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UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT  
KERALA, INDIA

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## Editor's Note

Communication and Journalism Research always promotes and upholds the spirit of an inter-disciplinary approach in humanities and social science research. This issue is also no exception, though some importance is given to digital media studies. The second issue of volume nine of CJR deals with digital technology adoption, disinformation and misinformation, interaction mechanism on language learning, gender portrayal of cinema, marginalisation of tribes, interactive infographics, and news use in digital times.

Dhanya S. Nair and Lalmohan P examine the factors influencing senior citizens' decisions about adopting digital technologies. They observe that seniors are less likely to accept and adopt digital technologies and benefit from them compared to younger generations. Given the expanding body of research on the advantages of technology use for older persons, they must comprehend the factors influencing adoption. Sajna M K and Muhammadali Nellyullathil compiled and analysed some studies on news use in digital times. It was found that news delivery and consumption studies focused on the changing role of journalists. Further, displacement studies play an essential role in digital news studies. They argue that digital natives have been discovered to use these platforms with ease. While they do not actively seek news and information, they do come across media content as part of their social lives on social media platforms.

Navaneeth T M and Ramis Salam P explore how Indian internet media use interactive infographics. Using content analysis of interactive infographics published by two major online media, Manorama Online and Times of India, researchers study the features and complexity of interactive infographics. Samples were selected around the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. They argue that online news portals in India are developing interactives of a high level of interactivity and varying complexity. Meanwhile, Abdul Rasheed P probes how interaction mechanism enhances English language learning. The main focus of the study is on the interaction approaches, discussing theories that have been developed in the study of interaction as a second language mechanism and an overview of the impact of the theories in practical terms. The study establishes that interaction is an essential technique frequently implemented to enhance learning in the English language (ELT) classroom. The study also highlights that interaction helps to figure out the real challenges of the students in acquiring a second language, mainly in the classroom.

Habeeb Rahman Y P and Muhammadali Nellyullathil analyse the studies related to disinformation and misinformation globally with special reference to India. They attempt to find out the recommendations for the field of communication research as to what should be the future agenda on the study of misinformation and disinformation. They argue that rather than limiting certain aspects of the cause and impact, further steps need to be taken on the literacy of detection of misinformation, public awareness, and inclusion of community-based media literacy initiatives. The article presents suggestions based on previous studies' experiences regarding how the verification and credibility assessment enterprises shall move forward.

The land assignment acts enacted by the state protected the plantation lobbies and settler farmers but did not address the need for land as well as the land rights of the marginalized tribes. Interventions of different departments like the forest in the government sector led to the ecological marginalization of aboriginal groups from the forest resources and treated them as trespassers. Further, environmental degradation accelerated the marginalization process, especially from the water resources they depended on earlier. These marginalization problems, which have been persisting for a long time in the western ghats region of Idukki, are examined by Basil P V, Agnes Sebastian, and Prasanth Saseendran through the lenses of social-ecology and their psycho-social impacts.

Arathy S B observes that the Malayalam cinema industry is transforming its narrative styles to get more inclusive of the question of gender in the narration. While praised for its innovative storytelling tradition, the industry widely used to be criticized for misrepresenting, underrepresenting, and stereotyping women and other sexual minorities. This tendency was observed to be the by-product of commercialization and the rise of star culture in the industry. To substantiate her arguments, she conducted a narrative analysis of the 2017 Malayalam movie 'Mayaanadhi' for its creation and execution of gender and gender roles.

# Ageing in the Digital Age: An Inquiry into the Adoption of Digital Technologies among Senior Citizens

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## Abstract

Rapidly growing digitalisation and societal trends like population ageing and increased life expectancy are hallmarks of the twenty-first century. Our societies and our environment are constantly changing due to the rapid development of new digital technology. This means that most people—including senior citizens—must accept technology as an integral component of daily life and constantly adjust to and incorporate new digital technologies into daily routines and living settings. Numerous technology solutions could enhance the elderly population's quality of life (QoL). However, compared to younger generations, seniors are less likely to accept and adopt digital technologies and benefit from them. This study examines the factors influencing senior citizens' decisions about adopting digital technologies. Given the expanding body of research on the advantages of technology use for older persons, it is critical that we comprehend the factors that influence adoption.

**Keywords:** Senior Citizens, Technology Adoption, Ageing, Decision Making

## Introduction

Even though its two founders, Charles Darwin and Herbert Spencer, are deceased, the theory of evolution is everlasting. This theory's applicability stems from the realisation that humanity is a by-product of natural evolution, closely related to scientific and technological advancement. They are the only species able to control their future, which is one of their key qualities. Darwin was already aware that this trait depends on people's ability for symbol-based communication.

In terms of social, scientific, technical, and communicational progress, we have now surpassed a threshold value. Both people and technology have always moved. Living in a digital society is a theme that deals with this evolutionary threshold's initial stage.

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The development of more adaptable and personalised media due to advancements in digital communication technology has a significant impact on people's daily lives and how those lives are changed. The possibilities of a digitised, rapidly evolving media environment have radically revolutionised information and communication technologies. The fundamental communication concepts that are true today—and will still be true tomorrow—are being called into serious doubt by the rapid digitisation of all media elements. Those who cannot access and use modern digital technologies will not be able to determine their destiny in a world that is almost wholly dependent on these technologies. Numerous factors can be directly linked to the adoption of modern technologies. How a person uses new technology can be significantly influenced by how they access it. In addition, a person's intended use of technology should be given priority when choosing or implementing a new technology over an existing one. They might tend to use technology that they perceive to be "necessary" for their surveillance. Some people neither are early adopters nor have exposure to these technologies through experience or familiarity. This is particularly true considering the elderly population.

Over the past ten years, the number of older individuals (65+) who use digital technologies like the internet and cell phones has considerably expanded. The adoption of technology by older persons has increased, although they still lag behind the overall population (Anderson and Perrin, 2017). Compared to younger individuals, they are still less inclined to acquire those technologies, and as they get older, they become more likely to stop using them (Berkowsky et al., 2018). This is disappointing since a growing body of research indicates that older individuals' quality of life may be considerably improved by using technology. For instance, among older adults, internet use has been linked to significant reductions in depression (Cotten, Ford, Ford, & Hale, 2014), loneliness (Chopik, 2016; Czaja, Boot, Charness, Rogers, & Sharit, 2017), increased sense of belonging (Sum, Mathews, Pourghasem, & Hughes, 2009), psychological well-being (Chen & Persson, 2002), and life satisfaction (Heo, Chun, Lee, Lee, & Kim, 2015).

Technology has come in many forms to help the elderly with daily tasks, including computers, the internet, digital healthcare technology, and others. Technology is therefore thought to have a significant potential to aid and prolong older independence, improve mental and physical health, and increase well-being by bridging the gap between their needs and wants. Senior citizens gradually embrace various digital technologies, though in a modest phase. The key issue in this situation is why and how senior citizens use digital technologies. What are the underlying causes of its adoption? Despite the benefits of embracing new technologies, older persons acquire them more slowly than younger adults do. Therefore, to boost the elderly's acceptance of new technologies, it is essential to identify the elements that may affect their desire to use them.

Technology acceptance and adoption is a complicated and dynamic process, as shown by the many factors that make up those technology acceptance models, both generally and within those specifically relevant to older individuals. It entails comprehending not just what makes technologies easier to use but also what barriers that can prevent people from accepting a technology fully and firmly integrating it into their lives and routines to maximise the potential benefits. The goal of this study is to comprehend the wide range of considerations that older persons look into while deciding whether or not to adopt new technology. The social, personal, and technological elements that support older persons learning digital technology may be identified with a sociological knowledge of these contexts and interactions connected to the usage of new digital technology in later life and learning processes among older people. It is important that these acceptance factors and the models they constitute are reviewed and modified to reflect current acceptance contributors as the technologies themselves evolve—both in form factor and capabilities.

### **Digital Technologies**

In their most technical form, digital technologies use a digital sequence as an interface between the source and the channel input and, of course, between the channel output and, finally, the destination (e.g., binary digits (0,1)). The systems, equipment, and procedures utilised to gather, store, and process data are regarded in this study as digital technologies. These include devices such as feature phones, smartphones, computers, laptops, tablets, or services and applications such as the internet, e-mails, healthcare applications, ATMs, e-banking, online shopping, or online gaming.

### **Senior Citizens**

As stated by the 'National Policy on Older Persons' adopted by the government of India in January 1999 senior citizen is a person of age 60 years or above.

### **The Proposed Study**

Ageing can be classified into primary and secondary. While primary ageing refers to the purely biological process, secondary ageing is more regarded as being cognitive, affective, and social. The term "cognitive ageing" describes a decline in the capacity to assimilate new information. The diminished ability of the individual to adjust to a changing environment is known as affective ageing. The term "social ageing" describes a decline in meaningful social engagement. All of these things indicate that "age" has a significant influence on how digital technologies are adopted.

Digital technologies are predicted to become more integrated into daily life than they already are. Every aspect of society has already been invaded by these

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technologies as daily life becomes more digitalised, from information to purchasing train tickets, using e-governance, to doing online banking operations. Numerous research have established the status of young people in the digital world, their difficulties, and their pitfalls, but it seems that there haven't been enough studies done to examine the role of senior citizens in digital communication. Therefore, it is vital to determine the gaps between what is known and what is unknown regarding the adoption of technology by older people. The proposed study is an attempt to find out why and how senior citizens learn to adapt to digital technologies. The study tries to:

- trace out the factors and contexts that are key to adopting digital communication technologies among senior citizens.
- analyse how senior citizens learned to adapt to digital communication technologies.
- figure out the barriers which prevent the adoption of digital communication technologies among senior citizens.

#### **Methodology**

A structured questionnaire survey is the method of inquiry adopted for this study. Senior citizens aged 60 or above were asked to respond to the questionnaire. The structured questionnaire was developed to understand more about the senior population's adoption of digital technologies and comprehend many aspects of their usage of the medium, including the barriers that stand in their way. Through this survey, the researcher could directly interact with the senior citizens and get their opinions on these technologies to determine their adoption among them and comprehend how these technologies affected their daily lives.

In addition to administering the survey questionnaire, the researcher also made informal deeper conversations with them, enquiring about the various aspects of using digital technologies and the crises or issues that these technologies could help them with. The respondents provided insightful feedback and recommendations.

#### **Plot of the Study**

The Thiruvananthapuram district's rural and urban areas were the fields selected for the study. Before beginning the data gathering process, the field was divided into urban and rural areas for the study's aim and to match the established criteria. The study's fundamental geographic divisions comprised corporations, municipalities, taluks, panchayats, and villages to delve further into the subject. It is broadly separated into urban and rural areas for the convenience of work. The study only included participants who were 60 years of age or older.

## Sampling

Stratified sampling is adopted for this study. It aids in ensuring that a sample is taken from an evenly distributed portion of the population or one with comparable features. The researcher stratified the population according to the age range of the sample population. Seniors of age 60 or older were chosen for the study.

The elderly population in Kerala is 11.8% of the total population, according to the 2011 Census. Considering the whole population in the Thiruvananthapuram district, the rural and urban density is 46.34% and 53.66%, respectively. Females constitute 52.09%, and males constitute 47.91% of the total population of the Thiruvananthapuram district.

Thus, a sample of 100 respondents from the urban and rural areas of Thiruvananthapuram was selected to administer the questionnaire. The chosen subjects have the required characteristics, and the researcher eliminated those who failed to meet those criteria.

## Sample Description

The respondents were chosen among people 60 years of age and older. The researcher classified the age group into four categories for the analysis, as shown in the table below. The first age range is categorised as 60–66 because this demographic is considered the early elderly population and frequently exhibits similar traits. The majority of responders (73%) belonged to this age group.

**Table-1**

Age Group	Number of Respondents
60 – 66	73
67 – 76	21
77 – 86	5
87 +	1
Total	100

Male: female ratio taken into account for the study is 50:50, which means that equal numbers of men and women participated in this survey. The researcher collected an equal number of samples from the rural and urban areas, i.e., 50: 50. It is because, compared to the other Indian states, the rural-urban divide in Kerala is exceptionally very negligible. Among the rural population, 26 respondents (52%) were male and 24 (48%) females. Considering the urban population, the majority (52%) of the



respondents were females, 26 in number, and males constituted, 24 in number (48%).

**Table- 2**

	<b>Rural</b>	<b>Urban</b>	<b>Total</b>
Male	26 (52%)	24 (48%)	50
Female	24 (48%)	26 (52%)	50
Total	50	50	100

**Sample Description by Educational Level**

**Table-3**

<b>Educational Qualifications</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>
Up to 10 <sup>th</sup> standard	52
Pluto two	16
Graduation	14
Above Graduation	18
Total	100

**Analysis**

**The Extent of Digital Literacy and Mobile Internet Penetration among Senior Citizens**

Based on the survey, most (83%) of the samples own a mobile phone. Among them, 56% own a cell phone, 24% own smartphones, and 3% have an iPhone. By subsidising the sample population, it is noticed that the mobile penetration among rural and urban people is 84% and 82%, respectively. Interestingly, iPhone users exclusively belong to the urban population. No one from the rural population ever uses an iPhone.

The responses from the rest of the sample, i.e., those who do not own a mobile phone (17%), point out the 'lack of need' (65%) as the primary factor behind the non-use of mobile phones. 29% respond that they don't know how to use it, and a minor group (6%) says they are not comfortable using it. It is also evident that mobile usage is higher among males (92%) than females (74%).

**Know-how Aspect**

**Table-4**

Know-how aspect of mobile usage statement	Yes	No
To type the number and save it	70	13
To take photos/videos	39	44
To text message	39	44
To switch off and switch on it	71	12
To use internet	27	56
To read messages from the inbox	57	26
To alter any settings	33	50

**Table-5**

Internet Use	Number of Respondents
Self	31
With the help of somebody	30
Akshaya/FRIENDS centre	39
Total	100

**Table-6**

Know-how Aspect of Internet Usage Statement	Yes	No
Search information on Google	39	61
To send / read e-mails	34	66
To watch movies	19	81
To read newspapers/books	19	81
To download anything	36	64

These figures indicate that though mobile penetration is high among the aged population, the technology can't go beyond simply replacing the earlier 'land phones'. Mobile phones are one of the latest developments in the telecommunication sector, particularly in rural areas, and most senior citizens are brought up in the age of development of telephones. So they are well familiar with the use of this technology. And they can replace it with mobile technology. It may be why they can use the base model version of mobile phones.

Considering the know-how aspect of mobile phones, the majority know how to switch off and on, type the number, and save it. It shows that they are not smart

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enough to use these technologies. Most of the sample does not know how to carry out the significant functions of even the base model. They are not interested to know about it because they think they don't need it. The majority (70%) of the sample does not have an e-mail ID. It shows that e-mail fails to become a typical digital communication medium among senior citizens. During the informal interviews, most of the respondents reacted that even didn't know anything about what an e-mail is. The situation is almost the same in both rural and urban areas.

Based on the data, 39% of the sample uses the internet through Akshaya/FRIENDS centres. The rest of the population uses it by themselves (31%) or with the help of other people (30%). It shows that the internet is highly limited for utility purposes among senior citizens (this is the main reason they depend on Akshaya centres). Still, the rate of internet penetration and the efforts to use it individually or on their own is gradually increasing in number, even in a slow phase. Regarding the know-how aspect of internet usage, the majority know how to search for information on Google (36%). Knowledge about watching movies (19%) and reading newspapers/books (19%) constitutes the most negligible share. From this, it is clear that only a minor portion of the total sample knows even the basic things related to internet usage. There are no considerable differences between the rural and urban populations regarding this aspect. But the divide is evident between males and females, with females being the category with the slightest knowledge regarding internet usage.

The responses clearly state that the aged population has not yet begun using the internet for entertainment purposes, such as watching movies, etc., in contrast to the younger generation. It also confirms that senior citizens are not ready to give up their affinity towards traditional media like print media and television. However, they are in the slow phase of embracing the internet as a medium to stay updated.

The findings suggest that digital literacy, especially literacy related to mobile and internet usage, is low among the aged population. A vast majority do not even consciously gather knowledge beyond these technologies' essential functions. It is because they firmly believe that these technologies are not meant for them, and they don't need them.

**The Pattern of Use of Mobile and Internet Technology by Senior Citizens**

**Table- 7**

<b>Purpose of Using Mobile Phone</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>
Making phone calls	79 (95%)
Browse on internet	4 (4%)
Listening to music	1 (1%)
Taking photos/videos	0

**Table-8**

<b>Purpose of Using the Internet</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>
Availing online government services	82
Online banking	15
Booking train/bus/air tickets	14
E-mail	20

Among the total samples who own a mobile phone, 95% responds that the primary purpose of their mobile phone use is to make phone calls. Similarly, among internet users, 82% use the internet to avail of various government services. 15% use it for online banking facilities. This indicates that digital communication technologies, especially mobile and internet, primarily serve the utility function among senior citizens rather than a medium for entertainment, information or participation. Internet fails to act as a mass medium among senior citizens.

The study revealed an interesting point. Though the government's e-governance initiatives compelled people to depend on the internet for various needs, a large majority (59%) still feel comfortable with traditional methods like filling out the application form and submitting directly to the government offices. They feel nervous and even irritated when compelled to submit online applications mainly related to pensions, government certificates etc. They think there are chances to create a lot of mistakes while doing it online, mainly because the whole process is out of their control. It is done by 'someone else' whom they are unfamiliar with.

