ideal platform to conduct them (Coleman, 2013). Even in the era of smart-handheld devices loaded with convergent apps (smartphone applications), television still exhibits uniqueness and relevance (Laghate, 2018), more so in India, which is witnessing a favourable traditional media climate, bucking the global trend.

Television continues to be one of the major sources of political content (Johnson, 2018), and news debates occupy most of the prime time of non-stop news channels aired in India. Though highly popular, television news debate is an understudied area of scholarly research, with most of the works focussing on presidential news debates on television (Borah et al., 2018; Ortiz et al., 2017; Pfau, 2002; Weaver et al., 1995; Drew and Weaver, 1991). Television debates have evolved into a narrative and investigative account of news sections (Khorana, 2014). There is also a shift from factual news broadcasts toward more contentious news debates that attract a much larger audience (Fatma, 2019). Television is also known to dramatise conflicts (Kellner, 2018) and has drawn widespread criticism. Usually, debate programmes begin with the introduction of the topic and the debaters (who include politicians, celebrities, experts, scholars and common people) by the host, and then the host moderates the debate, sometimes including the audience members, and finally, provides concluding remarks (Örnebring, 2003).

The types of debates usually observed include: the kind where it is set up as a debate but is an exchange of negative statements where two parties are pitted against each other, and the host of the programme tries to enable focus on the disagreements; secondly, a kind where the debates are set-piece theatre, that is, mostly scripted; and the third which has no ulterior agenda and is inclusive of all, with endless phone-ins and participation of viewers and viewer responses (Coleman, 2013).

A 24-hour news channel can serve three main purposes, according to Lewis et al. (2005): allowing viewers to watch an up-to-date news bulletin whenever they want; allowing viewers to watch major live news events as they happen; or providing more in-depth information, background, context, or analysis of news and current affairs. Though critically viewed, over 100 non-stop news channels are broadcast in India (Desai, 2011), and in them, political news debates are a crucial

component (Kinder et al., 1990), occupying the prime time and fulfilling the role of mass media as an institution providing a space for public debate (Buckingham, 2002).

Several Indian and foreign televised news debates have drawn widespread criticism (Rowat, 2019; Denyer, 2012). Most researchers agree that presidential debates educate voters, but they disagree over whether they simply expand the knowledge gap. The opposite viewpoint is that having televised debates helps inform a broader range of voters than not having them (Lemert, 1993).

According to Coleman (2000), televised debates are still the most effective means to reach many people. More than any other source, television is the primary source of political information for most voters. Second, there is substantial evidence that televised debates have educational value. Thirdly, televised debates help to equalise access to the mass media. Fourthly, televised debates allow the public to come as close as they can to auditioning the candidates for national leadership. Several studies have linked political media content to political behaviour and opinion change (Barclay 2017; Barclay et al., 2014, 2015, 2015a, 2015b, 2015c, 2016) and observed inter-media political agenda-setting (Barclay 2015 and 2019).

Television debates help the common people to gain information about electoral issues. The diversity of opinion and participants could offer more information to the viewers and add value to the debates increasing their credibility and leading to opinion change. Thus the present study aims to analyse the characteristics of television news debates and measure their effects. To bring in some clarity at this point, the following research questions are raised:

Research Questions

RQ1: Are the news channels different concerning Debater Diversity, Opinion Diversity, Personal Attack, Interruption, Equal Opportunity, Sensationalisation, Abusive Language, Raising Voice, Recall, Informativeness, Value, Credibility and Opinion Change?

RQ2: Are Debater Diversity, Opinion Diversity, Personal Attack, Interruption, Equal Opportunity, Sensationalisation, Abusive Language and Raising Voice associated with Recall, Informativeness, Value, Credibility and Opinion Change?

RQ3: Are there communication patterns in the news debates, and if yes, what are their effects on viewers?

Research Method

The present study aims to analyse the news debates on television channels. A sample of 40 debates was chosen from four 24-hour news channels in India (NDTV, Rajya Sabha channel, India Today and Republic TV). As many as 10 political issues were selected purposefully for this study. As many as 162 graduate students were chosen for this study using a stratified random sampling procedure and were shown 40 debates, following which, a questionnaire was used to gather their opinion. The respondents were chosen from the Central University of Tamil Nadu, in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu and which has a population representing almost all the Indian states.

A quantitative survey method with a questionnaire consisting of six pages was used to obtain

self-reported data on the variables chosen. As many as 32 questions measured 13 variables: Informative (4 items); Debater Diversity (2 items); Opinion Diversity (2 items); Value (5 items); Personal attacks (1 item); Interruption (2 items); Equal opportunities (1 item); Sensationalising the issue (4 items); Raising voice (2 items); usage of Abusive language (2 items); Recall value (1 item); Credibility (2 items) and Opinion change (2 items). In the present study, Informativeness means the ability of a debate to serve as a means to provide information to the viewers. Debater Diversity means including people from different ideological and sociological backgrounds to participate in the debate and discussion regarding a particular issue. Opinion Diversity is the extent of diversity in the opinions expressed during the debate. Personal attack refers to personally offending or targeting the other debaters instead of expressing views. Interruption is related to hindering the other debaters from expressing opinions. Value alludes to the perceived quality of the debate. Equal Opportunities means allocating more or less equal talk time for all participants to express their opinions. Sensationalisation refers to wording or depicting an issue in such a way to excite the audience, even sometimes manipulating the truth to do so. Raising the voice is using a loud voice to assert one's opinion or suppress those of others. The abusive language uses profanities and explicit words to attack opposing views or dominate the debate. The recall is the extent to which the content of the debate and the ideas expressed in it is being retained and remembered by the audience. Credibility refers to the authenticity of the debate, and Opinion change means the perceived extent to which the debate has caused a change of opinion of the viewers.

Google Forms were used to collect anonymous responses,

apart from hard copy questionnaires. Microsoft Excel and IBM SPSS software were used for data collection and analysis.

Data Analysis

RQ1: Are the news channels different concerning Debater Diversity, Opinion Diversity, Personal Attack, Interruption, Equal Opportunity, Sensationalisation, Abusive Language, Raising Voice, Recall, Informativeness, Value, Credibility and Opinion Change?

This research question is aimed at characterising news channels: it intends to examine which news channels use how much of the elements mentioned above in their news debates.

To test the relationship between the variable Channel and the 13 dependent variables, a one-way Anova was run, and the results are presented in Table 1 and Fig. 1. Channels used in the present study are NDTV, Rajya Sabha, India Today and Republic TV.

From the results of Anova test, it is inferred that apart from Diverse Debators and Raising Voices, all other dependent variables i.e., Diverse Opinion, Personal Attacks, Interruption, Equal Opportunities, Sensationalisation, Abusive Language, Recall, Informative, Value, Credibility and Opinion Change have significant associations with the Channel.

One-way Anova results indicated that there was no statistically-significant difference among the averages in the Debater Diversity among the Channel groups (F [3, 158] = 1.065; p = .366). However, there was a difference among the averages of the Opinion Diversity Expressed with regard to the Channel groups (F [3, 158] = 13.762; p < .0005). Rajya Sabha television channel (4.55 ± 1.377) had the most diverse of opinions expressed in its news debates, while the Republic TV had the least diverse of opinions expressed in its news debates (2.76 ± .994). There was a difference among the averages of the Personal Attacks that have been recognised with regard to the channel groups (F [3, 158] = 12.317; p < .0005). Republic TV channel (2.46 ± .778) had the high personal attacks recognised in its news debates, while India Today had the least personal attacks recognised in its news debates (1.54 ± .869).

There was a difference among the averages of the Interruptions in between the debates with regard to the news channel groups (F [3, 158] = 16.275; p < .0005). Republic TV (5.83 ± .495) had the high

Table 1. Table of Means: Channel vs Dependent variables

Television Channel	NDTV	Rajya Sabha	India Today	Republic TV	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Debator Diversity	4.85	4.93	5.17	4.66	1.840	1.065	0.366
Opinion Diversity	4.23	4.55	4.15	2.76	25.744	13.762	*0.000
Personal Attacks	1.78	1.48	1.54	2.46	8.368	12.317	*0.000
Interruption	4.13	3.73	4.07	5.83	36.355	16.275	*0.000
Equal Opportunities	2.23	2.78	2.51	1.80	7.009	12.495	*0.000
Sensationalisation	8.30	7.30	8.02	9.98	52.120	9.748	*0.000
Abusive Language	2.93	2.65	2.71	3.59	7.511	8.338	*0.000
Raising Voice	4.35	4.00	4.20	3.93	1.484	2.434	0.067
Recall	6.73	6.75	7.54	4.00	98.151	7.786	*0.000
Informative	9.75	9.75	9.59	5.88	148.903	19.263	*0.000
Value	11.53	12.23	11.63	6.95	243.129	24.493	*0.000
Credibility	4.98	5.35	5.00	3.78	19.150	16.894	*0.000
Opinion Change	3.95	4.38	4.05	2.95	15.360	9.019	*0.000

interruptions in between the debates, while the Rajya Sabha channel had the least number of interruptions in between the news debates(3.73 ± 1.768). There was a difference among the averages of the Equal Opportunities to Debaters to express their Opinion with regard to the news channel group (F [3, 158] = 12.495; p < .0005). Rajya Sabha channel ($2.78 \pm .480$) had high equal opportunities for debaters to express their opinion. In contrast, Republic TV had the least equal opportunity for debaters to express their opinion in its news debates($1.80 \pm .782$). There was a difference among the averages of the Sensationalization of News with regard to the news channel group (F [3, 158] = 9.748; p < .0005). Republic TV(9.98 ± 1.573) had the highest sensationalization of news, while the Rajya Sabha channel had the lowest sensationalization of news in its news debates(7.30 ± 2.574). There was a difference among the averages of the Usage of Abusive Language with regard to the news channel group (F [3, 158] = 8.338; p < .0005). Republic TV(3.59 ± 1.095) had the highest usage of abusive languages, while the Rajya Sabha channel had the usage of less usage of abusive languages in its news debates($2.65 \pm .864$). However, there was no statistically significant

difference among the averages of the Raising of Voice among the channel groups (F [3, 158] = 2.434; p = .o67). NDTV channel (4.35 ± .893) had the highest raising of the voice, while the Republic TV had the lowest raising of voice in its news debates(3.39 ± .346).

One-way Anova results indicated that there was a difference among the averages of the Recall among the channel groups (F [3, 158] = 7,786; p < .0005). India Today channel (7.74 ± 3.874) had the high recall, while the Republic TV had the least recall in its news debates (4.00 ± 2.569).

There was a difference among the averages of the Information with regard to the news channel group (F [3, 158] = 19.263; p < .0005). NDTV channel (9.75 ± 3.086) and Rajya Sabha channel (9.75 ± 2.658) channel giving more information, while the Republic TV gives less information in its news debates (5.88 ± 2.182). There was a difference among the averages of the Value with regard to the news channel group (F [3, 158] = 24.493; p < .0005). Rajya Sabha channel (12.23 ± 3.393) had the high value, while the Republic TV had the least value in its news debates (6.95 ± 2.156).

There was a difference among the averages of the Credibility with regard to the news channel group (F [3, 158] = 16.894; p < .0005). Rajya Sabha channel (5.35 ±.802) had more credibility, while Republic TV had the least credibility in its news debates (3.78 ± 1.153).

There was a difference among the averages of the Opinion Change with regard to the news channel group (F [3, 158] = 9.019; p < .0005). Rajya Sabha channel (4.38 ± 1.580) had more credibility, while Republic TV had the least credibility in its news debates (2.95 ± .921).

RQ2: Are Debater Diversity, Opinion Diversity, Personal Attack, Interruption, Equal Opportunity, Sensationalisation, Abusive Language and Raising Voice associated with Recall, Informativeness, Value, Credibility and Opinion Change?

To test this, a Pearson's product-moment correlation was run and the results are presented in Table 2.

