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Editorial

In this edition of *Social Orbit*, we bring together a diverse collection of scholarly explorations that engage with the complexities of contemporary society. While rooted in sociology, this issue embraces the broader wisdom of social sciences, incorporating insights from history, literature, and psychology.

Our contributors critically examine contemporary development narratives, giving insight in to the alternative pathways for a more sustainable and inclusive future. Studies on citizenship and public participation reveal the challenges and opportunities within governance structures, particularly through the lived experiences of marginalized groups.

Cultural and ritual practices are explored with fresh theoretical perspectives, offering deeper insights into evolving societal traditions and belief systems. Psychological inquiries into media influence and interpersonal relationships provide thought-provoking analyses of modern identity formation, generational shifts, and the paradox of digital connectivity. Additionally, reflections on literature and biography enrich our understanding of resistance, memory, and social stratification

As we engage with these articles, we are reminded of the potential of social science research to challenge assumptions, inspire change, and foster a more inclusive society. We encourage our readers to critically engage with the ideas presented here, reflect on their own roles within our social fabric, and join us in envisioning pathways towards a brighter future for all.

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Empowering Youth for Sustainable Living: A Critique of the Modern Development Paradigm and Future Directions

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Abstract

Youth are the future leaders and have the potential to drive positive changes for desired social transformation. Being the agents of change, empowering youth for a sustainable future seems to be very significant. The term sustainable development which has become a catchword in recent times emerged in the context of the impending ecological crises during the last decades of the 19th century. However, the concept of sustainable development remains a highly contested term, and delineating the path towards this goal appears to be a challenging task. The present conceptual paper aims to propose future directions for empowering youth for sustainable living, grounded in a critique of the current paradigm of modern development. The paper specifically aims to study the limitations in the concept of sustainable development, to propose the significance of culture of sustainability, and to analyze the necessary nature of change needed to empower youth for sustainable living. The study utilizes Derrida's concept of deconstruction and Habermas's theoretical concepts of legitimation crisis and communicative action as the underlying theoretical framework. The paper envisages the necessity of deconstruction of the modern development paradigm in search of an alternative paradigm rooted in sustainable practices and ways of living. Further, building sustainable societies through rational discourse as suggested by Habermas is also projected in the paper.

***Keywords**: Modern development paradigm, Sustainable development, Sustainable living, Culture of sustainability, Deconstruction, Legitimation crisis and Communicative action.*

Youth as the future leaders have to play a key role in desired social transformation. The term Youth connotes energy, enthusiasm, creativity, vitality, hope, optimism, etc. The unique combination of physical strength and proactive spirit makes the youth the most dynamic and vibrant segment of the population. The future of humanity and the whole globe lies in the hands of today's youngsters.

Youth have the potential to drive positive changes and can provide new energy, creativity, and dynamism to address the countless number of issues that today's world faces. Youth make up 16% of the global population (Hwang & Kim, n.d) whereas youth in the age group of 15-29 years comprise 27.5% of the population in India (Government of India, Ministry

of Youth Affairs and Sports, 2014). The formal definitions of the term 'Youth' are based on age criteria. For example, the UN defines youth as those persons between the ages of 15 and 24, the period of transition from childhood to adulthood (Hwang & Kim, n.d). National Youth Policy of 2014 in India defines 'youth' as persons in the age group of 15-29 years (Government of India, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, 2014). Apart from the age-based definitions of youth, some perspectives define youth in terms of mental attributes. A frequently used expression, such as 'young at heart,' is employed to characterize individuals who retain youthful traits regardless of their age. Young people are the core of our present and the key to determining if there will be a future (Canclini, 2007, as cited in Mouchrek, 2018). Given the leading role of youth as agents of change, empowering youth for a sustainable future seems to be very significant.

Sustainable development has become a widely shared and defining concept in recent decades. The adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by the UN, as well as the global challenge of climate change, have demanded increased attention to the term. An overview of the historical origins behind the emergence of the concept of sustainable development appears relevant at this juncture. The concept evolved in the context of impending environmental crises resulting from technological advancement and industrial expansion with the emergence of Western modernity over the last 250 years.

Western modernity and the belief in progress are almost synonymous…. During the Enlightenment and its aftermath (1750 – 1900) the idea of progress reached its zenith in the Western civilization…. As the Industrial Revolution was unfolding on the world stage from the 18th century, irrevocably transforming human societies, human progress was also linked to economic growth and material advancement. Donald Worster (1993: 178, 179, 180) describes how industrialization caused 'the greatest revolution in outlook that has ever taken place' by leading people to think that it is right for them to dominate the natural order and radically transform it into consumer goods…. (Du Pisani, 2006, p. 84).

The unprecedented increase in production, consumption and wealth for the first time in the human history during Industrial Revolution necessitated unlimited extraction, exploitation and destruction of the natural environment. With the industrial and commercial expansion and affluence during 1950's and 60's, wide-spread environmental catastrophes and terrible damage to the nature began to be evident in a frightening

manner. The Enlightenment promise of the linear and continuous improvement of the human condition had proved to be a Myth of Progress (Du Pisani, 2006). The awareness about the imminent ecological crisis led to the fear that the economic growth driven by scientific and technological advances might endanger the survival of the human race and the planet. The growing environmental concern began to manifest itself in various intellectual works, such as books and reports, as well as through global summits, movements, organizations, and day observances during the 1970s. Serious thoughts and deliberations for new models of development began to surface. It is in this backdrop of the growing international environmental consciousness during the last decades of the 20th century, the term sustainable development emerged.

In 1987, the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) report to UN known as Brundtland commission report entitled 'Our Common Future' proposed the desirability of Sustainable development. The report defined sustainable development as the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (WCED, 1987).

However, to chart out an effective action plan towards the realization of sustainable development seems to be a challenging task. The term sustainable development is critiqued on many bases. For example, there are arguments that the definitions of sustainable development are vague and full of contradictions (Qizilbash, 2001; Redclift, 1987, as cited in Foley, Bogue, & Onakuse, 2016). According to (Jabareen, 2008 as cited in Foley, Bogue, & Onakuse, 2016), literature on sustainable development lacks a comprehensive framework for understanding the complexities of sustainable development. Thus even though the use of the term has become institutional, its meaning is vague, undefined, and often contradictory (O'Riorden, 1985, as cited in Fergus & Rowney, 2005) and has become a cliché? (Lele, 1991; Mitcham, 1995, as cited in Fergus & Rowney, 2005).

Accordingly, the concept of sustainable development is a highly contested term, and delineating the path towards this goal appears to be a cul-de-sac. The general objective of this conceptual paper is to propose future directions for empowering youth for sustainable living, grounded in a critique of the current paradigm of modern development. The paper specifically aims to study the limitations in the concept of sustainable development, to propose the significance of culture of sustainability, and to analyze the necessary nature of change needed to empower youth for sustainable living. The study utilizes Derrida's concept of deconstruction

and Habermas's theoretical concepts of legitimation crisis and communicative action as the underlying theoretical framework.

Limitations in the current paradigm of sustainable development

Based on the idea of economic growth

One of the major limitations of sustainable development is that it agrees with the ideology of unlimited economic growth which is a project of Western modernity. The Cartesian division of the self from the context (Capra, 1975, as cited in Fergus & Rowney, 2005), and the notions of rational knowledge that came with this philosophical framework, in particular instrumental rationality, were fundamental in the progress of the European Enlightenment and the resulting Industrial Revolution (Fergus & Rowney, 2005). Hence, western modernity which has been founded on the dualistic understanding and the dominance of rational knowledge led to the sovereignty of scientific knowledge. The belief system, world view, and the resultant constructed reality of the modern capitalist paradigm rest on the assumption of the superiority of culture of science to nature. The anthropocentric philosophy emanating from this assumption permits plunder and domination of nature for the 'survival of the fittest' (Abraham, 2023). The belief is that ever-advancing technological production and unlimited material progress are the boons of modernity, following a linear progression. Traditional cultures, rooted in different philosophies and perspectives, have often been unfairly labeled as 'underdeveloped' within the scale of progress under modernity. Therefore the very concept of Western development has been based on unlimited linear progress in the economy. Economic growth requires increased plunder and exploitation of nature to expand industrial production. This results in environmental destruction, climate change, depletion of resources, etc. The Brundtland Report also continues to emphasize 'sustainability for the possibility for a new era of economic growth' (WCED 1987, 1). As a result, there is a conceptual and strategic bias towards economic growth (Reid 1995; Reed 1996, as cited in Haque, 2000). Thus the meaning of Sustainable Development has been constructed within an instrumental rational framework. The dogmatic power of the dominant scientific-industrial paradigm, where instrumental rationality and the cognitive framework of neo-classical economics dominated the validity and creation of new knowledge related to sustainable development (Fergus & Rowney, 2005). The observations of Du Pisani (2006) on sustainable development also highlight this view:

'Sustainable development was not ideologically neutral, because it was intended as an alternative to the zero-growth option and was therefore positively inclined towards the growth and modernization viewpoints…. It has become more or less an ornamental term to give an environmental cast to development over time. In other words, the term sustainable development seems to be a mere compromise between development and conservation rather than calling for a fundamental change in the existing paradigm of modern development'.

Agrees with consumption-centered development

As the concept of sustainable development is concerned about the fact that the excessive consumption of the present generation may affect the consumption capacity of the future generation, the belief in the consumption based development is noticeable (Haque, 2000). The modern development promotes economic growth which requires expansive industrialization and tremendous consumption. Both these in-turn lead to rapid depletion of resources and environmental pollution. The major critiques of sustainable development were that it did not question the ideology of economic growth and did not adequately challenge the consumer culture, and was thus serving neo-liberal interests (Euractiv 2002 as cited in Du Pisani, 2006). The present mode of consumption pattern is not viable for the whole world.

Does not address existing inequality

Even though intergenerational equity is addressed in the concept of sustainable development the existing structures of interclass and international inequalities adversely affecting the environment are little addressed (Haque, 2000). Excessive production and consumption in advanced industrial societies lead to the exhaustive depletion of environmental resources and exacerbate environmental degradation. For instance, the advanced industrial nations that represent about 22% of the world's population consume, on average, 80% of the world's goods UNDP 1997 as cited in Haque, 2000). The wide awakening lies in recognizing that the prevailing mode of production and consumption is neither universally sustainable nor generalizable for the entire world. The widening gap and inequality in the consumption pattern between the West and the rest indeed raise the issue of intra generational equity.

Significance of culture of sustainability

The present concept of development which is based on Cartesian dualism and instrumental rationality views other indigenous cultures based

on traditional beliefs in the satisfaction of basic needs, minimal use of resources, maintenance of the ecosystem, and preservation of nature as backward and underdeveloped (Haque, 2000). The theoretical concept of deconstruction by Jacques Derrida seems to be useful here. The deconstruction of the term 'modern development' can undermine its implicit claims of superiority with in hierarchical dualisms such as, developed vs underdeveloped, culture vs nature, modern vs traditional, etc. This facilitates questioning the dominant narratives about modern progress and development. Exposing biases embedded in the concept of development can indeed alter the emphasis from 'sustainable development' to a broader focus on 'sustainability'. Hence instead of sustainable development cultivating a culture of sustainability is crucial. The term sustainability means 'lastingness' (Du Pisani, 2006) or continuation of anything. The term 'sustainability', is used in ecology to refer to a state or condition that can be maintained over an indefinite period. Sustainability is commonly understood in terms of environmental sustainability. But sustainability is a multidimensional concept that encompasses not only ecological considerations but also economic and social dimensions. Sustainability mainly includes the 'Three Es'? - Economics, Ecology, and (social) Equity (Passerini, 1998). As social sustainability connotes equity, it is being conceived simply in terms of poverty reduction or redistribution of wealth only. Also, it is often understood as a separate dimension without much connection to the other two dimensions of sustainability. Indeed, there are strong social foundations that influence economic and environmental sustainability. According to Du Pisani (2006):

'How society responds to environmental issues often has social foundations rather than technical foundations, involving social action, institutions, organizations, relationships, culture, motivation, values, meaning, norms, and other social processes; human reactions to nature, science, or sustainability involve natural systems, but they also involve complex normative principles (whether explicit or concealed)….. We need to examine the fundamental assumptions behind the dominant mode of social organization in terms of its implications for sustainability'.

However, the major theories and models of development under the conservative-capitalist perspective overlook the socio-cultural roots affecting sustainability. Barbier (1987) defines social sustainability as the ability to maintain desired social values, traditions, institutions, cultures, or other social characteristics (as cited in Lele, 1991). Therefore, the existence of desired values and institutions are fundamental in achievina g

a sustainable lifestyle. However, such socio-political as well as cultural dimentions have been ignored in the modern development. To achieve social change towards sustainable ways of living, it is essential to promote a culture of sustainability among young people (Mouchrek, 2018). Thus achieving a sustainable lifestyle and fostering a culture of sustainability is crucial in confronting the dilemmas created by modern development. The idea of promoting a culture of sustainability encompasses all the factors of sustainability since culture embodies the meaning people give to their lives, the values they share, and how they express their vision for the future, to be conveyed to future generations (Hawkes 2001, as cited in Mouchrek, 2018). The culture of sustainability and a sustainable way of living are therefore mutually reciprocal and give the promise of a more stable and enduring nature and society.

Nature of change needed to empower youth for sustainable living

Youth should be informed and engaged in this process of creating a culture of sustainability. This cultural change necessarily encompasses a radical re-evaluation of the hierarchy of values that give meaning to life and determine society's priorities (Brown 1981, as cited in Mouchrek, 2018). Further, lifestyle changes will need to be accompanied by a new ethical awareness (Unesco 1997 as cited in Mouchrek, 2018). Sustainable ways of living demand a fundamental shift in core values and perspectives. It is especially regarding the new generations that the changes towards healthier, integrated, and sustainable lifestyles are fundamental (Mouchrek, 2018).

However, this transformation is not as easy as the whole world has internalized hegemonic modern values and ways of life. Under the influence of this hegemonic culture, inequality, and social injustices are being legitimized, no longer causing disturbance among the youth. A sustainable world will be more fair, just, and peaceful. Environmental destruction, exclusion, poverty, gender violence, terrorism, etc. are the different dimensions of the same malignant worldview. Hence, to empower youth for a sustainable way of living, they must be aware of the inherent danger in the prevailing culture of modernity. Sustainable ways of living aim to bridge the value-action gap and to develop sustainable competencies (Mouchrek, 2018) and attributes. Sustainability cannot be achieved without addressing key issues underpinning unsustainable development (Foley, Bogue, & Onakuse, 2016). This necessitates a revolution in institutions, systems, lifestyles, and values of modernity. Delineating the socio-cultural attributes that are fundamentally detrimental to holistic sustainability seems to be useful. It is especially important to

promote healthier, sustainable, and integrated lifestyles for newer generations.

Obsession with Consumerism

The Youth of the contemporary world is under the spell of consumerist culture. Consumer culture is unsustainable as it places high value and the purchase of goods and services. It is detrimental to the environment as it leads to environmental consequences such as excessive exploitation of nature, depletion of natural resources, increased production of waste, etc. However, the socio-psychological effects of consumerism are rather under-addressed. The consumer culture becomes deeply ingrained in the values, behaviors, and identities of youngsters. Acquisition and accumulation of goods become the central aspects of one's identity and self-worth under this culture. Materialism becomes the basis of the meaning of life and happiness turns out to be transient. The pioneering Critical thinkers Horkheimer and Adorno explain the deception of the masses by enlighten-ment through the Culture Industry (Horkheimer & Adorno, 1944/2002). The 'false psychological needs' that are created by the modern media can only be satisfied through the products of capitalism. The manipulation of the mass society into passivity and the simultaneous production of a consumerist culture is one of the major crises of the present society. The post-modern thinker Jean Baudrillard also mentioned the production of a consumer society due to the consumption of simulations and the production of hyperreality through media (Doshi, 2003). The internalization of the hegemonic consumer culture reduces the youth into passivity and turns their attention away from the ground realities of life. Sustainability will not be achieved without addressing key issues underpinning unsustainable development. Exposing and recognizing the formidable barrier created by consumerism is very crucial in realizing a sustainable way of life.

Legitimation of injustice

Injustice is inherently unsustainable and perpetuates imbalances within society. Injustice, ingrained and legitimized within societal structures, becomes a terrible block in the path toward sustainability. Injustices such as inequality, discrimination, or environmental degradation, disrupt the delicate equilibrium necessary for sustainability. There is a complex interplay between the legitimation of injustices and the perpetuation of unsustainable lifestyles and societal norms. The role of youth in perpetuating or challenging injustices is crucial. However, when youth are unable to identify structural injustices they may perpetuate an

unsustainable culture. The prevailing values of consumerism and individualism in modern society often divert attention from structural injustices. Under the spell of desire for personal consumption and individual success, systemic issues are often overlooked. This diversion prohibits the efforts to address the root causes of unsustainability.

A cultural shift toward sustainability demands challenging and reshaping societal values. This requires moving away from the legitimization of injustices towards a culture that values equity, inclusivity, and environmental responsibility. Thus addressing the legitimation of injustices is inexorable for advancing sustainability. A concerted effort to dismantle unjust structures, empower the youth, and foster a cultural shift that prioritizes more social equity is needed for a sustainable future.

Internalization of Ideological Extremism

Internalization of ideological extremism leads individuals to agree with extreme belief systems, with rigid and uncompromising views on political, social, or cultural issues. This socio-cultural attribute is generally viewed to have little consequence on sustainability. However, understanding the intricate relationship between ideological extremism and sustainability is significant in empowering youth for sustainable living. Ideological extremism perpetuates parochial thoughts, narrow world views, rigidity, exclusion, and intolerance with far-reaching consequences upon sustainability. Social polarization, violence, terrorism, and war are being justified under this situation. All these have severe implications for social equity, stability adaptability, and common ground for the efforts toward sustainability. Extremism and homogeneity are innately unstable and unsustainable. Ideological extremism among youth contributes to social fragmentation by fostering divisions based on identity, ethnicity, religion, or other narrow criteria. Fundamentalism, ethnocentrism, racism, and other manifestations stemming from ideological extremism have been confirmed to result in disastrous consequences for sustainability. The inability of youth to rise above extreme ideologies and propaganda poses a serious threat to the realization of a sustainable future. Developing critical thinking, global awareness, and an appreciation for diversity and heterogeneity enable the youth to develop tolerance and flexibility for transcending these threats. Social organization based on adaptability, inclusivity, and commitment to dialogue are generally more resilient and sustainable.

In the era of dominance of scientific knowledge, looming crises are dealt with through technological solutions. The dilemma of ‘legitimation

crisis' due to the domination of the system over the life world in the modern capitalist society as proposed by Habermas is evident here (Abraham, 2023). The socio-cultural foundations that define human interaction with nature are often considered trivial. Hence, along with desirable norms, values belief systems, etc., appropriate institutional structures that promote socio-cultural processes are also necessary. Based on the framework of Habermas, structural arrangements that promote communicative action for rational discourse and debate seem to be relevant. As the current development model which represents a weak sustainability perspective, has left the existing way of living unquestioned, critical discourses become particularly significant. It has become evident that the present developmental model which is beyond the capacity of nature and is neither generalisable nor sustainable. The idea of a new paradigm emerges in this context...and a more just and sustainable paradigm would continue to see humans as an essential part of nature (Abraham, 2023). Rather than being mere adherents or followers of the hegemonic modern culture, youth should have the determination to create 'counter-cultures' that promote sustainable ways of living. An authentic model of sustainable development should make sure that it represents a holistic development perspective beyond economic growth, recognizes multiple cultural traditions and beliefs, transcends consumerism and provides a framework of a more desirable lifestyle, emphasizes structural reforms for internal and international equality, and delineates effective legal and institutional devices for environmental sustenance (Haque, 2000).

Conclusion

Derrida's deconstruction of the concept of modern development calls for reference to alternative paradigms rooted in sustainable practices and ways of living. Instead of the current anthropocentric perspective, a sustainable society is characterized by a holistic perspective sensitive to the organic connection between various parts of nature. Drawing the wisdom of sustainable indigenous practices that have been rejected by modernity can provide great insights in this regard. However, there is no readymade formula for sustainable ways of living. Haberma's perspective of communicative action indeed offers valuable means in building sustainable societies through rational discourse. Rather than given models and answers, youth may resort to the means of dialogue and critical discourse to reach sustainable ways of living. This will enable them to challenge and question the existing norms and find out innovative practices that can lead to 'counter cultures' for sustainable alternative ways of living.

