

A study on colourism in an Indian Society.

Individuals between the age of 14 and 60 years in Chennai, India.

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CHAPTER 1

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

Prejudice or discrimination against individuals with a dark skin tone, typically among people of the same ethnic or racial group, is known as colorism. It is also known as shadeism, is a form of prejudice and/or discrimination in which people who share similar ethnicity traits or perceived race are treated differently based on the social implications that come with the cultural meanings that are attached to skin color.

Colorism is believed to be first coined in 1982 by Alice Walker. It was defined by her to mean the “prejudicial or preferential treatment of same-race people based solely on their color.” While some say that they are colour-blind, it's hard to deny that many people not only see colour but they also use it as a way to judge or determine someone's character. It is not racism although there is a clear relationship. A clear example of racism would involve a business that refuses to hire black people. Colorism would not preclude the hiring of a black person, but there would be a preference for a black person with a lighter skin tone than a darker skinned person. From this example one can see too that colorism can not only occur within same-raced peoples but also across races. Colorism also is often gendered. Because of its unique relationship to who and what is beautiful, it has a tendency, although not exclusively, to affect and infect women more than men.

Origin of the word ‘Colorism’

The absurd thing is, the word colourism doesn't even exist. Not officially. It autocorrects on one's computer screen. It does not appear in the dictionary. Still, the author and activist Alice Walker is the person most often credited with first using the word colourism, out loud and in print. In an essay that appeared in her 1983 book, “In Search of our Mothers' Gardens”, Walker defined colourism as “prejudicial or preferential treatment of same-race people based solely on their colour.” Light-skin preference had been common practice in the black community for generations, but

Walker gave it a name and marked it as an evil that must be stopped in order for African Americans to progress as a people.

BIPOC

Black, Indigenous, (and) People of Colour.

POC is widely used as an umbrella term for all people of colour, but now a different acronym is suddenly gaining traction on the internet—BIPOC, which stands for Black, Indigenous, People of Colour. People are using the term to acknowledge that not all people of colour face equal levels of injustice. They say BIPOC is significant in recognizing that Black and Indigenous people are severely impacted by systemic racial injustices.

— Chevaz Clarke

In recent weeks, as protests against police brutality and racism have flooded the streets and social media, another more inclusive term has been ascribed to the population: BIPOC. The acronym stands for "black, Indigenous and people of colour."

— Sandra E. Garcia

History of Colorism

A new study by a University of Georgia researcher explores the present-day impact of colourism, provides case studies of the effect of skin tone on U.S. politics, and discusses the appropriation of skin colour seen in transracial performances, as well as the global skin lightening industry.

According to this research, in Asian communities, this was a part of their culture long before they met Europeans. People with the luxury of staying inside and avoiding physical labour outdoors had lighter skin. Lighter skin became a symbol of higher class," said Gonlin, assistant professor in the Franklin College of Arts and Sciences department of sociology. "This was also the case historically in Europe, where having 'blue veins' or 'blue blood,' which refers to having pale and cool-toned skin thus making veins look blue, was viewed as having 'noble' and 'untainted' blood. Today, this has reversed in the western world as tan skin among white people has become more popular, as tan skin is now associated with the luxury of going on vacations or spending leisure time tanning.

Colourism as a Global phenomenon

With the recent developments of the #BlackLivesMatter movement, the world has witnessed a systematic commencement of raging voices against the issues of Colourism and Racism globally. As we know, Colourism finds its origins in slavery which led to an internalised continuum of colour-based bias against 'Non-whites' for over 300 years now.

On the other hand, Racism is an uninterrupted history of systematic deprivation. In both literal and practical meanings, it is entirely different from what colourism means. The former leads to an overarching prejudice towards '*outsiders*' whereas the latter deals with the underlying agenda involving marketing propaganda that deeply penetrates through societies by portraying 'Non-whites' as an inferior group of people in the perpetual long run of individual consumerisms.

Most other people believe, that the major cause of colourism starts with the young minds of adolescents who are systematically taught throughout their childhood about preferential treatments based on colour biases deriving from their own cultural and societal backgrounds. The notion of 'ideal beauty' which constructs the core foundation of these innocent minds makes them think that the words 'black' and 'beauty' could not be used together in the same sentence. This tempts people to use 'fairness creams' as their last resort in the hope of feeling more loved and appreciated in their surroundings.

Racial and Ethnic slurs against African American's or Southeast-Asians is a very prevalent practice across the world. The growing 'Meme culture' has also contributed to promoting these narrowed belief systems hiding under the name of just harmless humour. However, people should maintain 'moral sensitivity' towards their actions and acknowledge their privilege rather than using it to devalue others.

Our innate human state of individualism leads us to feel that we are indoctrinated to consider ourselves as a *key entity* in deciding who's better or worse than us, which clearly shows how we are all silently moulded to be hypercritical. This decision of preferential treatment is no doubt a conscious act that is influenced by both external factors and results from our in-built beliefs. This, in turn, acts as a needle that takes the thread of racism and runs its course throughout the generation.

History of Colourism in India

Ancient Indian texts, particularly the Mahabharata and Rig Veda, mention and celebrate dark-skinned heroes and heroines like Lord Krishna and Draupadi. The Indian subcontinent has people with distinct features based on their geographical location. People up North generally have fairer skin and people down South generally have darker skin with a wide spectrum falling in the middle as we progress geographically from North to South. This difference can be attributed to the mixture of the immigrant Aryan population with the ancient tribes of the Indus valley civilisation up North and the Dravidian population flourishing down South. However, even with the existence of this difference in the skin colour of people, the idea of colourism did not exist and in fact, people of different skin colour were equally celebrated.

There are recorded instances of the lighter skinned Aryan population fighting against their darker skinned subcontinental counterparts, which some historians have dictated to be events of prejudice based on colour. However, in reality, it was a fight to control territory, harness wealth, cultivate crops and graze cattle—basic cases of a population wanting to survive not a fight based on race or colour.

Things were good in the case of colourism back then but soon enter the long reign of Muslim invaders, predominantly the Mughals, the Portuguese and of course, the British. The Muslim rule of India consisted of several Muslim dynasties ruling over the Delhi Sultanate and later by the stronghold of the Mughal empire. During the years of Muslim rule, there are no accounted instances of ruling based on the preconception of skin tone. However, the subcontinent did then come under the rule of Mughals, people of Persian and Arabic heritage having a fairer skin tone than the average person of the subcontinent. The system got formed of fairer skin people to rule over the subcontinent, but it was not institutionalised or politicised.

The age of British colonial rule. This brings forward the first accounts of discrimination based on colour and the system of colour-based oppression becoming institutionalised. The British, who had fair skin, began preaching their idea of being superior and more intelligent as a race and hence meant to rule over inferior humans all of whom basically had darker skin colour. They built certain restaurants, clubs and institutions that prohibited entrance to dark-skinned individuals. During their rule, when it came to employment, they gave more preference

to lighter skin individuals. They also provided them with more power and made alliances with them. Public ridicule of darker skinned individuals and the institutionalisation of the idea that the lighter the skin more superior brought into the socio-cultural environment of the subcontinent, the basis of colourism. Hundreds of years of being ruled by lighter skinned individuals with the Muslim rule of India, other Europeans like the Portuguese and finally the British (with them institutionalising the idea), unknowingly or unwillingly, people began the association of fairer skin tone with greater social superiority. Even years after independence from the British, partition of India and independence of Bangladesh from Pakistan, the idea of colourism still remains deeply rooted systematically in our cultures throughout the subcontinent.

