

# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF COMMUNICATION DEVELOPMENT



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**(July - December - 2024 Joint edition)**

## About the Journal

The *International Journal of Communication Development (IJCD)* is a scholarly journal dedicated to the study and analysis of communication, mass media, and development in both Indian and global contexts. The journal invites submissions of high-quality, original research that have not been published elsewhere or are under consideration by other publications.

The *International Journal of Communication Development* explores how similarities and differences in communication systems, structures, and practices create opportunities for meaningful discussion, research, and application. The journal seeks innovative articles employing critical and empirical approaches to global communication. Topics of interest include, but are not limited to, the production, dissemination, consumption, and effects of content. Submissions are encouraged to adopt inter- and trans-national, cross-cultural, interdisciplinary, and comparative perspectives to advance understanding in this dynamic field.

The journal has successfully published 14 volumes to date, and the current issue marks the inaugural edition of Volume 15. In alignment with its commitment to fostering academic excellence, the journal does not charge any fees for the submission or publication of research papers. The sole purpose of this initiative is to encourage and disseminate quality research that contributes to the betterment of society.

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### FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

As the Editor of the International Journal of Contemporary Discourses (IJCD), I am privileged to present this edition, which encapsulates a diverse range of scholarly explorations across critical areas such as sustainability, media representation, traditional knowledge systems, women empowerment, and the interplay of music and spirituality. Each paper reflects not just academic rigor but also the potential to influence real-world practices and policies.

Dr. Baninder Rahi and Palak Ratra's paper, "Green Marketing: A Study of Communicative Practices Adopted by Indian Companies and Awareness Level among Youth," underscores the pressing need to strengthen the dialogue around sustainability. Their findings reveal that while Indian companies are proactive in publishing sustainability reports, these efforts often lack dynamism, limiting their impact. The study's discovery of a significant knowledge gap among youth highlights the urgency of enhancing educational initiatives and communication strategies to bridge this divide. As stewards of the environment, it is imperative for businesses, educators, and policymakers to collaborate in fostering a deeper understanding of Green Marketing principles among the younger generation.

Wanshika Sweta Kumar's investigation into the media representation of Fiji brings to light the disparities in coverage between mainstream outlets like BBC News and CNN and alternative platforms such as Common Dreams and The Real News Network. By analyzing media narratives surrounding Fiji's 2022 general elections, this study illuminates the challenges faced by smaller nations in garnering balanced global attention. The findings call for a reevaluation of media practices to ensure fair and nuanced reporting, which is crucial for shaping accurate international perceptions of underrepresented nations.

The paper by Abhishek Srivastava and Dr. Umesh Kumar Saxena, "A Systematic Study of Indigenous Communication in the Indian Knowledge System," delves into the profound legacy of India's traditional communication practices. Through an exploration of proverbs, riddles, and stories, the authors underscore the relevance of these timeless tools in shaping societal norms and fostering community bonds. Their work serves as a reminder of the need to preserve and integrate indigenous knowledge systems into modern communication frameworks, ensuring that this rich heritage continues to inform contemporary discourse.

Priyanka Rajkhowa and Prof. Kh. Kabi's exploration of mobile communication as an enabler of women empowerment highlights the transformative potential of technology in addressing health literacy. By focusing on the intersection of mobile communication and health-seeking behavior, the study brings attention to the critical role of education and awareness in empowering women to make informed health decisions. This paper is a clarion call for leveraging digital tools to promote health

literacy and mental well-being, particularly in marginalized communities where societal constraints often impede women's access to essential information.

Dr. Hoimawati Talukdar's research into the relationship between music and religious experiences in Vrindavan and Mathura provides a nuanced understanding of how soundscapes shape spiritual and existential beliefs. By employing R. Murray Schafer's soundscape theory, the study reveals the profound influence of musical elements in evoking spiritual emotions. Furthermore, the exploration of secular music's potential to elicit religious sensations opens new avenues for research into the universality of music as a medium for human connection and introspection.

The papers featured in this edition collectively underscore the importance of interdisciplinary approaches in addressing contemporary challenges. Whether it is the call for sustainable practices, equitable media representation, preservation of traditional knowledge, empowerment through technology, or the exploration of music's spiritual dimensions, each study offers valuable insights that extend beyond academia. As custodians of knowledge, let us endeavor to bridge the gap between research and practice, fostering a discourse that inspires action and innovation.

We hope this edition enriches your understanding and sparks meaningful conversations within and beyond the academic community.

Prof. (Dr) Durgesh Tripathi  
Editor, IJCD

## **Green Marketing: A Study of Communicative Practices Adopted by Indian Companies and Awareness Level among Youth**

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### **Abstract**

Discourses regarding environmental issues, including sustainability, started in the 70s. Eventually, environmental concerns became part of many brands' and companies' business plans and communicative strategies. Companies and brands aim to reduce carbon emissions and foster sustainable initiatives and policies. It led to many brands and companies adopting sustainable practices; one such practice is Green Marketing. Paettie and Charter (1994) defined Green Marketing as a "holistic management process responsible for identifying, anticipating and satisfying the needs of customers and society, in a profitable and sustainable way". This study is two-step in nature and involves a mixed-method approach. Firstly, using a systematic random sampling technique, researchers selected six Indian companies: Reliance, HDFC, TCS, LIC, Bharti Airtel and Hindustan Unilever. Secondly, the researchers studied the youth's awareness level of Green Marketing. Content analysis and survey methods were used to analyse the websites of the selected companies, and a survey was conducted to study the awareness level of sample units. Content analysis revealed that out of six, four selected companies are actively publishing their annual sustainability reports, and content published by these companies is static. The survey found that out of 100 respondents, 49% were aware and well-versed with the concept of green marketing, while 51% were unaware.

**Keywords:** *Green Marketing, Environment, Awareness, Youth, Communication Strategies*

### **Introduction**

The past decades have witnessed international and national discussions on environmental degradation, climate change, and global warming. Environment sustainability is one of the most focused concerns of all countries, and it may further include responsible behaviour, sustainable approaches, and green marketing to help restore the environment. Even the United Nations in 2015 adopted 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and made it mandatory to achieve these goals by 2030 (Nations, n.d.). Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) investing has become a recent trend in India (Earth5R, 2023). Companies and brands aim to reduce carbon emissions and foster sustainable initiatives and policies. For instance, Bharti Airtel, one of the leading telecommunications service providers, has committed to net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. Environmental concerns have become part of many brands' and companies' business plans and communication strategies. Social structures like education and social and



political institutions are asked to follow eco-friendly practices. It led to many brands adopting sustainable practices, including Green Marketing and sustainable policy initiatives.

Hennion and Kinnear, in 1976, used the term Ecological Marketing. They defined it as, “concerned with all marketing activities that have served to help cause environmental problems and that may serve to provide a remedy for environmental problems” (Dangelico & Vocalelli, 2017). Paettie and Charter (1994) defined Green Marketing as a "holistic management process responsible for identifying, anticipating and satisfying the needs of customers and society, in a profitable and sustainable way". Green marketing focuses on promoting the environment and longer-term advantages of products in marketing materials.

Green marketing is when a corporation promotes the environmental and longer-term advantages of the product/s in its marketing materials. Green Marketing items are typically constructed in a sustainable manner, do not include harmful components, are made from recycled or renewable resources, and have minimal packaging. When a corporation can manufacture its products in an environmentally responsible manner, it demonstrates its commitment to sustainability and social responsibility (Riserbato, 2021). For instance, Green Marketing is used by a company that announces its donations to an environmental protection agency, promotes its sustainable production practices, or otherwise offers its products as environmentally friendly. These marketing strategies target a sizeable and growing segment of consumers whose purchase decisions are highly impacted by social and environmental obligations (Shirdan, 2022). Green Marketing is more than just promoting environmentally friendly products or services. It entails brand alteration as well as adjustments to the manufacturing process. It's about having a different approach to marketing, taking into account the worldwide effects of environmental degradation. It is about a brand's capacity to meet client needs while causing the least amount of environmental damage (Vos, 2019).

With scarce resources, businesses must find new ways to satisfy the endless desires of consumers. The emergence of green marketing concepts has enabled businesses to use resources efficiently while minimising waste. Therefore, many businesses need to engage in green marketing to minimise waste while meeting the growing demand for environmentally friendly products and services (Green Marketing – History, Importance, Benefits and Problems, n.d.). If companies and brands have indulged in Green Marketing, there are buyers also. Consumers have also become cautious and buy green products, and such consumers are known as ‘Green Consumers’. Cambridge dictionary has defined a green consumer as “a customer who wants to buy things that have been produced in a way that protects the natural environment”. Green consumers are subject to more internal scrutiny, believing that individual consumers can effectively contribute to environmental protection. Therefore, they believe that the task of protecting the environment should not be left solely to governments, corporations, environmentalists and scientists; the consumer can also play a role (Boztepe, 2012).

Many brands and companies are practising Green Marketing nowadays. Indian companies implement diverse communication strategies to embrace Green Marketing practices. One effective approach involves leveraging digital platforms such as social media to directly engage with environmentally conscious consumers. For example, companies like Tata Motors utilise platforms like Twitter and Facebook to communicate their sustainability efforts, such as promoting electric vehicles and initiatives to reduce carbon emissions (Tata Motors, n.d.). Furthermore, incorporating eco-friendly labels and certifications on product packaging is another prevalent strategy among Indian companies. Research suggests these labels enhance consumers' perceptions of environmental responsibility and product trustworthiness (Bansal & Roth, 2000). Additionally, storytelling through advertisements and marketing campaigns plays a crucial role in conveying the brand's commitment to sustainability. By narrating stories that highlight environmental stewardship, companies like ITC Limited connect with consumers emotionally, fostering loyalty and advocacy for green initiatives (ITC Limited, n.d.). These communication strategies not only raise awareness about environmental issues but also empower Indian consumers to make eco-conscious choices, contributing to the adoption of sustainable practices and products in the country.

This research paper studies the communication strategies companies adopt to promote green marketing and advocate sustainable approaches, and check the youth's awareness level regarding the green market. In order to study the formulated research problem, the researchers have framed the following research questions:

**RQ1:** What are the types of communication strategies adopted by Indian companies to practice Green Marketing and advocate sustainability?

**RQ2:** What is the youth's awareness level regarding the concept of Green Marketing?

### **Review of Literature (ROL)**

A literature review advocates a thesis position by presenting credible evidence derived from previous research (Machi & Brenda, 2012). The research titled **Green Marketing in India: Emerging Opportunities and Challenges** by Pavan Mishra and Payal Sharma (2010) explored the increasing focus of businesses on targeting environment-conscious consumers and outlines three specific segments within this demographic. It discusses the challenges and opportunities of green marketing and examines current trends in India. It concludes that green marketing will continue to grow in both practice and demand. Another paper titled **Green Marketing and Its Impact on Consumer Buying Behavior** by Aysel Boztepe (2012) studied the impact of Green Marketing on consumer purchasing behaviours, particularly focusing on 540 consumers in Istanbul; the study found that environmental awareness, green product attributes, promotional activities, and pricing positively influence green purchasing behaviours. Research on **Green Marketing: A Study of Consumer Perception and Preferences in India** by Mayank Bhatia and Amit Jain (2013) studied the concerns of manufacturers and consumers regarding environmental impact, and their study of 106 respondents showed high awareness and preference

for green products, suggesting the need for effective marketing campaigns. Another research by Asothai (2019) on **Consumer Behaviour towards Green Marketing** highlighted that Green Marketing has become ubiquitous as companies respond to growing environmental awareness. This paper reviewed existing literature to analyse how Green Marketing strategies impact customer satisfaction and environmental safety. A book titled **The New Rules of Green Marketing: Strategies, tools for Sustainable Branding** by Jacquelyn A. Ottoman (2017) mentioned the green consumer buying strategies, green behaviour and innovative green marketing strategies adopted by brands like Nissan, Starbucks, Timberland, etc. Another book by Ruchika Singh Malyan and Punita Duhan (2019) on **Green Consumerism** talked about the meaning and inception of the concept of Green Marketing, the concept of green practices and behaviour of green consumers and purchasing decisions made by consumers to purchase a green product.

### **Research Gap**

After reviewing the existing literature on Green Marketing, it was found that studies have been conducted to understand consumers' behaviour towards Green Marketing, green practices, environment awareness, etc. The research on Green Marketing is still evolving and under investigation in academia because it involves multiple disciplines, including environmental communication, Business Studies, Management Studies, Psychology, and Mass Media. The current study took another perspective using a communication lens, different from the existing studies, to study the communicative practices adopted by top Indian companies regarding Green Marketing. Also, it surveyed the Youth to map their knowledge and awareness regarding the same. This study contributed to the existing literature on Green Marketing by addressing these. It provided insights that can inform marketing practices and policies aimed at promoting sustainable consumption among young people.

### **Research Methodology**

Research Methodology is the process that consists of a series of actions or steps necessary to effectively carry out research and the desired sequencing of these steps (Hari, 2015). In order to study the formulated research problem, the researchers have used a mixed-method approach consisting of both qualitative and quantitative methods. The survey method, under a quantitative approach, was used to gauge the awareness level of Youth regarding the concept of Green Marketing. Survey research is a systematic set of methods used to gather information to generate knowledge and to help make decision (Lavrakas, 2008). Content analysis was done to study the communication strategies about Green Marketing and sustainability practices adopted by top Indian companies. Content analysis entails a systematic reading of a body of texts, images, and symbolic matter, not necessary from an author's or user's perspective (Krippendorff, 2004).

To study the content, the website of each selected company was taken as a unit of analysis. Researchers also developed a code book to systematically study selected companies' content. Both probability and non-probability sampling techniques were used to draw the sample from the

population. Under non-probability sampling, the convenience sampling technique was used to survey 100 Youth in Delhi. Researchers have used the United Nations' definition of Youth as an operational definition. The UN defines Youth between the ages of 15 and 24 (Nations, Definition of Youth). Under probability sampling, the systematic random sampling technique was used to shortlist six top companies as per their market value in different sectors. The list was drawn from the Forbes India website, mentioning the top 10 companies in India by market cap in 2024 in sectors including Oil Exploration and Production, Banking, Information Technology, Insurance, Telecommunications and Consumer Goods. Selected companies included Reliance Industries, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), HDFC Bank, LIC India, Bharti Airtel and Hindustan Unilever (HUL).

### Data Presentations and Findings

The data presentation has been divided into qualitative and quantitative data analysis.

#### Section 1

##### Qualitative Data Analysis

Brand	Display of Navigation Bar	Nature of Content	Frequency of posting content	Presentation of Content	Publishing and frequency of Sustainability Report
Reliance <a href="https://www.ril.com/">https://www.ril.com/</a>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sustainability <input type="checkbox"/> CSR <input type="checkbox"/> Environment Contribution <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Blog <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual <input type="checkbox"/> Articles and visuals <input type="checkbox"/> Environment Policy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other Explanation: The content is presented in written format. Further subdivisions talk about the various areas and ways Reliance is contributing	<input type="checkbox"/> Once a week <input type="checkbox"/> Bi-weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other Explanation: Reliance's content on environmental contribution has already published, which also consists of the company's vision towards	<input type="checkbox"/> Written and Infographics <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Written and Visuals <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual <input type="checkbox"/> Other Explanation: The communication practices undertaken by Reliance to promote green marketing are well explained with access to some long-term goals the company is undertaking to	Publishing of report <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Frequency of publishing: <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly <input type="checkbox"/> Quarterly <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yearly Explanation: Reliance publishes a sustainable report annually. The last sustainable report published was in the year 2022-23. The report is crucial as it highlights the steps taken by the company on a yearly basis to contribute towards the

		towards the environment, like product stewardship, environmental responsibility, etc. The company also follows an environmental policy that highlights the company’s roles and responsibilities to protect the environment.	attaining its goals.	contribute towards the environment and promote green practices.	environment.
TATA Consultancy Services (TCS) <a href="https://www.tcs.com/">https://www.tcs.com/</a>	<input type="checkbox"/> Sustainability <input type="checkbox"/> CSR <input type="checkbox"/> Environment Contribution <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other Explanation: TATA Consultancy does not have a specific navigation bar to highlight its sustainability initiatives. Rather, it is part of the landing page of the website i.e., upon scrolling down the landing page, there is the	<input type="checkbox"/> Blog <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual <input type="checkbox"/> Articles and visuals <input type="checkbox"/> Environment Policy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other Explanation: The nature of the content is the combination of blogs and environmental policies framed and followed by the company to give back to the environment	<input type="checkbox"/> Once a week, <input type="checkbox"/> Bi-weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other Explanation: No particular timeline is followed for publishing the content on the website; the written part is static and not updated regularly.	<input type="checkbox"/> Written and Infographics <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Written and Visuals <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual <input type="checkbox"/> Other Explanation: The content is in written format.	Publishing of report <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No  Frequency of Publishing: <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly <input type="checkbox"/> Quarterly <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yearly Explanation: After analyzing the website for the sustainability initiatives, it was found that they are publishing sustainability reports on a yearly basis. It was also noted that the last sustainability report was framed and published for the

	heading 'Spotlight on Sustainability,' which consists of the sustainability initiatives by the company.	and become thought leaders in the industry.			year 2018-19.
HDFC Bank <a href="http://www.hdfcbank.com">www.hdfcbank.com</a>	<input type="checkbox"/> Sustainability <input type="checkbox"/> CSR <input type="checkbox"/> Environment Contribution <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other Explanation: HDFC Bank is a leading bank in the banking sector according to the list published by Forbes. Still, the bank has not mentioned anything about its practice of Green Marketing, i.e., it is not presented on the website under any particular navigation bar.	<input type="checkbox"/> Blog <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual <input type="checkbox"/> Articles and visuals <input type="checkbox"/> Environment Policy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other Explanation: Since the bank is not taking any green initiatives, there is no record of the nature of the content published on the company's website related to green marketing.	<input type="checkbox"/> Once a week <input type="checkbox"/> Bi-weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other Explanation: There is no content published on green initiatives by the bank.	<input type="checkbox"/> Written and Infographics <input type="checkbox"/> Written and Visuals <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other Explanation: The bank does not have any record of the green initiatives undertaken, but it does offer a sustainable livelihood scheme that provides banking services to impoverished sectors of society.	Publishing of report <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Frequency of publishing: <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly <input type="checkbox"/> Quarterly <input type="checkbox"/> Yearly Explanation: Since there are no sustainable initiatives, the sustainability report is not published.

