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Indigenous World-Views in the Post COVID-19 World: Towards a Necessary Integration of Indigenous World-Views in Development and Health Discourse.

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Abstract

In this paper, we revisit the discussion on integrating indigenous world-views with 'Western science and practice' towards collective futures (Mazzocchi et al., 2018), especially in the continuing aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. Acknowledging the serious work required to attempt such integration and its direct necessity for human and trans-human futures, we review the two fundamentally distinct world-views and their resultant concomitant implications for human development, with specific reference to environment and biodiversity. To that end, we have first identified key assumptions and practical implications of Indian philosophical frameworks and have selected one indigenous world-view that is quite popular — the yoga-sāmkhya world-view (Bhawuk, 2010), which we compare with the contemporary mainstream world-view of health and development.

The Euro-American view, which is considered mainstream, is predominantly a market-based capitalist world-view. This framework has created a crisis of faith in contemporary times, especially with reference to sustainable development, climate change and health (Iseke-Barnes & Danard, 2006), resulting in disruptions and churning in thought processes across political, economic and social systems.

The two world-views that we compare, suggesting an integration, is a preliminary work in line with the earlier work by Bussey and Inayatullah, but is specific towards the yoga-sāmkhya perspective, which is indigenous Indian view. Integration of an indigenous world-view foregrounds the possibility of three different futures of human development. COVID 19 provides us with that historical moment of introspection towards a more sustainable future that structurally integrates an indigenous perspective with contemporary perspectives of human development and health.

Keywords

World-views, development, Sāmkhya-yoga perspective, sustainability, indigenous systems, COVID-19

Introduction

The current COVID-19 crisis and its resultant disruption in the world can be viewed and represented in two ways, with their own distinct mental models and concomitant ways of conducting the development discourse. One views it as a 'war' and, therefore, aims to destroy the enemy and continue with life as usual post the several waves of the COVID-19 pandemic. The other, more reflective way, would be to represent this pandemic as a 'future forming' moment (Gergen, 2015). Kenneth Gergen, identified this key gap in social science research, when he called on research to be 'future forming and world making' rather than just 'mirroring'. This paper, continues the conversation of several important discussions published in the pre-COVID world on the challenges of integrating western science with indigenous world-views (Mazzocchi et al., 2018). The indigenous world-views and the mainstream world-views, especially driven by the reductionist and insular meta-theoretical assumptions of science, have birthed an approach to human development and a set of debilitating concerns that we as humanity have chosen to ignore and therefore 'normalised; this has been commented by several influential thinkers of future studies. If we take the first route of continuing business as usual after this pandemic, we will become more aggressive as a society, more

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alienated and paranoid about the environment, resulting in complete rupture between the non-human and the human. Taken to its dystopian conclusion, masks and biological suits may become the new normal.

However, if we are open to collective reflection, there is another route available. Rather than viewing the virus as an enemy bent on ‘intentionally’ destroying our civilization, we could think that the environment, in which both the virus and humans are a part of the whole, is indicating lessons of the indigenous world-view — of symbiosis, sustainability, frugality and care. The COVID 19 pandemic trajectory then becomes a moment of a radical overhaul and a departure from what we have wrongfully accepted as ‘normal’. In order to re-solve the questions, we start with the world-view of the very popular and ‘commodified’ Indian systems of yoga and Ayurveda as a use case example to analyse an indigenous world-view and the contemporary mainstream global world-view.

In this paper, we hold that COVID-19 provides us with an opportunity to look at the fundamental assumptions of our world-views, both indigenous and contemporary (for a detailed psychology of world-views, please see Koltko-Rivera, 2004) and then chart a way forward. After 70 years of independence from the British, in today’s India, we continue to mentally habitate multiple world-views along with their behavioural consequences. It is, therefore, relevant that we unravel and understand both contemporary global world-views and ancient and indigenous world-views.

When the British colonised the Indian sub-continent insidiously from about 300 years ago, they too encountered a variety of world-views and living practices, which they ‘organised’ as their ‘Indological’ enterprise. Indian civilization has seen multiple world-views and living practices, indigenous to India as well as those received through interactions in the ancient and medieval worlds. For example, while the Siddha system of health derives itself from the ancient Tamil system, the Unani system of health in India is derived from the Greco-Arab world view of the ancient times. One of the most famous among them is the yoga-sāṃkhya perspective. Notable scholars such as Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar, Danilou and Bjonnes have traced the yoga-sāṃkhya system to the antiquity of tantra in the Indian civilizations context, to the Vedic and pre-Vedic periods (Bjonnes, 2010; Daniélou, 2017; Sarkar, 1987, 1993). Scholars such as Dandekar (1959/81) have argued for a ‘pre-Vedic origin’ of the Sāṃkhya-yoga world-view and other scholars noted that yoga-sāṃkhya emanated from the Vedic tradition. Recent scholars such as Burley (Burley, 2012) have noted that yoga-sāṃkhya world-view and practice has a Vedic origin, about 1000 years before the Common Era (about 1000 BCE).