Reaching out the socio-cultural foundations is key to sustainable living. Youth who refrain from committing their intellectual abilities, who can rise above the rigid and parochial ideologies, who envision a world based on the principles of justice, pluralism, and co-existence, who uphold a holistic perspective, who have the potential to create miracles in living a life of sustainability.

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'Gaps' and 'Traps' In Practices of Women Citizenship: Investigations and Evidences on Lived Experiences of Women Self Help Group Members

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Abstract

The concept of citizenship brings in an intersectionality perspectives to locate political, legal, social, cultural and historical contexts to examine the lived experiences of citizenship .There is a need for complex analyses of differential subjects, sites, acts, responsibilities and answerabiliites in relation to gender equitable citizenship. The present research employs the conceptual framework of the 'gaps' and 'traps' of invisible women labour (Lister, 2011) to examine the lived experiences of women members of Self Help Groups in Kerala. The study was carried out among women SHGs sponsored by different organisational framework like Kudumbashree, Janasree , Community based and Non-Governmental agencies.The major argument this paper puts forth is need for more studies for documentation of the public interventions of women members in SHGs, thus reinforcing their role in promoting civil activism for practicing citizenship at local levels

Citizenship is a catchword that includes all aspects of origin, existence, and survival strategies adopted by people in a nation-state. The term citizenship is being framed and used by nation-states as a gender-neutral term, associated with its rights, duties, and responsibilities. T.M. Marshall (1950) proposed that Citizenship is constituted of three elements, *Political and Social.* Civil elements are rights to individual freedom, Political elements as participation in the exercise of political power, and Social elements as the right to share the social heritage and to live the life of civilized beings. The social element of citizenship was to be attained through the active intervention of the state in the form of a welfare state and through the educational system. Based on the development of ideas around the evolution of citizenship, two dominant strands or traditions of rights and citizenship have been developed: first, *Civic republicanism* characterised by ideas of common good, public spirit, political participation, and civic virtue; second *Liberal citizenship* with an emphasis on individual rights and private interests (Roy,2005). These aspects of citizenship have been primarily critiqued by Marxists and Feminists. The Marxian criticism is

mainly centered around the proposition that more than political emancipation in citizenship, general human emancipation wherein the persons are freed from private property and its associated institutions. Feminist criticism is based on the argument that concepts of citizenship had been inimical to women, either by excluding them or by relegating them to socially useful and dependent roles as mothers or wives.

Feminist Critique of Citizenship

The feminist critique of citizenship is centered around the rigid separation between the public and the private sphere. The Classical Republican notion of citizenship, differentiated between the public sphere *polis*, where men engage in political activities, and the domestic *oikos*, where women engage in productive/reproductive activities. The liberal model of citizenship is based on the division between the public as constituted by the state and the private as different from the state, relegated to the sphere of household. Liberal feminists have raised their concerns on how the private and public are inextricably connected and how much personal problems have a wider significance that can only be solved through political action. The boundaries between 'the public' and 'the private' were challenged by the feminists by making a call for 'the personal is political' to make both spheres more democratic and inclusive (Pateman, 1989, Muller Oiken, 1992).

Feminist scholars across the globe have tried to bring in intersectional perspectives to locate political, legal, social, cultural, and historical contexts to examine the lived experiences of citizenship. Feminists have raised reservations about citizenship on two grounds (1) integrating women indirectly as citizen-consorts and (2) incorporating them based on their socially useful and dependent roles as mothers and wives placing them outside the sphere of politics and distancing from opportunities such as education, property,etc, which equips them for political participation (Roy,2005).Different routes were taken by feminists to overcome their exclusion from the political community(1) One strand of feminists approaches citizenship as an aspect of political activity and looks forward to women's inclusion as equals in public sphere (2) The second strand questioning the patriarchal state argues for the inclusion of women's specific functions into the public realm of citizenship by -bringing *private sphere to political* and making them both subject to norms of justice and equality and by *maternalist citizenship* which advocates women should value their particular skills and interests. Stressing the superiority of maternal quali-

ties of caring, responsibility and compassion as the key elements of citizenship, the materialists dissolve the distinction between male/public and female/private facets of life.

Unsettling Public-Private Dichotomy: 'Gaps' and 'Traps" for women

Lister (2011) has identified 'spaces and places' from intimate, local to global arenas to explain how gendered citizenship bridges the public-private divide. The 'Public' side represented citizens who displayed necessary 'male' qualities of impartiality, rationality, independence, and political agency, and the 'Private' side embodied partial, irrational, emotional, and dependent women. Lister highlights the importance of political agency which provides the link between conceptualizations of citizenship as an active participatory practice and as a set of rights that are objects of struggle (Lister, 2011). The idea of 'spaces and places' of citizenship grounds citizenship as a practice and is also useful in thinking about how gendered citizenship practices bridge the public-private divide (Lister, 2011). Lister reinforces that the local level provides the most conducive area for the practice of citizenship. The local level composed of women's civil society associations and informal forms of politics has often provided a congenial arena of political citizenship than formal politics or paid work (Lister, 2011).

Lister asserts that women's civil society activism as a citizenship practice has become both a 'gap' and a 'trap' when women's unpaid, invisible labour fills the vacuum of the state's withdrawal from public service provision. Lister put forth that while it is important to recognize and value women's civil society activism as a citizenship practice, feminists must beware of the socio-economic gendered division of labour colluded with the political gendered division of labour which has weakened women's claims to citizenship (Lister, 2011). She exhorts feminists to be aware of the ways in which women's marginalized citizenship status can be recreated by constructing civic activity as feminine and institutional politics as masculine(Lister, 2011)

Feminist Critique of Microcredit

The United Nations-General Assembly Resolution 52/194 set recommendations for the First United Nations Decade for Eradication of Poverty(1997-2006) and declared that " microcredit programmes have proved to be an effective tool in freeing people from the mainstream the bondages of poverty, and have led to their increasing participation in the mainstream economic and political process of society"(UN,1998). Three paradigms

have been out by Linda Mayoux (1999) to identify the relationship between microfinance and gender.

Financial self-sustainability paradigm-wherein donor agencies design the micro-credit programmes to use groups to decrease costs of delivery. It is assumed that increasing women's access to micro-finance services will in itself lead to individual economic empowerment, well-being, and social and political empowerment. The underlying development paradigm is aimed at neoliberal market growth. Gender perspectives of this paradigm claim that women are being targeted for high repayment rates and contribution of women's economic activity to economic growth.

Poverty alleviation paradigm-The main considerations are poverty reduction among the poorest, increased well-being, and community development. Gender lobbies claim that women are being targeted because of higher levels of female poverty and women's responsibility for household well-being.

Feminist empowerment paradigm-the underlying paradigm is a structuralist and feminist critique of capitalism from the perspective of the gender impact of microfinance programmes. The basic concerns are gender equality and women's human rights, micro credit is considered as an entry point to the wider strategy for women's economic and socio-political empowerment. Effective ways to integrate gender awareness into programmes and for orgnisation of women and men to challenge gender discrimination through gender advocacy is the underlying assumption of this paradigm.

The studies conducted in many parts of the world place many reservations to this claim and provide evidence on how the participation of women in microcredit has brought almost no changes in the institutions that are oppressive to them. As less challenging the existing social hierarchies of caste, class, ethnicity, and gender (Batliwala & Dhanraj,2004), less provision of safety net for the poor(Kabeer,2005), as increasing debt-liability, increasing tensions and producing new forms of dominance over women and increasing violence(Rahman,1999)

Practicing citizenship at the Local level: The case of Self-Help Groups in Kerala

The combination of top-down state policies and bottom-up social activism has generated remarkable social gains in Kerala. Decentralized participatory planning known as people's planning has created an enabling environment for local self-governance by building a sense network of associational life in Kerala (Heller, 1996). Self Help groups in Kerala are

aided and abetted by many organisations - Non-Governmental Organizations, Government organized Non-Governmental Organizations (Kudumbasree), Caste based Organisations (SNDP), and Political parties. The Kudumbashree project, well integrated with local panchayats, has been a strategy of the state to appropriate civic space and to bring it under administrative surveillance capitalizing on the general faith in government institutions (John & Cathukulam, 2003)

An analysis of the performance of Kudumbashree SHGs has led Devika & Thampi (2007) within a feminist political agenda to finalize three channels of inquiry. First, whether the money income has enabled SHG members to maneuver and be able to 'bargain with patriarchy'. Second, the crucial link between the SHG members and local self-governments and bureaucracies. Third, how a political action that seeks to appropriate patriarchal power or even to challenge it emerges in fundamental ways can be achieved via SHGs.A decade later, based on research done on Kudumbashree women, Devika (2016) remarks on the state's eagerness to set up women as agents of welfare and that there are three kinds of political authority compete to utilize the services of Kudumbashree women- political parties, the panchayat, and the Kudumbashree Mission. Acomparative analysis of three Self Help Groups promoted by Catholic Dioceses, Caste based and Kudumbashree indicates that among the three, Kudumbashree does not seem to have the mechanism of stronger external control and strict hierarchies embedded in the rigid social institutions of religion or caste. On the contrary, Kudumbashree is least hierarchical and more amenable to individual well-being, all the while remaining largely apolitical (Devika & Nair, 2018)

Devika (2016) proposes that as the standard form of organizing women, Kudumbashree women have the potential to form a 'voluntary community' who enjoy an official, public recognition of the agency of women workers in national life', but largely demand full citizenship is still absent. Kudumbashree women can function as a civil-political society, composed of legal entities with which the state can negotiate directly.

The 'Gaps' and 'Traps' in Self Help Group based activism

The present study is an attempt to investigate and to find evidence on whether the formation of Self Help Group (SHG) and its engagements have been trapping women into both individualised activities and at large enabling their entry into the public domain. The study was conducted using a mixed research design among the members of SHGs promoted by the Self Help Promotion Institutions (SHPIs) namely Kudumbasree, SNDP

Microfinance, Janasree Sustainable Mission, and three NGOs from three districts of Kerala. The NGOs that were included in the present study were the Centre for Overall Development (COD) Thamarassery, Ernakulam Social Service Society, Ernakulam, and Neyyatinkara Integral Development Society, promoted by Catholic Dioceses. The SHPIs selected for the study come under the four broad categories of the organizational setting – Governmental, Non-Governmental, Caste, and Political party-based. The research was carried out in 2013-15 in three districts of Kerala, namely Kozhikode, Ernakulam and Thiruvananthapuram, through muti-stage stratified simple randommethods to identify the five SHGs from each of these organisational settings. Responses collected from Self Help Groups members from different organisational settings throw light on how they perceive the membership in SHGs and analyze both benefits as well as disadvantages of involving themselves in SHGs. (Nair, 2015)

Adopting the concept of 'gaps' and 'traps' of Lister (2011), the present study seeks to analyse how women's unpaid labour is being utilised by microcredit. Evidence on how women's engagements are made invisible by entitling most of them as feminine has been probed into. The proxies used for analysis of the invisible and unpaid labour exerted by women in SHGs are, the reasons they assume that would have motivated them to join the SHGs, the factors that led them to participate in all the SHG activities, the reason they assign for the successful functioning of the group and the possible public presence they sought for their groups

Initiative for starting the groups

The respondents enquired about the person or persons who took the initiative to start their group. The responses were very varied and ranged across five options - panchayat members, local leaders, parish priests, animators, and community leaders. The analysis of data shows that most of the respondents have cited the Panchayat members or representatives at the grassroots level as prime motivators for forming groups. Among the respondents from Kudumbasree, about 83.3 percent have cited that it was the Panchayat member that took the initiative to organise them in groups. In the case of the NGO, 86.7 percent opined that it was the Animators who inspired them to start the group. In the case of the Janasree groups it was mostly the local political leaders who took the initiative in organising them into groups and among the respondents from SNDP microfinance, it was mostly Community leaders. The most important factor that motivated the women to become members of SHGs was mostly external interferences, thus like Lister's assumption the gaps in the local civic activism were identified to be filled in by the SHGs, predominantly women.

Reasons for joining SHGs

Becoming economically self-reliant was cited as the reason behind joining the group by 47.1 percent, closely following 42.5 percent have opined that the groups were formed to build a collective feeling. When the responses were analysed based on the membership in a different organisation it was found that a large segment of respondents belonging to Kudumbasree(66.7 percent) and NGO(56.7 percent) thought that it was to become economically self-reliant that they formed into groups. In the case of SNDP Microfinance majority of respondents (68.3 percent) opined that it was for building a collective feeling in the community. Among the respondents from Janasree apart from being economically self-reliant (33.3 percent) and building a community feeling (35 percent) and significant percentage (25 percent) reported that political affiliation was the most important reason for launching the group. On the whole, being economically self-reliant is the prime reason for a large segment of respondents irrespective of organisational differences, to launch the group. The language of self-reliance, self-sufficiency, and empowerment through microfinance provides legitimacy for the withdrawal of the state and creates the condition for capitalist expansion (Fernando, 2006). The present study adds to this observation, as SHG members internalise the norm of being self-reliant, their resources are tapped for fathering the cause of capitalism and also as a cushion for the state's declining funding for welfare activities.

Unanimous participation in all group activities

The opinion of the respondents on the most important reason for the participation of the members of the group in the group-related activities. Most of the members (38.3 percent) reported that it has become a habit for them; they consider it as a routine activity internalising them as part of daily chores. 21.3 percent consider it as their responsibility and regard their participation in group activities as a duty. Thus the data analysis indicates that the groups formed under different organisational settings have come of age in Kerala, where a significant percentage consider participation in group activities as part of their habit or even as their moral responsibility. The data collected on this query was further analysed based on the organisational setting they belonged to. The analysis of the data shows that in the case of the largest percent of respondents from NGO it was strict rules that were cited as the reason for the participation of all members in the group. A large percentage of respondents from SNDP cited that participation in group activities has become a habit to them, at the same time 30 percent of respondents have opined that it is due to their community feeling

that they participate more in the group-related activities. 40 percent of responents from Kudumbasree reported that they participate in groups because they assume it is their responsibility. Regarding the respondents from Janasree, 51.7 percent participate in group-related activities as they have grown a habit of participating in group activities. Thus on the whole it can be seen most of the respondents irrespective of the organisational background, most of them considered participation in group-related activities as a habit and to some, it was a responsibility too. Participation in group-related activities has been internalised by most of the members as a normal activity and even as a responsibility.

Reason for successful functioning of SHG

A cooperative mentality was cited as the most important reason for the successful functioning of the group by 57.5 percent Role of leaders was mentioned by a significant percentage of respondents. The univocally highest percent of the respondents from different organisations reported that it was the cooperative mentality that was the most important reason for the successful functioning of the group. The second most important reason for the successful working of the group varies from organisation to organisation. In the case of NGOs it is the thrift and the saving habits (23.3percent), for the SNDP microfinance it is group prayer (38.3percent), in Kudumbasree it is due to strict adherence to rules, and for the respondents from Janasree it was due to the role played by the leaders. Henceforth the nature of the different groups becomes evident when the data is further probed. Group prayer was considered as a binding force for the successful functioning of the group by a significant percentage of respondents from SNDP microfinance.

Making a presence in public

The pro-activeness of the members of the group in organisation of collective action was analysed to understand whether the group has interfered in any collective action to seek more access to public services. The respondents were asked about the process that they think has contributed to their increased ability to make a presence in the public domain. The respondents have pointed out many reasons for their increased ability to make a public presence. At the same time, a significant percentage has also mentioned that they have not yet started to make a presence in public life.22.9 percent mentioned that it was the participation in the community meeting that has led to their increased presence in the public domain.18.8 percent have mentioned their participation in the protest movements.

The analysis of the data shows that in each organisational setting, the reason most of the respondents presented was different. In the case of NGO the highest percent of respondents (43.3 percent) mentioned that it was the participation in the protest movements that increased their ability to make a presence in the public domain. A majority of respondents from SNDP Microfinance mentioned that it was participation in community meetings that has increased their presence in the public domain. Among the respondents from Kudumbasree, the opinions of the respondents varied. The highest percentage (25 percent) reported that it was the training in the local bodies that provided them the ability to occupy public domain, participation in organisational meetings was also mentioned by a significant percent(23.3 percent),21.7 percent have also reported that they participate in protest movements which have increased their presence in the public domain. In the case of Janasree the highest percent (38.3 percent) mentioned that they have not yet started to appear in the public domain. Thus a close analysis of the reason perceived by the respondents on how their presence is marked in the public domain provides an understanding of the undercurrents that occur in different organisational settings. In the case of NGO it was participation in protest movements and for SNDP it was participation in community meetings and prayer meetings, Kudumbasree respondents have mentioned some inteventions for making their presence in the public domain, and formany of the respondents from Janasree, they have not yet made their presence in the public domain as of yet.

Conclusion

Naila Kabeer (2004) in her elaboration on the concept of 'inclusive citizenship' indicates that capacity to exercise agency at the individual level may be important, but it is the collective struggles of excluded groups that have historically led to social transformation. 'Everyday makers' is a term coined by Birte Sam (2000) to refer to mainly women 'citizens engaged in politics about everyday life problems'. The platform provided by SHGs has enabled collective struggles among women from excluded groups. The empirical analysis of the women members from SHGs functioning under different organisational settings too vindicates this fact. But the trajectories employed by the SHGs also point out that women are filled in the 'gaps' and are 'trapped' as invisible labour. Participation in the SHGs has become habitual, and members have internalised the group norms, thus the most important reason for the continued successful performance of the SHG is attributed to the cooperative mentality. The reasons SHG members assign for their presence in the public domain indicate, that, it varies based on the organisational setting, at the same time a significant

percent of respondents have reported that they had not made any public presence. As civil activism mediated by women-based grassroots-level organisations is considered as a mode for practicing citizenship, more studies are needed on the public interventions of women members of SHGs.

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Ritualization and Theorization of The Ritual Ayyappanthiyyattu

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Abstract

Rituals as a tool of cultural management and a strategy for maintaining social control. The concept of three different stages of rituals was put forward by Arnold Van Gennep a Belgian scholar, pre-liminal, liminal, and post-liminal. But this concept was borrowed by Victor Turner and changed to separation-liminality or transition–incorporation. All these processes of ritualization can apply to AyyappanThiyyattu. The ritualization process allows ThiyyadiNambiar to exist with separate entities and due to that they keep their own identity.
Keywords: *AyyappanThiyyattu,ThiyyadiNambiar&Liminality*

Introduction

In the historical process, ritual was reinforced as both a central sociological concept and a universal category of social life. Hence ritual is how individual perception and behavior are socially appropriated or conditioned. Victor Turner portrays ritual as the affirmation of communal unity in contrast to the friction constraints and competitiveness of social life and organization. Ritual emerges as the means for a provisional synthesis of some form of the original opposition (Turner, 1977:103). Emile Durkheim analyzed ritual as the central but most blurred and unconvincing part of society and religion. Ritual as an integrative mechanism is a synchronic force within the society, rendering it roughly equivalent to what is called culture (Durkheim, 1965:67). Although it is fairly clear that ritual facilitates change.

Ritualization

The term ritualization has some relevant history that needs to be reviewed. Two schools are employing the term ritualization and the first has developed from the work of Max Gluckman (Gluckman, 1962:20). He is best known as the founder of the Manchester School of Anthropology. The second is more or less linked to the ethological perspective pioneered by Julian Huxley. Gluckman contrasted the ritualization of social relationships

with ritualism to extend the notion of ritual beyond a narrow and somewhat traditional connection with organized religious institutions and formal wor- ship. Sir Julian Huxley explained the term ritualization to indicate adaptive formalization (Huxley, 1966:41). As a practical consciousness of the system of power relations and as a framework for action, redemptive hegemony helps to save someone from evil or error, suggests that human practice is characterized by relations of dominance and subjugation. These relations however are present in practice employing the practical values, obligations, and persistent envisioning as both an assumption and an extension of the system of a state of prestige within this ordering of power.

Huxley uses the term ritualization, which has also served to extend the traditional notion of ritual. Through his influence ritualization has been adopted by those who explicitly acknowledge the relevance of the study of ritual as human activity. The term ritualization is commonly and somewhat more simply used to emphasize ritual as an activity. Some others argue against the effectiveness of a delimited category of action called ritual and earlier ritualization is a more or less phenomenon that should be compared to other types of social interactions in terms of texture, not structure.

