

Colorism in India

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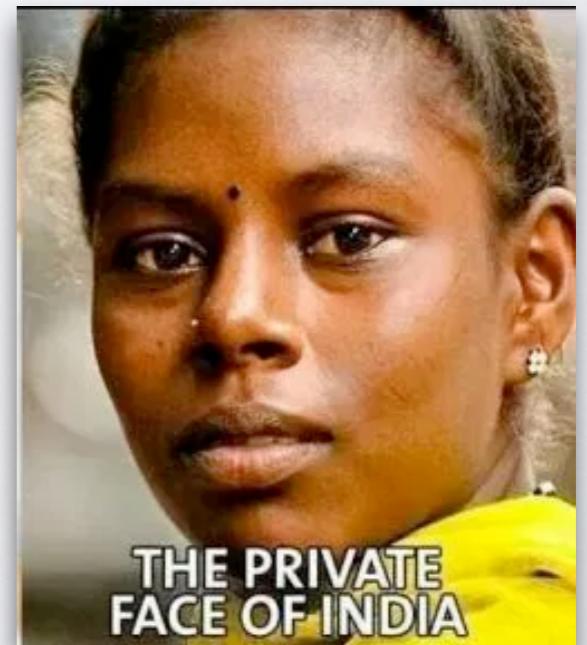
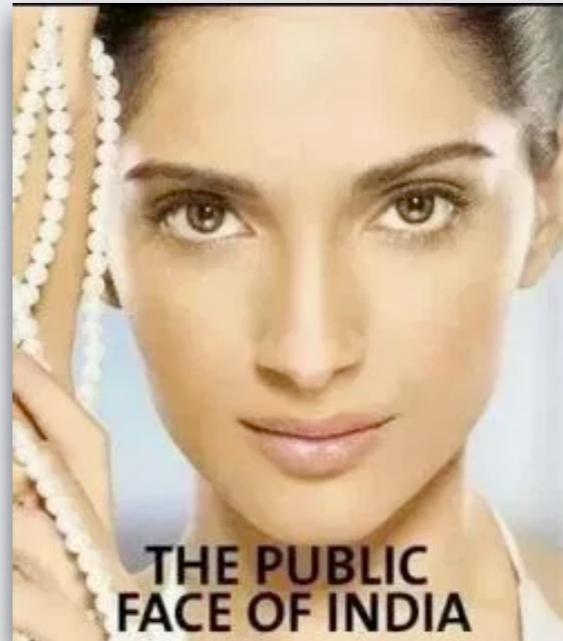
What is Colorsim?

- Colorism is a prevalent social issue in India where people with darker skin are discriminated against based on their skin color.



Why it is a problem?

- Both women and men are obsessed about fair skin, since the pervasive bias influences in family, workspace, school, and marriage, almost every aspect of life.