It is important to note here that categorization of knowledge systems of the world-views in the Indian civilisational context was done by the British colonizers and Christian missionaries who framed and interpreted indigenous knowledge systems for their own objectives, which were often polemical and certainly not an innocent pursuit of knowledge. Indeed, tantra is the sacred indigenous psychological tradition, that continues to be horribly distorted by the west for its sensation oriented purpose. Yoga-Sāṃkhya, an ancient and an undeniably Indian indigenous world-view, is a sophisticated consciousness based world-view, integrated with the tantric, Vedic world views and reached a sophisticated development till 1600 CE, much before the arrival of the British coloniser. In that regard, Bussey has been prescient and has discussed tantra as the episteme for future, way back in 1998 (M. Bussey, 1998, 2002; M. P. Bussey, 2000). This essay is an attempt to take these conversations forward, given the sharp edge of suffering that COVID-19 pandemic has wrought on the collective humanity. The contribution of this paper is to propose a pathway for integrating the two world-views of yoga-sāṃkhya and science.

Indigeneity is increasingly discussed in contemporary times, oftentimes in reference to the original people of the land and their rights. The idea of categorising peoples as ‘tribes/tribals’ itself arises from a white anthropological imagination. Arising from that imagination, there were and indeed are several ‘tribes’ in Indian civilization, who have a very close connection with the land. In the Indian civilisational context, originally, there was been no attempt to evangelize these groups and most have remained as they were. However, there were and are several ‘non-tribal’ peoples/communities in the Indian civilization, who are indigenous and also have a history of commingling with each other. The indigeneity of the yoga-sāṃkhya system cannot be questioned because the yoga-sāṃkhya world view and practice is a continuous world-view and practice for more than 3000 years (Larson, 2011). Not only did it originate in the Indian civilization, but has also subsequently been lived, practiced and commented upon by several thinkers, both Indian and non-Indian. The earliest texts of yoga sāṃkhya and references to them in the Vedic texts are in Sanskrit, one of the three key languages of ancient Indian civilization (others being Pāli/Prākṛit and Ardha-māgadhī, the languages of Buddhism and Jaina thought).

Methods: Identifying the world-views from the discourse

World-views are hidden and unseen, reflecting the myths and metaphors of the culture and thereafter as meta-theoretical and epistemic assumptions that then get reflected in visible axioms and methodological approaches. Inayatullah in a brilliant and an influential framework, proposed a causal network analysis (CLA) method to untangle the hidden and unseen myths/metaphor and world-views, that are expressed in discourse and other expressions; see (Cook et al., 2014; Inayatullah, 2004, 2008). In this paper, we acknowledge the relevance of CLA, however, at this stage, the current paper aims to set the preliminary work towards a the full application of the method proposed by Inayatullah and colleagues. We hope to take it forward in future research in specific reference to indigenous frameworks such as yoga-sāmkhya. In psychology, Koltko-Rivera (Koltko-Rivera, 2004) has worked extensively on the psychology of the world-views. Cross-culturally, research has also increasingly shown that the world-views make a clear distinction in the way human beings cognise, think, feel and importantly, act/behave. Koltko-Rivera has identified some of the key differentiators between world-views, one of them being the assumption about the relationship between nature and human beings. Whereas, the contemporary world-views look at humans as '*conquering*' nature, several indigenous world-views conceptualise humans as embedded within nature and several other world-view look at nature as holding humans within its larger system. Similarly, cross-cultural psychologists have analysed several aspects of world-views: the relationship between man and woman (the masculine and feminine principle), the detail versus holistic ways of cognition (Nisbett, Peng, Choi, & Norenzayan, 2001) and so on. Increasingly, the consensus is that culture and world-views fundamentally affect psyche, society and behaviour.