Murray Edelman defines the notion of ritualization to describe a process to which a conflicted relationship is subjected to facilitate both the escalation and resolution of a struggle that otherwise would destroy the relationship (Edelman, 1971:13). Eric Hobsbawm speaks of ritualization to describe the process of inventing traditions in modern societies. Ritualization appreciates how sacred and profane activities have differentiated the performing of them and thus how ritualization gives rise to the sacred as much by its sheer differentiation from the profane (Hobsbawm, 1983:4). Ritualization is very much concerned with power. The objectification and legitimation of an ordering of power as an assumption of the way things are, ritualization is a strategic arena for the embodiment of power relations. Hence the relationship of ritualization and social control may be better approached in terms of how ritual activities constitute a specific embodiment and exercise of power. Ritualization can be defined only as a way of acting that makes distinctions like the foregoing ones using culturally and situational relevant categories and nuances. Ritualization will sometimes be used to the point of creating certain impressions, but then stop short of provoke ing a controversy about its appropriateness. The deployment of rit-ualization consciously or unconsciously is the deployment of a particular construction of power relationship, a particular relationship of domination, consent, and resistance. As a strategy of power, ritualization has both positive and

effective aspects as well as specific limits to what it can do and how far it can extend (Frits Stall, 1975:16). While it may be an effective way of acting in certain places at certain times under other conditions it may be useless or counterproductive. It is necessary to explore the relationships of power constituted through ritualization and the circumstances in which these relationships are effective or ineffective forms of social interaction.

Theorizing the Ritual AyyappanThiyyattu

As a divine ritual, *AyyappanThiyyattu* has some specific meaning and social content. Each *ThiyyadiNambiar*family was attached to a *Sastha* temple or *Ayyappankavus* because Lord *Ayyappa* was the *irkuladaivam.* It was a social obligation for them to perform *AyyappanThiyyattu* in the particular places. As a hereditary right *thiyyadis* perform *Thiyyattu* in Sasta temples, their places of worship.*AyyappanThiyyattu* mainly intended to propagate *ThiyyadiNambiars* deep-rooted faith in Lord *Ayyappa.* It is only a medium of communication, where the ritual was a sacred center of social organization. Social organization meant the participation of various communities in this ritual. For example, rice husks and tender coconut leaves are the contributions of lower caste people who centered in the neighborhood of *ThiyyadiNambiar*houses. Another participation in the field of decoration of pandal and *koorayidal* ceremony was by *Ezhava* community. The special attire of *AyyappanThiyyattu* was washed by *Mannan*caste. This interactive participation of all these lower caste people in the ritual indicates the social power-sharing dynamics of *AyyappanThiyyattu*. *ThiyyadiNambiars* were the permanent staff of the temple with a small regular salary besides paddy and coconut.

Rituals as a tool of cultural management and a strategy for maintaining social control. In this context, Murray Edelman describes ritualization as a means of preserving strained social relations by simultaneously escalating and orchestrating conflict in such a way that it has to be and can be resolved. Victor Turner addressed social and structural conflicts rather than psychological conflict within individuals, their general approach has tended to direct attention to the individual as an entity controlled by the group process. Ritual integrates the social and the individual both externally and internally. Rituals are the central act of a cultural system generated by different stages of performance. Ritualization is central to culture as the means to dominate nature and the natural violence within human beings. Ritual obscures a very basic issue

namely the particular types of social arrangements in which ritual activities are an effective way of defining reality.

Another factor ritual has no intrinsic priority as a social strategy in establishing and maintaining such societies. Rather it works in concert with many other forms of activity and types of attitudes. Hence ritualization is not a single-handed method of social control, it is one of several ways of reproducing and manipulating the basic cultural order of a society as it is experienced embodied in, and reproduced by persons. Ritual is a matter of programmed learning through activities that involve the appreciation of codes principles, concepts, and their reproduction in practice in action (Smith, 1987:11). Ritual has generally been thought to express beliefs in symbolic ways for their continual reaffirmation and inculcation. This relationship is particularly prominent in theories of ritual as a form of social control. More frequently belief systems are understood to be a matter of cultural worldviews.

Victor Turner identified the symbol as the smallest unit of ritual and therefore the smallest mechanism of the transformation and integration effected in ritual (Turner, 1983:107). Ritualization is first and foremost a strategy for the construction of certain types of power relationships effective within particular social organizations. Rituals have assumed the close association of rites with belief. Ritual forms of solidarity are usefully promoted because they rarely make any interpretation explicit that is they focus on common symbols not on statements of belief. The power structure in the ritual e.g. oracle, the existence of freedom is necessary to the exercise of power or else what might be thought to be power is something much more like the force of necessity. Power must be grasped as quite different from the forces of violence or coercion. Every power relationship implies the potential for struggle or confrontation.

The dynamics of the social body depend in its projection and embodiment of a structured environment. Ritualization in this dimension as we have seen is a process that works below the level of discourse. It produces and objectifies construction then of power, which the social agent then re-embodies. The ultimate purpose of ritualization is neither the immediate goals avowed by the community nor the more abstract functions of social solidarity and conflict resolution (Rappaport, 1979:76). It is nothing other than the production of ritualized agents, persons who have an instinctive knowledge of these schemes embedded in their bodies in their sense of reality and in their understanding of how to act in ways that both maintain and qualify the complex micro-relations of power.

Ritualization is not a matter of transmitting shared beliefs instilling a dominant ideology as an internal subjectivity or even providing participants with the concepts to think with (Douglas, 1973:99). Ritualized practices require the external consent of participants while simultaneously tolerating a fair degree of internal resistance. Ritual symbols and meanings are too indeterminate and their schemes too flexible to lend.

All these process of ritualization can be applicable to *AyyappanThiyyattu* also. From the historical times onwards man started his life in traditional groups or *gotras* and these traditional groups have different iden-tity. The rituals, customs, rites, etc. to be considered as the important identity factor which given separate entity to each groups. The ritualization process provides *ThiyyadiNambiar* to exist with the separate entity and due to that they keep their own identity. Ritual gave meaning to their community and has a co-operating link with the past and future. *AyyappanThiyyattu*was the family vocation of the eight *Thiyyadi* families which centered in Thrissur district.

In the 19th century ritual denote a universal category of human experience. Religion explains the most emotional factor in life and most scholars stress the primacy of religious ideas born-off pseudo-scientific explanations or emotional experience as the basis of religion. From the viewpoint of Ervin Goffman, the Canadian Sociologist of the 20th century, ritual acts as a sociological interaction. Through the ritual, they communicate different ideas to the community in their surroundings and there is a kind of sociological interaction among the people of that particular locality (Goffman, 1970:113) besides through the ritual they are establishing their supremacy over the other castes. Above all rituals are an important factor that helps to establish individual relations with society. Rituals maintain a harmonious balance in the society. Perform ability of the rituals is accepted by the common people (Tambiah, 1979:14). This type of establishing supremacy and sociological interaction can be seen in the case of *AyyappanThiyattu*. It automatically gave high status and recognition to the *ThiyyadiNambiar* community. In another way, people recognize the unquestioned authority of *ThiyyadiNambiar*. From the initial phase of this ritual, *ThiyyadiNambiar*isin is a stage of liminality or thresholds (Turner, 1967:90). It took many years to get separate entities and recognition from the people and society.

The concept of three different stages of rituals was put forward by Arnold Van Gennep a Belgian scholar, pre-liminal, liminal, and post-liminal. But this concept was borrowed by Victor Turner and changed as separation-liminality or transition–incorporation. In a real sense, the

process of potential change was called liminality, as it involved an in-between state betwixt and between. Victor Turner argued that communities were more dominated by dynamic change processes than they were with static structures, as contemporary structuralists taught. Its thresholds lie between states or statuses, which the individual needs to cross the community and recognize the change. The ritual process describes change as a dynamic process. Structure means the social and power structure. This produces social action and co-operation which Turner calls *communitas* means all the positive aspects of community and togetherness. He used the Latin term communitas instead of community to represent an active partnership process rather than to describe a particular community. The partnership which is communitas is positive community action. This is in short all members of the community discussing together what is holistically right for everyone and listening to everyone who is affected.

The phase of separation or separation-liminality can apply to the case of *AyyappanThiyyattu* we can see the separation period or a period of spiritual retreat. In this stage, nobody has recognized their entity or existence. Actually, they were in a period of confusion and conflict. This complication led to a period of transition. This confused situation never gave them social status or real identity. With the passage of time, they reached a period of incorporation or aggregation. People recognized their identity and social status with this ritual. Before this, there was a period of liminality for those who stand in the corridor. Liminality can perhaps be described as a futile chaos and a store house of possibilities. The concept of liminality views the performance as a conduit of meaning which changes something within both devotees and performers.

When the *ThiyyadiNambiar* performs as an oracle in the ritual *Ayyappan Thiyyattu*, then he has transformed himself into a divine being. This is the particular moment that gives respect and social status to the *ThiyyadiNambiar*. This divine character has given a separate identity and a spiritual power to the performer and he can make prophetic utterances and also can invocate the divine blessings. The process of ritualization in the ritual *AyyappanThiyyattu* is completed only with this act. The *ThiyyadiNambiar* performs the role of oracle in the ritual *Thiyyattu*, his being had been elevated as a god or god-like figure. At that time everybody respected him and sought his blessings as god. Through this oracle, the identity of the *ThiyyadiNambiar* developed as a complete or perfect divine being. The whole community of that locality accepted the indomitable position of the *ThiyyadiNambiar* through this ritualization. Spirituality and the divine power of the communityhave increased through this ritual.

From the ideas of Catherine Bell everything including religion, society, and culture will be explained through ritual. Ritual is an inevitable part in the life of mankind (Bell, 1992:212).In the relationship of myth and rites ritual was used to explain the social existence and influence of religious ideas. In the historical pr- cess, ritual was reinforced as both as a central sociological concept and a universal category of social life. Hence ritual is the means by which individual perception and behavior are socially appropriated or conditioned. The simplest ritual activities are seen to fuse a people's conception of order and their dispositions for action. Ritual activity can then become meaningful to the theorist. Thus a cultural focus on ritual activity renders the rite a veritable window on the most important process of cultural life.

Ritual as an integrative mechanism is a synchronic force within the society, rendering it roughly equivalent to what he considers culture. Although it is fairly clear that ritual facilitates change, we logically kept from such a conclusion by the description of the rites. Ritual comes to be seen as performance in the sense of a symbolic act specifically meant to have an impact on an audience and entreat their interpretative appropriation. Cultural knowledge constituted through the study of ritual and performance appears to experiment with a new sense of community between theorists and performers, characterized by modest mutual dependence and shared problems of meaning epistemology and critical self-reflection.

Maurice Bloch interpreted ritual from a Marxist perspective. Rituals are an important and effective means of social control in only certain types of societies. Such societies must have a marked hierarchical structure of differentiated positions as well as a strong sense of corporate identity both evidenced in an assumption that interpersonal relations should be subordinated to the ordering of roles or positions. Ritual obscures a very basic issue namely the particular types of social arrangements in which ritual activities are an effective way of defining reality.

Ritual is a matter of programmed learning through activities that involve the appreciation of codes principles, and concepts and their reproduction in practices in action. Ritual has generally been thought to express beliefs in symbolic ways for the purposes of their continual reaffirmation and inculcation. The relationship is particularly prominent in theories of ritual as a form of social control. More frequently belief systems are understood to be a matter of cultural worldviews. Ritualization is first and foremost strategy for the con-struction of certain types of power

relationships effective within particular social organizations. Every power relationship implies the potential for struggle or confrontation.

James Frazer has elaborated on the concept of ritual and spirituality theory. In every case, the ritual appears to be explained simply and naturally by the supposition that the performers believe themselves to be freed from certain evils actual or threatened through the beneficent agency of fire which either burns up and destroys the noxious things or all events repels and keep them at bay (Frazer, 1894:410).On the other hand, there is much to be said for the view that the fire walk is a form of purification, the flames being thought either to burn up or repel the powers of evil. The fire walking and whirling of *thiri* or torch in the last stage of the *Ayyappan Thiyyattu*clear indication of warding off diseases and give solace to their family problems. Actually, *Thiyyattu* has performed as an offering to lord *Ayyappa*, with the Customs of stepping over fire for the purpose of getting rid of a ghost. The custom of passing images of gods through the fire may be simply a form of purification. The fertility of the land is supposed to depend on this ritual performance.

Thus it shows that almost all rituals came into existence from the earliest times of human settlement or at some point in social evolution. They performed these rituals to the village gods and goddesses for their protection, for begetting children, warding off evils, getting rid of epidemics, and for successful culmination of individual and social desires. In the case of particular ritual, or popular rituals have many social functions in the society. Participation of all sections of the society in these rituals sowed the seeds of communal harmony and mutual co-operation among the people. Actually, the rituals are part and parcel of their life; it gave meaning to their life. It provided solutions to the social, political, economic, and cultural problems of these people. In a sense, the performance of each ritual give solace to their material problems, and above all, this deep rooted and firm belief in rituals gave an emotional satisfaction and mental caliber to face daily problems. All rituals are visual extravaganza, and above all a meeting ground where high and low, rich and poor, performers and art lovers of all castes and demarcations gather to celebrate in a very special manner a mega festival of far- reaching religious, social, and environmental consequence while embracing much of the lands cultural lore and exceptional art. Most of the rituals of Kerala are virtually vanishing. Their existence is greatly threatened by the process of modernization and commercialization of life in the contemporary age and the accompanying changes in social and economic structure. In this context, it is not easy to find an effective way of preserving our rituals. The

problem is more acute in the case of rituals because preserving them also means preserving the belief that gave birth to them. To preserve the old beliefs would perhaps be an unscientific and obscurantist approach. The total eradication of smallpox-like diseases has made it impossible to revive the rituals. Similarly, the rural life of Kerala was sustained by agriculture and rituals thrived under the feudal structure prevalent at that time.

The same problem is everywhere in the case of almost all rituals. On the one hand, efforts are being made to bring all rituals in the mainstream of the society. The other, we cry ourselves hoarse about the need to present the traditional rituals. As they get modernized, the uniqueness of their life is lost. This process takes its toll on their rituals by creating a kind of composite culture. However, there appears to be no consensus regarding the mode of preservation of rituals. Some expect them to change with times whereas others want them to be kept in their pristine form. There are still others who demand that such outdated rituals should be discarded totally. Theoretical synchronization is applied in the Ritual *AyyappanThiyyattu*. There are too many theories regarding the ritual practice, this ritualization provides a kind of social entity to *AyyappanThiyyattu*.

Conclusion

It would be a futile attempt or exercise to either preserve rituals in their original form or to improve upon them. Rituals are inseparably united so it would not be feasible to remove the ritual component and preserve the art form alone. Many scholars felt that once a ritual takes shape, it will pass on from one generation to the next. Superficial changes that overcome society cannot remove deeprooted beliefs and the rituals that protect them. Time instead will decide their fate. Neither blind acceptance of the village rejection of tradition is desirable. Only if tradition is understood thoroughly, can the good elements be preserved and the bad discarded. What we need is not a complete revival but collection, documentation and objective analysis of rituals leading to dissemination of knowledge about them. Theory should be studied with scientific insight and in relation to modern trends. Further, monographs on extinct and extant rituals should be prepared they should be recorded in audio and video and preserved in archives as well as museums. When we go through all the important theories related to rituals, it shows that rituals play an important role in the life of human beings and it is difficult to surpass that.

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Conceptualising and Theorising Contemporary "Society": Paradigms and Perspectives

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Abstract

Ever since the emergence of social sciences, there have been serious attempts from many prominent scholars to define, conceive, conceptualise, perceive, perpetuate, and even theorise the social dimensions of human beings and natural entities. These efforts gradually gave birth to new branches of knowledge like Sociology, Anthropology, Cultural Studies, Ecology, etc. Scientific spirit and academic rigor have an innate tendency to define everything, even abstract entities like human 'collectivities', collective consciousness, institutions, and interaction patterns. Different scholars held varied and sometimes contradictory views on these aspects, thus making academia a contested territory of ideas. This paper looks into the emerging conceptualisations of human collectivities with an effort to lay bare the inherent complexities of those forms of knowledge. What is the best way to refer to the pivotal nature of the contemporary social situation? What are the justifiable choices? these striking questions echoing in academia are the major concerns of this paper.

***Keywords**: Hybrid society, Virtual collectives, Social spaces.*

In contrary to natural science where quantitatively definable conceptualisations constitute the foundations of academic knowledge, social sciences always find an alternative way to define (if there is no absolute definiteness) various things, processes, forms and functions by taking into account of the necessary and sufficient conditions to conceptualise those entities. But in practice, we can see that these conditions vary with space and time and therefore it is meaningless and illogical to "define" social entities as natural sciences do. In social sciences, such an effort will always be reductionistic as it curtails the latent dimensions which are generally expressed as qualitative dimensions.Therefore, the so-called "definitions" in social sciences are more or less semantic expressions or reference terms carrying few manifestable characteristics. For example, the concept of "society" only implies a mental construct having few necessary and sufficient conditions such as a "collectivity", having some sort of structural or functional

connectivity and a common identity in terms of any objective criteria like people belonging to a specific territory, place, etc. Ever since the emergence of Sociology as an academic discipline, thinkers like Auguste Comte, Emile Durkheim, Max Weber, etc tried their best to define Sociology without referring the term society. For example, Comte defined Sociology as the scientific study of "social phenomena" but for Weber it is the study of "social action". Durkheim defined Sociology as the study of "social facts" which he conceptualised as a collective way of thinking, feeling, and acting. It is with the emergence of the structural-functional perspective proposed by Talcott Parsons that the concept of Society became the major concern of Sociology. Thereafter, Sociology is broadly referred to as the scientific study of "society".That is, when the major concern of a discipline itself is ill-defined, it affects the consistency and rigour of theoretical perspectives also. It is evident in the case of Sociology as most of its major theoretical perspectives fail to develop a coherent view of the concept of society. Later, when the post-structuralist and post-modernist perspectives dominated the theoretical realm in Sociology academia, most of the constituent characteristics of the concept of society were questioned. Therefore, now even though sociological theories extensively deal with societal aspects, there are deliberate efforts to give up the concept of society. Therefore, it will be interesting to look into the various ways by which the present-day social situation is interpreted by various social scientists.

Among the various sociologists, it was Henri Lefebvre who put forward a new conceptualisation of social spaces which was more dynamic than the equilibrium model of the social system. Later, many thinkers like Pierre Bourdieu, Anthony Giddens, etc., tried to theorise the innate capacity of social spaces to reproduce in accordance with the power interventions. Even though these theoretical perspectives were more insightful, in-depth, and intricate, it was found to be under-utilised especially in the research arena as a theoretical framework. The reason for this scenario was primarily due to its complexity in dealing with qualitative dimensions of human affairs that are close to individualistic and behaviouristic aspects. For example, the concept of habitus proposed by Pierre Bourdieu is an interesting tool to deal with the micro-macro linkage of societal affairs. At the same time, in a research endeavour it is hard to use it as a part of a theoretical framework because of its abstractness and subjective dispositions. In short, we can say that even though there are numerous theoretical perspectives in Sociology, only a few are used as a constituent part of research frameworks. Same is the case when

academicians try to conceptualise the present-day social situation. There are plenty of new concepts like hyper reality, information society, risk society, heterotopia, liquid modernity, late capitalism, post-fordism, etc.

Among the above concepts Bauman's liquid modernity, Giddens' late modernity and Baudrillard's hyperreality are seemingly more close to the present scenario. By coining the term "liquid modernity", Bauman tries to encapsulate in a nutshell the characteristics of today's highly globalized and consumer societies. Boundaries have become fluid and we live in an age of uncertainty as in a globalized world grappling with contested and fragmented identities. Liquid modernity is a continuum of modernity or in other words, one can say that liquid modernity is a developed version of modernity. Individuals are provided with multiple choices and freedom to choose in a consumer society, but this freedom of choice also creates a chaotic situation whereby an individual can move from one social position to another in a fluid manner. This freedom of mobility creates a hierarchy where the affluent majority are benefited while the poor and marginalized are sidelined. Bauman provides us with a theoretical perspective of the condition of future of our society by coining the term liquid modernity, and engages with the dynamics of changing social relationships and loosening bonds between people (Bauman 2000).

