A Quintessence Scalar Field in Brans–Dicke Theory

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Abstract

It is shown that a minimally coupled scalar field in Brans–Dicke theory yields a non–decelerated expansion for the present universe for open, flat and closed Friedmann-Robertson-Walker models.

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1 Introduction

The recent extensive search for a matter field which can give rise to an accelerated expansion for the universe stems from the observational data regarding the luminosity–redshift relation of the type Ia supernovae up to about $z \sim 1$ [1]. This matter field is called a “quintessence matter” (Q–matter for short). The most popular candidate as a Q-matter has so far been a scalar field having a potential which generates a sufficient negative pressure at the present epoch [2]. Amongst the scalar fields considered as the Q-matter, the tracker field slowly rolling down its potential as proposed by Zlatev, Wang and Steinhardt [3] appears to be very promising. Some exotic matter like the domain walls or cosmic strings also find themselves amongst the possible candidates [4]. Unfortunately most of these fields work only for a spatially flat ($k = 0$) FRW model. Very recently, Chimento et al. [5] showed that a combination of dissipative effects like a bulk viscous stress and a quintessence scalar field gives an accelerated expansion for an open universe ($k = -1$) as well. This model also provides a solution for the coincidence problem as the ratio of the density parameters corresponding to the normal matter and the quintessence field asymptotically approaches a constant value. Recently Bertolami and Martins [6] obtained an accelerated expansion for the universe in a modified Brans-Dicke (BD) theory by introducing a potential which is a function of the Brans-Dicke scalar field itself.

The present work investigates the possibility of obtaining a non–decelerating ($q \equiv -\ddot{a}/(\dot{a})^2 \leq 0$) expansion for the universe in Brans-Dicke theory with the help of another scalar field which is minimally coupled to gravity and serves as the quintessence matter. Brans-Dicke theory played a major role in the attempts

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to solve the “graceful exit” problem in the inflationary scenario prevailing in the early universe. It is worthwhile to explore the possibility of an application of the theory towards a reasonable explanation of the late time behaviour of the universe as well. We find that for a negative value of the Brans-Dicke parameter $\omega$, the theory leads to an accelerated expansion for the universe for a spatially flat model. The possible solutions contain the Bertolami-Martin’s solution as well. Furthermore, the theory also leads to at least non–decelerating expansions even for non flat models. It should be noted that we do not modify Brans-Dicke theory by introducing a self interaction of the Brans-Dicke’s scalar field, but rather look at the possibility of a non–decelerating solution with the help of a quintessence field within the purview of the theory itself.

2 Field equations and the solutions

The Brans-Dicke theory of gravity is given by the action

$$S = \frac{1}{16\pi G_0} \int \sqrt{-g} [\phi R - \omega \frac{\partial \phi}{\partial \phi} \phi^\alpha + L_m] d^4x,$$

where $\phi$ is the BD scalar field, $\omega$ is the dimensionless constant BD parameter and $L_m$ is the Lagrangian for all other matter fields. If we assume the matter field to consist of a perfect fluid and a scalar field $\psi$ as the quintessence matter, the field equations for a Robertson-Walker spacetime are,

$$3\frac{\dot{a}^2 + k}{a^2} = \frac{\rho_m + \rho_\psi}{\phi} - 3\frac{\dot{\phi}}{\phi} + \frac{\omega \dot{\phi}^2}{2 \phi^2},$$

$$2\ddot{a} + \frac{\dot{a}^2 + k}{a^2} = -\frac{(p_m + p_\psi)}{\phi} - \frac{\omega \dot{\phi}^2}{2 \phi^2} - 2\frac{\dot{\phi}}{\phi} - \ddot{\phi}.$$

