



Globalisation and its effects on Religious Practices: A Case Study of the Hindu Community in Durban, South Africa

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to investigate the effects of globalisation on Hindu cultural and religious practices. Even though there are various practices in Hinduism, colour has been known to be closely related to the Hindu religion, representing the expression of faiths and beliefs. For example, many Hindu deities have specific colours associated with their attire, signifying their qualities. Hence, with specific reference to colour, this case study explores how globalisation has impacted the use of colour in Hinduism. A purposive sampling technique was used to select 20 participants from the population. The participants include ten (10) senior citizens (age 55 and above) and ten (10) Hindu Priests. The selection criteria help to ensure that the selected participants have a deep knowledge of Hindu culture and religion. The participants were interviewed using open-ended questions and the collected data was analysed using thematic analysis. Five (5) themes emerged as an indication of the effects of globalisation. These include, i) differences between colour use among Hindus in South Africa and India, ii) western influence on colour use, iii) global propaganda (media and Internet), iv) problems with education and v) young Hindus' lack of interest. The responses of all 20 participants also suggest that the richness of Hindu culture is strongly associated with the importance of colour. The colours are integrated into religion to such an extent that they hold important cultural, religious, and traditional meanings. As colours have a great significance in the Hindu religion, it can be said that this religion is represented by symbolic colours which form a large part of Hindu consciousness, festivals and celebrations.

Keywords: Colour symbolism, Globalisation, Hinduism, Religious practices, Westernisation

Introduction

Globalisation has always had its effects on culture and religion. Throughout history, religion has been one of the main reasons for the global interaction among different communities and cultures. For example, during the colonial era, the Christian Church promoted the faith in Africa, South America as well as parts of Asia. The impact of culture and religion in the context of globalisation cannot be ignored (Golebiewski, 2014). Interactions between different communities and cultures have created co-dependent relationships between globalisation and religion, causing further dissemination of religious ideologies and practices. Globalization and religion still possess a dependent relationship, and the growth of religions is but one manifestation thereof as religious practices are embraced by diverse cultures and



communities. (Khaled, 2007). In Hinduism, the religious practices have found a way to adapt to globalisation while retaining its unique character by trying to develop its own cultural and religious identity (Kumar, 2000). The interaction between Hinduism and globalisation in recent decades has resulted in a trend such as cosmopolitanism, which refers to the exposure and adoption of 'Western' values and beliefs, as the younger Hindu generation prefers to be a part of the new global community rather than following their native ideologies and practices (Turner, 2010). According to Khaled (2007), the degree of fusion of the two world views is unique to each individual and can be classified as "glocalization".

According to Khaled (2007), the globalisation effect on Hinduism has created a conflicting reality for the young generation of the Hindu community where individuals are torn between two choices: namely, the desire to be a part of the global culture while retaining their individual culture and religious identities. The Hindu religion, which also means the Hindu way of life, is under a big threat from globalisation. It can be compared to colonisation as it has the same negative effect on the Hindu community. The increasing development of the Western world along with the process of globalization has caused a great decline in Hindu communal life, religion, art, literature, and traditional customs. These negative effects of globalisation are carefully hidden behind big labels like democracy, humanitarian rights, gender equality, internationalism, free trade, and humanism. In the name of modernisation and globalisation, it pretends to inspire the people or communities that it abuses. This is not very different in one expectation or another from old British colonialism in the Indian setting which boasted itself as the amiable bearer of civilisation and culture (2007).

The ongoing process of globalisation, combined with a strong influence of Western culture in many parts of the world, has caused a partial loss of cultural identity among several cultures (Overgaard, 2010). Through changing times, regimes and practices, young Hindus are being more exposed to the adoption of Western values and beliefs. They form part of the new trend and prefer to be a part of the global community rather than following their native culture (Turner, 2010). As religious ideology is closely connected to cultural practices (Kumar, 2000), young Hindus' knowledge of religious institutions is slowly fading away and being replaced by uniformity caused by globalisation (Ritzer, 2009). This uniformity led to the disappearance of great knowledge of culture and identity among young Hindus (Tetreault & Denmark, 2004) and the viewing of Indian communities through a Western lens – not only by the West but by Indians themselves (Kumar, 2000). The impact of globalisation on the Hindu community has also affected the way colour symbolism is applied both in Hindu cultural and religious practices. According to Olson (2007), colours play an important role in Hindu religion and culture, where colour symbolism controls every aspect of life including religion, politics, social life, and celebrations. Hence, with specific reference to colour symbolism and application in Hinduism, this study aims to investigate the effects of globalisation on Hindu practices. The study used the Hindu community in Durban, South Africa, as a case study.