Even when 'culture and psyche co-constitute each other', India presents a most complicated situation. It is not a homogenous culture and there are indeed multiple world-views in the Indian cultural traditions. India, thus, has multiple indigenous world-views, including communities with no direct ownership of land. Many may be viewed as 'indigenous' from tribal traditions; many others are indigenous from the documented philosophical tradition. For the purpose of this research, the following steps were followed for identifying the 'indigenous' world-view for discussion in the current paper. First, a discussion was held with the traditional scholars for Hindu, Buddhist and Jaina texts, especially with reference to the relationship between nature and human beings. In the next step, key texts delineating the indigenous world-views were selected and validated with traditional scholars. In the final step, consistent and important pointers were chosen for analysis in order to keep the scope of the papers sharply etched.

After due discussions with traditional scholars, the paper first introduces the Yoga-Sāmkhya world-view and its practical implications in Āyurveda and Yoga. The yoga-sāmkhya world-view (Saha, 2015) is illustrative of the indigenous world-views which had 'man-within-nature' as a fundamental assumption rather than the man versus nature assumption that fuels the contemporary discourse. The Sāmkhya text on which the paper is based is the Classical *Sāmkhyakārika* by Iśwarkṛṣṇa (350 CE), (Mainkar, 1988; Virupakshananda, 2015). The celebrated text, written in Sanskrit and commented upon by various Hindu philosophers, refers to nature as beginning-less and the human as a part of this beginning-less productive principle/nature called as Prakriti. This 'prakriti is both physical and manifest in nature and a psychological principle. Taking this concept forward, human beings are considered as part of the physical nature as well. (For more details, please see, (Burley, 2012; Larson, 2011). The yoga-sāmkhya world-view is chosen because it is usually presented as more 'spiritual and therefore 'other worldly'' and 'personal growth' oriented. It also points to two other cognitive fallacies of the current times — that spirituality, especially in the indigenous world-view, is 'other worldly' and is divorced from economics/development and that personal growth and freedom is an insulated individualistic pursuit. Sāmkhya world-view rejects both these fallacies. Spirituality is here and now and growth is not an individualistic pursuit. All of us are interconnected and development is a web of growth for all human and non-human beings. Yoga is a very popular practice and yet, appallingly, its underlying assumptions in development futures are rarely discussed.

We also discuss the contemporary mainstream world-view and the discourse around development. We see this as a largely market based capitalist system, with several mongrelised ideas, currents and cross-currents. The object of this analysis is to identify the fundamental contradictions that arise due to this mongrelisation in the human development and public policy discourse (Serge, 2003). We look at three possibilities for future: first, an unquestioned acceptance of indigenous world-views and a vision and intention of reviving it as it is. We critique this unquestioned translocation of the past into the present as untenable because it assumes that world-views are frozen in time. The second model that emerges is the unfettered continuation of the contemporary mainstream world-view and a rejection of the indigenous world-view. The contemporary mainstream, liberal, positivistic intellectuals

tend to follow this pathway, as they are scared that we might lose the gains accrued by an unquestioning acceptance of the indigenous world-view. Finally, we look at the third pathway: can we work towards an integration of the indigenous world-views with contemporary systems and find ourselves a way to a sustainable future. We contend that COVID-19 and its challenges present us with that historical moment of a breakthrough.

The indigenous world-views of health and well-being

When the COVID-19 pandemic spread, a ferocious debate that sparked in India was the usefulness of the Indian systems of health, including Āyurveda and Siddha, in either preventing or curing the infection (Chaturvedi et al., 2020; Sheriff, 2020). Viewed objectively, these debates indicate a deeper clash of world-views between indigenous systems such as Āyurveda and Siddha and contemporary medical perspective, deemed ‘evidence based medicine’ by the English speaking elite and ‘English medicine’ by the rest of us, who think in Indian languages. Such debates point to colonial history and an imposition of world-views that are associated with medicine and health. Even as both sides accuse each other of similar crimes — financial interests (Pharma lobby versus Āyurveda lobby), lack of effect and unexplained side effects, focus on symptoms and not on root cause — a more serious ‘charge’ against the Āyurvedic and Siddha medicines is the lack of scientific evidence through rigorous scientific studies. This charge unravels not only the fundamental differences in indigenous world views from the contemporary positivistic reductionistic philosophy of science but also a lack of level playing field in terms of infrastructure, resources and knowledge/capacity to conduct such trials at a scale that is required. Importantly, It shows the blind dismissal, often based on ideological assumptions, of the indigenous world-views as ‘irrational’ and ‘superstitious’, because they don’t fit the ‘empirical scientific’ and hence the ‘modern’ world.

