

Decolonizing the Narrative: Proposing a Global Swadeshi Media Institute to Broadcast Bharat's Historical Reality

Harshvardhan Rai¹, Golu Kushwah²

¹Master's Student Zakir Husain Delhi College Delhi, University of Delhi

²Master's Student Department of history, University of Delhi

Abstract—The colonial period left a legacy of distorted historical narratives that continue to disproportionately influence global print and broadcast media. To counter this systemic bias, Bharat requires a robust, indigenous media infrastructure—a modern intellectual embodiment of the *Vande Mataram* mantra—dedicated to reclaiming its historical voice. This paper proposes the establishment of a "Global Swadeshi Media and Publication Institute" to aggressively promote India-centric content on the world stage. Functioning as the *Tantra* for intellectual self-reliance, this institute would systematically fund, translate, publish, and broadcast meticulously documented Indian global and local histories. Its primary mandate would be to deconstruct colonial-era stereotypes, uncover the suppressed realities of economic exploitation and grassroots resistance, and definitively present India's authentic side of the story.

By bridging traditional print publishing with modern digital broadcast mediums, the institute aims to produce high-quality, research-driven content that directly challenges Eurocentric historiography. Furthermore, this initiative aligns with the principles of *Bhartiya Swadeshi* journalism by cultivating a new generation of indigenous writers, historians, and media professionals. It will establish a self-sustaining intellectual economy that confidently exports Bharat's cultural and historical truth. Ultimately, this paper argues that true development remains incomplete without narrative sovereignty. Establishing a globally recognized publication and broadcast institute is not merely an exercise in historical correction, but an essential pillar for building a culturally secure, intellectually dominant, and truly *Samridh* (prosperous) Bharat.

Index Term—Narrative Sovereignty, Swadeshi Journalism, Decolonial Historiography, Global Media

I. INTRODUCTION: THE IMPERATIVE OF EPISTEMIC INDEPENDENCE

The formal dissolution of the British Raj in 1947 marked the culmination of a protracted political struggle, yet it did not immediately catalyze a corresponding emancipation within the epistemological, cultural, and narrative domains of the newly independent nation. The colonial period left behind a profound legacy of distorted historical narratives, carefully engineered to justify imperial rule, which continue to disproportionately influence global print and broadcast media today. In the contemporary geopolitical landscape, the transition from political sovereignty to true civilizational independence requires the systematic dismantling of these enduring colonial frameworks.

To counter systemic global bias and reclaim its historical voice, Bharat requires a robust, indigenous media infrastructure. The proposition to establish a Global Swadeshi Media and Publication Institute represents a strategic imperative to aggressively promote India-centric content on the world stage. Functioning as the *Tantra*—the systematic mechanism, technology, or organized apparatus—for intellectual self-reliance, such an institute is mandated to systematically fund, translate, publish, and broadcast meticulously documented Indian global and local histories.

Its primary objectives include:

- The rigorous deconstruction of colonial-era stereotypes.
- The uncovering of suppressed realities regarding economic exploitation and grassroots resistance.
- The definitive presentation of Bharat's authentic civilizational narrative.

By cultivating a new generation of indigenous writers, historians, and media professionals, this initiative establishes a self-sustaining intellectual economy that confidently exports Bharat's cultural and historical truths. Establishing a globally recognized publication and broadcast institute is an essential pillar for building a culturally secure, intellectually dominant, and truly prosperous civilizational state.

II. THE ARCHITECTURE OF COLONIAL HISTORIOGRAPHY AND EPISTEMIC

The writing of India's history in its modern academic form commenced under British colonial rule and was structurally designed to serve the administrative, ideological, and moral needs of the empire. A foundational element of this epistemic control was the framework laid down by James Mill in his highly influential 1817 work, *The History of British India*.

- Mill's model established religion as the sole entry point for studying Indian history, arbitrarily and maliciously dividing the subcontinent's past into the Hindu, Muslim, and British periods.
- It reduced the vast, complex, and pluralistic history of the subcontinent entirely to the history of rulers and ruling dynasties, insisting this history could only be understood through the narrow lens of the religious identity of those rulers.
- For utilitarian thinkers like Mill, the so-called "medieval" period was framed as the direct antithesis of the "modern" British period. The British era was falsely presented as a secular, rational statehood bringing much-needed civilization to an irrational, despotic, and regressive society.

This framework was a deliberate act of communalization that fractured the pluralistic history of the subcontinent along discernible religious lines, sowing the seeds for future geopolitical partitions. Furthermore, European-promulgated theories, such as the Aryan Invasion Theory, and the rigid institutionalization of the caste system under colonial census mechanisms, instilled a manufactured sense of civilizational inferiority.