The study also reveals that Akshaya/FRIENDS and other digital kiosks only provide the physical infrastructure to access digital technologies. In this way, it significantly bridges the social and digital divide between rural and urban geography. Still, it

often fails to achieve one of its foremost goals, providing digital literacy among the public of all ages through various digital training programs.

### **Process of Adoption of Digital Technologies among Senior Citizens**

Among the internet users, 20 respondents say that they learned to use it by themselves through self-learning. As only a small percentage of internet users (31%) among the selected samples use their own, the responses made by the mobile users (83%) give a clear picture. For them, a family member (42%), who may be their children or grandchildren, teaches them how to use these technologies. Also, 55% depend on their children for support and clarification while using these technologies. 29% rely on their grandchildren.

These figures clearly state that the older generation depends mainly on, the younger generation (2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> generation) regarding every aspect of the usage of digital technologies ranging from the learning process to the clarifications of ongoing doubts to seeking helps to solve unexpected problems. The aged population have no 'inferiority complexes' in seeking help from the younger generation. They are highly comfortable in doing so.

The study reveals that situational pressure or some unavoidable circumstances (67%) compelled the aged population to adopt/use digital technologies. The self-willingness/curiosity to explore new technologies (22%) and the consciousness of social status (11%) have only a minor role in adopting digital technologies among senior citizens. Here adoption takes the form of compulsion. Technological innovations and advancements may go unnoticed among senior citizens if they seldom need to use them or find any alternative to overcome that situation, which may go in phase with their traditional way of doing things. Thus, the study reveals that necessity is one of the prime factors determining the adoption of digital technologies among senior citizens.

### **Coping with the Adoption of Digital Technologies among Senior Citizens**

In the study, 76% of the respondents reveal that they feel a specific type of fear while using digital technologies. This fear is primarily related to the difficulty in coping with the speed that these technologies demand. The study also reveals that these difficulties and anxiety can gradually be converted to technology fear and will lead to an aversion to technology among senior citizens. Many respondents believe that they will make mistakes while using these technologies and that errors will be difficult to correct alone.

A considerable majority (56%) are not much confident enough to use digital technologies on their own. The study also reveals an interesting fact. Though a large majority of the sample population have a specific type of technology fear, 58%

respond that they feel these technologies/devices are users friendly, i.e., they are easy to use if learned. It is a contradictory statement, which indicates that there may be some psychological reasons (fear) that go beyond user-friendliness (ease or difficulty in using devices), which prevents senior citizens from adopting/using digital technologies/devices. If they may get mental support from somebody, especially from a peer group, friends or a family member, they may at least make an effort to trail it.

55% of the sample feels that it is challenging to keep up with technological changes. Only 39% believe that these technologies are making their easier. The rest of the sample, 6% reveals the general mentality of the aged population related to this topic; they are not bothered about these changes. They never even tried to adopt digital technologies, so they don't know how their life will be changed if they use these technologies and therefore, they are not bothered about it. This is the same for both men and women, for rural and urban. Thus the study reveals that digital technologies are not able to enhance the quality of life of senior citizens

### **Participation in Social Networking Sites**

The study reveals a critical aspect regarding the internet usage of senior citizens. 83% of the total samples do not have an account on social networking sites. Those with accounts on any social networking site (17%) believe it is an effective method of building contacts and relationships (70%). Indirectly it reveals that they are trying to deal with the social alienation posed by old age. But it is not the case for the majority. They have their traditional methods of building social contacts, which they are familiar with, other than using social media. Those who use social media know how to make posts, comments etc. That means they have sound knowledge regarding social media usage.

Thus, the study reveals that senior citizens show lower levels of participation in social networking sites. They haven't yet explored the scope of this media platform to engage in day-to-day issues.

### **The Extent of Using Online Banking Facilities**

The majority of the sample (73%) had never used online banking facilities at least once. 46% point out lack of knowledge as the most crucial factor that prevents them from using online banking facilities. 'Lack of need' (22%) is also a significant factor in this context.

At the same time, 63% have ATM cards. Though this figure is high, the reality is that most of them had never made use of it. They all find it comfortable with direct transactions with the bank. The majority of senior persons are included in government pension programmes, which may be the main reason of this. These

pensions are their primary source of income and the only form of financial transactions they require. Most of the time, it is available as a money order, or they may go directly to the bank to collect it. They find walking a few miles to the bank easier than to the Akshaya centres for online transactions. Online banking and ATM cards will only be possible if their bank accounts have an adequate balance. All these factors and the lack of knowledge make them reluctant toward online banking.

Thus, the study shows that there is the need for systematic planning and implementation of strategies primarily focused on creating awareness among senior citizens regarding online banking and thus making them confident to use it by teaching digital knowledge.

### **Barriers to Adopting/Using Digital Technologies among Senior Citizens**

The survey shows that the lack of digital skills (49%) and technology fear (17%) acts as the most critical barriers to the adoption /use of digital communication technologies. Simply providing physical infrastructure does not entirely deal with bridging the digital gap. People need digital skills too. Only 8% believe lack of access to technology will be the most critical barrier to using digital technology. Psychological factors like 'feeling too old' also have a significant role to play here. Some seniors have the feeling that they are too old to catch up with these trends, and it is too late to learn new technology. Thus, they find it better to avoid these technologies. They firmly believe that something 'new' is not for them. Thus, the study reveals that along with a lack of digital skills, the individual's attitude towards technology has a vital role in the acceptance/rejection of that technology.

### **Observations**

- Digital literacy among senior citizens is low, though they are gradually beginning to use these technologies for various purposes, even in a slow phase.
- Age acts as one of the crucial factors in determining digital literacy.
- Traditional literacy may have an impact on digital literacy.
- The aged population mainly uses digital communication technologies for utility purposes rather than for entertainment or as a source of information.
- Senior citizens tend to adopt digital communication technologies because of situational pressure or some unavoidable circumstances.

- Senior citizens often seek the help of the younger generation regarding technology usage and depend on them to acquire digital skills and digital knowledge without any embarrassment or inadequacy.
- The lack of digital skills and technology fear poses a big problem for senior citizens in adopting and using digital technologies.
- Senior citizens show lower engagement and participation in social networking sites.
- E-governance initiatives adopted by the government compelled the senior citizens to use the internet for a variety of needs, but they will not prefer these services over other traditional methods which they had been practising for years
- Senior citizens prefer traditional media for reading newspapers and books and watching movies.
- E-mail cannot be considered a common form of correspondence among senior citizens.
- Akshaya/FRIENDS centres only provide the physical infrastructure for accessing digital communication. It is a failure in sectors like providing digital literacy through training programs and thus bridging the social and digital divide.
- The lack of knowledge, lack of need and the fear of using the technology make the senior citizens reluctant towards online banking facilities.
- Senior citizens find it difficult to keep up with technological changes.
- Necessity is one of the prime factors behind adopting digital communication technologies.
- Technological innovations may go unnoticed among senior citizens if they seldom find any need to use them or if they find any alternative to overcome that particular situation.
- Most senior citizens feel that they are too old to catch up with trends and perceive that these technologies are 'not meant for them.
- Senior citizens may see some benefits of using digital technologies among other people, but they may not feel it is necessary for them at this later stage of life.



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- Advertisements and other promotional programs for digital technologies/devices create an impression among senior citizens that these technologies are exclusively meant for the younger generation.
- Moving government services online without support makes it harder for senior citizens to use them and thus leads to increased dependency.
- Older men are more likely to use digital communication technologies than older women.
- The social and digital divide is firmly evident in rural and urban demographics of the aged population.
- There is a strong feeling among senior citizens that using digital technologies is very much outside their comfort zone, and it is an unsafe place to stay.
- There is a top notion among senior citizens that they are not missing out on anything by not using digital technologies or not being online. They are well satisfied with their current life as it is going, and they are unable even to imagine how their life will be changed if they start to use these technologies.

#### **Discussion**

Every form of communication technology can be strongly linked to the corresponding generation. Adopting new technologies is also required to learn new skills and alter some of the usual procedures. Offering the bare minimum of facilities and resources does not guarantee they will utilise them effectively; instead, they may be unable or unwilling to do so. Effective use requires not just sharing information but also adapting that technology to the user's needs.

The study reveals that senior persons have poor digital literacy and technology use levels. One crucial factor in determining digital literacy is age. Senior citizens frequently turn to digital technologies to overcome situational pressure and deal with certain unavoidable conditions. They are therefore compelled to do so. They are not wholly willing to do it on their own accord most of the time. However, it is worth mentioning that the initial use of technology based on situational pressure cannot be co-related with adopting that particular technology. It is different. The study highlights various elements that serve as facilitators and obstacles to the senior population's adoption of technology.

#### **Facilitators of Digital Technology Adoption and Usage**

A variety of facilitators influences intentions and actual technology use. The highest rated facilitator for older persons' digital technology usage and adoption is the necessity/requirement or the unavoidable circumstances compel them to use new technology. The perceived use of these technologies in their daily lives is a significant additional aspect. This perceived usefulness might also include perceived ease of use and perceived simplicity of technology understanding and comprehension. This finding is consistent with many earlier studies, which state that perceived usefulness and ease of use had an impact on users' intentions to use (Venkatesh et al., 2012) and actual use (Chen and Chan, 2014).

The confidence in one's ability to learn the technology was a common predictor of readiness to adopt. Across all technologies, it was discovered that confidence significantly correlated with the desire to adopt. According to studies by Czaja et al. (2006), older persons generally report less confidence in using technologies than younger age cohorts. This lack of confidence can be a significant obstacle to successfully using or utilising technology (Siren & Knudsen, 2017).

Intentions to use are influenced by facilitating factors (such as instructional support) and a social component. The vast majority of older persons acknowledge that they require help to learn how to use modern technologies. They find it difficult to pick up these technologies on their own. The majority of participants received family assistance in terms of instructional support. Children and grandchildren mainly act as mentors. Through their informal guidance and encouragement, they served as intermediaries between the technological artefact and the user, enabling affordances to emerge. But diverse approaches to the applications of digital technology reveal generational gaps. Although older persons typically use technology at a lower rate than the general population, once they become comfortable with the tools, they prefer to use them frequently and believe they are essential to their daily lives.

Their presumptions about ageing and technology were quite evident throughout the study, especially regarding self-efficacy and confidence. According to the study, various adoption-related variables changed depending on the particular characteristics and functionalities of the technology. This could explain the fact that senior citizens favour some technology over others. Anxiety, attitudes, self-efficacy (Chen and Chan, 2014), hedonic motivation, perceived benefit, price value (Venkatesh et al., 2012), and other elements that have an impact on the core facilitators, intentions, and actual usage. Participants in this study largely agreed on these facilitators, but their relationships varied between technologies.

## **Barriers to Digital Technology Adoption and Usage**

Lack of digital skills and technological anxiety were the barriers that received the most support throughout this study. Although older individuals may be aware of their digital technology's features or capabilities, they cannot access or use them. They look for instructional support to help them overcome their phobia of technology. Therefore, confusing instructions or the absence of facilitating conditions may lead to resistance from the senior citizens regarding the technology adoption. Many technologies are built to be multipurpose or have different characteristics in addition to their primary function. Therefore, it is not unexpected that some older citizens were unaware of all the features of their digital devices. Older persons also care about the cost of digital technology and their ignorance of technological characteristics (Vaportzis et al., 2017). Privacy issues significantly deter those who do not adopt digital technologies. Privacy concerns are a significant hurdle for older persons due to the increasing likelihood of personal data being accessed without consent or knowledge (Fox & Connolly, 2018). Feeling too old is one of several psychological reasons that can prevent senior citizens from adopting new technologies.

## **Conclusion**

It is essential to understand how older people learn and adopt new digital technology to address digital inequalities in later life, particularly in the context of an ageing population on the rise. This requires paying attention to their socio-technical contexts, previously acquired habits, and current attitudes. Various mediations are seen to pass between technology and its user instead of being an instant encounter. Though they are eager to learn how to utilise the digital tools that others in their networks frequently use, older people often find that their efforts are foiled—either by internalised ageism or by tools that seem to have been designed with others in mind. The perceived value of the technology, trust in one's ability to learn the technology, and the perceived impact on quality of life are all elements that influence older persons' readiness to accept it.

The social circumstances in which technology is used impact everything, from the designers' envisaged users to the technology's applications by the users themselves. This embedding also shows how things that help with learning may get in the way. A comprehensive digital inclusion policy must consider various socioeconomic settings and refrain from becoming "one-size-fits-all." It is vital to provide age-friendly design, the relevance of digital services, and ageism-free, moral, secure, and embracing digital environments that welcome the diversity of ageing populations. For instance, digital literacy programmes aimed at older audiences should consider both the individuals' needs and goals (personalisation) and their social surroundings, such as living conditions or interactions within the family

(contextualisation). However, use over time is necessary to understand the benefits of technology and make decisions regarding its adoption.

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# Disinformation and Misinformation Research: Trends in the Past and Ways for the Future

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## Abstract

Increasing, yet intensified and charged discourses in communication research literature and beyond about the ways of tackling the menace of misinformation, and disinformation as well, amply indicate how the post truth media content, particularly digital media content, contaminated the global information ecosystem implicating for social and political communication practices and necessitated complicated verification methods and vetting mechanisms. At various points in history, with the outbreak of communal clash, pandemic or war, this menace has been taken seriously by the authorities, both governmental and non governmental, as it could cause harm to the lives of people (Vogel, 2017). Realizing the harmful power of misinformation on the web, and being helpless to fight against the spreading misinformation beyond a limit, the necessity of the time being is to find alternatives to fight the fake through more detection strategies. This work analyses the studies related to disinformation and misinformation across the globe and with special reference to India, trying to find out the recommendations for the field of communication research as what should be the future agenda on the study of misinformation and disinformation. Rather than limiting certain aspects of the cause and impact, further steps need to be taken on the literacy of detection of misinformation, public awareness and inclusion of community-based media literacy initiatives. For example devising newer credibility assessment mechanisms has become need of the hour when it comes to infiltration of misinformation and disinformation trends to serious academic communication domains (Marwick and Rebecca, 2017). Same is the case of other domains too, particularly journalism, which is fundamentally positioned as a process of verification. The article presents suggestions based on previous studies experiences as to how the verification and credibility assessment enterprises shall move forward.

**Keywords:** Misinformation, Disinformation, Media Literacy, Information Literacy, Media Research, Communication Research.

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## **Misinformation Research: Tracing the Trends and Carving the Way Forward**

Misinformation and disinformation are two terms that have gained popularity in the post-truth era but are very difficult to define and the complexity in their defining arises not only from the confusion in their conceptualization but also at the functional level. Viewed through a functional perspective, disinformation and misinformation and their action patterns are unpredictable depending on time and context. The unpredictable is most often inefinable in their exact terms. Fast changing digital technologies offer newer and newer audience engagement methods, interactive ways, form and content constantly redefining the dynamics of information dissemination and consumption patterns. It again complicates the definition that convey the exact meaning in the present day context where disinformation and misinformation do what was imagined of them or conceptualized about them in communication and information literature of bygone era.

Disinformation and Misinformation are terms that are being widely discussed these days due to the influx of information on the web. Though both these terms evolved long back and had a lot of impact on notable incidents, the consequences were further strengthened due to the advent of the Internet. Disinformation can be defined as deliberately misleading or biased information, manipulated narrative or facts, or propaganda. Misinformation is the false information that is spread regardless of whether there is an intent to mislead. Disinformation and Misinformation have been a topic of discussion across the globe since years back. Today, it has become more evident with the weaponization of information by governments and public relation agencies. A deliberate attempt often happens at the beginning and the content is being shared at the other end often as misinformation. Numerous studies have been conducted on disinformation and misinformation at various aspects, in the field of communication. Most of them are limited to certain aspects of misinformation and disinformation, such as the historical context, political influence, 'infodemic' in the health sector, consequences of misinformation and media literacy, digital divide and information literacy etc. The studies on detection of fake content online is relatively a new topic, which is being studied in different parts of the world these days. Since the detection tools for misinformation are being developed day by day, a continuous effort is required in order to keep track of the trends in the developments of the field. In the context of India, various efforts are being taken by government, independent bodies as well as corporates in order to develop strategies in combating misinformation. Studies on various models of detection literacy would probably be needed in the near future.

The history of disinformation and misinformation can be traced back to the 12th century, as a child went missing in Italy and rumours spread as the child had been

kidnapped and killed by the Jewish community and celebrated Christmas Eve by drinking the blood of the child. It further developed into communal violence and couldn't even be controlled by the communal leaders. The rumour was spread in depth to the minds of people as they blindly believed the misinformation, which couldn't be recalled even after the child's body was found, and there are still people who believe the fake information as truth. During the 17th century, historians began to play a role in verifying the news by publishing their sources as verifiable footnotes. The trial over Galileo's findings in 1610 also created a desire for scientifically verifiable news and helped create influential scholarly news sources. The influx of fake news increased as per the increase of printed newspapers. There were claims that sinners are responsible for natural disasters which were believed by thousands of people on religious background. Religious texts and certain beliefs catalysed the spread of rumours which influenced many people through the channel of faith. (Soll, 2016)

Since science and technology have advanced a lot by today, misinformation related to the field of science and technology could be simply verified, but the historical misinformation is still found difficult to verify. Analysing the global trend on the studies on misinformation, it could be found that most of the studies at the primary level focus on the psycho-social aspects of misinformation. Studies conducted in the western countries during the last ten years have concentrated on the various aspects of misinformation including science, health, religion, politics, socio-cultural and communication aspects.