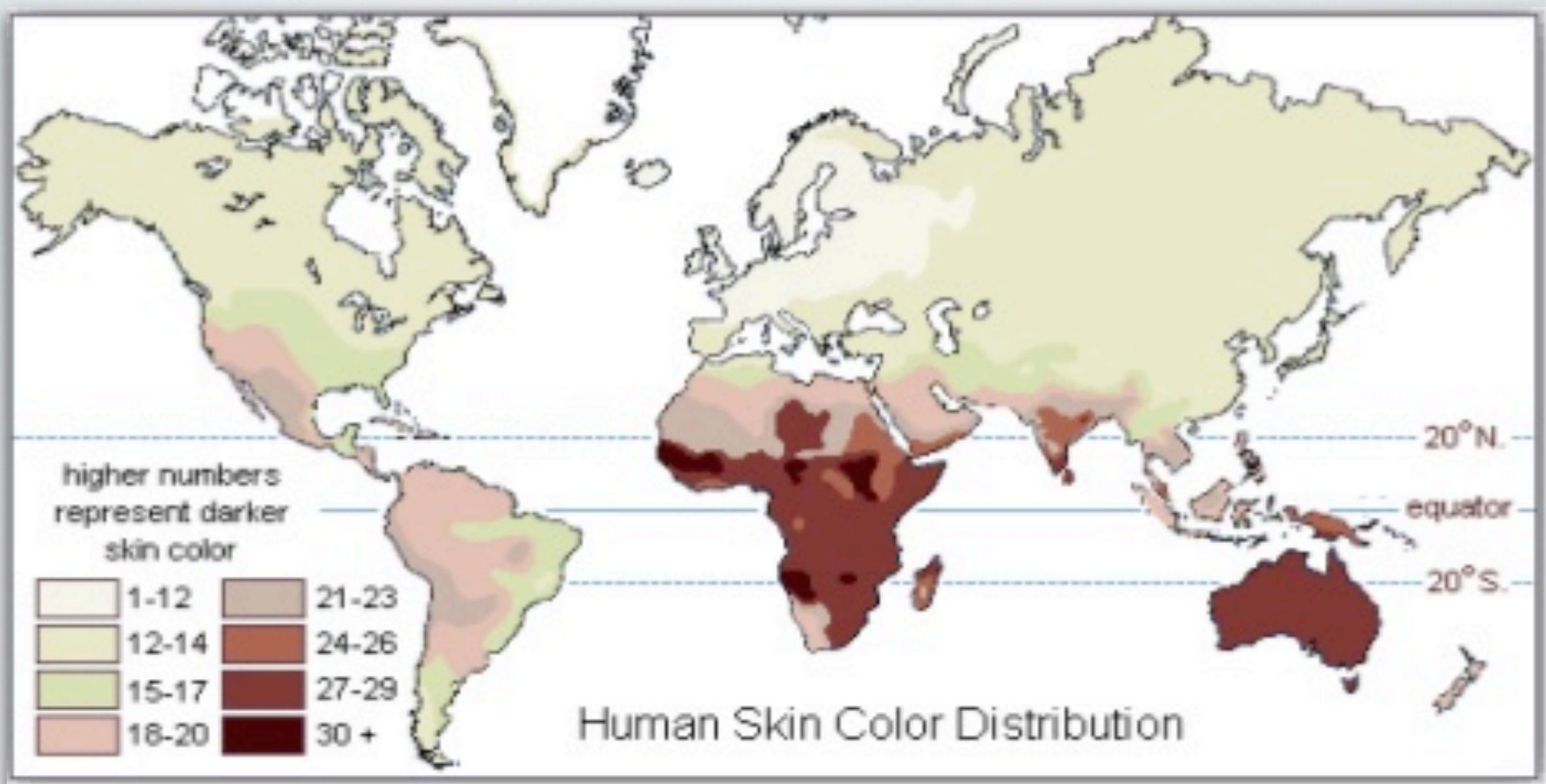


Indian Skin Color Distribution

- Indians have varied degrees of color as well as facial features based on the geographical area to which they belong (Misha).



Human Skin Color Distribution



Ancient India:

- The ancient society did not discriminate a person's skin tone.
- Many Indian deities like Lord Ram and Kali were depicted with dark skin, representing power, love, and beauty (Vandana Mohandas).



