

The South Asian Teen in America

This event under PROJECT SAATHI is funded by Subgrant# FD21011402 through California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (CalOES) .

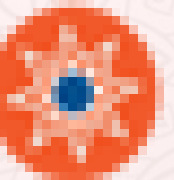


Cal OES
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE
OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

Why Are We Here Today?

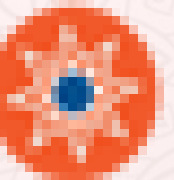


- Knowledge and understanding of South Asian culture
- To understand the South Asian teens in the USA
- To provide better support for their mental health needs



Outline of Our Program Today

- Background (Macro)
 - Diversity of South Asia
 - Immigration of South Asians
- South Asian Parenting (Micro)
 - Dynamics of South Asian families
 - Importance of Education and Family
- Media and Representation (Meso)
- South Asian Teen And Their Challenges
- Understanding And Approach
 - Proposals For Actions

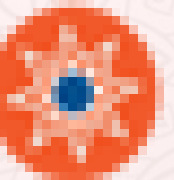


South Asian Background

Macro Overview



- **Geography and Diversity**
 - Statistics
- **South Asian Culture**
 - Generational Traditions
 - Religions and its impact
 - Languages
- **Immigration**

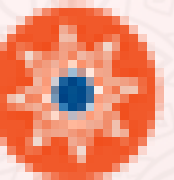


What countries constitute South Asia?