The inquiry to define disinformation and misinformation has started a long way back, and a lot of studies have been done in the last ten years across the globe to trace out the history and evolution of misinformation. A set of such studies would conclude that the history of misinformation and disinformation is not just limited to certain contexts, but there were propagandas and satires in various political contexts also, which catalysed the spread of misinformation. Analysing various articles on the history and evolution of misinformation at international level, it is found that most of them are somehow related to the political wars and other conflicts.

During the First World War, patriotism and nationalism were wrongly projected through misinformation in Britain, in order to recruit people to the army. Propaganda played a crucial part in the process as the population was convinced that their sacrifices for the country would be rewarded. Certain slogans and advertisements used in this regard were of strong propaganda or tactics. (Welch, D, 2014)

The process of propaganda played a crucial role in misleading the public as well as communities in various wars in the world. It continued in the Second World War, Vietnam war, the cold war, Iraq war and Syrian civil war. The various aspects of



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different studies on the misinformation and propaganda during the wartime indicate the consequences of misinformation and propaganda that spread during the wartime.

Misinformation has deep connections with political discourse, in connection with deception and propaganda. It has started with exaggerated content of falsehoods presented in public speeches, or mentioned in the written works. Propagandists also used cartoons as an effective medium for satirical content from the 18th century. The propaganda based content could often influence people to a large extent during a number of civil wars across the world. With the invention of printing, the magnitude of circulated propaganda based content has increased a lot, by using printed material to spread falsehoods and misinformation as part of political aims. Invention of photography and colour printing added to this. Later with the invention of radio and audio visual media, songs and movies became important tools of spreading fake information as part of propaganda. As the new media and internet further increased the magnitude of the space for the distribution of content to a vast majority through personalised platforms, spread of fake information has been further increased. (Sample, Justice and Darraj, 2019)

Numerous studies have taken place on how misinformation and disinformation have been used for political propaganda and even to influence the elections. According to Quarts, People shared nearly as much fake news as real news on Twitter during the US presidential election in 2016. Most of the content that were later identified as fake, were circulated on the days immediately before and after the elections.

The trend of fake news was at its top prior to the presidential elections in America from 2016. Around 140 fake news websites were identified which were spread over social media. Craig Silverman, editor of BuzzFeed had investigated on the topic during the time and found that the misinformation was widely spread in the form of advertisements through social media. It was identified as part of the political propaganda that misinformation was deliberately spread. Donald Trump was identified as the first politician to use the term fake news. According to Clare Wardle, social media like twitter were used previously for verifying content as the space was effectively used to debunk misinformation, but now it is not an easy task since an overflow of fake news and misinformation is spread over social media. Concrete actions are being taken by governments and organizations to make people aware as well as to develop tools to combat fake news. (Wendling, 2018)

Apart from the war propaganda and political aims, there was misinformation spread across the globe on scientific, religious and socio-cultural issues. The misinformation on science can be traced back to the belief in the myths,

There was false information spread across the world related to the field of science as well, since it was something far for common people and was easy to create misinterpretations and make them believe. Proving scientifically false information was also not an easy task during the time since the advancements of technology was not on its height. One such major misinformation spread was from the US, in the New York Times. The *New York Sun*'s "Great Moon Hoax" of 1835 claimed that there was an alien civilization on the moon, and established the *Sun* as a leading, profitable newspaper. (Soll, 2016)

The misinformation on science is still a nightmare. It mostly happened in the world related to health communication related to various epidemics, precautionary warnings, and other forms of health related awareness messages. Rumours and misinformation spread on contraceptives and family planning in Africa was one among many other countries. According to a study conducted in 2011, the major sect of the society who were away from being trusted in scientific communication were the women from rural areas. The situation still remains in countries including India, mainly because of digital divide and information illiteracy. Myths and misinformation equally cause misinterpretation of facts.

Misinformation based on myths is often connected to religion also. There is a huge amount of misinformation developed by Islamophobia. The community is being labelled often with terrorism and other inhuman activities. The religious teachings are often considered as misinformation by certain sects of people in order to develop anti-religious elements. There are studies that prove religion never becomes a reason for misinformation. A study on the Information literacy in Islam states that there are enough recommendations in Islam itself to be aware of misinformation and be away from spreading unconfirmed information.

The Islamic teachings on seeking beneficial knowledge for life, verifying truth, and intellectual humility always contribute to the information literacy of the community. By acquiring and teaching these skills within a particular community, the community can protect themselves, their families, and their communities from anti-religious disinformation, scam artists, fake news, conspiracy theories, and other such sources of deceit. (Parrot, J, 2018)

A minority who don't believe science and medicines often misinform people regarding the scientific measures. It was witnessed during the spread of Ebola in 2014 and continues to be the same during the COVID-19 pandemic by the end of 2019. Various studies have been conducted recently on the misinformation spread related to COVID-19 disease, precautions, treatments and vaccination. Safety and effectiveness, alternative medicine, civil liberties, conspiracy theories, and morality were the base of most of the misinformation circulated on the web. The

pandemic time also witnessed political propaganda being reflected as misinformation connecting the virus spread among different countries.

According to several studies, most of the information spread on the web regarding coronavirus across the world was not credible enough. The amount of verified and authentic information on the issue was far less than the misinformation and unauthentic information spread on the web during the pandemic time. This has highly affected the population behind the line of digital literacy. Since research is still going on about detecting false information on the web, and ever since it is not an easy task for the common people, the misinformation on COVID-19 has been a major threat for the field of health communication.

According to an infodemiology study conducted by JMIR Public Health Surveillance, Health professionals and the scientific community need to be more aware of the quality of information they read and produce on the web. In the scenario of widespread misinformation on the web, there is a high risk to public health on usage of the internet. The governments at national and international level must be developing strategies in order to regulate health information on the web from unauthentic sources.

Specific misinformation claims are consistently deemed reliable by a substantial segment of the public and pose a potential risk to the public health. There are issues related to vaccine hesitancy which also contribute to sharing misinformation. There is an important and crucial role for the scientists and media to play as disseminators of factual information and health guidance for the public. (Roozenbeek. J, et. al, 2020)

Analysing the misinformation studies with special reference to India, most of the research on Information literacy, disinformation and misinformation are limited to certain topics including digital literacy, digital divide, internet accessibility etc. The Press Council of India in 2018 has come up with a definition of fake news in terms of the nation's well-being. According to PCI, *information, an intentional twisting of a news story etc.* It has been analysed by the legal experts that the definition of Press Council was limited to defamation and was only mentioned in elections which ignores the social and cultural issues and religious polarization that a fake content would create.

Journalism in India has been on its way to be outstanding and committed towards the truth. But the pressure from the political institutions, part of the media house or from outside has been putting pressure on media houses and journalists in India, for mere political and profit interests. There are revenue concerns also since the central and state government advertisements are the major revenue of every media house and standing in favour of them would only invite more ads and otherwise would get

selectively withdrawn. These concerns affect the trustworthiness of the Indian media and meanwhile affect the fight against misinformation which are two highly interrelated concepts. (Upmanyu, 2018)

According to several studies and news reports, social media campaigning is the key tool of every political party in India today as it is identified that social media content can influence people a lot. Another insight towards the same is that the digital illiteracy of the majority population in India would help in not recognizing false information being circulated in the new media space. This is being widely misused and fake information is being circulated anonymously over different social media platforms.

Political parties in India spend a high amount of money for digital campaigning, especially on social media. Election Commission of India has recently instructed the political parties regarding the campaign on the social media where they have to produce the expenditure details for the same along with other modes of publicity. There are numerous politicians in India who have created a modest image of themselves on social media. The social media strategy of the political parties ensures a specific number of followers on social media which creates a concept of virtual acceptance of the personality among social media users and which would definitely reflect in the public space as well. (Banerjee & Haque 2018)

On the other hand, social media as a political weapon also leads to intolerance and religious disharmony in India. The recent mob lynching in India has a big story of fake information and forwarded content behind. The society is being polarized politically with the influence of the fake information forwarded aiming at political interests of certain groups. The polarization is caused mostly by the illiteracy of the public in order to understand the truth.

The disinformation is to be seen as a more complicated issue in India compared to the west in the context of the political polarization. The existing economic inequality, poverty and low trust in the administration will eventually make this a serious concern. The media being biased for political and profit reasons would become a major challenge in fighting against misinformation in the country, as the trust of the public in the mainstream media matters a lot. Journalists and media houses have to ensure their acceptance among the public, especially in the rural areas and provide verified content in order to fight against misinformation and disinformation. (Upmanyu, 2018)

The advent of the internet and social media has further increased the influx of fake news and misinformation today. Since social media is a space where anyone can share information to the public, and can even be anonymous. Applications like

WhatsApp have now become the space where a lot of unverified information is being shared blindly, without source and without attribution.

In India, WhatsApp has been one of the major platforms that is used to spread fake content. The reasons behind WhatsApp being so is the digital illiteracy of the public. WhatsApp has a very basic UID which is accessible to anyone owning a smartphone, it has become a hub of misinformation. Since WhatsApp has recently increased the number of members in a WhatsApp group to 256, many public groups have been formed and the community using WhatsApp got quite wider. This also contributed to a wider circulation of unconfirmed content. Difficulty in tracing out the origin of the message, difficulty in stopping the already forwarded content etc. are an important flaw of the medium which causes an influx of fake content.

WhatsApp and Facebook are the two major platforms in India which often become the hub for the flow of fake information. WhatsApp being a more personalized instant messaging application mostly preferred to connect with family and friends, and Facebook found wider than the previous, both platforms are witnessing an influx of misinformation which are mostly unidentified. People who deliberately share wrong information would eventually become misinformation as people unknowingly share them without verification. (Banerjee & Haque, 2018)

In India, the accuracy of news media content is found to be 82 per cent (Fielden, Grupac and Adamko, 2018, p. 55). This indicates the traditional media which are believed to be authentic and trustworthy has a minimal amount of wrong information being passed on. The chances of a huge percent of misinformation on social media and internet are high, where such a study is yet to be conducted.

Since the users of social media especially in India are not highly literate digitally, and the aim of fake information on the web is either political propaganda by satirical content or for the personal revenue, a general awareness and introduction of verification tools would help users distinguish fact and fake. Data validation tools are to be developed further with more efficiency, as the pattern and style of fake content online is changing instantly, where it becomes a difficult task to develop validation tools.

Since social media has become the space for people to talk about anything to the public, the line between journalists and the public has been blurred. This actually increases the responsibility of journalists. There are various concerns over the trustworthiness of the content that journalists receive, as well as the ways to prove themselves as trustworthy is another challenge. (Upmanyu, 2018)

Most of the recent studies conducted in India on misinformation are on the COVID-19 pandemic. Since the outbreak of pandemic in India from the beginning of 2020,

there has been an influx of misinformation on the web related to the virus spread, precautions and treatment. Unfortunately, the misinformation was even shared by prominent figures and the educated community. Most of the studies stress on the need of making the public literate on the consequences of misinformation, and to educate them on the tools by which they can detect fake content online.

There are numerous media houses and non-profitable organizations that work on fact-checking and to aware the public regarding the ground truth of the story. Alt News and Boom Live are the two major media houses continuously engaged in fact-checking in India. The contribution of both these media houses recently have been helped the public access accurate information on the web.

Several initiatives have also been taken by FactShala, an Information Literacy Network initiated by DataLeads and Internews, with the support from Google News Initiatives in India. The network consisting of around 250 trainers have conducted various training sessions on addressing misinformation and fact-checking at various levels in the different parts of the country. Analysing the report of the feedback and study conducted thereafter, it is found that the majority of rural population are still far behind in understanding whether an information is right or wrong. Several steps have been taken by the initiative to give awareness on the ongoing 'infodemic' about the corona virus in the country. It has also conducted a series of webinars for the public on vaccination myths and misinformation.

Analysing the previous studies, most of them specify the inevitable contribution of the media in fighting disinformation and misinformation. Most of the studies across the globe have recommended further studies in the field specific to fact-checking, information literacy and detection of misinformation. The future agenda for the research in communication with special reference to disinformation and misinformation can be focused on the public awareness and effectiveness of the existing fact-checking systems, the need of introducing new ventures on verifying the information on the web, the misinformation detection mechanism for common people etc. Since there is a major population in the country depending on the traditional media, the role of such media in providing awareness on the influx of fake content on various issues and topics, and also educating the public on the impact of misinformation is also recommended.

Media literacy is the basic idea by which combating misinformation would succeed. Studies to explore the possibilities of media literacy education programmes at grassroots level of communities and rural population in the country with the support of various organizations which are already working for the same goal would help survive the 'infodemic'. Quality research being dynamic on the constantly changing scenario misinformation and technology would help fight against misinformation.

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# How Interaction Mechanism Enhances English Language Learning: An Overview

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## Abstract

Employing various methods for learning English as a second language has been the focus of many studies in English Language Teaching (ELT). In a multi-cultural society, people are naturally exposed to other languages in their surroundings, apart from their first language. Some parents are naturally bilingual, thereby exposing their children to acquiring two or more languages. Some second language learners improve their language skills through various means including interactions, either with fellow students or with the teachers in the classroom situation. There are many factors that impact English language Learning. This immediate study focuses on the impact of the interaction mechanism in the enhancement of the learning of English as a second language. The main focus is on the interaction approaches, discussing theories that have been developed in the study of interaction as a second language mechanism, and an overview of the impact of the theories in practical terms. The study utilized simple qualitative approach, and data was collated through secondary sources. The discussion was carried out descriptively. Findings were made in the analysis. The main component of the analysis is based on the discovery that interaction has remained a vital factor in the learning of English as a second language. The interaction was proven to remain a basic technique frequently implemented to enhance learning in the English language teaching (ELT) classroom. The study also established that interaction helps to figure out the real challenges of the students in acquiring a second language, mainly in the classroom. Consistent interaction, which directly engages the students in the learning process, was proven to trigger teachers to expedite suitable methods to inculcate behavioral changes among learners.

## Keywords

Interaction, English as a Second Language, Classroom Learning, Second Language Learning, Interaction Impact, Communication in Class, Competency-Based Language Teaching (CBLT).

## 1. Introduction

English is taught as a second language across various countries. It is the official language of the countries colonized by British administrators. English can be acquired as a second language either simultaneously or sequentially. Many children

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across the world are exposed to English as a second language while they acquire the first or native language at home. At the same time, English is taught in the classroom as a second language. Various factors are considered in terms of what motivates or impacts the learning of English as a second language in the classroom.

Among many techniques that enhance the learning of English as a second language, interaction has remained relevant. Interaction remains a basic technique usually implemented to enhance learning in the English language teaching (ELT) classroom. A plethora of studies indicated that there is a great level of relationship that exists between classroom interaction techniques and students' English language learning performance (Moss & Feldman, 2003; Wang & Castro, 2010; Odu, Odigwe, & Ekpenyong, 2013). Following the propositions of the interaction hypothesis theory, the development of communicative competence can easily be accelerated by interaction and communication in the classroom (Long, 1984). Interaction brings out an open exposure to communication and thereby acquiring the second language skills at an enhanced rate among the students in a minimum span of time. It also helps figure out the real problems of the students in acquiring a second language. It triggers teachers to expedite suitable methods to inculcate behavioral changes among learners. Interaction contributes immensely in the learning of English as a second language in the classroom. Peer-group interactions are getting dominated in most of the twenty-first century ELT classrooms. The contemporary curriculum focuses on social skills like interpersonal, group work, motivation, and empathy along with learning the second language.

The lack of interaction inside language classrooms results in poor learning. Long (1984), who is usually referred to as the founder of interactionism in English language learning, argues that lack of interaction is a reason for slow communicative competence in the English language in the ELT class. The effectiveness of interaction is often governed by teachers' and learners' intentions, actions, attitudes, and motivations. There are so many techniques employed to enhance communicative competence in language classrooms. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Collaborative learning, role-plays, interviews, games, pair-work, surveys, etc are the techniques used to enhance interactions. ELT in India in particular and across other countries where English is taught as a second language, is largely embracing the Communicative Approach today to promote English language Learning.

## **2.0. Review of Related Literature**

The learning of a second language by an individual requires intensive study, commitment and deliberate memorization of the grammar of the second language. The acquisition of a second language in a class setting requires extensive commitment, deliberate efforts, a proper teaching environment, and professional

teachers, among other pertinent issues. Second language teaching and learning is a bidirectional effort, requiring the input of teachers and learners for effective acquisition. However, Maleke (2014) concluded that it is out of place to state that an FL (Foreign Language Learner) could aspire to attain a native-like competence in the second language when it is learned mainly in a classroom setting.

