

## **SOCIAL DISTANCE AND KNOWLEDGE ACQUISITION IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF STEREOTYPES TOWARDS A NEIGHBOURING COUNTRY: A STUDY OF INDIAN CHILDREN IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Our perception of the physical space is confined with certain limit. Over the years we have struggled to combat this limitation by cognizing the remote places through imagination which is manifested in the construction of mental maps. This study tries to understand the differential construction of mental maps embedded with specific stereotypes by linguistically and culturally homogeneous school children in India. It was conducted in two different locations – Delhi and Calcutta. The analysis showed that the mental maps were constructed with certain stereotypes which were subjected to distortion due to various attributes of social distance.

**KEYWORDS:** Knowledge Acquisition, Mental Map, Social Distance, Spatial Reality, Stereotypes