Here, $a$ is the scale factor of the Robertson–Walker metric, $k$ the spatial curvature index, $\rho_m$ and $p_m$ are the density and the pressure of the normal matter, $\rho_\psi$ and $p_\psi$ are those due to the quintessence field given by

$$\rho_\psi = \frac{1}{2} \dot{\psi}^2 + V(\psi), \quad p_\psi = \frac{1}{2} \dot{\psi}^2 - V(\psi),$$

where $V = V(\psi)$ is the relevant potential. The wave equation for the scalar field $\psi$ reads

$$\ddot{\psi} + 3\frac{\dot{a}}{a} \dot{\psi} = -\frac{dV(\psi)}{d\psi},$$

and the wave equation for the Brans-Dicke scalar field $\phi$ is

$$\ddot{\phi} + 3\frac{\dot{a} \dot{\phi}}{a} = \frac{1}{2\omega + 3}[(\rho_m - 3p_m) + (\rho_\psi - 3p_\psi)].$$
The matter conservation equation,

$$\dot{\rho}_m + 3 \frac{\dot{a}}{a} (\rho_m + p_m) = 0,$$

follows from the field equations. Assuming that at the present epoch the universe
is filled with cold matter with negligible pressure, we put $p_m = 0$, and this
equation integrates to

$$\rho_m = \rho_1/a^3,$$

where $\rho_1$ is an integration constant. Since our principal interest is to find an
accelerating power law solution for the scale factor $a$, we shall assume that both
$a$ and $\phi$ are power functions of the cosmic time $t$ in the form

$$a = a_1 t^\alpha, \quad \phi = \phi_1 t^\beta.$$

We shall look at the possibilities of consistent solutions with $a_1, \phi_1, \alpha, \beta$ are con-
stants with $a_1, \phi_1$ being positive definite and $\alpha \geq 1$. These constants will be re-
lated amongst themselves and the characteristic constants of the theory through
the field equations.

By combining (2) and (3) with (9) yields the expression for $\dot{\psi}^2$ as

$$\dot{\psi}^2 = \frac{2k\phi_1}{a_1^2} t^{\beta - 2\alpha} + (2\alpha + \alpha \beta - \omega \beta^2 - \beta^2 + \beta) \phi_1 t^{\beta - 2} - \frac{\rho_1}{a_1^3} t^{-3\alpha}. \quad (10)$$

The potential $V$ can be found out from the equation (3) as

$$V = -\frac{1}{2} \frac{\rho_1}{a_1^3} t^{-3\alpha} + \frac{1}{2} \frac{k\phi_1}{a_1^2} t^{\beta - 2\alpha} + \frac{1}{4} \phi_1 [(2\omega + 3)(\beta + 3\alpha - 1)\beta$$

$$+ (2\alpha + \alpha \beta - \omega \beta^2 - \beta^2 + \beta)] t^{\beta - 2}. \quad (11)$$

The wave equation for the quintessence scalar field $\psi$ (3), when multiplied
by $\dot{\psi}$, looks like

$$- \frac{dV}{dt} = \ddot{\psi} + 3 \frac{\dot{a}}{a} \psi^2,$$

which readily yields a first integral and hence an expression for $V$ as

$$V = -\frac{1}{2} \frac{\rho_1}{a_1^3} t^{-3\alpha} - \frac{k\phi_1}{a_1^2} (\beta + 4\alpha) t^{\beta - 2\alpha}$$

$$- (2\alpha + \alpha \beta - \omega \beta^2 - \beta^2 + \beta) \frac{(\beta - 2 + 6\alpha)}{2(\beta - 2)} \phi_1 t^{\beta - 2}. \quad (13)$$

Now we demand that the right hand sides of (11) and (13) coincide. This
leads to the required consistency relations amongst the constants. These relations
lead to quite a few possibilities of solutions for an accelerating universe ($\alpha \geq 1$). These possibilities fall into two broad classes, one in which $k = 0$ and the second where $k$ is different from zero.