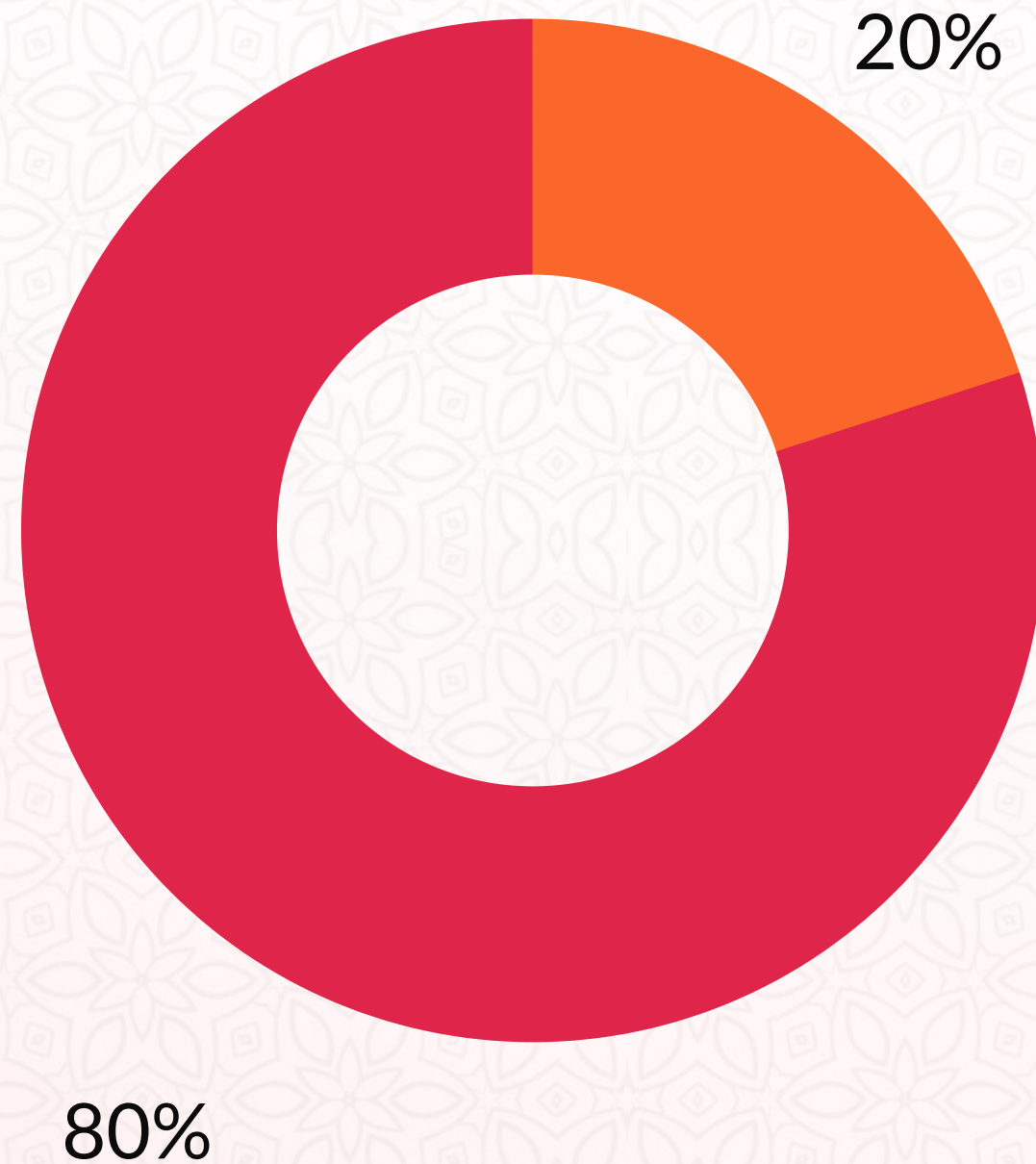
Diverse and Culture Rich South Asia



8 Countries

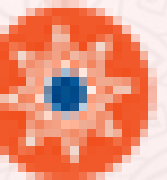


**Approximately how
many languages are
spoken in South Asia?**

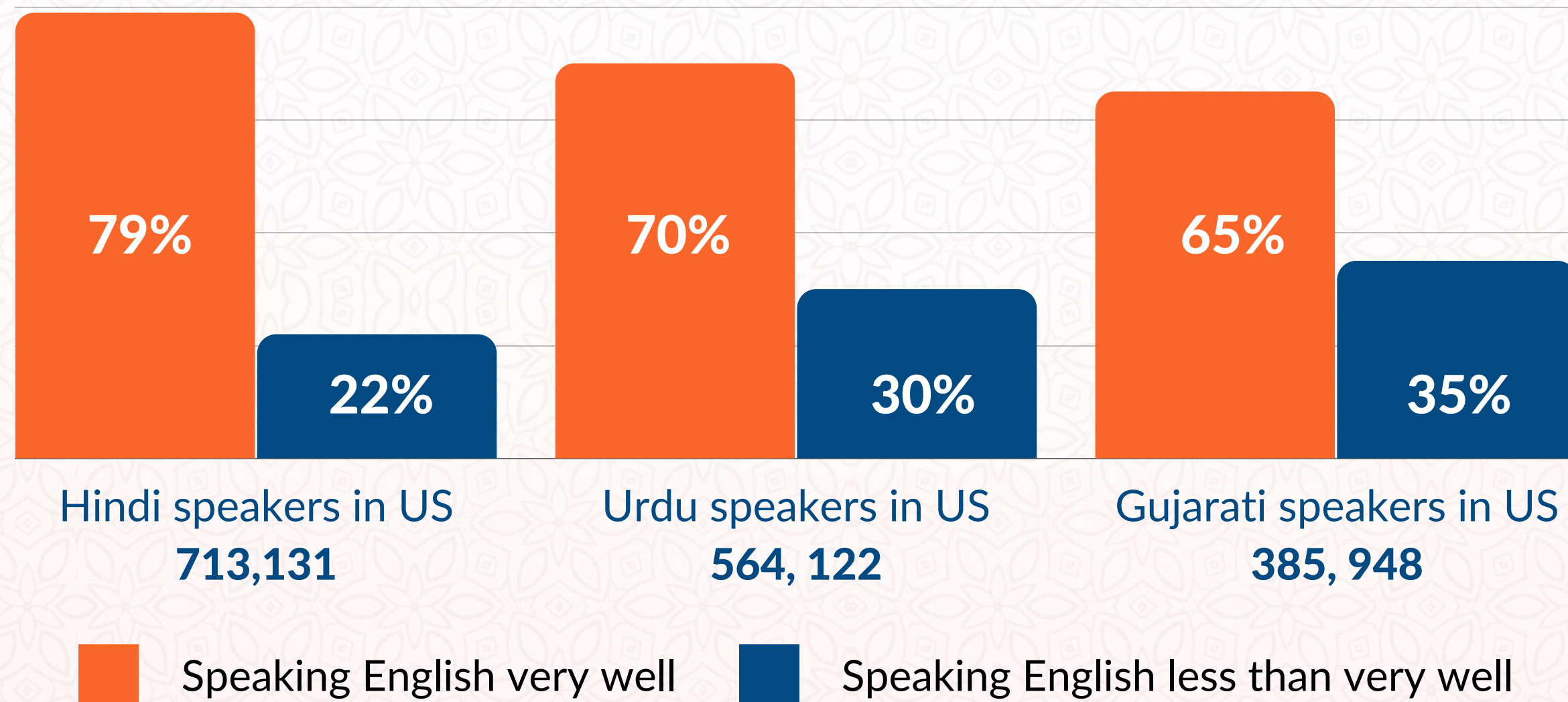


>20% of the world's population, within **8 countries** over 461 spoken languages

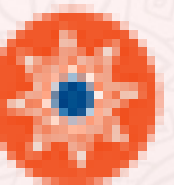
High-density population inhabited by **>1.5 billion people**



English Proficiency Among South Asian in USA



(U.S. Census Bureau data on “Language is spoken at home for the population 5 years and over,” from the 2015 American Community Survey, 5-year estimates.)





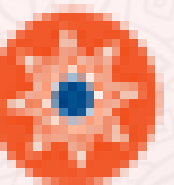
**Name the 5 states in the USA
that host the largest South
Asian Populations.**



South Asians in the United States



Around **6 million** South Asians live in the United States



Immigration

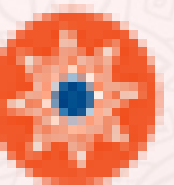
A Process for Generations



Immigration is the trauma of:

One fine day leaving behind what you love and fit into seamlessly by way of birth/heritage to...

...suddenly joining ranks of a community/culture that is both distant and foreign.



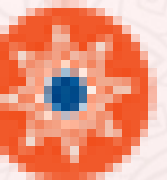
Generations of Students

1st: The descendants of Immigrants.

1.5th: The children who were born in their home country but were brought here at a malleable age.

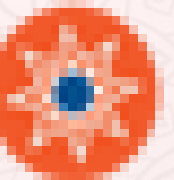
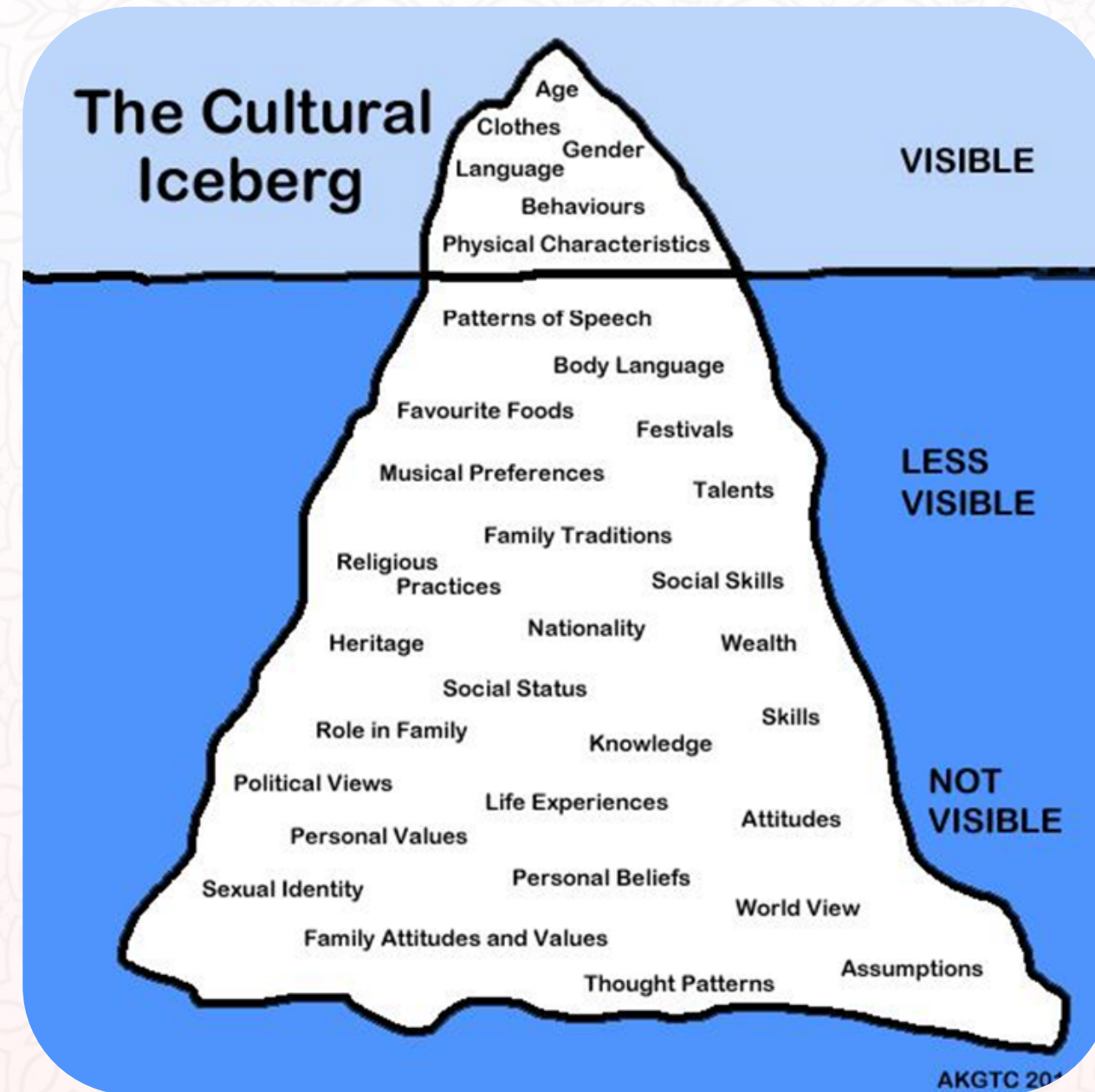
2nd: The descendants of the first generation.