The above point is important to critically bracket off unexamined mainstream ideas of what constitutes knowledge and superstition and the ‘cancelling’ out of other world-views or removing the legitimacy of ‘science’ from these views. All the Indian world-views and their diverse ontological and epistemological assumptions converge on three important assumptions. The Buddhist, Jaina, Sikh and the Vedic/Vedāntic world-views all agree on the following fundamental principles, which we will utilise for analysis:

Table 5. Showing the comparison between Indigenous assumptions and Current discourse

<p>Indian World-View Assumptions</p> <p><i>Karma</i>: The theory of karma is accepted by the indigenous perspectives. Of the many and detailed theses on karma, we are taking a specific principle for the purpose of this paper — that the law of karma encompasses all eco-systems in circularity. All are responsible for self and actions of others, including thoughts, which are mental actions.</p>
<p>Specific translation in the current development discourse</p> <p><i>Development with nature versus Development as a conquest over nature</i>: Since all beings are encompassed in the cycle of karma and there is an assumption for a Dhārmic life, <i>it follows that development cannot be human-centric alone</i>. Development must be co-constructed with nature. This assumption hits at the root of unbridled exploitation of natural resources such as rivers, earth, water, space/air, etc., that is viewed as ‘development’. Scholars have called out the idea of ‘progress’ - an unbridled exploitation of resources, economic and material progress associated with western modernity (Du Pisani, 2006). The world-view of development as an unbridled conquest over nature that the European industrial revolution of the 18th century has ushered in has not only impacted Indian and Asian cultures but also cultures of the Americas, Australia and Africa.</p>
<p>Indian World-View Assumptions</p> <p><i>Mukti/Nirvāna</i>: The possibility of a true cessation of suffering, the need to be liberated from this eternal and repetitive cycle of pain and pleasure, which is true for all beings. The idea of nirvāna is a unique idea from the Indian civilization and does not imply a rejection of life. The Buddha accepted the doctrine of birth and re-birth; the idea of nirvāna implies a freedom from the cycle of samsāra, or cycles of pain and pleasure and birth and rebirth.</p>
<p>Specific translation in the current development discourse</p> <p><i>Infinite Supply to feed Infinite demand versus Sustenance according to need</i>: An important fallacy that follows from a conquest over nature world-view is that development is also frequently reduced to economic development,</p>

which itself is based on an unbridled exploitation of resources and consumption. This is a fallacy because trade and economic development flourished earlier as well. Is it that the industrial development allowed an unbridled flourishing of human greed for consumption and looting of other cultures / hoarding, asset ownership and by doing so changed the meaning of a good quality of life in economic terms alone? Can human beings be fuelled by infinite and relentless demand and is it liberation? The idea that economic development is powered by an unbridled exploitation of 'infinite' natural resources, has come to be questioned. The articulation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) demonstrates these contradictions within the various SDGs, especially those relating to economic development and environment and climate action.

Health as a systemic-ecological versus health as an isolated and localised fight against predators and pathogens: Even as there is a value to isolating causative mechanisms for both disease and health, Āyurveda, yoga and other indigenous world-views view health as fundamentally embedded in the ecological, psychophysical and social systems. Body-mind are viewed as whole systems and addressed systemically in therapy and practice. Contemporary health systems do recognise theoretically that health is embedded ecologically, but the very nature of scientific method requires parsing and isolating specific variables and focusing on them in isolation, even at the genetic and molecular level. It must be emphasised that āyurvedic and yogic practices focus on multiple modes of interventions simultaneously and use day-to-day and locally available low-cost materials. Thus, āyurvedic as well as yogic practices are whole person-within-the-system approaches rather than isolated systems within a person, who is himself/herself/themselves isolated from the social, geographical and ecological systems.

Indian World-View Assumptions

Dharma: The universe and all that it encompasses has an intrinsic pattern; follows an order and a meaningful process and outcome. Beings live and die in dharma, emphasizing the need for an ethical, compassionate, harmonious and dhārmic living so that unnecessary *karma* is not gathered.

Specific translation in the current development discourse

Behaviour as harmonised with systemic rhythms versus behaviour as free will: Consequent to this systemic conceptualization, two corollaries ensue: first, behaviour can never be an act of free-will; it is tied to the cycle of *karma*. Free-will is a sacred principle in European-American liberal thought and is considered immature and pathological in the *yoga-sāṃkhya* world-view! Behaviour as free will is viewed as pathological as an a-contextual 'free will' refuses the responsibility of the harmonious living with each other.