**Case 1 : $k = 0$**

In this case, the consistency condition is

$$6(4\alpha^2 - 2\alpha + 2\alpha^2\beta - \alpha\beta) = \omega\beta(\beta^2 + 6\alpha\beta + 12\alpha - 4).$$  \hspace{1cm} (14)

It is easily seen that the condition (14) is automatically satisfied if $\beta = -2$, and so equation (10) reduces to

$$\dot{\psi}^2 = -\frac{2(2\omega + 3)\phi_1}{t^4} - \frac{\rho_1}{a_1^3}t^{-3\alpha}. \hspace{1cm} (15)$$

This indicates that $\omega < -3/2$ as $\dot{\psi}^2$ cannot be negative. For $\alpha = 4/3$, one has $2|2\omega + 3|\phi_1 \geq \frac{\rho_1}{a_1^3}$. In this case equation (15) integrates to

$$\psi = \pm \frac{A}{t}, \hspace{1cm} (16)$$

where $A^2 = -2(2\omega + 3)\phi_1 - \frac{\rho_1}{a_1^3} > 0$, and a simple form of $V(\psi)$ can be obtained,

$$V = V_1\psi^4, \hspace{1cm} (17)$$

$V_1$ being a constant, related to the other constants of integrations like $a_1, \rho_1$ etc. through the field equations. With $\alpha = 4/3$, deceleration parameter $q = -1/4$ and the model works for all time $0 < t < \infty$ provided the condition $2|2\omega+3|\phi_1 \geq \rho_1/a_1^3$ is satisfied. The value of $\omega$ is related to the other constants through the relation

$$2\omega + 3 = -\frac{\rho_1}{a_1^3\phi_1} \pm \sqrt{\frac{2a_1^2\phi_1 - 3\rho_1}{6a_1V_1\phi_1^2}}. \hspace{1cm} (18)$$

For other values of $\alpha$ the model does not work for the whole range of time $0 < t < \infty$. If $\alpha > 4/3$, when the rate of acceleration is faster than $q = -1/4$, the model works only for $t > \left[\frac{\rho_1}{2a_1^2\phi_1|2\omega+3|}\right]^{1/2}$. For $1 < \alpha < 4/3$, the model is valid only up to a time $t = \left[\frac{\rho_1}{2a_1^2\phi_1|2\omega+3|}\right]^{1/2}$ during which the universe expands with an acceleration with a rate less than $q = -1/4$.

For $q = -1/4$, where the model works for the entire time span, the present age of the universe can be calculated from (3) as

$$t_0 = 2\sqrt{2} \left[\frac{(2\omega + 3) - \frac{\rho_1}{2a_1^2\phi_1}}{3(3\omega + 4)} - \frac{V_1A^4}{H_0}\right]^{1/2}.$$  \hspace{1cm} (18)
In the large $\omega$ limit, this equation reduces to
\[ t_0 \simeq \frac{8\sqrt{-2\omega V_1}}{3H_0}, \tag{19} \]
where $\omega$ is obviously a negative quantity. Choosing $V_1 = \frac{-9}{128} \omega^{-1}$ and $H_0 \simeq 65$ km·s$^{-1}$/Mpc, the present age of the Universe turns out to be approximately 15 Gyr.

Likewise, the present rate of variation of $G$ is $|\dot{G}/G|_0 = |\dot{\phi}/\phi|_0 = \frac{3}{2}H_0 < 10^{-10}$ per year. This is quite compatible with the observational data (see [7] and references therein).

All these possibilities are for $\beta = -2$. For other values of $\beta$ also, one can obtain consistent solutions. Such as if $\beta = -1$, the equation (14) yields two possible solutions for $\alpha$, namely $1/2$ and $-\omega/2$. We disregard $\alpha = 1/2$ as we are interested in non-decelerating models where $\alpha \geq 1$. For $\omega = -2$, we have $\alpha = 1$, i.e. an uniformly expanding universe with $q = 0$. In this case, $\phi_1$ should be greater than $\rho_1/a_1^3$. The equation system can be easily solved to get $\psi \propto t^{-1/2}$ and $V \propto \psi^6$. In this uniformly expanding scenario, the model can work for the whole range of $0 < t < \infty$. If $\omega$ is further negative, i.e., $\omega \leq -2$, we get faster rates of acceleration, but the model does not work for the whole range of time.