Colourism in India

Imagine, for a moment, that you're a five-year-old growing up in India. All around you, the standards for beauty are pretty, light-skinned Indians: they're in all of the movies, splashed across billboards and magazines, on promoted ads and videos. Every drug store sells multiple brands of skin-lightening creams, and your favourite actors and actresses all endorse skin-lightening products. Your family members tell you not to spend too much time in the sun, just so you won't get too tan. That's what colourism in India was like for most young Indian children

Colourism is so ingrained in everyday life and society, in fact, that skin-lightening products make up a multi-billion dollar industry in India. Bollywood, India's movie industry, casts predominately light-skinned actors, which perpetuates beauty as light-skinned. Many Bollywood actors also endorse skin-lightening creams.

While the media plays a large role in these notions of lighter skin aligning with beauty, colourism in India can trace its roots all the way back to British colonization. The British ruled many South Asian countries, including India, for over 200 years. Their colonization embedded the idea that fair skin people were the ruling class, and darker-skinned people were the subjects. British rulers treated lighter-skinned Indians more favourably than their dark-skinned counterparts. They gave light-skinned Indians access to government jobs, while constantly demeaning dark-skinned Indians. This discrimination also bled into India's caste system, where

people perceived higher castes as fairer and superior and lower castes as darker and inferior. As such, these lasting colonial legacies mean that skin colour still affects the socioeconomic status of Indians today.

Colour preference in India is an aesthetic choice, largely a domestic affair. It has no obvious impact on public spaces like racism does in the US. The Indian variant of “colourism”, if one may call it that, is an unfortunate consequence of colonialism. But that does not allow it to gate crash into the “Black Lives Matter” movement

How Colorism affects Poverty

Poverty and colourism in India go hand-in-hand. Because the caste system still affects socio-economic status, people with darker skin tend to be lower in a socio-economic status as well. Colourism makes social mobility harder for Indians in general. There is systemic discrimination against dark-skinned people in education systems and the labour market. Educators and employers still prefer light-skinned Indians over dark-skinned Indians, which plays greatly into the opportunities for social mobility that darker-skinned Indians do and do not have. A basic link between poverty and colourism in India is that impoverished people are not able to take care of their appearance and diet. Though they don't have access to skin-lightening products, they are seen as “dirty” and “dark.” Over time, these connotations begin to blur, and socio-economic status and skin tone become connected to social and financial status. One of the most unique effects of colourism in India is how arranged marriages, common in India, discriminate against dark-skinned people. Marriage ads allow people to filter out women on every condition under the sun, including skin colour. A study done at the University of New Delhi, India found that dark-skinned men and women were consistently rated lower on marriage ads. This demonstrates yet another way that colourism in India inhibits social mobility, which makes it harder for impoverished people to change their circumstances.

Critical Reflections on Ethnicity and Colourism in Africa

“Ethnicity” is a subjective term that is widely debated, however, broadly it is identified as the belonging to a social group of common traditions or interests including; territory, forms

of religion, values and social norms (Williams 2015: 147). Identifying and differentiating people by the colour of their skin is a specific type of behavioural pattern, linked to ethnicity. This division of individuals based on difference of appearance, has often led to discrimination and violence, most commonly reflected in the act of racism. However, it also manifests in other forms, such as colourism, a concept intertwined with racism but distinct in its own respect. Colourism is a prejudicial manifestation within ethnicities, which discriminates people, according to the tone or shade of their skin. As scholar, Hunter (2007) recognises, colourism lies within the second system of discrimination, he argues that those of African descent can experience discrimination because of their race and ethnicity but the outcome of that discrimination will differ dramatically by skin tone. Moreover, colourism can operate in both **intra-racial** and **inter-racial** terms, meaning that it can be seen in a racial group to a member of their own race, or amongst those of different colours and race.

Race

In a lecture at Harvard University, Nell Irvin Painter (2012), author of *The History of White People* (2010), pointed out that “race is an idea, not a fact.” Trautmann (2004) rightly asserts that “race is socially constructed, that it is not objective but conventional, and that, therefore, it has contingent, historical character that is not perduring but governed by forces in play at a given time”. Therefore, there is no scientific evidence to allude to the belief that race is a scientific quality. Race is an abstract and flexible notion. It is sociologically, rather than biologically, based. The meaning of race has also translated into interpreting physical characteristics. We mostly view beauty, especially light skin complexion, as personal characteristics in which we deem as attractive and worthy of deserved attention.

The age-old question of whether race determines genetic differences has been debated for decades. In 2000, the Human Genome Project concluded that there is virtually no genetic difference between people of different skin colours (Rogers, 2010). In fact, scientists have discovered that all humans share 99.99 percent of the same genetic code, no matter the race of the person. Geneticist J. Craig Venter concluded that this fact proves that race is definitely a “**social concept, not a scientific one**”. Nell Irvin Painter notes that the concept of whiteness originates from ancient Rome, where slaves were ironically, mostly white. The elevation of some ethnic populations such as Germans as “whiter” than other groups originates from scientists who measured human skulls and set abstract criteria for beauty in people.

Racism

According to the Oxford Dictionary racism is “any kind of prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism by an individual, community, or institution against a person or people on the basis of their membership of a particular racial or ethnic group, typically one that is a minority or marginalized”.

Racism takes many forms and can happen in many places. It includes prejudice, discrimination or hatred directed at someone because of their colour, ethnicity or national origin. People often associate racism with acts of abuse or harassment. However, it doesn't need to involve violent or intimidating behaviour. Take racial name-calling and jokes. Or consider situations when people may be excluded from groups or activities because of where they come from. Racism can be revealed through people's actions as well as their attitudes. It can also be reflected in systems and institutions. But sometimes it may not be revealed at all. Not all racism is obvious. For example, someone may look through a list of job applicants and decide not to interview people with certain surnames. Racism is more than just words, beliefs and actions. It includes all the barriers that prevent people from enjoying dignity and equality because of their race.

Difference between Racism and Colourism

Racism is a propagated history of systemic deprivation. Racism, in both literal and practical meanings, is entirely different from what colourism means. Racism is a much bigger issue than colourism. In our country, we are just bringing down the actual meaning of the protest against racism. It is not merely discrimination based on skin-tone. When it comes to colourism, we always have the freedom to not get manipulated by media and advertising, whereas racism is an institutionalised concept conformed by laws we can hardly escape from.

From Indians using “Chinky”, “Momo” or “Chinese” as ethnic slurs for Indians from the Northeast region, to the US President Donald Trump repeatedly addressing coronavirus as a “*Chinese Virus*”, it has triggered the threat of racial attacks on the Northeast Indians in this time of the global pandemic.

This particular section of the country always faces this humanitarian crisis of discrimination based on their race, culture, language, region, and primarily, their Tibeto-Burman facial features. As the whole country focuses on coping with the outbreak, the Northeast region just gets another misconception added on to their long, everlasting list.

One incident that stands out is that of a post-graduate student of Hyderabad Central University who was travelling back to her hometown during the pandemic. She quoted:

“I travelled from Hyderabad to Agartala via Kolkata today. While at a check-in counter at the Hyderabad airport, a guy said “Oh so you’re to Kolkata, then China!” Thinking that maybe I heard something wrong, I asked what he meant to say, and he repeated the same thing about me travelling to China... He then looked at my face and said “Just kidding” while laughing shamelessly. I wasn’t amused and nobody in that situation would have been... I told him that saying something like this is racist, but he still managed to say that it was a joke! Calling Northeast India as China is not a joke.

Calling people from the Northeast India with Chinky, Momo or Chinese is not a joke, it is racism. Nobody from anywhere else in the country would ever have to listen to something like that... Why this discrimination against people from the Northeast?”

Now, when an anti-racism movement started spreading rampantly worldwide, these are the points we should consider before joining the protest, or completely changing the whole message that the movement is conveying. We are failing somewhere by overlapping “colourism” with “racism”.