For emphasis, interaction in the classroom refers to the conversation between teachers and students, as well as among the students, in which active participation and learning of the students become vital. Conversations are part of the socio-cultural activities through which students construct knowledge collaboratively. Conversations between and among various parties in the classroom have been referred to as educational talk (Mercer and Dawes, 2008) or “exploratory talk” and “presentational talk” (Barnes, 2008:5). Presentational talk is the one-way lecture conducted by the teachers in the classroom which contributes little to encouraging and engaging students in a communicative dialogue. Exploratory talk is a purposeful conversation, often deliberately designed by teachers, which provide opportunities to students to engage in “hesitant, broken, and full of dead end” conversations enabling them to “try out new ideas, to hear how they sound, to see what others make of them, to arrange information and ideas into different patterns” (Barnes, 2008:5). Given the limited linguistic resources the EFL students possess in their school years, these hesitant, broken and dead-end conversations could be developed into spontaneous conversational skills. When students engage in interactions, they produce “symmetric dialogic context” (Mercer & Dawes, 2008:66) where everyone can participate, get respected and get the decisions made jointly. Students’ participation in interactions, therefore, can help them enrich their linguistic resources and build their confidence to communicate with others in English.

In the submission of Mercer and Dawes (2008: 69), interaction as used by learners with their teacher is really fundamental, both in spoken and/or written form. Significantly, the emphasis is on students’ engagement in real communication and integrating the forms learnt through interaction (Long & Robinson 1998). In the communication model, second language (L2) classrooms are students-centered activities where they practice (L2) through authentic communication. Students are exposed to spoken and written discourse, which reflects real communication, like writing a CV, or role playing an interview. Student-centered classroom offers more chance for the teacher to positively react to the learning styles and needs of his learners in a practical way. Additionally, the instruction is based on the teacher in terms of transforming all grammatical structures to the learners.

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Interaction is an aspect of English language Learning that has attracted huge attention. The understanding of interaction, as a mechanism for the acquisition of second language is what this study pursues. Generally, there are three major types of interactions taking place in an ELT classroom.

1. Interaction of the students with the teacher and vice versa.
2. Pair Interaction (Interaction with students' peers sitting together or next to them), and
3. Group Interactions.

These interactions make the students work in pairs and small groups, and involve them in using different modes of communication such as discussions, making presentations, brainstorming, group activity etc. It also encourages in-depth conversations among students.

The Interaction theory proposes that language acquisition is strongly facilitated by the use of the target language in interaction. Similarly to Krashen's Input Hypothesis, the Interaction Hypothesis claims that comprehensible input is important for language learning. In addition, it claims that the effectiveness of comprehensible input is greatly increased when learners have to negotiate for meaning.

Interactions often result in learners receiving positive or negative evidence. That is, if learners say something that their interlocutors do not understand, after negotiation the interlocutors may model the correct or incorrect language form. In doing this, learners can receive feedback on their production and on grammar that they have not yet mastered. The process of interaction may also result in learners receiving more input from their interlocutors than they would otherwise. Furthermore, if learners stop to clarify things that they do not understand, they may have more time to process the input they receive. This can lead to better understanding and possibly the acquisition of new language forms. Finally, interactions may serve as a way of focusing learners' attention on a difference between their knowledge of the target language and the reality of what they are hearing; it may also focus their attention on a part of the target language of which they are not yet aware.

As this immediate research is predicated on the impact of interaction in the English language Learning process, this will constitute a separate section to further analyze the nature of interaction in English language Learning.

### **3.0 Research Methodology**

The research method adopted for this study is a directly qualitative research procedure. The adoption of the qualitative approach is aimed at submitting textual analysis and thematic discussion of how interaction enhances the learning of English as a second language. The approach facilitates the collation of different submissions and discussions on the intended theories of teaching and learning English as a foreign language. The data was collated through secondary sources, such as the high-ranking journal publications on the impact of interaction in the acquisition of English as a second language. The analysis is conducted descriptively, focusing on the tenets of the interaction, the impact of interaction, and the manner in which interaction in the classroom has improved the learning of English as a second language.

### **4.0 Discussions**

The discussion of interaction is a vital component of the learning of English as a second language here focuses on what previous studies have unveiled and projects an overview to generate some basic findings. The impact of social interaction in general and classroom interaction in particular in the learning of a second language has been argued to be significant. This section discusses interaction as a facilitator of English language Learning in a classroom.

Current theories of ELT pertaining to second language acquisition, such as “Interactions Hypothesis” and “Communicative Language Teaching Approach” etc, have claimed that interactions have important effects on language acquiring and communicative competence. Interactions in language classrooms are important as it is a social activity for students by which they not only construct knowledge, but also build confidence and identity as competent language users (Luk & Lin, 2007). In an in-depth ethnographic study of teacher-student interactions in Hong Kong, Luk and Lin (2007) found out that students develop multiple identities through their classroom interactions with their language teachers. Although the study took place in an ESL classroom where native English language teachers are available, Luk and Lin (2007:188) present a telling story about how students negotiate identity and cultural resources, which are “translated into non-institutionally sanctioned language practices and identities”. Perhaps, the social knowledge students bring into the classrooms might be those “non-institutional language practices”, that schools and teachers are supposed to build on in order to enhance their learning.

Under this perspective, the social and the individual factors are comparable in terms of relevance because language is an integration of both components. Specifically, it is argued that “people gain control of and reorganize their cognitive processes during mediation as knowledge is internalized during social activity” (Lightbown &

Spada, 2006, p. 47). This statement strongly emphasizes the importance of interaction and the mental processes involved during the interaction with another interlocutor. The main tenet of this theory is that the human mind is mediated; this essentially means that the human mind employs language, which is a symbolic artifact, in order to regulate, or mediate people's relationships with themselves and the world around them (Lantolf, 2001). On that regard, language serves as the mediator between the world and the mind, reshaping biological perception into cultural perceptions and concepts. When language becomes social, patterns are changed in order to mediate mental activity. Language does not have to be completely syntactic in its form, because the context given by the topic supports the learning process.

All these activities are important in English language learning because they are essential mental capacities that will lead to the successful acquisition of an L2. Taking into account the idea that, under the Socio-cultural perspective, learning is both a cognitive and a social process, it is worth mentioning the relationship between thinking and Lantolf (2001) points out that despite the fact that these concepts are neither a single unit nor completely independent, they are closely related: speaking is the public realization of what once was a private thought. Therefore, these two aspects are necessary for a complete understanding of human mental capacities, and as a consequence, the learning process itself.

According to the socio-cultural perspective, it is essential for learners to interact with other individuals in order to develop L2 acquisition. In this model, learning occurs when a learner interacts with an interlocutor. Thus, this is a situation in which a learner is able to perform at a higher level of proficiency because there is support from the interlocutor. Teachers have bear in mind that teaching must be in accordance with the roles of language teaching for the person or society. Also, the acquisition process may be materialized through talking, or in other words, learning by talking. In such a way, learners would be able to co-construct knowledge in collaboration with an interlocutor (Lightbown & Spada, 2006). Collaborative dialogues, then, explain how language learning takes place through interaction among the participants of the social activity. Along the same lines, the following techniques and approaches have a strong interactionist load in their features, and they are heavily related to communication in the classroom and Constructivism. Starting with the Whole Language Approach, which states that language should not be taught as a set of separate components of language, such as grammar and vocabulary, but rather as a whole (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). In this sense, it is closely related to the Socio-cultural tradition because it has a holistic and more natural perspective to the ESL teaching. According to the authors, this essentially means that the Whole Language Approach emphasizes the teaching of literacy

through real communication, and it is designed to help learners of all ages to acquire an L2 in the same manner that native speakers learn their L1.

Beyond the above description, there are other methods that are relevant in the discussion of interaction as a means of improving in the knowledge of English as a second language. One of such is the Competency Based Language Teaching (CBLT). This method, which was introduced mainly to handle the learning of English as a second language by the immigrants in some nations, has proven to remain effective in the discussion of interaction as an impactful tool in the learning of English as a second language. Competency-Based Language Teaching (CBLT) is mainly based on the principles of Competency-Based Education (CBE), which are focused on the outcomes of learning in language programs. According to Richards and Rodgers (2001), this refers to the description of specific types of knowledge and skills that learners should acquire at the end of a language course. The authors point out that competency lists have been determined through the analysis of typical tasks required in life-role situations, such those needed by immigrants who have to learn an L2. Therefore, the CBLT is the application of teaching with an emphasis on output: that is, it is focused on a set of certain knowledge that learners should master in order to function proficiently, which are achieved through interaction. Similarly, Content-Based Instruction is an approach that bases teaching around the information that the student will acquire rather than linguistic knowledge. It establishes that people learn a language more successfully when they use the language as a means of acquiring information, rather than as a target itself (Richard & Rodgers, 2001). Lastly, Community Language Learning (CLL) is a method that applies the idea of counseling to the teaching of languages. Following Richards and Rodgers (2001), this means that a person gives support and assistance to a learner who needs help. In this manner, this metaphor redefines the roles of teacher and learners in the classroom, and at the same time, it emphasizes the importance of interaction.

Additionally, there are several requirements for teachers as well: they must be highly proficient in both their L1 and L2, they should avoid using traditional materials, and they have to be quite sympathetic in their role as counselors. Likewise, Cooperative Language Learning (CLL) is part of a bigger instructional approach that is called Collaborative Learning (CL). According to Richards and Rodgers (2001), this is an approach that promotes the use of cooperative activities in the classroom, such as those involving pairs or small groups of learners. In this manner, the CLL encourages interaction between peers, and it is viewed as a learner-centered approach. Some of its main goals include: offering instances for naturalistic language learning, developing successful and meaningful learning, and finally, increasing learner motivation, among others.



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Across studies of interaction as a socio-psychological factor that impacts the learning of English as a second language, different researchers have proposed varying but structurally related perspectives. These are approaches that aid the interpretation of the place of interaction in English language Learning. After the studies carried out by Long, who is the main progenitor of interactionism in English language Learning, other researchers have applied related perception to further unveil the relevance of interaction in English language Learning.

One of such projection is that socio-cultural perspective of interactionism in English language Learning, which is usually associated with Vygotsky's work (1978). The perspective emphasizes the role of thinking and speaking in the context of the activity. According to this perspective, an individual's mental activity can be understood only by investigating it within its cultural, historical and institutional context. Central to the socio-cultural perspective is the fact that any mental activity is investigated as an interaction between social agents and the physical environment, so the theory has a significant emphasis on the role of action in cultural context.

Similarly, Walsh (2006) confirms that social interaction and context are not separated from the learning situation. The role of culturally developed sign systems, such as language, is stressed in social interaction since they are regarded as tools for thinking and the construction of socially shared meanings. The individual learns to understand the world and self through sign systems, which are seen as having personal, social and cultural importance. This supports Vygotsky's view of the role of active participation and assistance provided by other members of the learning community. Applying the pedagogical practices and instructional settings to the socio-cultural theory, emphasis is often placed on providing learners with the opportunity to engage in their zones of proximal development supported by social interaction with more knowledgeable members of the culture (Kumpulainen & Wary 2002).

There is also the cognitive perspective which has been associated with Piaget's developmental theory and cognitive psychology in general. The cognitive perspective on learning emphasizes the individual's mental activity, the development of thinking, cognitive strategies, and their application. The cognitive perspective sees interaction in English language Learning as supporting the individual's knowledge construction, since it helps to activate the existing knowledge of individuals. Social interaction is seen as helping the individual to understand and become aware of thinking processes since the organization of thought in speech assists the reorganization of knowledge. Doise and Mugny (1984) state that the disagreements confronted during the interaction may cause cognitive conflicts, which, after being solved, stimulate cognitive accommodation in the individual. The cognitive theory emphasizes psychologically equal interaction, in

which individuals coordinate their actions towards a common goal. Psychologically equal interaction between individuals is seen as enabling the creation of conflict situations relevant for the construction of knowledge (DeVries 1997).

These two perspectives have extensively dominated the discussion of interaction in the classroom. For emphasis, Vygotsky perspective on interaction in English language Learning supports the belief that “intellectual development can be understood only in terms of cultural and historical contexts children experience” (Slavin 2006, p. 42). Whilst the advocates of a cognitive theory analyze cognition and thinking as conceptual processes that are located in the individual, socio-cultural researchers, on the other hand, take social action as the unit of analysis (Cobb 1994). Crucial to the latter view are the means whereby participation in interaction is associated with the individual's development. It is noteworthy, the cognitive theory conceptualizes thinking as an activity in the individual's mind, whereas the socio-cultural perspective does not separate thinking from its social context, but rather examines it as a social action.

This shift in the theoretical concepts of learning can positively affect the nature of social factor in classroom and emphasize the importance of dynamic teaching and learning. There is an emphasis on the role of student as an active participant and classroom interaction may be seen nowadays as an element to the success of L2 teaching and learning. Accordingly, this comparison shows us that the cognitive perspective has come closer to the socio-cultural view of learning. However, there are still distinct differences between the two perspectives.

Based on the fact that data was collated through different secondary sources, there are arrays of citations in the discussion mainly to ensure that all the expressions culled from secondary sources are dully referenced.

#### **4.1 Summary of Findings**

The discussion as presented provided an understanding of the premises of interaction and its relevance in the learning of English as a second language. The following findings are cardinal in the discussion:

1. The impact of interaction in the learning of English as a second language is better examined in the light of the essence of communication in second language learning.
2. Learning English as a second language in the classroom seems to be effectively dependent on the interaction between students and teachers, and students with other students.

3. The discussion also unveiled that different theories and methods have been developed in the account of the impact of interaction in the learning of English as a second language in the classroom.
4. The understanding of the relevance of interaction in the learning of English as a second language promulgates the functionality of both the cognitive and socio-cultural developmental systems of the learner and the teacher. This is discussed in light of the structure and nature of the classroom.

The interaction between teachers and students has a great impact on the process of acquiring English as a second language. However, part of the discussion is to unveil the cognitive and socio-cultural implications of interaction components. When students interact in English as their second language, there is the tendency to transfer certain socio-cultural which may impact on the interaction process. As such, interaction in the classroom is usually monitored, especially when this is in the period of teaching.

There is the angle of lack of interaction. Lack of interaction between teachers and students, and students with fellow students inside language classrooms usually amount in poor learning. Lack of interaction is a reason for slow communicative competence of English in ELT classes. The effectiveness of interaction is often governed by teachers' and learners' intentions, actions, attitudes, and motivations. The analysis also unveiled that there are so many techniques employed to enhance communicative competence in language classrooms. This has the implication that Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Collaborative learning, role-plays, interviews, games, pair-work, surveys, etc are the techniques used to enhance interactions.

## **5.0 Summary and Conclusions**

From the study carried out in this research, the interaction was proven to remain a basic technique frequently implemented to enhance learning in the English language teaching (ELT) classroom. The study also established that interaction helps to figure out the real challenges of the students in acquiring a second language, mainly in the classroom. Consistent interaction, which directly engages the students in the learning process, was proven to trigger teachers to expedite suitable methods to inculcate behavioral changes among learners.

It is thus concluded that the impact of interaction in the learning of English as a second language is enormous. Teachers of English as a second language must implement different interaction mechanisms and principles, and provide an impact record of the systems in order to further the projection of discussion, communication, and interaction inside the classroom.

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# Womanhood Portrayal in Contemporary Malayalam Cinema: A Study Based on the Film, 'Mayaanadhi'

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## Abstract

Malayalam film industry is known for its artistic value emerged from the realistic portrayal of lives. Even while being praised for its innovative storytelling tradition, the industry widely used to be criticized for misrepresenting, underrepresenting and stereotyping women and other sexual minorities (Guy, 2009). This tendency was observed to be the byproduct of commercialization and the rise of star culture in the industry. But much research point out to a tendency in Malayalam cinema making up for their mistakes for the past few decades (Johnson, 2016). These studies observe that the Malayalam cinema industry is transforming its narrative styles to get more inclusive of the question of gender in the narration. In the light of these observations, this research paper intends to conduct a narrative analysis of the 2017 Malayalam movie 'Mayaanadhi' for its creation and execution of gender and gender roles.

## Keywords

Character Positioning, Male Gaze, Narrative, Patriarchy, Womanhood

## Introduction

*“Our society like any other society must pass on its social heritage from one generation to the next. The societal need for continuity and transmission of dominant values may be particularly acute in times of rapid social change, such as our own. Then, individuals need some familiarity with the past, if the society is to survive, but they must also be prepared to meet changing conditions. Nowhere is that need as readily identifiable as in the area of sex roles.”*

(Tuchman, 1978)

Womanhood is considered as the state of being a woman or the adult life of a woman. The concept of womanhood changes from place to place and is embedded within the culture of a particular country or community. It takes the social, personal, psychological, and cultural aspects of gender in a broader sense into consideration. The history of underrepresentation of woman goes back to the earliest years of film.

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The underlying male domination in multiples segments of society has influenced the molding of gender roles in film (Sarkar, 2012)

The theories of 'Social Dependency' and 'Framing' indicates the extend of reliance the society has on media-constructed images. The image of masculinity and femininity built by media are perceived by the society as real, even though these images are the selective construction of a patriarchal industry dominated by men. The term patriarchy does not confine to the biological sex and studies shows that many films directed by woman also consists elements of 'Male Gaze' proposed by Laura Mulvey (Mulvey, 1975)

Being the fourth largest film industry in India, Malayalam film industry is not free from the influences of patriarchy of societal structure, right from the caste system and Brahmanical male-dominated family structures. The origin of glorified images of woman as mothers and sisters has emerged from the conception of 'obedient women' within the family structure (Cooke, 2018)

The fluctuating position of Malayalee women within the families and the anxieties they are facing has become a subject of reference in a few Malayalam films. The social and economic changes of the Keralite women were better demonstrated in the soft porn boom in 1980's, marked by movies like *Avalude Ravukal*. Although the film acclaimed critical success throughout the country, the initial response from Kerala was negative because of its portrayal of sexuality (Jasbir Jain, 2015). The film is now considered as feministic in nature because of its attempt to narrate politics of body and the alignment towards the post-feminist approach of choice and authority over one's own body. The virtuous, restricted and submissive imagery of Malayalee woman was broken though during the soft porn boom.