Each generation of South Asians may carry a different degree of cultural norms and expectations.



What do you know about South Asians and their culture?

Myths about South Asian Culture?



South Asian Culture



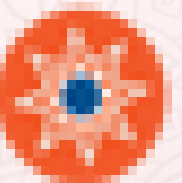
Importance of Religion



Patriarchal Society

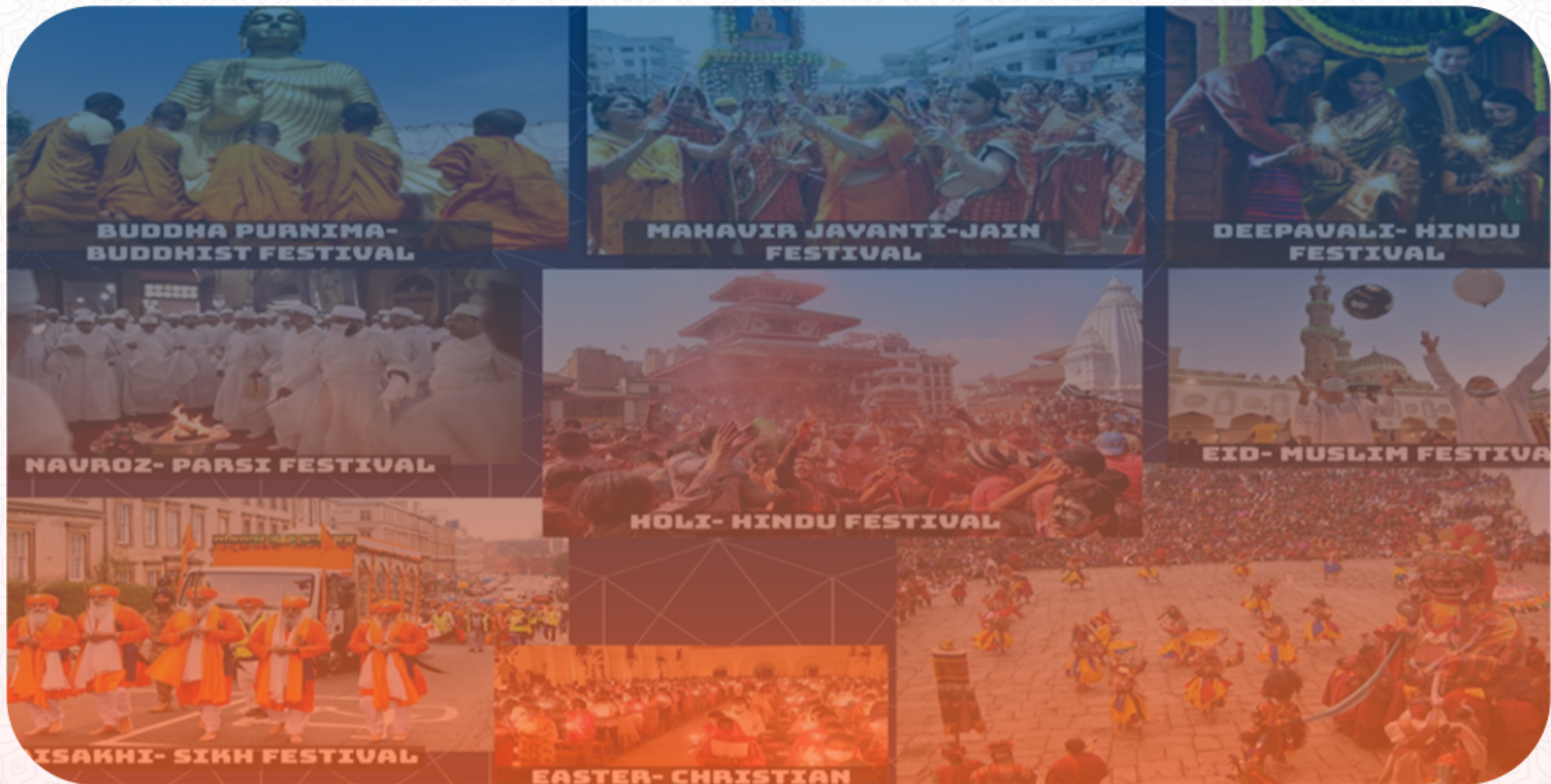


Family and Marriages





What do you know about
South Asians and their culture?



Family System

Micro Overview



Families can be nuclear or joint (multigenerational)