The colonial historiographical apparatus systematically portrayed colonized societies as backward "Others" in desperate need of Western civilizing intervention. This narrative was heavily

enforced through the educational policies of figures like Thomas Macaulay, whose imposition of English marginalized indigenous knowledge systems and severed the populace from their own intellectual heritage.

III. THE POST INDEPENDENCE CONTINUATION OF COLONIAL PARADIGMS

The attainment of political independence did not immediately rectify these historical distortions; instead, Indian historiography underwent a complex evolution. Following the initial wave of Nationalist historiography, the academic landscape from the 1960s and 1970s onward became heavily influenced by Marxist historiography. While Marxist historians provided valuable critiques of colonial economic policies, their approach frequently perpetuated Eurocentric, materialist frameworks that universalized Europe's historical experience and applied it rigidly to the Indian context.

Critics argue that a neo-colonial mentality persisted through these academic proxies, who weaponized historiography to maintain control over institutional gatekeeping, often dismissing indigenous civilizational continuity as mere myth or nationalist propaganda. Consequently, the authentic historical memory of Bharat remained obscured, filtered through analytical categories that were fundamentally alien to its indigenous ontological realities.

IV. THE ECONOMIC DRAIN AND SUPPRESSION OF SUBALTERN RESISTANCE

Colonial historiography frequently advanced the myth of British benevolence, suggesting that imperialism modernized India through the introduction of railways, legal frameworks, and administrative infrastructure. However, critical economic history reveals a systematic, ruthless process of wealth extraction that devastated the indigenous economy and fuelled the rise of the British Empire.

The intellectual roots of countering this narrative lie in the economic critiques of early nationalist thinkers like Dadabhai Naoroji, who introduced the "Drain Theory" in his 1876 work, *Poverty of India*. Naoroji meticulously documented how the British Indian

Empire was formed and maintained entirely by Indian money and Indian blood.

The mechanisms of this economic drain were multifaceted:

Drain Mechanism	Description of Exploitation	Economic Impact on Bharat
Home Charges	India forced to pay for its own subjugation, including the salaries, pensions, and global military campaigns of the British Empire.	Exceeded £20 million annually by the early 20th century; massive depletion of domestic capital.
Deindustrialization	Discriminatory tariffs and the influx of British machine-made goods designed to destroy indigenous manufacturing.	Collapse of traditional textile and metal industries; loss of global export dominance.
Trade Imbalance	Forced export of raw materials (cotton, jute, indigo, opium) at manipulated low prices, while importing high-value British goods.	£500 million surplus drained between 1835 and 1872; financing of the British Industrial Revolution.
Land Revenue Systems	Implementation of Permanent Settlement, Ryotwari, and Mahalwari systems enforcing exorbitant taxation regardless of yield.	Widespread peasant indebtedness, land alienation, and catastrophic, recurrent famines.

This transfer of economic surplus was the fundamental catalyst for the British Industrial Revolution. Economic historians such as Irfan Habib have estimated that nearly one-third of Britain's capital formation in the late 18th century was derived directly from India's export surplus. Empirical findings suggest that a 1% increase in the colonial drain increased the rate of profit in Britain by approximately 9 percentage points throughout the 19th century, confirming that European development was inextricably linked to Indian underdevelopment.

V. THE ERASURE OF GRASSROOTS RESISTANCE

In tandem with economic exploitation, the colonial state systematically attempted to suppress and erase the history of indigenous resistance. Official colonial archives frequently criminalized or entirely omitted instances of grassroots rebellion. Major uprisings—such as the Indigo Revolt, the Deccan Riots, the Pabna Agrarian Unrest, the Moplah Rebellion, and the Santhal Rebellion—were routinely framed by colonial

administrators as mere law-and-order disturbances, religious fanaticism, or criminal riots, rather than sophisticated socio-economic resistance to imperial policies.

Moreover, everyday forms of opposition practiced by rural communities constituted a sustained challenge to colonial authority that was rarely documented in official written records. Practices such as selective tax compliance, agricultural non-cooperation, and the modification of local rituals were deliberate political actions. For instance, the resistance of Adivasi groups, such as the Dongria Kondh in the Niyamgiri hills of Odisha, against the imposition of scientific forestry and the commercial exploitation of their sacred geographies, illustrates the persistence of indigenous defense mechanisms.