The data showed no violation of normality, linearity or homoscedasticity. There was no statistically significant relationship between the Debator Diversity and Recall Value (r = 0.100, n = 162, p = 0.205); between the Debator Diversity and Opinion Change (r = 0.048, n = 162, p = 0.). However, there were statistically significant

Fig 1. Means plot
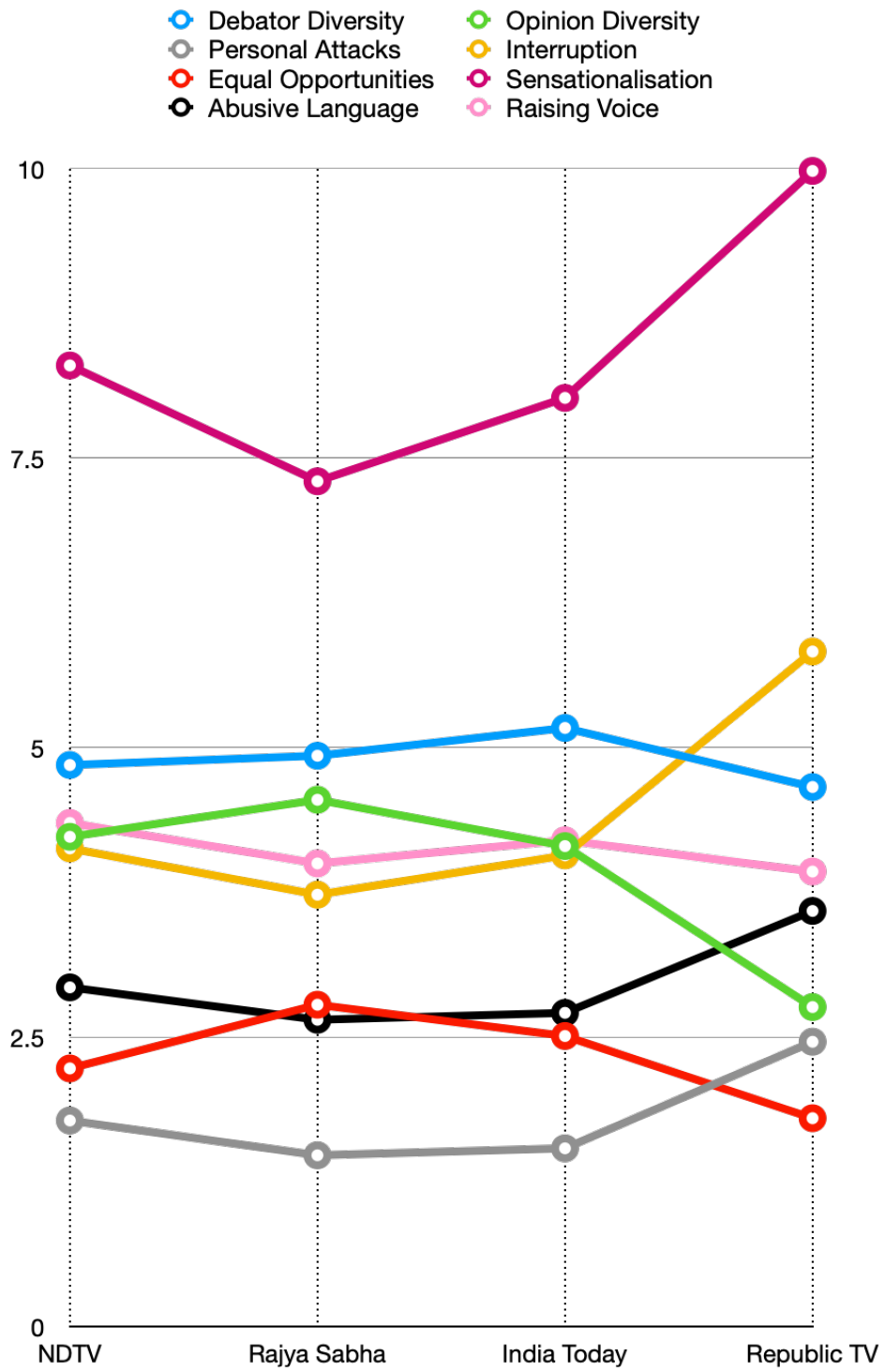
positive correlations between Debator Diversity and the Perceived Informativeness of the Debate ($r = 0.100$, n = 162, $p = 0.205$); between Debator Diversity and the Perceived Value of the Debate ($r = 0.100$, n = 162, $p = 0.205$); between Debator Diversity and the Perceived Credibility of the Debate ($r = 0.100$, n = 162, $p = 0.205$). That is, if participants of the debate are brought from different opinions and political groups, the audience perceived that the debate had more information, value and credibility and was able to recall the debate

Table 2. Correlation

		Recall	Informative	Value	Credibility	Opinion Change
Diverse Debaters	Corr.	0.100	.202	.219	.251	0.048
	Sig.	0.205	0.010	0.005	0.001	0.544
Diverse Opinion	Corr.	.233	.553	.710	.451	.436
	Sig.	0.003	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Personal Attacks	Corr.	-0.059	-.226	-0.100	-0.19	-0.050
	Sig.	0.454	0.004	0.207	0.015	0.529
Interruption	Corr.	-0.020	-.234	-0.131	-.328	0.006
	Sig.	0.798	0.003	0.097	0.000	0.936
Equal Opportunities	Corr.	0.000	0.197	.327	.435	0.200
	Sig.	0.998	0.012	0.000	0.000	0.011
Sensationalisation	Corr.	-0.011	-0.20	-0.099	-0.18	0.027
	Sig.	0.885	0.010	0.209	0.021	0.729
Abusive Language	Corr.	-0.063	-0.180	-.405	-.239	-.210
	Sig.	0.425	0.022	0.000	0.002	0.007
Raising Voice	Corr.	-0.049	.235	0.119	0.112	-0.066
	Sig.	0.533	0.003	0.132	0.155	0.406

content more efficiently. Hence, the hypothesis is that if there is more diversity in the debaters participating in the debates, there is an increase in perceived informativeness of the debate, perceived debate value, and perceived credibility of the debate. However, the Debator Diversity did not relate to opinion change.

There were statistically significant positive correlations between Opinion Diversity and the Perceived Recall Value of the debate ($r = .233$, n = 162, $p = 0.003$); between Opinion Diversity and the Perceived Informativeness of the Debate ($r = .553$, n = 162, $p = 0.000$); between Opinion Diversity and the Perceived Value of the Debate ($r = .710$, n = 162, $p = 0.000$); between Opinion Diversity and the Perceived Credibility of the Debate ($r = .451$, n = 162, $p = 0.000$;).

between Opinion Diversity and the Opinion Change(r = .436, n = 162, p = 0.000;). Hence the hypothesis is that if there is more diversity in the opinions expressed in the debates, there is an increase in recall value of the debates, perceived informativeness of the debate, perceived debate value, perceived credibility of the debate, and opinion change. There was no statistically significant relationship between the Personal Attacks and Recall Value (r = -o.o59, n = 162, p = 0.454); between Personal Attacks and Value of the debate (r = -o.100, n = 162, p = 0.207); between Personal Attacks and Opinion Change (r = -o.050, n = 162, p = 0.529) . However, there were statistically significant negative correlations between Personal Attacks and the Perceived Informativeness of the Debate (r = -.226, n = 162, p = 0.207); between Personal Attacks and the Perceived Credibility of the Debate (r = -0.19, n = 162, p = 0.o15). Hence, the hypothesis that if there are more Personal Attacks in the debates, there is a decrease in perceived informativeness of the debate and perceived credibility of the debate is accepted. Data analysis shows that personal attacks are not good for news debates as they reduce their sense of informativeness, and credibility is lost.

There was no statistically significant relationship between the Interruption and Recall Value (r = -0.020, n = 162, p = 0.798); between the Interruption and Value of the debate (r = -0.131, n = 162, p = 0.097); between the Interruption and Opinion Change (r = 0.006, n = 162, p = 0.936). However, there were statistically significant negative correlations between Interruption and the Perceived Informativeness of the Debate (r = -.234, n = 162, p = 0.003); between Interruption and the Perceived Credibility of the Debate (r = -.328, n = 162, p = 0.000). Hence, the hypothesis that if there are more Interruptions in the debates, there is a decrease in perceived informativeness of the debate and perceived credibility of the debate is accepted. Data analysis shows that interruptions are not good for news debates as they reduce their sense of informativeness, and credibility is lost.

There was no statistically significant relationship between the Equal Opportunities and Recall Value (r = 0.000, n = 162, p = 0.998). However, there were statistically significant positive correlations between Equal Opportunities and the Perceived Informativeness of the Debate (r = 0.197, n = 162, p = 0.012); between Equal Opportunities and the Perceived Value of the Debate (r = .327, n = 162, p = 0.000); between Equal Opportunities and the Perceived Credibility of the Debate (r = .435, n = 162, p = 0.000); between Equal Opportunities and the Opinion Change (r = 0.200, n = 162, p = 0.011). Hence, the hypothesis is that if there is more Equal Opportunities are provided

for the debaters, there is an increase in perceived informativeness of the debate, perceived debate value, and perceived credibility of the debate and the Opinion Change.

There was no statistically significant relationship between the Sensationalisation and Recall value of the debate (r = -0.011, n = 162, p = 0.885); between the Sensationalisation and Value of the debate (r = -0.099, n = 162, p = 0.209); between the Sensationalisation and Opinion Change (r = 0.o27, n = 162, p = 0.729). However, there were statistically significant negative correlations between Sensationalisation and the Perceived Informativeness of the Debate (r = -0.20, n = 162, p = 0.010); between Sensationalisation and the Perceived Credibility of the Debate (r = -0.18, n = 162, p = 0.021). That is if Sensationalisation in debates decreases informativeness and credibility. Hence, the hypothesis is that if there is more Sensationalisation in the debates, there is a decrease in perceived informativeness of the debate, and perceived credibility of the debate. There was no statistically significant relationship between the Abusive Language and Recall Value (r = -0.063, n = 162, p = 0.425). However, there were statistically significant negative correlations between Abusive Language and the Perceived Informativeness of the Debate (r = -0.180, n = 162, p = 0.022); between Abusive Language and the Perceived Value of the Debate (r = -.405, n = 162, p = 0.000); between Abusive Language and the Perceived Credibility of the Debate (r =-.239, n = 162, p = 0.002); and between Abusive Language and Opinion Change(r =-.210, n = 162, p = 0.007). That is, if abusive language usage in the debate, the audience perceived that the debate had less information, value, credibility and opinion change. Hence, the hypothesis that if there is more abusive languages usage in the debate, there is a decrease in perceived informativeness of the debate, perceived debate value, and perceived credibility of the debate and opinion change.

There was no statistically significant relationship between the Rising Voice and Value of the debate (r = 0.119, n = 162, p = 0.132); between the Rising Voice and Credibility of the debate (r = 0.112, n = 162, p = 0.135). However, there were statistically significant negative correlations between the Rising Voice and Recall value of the debate (r = -0.049, n = 162, p = 0.533); between the Rising Voice and Opinion Change (r = -0.066, n = 162, p = 0.406). There was also one statistically-significant positive correlation between the Rising Voice and the Perceived Informativeness of the Debate (r = .235, n = 162, p = 0.003). That is if Raising Voice in the debates is brought value and credibility; even the raising of voice increases the information at the same time it decreases the recall value of the debate and

opinion change. Hence, the hypothesis is that if there is more rising voice in the debates, there is an increase in the perceived informativeness of the debates; and also a decrease in the recall value of the debates and opinion change.

Factor Analysis

RQ3: Are there communication patterns in the news debates, and if yes, what are their effects on the viewers?

To check the patterns of news debates and the impact of such debates on the perception of the audience, factor analysis was conducted, and the results are presented in Table 3. An examination of the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy suggested that the sample was just factorable (KMO= .658) and Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant ($\chi2$ =353.238, p <.0005). A Varimax rotation was employed to extract the common variables. The Eigenvalues are 2.644, 1.853 and 1.187.

Study results indicated that there are three major debate patterns: in one type of debate, there is more personal attacks, interruption and sensationalisation and very less equal opportunities for the debaters. In the second type of debate, there is more diverse debaters, diverse opinion and equal opportunities but less abusive languages. In the third type of debate, there is more diverse debaters, equal opportunities for the debaters to express their opinion, abusive language and rising of voice. Only the second type of debate had a favourable impression on the audience.

Table 3. Factor Analysis

Communalities		
	Initial	**Extraction**
Diverse Debators	1.000	.562
Diverse Opinion	1.000	.730
Personal Attacks	1.000	.722
Interruption	1.000	.735
Equal Opportunities	1.000	.478
Sensationalisation	1.000	.692
Abusive Language	1.000	.560
Raising Voice	1.000	.586
Overall Rating	1.000	.620
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.		

Total Variance Explained				
Component	Initial Eigen-values	Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings	Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings	
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total
1	2.644	29.380	29.380	2.644
2	1.853	20.586	49.965	1.853
3	1.187	13.190	63.155	1.187
4	.803	8.926	72.081	
5	.773	8.592	80.673	
6	.651	7.237	87.910	
7	.447	4.961	92.871	
8	.369	4.102	96.973	
9	.272	3.027	100.000	
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.				

Scree Plot
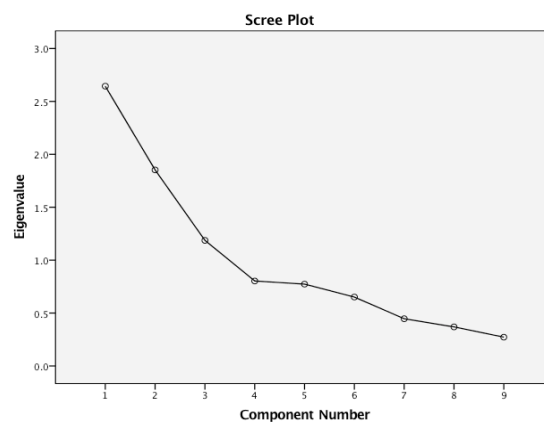
Rotated Component Matrix[a]			
	Component		
	1	2	3
Diverse Debaters		.258	.696
Diverse Opinion		.833	
Personal Attacks	.834		
Interruption	.836		
Equal Opportunities	-.298	.543	.308
Sensationalisation	.831		
Abusive Language		-.686	.297
Raising Voice			.757
Overall Rating		.765	
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.			
a. Rotation converged in 4 iterations.			