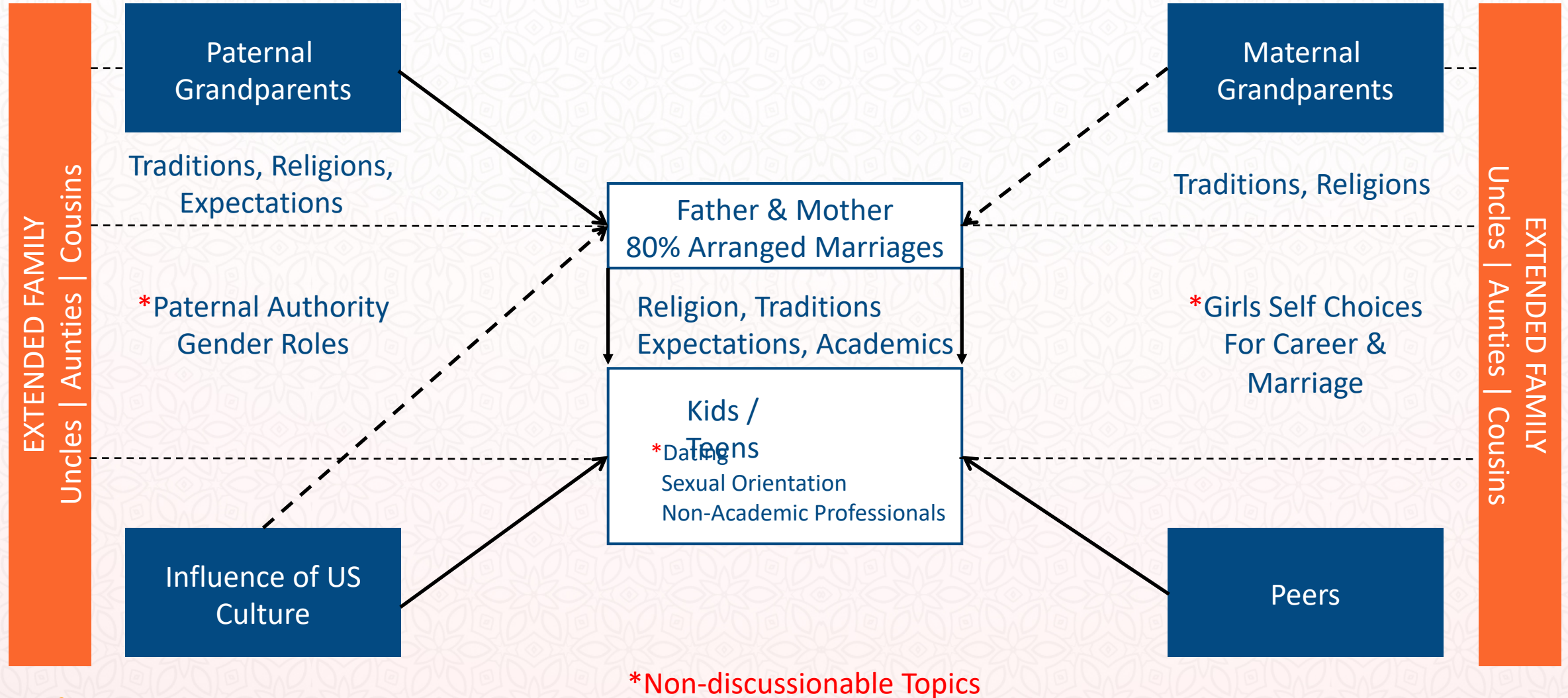
- Families are often open to receiving influence by extended family members.
- Even when a branch of the family migrates, it is psychologically joint to the family back home.
- Gap between cultural realities between South Asian families and U.S origin families.
- Marriages often lead to the validation of patriarchal theme of S.A culture.
- Family decision making and leadership culture often follows a gender/age based hierarchy.
- Consequences for bringing a shift in this culture through individual efforts can lead to ostracism.

“Log Kya Kahenge” mentality

Nuclear Family vs Joint Family



The South Asian Teen In USA



South Asian Marriages

LOVE: the suitors have made a match for themselves.

ARRANGED: typically the match is made based on suitability of families.

FORCED: the match was made typically with emotional, financial or physical manipulation.



