Ahmedabad, Gujarat and has acquired basic education till graduation in BA. She accepted *Diksha* (sainthood) at the age of 39.

[8] Rashtra Sant Pujya Gurudev Shree Namramuni Maharaj Saheb – a 45 years young Jain Muni of Sthanakvasi Gondal Sampraday, born at Nagpur, Maharashtra. He accepted *Diksha* (sainthood) at the age of 25 years and has acquired basic education till 12th standard. He is a revolutionary Saint who has touched the heart of Jain and Non Jain across the globe and has brought about life changing experiences in them.

[9] https://www.facebook.com/search/str/jainism/keywords_top as accessed on 6th October 2015

[10]https://www.facebook.com/pages/Jain/105758209464743?ref=br_rs&rf=108107602544527 as accessed on 6th October 2015.

[11]https://twitter.com/search?f=users&vertical=default&q=jainism&src=typdas accessed on 6th October 2015.

[12] https://twitter.com/JainismNews as accessed on 6th October 2015.

[13] http://www.ekcheez.com/about-movie.html

A JYOT India presentation, Conceptualized by his Holiness Jain Acharya Shri Yugbhoosan Suriji "Pandit Maharaja", Directed by Deepesh Shah'Ek Cheez milegi Wonderful' is a journey in itself. From the world that craves and celebrates the physicality of happiness, this leads us to the core of the meaning and essence of being Happy. In the era where movies are made for 'Mass appeal', with the commercial aspect as the focus, this focuses on appealing to the mass in a different way.

Right from its conceptualization to presentation on screen, every frame is crisp, well presented and thought provoking. It strikes the emotional chord too, at the right places. As the story progresses, it becomes more gripping. The plot though, very simple, keeps the curiosity and interest till the very end. At the end, it culminates as a rich and wonderful experience. Watching ' Ek cheez ...' is something like sipping lime juice, the taste distinctly felt, but none of its ingredients makes its presence felt. Though based on Jain principles, the message has been woven in such a scuttle way that the essence of it is omnipresent but not visible. No direct mention. No labels attached.

Sanatan Dharma and Digital Media: The Process of Adaptation, Absorption and Assimilation in Hindu South Asia

Binod C. Agrawal

Introduction

Sanatan Dharma (Hindu religion) within the living civilization of South Asia that includes modern India believe in the transmigration of un-destructible, un-flammable and non-wet able *Atma* (human soul), re-birth and appearance of gods and goddesses as *Avtar* (appearance of god on the earth) from time to time to reduce human suffering and reduce prevailing sinful activities on earth. By means of oral methods and techniques in largely non-literate South Asia, the concept of transmigration of soul as one of the fundamental tenants of *Sanatan Dharam* continue to be entrenched in Hindu psyche and accepted practice for giving "rational" explanation for individual human misery and misfortune. In the long and meandering oral history of *Sanatan Dharama* it remained an inseparable aspect within the Indian civilization. Among many conceptions of *Sanatan Dharma* in the day-to-day oral discourse, discussion and speculation about *Atama* (soul) and *Parmatama* (god) and its relationship with self and god remain a paramount point of self expression for acceptance of current human condition and inequality in the Indian Civilization.

The quest to answer the question of human self and god continues within a multi-religious South Asia where many world religions appeared and lost sheen as continuing process of growth and decay of religious beliefs. Contemporary emphases on the notion of individualism, privacy and freedom have added new set of discussion and discourse in *Sanatan Dharma* fueled

Binod C. Agrawal, PhD from Ahmedabad, India is pioneer of holistic study and qualitative research and quantitative survey in development and communication. He is an established leader of satellite communication applications studies, health care and opinion poll survey.

by growing acceptance and influence of digital media across South Asia especially in the democratic, hierarchal and multi-religious India.

It is believed that humans have innate and unique ability of self expression in a variety of ways. It is depicted in the ancient rock paintings of Bhimbedka in India that captures creative human genius (Behl [1998] 2005). Modern graphic arts are also human self expression in other mediums. So is digital media in 21st century. The common thread in all forms of creative self expression is human imagination, intellectual ability and desire to express. Cultural configurations, religious beliefs and expressive cultural conditioning help shape self communicative urge that leads to verbal, non-verbal and symbolic expression through a variety mediums including plastic art and material culture. Dynamic social organization helps channelize the inner desire of self expression. Self expression is a process as well as product of conceiving and creating new forms and reshaping the existing material or idea while adding new symbolic and cultural meanings to the dynamic expression over time.