Giddens has described the modern world as a juggernaut. It is the advanced stage of modernity. Because of its advanced stage, he calls it late modernity. Modernity is like a powerful machine. If it is not controlled meaningfully, it can be highly harmful to society. But, if taken up cautiously, it can be beneficial also.Juggernaut is a runaway engine of enormous power which collectively as human beings, we can drive to some extent but which also threatens to rush out of control and which could tend itself asunder. The juggernaut crushes those who resist it and while it sometimes seems to have a steady path, there are times when it veers away erratically in directions we cannot foresee. The uncertainties in explaining the direction of societal change is evident in the conceptualisation of modernity as juggernaut. Ulrich Beck opines that we are no longer in the era of industrial society, but moving towards "risk society". The risk society is a form of modern society or part of reflexive modernization. Giddens views modernity in terms of security versus danger and trust versus risk. He considers modernity as a double-edged phenomenon. Although modernity has created vastly greater opportunities for human beings to enjoy, at the same time it has a somber side.

For Baudrillard, postmodern societies are characterized by dedifferentiation, the "collapse" of (the power of) distinctions, or

implosion. In his society of simulation, the realms of economics, politics, culture, sexuality, and the social all implode into each other. In this implosive mix, economics is fundamentally shaped by culture, politics, and other spheres, while art, once a sphere of potential difference and opposition, is absorbed in to the economic and political, while sexuality is everywhere. In this situation, differences between individuals and groups implode in a rapidly mutating or changing dissolution of the social and the previous boundaries and structures upon which social theory had once focused. This conceptualisation negates the notion of stable structures and objective "realities" and thus inevitably envisages a social condition heavily manipulated by media and communication.

The Coming of Post-Industrial Society by Daniel Bell was another significant effort to describe the impact of advanced technologies in regulating societal affairs. This work constitutes an attempt to describe a newly emerging social reality which while not determining political and cultural life (a point which Bell stresses but which is often implicitly ignored by others, including political scientists who have taken over his ideas) does at least strongly condition them. Its focus is on the changing nature of work and work relationships, on the increasing role of scientists and technicians in the social order, and on the allegedly central role increasingly played by theoretical knowledge in social change and the making of societal decisions, a role epitomized by the rise of social and economic planning as a tool of public policy. All these changes taken together—and the book is replete with empirical and statistical data (some of dubious cogency) attempting to illustrate them—constitute what Bell denominates the emergence of a new society that he calls post-industrial. The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism is a series of loosely related essays that seek primarily to defend post-industrial society—based as it is on rationalism and technical efficiency—against what Bell sees as a growing menace from irrational and hedonistic forces spawned by the very successes of advanced capitalism in creating affluence and opportunities for individual self-expression.

Most of these conceptualisations remain as reference terms without contributing much to the production of theories. It is mainly because of the inherent nature of present societies to deconstruct all the institutional configurations through which these concepts are developed. For example, the term "post-truth" is still used as jargon since there is no precise definition for truth. In other words, we can say that the present social situation cannot be interpreted or intervened with the limited theoretical vocabulary hitherto developed in formal academia.

Towards a Hybrid Society?

We need to have new conceptualisations, especially in the context of the increasing influence of technology in societal life. Such a situation is more significant in the post-covid era in which the centers of power overwhelmingly used technology to monitor human affairs. Even though Michel Foucault talked about technology-driven power interventions by using the concept of panopticon, he never envisaged the technocratic social condition that we see now in the era of artificial intelligence. Here, the concept of "hybrid society" is more realistic to refer to the impact of mass media and digital devices in personal life as the present-day social situation indispensably led to the processes of atomisation and estrangement. "Hybrid society" allows getting into new 'collectivities' through virtual media. The concept of risk society by Ulrich Beck is also well connected with such hybridsocieties as the technology is always embedded with innate risks of external interventions. However the concept of risk society is more concerned with the anticipated hazards in a post-industrial society where the risks are more unpredictable and latent by nature. The proposal of this paper is to elaborate the efforts of existing theoretical perspectives to deal with the nuances of contemporary societal life. What we need is to have more insightful theory-driven conceptualisations, not reference terms or jargons.

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A Study on Fans of Reality Show Celebrity: Personality Traits and Attachment Pattern

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Abstract

Reality shows such as Big Boss influence fandom behaviour, especially among adults, by serving as role models and encouraging people to mimic their words and actions. The study examines the personality traits, attachment patterns, and fandom behaviour among fans of celebrities in reality show, particularly Dr. Robin Radhakrishnan (Big Boss contestant). The research aims to highlight the harmful impact of negative role modelling and examines similarities between fans' personality traits and Dr. Robin's. The study uses variables such as personality, attachment, narcissism, and fandom behaviour. A sample of 80 participants aged 18-35 from Kerala was used for data collection. The results showed a significant relationship between fanship degree and narcissistic traits, as well as a positive association between fanship degree and attachment style. However, no relationship was found between fanship degree and personality traits. The study suggests a larger, more representative sample to further explore and confirm the results.

***Keywords**: BigBoss, Reality Shows,Personality,Fanship,Attachment, Narcissism*

Introduction

Media plays a crucial role in shaping public opinion and influencing people's perspectives. It serves as a platform for information dissemination, entertainment, and cultural expression. People consume and interact with media, forming their beliefs, values, and attitudes based on the content they encounter. Media fandoms are formed by fans who are passionate about a particular franchise, celebrity, or cultural phenomenon. Fandoms can be found in various areas of entertainment, such as sports teams, movies, actors, games, and celebrities.

Fandoms are defined as cultural communities that share a common mode of reception and social norms, practices, and expectations (Jenkins, 1995, p.144). Fans of a particular person, object, or culture are considered

a community or subculture, connecting people of diverse cultures and cutting across geographic and generational boundaries. Technological advancements have expanded resources for fan involvement in fandoms, leading to new media-fandoms and expanding their fan base worldwide.Fandom behavior is the set of attitudes and actions exhibited by fans in their engagement with the object of their fandom. This includes active participation, dedication, and emotional investment in various ways, such as expressing enthusiasm, creating fan content, interacting with other fans, and supporting the subject of their fandom through various channels.

Media fandom often leads to negative role modeling, particularly in teenagers, which can promote unethical, irresponsible, or harmful actions. Television shows like Bigg Boss and Kaun Banega Crorepati have a great impact on cultivating model figures in people. Factors contributing to the show's popularity include celebrity appeal, controversies, and the format of the show, which allows viewers to vote for their favorite contestants and generates buzz on social media platforms.

Bigg Boss is a popular show that combines emotional connections, active participation, and social interactions to shape individual perspectives and societal trends. Fans become emotionally invested in the show's participants, leading to passionate discussions and debates. Robin Radhakrishnan, a strong contestant in Bigg Boss Malayalam 4, was expelled from the show for allegedly hitting inmate Riyas, but he still gained a large fanbase across Kerala.

Review of literature

A 2010 study by Reysen and Branscombe found that sports fans share similarities and perceive themselves as part of a group. A 2018 study by Collisson, Browne, McCutcheon, Britt, and Browne examined the relationship between celebrity attraction and interpersonal trust. A study by Spinda, Wann, & Hardin (2016) found significant differences in points of attachment (POA) among sports fans. Roberts (2007) found a positive association between attachment-related anxiety and avoidance, suggesting a connection between stalking and celebrity harassment. Levental et al. (2021) found that fans with secure attachment styles exhibited higher self-esteem and devotion to their favorite sports team. Greenwood (2008) found adult attachment style predicts interpersonal engagement with fictional media personas, impacting emotional well-being. Cohen’s (2004) study found negative reactions to the loss of favourite characters.

Objectives

- To assess the degree of fandom behavior among fans of celebrity in Big Boss reality show
- To find the relationship between the degree of fanship and the Big Five personality traits of fans
- To find the relationship between the degree of fanship and the attachment style of the fans
- To find the relationship between the degree of fanship and the narcissism of the fans

Statement of the problem

Considering the key objectives, the study has been entitled "*A Study on Fans of Reality Show Celebrity: Personality Traits And Attachment Pattern"*

Definition of key terms

Personality: "Personality is the dynamic organization within the individual of those psychophysical systems that determine his characteristics behaviour and thought" (Allport, 1961).it is the "characteristics or blend of characteristics that make a person unique" (Weinberg & Gould, 1999).

Attachment: Attachment is defined as a "lasting psychological connectedness between human beings" (Bowlby, 1969, p. 194), and may be considered interchangeable with concepts such as "affectional bond" and "emotional bond."

Fandom behaviour: Fandom can be defined as a cultural community which shares a Common mode of reception, as well as a set of social norms, practices and expectations (Jenkins, 1995). Fanship or Fandom often leads to "fandom behavior," which is the set of attitudes and actions exhibited by fans in their engagement with the object of their fandom

Narcissism: Narcissism is the excessive self-love or egocentrism. In psychoanalytic theory, the taking of one‟s own ego or body as a sexual object or focus of the libido or the seeking or choice of another for relational purposes on the basis of his or her similarity to the self. (APA)

Hypothesis

- There will be no significant relationship between the degree of fanship and the personality traits of fans
- There will be no significant relationship between the degree of fanship and the attachment style of the fans

Participants

Eighty participants aged 18- 35 from Kerala is taken for study. Data was collected via Google Forms questionnaires and phone interviews. The participants were required to finish 3 scales and a personal data sheet. It took nearly 10 minutes to mark the responses. All the participants voluntarily participated in the study.

Sampling procedure

Initially, consent of the participants was taken online via Google form sheet, which is an online platform for data collection. This was followed by measures used for the study which included Socio-demographic data, the Big Five personality inventory, the Revised Attachment scale, and The Narcissistic Personality Inventory. A total of 86 items were there for all the measures. Google forms were given to 130 participants and 80 responses were gained. In addition to this, an online data collection is carried out through phone interviews. Participants were free to answer and ask doubts if needed. More clarity about their fandom behaviour, personality, attachment styles, and narcissistic traits was gained through this method. To get a representative sample of the population (fans of big boss celebrity Dr. Robin Radhakrishnan), contacted different fan group admins and fan association heads this made data collection easier. The email ID of the researcher was also provided for contact, so as to clarify doubts, if any while filling out the forms. Participants were informed that they could contact the researcher for further clarification or assistance.Big Five Personality Scale is a 44-item inventory that measures an individual on the Big Five Factors (dimensions) of personality (Goldberg, 1993) of Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness and Neuroticism. It is a 5-point Likert type scale ranging from 1 (Disagree strongly) to 5 (Agree strongly). On average across the five factors, the reliability coefficient is 0.88, which may be considered very high

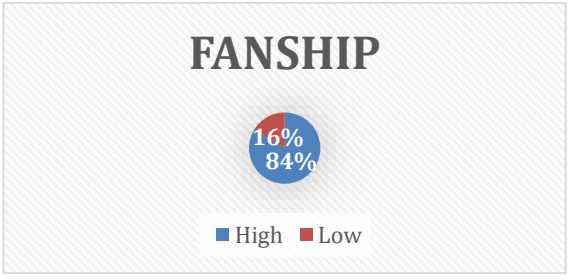
The Fanship Scale is a unidimensional 11-item self-report scale measuring psychological fanship and was designed to facilitate any kind of fan interest (Reysen & Branscombe, 2010). Sample items on the Fanship

Scale include: “I would devote all my time to my interest if I could” and “I want to be friends with people who like my interest and all items are self assessed on a likert scale ranging from one to nine. The scoring procedure for the Fanship Scale involves tallying up the item scores (one item is scored in reverse) and interpreting the final score as a level of fanship. The fanship scale is highly reliable according to a McDonald‟s Omega reliability computation (11-items, $\omega = 0.88$).

The revised Attachment scale by Collin contains three subscales, each composed of six items. The three subscales are CLOSE, DEPEND, and ANXIETY. The CLOSE scale measures the extent to which a person is comfortable with closeness and intimacy. The DEPEND scale measures the extent to which a person feels he/she can depend on others to be available when needed. The ANXIETY subscale measures the extent to which a person is worried about being rejected or unloved. Cronbach's alpha coefficients in normal group are higher than 0.7. The discriminatory validity in anxiety and close-dependence dimension is good. The score of construct-related validity is high .The Narcissistic Personality Inventory–13 (NPI-13; Gentile et al., 2013) is a 13-item shortened version of the 40-item Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI, NPI-40; Raskin & Terry, 1988), used to assess grandiose narcissism. The NPI-13 is based on the three-factor structure of the NPI-40: 1. Leadership/Authority (LA), 2. Grandiose Exhibitionism (GE), and 3. Entitlement/Exploitativeness (EE) (Ackerman et al., 2011). Expert ratings, item-response theory (IRT) analyses, and exploratory factor analyses were all employed to select the final 13-item measure, with 4 LA items, 5 GE items, and 4 EE items. Using samples of undergraduates, US adults, and clinical outpatients, additional analyses revealed that the NPI-13 has good convergent and discriminant validity and adequate overall reliability

Result and Discussion

Degree of fanship



A total of 80 samples were taken and they were classified based on the Fanship scale by Reysen & Branscombe, 2010.Eighty four percent of the total sample exhibited High fanship and 16% exhibited low fanship

Table 1: Pearson correlation of degree of Fanship and Big five personality traits

Variables		Extraversion	Conscientiousness	Agreeableness	Neuroticism	Openness to experience
Fanship	Pearson's correlation	.041	.110	-.108	-.036	.077
	Significant difference	.742	.374	.384	.769	.534

The study indicates no significant correlation between fanship and the Big Five personality traits among fans of Dr. Robin Radhakrishnan, despite his popularity as a reality show star. This suggests that fanship behavior is not strongly influenced by core personality dimensions in this context.

Table 2: Pearson correlation of Fanship and Attachment style

Variables		Close	Depend	Anxiety
Fanship	Pearson's correlation	.422**	.374**	-.060
	Significant difference	.000	.002	.627

The Pearson correlation analysis demonstrates a significant association between fandom and all attachment styles identified by Collins in the revised attachment scale, with the strongest relationship observed between fandom and a close attachment style (r = .422, SD = 0).The study by Collisson et al. (2018) supports the finding that attachment styles can influence how people are drawn to celebrities. While they found no major differences between attachment styles in celebrity admiration, the research highlights how attachment and trust play a role in celebrity worship. This aligns with our finding that fandom is strongly linked to attachment styles, especially close attachment

The study by Cole and Leets (1999) demonstrates that attachment styles Influence parasocial relationships with media personalities. Their

findings show that individuals with anxious-ambivalent attachment are more likely to form such bonds, while avoidant individuals are less likely. This suggests that attachment styles play a significant role in shaping interactions with public figures. These results support the finding in our study that fandom is strongly associated with attachment styles, particularly close attachment patterns.

Table 3: Pearson correlation of Fanship and Narcissistic traits

Variables		Leadership/ Authority	Grandiose/Exhibitionism	Entitlement /Exploitativeness
Fanship	Pearson's correlation	.323**	.323**	.275*
	Significant difference	.008	.008	.024

The results indicate a significant relationship between narcissistic personality traits and fandom. Specifically, leadership (r = .3), grandiosity (r = .3), and entitlement (r = .27) are positively associated with fandom behavior. These findings suggest that individuals with higher narcissistic traits may be more inclined toward fandom. The study by Sansone and Sansone (2014) finds that celebrity worship is linked to narcissistic traits like sensation-seeking and identity diffusion.This supports our finding of a significant relationship between narcissism (leadership, grandiosity, entitlement) and fandom.

Liebers and Schramm (2022) found that individuals with high dark triad traits, including narcissism, are more likely to engage in romantic parasocial interactions, linking narcissism to media character attachment. Similarly, Ash et al. (2023) highlighted a connection between narcissism and celebrity worship, suggesting that narcissists are prone to intense celebrity admiration. These findings align with our result, which shows a significant relationship between narcissistic traits (leadership, grandiosity, entitlement) and fandom behaviors, indicating that narcissism contributes to intense fandom experiences

The main statistic used for analyzing data is Pearson's correlation. After coding, the data have been subjected to descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings show that fanship is not significantly associated with the Big Five personality traits among Dr. Robin Radhakrishnan's

fans. The Pearson correlation analysis reveals a strong association between fandom and all attachment types introduced by Collin in his revised attachment scale, with a strong relationship between fandom and a close attachment pattern (r=.422, s.d. =.0). The result shows a significant relationship between narcissistic personality traits, (particularly leadership: r= .3, Grandiose: r= .3 and Entitlement: r= .27). It also suggests that passionate fans are more likely to develop authority and influence within their fan community.

Conclusion

Despite his reality show prominence, the study showed no significant relationship between fanship and Big Five personality traits among Dr. Robin Radhakrishnan's fans. However, fandom is closely connected with attachment types, particularly narcissistic traits like leadership and entitlement, implying that devoted fans develop authority and influence.

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Connected but Isolated: Generational Perceptions on Decreasing Interpersonal Interaction

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Abstract

We are living in a world where mediated communication dominates face-to-face communication. Even though the number and extent of communication is increasing, the depth and intimacy of social interactions are decreasing. Did actually social interaction decrease? Does it pose a threat to social life? This paper analyses the generational and rural-urban differences in the perception of changes in social interaction. The study is based on quantitative data collected from the young (aged between 18 and 35) and the old (aged above 60) from Kozhikode District, Kerala. 200 samples were randomly selected for the study, of which 100 were from rural and 100 from urban areas. The responses are elicited by using a structured interview schedule. Chi-Square Test is used to test the association between variables.

Keywords: *Decreasing social interaction, interpersonal interaction, mediated communication, generations, social change*

Introduction

Kerala has undergone a significant restructuring of its social fabric over recent decades. Changes are seen in social institutions, social interactions, communication patterns, way of life, material possessions, social mobility, etc. Traditional forms of interaction and communication are giving way to mediated communication via digital technologies, potentially impacting social capital and trust networks. Daily routines, customs, and consumption patterns are undergoing transformations influenced by globalization and exposure to diverse lifestyles. The transformation of communication structures and interaction patterns, driven by factors like technology and globalization, is not a singular phenomenon, it has cascading effects on all facets of social life, impacting the very foundations of social institutions.

This paper analyses the perceptions of generations on the changes in social interaction, its reasons, and its effects on social life. The rise of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) has undeniably transformed the landscape of human connections. Social media platforms, instant messaging services, and video conferencing tools have facilitated

an unprecedented level of mediated communication. Individuals are now connected to vast networks, fostering a sense of global interconnectedness. Information dissemination is instantaneous, and the ability to maintain relationship across geographical distances has become easier than ever before.

However, this explosion of communication channels has coincided with a concerning decline in face-to-face interaction and the erosion of traditional forms of social capital. Sociologists argue that the quality of social interaction is being compromised by the dominance of mediated communication. Turkle (2001) argues that while technology allows us to connect with a wider network of people, it can also lead to a sense of loneliness and isolation. She highlights the difference between "weak ties" formed online and the "strong ties" that develop through face-to-face interaction. Wellman et al. (2002) argue that the quality of social capital, not just the quantity of connections, is crucial for social well-being. The richness of nonverbal cues, the depth of emotional connection, and the sense of shared space that characterize face-to-face interactions are often missing in online exchanges. Furthermore, the curated nature of online personas and the fleeting interactions on social media can create a sense of social isolation even amidst a vast network of virtual connections.

Proposition

The study proposes that "amidst the increase in mediated communication, there is a perception that social interaction is decreasing. The elderly and the rural people are more concerned about this decreasing social interaction and they think it is a serious threat to society"

Methodology

The objective of this study is to analyze the perceptions of people on decreasing social interaction and its impact on society, and the differences in their perception based on their age, gender, place of residence, religious affiliation, and income status. The population for the study consists of the young and the old of Kozhikode District, Kerala. 200 samples were randomly selected for the study, of which 100 were from rural and 100 from urban areas. Half of the sample belongs to the young (aged between 15 and 35) and half to the old (aged above 60) category. Thus, the sample is constituted as below.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Generation	Rural	Urban	Total
Young	50	50	100
Old	50	50	100
Total	100	100	200

The samples were selected randomly by using the voters' list of the selected village wards and corporation wards. An interviews schedule was used to elicit primary data. Secondary sources like books, research papers, and the internet were also used.