Colourism can sometimes be an underlying cause of racism, but that doesn’t make the two terms mutual synonyms. Obviously, the entire structure is interlinked, the way the effect of the #BlackLivesMatter movement lets this systematic commencement of the rise of agitation against ‘colourism.’ As Lupita Nyong’o quoted, *“Colourism is the daughter of racism.”* Some view Colourism to be a by-product of white supremacy; a form of inter-racial discrimination practised globally. By refusing to recognise institutional racism and its performance by privileged actors daily, colour norms are perpetuated at grassroots levels.

Racism in India

The markers of status in India are far more subtle and varied with skin colour playing only a peripheral role, at best. For example, no Indian cop will have his knee on a person's neck because of skin colour. In the high-end job market being "wheat-ish", or fair, is easily trumped by brains and skills. A Bengaluru-based IT executive put it graphically: "We need Nerds, not Birds."

There are times when light skin works in India but, ironically, in the reverse direction, such as when hiring people for low end jobs, like that of shop assistants and hospitality staff. This is because a pleasant face at the counter, or reception desk, helps customers reach for their wallets without a muscle pull. The store owner or the hotel general manager could be much darker than the junior, front line employees, many of whom are from India's Northeast, where people are generally "fairer". Yet, it is these light skinned migrants from Northeast who face actual, public racism in Bengaluru, Delhi, and elsewhere.

The Link Between Colourism, Racism, and Classism

While colourism is often thought of as a problem that exclusively afflicts communities of colour, that's not the case. Europeans have prized fair skin and flaxen hair for centuries, and blonde hair and blue eyes remain status symbols for some people. When the conquistadors first travelled to the Americas in the 15th century, they judged the Indigenous peoples they saw on their skin colour. Europeans would make similar judgments about the Africans they enslaved. Over time, people of colour began to internalize these messages about their complexions. Light skin was deemed superior, and dark skin, inferior. In Asia, though, fair skin is said to be a symbol of wealth and dark skin, a symbol of poverty, as peasants who toiled in the fields all day typically had the darkest skin.

Role of Media

Mass media is incredibly pervasive in our society. While we can only speculate the intentions of the media, these particular patterns of racial bias constantly emerge. Discrimination based on skin tone within a racial group, known as colourism, is one of the many legacies. Mass media has a prominent role to play in modern society. It can bring about radical changes and improve social situation as it influences our social, civil, cultural, political,

economic and aesthetic outlook. Modernization has converted media into an indispensable feature of human activity.

The purpose of multimedia is to explore the pervasiveness of the Eurocentric standard of beauty in mass media and the subsequent effects it has in the formation of personal identity and on the psyche of lighter skinned women in particular. The media is responsible for influencing beliefs regarding ideas of beauty in the African American community. Mass media productions often perpetuate discrimination based on skin colour. African Americans possessing lighter skin complexion and “European features,” such as lighter eyes, and smaller noses and lips have more opportunities in the media industry. For example, film producers hire lighter-skinned African Americans more often, television producers choose lighter skinned cast members and magazine editors choose African American models that resemble European features. As a result, the media industry sends the messages that lighter skinned women with Eurocentric features are more likely to be accepted, diminishing the status of darker-skinned women. This colour prejudice is observed to be more prominent among women, when compared to men.

The Paper Bag Test

Perhaps one of the most infamous examples of colourism is the paper bag test that was used throughout Black communities in the United States. Basically, light skin became associated with a high social status. To keep their social clubs pure, light skinned Black people would hold up a paper bag to someone's skin. If you were darker than the paper bag, you were too dark to participate.

The Doll Test

Another example is “the doll tests,” first done in the 1940s, with results that have since been replicated. African American psychologists Dr. Kenneth Clark and Dr. Mamie Clark gave African American children two dolls: one that was white and one that was painted black. The children were asked questions like: “Which one is the ugly doll?”, “Which one has a nicer colour?”, “Which one is the bad doll?” The study showed that amongst the African American children, the majority preferred the white baby doll to the black baby doll. The white baby doll

was associated with positive attributes like “smart” or “pretty,” while the black baby doll was associated with negative attributes. This study, along with its remodels, proves that words such as, “beautiful, good, positive, etc.” are associated with white or lighter skin individuals. Many American studies since the 1940s have replicated these findings, proving that these damaging associations are not a thing of the past.

Skin Whitening products and their growing market

The global skin lightening products market size is expected to reach USD 13.7 billion by 2025, according to a new report by Grand View Research, Inc., expanding at a CAGR of 7.4% over the forecast period. Increasing preference for fair skin in order to enhance beauty and confidence among consumers is expected to propel the growth of the global market. In addition, rising adoption of skin care regime to get an even tone, blemish free, and reduced acne spots is expected to boost the growth of the market in the forecast period.

Moreover, increasing prominence of skin care regime among male consumers, particularly skin brightening techniques, owing to constant favouritism for fair skinned people in Asian and Middle East countries has impacted the popularity of these products. For instance, Oriflame Cosmetics AG. addresses men’s fairness products with their brand North For Men Fairness Face Cream, which is sold across all the regions. Asia Pacific led the market in 2018 and is expected to witness the fastest growth from 2019 to 2025. Consumers in the region link pale skin with beauty, which is greatly associated with career success and social status. Moreover, increased visibility of hyperpigmentation in Asian skin has increased the application of these lighteners.

The Black Lives Matter protests of 2020 also put a spotlight on marketing pitches and consumer products with racist or colourist legacies around the globe. Some companies in the U.S. responded by dropping Aunt Jemima, Uncle Ben’s, and other racially charged brands. In the cosmetics world, however, not much has changed. A popular commercial on the YouTube channel of French cosmetics giant L’Oréal SA’s Garnier skin-care brand in Thailand shows how its Sakura White masks and creams can help women achieve “Korean pinkish skin” in only a few steps. “It’ll transform dull skin to bright-pink colour in just seven days,” a woman says in Thai, her smile growing wider as her skin transforms from dark to

light. The video has had 11 million views. Skin whitening in Asia is big business. From Japan to India, pharmacies and department-store cosmetics counters peddle all sorts of body moisturizers, face creams, and serums that promise to whiten users' skin, playing off a traditional belief that a light complexion denotes status and wealth because people with fairer skin can afford to stay inside instead of toiling for hours under the sun.

“Individuals who have fairer skin are more acceptable when it comes to career or marriage,” says Sujata Chandrappa, an aesthetic-medicine specialist and founder of R3 Clinic, a skin and hair treatment centre in Bengaluru. “Desire to have fairer skin is deep-seated.” Some companies have tried to finesse the issue by getting rid of the offending brands while keeping the products. Unilever Plc last year dropped the Fair & Lovely name in India and replaced it with the more neutral-sounding Glow & Lovely. Neutrogena, the skin-care brand owned by Johnson & Johnson, dumped its Fine Fairness line and replaced it with Bright Boost. And last year, L'Oréal said it would remove words such as “whitening” and “lightening” from its skin products.



Fig 1.1
Source: Fact.MR



Fig 1.2

Source: VMR.com

Fair and Lovely by Johnson Johnson

India's favourite fairness cream *Fair & Lovely* seems to be taking responsibility for the inherent racism and colourism that the product has perpetuated for decades. Its parent company *Hindustan Unilever* announced today that the product line would be rebranded and the word 'Fair' dropped from the brand name, while the company's advertising would evolve to feature women of different skin tones. Why not drop the product altogether.

The move comes days after US multinational company *Johnson & Johnson* announced that they will be halting production of their 'Clean and Clear' fairness range of products, after the Black Lives Movement protests made several companies take stock of their own contribution to systemic racism. "Conversations over the past few weeks highlighted that some product names or claims on our dark spot reducer products represent fairness or white as better than your own unique skin tone," *Johnson & Johnson* said in a statement clarifying their decision.

