Public Perception of the Palestine Conflict through the Lens of the Sadharanikaran Communication Model

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Abstract

The Palestine conflict has long been a focal point of global political discourse, with media coverage significantly influencing public perception. This study employs the Sadharanikaran Communication Model (SCM), rooted in Bharata's *Natyashastra*, to analyze how emotional resonance and shared understanding shape audience interpretations of the conflict (Dissanayake, 2003). SCM emphasizes *sahridayata*—the emotional and intellectual synchronization between the communicator and the audience (Bharata, trans. 1967). By examining news coverage, social media narratives, and cultural representations, this research explores how emotional framing, particularly through images of human suffering and resistance, evokes *rasa* (emotional essence) to foster empathy or reinforce biases (Lull, 1995). The study applies content analysis and audience perception surveys to evaluate the role of shared cultural and ideological contexts in shaping responses. Findings indicate that media narratives aligned with audience predispositions are more likely to achieve *sadharanikaran*, thereby reinforcing existing beliefs. This analysis underscores the significance of culturally resonant communication in conflict reporting and advocates for ethical media practices to ensure balanced representations (Hamelink, 2011). The research contributes to the broader understanding of media influence on conflict perception and the application of indigenous communication models in contemporary media studies.

Keywords: Sadharanikaran, International Conflict, Perception, Culture, Media Influence.

Introduction

Media narratives have a profound impact on shaping public perception of conflicts, influencing attitudes, beliefs, and responses to ongoing situations. The Palestine conflict, one of the most contentious and enduring geopolitical issues, offers a compelling case for examining the role of communication models in public perception. Traditional Western communication theories often overlook the cultural and emotional dimensions crucial in non-Western contexts. The Sadharanikaran Communication Model (SCM), rooted in Indian philosophical traditions, provides a nuanced framework for understanding how emotional resonance and shared understanding influence audience interpretations (Dissanayake, 2003) [4].

This paper aims to analyze the public perception of the Palestine conflict through the SCM lens, exploring how emotional framing, cultural narratives, and shared experiences shape audience responses. The research will investigate media content, including news reports, social media posts, and visual representations, to assess how the principles of *sahridayata* (like-heartedness) and *rasa* (emotional essence) are employed to construct and convey meanings.

Theoretical Framework: Sadharanikaran Communication Model

The SCM, derived from Bharata's *Natyashastra*, emphasizes the role of emotional and intellectual synchronization in effective communication. Unlike linear models that focus on message transmission, SCM centers on the shared experience between communicator and audience. The key components of the model include:

i). **Rasa (Emotional Essence):** The emotional response elicited in the audience.
ii). **Sahridayata (Like-heartedness):** The shared understanding and emotional connection between sender and receiver.
iii). **Sadharanikaran (Simplification):** The process of making the message universally relatable.

SCM is particularly relevant in media communication, where emotional framing plays a crucial role in shaping audience perceptions (Bharata, trans. 1967) [3].
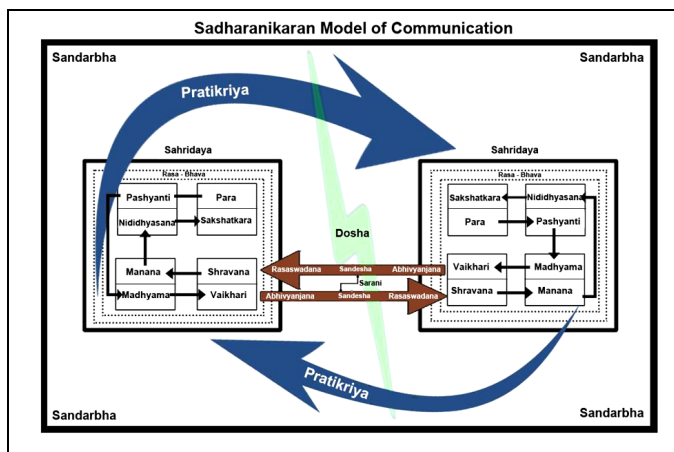
Fig 1: Elements in the Sadharanikaran Model of Communication

The Sadharanikaran Model of Communication, which can be contextualized to analyze the Israel-Palestine conflict as follows:

i). **Sahridaya (Like-Heartedness)**: Israeli and Palestinian communities, along with international audiences, form shared emotional and cognitive spaces based on historical narratives, religious beliefs, and media representations.

ii). **Rasa-Bhava (Emotion-Feeling)**: Media narratives depicting human suffering (e.g., displaced families) evoke *karuna rasa* (compassion), while political discourse may trigger *bhayanaka rasa* (fear) or *raudra rasa* (anger).

iii). **Pratikriya (Feedback)**: Social media responses, protests, and international solidarity movements reflect audience reactions, completing the communication cycle.

iv). **Dosha (Distortions)**: Misinformation, propaganda, and deepfakes disrupt accurate understanding, contributing to biased perceptions.

v). **Sandesha (Message)** and **Sarani (Path)**: Content flows through news media, social platforms, and diplomatic statements, shaped by cultural contexts.