**Case 2 : $k \neq 0$**

In this case the condition (14) remains in place and a further condition from (11) and (13) is
\[ \beta = -2\alpha. \tag{20} \]

It can be seen from the field equations (2) and (3) that one can obtain consistent solutions only for $\alpha = 1$. So equation (20) immediately yields $\beta = -2$. With this value of $\beta$, the condition (14) is automatically satisfied for all values of $\omega$. In this case also the model works for a limited period of time, $0 < t < t_1$, where
\[ t_1 = 2\phi_1 \left[ \frac{k}{a_1^3} - (2\omega + 3) \right] \frac{a_1^3}{\rho_1}. \tag{21} \]

For an open universe, i.e. for $k = -1$, $(2\omega + 3)$ has to be negative and $|2\omega + 3| > 1/a_1^3$.

For a closed universe ($k = 1$), the model works even for a positive $(2\omega + 3)$ provided $(2\omega + 3)a_1^2 < 1$. If however, $(2\omega + 3)$ is negative, the model holds good without any such relation between $a_1$ and $\omega$.

Thus, unlike most of proposed models with a non–positive definite deceleration
parameter, a quintessence field in Brans-Dicke theory works for a spatially non-flat Robertson Walker spacetime as well. It is true that for $k \neq 0$ cases the only consistent solutions have $q = 0$, but it is anyway non-decelerating and thus the expansion rate is faster than $t^{2/3}$, which might sufficiently explain the recent observations on the distant supernovae [8].

It is worthy of note that the field equations can be integrated to produce consistent solutions for other forms of normal matter. Such as for a radiation dominated universe ($p_m = \rho_m/3$), a simple choice of $V$ as $V = V_0 \psi^6$ and a negative $\omega$ will lead to a decelerated expansion ($q > 0$) for the universe with $a \propto t^{4/7}$ and $\phi \propto t^{-1}$. Thus the model can be interpolated back to earlier epoch to yield a decelerated universe which is required in order to explain processes like nucleosynthesis.

### 3 A possible solution to the flatness problem

One important aspect of this model is that potentially it can solve the flatness problem as well. To see this we effect a conformal transformation as

$$\bar{g}_{\mu\nu} = \phi g_{\mu\nu},$$

which enables us to identify the energy contributions from different components of matter very clearly. Equation (2), in this new version, looks like

$$\frac{3(\dot{a}^2 + k)}{a^2} = \bar{\rho}_m + \bar{\rho}_\phi + \bar{\rho}_\psi,$$  \hspace{1cm} (23)

where a bar indicates quantities in the transformed version; $\rho_m, \rho_\phi, \rho_\psi$ are the contributions to the energy density from the normal matter, the BD scalar field and the quintessence scalar field respectively. The quantity $\bar{\rho}_\phi$ is actually given by

$$\bar{\rho}_\phi = \frac{(2\omega + 3)}{4} \left(\frac{\dot{\phi}}{\phi}\right)^2 = \bar{p}_\phi.$$  \hspace{1cm} (24)

The quantities describing the matter distribution are transformed as $\bar{\rho}_i = \phi^{-2} \rho_i$ and $\bar{p}_i = \phi^{-2} p_i$. Now we define the dimensionless density parameter $\bar{\Omega}$ as

$$\bar{\Omega} = \frac{\bar{\rho}}{3H^2} = \bar{\Omega}_m + \bar{\Omega}_\phi + \bar{\Omega}_\psi,$$  \hspace{1cm} (25)

where the total density $\bar{\rho} = \bar{\rho}_m + \bar{\rho}_\phi + \bar{\rho}_\psi$, and the individual density parameters $\bar{\Omega}_i$ are defined accordingly. Using the equation (23) and the equation for the conservation for the total energy,

$$\dot{\bar{\rho}} + 3\dot{H}(\bar{\rho} + p) = 0,$$  \hspace{1cm} (26)
we can write down the evolution equation for the density parameter as

\[ \dot{\Omega}(\Omega - 1)(3\gamma - 2)H = 0. \]  (27)