Conclusion

India Today invited the most diverse debaters for its news debates. In comparison, Republic TV brought fewer debaters from different opinion groups. Rajya Sabha TV had the most diverse opinions expressed in its news debates. The Republic TV had the least diverse opinions expressed in its news debates. Personal attacks were the highest on Republic TV, while the lowest was on Rajya Sabha TV. Similarly, interruptions were high on Republic TV and the lowest in Rajya Sabha TV. Rajya Sabha TV offered equal opportunities to all of its debaters to express their views, and it was the lowest on Republic TV. Republic TV also was the worst with sensationalisation. Rajya Sabha TV scored the lowest in the sensationalisation of news. Abusive language in news debates was highly prevalent on Republic TV. However, the rising of voices was the most prevalent on NDTV. India Today scored the highest when it comes to informativeness and recall value of news debates. When it comes to news value, credibility and the ability to induce opinion change, Rajya Sabha TV led

If news debates bring debaters from diverse opinion groups, it increases the informative value, overall value and credibility of the debate. If diverse opinions are expressed in news debates, it increases the recall value, informativeness, value, credibility and opinion change. When there are more personal attacks in the debate, it decreases the informativeness and credibility of the news debates. Similarly, if there are frequent interruptions in the debate, there is a decrease in both informativeness and credibility. Suppose the debate gives mora equal opportunities for the debaters to express their views. In that case, it increases the informative value of the debate, overall value of the debate, perceived credibility and the chances of opinion change. If a debate includes unnecessary sensationalisation, it decreases the informative value and credibility. If the debates have more abusive languages, it decreases the informative value, overall value, credibility and opinion change.

As the study results indicate, there are three major debate patterns. There are more personal attacks, interruption and sensationalisation, and very few equal opportunities for the debaters in one type of debate. In the second type of debate, there are more diverse debaters, diverse opinions, and equal opportunities but less abusive languages. In the third type of debate, there is more diverse debaters, equal opportunities for the debaters to express their opinion, abusive language and rising of voice. Only the second type of debate had a favourable impression on the audience's perceived debate value.

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Narendra Jadhav's Outcaste, A Memoir: A Saga of the Social Evolution of the Dalits in India

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Abstract

This paper tries to analyse how Narendra Jadhav presents the history of the Dalits' awakening spearheaded by Dr. Ambedkar. This novel is a story of the struggle for equality and justice in India. It is a chronicle of one of the most important moments in Indian history and an eye-opening document that gives readers access and insight into the lives of the Dalits in India. It gives an appraisal of the caste system in India and also depicts the oppressive and exploitative village life. This paper details the struggles of a family for three generations to defeat the caste system by empowering themselves with education. This also projects Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's philosophy, the independence movement, the mass conversion of Dalits to Budhism in 1956, and caste in its current reality. Through this work Narendra Jadhav gives voice to the voiceless, a marginalized community. This is a call made to unite all the down trodden people to empower themselves and to stand against tyranny, subjugation, slavery and oppressions. So the aim of this paper is to analyse the metamorphosis of Dalits in India in the context of the social movement spearheaded by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar.

  Keywords: marginalisation, awakening, evolution, empower, caste, social movement

Introduction

The social system of India is different from the other countries. There were four different groups according to their profession but gradually this system had been lost and the society was divided into caste and sub-caste. The caste system repressed the Dalits and they were treated as less human being by the society. The downtrodden

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Dalits raised various struggles to fight their social exploitation in all forms. They have participated in the different movements to regain self respect and equal human status in the society. Among the depressed classes also rose intellectuals, distinguished of whom was Dr. B. R. Ambedkar who struggled to secure for them the social recognition and human rights. If the downtrodden hold high positions in the administration, in politics, and in every field, a story of their social evolution is very clear with the different movements.

The category 'Dalits' is a historical construction only. The new category of writing 'Dalit Literature' has established as a new literary movement in India in the last few decades. Dalit writing is of revolutionary aims. The destruction of the caste system and the establishment of equality in the social and political spheres also come under its aim. Dalit writing presents a dalit centric view of life and constructs Dalit identity in relation to colonial identity and Indian identity. According to Limbale (2003), the purpose of Dalit literature is to transform the conditions of Dalits by challenging the unjust social order. Dalit Autobiography is the most popular form of Dalit writing with a Dalit consciousness. These are distinguished with other autobiographies because they deal with social aspect unlike the personal aspect of mainstream autobiographies. *Outcaste, A Memoir* is a Dalit autobiography written by Narendra Jadhav. It is a saga of the social evolution of the Dalits in India. Narendra Jadhav portrays a Dalit family and their subsequent transformation. Dalit history is recorded in this memoir and the struggle for equality and justice in India is also reveled through this work. This is also a critical appraisal of Dalit awakening led by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar. Narendra Jadhav explains historically how the Hindu religion and its caste structure had operated, deprived and discriminated the untouchables at the feudal village level.

Narendra Jadhav is an Indian economist, public policy expert, professor and writer in English, Marati and Hindi. He is a member of Rajyasabha too. *Outcaste, A Memoir* is an adaptation from his own Marathi novel. The novel is a multilayered personalized saga of social metamorphosis of Dalits in India. Through this story Narendra Jadhav gives an appraisal of the caste system in India and traces the story of awakening of Dalits traversing three generations. It explores the world Jadhav lived and struggled in through the eyes of his family. The story is narrated from the perspective of his father, mother, himself and his daughter. It traces the journey out of the caste system. Damu, the protagonist from the Mahar community, moves from a small village in Maharashtra to Mumbai. The Memoir

portrays the success of this Dalit family in the context of the social movement led by Dr. Ambedkar. His children and grandchildren fulfill his aspirations with education and determination. Jadhav says; "The book is in two levels- it's the story of a family on the one hand; it is also about the social metamorphosis that has taken place over the past eighty years."

Outcaste, A Memoir is a journey out of the caste system in three stages. In the first stage Jadhav's father Damodar Ranjhaji Yadava, a low-caste helpless in a Mahar community, is presented. In the second stage he moves to city and comes under the influence of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and realizes the need to stand against the caste-system and in the final stage he succeeds in providing his children a life of respect and dignity with the help of education and emancipation. His struggle to become a universal citizen and his successful life are portrayed in an inspiring way. Damu is an intelligent man with no formal education but he works hard to lead a life with dignity. He creates his own destiny by being rebellious against the caste system. Narendra Jadhav, in his 'Author's Notes', describes him; "Damu was not a leader…but he refused to define himself by circumstances and aimed at shaping his own destiny." He says; "Damu was not a guru… but he taught his children to believe in themselves and retain human dignity."

This book is divided into four parts as 'Up Against Bondage', 'Towards Freedom', 'The Struggle' and making of the Second Generation'. The Epilogue is written by Apoorva, the seventeen year old daughter of Jadhav. The first part of the Memoir portrays the plight of Mahars in the oppressive and marginalized society. The social history of forefathers is detailed from the point of view of Narendra Jadhav. So this Memoir portrays the reality and authentic experiences of untouchability. His father Damodar tells his wife Sonabai that once he joined his father to his place of work. He got thirsty and the master from higher caste offered him water. Damu stretched his hands for the tumbler but the master screamed at him and abused him for trying to touch the tumbler. He could not understand how the water could get polluted by his touch, while he has seen a dog lapping water from the same pot. Damu says;

> "This was the first time I wondered if it is better to be
> born a dog than to be born a Mahar."(Jadhav 47)

He felt humiliated and he could understand that the insult was the result of his belonging to an untouchable caste. Another incident happened to Jadhav's mother Sonabai in her childhood and this made

her to realize that the social system she belonged is inhuman. In a wedding function of high-caste people she helped one in distributing the sweets to the guests but the reaction from the landlord's mother was humiliating. She said;

> "Eh you bloody Maharin, what do you think you are doing? You have polluted our auspicious food, you fool… you scoundrels, your caste will never change, give you an inch and you grab a mile."(Jadhav 47)

Later, all the sweets were thrown away. Sonu could not understand who decided the things to be this way. From these experiences this is clear that how the Dalits are exploited.

Damu is a common man belongs to Mahar community. He works as a Yeskar, one who does the duty of guarding the dead bodies. He is a witness and victim of all the atrocities against the downtrodden people of his community. The story begins in the native village of Damu where he works as Yeskar Mahar. He is asked to get the corpse of a savarna woman who committed suicide, out of the well. But he denies following the order and he presents himself as a dignified Mahar, awakened by Ambedkarite movement. Damu was beaten by the police officer for refusing to obey his orders. He was stubborn and he says;

> "…inspite of these inhuman traditions I am not going to abide by such traditions. I am a man of dignity…." (Jadhav10)

That night itself he runs along with his wife Sonu and children to Mumbai. He struggles hard and works in the Railways, the port trust and some textile mills to earn his living in Mumbai. Inspired by Dr. Ambedkar's call for Dalit emancipation, Damu participates in Dalit movement. He actively involves in the Nasik Temple Entry Movement in 1930, in Mahad Satyagraha in 1927, in the Budhist conversion Movement in 1956, Ambedkar's funeral procession and other activities of the Dalits. He is presented as a self-made man in many ways. Dalit identity gave Damu's family confidence and pride to reject their ascribed status as low caste Mahar. The making of the modern identity as Dalits is possible because of two historical processes. One is of the journey of Damu from his village to the city, Mumbai and the other is the Dalit movement led by Dr. Ambedkar. Damu reminds us of Ambedkar's words;

> "The untouchables have to do away with the humiliating and enslaving traditions of village duties like carrying

away dead cattle. It is utterly disgraceful to sell your human right for a few crumbs of bread. We will attain self-elevation only if we learn self-help, regain our self respect and gain self-knowledge."(Jadhav 22)

Narendra Jadhav narrates the life of his father in Mumbai. He struggled hard to survive through the Great Depression in the 1930's.It was the worst economic downturn in US history. It began in 1929 and did not abate until the end of the 1930's. Unemployment was at 25% and more than 5,000 banks had gone out of business. The modern urban life and his small job provided him some relief in his life. The untouchables were not allowed to take water from the public water places. So the Mahad municipality passed a resolution allowing the untouchables to take water from all the public water places. But this resolution was not implemented due to the pressure of the upper caste people. So Dr. Ambedkar decided to exercise the resolution on the public water lake at Mahad itself. According to Dr. Ambedkar, untouchability was not a simple matter: it was the mother of all poverty.

Another important incident the author speaks in his work is the Satyagraha Movement in 1930. Dr. Ambedkar called for a Satyagraha demanding an entry for the Dalits into the Kalaram temple at Nasik in March 1930. All the untouchables of Mahrashtra gathered and they started shouting slogans "Jai Bhim, Hail Babasaheb." Damu and his wife Sonu also participated in the Satyagraha. Dr. Ambedkar argued;

"We will not die if we are not allowed into the temple, nor are we going to be immortalized by gaining entry. We are fighting for equal rights as human beings…. We must continue our movement till we succeed in claiming our birth right." (Jadhav 128)

Damu was completely influenced by Dr. Ambedkar. He fought for equality and he himself practiced it in his own life. Ambedkarite movement brought about change in Damu. He said that the movement inspired by Babasaheb Ambedkar had fully seeped into him. He was imbued with new courage and self-realization and it had given him the power to question, reason and act. Damu, an illiterate man, followed the message of Dr.Ambedkar. He was searching a new identity. Damu and Sonu inculcated in their children an ambition to succeed in life through education and hard work. He followed the slogan of Dr. Ambedkar, "Educate, Unite and Agitate." Damu took this slogan as his personal mission and he educated his children to

the best of his abilities. The children fulfilled his aspirations and rose to high positions in their chosen careers. From this it is clear that education is the only way for the Dalits to develop themselves and fight against the caste discrimination in India.

Damu's life is shaped completely by the philosophy of Dr. Ambedkar and Ambedkarite movement awakened the conscience of Damu. This movement ignited a sense of dignity and self-respect among Dalit women also. They also participated in the movement. In Kalaram temple Satyagraha around 500 Dalit women took part. Sonu, Damu's wife, before knowing the movement, followed her husband's order like his slave but later, she got awakened and she started considering herself as the free individual human being. Narendra Jadhav says that women's condition was as same as of Dalit in the society. Sonu is representative of all Dalit women who are double marginalized. She was caught between the caste prejudices and patriarchy. She was advised by the elders to follow her husband blindly. The resistance from the side of Sonu is seen in the incident where she was taking part in a religious procession. She reacted when she noticed the crowd started misbehaving with the girls. One old woman expressed her shock over her "unfeminine behavior." But Sonu told her;

> "How long do we take things lying down? We are not allowed to enter their temples. Their Gods are polluted…. We won't let them bully us in Mumbai". (Jadhav 120).

In this work Jadhav narrates the history of Dalit and the treatment with Dalit in the society by upper caste. With their hard struggle they could overcome all these and they have got the present position. The way of exploitation based on caste has been changed gradually. This memoir is a voice of Dalit and voice of oppressed people. A man can change the status through hard work and education. The author's own life had been changed through education. His family could change and they had entered the new era. The author details the struggle of Damu and achievement of Narendra Jadhav himself and his daughter Apoorva. These three belong to the same caste but they were treated different ways in the society. Narendra Jadhav says;

> "If others looked down on me in their belief that my caste is low, it is their problem not mine. I certainly don't need to torment myself over it. I pity them for they are the victims of their own absolute prejudices" (Jadhav 214).

In Narendra's era the ideas and thinking have been changed by entering into the temple. He says;

> "I was the unwanted, unworthy untouchable. I was transported to another era."

The author discusses about his daughter Apoorava in the last phase. She says;

> "I was proud, but confused. Yeah my dad is famous, but what does Dalit have to do with it? Is that of significance? (Jadhav 261).

In the epilogue she says that she is not tied down by race, religion or caste. She says;

> "My ancestors carried the burden being a Dalit and bowing down to demeaning tasks even after India's independence. I have the torch they lit for me and nothing can stop me" (Jadhav 263).

Author tries to say that we can't change the caste and social history but we can get self respect and self identity through education.