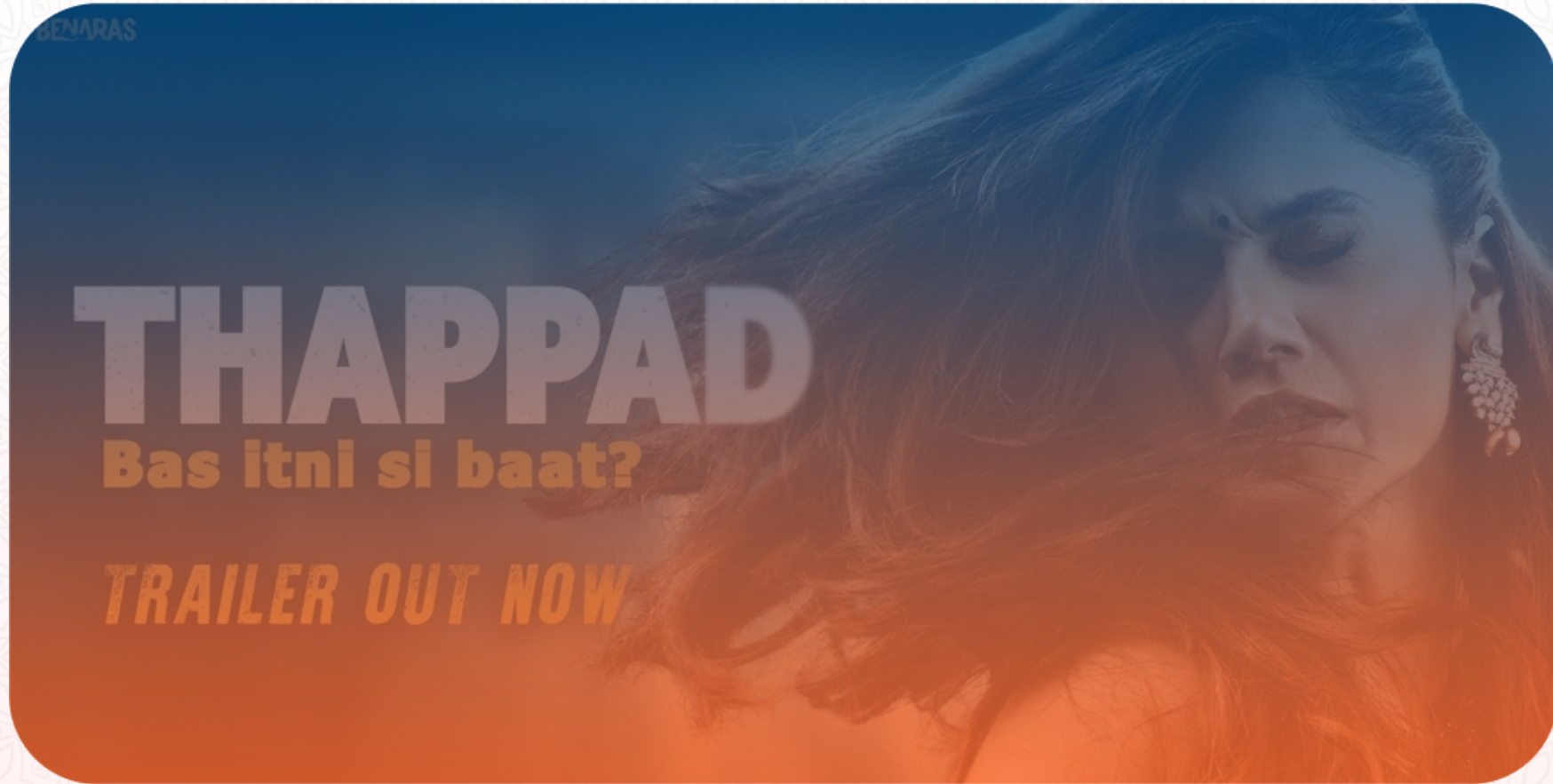
The Concept of Marriage



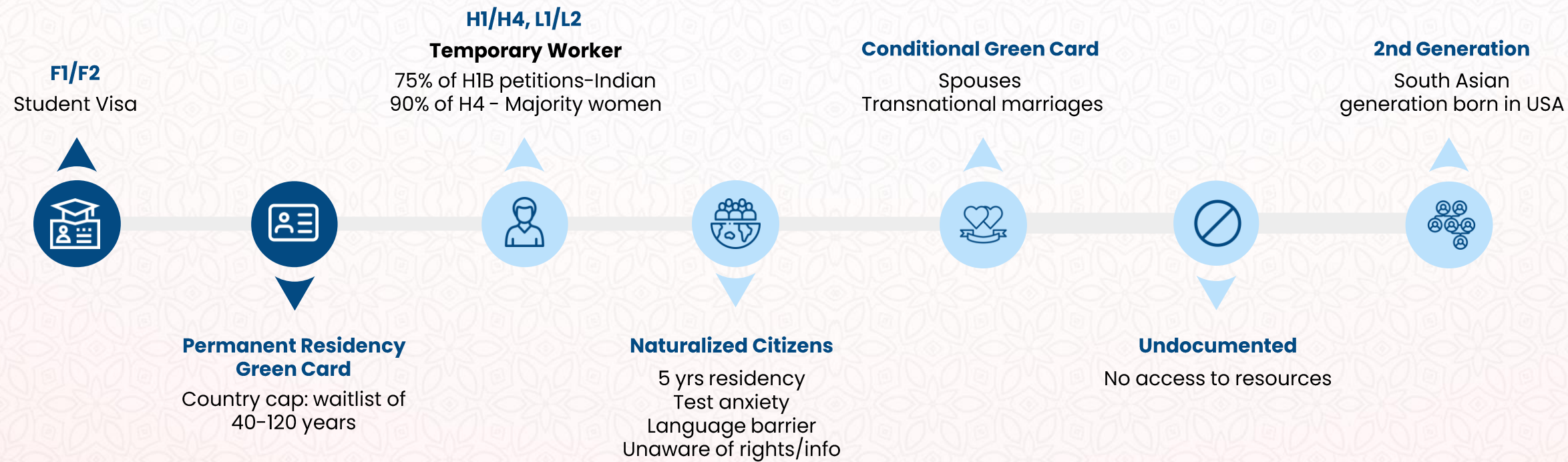
- Marriage or being married gives higher status in the community
- Marriage is sacred
- Marriage happens only once
- It is not a personal but a community issue
- Complicated after immigration

Divorce in most South Asian communities, even those in more liberal North America, is still considered taboo. Many South Asians, like other traditional ethnic groups, stay in toxic marriages for the sake of finances, duty, children, fear or pride. Getting divorced seems impossible and often, couples stay together to avoid the label of a failed marriage.