<p>LIC India <a href="https://licindia.in/">https://licindia.in/</a></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Sustainability <input type="checkbox"/> CSR <input type="checkbox"/> Environment Contribution <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other Explanation: LIC India is a leading Insurance company in the insurance sector according to the list published by Forbes, but the company has not mentioned its practice of Green Marketing i.e., it is not presented on the website under any particular navigation bar.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Blog <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual <input type="checkbox"/> Articles and visuals <input type="checkbox"/> Environment Policy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other Explanation: Since the company is not taking any green initiatives, there is no record of the nature of the content published on the company's website related to green marketing.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Once a Week <input type="checkbox"/> Bi-weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other Explanation: There is no content published on green initiatives by LIC Indian.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Written and Infographics <input type="checkbox"/> Written and Visuals <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other Explanation: LIC India does not have any record of the green initiatives.</p>	<p>Publishing of report <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Frequency of publishing: <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly <input type="checkbox"/> Quarterly <input type="checkbox"/> Yearly Explanation: Since no sustainable initiatives exist, the sustainability report is not published.</p>
<p>Bharti Airtel <a href="https://www.airtel.in/">https://www.airtel.in/</a></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Sustainability <input type="checkbox"/> CSR <input type="checkbox"/> Environment Contribution <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other Explanation: Bharti Airtel does not have a specific navigation bar to highlight its sustainability initiatives. Rather, it is part of the landing page of the website i.e., upon scrolling down the landing page, there is a 'Find more about</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Blog <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual <input type="checkbox"/> Articles and visuals <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environment Policy <input type="checkbox"/> Other Explanation: The company does not have any blogs, visuals, etc.; rather, it has an environment policy, i.e., a Sustainability procurement report that defines the roles and responsibilities</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Once a week <input type="checkbox"/> Bi-weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other Explanation: The company has an environmental policy that highlights the company's commitment towards the environment, and social inclusion is the cornerstone of Airtel's</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Written and Infographics <input type="checkbox"/> Written and Visuals <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other Explanation: The company does not have any written content; the environmental policies are published in the form of guidelines and procurement reports.</p>	<p>Publishing of report <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Frequency of publishing <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly <input type="checkbox"/> Quarterly <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yearly Explanation: After analysing the website for the sustainability initiatives, it was found that they are</p>

	Airtel' that consists of the sustainability initiatives by the company.	of the company in the environmental sector.	sustainability initiative, which aims to guarantee that an increasing number of people benefit from a sustainable and enriching life.		publishing sustainability reports on a yearly basis. It was also noted that the last sustainability report was framed and published for the year FY 2022-23.
Hindustan Unilever (HUL) <a href="http://www.unilever.com">www.unilever.com</a>	<input type="checkbox"/> Sustainability <input type="checkbox"/> CSR <input type="checkbox"/> Environment Contribution <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other Explanation: The navigation bar to represent the green marketing practices has been shown in the navigation bar 'Planet & Society', which is further divided into multiple tabs, the tabs which promoting the practice of Green Marketing are Climate Action, Protect and regenerate nature and Waste-free world.	<input type="checkbox"/> Blog <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual <input type="checkbox"/> Articles and visuals <input type="checkbox"/> Environment Policy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other Explanation: The content is presented using written blogs and articles along with visuals. The website shows green marketing practices in different formats like blogs, illustrations, visuals etc.	<input type="checkbox"/> Once a week <input type="checkbox"/> Bi-weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other Explanation: The content on an environmental contribution by HUL is already published, which also consists of the company's past projects contributing towards the environment and present steps it is taking to maintain the Green Marketing brand list	<input type="checkbox"/> Written and Infographics <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Written and Visuals <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual <input type="checkbox"/> Other Explanation: The communication Practices undertaken by HUL to promote green marketing are well explained with access to goals the company is undertaking to contribute towards the environment and promote green practices. The brand is committed to long-term value creation	Publishing of report <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Frequency of publishing: <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly <input type="checkbox"/> Quarterly <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yearly Explanation: HUL publishes a Sustainability report yearly. The latest report was published in FY 2022-23.



				for all our stakeholders and our philosophy has always been about incorporating the right environmental, social and governance practices to ensure a sustainable future.	
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**Analysis**

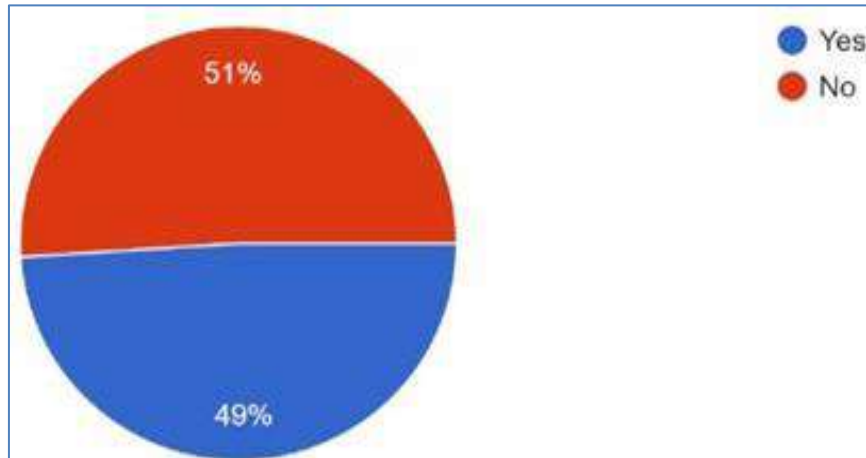
From the above content analysis, it can be concluded that out of the six selected companies, two companies, HDFC and LIC, have not highlighted their sustainability practices on their website. The other two selected companies, TCS and Bharti Airtel, do not have an exclusive navigation bar for their sustainability practices. Companies like HUL and Reliance have an exclusive navigation bar highlighting their green practices. The format companies use to communicate their green marketing practices was presented with visuals accompanied by written content. Like Hindustan Unilever published an article titled ‘Protect and Regenerate Nature,’ where the company highlighted its ESG goals and sustainable production of fruits and vegetables. The company stated that, in 2022 tomatoes used in its Kissan Ketchup were sustainably and locally sourced. In contrast, few companies presented written content with a combination of well-framed environmental policies. Reliance has mentioned two policies titled Environment Policy and Health, Safety and Environment Policy. These policies highlighted the company's role towards sustainability. Also, Reliance has an internationally accepted manufacturing Environmental Management System. The researchers have observed that the content on the websites of all six companies is predominantly static. Additionally, of the six companies examined, four consistently publish sustainability reports on an annual basis, indicating a commitment to green marketing practices. In contrast, the remaining two companies, HDFC and LIC, have not mentioned anything about their Green Marketing initiatives on their website.

## Section 2

### Quantitative Data Analysis

Researchers have collected quantitative data by surveying 100 sample units.

#### 1. Awareness among youth about Green Marketing



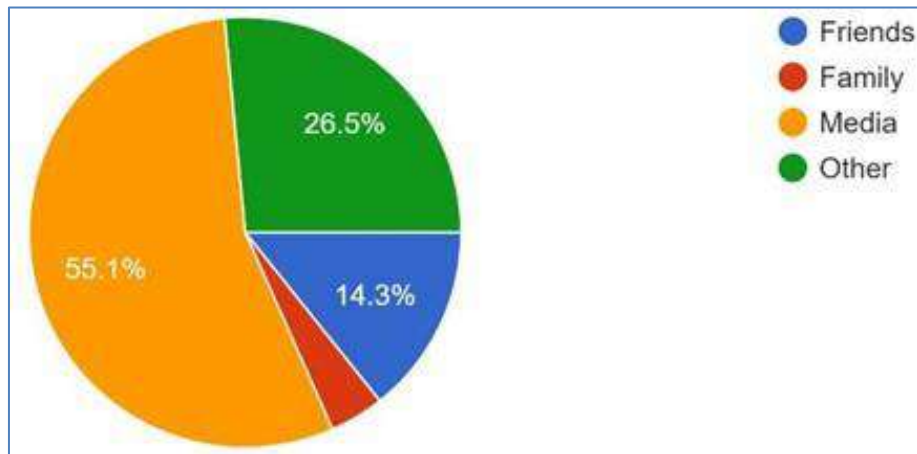
Out of 100 respondents, 49 respondents (49%) are familiar with the concept of Green Marketing, while 51 respondents (51%) are unaware of the concept of Green Marketing.

#### 2. Respondents' understanding of Green Marketing

S. No.	Youths' understanding	No. of Respondents
1	Sustainability	24
2	Eco-friendly/environment friendly	17
3	Products with environmental benefits	3
4	Promoting Green	2
5	Reduce carbon footprint	2
6	Environment Sustainability	1

The above table showcased respondents' understanding of the concept of Green Marketing. The analysis showed that most respondents, i.e., 24 respondents, believed Green Marketing is associated with sustainability, and 17 respondents equated it with eco-friendly efforts.

### 3. Respondents' source to know about Green Marketing



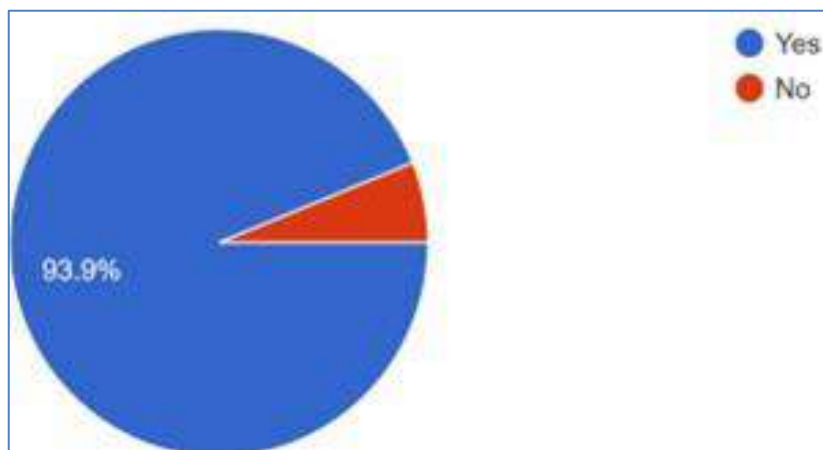
The above pie chart found that 55.1% of respondents came to know about the concept of Green Marketing through Media. While 26.5% of respondents knew about the concept from other sources, only 14.3 % knew through friends.

### 4. Brands practicing Green Marketing

S. No.	Brands /Companies	No. of respondents
1	Mama Earth	13
2	Starbucks	9
3	IKEA	8
4	Hindustan Unilever/Unilever	8
5	Nike	8
6	Apple	6

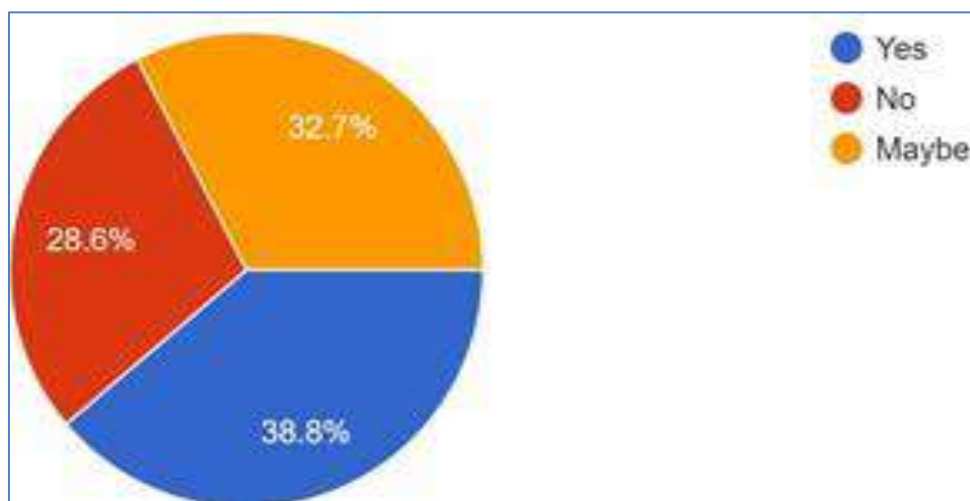
The respondents were asked if they knew companies and brands that indulged in Green Marketing. It was found that all the respondents knew about only brands practising Green Marketing. As many as 13 respondents mentioned Mama Earth as a practitioner of GreenMarketing, while eight respondents each mentioned IKEA, HUL and Nike, nine mentioned Starbucks, and 6 mentioned Apple.

## 5. Contribution of Green Products towards Environment



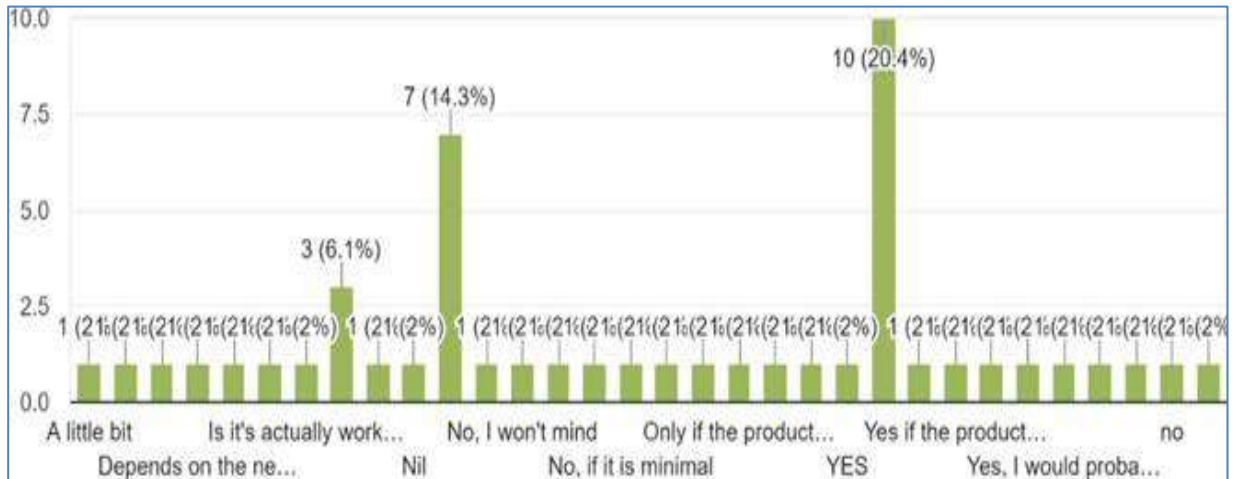
The survey found that 93.9% of respondents thought that green products are crucial and contribute to the environment and that launching more green products can conserve the environment.

## 6. Advertisement (s) related to Green Marketing



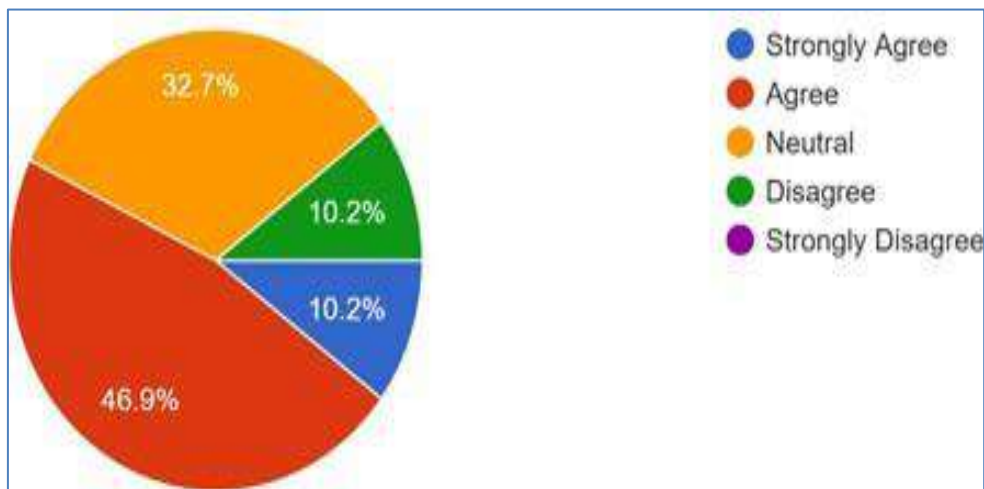
It was found that 38.8% of respondents have come across an advertisement related to Green Marketing and 28.6% have never come across any advertisement regarding the same.

**7. Readiness to pay extra for green products**



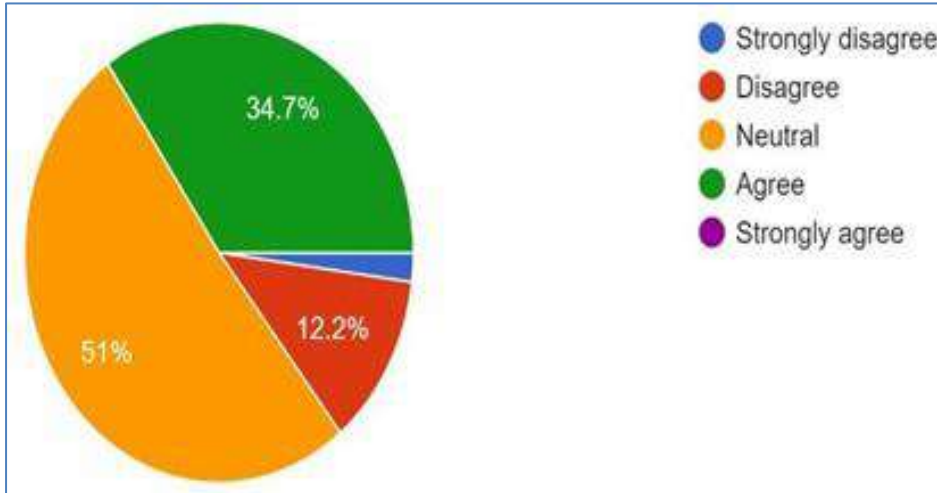
According to the data gathered from respondents about their willingness to pay extra for green products, it can be drawn out that 40.81% said that they are willing to pay extra for green products and think that these products will contribute towards the environment. Opinion regarding techniques harming the Environment.