The characterization of women in Malayalam cinema has always been subordinate to men. The physical and emotional torchers over women are also romanticized at many instances. The upper class, financially sound hero with superpowers is made the centers of attraction in the films. Movements like 'Me Too' and Women's Cinema Collective have created a platform for the industry to examine and comprehend the dimensions of damages created by the toxic masculinity in the industry nourished by them. As a result of this open debate, a swing of movies exposes a new kind of masculinity considering post-feminist receptivity (Sonali Srivastav, 2018)

Malayalam movies in the last few years is observed to be trying hard to respond to societal changes but are confused on how to accommodate a fame voice into the conventional male-centric narrative. The problems rise with the inorganic incorporation of feministic ideology or dialogue into the scripts. Most of the films endorse women empowerment as a 'trend' and not something that is organically

generated with the storyline. Here, respecting women and ‘giving’ space and freedom to female characters are the selling elements of heroism (Tere, 2012). The status of women as sister, daughter, and wife of the hero has never changed. The idea of making women secure and the act of rescuing them from threatening situations appears in different forms within the storyline.

New Wave Malayalam cinema has built a platform from which the female characters can explore the possibilities of their womanhood. Toxic masculinity and sexual perverseness of men in Kerala came under open discussion in movies like *Trivandrum Lodge*, *Varathan* etc. Women characters came into mainstream and unraveled their sexual, psychological and social imbalances of society. The unrefined dialogues paired with life like situations have provided new opportunities for womanhood to explore their strength and weakness from a narrative constructed on behalf of them (Najib, 2019)

This study is directed towards addressing the discourse of gender, especially womanhood in contemporary Malayalam cinema, by taking the movie ‘Mayanadhi’ as a case. Not much research studies have explored the question of gender in Malayalam cinema in recent times. The study intends to analyze the macro elements of narration in the movie and tries to derive meaning from cinematic cues, by looking from a feministic perspective.

### **Analysis**

Cinema	:	Mayaanadhi
Director	:	Aashiq Abu
Writer	:	SyamPushkaran, Dileesh Nair
Year of release	:	2017
Producer	:	Aashiq Abu
Cast	:	Aiswarya Lakshmi, Tovino Thomas, Leona Lishoy, SoubinSahir, Ilavarasu, Harish Uthaman

### **Storyline**

Mayaanadhi is a story revolves around the love story of Appu and Mathan. Mathan is a criminal on the run while Appu aka Aparana is an aspiring actress. They have a complicated relationship while both are passionately in love with each other. The story develops through Mathan’s effort to convince Aparna to move out with him. The struggles of an aspiring actress and the stressfull life of a criminal outlines the plot.



### **Treatment of Womanhood**

Appu aka Aparna is the lead character in the movie along with Mathan, played by Tovino Thomas. The film is based on the complicated love life of Appu and Mathan who were lovers from college. The relationship broke because of some financial fraud done by Mathan to a friend of Appu. Although Appu has feelings for Mathan, she doesn't express it openly. According to Appu, Mathan broke her trust, and he is



“too young to be believed”.

*Figure 4.1 Mid shot of Mathan looking at Appu's picture on Instagram. Establishes Mathan's love for Appu and give an indication that they are no longer together*

The introduction of lead character Appu begins from an audition scene along with a title music. Right from the beginning scene, the character of Appu is established. She is seen entering an audition room and is very tensed. She observes everyone around her, and the number of competitors seems to be making her uncomfortable. Appu reads the paper on her hand, probably the mock script provided at the audition. Though she is trying to by heart the lines, she looks around and observes the performances of others inside the audition room. When she hears claps from the room, she becomes really nervous and look eagerly at her competitor. After entering the audition room, she tries to appear very confident. She recites something that she has already prepared. She finds out that it is not enough to make an impact from the response of the crew. The casting director sneers at her and calls her “plastic”. She quickly hides her resentment and tries to be herself. From the one-minute statement that she makes about herself, the audience get to know the character, Appu. She is a B-tech dropout and have tried her hand on many professions. She is doing anchoring for her living and is so passionate about acting as a career. Her former roommate Sameera is now a successful actress and Appu consider herself having more talent and beauty than Sameera.



*Figure 4.2 A Medium Shot of Appu looking anxious at the women who performed well in the audition. The scene indicated how important the audition is for Appu*

Right from the establishing of the character Appu, audience get to know her passion towards her career. Being a film focusing on the romantic relationship between a couple, *Mayaanadhi* breaks the stereotypes of female leads in popular narrative cinema. The common notion of women sacrificing her career and dreams to quire her love life and the ‘live happily ever after’ narrative at the cost of women’s ambition is broke in *Mayanadhi*. Appu’s emotions revolve around the ups and downs of her career no matter what happens with her love life. In the second round of audition scene, actor Aparana Balaurali comes in. The actor tries to make a small talk with Appu and she excuse herself and go to the washroom. From there Appu calls Mathan and ask him to praise her, just to make her feel better. As the verbal rampage about her beauty and intelligence go in wain, Mathan desperately shouts at her that she must prove herself to the world and otherwise she will be seeing herself as the wife of any psychopath. Appu finds herself motivated with that uncomfortable truth and says “yes, I am better now”.



*Figure 4.3 A much celebrated dialogue of the film as the reclamation of women’s right over her own body and sexuality*

While coming to the relationship between Appu and Mathan, she welcomes her ex-boyfriend Mathan with a slap on his face. Mathan expresses only the physical pain of the slap, and it doesn't hurt his male ego. She walks away from Mathan and later slow down while he follows her to her home. The scene establishes her intimacy towards Mathan. While Mathan appears weak and emotional, Appu is courageous enough to say about her lost intimacy and trust towards him. For Appu trust is the most important thing in a relationship. From a teenage girl who is fascinatedly in love with Mathan, Appu has grown as an independent lady who is emotionally consistent and who have her own dos and don'ts. She doesn't refuse to count her wage in front of Mathan and counters his teasing and emotional conversations by narrating the practicalities of life. When Mathan compliments her for her sophisticated language used in anchoring, she slaps back by saying "this is how I paid back the money you have cheated". She never refuses to express her anger towards Mathan for spoiling the relationship. The consistency of Appu's character is maintained throughout the film.

### **Socio-economic Positioning of Female Characters**

Feminist economic proposes the economic independence of women as a tool from their liberation from patriarchy. Narrative Malayalam films normalize the joblessness of women while unemployment of men is presented as a big issue. When a hero is unemployed, it can be the biggest barrier for his love life to be succeeded and the dignity or happiness of men is presented directly in relation with his employment state. The unemployment of women is presented as a conflict only when she is not under the protection of anyone.

While coming to Mayaanadhi, Appu is a financially independent woman who is struggling to enter into the profession which she is passionate about. She describes herself as a b-tech dropout and currently doing anchoring in events. From her conversation with Mathan, we get to know that she is looking after her family by her own. She bears the expenses of her brother's studies and take care of her mother. In the film we see Appu scolding her brother to share some post on Facebook associated with the 'Kiss of Love' protest. Her brother behaves to her politely and respectfully. Though having the privilege of being an elder sister, the power position occurred by Appu in her family is also associated with the financial independence and responsibility she bears.

For Appu money is an important matter in her life and she do not refuse to admit it openly. she could not trust Mathan in their relationship because of the financial fraud that he has done with her friend. She associates money with trust. At the same time, she is not ok with money earned from wicked ways. Mathan tries to convince Appu to come with him to settle somewhere abroad. When he talks about the money

that incidentally came into his hands, she refuses to take the offer and shuts the door in front of him.



*Figure 5 Appu staring at Mathan while counting her payment of the day. Indicates the importance of money in her life*

In the audition scene, Appu describes herself and say, “more than anything, I deserve a better life”. Better life is a promise she has done to herself. She wants to live a life in which she doesn’t need to wear used clothe of her friends. When Sameera offers her food, Appu feels uncomfortable. She makes excuses to prevent her from buying expensive food for her. Beyond the envy towards Sameera’s celebrity life, it is the dependence that make Appu uncomfortable. While Sameera offers an advertisement for Appu, it hurts her ego because it is a project refused by Sameera. But she gets forced to accept it because of the payment they offer. The film doesn’t incorporate any scene which directly show Appu’s economic problems. But throughout the film, the narrative incorporates elements which explains Appu’s approach towards matters of finance. She understands and accepts the realities concerning financial matters. While her mother is being degraded by relatives in a function, she remains her mother that “we are not rich enough for our opinion to get accepted”

Appu is a woman who buy things for her own and pay her own bills. she does not refuse to count money in front of Mathan, neglecting his romantic gaze. She buys food for herself and do not refuse to ask the price and quantity of the food that she buys. For Appu Mathan is “too young to be believed”. Her maturity and practical approach towards life is a result of her financial independence. She associates the ability to manage the finances in one’s life as an important aspect of an individual’s personality to be trusted or depended upon.

### **Depiction of Occurrences within Family Relationships**

The term patriarchy come from a Greek term means “the rule of the father’. According to sociologist Sylvia Walby, “patriarchy is a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress, and exploit women”. Historically, the term has been used to refer to the automatic rule by the male head of a family. The structure and functioning of family structure in society is seemed as an important element in building and maintaining patriarchal structure in society.

In the film *Mayaanadhi*, the lead character Appu is an independent woman who lives out of her family despite of having emotional and structural connections with her family members. Appu’s father is no more, and she look after her family by her own. Despite of the absence of her father, Appu is not free from the restrictions of patriarchy. While analyzing patriarchy as the rule of dominant male in the family, elements of patriarchy inside women is also not negligible. Appu is restricted from engaging in a romantic relationship or physical intimacy with someone. Her mother calls her a prostitute after she finds out Appu and Mathan together in their house. Appu is a woman who have deep emotional connections with her mother. In that scene, the mien scene incorporates a chair, traditionally portrayed in films as the one used by the dominant male in a family. As her mother sit on the couch, crying we see Appu sitting at the hand of the chair. After that is becomes her responsibility to prove herself in front of her mother that she is not doing anything immoral to earn.



*Figure 6 Long Shot of Appu sitting on the arm of a chair traditionally used by the dominant male in the society. Indicates the existence of patriarchy in family structures even in the absence of dominant male characters.*

The film explores how women are deeply bounded by the elements of misogyny despite of the independence they acquire. She is forced again and again to prove her morality and personal life in front of the family and society. The society’s

conservative mentality towards a women's body and sexuality is also portrayed in the film. As Mathan engages in a sexual intercourse with Appu, he considers it as a promise to move out with her. When she explains it as an act of celebration, he calls her a prostitute. Mathan is a representative of the society who is not ready to acknowledge the sexual liberty of a women. He considers sex as a commitment to live happily ever after.

Sameera, friend of Appu is another major female character in the movie. Despite of being an actress who lives alone, she is always under the monitoring of her brother. The role of Sameera's brother, played by SoubinSahir, is an ultimate version of patriarchy. He claims right over her life and career and want her to like according to her will. The character Sameera is molded as someone who loves the limelight and to be admired. Sameera is one among the several women who do not exercise any rights over their own body. The conversation between Sameera and Appu in the airport also reveals society's mentality towards the women who are in acting profession. Although presented as humorous, the dialogues of Sameera are worth thinking about.

### **Relationship between Women**

The relationship between Appu, Sameera and Darshana shows the different shades of relationships between women. Appu and Darshana are people aspiring to mark their place in the film industry while Darshana is a professional councilor. Darshana and Sameera are a part of Appu's life right from the beginning of the film. After the audition scene, Sameera call Darshana and ask her to come to her flat and says she has brought some surprise gift for her. Appu meets Darshana for the first time at Sameera's flat. Appu introduces herself as an actor 'struggling to be an actor'. Darshana respond to her opening up by recalling some funny dialogue from a film and comforts her.

When Sameera encounters into another issue and her brother inform her that he is coming to take her abroad, Appu and Darshana console her by saying that they'll try to explain things to her brother. They somehow succeed in consoling her. They spend the whole night sharing stories, drinking wine and singing songs. This is perhaps the most realistic and romanticized scene of women's sleep overs in Malayalam cinema. The color tone and the physical and emotional connection they express each other is somehow a novel experience to Malayali audience. When Sameera leaves with her brother, both Appu and Darshana weeps by hugging her. Although Appu knows the fact that the withdrawal of Sameera from the industry can provide a slot for her, Appu cry by grief when she leaves. All these scenes combined together narrates the deep-rooted relationship that exist between these women.



*Figure 7 Long Shot of the women sitting on the roof top consoling each other over a glass of wine*

The relationship of Appu with the lady near her house is also a notable one in the movie. She awaits Appu to share her problems. Although Appu is tired of the tiring routine, she empathies with the women and sit down to hear her problems. The relationship between Appu and her neighbor is a realistic one which every woman can relate to. Here, she advice Appu in her love life and seek solutions from Appu in her personal life. The female characters in the film are well developed and their relationship is portrayed with beauty and intensity. The stereotypes of envious women fighting with each other is broke through the mutually understanding and supporting women characters in the film. The women in *Mayaandhi* stand up for each other during hardships despite of the conflicts they have in their life. The trio Appu, Darshana and Sameera are women who live outside of their family. They share their hopes and concerns with each other and give a shoulder to cry on during difficult times.

### **Directorial Treatment of Women in Critical Situations**

The female characters in the film *Mayanadhi* are diverse by their nature. There are women from all age groups who suffer from multitudes of issues in their lives. While the young women like Appu and Darshana live independently out of the family structure and earns for their own living, Appu's mother is a woman who is someone who limits oneself through her own patriarchal mindset. Characters like Sameera represent the struggling women inside the family structure who have to drop her dreams because of the patriarchal setup inside families.





*Figure 8 A long shot of Appu holding her tears when Mathan is being arrested by the cops. There is a board which reads 'Express your emotions'*

Appu is a woman who passes through extreme amount of trauma in her life. Mathan breaks her trust, and she becomes responsible for the money that he cheated. She somehow gets dropped out from college. Appu introduces herself as an “actor, struggling, but an actor”. This indicates that he struggles that she mentions when talking about herself is part of her existence. She is a woman desperately trying to get a space of her own in the industry. The struggle that Appu faces has different dimensions. Her prime concern is the issue that she faces in her career and her second most important problem is her love relationship with Mathan. She also absorbs many parallel issues such as pressure from family and relatives. Appu is a woman who manages each stressful situation with courage and grace. When Appu is caught by her mother with Mathan, from their house Mathan gets panicked. Appu console him and courageously opens the door, introducing Mathan to her mother.

In all these conflicting situations, Appu acts bravely and balance the events happening in their life. She takes the responsibility of the financial fraud done by Mathan to her friend. By doing anchoring and another jobs, she manages to pay the money back. Even when Mathan gets arrested by the cops, she sits at the restaurant, gazing at the scene. On the mirror there is a board which reads “express your emotions”. Even after the disappearance of Mathan from her life, Appu continues to fight and manage to achieve success in acting.

## **Conclusion**

The world is changing, and women are claiming their own spaces in all areas of the society. It is high time that the Malayalam film industry need to accept these changes happening in the society. The authority of a women over her own body and women’s denial of the authority of men over it should be included as part of the narrative. These films have played an important role in bringing these changes into discussion and it challenges the glorification of masculinity through the patriarchal



positioning of men in the storyline. The films have also shown the courage to question the construction of patriarchy inside family structure. These realities need to be addressed by the filmmakers and they should come up with films that narrow down the gender gap by making an influence in the receiver's mind.

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# **Socio-ecological Marginalisation of Tribes and Psycho-social Impacts: Reflections from Western Ghats Region of Idukki District, Kerala**

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## **Abstract**

The Western Ghats in India has a rich biodiversity with a variety of endemic flora and fauna. The dense forests and hilly lands of the Western Ghats in the Idukki region of Kerala were less populated regions with natural forest resources in ancient times. Aboriginal groups were one of the significant populations during that time. They lived in the hilly tracts and depended on forest resources for their livelihood but never settled down in a specific location for a long time. Later, the state promoted migration and encroachment activities for plantation and agricultural development, resulting in the marginalization of tribes in the Idukki District, hence forcing them to move into the interior areas. Besides, the alcoholic abuse among tribal people resulted in land alienation. The encroachers used alcohol as a tool to grab the mainland from the tribals. During this era, the government-initiated policy level changes in landholding and land rights. The land assignment acts enacted by the state protected the plantation lobbies and settler farmers but did not address the need for land as well as the land rights of these marginalized tribes. These kinds of interventions of different departments like the forest in the government sector led to the ecological marginalization of these groups from the forest resources and treated them as trespassers. The environmental degradation accelerated the marginalization process, especially from the water resources they depended on earlier. These marginalization problems, which have been persisting for a long time in this region, are examined through the lenses of social-ecology, and their psycho-social impacts are discussed in this article.

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**Key Words**

Western Ghats, Ecological Conservation, Tribal Alienation, Socio-ecological Marginalisation, Psycho-social Impacts, Perspectives on Conservation.