The theory of "self expression" relates to basal human instinct of achieving social recognition within and outside one's culture and asserts sense of unique self worth. Self expression permits some imaginative, special and unique ability, characteristics and trait often enhanced by digital media. For many, it is a method personal satisfaction to impress peer group and others within socio-cultural boundary of language. The theory of self expression helps explain why digital media as product are being used for individual sharing and exchanging of information including religious learning.

In the past and even now, religious learning and preaching is largely highly collective and congregational practice especially in *Sanatan Dharma*. The term digital media in the present context is conceived as an electro-mechanical device having power and ability to store, view, create, distribute, modify, read and reproduce information in a verity of forms. In South Asia, it seems the ubiquity of digital media has brought about multiple changes in the canvas of cultural, entertainment, economics, and political governance including religions dissemination and practices like elsewhere in the world. In over billion population multi-religious South Asia the digital media have opened up "tight lip" individuals to become nonstop talking heads around the clock (Agrawal 2015a). Societal implications are yet to be fully analyzed, realized, and understood. Observations support the view that digital media have forereaching influences on the social structure, l human relations and in blurring national boundaries that might change the content, meaning and method of preaching religion.

Study

In the light of these initial comments and observations, an attempt has been made to show how digital media product of information and communication technology (ICT) has accentuated religious self expression within the theory of self expression.

The paper is based on part data of a survey conducted in the city of Ahmedabad, Gujarat, India among adults above 18 years of age of either sex who owned or had access to mobile phone and or television. The sample consisted of 211 Christian, 300 Hindu and 200 Muslim respondents who were administered a pre-tested English closed ended questionnaire by a team of seven field researchers. Snowball sampling technique was used to select the respondents. In order to improve the response rate, field investigators made several trips and persuaded the respondents to return the questionnaire after filling it. The data collection was spread over two months from February to April 2015. Data checking, cleaning, entry and analysis were carried out from May to June 2015.

The original sample consisted of 711 respondents who belong to three religions (42.2 percent Hindu, 28.2 percent Muslim and 29.6 percent Christian). Since sample was drawn using snowball technique, sample consisted of digital media owners and users. In the present paper, only 300 Hindu respondents have been taken into consideration for analysis.

Analysis

All 300 Hindu respondents in the sample belong to both sexes (male 60.8 percent and female 39.2 percent, Table 1). They are educated (50.0 percent graduates). All respondents have mobile phone and television at home. They largely belong to the young age category of below 25 years (53.0 percent, Table 2). As much as 50.0 percent are educated with a Bachelor's degree (Table 3). Table 4 shows that 42.7 percent are students, 32.3 percent and 14.3 percent respectively are in service or business (Table 3). In this respect, the

sample represented a selected group of mobile and smartphones owners and users urban educated "middle class" of Ahmedabad, India.

Table 1: Sex Distribution of Respondents

Sex	Percent
Male	60.8
Female	39.2
Total	100

Table 2: Age Distribution of Respondents

Age	Percent
Below 25 Years	53.0
Above26 Years	47.0
Total	100
Mean Age in Years	25.2

Table 3: Education Distribution of Respondent

Age	Percent
Below 10th Grade Pass	1.0
10th to 12th Grade	21.3
Bachelor's Degree	50.0
Master's Degree	20.0
Professional Degree	7.0
Total	100

Table 4: Present Occupation Distribution of Respondents

Occupation	Percent
Student	42.7
Service	32.3
Business	14.3
Housewife	10.0
Retired/ Unemployed	0.7
Total	100

Digital Media Access and Use

Almost all respondents (96.0 percent) had access to direct-to-home (DTH) or cable television in which four out of five or 81.0 percent watch television for entertainment regardless of gender (Tables 5 and 6). These respondents spend one hour and thirty-six minutes every day watching television or using digital media (Table 8). Half of them or 49.0 percent also had access to radio though little is known about radio listening or specific religious use of radio by them (Table 7).

Table 5: Television, Radio Access*

Access		Percent
Television		
	Yes	96.0
	No	4.0
Radio		
	Yes	43.0
	No	57.0
Total Sample	300	

*Multiple responses

Table 6: Current Digital Media Use*

Use	Percent
Entertainment	81.0
Knowledge	70.
Professional	34.7
News	35.0
Religious	13.3
Total Sample	300

* Multiple responses

Digital Media Access and Use

Ownership and access of digital media is presented in Table 7. On the whole, 90.7 percent of Hindu respondents have access to smartphone, 86.0 percent have access to the Internet and 63.7 percent have access to laptops. In addition, in 60.7

percent of homes computer is available to the respondents. It should be mentioned that almost all respondents who were in business or service had computer in work place as reported by 39.3 percent respondents. Consequently, the use of digital media through smartphone, Internet, desktop and laptop is fairly (Table 7).