For years, these products have been circulating in markets, but it is only now that these companies have developed a conscience about their role in actively contributing to impossible beauty standards and fixation with fairness, especially in India. The central product benefit

claimed for Fair & Lovely is dramatic skin whitening within six weeks. HLL claims the product fulfils a social need, given that fair skin is valued in the country, even though dark skin is less vulnerable to skin diseases. It is not marketed as a pharmaceutical product and therefore does not have to prove efficacy – which is disputed by dermatologists on the basis of the ingredients contained in many products. Advertisements in all the countries in which Fair & Lovely is sold show product users getting better jobs, getting married or having a brighter future (and being noticeably happier) as a result of their lighter skin. The primary target market is women aged 18 – 35, with the poor being a significant segment. There are reports of girls aged 12 – 14 using the product, which is marketed in ‘affordable’ small packages. Critics have claimed that the ads are socially objectionable, racist, demeaning or even ‘repellent’. Two ads have been taken off air in India as a result of protests, but others are still running. HLL claims the ads promote choice and empowerment. Critics such as women’s movements claim they entrench disempowerment

Many experts on the scene all said something along the lines that this is a positive move. Although it is long overdue, it should be welcomed. That does look like a reactive step; a big step ahead in the right direction. However, other experts beg to differ as well. They commented that this is just an eyewash and a complete ban on skin-tone-focused products is necessary. They also added that this is not empowerment but exploitation. The brand caused the damage of promising young Indian girls insecure about their skin tone by promising their dreams to come through by whitening. The damage caused for almost five decades is too deep to be healed by just a change in name.

Despite all the campaigns claiming ‘dark is beautiful’, colourism and racism is a problem that persists far beyond these products.

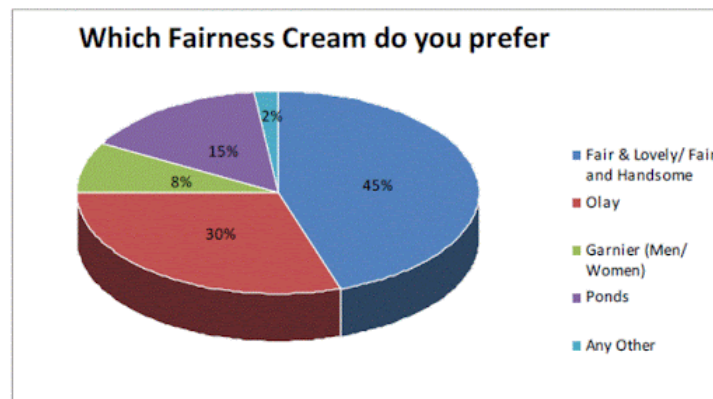


Fig 1.3

Source: Ignited Mind Journals

Why Skin Colour Discrimination May Foster Self-Hatred

If a child is born with dark skin and learns that dark skin is not valued by their peers, community, or society, they may develop feelings of shame. This is especially true if the child is unaware of colourism's historical roots and lacks friends and family members who shun skin colour bias. Without an understanding of racism and classism, it's difficult for a child to understand that no one's skin colour is innately good or bad.

Colourism Bias Narrows Beauty Standards

Colourism has long been linked to restrictive beauty standards. Those who embrace colourism not only tend to value lighter-skinned people over their darker-skinned counterparts but also view the former as more intelligent, noble, and attractive than dark skinned people.

Actresses Lupita Nyong'o, Gabrielle Union, and Keke Palmer have all spoken about how they desired lighter skin growing up because they thought darker skin made them unattractive. This is especially telling given that all of these actresses are widely considered to be good-looking, and Lupita Nyong'o earned the title of *People* magazine's Most Beautiful in 2014. Rather than acknowledging that beauty can be found in people of all skin tones, colourism narrows beauty standards by deeming only light skinned people as beautiful and everyone else as less than.

Colourism Leads To Longer Prison Sentences

Colourism dramatically shapes peoples' experiences with carceral institutions. In 2011, researchers from Villanova University in Philadelphia analysed the prison sentences of 12,158 women who were incarcerated between 1995 and 2009. They found that those who were seen as lighter-skinned received sentences that were, on average, 12 percent shorter than dark skinned women.

However, sentences aren't the only thing influenced by colourism — whether or not you even get arrested is also impacted by skin colour. In 2018, a study by Ellis Monk, a Harvard sociology professor, found that, when accounting for differences like gender and education levels, Black people have a 36 percent chance of being jailed at some point in their lives. But if they were dark skinned, that chance jumped to almost 66 percent.

“Put bluntly, while being black (and poor) may already predispose one to have a higher probability of contact with the criminal justice system and harsher treatment...being perceived as blacker intensifies this contact further and may increase the harshness of one’s treatment by the [criminal justice system] as an institution,” Monk wrote in the study.

Impact of Colorism

One great oversight of our modern generation is that we turn a blind eye to the subconscious colourism that occurs in our society. Colourism within the Indian community is defined as the attitude among Indians discriminating against other Indians because of their skin complexion – for instance, being too light or too dark. The form of racial discrimination known as colourism dates back to slavery, and has been systematically passed through various elements of our culture. It implies that lighter skin and straight hair are better, and successful men should marry women who fit this standard. Colourism can also happen within other communities. Much research has shown how racial discrimination, negatively affects mental health, contributing to depression and anxiety.

Colourism plays a huge role in the low self-esteem of Indians from individuals to relationships, and even expands into societal status. Colourism occurs both interracially and

interracially. Interracial colourism is when a member of one racial group discriminates based on the skin colour of a member belonging to a different racial group, and interracial colourism involves a member of a racial group discriminating a member of the same racial group based on skin colour. Both forms of colourism impact the communities by causing division, and can contribute to negative mental health effects.

To fulfil the beauty standards of being light-skinned and having straight hair, individuals use skin tones, skin bleachers, hair relaxers, and straight hair extensions are used. These markets, which promote white supremacy, are being promoted through media and magazines. According to Dr. Yaba Blay, who has studied these issues extensively, there are specific reasons why women use such products: to remove blemishes and imperfections and to counteract the effects of the sun, to appear and feel clean, to appear white, European, and “beautiful,” to please a partner, grab attention, or attract potential mates, to impress peers, appear sophisticated and modern, and gain economic and social mobility. These reasons tie together the key factors of interracial and intra-racial colourism: discrimination, self-deprivation, self-hatred, white supremacy, social conditioning, etc.

These ideas of wanting to be accepted, or wanting to be “beautiful,” are relatable, yet very concerning. There shouldn’t be limitations on which skin tone is beautiful or not. Commentary such as, “You’re pretty for a dark-skinned girl,” or, “She is beautiful because she is light-skinned,” are insulting and belittling. People of colour often associate darker persons of their racial group with poverty and unattractiveness. Having lighter skin and being mixed with Native American, black, and white, I too have been a victim of colourism. People automatically assumed that I felt I was “better” than others because I had “good hair” and fair skin.

A. Physical Health

There is considerable research to suggest that the stress associated with experiencing racism can have long lasting physical effects. Stress can elevate blood pressure and weaken the immune system, which, in turn, raises the risk of developing long-term health conditions. Racism is associated with higher rates of stress, increasing a person of colour’s risk of developing high blood pressure. In fact, the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) report that dark-coloured people are more likely to have hypertension than any other racial or ethnic group. Stress as a result of racism can also lead to behaviours that may cause further risk

to physical health. For example, research has found that discrimination is linked to higher rates of smoking, alcohol use, drug use, and unhealthful eating habits.

A 2019 study found that racist experiences appear to increase inflammation in African American people, raising their risk of developing chronic conditions such as heart disease and kidney disease. Another study found that unfair treatment of people of colour has a significant consequential effect on sleep and physiological functioning in midlife. Many studies have cited structural racism within medical care as a key factor in poor physical health. For example, a 2016 study into racial bias and pain management found a link between undertreating pain in Black patients and false biological beliefs, such as, “Black people’s skin is thicker than white people’s skin.”