**8. Performance of green products and services**



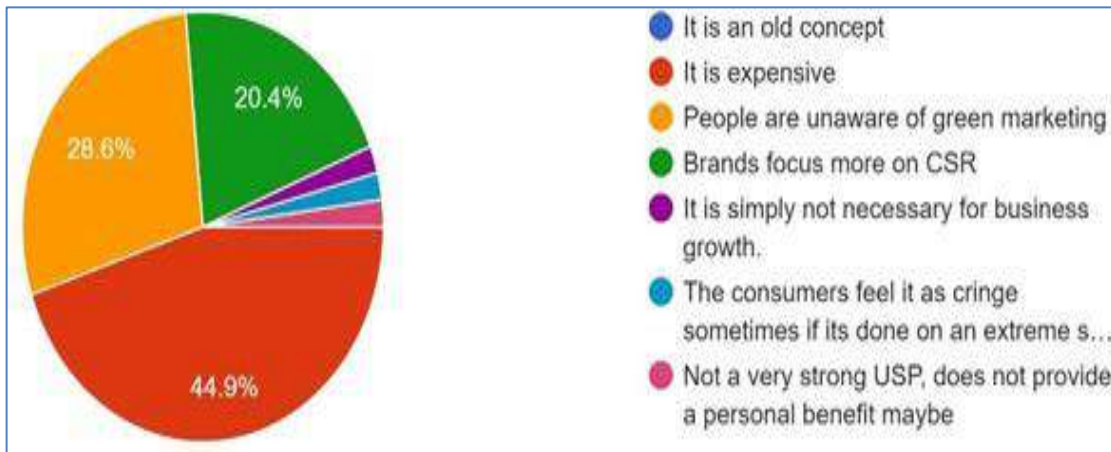
According to the above pie chart, 46.9% thought that regular marketing techniques harm the environment and can lead to harmful environmental conditions. At the same time, 32.7 % of respondents are neutral regarding the same.

**9. Reason behind fewer companies/brands practicing green marketing**



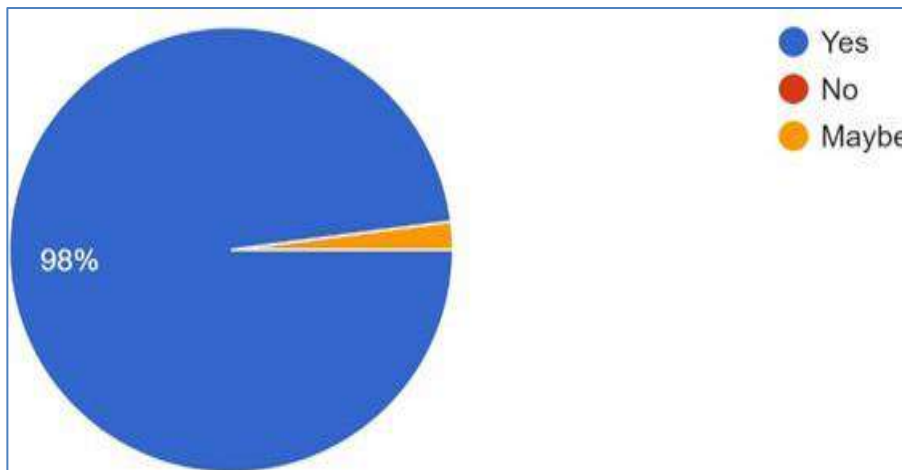
As per the collected data, it was found that the majority of respondents (51%) did not have any opinion regarding the performance of green products as compared to conventional products.

**10. Government should take steps to promote Green Marketing**



The above pie chart showcased that the majority of the respondents, 44.9%, felt that green products are expensive and 28.6% felt that people still are not aware of green marketing and products and the other 20.4 % felt that brands focus more on doing CSR activities rather than practising green marketing.

**11. Measures that the government or brands or companies cantake in order to promote green marketing**



The survey found that 98 % of the respondents thought that the government shouldtake all steps to promote Green Marketing.

**12. Measures that the government or brands or companies cantake in order to promote green marketing**

S. No.	Strategies for green marketing	No. of Respondents
1.	Awareness Campaigns	11
2.	Incentives	6
3.	Tax concessions	6
4.	Green product/services advertisementson different media platforms	5
5.	Education among people	3

The above analysis revealed that a total of 11 respondents thought that Green Marketing might be promoted through awareness campaigns; six respondents each felt that incentives must be given to companies or bands regarding their green endeavours,and also, tax concessions may be another effort for the same. Five respondents felt that the frequency of advertisements regarding green products and services may beincreased, and only three respondents thought of educating people regarding the same.

### **Conclusion, Limitations and Suggestions**

The research study titled, Green Marketing: A Study of Communicative Practices Adopted by Indian Companies and Awareness Level among Youth, examined the communicative practices adopted by Indian Companies, enlisted by Forbes according to their market valuation and also assessed the awareness level of Youth regarding the concept of Green Marketing. The content analysis was done of the top six Indian companies based on market valuation from different sectors, including Oil Exploration and Production, Banking, Information Technology, Insurance, Telecommunications and Consumer Goods. The findings revealed several crucial insights. The study identified various communicative practices companies employ, including the sustainable navigation bar, Environment Policy, Corporate Social Responsibility, and Sustainability Report as part of their Green Marketing initiatives and sustainable efforts. It was also concluded that two of the six selected companies, HDFC and LIC, have not highlighted their sustainability practices on their website. The other two selected companies, TCS and Bharti Airtel, do not have an exclusive navigation bar for their sustainability practices. These practices are crucial in promoting green products and services, influencing consumer behaviour and raising environmental awareness. Additionally, of the six companies examined, four consistently publish sustainability reports on an annual basis, indicating a commitment to green marketing practices. In contrast, the remaining two companies, HDFC and LIC, have not mentioned anything about their green marketing practices on their website.

The study found that the youth's awareness level regarding green products and services. The researchers have found that out of 100 respondents, only 49% were aware of green marketing; the other 51% were unaware of the concept. However, the respondents who were aware of the concept lacked a basic understanding of the concept of Green Marketing and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). For instance, according to 13 respondents, Mama Earth is a brand that practices Green Marketing and contributes to the environment by growing trees, which, according to them, is a green practice rather than a CSR practice by brand. It was found that 40.81% of respondents said they are willing to pay extra for green products and think they will contribute to the environment. The maximum number of respondents felt that through awareness campaigns and educational drives, green marketing could occupy a space in every person's mind, which would, in turn, help conserve the environment.

Even though a lot of discussions and discourses are happening around the globe, however, if we consider this study, Green Marketing is still in its infancy. The survey data analysis found that even youth need more clarity on the said concept. Many were unaware of the advertisement(s) promoting green practices. This study highlighted the importance of effective communicative practices in Green Marketing by companies and the need to enhance awareness among Youth.

Companies must be more creative in their communication practices to create environmentally conscious consumers. By leveraging innovative strategies and collaborations, companies can inspire positive behavioural change and promote sustainable consumption patterns. Ultimately, such efforts can contribute to a more environmentally conscious society and pave the way for a greener and more sustainable future. Regarding limitations, researchers could have more respondents as part of their sample size to draw a broader understanding of Green Marketing.



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## **Small and Unique Yet Overlooked: Dilemma of Media Coverage of Fiji on Global Stage: Mainstream Vs Alternative Media**

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### **Abstract**

The image of a particular country in the eyes of the people at the international level depends largely on the portrayal of that country in the mass media. Introduction of new information technologies and advances in communication has greatly enhanced the scope of international communication moving beyond government-to-government and including business-to-business and people-to-people interactions at a global level. The messages conveyed by news media organizations of a particular country not only inform its citizens about the significant events and issues in their localities, but also shape their understanding and opinion of significant events and issues in the foreign countries. Shaping people's global context through various political, economic, social, and cultural factors, international media such as the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), The Cable News Network (CNN), Common Dreams and the Real News Network have expanded their coverage over the years by including coverage of countries various other regions.

The aim of this paper is to analyze how Fiji's national image is represented by international mainstream media and independent media with specific focus on BBC News website, The Cable News Network (CNN), Common Dreams and the Real News Network website coverage of Fiji in the last 12 months that is from July, 2022 to June, 2023. The purpose of choosing the last 12 months is to allow a detailed analysis and because Fiji held its 2022 general elections and representatives from various media organizations were present in the country for its coverage. The focus of this paper will also be towards examining the degree to which news about Fiji was published on BBC News (a mainstream media) and The Real News Network (an independent, non-profit news organization). The paper will also provide a comparative analysis of the coverage by both the media (mainstream and alternative).

**Keywords:** Alternative media, mainstream media, agenda setting, cultivation theory, editorial focus, under-representation.

### **Introduction**

The world of mass media has been evolving overtime leading to the introduction of many new and diverse sources of news for people to access and interpret the world around. While the expansion of mass media has provided undeniable social, economic and political advantages, it has also resulted in misinformation, prevalence of large number of fake news, people having too much information making it difficult for them to adequately understand an issue or make effective decisions particularly about events occurring in developing countries like Fiji. Recognized for their timely and trustworthy news coverage, international media such as the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), CNN, Common Dreams and the Real News Network have expanded their reach over the years by including coverage of countries from various other regions.

The health of the population, the environment and the economy of a small developing country such as Fiji is substantially affected by decision and actions of the rest of the world. Despite its significant role, the country only continues to attract the attention of international media during major crisis which leads to misrepresentation and lack of information for the public to learn about its region. For instance, based on the publication of the past news articles by BBC News, it can be noted that issues related to climate change, politics, and sports were given high priority. However, every month reflected different rations of news coverage in regard to these four categories.

Pacific Island countries such as Fiji are provided minimal space in the international media space with only issues such as its vulnerabilities to climate change and politics being largely covered. Located in the South Pacific Ocean about 3,000 kilometers east of Australia and 2,000 km north of New Zealand, Fiji Islands have a population of about 900,000 people. The country is seen to be attracting the attention of international media mostly during the times of crisis such as political crises, major cyclones or economic downfalls. Therefore, the paper focuses on examining the types of news that were given priority by international mainstream media and independent media, analyzing the language, image used in the news articles about Fiji and examining the degree to which the news about Fiji was published by the mainstream media and independent news organization. It also explores the factors which help in determining the coverage of news from Fiji by both media organizations to explore if the coverage by the international media provides an accurate picture of the issues in Fiji or alternative media too has a relevant role to play.

### **Review of Literature**

Media plays a vital role shaping people's global context and perspectives through various political, economic, social, and cultural factors. Developing countries are reflected to be occupying maximum space for political topics or during crisis such as natural disasters, which provides a distorted picture of developing countries like Fiji. This paper delves into the role of global media in shaping the public perceptions, symbiotic relationship between media and democracy and the contradiction between mainstream and alternative media coverage. International media tend to favor coverage of first-world nations, perpetuating stereotypes and providing limited visibility to developing countries, particularly focusing on conflict and crises. Moreover, while mainstream media set the agenda and prioritize certain narratives, alternative media serve as corrective measures, offering diverse perspectives and addressing underrepresented issues. While several research papers have explored the coverage of news from Fiji, there exists a significant gap in understanding the disparity in media coverage of Fiji in the international media and their editorial priorities in regards to reporting on issues related to Fiji.

### **I. The Role of Global Media in Shaping Perceptions**

Media coverage is a crucial element in fostering peace and establishing the identity of a country. The media coverage plays a key role in the dissemination of information to a wider audience especially to the individuals who do not have the opportunity to witness the events that occur hundreds of miles away from them. Information circulated through mass media and a person's opinions are interrelated since mass media greatly influences the people's perception about policies, law or action (Grossman, 2022). According to Rooh Ullah and Adnam Khan (2020), the greatest power of media in this 21<sup>st</sup> century is persuasion whereby it presents stories and information in such a manner, that the general public are persuaded to buy what they are being told by the media. Therefore, over the years, media

outlets have gained control over the value judgements of the citizens who are unable to distinguish between what is right or wrong (Petrova, 2017).

In the current period where every day there are different incidents taking place which affect all countries either directly or indirectly, it is essential for the citizens to be informed, educated and equipped with a balanced perspective by weighing all angles of those incidents. Media provides all the necessary details to the masses so that they are aware of everything that is taking place around the world (Khan, 2020). Media shapes the public opinion by publicizing certain stories or stressing certain aspects of an incident (Khan, 2020). Through media, people get the opportunity to learn several things and are provided with timely and accurate information about the events that occurred abroad or domestically. Media is a powerful weapon that can change people's perspectives and beliefs; therefore, it is important for the media organizations to be transparent and unbiased in their reporting (Hamada, 2018). As evident in the media coverage of the ongoing Israeli and Palestinian conflict, several organizations have been alleged to be providing a biased coverage which is influencing people's opinion and understanding about the conflict (Nashed, 2023).

The dominance of the global media by the west is reflected in the representation of developing countries in the western news media. For instance, Europeans and Americans primarily encounter Africa through stereotypes and myths. Many Westerners view Africa as primarily a 'jungle or desert landscape where the people speak unintelligible languages. Africans are thought to live in rural areas, practice strange customs, and fight pointless battles against each other' (Harth, 2012). These representations provide a vague image of Africa which are influenced by several myths and stereotypes practiced over the years.

Global media and media as a whole, greatly affects and shapes people's perceptions as it can be widely accepted that an individual's understanding about an event happening all around the world is shaped particularly by how the event is projected by the news media outlets (Myers, 1999). Adjacent to the cultivation theory, media greatly shapes one's perceptions which determine their actions (Brichacek, 2018). Cultivation theory holds that the "popular media, such as television, has the power to influence our view about the world and it is "primarily responsible for our perceptions of day-to-day norms and reality (Dominic A. Infante, 1997)." Therefore, media influences public opinion as it brings simulated reality into citizens lives which leads them to rely on those sources or information that provide a conceptualized image of the real world (Fields, 2006).

### **I. International Media Coverage of Developing Countries**

Generally, international news is seen to be "quantitatively dominated by and qualitatively favorable to first world nations while it is unfavorable to developing and underdeveloped nations" such as Fiji (Galtung and Ruge 1965; Masmoudi 1979). The coverage patterns of developing nations are characterized by low visibility, stereotypes and generalizations (Ketter, 2016). The coverage by international media often provide a distorted impression about other countries particularly developing nations as they tend to concentrate more on events that center on conflict, such as military coups, civil wars, or genocide and major catastrophes (Ketter, 2016). Golding and Elliott (2018) have argued that most of the coverage of developing nations is centered around repetitive crisis or military conflict. Extensive coverage on conflicts and crisis in developing countries confirms the twelve factors

examined by Galtung and Ruge (1965) that make an international event newsworthy. The twelve factors include frequency, threshold, unambiguity, meaningfulness, consonance, unexpectedness, continuity, composition, reference to elite nations, reference to elite people, reference to persons, and reference to something negative (Golding, 2018). These concepts have been evident in international media organization's coverage of Fiji as they have provided more attention to news about crisis, politics (involving the Prime Minister and other politicians), crime and climate change other than those relevant for public engagement and welfare.

Despite not being able to provide the coverage of all the countries every day, many international news media organizations at times provide a distorted picture about the people and the events in the developing nations (International Association for Mass Communication Research, 1985). As explained through the theory of agenda settings, news reporters and editors shape the public's knowledge of events by allowing some stories to pass through the system via gatekeeping while keeping others out (Mccombs, 2018). Agenda setting theory accounts for the connection between the rate at which media covers an event and the extent to which the public and policymakers will consider that event to be important (Fay Lomax Cook, 1983). According to Shaw and McCombs (1977), the most important effect of the mass media is its ability to mentally order and organize our world. The practice of news media organizations making conscious and unconscious decisions about what is newsworthy and what is not reflects the agenda setting theory which is parallel to gate-keeping. This gatekeeping process results in a global news system that over-represents particular issues and countries while underrepresenting others (Canada, 2017). For instance, core nations such as US, China, Russia and Germany are more likely to receive coverage from the international media while small developing county like Africa and LatinAmerica have very less low coverage in the international media (Harvey, 2012).

## **II. Alternative Media Coverage and Democracy**

Confined with laws, organizational biases and ownership conflicts, journalists often have to juggle in choosing the type of news they want to cover for publication purposes. Alternative media, on the other hand, provides the general citizens the lens to view both sides of an event, policy or an action (Francis, 2021). In some cases where the mainstream news media are only justifying or glorifying one side of a story or action, independent media act as watchdogs to ensure accountability and transparency by shedding light on the consequences of an action on general public (Forum, n.d.).

Accessing news from alternative media along with mainstream news media has allowed readers to know the various perspectives and analyze the situation or event accordingly before making any decisions or conclusions (Francis, 2021). Citizens tend to be more empowered by getting information from different sources as they understand topics comprehensively which diminishes the possibility of biases.

## **III. Dichotomy of Views: Mainstream vs Alternative**

Over the years, the increasing number of alternative news media online has positioned themselves as correctives to the content provided by the mainstream media (Kim Andersen, 2023). At times, alternative media disseminate content that stands in opposition to the content portrayed by mainstream news media as they aim for social and political reforms (Kim Andersen, 2023). The emergence of online alternative news sites such as on social networking sites have allowed people to participate,

access different perspectives relating to their social and political identities and fill the gap created by the mainstream media coverage.

One of the key examples of same events covered differently by the mainstream and alternative news media was the coverage of the 2020-2021 farmers protest in India. Most of the mainstream media provided coverage on the farmer's methods while the issues raised by the farmers were provided less emphasis. The protest did not much outreach through digital and social media which created a gap in the information transmitted to the public as the mainstream media's coverage formed the primary narrative of the protest (Sharma, 2022). The mainstream media was observed to be "discrediting the farmers' protest and work in favor of the ruling party and corporations" (Sharma, 2022). On the other hand, a newspaper run mainly by volunteers named *Trolley Times* provided a deep coverage into the political and historical context surrounding the protest. It profiled the protest leaders, the farmers' issues and other elements which were neglected by the mainstream media in India (Philip, 2021).

Furthermore, mainstream media has been referred to as the agenda setting media as they are equipped with big resources and they set the framework in which everyone operates (Chomsky, 1997). The ownership of mainstream media plays a critical role in determining the type of content distributed which mostly serves the interest of the dominant ideologies of the system (Chamola, 2020). During the Lok Sabha election in 2014, Indian Prime minister Narendra Modi and his Bharatiya Janata Party got more than a third of all prime-time television which was considered the highest coverage compared to other politicians or parties contesting the election, therefore, the votes of these citizens who were entirely dependent on these television channels for news might have been influenced by the content as news coverage enhanced the 'accessibility of beliefs about an issue in citizens' memories, which automatically increased their impact on relevant judgments' (S., 2014) (Krosnick, 2000).