Patriarchy in Motion



South Asian Immigration





**What do you know about
South Asians and their culture?**



**BUDDHA PURNIMA-
BUDDHIST FESTIVAL**



**MAHAVIR JAVANTI-JAIN
FESTIVAL**



**DEEPAVALI- HINDU
FESTIVAL**



NAUROZ- PARSI FESTIVAL



HOLI- HINDU FESTIVAL



EID- MUSLIM FESTIVAL



ISAKHI- SIKH FESTIVAL

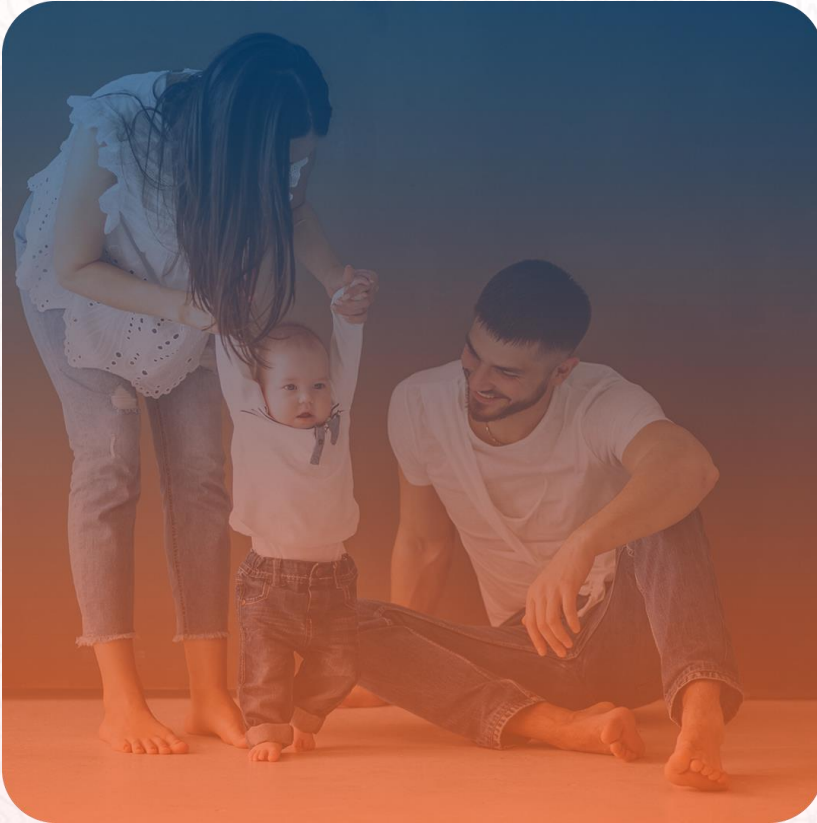


EASTER- CHRISTIAN



Family System

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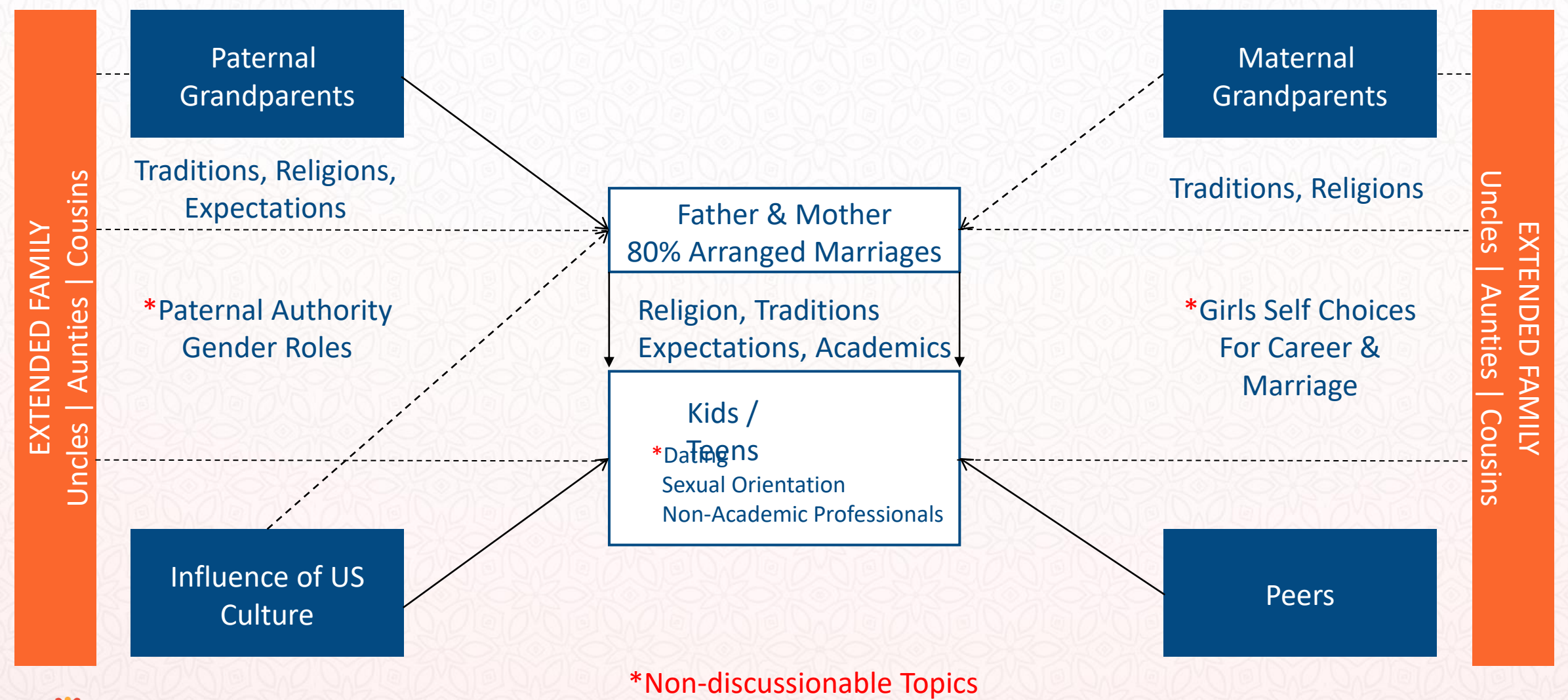
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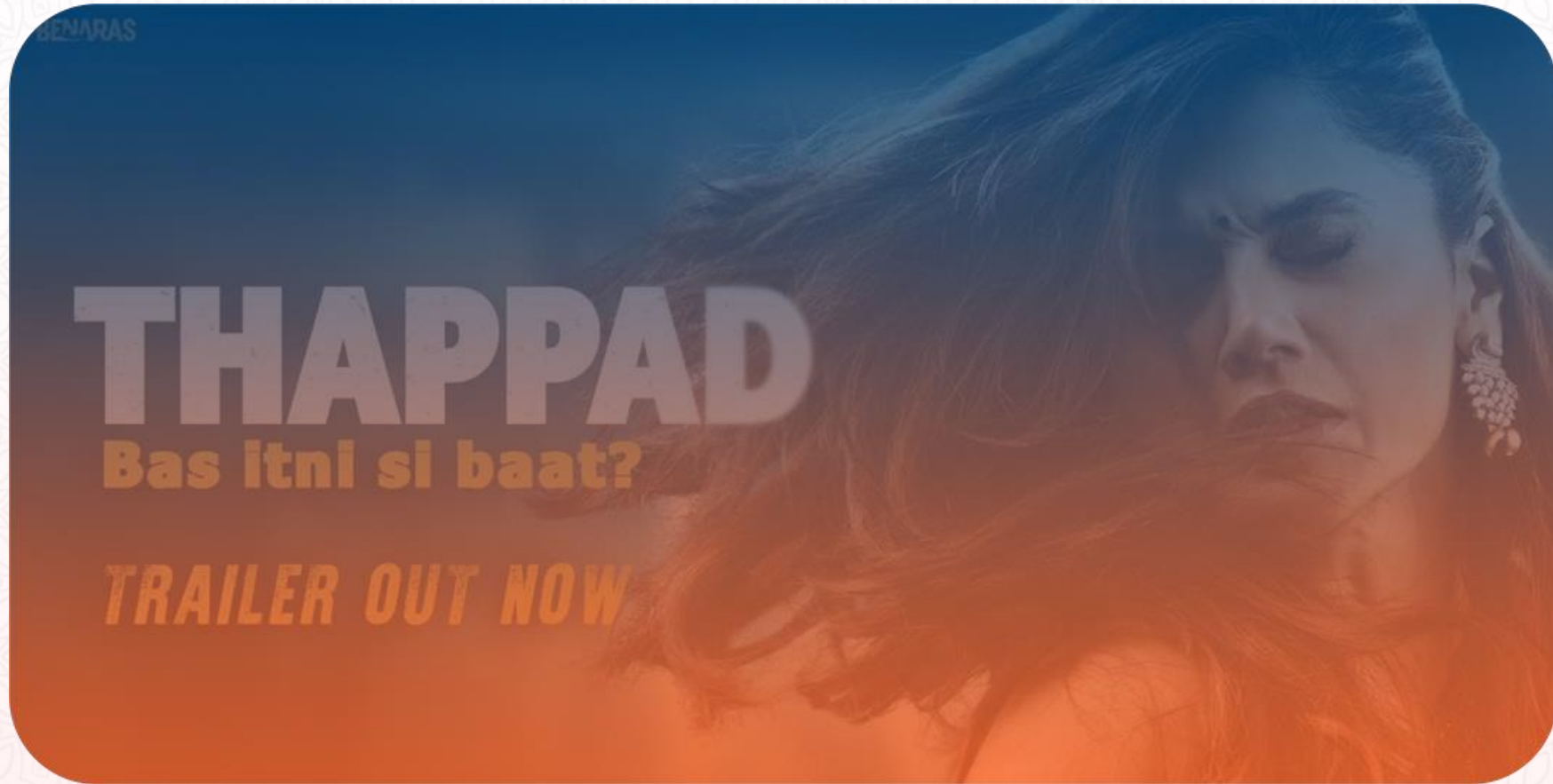
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Patriarchy in Motion



Did you Know?

- South Asian students experience **high rates of mental health disorders, sometimes higher than their peers.**
 - Reasons include intergenerational conflict
 - Young adults wish to start **dating**.
 - **Pursue a career** that is discerned to be unacceptable by the parent.
 - The stress of adapting into western society.