VI. DECOLONIAL HISTORIOGRAPHY AND THE RECOVERY OF INDIGENOUS EPISTEMOLOGY

The Subaltern Studies collective sought to challenge epistemological dominance by foregrounding the

agency of marginalized populations. However, while Subaltern Studies successfully highlighted "history from below," it often remained intellectually tethered to Western post-structuralist and Marxist theoretical frameworks. Similarly, postcolonial theory frequently relies on the very Western academic frameworks it seeks to dismantle, analyzing the colonized experience primarily in relation to the colonizer.

The decolonial paradigm, conversely, insists on fundamentally "delinking" from dominant Eurocentric ways of knowing. Championed by thinkers like Walter Dignolo and Linda Tuhiwai-Smith, decoloniality argues that colonialism was intrinsic to the constitution of Western modernity itself, and true intellectual liberation requires centering local, indigenous knowledge systems.

VII. ORAL HISTORIES AND THE VERNACULAR ARCHIVES

In Bharat, the historical over-reliance on colonial administrative records has silenced the lived experiences of diverse communities.

- For indigenous and tribal populations, particularly in Northeast India, oral traditions function as complex, structured "living archives".
- Among the Khasi, oral narratives underpin matrilineal inheritance and customary governance.
- Among the Nagas, they preserve migration histories, memories of warfare, and territorial consciousness.
- Among the Mizos, they mediate cultural continuity amid rapid socio-political and religious transformations.

Furthermore, during the late nineteenth and mid-twentieth centuries, vernacular scholars and grassroots chroniclers working in Bengali, Tamil, Marathi, Malayalam, Punjabi, and Gujarati compiled vast archives of anti-colonial resistance. They utilized local newspapers, memoirs, folk ballads, temple inscriptions, and pamphlets to narrate the freedom struggle from the vantage point of rural, caste-based, gendered, and tribal communities. Yet, contemporary academic structures often overlook these rich sources due to language barriers and a lack of institutional support for translation. A core function of the proposed

Institute must be the aggressive funding, translation, digitization, and global dissemination of these vernacular and oral archives.

VIII. NARRATIVE SOVEREIGNTY AND THE AGE OF DIGITAL COLONIALISM

The concept of "Narrative Sovereignty" represents the inherent right and power of a community, nation, or civilizational state to control, define, and disseminate its own stories, histories, and cultural representations, free from external imposition, distortion, or censorship. It insists on centering indigenous communities as the primary audiences for their own cultural production, rather than constantly catering to the normative gaze of mainstream settler-colonial or Euro-American societies.

IX. THE GEOPOLITICAL IMPERATIVE FOR BHARAT

As an emerging global power, India operates within a fiercely contested international information environment characterized by deep-seated structural biases.

- Empirical studies indicate that over 70% of articles published by leading Western outlets portray developing nations, including India, through a persistently negative lens.
- This skewed framing generates highly tangible geopolitical and macroeconomic consequences, as nations subjected to persistent negative framing attract significantly less foreign direct investment (often 20-25% less) and face adverse impacts on sovereign credit ratings.
- The global media ecosystem operates as a sophisticated mechanism of "Network Propaganda," where digital platforms amplify structural biases that serve specific elite, often Euro-American, geopolitical interests.

Therefore, for Bharat, narrative sovereignty must be institutionalized as a core, foundational civilizational capability. Securing narrative sovereignty is entirely synonymous with safeguarding cultural and geopolitical sovereignty.

X. THE VANDE MATARAM FRAMEWORK
AND BHARTIYA SWADESHI
JOURNALISM

A. *Historical Foundations of Intellectual Self-Reliance*

The Swadeshi movement, which took formal shape in 1905, was a watershed moment in the evolution of Indian nationalism. Central to this civilizational awakening was the mantra *Vande Mataram*. Originally composed by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, the song rapidly transcended its literary origins to become the ultimate rallying cry for national resurgence. Visionaries like Sri Aurobindo elevated *Vande Mataram* from a mere political slogan to a profound philosophical and intellectual framework, emphasizing that true independence (*Swaraj*) required a fundamental reliance on indigenous strength, cultural authenticity, and absolute intellectual autonomy.

The vernacular press of the late 19th and early 20th centuries embodied this fierce Swadeshi spirit. Newspapers such as *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, *Kesari*, and *The Hindu* functioned as the vanguard of nationalist thought. The resilience of the Bhartiya press in the face of draconian censorship laws, like the Vernacular Press Act of 1878, cemented the legacy of journalism in India as a sacred, patriotic duty to the nation and its people.