**Conceptual/ Theoretical Framework**

**Bio-Psycho-Social Model**

The history of migration and encroachments in the hilly tracts of the Western Ghats coextend to the story of migration-induced marginalization among aboriginal groups who lived there. Although the bio-psycho-social model generally aims to predict the relationship between biological, social, and psychological factors and illness, this chapter is an attempt to understand the psycho-social impacts of marginalization among tribes in the Western Ghats region of Idukki District, which stems from the widespread migration within the framework of this model.

According to this model, biological, social, and psychological elements interact together to contribute to the overall health and well-being of individuals. Similarly, interruptions in any of these systems adversely affect other systems. In other words, social elements such as environment, family, culture, religion, and socioeconomic status influence other systems, especially mental health. Being a marginalized community who are primarily landless with inconsiderable power over sources such as land, forest, and water, tribals remain in a socially and economically disadvantaged position throughout and experience discrimination based on the stereotypes generated by migrant farmers due to their low socioeconomic status which occurred as these people persuaded tribes who were natives of the western ghats region of Idukki to move to interior areas.

Moreover, the most renowned Kerala model of development didn't make much difference in the lives of marginalized tribes, especially in their social and economic life. Excessive levels of poverty, deprivation, and vulnerability, High developmental and social exclusion, remarkably low rates of empowerment, unpredictably swift marginalization as a result of unfair, unbalanced, and exploitative associations of production, and exchange between tribal communities and others, and least participation in development initiatives and decision-making process prevailed in the society (Haseena, 2014). As a result, these people, have comparatively limited power over their life, and the resources attainable to them. Even though tribal communities are not identical, most of their shared experiences are the same. Among the 84.3 million Scheduled Tribes population in India, the majority of them are landless, considered to be socially and economically disadvantaged with little control over resources like land, forest, and water (Devesh, 2014). These elements act as stressors that prevent tribals from leading a flourishing life as others.

This lack of autonomy and independence due to social situations along with inability of legislation to accommodate the unique traditions of tribal communities and their culture and act on the stigma associated with tribes as the homogeneous, “primitive” other, (Hebbar, 2009) contributed to an increased vulnerability by diminishing their social and coping skills which in turn result in impaired social and coping skills. Consequently, through generations, they learned to use pernicious strategies when they encounter stressors such as drug addiction instead of constructive ones.

Certain social behaviours and attitudes by migrant farmers further facilitated destructive habits among tribals. One of the most powerful methods that the migrant farmers in Idukki adopted, which threw tribals into suffering, was alcohol. There exists a noble prevalence of alcohol consumption and smoking among Indian indigenous tribes, (Subramanian, 2006), which is linked with a broad spectrum of mental as well as physical health problems and social issues such as violence, failed family, child negligence, loss of income, redirecting income away from family requirements, high morbidity, and early mortality (Wilson, 2010).

It was triggered by the custom among the landowners to offer alcohol to the tribal men for their work. Gradually, the tribals began to expect it from the workplace, and they were reluctant to work if alcohol was not provided. Likewise, those agricultural landowners who failed to provide this faced difficulty to find workers. Another assumption that dominated the owners is that alcohol consumption makes tribals work hard. Thus, the landowners gave an increased amount of alcohol to the tribal men before they worked (Sadath, 2019). This belief transferred to the workers, and this specific social context resulted in the formation of one of the most disastrous habits capable of ruining the personal and family life of these people, alcohol addiction. Furthermore, they limited themselves to find income only from forest sources and working in the lands of migrant farmers as they became rich by cultivating money crops. As a result, the socioeconomic status and stability of tribal communities remained in the lowest strata, and it affected their overall cognitive as well as emotional development through socialization.

### **Social Ecology of Idukki Region of Western Ghats**

Guha, R. (1994) argues social ecology or environmentally oriented sociology as a study of the reciprocal relationship between four major societal elements such as culture, polity, social structure, economy, and ecological infrastructure. He discusses about basic categories of Social Ecology includes Culture refers to religion, ideology, and self-expressions that influence social life. Polity implies the power relations between different social groups and institutions in the society which influence law and the state. Social Structure is the social arrangements such as family kinship, caste, and community as well as gender relations. The economy

incorporates the Marxian sense of production, distribution, and allocation of resources. Guha mentions the growth in the environmental consciousness of people in India as they faced Bhopal gas leak and were familiar with the Chipco movement. Guha's remarkable analysis of the class contradictions in resource utilization makes it possible to examine the class influence in the use and misuse of natural resources.

The tribes in the Idukki district have customs of worshipping gods, which are closely associated with nature, and hence their environmental consciousness is a step ahead of the general population. Their culture always aims to protect forest resources and ensure the sustainable utilisation of natural resources. While these tribal populations led a sustainable life in the hilly tracts, the migration and encroachments of the general population from lower lands with the support of the state resulted in increased deforestation activities. As most of the migrants in the Idukki district are farmers, they are more concerned about agricultural productivity than environmental degradation. It creates ecological problems as a consequence of deep-rooted social problems which determine the social ecology.

### **Tribal Settlements in Idukki District**

Idukki district is home to nine categories of tribes. Most of them migrated from the plain lands of Kerala and Tamil Nadu region during the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries. They had been the only inhabitants of the hilly tracts till the migration of non-tribals to the region during the 19th century. The tribal groups who rely on forest dwellings made the slightest damage or no damage to the environment during their habitation for more than a hundred years. As they depended on forest resources and led traditional sustainable livelihood practices, they formed valuable models of the human-environment relationship. Moreover, they have distinguished cultural practices, language, traditions, and modes of living that are environmentally friendly and healthy food habits.

Kerala history is closely associated with ancient Tamil speaking society. The Idukki region was part of "Kurinchi" as Tamils divided the land into five types: Kurinchi, Mulla, paala, marutham, and neithal. The pioneer population of this region were Kaanavar, Veedar and Kuravar, who relied on hunting and gathering for livelihood. Moreover, there is evidence of cultivation in this region till the end of the 19th century, and the tribes used to grow in uncultivated forest land by cleansing it.

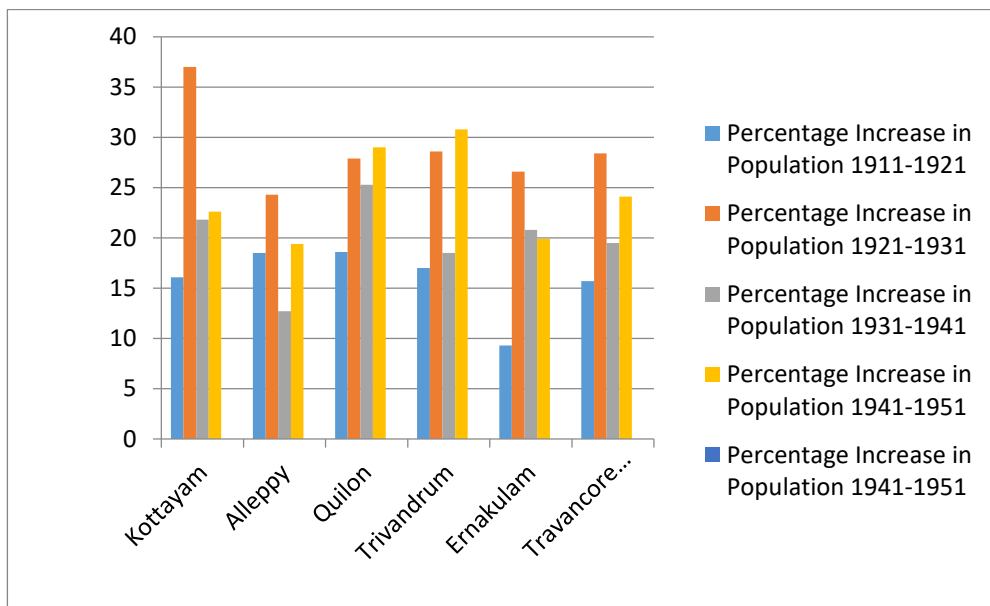
The Oorali community found in Idukki have been residing in the forests for centuries. The major tribal groups prevailing in Idukki are Mannan, Oorali, Muthuvan, Mala-arayan, Mala-pulayar, Paliyar and Ulladar, who are considered as five collective societies. The linguistic and cultural similarities of Mala-arayar, Oorali, and Ulladar helps to group them as first. Mannans and Muthuvans

communities are the second and third collective. The Paliyar group is the fourth collective living in this region and the fifth group of Mala-pulayars. They migrated from the Madurai region of Tamil Nadu like Mannan and Muthuvans.

As per the census report 2011, Idukki district has a total population of 1,107,453, including 4% of the tribals with a number of 50,000. Among these tribal communities, most of the tribal population still live inside the forest in 181 settlements and 91 settlements away from the forest, and five settlements in isolated regions. They were hunters and gathers who lived in the natural environment. They occupied the forest land and lived in temporary shelters made of materials collected from the forest. These tribal groups worship gods which are part of their culture and closely associated with nature.

**Migration and Deforestation in Western Ghats**

**Figure 11: Percentage Increase in Population in Travancore Cochin Region From 1911 to 1951**



Source: Census of India, 1971

The exact number of migrations to the Idukki district in the early 1900s is not available as land transfers are not legally recorded. The extent of migration during those days can be drawn from the history of deforestation in the Western Ghats as well as the extent of the agricultural sector in the region. Encouragement for migration from the Travancore Province to the hilly areas of the Western Ghats has

accelerated with the government-level incentives to address the Great Famine that resulted from the First World War.

Available records from the 1931 auction testify that as part of the development of settlements in the hilly areas of the Western Ghats in 1940, the wetlands and forest lands auctioned by the government were concentrated in the Upputhara and Munnankandam areas of the Idukki district and served as early settlements. After independence, to combat post-World War II food shortages, the government again encouraged immigration in the 1940s with the 'Grow More Food Scheme' program. As part of this, ten thousand acres of land was allotted to settler farmers in Ayyapankoil and Adimali areas and three thousand acres in the Kattappana area to encourage agriculture to alleviate food shortages.

Then in 1954-55, the ruling minister of Kochi, Pattom Thanu Pillai, announced the 'High Range Colonization Scheme' and established colonies in Kallar, Pattom, Marayoor, Kanthalloor and Deviyoor by allotting more than 7500 acres of land to the settlers. Migration continued during the 1950-1970 and as a result of it, the population of the district increased almost 16 times during the period from 1901 to 1971 and recorded a very high rate of population growth in the state (Suneesh K K 2016).

The land transformation of the topography of the Idukki district began with land-use changes related to plantation cultivation, human migration, and the origin of human settlements. Human interactions at different levels have led to the transformation of flora. Increased migration accelerated the conversion of forests into agricultural land and led to environmental degradation in the Western Ghats. Later, settler farmers began their fight for the ownership of lands while the tribal communities adhered to their philosophy that no one owns land or nature. Consequently, farmers gained dominance and marginalized the tribals, which clearly impacted their psyche.

### **Social Exclusion and Marginalization of Tribes**

The marginalisation of indigenous people is a global phenomenon that resulted from colonisation in the past and later through the economic development and privatisation of properties. The marginalisation became intensified due to the ecological conservation efforts without the participation of indigenous communities. Besides, these policy-level decisions often outrage the rights of indigenous people by limiting their access to natural resources. It affects their cultural practices blended with nature and the shared knowledge and practice followed by the people in a society. The prevailing ecological conservation initiatives often perpetuate a paradigm that separates the nature-culture dualism, which separates the reciprocity of indigenous people with nature. As the Western Ghats is one of the World

Heritage Sites listed by UNESCO, there is particular attention to protecting this region. The top-to-bottom approach in the planning process for conserve this region weighs the natural and cultural values distinctly without a critical analysis of its implications. Moreover, the material-centred approach has been adopted to characterise natural and cultural values.

There are pieces of evidence globally for this kind of conservation efforts aimed at resolving environmental problems through nature-culture disjuncture (Andrade, 2000). Even though the progressive scientific paradigm looks forward to the interdisciplinary approach that addresses indigenous people's concerns regarding their culture and the nature they live. The term 'cultural landscape' and 'natural landscape' were discussed in the sociological paradigm, which became a part of these conservation reports came out for the protection of heritage sites, including the World Heritage Committee Report (Jones, 2003).

The frequent interference into their life in the form of conservation policies and restrictions on land utilization along with attempts to protect the ecosystem of Western Ghats by the government further stimulated their problems by pushing them into the pit of financial crisis by establishing control over their land use and utilization of forest resources. This increased the gravity of identity crisis and a feeling of social exclusion that they have been experiencing since ages because a large proportion of the tribals continued as labourers in the agricultural, casual, plantation and industrial sectors irrespective of the fact that they are the natives of Western Ghats region. This crisis further worsened by the fact that land is the only tangible asset of a tribal community, and their affect is to a large extent is deeply linked to it (Haseena, 2014). When they lose control over this, poverty and poor psychological well-being were the ultimate outcomes. Thus, they were forced to fall into the most underprivileged layers of the community and faced critical mental health problems due to high vulnerability and triggering social situations (Devesh, 2014). This is a clear indication of the impacts of the social stigma and cultural isolation and the continuing distress caused by migration.

Furthermore, the developmental activities that took place in the Idukki district led to the displacement of the tribals from their habitats, especially during the construction of hydroelectric projects. In 1895, the tribal community was forced to relocate from the project area for the construction of Mullapperiyar Dam. Moreover, the Periyar Tiger Reserve Project limited their access to forest resources and took place in a large-scale displacement of tribal communities in 1934. Later, several major and minor dam construction projects resulted in repeated habitat change among these vulnerable groups.



## **Conclusion**

Idukki District has the fourth-largest tribal population in Kerala. From 2013 to 2018, Idukki, the police department, has registered 168 cases of atrocities against indigenous people. Furthermore, these aboriginal groups have been exploited by mainstream society. The migrants grabbed the agricultural land owned by these vulnerable groups through alcohol abuse, and the tribes became landless in their land. Another form of exploitation that took place was sexual abuse which resulted in an increased number of unwed mothers among tribal communities in the Idukki district. Even the state did not consider these tribal populations who work in the land owned by the mainstream during the land reform acts implemented in Kerala. However, it resulted in the emergence of a middle-class society in Kerala through the land reform act of 1969, which put an end to the feudal system, and tenants got ownership over the land they cultivated. The tribal population did not cultivate as tenants even though they took part in agriculture as daily labourers and continued to work as the same in the lands of the newly emerged middle-class society.

Later the situation became drastically changed, and the attention of the state to grow more food into ecological conservation. The conservation initiatives of the state created a threat of eviction and challenged their existence in the hilly tracts. The increased human-animal conflicts in the nearby forest regions affected their agrarian crops and extended the cultivation struggle. These difficulties generated a double marginalisation among tribes as most of them live close to the forest area, and the majority of their farmland shares a boundary with the forest. In addition, their access into the forest became restricted, and they became treated as an exile in their own land.

## **Recommendations/Way Forward**

The indigenous people who live in the hilly regions of Idukki have been the earliest inhabitants for centuries. They followed a sustainable lifestyle without harming the environment and did not settle in a specific area for cultivation. This nomadic nature led to their marginalization during the migration of mainstream society to the district for developmental activities, plantation expansion, and agricultural development. Later, as a result of various social movements, most of the settlers got land ownership. However, a section of the society still holds and cultivates the land without ownership rights. The tribal community in the district faces double marginalization as they live in rural areas with conditional land rights. The forest department restricts their access to the forest, and the environmental degradation resulted in the vanishing of water resources they used earlier.

The government has to take the initiative to tackle the social and ecological marginalisation faced by the tribal community. The developmental or empowering

activities should ensure the active participation of the people in this community. These programmes have to be a continuous process which will result in gradual overall development among them. However, the basic amenities and educational as well as land distribution have to be the primary concern. In-depth studies on the tribal land alienation can be conducted and laws have to be enacted to protect their rights and implementation of which has to be ensured.

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# Interactive Infographics in Indian News Portals: A Study Based on Manorama Online and Times of India

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## Abstract

Interactive content is one of the biggest advantages of web journalism. Interactive infographics, which have become the buzzword of Western Internet-based news organisations in the last decade, are now increasingly being used in India as well. The study titled 'Interactive Infographics in Indian News Portals: A Study Based on Manorama Online and Times of India' is an attempt to understand how Indian internet media use interactive infographics. Using content analysis of interactive infographics published by two major online media, Manorama online and Times of India, researchers study the features and complexity of interactive infographics. Samples were selected around the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. Study infers that online news portals in India are developing interactives of high level of interactivity and varying complexity.

## Keywords

Infographics, Interactivity, Election Infographics, Data Visualisation

## Introduction

Since ancient times, graphical representations have been observed as a powerful medium to communicate ideas. Ancient Egyptian writing system, hieroglyphics, known for its graphical writing style is only one example. Hence systematised graphical communication is nothing new. Infographics can be simply defined as a visual representation of information or concepts that aims to make complex ideas understandable and accessible to the audience (Smiciklas, 2012). When information that is difficult to convey verbally is presented in graphical format, readers grasp the information quickly through visual learning. Because of this, infographics are a helpful tool for news media. Tremendous potential of the internet as an interactive medium helped the web based news organisations to step into the interactive infographics. Apart from viewing and reading, Interactive infographics provide the

option of selecting, shaping and searching the information. (Uyan Dur, 2014). Also interactive format can contain more content than static format. The reader is given the option to choose the necessary information. A more dynamic author-reader relation is enabled by the interactives. Even though it's the author who chooses the content, the reader has the freedom to explore it. It also enables the author to present a larger amount of information using multiple modes.