A 2015 study found that compared with other racial groups, Black children with severe pain from appendicitis are less likely to receive pain medication. This suggests that racial bias is causing medical professionals to use different thresholds of pain for different racial groups, either inadvertently or purposefully, before administering care.

Racism is already linked to poorer birth outcomes, such as infant mortality, for BIPOC (black, indigenous, and other people of colour). Students suggest that mothers who report experiences of racism are more likely to have babies with a low birth weight, which can cause further health problems for the infants later in life. Just as with older BIPOC (black, indigenous, and other people of colour), young people also experience the ongoing stress of living with and witnessing racism and discrimination. As young BIPOC get older, they have similar risks of developing chronic health conditions as their parents.

B. Mental health

The 2015 meta-analysis found that racism is twice as likely to affect mental health than physical health. Of those the researchers sampled, BIPOC who reported experiences of racism also experienced the following mental health issues: depression, stress emotional distress, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and suicidal thoughts.

A 2011 meta-analysis of studies into racism and mental health among Asian American people also revealed significant relationships between racial discrimination and depression and anxiety. A 2018 paper suggested that fear of racism itself is harmful, and that it can undermine

good mental health characteristics, such as resilience, hope, and motivation. The paper also underlined how verbal and physical assault can cause PTSD.

The AAP also say that even if children do not directly experience colourism themselves, they can be just as significantly affected by witnessing colourism as those who experience it first-hand. Intense and persistent stress can influence how the brain develops, intensifying negative emotions such as fear and impacting learning and memory.

CHAPTER 2

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Research methodology is the specific procedures or techniques used to identify, select, process, and analyse information about a topic. In a research paper, the methodology section allows the reader to critically evaluate a study's overall validity and reliability.

Research Methodology can be known as the systematic, theoretical analysis of the methods applies to a field of study. It is a way to systematically and logically solve a problem, help us understand the process and not just the product of research, and analyses methods in addition to the information obtained by them. It describes the specific procedures or techniques used to identify, select, process, and analyse information about a topic and hence includes research type, design, sampling techniques and tools of data collection.

Statement of the problem

The problem of distinguishing people and judging individuals based on their skin tone, has been a major issue in the Indian society. It has been a complication for centuries. Indians have discriminated each other, have been disfavoured by foreigners and continue to victimise individual's according to their skin tone.

Colourism is a form of discrimination that favours light-skinned members of the same ethnic group. It is a persistent problem for in India. Colourism, or skin colour stratification, is a process that privileges light-skinned people of colour over dark in areas such as income, education, housing, and the marriage market. Despite its major impact on communities around the globe, it's been barely discussed. The first time Harsharin Kaur, a feminist from New Zealand visited India, the country of her ancestors, she was struck by the amount of pressure there was for people to change the colour of their skin.

Billboards of upcoming movies seemed to show that only light-skinned men and women could make it in the country's film industry. Television advertisements for skin care products

emphasised that the fairer a woman's skin, the more likely she is find a job, a husband, or happiness. All this in a country whose population is far more likely to be dark-skinned – a necessary protection against the harsh UV rays from the Sun that come with living closer to the equator.

Scope of the study

This research aims to bring to light the awareness of 'Colourism' among Indians, it's disadvantages and its effects.

General Objective

A study on colourism as an evil in the Indian society.

Specific Objectives

- I. To identify whether 'Colourism' is an existing evil in the Indian Society.
- II. To infer the knowledge of people on Colourism.
- III. To assess the thoughts of individuals on their skin tone.
- IV. To study the effects of Colourism in the society and on an individual.
- V. To understand the difference between racism and colourism.

Research Method

Research methods is an extremely broad term. It depends on the type of research according to the purpose of the study. It would contain and dictate the type of techniques and tools that the researcher might employ in the proceedings of the research. For this study, the

researcher has chosen to use Quantitative and Qualitative Research. The researcher has used this method to provide a deeper picture using numbers and figures for a clearer understanding of the magnitude of the problem.

Research design

The research design is used to structure the research. It is a general plan about what will be done to answer the research question. Important elements of research design include research strategies and methods related to data collection and analysis. The research design used by the researcher is **Cross-sectional study**, to analyse the research question using the responses from a specific sample size.

Universe

The population or universe represents the entire group of units which is the focus of the study. Depending on the purpose and coverage of the study, the population could consist of all the people in the country, or those in a particular geographical location, or a special ethnic or economic group. For this study, the universe would consist of all Indians between the ages of 14 and 60.

Area of study

The area of study is a specific area within which the researcher will be conducting their research. The area of this research will be focusing on people living in Chennai, India.

Sample size

It would normally be impractical to study a whole population, for example when doing a questionnaire survey. Sampling is a method that allows researchers to infer information about

a population based on results from a subset of the population, without having to investigate every individual. It is the important feature of any study which aims to make inferences about a population by collecting information from a specific sample. The researcher collected **50 samples**.

Sampling technique

The researcher has used the purposive Convenient Sampling technique for this research. The only criteria for this would be that the individual is between the age of 14 and 60 years.

Sources of data

Primary data:

This is the data collected directly from interaction with the respondents.

Secondary data:

These are the data which are collected from some secondary source, that is, the source of where the data is collected by one person and used by other agencies. The researcher has collected secondary data from websites, blogs and journals.

Tool for data collection

The researcher has used **Questionnaire** as a means of collecting data for quantitative analysis.

Duration of data collection

The data for this research was collected over a period of **12 days**, between Dec 20 , 2021 and 2 January,2022.

Analysis of data

Data analysis is the process of evaluating data using analytical and logical reasoning to examine each component of data provided. Data from various sources is gathered, reviewed and then analysed to form a conclusion. The researcher used the **Google Forms** to analyse and compile the data collected from the respondents.

Definition of terms

I. Conceptual definition

Colourism

Prejudice or discrimination against individuals with a dark skin tone, typically among people of the same ethnic or racial group.

- Merriam Webster

Society

It is a complex of organised institutions and associations with a community.

– G.D.M. Cole

Racism

Racism is the belief that groups of humans possess different behavioural traits corresponding to inherited attributes and can be divided based on the superiority of one race over another.

– Merriam Webster

II. Operational definition

Colourism

Differential treatment based on skin colour, especially favouritism toward those with a lighter skin tone and mistreatment or exclusion of those with a darker skin tone, typically among those of the same racial group or ethnicity.

Society

A group of individuals as members of a community or association.

Racism

Racism is when people are treated unfairly because of their skin colour, race, ethnicity or background. It is a kind of discrimination, and it causes great harm to people.

Conclusion

The Research Methodology has provided the researcher a clear understanding of the research, which will help in the collection and processing of the data. This gives a basic idea and lays the groundwork on which the researcher can build their analysis.

CHAPTER 3

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Introduction

Analysis can be defined as the detailed examination of the data collected for the research.

All the information given by the respondents has been compiled, interpreted and presented in this chapter. This part of the project aims to represent all the information and data collected from the interviews, and organise it in a tabular and graphical format. The data presented in these tables and graphs will be analysed and interpreted leading to conclusions.

Gender of Respondents

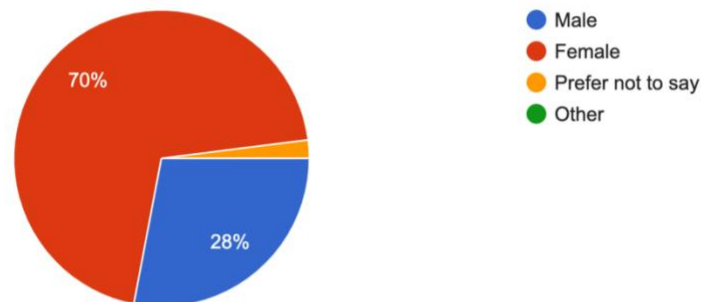


Fig 3.1

A vast majority of the respondents were female and more than one fourth were male, a small proportion did not wish to reveal their gender.