Decreasing Interpersonal Interaction

Social interaction is the social exchange between two or more individuals. It is the basis for social structure and thus the key object of social inquiry. Social interaction is the process of reciprocal influence exercised by individuals over one another during social encounters. Gillin and Gillin (1948) define social interaction as the 'social relations of all sorts in functions-dynamic social relations of all kinds-whether such relations exist between individual and individual, between group and group and group and individual, as the case may be". Usually, social interaction refers to face-to-face encounters in which people are physically present with one another for a specified duration. The advent of the digital age along with globalization has brought unprecedented technological advancement, which transformed the form and nature of social interaction. Globalisation, technological development, and related changes have revolutionised communication and social interaction.

The internet and digital technology have transformed the nature and form of social interactions. Technology has reshaped the ways in which we interact in an unprecedented manner. The internet and digital technologies have transformed the way we live and work, during the past few decades. Contemporary innovations have reduced distance across the globe and the need for physical proximity for communicative interactions. The digital age, with its ever-increasing pace, has fundamentally reshaped how we interact. The rise of information and communication technologies like the internet, social media platforms, and mobile devices has ushered in an era of instantaneous global connections. These technologies have fostered unprecedented connectivity, allowing individuals to form relationships and communicate seamlessly across vast distances.

Communication has become mediated by machines and gadgets. The digital revolution has ignited an explosion of social interaction. Gone are the days of limited communication channels; the internet, social media, and mobile devices have woven a web of instant global connections. Individuals can now forge friendships, collaborate on projects, and share ideas with anyone across the globe, fostering a sense of unprecedented interconnectedness. This constant connectivity fosters vibrant online communities, where shared interests transcend physical boundaries. "The richness of the Internet can expand the range of interpersonal communication, increase people's communication opportunities in different regions and cultural backgrounds, and promote elastic contact between people, which has a positive effect on people's daily interpersonal interactions" (Lewis & West, 2009; Xiao & Bai, 2012).

On the other side, the high dependence upon mediated communication has reduced physical interaction between people. Studies show that technology has increased the number and ways of social interaction but reduced its quality and intimacy. Some theorists have suggested that Internet use increases social interaction and support (Silverman, 1999) while others have argued that it leads to decreased interaction and support (Kiesler & Kraut, 1999). There is a growing tendency that people are interacting more with machines than with men. This decreased physical interaction has serious impacts on social life. "Technology has become an integral part of the way that people communicate with one another and has increasingly taken the place of face-to-face communication" (Drago, 2015).

An interpersonal network established through the Internet is often unreliable and easily hinders real communication. Researchers believe that Internet use has a time and media substitution for interpersonal communication. That is, the more time people spend on the Internet, the less time they spend communicating in person (Putnam, 2000). Kraut et al. (1998) found that the Internet has a weak but significant negative impact on people's social participation and mental health. In mediated communication, strong social ties have been replaced by weak and transient social ties. Though people have wider social connections, mediated communication reduces the quality of and time spent on communication with family members and other people.

This study enquired whether people perceive any decrease in interpersonal interaction and whether there are any generational differences in their perception. Table 2 shows that more than three-fourths

(75.5%) of the respondents believe that interpersonal interaction is decreasing. There are only 17% who believe that interaction is increasing. The remaining perceive that there is no change in social interactions. There is a considerable variation between the generations in their opinion about the changes in interpersonal interaction. Table 2 shows details in this respect.

Table 2: Generation and Perception on Changes in Interpersonal Interaction

Generation	Interaction is increasing	Interaction is decreasing	No change	Total
Young	30 (30%)	63 (63%)	7 (7%)	100 (100%)
Old	4 (4%)	88 (88%)	8 (8%)	100 (100%)
Total	34 (17%)	151 (75.5%)	15 (7.5%)	200 (100%)

Chi square= 24.09, df=2, Table value=9.210, $P \leq 0.01$.
The association is significant.

It is evident from Table 2 that the elderly perceive more that interpersonal interaction is decreasing than the youngsters do. While 88% of the elderly believe that interaction is decreasing, the corresponding figure for the youngsters is 63%. It is notable that while 30% of the youngsters believe that interaction is increasing, only 4% of the elderly have that perception. It is evident that both young and old feel that there is a decrease in interpersonal interaction. However, a considerable portion (30%) of youngsters perceive that interaction is increasing in contemporary society. Even though face-to-face interactions are decreasing, mediated communication and interaction are increasing as a result of the growth of modern technologies. Technology has revolutionized the form and volume of interpersonal interaction today. "For at least a segment of our population, a number of face-to-face transactions are now mediated by computers and other interactive technologies" (Tubbs, 2010). The digital revolution has created a fascinating divide in how different generations perceive social interaction. For the elderly who are less accustomed to the intricacies of modern technology, communication might feel like a fading art. They feel that mediated communication is missing the soul. The challenges of navigating online tools and a yearning for the richness of face-to-face interactions can contribute to a sense of isolation. Conversely, the tech-savvy younger

generations, fluent in the digital language, see technology as a bridge, allowing them to connect seamlessly with loved ones and forge new bonds in vibrant online communities. Studies have proven that technology has led to a decrease in face-to-face communication. This can be seen in all social situations, from family to workplace. Communication in interpersonal relationships has been influenced by technology with its advantages and disadvantages (DeVito, 2005). "There are times when the one-on-one communication between human beings falls through the cracks and technology can take control over a family" (Sorensen, 2010). "It is a typical scene in modern families these days that the father may be watching the news on the television, the mother is busy fiddling with her smartphone, the sons are fighting aliens on the game console and the daughter is playing with the applications on her tablet. In *Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less From Each Other*, Turkle (2012) examined the effects of technology on familial relationships. After interviewing more than 300 young people and 150 adults, Turkle found that children were often times the ones complaining about their parents' obsession with technology. Turkle discovered that many children believed their parents were paying less attention to them than to their smartphones, often neglecting to interact with them face-to-face until they had finished responding to emails.

On the other hand, there are arguments that technology is increasing human interactions. DiMaggio et al. (2001) argue that "the internet enhances social ties" by putting "users in more frequent contact with families and friends". It allows individuals "to strengthen their connection with the extended family beyond their own nuclear family" (Yoon, 2006). The internet is therefore a new form of online interaction that enhances "offline relationships" (Wellman et al.2001). Contrary to many researchers' beliefs that technology impacts face-to-face communication negatively, Nancy Baym, principal researcher at Microsoft Research, doesn't share these concerns. She says research suggests that digital communications enhance relationships and that "the evidence consistently shows that the more you communicate with people using devices, the more likely you are to communicate with those people face to face." She says every new technology raises the fear that we will lose or lessen our human connections, but that we eventually figure out how to adapt (Adler, 2013).

To conclude, the digital age presents a contrasting experience for different generations**.** The elderly who are accustomed to a world

dominated by face-to-face interaction, feel a decrease in social interaction today. The digital divide can be identified as a major reason for this. It creates a sense of isolation among the elderly as navigating online tools proves challenging and the richness of in-person communication is lost. The youngsters, on the other hand, who have been born into the digital era feel that the situation is not so worse. Even though they have the perception that interpersonal interaction is decreasing to some extent, they are optimists. The digital devices are making them able to communicate and interact with a larger world. The vast capabilities of Information and Communication Technology allow them to connect with a wider world and forge new bonds in online communities.

The responses were further analysed on the basis of gender. It is revealed that gender is not significantly affecting the perceptions of the generations on changes in interpersonal interaction. That is, both males and females among the young and old uphold the same view regarding the changes in interpersonal interaction.

Analysis based on place of residence shows that rural people perceive a sharper decline in social interaction compared to their urban counterparts. 91% of the rural respondents perceive that interaction is decreasing, whereas the corresponding strength for the urban respondents is 60%. While there are no significant differences in the perception of the elderly in both rural and urban areas, it is highly remarkable that 50% of the youngsters in urban areas perceive that interpersonal interaction is increasing in contemporary society, whereas only 5% of the rural young have that perception. The corresponding strength for urban and rural elderly is 6% and 2% respectively (Tables 3 a & b).

Table 3: Place of Residence and Generations' Perception on Changes in Interpersonal Interaction

a) Young and Old Among Rural Community

Generation	Interaction is increasing	Interaction is decreasing	No change	Total
Young	5 (10%)	43 (86%)	2 (4%)	50 (100%)
Old	1 (2%)	48 (96%)	1 (2%)	50 (100%)
Total	6 (6%)	91 (91%)	3 (3%)	100 (100%)

Chi square= 3.27, df=2, Table value=9.210, P ≤0.01. The association is not significant.

b) Young and Old Among Urban Community

Generation	Interaction is increasing	Interaction is decreasing	No change	Total
Young	25 (50%)	20 (40%)	5 (10%)	50 (100%)
Old	3 (6%)	40 (80%)	7 (14%)	50 (100%)
Total	28 (28%)	60 (12%)	12 (12%)	300 (100%)

Chi square= 24.29, df=2, Table value=9.210, P ≤0.01. The association is significant.

Several factors might be contributing to the perception of urban youth that interaction is increasing. Social relationships vary according to age, gender, and place, where place element is a key factor to determine the nature of social activity for all ages (Holland C, et al, 2007). Anonymity and individuation are generally considered as the characteristics of urban society. Early-twentieth-century writings suggested that the social life of individuals in larger cities is more fragmented and impersonal than in smaller ones, potentially leading to negative effects such as social disintegration, crime and the development of a number of adverse psychological conditions (Wirth, 1938, Simmel, 1950). But research since the 1970s has dispelled many of these assumptions by mapping social relations across different places (Fischer, 1982, Wellman, 1999). With the development of modern technology, especially the internet and social networking sites, the urban youth have expanded their horizons of interactions. The social media platforms provide unlimited opportunities of making relationships. Further, as cities are expanding over space and the population is increasing, the city dwellers get more opportunities for interactions than the villagers. Cities are places for social interaction (Batty, 2012, Bettencourt, 2013)

Analysis based on religion also revealed a similar pattern. Across all religious affiliations, a significant majority (76%) of elderly respondents reported a perceived decrease in social interaction. In contrast, only around half (50-60%) of younger individuals within the same religious groups shared this perception. Remarkably, a considerable portion of the youngsters among Christians (29%) and Muslims (37%)

perceive that interpersonal interaction is increasing in contemporary society. Among the elderly too Muslims (18%) and Christians (15%) perceive more that interaction is increasing. Religious affiliation of people influences their socio-economic behaviour. Max Weber's classical work 'The Protestant Ethics and Spirit of Capitalism' establishes a firm relationship between religious affiliation and economic life. It was also demonstrated that religion and intensity of religiosity affect social interactions and attitudes: several studies related to donations (e.g., Flanagan, 1991; Barry, 1996; Brooks, 2003) show that intensity of religious participation is positively associated with amounts donated in charity giving. The comparatively strong community bond among Muslims and Christians may be the factor that contributed to their perception that social interaction is not that much decreasing.

Analysis on the basis of the income of the respondents also shows a similar pattern, i.e., regardless of their economic status, the elderly perceive more that interpersonal interaction is decreasing than the youngsters do. However, it shows that the high-income group perceives the most that interpersonal interaction is increasing, compared to the middle- and low-income groups. This difference in the perceptions based on income can be attributed to their differential access to social networks and modern digital gadgets. The affluent group gets more opportunities to interact with a wider circle. They get higher status and acceptance in society. High-income groups with greater access to modern Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and digital devices, enjoy a distinct advantage. These tools facilitate the expansion of their social circles and create more opportunities for interaction. Conversely**,** lower-income groups, often facing limited social mobility and restricted access to technology**,** may feel a decline in social interaction. Furthermore, a lack of digital literacy can further restrict their ability to build and maintain social networks online.

Reason for Decreasing Interpersonal Interaction

Various reasons can be identified for the decreasing social interaction. The study enquired about the major reasons behind the decreasing interpersonal interaction. Figure 1 shows the responses.

Figure 1: Reason for Decreasing Interpersonal Interaction as Stated by the Respondents

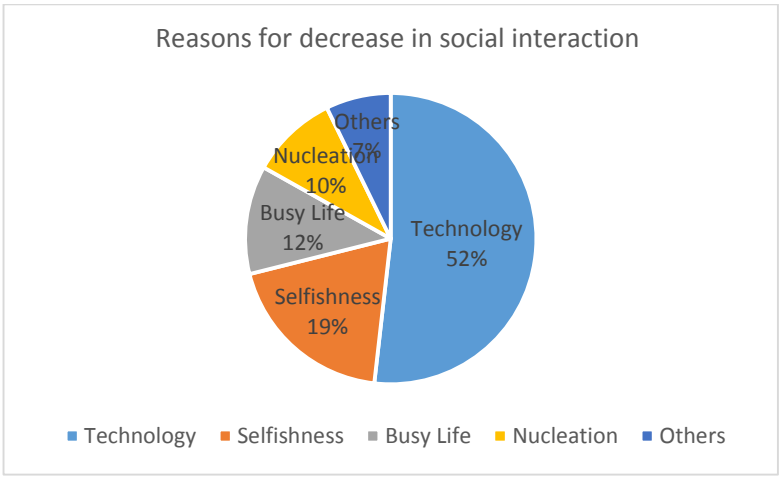

Figure 1 shows that the respondents perceive technology as the major reason for decreasing social interaction. Selfishness, Busy life, Nucleation and Affluence are the other major reasons identified by the study. The findings suggest that changes in communication technology might be perceived as the most significant factor behind the perceived decline in interpersonal interaction. No significant association is revealed between generations and their perception of the reason for decreasing interpersonal interaction, i.e., regardless of generational difference, people perceive that modern technology is reducing social interactions. This is against the general perception that modern technology and digital gadgets help improve social contacts and interaction. The prevailing narrative often positions technology as a facilitator of social connection, fostering communication and new relationships. However, a countervailing perception persists, suggesting that technology may actually lead to a decline in interpersonal interaction. This apparent contradiction can be illuminated by considering the concept of "real social interaction." Individuals who perceive technology as diminishing interaction may hold a more restrictive definition of what constitutes authentic social engagement. For them, the nuanced communication cues and nonverbal elements inherent in face-to-face interaction may be absent in technology-mediated communication, leading to a perception of a diminished social interaction. Technology is affecting the nature and volume of social

interactions in various ways. First, the more the time people engage with digital gadgets, the lesser their social interaction. the more time people spend using the internet during leisure time, the more time has to be detracted from social activities like communicating with friends, neighbours and family members (Nie et al., 2002). Wellman et al. (2006) note that internet usage may sometimes interfere with communication in the home, creating a "post-familial family" where family members spend time interacting with computers rather than with one another. Secondly, the internet and modern digital gadgets allow users to conduct many daily transactions such as shopping or banking online from home. This reduces the chances of face-to-face interactions. In today's digital world, men are interacting more with machines than with men. Thirdly, technology has changed the nature and intensity of communication. Even though it opens up wide horizons of acquaintances and social networking, the intensity of the communication is relatively low. This argument relies on the concept of "community without propinquity"(Weber, 1963) and on the earlier theories of the Chicago School of Sociology. In a famous paper, Wirth (1938) claimed that a heterogeneous urban environment would be characteristic of the absence of "intimate personal acquaintanceship" and would result in the "segmentation of human relations" into those that were "largely anonymous, superficial, and transitory". This argument can be easily applied to the internet, which seems to have the potential to fragment local communities into new virtual realities of shared interest that may negate the necessity (or even the desirability) of face-to-face encounters (Antoci, 2010).

Selfishness is the second major reason identified by people for decreasing interpersonal interaction. Capitalism and rational thinking make people more self-centered and calculative. Free-market economists regard people as 'tunnel-visioned self-seeking robots', 'totally selfish', and 'selfish, amoral agents'. 'Free-market ideology,' is built on the belief that people won't do anything "good" unless they are paid for it or punished for not doing it' (Chang,2010). Most of the interactions in contemporary society are characterized by a heightened emphasis on instrumental rationality**.** This perspective suggests that individuals prioritize interactions based on calculated benefits and potential costs, minimizing engagement deemed superfluous or unproductive. Consequently, social encounters may be curated to maximize efficiency and minimize unwanted interactions

Busy life and nucleation are the other two prominent reasons for decreasing interpersonal interaction identified by the study. People live a

hectic life and thus hardly get time to interact with and care others. The increased speed of life and a sense of time scarcity, can limit opportunities for social engagement. Rapid urbanisation, technological development, economic affluence, etc. are contributing to the increased speed of life in Kerala. Kerala is experiencing a fall in the size of households as a result of the demographic transition. Decreasing size of household leads to increasing nucleation of family. The average household size in Kerala is 4.3 (Census, 2011). Decreasing size of family decreases the opportunities for interaction among members. Urbanization, the growing participation of women in the workforce, and the intensification of daily life definitely decrease the chances for interaction.

Decreasing Interpersonal Interaction is a Challenge to Individual and Society

The study also enquired whether the respondents feel that decreasing social interaction is a challenge to individual and society, it is seen that 73% of the respondents feel that it is a challenge to individual and society, while the remaining (27%) feel that it is not a challenge. Table 4 shows the details in this respect.

When asked about the result of the decreasing interpersonal interaction, people identified 'social disintegration' (64.50%) and psychological problems (35.50%) as the major effects. However, no significant difference is evident between generation and their perception about the impact of decreasing interpersonal interaction upon society.

Table 4: Generation and Perception on Decreasing Interpersonal Interaction as a Challenge to Individual and Society

Generation	Is a challenge to individual and society	Is not a challenge	Total
Young	53 (53%)	47 (47%)	100 (100%)
Old	93 (93%)	7 (7%)	100 (100%)
Total	146 (73%)	54 (27%)	200 (100%)

Chi square= 40.59, df=1,Table value=6.635, $P \leq 0.01$.
The association is significant.

Table 4 also makes it clear that there is a marked difference between generations in their perception about decreasing social interaction as a challenge to social life. The elderly perceive decreasing interpersonal interaction more as a challenge to individual and society, than the youngsters do. 93% of the elderly believe that it is a challenge to individual and society. On the other hand, only 53% of the youngsters believe that way. This clearly shows that the youngsters are not that much concerned about the impact of decreasing interpersonal interaction. These differing perceptions of generations may stem from contrasting views on social capital and its role in a well-lived life**.** The youngsters, who are more depending on technology-mediated interaction may subscribe to a functionalist perspective, believing that technology can adequately fulfill social needs. This aligns with the concept of weak ties, where digital connections provide instrumental benefits without the demands of close relationships. Conversely, the elderly may hold a more interactionist perspective, valuing the strong ties formed through face-to-face interaction and the positive impact of social networks on individual and societal well-being.

Anxiety about Decreasing Interpersonal Interaction

It was also enquired whether the respondents are anxious about this decreasing interpersonal interaction. It is evident from the analysis that over three-fourths (76.26%) of the respondents expressed anxiety about this trend. The analysis also made it clear that the elderly are more anxious about the decreasing interpersonal interaction than the youngsters. 91% of the elderly are anxious about it, while the corresponding strength of the youngsters is 55%. This difference may be possibly because the elderly socialized in a more community-oriented era, may exhibit higher gregariousness and prioritize strong ties formed through face-to-face interaction. They are more concerned about the importance of interpersonal interaction for the well-being of society. They believe that interpersonal interaction is the cornerstone of social life. They think that face-to-face relations cannot be replaced by mediated interactions and communication. On the other side, the youngsters are less concerned about the importance of face-to-face relations. They may be believing that technology can adequately fulfill social needs by providing access to a wider social sphere and social life is easily possible in a mechanical way in modern society.

Conclusion

This paper analysed the perceptions of generations on decreasing social interaction. The paper was based on a study conducted among the young and the old of Kozhikode, Kerala, selected from both urban and rural areas. The study was based on the proposition that the perception of people on decreasing social interaction differs according to age and place of residence. The rise of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) has undoubtedly revolutionized communication, fostering global interconnectedness and instant information sharing. However, this explosion of online connections coincides with a decline in face-to-face interaction. The analysis reveals that when taken together, majority of the respondents believe that social interaction is decreasing. However, it is notable that there is marked difference between the young and the old in their perceptions. The elderly people very much believe that interaction is decreasing and that this poses serious challenges to individual and society. The young are not that much pessimistic about the decrease in social interaction. It is also revealed that the rural people believe that social interaction is decreasing very much and it has serious implications for society. However, the urban people, especially urban youth do not perceive such a serious decrease in social interaction. Analysis based on other variables, viz. gender, religion and income group also shows a similar pattern, i.e, irrespective of these variables, majority of the people perceive that there is a decrease in social interaction. Technology, selfishness, busy life and nucleation are the important reasons identified by the respondents for the decrease in social interaction. Majority of the elderly feel that this decrease is a serious threat to individual and society and they are very much anxious about the decreasing social interaction.