Who Are Hybrid Parents?



- Sandwich generation or Pav Bhaji generation
- Parents in India and child rearing /upbringing in America
- 40 to 60 yrs. old taking care of parents 65 and older plus raising young kids
- Wanting to be the best parent!
- Extended family support absent

Intergenerational Acculturation

Children: adapt quicker to a new culture

School helps!

Parents: have a slower process

changes in language, behavior, attitudes, and values

The result is an **acculturation gap**

emerges between generations over time.



Acculturation Gap



Parent's fears



Media, Society and Representation

Meso Overview

Social media, Mainstream Entertainment and Legacies.



- Possible Triggers **Society**
 - S.A community members asking which school their parents which school their going to etc. (Admissions season stress)
 - Shaming inter-gender hangouts. **Social Media**
 - Children listing schools (Colleges) on their social media bio
 - S.A influencers posting pictures with elaborate clothing
- Mainstream Entertainment**
- Highlighting achievements based on intellect as the only representation on American Mainstream

Being Raised in Hybrid Families

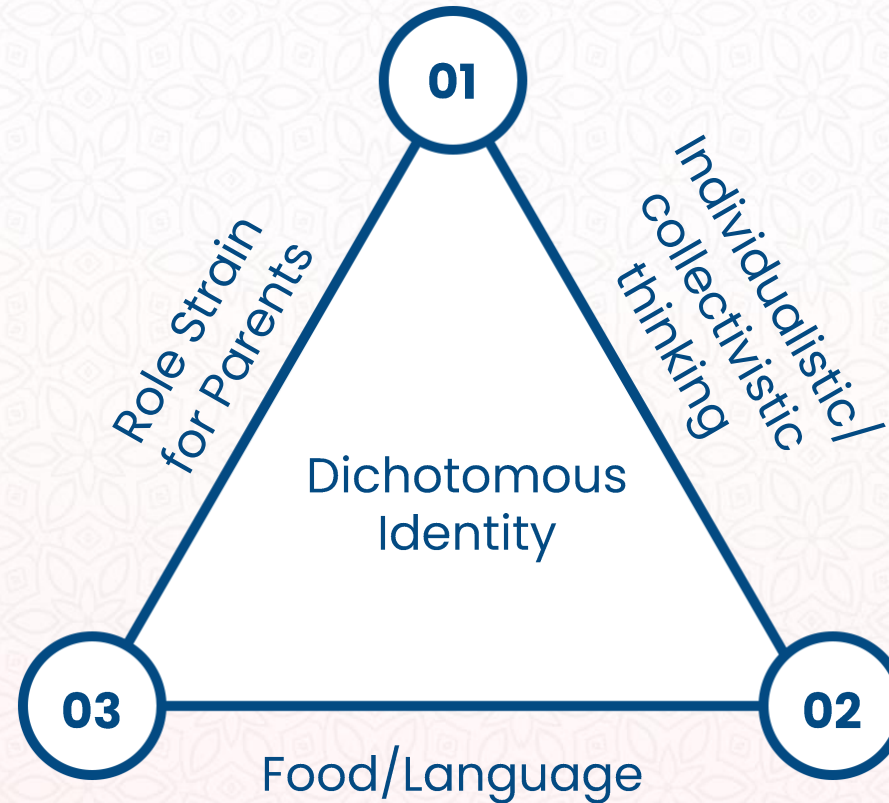
Benefits

- Exposure to two cultures.
- There are positive family oriented characteristics learned such as sharing space, care for members, bilingualism, etc.
- Amicability is in the foreground of social actions.

Challenges

- Healthy boundaries and self-care is lacking
- filial piety causes guilt induction if obligations can't be met.
- conformity is encouraged
- Healthy debate can be construed as a form of disrespect.

Challenges for Students and Hybrid-Parents



The Pressure of Education on South Asian Americans

In a study conducted in 2017 by the life insurance company Mass Mutual, parents across America concluded that “Asian Indian parents consider a college education as the key to a child’s success, maturity, respect and the gateway to full employment — and woven into the fabric of Asian Indian culture is a parental obligation” to fully fund their kids’ education.

The researchers noted that “by the time a child has reached the age of 10, 79% of Asian Indian parents, more than any other ethnic group in the study, are saving for college.” Moreover, 90% of Indian American parents, higher than any other ethnic group in the study, said that a college education was important.

Source: Institute of Family Studies



Presentation of South Asian student in a clinical room



Attention seeking behavior by children possibly resulting in

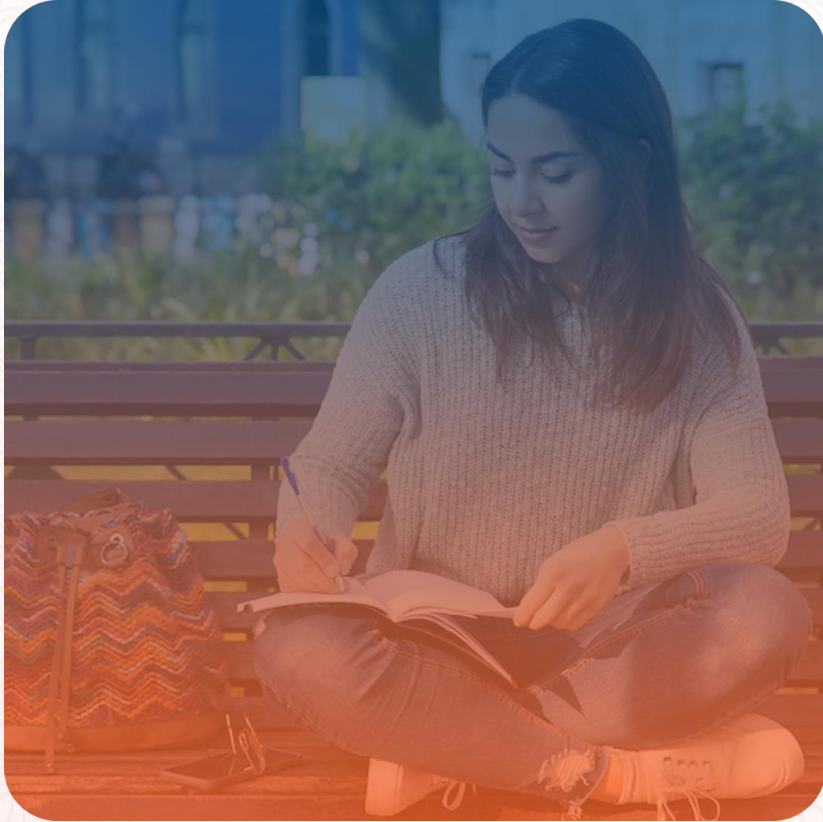
- Somatic complaints,
- Poor performance in school-
- low self esteem,
- Eating disorders,
- Suicidal thoughts/self harm
- Substance misuse
- PTSD
- Depression
- Adjustment problems
- Hypochondriasis
- Anxiety