On the contrary, defined as "another possibility to the mainstream media", alternative media has helped in feeding the public with relevant information and different perspectives when the mainstream media has discontent and dissatisfaction (University). In relation to the gatekeeping theory, alternative media has allowed different opinions to surface which has been rejected or downplayed by the mainstream media. Alternative media are often directed at communities, they address topics aimed at defending human rights and issues that are not addressed by mainstream media, such as the agenda of people with disabilities, the homeless, the LGBTQI+ community, minority ethnic groups, and women. The representation of subjects and communities which find less space in mainstream media appears as necessary for greater participation and social change (Jorge, 2021). For instance, *Green Left Weekly*, an Australian on- and offline publication, covers climate change quite differently than *The Age*, a daily newspaper in Australia whereby the *Green Left Weekly* 'focused their discussion of climate change principally on the projected 40 to 50 per cent of all food wasted in the United States, while *The Age* remained fixated on the possibility of increased carbon taxes for local businesses (Kenix, 2011).' As most of the alternative news media are operating as independent bodies, non-profit media organizations or depend on the financial support from its viewers and readers, they prioritize their news coverage and mostly cover stories that attracts or interests wider range of audience. Therefore, with adequate funding, resources and ability to reach diverse audience, mainstream media provides wider coverage of an issue which leads to information gap between the alterative news media and mainstream news media.



### **Methodology and Data Collection**

In this research, a mixture of quantitative research approach and qualitative research approach was adapted and practiced to provide a comprehensive comparison of the international mainstream media and alternative media's reporting on Fiji.

Under the quantitative research approach, both content and discourse analysis were incorporated to identify the frequencies and recurring words, concepts and the types of images used in the news articles regarding Fiji. Through the discourse analysis the usage of words, images or language identified under the content analysis were justified and explained how it constructed the image of the country in the eyes of the readers/ audience.

Under the qualitative research approach, the manner in which each media organization portrayed Fiji was analyzed. Through critical analysis of the language and images used in each article, I identified how accurately the information and image of Fiji was portrayed by the mainstream media and alternative media. Through the qualitative element, I assessed the positive, negative or neutral coverage, as the public image of a country is shaped not only by the amount of coverage but also by its tone; such as how developing countries like Fiji are presented in the news media.

These methods enabled not only an empirical assessment but also the determination of which news are provided priority and the gaps in the coverage by both the media organizations (mainstream and alternative media).

The methodology included the content analysis of the electronic media's coverage of Fiji with specific focus on the news articles published by BBC, The Real News Network, Common Dreams and CCN. To identify and understand the common themes and specific concerns regarding the coverage over matters related to Fiji, code sheet was prepared to identify the major subjects, frequency of those subjects and to interpret the difference in both the media organization's coverage.

### **Period of Study**

The study period ran from July, 2022 to June, 2023 with specific focus on BBC News website, The Cable News Network (CNN), Common Dreams and the Real News Network website coverage of Fiji. The purpose of choosing these 12-month period was to allow a detailed analysis and because Fiji held its 2022 general elections on December 14 and representatives from various media organizations were present in the country for its coverage.

### **What was Included in the Data**

As a measure of objectivity, balance and fairness in Fiji's news coverage, the analysis includes all the news stories related to Fiji published including the opinion pieces. Focusing on international news media website, I confined my study to BBC, CNN, The Real News Network and Common Dreams as the aim was to focus on major international media organizations based mainly in the United States and United Kingdom. I only used news stories published by these news media organizations as data because the newsroom exercises total editorial control and responsibility over news headlines, images and story angle.

### **ANALYSIS OF DATA AND OBSERVATIONS**

**News Articles Published By BBC, The Real News Network, Common Dreams and CCN Between July 2022 and June 2023.**

**Figure 1:** This code sheet identifies the major subjects; frequency of the subjects published and interprets the difference in both the media organization’s coverage.

Mainstream Media								
Serial no.	Headline of the Story	Name of the Source	Source type	Category	Keyword	Frequency	Code	Remarks
1	Commonwealth Games 2022: Fiji's Rugby Sevens team start UK training camp	BBC News	Mainstream	Sports	Commonwealth Games	0.067	S1_C1_Sports	As the game was held on global stage, the team was provided coverage, however this was only news about the Fijian team.
2	Pacific Islands urge unity in face of China ambition	BBC News	Mainstream	Climate Change	Pacific Islands Forum (PIF)	0.53	S2_C2_Cimate Change	The stories published lacked key descriptions about Fiji as it placed more emphasis on the influence of China on the Pacific region particularly Kiribati and its relationship with US.
3	Fiji PM's son charged with domestic violence in Australia	BBC News	Mainstream	Politics	Domestic Violence	0.27	S3_C3_Politics	Only the negative news about the Prime Minister was published.
4	Pacific Island Fiji aims for a high-tech future	BBC News	Mainstream	Business	High-tech future	0.067	S4_C6_Business	It was positive coverage as it highlighted the country's growth and how it is adapting to the latest technological advancements.
5	Fiji's main political rivals deadlocked after parliamentary election	BBC News	Mainstream	Politics	Parliamentary Election	0.27	S5_C5_Politics	It only covered the results, which lacked adequate information for the readers to understand the situation comprehensively.
6	Fiji election: PM Bainimarama out as opposition reaches coalition deal	BBC News	Mainstream	Politics	Coalition deal	0.27	S6_C5_Politics	Selective in coverage as they did not cover the events such as election preparation process, blackout period, voter's turnout and the human-interest stories for example the general public's reaction on the final outcome of the election.
7	Australian boy, 8, dies of suspected electrocution at Fiji resort	BBC News	Mainstream	Crime	Suspected electrocution	0.067	S7_C1_Crime	This story was only covered because it inclu a person from an international country.
8	The US steps up its game as China circles the Pacific	CNN	Mainstream	Climate Change	US steps- up	0.53	S9_C2_Climate Change	
9	This has quickly become the key issue at COP27 – and the most difficult to resolve.	CNN	Mainstream	Climate Change	COP27	0.53	S10_C4_Climate Change	The article did not provide a thorough insight of how the country is struggling to cope with the effects of climate change.
10	Opinion: What 2022's elections taught me about humanity, politics and 'magic sauce'	CNN	Mainstream	Politics	Magic sauce	0.27	S11_C4_Politics	The article lacked more details about the country as it was an opinion piece about the general election.

8	The US steps up its game as China circles the Pacific	CNN	Mainstream	Climate Change	US step-up	0.53	S9_C2_Climate Change	
9	This has quickly become the key issue at COP27 – and the most difficult to resolve.	CNN	Mainstream	Climate Change	COP27	0.53	S10_C4_Climate Change	The article did not provide a thorough insight of how the country is struggling to cope with the effects of climate change.
10	Opinion: What 2022's elections taught me about humanity, politics and 'magic sauce'	CNN	Mainstream	Politics	Magic sauce	0.27	S11_C4_Politics	The article lacked more details about the country as it was an opinion piece about the general election.
11	How to help Pacific islanders cope with climate change and protect the environment	CNN	Mainstream	Climate Change	Cope	0.53	S12_C5_Climate Change	The article accommodated most of the Pacific Island countries affected by climate change and the organizations working to help the countries cope with the effects so Fiji was provided a small space highlighting the words of the
<b>Alternative Media</b>								
12	Amid Pakistan wreckage, UN chief warns against 'sleepwalking toward' planetary 'destruction'	The Real News Network	Alternative	Climate Change	Planetary destruction	0.53	S8_C2_Climate Change	It was not an original piece by The Real News Network which indicated their lack of interest in the country.
13	Not a Blacklist? But a 'Whitewash': EU Starred for Letting Tax Havens Off the Hook	Common Dreams	Alternative	Economy	Tax Havens	0.67	S13_C1_Economy	Only the name of the country "Fiji" was mentioned in the article to indicate that it remained part of the EU's list of non-cooperative jurisdictions for tax purposes
14	As COP27 Failure Looms, Climate Movement Demands 'Phase Out All Fossil Fuels'	Common Dreams	Alternative	Climate Change	Failure	0.53	S14_C2_Climate Change	Lacked sufficient coverage as to how Fiji was working towards reducing the fossil fuel emissions
15	Six Island Nations Commit to 'Fossil Fuel-Free Pacific,' Demand Global Just Transition	Common Dreams	Alternative	Climate Change	Fossil Fuel-Free Pacific Demand	0.53	S15_C2_Climate Change	Only the name of the country was mentioned.
16	Fiji Joins Call for Global Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty at UN Climate Talks	Common Dreams	Alternative	Climate Change	Joins call	0.53	S16_C2_Climate Change	The article described how the country is suffering because of the effects of climate change. The pleasing thing in this article was the use of the image from the Togora village which emphasized the impact of climate change as it showed how one graveyard has immersed underwater currently because of climate change.

Figure 1: News articles published by BBC, The Real News Network, Common Dreams and CCN from July 2022 to June 2023 to identify the common words and the frequency of the subjects covered.

## Coverage of Different Themes by Mainstream Media and Alternative Media

**Figure 2: Themes Covered by Mainstream Media** **Figure 3: Themes Covered by Alternative Media**

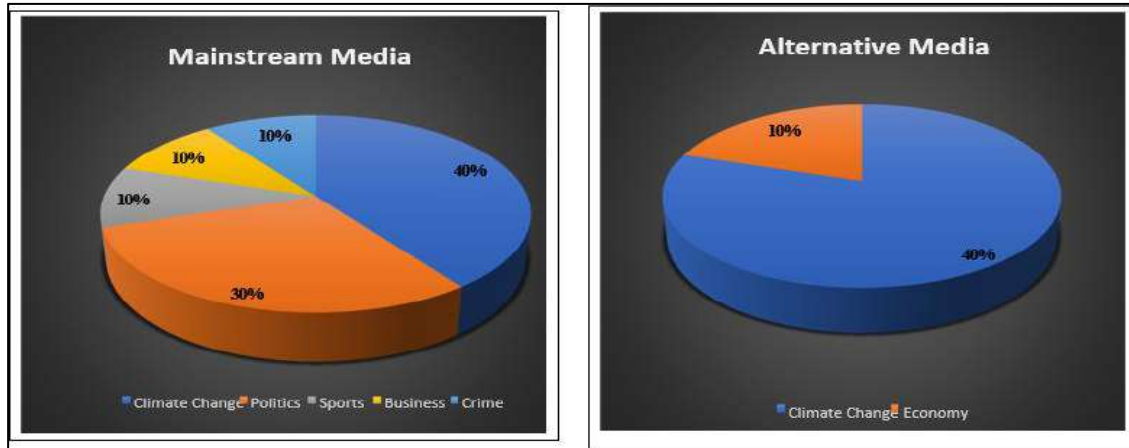


Figure 2: Major themes covered by BBC and CNN. Figure 3: Major themes covered by The Real News Network and Common Dream

### Result

This section provides a critical analysis of the lexical, language and the images used in the articles published by BBC, CNN, The Real News Network and Common Dreams regarding Fiji. It identifies the types of adjectives and connotations used to describe the political parties or leaders along with the significance of the images used.

### Mainstream Media

#### I. *The British Broadcasting Corporation*

The BBC News published a total of seven news stories on its website from Fiji between July 2022 and June, 2023.

##### 1. Politics

- Lexical Use

**Headline 1:** “Fiji election: PM Bainimarama out as opposition reaches coalition deal”

- **Sub-heading:** “Fijian opposition parties have reached a deal to form a new coalition government, ending Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama's nearly 16-year rule”
- **Keywords:** coalition, alliance, government, people, party

**Headline 2:** “Fiji's main political rivals deadlocked after parliamentary election.”

- **Sub-heading:** “Fiji's two main rival political parties headed by former coup leaders are deadlocked after Wednesday's general election, final results show.”

- **Keywords:** coup, results, party, liberal.

The use of negative connotations such as ‘rule, loss, deadlocked and rivals’ in the headline paints a negative picture of Prime Minister Voreqe Bainimarama reflecting his loss. These words construct a bad image about Mr Bainimarama and its governance over the years, while the use of word such as “rival” reflect the relationship between the two parties which can influence the readers or the supporters of those parties to act in the similar manner such as regard the opposing political party supporters as their rivals.

The headline of these two articles informs the readers about the event and the location that is discussed in the article which is “Fiji election”. The other information summarizes the main outcome of the election which answers the what, who, why questions and attracts the reader’s attention urging them to read further.

### **Headline 3:** Fiji PM's son charged with domestic violence in Australia.

In this news story, the journalist uses the element of prominence that is by identifying the relation between the Prime Minister Voreqe Bainimarama and the person charged. This arouses more interest and curiosity among the readers as the Prime Minister is the person of interest.

- **Keywords:** Case, offences, suppression, order, Fijian
- **Use of Adjectives**

Use of phrase such as ‘former coup leaders’ places more emphasis on the person that is been described which leads to readers referring back to the Coup that happened in the country and relating its consequences on the people. Describing Mr. Rabuka as the former coup leader helps the readers get a better view and also get additional knowledge about him.

In choosing the title, journalist Kathryn Armstrong used these interesting and eye-catching words to attract the reader’s attention and invite the FijiFirst and opposition party supporters, critics and international readers be informed and critically analyze the news which reduces hoax and hate speech.

- **Images**



Source: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-64037094>

The news article "Fiji election: PM Bainimarama out as opposition reaches coalition deal." Used the image of the former Prime Minister Voreqe Bainimarama along with with two Police officers on both the sides.



The second news article “Fiji's main political rivals deadlocked after parliamentary election” showed the

Source: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-64015600>

Images can convey a message quickly. For instance, the first news article highlights that the former Prime Minister of the country had lost his position, which can be interpreted by the image where he is guided by the Police Officers.

The second article provides context to the news story and by the use of the picture of the woman with Fijian hair style, it tells the readers the location of the story. Showing a woman casting a vote also informs the readers that the article is about elections.

## 2. Sports

**Headline:** Commonwealth Games 2022: Fiji's Rugby Sevens team start UK training camp

- **Subheading:** The head coach of Fiji's men's Rugby Sevens squad says the three-times runners-up are not feeling pressure as they bid to win a first Commonwealth gold medal.
- **Keywords:** Commonwealth, gold, coach, team, rugby sevens.

In this article, reporter used the picture of two Fiji Sevens team players with their gold medals, therefore it is a positive story and it reflects that Fiji Sevens team is dedicated to winning another gold medal at the Commonwealth Games. The use of the two players with their gold medals also informs the audience that the team had won Olympic gold medalists in Rugby Sevens previously.

## 3. Climate Change

**Heading:** Pacific Islands urge unity in face of China ambition

- **Keywords:** China, climate, security, Pacific
- **Lexical Use**

The article was about the 51st Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) Leaders Meeting which was held in Fiji from July 11 to 14. The use of words such as “unity” and “face” indicates a call for action to combat or overcome a negative action which is the influence of China on the Pacific.

The use of word such as ‘face’ in the headline paints a negative picture of China. This word constructs a bad image about China and its presence in the Pacific, while the use of word such as “urge”, “unity” reflects the ways the Pacific Island nations can reduce China’s presence and influence on the Pacific.

- **Images**



In this article, the reporter used multiple pictures such as of Solomon Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare, US Vice President Kamala Harris and of the sea, however the leading picture used was of a selfie picture taken by Australia PM Anthony Albanese with the Pacific Island leaders. The picture reflected positivity which related with the headline that called for the Pacific Island leaders to unite.

#### 4. Crime

**Heading:** Australian boy, 8, dies of suspected electrocution at Fiji resort

- **Lexical Use**
- **Keywords:** Fiji, Police, family, resort.

The headline of the article informs the readers about the event and the location that is discussed in the article which is “suspected electrocution”. The use of the word “Australian boy” identifies the victim and emphasizes that a child lost his life in a foreign country. The other information answers the what, why questions and attracts the reader’s attention urging them to read further.



- **Images**

The article used the image of the eight-year-old Australian boy who lost his life. The picture of a child attracts the attention of the reader, causing them to sympathize with the family of the child.

## II. The Cable News Network (CNN)

CNN published only four news articles about Fiji, however all these articles did not provide a detailed analysis or focused entirely on Fiji.

### 1. Climate Change

**News Article 1:** The US steps up its game as China circles the Pacific

**Keywords:** China, Forum, leaders, island, overshadow, influence.

This article focused mainly on Kiribati and the support by the United States and China to the Pacific Island region. Fiji was provided a small space in the article where the country’s name was only mentioned to describe the location of the event and identify the list of Pacific Island countries which would be supported by the US.

**News Article 2:** This has quickly become the key issue at COP27 – and the most difficult to resolve.

**Keyword;** Climate change, COP, damage, developed, loss, fund.

The article focused on the impact of climate change in Pakistan and the Pacific region, therefore, it only contained a paragraph on climate activist Lavetanalagi Seru's reaction about the effects of climate change in Fiji which was her home island. The article did not provide a thorough insight of how the country is struggling to cope with the effects of climate change.

In the month of December, CNN did not publish any news articles related to the events happening in Fiji. The news organization just published one article including the name of the country, however it lacked further details about the country and it was an opinion piece about the general election.

**News Article 3:** How to help Pacific Islanders cope with climate change and protect the environment.

**Keywords:** Climate, conservation, Fiji, fund, marine, moana.

The article highlighted on most of the Pacific Island countries affected by climate change and the organizations working to help those countries cope with the effects so Fiji was provided a small space highlighting the words of the former Fijian Defense Minister Inia Seruiratu.

## 2. Politics

**News Article 1:** Opinion: What 2022's elections taught me about humanity, politics and 'magic sauce.

**Keywords:** election, party, power, victory, voter

The article provided David A. Adelman's experience and stance on the various country's national elections which he had chronicled where Fiji was just mentioned once to describe the latest country who held its national elections. Therefore, CNN did not publish any news that was researched and gathered by its reporters in regards to the Fijian General Election. The name of the country was only mentioned in an opinion article by David A. Adelman which did not provide the readers with a fair and verified information.

## Overall Language Used

In all the eleven articles published on the BBC News website and CNN, formal, concise language with short sentences were used for easy understanding. However, in regards to the content, the content lacked background information about the former ruling party that is FijiFirst and the other Opposition parties, therefore new readers were not equipped with enough information to analyze the situation and understand the political outcome of Fiji.