Outcaste, A memoir is a story of a Dalit family and their subsequent transformation. It also chronicles Dalit history. Ambedker's philosophy, a major influence on Damu, has been brought in extensively in this work. It is more than a personal account of the caste divide in India. It examines the Dalit awakening. The book ends with note of self realization and it gives voice to the voiceless. It is a call made to unite all the oppressed people to empower themselves through education to fight against tyranny, subjugation and slavery. It is not just a memoir of three generations of Jadhav family but a social evolution of Dalits in India.

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Media Technologies and Digitally Mediated Reality: A Study on Emerging Trends in Content Development and Manipulation in News Media

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Abstract

The 20th century witnessed the beginning of significant transformations in media. The technologies became extremely powerful, and their applications became wide. Artificial intelligence gained more control over the learned data and built more robust algorithms to process information. It is evident that the beginning of the 21st century also continued these technological transitions. Since media is one of the early adaptors of new changes in technology, the content production in media will also be exposed to the changes. In this background, the study primarily observes how news is modified while served to the audience after implementing sophisticated technological tools for content processing. Media somehow altered the reality when disseminated to the consumers. Often it was essential, and sometimes it was deliberate. The introduction of more advanced communication technologies again strengthened the presentation of news content in a certain way. This study aims to come up with inferences, with the help of direct observations and document analysis, as to how news media are influenced by new technologies like Augmented Reality, Virtual Reality, and Mixed Reality and how media consumers are being exposed to the digitally processed information.

Keywords: digital media, media technology, mediated reality, digitally mediated reality, virtual reality, augmented reality, metaverse, content manipulation, mixed reality, media effects, news media and mediation

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Introduction

Media is primarily an entity that mediates news and facts to the audience from a source. Data and information are collected, processed, and sent to the media consumers for access. However, this mediation may cause to change the fundamental nature of truth that binds information. The facts are usually altered to enhance their appeal. For example, advertisers use various properties and visual effects to make their products, like the food, clothes and gadgets, more attractive. But the case of news content is different. The facts should not be altered, and information must be rightly served; otherwise, it will directly affect social consciousness and thoughts as media is a direct influencer of society. But, as the media serves as a mediator to convey facts to the audience, there are chances to manipulate information.

If a different context is considered, specific tools and equipment like computers, head-mounted displays and handheld devices are used to establish a different aspect of reality. Sometimes the real world is being entirely changed, and what we are experiencing with these tools is an amalgamation of the natural and virtual world.

The two different yet interconnected contexts mentioned above have a common trait. It alters reality, and the result causes either a positive or negative impact on the user. This process of manipulating or enhancing reality is called Mediated Reality. The phrase 'mediated reality' was coined by Steve Mann to portray the combination of virtual and real-world visual information. According to Steve Mann, the mediated reality is established when virtual, or computer-generated, information is mixed with what the user would generally view. (Mann, 1994)

Mediated reality is the term used to describe how we perceive and understand our physical world through the medium of visual, audible and tactile technologies. For instance, this sense of reality is a subjective one created by technology, such as the television or the computer. The use of digital media and other technological tools allows the production of an objective reality, which is radically different from the reality of the traditional senses. Technology made it possible to add information to and deduct information from reality. And technological tools also influence a person's sense of reality through a wearable device such as an AR/VR headset or a smartphone. The change of reality with the assistance of technology tools is referred to as computer-mediated reality.

On the other hand, the mainstream media such as television, print, radio, online media and other digital platforms brings information as visual, auditory or textual elements. It would be accurate to extrapolate this context with the mediation happening through the technological tools mentioned earlier. Here, the media itself are tools that change reality. The change can be ideological or physical.

The primary function of media is to exchange information to the senses of a user or audience. Recent development in communication and technology brought new changes in news processing and dissemination. The media users are slowly immersed in the world of information using advanced technological tools. In this context, the sacred entity, the fact, and its exchange to the consumer in the mediation process must be thoroughly studied.

Objectives of the Study

1. To discuss the contexts that create Mediated Reality
    a. News Media Environment
    b. New age technological tools

2. To assess whether reality is being skewed or served intact to the consumers through media

3. To analyse how the concept of mediated reality alters news and real-world experience and how positive or negative it would be when considering human perceptions and experiences.

4. To explain the future of *reality* by observing current technological trends

The Contexts: Mediated Reality and Other Altered Realities in the Digital Age

Technological tools are allowing human perceptions to perceive the information differently. All these technologies together bring mediated reality. It includes Virtual Reality (VR), Augmented Reality (AR), Mixed Reality (MR), Augmented Virtuality (AV), Modified Reality (MfR), Modulated Reality (ModR), Diminished Reality (DR), and Severely Diminished Reality (SDR).

Virtual reality, Mixed reality, Augmented reality etc. are technologically simulated environments that generate an illusion of immersion *(Figure 1, 2, and 3)*. These settings encompass digital

domains such as computer games, movies, virtual worlds (e.g., Second Life), and augmented reality environments (e.g., Google Earth). The goal behind creating these environments is to simulate and replicate physical environments in virtual/augmented reality.

Virtual reality mimics the real world with the assistance of computers, tools and software. It wholly or partially recreates the *real* environment virtually through computer-generated imageries. The term virtual means nearly as described. Virtual reality tries to reimagine the natural environment as accurately as possible. To deep immerse in virtual reality, the user has to mount a piece of equipment like a head-mounted display. A computer will control the virtual world experience by sending visual and auditory data according to the response from the user.

Augmented reality is part of the virtuality world. The word *augment* means *to increase or add* something to improve the perception or sensation. In augmented reality, objects or information are added to enhance the real-life experience. It is an experience of the real and virtual worlds simultaneously, resulting in an improved view of the surroundings. In augmented virtuality, some real-world elements are superimposed in virtual imagery, and thus it enhances the overall output. Augmented reality is an incredibly diverse, rich, and sophisticated field, and this diversified nature makes it more complex to comprehend. (Peddie, J., 2017)

When augmented reality adds or places new objects in the natural environment, diminished reality removes or hides the real-world objects. Removing in or adding elements from the real world is called modularity. The Modulated reality, Modified reality and Diminished reality are part of it. Modified reality alters the perception of the user.

In severely diminished reality (SDR), the wholeness of the real environment will be removed. SDR is confusing, and it causes sensory deprivation to the user.

All these technological tools are used to disseminate information in a much-improved way. Moreover, technology makes it possible to comprehend much information more effectively within a short period. Numerous industries and social systems are ready to use these technologies to transfer information in a pacer way. In the near future, not only the entertainment industry use virtuality in their products, but the education system, medical fields, travel and tourism sector, political parties, automobile industry, and many other industries connected to the social environment will adapt to these advancements.

Figure 1: *Milgram's continuum between reality and virtuality*
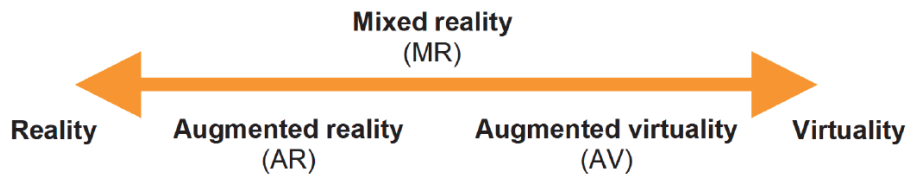
Source: *Milgram & Kishino (1994)*

Figure 2: *Mann's classification of mixed reality systems (mediated reality continuum)*
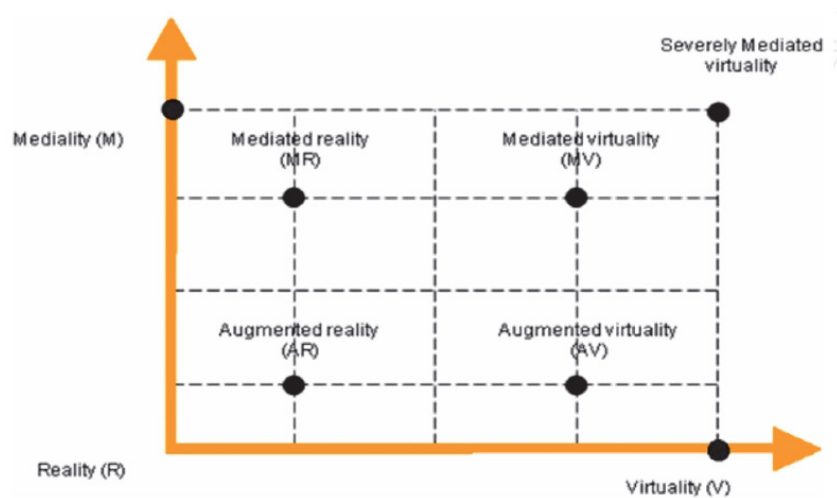
Source: *Mann, Feiner, & et. Al, (2015)*

Figure 3: *Mediated Reality is a proper superset of Virtual Reality, Augmented Reality, Mixed Reality, and Modulated Reality.*
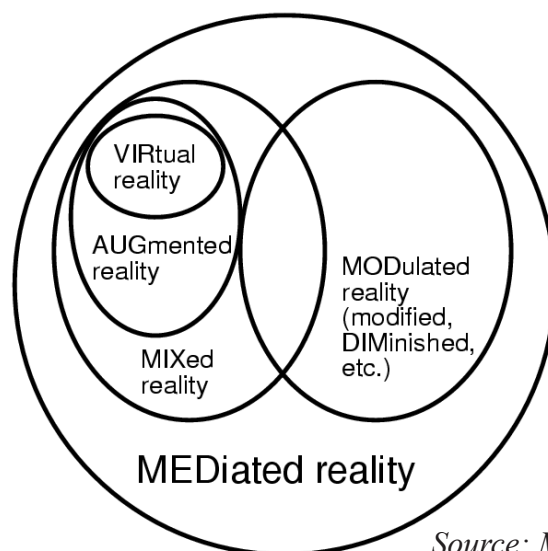
Source: *Mann & Barfield (2003)*

Media is now digitally empowered, and information handling has become easy. The digital technological tools caused a perceptible facelift in media. The media consumers are mediated by digitally exchanged information.

The Mainstream Media and Mediation

Noam Chomsky (2005) identified media as part of a large conglomerate that sells a product to the market. Since news is a product, chances are higher to present biased and narrowed interests of the sellers in the news content. As Chomsky points out, the media is likewise a component of a doctrinal system. It indoctrinates the consumers with a specific ideology, a particular discourse that supports the interests of power systems.

When we consider mediated reality as a backdrop, the unchanged reality is referred to as the 'real environment'. News media's responsibility is to convey facts or 'reality' in front of the person who needs it. Mediated reality is the term for how we perceive and understand our physical world through the medium of visual, audible, and tactile technologies. This sense of reality is subjectively created by technology (the television). The use of digital media and other technological tools allows the production of an objective reality (the television program), which is radically different from the reality of the traditional senses (the viewer). In earlier days, it was difficult to reach a large proportion of the audience because of the technology's lack of availability and accessibility. But at present, technology has become so cheap and accessible that even the poorest in the world can afford it.

The media has the power to influence the audience through its long-gained credibility. Television, Radio and Print media have that trust. But on the other hand, consumers choose their medium following the ideology they believe in or with their religious or communal inclination. Selecting media for consuming news is always part of their confirmation bias because we choose to believe what we already know. Thus, the media consumers look for evidence by filtering information using perceptual myopia to limit the factual inputs. (Ling, 2020)

News Media is also doing the same stuff. We cannot say media is independent because they constantly supply information focused on a specific group of people. So, news media has to take care of these audience's biases. The cardinal difference between news media and

entertainment media is in the content they share. News media are supposed to share reality or the event in real life without losing its newness. Yet, entertainment media always aims at delighting people. Thus, it needs to exaggerate, lie and add spice to the content; only then do people consume the package. In this case, content manipulation is a prerequisite. However, news media are always supposed to supply accurate factual information but are not always true.

Factors Affecting News Manipulation through Media Intervention

Numerous factors affect news selection and content manipulation. The editorial policy and organisations' agenda are two of them—purposive agenda settings during elections or conflicts are other contexts. Sensationalism also helps increase social media engagement, and thus, monetising content becomes easy. The role of advertisers in selecting the media content is also be mentioned. These are all ideological level manipulations. However, there is another type of content alteration too. For instance, the equipment like a camera (still or video), microphone, lighting, and software used to edit or enhance the content causes distortion of reality. This distortion might not be intentional, but the output might be altered. While we place mediation as a negative aspect, the information has no credibility. The data disseminated might be deceptive and fake and causes misinformation and disinformation.

Discussions and Inferences

Mediation is simply the intermediacy between two entities, and it indicates the intervention of something; it can be a tool, a person, for a purpose. In the real world, news media stand as a tool for mediation. Moreover, the digital tools for virtual reality and augmented reality are direct tools for that reality alteration. The principal difference is that news media is supposed to bring factual news content. However, the new technological tools are designed not only to get news and facts but to enhance, manipulate and alter reality. In fact, a media consumer lives in virtuality. Virtuality is an umbrella term that puts together VR, AR, MR, AV etc. All other created realities are part of virtuality.

In the media scenario, information is conveyed to the audience through a channel. There are quite a few aspects of mediation.

1. Conventional and new media communication for news dissemination

2. The use of technological tools to experience the information

These two scenarios directly relate to how media conveys news and information. These aspects will remain as the backdrop of the study. A few examples can be mentioned while considering all other aspects of mediation. Customer service communication is a type of mediation in which customers and service executives of a particular company interacts. Often, this communication would be between a human being and a computer or robot.