Weber (2013) defines interactive infographics as the graphical representation of information that includes verbal (text, audio, and typography) and visual (photo, illustration, diagram, map, symbol, icon, pictogram, video, moving image). Interactive infographic examples were identified and selected based on the definition.

The ongoing print to online transition in the media landscape of America and Europe is resulting in innovative transition of infographic content as well. Up until recently, newspapers in India were the only outlets for data-driven election analyses. News organisations had not fully utilised the potential of the online medium, which can effectively harness massive content and interactivity. (Gupta, Sapat, Sharma, & Rajamanickam, 2016).

Infographics in Indian news media have got very little research interest from media researchers. Gupta, Sapat, Sharma and Rajamanickam (2016) as part of a broader research, compared infographics published by two Indian dailies with online presence, The Hindu and Times of India during the Tamil Nadu state elections of 2016. They observed both newspapers published similar types of infographics such as bar charts, donut charts, maps etc. Ghode (2012) compared the number of infographics published by two major newspapers in India. In which statistical infographics published by Times of India and Indian express were divided into three levels according to its detailing. Study shows that both newspapers' preferences were different as the Times of India published more infographics in the news section while Indian Express published more in the article section Ghode (2012). Although this study barely touches the qualitative aspects of the infographics published. There have been many efforts from the scholars to study the feature of interactive infographics such as usability (Albers, 2014), degree of interactivity (Zwinger & Zeiller, 2016) and complexity (Olivio, 2015).

In India elections are the event for which most data visualisations and infographics are produced. During election seasons, many of the news organisations' use of data journalism is frequently restricted to opinion polls, which experts debate whether or not to classify as data journalism (Rajasekar, 2014). Around the 2019 Lok Sabha election, some major online news organisations started using interactive content, among them Times of India (English) and Manorama online (Malayalam) used interactive content extensively. Both of its' print counterparts are known for

extensive usage of static infographics. This paper aims to document this development of interactive infographic in India by studying the content characteristics of the interactive infographics made by these two media. It also aims to compare the complexity of infographics Manorama online and Times of India published during the Lok Sabha election of 2019.

### **Objectives of the Study**

- To study the features of interactive infographics in Indian online news portals, with special reference to Manorama online and Times of India news portal.
- To compare the complexity of interactive infographics produced by Manorama online and Times of India news portal.

### **Methodology and Theoretical Framework**

To achieve the objectives of the study, researchers did the qualitative content analysis of the selected interactive infographics. For this theoretical underpinnings put forth by Weber (2013), classification of interactives by Nichani & Rajamanickam (2003) and the visualisation wheel by Cairo (2013) are employed.

Out of the six dimensions (data visualisation, interactivity, linearity-nonlinearity, communicative function, multimodality and semiotic system) of Weber's (2013) framework, this study concentrates more on 'interactivity' and 'linearity-non-linearity'. The communicative function dimension of Weber (2013) has parallels with the classification based on communicative intent of Nichani M and Rajamanickam.V (2003).

**To Study Features of Interactive Infographics** Weber's (2013) categorisation of interactives based on how readers interact with them has three levels - low, medium and high. Low level of interactivity, when the reader cannot alter or control the infographics, but can simply browse the content and choose what to display out of the given information. If the reader can modify the infographics' structure and compare the content using modalities like a timeline slider or menu buttons which are offered in the infographics, it comes under medium level of interactivity. High level of interactivity, if the reader can provide an input by the options like a dropdown menu, search bar etc. and get an output which may differ according to the input provided.(Weber, 2013; Zwinger, S. & Zeiller, M., 2016).a

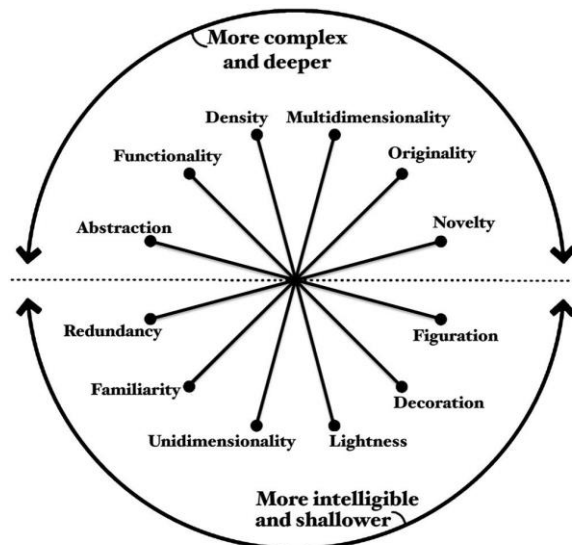
The course of action specifies the movement from one point of the interactive story to another point (Zwinger & Zeiller, 2016). Weber (2013) mentions this dimension is closely related to the interactivity of the infographics. If the movement is through a linear, predetermined path it's called a linear course of action. It could be by

scrolling, next-previous buttons etc. If the movement does not have a predetermined path and allows to drive or navigate the interactive, which is called a non-linear course of action. The navigating tools could be filters, input box, drop-down menu etc. Linear-non-linear course of action allows the reader to navigate the interactive infographics to a certain extent but some parts of the interactive will have a predetermined path.

Narratives (presenting information from a particular point of view), instructives (outlining a procedure step-by-step), explorative (allowing the reader to explore graphics and determine his own communicative intent), and simulatives (allowing the reader to experience a real event or phenomenon) are the classification based on communication intent of interactive infographics (Nichani & Rajamanickam, 2003)

**To Study the Complexity of Interactive Infographics.** To compare the complexity of interactive infographics Cairo's visualisation wheel is used. Alberto Cairo developed this wheel to plan ahead for his infographics projects. Here the six axes of this visualisation wheel is employed to do a close reading of different aspects that contributes to the complexity of infographics. Six axes of the visualisation wheel are abstraction-figuration, functionality-decoration, density-lightness, multidimensionality-unidimensionality, originality-familiarity and novelty-redundancy (Cairo, 2013).

**Fig 1: Visualisation Wheel (Cairo, 2013)**



**Abstraction - Figuration.** A highly figurative infographics will contain a lot of physical representations in the form of drawings or photographs. This brings a sense

of reality rather than conceptuality of the content. An infographic which moves onto the abstraction hand will be more conceptual.

**Functionality - Decoration.** According to Cairo (2013) a functional graphics will contain fewer embellishments and also will be closer to the direct representation of the data. A decorative visualisation will have more artistic embellishments.

**Density - Lightness.** This axis is related to the amount of information the infographic contains. Some visualisations may have to read closely because of the abundance of information it contains. Such visualisations are denser, hence scaled more to the density edge of the visualisation wheel. While some other infographics can be studied quickly and the quantity of information is not much devastating. Which can be said to be lighter.

**Multidimensionality - Unidimensionality.** A visualisation move to the multidimensional edge if it invites the viewer to explore different aspects of a phenomenon. Unidimensionality on the same hand invite single or fewer aspects.

**Originality - Familiarity.** If a broad population is used to a certain kind of visualisation by witnessing it regularly, then it is more familiar than the original. On the other hand, some visualisations are unique and built for a particular use, may make its uses consumes time on the understanding of the presentation. More original in nature.

**Novelty - Redundancy.** Redundancy is the character of visualisation to tell the same story in different ways. It could be using multiples visual elements to convey same information. Novelty is the act of describing the information in only in only one way.

### **Sample Profile**

Manorama online and Times of India news portal both published five interactive infographic stories each related to Lok Sabha elections in India during March to May, 2019. These were taken as the samples for the study. Stories Manorama Online published were *Vottu cheyyendath engane? (How to vote?)*, *Thiranjeduppukeralam: ariyendathellam (Election in Kerala: Everything you need to know)*, *Thiranjedupp-digital calenderil (Election in a digital calendar)*, *Rahstreeyathodulla Indian cinemakkarude pranayakatha (The love story of Indian film stars with politics)* and *Keralam: votemap*. The interactive infographics Times of India published were *Election 2019: Explainer*, *Fantasy election game*, *Lok Sabha election campaign tracker*, *Battleground 2019: Election datahub* and *Modimetre*.



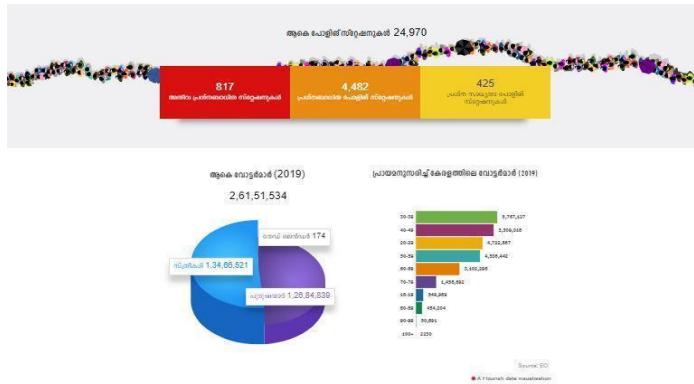
## **Analysis and Discussion**

Researchers analysed all ten interactive infographics in detail. Out of which two are given here.

### ***1. Loksabha Thiranjeduppil Keralam; Ariyendathellam***

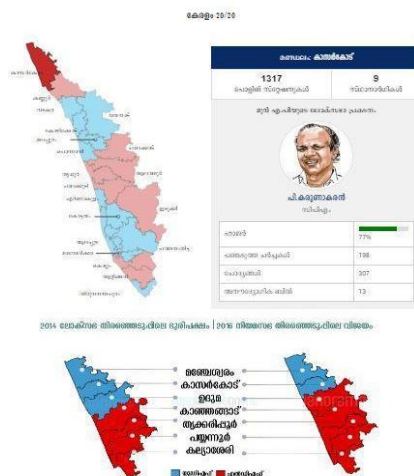
#### **(Kerala in Lok Sabha Elections; All You Need to Know)**

This interactive infographic by Manorama online combines multiple visual and textual modalities. As you scroll down from the heading, which is decorated with small sketches of prominent politicians, election-related text cards pop up and align downwards. This card carries the figures related to the Lok Sabha election in Kerala. As we scroll down the figures of critical, sensitive and vulnerable polling stations in Kerala which are presented with a back ground of three colour codes. The total electorate of Kerala on the basis of gender and age is presented as a 3-D pie chart and bar chart, both are interactive. While scrolling down, readers can see a map of Lok Sabha constituencies in Kerala. When the reader clicks on each constituency on the map, a box appears on the right-hand side with information of its current Member of Parliament, attendance in the parliament, number of debates attended, number of questions and number of private bills. Another two static maps of the constituency, which the reader selected in the first map, appear below the information box. These two maps show which alliance had the upper hand in the Lok Sabha election of 2014 and state election of 2016. Other elements of this interactive includes an interactive donut chart showing the number of votes received by each party in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, an interactive column chart showing the number of seats won by each alliance in the parliamentary elections in Kerala during 1980 to 2014, and an interactive line chart showing the number of voters in Kerala during the period 1957-2014 by gender. Hyperlinks to detailed analysis of twenty constituencies in Kerala are given at the end with sketches of candidates of each constituency.



**Fig 2. Visualisation from the Interactive Infographics *Lok Sabha Thiranjeduppil Keralam; Ariyendathellam* (“Kerala Lok Sabha Elections 2019,” 2019).**

*Degree of Interactivity.* Most of the modalities embedded in the story are interactive contents. The second part, the interactive map and associated information box is given, has a medium level of interactivity. It's because clicking on each point on the map, the corresponding information box and the two maps that appear below the box changes. Readers can also compare two members of Parliament who represent different constituencies. While the other data visualisations in this interactive fall into the low-level interactivity category, this infographic has a hyperlinked, hierarchical structure, also users can manipulate the graphics - indicate medium level of interactivity.



**Fig 3: Interactive Map from the Interactive Infographics *Lok Sabha Thiranjeduppil Keralam; Ariyendathellam* (“Kerala Lok Sabha Elections 2019,” 2019)**

**Course of Action.** Elements of this interactive infographics are connected linearly, open up while scrolling down. But out of these elements, readers can interactive maps and data visualisations that the reader can explore without a definite path. For example, the interactive map showing the constituency information can be navigated by a reader in a non-linear way. Hence this graphical story show the characters of both linear and nonlinear infographics.

**Communicative Intent.** It is neither an account of an incident nor a detailed walkthrough of a procedure. The information about the constituency, Member of Parliament, voters, etc. is available for the readers to explore as they wish. So this interactive infographics can be categorised as exploratory.

**Complexity of Infographics.** These interactive infographics are more abstract than figurative. Its core content is maps and data visualisations whose referent and representation are purely mimetic, while still having figurative elements, including sketches of members of parliament. The background picture of the text cards and the graphic provided in the background of the polling stations information are embellishments that do not enhance the information in the content. So this infographic is more decorative than functional. The content is distributed in a light manner by providing whitespace as needed in each part. So these graphics feel lighter on the density-lightness axis. The infographic has shown two layers of information for the factor 'number of voters'; a 3-D pie chart for gender wise statistics and a column chart for age wise statistics. Also the Interactive map shows multiple factors which contribute to the performance of the parliament member, which all shows this infographic is more multidimensional. All visualisations used in this interactive should be familiar to the readers such as pie charts, line charts, bar charts and maps. Hence the visualisation moves towards the 'familiar' edge in the originality-familiarity axis. Since the data presented through the charts are not repeating in form of textual descriptions or other visualisations, makes it less redundant.

In overall the interactive infographic is inclined to 'abstract', 'multidimensional' and 'novelty' edges in the 'complex and deeper' hemisphere and 'familiarity', 'lightness' and 'decoration' in the intelligible and shallower hemisphere. Hence researchers infer that this infographics is in a balanced state in terms of complexity.

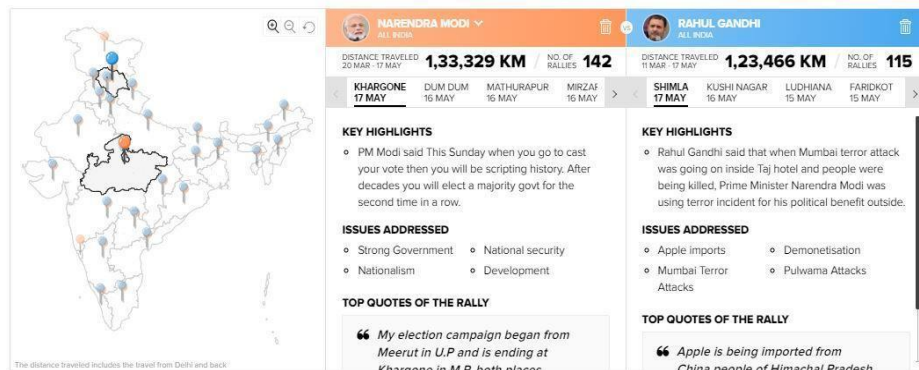
## **2. Lok Sabha Election Campaign Tracker**

The Times of India's interactive *Lok Sabha campaign tracker*, provides information on the election campaigns of three political figures- Narendra Modi, Rahul Gandhi, and Amit Shah- from the start to the finish of the 2019 Lok Sabha election cycle. An interactive map and two information boxes with the campaign

information are the main content of this infographics. In the first information box, reader can choose either Narendra Modi or Amit Shah, both are part of the ruling party. Reader can choose Rahul Gandhi, the leader of opposition, in the second box. The interactive map shows the states where these three leaders campaigned. Clicking on any of these states will bring up a map of that state, showing the locations of the election campaigns happened. Now by clicking on the point indicating that location, the information box of corresponding leader modifies and shows key highlights, issues addressed and quotes related to that. Readers can also select the distance and day the leaders travelled for campaigns. Links to view campaign coverage, poll tweets and videos related to each alliance are provided below this interactive part in three distinct sections.

**LOK SABHA ELECTIONS CAMPAIGN TRACKER**

TOI's Interactive Campaign Tracker follows PM Narendra Modi, Congress President Rahul Gandhi and BJP President Amit Shah on the poll trail across India. Click on the tabs below to get a day-by-day summary where they are traveling, what they are saying, issues they are focusing on and how TOI is reporting it.



**Fig 3. Interactive Map and Information Boxes from the Infographic, Lok Sabha Election Campaign Tracker.** (“Elections 2019 Campaign Tracker for Narendra Modi, Amit Shah and Rahul Gandhi,” 2019)

**Degree of Interactivity.** All the elements in this infographic are interactive. When the reader clicks on the interactive map, the information in the information box changes. The reader can manipulate the graphics using campaign date, campaign location and also using an option to delete one of the boxes. This indicates a medium level of interactivity.

**Course of Action.** A reader can start reading this interactive at any point. Reader can navigate the graphic using the interactive map or the information box. In the map itself a reader can start with different states. Since it allows the reader to explore the graphics, this comes under the category of non-linear course of action.

**Communicative Intent.** This interactive infographic is not a step-by-step description of a process or a narrative which explains the event from a distinct point. But it allows reader to explore the content and create their own insights from the graphic. So it's an explorative infographic.