Table 7: Digital Media Access

Access		Percent
Smartphone		
	Yes	90.7
	No	9.3
Internet		
	Yes	86.0
	No	14.0
Laptop		
	Yes	63.7
	No	34.3
Desktop Computer at Home		
	Yes	60.7
	No	39.3
Desktop Computer at the Office		
	Yes	39.3
	No	60.7
Other		2.3
Total Sample		300

Table 8: Average Time Spent for Digital Media (in minutes)

Digital Media	Time spent
Television	69.3
Website	262.2
Whats App	123.3
YouTube	15.7
Twitter	3.0
Facebook	33.8
Instagram	0.5

Skype	0.4
Total Sample	300

Multi-Lingual Digital Media

The unique genre of television and radio in South Asia and India represents a multi-lingual, multi-religious and multi-content telecast and broadcast. Several hundred satellite exclusive television entertainment, education and news channels are telecasting around the clock seven days a week received in South Asia and India beyond their national boundaries. To a large extent the same can be said about the FM radio. In addition, public service broadcasting television and radio in several languages continue to broadcast which are accessible across the nation and beyond. They are spread over about two billion viewers and listeners within South Asia and India. Broadcast in major languages are having more the 100 million viewers and listeners in languages like Hindi, Urdu, Bengla, Punjabi, Telugu, Tamil, Marathi apart from English and many other languages. The focus of television telecast is to provide entertainment, education, religious programs and news around the clock. The same holds true for radio. Smartphones carry both television and radio signals apart from print news.

Analysis presented in Table 6 provide a glimpse of the pattern in which entertainment remained the most dominant attraction of the viewers and listeners. Both men and women regardless of their religion largely wedded to entertainment as indicated the large survey (Christian 82.5 percent, Hindu 81.0 percent and Muslim 78.5 percent), apart from knowledge gain, news and information. It should be mentioned that as much as 52.0 percent Muslim and 46.9 Christian viewers watch television for religious gain and information whereas only 13.5 percent Hindu do so (Table 6) thereby showing clear differences between Hindu and two other religious groups in digital media use for receiving religious television. Significant differences tend to point out differential and extensive religious use of television between Hindu on one side and Christian and Muslim on the other side.

Possible explanation for the differences can be found within the core of religious doctrine and philosophical beliefs of these religions. For example, in *Sanatan Dharma* (Hindu religion) live enactment of various incarnations of Gods and Goddesses are common. Symbolic visual performances are carried

out by "actors" and "actress" who remain in state of "liminality" during the period of festivity and hence are treated as incarnation of God or Goddess. Such a performance has been in vogue for several millennia in the sub-continent of India and elsewhere in Asia. On the other hand, there is a little evidence in Islam and to a large extent in Christianity except in Latin America of somewhat similar practices. Hence, it is author's contention that 'self expression' through visual medium of television is receiving special attention among the non-Hindu viewers of "monotheistic" religions more than "polytheistic" S*anatan Dharma* (Hindu religion).

Qualitative analysis and observations support the view that 'self expression' was highest among Hindu as compared to Christian and Muslim. Historical analysis of folk theatre, drama and satire amply supported the view that peoples' descent, opposition and resentment in the past during feudal and British rules were humorously performed by way self expression without major and serious social repercussions like *Bhavai* (a satire in which men and women ridicules the ruling class by song and dance performance) in Gujarat and similar forms in other parts of India. The author had also witnessed similar social satires against government and local elites in Madhya Pradesh during his field work in 1967-68 and ealier in Uttar Pradesh. Digital media are another technological extension that has opened up a new flood gate for 'self expression' especially in social media e.g. Facebook and Twitter. For a large majority social media have provided space to vent suppressed view and opinions for better democratic governance of the Indian Sub-continent. In addition, digital media in the form of social media has other innumerable possibilities of 'self expression of the evils of *Sanatan Dharma* (Hindu religion) in a highly asymmetrical, hierarchal and multilingual South Asian civilization. Visual 'self expression' for pan-national communication is gaining a great deal of popularity in all forms of digital media. Inter-religious differences in self expression have seen sudden explosion that can largely be explained in digital media expansion and liberal existing democratic fabric of the Indian civilization and emerging democracies like Nepal and socio-economic and religious beliefs within *Sanatan Dharma* (Hindu religion). The repercussion of digital media adaptation can be experienced in increased religious and socio-political tension in self expression on social media and in "... humanizing elements of religious order" (Mishra 2015:74).