B. *Modern Interpretations: The 'Third Way'*

Thinkers such as Dattopant Thengadi proposed a 'Third Way'—an alternative model of globalization that fully embraced technological advancement without sacrificing traditional cultural hierarchies or accepting intellectual subservience to the West. When applied to modern media, Bhartiya Swadeshi journalism demands strict adherence to an ethical framework that prioritizes truth, cultural sensitivity, and national integration over commercial sensationalism. It demands absolute intellectual independence, requiring media entities to remain free from the ideological dictates of foreign capital and Western normative paradigms.

C. *Tantra as the Applied Mechanism*

Within the strategic framework of the proposed institute, the concept of *Tantra* is reclaimed from distorted colonial interpretations. In its fundamental

Sanskrit context, *Tantra* denotes a systematic framework or a highly organized methodology utilized to achieve a specific, tangible goal. The Global Swadeshi Media and Publication Institute is conceptualized as the literal *Tantra* required to actualize the philosophical mantra of intellectual self-reliance.

XI. STRUCURAL MODEL FOR
INTERNATIONAL BROADCASTING: A
COMPERATIVE ANALYSIS

To operationalize the Institute effectively, it is imperative to deeply analyze existing structural models of international state-funded broadcasting.

1. The BBC World Service (The Public Diplomacy Paradigm): The BBC reaches over 300 million people weekly and is mandated to "reflect the United Kingdom, its culture and values to the world". It operates with a carefully cultivated perception of editorial autonomy, generating global trust and soft power. However, it continues to act as a conduit for Western normative frameworks and subtly perpetuates post-colonial hierarchies.
2. Al Jazeera Media Network (The Global South Disruptor): Primarily funded by the Qatari state, Al Jazeera was explicitly established to provide an alternative news perspective for the Global South. It combines massive financial backing with high-quality production to consistently centre perspectives and conflicts marginalized by the Anglo-American paradigm.
3. CGTN (Authoritarian State Media): Rebranded from CCTV, CGTN represents a massive effort by the Chinese Communist Party to expand "discourse power". It relies on vast infusions of state capital and operates on a highly specific "surface neutrality" model, cloaking pro-China propaganda with the aesthetics of impartial international news.

The proposed Global Swadeshi Media and Publication Institute must synthesize their most effective elements while discarding their flaws: it must possess the institutional independence of the BBC, the disruptive audacity of Al Jazeera, and the robust financial commitment seen in CGTN's expansion, while remaining firmly anchored in the democratic ethos of Bharat.

XII. OPERATIONALIZING THE GLOBAL SWADESHI MEDIA AND PUBLICATION INSTITUTE

The institute will serve as the premier infrastructure for reclaiming India's past and confidently projecting its future, operating simultaneously through four primary strategic verticals.

1. Archival Recovery, Translation, and Academic Publication

The institute will fund dedicated research cells to unearth district-level colonial records, regional folk ballads, and regional language newspapers that document subaltern resistance. These materials must be aggressively translated into major global languages to directly challenge Western academia on its own terrain. The institute will operate a globally distributed publishing arm tasked with producing bilingual critical editions, peer-reviewed journals, and historical non-fiction.

2. Digital Broadcasting and Global Content Distribution

Utilizing the booming Indian "creator economy," the institute will cultivate a vast network of "creatorpreneurs"—indigenous writers, documentary filmmakers, investigative journalists, and digital historians. The broadcast arm will produce documentaries, podcasts, and digital news programs that present compelling, India-centric narratives focusing on India's democratic resilience and technological innovation.

3. Technological Sovereignty and Indigenous AI Integration

A critical vulnerability in the global media landscape is the reliance on foreign Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Large Language Models (LLMs). Western LLMs are embedded with safety mechanisms that inherently reflect Western normative values; when tasked with translating sensitive historical texts detailing colonial atrocities, their safety filters frequently flag the content as "harmful". To safeguard the historical record against algorithmic neo-colonialism, the Institute must collaborate with domestic tech sectors to deploy Indigenous AI models (such as Bhashini) trained on authentic Indian datasets across all 22 recognized constitutional languages.

4. Cultivating a Self-Sustaining Intellectual Economy
The institute cannot rely perpetually on state subsidies. By leveraging India's robust digital public

infrastructure (DPI), the institute will empower content creators to monetize their historical outputs directly on the global market. The institute will act as an incubator, offering competitive fellowships and research grants to ensure a continuous pipeline of top-tier talent capable of defending Bharat's intellectual borders.

XIII. CONCLUSION: THE HORIZON OF CIVILIZATIONAL INDEPENDENCE

The most insidious, durable, and damaging victory of colonialism was the colonization of the mind and the absolute monopolization of the historical narrative. For over two centuries, the story of Bharat has been authored, edited, and distributed by external forces that utilized history as a primary instrument of psychological and political control.