In this study, the frame of interrogation is limited to the news media's communication with the audience. The significance is that the term *mediation* gets diverse connotations in the media context. That is, the information conveyed is somehow shaping society. In a broader context, media always communicates to a mass audience, and it changes people's behaviour and beliefs *(Figure 4)*. (Mehraj, H. K., Bhat, A. N., & Mehraj, H. R. (2014). The media effects theories like the Cultivation theory proposed by George Gerbner, Agenda Setting Theory developed by Max McCombs and Donald Shaw portray how media influences a mass audience. In all other scenarios of the mediation, the number of stakeholders is limited.

The extent to which digital media has been integrated into our lives today has resulted in an unusual situation of profound mediation. To an unprecedented degree, media are a part of such material ties as well as the cultural processes by which individuals define their lives and make sense of the world around them. (Jansson, 2018)

When electronic media showed up in the media frame during the last century, the meaning of mediation changed. Print media had a limited influence on altering the realities. They conveyed facts by investigating the happenings and rechecking the data many times before printing it. The print media firms had many agendas, which also influenced their content. However, the area of impact was restricted.

Mediation in the Digital Era

In the 21st century, digital tools have dramatically influenced our daily lives. The evolution of digital technologies over the last two decades is vast. Digital technology tools, such as the computer, the internet, and social media, have become an integral part of our

Figure 4: *McQuail's typology of media effects*
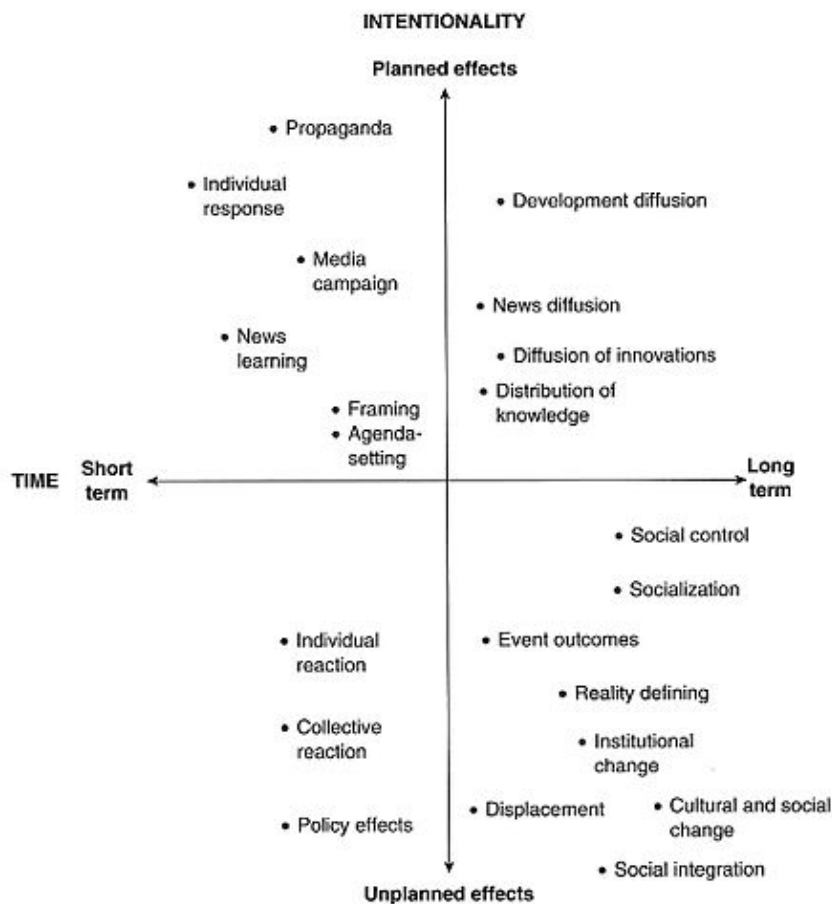
Source: McQuail (2010)

daily lives. These tools have obviously changed how we work, play, socialise, and communicate. These tools have entirely altered the way by which information is generated, distributed and consumed.

The technology industry has been on a remarkable growth trajectory during the last few decades. The internet, social media, and smartphone have dramatically changed the way people use information to communicate. We are living in a fast-paced and information-driven world. As people are increasingly dependent on the internet to access information, get in touch with each other, and get a sense of reality, being informed is necessary. With the development of new technology tools and the creation of new media formats, we are now living in a digitally mediated reality.

Nowadays, the modern world is characterised by digital connectivity and globalisation. These approaches have expanded and

liberated the boundaries of space, time, and political-geographical constraints, permitting different communication practices to merge (Winer, 2009). More importantly, it may be stated that this new model of communication among societies subjects is influencing the dynamics of the connection between companies and individuals – consumers are empowered. They want to be part of all stages of change.

The mediation process in the digital age is closely dependent on technological tools and equipment. If we consider television a tool for communication, it spreads information that is pre-processed in a broadcast centre and the audience consumes it. Virtual reality tools like VR headsets and holographic projectors are also used to access visual and auditory information in a certain way. Smartphones are pretty common now and critical for mainstream news accession and virtual reality information distribution. Now, in media, personalisation and filtered content selection are possible. It shows that the digital media tools allow the amount of exposure to the virtual world that the user can control.

Mediated Reality and Altered Perceptions

Mediated reality has two direct connotations in two different contexts. The first one is related to the working of news media, and the latter part is how reality is presented to a media consumer with the assistance of new technological tools. The news media as a whole is a tool that enables the change of consumers' perspectives. Its influence is primarily ideological. Nevertheless, the physical head-mounted devices can be directly worn and experience the information in a visual and auditory format. This kind of experience is more personal as the perspectives built are with the assistance of specific tools. People can wear similar tools together and experience a shared world.

The audience's perception of digital technology has changed over the years, and digital technology tools have changed the world around them. Social media, the internet, smartphone, satellite, mobile phone, cable TV, and television provide us with readily available information. The changes that occurred were drastic. It made it necessary to differentiate between reliable and unreliable sources of information and assess the credibility of the information accessed. People's daily lives are changing due to digital media and technology since people communicate and collaborate in a broader societal context (Iqbal, 2002). The majority of these increased use effects are suitable for both individuals and society. It enables unprecedented communication,

social interaction, and community formation across time, space, and social context boundaries. It empowers individuals and accelerates knowledge democratisation. (Cocorocchia, Woodward, et al., 2016)

How the audience perceives digital technology has changed from being looked down upon to being embraced. This transformation in audience perception of digital technology has been largely shaped by the growth and advancement of digital technology. The cardinal point to consider is that technology has become a vital part of our lives, and it is imperative to assess how people perceive and use technology. There are numerous advantages of digital technology, such as ease of use, convenience, and accessibility. However, there is an equally important downside to it, which is the possibility of being misled or getting skewed information.

The Technology Altered Reality

Digitally mediated reality means the information or the facts conveyed through any media that usually get manipulated or change their real meaning through technological tools. These tools can be hardware or software. Here, technology is used or caused to skew the 'real' reality. The technological tools can be used to change our perception and, thus, reality. How do we perceive a context? Through our human senses. Technology can assist or support enhancing our sensations. For example, binoculars can assist us to see long-distance scenery. An amplifier and speaker can make a feeble voice audible. These are some tools or some additions to our natural sense.

Moreover, now, the technology gets it right by employing numerous advanced tools for augmenting users' perceptions. The perceptions can be enhanced and accurate or, on the other hand, enhanced and manipulated. That is up to the context of perception and how the information is processed and sent to the receiver.

So, the reality is a bunch of visual, auditory, or other forms of data. With advanced technological tools, we can now reproduce visual and auditory data with high accuracy. However, other sensations like touch, smell, and taste are different and are mainly not used to explain real-life events through media.

Some tools are employed to experience these sensations, too; for example, a movie can be enhanced by giving appropriate smells and haptic responses according to a scene in the visual. These tools have limited usage, but with advanced AR/VR tools, the whole experience will be boundless in the near future.

Social Media and Content Manipulation

The conventional mainstream media like print, radio and television have adapted many technological tools for survival. A decade before, social media were a threat to traditional media forms. But now, the scenario has changed. The traditional media have adapted new communication and technological tools for news handling. The conventional media have made social media like Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, YouTube etc., a vehicle for information dissemination. They incorporated these content delivery mechanisms with their traditional news flow systems and gained more efficient information dissemination.

Today, mainstream media, popular media, and social media play a role in the indoctrination and entrenchment of grand narratives (Talwar, 2019). Social media platforms are very notorious for skewed information. The new media tools made a layman to be a content creator (not a professional journalist). They placed themselves as journalists among the professional journalists. This trend allowed the content in social media to be unreliable and not dependable. There were numerous reasons for this tendency, including content monetisation. The content creators tried to create sensationalised content and thus manipulated it. Professional mainstream media also used these platforms to reach more audiences quickly.

The Future: Trends and Turbulences

The next generation of mediated reality products is developing, intending to reproduce or enhance reality convincingly. The entertainment industry will highly depend on those tools to sell their products, and that is reasonable. However, the cases of news and education media are different. These tools should be used without changing the real essence of the information. The truth should be preserved even after using technological tools, which ultimately enhance the information.

The news media in India have already adapted the tools for presenting the real facts more effective. VR and 360º News packages are now common among news channels. There are news channels like 24News, Times Now and Republic TV are using advanced technologies for news presentation. In 2017, republic TV editor, Arnab Goswami, announced Virtual Reality (VR) news initiative (Chowdhury, 2017). Now numerous channels are started to

disseminate news with graphical explainers and Augmented Reality packages.

International news channels like New York Times, Wall Street Journal, CNN, he Guardian, and BBC started incorporating VR videos with their daily news broadcast. Moreover, these media organisations developed apps to access exclusive VR and AR news packages. (Watson, 2017)

The future of media is of Virtual Reality Journalism and Augmented Reality newscasting. The advanced digital story telling will enhance the potential for easy access to information and generate enthusiasm among media consumers. Introduction of latest technological tools will also increase the business in the digital world. The 360° VR experience will be more immersive, and mixed reality content production will be common. The companies like Amazon, Google, Microsoft, Apple and Samsung are in the verge of developing highly efficient AI algorithms by streamlining all the possible trajectories of technology.

In reality, the interest of audience in VR and AR is purely out of curiosity to experience a new form of sensation. This enthusiasm might diminish quickly. Then there must be new tech tools to deliver high-quality immersive content. The VR headsets and other digital accessories will be replaced with more immersive and direct information diffusion.

Recent years witnessed a handful of buzzwords pop up in the world of technology. Artificial intelligence, virtual reality, cryptocurrency, and blockchain are a few among them. The term metaverse is the new one in the line: a whole 3D world of virtual realities, and it is a digital domain that integrates several technology components such as virtual reality, augmented reality, and video. Metaverse weaves a world to 'live' another life for the users. The future of Metaverse will be of connections and communications. The users will entertain, work, meet, and have conversations together like in real life. It would be possible to participate and collaborate in research activities with people from different corners of the world in the academic arena. (Zagalo, Morgado, & Boa-Ventura (Eds.), 2012)

The Metaverse will very certainly drive the future of the media and entertainment industry. The current system will turn into a massive network of interconnected virtual worlds. The accessibility of meta-resources is another concern. For a more democratic accession among people, it should be made simple, trustworthy, and decentralised for anybody to create an identity and access those worlds. If this

vision is realised, the Metaverse will be able to demonstrate its full potential while staying free and accessible to all. Then the media will employ information dissemination in a broader aspect. It will enhance the experience of information access, and the reality will again be redefined.

In India, the Covid-19 pandemic accelerated the use of VR and AR deployments in various sectors. The Media & Entertainment industry was able to give real-time information from athletic stadiums to interactive commercials to immersive music concerts with the use of AR/VR disposition. There are many direct evidences of the influence of technology in the world. Human beings always try to find solutions from technology whenever a situation arises. During the pandemic, communication technologies became more dependable. Advanced tools were used to communicate, and the media adapted new content delivery methods. The next-generation media industry will also adopt new ways to disseminate information. At the end of this conversation, an important question will be relevant: to which extent will the mediation happen, and how do media consumers overcome manipulation?

Conclusion

The coming decade will be a crucial period of change in the news media industry. The advanced media technologies will be converged with the existing ones. Now the period is of trial-and-error experiments. But after a demi-decade, these technologies will be part of the media industry. Within this period, people will be more used to advanced technological tools. By the introduction of more sophisticated yet flexible tools, information handling will become much more systematic and personalised.

There are chances for more manipulations of information in the news industry. But the same technology will help us to filter out the authentic facts. Manipulative mediation will be used in many important places, like entertainment industries, medical fields, academic research, and many other areas where virtualisation and augmented reality are vital.

As discussed above, mediation may alter ideas and sensations. The modification of sensations might be necessary for specific conditions. The perceptions built by these sensations are dependent on our knowledge and critical thinking capacity. But ideological manipulations are much more problematic. The persuasive nature

of consumed information may cause altering people's perspectives directly. The discriminative power between valid and lousy information will help construct genuine insights.

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Knight of the Faith: A Critical Interpretation of Abraham's Silence based on Kierkegaard's Fear and Trembling

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Abstract

When it Silence is one of the golden means of human communication. Researchers have suggested that silence is not simply an absence of speech but constitutes a part of communication as necessary as speech (eg. Jaworski, 1993, 1997; Tannen & Saville-Troike, 1985). As Max Picard noted silence is nothing that is merely negative rather a positive phenomenon with a complete world in itself. Most of the poets and thinkers throughout the history have clearly stressed the fact that silence communicates. The notion of silence is heavily rooted in human's natural expression.