This framework reveals how emotional framing influences perceptions and can either promote empathy or deepen divides in the conflict.
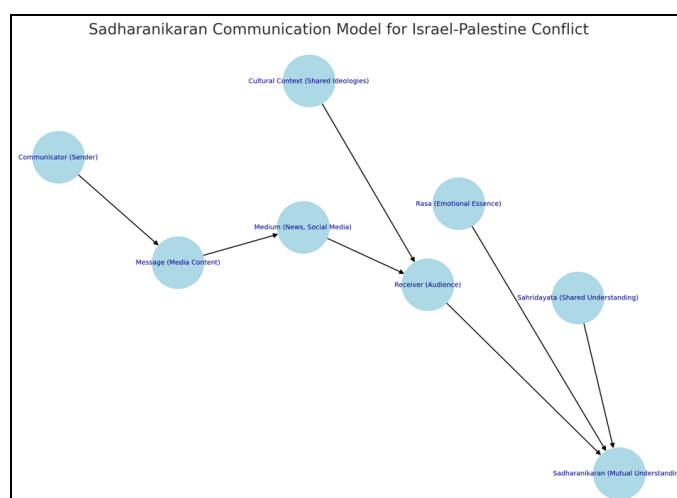

Fig 2: The diagram (Data analysis was performed using the Python Pandas library) represents the Sadharanikaran Communication Model applied to the Israel-Palestine conflict.

The diagram (Data analysis was performed using the Python Pandas library) represents the Sadharanikaran

Communication Model applied to the Israel-Palestine conflict. It illustrates how the communicator conveys messages through media, influencing the audience's perception via emotional resonance (*rasa*), shared understanding (*sahridayata*), and cultural context, ultimately leading to *sadharanikaran* (mutual understanding).

Methodology
The study adopts a mixed-method approach, combining content analysis and audience perception surveys. The content analysis examines media narratives across diverse platforms, including traditional news outlets, social media, and independent journalism. The audience perception surveys target individuals from different cultural backgrounds to assess variations in emotional and cognitive responses.

Findings and Discussion
i). **Emotional Framing in Media Narratives:** Media outlets often employ emotional framing to evoke sympathy, anger, or fear. The analysis reveals that images of suffering Palestinian civilians are frequently used to generate empathy and support, while depictions of militant activities are framed to evoke fear (Lull, 1995) [6]. SCM's emphasis on *rasa* explains how these emotional cues influence audience interpretations.
Emotional appeals in media content create a sense of proximity to distant conflicts, turning abstract geopolitical issues into relatable human experiences (Dissanayake, 2003) [4]. For instance, visual coverage of bombed-out hospitals and displaced children often triggers *karuna rasa* (compassionate emotion), motivating audiences to empathize with the Palestinian plight.

i). **Role of Cultural Context:** Audience responses vary significantly based on cultural and ideological backgrounds. Individuals with prior exposure to pro-Palestinian narratives tend to experience *karuna rasa*, while those exposed to opposing perspectives often exhibit *bhayanaka rasa* (fearful emotion) (Dissanayake, 2003) [4]. Cultural context acts as a filter through which media messages are interpreted, with shared historical, religious, and ideological backgrounds influencing the intensity and nature of emotional responses.

ii). **Impact of Social Media:** Social media platforms amplify emotional content, creating echo chambers where like-minded individuals reinforce each other's beliefs. SCM's concept of *sahridayata* explains this phenomenon, as users engage with content that resonates with their existing emotional and ideological frameworks (Hamelink, 2011) [5]. Algorithms designed to maximize engagement often prioritize emotionally charged content, contributing to polarized perceptions of the conflict.
Platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram become arenas for emotional mobilization, where narratives of victimhood and resistance are constructed and disseminated. The research found that emotionally resonant content, such as videos depicting civilian casualties, received significantly higher engagement than fact-based reports, illustrating the primacy of *rasa* in audience interaction.

Ethical Implications
The use of emotional framing in conflict reporting raises ethical concerns about media responsibility and audience manipulation. While emotional engagement can foster

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empathy and awareness, it can also perpetuate misinformation and deepen societal divisions. The principles of SCM emphasize the importance of *sahridayata* as a foundation for ethical communication, advocating for narratives that promote understanding rather than discord (Hamelink, 2011) [5].

Conclusion

The application of the Sadharanikaran Communication Model to the Palestine conflict highlights the critical role of emotional resonance and shared understanding in shaping public perception. Media narratives that align with audience predispositions achieve more significant *sadharanikaran*, reinforcing existing beliefs and attitudes. The findings underscore the need for ethical media practices that prioritize balanced reporting and foster intercultural understanding. By integrating SCM into contemporary media studies, scholars can better understand the mechanisms through which emotions and cultural contexts influence conflict perception.

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