Impact of globalisation on Hinduism

In the colonial era in India, from 1700 to 1875, British pioneer extension worked through military, financial and strict strategies (Singh & Aktor, 2015). Alongside military power, which was the essential starting technique, there were also religious influences. According to missionaries who came to India to assume a supporting role to the British Imperial rulers, Christianity was the only genuine religion (Robertson, 1992). Alongside the Christian religion came the remnants of British or Western culture, the habits of thought and the progressive end of the Hindus' customary way of life (Turner, 2010). Traditional religions and societies were continuously undermined or disposed of as the new Indian proselytes of Christianity were pushed not only to abandon their religion but also their way of life (Turner, 2010). According to Turner (2010), a decent Indian Christian convert would dress like an Englishman and copy English habits in everything that the Hindu community encouraged.



After the foundation of the powers of colonialism came a scholarly structure that was less obvious but more perilous and dangerous for local society (Golebiewski, 2014). The British rulers endeavoured to 'colonise the brains' of Indians by dispensing with all customary schools through a reformist arrangement of Western training (Golebiewski, 2014). Educated Indians, having advanced education in the schools opened by the outsider rulers in the last part of the nineteenth century, were forced to accept that it was not colonial abuse that the Englishmen were bringing to India, but reformist Western qualities in science, workmanship, and innovation (Golebiewski, 2014). Local Indian people were assisted with acquiring the skills of English civilization by becoming modern (Golebiewski, 2014).

Although all types of colonial empires, from a geographical point of view, came to an end after World War II, many similar types of colonisations albeit not military, continue to this day in all parts of Asia, Africa, and Latin America due to the process of globalisation (Khaled, 2007). Despite all the claims about diversity, Western civilisation promotes only one universal culture with a set of standardised values, institutions, and views for all, called globalisation (Khaled, 2007). The truth is that Western culture, with its bid for universal business, eliminates any true culture based on quality rather than quantity (Khaled, 2007). The monoculture created has taken all the morals and values away while promoting consumerism and lust for money as the main pursuits, where everything can be purchased, sold, or exploited (Khaled, 2007). Every one of the industrialists and financial specialists in India today boasts about the steadily rising tide of commercialisation and consumerism brought into Hindu society by the means of Globalisation (Khaled, 2007).

Globalisation is seen as rather gentle and good-natured by the people of India – more like a breeze, which blows in quietly, tops off the mental air, makes a psychological mindset and settles down as a social environment (Kumar, 2000). It is not out to utilise a particular segment of Indian culture as a vehicle for its harmfulness. Simultaneously, it is slowly crawling through communities and consuming the spirit of the Hindu culture. It slowly poisons well-established social frameworks while targeting each segment of Hindu culture (Kumar, 2000). Every informed Indian seems to accept that nothing in Hindu India, past or present, is to be supported unless it is perceived and suggested by an appropriate expert in the West (Golebiewski, 2014). There is a pervasive presence of an uplifting view towards everything in Western society and culture, for the sake of progress, reason, and science, where nothing from the West is to be rejected unless it has first been found necessary by a Western assessment (Golebiewski, 2014).

The Hindu community of Durban

The primary gathering of Indian workers, generally Hindus, arrived in South Africa in 1860. The majority settled in Durban, Kwa-Zulu Natal since they were initially requested by the local farmers (Desai and Vahed, 2010). The nineteenth-century migration of Indian workers brought two kinds of migrants: namely, labourers and normal travellers. The Indian travellers came at their own cost and were generally merchants; over time, they became a financial power (Desai & Vahed, 2010).

Hinduism was mostly educated at home, while temples were used as the main areas for social bonding (Desai & Vahed, 2010). Religion was at first educated within families while elderly members of the community were telling religious stories from Indian writings (Desai & Vahed, 2010). From the mid-1900s, books on prayers, histories of saints and praise poems were sold by Moothoosamy Bros in Gray Street (Desai & Vahed, 2010). Hindus perform 'pujas' which are prayers performed by a pandit for each special occasion – a custom which is still practised today (Desai & Vahed, 2010). Prayer flags called 'jhandi' were placed in a special area in front of the house of every Hindu (Desai & Vahed, 2010). These were produced using bamboo posts with a red flag and stayed there until the following puja was performed.