The net barotropic index \( \gamma \) is defined as

\[ \gamma \Omega = \gamma_m \Omega_m + \gamma_\phi \Omega_\phi + \gamma_\psi \Omega_\psi. \]  (28)

The individual \( \gamma_i \)'s are defined by the equation \( p_i = (\gamma_i - 1)\rho_i \). The ratios \( p_i/\rho_i \) remain the same in both frames and thus \( \gamma_i \)'s do not vary. For our choice of matter, \( \bar{p}_m = 0 \) and \( \bar{p}_\phi = \bar{\rho}_\phi \), and thus \( \gamma_m = 1 \) and \( \gamma_\phi = 2 \). The third index \( \gamma_\psi \), however, is not a constant and evolves with time via the equation

\[ \gamma_\psi = (p_\psi + \rho_\psi)/\rho_\psi = \dot{\psi}^2/(\frac{1}{2} \dot{\psi}^2 + V). \]

Equation (27) indicates that \( \Omega = 1 \) is indeed a solution. The stability of this solution demands that \( (\partial \dot{\Omega}/\partial \Omega)_H \) should be negative at \( \Omega = 1 \). Equation (27) shows that for an expanding universe \( (\dot{H} > 0) \) this is possible only if \( \gamma < 2/3 \).

From equation (28) it can be shown that the relevant condition for \( \gamma < 2/3 \) is

\[ \bar{\Omega}_m + 4\bar{\Omega}_\phi < (2 - 3\gamma_\psi)\bar{\Omega}_\psi, \]  (29)

which can be achieved by a suitable adjustment of the parameters.

It is wellknown that geodesic equations are not valid in this conformally transformed version \[9\] and hence different quantities are not dependable regarding the content of their physical meaning. But it must be emphasized that the character of \( k \) remains unaltered, and thus if \( \Omega_k = k/a^2 \) is zero in one frame, it must be so in the other as well.

4 Concluding remarks

A quintessence scalar field in Brans-Dicke theory is shown to give rise to an accelerated expansion for the present universe. Bertolami and Martins \[6\] modified Brans-Dicke theory by introducing a potential function \( V = V(\phi) \) where \( \phi \) is the Brans-Dicke scalar field. As Brans-Dicke theory by itself is, in a sense, self–interacting (the kinetic term in the action contains \( \phi \)), we do not include such a potential. Rather a non–gravitational field \( \psi \) with a potential \( V = V(\psi) \) is included. For a spatially flat universe, the model yields various non–decelerating solutions including a uniformly expanding solution \( (q = 0) \). For a simple choice of the potential \( (V \propto \psi^4) \), the model gives the solution of \[6\]. In this last case, the model can work for all time \( 0 < t < \infty \). In most of the other accelerating solutions, the model is seen to work for only a restricted period of time.

An important merit of this ansatz is that it provides solutions for a non flat
Robertson Walker metric as well. Although these solutions are not accelerating, they are not decelerating either \(q = 0\). So along with providing a non-decelerating solution, it can potentially solve the flatness problem too. In fact it has been shown that \(\Omega = 1\) could be a stable solution in this model.

This acceleration of the universe is achieved, in general, by a negative \(\omega\). It has been claimed that the value of \(\omega\) should be large (> 500) if Brans-Dicke theory has to be consistent with the astronomical observations \([10]\). But this value actually refers to the magnitude of \(\omega\) which can still be very large in this model except in some cases, such as for \((k = 0, q = 0)\), where \(\omega = -2\). Furthermore, reconciliation with Kaluza-Klein theory or low-energy string theory favours a negative value of \(\omega\) (see e.g. \([11]\)).

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8
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