Covid 19: Mental health and South Asian Teens

- Work from Home
- School from home
- Constant monitoring and pressure
- Isolation from peers
- Immigration pressures
 - visa
 - Travel ban
 - Split families
 - Delta Variant: racism



Barriers in Seeking Help



Lack of information and resources

- Fear and distrust of legal authorities
- Lack of evidence to prove abuse
- Lack of fluency in English and of knowledge about rights
- Legal residency status – immigration used as a tool of control
- Fear of losing custody of children
- Lack of financial independence

Considerations When Working With South Asian Students

Immigrant South Asian students:

- May express distress through physical or somatic symptoms
- May not attribute symptoms (e.g., such as anxiety, sadness, exhaustion) to mental health concerns to attend to, rather they may perceive it as a normal response to social problems
- Find it easier to access medical treatment for their physical ailments as compared to any emotional and mental health challenges
- May be more likely to seek help within their community
- May have community and language specific descriptions of symptoms. For example, Hindi: “Chinta” (worry) or “chinta rog” (worry sickness) are common terms. “Tension” or “tension rog” (tension sickness)
- Consideration of circumstances of immigration, accessing support from family and community, experiences of racisms and other discriminations,
- Use simple language, avoid clinical terms



Recommendations For Therapy



- Cultural sensitivity: Keep in mind acculturation level- Berry's model
- Understand the family dynamics
- Active & direct approach in therapy
- Not misunderstanding non-verbal communication
- Over diagnosis or misdiagnosis
- Short term, problem focused approach
- Overcoming language barriers,
- Tendency to avoid confrontation about sensitive issues
- Design interventions keeping in mind family values

Recommendations For Therapy

APPROACH	Prescriptive	Guide and support through survivor's healing
ASSESS	Only for teen dating violence	For lifetime trauma
EMPHASIS	Reaching identified goals	Survivor safety & well-being
PRACTICE	Us & them	We are in the together
PRACTICE	Staff knows best	Survivor knows best about their healing journey
RECOVERY	Journey can sometimes have setbacks	Journey with many trials & triumphs

Moving Forward Together

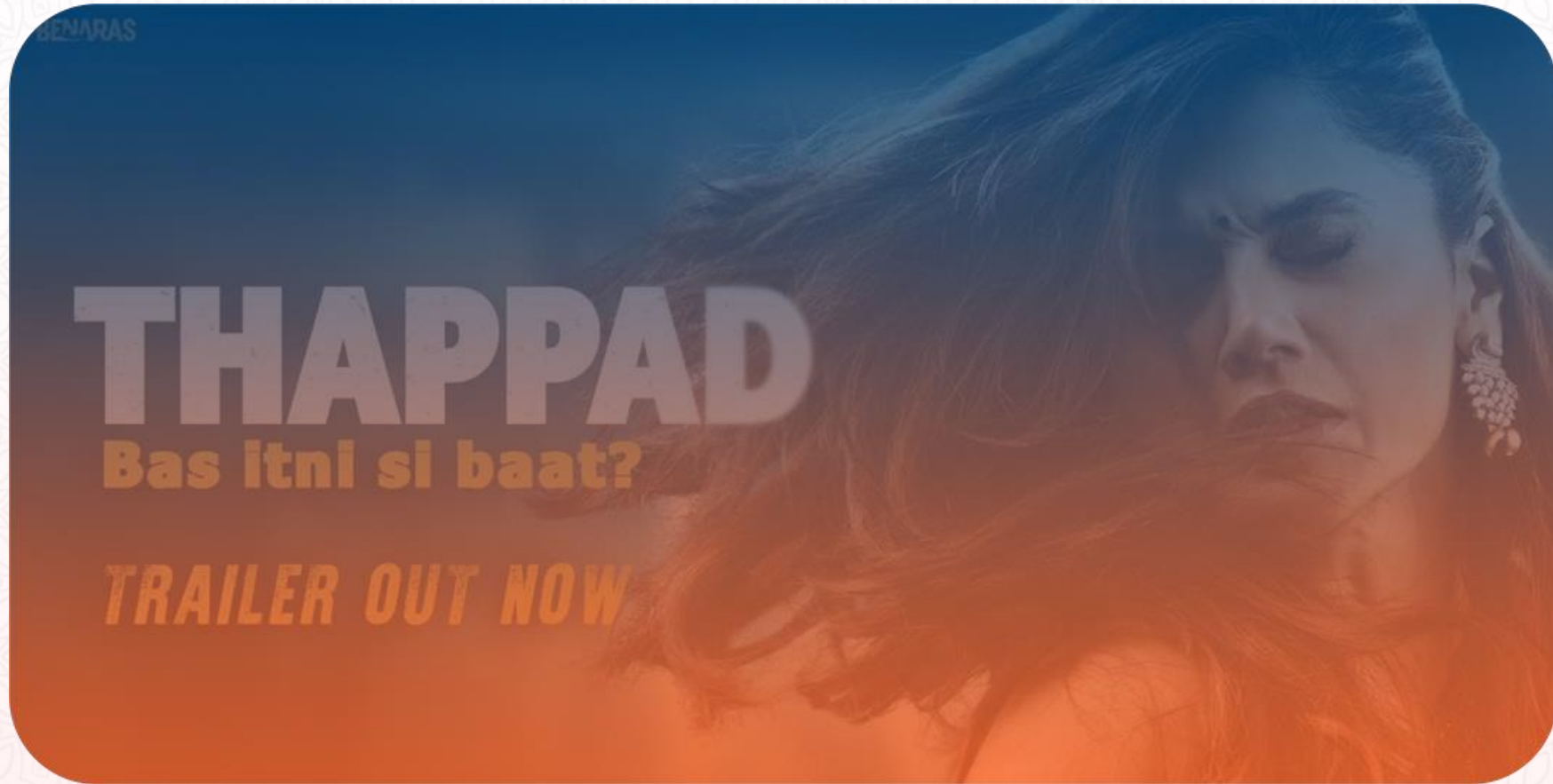
UNDERSTANDING AND APPROACH

- Cultural and Family background plays a very important role in understanding the South Asian Teens.
- The teens might hesitate to ask for help.

SOLUTIONS

- Cultural sensitization.
- The School counselor would be like a first responder in most cases.
- Partner with organizations like Saahas who can help provide support.
- Workshops with teens to increase awareness about Mental Health, Teen Dating violence, Stalking/Cyberstalking.

SAFETY CARDS FOR TEENAGERS





Thank You!