The cycle of *karma* itself is not individualistic but collective as well. Therefore, human behaviour needs to be in harmony with the systems in which it is embedded in an everyday lived practice, rather than just a philosophy.. Finally, as a consequence of these assumptions in the framework, death is perceived as a natural change. This clearly contrasts with contemporary views, which seek to 'conquer' death by viewing it unacceptable! The role of spirituality is emphasised here.

These assumptions are profound and pervade life and living (Cornelissen, Misra, & Varma, 2014; Rao, Paranjpe, & Dalal, 2008). In the modern lexicon and in the context of development discourse and health, these have day to day consequences on living and decisions that people make.

Indigenous world-views and the organization of life towards a healthy living

As mentioned, India has a plurality of world-views and conceptualizations of a healthy life. Unani (with its Islamic influence), Siddha and Āyurveda are the three more well-known systems of health and well-being. In the recent years, Siddha medicine has been in discussion to address the viral load of SARS-COV2. In this paper, we focus only on Āyurveda. Āyurveda is a complete system of health and well-being that pivots on the self/consciousness and mind, in the diverse texts including tantra. The texts are premised on the centrality and pervasiveness of consciousness, central to the manifest and un-manifest universe; personalised as well and transcending the personal. This idea is quite different from an Abrahamic idea of God or Spirit. Consciousness can manifest as 'God' but is not limited only to 'God' and thus all of creation is pervaded with consciousness. The sense of sacred is thus infused in all that is, all that was and all that will be –human, non-human; animate and inanimate.

Āyurveda as a practical and holistic system of health is derived from the concepts in the *Sāṃkhya*. It starts with the person and systems within which the person is embedded (Athavale, 2004; Dash and Junius, 1983). The *Sāṃkhya*

frameworks posits two aspects of reality: *Prakriti* and the *Puruṣa*. *Prakriti*, as explained in the introduction, is both a physical and a psychological principle of creation, sustenance and destruction, a dynamic, ever changing and unself-conscious aspect of reality. This *prakriti* is *trigunatmika* or is expressed in three *gunas* — principles of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. *Sattva* refers to the principles of light, intelligence and purity. *Rajas* refers to the principles of movement, dynamism and desire. *Tamas* refers to the principles of stasis, stability, inertia and negation. All the three principles pervade this manifest universe, one dominating the other two. For example, stones and rocks are part of this *trigunatmika prakriti*, where *tamas* is dominant and *sattva* and *rajas* are hidden. Similarly, in plants, *tamas* and *rajas* predominate and *sattva* remains in the background. In animal beings, *sattva* and *rajas* dominate and *tamas* provides base stability. The combination of the three *gunas* has been used in indigenous psychology to understand personality typologies (Krishnan, 2002) and mental health (Rao S. R., 1990) and is used by Āyurvedic physicians for diagnosis and treatment to this day.

The second fundamental aspect of reality is the *Puruṣa* or the principle of self-witnessing awareness and intelligence. Creation is triggered in the perturbation of the three *gunas* in association with the *Puruṣa* principle. Destruction is not viewed negatively in *Sāṃkhya*; it is a change of matter and energy from one *guna* to another and a final re-integration into a non-perturbed state. Nothing is lost or gained and nothing is essentially good or bad; everything manifests and merges in the un-manifest. Depending on manifestation of *gunas*, the expression *appears* as good or bad in its consequence. Each manifestation of being, with movement of life (*Prāṇa*) is called *Prāṇi* (who is with *prana*) or *Jīva*. A *jīva* is a *prāṇi* and is a unique constellation of *karma* (thoughts, words and action in past carried forward), *samskāra* (impressions and experiences of past carried forward) and *Vāsana* (residual desires and aspirations arising, carried forward). Thus, *yoga-sāṃkhya* presents a non-anthropomorphic, equalizing world-view where the virus is a form and part of the *trigunātmika prakriti* just as humans are.

This *Sāṃkhya* conceptualization forms the base of āyurveda and āyurvedic living; disease is not an ‘enemy’ but an imbalance in the overall scheme, personally and at the eco-system level. Āyurvedic living thus implies a sustainable and ecologically harmonised lifestyle, focusing on harmony of systems within and outside the body. This harmony of *prakriti* within and outside the body manifests in ever-expanding systemic whorls of body-mind, families, societies and cultures as embedded in natural ecologies and in the primordial elements of space, air, water, fire and earth. Reviewing these assumptions of *yoga-sāṃkhya* metaphysic, it is emphasised that the sustainability of the physical eco-system is central to the sustainability of human societies and the human being. This is not a metaphysical but a very concrete and physical implication of the world-view. Āyurvedic texts identify the health of the mind and self-awareness as essential aspects of health. So, a healthy body-mind is seen as instrumental to dharma and thus the purpose of life. The healthy body-mind is never seen in isolation, rather it is always embedded ecoculturally with other body-mind beings. In addition, āyurvedic concepts point to a lifestyle in harmony with seasons and the whole eco-system.