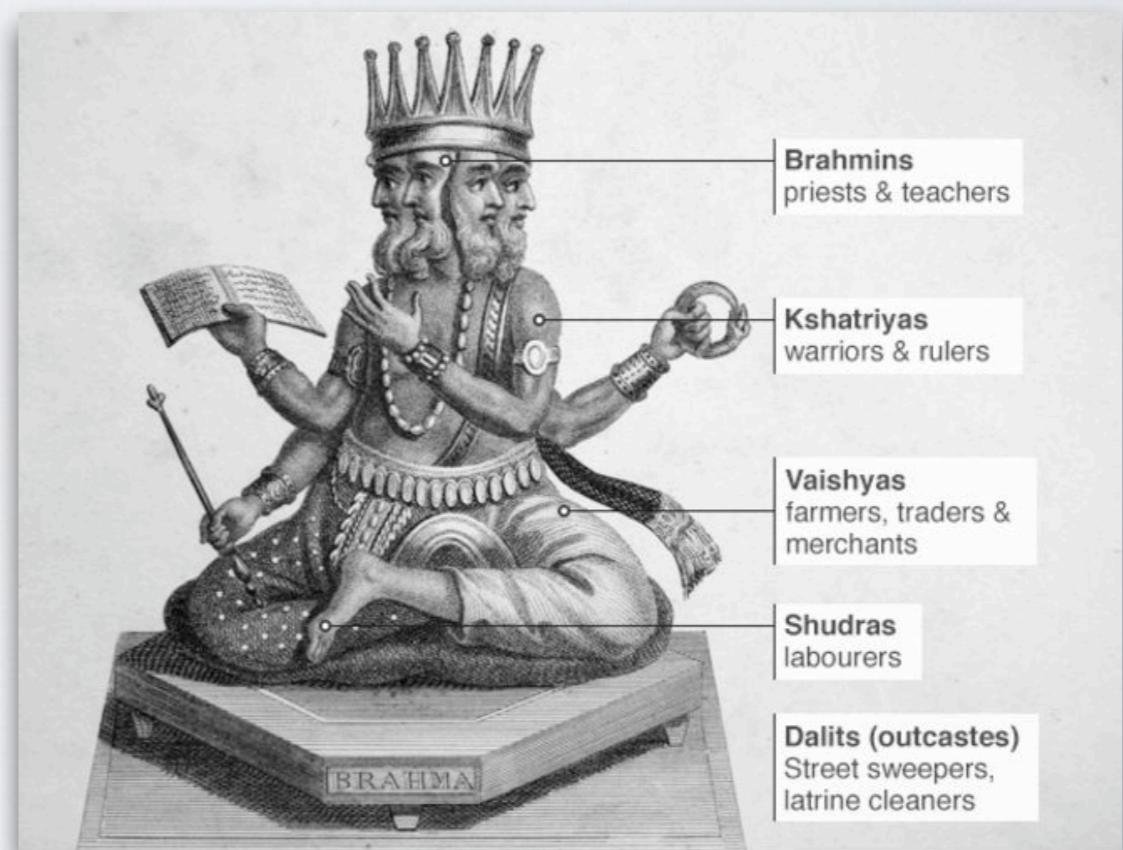
Cause 1: The British Colonization

- The British colonizers claimed themselves “as a superior and intelligent race”, and they preferred Indians with fair skin (Misha).
- Fair-skinned Indians took privilege of their inborn appearance to get better jobs, elevating their social status.



Cause 2: The Caste System

- The caste system enabled the upper castes to exploit the oppressed castes who were more likely to have darker complexions (Saif Khalid).



Cause 3: Misleading Media

- In the modern society, colorism is promoted by the misleading media, which continuously instill the notion that “fair is beautiful” (Mary-Rose Abraham).
- This reinforces the superiority of fairness, rendering colorism a deep-rooted problem.