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Bridging the Gap: Citizenship, Public Participation, and Technoscientific Governance in India

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Abstract

In post-independent India, science, technology and innovation has largely been the domain of experts, with minimal public engagement. This exclusive nature has created a gap between the scientific community and society at large. However, recent development in Science, Technology, and Innovation Policies emphasize citizen participation as integral to fostering inclusive research and development. This review paper examines the intersections of citizenship, democracy, and governance in the realm of techno science, focusing on the public debates surrounding Genetically Modified (GM) crops in India. These debates involve diverse actors, including scientists, corporations, policymakers, civil society organizations, and farmers, highlighting the complexities of public engagement in science.

By referring to Science, Technology, and Society (STS) framework, the paper critiques traditional 'deficit models' of public engagement and explores participatory governance paradigms that integrate diverse knowledge systems, including local and indigenous perspectives. By analyzing the dynamics of rights, duties, participation, and identity in techno scientific discourse, the paper elucidates the challenges and opportunities of democratizing science and technology governance. The findings emphasize the need for a nuanced science-society contract that fosters cognitive justice, inclusivity, and public trust. It offers a sustainable pathways for equitable and responsive governance of science in India's rapidly evolving techno scientific future.

Keywords: *Techno science governance, Citizen Participation, Genetically modified crops, Science-society contract, Cognitive justice, Participatory governance*

In the post-independent India, public debates in and around science and technology have largely confined to the domain of experts. Most of the time, the public—or common people—has been excluded from policy narratives and the decision-making process. This elitism in the field of science and innovation has created a gap between the general population and the fields of research and development. However, recent developments

in Science, Technology, and Innovation Policy emphasized that the policy makers have to recognize the importance of citizen participation and inclusive development as critical concerns for the country's future.

In this context, debates about citizenship, democracy, and public participation in the realm of techno science have gained momentum. At the same time, these concepts remain unarticulated, contested, and misunderstood in both theory and practice. In this review paper, I will explore the importance of understanding these concepts and their various articulations within the debates on citizen participation and democratic engagement. The paper will unpack these ideas in the context of public discourse and policy narratives, helping to illuminate the evolving social contract between science and society in India. Specifically, I will examine the interconnections between science, citizenship, and governance through the lens of public debates surrounding genetically modified crops and related technologies.

The introduction of transgenic technologies into the domain of agriculture have sparked a strong public debate in the Indian subcontinent. The main reason for this outrageous response was the involvement of different actors and critical issues around this particular scientific knowledge and technological artefacts. The involvement of the diverse sections of people such as scientists, technocrats, corporations, civil society activists, local, national and transnational NGOs, policy makers, regulators, farmers, indigenous people, environmentalist and media has made this debate more complex and wide ranging. This wide range of people constitute the public of bioscience. In the science and citizen

In post-independent India, public debates surrounding science and technology have largely been confined to the domain of experts. Most of the time, the public—or common people—has been excluded from policy narratives and the decision-making process. This elitism in the field of science and innovation has created a significant gap between the general population and the domains of research and development. However, recent developments in Science, Technology, and Innovation Policy have emphasized the need for policymakers to recognize the importance of citizen participation and inclusive development as critical concerns for the country's future (GoI 2020).

In this context, debates about citizenship, democracy, and public participation in the realm of techno science have gained momentum. At the same time, these concepts remain unarticulated, contested, and often misunderstood in both theory and practice. In this review paper, I will

explore the importance of understanding these concepts and their various articulations within debates on citizen participation and democratic engagement. The paper will unpack these ideas in the context of public discourse and policy narratives, shedding light on the evolving social contract between science and society in India. Specifically, I will examine the interconnections between science, citizenship, and governance through the lens of public debates surrounding genetically modified crops and related technologies.

The introduction of transgenic technologies into agriculture has sparked vigorous public debate in the Indian subcontinent. The primary reason for this intense response lies in the involvement of diverse actors and critical issues surrounding this specific scientific knowledge and technological artifact. The participation of various groups, including scientists, technocrats, corporations, civil society activists, local, national, and transnational NGOs, policymakers, regulators, farmers, indigenous communities, environmentalists, and the media, has made this debate more complex and wide-ranging. Collectively, these diverse stakeholders constitute the "public" of bioscience.

Citizenship and Public Engagement in post Independent India

In this paper, I do not attempt to review recent debates and various perspectives on the notion of citizenship. Undertaking such a task would be herculean, especially given the vast amount of literature available on citizenship and its different manifestations across historical and socio-political contexts. In India, the practice of citizenship is framed around notions of "rights and duties," "responsibilities and choices," and "entitlements and obligations" of individuals toward the country. These rubrics provide meaningful entitlements, moral obligations, membership, and the capacity to engage or participate in a community (Mithra, Subrata, 2010).

Before delving into the intersections between citizenship, democracy, and governance in the context of science and technology, it is important to understand how the concept of citizenship is framed in political sociology literature. Subrata Mithra (2010), in his recent survey of citizenship in India, argues that "citizenship is a specific form of political identity." According to Mithra, "[i]t is a political variable and not merely a legal concept," and "nationality is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for citizenship" (Mithra, Subrata, 2010).

He further elaborates that "citizenship derives from a set of core considerations of rights to which the citizen feels entitled and some moral

obligations that the citizen considers fundamental. The citizen sees himself as the agent of his political destiny and that of the political collectivity of which he is a part" (Mithra, S., 2010, p. 46). Based on a detailed empirical study, Mithra concludes that "citizenship emerges as the convergence of the individual's self-perception, rights, and capacities as well as loyalties, values, and sentiments" (Mithra, S., 2010, p. 52). Thus, citizenship entails the following:

- Membership in a politically bounded and sovereign community.
- The right to engage in socio-political deliberations as a community member.
- Participation in decision-making on policy-related issues.
- Access to natural and other resources.
- A "cognitive right" to have their knowledge claims included in policy domains.

In India, the concept of citizenship within the context of science and polity is deeply rooted in notion of developmentalism. This implies that progress in science and technology is intrinsically linked to the advancement of society and the nation as a whole. State institutions and the scientific community are often tasked with educating the public on the potential benefits of scientific and technological developments. Modern science and technological artifacts are regarded as neutral entities that serve societal progress. The state's role is to ensure the development of science and make it accessible for societal benefit.

However, the nuanced and complex interactions among the state, science, and the public reveal that this simplistic understanding of the citizen-science contract is inadequate to address contemporary issues. Terms such as "people," "citizen," "public," "civil society," and "stakeholder" are frequently used in policy and academic literature to capture the dynamics of citizenship.

On one hand, "people's participation" in policymaking processes, "public engagement" with the governance of risks and benefits of new technological artifacts, and "civil society protests" against Bt Brinjal or large hydroelectric projects are manifested as citizens' participation. On the other hand, rights such as "farmers' rights" over seeds, "indigenous communities' traditional rights" to forest resources, and the "scientific community's right" to conduct research in their respective fields represent other articulations of citizenship.

Policy documents also highlight development for the country, development with a "human" touch, or "inclusive" development. Similarly,

they emphasize scientific knowledge and technological artifacts for the "betterment of the people," biotechnology for "farmers and rural communities," and the "consumer's right" to know whether food products contain GMOs. These attributes of citizenship raise critical questions about its performance as both a legal entitlement and a political practice. In the context of public policy in general—and biotechnology regulation in particular—there is a growing need for more scholarly articulations and academic engagement.

Citizenship and Science Technology Studies

This section focuses on the Science, Technology, and Society (STS) perspective on citizens and citizenship, particularly in the context of recent developments in science and technology and public engagement in the governance of biotechnology. The STS scholarship has paid limited attention to the nuances of citizenship and public actions in the realm of science and technology. As Melissa Leach, Ian Scoones, and Brian Wynne (2005) noted:

"The need to clarify our understanding of the complex interfaces and intersections between science and citizenship is now more pertinent than ever. There have always been issues and controversies over how people relate to science, and how science reflects its human contexts; but these are now unfolding in a new, more pervasive and complex, and arguably more urgent, context" (Leach, Scoones, and Wynne, 2005).

In STS, two central approaches to public engagement with science are often discussed. The deficit model advocates for educating the public and laypeople about scientific issues, while the dialogue approach emphasizes involving the public in discussions with experts. Since the 1990s, the notion of "public engagement" in technoscience has triggered academic and political interest in the role of citizens in decision-making and the need to democratize science policy, particularly in the West.

The Public Engagement with Science (PES) paradigm has exposed both challenges and opportunities for public participation in technical decision-making processes. Traditionally, decisions about science were the exclusive domain of state bureaucracies and technoscientific bodies. The PES paradigm challenged the deficit model, which often portrayed citizens as "ignorant" or "irrational." Under this model, public critique of science was viewed as a lack of knowledge, and public indifference was seen as anti-science or opposed to technological progress. The deficit model assumed that improving public understanding would naturally lead to acceptance and trust in science and technology.

However, empirical studies in STS have questioned this paradigm, particularly recent studies on public engagement with technoscience and citizenship. STS scholarship on citizenship has focused on debates around "expertise and lay knowledge" (Collins and Evans, 2002), "citizen science" (Irwin, 2001), and "civic epistemology" (Jasanoff, 2005). Alan Irwin (1995, 2001) emphasized the importance of public participation in knowledge production and policymaking, defining "citizen science" as the "participation by non-experts in the governance of society when dealing with technically-based topics" (Irwin, 2001). For Irwin, citizen science operates on three levels:

1. Science that addresses the needs and concerns of citizens.
2. Science developed and enacted by citizens themselves.
3. Contextual knowledge generated outside formal scientific institutions.

The "third wave" debate, initiated by Collins and Evans (2007), provided a more rigorous conceptualization of public participation in technoscience. This debate envisioned a new perspective on citizenship in the context of policy-relevant technoscientific developments. Broadly, the PES paradigm in STS emphasized that "science and technology can be reframed, reshaped, and redirected by numerous social factors that extend beyond the reach of technical expertise" (Fisher, 2011).

So, the STS perspectives have introduced new variables and actors into discussions of science and citizenship. Questions of citizenship in the context of technoscience revolve around public engagement with issues concerning technological developments, particularly in policy-relevant science that directly impacts people, economies, politics, and society at large. Citizenship here goes beyond legal status to include public participation in science and technology.
Four critical questions in contemporary debates about citizenship and techno science are:

- Who has the right to choose among different technological options?
- How should society shape its technological future?
- Who has the authority and mechanisms to regulate risks and uncertainties associated with new technologies?
- Who has access to new technologies, and how can access be broadened across different societal constituencies?

These questions highlight four dimensions of citizenship—rights, duties, participation, and identity (Delanty, 2005). Discussions of these dimensions help map the domain of citizenship in relation to policy

discourses, particularly those involving public participation in the governance of biotechnology. Among these dimensions, rights and participation dominate academic and policy debates.

In the case of technoscience, the right to be included in debates and decisions, the right to participate in policy discussions, and the right to influence technical decisions are central. The Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) regime and the entry of multinational corporations into agriculture raise critical questions about the rights of traditional farmers, indigenous communities, and consumers. For example, debates about genetically modified crops bring new dimensions to the rights discourse, such as consumers' rights to safe food and proper labeling of GMO-containing products. As Jasanoff (2004) has argued:

"[I]ntroducing, or reintroducing, the concept of citizenship into these discussions may help to put the emphasis back where it belongs: on citizens' rights, obligations, cognitive capacity, and imaginative power to steer the courses of science and technology towards shared visions of betterment" (Jasanoff, 2004).

Policy documents, media reports, political rhetoric, and governmental and non-governmental publications in India illustrate the evolving meanings of citizenship. They also highlight continuities and discontinuities between constitutional definitions of citizenship and its performance in various socio-temporal contexts.

In techno science, citizenship examines public engagement with new technologies and its role in democratizing design, innovation, marketing, consumer choice, and governance. Bruce Lewenstein (2004) developed a three-part definition of citizen participation or citizen science:

1. Participation of non-scientists in data gathering according to scientific protocols and in interpreting the data.
2. Engagement of non-scientists in decision-making on policy issues with scientific or technical components.
3. Involvement of scientists in democratic and policy processes.

Including local or traditional knowledge in policy discourse also represents a form of citizenship assertion. This inclusion broadens citizenship by incorporating diverse actors—such as traditional farmers and indigenous communities—and long-standing knowledge systems. The principle underlying these assertions is the demand to widen democratic horizons. As Beverly Gibbs (2015) outlined, citizenship in science can be categorized into five types:

1. Recipient citizen: Passive individuals informed about scientific developments.
2. Consumer citizen: Citizens consuming scientific content for personal, professional, or entertainment purposes.
3. Dialogic citizen: Stakeholders actively engaging in public debates on science and technology.
4. Epistemic citizen: Individuals involved in the research process at various levels.
5. Activist citizen: Those taking an oppositional stance toward science and technology.

These categories reveal the complexities and diversities within public engagement with techno science. For instance, in debates on transgenic technology, differing views exist among scientists, civil society, and policymakers. Such issues have turned biotechnology into a political contestation site. As Stephen Hilgartner (2015) noted, "[E]merging technology is simultaneously an arena of emerging politics, a space in which old orders may be shaken up and changed, sometimes in subtle and sometimes in dramatic ways" (Hilgartner, 2015, p. 5).

Understanding public engagement with transgenic technology in post-colonial states like India requires clarifying concepts such as democracy, citizenship, and governance. These clarifications are critical in navigating the evolving science-society contract and addressing the risks and benefits of new technologies. In academic, policy, and media debates, these concepts help critique the role of expertise in governance and frame responses to technoscientific and environmental challenges. They are vital for understanding the governance of science and technology in the Indian context.

Democratic Participation in the Development of Science and Technology

Democratic participation in the development of science and technology is a highly contested issue in Science, Technology, and Society (STS) studies and public policy literature. As J. B. S. Haldane (1939) argued in the early 20th century, "[w]ithout a much broader knowledge of science, democracy cannot be effective in an age when science affects all our lives continually" (Haldane, 1939, p. 8). The evolving relationship between science and society, along with the emergence of new scientific knowledge and technological artifacts, demands diverse forms of public participation at various stages of innovation.

The recent “democratic turn” (Dryzek, 2000) in public policy and the governance of emerging technologies has sparked widespread discussion across academia, public policy forums, media, and civil society movements. This shift implies two critical changes: first, the need for greater public access to information about the design, risks, benefits, and uncertainties of technologies; and second, the demand for active public involvement in policymaking, granting citizens the "cognitive right" to contribute meaningfully to decision-making processes.

This transition toward participatory governance in technoscience arose from several issues with existing practices. Key concerns include:

1. Risk and Impact: The risks associated with new technologies often affect people’s daily lives and the environment.
2. Trust Deficit: The erosion of public trust in experts led to questions about the legitimacy of science and its socio-economic and ecological roles.
3. Corporate Control: The commercialization of knowledge by multinational corporations raised concerns about the monopolization of natural resources and intellectual commons.
4. Technological Hype: Disillusionment with the promises of technology-driven development under the Nehruvian model fostered skepticism.
5. Emerging Actors: New actors in knowledge production and critical insiders within scientific fields have introduced alternative perspectives.
6. Civil Society Advocacy: Campaigns by civil society and environmental movements have reshaped perceptions of science’s societal and environmental impacts.
7. Global Commitments: International conventions and protocols obligate India to incorporate public participation in science governance.

The governance of science and technology extends beyond funding allocation, institutional oversight, and risk assessment. As Alan Irwin (2008) stated, “it is necessary to include the activities of a much wider range of actors—including industry, scientific organizations, public and pressure groups, consumers, and the market.” Governance involves dynamic interactions between technoscience and democratic engagement, requiring collaboration among diverse stakeholders and institutions.

As Lyall and Tait (2005) emphasize, effective governance requires a comprehensive understanding of the regulatory ecosystem,

encompassing governmental and non-governmental bodies, civil society organizations, industries, and transnational networks. Catherine Lyall et al. (2003) argue for strategies that enable decision-makers to govern science, technology, risk, and the environment using systemic analyses and evidence from both social and natural sciences (Lyall, Papaioannou, & Smith, 2009).

Furthermore, governance incorporates the enhanced role of civil society actors and their connection to state mechanisms (Bevir et al., 2003). According to Voß and Freeman (2016), "governing implies knowledge about the world to be governed and the resources available to do so, and about the interests and dispositions of the actors involved." These complexities make governance particularly challenging in fields like biotechnology.

The STS Perspective on Governance

Over the past three decades, STS scholarship has expanded the conceptual frameworks for governance through empirical analysis. Alan Irwin (2008) identifies five key points from STS literature regarding science and technology governance:

- Scientific knowledge are shaped by socio-political contexts and are open to various framings and interpretations.
- Governance involves an interactive relationship among science, citizenship, and the state.
- Democratizing governance must consider the cultural and political contexts of democracy.
- Public trust in institutions and the inclusion of alternative policy perspectives are vital.
- Scientific knowledge and socio-political order are co-constituted in governance practices.

These principles underscore the importance of addressing social, ethical, environmental, and justice concerns alongside technical and economic criteria in governance. The contested nature of biotechnology governance highlights the need for broader public involvement to mediate controversies around issues such as the commercialization of genetic technologies.

The state plays a crucial role in balancing the interests of various actors, including markets, research institutions, civil society, and the public. A nuanced understanding of institutional dynamics, democratic principles, and political frameworks is essential for effective governance.

Ensuring "cognitive justice" and addressing the "trust deficit" are central to contemporary governance. As Shiv Visvanathan 2007, 2009)

"Cognitive justice recognises the right of different forms of knowledge to co-exist, but adds that this plurality needs to go beyond tolerance or liberalism to an active recognition of the need for diversity. It demands recognition of knowledges, not only as methods but as ways of life. This presupposes that knowledge is embedded in ecology of knowledges where each knowledge has its place, its claim to a cosmology, its sense as a form of life. In this sense knowledge is not something to be abstracted from a culture as a life form; it is connected to livelihood, a life cycle, a lifestyle; it determines life chances" (Visvanathan, Shiv 2009).

Recognizing diverse pathways for agricultural and scientific development fosters inclusivity and enhances public trust in governing institutions. Incorporating multiple perspectives in decision-making processes strengthens public confidence and democratic legitimacy. The STS approach to governance emphasizes the co-constitution of political order and technological development. Understanding this interplay is critical for creating governance systems that are responsive, inclusive, and equitable in managing science and technology in complex socio-political and economic contexts.

Conclusion

In this paper I tried to understand the evolving discourse on citizenship, democracy, and public participation in science and technology reflects the pressing need to redefine the relationship between science and society in post-independent India. As I mentioned sociological examinations shows the exclusion of the public from technoscientific debates has fostered a hierarchical structure where expertise and innovation were confined to elite circles. However, the democratization of science policy and governance, driven by recent developments in Science, Technology, and Innovation Policy, marks a significant shift towards inclusivity and citizen engagement.

The debates surrounding transgenic technologies and biotechnology highlight the intricate interplay between various stakeholders, including scientists, policymakers, civil society, farmers, indigenous communities, and the media. These interactions underscore the necessity for a broader and more inclusive framework that integrates diverse knowledge systems and values public engagement as an essential component of decision-making processes. The Indian context, with its deep-rooted traditions of state sponsored development and contested

notions of citizenship, presents a unique opportunity to examine how public participation can reshape technoscientific governance.

Theoretical insights from STS have expanded our understanding of citizenship beyond its legal and political dimensions, emphasizing the need for active involvement of non-experts in shaping the trajectories of science and technology. Concepts such as "citizen science," "civic epistemology," and "public engagement" illustrate the transformative potential of participatory approaches. By challenging traditional deficit models, these frameworks advocate for a dialogic relationship between citizens and experts, fostering mutual respect and co-creation of knowledge.

Moreover, the nuanced perspectives on citizenship—ranging from rights and duties to participation and identity—highlight the complexity of public engagement in techno science. The emphasis on rights, such as access to safe food, proper labeling of genetically modified products, and inclusion of local and indigenous knowledge in policy-making, underscores the critical role of citizenship in advocating for equity and justice. At the same time, the diverse modes of participation, from passive consumption to active opposition, reveal the pluralistic nature of public involvement in techno scientific debates.