**Figure 4: Common Keywords Used by Mainstream Media**

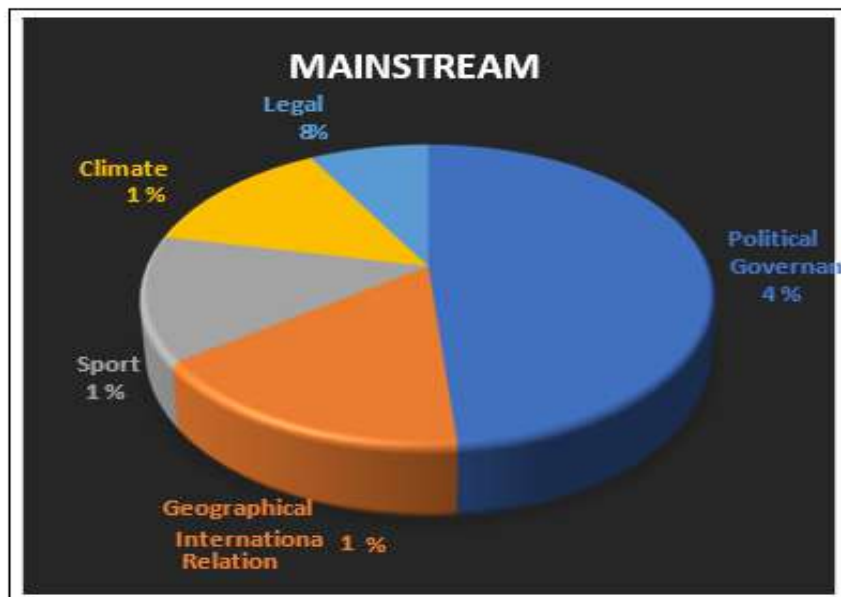


Figure 4: Common keywords used by CNN and BBC. (Source: Self-Generated)

Political and Governance	Geographical/ International Relations	Sports	Climate Change	Legal terms
Coup	China	Commonwealth	Climate Change	case
Result	Fijian	Gold	COP	offences
Order	Resort	Coach	Damage	Police
Leaders	Island	Rugby Sevens	Marine	
election	Fiji	team	Moana	
Power	Developed			
Fund				
Loss				
coalition				
Party				

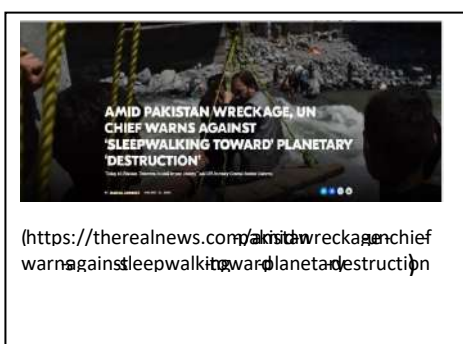
Liberal				
suppression				
Voter				
victory				
rule				
rivals				
overshadow				
influence				
<b>18</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>

Figure 4: Common keywords used by CNN and BBC. (Source: Self- Generated)

## Alternative News Media

### I. *The Real News Network*

- **Headline:** Amid Pakistan wreckage, UN chief warns against 'sleepwalking toward' planetary 'destruction'
- **Keywords:** climate, destruction, flooding, global, people, support.
- **Image Used**



The article used the image of Pakistan citizens being evacuated following flash flood in Kalam in 2022 to identify flooding as one of the effects of climate change which is affecting many countries. The article was originally published by Common Dreams and The Real News Network shared it on its website.

- **Content/ Lexical**

This article focused mainly on the content provided by UN secretary General Antonio Guterres.

Fiji was provided a small space in the article where the screenshot of the tweet by country's Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama was published. The tweet emphasized the effects of climate change which was caused by everyone particularly the high-emitting nations and called for all the countries to reduce the "addiction to fossil fuel".

## *II. Common Dreams*

Out of the four news articles published by Common Dreams between July 2022 to June 2023, only one news article had a thorough description of Fiji.

- **Headline:** Fiji Joins Call for Global Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty at UN Climate Talks
- **Lexical Used**
- **Keywords:** climate, COP, crisis, Fossil fuel, non-proliferation, Fiji.

The use of words such as "joins call" indicates Fiji's efforts to fight climate change along with other countries suffering its effects as highlighted in the article by the use of words such as "already suffering". The other lexical in the headline provides description and fulfills the what and where questions of the audience.

The article further stated a quote by a Fijian government official which said ""We cannot afford to delay action any longer". The use of this quote reflected the severity and emphasized the need for urgent action as they were losing their culture, ecosystem and livelihood.

### •**Image Used:**

The article used the image from the Togoru village which emphasized the impact of climate change in Fiji as it showed how a graveyard has immersed underwater currently because of climate change.



Source: <https://www.commondreams.org/news/fijiraises-voice-for-fossil-fuel-non-proliferation-treaty>

**Figure 5: Common Keywords Used by Alternative Media**

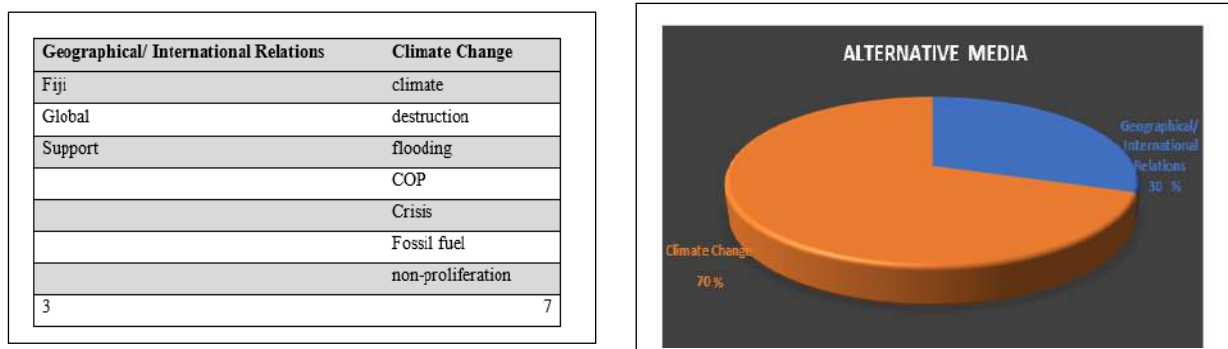


Figure 5: Common keywords used by The Real News Network and Common Dreams. (Source: Self-Generated)

**Analysis of Collected Facts**

**I. Determinants of Fiji’s News Coverage by BBC News, CNN (Mainstream) and The Real News Network (Alternative)**

Based on the publication of news by BBC News between July, 2022 and June,2023, it can be noted that issues related with or topics such as climate change, business, politics and sports were given high priority, however, every month did not have the same ratio of news covered from these four categories as evident in Figure 2. In the month of July, BBC News only covered sports news from the Commonwealth games, as reflected in Figure 1, which was like a build-up article to the Commonwealth Games coverage in Birmingham from July 28 to August 8.

The second subject was the 51st Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) Leaders Meeting which was held in Fiji from July 11 to 14. As the PIF meeting was held in July, the BBC News covered stories related to it to fulfil the news element of timeliness as it was a current event and it included representatives from Australia, the Cook Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, French Polynesia, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, the Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu. Despite covering the event, news stories by BBC News and CNN were lacking key details about Fiji. The stories published placed more emphasis on the influence of China on the Pacific region particularly Kiribati and its relationship with US as China’s political, economic and cultural influence had been steadily rising in the Pacific region as a whole. Over the years, China has been seen as the second largest donor to the region and largest financier to Fiji, however BBC News did not elaborate about the benefits and disadvantages of China’s presence in Fiji.

On the other hand, alternative media that is The Real News Network did not publish any news that was researched and gathered by its reporters on climate change. The website published an article originally compiled by an independent news outlet Common Dreams where the name of the country was only mentioned to identify a tweet shared by the Fiji’s Prime Minister.

In regards to politics, BBC News mostly covered news which fulfilled the element of prominence or involved a person of interest such as the Prime Minister such as the article “Fiji PM's son charged with

domestic violence in Australia.” Most often negative news related to a country are given high priority and prominence by the international media. However, coverage of a foreign nation can affect people ‘s perception of the foreign nation (Perry, 1990; Salwen & Matera, 1992), therefore, BBC News covering only the outcome of the General election in Fiji in December does not provide a clear image of the country to the international readers and for them to evaluate the situation accordingly. CNN did not publish any news that was researched and gathered by its reporters in regards to the Fijian General Election. The name of the country was only mentioned in an opinion article by David A. Adelman which did not provide the readers with a fair and verified information.

Fiji’s news coverage by BBC and CNN between July, 2022 and June, 2023 showed that they were selective in their coverage as they only covered the major events which included the National General Election, Commonwealth Games and Pacific Islands Forum leader’s meeting. Even by selecting to cover the General Elections in December, BBC News did not fulfil all the elements as they did not provide pre-election and post-election coverage. The media organizations did not cover the events such as election preparation process, blackout period, voter’s turnout and the human-interest stories for example the general public’s reaction on the final outcome of the election. However, in comparison to the alternative media, The Real News Network did not publish any news related to politics or elections so as a mainstream media BBC News portrayed its role effectively by providing citizens the important information about the general elections which was not covered by the alternative media.

Climate change issues in Fiji were discussed by both the media organizations as it is affecting everyone, however both media organizations lacked human-interest stories and field reporting. In 2021, Fiji was ranked globally among the top 15 countries with the highest disaster risk, a situation that will worsen as climate impacts intensify.

## II. Factors affecting Coverage of News from Fiji by Mainstream Media and Alternative Media

Serial No.	Factors affecting coverage	Type of Media	Important Observations
1.	Resources	<b>Mainstream Media</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BBC News and CNN lacked human-interest stories such as while highlighting the topic of climate change, or when covering the Pacific Islands Forum meeting.</li> <li>• Human- interest story could be covered by interacting with the people affected or by visiting the vulnerable communities and highlighting how they are coping with the effects of climate change such as Vunidogoloa village which became the first inhabitants of Fiji to be relocated owing to significant saltwater intrusion and regular floods in 2012.</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Despite covering the country briefly, the number of news articles in regards to Fiji published by BBC News and CNN outweighed the number of articles published by the alternative news media.</li> <li>• The higher coverage of Fiji by mainstream news media reflected the financial strength of the mainstream media as they have resources, connections and funding to access news or send its correspondences to various countries.</li> </ul>
		<b>Alternative Media</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Real News Network lacked human-interest stories.</li> <li>• To some extent it was achieved by the alternative news media Common Dreams where they used the image of the submerged graveyard in Togoru, however it did not provide a detailed description.</li> <li>• The lack of human-interest stories could be because of media organization’s budget of sending its journalists/ news crew to Fiji.</li> <li>• The Real News Network is a non-profit media organization and depends on the financial support from its viewers and readers, therefore they prioritize their news coverage and mostly cover stories that attracts or interests wider range of audience.</li> </ul>
2.	Reach	<b>Mainstream Media</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In regards to Fiji, BBC News and CNN both has Asia Pacific or international correspondences who provide coverage from the Pacific region whenever needed.</li> </ul>
		<b>Alternative Media</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Real News Network and Common Dream published a total of five news stories about Fiji between July 2022 and June, 2023, which also included opinion pieces.</li> <li>• This reflects that these organizations had limited access to the on-the ground information from Fiji because of absence of their reporters or correspondences in the country.</li> <li>• The alternative media missed out on one of the major events which was the national elections and provided more coverage of climate change and ways the Pacific Island countries were coping</li> </ul>

			with its effects which mostly included details from other countries such as Pakistan, Samoa.
3.	Editorial Focus	<b>Mainstream Media</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The coverage by both BBC News showed that they were only focused on covering sports, politics which included prominent people, major changes and climate change issues.</li> <li>• Between July, 2022 and June, 2023, BBC News did not cover any news related to health in the country such as 370 children were detected with congenital heart defects, Fiji’s major hospital has run-down infrastructure or issues with crime such as major brawl in the capital city of the country.</li> </ul>
		<b>Alternative News Media</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Real News Network did not prefer to cover news specifically and entirely focused on Fiji which may be because of lack of audience and interest in the country.</li> </ul>

**Conclusion**

The world is increasingly interdependent particularly in areas such as economic, environment, health, crime and immigration. While the report indicated high number of articles published by the mainstream media in regards to Fiji compared to alternative news media, there is a need for both mainstream and alternative news media to further enhance their reach of news from Fiji to cater to the increasing Fijians shifting abroad.

Fijian population in UK and Atlanta has increased over the years. According to the 2021 Census, there were over 7,700 people from Fiji living in England and Wales at the, therefore it is crucial for this population to receive adequate and detailed news about Fiji to decide the wellbeing of their family and friends residing in Fiji (Statistics., 2021). News media is undoubtedly a critical source of news for the public and audiences depend enormously on the media for information on public issues, particularly issues that in some way or another impact their lives.

To improve the overall coverage of foreign news, BBC News and The Real News Network should create a framework which highlights the role and importance of news from Fiji for its populations and reflect an increasingly diverse and multicultural society. Secondly, greater efforts should be made to cover other realities beyond conflict, sports and disasters which only occur at the large scale or affects the international relations.

BBC News and The Real News Network can get in contact with the Fijian immigrants based in UK and Atlanta to explore how these communities perceive foreign news that is happening in their countries of origin. Similarly, correspondences can reach out to the people from UK and Atlanta based in Fiji to get news and their experiences of an event. For instance, a UK based businessman in Fiji can

be helpful in analyzing the economic and trade issues in Fiji or a UK family settled in Fiji can provide account of their experience of cyclones or disasters in Fiji.

Based on the analysis of news published by BBC News, CNN, Common Dreams and The Real News Network, it reflects that it is essential for the editors and producers particularly The Real News Network to encourage its journalists and foreign correspondences to enlighten their audience and readers with issues which are neglected globally. By expanding and improving its Fiji's news coverage, these media organizations will provide greater understanding of global affairs in Fiji and a better sense of Fiji's role in the world.

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## A Systematic Study of Indigenous Communication in Indian Knowledge System

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### Abstract

With the technological development the communication systems also get advanced and instantaneous gradually. From the proverbs to publication and riddle to rhymes and stories, that all plays a significant role to communicate in society. From the impression of words on old manuscripts and scriptures to the today's newspaper, magazine, radio, television and Internet all these are playing an important part in our daily lives in terms of communication and sharing of knowledge and information. Only using the modes of communication is not enough to understand the meaning of communication, but communication system is defined much ancient and broader and this is also seen in the Indian knowledge system. To understand the types and philosophy of indigenous communication system the systematic study will help to identify and examine the concept and relevance of this in present scenario. The study outline that how concept of communication is deep rooted in our Indian knowledge system. This is to understand the heritage and inheritance on the "*Bhritya Gyan Parampra*" and its contribution and significance in today's knowledge sphere.

**Keyword:** IKS, Indian knowledge system, Indigenous communication, communication, viksit bhara 2047

### Introduction

The complex and detail concept of communication is beautifully converged in the Indian knowledge system. With the diverse cultural heritage of India, the Indigenous communication is the noticeable aspect. It includes oral traditions of communication, folk medium, and traditional storytelling and in Indian tradition this has been an integral part of the life for centuries in India. This have played a fundamental and key role in preserving, transmitting, and enriching India's vast repository of traditional knowledge and deep-rooted heritage since from the ancient times. Our Vedas, Upanishads and our old scriptures are taught and conveyed orally from one generation to other before this has been documented. Orally the knowledge share by the peoples ensures the proximity and continuity of knowledge.

The life learning lessons to proverbs, aphorisms and Dadi Maa stories all are been conveyed with our traditional form of communication it may be through orally, by drama and dancing or through our rituals. There may be the form of communication is differed but the purpose of the communication is to inform or to be get informed effectively. That is why the complex concepts of our life are described and defined in such a simple and interesting way where one can easily understand the quest of universe, even if it is to search for "Swayam" (Ourself) to "Braham" (Ultimate Divine).

The indigenous communication is diverse in nature and may vary from culture to demography. The important form are Oral narrations and speeches, Folk songs, Drama and Dance,

Traditional Rituals, Signs and Symbols. Which is foundation to in reach the Indigenous communication in Indian knowledge system (IKS).

Several civilizations in the world are considered and claim to be the supreme philosophy of knowledge and Indian knowledge system is one of the primitive philosophy. This will not only recognize our ancient knowledge but to remember our ancient thinkers and philosopher who unwind the knowledge quest to thread them into the Indian knowledge system.

The significance of communication is described and defined in the core of Indian tradition which can be observed by some of the aphorisms and *shloka* like- *IR;a on--- speak the truth (Taittiriyaopnishada)* which is the inherent value of Indian tradition. There is another philosophy which emphasizes on the brevity and meaningfulness in speech is the art of Speaking “*feRra p lkja p opks fg okfXerk*” and necessary for the effective communication.<sup>1</sup> The Indian tradition have numerous examples which discuss the truthfulness, effective and pleasing communication-like quality and the importance of communication itself.

Due to the lack of knowledge, less traditional practices and rapid urbanization the indigenous communication faces several challenges. But, today the advent of technology and mass media the indigenous communication remains relevant and act as a bridge of our heritage and modern identity. This will not only help to disseminate the knowledge and information of our rich culture but also serves a tool to preserve and document it in digital form for better understanding to our generation to access.

### **Research Objectives**

To explore the indigenous communication methods within the Indian knowledge system and their significance? By this we can understand the role and relevance of the indigenous communication in Indian Knowledge System.

### **Literature Review**

By selecting the name of the subject topic keywords “Indian knowledge system and communication” out of search result we have selected the top 5 results which is open access as well.