Hindu reform associations endeavoured to make Hinduism more appealing to their own supporters (Diesel & Maxwell, 1993). A considerable number of associations, such as the Arya Samaj, the Ramakrishna Centre, and the Divine Life Society, have emphasised the departure from custom frameworks to a more philosophical comprehension of Hinduism (Diesel & Maxwell 1993). These Hindu movements accepted that customary “Hindus lacked the enlightened understanding of Hindu philosophy” which was only present in the sacred texts of Hinduism (Diesel & Maxwell, 1993: 36). They also dismissed worshipping of different gods in Temples, believing it was based on ignorance (Diesel & Maxwell, 1993).

In research directed by J H Hofmeyr and G C Oosthuizen in 1981, a shift toward a more philosophical way to deal with Hinduism was apparent (Hofmeyr & Oosthuizen, 1981). Over 88% of Hindus asserted a monotheistic comprehension of God in Hinduism, with about 11% conceding polytheistic thoughts (Hofmeyr & Oosthuizen, 1981). Still, the Hindu strict life based on ceremonies in Temples and places of worship kept on prospering (Hofmeyr & Oosthuizen, 1981). This is not surprising given that Hinduism emanates from Sanatan Dharma, according to which, god is found in everyone and all things are essentially a part of god (panentheistic).

It continues to be apparent during the celebrations of fire-strolling customs at which a few Hindus show insistence on their confidence in their wide range of divinities (Hofmeyr & Oosthuizen, 1981). On later occasions, the South African Hindu, Maha Sabha, presently the authority organ under which all Hindu relationships in the nation fall, has held gatherings on Hinduism to educate the youth (Hofmeyr & Oosthuizen, 1981).

However, Landy (2004) and Maharaj (2013) contended that in 2004, the Indian character was alive in Durban. It was divided by religion, language, age, and class, where India was a key referent ‘supernaturally’ since it has a theoretical presence, which is talked about, longed for and now and again visited. Along these lines, Desai and Vahed (2010) conclude that people of Indian origin have lost much of their heritage as they turned out to be ‘South Africans’, with English being the predominant language for the 1.2 million Indians inhabiting the country.

Sooklal (1991), in his work on Hinduism and legislative issues in South Africa, writes that the Hindu confidence was created in a non-Indian setting in which its followers adjusted to South African conditions. Sooklal’s key question is in a nation comprising African greater parts, how might it affect a Hindu to recognize himself as a South African? The work of Chetty (1999) addresses this inquiry by writing that religion is perhaps the most unavoidable means by which individuals of Indian descent in South Africa distinguish themselves. Despite the practically natural assimilation measure that Hindus have gone through, they keep on drawing upon Hindu lessons and use examples from India (Chetty, 1999). India is seen as a definitive source of experts for strict practices and personality (Sooklal, 1991),

Colour in Hindu Practices

Colour has three distinct origins, namely emotional, socio-economic, and cultural. Firstly, colours can have a strong emotional effect and influence an individual's physiological state, such as red increasing blood pressure and affecting physical strength (Kress, 2002). Secondly, the colours have a socio-economic meaning attached to them such as the colour violet which is associated with wealth and happiness in Western society, due to the violet dye being more expensive than gold and only available to rich people and a few selected organisations such as the Christian Church. Lastly, the cultural origin of colour meaning can be seen in the example of the Indian Bridal outfit which is red as opposed to the Western white wedding gown.

In Hindu astrology, the planets are said to have an influence on the life of man according to the position they are in when a man is born. Each planet has its period of influence (Seva, 2017). Thus, colours became an effective tool in worshipping, and the planets, named in



Hindu, Navagrahas. Sun, Moon, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus, Saturn, Rahu (Neptune) and Ketu (Pluto), are invoked before the important prayers in ceremonies and weddings. These planets are also depicted in Rangolis with certain colours assigned to them (Seva, 2017). Numerous studies have been directed featuring the significance of colour in Indian culture with an emphasis on magnificence and style. In India, colour is not simply a method for ornamenting the body, antiques, or architecture (Olson, 2007). It is a fundamental piece of all features of life joined into the ordinary texture of Indian culture (Olson, 2007). This wonder is most obvious in the customary pieces of clothing worn by the ladies of different societies where the use of a specific colour is generally viewed as a marker of a social character (Olson, 2007).