Age of Respondents

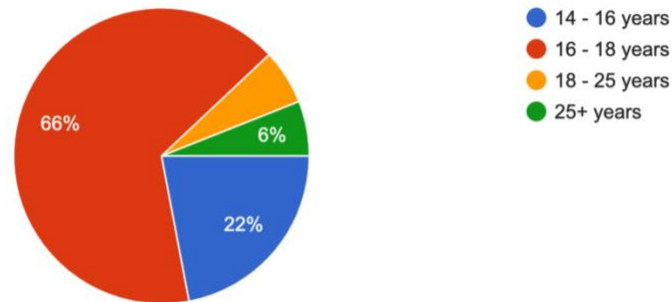


Fig 3.2

More than two thirds the respondents were of the age group 16-18 years and less than one fourth were 14-16 years old. A considerable proportion was above the age of 25 years.

Awareness on the term colourism

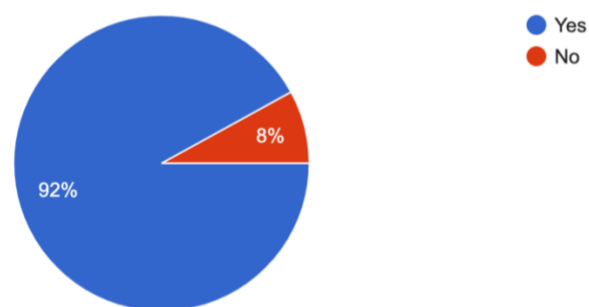


Fig 3.3

A vast majority of the respondents are familiar with the term 'colourism', whereas a small proportion are still unaware in spite it being an existing evil in the Indian society.

Awareness on the meaning of the term colourism

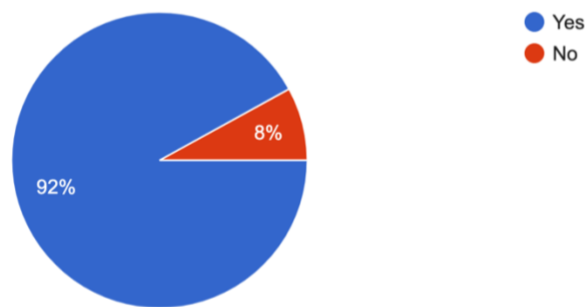


Fig 3.4

A vast majority of the respondents know the meaning of the word 'colourism', on the contrary a considerable proportion don't know the meaning of the term.

Awareness on the difference between the terms racism and colourism

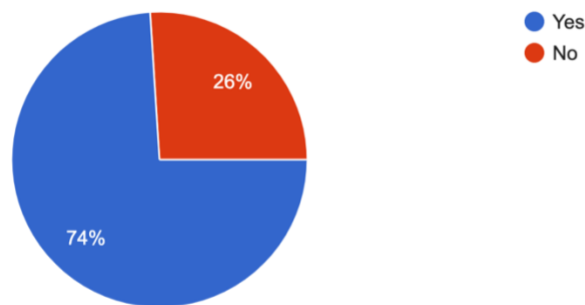


Fig 3.5

More than two thirds the population is able to distinguish between the terms "colourism" and "racism". Although it is disappointing that almost one third are unaware of the differences between the two very different words, and often use the terms interchangeably.

Discrimination based on your skin colour

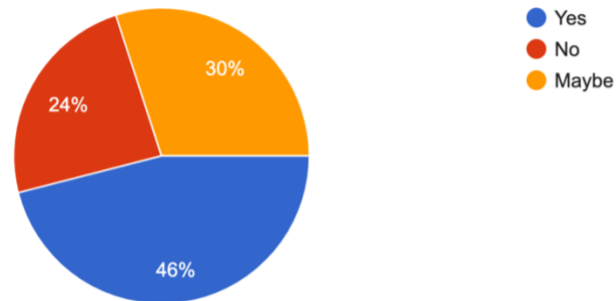


Fig 3.6 Discrimination based on your skin colour

Half the respondents have been discriminated based on their colour whereas less than one third have not been discerned.

Colourism as an existing evil of the Indian society

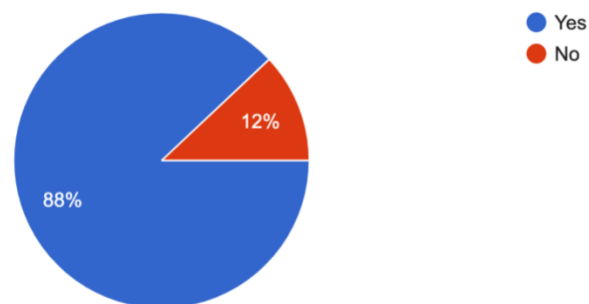


Fig 3.7

A high majority of the respondents believe that colourism is a very prominent problem that persists in the Indian society, whereas a small portion believe the opposite.

Desire to change one's skin tone

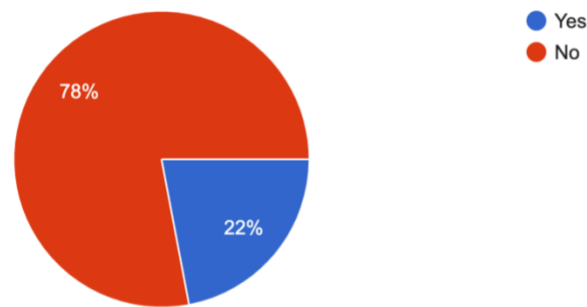


Fig 3.8 Desire to change one's skin tone

More than three fourth the total respondents have never felt the urge to change their skin colour or have not had the desire to be born with an alternate skin colour and a considerable portion have wanted to change their skin tone.

Discrimination based on your skin tone

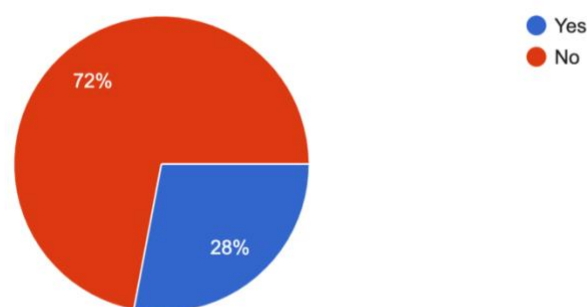


Fig 3.9 Discrimination based on your skin tone

Three fourth the respondents have never been discerned by their skin tone, but more than one fourth have been discriminated because of their colour.

Considering only fair people beautiful or handsome

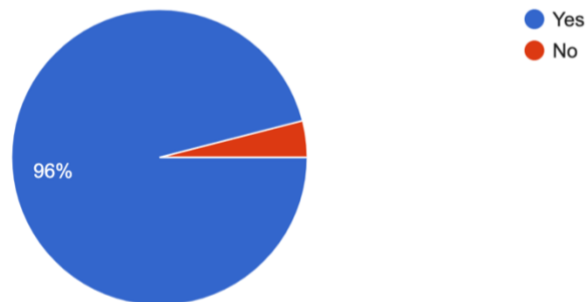


Fig 3.10

Unfortunately, an absolute majority have been a witness to people being called “beautiful” or “handsome”, solely because of their fair or lighter skin tone.

Colourism affects light skinned or dark skinned people

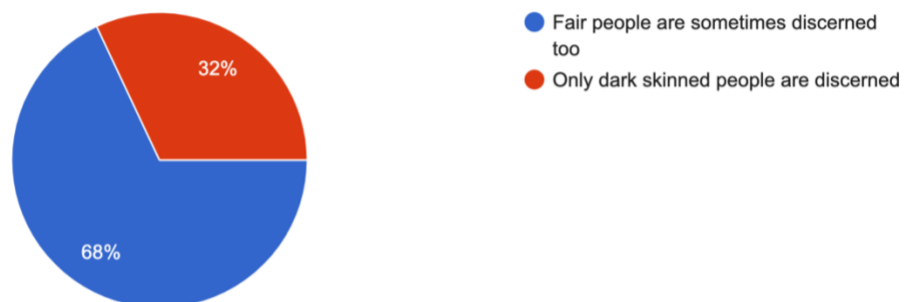


Fig 3.11

More than two thirds the population believe that it is both fair skinned and dark skinned individuals who face discrimination. On the contrary, one third the respondents are of the opinion that only dark skinned people are discerned.