The purpose of economic development or ‘*artha*’ is not human development at the cost of other beings. It is important to note here that during the reign of Aśoka Priyadarśi, much before European modernity and liberal ideas, facilities such as water pools and animal hospitals were provided for animals by the king. Development also was not limited to economic development. The development of culture — arts, poetry, literature and philosophy — was the high point of development in the historical context of India. A review of Buddhist and Hindu texts reveals that traders and merchants were frequently the highest donors of arts, literature and culture, and philanthropies, without interfering or manipulating the initiatives (Johnston, 2006; Khisty, 2006; Narayanan, 2001; Perera, 2015). It is important to note that India was contributing a substantial percentage to world GDP before the British systematically looted India for over a century. The principle to note is that overall development, which includes economic flourishing as well, is possible, without an unbridled exploitation of natural resources. In fact, new technologies with the right ethics do provide us with that opportunity once again.

Health systems, in the indigenous frameworks are conceptualised to enable the fulfilment of desires and a good quality of life. The core of the Āyurvedic health frameworks is the happiness and fulfilment from a stable body-mind, in harmony with the ecosystems that yields to transcendence. Yoga and Ayurveda, following tantra frameworks, embrace the world and transcend it.

Thus, in this section, we have briefly underlined the indigenous world-views on development and health. We can connect it with the three basic ideas identified in the earlier section — the ideas of *karma*, *mukti* and *dharma*; we

can see that both development and health are seen as instrumental towards dharma — an intrinsic order of all beings — which are interdependent within the eco-system. Each and every purposive thought and action of beings forms the web of karma which has to be accounted for. Finally, mukti/nirvana is a fundamental aspiration of all beings, both human and non-human, and therefore, the dhārmic systems of development and health need to be enabled in such a way that we move towards a cessation of suffering. The key task for social policy thinkers is to examine this question: can we create intelligent and sustainable economic systems that remove suffering and create wealth for all, while at the same time put less burden on the eco-system.

Contemporary World-View on Development and Health

Now that we have outlined the indigenous yoga-sāṃkhya world-view on health, we can ask the question: what are the key assumptions in the contemporary world-view on development and health that impact the way economic, social and health policy is framed. We find that several streams of thought, often contradictory, mish-mash in the contemporary world-view, which reflects its ‘ideal’ in the articulation of the SDGs. Yet its ‘reality’ clashes with political economy in the world, within the national polity and between nations and nation blocs. Overall, these inherent contradictions of world-views in contemporary systems mongrelize (understood as non-ownership) it, in terms of economic policies and implementation. Critically, it is noted that whereas, culturally, multiple world-views create a melting pot, *economically, however, market based discourse rules the roost*. Here are some of the key influences in this discourse with specific reference to development and health:

1. *Colonization and the effacement of Indigenous world-views*: In the Indian context, the moment an Indian perspective distinct from the default imposed ‘universal’ is proposed, there is a great deal of self-shame and self-flagellation. The recent debate about the new National Education Policy (NEP) provides a fascinating example of such self-loathing. India’s civilisational heritage was grounded in an extremely sophisticated system of education (Basu, 1985). The colonial decimation of the knowledge transmission processes and institutions heralded a terminal decline in learning outcomes and reduced a polyglot culture to one that is given to mimicking. One provision of the policy seeks to address some of this and the intent is validated by the experience from other post-colonial cultures, particularly the African experience (Prinsloo, 2007). Research demonstrates that mother tongue education (MTE) can play a vital role in the formation of a ‘community identity’ (Trudell, 2005) and this is supported by psychological research in multilingual education; yet the reaction to this provision demonstrates a sense of alienation and atavism, which is puzzling to put it mildly.
2. *Shame in reclaiming indigenous psychologies and working with the indigenous knowledge structures*: Increasingly, social scientists, especially in psychology, are recognising the impact of colonization on effacing indigenous world-views and the psychologies arising thereof. There are African, Chinese, Filipino, Latin American and Japanese psychologies. We now recognise that Euro-American psychology is one of the many indigenous psychologies, which became the default universal due to colonization and missionary activity, and framed indigenous world-views as ‘superstitious’, ‘backward’ and ‘un-modern’. More significantly, these emic health systems suffered a rupture in their organic growth and updation in the current context, as funding and intellectual interest dried up; besides, the emerging middle classes in these countries dismissed them and the associated cultural memory. The deep structure of culture has remained, even when cultures have been transitioning and, thus, the educated, liberal middle classes and academics in these countries live a life of contradiction — a fact commented and analysed by Misra and Dalal, in reference to academic research in India (please see, (Dalal & Misra, 2010) and by many others. *Cultures in transition and the effect of globalization*: The second major influence on contemporary world-view is the effect of globalization. Whereas colonization was a one-way influence, globalization is multi-directional. This has created its own set of benefits for developing countries and indigenous cultures as there is indeed an increase in the ethical imperative of inclusion of voices. However, the entrenched power dynamics are hard to challenge/ change and it is not a level playing field in terms of policy, resources, institutional architecture and systemic challenges (Johnson, 2008). For instance, there is a perspectival