This paper is a critical interpretation of Abraham's silence based on Kierkegaard's Fear and Trembling and tries to find out, just like the traditional notion, whether his silence emerges out of his ultimate faith in God. The results show that we have misread the story of the binding of Issac and Abraham's silence most of the time.

Keywords: Abraham's silence, Fear and Trembling, faith, anxiety

Introduction

In Judaism, Christianity and Islam, Abraham is the paradigm of the man of faith. Generations and generations have praised Abraham for his willingness to sacrifice his son, Issac, as proof of his love and faith in God. The binding of Isaac, is one of the most powerful narratives in the Hebrew Bible, which is found in Genesis 22:1-19. Abraham's silence throughout this incident was interpreted in different ways, the

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most prominent being his silent obedience to God. But the question is had we misinterpret the story, the silence of Abraham? Being one of the strangest passages in the Hebrew Bible, this question needs special attention.

The issue here is not whether Abraham's silence make sense, but what sense does it make? This paper tries to make a critical interpretation of Abraham's silence based on Kierkegaard's *Fear and Trembling* to find out, just like the traditional notion, whether his silence emerges out of his ultimate faith in God.

Who is Abraham?

According to the biblical account, Abram ("The Father [or God]"), who is later named Abraham ("The Father of Many Nations"), a native of Ur in Mesopotamia, is called by God (Yahweh) to leave his own country and people and journey to an undesignated land, where he will become the founder of a new nation. He obeys the call unquestioningly and (at 75 years of age) proceeds with his barren wife, Sarai, later named Sarah ("Princess"), his nephew Lot, and other companions to the land of Canaan (between Syria and Egypt). There the childless couple receives repeated promises and a covenant from God that his "seed" will inherit the land and become a numerous nation. Eventually, he not only has a son, Ishmael, by his wife's maidservant Hagar but has, at 100 years of age, by Sarah, a legitimate son, Isaac, who is to be the heir of the promise. Yet Abraham is ready to obey God's command to sacrifice Isaac, a test of his faith, which he is not required to consummate in the end because God substitutes a ram.

Theoretical Framework

Here in this study the researcher employed Søren Kierkegaard's inquiry into the significance of silence. For Kierkegaard silence is clearly a source of enormous power, the condition for the reception of word. For Kierkegaard, silence is not equivalent to soundlessness, stillness, or a lack of words. In fact, it is quite the opposite. Indeed, one can fail to be silent in the relevant sense while not making a sound, and inversely, one can be silent in the relevant sense while screaming. The relevant sense of silence has little to do with aural experience: rather, silence, is dependent on the notion of concealment. Silence conceals the self.

The study also brings into play Uncertainty Management theory to understand the core area of the research objective. The theory elaborates on two aspects of uncertainty: (1) the many emotional responses that

accompany uncertainty, and (2) the many strategies that people apply to managing uncertainty. In contrast to early frameworks that assumed that uncertainty inevitably causes anxiety and necessarily leads people to seek information, UMT brought to light cases in which uncertainty produces hope and detailed the range of options other than information seeking that individual sometimes choose in response to uncertainty.

Method

Theoretical analysis found to be the best suitable method to study the research objectives. For this purpose the researcher employed Kierkegaard's approach of silence and focuses on his philosophical work *Fear and Trembling*.

Theoretical analysis is a logical exploration of a system of beliefs and assumptions. It is based on or uses the ideas, principles and concepts that relate to a particular subject.

Analysis and Findings

Abraham's Story

It's a story that begins and ends the same way: with Abraham following Yahweh (Hebrew name of God used in the Bible) without question. The Hebrew text reinforces this symmetry by using the very same expression— lek leka—for Yahweh's instructions to Abraham in Chapter 12 ("Go from your country") and in Chapter 22 ("Go to the land of Moriah"). It can be found that both passages involve calls to action, rather than plans or promises. They've noticed that in Chapter 12, Yahweh is asking Abraham to separate from his past ("Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house"); in Chapter 22, he asks him to separate from his future ("take … your only son … and offer him … as a burnt offering"). Abraham's significance in the book of Genesis should not be underestimated. The last thirty-nine of the fifty chapters of this first book of the Bible are concerned with Abraham and his family.

Kierkegaard and *Fear and Trembling*

Kierkegaard, under the pseudonym *Johannes de silentio,* as John of Silence in Fear and Trembling wanted to understand the anxiety and silence that was present in Abraham when God tested him. The book

was published in 1843. He hoped to problematize what he felt were overly simplistic and uncritical interpretations of Christianity. In order to do so, Kierkegaard centers his existential exploration of Christianity on the figure of Abraham.

Abraham's Silence

Genesis 22 presents a turning point of events in the life of Abraham. After years of patiently waiting for a child through whom God's promise of a mighty nation would be realized, God now issues, without any warning, the following command:

> *Take now thy son, thine only [sic] son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.*

Abraham had two choices – either to complete the task or refuse to obey the God's orders. Abraham choose the path to the three-and-half day journey and to the loss of his son. But the most shocking thing is the surprising silence Abraham possess at this moment. He said nothing to Sarah, to Issac, to God and even to himself.

Why is Abraham so strangely silent here? Why doesn't he speak up and try to save his son? Why doesn't he say or do something? This is the part which fully fascinates Johannes.

> *On the third day of the journey to Moriah, Abraham says to the young men (presumably household servants): 'Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you'.*

This apparent deception is part of what Johannes will refer to as Abraham's 'silence': as he put it, he 'conceals his purpose' (FT 109).

In the third problema in Fear and Trembling, de Silentio explains how by remaining silent Abraham "takes a responsibility on himself as the single individual," which undeniably makes him great since "secrecy and silence are qualifications of inwardness" (KW VI 87-88). In other words, silence is the condition of subjectivity and inwardness. It really makes a man great. But this greatness may be either demonical or divine. "Silence is a demon's trap, and the more that is silenced, the more terrible the demon, but silence is also divinity's mutual understanding with the single individual" (KW VI 88). Abraham, that knight of faith, was also a knight of silence, and it is his abominable story which shows that both secrecy and silence are "essential to the exercise of this absolute responsibility as sacrificial responsibility" (GD 67).

Johannes claims, aesthetics 'demanded silence of the individual when by remaining silent he could save another' (FT 136). Johannes draws a disanalogy between such an 'aesthetic hero' – that is, someone who is a hero from an aesthetic point of view in keeping silent in order to save another – and Abraham. Abraham's silence is *not* in order to save another: it is precisely silence in the face of the need to sacrifice another. 'His silence is not at all to save Isaac, as in general the whole task of sacrificing Isaac for his own and God's sake is an outrage aesthetically.

Aesthetics can well understand that I sacrifice myself, but not that I should sacrifice another for my own sake' (FT 136–7). In other words, the disanalogy between Abraham and the aesthetic hero shows that Abraham would offend 'aesthetics' as well as 'ethics.

Johanne de Silentio repeatedly maintains that he cannot understand Abraham's silence. Is it really God's word that Abraham is listening to when he hears the call to sacrifice Isaac? God's word is given in secret and in silence, in which case Abraham acts as he does because "he cannot speak."

> *Therein lies his distress and anxiety. Even though I go on talking night and day without interruption, if I cannot make myself under- stood when I speak, then I am not speaking. This is the case with Abraham. He can say everything, but one thing he cannot say, and if he cannot say that - that is, say it in such a way that the otherunderstands it - then he is not speaking. The relief provided by speaking is that it translates me into the universal. (KW VI 113).*

It is important to emphasise here that Johannes is not merely claiming that Abraham *does* not speak – but that he '*cannot . . .* therein lies the distress and anguish' (FT 137). What he means by this is made clearer by the next sentence: 'For if when I speak, I cannot make myself understood, I do not speak even if I keep talking without stop day and night. This is the case with Abraham' (FT 137). In other words, what Johannes is talking about is not Abraham's inability to utter words – he is not literally struck dumb – but his inability to *communicate* his situation: 'there is one the sound of silence thing he cannot say and since he cannot say it, i.e. say it in a way that another understands it, he does not speak' (FT 137).

This passage shows us, first of all, that creating silence does not call for the complete absence of speech. One can speak night and day, as perhaps Kierkegaard did in his authorship, but in such a way that the secret, the meaning that leads to under- standing for the other, remains hidden. There is nothing that Abraham could say to Sarah, Eliezer, or Isaac that would lead one of them to say, "yes, now I understand; it is

clear to me now why you're acting this way."

De Silentio writes:

> *Speak he cannot; he speaks no human language. And even if he understood all the languages of the world, even if those he loved also understood them, he still could not speak - he speaks in a divine language, he speaks in tongues. (KW VI 114*)

Divine language is absolutely different from human language, for it is a language spoken in silence to the single individual who stands in an absolute relation to the absolute other.

Though this is the case, Abhraham, the father of faith, also had a last word. He was not totally silent. Abhraham could not explain to himself, to Issac, to Sarah and to anyone why he was going to kill Issac. But in response to Issac's question he utters a last word, "God will provide Himself the lamb for the burnt offering, my Son".

> *Isaac, oblivious to what is about to happen, himself carries the wood, and asks 'where is the lamb for a burnt offering?' Abraham's response is: 'My son, God will provide himself a lamb for the burnt and binds Isaac ready for sacrifice. He takes out the knife, and just as he is about to Isaac, hears the voice of 'the angel of the Lord' calling his name. 'Here am I', Abraham answers. He then hears these words: Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him: for now I know that thou fearest offering.' Thus they go to the appointed place, Abraham builds an altar upon which he lays the wood, God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me. Abraham then sees a ram caught in a thicket, which he sacrifices in Isaac's place.*

Having insisted that Abraham 'cannot speak' – cannot make himself understood – Johannes points out that Abraham *does* say something: 'My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering' (FT 139, 142). This ambiguous response, Johannes tells us, 'has the form of irony, for it is always irony to say something and yet not say it' (FT 142).

> *"First and foremost, he (Abraham) does not say anything………
> it is always irony when I say something and do not say
> anything…………..he is speaking no untruth, but neither is he
> saying anything, for he speaks a foreign language."*

By 'irony', Johannes here seems to have in mind something like what Gregory Vlastos calls 'complex irony', in which 'what is said both is and isn't what is meant: its surface content is meant to be true in one sense,

false in another'. Clearly, Abraham's utterance is false in the sense that he does not really expect God to provide, literally, a lamb; but true in the sense that Isaac is himself the 'sacrificial lamb'. (A further layer of irony is added, of course, by the fact that in the event God *does* provide a sacrificial animal, albeit a ram rather than a lamb.)

But can we really say that this utterance is accurately described by the phrase 'saying something and yet not saying it'? Previously, Johannes has stressed Abraham's utter isolation, his complete inability to make himself understood. But an ironic utterance with only two or three possible meanings hardly amounts to utter isolation, hardly amounts to putting Abraham way beyond the reach of language. Certainly, Abraham's utterance is more gnomic than the straightforward utterance – 'It is you who are to be sacrificed' – that Johannes tells us he could not have made at the crucial moment. (This is so both because if Abraham could say this at all, he could have done so earlier, and also because such a 'straight', easily comprehended utterance takes him 'out of the paradox' and into the universal (see FT 142).) But does the double- (or triple-) edged nature of his actual remark really amount to total incomprehensibility.

This discussion points out some important elements in connection between silence and discourse. The silence here is indeed terminal. Because what is said does not spoiled the silence rather the word uttered are the refraction of the preceding silence. In other words, the discourse here is maximally nondeterminateness and silence becomes the determinate. Being the nature of terminal, the silence present here has its own specifications.

Also the discourse uttered here is strange and not empty even though, at least according to Kierkegaard, he does not say anything. This is because of the fact that the discourse uttered here have no antecedents whence it follows and no consequences following from it. That is it stands alone.

Most importantly it is not clear whether this silence is divine or demonical, which shows that the silence here is not fully transparent.

While considering the saying, Abraham's "*God will provide Himself the lamb for the burnt offering, my son*". Is this the silence of hope, faith, despair, madness, desperation or anything else? Rather the audience nor the readers does not know what else it is. That is it remains ambiguous.

Abraham's silence can be explained and goes in line with uncertainty management theory, when we consider his silence as the strategy that was used to overcome the uncertain situation and also the one which

emerges out of his emotional nature, particularly being hopeful. The proposed theory fits very well with the above-described situation. But further interpretation reveals us that the situation is different here and Abraham was not much in an uncertain stage.

It is through the further evaluation of preceding events that we come to assume that it is certainly not a silence that is emerged out faith. To substantiate this argument we have to make a recap of some incidents that have some relation with the life of Abraham.

When we look at the whole story of Abraham in Genesis, we find plenty of places where he doesn't show such automatic faith at all. One is in Chapter 15, where Yahweh promises him "a very great reward." In the very first words he ever speaks to God in the Bible, Abraham replies O Lord GOD, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir to my house is Eliezer of Damascus…. You have given me no offspring, and so a slave born in my house is to be my heir (15: 2-3). In other words, he scoffs at his God. Hardly the words of a man of faith. Earlier still, when he feels his life threatened in Egypt, he doesn't turn to his God for help, but instead has Sarah lie for him, claiming she's his sister instead of his wife (12:10). In this case, he takes matters into his own hands.