Being a victim of colourism

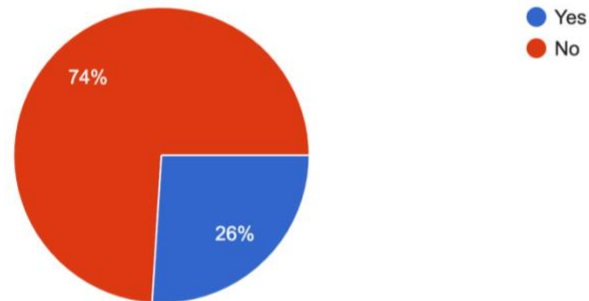


Fig 3.12

More than one fourth the respondents, have been a victim of colourism. Three fourth of the respondents were not victims of colourism.

Colourism affecting your mental health

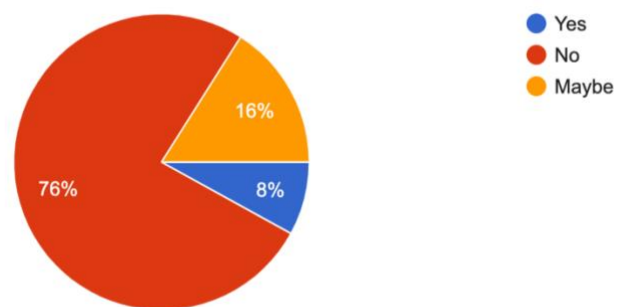


Fig 3.13

A considerable portion have unknowingly been affected because of the pressure to have a fairer skin tone. On the other hand, the mental health of a minority has been directly affected because of the pressure to have a fairer skin tone

Usage of skin whitening products

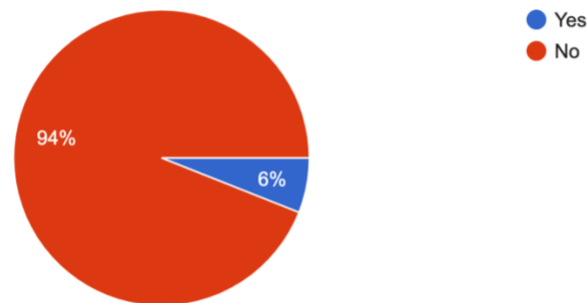


Fig 3.14

A considerable portion are users of skin whitening products, where as a majority doesn't use these products.

13. According to you, what are the causes of colourism?

A high majority of participants are of the opinion that Media, Stigmatisation, Society and Social standards are among the most primary and innate causes of colourism

Summary of all answers.

Colourism, the bias against people of darker skin tones, has vexed India for a long time. It is partly a product of colonial prejudices, and it has been exacerbated by caste, regional differences and Bollywood, India's largest film industry, which has long promoted lighter-skinned heroes. According to western and Asian beauty standards, fairer skin is more beautiful. The primary cause of colourism would probably be the media portrayal and the beauty standards set by the society and the media. The primary cause of colourism would probably be the media portrayal and the beauty standards set by the society and the media. The wrong notion

and thought ingrained in people that only fair people are beautiful. Colourism is a habit more than an opinion. According to most respondents, the main cause of colourism is the established yet unnecessary beauty standards and how people feel obliged to follow them all the time. Another common response to the question, was that society ,arrogance and self-pride, and jealousy play key roles in colour discrimination. The environment you are raised in (the people and the area you live in) also influence your train of thought. The notion that being lighter is cleaner, also has caused major problems down history with regards to discrimination. Media , and the internet which shows women of only one colour or body in a nice and biased manner. Ideologies and criteria set by the society for the term beautiful. Some people also believe that genes and social status could be a cause of colourism.

14. According to you, what are the effects of colourism?

Summary of all answers.

Colourism has a major toll on people's mental health. Affects mental health, makes people less proud of their ethnicity and there by the heritage, encourages the usage of skin whitening products which affect the skin and health. Victims become mentally unstable and dislike towards one's own body or skin. Colourism against an individual can lead to several mental health problems such as depression, anxiety, anti-social, personality disorder, etc. It builds a ton of pressure on young children (usually young girls). It also brings down the confidence and self-esteem in people of a darker skin tone. Victims may develop feelings of shame which can lead to self-hatred. Tends to make people ashamed (less proud) of their ethnicity or heritage. Encourages the usage of skin whitening products which affect both one's skin and health. People are deprived of certain opportunities. One develops insecurities and becomes self-conscious.

Inspiration to come out of the unfair notion that fairer skin is more superior than darker skin.

Different respondents have been inspired and motivated in various ways to break out of the stereotypical mindset that, fairer skin is more superior than darker skin. Some personal stories and experiences have been listed below. Among the most common responses, individuals have been constantly encouraged by family and friends to come out of absurd and unfair social standards. Social media, and influencers especially have made a great impact on individuals. The Black Lives Matter, which gained a lot of momentum in recent years has brought awareness and help individuals throughout the world understand and remove the evils of society. Many individuals helped themselves believe in their potential and turn a deaf ear to the society, which has helped them gain a lot of confidence with regards to their looks and skin tone.

Illustrative Quotes

- *“When I was growing up, I used to hate my darker skin because I thought people with lighter skin looked better. Now I understand that both are equally natural and beautiful in their own way. Being fair doesn't make you feel superior or make you perfect, and does not make you more beautiful.”*
- *“Being of Indian origin and living in a foreign country taught me what unity within diversity truly represents. My parents never made me feel like I am not as good as the people with lighter skin. There are more important things to worry about than how you look, especially when it comes to modelling.”*
- *“At first, I was ignoring when people around me kept saying that "being fair is beautiful", " being fair makes you feel superior", etc. But after a point I wasn't able to control so I started crying and hating my skin tone. My parents and my friends noticed this and made me come out of such a situation. Since then, whenever I see someone discriminated for the same reason (for not being fair), I will try to convince the victim of bully that being fair doesn't make you feel superior, it doesn't make you perfect, and it doesn't make you feel beautiful.”*
- *“Social Media awareness.”*

- *“My mom, has always supported when I was being judged and she always assured me that colour should not matter. She played a key role in giving the strength to pass through the tough times and strengthen my belief that skin colour is just melanin and nothing more.”*
- *“The Black Lives Matter campaign”*
- *“Family and friends believe accepting and embracing me, for who I am”*
- *“Believing in yourself and your abilities.”*
- *“Just the thought that all of us are equal in every way has helped me overcome this abnormal behaviour. “*
- *“HAMEL PATEL. She's drop dead gorgeous. She's an example of how one (especially an Indian woman) does not have to fit into the cliché, fair skinned beauty standards in order to make it big. She's awesome and inspires many others who feel insecure about their skin tone because of society, when really it's something that one should not be insecure of, but be proud of.”*

CHAPTER 4

MAIN FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter of the research aims at gathering the fully analysed and interpreted data from the previous chapter and drawing certain conclusions and findings from it. Here, the responses will be thoroughly evaluated and the observations made from it will be related to the objectives of the research.

Overview of the study

This study is intended to review the act of Bullying in Chettinad Harishree Vidyalayam. The research constituted of 90 respondents, which the researcher collected using random sampling. The researcher passed out an online questionnaire to the respondents.

Personal Demographics

This study covered a wide range of grades, varying from 6 –12 . Regarding gender, the split up was almost equal, with a majority of male respondents. Most of the respondents belonged to the age group of 15-18years.