The governance of emerging technologies in India, particularly in agriculture and biotechnology, serves as a microcosm of the broader challenges and opportunities associated with citizen's participation. Issues such as corporate control, environmental risks, and socio-economic inequalities demand a reimagining of the science-society contract. By addressing these concerns, policymakers and scholars can foster a more inclusive and equitable framework for techno scientific governance that aligns with the aspirations of a diverse and dynamic society.

As Jasanoff aptly observed, reintegrating the concept of citizenship into techno scientific discussions is crucial for empowering citizens to steer the course of science and technology toward shared visions of betterment. This requires not only structural reforms in governance and policy but also a cultural shift that values public engagement as a cornerstone of democratic practice. By embracing the principles of transparency, accountability, and inclusivity, India can pioneer a model of technoscientific governance that resonates with its rich democratic ethos and diverse socio-cultural fabric.

In conclusion, the integration of citizenship and public participation into the governance of science and technology is not merely a normative ideal but a pragmatic necessity. It represents a transformative

pathway for addressing contemporary challenges and ensuring that the benefits of scientific and technological advancements are equitably distributed. By bridging the gap between science and society, India can harness the collective wisdom of its citizens to navigate the complexities of the 21st century and build a more sustainable and inclusive future.

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Sociality of Dress and Dynamics of Change

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Abstract

Attire has long played a significant role in society, serving as a marker of social distinctions. This paper seeks to trace the evolving patterns of dress, which reveal underlying narratives of social change. All societies adhere to certain norms and conventions, some of them highly rigid, regarding how men, women, and children should dress, as well as how different social classes and groups should present themselves. These norms become central to shaping individual and collective identities, influencing both self-perception and the ways individuals are perceived by others. As societies undergo transformation, so too do these cultural codes, with shifts in clothing reflecting broader social changes. Drawing on secondary sources, this paper outlines a timeline of these changes, illustrating the relationship between attire and social dynamics of change.
***Keywords**: Dress codes, caste, and social change*

Introduction

The term "attire" is derived from the French word *atirier*, meaning clothing, particularly formal or fine garments. Attire refers collectively to items worn on the body. While clothing is primarily made from fabrics or textiles, it has historically included garments crafted from animal skins or other thin materials assembled together. The wearing of clothing is a practice largely unique to humans and is a characteristic of all human societies. The type and quantity of clothing worn vary based on factors such as gender, body type, as well as social and geographic contexts. While it is difficult to pinpoint the exact origin of clothing, research suggests that it emerged approximately 42,000 to 72,000 years ago. Over time, the general term for clothing has shifted, with "dress," "attire," or "wear" becoming more common, while the term "costume" has become increasingly associated with specialized, out-of-date, or identity-shifting garments (Tarlo, 1996).

Clothing serves a variety of social and cultural functions, including the differentiation of individuals by occupation, gender, and social status. In many societies, clothing norms are shaped by standards related to modesty, religion, gender roles, and class distinctions. Additionally, clothing functions as a form of adornment, reflecting personal taste and style. Gender-based distinctions in clothing are widely regarded as appropriate across cultures, with differences manifesting in styles, colors,

fabrics, and garment types. In some societies, clothing is used to signify rank or status, and in certain contexts, religious attire may be seen as a specific form of occupational dress. Such clothing is sometimes worn exclusively during religious rituals but can also be donned daily to signify a distinct religious identity. Various cultures have developed different methods of creating garments from textiles, with one common technique being the simple draping of cloth. This paper focuses on the issue of clothing choices rather than merely describing what is worn, and it examines how different individuals and groups have used attire to assert power and status within society. The study highlights the clothing patterns and styles prevalent in Kerala, while also addressing the historical struggles related to dress, which form an integral part of this narrative.

The traditional attire of Kerala, characterized by elegant white and off-white hues, reflects the deep cultural association of Keralites with purity. White is a favored color for clothing among both men and women in the region. Historically, there were instances of violence and oppression against women in Kerala, predating even British colonization. In the erstwhile kingdom of Travancore, many women were compelled to remain partially unclothed as a marker of their low social status. This oppressive practice persisted for nearly a century and a half until a law enacted by the British put an end to it. This struggle for dignity and bodily autonomy contributed to Kerala's progression into a more enlightened and modern state.

Kerala is one of India's most progressive and highly educated states. However, approximately 150 years ago, it was marred by deeply entrenched social evils. In her article *"Once upon a time, when women were forced to bare it all,"* Priyanshi Lal (2015) highlights how lower-caste women in the Travancore district of Kerala were prohibited from covering their upper bodies. The privilege of covering one's breasts was reserved for upper-caste women belonging to the Namboodiri, Brahmin, Kshatriya, and Nair communities. This oppressive practice endured until the mid-19th century, perpetuating caste-based discrimination.

For nearly 50 years, violent conflicts over this issue contributed to the rise of the Renaissance movement, which played a critical role in shaping the modern state of Kerala. During this time, lower-caste women who covered their breasts were ostracized by society, and even upper-caste Kshatriya women were expected to expose their upper bodies in the presence of Brahmins. Displaying a bare chest, for both men and women,

was seen as a sign of respect for those of higher caste status. Fear of punishment compelled women of all castes to conform to these practices.

The cruelty extended further, as demonstrated by an incident where a Dalit woman was seen in the queen's palace wearing upper-body clothing, leading the queen to order her breasts to be removed as punishment. According to an article by *Justice News* (2022), titled *"Leave the hijab, breast cover was also forbidden: Till 1924, Dalit women had to pay tax to cover the breast,"* the King of Travancore in the 19th century imposed a "breast tax" (Mulakkaram) on lower-caste women who wished to cover their breasts. Only waist-length garments were allowed for these women, and they were required to expose their chests whenever they encountered upper-caste individuals or officials. Women who desired the dignity of covering their breasts were forced to pay the Mulakkaram, with the tax amount varying based on breast size—smaller amounts for smaller breasts and larger amounts for larger breasts. This inhumane tax was collected by royal representatives from adult lower-caste women, perpetuating a deeply dehumanizing practice.

Manu S. Pillai provides an account of resistance to the Mulakkaram tax, highlighting the story of Nangeli, which has gained historical significance. According to the narrative, Nangeli was subjected to the breast tax, a levy known as Mulakkaram, imposed on women of lower castes as they transitioned from girlhood to adolescence. The tax collectors would assess the size and shape of a woman’s breasts to determine the amount owed. Nangeli had likely paid this tax for several years, but when the collectors came to her home that year, she was prepared for an act of defiance that would immortalize her in history and folklore. Calmly, she entered her dwelling and returned with her tax offering on a plantain leaf. Since the collectors had come for the breast tax, that is exactly what they received—Nangeli’s severed breasts, which she had cut off herself and placed on the leaf. She then collapsed and died in excruciating pain.

Nangeli’s act was not merely a demand for the right to cover her breasts, as such a "right" would have held little significance in the sociocultural context of her time. The Mulakkaram, in reality, had only a nominal association with breasts; it was primarily a poll tax imposed on lower-caste communities and other marginalized groups (Pillai, 2019, p. 124). Her act of defiance, therefore, symbolized a broader resistance against caste-based oppression and exploitation that permeated the societal structure.

Castes and Sociality of Dress

In society, clothing styles were closely aligned with caste distinctions, with each caste adhering to its own unique sartorial norms. For the Namboodiris, a high-caste group, attire consisted of simple garments. Men typically wore a lower garment known as the Mundu, which measured 1.5 meters in width and 2.5 yards in length. This was paired with a second cloth, the Melmundu, draped over the shoulder. Underneath, they wore a small piece of cloth called a Kaupeenam, which was wrapped between the thighs and secured with a thread at the waist.

During religious ceremonies, Namboodiri men donned the Tatudukka, a long cloth measuring six to seven feet that was passed between the thighs, tucked in at the waist, and pleated at the front. Although the Mundu was traditionally white, as with other castes, the Namboodiris distinguished themselves with a golden border. Historically, many castes wore blue clothing, but white eventually became predominant.

Namboodiri women wore a garment known as the Pudava, which was two feet wide and seven and a half feet long. This garment was arranged by passing one end between the legs and fastening it behind the waist, with the other end wrapped around. This method of wearing the Pudava was also referred to as Thattudukkuka. In keeping with tradition, Namboodiri women covered their upper bodies and used an Olakkuda or Marakkuda to obscure their faces and bodies, reflecting the societal norms and values related to modesty and caste. (Bhaskaranunni, 1988).

Traditionally, the Namboodiris utilized specific clothing practices for different social contexts. At home, they wore a simple cloth around their waist known as a Thorth (or Thorthumundu). When traveling to other villages, they would often carry an additional towel, called the Randaam Mund, draped over their shoulders; nobles, however, preferred a longer cloth known as the Valiya Mund instead. A significant ritual among the Namboodiris was "Swaadhhyaayam," during which they were required to wear special attire in the Tattudukkal style, including a double towel or garment known as Vasthra. This garment frequently served as the Randaam Mundu. For special occasions, they donned long garments with a thin gold border, known as Kasavu or Erkilakkara. During wedding ceremonies, bridegrooms wore a four-length Vasthram, and a similar garment, twisted and worn, called Uthareeyam. In preparation for the Upanayanam ritual, boys wore Ilakkonakam, a loin cover made from a strip of plantain leaf softened by heat. Following the ritual, they transitioned to wearing Seelakkonakam, a cloth loin cover. These clothing

practices reflect the intricate relationship between attire, ritual, and social status within Namboodiri society.

The traditional attire of the Nair community in Kerala bore similarities to that of other higher caste groups in the region. Women's clothing was generally similar to that of men. Initially, colored mundus were worn, and during festivals, Pudavas and mundus with gold borders were typical. However, this particular dress style became outdated with the introduction of the Rauka (blouse) in the early 20th century. Despite the growing acceptance of Western clothing, the mundu remains widely worn throughout Kerala. The traditional dress for the Nair, Kshatriya, and Ambalavaasi communities shared common elements, including the Mundu, Kaupinam, and a secondary mundu or Neriyattu. Women from these groups traditionally wore garments in the Thattudukka style, often including a Pudava or Onnaramundu, although the upper part of the body was sometimes left uncovered. Nair women wore a choli around the waist, approximately 1.8 meters long, and used a third garment known as Neriadu when outside the home. The Neriadu, also 1.8 meters long, was draped over the shoulders to cover the upper body (Biswas, 2003, p. 87).

Nair women were generally allowed to cover their chests only in the presence of Brahmins, members of the royal family, or within temples. For instance, a Nair woman who appeared before the Zamorin of Calicut with her breasts covered was ordered to remove them, as it was deemed illegal to display such clothing before individuals of higher social status (Raman Nair & Sulochana Devi, 2010, p. 36).

Ironically, being bare-chested was neither considered a mark of shame nor a forced display of respect for both men and women in Kerala. The choice of minimal upper body garments was influenced by the humid climate, aiding in sweat evaporation and preventing overheating. However, Dalit women were subjected to restrictions that prohibited them from covering their breasts, and those who did were forced to uncover them. The royal family in Kerala did not support the right of lower-caste women to cover their breasts, reflecting broader patterns of caste-based discrimination and social inequity.

According to George Abraham's *"Lanterns on the Lanes Lit for Life,"* the lower castes, including the Ezhavas, Pulayars, and Parayas, traditionally wore short, single white cloths fastened around their waists. Young children, both boys and girls, wore only an undergarment known as a konakam. Both men and women in these communities left their upper bodies exposed, in keeping with the customs of the avarnas. Women of

these lower castes were prohibited from covering their breasts or wearing garments that extended below their knees. In contrast, the Tiyattis and Mukkuvas of North Malabar, as well as Ezhava women in Palghat, occasionally wore dark blue clothing but avoided expensive fabrics like silk. The distinguishing feature of higher castes was their use of fine, semi-transparent cotton garments. Mukkuva women used to wear black silk cloths, but this practice has since declined.

In Malabar, the traditional mode of dress involved a single piece of cloth wrapped around the waist, leaving the upper body exposed. This practice was uniform across both rich and poor individuals. Except for Brahmin women, most Hindu women did not consider covering the breasts necessary, and doing so was viewed as immodest. Tipu Sultan's disregard for Hindu customs, including his criticism of polyandry and women's nudity, exacerbated tensions. Sultan's views were seen by Hindus as an affront to their religious and cultural practices, with fears that he aimed to convert them to Islam. This cultural clash was evident when Tipu Sultan suggested that Nair women adopt Muslim customs, including covering their lower bodies.

In Travancore, the "cloth controversy" or "upper cloth revolt" emerged as a significant event where Nadar women challenged the caste-based restrictions and demanded the right to wear appropriate upper garments. This insurrection was a pivotal moment in the struggle for caste-based reform and the assertion of women's rights. Until the 19th century, women in Travancore, Cochin, and Malabar were prohibited from covering their upper bodies in the presence of Brahmins. Similarly, Nadar women, like their lower-caste counterparts, were barred from concealing their breasts. Their attire was restricted to a single rough-textured cloth that could be worn by both men and women, but it was mandated that this garment could not extend above the waist or below the knee.

Efforts by social reformers to secure the right for lower-caste communities to wear more refined clothing met with resistance from the upper classes. In Travancore, the Rani decreed that Nadar women had no right to wear upper garments, unlike their affluent Nadar counterparts who had the freedom to cover both their upper and lower bodies. This led to the first upper-cloth disruption in May 1822, marking a significant event in South Travancore’s history.

Following the abolition of slavery in Travancore in 1855, the higher castes perceived a loss of social power and became increasingly resistant to changes that could undermine their perceived superiority. In

response to pressures from these caste forces, the Raja reaffirmed in 1859 that Nadar women would not be permitted to dress like their Savarana counterparts. This reaffirmation led to the second phase of the upper-cloth uprising in 1859. Despite the upper castes' attempts to suppress them, Nadar women persisted in their struggle for rights, demonstrating their resilience and determination to challenge entrenched social hierarchies (Binukumar, 2012, p. 13).

Under pressure from Charles Trevelyan, the then-Governor of Madras, the Travancore king was compelled to issue an order on July 26, 1859, allowing Nadar women to wear upper clothing. However, this concession did not equate to the attire worn by their Savarna counterparts (Singh, 2019). Despite this partial victory, the demands of Nadar women were not fully met, and caste-based restrictions persisted. Women who attempted to adopt Savarna-style clothing faced interrogation and, at times, punishment. The tradition of upper body exposure continued among higher castes, such as the Namboothiris and Nairs, while lower-caste Hindus remained barred from wearing more elaborate clothing. The Channar Revolt stands out as a pivotal event in Kerala's history, marking the first significant assertion of civic rights by Keralan women. This widespread movement, significantly influenced by Christian missionaries and supported by British efforts, challenged the entrenched social hierarchies. The revolt gradually enhanced the social and economic status of Nadar women over the following decades, leading to substantial changes in traditional clothing practices. The prohibition against wearing upper garments was eventually lifted, and Western cultural influences began to reshape clothing styles in Kerala. These transformations are evident in the shift from the traditional attire depicted in Raja Ravi Varma’s paintings to contemporary fashion in Kerala, reflecting broader social and cultural changes (G. Arunima 2003).

The attire of Syrian Christians in Kerala reflects the traditional clothing styles prevalent among the broader population. Men typically wear a mundu or dhoti, which is a white cloth wrapped around the waist from left to right, with a portion of the end allowed to hang over the front after being tucked in on the right side. This garment reaches the ankles and does not pass between the legs. Historically, this was worn without additional upper garments, but it is now commonly paired with a shirt, known as a juba or Indian shirt. Additionally, men wear an Angavastram, a folded cloth with a gold border, called a Kavani, draped around the neck. Women traditionally wear white clothing, consisting of three main pieces. The basic garment is a white fabric, called a Thunt or mundu, which is

wrapped around the waist and allowed to fall to the feet. One end of this cloth is artistically folded into a fan shape, known as Myort (meaning "folds"), and secured to create a decorative effect. The fan is tucked in at the back and allowed to hang loosely, giving the appearance of a fan. Women also wear a plain white jacket or blouse with a "V"-shaped neck, called a Chatta, over the body. For formal occasions, women drape a white cloth with a thin gold border, also referred to as a Kavani, over their left shoulder. This Kavani can also serve as a head covering in churches. The tradition of wearing the Kavani as a head covering has its origins in the religious veil once mandated for women in church settings (Pothan, 1963, p. 92-93). In traditional attire, Syrian Christian women typically wear white clothing, characterized by its simplicity and consisting of three primary pieces. The central garment is a white fabric, referred to as a Thunt or mundu, which is wrapped around the waist and extends down to the feet. This garment features a distinctive artistic element: one end of the cloth is meticulously folded into a fan shape, known as Myort, meaning "folds." This fan is secured in such a manner that it folds at the back and hangs loosely from the waist, creating an aesthetically pleasing effect.

Over the top, women wear a plain white jacket or blouse with a "V"-shaped neckline, known as a Chatta. For formal occasions, a white cloth with a thin gold border, called a Kavani, is draped over the left shoulder. The Kavani also serves as a head covering during church services, a practice that originated from the religious veils once mandated for women in church settings (Pothan, 1963, p. 92-93). The advent of Islam in Kerala marked a significant period in the development of the Mappila community on the Malabar Coast. The traditional attire of the Mappila Muslims evolved from historical practices, with notable garments including the Kanchi, a variant of the Mundu worn by girls. This item was available in various colors, such as Pacha Kanchi and Vella Kanchi. Cotton Mundus were commonly worn by boys, while Mathan and Chural, silk

garments embellished with gold and silver embroidery, were reserved for special occasions like weddings. Older women traditionally wore black Mundus known as Soop, while affluent individuals favored the Soori Thuni, a fine white cloth. In the Malappuram region, Mappila women commonly wore the Pen Kuppayam, a tight-fitting garment, whereas in Kozhikode, the Kuppayam was designed to be looser. Men's attire included the Mundu for special events and a cotton Mundu for everyday wear.

The traditional dress of the Mappila Muslims reflects their cultural heritage and is influenced by shifts in ideology, economic conditions, and social status. Over time, traditional attire underwent significant changes and revivals, particularly noticeable during the colonial period in Kerala, leading to more impressive and well-maintained dress styles.

During the British colonial period, which spanned approximately 200 years, the arrival of British traders brought profound changes to Indian attire and fashion. The British, with their distinct cultural beliefs and sartorial preferences, introduced a new standard of dress that quickly became a symbol of modernity and status. This led to a significant transformation in Indian clothing, as many Indians sought to emulate the styles of the British rulers. The imposition of British clothing on Indian society led to various changes in traditional attire. The British Raj not only influenced the adoption of Western garments but also led to the assimilation and adaptation of these styles into Indian fashion. Terms such as "petticoat" and "blouse" were integrated into Indian languages, reflecting this sartorial shift. The traditional Indian saree also underwent changes in response to these new influences. However, the shift to Western dress was not uniformly welcomed. While some viewed it as a mark of modernity and prestige, others, particularly among the Brahmins and commoners, initially found Western attire to be inappropriate or foreign. This dichotomy illustrates the complex dynamics of cultural exchange and adaptation. Prior to British influence, Persian clothing had already exerted significant influence on Indian fashion. The sociopolitical changes brought about by British rule further altered Indian dress codes. Early colonial paintings depict Indian royalty adopting Western fashion, while the general populace and traditional Brahmins often viewed these changes with skepticism. For the privileged classes, Western fashion became a symbol of modernity and education, blurring traditional caste distinctions. Women, in particular, found Western attire to offer greater comfort and a contemporary look. Conversely, porters and servants were required to adhere to traditional Indian dress codes, such as wearing turbans, alongside Western outerwear like shirts and coats. This dichotomy reflects the

complex interplay between colonial imposition and cultural adaptation. Overall, the British Raj had a profound impact on Indian dress, driving both voluntary and imposed changes that continue to shape modern Indian fashion.

In examining the evolution of clothing in India, it is evident that the aristocracy played a pivotal role in initiating change. Indian royal men and women were among the first to adopt "Western Clothing," a significant departure from traditional attire. This shift was not merely a matter of personal preference but a strategic move to align with British tastes and modernize their image. Interestingly, these royals never reverted to traditional attire for significant occasions such as weddings or funerals, suggesting a deep-seated belief in the necessity of Western fashion to project a contemporary and sophisticated identity. The adoption of Western dress was not limited to the elite. Hindu women from Bengal and South India, influenced by Western fashion, began incorporating elements such as jackets, shirts, and jumpers into their traditional saris. This blending of styles reflects a broader trend of fashion assimilation where Western influence started to permeate traditional Indian garments.