There is another possibility: Abraham's afraid of Yahweh. After all, he's a man, and Yahweh's a god—maybe he doesn't dare speak up when the god commands. But again, the context gives us problems. In Chapter 17, when Yahweh promises that Sarah, despite her great age, will deliver a son, Abraham falls on his face and laughs! Can a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old? Can Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child? (17:17) And in the next chapter, when Yahweh decides to tell Abraham that he plans to wipe out the cities of the plain, instead of showing fear, Abraham scolds Yahweh for acting too hastily: Will you indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked? Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city? Will you then sweep away the place and not forgive it for the fifty righteous who are in it? Far be it from you to do such a thing, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Far be that from you! Shall not the judge of all the earth do what is just? (18:23-25) Instead of getting angry, Yahweh—amazingly—says "you're right": If I find at Sodom fifty righteous in the city, I will forgive the whole place for their sake (18:26). Then Abraham asks, what if there are only forty-five righteous in Sodom, or forty, or thirty—eventually, he cuts it down to ten. And Yahweh says, OK. If Abraham is willing to bargain extensively over Sodom—a distant town where at best he has a nephew, Lot, residing—why will he not bargain

over his only son, whom he loves?

Johannes de Silentio's text on Abraham inspired Derrida, whose words on Abraham will be an appropriate explanation in this context:

> *But even if he says everything, he need only keep silent on a single thing for one to conclude that he hasn't spoken. Such a silence takes over his whole discourse. So he speaks and doesn't speak. He speaks without speaking. He speaks and doesn't speak. He speaks indirectly. He speaks in order not to say anything about the essential thing that he must keep secret. Speaking in order not to say anything is always the best technique for keeping a secret. (GD 59)*

Conclusion

The first problema of Fear and Trembling begins with the Hegelian assertion that the ethical is the universal, and that it is the *telos* for everything outside itself. According to the ethical, what Abraham attempted was murder: his sacrifice cannot be understood in terms of the universal. Thus, he suggests, there must be a teleological suspension of the ethical. Abraham suspended his obligation to the universal to fulfill his higher duty to God.

The second problema suggests that, contrary to Kantian ethics, there is an absolute duty to God. Abraham by-passed all his ethical obligations to perform what God asked of him directly. As a result, he was constantly tempted by the ethical, but held fast.

The third problema provides hints as to why Abraham did not disclose his undertaking to anyone. Disclosure is associated with the universal and hiddenness with the single individual. Abraham acted as a single individual, isolated from the universal,

To begin with, several rabbinic sources fabricate a prologue to the story told in Genesis 22 that assimilates the tales of Abraham and Job. In this prologue, God conceives the command to sacrifice Isaac as a means of setting in motion a public proof of Abraham's faithfulness – one that will decisively refute Satan's accusation that Abraham's blessings have caused him to forget God. This interpretation establishes that God has good reason for testing Abraham, while simultaneously portraying him as a defender of truth and righteousness.

While Kierkegaard does highlight Abraham's faith, this faith is quite unlike more popularly accepted understandings of the term. Rather than a genteel piety within a culture of Christendom, Kierkegaard

understands Abraham's faith as highly isolating, anxiety-ridden, and rationally absurd.

Abraham is not an aesthetic hero, since aesthetics demands that he remain silent in order to save someone. In fact, his silence is not meant to save Isaac, but is rather a way of concealing his intention to kill Isaac. Nor is Abraham a tragic hero, since the ethical would demand disclosure. Since he is neither an aesthetic hero nor a tragic hero, Abraham is either higher than the ethical or he is lost.

Genesis attributes only one speech to Abraham on the journey to Mount Moriah. Isaac asks his father why he has no burnt offering, and Abraham simply replies: "God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." These words prompt Johannes to launch a discussion of the value of last words. He suggests that a tragic hero whose heroism lies in action does not need last words: its unnecessary chatter that distracts from his actions. The intellectual tragic hero on the other hand needs last words: these words are the culmination of his life, the words that make him immortal.

Like the conventional understanding, Abraham's silence does not emerge out of the ultimate faith in God.

As a common understanding which was widely accepted for an extensive period of history, silence begins when speech has ended. Is this can be considered as the end of the communication? Is this the end of the word? For Kierkegaard it is the absolute beginning of the communication of that meaning which is essentially related to existence. It is the beginning of the word.

One cannot speak about silence without breaking the silence. This is what Kierkegaard does, for he speaks with his pen and communicates a multitude of words and meanings, while never communicating his secret and taking full responsibility for his reticence. Unlike the early Wittgenstein who claimed that "what we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence," Kierkegaard affirms paradoxically that whereof one cannot speak one must communicate silence ... in language.

If Derrida has deconstructed the presence of being in speech, then Kierkegaard has reconstructed the presence of being in silence, and through the testimony of silence, the presence of being in absence. The secret of silence, paradoxically, makes communication with the other possible. Without its true communication is lost. Communication is, after all, making something common to another.

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The Early Phase of Digital Activism: From the Zapatista Movement to the Pink Chaddi Campaign

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Abstract

This paper examines the early phase of digital activism from the Zapatista movement of 1994 to the Pink Chaddi campaign of 2009. We use the existing literature to explain the significant digital activism campaigns. Digital activism or social media for sociopolitical movements have become substantive after the Arab spring. This research tries to situate the vitality of digital activism before the Arab spring. This paper discusses seven key digital activism campaigns that have captured broad appreciation and acceptance. These campaigns laid the cornerstone for what we see as the power of digital media activism today. The study findings will significantly contribute to the digital activism academia, and it will supplement students' interest in the use of ICT's in activism.

Keywords: digital activism, early-phase, history, information and communication technologies(ICTS)

Introduction

From the early 1990s, with the rapid growth of the internet and the advent of web 2.0, the world's networked population has grown to billions. Over time, the internet has become a vital part of human life. With the advancement of new communication technologies, the internet and social media have been fundamental in driving and supporting socio-political movements and social activism. New media is taking a brisk role in defining venues for engagement and mobilizing individuals for civic activism (Zaber, Nardi, & Chen, 2017). It allows anyone with a technological device and active internet connection to spread social causes and participate in social

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activism on various issues.

When examining the concept of digital activism, we have to keep in mind its broad and ambiguous nature. Digital activism is an overall concept with many synonyms like online activism, internet activism, social media activism, cyberactivism, hacktivism, hashtag activism. Academia commonly uses these words interchangeably. While defining digital activism, it is inevitable to consider these equivalent words.

Definitions of the concept include activism that engages both fixed and mobile devices with access to the internet, such as different forms of hacktivism, denial of service attacks, hashtag activism, and open-source advocacy or definitions that include all new media sources used for political purposes. The concept is currently studied in various disciplines, including sociology, political science, anthropology, and mass communication.

Objectives and Scope of the Research

The purpose of this paper is to unfold the early history of digital activism before the advent of the social media era. Exploring the history of digital activism enables us to understand better and observe the gradual growth of new media technologies and their use for activism. This work will have significant importance in the digital activism academia and among the scholars working on the use of ICT's in activism.

The Beginning

Academicians like Athina Karatzogianni acknowledge the birth of digital activism in virtual knowledge communities like the first hackers of the 1960s, who are early innovators who identified the power of technology. And those used to create alternative softwares and engages in the open software movement (Karatzogianni, 2015). With the advent of the World Wide Web, the potential and prospects of using the internet for activism have proliferated. Subsequently, the first use of the internet for social or political causes was seen in the Zapatista movement of Mexico.

Zapatista Movement 1994 – The First Notable Mention

One of the notable early mentions of digital activism is the Zapatista movement. The protest using online technology emerged in *Chiapas* (Mexico) in 1994, with the indigenous Zapatistas and

their leader, Sub-commandant Marcos. The Zapatista movement was against the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). The protesters use email to communicate their ideas worldwide and garner the attention of international media and opinion leaders. This movement changed the face and behavior of protest and opened the door to new protests and civil engagement (Sandoval-Almazan & Ramon Gil-Garcia, 2014).

Battle of Seattle 1999 – Transnational Scope of Digital Activism

In the late 1990s, activists started using the internet against the excesses of globalization, neoliberalism, and transnational corporate capitalism. A massive demonstration was set up on June 18, 1999, namely '*Carnival Against Capital!'* involving hundreds of thousands of protesters from various sorts of life throughout the world to protests against the World Trade Organization (WTO) meeting in December 1999. The social movement, infamously known as the Battle of Seattle, uses the new media to inform and construct opinions against the WTO ministerial conference of 1999. Through the use of ICT's, the movement broke national boundaries and emerged as a transnational movement. The campaign is viewed as the beginning of the anti-globalization movement worldwide (Kahn & Kellner, 2004). The battle of Seattle is critical in identifying the transnational reach of digital activism.

The Resignation of the Philippines President Joseph Estrada in 2001; The Rise of Mobile Phones for Activism

Another classic example of the role of ICT's in protests is a protest movement in the Philippines that resulted in the resignation of President Joseph Estrada in 2001. The mass protests are organized and gather support by using cell phones. In a third-world country like the Philippines, mass protests primarily via cell phones overthrew President Joseph Estrada is quite a revelation.

On January 17, 2001, during the impeachment trial of Philippine President Joseph Estrada, loyalists in the Philippine Congress voted to set aside key evidence against him. Within a couple of hours after the decision, activists, with the help of forwarded text messages, organized a protest at different parts of Manila. Over time, more than a million people arrived and gathered for the protests. The ICT's ability to coordinate such massive protests within a short period is an epic in the history of digital activism. The event marked the first time new media had helped force out a national leader from the position.

This incident illustrates the capability of the new media technology to communicate and create a collective opinion among the public (Rizzo, 2008). The campaign is the first to use mobile phones as a potential tool of digital activism (Alessandra, 2003).

Ukraine's Orange Revolution 2004; Use of New Media in Electoral Politics

The Ukrainian presidential election of 2004 is one of the early examples of the use of ICT's in electoral politics. On December 26, 2004, Viktor Yuschenko was elected as the president of Ukraine, overcoming Viktor Yanukovych, an autonomous ruler who supported the corrupted political syndicate and the mainstream media owned by them. With the mainstream media acting as puppets in the Viktor Yanukovych regime. The opposition needs to find other innovative methods to connect and communicate with the public. To achieve the goal, supporters of the orange revolution use the internet to recruit volunteers, raise funds, organize campaigns, report breaking news, and garner the sympathy of the global democratic community. The supporters of organized 15-day protests helped sustain the orange revolution's momentum. The revolution got its name from the orange flag attributed to Viktor Yuschenko's party(Rizzo, 2008). The Ukrainian orange revolution is a forerunner campaign that uses Information and communication technologies in favour of electoral politics.

The Estonian Cyberattacks of 2007 and the Rise of Hacktivism

In 2007 Estonia, a small nation in Europe fell under a cyber-attack campaign lasting 22 days. The attacks were part of a more significant political conflict between Estonia and Russia over relocating a Soviet-era monument in Tallinn. The trigger for the cyberattacks was the Estonian government's decision to relocate a Soviet monument from a busy intersection in central Tallinn to a nearby military cemetery. The monument depicting a Soviet soldier was initially erected in 1947 at the burial site of Soviet troops who died while taking Tallinn in World War II. Since that time, the monument has developed two very distinct ideologies. For the local Russian minority, it represents the "liberator," while for the Estonians, it represents the "oppressor."

April 27, 2007, marked the beginning of cyber attacks that targeted Estonian internet information systems. Attacks of various types continued for a total of 22 days. Even though the attack types were well known, they were unparalleled in size and variety compared to

a country the size of Estonia. The highly networked nature of Estonia makes these cyber-attacks threaten national security (Ottis, 2008). This Estonian cyber attack was an exemplar of hacktivism that can disrupt or destroy government operations, banking transactions, city power grids, and even military weapon systems using internet technologies. Hacktivism can be defined as the form of political activism which uses computers and internet networks for political or social goals. Hacktivists' activities in Estonia include denial-of-service attacks, cyberattacks targeting the country's infrastructure, disrupting all government ministries and banks' websites, and breaking down parliamentary email servers (Karatzogianni, 2008). Even though there are raising questions about the ethical integrity of hacktivism, it is still a favored tool of activism (Sorell, 2015).

The Rise of Social Media; The US Presidential Election of 2008

By the time of 2008, Social media had become ubiquitous, reaching billions of people in a flash of seconds. Even though many candidates use the internet and social media for the election campaign, the 2008 United States presidential election campaign of Barack Obama is the marquee example of deploying internet-based information and communication technologies commonly referred to as Web 2.0 and social media to the election campaigns (Schuff, 2010). Social media like Facebook, Twitter, and Youtube were central to the campaign. Obama's campaign used Facebook and many other social media sites, including Digg, Flikr, LinkedIn, and MiGente. The Obamas campaign also employs SMS, using text messages to connect with supporters. The campaign also uses traditional emails to make communication accessible. Apart from these strategies, virtual advertising space from video game maker Electronic Arts, such that Obama ads appeared on billboards inside games, were adopted. The campaign used YouTube very heavily, where it posted its videos and encouraged supporters to post as well. The campaign also has a broad online presence through its own social media site, MyBO. This site provided registered users with activism tools such as phone banking and volunteer coordination (Cogburn & Espinoza-Vasquez, 2011).

Pink Chaddi Campaign; The First Desi Digital Activism Campaign

The Pink Chaddi Campaign is the pioneer of digital activism campaigns in India. The campaign identified the significance of social media as a tool for social activism in India. The Pink Chaddi campaign was initiated to protest against Hindu right-wing group

Sri Ram Sene's attack on women in Amnesia pub in Mangalore (Niranjana, 2010). The campaign was started in 2009 with a group of women called "Consortium of Pub-going, Loose, and Forward Women" launched a Facebook group, which garnered 30,000 members in a week. The campaign was the brainchild of Nisha Susan, a Newdelhi based journalist. The group members then using social media handles campaigned to send 3,000 pink panties to the head of Sri Ram Sene Pramodh Muthalik. The campaign became famous for its innovative model of protest that disputed the traditional notions of activism and how it effectively used social media to accumulate widespread attention to its cause. Since then, new media has been an instrumental activism tool among Indian feminists. The Pink Chaddi campaign is one of India's most successful feminist digital activism campaigns (Banerjee, 2015).