This paper titled "The Roots of Communication Skills in Indian Tradition" written by Dr. Prasannanshu. Here the author discusses the importance of communication skills and how this topic was discussed in Indian literature. The author also shares some ancient Indian wisdom about communication. The content of this file is primarily focused on the historical and cultural perspectives of communication skills.<sup>2</sup>

In the paper titled “Communication and dissemination of India's traditional knowledge” authored by G Mahesh We observed that this publication discusses about the India's rich traditional knowledge (TK) base that goes back over 5000 years, particularly in the fields of agriculture, science, medicine, biodiversity, and ecology. It also highlights the challenges related to communication, dissemination, and preservation of TK, as well as efforts made by various nations to conserve, protect, and validate their TK. The paper concludes that effective communication and dissemination of scientifically validated TK is crucial for conserving and leveraging it for a sustainable future.<sup>3</sup>

In the paper titled “Indian Knowledge for Sustainable Futures” it is outlined by the author Mrs. Deepa Kumari about the Indian Knowledge System (IKS), which is a well-structured system and process of knowledge transfer that focuses on sustainable development. The Vedic literature is considered the fountainhead of the Indian Knowledge Tradition. The paper explains how the Indian education system believes in the existence of life in all things of the universe and how the Vedas treated nature as God. It talks about how SDGs and IKS correlate and recognize India's rich and eternal knowledge history.<sup>4</sup>

The majority of the reviews literature insighted about the key components of India's knowledge system include cultural diversity, historical continuity, spirituality, philosophy, and the importance of ethical and moral values for future generations, as emphasized in NEP 2020.

#### List of literature\*

TITLE	AUTHOR	URL
India's knowledge system - A needed approach in NEP2020 to regain the deep roots of our nation- India	K Sudhakar	<a href="https://typeset.io/papers/india-s-knowledge-system-a-needed-approach-in-nep2020-to-3cfrk02bt">https://typeset.io/papers/india-s-knowledge-system-a-needed-approach-in-nep2020-to-3cfrk02bt</a>
Indian Knowledge Systems	Kapil Kapoor, Avadhesh K. Singh	<a href="https://typeset.io/papers/indian-knowledge-systems-4ezh5dyt7f">https://typeset.io/papers/indian-knowledge-systems-4ezh5dyt7f</a>
Corporate lessons from indian knowledge system: learning from the glorious past for building a strong india	Chanchal Rajoura, Nisha Rajoura	<a href="https://typeset.io/papers/corporate-lessons-from-indian-knowledge-system-learning-from-3716v0ni">https://typeset.io/papers/corporate-lessons-from-indian-knowledge-system-learning-from-3716v0ni</a>
An Overview on Indian Knowledge System	Shah Alam Khan, Meeta Sharma	<a href="https://typeset.io/papers/an-overview-on-indian-knowledge-system-dcskumt7fq">https://typeset.io/papers/an-overview-on-indian-knowledge-system-dcskumt7fq</a>
Indian Knowledge System	Rajesh Timane, Priyanka Wandhe	<a href="https://typeset.io/papers/indian-knowledge-system-43z9kct1cw">https://typeset.io/papers/indian-knowledge-system-43z9kct1cw</a>

\*<https://typeset.io/search/what-are-the-key-components-of-the-indian-knowledge-system-3zkhngf0mb?q=What+are+the+key+components+of+the+Indian+Knowledge+System%3F>

#### Methodology

The paper is descriptive research and for the primary data by considering the literature which is published earlier is done with bibliometric analysis. The tool used for the searching and selection of the literature is done by SCISPACE.

### **Limitation**

There are some limitations of this study. The study includes the online literature as a primary data and that is also limited in nature. Because there are number of literatures associated with this topic but mostly are discussed on Indian knowledge system and national education policy. There is only one paper is clearly titled “THE ROOTS OF COMMUNICATION SKILLS IN INDIAN TRADITION by Dr. P. Prasannanshu, So the paper interprets about the forms of Indigenous Communication system which are rooted in our Indian knowledge system.

### **Findings**

The study finds that the heritage of Indian knowledge system poses the significant forms of indigenous communication system with is an integral part of society, culture and tradition. For the dissemination, preservation and promotion of knowledge and information. This has cultural impact as well to foster the social bonds within communities. The study outlines some major indigenous forms of communication which is still in practice and needed to be preserved. From Folk songs, Drama and Dance, Traditional Rituals, Signs and Symbols the Oral narrations and speeches are one of the key forms of communication and is used in any other form to communicate and disseminate the information. Sign and symbols are considered as the most ancient form to communicate, from the cave painting to the archaeological inscriptions to the stone engraved signs. These all not only the form to communicate but we witnessed the enigma of our rich tradition and enlightening knowledge.

It is also observed that the News Education Policy (NEP 2020) has tremendous proposed initiatives in order to revive and preserve the Indian Knowledge system (IKS) or formed around the IKS. The key components of the Indian Knowledge System include logical, scientific-rational, openness, diversity, traditional values, spiritual ideology, and corporate lessons from Bhagawad Gita, Ramayan, and Mahabharat.<sup>5</sup> This will also include influence of Vedic literature digital integration, training for educators and innovation for effective global collaborations.<sup>6</sup>

### **Conclusion**

In this study there is a distinct identification of the concept of Indigenous communication which is ancient at the same time reach in tradition and culture. The communication concept is always present in Indian knowledge system in the form of oral narration, dance-drama, poems and proverbs, Signs and aphorisms. This is so enriched in nature that one can easily understand the quest of the message while communicating. Every indigenous form of communication has its own significance as per the situation, time and place. Dance and Drama can be used while addressing the large group of people, whereas stories, poems used to small group those who are close and near and the proverbs and aphorisms is to convey the long descriptions in short worm. Sign and symbols are used to convey the information in documented way where information are coded in the form of sign and symbols to communicate with the community and is easy to understand and recall the meaning behind. The oral and speech form is the basis of communication weather it is used in interpersonally communicating to the masses. It has an effect of proximity with the listener and audience.

The several forms of indigenous communication is an inevitable part of our tradition and culture. Earlier this is in regular practice but gradually become unpopular due to the less prevalence. Today majority of us are using technology and consuming the digital content on their digital devices. Which is relevant to this new world but use of digital technology can be more significant when it is used to revive and preserve the glorious heritage of our culture and tradition of Indian knowledge system which is deep in our veins and soil.

### Recommendation

There is a great scope of this topic in future studies. According to our observation it is insighted that future study may focus on the integrating these indigenous traditional practices with the modern communication technologies and requirements of the necessary steps to ensure their continued relevance and impact.

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## Mobile Communication and Women Empowerment with Special Reference to Health Seeking Behavior

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### Abstract

Empowerment of women is a major factor in the global scenario. Women empowerment is a process in which women are made independent and self-reliant, it involves upgrading the status of women in a society with involvement of decision making and right to make their own choices. Women empowerment boosts the status of women in a society through education, literacy and awareness. It creates awareness among women about the basic rights to live a life of well-being. Health is one such basic fundamental right entitled to every human being and empowerment of women helps in creating awareness about the importance of health among women. Health is also one of the important parameters that contribute to the measurement of overall development index of any nation. The aspect of health is ignored in most societies due to various reasons, and in such context women who are considered more vulnerable to health issues suffer the most. In this context the paper applies the method of focus group discussion to understand the need and importance of women empowerment in the area of health literacy. Apart from that the paper reflects on the role of mobile communication in empowering women about health and creating awareness about mental health issues, which is one of the most neglected health issues prevalent among women.

**Keywords:** women empowerment, health literacy, mental health, mobile communication

### Introduction

Gender discrimination has been a major factor that has kept women subordinate to men in various aspects like, education, politics, social status, health and also at workplace. Various gaps existed between men and women in receiving basic human rights. Social upliftment and progress have been stagnant in many societies due to gender discrimination. Hazarika, (2011) states opines that even the central and state Governments have come up with various schemes at present day to empower women and end gender-based discrimination, but in India there still exists discrimination among women in various fields like social participation, political participation, economic participation, access to education and healthcare. In spite of many steps undertaken by the government, women in India relatively disempowered and enjoys lower status than men (Nayak and Mahanta, 2012).

Mandal, (2013) states that, historically women have suffered the most among all the deprived groups. He further states that women are victims of social, political, economic and religious subordination and faces various discrimination in Indian society. Apart from facing various discrimination and oppression, women have faced inequalities in the area of healthcare to a great extent. According to Rueda et.al. (2008) women have poorer health status than men.

“Although women as a gender do live longer than men, they have more mental health problems. The individual risk of encountering health problems is influenced by biological, political, economic, social and psychological adversities. In women the biological basis of mental health problems is concentrated mainly around the menses, childbirth and the menopause.” (Kohen,1999 pp.1)

The awareness among women in the context of health issues especially mental health is very low. Women lacks empowerment when it comes to metal health. Health is a prime indicator of development in any society. Any country with a population irrespective of gender, socio economic background with a sound mental and physical

health is considered to be developed. It is one of the fundamental human rights under Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Promoting health is one of the 17 goals to be achieved by Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) by the year 2030. SDG 3 aims at ensuring health and well-being for all.

In the context of health information and care seeking, women face various discrimination compared to men. The importance of availability of health information, health care and empowerment in terms of health is often ignored in many societies due to factors like social constraints, religious taboos, economic conditions and education among women.

Nasrabadi et.al (2015) is of the opinion that at the present-day context women empowerment is an important issue. Several methods are used to empower women. Health information seeking is one important activity in this regard. Promotion of women health information is a fundamental strategy in women empowerment. The study further states that, seeking health information empowered women and gave them confidence to be strong to fight various health issues and also helped them seek more health-related information. According to MacKian (2003), health seeking behaviour as part and parcel of a person's family or community rather than an individual matter. He further mentioned that health seeking behaviour is a result of social, cultural, personal, and experimental factors, when beliefs, attitudes and awareness levels are measured of an individual or a group of people. Empowering women is essential for overall development of families, communities and countries. To empower women in terms of health is important as when women lives a healthier life, they are able to reach their full potential. According to Yogendrarajah, (2014) "women empowerment is giving legitimate power or authority to perform the tasks. If women were empowered they would be able to participate in the planning and decision-making task and contribute to the development programmes and activities individually." in context of seeking health information and health care women empowerment plays a vital role. According to Mainuddin et.al, (2015), women empowerment increases the health seeking behaviour among women, which should be recognized as an important norm in health system designs.

In the similar context, the present study focuses on the role of mobile communication in empowering women about health. The study discusses the potential of mobile communication as an effective health communication tool among women. Health communication is an important branch of communication studies that communicates information about health to the masses. Ishikawa, Kiuchi, 2010 states that, health communication focuses on improving health of individuals and populations. In similar context Schiavo, 2007 defines the key objective of health communication as to influence individuals and communities with the primary aim to improve health conditions by sharing health related information. The process of health communication aims to improve health outcomes with different communication strategies which encourage behavior and social change. Effective health communication can help in adapting healthy lifestyle choices. With the advancement in technology, Information and technology (ICT) has been an important aspect in health communication. One of the effective strategies in communicating health related information is the use of modern technologies in the field of health communication. Timely access of health-related information with the help of smart phones can reduce the amount of health hazards and risks of diseases to a great extent.

According to Firth et.al,(2021) "Smartphone technology presents an opportunity to transform mobile phones into devices which could provide global, cost effective and evidence based mental health services on demand and in real time."

The study attempts to analyse how mobile communication is an effective medium of health communication among women, the study further focuses on the role of mobile communication in creating awareness among



women. In this context Malhotra and Shah, (2015) states that “Analysis of mental health indices and data reveals that the patterns of psychiatric disorder and psychological distress among women are different from those seen among men. Symptoms of depression, anxiety, and unspecified psychological distress are 2–3 times more common among women than among men.”

According to Kohen,(1999 pp.1)“Although women as a gender do live longer than men, they have more mental health problems. The individual’s risk of encountering health problems is influenced by biological, political, economic, social and psychological adversities. In women the biological basis of mental health problems is concentrated mainly around the menses, childbirth and the menopause.”

Mobile communication is an effective medium that offers a comfortable platform for women who can seek mental health information. Women are hesitant in seeking help in regard for mental health due to various social taboos and conditionings. In most cases a majority of women specifically in the rural areas lack awareness about mental health issues. Under these circumstances smart phones are effective communication tools that can help create awareness about various issues related to mental health and also seek treatment.

Bidmon and Terlutter, (2015) in their study states that women use the internet more often for health related information searches. They used the information received on health issues more than men. In the exploratory study conducted by Pandey et.al, (2003) it is stated that “women who face significant demands on their time on a day-to-day basis due to a variety of obligations such as child care, elder care, personal health, are more likely to use the internet to search for health information.”

At the present-day context where every individual has access to internet through their smart phones, the study will provide a clear understanding about how technology plays a vital role in empowering women about mental health. It will unfold how the penetration of smart phones and development in ICT have changed the ways of health information seeking among women.

### **Objectives**

The study aims at fulfilling the following objectives:

- To assess the importance of health communication in empowering women.
- To analyse the role of smart phones in health seeking behaviour among the women of Kamrup District
- To identify the common mental health issue women mostly seek information through their smart phones.

### **Research Questions**

The proposed research will answer the following research questions:

RQ1. What is the role of health communication in empowering women?

RQ2. What is the role of smart phones in health seeking behaviour among women of Kamrup district?

RQ3. What is the most common mental health issue women seek information through smart phones?

## Theoretical Framework

To fulfil the stated objectives of the study and to conceptualize the research problem a theoretical framework is provided. The study applies the following theories to establish connection between adapting new technology and changing behavioural patterns in health information seeking among women of Kamrup district of Assam.

- 1. Diffusion of Innovation Theory:** The diffusion of Innovation theory, developed by E.M.Rogers in 1962 states that masses adapts to new technology and it affects their behavioural changes and results in change in attitude and change in the process of acquiring knowledge. According to this theory, over time innovation, idea or products become diffused among the population until a saturation point is achieved. While promoting any new ideas, technologies or an innovation there are 5 stages, (i) innovators (ii) early adopters (iii) early majority (iv) late majority and (v) laggards.

According to Kaminski, (2015) “The Diffusion of Innovation theory is often regarded as a valuable change model for guiding technological innovation where the innovation itself is modified and presented in ways that meet the needs across all levels of adopters. It also stresses the importance of communication and peer networking within the adoption process.”

In reference to the Diffusion Of Innovation theory the study will explore the role of smart phones and emerging technologies in ICT in behavioural changes among women of Kamrup district.

- 2. Health Belief Model:** The health belief model was developed by Hochabaum and Rosesnstock in 1950s. It attempts to explain the situations under which an individual adapts to certain health behaviors to prevent or to seek information about health issues. It is theoretical model that is used to explain and predict individual changes in health behaviours. According to this model an individual’s decision to engage in a health behaviour is based on their perception. Therefore, by changing their perception they can adapt to new health behaviours. The study adopts this model to analyse the factors that result in change in health seeking behaviour among women of Kamrup district of Assam.

## Research Methods

The study employs the qualitative method of focus group discussion. According to Hennink 2014, focus group discussion are flexible research method, they result of focus group discussions are widely applied to health, social science and behavioural research; strategic planning; health promotion; policy development; program evaluation and other areas of social science research. To analyse the awareness level about mental health and to assess the role of mobile communication in empowering women of Kamrup district focus group discussion is carried out among four groups of women, consisting ten participants in each group.

- Area and Population of the Study:** The study is conducted in the Kamrup district of Assam. The district is further divided into two divisions namely Kamrup district and Kamrup metropolitan district. The study is conducted among women belonging to the Assamese community of the district who forms the majority population.

The Kamrup metropolitan district is divided into six sub districts namely, Azara, Chandrapur, Dispur, Guwahati, North Guwahati and Sonapur. For the purpose of the study the sample of the study is chosen from Dispur and Guwahati sub districts. From these sub districts, the area of Downtown is chosen as an area of study from the Dispur Sub district and Lachit Nagar is taken as an area of study from the Guwahati Sub district.

The Kamrup district which lies in the rural areas has twelve sub divisions namely Boko, Chamaria, Chaygaon, Goreswar, Goroimari, Hajo, Kamalpur, Koya, Nagarbera, North Guwahati, Palasbari and

Rangia. For the study two villages are taken, Barpulla village from Koya Sub division and Kulhati from Hajo Sub Division.

- **Sample Size:** The total women participants for the focus group discussion is 40, belonging to the group of 30 to 50 years of age. The 40 participants are further divided to four groups each group consisting of ten members. Out of the four groups two groups comprises of women from Kamrup District and the other two groups consists of participants from the Kamrup Metropolitan District.
- **Sampling Techniques:** The respondents of the study are selected by applying the cluster sampling technique, where two out of six sub districts from the Kamrup metropolitan district and two villages from twelve sub divisions from the Kamrup District are chosen for the area of the study. The respondents of the study are chosen by applying the purposive sampling technique where only women respondents with smart phones are belonging to the age group of 30-50 are taken as samples.
- **Tools for data Collection:** For the primary data, focus group discussion is conducted by asking open ended questions to the participants by the researcher who is also the moderator. For the collection of the secondary data, existing literature such as books, research journals, articles are referred.

### Results and Discussions

- Out of the total population of 40 women samples chosen for the study, a total of 28 women are married. Among which the samples were divided into 20 rural participants and 20 urban participants.
  - Among the 20 rural participants 15 were married and 5 were unmarried. Among the 20 urban participants 13 were married and 7 were unmarried.
  - Out of the 10 participants from the Barpulla village of Koya sub division, 8 women were homemakers and two were high school teachers. Among the Kulhati village from Hajo sub division, 3 women were entrepreneurs, and 7 were homemakers.
  - The participants from the Downtown locality of Dispur sub district of Kamrup Metropolitan District, 7 women were working under both government and private sectors and 3 were homemakers. From the Lachit Nagar Area of Guwahati sub district of Kamrup Metropolitan district, 5 women were homemakers, 1 was entrepreneur and 4 were homemakers.
- I. **Internet Connectivity:** in the Kamrup district, 7 women of Barpulla village has regular internet access in their smart phones and 3 women occasionally subscribed to internet services. In the Kulahati village, 9 women has regular internet services in their smart phones, whereas 1 woman occasionally subscribed to internet services. In both the localities of Dispur sub district and Guwahati Sub district of Kamrup metropolitan, all 20 women participants had access to regular internet services in their smartphones.
- II. **Smart Phone Uses:** Each participant from both the rural and urban areas owned smart phones since last five to ten years. Smart phones are their most preferred medium at present. Among the rural participants of Barpulla Village under Koya Sub division, women participants mostly use the smartphones for entertainment purpose along with using it to stay connected. The women of Kulahaiti village under Hajo sub division, mostly use smartphones to stay connected and also for business purpose.
- “I use smartphone to stay connected with my friends and family through social networking sites and also through phone calls” said a participant of Barpulla village.
- The women from the downtown locality of Kamrup metropolitan use the smart phone for information seeking, entertainment purpose and also for e-commerce like online banking, and also online shopping from various sites. Similarly, the women from Lachit Nagar locality of Kmarup Metropolitan district uses smart phones for information access, commercial activities, entertainment and business purpose. According to a participant of Lachit Nagar “smart phones are such effective communication medium, people can watch television, seek any information, do shopping, banking and also use it to promote their business, it can do it all, all in just a click.”