Main Findings

‘Colourism’ is an existing evil in the Indian Society and difference between racism and colourism

According to the survey results, 'Colourism' is a widespread evil in Indian society. It has existed since the 16th century and continues to do so in the twenty-first. Most people are aware of the concept "colourism," but are oblivious of its meaning or presence. It is sometimes mistaken with 'racism,' which has a completely different connotation. Although the terms colourism and racism are synonymous, their prevalence and severity in India vary significantly. Colourism is a prevalent occurrence in India, even in the twenty-first century; it can be seen

and experienced in most people's everyday lives. It has become so widespread that it is deemed acceptable. Many people are still unaware of the harmful repercussions of colourism.

Knowledge of people on Colourism.

Most individuals know that racism and colourism are two distinct terms, but they do not understand what distinguishes them from each other. Racism is often defined as the prejudice and discrimination that a marginalized minority group receives on the premise of their ethnic origin; it is generally upheld by systemic infrastructures within society. Colourism, on the other hand, describes the preferential treatment of people within a minority group based on their lighter skin tone.

Thoughts of individuals on their skin tone.

A significant percentage of respondents are still apprehensive and judged based on their skin tone, regardless of whether they have a fairer or darker complexion. A fraction of the participants also use fairness creams. Such cosmetics promote the idea that having fairer skin makes you more superior or attractive. Many people, particularly young girls, are under pressure to achieve a light skin tone. It is a long-held belief that girls are 'beautiful' when they are fair, and that this helps them marry sooner. The research suggests that eliminating such concepts and products will result in a more fair and healthy society. A lot of respondents also believe that fair skinned people are also discriminated. The bias is not only against dark skinned people.

For a long time, India has struggled with colourism, or prejudice towards those with darker skin tones. It stems from colonial preconceptions and has been worsened by caste, regional inequalities, and Bollywood, India's greatest film industry, which has always favoured lighter-skinned protagonists. Fairer skin is more attractive according to Western and Asian beauty standards. The fundamental source of colourism is most likely media depiction and aesthetic standards imposed by society and the media. The fundamental source of colourism is most likely media depiction and aesthetic standards imposed by society and the media. Individuals have been conditioned to believe that only fair people are beautiful. The majority of respondents believe that the main cause of colourism is the establishment of superfluous beauty standards and how individuals feel obligated to adhere to them all of the time. Another typical response to the question was that culture, arrogance and self-importance, and envy all

play important roles in colour prejudice. The environment in which you were reared (the people and the location in which you reside) also has an impact on your train of thinking. The concept that being lighter is cleaner has also produced significant issues in the past with relation to discrimination. Media and the internet that portrays women of only one colour or physical type in a flattering and prejudiced light. Society's ideologies and standards for the term "beautiful." Some people feel that genes and social status may also have a role.

Effects of Colourism in the society and on an individual.

Colourism has a serious influence on people's mental health. It has an impact on mental health, makes individuals less proud of their race, and stimulates the use of skin whitening treatments, which are harmful and toxic . Victims develop mental instability and a hate for their own body or skin. Colourism against an individual can give rise to a number of mental health issues such as sadness, anxiety, anti-social behaviour, personality disorders, and so on. It puts a great deal of stress on adolescents (usually young girls). It also lowers the confidence and self-esteem of persons with darker complexion. Victims may experience emotions of humiliation, which can lead to thoughts of self-hatred and actions of self-harm. It has a tendency to make people feel ashamed (or less proud) of their ethnicity or background.

Many of us have broken free from the belief that people with dark complexion are "not beautiful," "unclean," or "criminals." Many of us have also been identified due to our light or dark skin tone, which has had an impact on us. Each person has their own tale that encouraged them to understand what is right and embrace themselves for who they are. They have also stood up for themselves whenever they have been degraded. Some of the factors that motivated people were the fact that individuals were constantly pushed by family and friends to break free from ludicrous and unfair social norms. Individuals have been greatly influenced by social media, particularly by influencers and their role models on the internet. The Black Lives Matter movement, which has acquired a lot of public support in recent years, has raised consciousness and helped people all over the world comprehend and combat society's injustices. Many people helped themselves believe in their potential and turned a deaf ear to society, self-care worked best for many, which helped them achieve a lot of confidence in their appearance, behaviour and over all attitude in life.

Limitations of the research

The researcher did not face many limitations whilst conducting the research. The only limitation that slightly affected the research was the fact that the accuracy of the responses collected from the sample. The interpretation of the questions and the level of honesty of answers may not be absolute.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to offer an introduction to the endemic problem of colourism, its history, and how it differs from racism. It also raises awareness of the harmful consequences of colourism in India.

Victims should also realise that they are not weaker or less than others, but that certain individuals will not be satisfied until they have pushed you to the dirt. Some others have a deep value for their past heritage and learned habits regarding colour bias and will not give them up. What you must do is muster the guts to hold your ground and refuse to give them the benefit of the doubt. Keep your power and never give it away. And every one of us is entitled to seek our own definition of happiness. No one deserves to be discriminated because of their skin pigmentation, and this is an issue that must be addressed and eliminated as soon as possible.

It is critical to recognise that it is high time we to put an end to all forms of discrimination, whether they are based on race, colour, or gender. Almost the entire planet is affected by the negative impacts of prejudice, each in their very own way. Before we can embrace others, we must first grow up and accept ourselves and be proud of who we are. We must love and treat our neighbours as we would like to be loved and treated. Every individual can make a difference in their own fascinating way to eradicate this age-old bigotry by first loving oneself and then raising awareness.

APPENDIX - I

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APPENDIX – II

Questionnaire

1. Gender

Male

Female

Prefer not to say

2. Age

14-16 years

16 – 18 years

18 – 25 years

25+ years

3. Have you heard of the term 'colorism '?

Yes

No

4. Do you know what the word 'colorism ' means?

Yes

No

Maybe

5. Did you know that 'colorism' and 'racism' are two terms that are no interchangeable and are very different?

Yes

No

6. **Have you observed any form of Colourism or racial prejudice based on color in your society?**

Yes.

No

Maybe

7. **Do you think Colourism is an existing evil in the Indian society?**

Yes

No

Not sure

8. **Did you ever feel the need to change your skin colour? Or the desire to have an alternate skin colour?**

Always

Sometimes

Often

Never

9. **Has anyone ever discriminated based on your skin tone?**

Yes

No

Sometimes

10. **If yes, did it have any impact or effect on you?**

11. **Have you ever seen or heard people being considered “beautiful” or “handsome” because of their light skin tone?**

Yes

No

12. Are light skinned individuals prejudiced for their colour? Or is it only dark toned individuals who are discriminated.

Fair people are sometimes discerned too

Only dark-skinned people are discerned

13. Have you been a victim of colourism?

Yes

No

14. According to you, what are the effects of colourism?

15. According to you, what are the causes of colourism?

16. Has the pressure to have fairer skin ever affected your mental health?

Yes

No

Maybe

17. Are you a user of skin colour whitening products?

Yes.

No.

18. It is scientifically proven that we have been conditioned to in some way think that fairer skin is more superior than darker skin. But a lot of us have broken out of that mindset.

What helped you to breakout? Or what inspired you to make that change?

APPENDIX – III

Consent form

Dear Respondent,

Namaste! I invite you to participate in a Study on colourism as an existing evil in the Indian society. . The purpose of this research project is to identify the existence of colourism in an Indian society, to infer people's knowledge on the same and to understand its effect and how it's different from racism. This is a research project being conducted by Uttara of Grade XI, Chettinad Harishree Vidyalayam. The data collected will be reported in my Grade XI ISC Sociology Research Paper. I would really appreciate it if you could take some time out, and participate in this survey.

Your responses will be confidential and information such as your name, email address, etc. will not be asked, your response will be completely anonymous.

Your participation in this research study is voluntary. You may choose not to participate