Given the visual well established tradition of *Natyashastra* (Indian treasure of drama) digital media have been absorbed in the religious fold as it has helped like cinema in the past, depicting religious miracles, mythological stories and power of supernatural and gods and goddess. Almost all Indian television channels are continuously telecasting such religious programs apart from exclusive Hindu religious channels.

It is the contention of the author that digital media in the process is getting assimilated while refining religious program production. New techniques of production have created modern characters of mythological heroes in the Hindu religious telecast though such telecast seems to have limited effects (Agrawal 2012). Further, digital media for many have become an essential method and means of self expression in personal, professional and political arena. Apart from reporting cases of injustice, expressing views and opinion on almost every social, economic and political issue are common occurrence on different digital media. Digital media are also being used for sharing appreciation and expressing displeasure. Today, the competition can be observed among political leaders, film actors, social elites and Hindu religious leaders about the size of digital and social media followers and how often they are on Twitter or on Facebook. Privacy is in public glare. It has touched new heights regardless of one's religion, gender and personal ambitions.

Given the rapid and revolutionary changes in digital media, it is difficult to predict the direction and pace of change in social, religious and political arena. At the same time, it is firmly believed that digital media have been adapted, absorbed and getting assimilated in the unbroken continuity of cultural visual tradition of 'self expression' in *Sanatan Dharma* (Hindu religion). Digital media have strengthened the process Hindu religious propagation over a period of time. It is a view of the author that digital media will take centre stage to play a critical role in 'self expression' of *Sanatan Dharma* (Hindu religion) preachers, saints and priests in the near future. This view is supported by Singh (2015:51-68) who observed that *Ramlila*--the traditional method of dramatic presentation of *Ramcharitmanas* the most revered mythological *magnum opus* of the poet Tulsidas is losing its importance in the wake of digital media. According to Singh (2015:55) "The development of mass media [digital media], particularly television soap operas, however, is leading to a reduction in the audience for Ramlila plays, which are losing their principal role of bringing people and communities together." At the same time, the telecast of Ramlila attracts very large audience no matter how many time it is telecast and through which medium.

Concluding Comment

Based on the analysis presented so far, the contention of the author is to highlight and explain the theory of self expression; the innate human desire for 'self expression' in which digital media, it seems, have played an important role. At the same time, the digital media have helped to accelerate the process of religious doctrine its adaptation, absorption and assimilation of *Sanatan Dharma* (Hindu religion) in a multi-lingual and multi-religious South Asian especially the Indian civilization.

REFERENCES

Agrawal,Binod C ,

2014a   Media and Oral Tradition of Hindu *Satsang*: An Analysis of Sri Sri Thakur Anukulchandra *Avatar* in the Indian Civilization. *Religion and Social Communication, Journal of the Asian Research Center for Religion and Social Communication* Volume 12, No. 2, 2014, pp-169-177.

2014b   Influence of Religious Telecast in Multi-religious India: An Analysis of Hindu and Muslim Television Viewers. *Religion and Social Communication, Journal of the Asian Research Center for Religion and Social Communication* Volume 12, No. 1, pp.54-69.2014b.

2014c   New Media Turned Tight lip into a Non-Stop Talking Civilization: An Analysis for Language Transformation in Family Discourse.Keynote Address presented in National Seminar on 'Emerging Languages in Public Discourse and New Media' organized by CIIL Mysore in collaboration with AMIC Singapore held at Mysore, March 15-16, 2014.

2012   Learning Hindu *Dharma* from Television Cartoons: An Analysis of School Children in the Indian Civilization. *Religion and Social Communication, Journal of the Asian Research Center for Religion and Social Communication* Volume 9, No.2, pp 113-132.

Behl. Benoy K.

2005   The Ajanta Caves. Ancient Paintings of Buddhist India. New York: Thames &
(1998)   Hudson Inc.

Mishra, Shuchi,

2015   Dialectics of Religion and Politics in Contemporary India. *In* Dynamic Aspects   of Religion in India. Anjali Chauhan, ed., pp69-75. New Delhi: Bloomsbury Publishing.

Singh, Neetu,

2015   Cyclical Time: Ramlila in India Concepts, Actions and Objects. *In* Dynamic Aspects of Religion in India. Anjali Chauhan, ed., pp 51-68. New Delhi: Bloomsbury Publishing.