Conclusion

This paper explores the early phase of digital activism from the Zapatista movement to the Pink Chaddi campaign. Seven digital activism campaigns between 1994 and 2009 are evaluated to determine the rationale for situating the prevalence of digital activism before the social media era. The study identified the roots of many essential activism tools like hacktivism and social media use for electoral politics. The study also identifies the inception of using social media and mobile phones for activism in the early campaigns. This research bridges the gap between the early history of digital activism and the most updated digital activism version. It will contribute to the existing digital activism literature and cater to digital activism scholars.

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Language Learning in Virtual Reality-A Constructivist Approach

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Abstract

Virtual Reality has proved its efficacy in providing life-like learning circumstances in various fields since the advent of technology. Apart from its entertainment, therapeutic, and industrial sector applications, Virtual Reality is used primarily in learning and training. The current technological advancements in Virtual Reality are narrowing the real and virtual differences. Learning, according to the constructivist approach, materialises in non-mediated first-hand experiences. Virtual Reality provides the learners with first-hand immersive experiences that play a crucial role in creating real-life-like situations that promote learning. Language learning apps that use Virtual Reality and virtual platforms are booming. This article looks into popular language learning applications, whether they apply Constructivism in Virtual Reality Language learning.

Keywords: virtual reality, language learning, constructivism

Introduction

Technology has always played a part in enhancing how humans learn. Virtual Reality is one of the key technologies expected to revolutionise the arena of education and learning. Virtual Reality's ability to provide learning experiences plays a crucial role in its educational and training applications. The military, airlines, and huge businesses embraced Virtual Reality as an economical and efficient means to train soldiers, pilots, and personnel working in hazardous environments (Yount, 2004). The ability of Virtual Reality to visualise and simulate both natural and imaginative environments gave it the power to change the abstract to the experience (Helsel, 1992). Hence

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the users can immerse themselves in imaginary scenarios or virtual environments. Virtual Reality, according to Schroeder, enables or induce the "sense of being present to a user in a milieu other than the one he is actually in, allowing him to interact and gives the feeling of being in that environment. Virtual Reality technology can provide vivid and life-like scenarios along with interactivity. According to Joseph Psotka, Virtual Reality has the edge over all existing technologies due to its "sense of immediacy and control created by immersion". Virtual Reality content helps users' experience an environment and react to the stimuli accordingly.

Language learning could be an arduous task, and acquiring a satisfactory level of communicative proficiency in a non-native language can be challenging(Bush, 2008). Learning a second language from scratch is not always easy and requires rigorous practice. When done in Virtual Reality, the practice mimics real-life scenarios. Not many achieve proficiency in a foreign language, just with classroom teaching(Brown, 2000). Classroom teaching follows boring and repetitive pedagogical methods. Constructivism articulates that an individual constructs knowledge dynamically, and the process of knowing is adaptive to the individual experiences(Hendry, 1996; Mayer, 1992). The central idea of constructivism states that the meaning created by an individual depends on the world they live in and their personal and subjective experiences (Karagiorgi & Symeou, 2005). Constructivism argues that "the knowledge possessed by an individual is connected in a comprehensive 'construct' of facts, concepts, experiences, emotions, values and their relationship with each other" (Baviskar, Todd Hartle, & Whitney, 2009). Virtual Reality provides the users with first-hand immersive experiences, enabling the learners to encounter real-life scenarios convincingly.

Moreover, this, in turn, allows the users to respond to those scenarios as natural as possible. Virtual Reality in language learning can eliminate the chances of getting shamed during the learning process. Galmiche says that learners have shunned away from language learning due to the repeated humiliation and shaming from the classroom (Galmiche, 2018). The scenarios or situations in virtual reality are highly controlled and can motivate and improve the learner's morale. The learner will not fear making mistakes if he/ she feels safe in the learning environment and aids the learning process. This paper examines a few Virtual Reality based language learning applications and understands whether they follow a constructivist learning approach.

Theoretical Background

Constructivism

Constructivism states that humans construct learning or knowledge from their surroundings and experiences. Constructivism is a method of learning where knowledge is generated within the learner, and the experiences of the learner define reality (Elliott & Travers, 1996). Constructivism emerges from the cognitive theories of Piaget and Vygotsky. The idea of constructivism lets the student identify the main crux of the idea and then dive into the detail. The learner-centric approach of constructivism actively put the learner in control of their education, making constructivism the most sought after approach in language learning (Muna Aljohani, 2017). Constructivism as a theory states that "the knowledge possessed by an individual is connected in a comprehensive 'construct' of facts, concepts, experiences, emotions, values and their relationships with each other." (Baviskar et al., 2009). According to Kaufman, due to the intervention of the "constructivist-based computer and video-based technologies", various teaching aids that could append the learner's abilities and diversify the way human interaction took place came into existence. Also, the technologies mentioned above helped conceive the "Virtual microworlds" that enabled the learners to go beyond the borders virtually and increase the exposure (Kaufman, 2004). According to Yilmaz, to achieve the intention of teaching, educators should engage the students to analyse, synthesise, apply and evaluate, rather than recall and memorise(Yilmaz, 2008).

Virtual Reality

In his book, Jason Jerald says, Virtual Reality is a digitally created environment mediated by a computer that can be felt and interacted as if real (Jerald, 2015). Virtual Reality is an amalgamation of a set of technologies that blocks the user's senses from the real world and provides those senses with digitally created, computer-mediated stimuli creating a pseudo perception of being in a non-existent environment. Creating an environment in which the user can digitally manipulate the surrounding, either mimicking the real world or creating an entirely imaginary world, generating numerous opportunities and possibilities. Virtual Reality finds its applications in almost every sector that we can think about, gaming, entertainment, medicine, manufacturing, education, defence, and

many more (Bowman & McMahan, 2007). Hesel says that applying Virtual Reality in education will bring revolutionary changes like simulation-based learning and the curriculum transformation to image and symbol-based from the text(Helsel, 1992).

Virtual Reality is classified into fully immersive, non-immersive and semi-immersive systems(Saeed, Foaud, & Fattouh, 2017). Virtual Reality (VR. The fully immersive VR technology provides maximum immersion to the user, making him/her feel that they are detached from the real world and transported to the simulated one. In the words of Brenda Laurel, "it permits people to behave as if they were somewhere they are not" (Laurel, 1995). The non-immersive and semi-immersive systems provide lesser levels of immersion, in which the user is aware of the real world. The level of immersion perceived by the user in VR depends on how well the technology can alienate the user from his natural environment, and VR is categorised based on this. There are mobile virtual reality headsets like Google Cardboard that work utilising the computing and processing capabilities of the mobile phone. The fully immersive VR devices like HTC Vive and Oculus Rift come with hand controllers and tracking antennas; they depend on computers with high-end graphics and processing capabilities.

Technology plays a vital role in providing the required immersion in the Virtual Reality environment for the user. Virtual Reality technology that creates the feeling of being present in the environment will initiate active participation from the user. According to the constructivist approach to learning, this active participation leads to better cognition and learning. The advantages of using VR to learn or teach is innumerable. Virtual Reality teaching is highly motivating, attention-grabbing, exciting, and radically changing how students interact with the content taught; apart from these, virtual reality enables the student to learn by doing(Pantelidis, 2010). The efficacy of Virtual Reality in providing the learning experiences is highly dependent on the technology used and on the capability of the technology to provide levels of immersion necessary enough to create the feeling of presence.

Language Learning in Virtual Reality

According to Baviskar et al., for a learning content termed to be constructivist, it should satisfy four essential criteria. They are "eliciting prior knowledge", "creating cognitive dissonance", "application of the knowledge with feedback", and "reflection of learning". Virtual Reality is considered a constructivist learning

environment since it tends to satisfy all the criteria mentioned above. When in Virtual Reality, the students get immersed in the content. The immersion in Virtual Reality is on par with the real world; the feeling of being present in an environment happens while immersed in Virtual Reality. Psotka says Virtual Reality places the user in a virtual environment that gives an illusion of a natural environment. The learning contexts in Virtual Reality reflects the real-world scenarios. Schwienhorst argues that Virtual Reality empowers the learners with self-awareness, promotes experimenting, increases interactions and helps them critically reflect, monitor, and evaluate their learning. When in Virtual Reality, learners can record and monitor their activities, leading to increased self-evaluation and reflection. The ability to interact in Virtual Reality enables the users to apply the knowledge they have gained and receive the feedback instantaneously. The content creators create interactive avatars that encourage students to think out of the box and enhance divergent thinking. It is easier to expose the students to classroom experiences and real-world scenarios in Virtual Reality. When in Virtual Reality, the user/ student detaches from the real world and, in a sense, is alone and can take decisions and actions independent of external influences. This detachment helps them use their prior experience to solve the problem rather than approach the teachers for readymade solutions. Another factor that can be attached to the constructivist approach of Virtual Reality is its capability to introduce social interactions. The social interactions in Virtual Reality can either be to real humans in their avatars or AI avatars that behave like real humans; avatars are the Virtual object in the Virtual environment embodied by a human or computer (Sherman & Craig, 2003). It is possible to watch a video/ photo, read a text and play audio in Virtual Reality. Kaufman says that inquiry and constructivist-oriented technology have become powerful educational tools that expand human capacities and social interactions. They reinforce and extend student learning, improve curriculum development and assessment, and bring real-world problem-solving issues into the classroom.

According to Aljohani, "action orientedness" is easier to analyse and reflect on the experience had in Virtual Reality; the whole experience is recorded and analysed to understand our interactions and our responses to stimuli for further perusal. There are a few Virtual reality-based language learning applications like ImmerseME, Mondly VR and Virtual Speech. This paper analyses whether these applications apply constructivism in their approach.

ImmerseMe

ImmerseMe uses Virtual Reality as a language learning tool and traditional multimedia language teaching. This application provides around 3000 interactive scenarios across nine languages and allows the users to interact with native speakers in Virtual Reality. It supports VR on desktop, mobile and standalone headsets. ImmerseMe provides Virtual Reality scenarios where the learners are in real-world interactions, like hiring a taxi, eliciting their prior knowledge. Then the learners are encouraged to use the learning language to create cognitive dissonance, making them aware of the difference between what they know and what they are learning. Finally, the learners apply their learning in that particular scenario eliciting a response. The Virtual Reality learning in ImmerseMe application aligns with the constructivist learning approach.

Mondly VR

Mondly is a language learning platform that uses mobile learning, Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality. Mondly VR focuses on using Virtual Reality for language teaching. Mondly has a Multiplayer feature that enables the users to learn the language with real people in virtual environments. Mondly provides VR content in about 30 languages, with real-life scenarios like taking a taxi, ordering at a restaurant, arriving at a hotel's reception, etc. Unlike Immerseme, Mondly provides an additional feature of interacting with real people in virtual environments. Mondly claims to be the first Virtual Reality language learning application with speech recognition and chatbots. ("Mondly VR Is Now Available on Steam | Mondly Blog," n.d.). Mondly VR helps the users to overcome the fear and lack of confidence. Scenarios like "train, Make a new friend." Enables the learner to make a friend in a train journey to Berlin. This scenario brings up the prior knowledge of making a friend, makes the learner aware of the differences in his prior knowledge and helps him apply this in a novel language setting with a real-time application of his learning and feedback. The application also provides the user with recordings and performance analysis reports of self-evaluation.

Virtual Speech

Virtual Speech identifies themselves as soft skill trainers. They do not exclusively focus on language learning but teaches business

English as a part of their overall course. Since the English language acts as a communication channel in international business, English and the language skills associated with business, like public speaking, sales pitching and all, are part of the course. They provide multiple VR scenarios and simulations, enabling the users to improve their presentation, interviewing and networking skills. Virtual Speech is more of a training application than a teaching one. It helps the user practice and improves the oratory skills rather than learn one. We cannot find constructivism applied in this application.

Conclusion

The Virtual Reality language learning environments discussed in the paper are classic examples of the constructivist language learning approach. Computer-assisted language learning has grown into another realm by introducing technologies like Virtual Reality. Virtual Reality enables the learners to learn in a virtual world, which is on par with the real world, and the learners repeatedly experience a scenario, record and replay the same for better learning. Not all Virtual Reality applications fall into the constructivist learning and teaching model. However, constructivism can explain how Virtual Reality applications can be better in teaching language than traditional teaching and learning. The usage of Virtual reality has turned the art of learning into an immersive experience. Incorporating technologies like Artificial Intelligence and Augmented Realities can revolutionise language learning and teaching. When learning breaks the classroom boundaries, the best possible way to analyse meaning and content is through experience. Language learning in Virtual Reality offers this experiential learning which is the main idea of constructivism. Unlike traditional memorising methods, Virtual Reality provides realistic scenarios that enable users to think and apply their learning. Out of the three VR language learning content providers considered, ImmerseMe and MondlyVR use constructivist approaches in their pedagogy, whereas Virtual Speech acts as a training tool that monitors and improves the public speaking skills of the user. Virtual Reality can improve education in numerous ways, including language learning or STEAM learning. The availability and accessibility of Virtual Reality technologies are still a problem and a matter to be sorted out.

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