White came to be related to purity and light and was saved for the use of the highest castes, for example, the Brahmins (Olson, 2007). Across India, white is broadly worn by men, albeit generally structured with other colour shadings as an embellishment (Olson, 2007). Married ladies never wear any white-shaded pieces of clothing. In certain instances, they frequently wear a mix of red and white which is illustrative of both their manly and ladylike parts (Olson, 2007). White is likewise seen as a refutation of quality and along these lines connotes effortlessness. Thus, Hindu priests frequently wear white, for example, the members of the Jain Svetambara organisation sect wear Sveta or white attire (Olson, 2007).

Red was generally connected with the Kshatriya champion position but is also viewed as a favourable colour, referred to in Vedic sacred texts as 'captivating' to the divine beings and goddesses (Olson, 2007). Generally acquired from the Manjit or madder plant, the colour red is related to blood or the existence of power (Olson, 2007). It is normally used for bridal attire and is emphatically associated with an image of fruitfulness because of its relationship with the Goddess Lakshmi (Olson, 2007). Married ladies in many areas of India apply red turmeric powder on their temples or on their hair as an image of their marital status (Olson, 2007). Viewed as the shade of religion and asceticism, saffron yellow or orange are broadly worn by Hindu priests and mendicants as well as by other individuals (Olson, 2007). In North India, saffron means thriving because of its relationship with great harvests of wheat and mustard (Olson, 2007). Thus, in Bihar and eastern Uttar Pradesh, the maternal grandmother of the bride typically gifts a piri or orange sari to the bride for the wedding while the lucky man wears a brilliant yellow dhoti (Olson, 2007). In the Kangra area, the maternal aunt used to wear a yellow full-length ling-chola or tunic during matrimonial functions (Olson, 2007).

Yellow was additionally viewed as a highly auspicious colour; thus, Hindu gods are regularly wearing the golden pitambaram. Head covers of a similar colour are hung on the bride or groom in different communities. For example, a yellow odhni or wrap is put on the groom's shoulders during the wedding function in Uttar Pradesh while extravagantly weaved phulkari wraps are given to the bride in Punjab. In the eastern areas of the Indian subcontinent, on the main day of the Hindu wedding, the bride is washed in turmeric during a customary ceremony, during and after which she wears a yellow sari. Yellow saris are usually worn during the peak of Tamil and Telugu wedding services among non-Brahmin people (Olson, 2007).

Aspects of colour in Hinduism have been highlighted in the works of some researchers, ranging from the symbolic use of colour in Hinduism (Feisner, 2006; Sharma, 2007) to the relationships that exist between scientific properties of colour and the use of colour in Hindu culture and religious practices (Mumtaz, 2004). Some studies also highlight the effects of globalisation of Hindu practices (Turner, 2010; Golebiewski, 2014), however, there is apparently no existing study that investigate the effects of globalisation on the understanding and use of colour among Hindus, especially Hindus outside India. Hence, this study fills this literature gap and develops a visual colour guide to create awareness about colour symbolism in Hinduism.



Research Methodology

The main aim of this study is to investigate the effects of globalisation on the use of colour in Hinduism. The Hindu Community in Durban, South Africa is selected as the case study as it is the second largest Hindu community in the world (Kumar 2000); hence, it is believed this population will provide rich and detailed data and insights to the research. A purposive sampling technique was used to select 20 participants from the population. The participants include ten (10) senior citizens (age 55 and above) and ten (10) Hindu Priests. The purposive sample selection criteria helped to ensure that the selected participants have a deep knowledge of Hindu culture and religion.

Data was collected using semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions. The interview sessions were audio recorded and the researcher also took notes occasionally to record the emotions and expressions and tone of participants. The recorded interviews were transcribed and then analysed using thematic analysis. The thematic analysis process includes six (6) phases; i) familiarisation with the collected data; ii) generating initial codes; iii) searching for themes; iv) reviewing themes; v) defining and naming themes, and vi) presenting and discussing results. Throughout this study, ethical considerations were adhered to. Participants were not rewarded in any way, and they were also free to withdraw from the study at any juncture. Their anonymity was also maintained.

Discussion of Findings

The summary of the demographic data of the twenty (20) participants as well as their status and religious knowledge are presented in Table 1. Five (5) themes emerged from the thematic analysis of interview data. As shown in Table 2, the themes include, i) differences between colour use among Hindus in South Africa and India, ii) western influence on colour use, iii) global propaganda (media and Internet), iv) problems with education, v) young Hindus' lack of interest.