difference from international to sub-district grass-root level in social policy. Globalization and the impact of technology has created a challenge for the indigenous cultures as well, raising a fundamental question: what is really indigenous (now)? This is especially relevant for the emerging generation of adolescents and youth.

3. *The relentless march of markets and rising inequality*: New technologies are the engines that fuel globalization further, resulting in both benefits and challenges. The biggest challenge for sustainable lifestyles is the pitching of the fallacy of relentless and unconstrained possibilities, which include unconstrained consumption. Ultimately, the industrial revolution 4.0 promises bypassing the inconvenient 'social' arising out of humanity and technology replacing the human social (Morrar & Arman, 2017). When technology replaces the social, the world is better controlled and predictable by those who own these technologies. IR4.0 then is a relentless march of markets; only that these markets will be masked through technologies products and services, creating their own divides.
4. *Contemporary world-views and COVID-19*: COVID-19 represents the advances and pitfalls of the contemporary world-view. In terms of medical research and understanding the host-virus interactions, vaccines and drug efficacy, the advances of the contemporary world-view including the evidence-based paradigm are clearly acknowledged. However, in a broader sense, in terms of framing it as a 'war', the fear and rupture between self/human and non-self world is complete. Even without COVID-19, mental health and non-communicable lifestyle disorders (NCDs) have been a cause of concern ; according to Lancet, 2015 (<http://www.thelancet.com/series/china-india-mental-health>).The way the pandemic has played itself out has not only highlighted the failures of contemporary world-view but also amplified the failures in terms of social, political and economic responses and impact.

With a brief review and a comparison between indigenous world-views and the contemporary world-view, we telescope what the future might be. The object of this gazing is to stir up a discussion and debate, which in turn will help us cognise, create and form our collective futures.

Gergen in a seminal paper (Gergen, 2014) called for research in social sciences to be 'future forming', while trying to address a critique of assumptions of strict empiricist research traditions, with their narrow and rigid focus on the material, visible and reduced versions of phenomena. As discussed earlier, indigenous and contemporary world-views imply profound divergences how we fundamentally view and live our lives as a collective humanity, understand development and health and indeed the purpose of life itself.

Three Possibilities Towards Collective Futures

Commentators across the world have identified that there is indeed a deep crisis of faith among people for contemporary systems and institutions. Even as several factors are implicated, the inability of the systems to solve existing problems and the emergence of new issues and concerns are the key factors behind this unrest. The key point in this historical moment is the crisis and vacuum of a life affirmative meaning; how do we access that?

Here Inayatullah's CLA provides some clues- *Yoga-Sāmkhya* is that deep civilisational code indigenous to India *but universal in its fellowship*. *Yoga Sāmkhya*, with its non-anthropocentric embeddedness of dharma 'commands' respect for all creatures and the process of life and death; responsibility that arises from karma and the motivation to be free from suffering as mukti provides the life affirmative meaning; the life affirmative meaning in karma, dharma and mukti translate into trust and responsibility in human endeavour in social and operational contexts.

The Myth/Metaphor of Prakriti as a powerful feminine archetype is central; prakriti is nourishing and terrifying as well! One must follow and honor the innate grammar of *prakriti*. In several Hindu tantric myths, Siva himself, who symbolises consciousness is awestruck and subservient to her. This feminine and powerful *Prakriti* yields to devotion, to whatever 'she' allows to happen. At the very least, this engenders an acceptance and healing of trauma and grief.

We have already discussed the world-view, in brief. The causes and the litany are to be studied in future through discussions with the stakeholders. However, looking at the myth/metaphors and the world-views, we telescope into three alternative futures below.