Conversely, the lower castes, marginalized under the Hindu caste system, saw the adoption of Western dress as a form of liberation and modernity. Dalits, who had converted to Christianity, embraced Western clothing as a way to signify their new identity and break away from the oppressive caste norms. This transition aligns with a broader post-Independence movement in India, where a significant shift in dressing patterns was observed across social strata, reflecting a desire to appear progressive and forward-thinking. Clothing has long served as a tool for establishing social hierarchies, challenging authority, and catalyzing societal change. During India's struggle for independence, the elite's adoption of Western fashion was a statement of modernity and political alignment, while figures like Gandhi chose the loincloth as a symbol of resistance and simplicity. This contrast highlights how clothing can be both a means of embracing new identities and resisting prevailing norms, reflecting the dynamic interplay between tradition and modernity in sociological contexts.

Normative social control operates through a tiered process, beginning with personal social control, which is characterized by self-regulation. Individuals strive to integrate into their social groups by adhering to established norms, which are often reflected in the group's dress code. When an individual's attire deviates from these norms—such

as wearing clothing that is overly revealing—peers may employ informal social control methods to encourage conformity. This disapproval can manifest through subtle cues or social pressure aimed at aligning the individual's behavior with group expectations. When informal mechanisms fail to maintain social order, formal social control measures may be enacted. These include disciplinary actions or expulsion, which are typically enforced by designated authority figures such as religious leaders or other moral arbiters. This structured approach ensures adherence to social norms, even at the most granular level.

Clothing, as a symbolic device, plays a crucial role in expressing and reinforcing societal norms. It visually communicates the normative values of a social body, delineating group boundaries and providing nonverbal cues about the individual's identity. Distinctive attire associated with specific religious or cultural groups can serve to insulate members from outsiders while fostering cohesion within the group. Uniformity in dress within a culture not only reflects but also reinforces loyalty and conformity to the group's norms, underscoring the integral role of clothing in social control and identity formation.

Clothing has universally been recognized as a marker of social identity. It not only constructs and perpetuates social hierarchies but also defines deviant behaviors and reinforces systems of control and power. Personal adornment and attire serve to construct and maintain both individual and group identities. This paper examines how societal influences and social norms significantly impact individual dress choices, revealing how attire can signal one's commitment to their group and religious affiliations. The early 20th century witnessed transformative changes in the clothing industry, driven by advancements in technology and the expansion of global capitalism. Innovations such as sewing machines, the rise of mill production systems, and the proliferation of retail establishments, including department stores, reshaped dress manufacturing (Ramaswamy, 2006). This section of the paper explores the implications of these developments on the clothing sector in Kerala.

Technological advancements during the 20th century profoundly influenced Kerala's clothing industry. Historical records indicate that prehistoric people utilized natural fibers and hairs, sewing with tools made from bone and ivory. The advent of modern machinery, looms, and other technological innovations marked a significant shift, facilitating the faster, more efficient, and cost-effective production of garments. The proliferation of sewing machines and the effects of global capitalism in the 19th and 20th centuries led to the rise of factory-produced clothing.

Consequently, large volumes of apparel were manufactured and exported, illustrating a significant transformation in the region's dress manufacturing practices.

Kerala's relationship with clothing exhibits unique characteristics compared to other regions globally. Traditionally, Kerala was known for exporting woven fabrics adorned with mural paintings, while also importing textiles from Western countries. This exchange led to significant alterations in local dress styles, introducing new colors and garments that marked a departure from previous norms. Throughout history, advancements in sewing technology and human creativity have continually transformed fashion. These developments have enabled the production of diverse and innovative clothing styles. The contemporary generation in Kerala has rapidly adapted to and embraced imported garments from various countries.

In Kerala, the term "clothing" takes on a specific connotation, referring to fabrics that are unusually long and wide. Fashion in Kerala, historically more modest and less diverse in color and pattern compared to Western styles, began to evolve significantly during the colonial period. For instance, J. Knowles' article in the LMS Missionary Worldwide magazine from October 1899 describes the introduction of British textiles like "Manchester calico cloth" at local festivals, illustrating the impact of British colonial trade on Kerala's clothing practices.

The interplay between caste and clothing in Kerala has also evolved. Historically, clothing—or the lack thereof—was a marker of caste and gender, with exposure considered dishonorable. Over time, the opposite has become true, with norms dictating that certain levels of concealment or exposure are appropriate based on caste and gender. A recent example includes the controversy surrounding the March 1, 2018, cover of *Grihalakshmi*, which depicted Malayalam actress Gilu Joseph breastfeeding in public. This portrayal sparked debate on social media, with some criticizing it as inconsistent with Kerala's perceived standards of modesty and dignity.

The saree, traditionally symbolizing modest femininity across class, caste, and religion in Kerala, gradually became the preferred public attire for women. It was designed to cover the body extensively, in contrast to the later adoption of the churidar, which faced criticism for being a foreign or Muslim garment. Ramachandra Guha's article, "The Spread of the Salwar" in *The Hindu*, discusses how wearing a saree represents affiliation with a broader South Asian culture, while adopting a churidar

signals a more specific cultural identity. In contemporary Kerala, the churidar is sometimes seen as inappropriate or, conversely, as a respectable garment. Its adoption signifies varying societal attitudes toward modernity and cultural identity. The churidar's evolution from a saree-like, draped top to a more fitted garment reflects broader shifts in clothing norms. Despite initial resistance, the churidar has been integrated into Kerala's fashion landscape, demonstrating how clothing continues to define and reflect individual and collective identities.

In "Ente Smaranakal," Kanippayyur (Shankarannamboothiripad, 2007) notes that clothing below the waist was traditionally similar for both men and women in Kerala. However, as time progressed, gender distinctions in clothing became more pronounced. This differentiation initially emerged within professions and was influenced by factors such as work roles, propriety, and family honor. Traditionally, Kerala's clothing was gendered: women wore sarees while men donned mundus and shirts. G. Ushakumari, in "Sharirathinte Samoohika Bhavanakal," argues that the evolution from collarless upper garments to collared shirts likely reinforced gendered perceptions (Ushakumari, 2022). Historically, Kerala's clothing reflected gender distinctions, with men typically wearing sturdy, minimal clothing and women wearing more elaborate and decorated garments. Bright colors and patterns like checks, stripes, and floral designs were often associated with women, while men's attire avoided such embellishments.

In contemporary Kerala, these gender boundaries in fashion are increasingly blurred. The acceptance of jeans and pants for women and the incorporation of flower-embroidered shirts into men's wardrobes signify this shift. Traditional gender-specific attire, such as the churidar and saree, has evolved, with modern fashion often disregarding rigid gender norms. Fashion today shows a trend towards androgyny, with both men and women adopting previously gender-specific clothing styles. Men now wear soft, smooth fabrics and garments like pocketless shirts with floral embroidery, which were once considered feminine. Conversely, women are seen in jeans, check shirts, and other items that were traditionally associated with men's fashion. This evolving fashion landscape reflects broader societal changes, where gender roles are less rigid and individuals are freer to choose clothing that expresses their personal style rather than conforming to historical norms. Nevertheless, traditional values persist in certain contexts. For instance, during Onam, a traditional festival, the expectation to wear specific attire like a white saree or to dress in a particular way remains strong.

In Kerala, fashion has historically been segmented into categories such as party wear and casual wear, with a clear distinction based on gender. Men's clothing was traditionally robust and unadorned, while women's clothing was ornate and soft. The demarcation of color and pattern preferences—such as checks and stripes for men and floral designs for women—reflects these historical gender divisions. However, recent fashion trends have increasingly challenged these norms. Women's adoption of jeans and men's embrace of embroidered shirts are indicative of a shift toward a more inclusive fashion landscape. This shift suggests a growing acceptance of diverse styles and a move away from gender-specific clothing conventions. As fashion becomes more about personal expression and less about adhering to traditional gender norms, individuals are empowered to choose attire that reflects their identity and preferences, beyond outdated classifications.

In Lieu of Conclusion

In earlier periods, clothing choices were primarily dictated by caste and religion. Over time, however, this determination shifted towards factors such as body type, color, and height. In more recent times, clothing has increasingly been influenced by gender distinctions. Despite these shifts, not all aspects of traditional norms have completely transformed; some old values and customs persist into the 21st century.

The interaction between religion, culture, and clothing is particularly fascinating. Clothing serves as a window into the social environment, governed by a complex system of laws, traditions, norms, and rituals that regulate personal interactions. For many religious communities, attire is a key symbol of religious identity. However, the concept of "dress" extends beyond mere clothing to include all forms of body decoration, grooming, and other practices such as dieting, cosmetic surgery, and body-modifying procedures. From a holistic perspective, clothing acts as a potent form of nonverbal communication, conveying core ideas related to sex, gender, race, and religion. Individuals and groups use clothing to project identities that align with their belief systems, making attire a significant marker of self-presentation. This essay explores the evolution of clothing norms from historical to contemporary contexts. It highlights the transition from caste- and religion-based clothing to gender-based distinctions and the current trend towards more gender-neutral fashion. Despite these changes, traditional values and customs continue to influence modern attire. Religious attire, despite its sometimes discomfort and resistance to change, remains a significant aspect of

identity. The transition to Western styles has affected the texture and color of clothing, with men adopting more traditionally feminine colors and styles, leading to the emergence of unisex clothing that blurs traditional gender lines.

Historically, the role of women, particularly as wives and mothers, was confined to domestic responsibilities, reflected in their clothing choices. Traditionally, women wore house dresses as part of their domestic duties. However, technological advancements have expanded women's roles beyond the home, leading to a shift in their attire. Modern homemakers now commonly wear sportswear, slacks, blouses, and sweaters, reflecting their evolving roles as both caregivers and professionals. Clothing patterns at any given time serve as markers of cultural and geographic affiliations. Dress customs vary significantly in their social and religious contexts. The concept of modesty in dress is culturally specific rather than universally applicable. Clothing has emerged as an academic subject, with fashion continuously evolving and poised for further transformation. The Western fashion industry must adapt to new global challenges, signaling an ongoing shift in fashion dynamics. While societal norms historically dictated attire based on caste, contemporary challenges are increasingly gender-oriented. Although gender divisions existed in earlier eras, they have become more pronounced in modern society. As discussed, it is not merely about what is worn, but about what should be worn, reflecting ongoing societal negotiations around identity and expression.

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Book Review

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Racine, J., & Racine, J. L. 1997. *Viramma, Life of an Untouchable*. London: Verso.

The captivating tale of Viramma: Life of an Untouchable (1997) is the outcome of the prolonged relationship between Viramma and Josaine Rocine, which showcases the frailties and resilience of a Dalit woman. Viramma, an untouchable, an agricultural worker, a mid-wife and a 'Pariah' woman from a village in Tamil Nadu, the southern part of India, recounted her life stories with the French ethnomusicologist Josiane Racine and Jean-Luc Racine between 1980 and 1990. In tandem,Viramma and Josiane Racine worked on an auto-ethnography that debunks caste politics and defends their cultural practices and 'Pariah' traditions. Viramma identifies herself as a "pariah," a term used to describe a woman belonging to an untouchable category in the caste system. Many aspects posing significant concerns about vulnerability spurred on by external circumstances can be seen throughout Viramma's life narrative. Further, since it is a translation from French to English, the translator has acknowledged the presence of some compromises and inaccuracies to reflect an oral culture in the written word.

Starting an in-depth conversation between Viramma and Rocine took enough time, as Goffman stated, people were highly bothered about the front-stage role-play and the consequent impression management. Eventually, they befriended and shared a sense of reliability and affection, leading to the birth of a comfortable space where Viramma shared her emotions, memories and life experiences in detail. As a result, Viramma's

voice travels through the unknown modern economic and cultural mediations of anthropologists, writers, and translators. This remarkable book is a live manifestation of the all-time popular query posed by Gayathi Chakravarthi Spivak (1987), "Can the subaltern speak?" indeed, the subalterns can speak!

Exclusion, discrimination, and exploitation are the main themes that define Viramma's life experiences. However, she raised her voice against caste oppression, marginalisation, degradation and its related inequalities. She reveals a profound awareness of the sexism that Dalits (Dalit patriarchy) face in their community. In a nutshell, she represents the voice of her community and turns herself into a resilient wall against the incoming oppression. Racine & Racine (1997:310) rightly noted that "it is a text which tells how an oppressed woman lives and thinks".

Viramma's trajectory of resilience can be likened to a lamp's flame that is constantly facing a threat by the wind of vulnerability, yet it continues to spread the light. One crucial point that strike the reader is that, instead of lamenting the persisting discrimination on the grounds of class, caste, and gender, she highlighted the indigenous traditions and cultural aspects of her community. She is well-versed in the mythologies, customs, rituals and heritage of their community at various points in time and occasions. In accordance with their caste traditions, she performed rituals and rites at every level to satisfy/please the gods and to drive off the evil spirits. From the readers' perspective, we can say that she has internalised the caste system in one way. But on a second note, one can see Viramma highlights the 'Pariah' identity thatis embodied in traditions meant to nurture specific attributes.

Mariamman- mother of smallpox; IsriKatteri- the foetus eater; and other recollections support a more complex, compassionate, and inclusive understanding of history and myths of the pariah community. Historical event-based autobiographies serve a vital role in constructing our perspective of the past and its relevance to the present. They serve as a reminder that history is a complex fabric made up of the experiences and viewpoints of people, not merely a set of facts and dates. Viramma further addresses the worth of money in leading a prosperous life and how upper-caste men utilise it to entice Dalit women. She always thinks back on her happy childhood memories in the comparable way that most poets capture the purity and beauty of childhood. Additionally, she glorifies the traditional periods while discussing the dichotomy between tradition and modernity.Viramma's tale kicks off during her early years in Velpakkam,

and progresses with her arranged marriage to Manikkam, puberty after marriage, first sexual contact with her husband, and and birthing of twelve children, and culminates with multiple traditions and ceremonies distinctive to her community. The story becomes integral to her community's repertoire rather than revealing Viramma's life history. Moreover, virama is portrayed as a manifestation of fulfilment, efficiency, and optimism as opposed to a meek, unfortunate, untouchable woman. Viramma's narrative stands out as a crusade of intersectional feminism that operates as a dual-edged sword against the existing oppressive structure and regime that cooperates to discriminate, exploit, marginalise and exclude the Dalits in general and the Dalit women in particular. This autobiographical narrative holds the agency of a Dalit woman, who fights against the system in her own subtle ways, the tone of the narrative sets it apart from the dominant and elitist production of literature on Dalits written by the upper caste educated individuals. The voice of vulnerability and resilience showcased by Viramma, the illiterate Dalit woman, looms large against the existing set of literature produced by the 'haves' of the society by taking the form of a testimony that unveils the lived experiences of Viramma and the community that she is representing. Subjugated to the existing system by means of multiple forms of stratification, the vulnerability experienced by Viramma and the women in her community is intersectional in nature, in the sense that they are targeted on the basis of their caste, class and gender., which many of them, includingViramma, has internalised to a great extent.

To conclude, this work achieves a remarkable feat of emotional resonance, effectively conveying the realities not only of a Dalit woman's life, but also of the entrenched caste system in India. By centering the emotional and cultural subjectivities of Viramma's experiences, the book establishes itself as a powerful testament to the growing body of Dalit auto-ethnographies in contemporary Indian literature. Furthermore, it transcends mere representation, functioning as a potent tool for advocacy, urging mainstream society to confront the injustices faced by Dalit women. The lasting impact of this work lies in its potential to foster empathy and ignite critical dialogue around the ongoing struggle for equality for Dalit women in India.

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Book Review

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Sheela Tomy's *Valli*, a Compendium of Memory, Resistance and Hope

Sheela Tomy's recent novel *Valli* is an open ended narrative with an autobiographical touch. One of the most prominent texts in Malayalam about the experience of the migrant settlers in Wayanad district of Kerala is *Vishakanyaka* or *The Poisoned Land* by S.K. Pottekkad. Whereas *The Poisoned Land* is about the experience of the early settlers, with their almost complete failure to overcome the challenges posed by the new land, *Valli* is about the next phase of migration and its consequences. If *The Poisoned Land* ends in most of the people either succumbing to epidemics like Malaria or other fevers or returning to Travencore, *Valli* tries to say what would happen once the settlers survive in the promised land of their choice.This tale of memory, history, myths and struggle for survival attains greater significance, when we know that it is carved by an expatriate insider settled in the Middle East at the time of its writing. The expatriate and homely experiences of Susan and Tessa, the two major voices of the narrative is probably a reflection of the experience of Sheela at large.

The novel is primarily the story of four generations of the family of Anjilakunneel Ivachan, one of the fortunate settlers in the Kalluvayal village of Manandavadi, Wayanad. The Microcosmic space of Kalluvayal is in fact a symbol for the macrocosmic space of Wayanad itself. The Novel can be a family story, a historical novel, a quest narrative or an ecocritical text, depending upon the reader's lens. It incorporates past, present, and future in an intermittent way through its fluid, lucid and poetic narrative. The novel has a partial linear narrative structure along with the halo of a memoir and an epistolary thread. Each chapter stops in the midst of a linear narrative and ends either through the correspondence between Susan mamma and Tessa or through the dairy entries of Tessa.

The novel reminds one of several texts written in such an apocalyptic tone. Intermittent quotes from the bible with their futuristic implications remind the reader of the similar pattern In *Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck. While the novel is a continuation of many narratives

about the life and struggle of the tribals, like *Maveli Mandram* by K.J. Baby, the recently passed away activist and author, it is also similar to the existential and quest pattern that is prevalent in works like *Karikkotta Kari* by Binoy Thomas.

The book abounds with myths like that of 'Unniyachi', 'Karinthandan', and so on, the book also has partial and provocative references to Naxalism, Vargees, police brutalities against the tribals and other forceful manipulations of state sponsored hegemonic suppressions of the tribals through the 'Repressive state Apparatuses'. Each character in the novel, be it Sarah, Tomichan, Padmanabhan, Annakutty, Ivachan, Father Felix, Tesa, Susan, Isabella, Unnithar, Salomi, or James stays deep in the reader's psyche as a unique manifestation of human temperament.
The novel has great relevance as an ecocritical text. In the wake of the recent calamities in different parts of Wayanad, the novel is grievous reminder to the mashrooming resort industry in the region. James is one of the most mysterious and admirable characters in the novel. It is perhaps as a recompense to to the umpteen degree of violence that his predecessors has imposed on the land that he becomes an absolute son of the land and forest. James is what Peter could have been, if he had not disappeared in a bewildering and mysterious way.

Though the landscape of the novel is the village Kalluvayal, we travel into America the middle east, Culcutta, Assam and so on through the narrative. The foster parent of Tomy Aaba, is a parelel to the parents of either sarah or Peter. Parelel to the natural world of Kalluvayal with its complexities and surprises, there is the world of Robots to which Tessa is connected with.The women of the novel attains greater prominence and attraction in comparison with the mail characters. Be it the ever loving, pure and simple Sarah; the imaginative, earthly, poetic Susan; the homely, patient virtus Annnnakutty; The ferocious, fluid, nature like Kali: The heroic, strong, and indomitable Salomi and Unnittar; they all engage our attention deeply than their counter parts.

Though the novel consists of some of the gruesome chapters of violence, aggression, oppression and destruction, it is also an equally superior tale of hope, love dedication and commitment. Even as Tessa leves for abroad at the end of the novel, one is sure that she will some day return to the quietude and serenity of her land. James embodies the bueaty, peace and satisfaction that man can attain through his communion with nature. In a limited sense, he is Thorau in Valdon.

The novel is written mostly as an autobiographical narrative of Susan and Sara. However, in this narrative there is also an omniscient narrator, Sheela herself controlling the narrative. It is also a historical documentation about the rise and fall of a location in Wayanad. It is also a larger historical articulation about the different phases of migration and oppression in the district. The interfusing of myths and visible and hidden romantic tales in the novel erases any element of ennui in reading. This novel of about 350 pages in 38 chapters is written almost in a socialist realistic mode with slight romantic and postmodern deviations. The author needs to be commended for the originality of the text and for her creative ingenuity.