The responses of all 20 participants suggest that the richness of Hindu culture is strongly associated with the importance of colour. The colours are integrated into religion to such an extent that they hold important cultural, religious, and traditional meanings. As colours have a great significance in the Hindu religion, it can be said that this religion is represented by symbolic colours which form a large part of Hindu consciousness. The symbolism of colour in Hinduism controls all aspects of life such as festivals and celebrations.

Table 1. Demographic data of participants

Pseudonym	Status	Religious Knowledge
Participant 1 (P1)	Priest	Excellent
Participant 2 (P2)	Senior Citizen	Good
Participant 3 (P3)	Senior Citizen	Excellent
Participant 4 (P4)	Priest	Excellent
Participant 5 (P5)	Senior Citizen	Good
Participant 6 (P6)	Priest	Good
Participant 7 (P7)	Priest	Excellent
Participant 8 (P8)	Senior Citizen	Good
Participant 9 (P9)	Senior Citizen	Good
Participant 10 (P10)	Priest	Excellent
Participant 11 (P11)	Priest	Excellent
Participant 12 (P12)	Priest	Excellent
Participant 13 (P13)	Senior Citizen	Good
Participant 14 (P14)	Priest	Excellent



Participant 15 (P15)	Priest	Excellent
Participant 16 (P16)	Senior Citizen	Good
Participant 17 (P17)	Senior Citizen	Good
Participant 18 (P18)	Priest	Excellent
Participant 19 (P19)	Priest	Excellent
Participant 20 (P20)	Senior Citizen	Excellent

Table 2. Themes Emerging from collected data

Research Question	Themes
What are the effects of globalisation on the use of colour in Hinduism?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Differences between colour use among Hindus in South Africa and India● Western influence on colour use● Global propaganda (media and Internet)● Problems with education● Young Hindus' lack of interest

Differences between colour use among Hindus in South Africa and India

According to the data collected, the use of colours in the Hindu community in South Africa does not differ from the Hindus in India. A total of 16 participants (P2-P11, P13, P15, P17-P20) agreed that India is still the example for all Hindu communities around the world and is seen as the main region of reference when it comes to colour symbolism. Participants have also indicated that there are slight differences in colour choices among different casts and linguistic groups. The data also revealed that the colour difference in the Durban community is slightly influenced by the Western lifestyle in South Africa and has a few differences when it comes to choosing colours for everyday lifestyle. However, the religious aspect of colour use is the same as in India where most Hindus follow the traditional way of colour application in religious practices and auspicious rituals.

Most participants (P2-P11, P16-P20) mentioned many similarities regarding the use of colour in the Hindu communities in India and South Africa. According to P4, 'It is basically the same, the scripture originated in India, but it is all around the world. Whatever is in the scriptures, will be practised in different countries. The colours are specific to the religion, not of the country'. A few participants (P13, P16 and P19) mentioned that the colours used in India follow a stricter way when it comes to choosing the attire for religious occasions. According to P16:

In India, when it comes to a funeral or sick people they are covered in white, to show they are mourning. In SA they do not give preference on wearing white. When conducting prayers in both countries the colours are very colourful. (P16)

Five participants (P2, P7, P12, P17 and P18) mentioned differences in colour choices between communities. According to P12:

It will depend on different communities, linguistic groups, etc. The dominant colour for Lakshmi Puja is red, because Lakshmi, because it is about living with the world and attaining the highest possible prosperity. In India, I notice more spiritual disciplines and they tend to use white when they attend programs, to denote their scholarly, student attitude. (P12)

While examining different linguistic groups presented in the Hindu population, the data



revealed that there are differences in colour choices between South and North Hindu communities. Five participants (P1, P7, P11, P12 and P20) mentioned that the Southern Indian Hindus prefer to use the brightest colours for festivals and celebrations such as weddings, while the Northern Indians tend to choose more subtle colours. Historically, there were also differences among different castes, but with time these have mostly faded away and in modern times everyone follows the same principles when using colour for religious practices and auspicious occasions (Olson, 2007). All the participants explained the differences and similarities in colour choices which exist among Hindu communities in India and South Africa. This includes a difference between Hindi and Tamil communities, as well as caste differences which were formed historically. However, a few participants (P2 and P5) also mentioned that the caste system was no longer applicable in India, where there were no important differences in colour choices among different communities. Two participants (P8 and P19) highlighted the important differences based on the language groups to which individuals belong, with a special mention of Hindi and Tamil language communities. These examples are shown in the responses of P2, P8, P5 and P19 below:

Originally there were different castes in India that used to wear different colours. But no more, in SA there is not. There is no colour differentiation, cast is not a bad thing. The way it was interpreted was the division of labour. When the British took over, they over-emphasised the cast and slowly made them feel divided. (P2)

There is no major difference between North & South India, but the choice of colours is a big difference. The Tamils from the south like bright clothing, with bright borders. Whereas the Hindi speaking, from the north, does not go too deep into that. A Tamil bride does the full work on her hair to the bottom, whereas a Hindi bride uses a veil (Red) to cover her hair as a mark of respect. (P8)

Really there was no caste, it was just your nature and you lived and worked according to your nature. In SA there is no caste, colour did not divide people. I do not think there is any different colour division between SA and India. You might still have that caste thing hanging on in India. Different tribes will have different headgear and colours, like in Africa. In India, you will find different headgear to differentiate different clans. You will not find that with Indians here in SA. (P5)

For the cast, it is a no, but in the linguistic groups, like South and North India. Those that came from the south had different colours and different shiny materials, according to the texture manufactured. So, whatever was available, became trendy and fashionable. (P19)

According to P1, 'From a priest's point of view... People wear colourful kurtas. A priest generally sticks to white, or cream colours. The sache they use is yellow, and mentally it has a soothing effect. Ladies wear bright colours to weddings, associated with our deities and avoid dark negative colours'

Western influence on colour use

Most participants (P1-P5, P11, P13-P17, P19, P20) viewed the process of globalisation as a negative factor which has affected the lifestyle of Hindu communities around the world, especially the ones based in Western countries. Different responses of all 20 participants revealed that globalisation has resulted in the development of new norms in a community, while traditional practices were pushed back in the process. The latest technological development has also affected every sphere of life in the Hindu community. A few of the participants (P6-P10, P12 and P18) have argued that the process of globalisation could be viewed as a positive aspect as it opens opportunities for educated and skilled Hindus. At the



same time, the process of globalisation has created a cultural shock for Hindu culture. During data analyses it was found that many of the members of the Hindu community do not follow the 'Hindu way of life' as it was practised by previous generations, thus creating a slow fade of culture and an integration into the new Western culture.

The main characteristic of globalisation is the rapid change in all forms of order and values of life. It was concluded that one who does not follow the change will be left behind, even crushed by the times. Such influence has caused communities to embrace the change and adapt to a new way that colour is viewed and applied in their everyday life. Many participants (P2-P10, P13, P17 and P20) spoke about the change in colour choices among Hindus that was brought about by the process of globalisation and westernisation. Such change was mentioned in a negative way, where many Hindus are influenced by the colour norms of the Western world. According to P13:

In the past Indians would wear light colours, but nowadays, they have joined the Western world, wearing low value and low saturation colours. In the past men would wear white Kurt's & ladies would wear light coloured saris. Nowadays fewer people are wearing Kurt's & saris. Carrying your culture defines who you are. One does not have to get outlandish about it. (P13)

A few participants (P2, P7-9, P13 and P19) spoke about consumerism as the main driving force behind such change. P2 stated:

Yes, there is a big influence of Western culture on Eastern culture. People are persuaded to control materialistic things, but not to keep their souls happy. You have great nights for your material pursuit but have not come to know your inner self. You want to conquer the world, but you do not know who you are. (P2)

According to P11, the process of globalisation has caused black colour, which is the most avoided colour in Hindu culture, to become the norm for the corporate environment, which completely contradicts the use of colour in Hindu communities. P11 states:

All cultures influence each other and if any Hindu says they are not influenced, I will not agree with them. Black has influenced everybody, especially for work, that seems to be a dominant colour. Black is normally worn to ward off negativity in Eastern cultures. If you look at the Navagrahas, we have 9 influences (planets), and at least three of them have a leaning toward black. Particularly with Saturn, and we wear black clothing for that prayer, to ward off any negative influences from the planetary side of the world. In the ancient eastern community, colour played a very big role, today we have developed into a monotone culture. There definitely is an influence of other cultures on the idea of the East. (P11)

The effect of Western culture can be seen in the customs, tradition, and social and moral behaviour related to the use of colour (Khaled, 2007). "Western culture has brought with it the seeds of selfishness in the minds of Indians" (Khaled, 2007: 86). Westernisation was also seen as a curse by a few participants. Mounting Western culture was seen as degrading the Hindu culture itself (Khaled, 2007). Much of the traditional Hindu attire that is no longer worn by Hindus is considered outdated; thus, it is becoming more extinct and can only be found in museums. Interestingly, a few participants have different perspectives about globalisation and western influences as reported below:

Globalisation has no impact on colours. Hinduism is a very old religion and what is embedded in us will never change. It has been transcended over



the years; colours are a very vibrant thing amongst Hindus. Globalisation will not change any of that. Westernisation has changed the generation that we are in, the current generation has become more westernised and more modern. They do not want to keep their culture. As far as our culture is, we will continue to wear bright colours, as long as we live. Technology has changed, everything is virtual and online, and you do not need to visit temples or cultural functions. People use electronic devices to check up on things. (P20)

It has changed, I do not know if it is because of status, progress in the sense of becoming wealthier and can afford different clothes. It is just the whole Western influence on the Hindu people that has changed. Take me for example, I haven't worn a traditional dhoti, which looks like a skirt. But in India, everybody wears that. (P15)

There are maybe a few people in India that will wear westernised clothing, such as a shirt and pants, as opposed to the traditional dot, or vesī... the majority of people wear to a temple or religious festival. In SA there are very few males that wear traditional outfits to religious functions. Whereas females will still wear saris or Punjabis. (P2)

Western culture has certainly had a positive impact on Hindu communities (Khaled 2007). The development of technology has also made life faster, easier, and more comfortable (Kumar, 2000). It is important to understand that the Hindu religion focuses on teaching one to live in peace and harmony with others and to have tolerance and patience for other cultures and religions (Khaled, 2007). Many people in different nations comprehend the significance of Indian heritage and value the advantages the Indian culture has to offer, including yoga and reflection, the ancient teachings and so on (Kumar, 2000). The knowledge of Indian wisdom helps people around the world to enrich their lives.

Global propaganda (media and Internet)

The following extracts indicate the main reasons why younger generations of Hindus are more interested in Western practices and have little knowledge of their own religion and traditions. Most of the participants mentioned the westernised media and entertainment, and the internet that provides easy access to those contents, as the main reason for such problems. They argued that there is no harm in taking good things from other cultures and gaining knowledge from different traditions. However, according to participants, most of the Western influences have had a negative effect on the Hindu community by replacing its ancient traditions, values, and religious guidelines with those of the modern world. According to participants P1, P3-P7, P10-P16, P18 and P20, global propaganda via media and the Internet was seen as one of the main reasons why younger Hindus are more interested in Western practices, as shown in the responses of P5, P10 and P7 below:

Advertising, which is propaganda, i.e. Coca-Cola adds life...but coke does not add life, it can kill you. It is misleading the people. (P5)

I think they want to be like the West. Christian brides will always wear white. And because of mixed cultures getting married, Tamil marries a Christian bride or groom. It could be their choice; the younger generation does not stick to old traditions. I think they want to be different from the norm and do things, and to their own unique way of things'. (P10)

Our culture has changed quite a bit because this generation of people does not want to follow the roots of their grandparents, or ancestors. Technology has an impact on this as well. Unfortunately, people are not interested in their own culture, they just want to live their way of life and without spirituality and that is finished, their life is done. It is also the



upbringing of the parents. (P7)

Problems with education

Participants P1, P4-P6, P18 and P20 have also identified problems with education in the Hindu language and the absence of traditional Hindu schools as the main reasons why younger generations of Hindus are lacking interest in their own culture. According to P20:

This is purely down to education, and the influence the western influence has had on the Hindu community. If you compare the Muslim community, where they teach their children from a very young age, about their culture. They have their own separate school for that. Unfortunately, in our community, it is practically non-existent. For some reason, we have not been teaching our own religion and it all starts with the language. If language is not taught from a very young age, then they would lose that and the same goes for our culture and religion. (P20)

As many younger Hindus do not speak Hindu languages, they have no way of learning the religious literature, causing them to be influenced by the Western values which are available in English. P1 states that:

In our Hindu culture, the religious aspect is very complex and has a lot to do with symbolisation. It is not just black and white. If you look at all the deities that are worshipped, who have different names and forms and if you do not understand all of that and what each symbolises to the westernised Hindu child, it is unfortunate that something like that can exist. If a child was not taught from a young age, about our religion, and the meaning of each god, they will find it difficult to believe. (P1)

As an example, P4 mentioned one religious organisation which could be used to improve the situation with the lack of religious Hindu organisations and states:

They are not exposed to Hindu training and culture when they are young. In our organisation, we teach you all the things about our deities. It is a lengthy program; you start when you are 6 and until you are 16. When they come from there, they are knowledgeable, clever, doing the right things and very good kids. They like to do spiritual and voluntary work, instead of doing naughty things. It all depends on your circle of friends and your parents. (P4)

Young Hindus' lack of interest

Some of the Western values brought by the process of globalisation can be seen as contradictory to some of the values of the Hindu religion which has always taught people to live in harmony with each other and always love and respect everyone. Since there is no experience of basic religious education in the family, due to the absence of a grandfather and grandmother and the fact that both parents are working, a child does not learn ethical or moral values, except for what little he sees and understands of the world and his teachers. In this way, the child is brought up with little religious knowledge and few ethical values and does not hesitate to engage in any unfair practices, because there is no one there to teach him/her good or bad or to stop him/her from doing anything bad. Thus, unethical practice is not mitigated adequately.

Participants P3, P6, P8, P10, P12, P17, P18 and P20 identified the lack of interest in their own culture among young Hindus and mentioned that materialistic values brought by the process of globalisation were more important to them. Participants P3 and P18 have highlighted that



the merge of Eastern and Western cultures in modern days is unavoidable, as shown in the responses below:

The younger generation wants to blend in and be part of them. The millennials will use the other groups' colours to blend in because Hindu colours are bright, the younger generation would rather want to blend in with the modern world. At home they might do their traditional stuff, but not in public. We cannot insist anymore but have to embrace their choices of colours, dress, etc. (P6)

A lot of Hindus would rather be materialistically uplifted than spiritually. They are drifting away from the scriptures and what it teaches. Children of today are distracted by materialistic things, and they do not want to learn the real meaning of Hinduism. What has been written in our sceptra is already taking place, the east will embrace the west and vice versa. (P18)

I feel that people who feel different from other people have made them feel inferior about themselves. They feel, that if they do something different to other people, they are going to laugh at them. Half of the time they do not know the meaning of the rituals that take place. If they knew all these rituals, they would not feel inferior. When looking at a wedding function, it is only the elders who pay attention to all the rituals. The youngsters are doing something else, or busy with their cell phones. Unfortunately, the younger generation will not sit with the elders and ask them about all the traditional things that need to take place. The younger generation depends too much on getting info from the internet. (P3)

Conclusion

The problem of globalisation and its impact on the life of the Hindu community was discussed with participants and the data collected produced some interesting findings. The process of globalisation, as well as the rapid development of technology, has not only had its effect on the use of colour in the Hindu religion but has also affected the lifestyle of the Hindu community in general. Many members of the community are now more interested in Western practices – especially the younger generations of Hindus – in order to fit into the modern world's model. The integration of the Internet and social media into lifestyle has had a negative impact on the community. The questionable values of modern propaganda, such as materialist wealth, consumerism and one unified global culture, go completely against the norms and morals of the Hindu religion, which include peace, love, and a simple lifestyle with minimum damage to nature.

The lack of knowledge of the traditional languages such as Hindi or Tamil was also revealed by many participants as one of the main reasons why younger generations of Hindus lack interest in their own culture and traditions. A limited number of Hindu schools where a child could learn the native language along with religion and traditions has forced the members of Hindu communities to use standard state schools for general education in South Africa. For most Hindus, the only way for them to learn their own traditions is in-house education by family members. With the fast-paced modern lifestyle, it is almost impossible for parents to give extra lessons after work along with the homework of the main school. Thus, the child is educated according to the standard school curriculum where Hindu language, religions and traditions are absent. A few lucky children were taught by their grandparents who were looking after them and who introduced the Hindu culture and religion to the children from an early age.

By being greatly exposed to the values and norms of Western culture, the younger generation of Hindus subconsciously follow the new way of life to be accepted by the rest of the world's society. A good example is a traditional Hindu wedding which includes many religious rituals



and specific colour norms according to the scriptures. Many modern Hindu couples try to cut off some of the important rituals to make the wedding ceremony shorter to allow for a long, Westernized reception. The choice of white outfits for the wedding attire, which is considered in Hinduism a mourning colour for widows, has been adopted by couples to fit into the norms of the Western world. According to Hindu customs, the original wedding outfit for the bride is red and stands for prosperity and fertility. However, many brides now try to alter the tradition and wear different colour outfits to stand out from the rest.

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