III. **Mental Health Awareness:** from the focus group discussions conducted among the women of rural and urban areas of Kamrup district, it was found that there was gap in awareness about various mental health issues and lack of information was prevalent among rural women compared to the women of urban areas of Kamrup district. There was a significant lack of empowerment between women of rural and urban Kamrup district in terms of mental health specifically among the women belonging to the age group of 30-50 years. A participant from Kulahati village said, “somedays I feel like crying and I cannot find a reason, many a times I think I might have gone mad, until few months back I saw a motivational speaker in Facebook saying that it can be symptom of mental health issue, I was enlightened about mental health as we hardly talk about it in our society. In our society it is believed that there is nothing called mental health.”

Another participant of Downtown locality said “we women, will do everything for the family but will always ignore ourselves, and most women only seek health information or treatment if it is related to their physical health, we always ignore our mental well-being because we were never made aware about it, there were no communication be it mass or interpersonal about mental health until may be the last few years when we come across social media contents about it.”

IV. **Lack of Empowerment in Mental Health:** societal taboos, pre-existing superstitious beliefs, absence of communication on mental health issues from both personal and public level and ignorance were prime reasons for lack of empowerment on mental health issues among women of rural Kamrup district. Whereas according to the women participants of Kamrup metropolitan district, women’s ignorance about various health issues in the society is a major factor behind lack of empowerment on mental health.

A participant from kulahati village said “in our rural areas people never speak or are concerned with mental well-being of each other, we fail to recognize the symptoms, we ignore due to various factors. If one is depressed or goes for social withdrawal, they are termed as crazy.”

Another participant from lachit nagar said “only reason we are not empowered in terms of mental health is nothing else than ignorance, we ignore mental health to a great deal.”

V. **Most Searched Mental Health issues on Smart Phone:** The most searched mental health issue among women of both rural and urban areas of Kamrup district is symptoms of depression. According to the participants of Barpulla village, “we have heard about this term but never realized or been aware of its symptoms or cure unless we saw many social media contents on depression.”

Another participant of downtown locality in kamrup metro said “I always thought I cannot have depression, but when I was exposed to awareness videos on mental health in youtube I could analyse that there are times I have gone through depression.

Apart from depression the other searched mental health issues are:

- How to identify if one is having poor mental health?
- Mood swings
- Difficulty in sleeping
- Irritability
- Anger issues
- Anxiety

- Constant fear of losing a loved one
- Hopelessness
- Suicidal tendencies
- Lack of energy or motivation to do any work

VI. **Proffered Mediums to Seek Information on Mental health:** Smart phones are preferred to be the most effective medium for seeking mental health information among women of both rural and urban areas.

VII. **Role of Smart Phone in Health Seeking Behaviour among Women:** According to the women of rural and urban Kamrup district smart phone is an effective tool for health communication. when it comes to seeking information about mental health by women through smart phones it plays the following roles:

- The information reaches the users irrespective of social, economic, religious, political or geographical area.
- It is an effective tool of interactive health communication.
- It helps to gain information from across the globe on various mental health issues.
- It is an effective tool for personalized health information.
- Smart phones are cost effective tools for seeking health information.
- It helps seek and share health related information faster.
- Various websites and social media sites disseminating health related information can reach the target audience at any time of the day.
- It is a potent tool to empower women about mental health through various contents which are both sources of information and entertainment.

**Need and Importance of Health Communication in Empowering Women:** According to the participants of both rural and urban Kamrup district, women empowerment is an important aspect for overall development and overall development in any society is possible only if women are made aware of every aspect and specifically about health. Without a sound mental health, women cannot be empowered. The lack of information and ignorance about mental health are most common issues that has been acting as a barrier in health communication in rural and urban Kamrup district. According to the participants effective health communication strategies, and interactive health communication can help achieve total women empowerment to live a life of equality. A participant from the Barpulla village said “we all come across the term women empowerment, the government always speaks about it but we cannot ignore our mental health and walk towards empowerment, it is impossible.”

**Scope of Future Research:** Awareness about health is crucial to every individual. Timely information and knowledge about health issues can help prevent vulnerability to various health issues. In this context the use of smart phones in health communication plays a vital role.

Health communication focuses on identifying health related issues and also in problem solving through use of communication tools. It empowers women about various mental health issues, its cure and also to make healthier choices. The availability of internet access through smart phones has proved to be an effective tool in communicating health issues among women. The emergence of smart phones has resulted to interactive health communication.

With the availability of information in just a click, there arises issues like information overload and hence the need and importance of media literacy can be regarded as an importance aspect of research for further studies. As there are many social networking sites, websites and applications disseminating health information, it is necessary the users recognize authentic information sources rather than receiving anything that is available over

the various internet platforms. In this context the need and importance of media literacy must be highlighted in health communication and women empowerment.

### **Conclusion**

women empowerment is an important aspect. It can be simply defined as proving equality to women in areas of education, awareness, literacy, and training ending gender biases. To improve the social, political, economic and health status of women are important areas of women empowerment. Empowering women gives them the ability to equal participation in all walks of life and the right to make their own life decisions.

Health is an important parameter in development and empowerment of women. Without awareness about health, empowerment of women is not possible. Complete mental and physical well-being refers to good health. As per the definition by the world Health Organization (WHO)

“Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.” A country with a population irrespective of gender, socio economic background with a sound mental and physical health is considered to be developed. Ignorance towards mental health can act as a barrier in development of a society as a whole. In this context effective health communication plays a vital role in women empowerment. Schiavo (2007), states health communication as an evolving practice and asking people to adapt to new healthy habits, introducing to new policies and practicing ways to develop healthy behaviors is not easy. “One of the key objectives of health communication is to influence individuals and communities. The goal is admirable since health communication aims to improve health outcomes by sharing health-related information.” Advancing technologies in the field of information and communication technology (ICT) have changed the scenario of health communication. Yifeng Hu (2015) analyses the role of technology in both ways, how it has changed the health care system and how people have changed the way of information seeking related to health.

Cassell, (2010) opines that the use of internet in the process of health communication is effective in persuading people to adapt to positive behavioral changes. “The notion that the Internet features many of the persuasive qualities of interpersonal communication makes it a prime candidate for the application of key behavioral science theories and principles to promote healthier behaviors”

The use of mobile communication, smart phones for instance is effective in seeking health information. “Mobile communication technologies provide novel opportunities to support clinic-based health initiatives. Opportunities include sending appointment reminders, 6-8 distributing laboratory reports or medical alerts, reminding parents about vaccination and medication use. Mobile technologies and social media offer advantages of efficiencies of access, personalization, real-time communication and scaled-up dissemination. Text messaging is the primary modality being assessed for communicating with adolescents about self-management of chronic health conditions such as diabetes and asthma” (Smaldone et.al.,2015).

Women are more likely to use the web to access health information. “A comparison of female Web users and non-Web users who seek health information revealed that Web users sought health information at a higher rate than non-Web users. Web users were more likely to communicate with medical professionals about the health information found and claimed that their decisions about health treatments were influenced by the health information. In most cases. Web users expressed a higher awareness of resources, regardless of format. (Warner and Procaccino, 2007).

From the present study conducted, it was found that among both rural and urban women participants the most commonly searched mental health issue over the internet platforms is depression. According to findings of the present study, it is found that women of both rural and urban areas of Kamrup district prefer the smart phone as

an effective medium for health information seeking. Smart phones are easier to access and are faster and cost-effective medium that supports interactive health communication. The samples preferred the medium of mobile communication to seek mental health information as it gives them one to one communication space plus personalized health information. They are of the view that without effective health communication it is impossible to reach overall development of any society. As health is one of the most important parameters of national development, without effective health communication among women, women empowerment is not possible. As Women are prone to more psychological distress than men and when it comes to mental health. The vulnerability of women towards mental health is an issue of concern in our society. It is very important to diagnose the symptoms in right time and seek treatment or cure to mental illness. In this context health communication plays a very crucial role. When information regarding various mental health issues, its cure, counselling and behavioural changes reaches the women population in right time, it becomes easier to heal from mental health issues. The field of Health communication has experienced new wave after the new technologies in ICT. Women with internet access through smart phones can seek information about various mental illness in a faster and more affordable way. Interactive health communication helps people open up as it provides a personal space to interact on any mental health problems they are going through. There is prevalence of mental health issues in both rural and urban societies, yet ignorance about it and lack of effective health communication has made the issue of mental health silent. Thus, smart phones can be an effective tool for health communication about mental health issues among women.

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## Sound, Music and Sonic Experiences: A study of the Religious Spaces of Vrindavan and Mathura in Northern India

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### Abstract

Music has the potential to stir strong emotions, particularly feelings of exhilaration and exuberance in religious contexts. However, for music to induce a religious experience, the listener must cognitively appraise the subjective experience as a religious experience. This understanding of music as a religious experience is typically learned through participation in religious rituals accompanied by music during religious services. Over time, music has become intertwined with the individual's mental depiction of these rituals, allowing them to recreate the emotional experiences associated with the rituals across different times and places. Music and religion are strongly linked in a variety of ways. Individuals solace in facing existential fears by aligning themselves with these two cultural symbols: music and religion. These symbols serve as extensions of their belief systems, offering a sense of continuity beyond their personal existence. It is through this idea that the study navigates and explores the idea of religion as sonic expression by re-looking at the religious spaces of Vrindavan and Mathura, two most sacred spaces for Hindus in the northern India. The method undertaken for this study is field study. Two places were considered for the study – Vrindavan and Mathura in Uttar Pradesh, India. The theoretical framework referred to here is the soundscape theory by R. Murray Schafer. n religious music and its influence on religious experience. Not much is explored in how secular music can trigger religious experience in secular individuals. This study investigates the incorporation of a more in-depth analysis of universally present musical elements such as monotony, repetition, and simplicity in the religious music of Vrindavan and Mathura, in Uttar Pradesh.

**Keywords:** music, sonic spaces, Vrindavan, Mathura, religious experience

### Introduction

How do sound break and reconnect in distinctive sonic spaces? Can we read sounds? What is sound? Sound is anything that makes us listen. Sounds carry meaning as much as words make meaning. While ocular is something that has always occupied the pivotal position, auditory sounds cannot be deemed as less crucial. The study here attempts to encapsulate the sonic spaces in relation to sonic rhythm and sonic culture and thereby drive home the point that an ethnographic ear is as crucial and as significant as visual observation that is considered as the backbone of cultural anthropology. The devaluation of sound within the academic examination of religion is associated with favoring sight over sound in Western modernity, which diminishes the spiritual significance of hearing (Chidester 1992; Schmidt 2002). Listening is often regarded as the least active of the senses, and musical expression is seen as derivative rather than formative of culture (Chernoff 2002). Veit Erlmann questions the usefulness of continuing to connect modernity primarily with visual experiences (Erlmann 2004, 3–4), especially as contemporary technologies have led to a renewed emphasis on auditory experiences. However, he cautions against advocating for an overemphasis on hearing over sight, instead suggesting that understanding a "hearing culture" offers fresh perspectives on cultural understanding and social dynamics.



The study of religion has recently benefited significantly from a renewed focus on lived religion and materiality (Meyer et al., 2011). This shift urges us to consider how aesthetics play a role in interpreting religious experiences (Meyer, 2009), and it emphasizes the importance of moving beyond beliefs and texts to explore practices and sensory experiences, which in turn raises new questions about religious communication and mediation (Morgan, 2009). Despite the crucial role of sound and hearing in our lives, music and extramusical sound have not received adequate attention in religious studies, reflecting a broader neglect within the multidisciplinary field of sound studies (Keeling & Kun, 2011).

The lack of emphasis on sound in religious studies can be attributed to the historical preference for sight over sound in Western modernity, leading to a devaluation of the auditory as a spiritual sense (Chidester, 1992; Schmidt, 2002). Additionally, listening is often seen as a passive sense, and musical expression is considered secondary rather than fundamental to cultural understanding (Chernoff, 2002). Veit Erlmann challenges the continued association of modernity with visibility, particularly in an age where technological advancements have highlighted the importance of auditory experiences (Erlmann, 2004). However, he suggests moving beyond a complete reversal to an "ear monopoly" by exploring the concept of a "hearing culture," which offers novel perspectives on cultural knowledge and social relationships. While recent scholarship has begun to address the neglect of sound in religious studies, there remains a need for further exploration and integration of auditory perspectives to develop a more comprehensive understanding of religious experiences and expressions.

Analyzing and describing sound—including its creation, perception, usage, and transmission—requires input from a range of disciplines spanning natural, social, and human sciences. Notably, ethnomusicologists, cultural anthropologists, and historians who have pioneered research on acoustic and auditory practices highlight the dangers of isolating specific sound elements from their cultural contexts or imposing Western music frameworks in cross-cultural settings. It's crucial to clarify that studying sound in the context of religious concepts and practices is not necessarily confined to music. Music is defined as culturally organized and meaningful sound or as having structured acoustic attributes (Chernoff 2002; Shelemay 2006; Ellingson 2005). Similarly, just as languages may lack direct equivalents for "music" as understood in Western contexts, they may prioritize other forms of vocalized expression, such as recitation in Islam or the use of instruments like drums in Siberian shamanic traditions. Thus, adopting a broader understanding of sound, as perceived and interpreted diversely, can provide insights into its role in mediating divine presence across cultures (Schulz 2008, 172–3). The objective of this study is to emphasize the fact that auditory semiotics deserves as much attention as visual semiotics in a religious space. When examining sound in its diverse aspects including production, perception, usage, and transmission, a multidisciplinary approach is necessary, drawing from natural, social, and human sciences (Chernoff 2002; Shelemay 2006)). Ethnomusicologists, cultural anthropologists, and historians, in their pioneering work on acoustic and auditory practices, emphasize the dangers of isolating specific sound objects from their social contexts or imposing Western musical paradigms in cross-cultural contexts (Ellingson 2005). It is crucial to differentiate the study of sound in religious contexts from music per se; while music is typically defined as culturally organized and meaningful sound or sounds with specific acoustical patterns, not all cultures conceptualize sound in this way (Schulz 2008, 172–3). For instance, in certain traditions like Islam, vocalized expressions such as recitation hold more significance, while in Siberian shamanic

practices, instruments like drums may be more central than vocal elements (Schulz 2008, 172–3). Adopting a broader perspective on sound, encompassing its varied perceptions and conceptualizations in mediating divine presence, proves more fruitful in scholarly exploration (Schulz 2008, 172–3) in any academic discipline.

### **Aim**

To reclaim the sounds of the religious spaces with specific references to Vrindavan and Mathura in Uttar Pradesh, India, whether as objective facts or as they were subjectively heard, interpreted, and imagined by the people in particular historical settings. Moreover, extraordinary and unusual sounds are more likely to be recorded, rather than the ordinary and mundane. Therefore, the study aims to analyze on the range of possible interrelationships between religion, sound, and music.

### **Objectives**

- To explore how sounds, create human bonding and harmony through religious and cultural spaces.
- To understand how sounds, help in recreating and affirming social values and bonding in the context of Vrindavan and Mathura in Northern India.

### **Theoretical framework**

The soundscape theory developed by the Canadian composer R. Murray Schafer has been applied for this study. The theory examines the relationship between sound and environment and believes that sounds of a particular place can provide insight into the cultural and social values of the inhabited people. Schafer believes that the sounds of a particular place can provide insight into the cultural and social values of the people who inhabit that place. At the same time, the study is concerned with the relationship between sound and the environment. However, acoustic ecology focuses more on the impact of human activity on natural soundscapes, and the ways in which humans can create more harmonious sonic environments. The study of sonic rhythms of place has also been applied as part of this research work as it helps to explain why certain sounds might be perceived as soothing or disturbing and to examine the relationship between sound and geography. Sonic geographers study the ways in which the physical features of a place impact its sonic environment, and how people interact with sound in different geographic locations. It also examines the patterns of sound and silence in a particular place, and how those patterns create a sense of rhythm. This field of study explores the ways in which humans perceive and respond to sound.

### **Review of Literature**

In the realm of religious studies, two scholars have made significant contributions to understanding the role of sound and hearing in religious experiences. Leigh Eric Schmidt's book, *Hearing Things: Religion, Illusion, and the American Enlightenment*, delves into the history of auditory experiences and hallucinations within American religion during and after the Enlightenment (Schmidt 2002). He argues for a broader examination of the auditory landscape in religious contexts, including not just preaching and music but also the diverse range of sounds such as sobbing, psalms, and bells that contribute to the devotional experience (Schmidt 2002). Similarly, in the context of Hinduism, Guy Beck (1993) emphasizes the centrality of sound in Hindu theology and ritual practices, a dimension often overlooked by Western scholars who focus more on visual elements. Beck's insider perspective,

gained through years of learning vocal classical music in India and subsequent academic studies in musicology and religious studies, allows him to explore the significance of sound in Hindu worship comprehensively (Beck 1993, 10–11). He highlights the rich sonic environment of Hindu worship, which includes various musical instruments and vocalizations, echoing the cosmological importance attributed to sound in Hindu scriptures like the Sabda-Brahman and Nada-Brahman across different Hindu traditions (Beck 1993).

Both scholars underscore the need for a holistic understanding of religious experiences, incorporating auditory elements and sonic theology alongside traditional visual and textual analyses, enriching our comprehension of diverse religious practices and beliefs.

Some scholars are shifting their focus from specific musical elements or performers to investigate broader acoustic environments known as "soundscapes" (Schulz 2008). These environments, such as the use of trumpet voluntaries in Christian services or conch-shell trumpet notes in Hindu rituals, play a significant role in structuring spaces and defining boundaries (Ellingson 2005, 6254). Alain Corbin's exploration of how bells functioned as both auditory and defensive markers in nineteenth-century France is frequently referenced in this context. Anthropologist Dorothea Schulz contributes to this discussion by examining the urban soundscape of Mali, where local and national radio broadcasts shape the public arena (Lee 2006).

The concept of the soundscape originates from R. Murray Schafer's work on sonic environments (Schafer 1993), and Emily Thompson defines it as a blend of physical space and cultural perception (2004, 1f.). Schulz (2008) extends this concept to emphasize the interplay between sound production, perception, and religious experience, highlighting how soundscapes create a sense of time, space, and embodiment crucial for religious communication (2008, 185).