**Complexity of Infographics.** This interactive is more abstract than figurative since there are very little figurative elements (the small photographs of the leaders). Every other representations such as the maps are abstract elements. Also this infographic has no decorative elements in it. The colours in the background of textbox also cannot be considered as decoration as those are the colour codes of the political front of these leaders. It shows the interactive is more functional than decorative. It's densely packed and has multiple layers. A reader can compare the leaders by the distance covered, the issues addressed in the campaign etc. Even though the interactive map and the text boxes could be familiar for the readers, mode of interaction used in the text box is unique and complex, makes it more original than familiar. Characteristics of this infographics are inclined to 'more complex and deeper' hemisphere of visualisation wheel.

### **Summary of Analysis**

There are differences in the features of interactive infographics published by Manorama Online and Times of India. Taking the degree of interactivity, out of the five interactives published by Manorama Online, three exhibit medium level of interactivity and two exhibit low level of interactivity (Table 1). Three of Times of India's infographics exhibit high level of interactivity and two exhibit medium level of interactivity (Table 2). Except one interactive by Manorama named '*Vottu cheyyendath engane?*', the communicative intent of the infographics produced by both media can be explored by the reader, hence comes under 'explorative' category. Both media do not exhibit uniformity in terms of course of action, they aligned the content in the best visible manner. Another noteworthy point is the difference in content. The main content of the all of the infographics The Times of India published were numerical data. While Manorama was delivering more factual information in textual format. Also Manorama online used more visual modalities, including videos, flash animations in their interactive infographics.

When studying complexity using the Visualization Wheel, Times of India's graphics hardly used decorative elements. Manorama, on the other hand, uses colourful decorations and backgrounds to make the graphics attractive. Times of India's graphics were more abstract as they were using more data visualisations. Manorama's graphics were mostly unidimensional and less dense. Times of India, on the other hand, has presented information very densely with multiple

layers. The Times of India's infographics on the visualisation wheel inclined more to the characteristics of 'complex and deeper' hemisphere.

**Table 1: Features of Interactive Infographics Published by Manorama Online**

<b>Name of the Interactive Infographics</b>	<b>Degree of Interactivity</b>	<b>Communicative Intent</b>	<b>Course of Action</b>
Keralam Votemap	Low	Explorative	Non-linear
Vottu cheyyendath engane?	Low	Instructive	Linear
Rahstreeyathodulla Indian cinemakkarude pranayakatha	Medium	Explorative	Non-linear
Thiranjedupp-digital calenderil	Medium	Explorative	Linear-Non-linear
Thiranjeduppukeralam:ariyendathellam	Medium	Explorative	Linear-Non-linear

**Table 2: Features of Interactive Infographics Published by Times of India**

<b>Name of the Interactive Infographics</b>	<b>Degree of Interactivity</b>	<b>Communicative Intent</b>	<b>Course of Action</b>
Fantasy poll game	High	Explorative	Non-linear
Election 2019 explained	Medium	Explorative	Linear-nonlinear
Campaign mapper	Medium	Explorative	Non-linear
Modimeter	High	Explorative	Linear
Datahub	High	Explorative	Non-linear

**Discussion and Conclusion**

Times of India and Manorama online delivering infographics with various levels of interactivity. From this it's clear that news portals in India can make good use of interactive possibilities. News portals starting the use of interactive infographics also a positive step for data journalism in India as the interactive techniques will aid to deliver more data. But effectiveness of interactive medium is also depended upon how readers use the interactive elements. Gupta, Sampat, Sharma and Rajamanickam (2016) had mentioned poor data literacy as one of the reasons that harness the growth of data journalism in India. It's important to understand whether the interactive infographics enhance the data literacy of the readers or whether they struggle to grasp the interactive elements. It is also important for these media to understand what their target readers like about interactive infographics through audience-specific studies. The difference in features and complexity of interactive infographics of Manorama online and Times of India should be due to the difference in target readers. It's positive that media outlets consider their target readers as it will give access of interactive content to every class of readers. It is yet to be seen whether interactive infographics will be used regularly by Indian internet media outlets beyond events like elections.

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# News Use: Exploring the Hopes and Fears in Digital Times

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## Abstract

With the advent of digital media, the media environment is witnessing drastic changes in news consumption, distribution, and production. 24/7 news culture raised many questions regarding the medium and its audience. Journalistic practices have changed as journalists are equipped with new digital tools. The choice and habits of the audience also changed with digitization. The present study compiled and analysed these studies to gain a better knowledge of the elusive and ever-changing aspects of digital media news, which have been the subject of several studies from various nations. It was found that news delivery and consumption studies focused on the changing role of journalists. Displacement studies play an essential role in digital news studies. Digital natives have been discovered to use these platforms with ease. While they do not actively seek news and information, they do come across media content as part of their social lives on social media platforms.

## Keywords

Digital News, Media Audience, Digital Natives, Displacement

## Introduction

The hope surrounding the bright days ahead of digital media narratives attracted both the worlds of industry and academia. The emergence of the new medium, the internet, has transformed the facets of journalism with its relative advantages, such as the pace of dissemination of news, the low cost of production and distribution, and the opportunity to interact with users. Further, it possesses the three essential advantages of radio, print, and television. It has the immediacy of radio, the details of the print, and the impact of television's sight, sound, colour, and motion (Editor & Publisher, 2005).

Among the services provided by the Internet, digital/online news is the most sought-after content. Globally, news websites and digital newspapers are among the most frequently viewed sites on the Internet. (Eveland, Marton, & Seo, 2004; Levins,

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1998). News delivery is set to change hands from paper to screens. People listen to the notification voice from their mobile phones, which tells them the latest updates on almost everything from corona to climate disruptions. An array of questions popped up from all corners regarding readers' behaviour, preferences, and motives, to list a few. Along with industry, academia tried better to understand people's use of digital news platforms.

The present study attempts to trace the common concerns and hopes of the academic world over the emergence of digital news platforms. The study employed the method of analysing various articles from around the world by analysing the objectives of various studies, and the conclusion arrived at.

Studies were divided and presented into three sections; the first section focuses on the studies dealing with the changes in news delivery and consumption, while the second deals with competition and displacement narratives. The third section includes the digital news habits of the younger generation.

### **News Delivery and Consumption Takes New Road**

It will be apt to mark 2000 as a benchmark year in the online news world because digital media in 2000 was armed with high-speed Internet, news on mobile phones, the Internet revisited news, and changed news consumption patterns (Brown, 2000). The inherent characteristics of the Internet provide ample opportunity to its readers. Omnipresence and easy accessibility facilitate the immediacy of information that no other news medium can, enabling journalists to stay ahead of the news race and fulfil users' demands.

Likewise, the news consumption habits of readers also have undergone tremendous changes. People are not adamant about reading a morning newspaper and are not very particular about viewing evening news broadcasts. They listen to podcasts while they drive toward work, scan through news updates on their mobile gadgets, watch and rewind live videos on YouTube and other video newsfeeds, and follow and comment on blogs at work, gym, and restaurants. Further, as news is muchly personalized, the audience has an active role. They have many avenues or options as well. They even share news stories on Facebook and WhatsApp, initiate opinion formation, and sometimes share their news over social media (Sagan & Leighton, 2010).

The Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism released its digital news report in 2016 after analysing five years of data from the United States. It noted that the significant change in digital media news use is the rise of news use via social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat. Out of the total sample, 46 percent reported accessing news on social media platforms. With breaking news,

live streams, and videos, Facebook considers news a vital part of it, and its algorithms have prioritized the same. While the readers can access original content on Facebook, there is no need to log directly into a news website. Another interesting fact is that online news users rely on old reputed brands (legacy media firms). In contrast, relatively new brands are used as a secondary source and for soft news (Reuters Institute Digital News Report, 2016).

### **Competition and Displacement**

With the emergence of the Internet, several scholars were curious about its effects on traditional media, especially print. Some studied how it competes with print media. For instance, Dimmick et al. (2004) studied the competition between the Internet and traditional news media using U&G theory and niche theory. The study tried a comparison between news use via traditional and new media. A new medium thrives by offering gratifications to users, and during the process, there are chances of competing with other existing media. Niche theory proposes that the traditional media will have to compete with the newer ones for consumers' satisfaction, time, and advertising revenue. It also predicts that such competition will bring disadvantages to the older media in the form of exclusion, displacement, or replacement.

In contrast, the newer one will take over some of the roles previously played by the latter. The results demonstrate unequivocally that there is a high degree of overlap or similarity between the niches of the traditional media and the Internet on the aspects of gratification opportunities. Further, the results point out that the Internet has the most prominent niche, providing its users more satisfaction than their traditional counterparts.

Many people can access updated news and information at any time and place since ICT is at their convenience and their disposal. So many switched from traditional to new media leading to the decline of print readership (e. g. Westlund and Fardigh, 2011) and threatening the business models of newspapers as well (Nel, 2010). Observing those tendencies, academics and media scholars predict the death of the newspaper, though not in the immediate future. Further, the emergence of mobile news has vitiated the situation offering many concerns to the legacy news media.

Tewksbury and Althaus (2000) sought to comprehend the variations between online and print users of a national newspaper regarding knowledge acquisition. They compared the remembrance of news items by two different groups, one reading print and the other its online version, and found differences in news selection: "online news readers were less likely to recall having read national and political news topics than appeared in the Times and more likely to recall business and other news topics" (472). Numerous other scholars also underline these findings.

Schönbach, De Waal, and Lauf (2005), with their comprehensive survey of 1000 respondents, came up with the same results. "Reading print newspapers contributes to the awareness of more public events and issues than using online newspaper does" (pp 253). This study also reported that perusing print editions of dailies contributes to the attentiveness of more public proceedings and topics than using an e-paper or online edition of news daily. In any case, their information additionally demonstrated that this impact is anchored upon the capability and understanding with respect to online data use. Very informed respondents were expected to apply a more careful thought about the methodology of data determination and to intentionally search for a far-reaching outline of what is happening in the world.

Tewksbury (2003) notes that the WWW furnishes followers of people with significantly more power over the news picking process than they get from the traditional media. Online users are especially keen to seek their own inclinations, and they are more averse to pursuing the prompts of news editors and content creators (pp. 694).

In both the web and printed news dailies, the reader is presented with the vast paraphernalia of visual contents, which flag the significance and place on the ladder of the importance of news items. This side of newspaper curation is responsible for mapping the social world for its users (Barnhurst and Nerone, 2001, p. 22). Concerning both online and printed news, however, these indicators should affect reception in various ways: Online newspaper readers are presented with less than their print counterparts (Schönbach et al., 2005, p. 248). The requirements that incited individuals to utilize the Internet the most were social collaboration, friendship, articulation, incorporation, control, and observation.

In a study on the utilization and delights of the Internet, Roy (2009) found that there is gender difference in their apparent experience of the Internet. The contrasts between gender groups were remarkable in using the Internet for gaming, chatting, getting business data, news, information regarding education, the quest for new employment, shopping, downloading software, and money transactions. Such uses were more articulated among men than women.

As of the first quarter of 2018 (Nielsen Total Audience Report, 2018), about half of an adult's day is spent consuming media content. Indeed, American adults spend more than 11 hours every day listening to, seeing, browsing, or otherwise interacting with media. Behind this flood of information is the developing utilization of new media platforms, just as the vibrantly multi-cultured young generation who influence them.

The number of individuals utilizing conventional media platforms remains almost the same when looking further into the information. Live and deferred TV and radio

have stayed steady over the measured quarters—a fitting witness to the relative soundness of these vital media platforms. Radio alone achieves 92% of grown-ups weekly; live and deferred TV reaches 88%. Overall, live and deferred TV, despite variations in viewership, still consumes a more significant part of a grown-up's media use, with four hours and 46 minutes being spent on the platform every day in the first quarter of 2018.

The term displacement gained maximum attention with the advent of the internet; nonetheless, it is not a new concept. "Speculations about the death of old media in the face of new communication technology are widespread" (Nguyen&Western, 2006, p. 2). Fortunati et al. (2015) have taken the narrative to a new level by introducing the element of 'experience.' They argued that users of every medium have different experiences with each of them, and they experience print newspapers as a complete object. In contrast, they miss the feel of totality with the online medium. Online newspapers' physical existence is evanescent because users have to have an internet and digital device in their possession to read online newspapers. Online users only see one page at a time.

In contrast, print users can hold the total pages in hand and experience it in totality because they know the size and can understand the number of pages in the print material. Fortunati et al. define print experience as an 'experimental continuum' and online news reading as a 'fragmented.' These two media also differ in their manipulability. When readers can hold an entire print newspaper, it is impossible to do the same with online newspapers. Hence the sense of ownership readers attach to each medium will differ. While reading print newspapers, readers can handle the entire thing, whereas the online user cannot do the same. Degrees of freedom regarding usage, reading style, and emotions vary with online and print mediums.

Gurevitch, Coleman, and Blumler (2009) urge not to see the present media landscape as a place where powerful digital media are displacing fading print and broadcast media but to understand the present situation as an evolving media scenario where the roles and relations undergo reassignments and reconfigurations. In this evolving scenario, editors and broadcasters lost their grip over the 'gatekeeping' process because people found new ways to deal with information and content. They produce their own content, interact with media, and set up alternative platforms to publish information. Audiences listening to political news on television are not passively doing the same, as proved by studies over the years. With digital media and its mass circulating messages, people are becoming more active as senders and receivers of public communication. At the same time, alongside this, media production carried out by professionals is also taking place. With YouTube videos asking questions on government decisions, interactive websites, and news

websites flooded with comments, traditional media production in an enclosed style cannot operate for long, and now the audience too has their say in political reports.

Displacement narratives also consider the migration of journalists from traditional media to digital ventures. High-profile journalists moved to digital ventures after 2013, says a report from Pew Research Centre (2014). Ahlers (2006) argued that facts are missing in the mass migration of audiences from print to the digital narrative. He has not denied that migration has occurred, but the number is blown out of proportion. For many who consume digital news, it is complementary, but they are not ready to accept it as a substitute. Advertisers too also refuse to take in digital media as a substitute, says Ahler. Ngyuen(2003) points out that the internet is an important news source and will grow into a major news source in the coming years. He argues that online editions of traditional media firms appeared in the 1990s due to fear of penetration of the internet and traditional media did it in haste to defend the digital wave. They showed reluctance to invest ample funds in their online ventures. Ngyuen(2008).

### **Digital Presence among Digital Natives**

Media researchers often relied on chronological age to explain the characteristics of the media audience. Studies among college students grabbed the particular interest of digital media researchers. Today's college students are digital natives familiar with reading news on mobile phones. So, the news consumption patterns of students were widely studied, and it is expected to shed light on the direction of digital media proliferation.

In an attempt to find out college students' news consumption patterns, Diddy and LaRose chose 303 undergraduate students and provided them with a questionnaire that includes uses and gratification measures and habit strength questions. The result showed that Internet news portals were used by students frequently as a news source, and the Internet fell second in line after their campus newspaper. Habit strength that emerged as a significant predictor of news consumption can be the reason, because of which Internet failed to replace traditional media, reveals the study (Diddi & LaRose, 2006).

Reception of news videos produced by professionals on YouTube among college students was studied by Hanson and Haridakis (2008). This study utilized the uses and gratifications framework and tried to determine the influences on college-age cohort viewing and sharing news videos with a survey questionnaire that included measures of personality characteristics, motives, and social background.

Johnson & Yang (2009) studied the motives and satisfaction gained by Twitter users using a self-administered online questionnaire. They used the Snowball sampling

method to select 242 Twitter users and investigated their news usage. The study identified social and information motives as the two crucial factors related to Twitter use. Users largely rely on Twitter as a source of information, and there is no substantial correlation between Twitter use and social needs. (Johnson, & Yang, 2009).

Ivan Tanta et al. (2014) studied the uses of Facebook among adolescents. In a survey where 431 adolescent Facebook users participated and responded to questions that tried to elicit their responses on the benefits they received from Facebook, and the gratification sought. Socializing was the paramount gratification that urges the students to use Facebook, a platform where they interact with friends, discuss school, and set meeting dates.

Papacharissi and Rubin (2000) conducted a study among college students in an introductory communication course to determine whether their Internet use provides helpful information on an individual level. Users seeking information on the Internet were found to be more satisfied with their lives and comfortable in interpersonal encounters with secure economic status. Those who were contrary to the earlier mentioned personal traits who felt less valued in interpersonal interactions and life satisfaction, found the Internet as a functional alternative to the earlier instrumental information-seeking behaviour. The needs that prompted people to use.

## **Conclusion**

Utilising the potential of digital platforms, the news industry has come a long way in an unprecedented way. This journey challenged the news ecosystem, resulting in new debates on academic and industry fronts. Theoretical and methodological innovations were produced, and fundamental concerns were addressed through studies from across the world. The same can be seen in the case of digital news platforms that can be traced from various studies addressing the broad spectrum of digital news practices.

News delivery and consumption studies focused on the changing role of journalists as they incorporated new digital tools in their workplace and news users' transformation from passive to active. The rise of news use via social media platforms is another vast area researchers addressed in their studies.

Traditional media vs. new media, as well as displacement studies, play an important role in digital news studies. Most studies estimate the future of various media by comparing the advantages and disadvantages of one medium vs. another. Breaking news, the absence of gatekeeping, and the credibility of news are the major concerns and hopes raised by these studies.



Another vast area of research is the behaviour of digital natives on digital news platforms. They have discovered to use these platforms with great ease, and habit formation is more likely in them. The majority of young people do not actively seek news and information. However, they do encounter news and other media content on digital news platforms as part of their social lives on various social media platforms.

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