The detailed proposal to establish a Global Swadeshi Media and Publication Institute represents a definitive, structural break from this deeply entrenched paradigm, marking a strategic pivot from a posture of constant reactive defence to one of proactive, authoritative global narrative generation. By harnessing the intellectual mechanism of *Tantra*, deploying culturally secure indigenous AI, and creating a massive global broadcasting footprint, Bharat can definitively secure its narrative sovereignty. Ultimately, the realization of a truly prosperous, technologically advanced, and self-reliant nation—*Atmanirbhar Bharat*—requires an equally self-reliant, confident, and sovereign intellect

REFERENCE

- [1] Chattopadhyay, Bankim Chandra. *Anandamath, or The Sacred Brotherhood*. Translated with an introduction by Julius J. Lipner. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005. (Primary literary source for the 'Vande Mataram' ethos).
- [2] Guha, Ranajit, ed. *Subaltern Studies I: Writings on South Asian History and Society*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1982. (Foundational text for the Subaltern Studies collective and grassroots resistance).
- [3] Mignolo, Walter D. *The Darker Side of Western Modernity: Global Futures, Decolonial Options*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2011. (Substantiates the specific decolonial theory of "delinking" from Eurocentric epistemologies).

- [4] Mill, James. *The History of British India*. London: Baldwin, Cradock, and Joy, 1817. (Primary source for the critique of the tripartite communal periodization of Indian history).
- [5] Naoroji, Dadabhai. *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India*. London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co., 1901. (The definitive primary text for the "Drain Theory" and "Home Charges")
- [6] Patnaik, Utsa. "Revisiting the 'Drain', or Transfer from India to Britain in the Context of Global Diffusion of Capitalism." *Agrarian and Other Histories: Essays for Binay Bhushan Chaudhuri*, edited by Shubhashis Basu, 277-317. New Delhi: Tulika Books, 2017. (This is the authoritative modern economic analysis that validates your specific figures regarding the £500 million export surplus and its role in the British Industrial Revolution)
- [7] Smith, Linda Tuhiwai. *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. London: Zed Books, 1999. (The global academic standard for validating oral histories and indigenous epistemologies over colonial archives).
- [8] Benkler, Yochai, Robert Faris, and Hal Roberts. *Network Propaganda: Manipulation, Disinformation, and Radicalization in American Politics*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2018. (Provides the theoretical framework for how digital platforms amplify structural biases and elite geopolitical interests)
- [9] Aurobindo, Sri. *Bande Mataram: Political Writings and Speeches, 1890-1908*. Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1997. (Contextualizes the philosophical elevation of the Swadeshi movement and intellectual self-reliance).
- [10] Kluver, Randolph, et al. "China's Global Television Network (CGTN) and the 'Telling China's Story' Strategy." *International Journal of Communication* 13 (2019): 25-46. (Academic analysis of CGTN's "surface neutrality" and state-capital deployment).
- [11] Seib, Philip. *The Al Jazeera Effect: How the New Global Media Are Reshaping World Politics*. Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books, 2008. (Substantiates the operational model of Al Jazeera as a Global South disruptor).
- [12] Thengadi, Dattopant. *The Third Way*. New Delhi: Sahitya Sindhu Prakashan, 1995. (Provides the philosophical basis for the alternative globalization and development model).
- [13] British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). *Royal Charter for the Continuation of the British Broadcasting Corporation*. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 2016. (Official primary document mandating the BBC's public diplomacy and global reach).
- [14] Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), Government of India. *National Language Translation Mission: Project Bhashini*. New Delhi: Government of India, 2022. (The official framework for the indigenous AI and translation infrastructure required to bypass Western LLM censorship).
- [15] Sundance Institute. *Indigenous Program Core Tenets and Kin Theory*. Park City, UT: Sundance Institute, 2023. (Corroborates the principles of narrative sovereignty and indigenous media maker databases).
- [16] World Economic Forum. *The Impact of Global Media Framing on Foreign Direct Investment in Emerging Markets*. Geneva: WEF Annual Reports, 2021. (Provides the empirical backing for the claim that negative media framing adversely impacts FDI and sovereign credit ratings).
- [17] Bayly, C. A. *Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780-1870*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- [18] Cohn, Bernard S. *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996.
- [19] Dutt, Romesh Chunder. *The Economic History of India*. 2 vols. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1902-1904.
- [20] Gandhi, Mohandas K. *Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule*. Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1938.
- [21] Patnaik, Utsa, and Prabhat Patnaik. *A Theory of Imperialism*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2016.