A burgeoning area of interest is archaeoacoustics or acoustic archaeology, which explores the acoustic effects of ancient monuments on religious experiences (Scarre & Lawson 2006). These sites, believed to induce altered states or replicate sacred sounds, are now visited by music therapists leading pilgrimages (Hale 2007). This interdisciplinary approach aligns with the spatial turn in religious studies, deepening our understanding of the interplay between sound, space, and spirituality throughout history. Two notable works delve into the experiential aspects of trance, broadening the discussion beyond mere altered states of consciousness. Deborah Kapchan's book *Traveling Spirit Masters: Moroccan Gnawa Trance and Music in the Global Marketplace* (2007) delves into how Gnawa trance music transforms musical and racial identities for the Moroccan people and their global collaborators. Kapchan's analysis encompasses the aesthetic and emotional dimensions of Gnawa possession trance ceremonies, highlighting the transculturation of trance and sacred music more broadly. Ethnomusicologist Judith Becker's work, particularly her book *Deep Listeners* (Becker 2004), merges scientific and cultural perspectives on music and emotion, focusing on trance experiences. Becker proposes an emotion-based theory of trance, drawing from neuroscience and biology, and draws parallels between individuals experiencing deep emotions through music and those entering trance states during religious rituals.

Recent studies, such as one by Joshua Penman and Judith Becker (2009), delve into physiological responses like galvanic skin response and heart rate among different groups experiencing trance-like

states, such as Pentecostal Ecstatics and Deep Listeners. Moving beyond trance, discussions on religious sounds and music often intersect with healing practices. Scholars like Penelope Gouk (2000) and Peregrine Hordern (2000) explore historical beliefs and practices regarding music's emotional and healing powers. Ethnographic studies, such as those by Barnes & Sered (2005) and Gioia (2006), focus on contemporary communities and their discourses on sonic effects in healing practices, often involving drumming, chanting, and shamanic elements. With the globalization of world musics and the rise of resources like radio programs and websites dedicated to "sound healing," scholars like Timothy Taylor (2007) examine how specific sounds in advertising music symbolize spiritual or mystical ideas, reflecting historical Western perceptions of spirituality in contrast to other cultures. These discussions highlight the multifaceted nature of religious sounds, from their roles in transformative experiences to their therapeutic and healing potentials in diverse cultural contexts.

### **Research Method**

The method undertaken for this study is qualitative field study. Two places were considered for the study – Vrindavan and Mathura in Uttar Pradesh, India. Inside these two places, the following spaces were studied for this research – the locations were Prem Mandir

ISKCON Temple, Kesi Ghat near the banks of the Yamuna River, Gopeshwar Mahadev Mandir, and Nand Gaon. A considerable amount of time was devoted after looking for books, articles, magazines, thesis and research in several libraries, bookstores and online libraries to study the history of Vrindavan and Mathura, with a focus on the temples and their respective devotional practices. Vrindavan, located in Uttar Pradesh, is renowned as a sacred city associated with Lord Krishna, and it enjoys direct road connectivity from Delhi to Agra via NH-2, approximately 145 kilometers south of Delhi. The revered Yamuna River, considered one of India's holiest rivers, flows through Vrindavan and Mathura. Notable ghats in Vrindavan, such as Keshi Ghat and Chir Ghat, showcase remarkable architectural features with their construction in yellow sandstone. The city attracts pilgrims throughout the year, serving as a significant pilgrimage site for both Indian and international visitors. Moreover, Vrindavan holds historical significance intertwined with neighboring places in the Braj region, including Mathura, Gokul, Barsana, Govardhan, and Nandgaon (U.P. Tourism Data, 2014). Mathura stands as one of the seven sacred cities for Hindus, alongside Haridwar, Varanasi, Ujjain, Kanchi, Puri, and Dwarka. Situated along the Yamuna River, Mathura holds deep-rooted traditions and historical significance related to the birth and life of Lord Krishna, a revered Hindu deity. It occupies a pivotal role in Brajbhoomi, which comprises two distinct regions divided by the Yamuna River: the eastern side encompassing Gokul, Mahavan, Baldeo, Mat, and Bajna, and the western side including Vrindavan, Govardhan, Barsana, and Nandgaon (Tandon and Sehgal, 2017). An ethnographic study was conducted in Mathura and Vrindavan exploring its streets, ghats, and temples while capturing sounds and videos for documentation purposes. The sound recordings were made during a day-long visit to Vrindavan were encapsulated in the form of a sound documentary project. In order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the city and its religious practices, extensive readings were consulted that delve into these topics in depth. The research also drew from secondary sources such as scholarly journals, newspaper articles, and reports from various organizations. A primary survey was conducted in different areas of the city to gather firsthand data. The research specifically focused on heritage conservation efforts in the region, utilizing secondary data alongside primary research methods.

Efforts were made to ensure the data collected represented diverse perspectives across caste and community lines among the participants in the region.

### **Data Collection**

During the fieldwork, several crucial steps were undertaken to gather data and insights for the documentation project focused on Vrindavan. Firstly, extensive readings on Devotion and Krishna Consciousness were conducted to establish a foundational understanding. Subsequently, visits were made to explore the urban reality of Vrindavan firsthand. This involved collecting documentation on the temples in Vrindavan and actively participating in conferences, events, and collective bhaktis to immerse in the local religious practices.

A survey of the temples was conducted to understand their significance and layout within the city. Special attention was given to identifying unique elements of the surroundings that hold cultural or spiritual value. Interviews were also conducted with the local community residing and working near the temples to gain insights into their perspectives and to better comprehend the neighborhood dynamics. The research focused specifically on Vrindavan's cultural and spatial aspects, emphasizing city spaces within the temples. Rather than focusing solely on the grandeur of the temples, the goal was to map out the everyday cultural practices and usage of spaces by the general populace. This approach aimed to capture the spatial characteristics and their evolution over time, drawing from accounts and narratives shared by local devotees spanning from the past to the present. Furthermore, the research highlighted the significant role of sound in the process of creating meaning, particularly expanding beyond traditional visual semiotics, in the sacred context of Vrindavan, a revered Hindu site believed to be the birthplace of Lord Krishna.

### **Data Analysis**

Our auditory sense does not get shut down even when we cover our ears or move our head in the opposite direction to the source of the sound in the way closing the eyes does for our sight. We become keenly aware of it when it comes to our preference for it and get frustrated in the presence of unwanted sounds. Even during our sleep our auditory system keeps working. This tendency to be on constant alert brings its own merit. Our visual sight aids us in detecting an unknown, impending or invisible presence, or tracking and tracing an unknown one- it not gives us access to information provided by our visual sight but can be referred to as a highly accommodative function in its own right, an *alert* system we share with the higher form of animals.

Common emphasis in their exploration of the diverse ways in which sound has been and continues to be crucial to the ideological construction of a unifying postcolonial Indian nation-state, as well as insistent articulations of communal difference and specificity from multiple publics. How is that sense of individual and group belonging—or unbelonging—mediated by the sounds of India, in India, and representing India—from the street to the festival ground to the cinema hall to the mobile phone? How do Indians generate, inhabit, and interact with the multiplicity of soundscapes through which they move? What is the aesthetic, pragmatic, and political choices that artists make when sonically representing Indian culture(s) and national identit(ies) through media? As a discipline, ethnomusicology has roots deeply embedded in the colonial imaginary. Like the colonial fascination with Indian languages, caste structures, and religions, “Indian music” and its exotic instrumentation and system of scales fascinated early travelers to and scholars of the subcontinent and gave way by the

early twentieth century to a late colonial and early Indian nationalist emphasis on the collection and preservation of “classical” Indian music.

That sound or indeed noise is not experienced as a single event, isolated from social context, is a key insight that research participants shared in the sound experiment. Their recollections of the sound composition were accompanied by narratives that contextualized and enlivened their listening experience. The stories that they constructed, in tandem with listening to sounds, thus made them ‘disturbed’, ‘happy’, ‘annoyed’, ‘scared’ even, ‘shaking’ and ‘feel like turning around’ as if ‘some of the things were happening right behind you’.

When asked to share their experiences of the sound experiment, a participant depicted the physical settings where she located the sounds listened to. Rather than feeling enclosed and isolated inside the box, focusing on the sound allowed her to put together visual fragments of her everyday life in the city in what emerges as a detailed and fascinating narrative:

*It sounded like the day was starting. I heard birds chirping. It felt like I was on my balcony, seeing the sunrise, so it was quite pleasant. After that, screaming sounds [laughs]. The buses, the honking, the crowd. Then it felt like I had gone shopping. A Sunday is even more hectic than a working day. You are running around with your family. The hawkers are around, you know. The ladies are window shopping, their words are quite clear.*

Therefore, the communicative power of sounds appears to lend itself to an almost tangible physical quality that engendered emotional, visceral and bodily reactions among participants.

Parallels can be drawn with Rice's research into the impact of the acoustic dimension of hospitals on patients—an ‘active soundscape’ which is shown to be experienced with particular immediacy, thus rendering more acute the experience of other senses. Sounds evoked images and enabled participants to observe and describe them with intense curiosity—scenes from urban life and natural scenery. To use their own words, people were ‘transmuted’, ‘transported’, ‘alchemized’ in and out of the box, ‘visualized’ waterfalls, rivers and mountains, and generally felt ‘interested’. The sonic dialectic's serendipitous discovery resonates effectively with Ralph Nicholas "serendipitous discovery' of two opposing observances (Gajan and Durga puja) in the Bengali ritual calendar, which together construct a specific form of 'regional culture in Indian civilization' (Nicholas 2008, p. 7; Nicholas 2013, pp. 41-42). Through sacred sound production, this culture precisely mediates an orthodox and non-classical form of divinization.

An understanding was made that these chants have distinctly different textural acoustics and rhythms, aligning with the differing moods of Krishna worship. In the former context, generally cognitively distracted audiences require fast-paced, striking rhythms and loud and high-pitched, imposing sounds to attract them to the pandals.

**Kirtan and the Power of Sound Vibration:** Humans have a long history of engaging in group singing as a form of social bonding and as a way to represent and embody collective harmony and union. Because of sound's ability to resonate within multiple people at once and elicit a sympathetic

response. Kirtan is an incredibly accessible way to tap into the power of group singing— for the power of the wider collective to be felt through music and then for that music to ripple out, reverberate, or echo back the power of the collective vibration as call-and-response.

Bhakti Yoga as a movement emphasizes equality and harmony within the community as a path of socio-spiritual practice accessible to all and focused around collective participation. The community that takes part in the *Kirtan Satsang* is known as the *Sangam* or collective. Chanting is often accompanied by clapping and playing of musical instruments such as the harmonium, tanpura, drums or cymbals. The songs, chants, and mantras can be a simple name of an archetypal deity or the recitation of a devotional Sanskrit or vernacular phrase honoring or praising some aspect of the divine.

**Healing the Collective through Sound:** Synchronizing consists of responding to the call and amplifying the response which is not only heard through the ear, but felt within the body. Feeling the collective pulse brings the mind's attention to the moment, with heart open in receptivity, experiencing the full power of the grace of being in the here-and-now. This master pulse activates the subtle body at the heart chakra, the seat of divine love where one can experience the divine directly through personal relationship and emotional connection, if not by the union of hearts through the union of voices in harmony with each other. The pulsation of divine love is felt as a rippling force of purification, or shuddhi, within the soul of all being.

### **Listening into listenings**

Passing hassles sounds like listening. Hearing is the hassle with the ubiquity and transience of soundscapes; while harkening is the passing of soundscapes, informed by one's social, artistic and moral leanings. It's a matter of deliberation to draw this distinction between hail and listening. One can argue that it's between this hassle and experience that the politics of product, performance and articulation of sounds unfolds. While everyone translates the hassles with soundscapes, furthermore it argues that not all and everyone's experiences— and, therefore, harkening(s) – accord legality to the organization of sounds similar to noise, music and silence.

It's in asking questions, similar as the following, that these forms of politics can be teased out whose gestures of soundscapes – that is, listening – are given preference and whose listening is not? how and where is similar harkening asked and demanded? how does the character of space, artistic surrounds, and soundscapes alter and transfigure with assessments of certain kinds of harkening? and what are the ways in which non-recognized listening(s) pollutants in and out of these soundscapes? Drawing upon ethnographic accouterments from my exploration in Vrindavan, this paper tries to unravel some of these politics, by pressing the social, artistic and moral positions which inform certain listening.

The reflections are interesting as they illustrate a qualitative appreciation of associative recollections that come with sound, enabling communication with the city and its dwellers. In light of discussing sound as communication in this section, they describe a liveliness that imparts a sense that 'the city is not empty,' as another participant observed; 'people talking around, life, people singing, street hawkers etc. A city without noises is not good', she went on to explain.

This was an understanding shared by most participants, whose ideal city 'would not be a noiseless' city—it's quite a comforting sound, that there are people around you', one expressed, thus, experiencing a sense of connection with people via sound.

The above remark exemplifies Cain et al.'s holistic conceptualization of sounds as 'meaningful events' that create a set of expectations and understandings for individuals and communities. In this light, they contend, 'simply removing negative sounds is not enough. The simple elimination of "noise" is not always appropriate and can create anxiety. Symbolisms and meanings were identified as being communicated by sounds—symbolisms that differed depending on a variety of factors. For example, when asked about their views on the intensity, loudness or calmness of sounds that participants had been exposed to, they often related these to religion and religious practices. Whilst several participants, for example, reported using meditation as a means of relaxation and retreat from the city hullabaloo or withdrawing to a temple in order to find acoustic peace, for the rest sound became a marker to identify and distinguish religions and their practices, for instance 'The Sikh temple believes it has the right to be loud, Hindus believe they have the right to be loud. This is wrong'.

In the above examples, sound was used by participants to create distinctions between social status and religion, and identify 'the noisy "other" [as a] consistent rhetoric' which marginalizes, politicizes and moralizes people's narratives and understandings of the self and other.

Whether physical or symbolic, the qualities of sound appear to permeate participants' understandings of identity, their sense and experience of place. People's culture, status, religious orientation, emotional or psychological state and wellbeing, everyday experience of traffic, all permeate and are expressed by sound. This resonates with Chandola's understanding that: Sound is not just a moment of insular and individuated instance of utterance, but derives its momentum from the collisions with the multiplicities that abound these matrices: spatial, temporal, sonic, social, cultural, and political. A listener traverses through these matrices to 'make sense', to hear, to map not by accompanying each sound but by deliberately, unintentionally, and inadvertently leaving most un-listened in. All-pervasive as it is, sound communicates city life, it expresses the 'reactions of the city.' Or one can say, 'Sound passes messages to us, almost subconsciously, without anyone's consent.'

## Discussions

On a personal observation, the soundscape of Vrindavan is a unique blend of religious chants, temple bells, and street sounds that create a vibrant atmosphere.

The most prominent sound in Vrindavan is the chanting of "Hare Krishna" mantra, which can be heard throughout the city. It is common to see people walking around with prayer beads chanting the mantra. The sound of bells ringing in the numerous temples adds to the spiritual ambiance of the city. Apart from religious sounds, the streets of Vrindavan are filled with the sounds of vendors selling flowers, sweets, and souvenirs. The sound of rickshaws and motorbikes honking their way through the narrow lanes is a constant presence. There are also occasional sounds of cows mooing, as cows are considered sacred animals in Hinduism, and are a common sight on the streets of Vrindavan. During major festivals like Holi and Janmashtami, the soundscape of Vrindavan becomes even more vibrant. People play drums and other musical instruments, sing devotional songs, and dance in the streets. The sound



of firecrackers exploding in the sky adds to the festive atmosphere. In conclusion, the soundscape of Vrindavan is a unique blend of religious chants, temple bells, street sounds, and occasional festive music that creates a vibrant and spiritual atmosphere in the city. Since the Mantras is flexible in its practice and activation, it can be chanted at any speed, at any pitch, and either by being sung or hummed. During fast humming the consonants of the mantra disappear and only the vowels remain. Because of the meaning of the mantra, its cyclic effect, and its humming nature, the mantra revolves and resounds around and in our entire existence. In a colloquial manner, the mantra and its chanting as being like a cosmic accelerator with otherworldly implications; it takes off from the ground, revolves around the cosmos and then returns. The yogic and physiological effect of humming the Mantras can be compared to the practice of *bhrāmari prāṇāyama* (humming bee breath). The humming is created during this breath control practice, where the practitioner focuses on the sound vibration itself and on *ajña chakra* (the third eye point). The Bihar School of Yoga proposes “Bhramari relieves stress and cerebral tension, alleviating anger, anxiety and insomnia, and reducing blood pressure. It speeds up the healing of body tissue and may be practiced after operations. It strengthens and improves the voice and eliminates throat ailments.”

### Conclusion

Writing a conclusion of such an intense experience is not such an easy task. Indeed, the work behind this documentary has been a professional experience full of human involvement. Exploring a reality like Vrindavan, was not simple. To those who think that there is no hope for Vrindavan, I will reply saying: “The beauty of the devotion of Vrindavan lies in its chaos. If you can’t see it, it is probably just behind a crumbling sign.” By deliberating on a distinction between hearing and listening, one could see the manner in which encounters with spaces, cultures and bodies translate into experiences informed by sensorial, social, cultural and moral backgrounds. The ears, they never close. And, thus, we are constantly surrounded by, and submerged in, soundscapes. They evoke different emotions, often helping us to find our bearings and, at other times, making us lose them. Sounds, in a somewhat crude articulation, allow us to make sense of ourselves and the spaces we occupy at the same time (Feld, 2005; Feld and Basso, 1996; Rice, 2003). We do not, however, interact with sounds in their measurable embodiment of decibel notes; rather, we interact with a plethora of notes, variously structured as quiet, music, or noise.

Given the pervasive, albeit fleeting, experience of soundscapes, not only are the particularities and peculiarities of sounds organised as silence, music, and noise, but the preference for one kind of sound organisation over another is also reckoned to be a *de facto* reality, and thus considered apolitical. In non-Western societies, religious belief can be both scriptural (to classical deities) and more instantaneous and spontaneous (to non-classical gods). In both cases, these beliefs are formed and maintained through long-term habit patterns on the specific nature of devotions to these deities. Furthermore, when these devotional habits are intensely sensory in nature, they become more ingrained or sediment more effectively in cultures and bodies. Aurality and the body's sensitivities to sonic influence are crucial in this process.

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