First, the current mental model is to reject contemporary world-views, while highlighting the various failures in resolution of deep problems such as inequality, widespread poverty, lack of access and delivery of services, climate change, loss of biodiversity and desertification, water and air pollution, unmanageable cities, migration, wars and violence, etc. In this scenario, we frame COVID-19 as another of those man-made disasters, which humanity has lurched towards. Post COVID-19, the social and individual psyche and the imaginary will be scarred and be expected to heal on its own. No collective meaning making that enables healing is available to human leadership, where individuals, families, organizations grapple with the last two years, with their limited coping resources, with increased fear of future pandemics and the waves that have singed even the most basic of human social relations; the physical touch, a hug, human togetherness, a goodbye, in the event of death. This scarring and mass grief leaves us with a yawning vacuum of meaning and so we can expect more depression and other mental health issues across the world. As a collective humanity, we don't have any other alternative world-views, which have developed in the collective consciousness.

The second model, which people seem to gravitate towards is the complete rejection of a contemporary world-view and the framing of the indigenous world-view as a panacea, a transportation that would usher in all good! This is quite dangerous and has been warned against by Inayatullah, in his latest essay, quotes Sarkar to discuss why Āyurvedic system did not progress further, due to dogma, corrosive caste and hierarchy related beliefs (Inayatullah, 2022) The revivalist claim suffers from the cognitive fallacy in reconstructive memory, where recall tends to sharpen certain features of collective memory and level off certain other features of events. The revivalist claim will not only make us mentally discount the gains of contemporary world-views but is also untenable simply because the world has changed; the transported world-views do not fit in. In both the above models, we run the risk of being content with surface level changes, which will not solve our problems in development and health.

The Integrative Pathway: Indigenous World Views with Contemporary Systems

The third model which we propose is to attempt at integration rather than a balancing act; not a half-hearted compromise but a true integration, that will lead to a deep structural change and represent continuities and commingling of both the world-views. The question is what do we mean by true integration and deep structure change? For that we need to understand the assumptions of the world-views and change those assumptions. To illustrate, a similar change is underway in economics, which now accepts a revision in its fundamental assumption of a human being as a rational economic agent in order to see the non-rational aspects of economic agency. We suggest that the discourse be reframed around development and health, having at the core the assumptions of indigenous world-views so that the implementation mechanisms and pathways to development and health will radiate out of them. This means that we fundamentally revise our assumptions of man versus nature to man-within-nature. The 'what' and the 'why' (Halpern, 2015) questions must come from the indigenous world-views, and the 'how' questions from contemporary world-views. Let us take economic development as an example. *What* is it really? Unbridled exploitation of natural resources and unrestrained consumption? That *is* what needs to be reframed! Yet another question: What is the purpose of a health system? Can it focus on non-medical preventive lifestyles? Why cannot it be a person specific customised and low cost model and not the generic and expensive one that we see in current public health systems?

Whenever the pathways lead to a distortion of the core assumptions of what and why, they need to be suitably changed. This will lead to massive but positive disruptions in economics, trade, science and social research and technology interventions. It is to be noted that the vacuum in the contemporary systems is not just the vacuum of 'why' questions, but also the 'what'. Both why and what are the fundamental questions that frame 'meaning making'. Contemporary systems are unable to answer sufficiently the 'what' and 'why' questions, whereas they are indeed very strong on the mechanism oriented 'how' questions. Also, both indigenous world views and contemporary world-views have been critiqued for the delivery oriented 'for whom' question. This 'for whom' question needs to be answered and explicated afresh. The detailing of this can be done using a country's social and health policies in specifics, which is beyond the scope of current discussion.

In conclusion, in this paper, we have tried to use this historical moment of COVID-19 as a moment of reflection to analyse the contemporary discourse around development and health. We have tried to propose an integrated perspective at the level of philosophical assumptions and mental models. It is a paradigm that is life affirming, meaningful and nurturing for the human being, embedded as it is within eco-systemic whorls. We have presented the indigenous view of Āyurveda and Yoga-Sāṃkhya and indicated the assumptions of these world-views and their relevance to discourse around development and health. We have then compared them with the current systems, and identified a crisis of faith and disillusionment, which is the background on which COVID-19 plays itself out. Finally, we proposed a true integration of the core ideas of indigenous world-views with contemporary systems. The possibility of true integration provides a meaningful future for our collective humanity. More specific and local work with communities is clearly a way forward for sustainable futures.

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