Possible Solution: Government Regulations

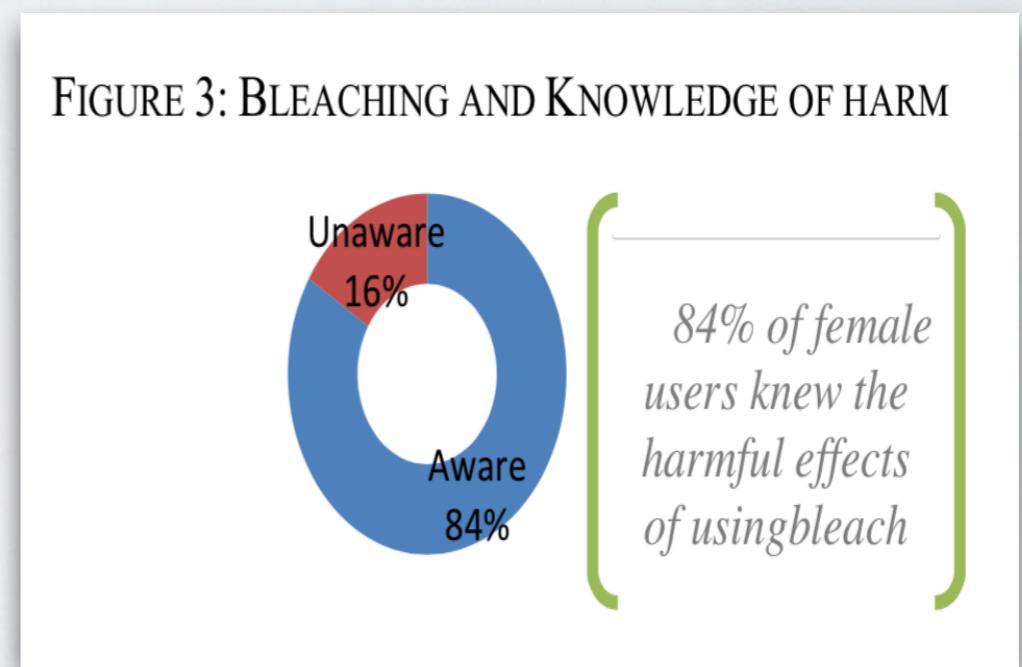
- India government should foster the awareness on the need of responsible advertisements.
- The Advertising Standards Council of India “banned adverts depicting people with darker skin as inferior” (Mary-Rose Abraham).



Is That Enough?

- Nevertheless, many Indians still resort to skin bleaching to brighten their skin regardless of the presence of media.
- A survey conducted by Washington University shows that 84% of female users buy bleaching products in spite of knowing the harmful effects.

FIGURE 3: BLEACHING AND KNOWLEDGE OF HARM



Possible Solutions: NGO Campaigns

- #ColorMeRight
 - Petitions
- #Dark is Beautiful
 - Online forums



Possible Solutions: NGO Campaigns

- Flexibility
 - media literacy education,
 - mass petition
 - online forums.
- “[We] should promote beauty beyond color rather than endorse the age-old stereotypical belief that only fair is beautiful.” (Das)



Recommended Action Plan:

- The best way to combat colorism is to combine the power of government and NGOs.
- Government's regulations serve as rigid standards, and the NGOs have the potential to make widespread impacts when they appeal to emotions and public opinions.

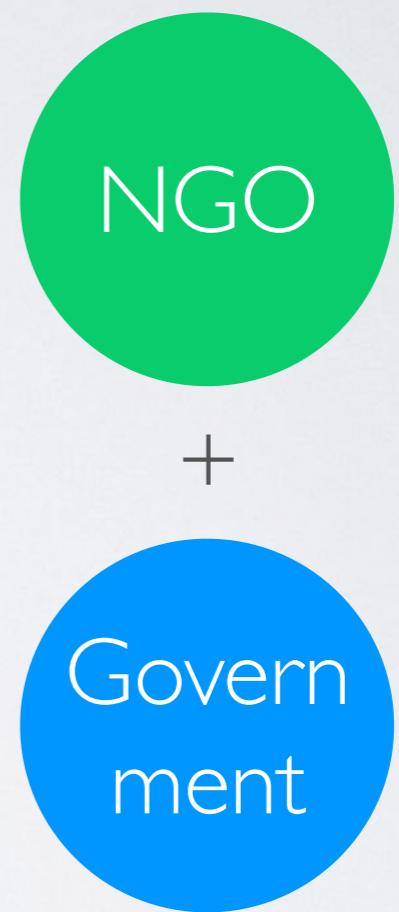


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Recommended Action Plan:

- Regulations may be ineffective without people's support, and people's petition may be ignored without government's endorsement.
- The anti-colorism campaign exerts the maximum power if and only if government and NGOs cooperate together.



Citation

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