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# RESEARCH ESSENCE

Peer-Reviewed Multidisciplinary Biannual Journal



**Sree Narayana College, Sivagiri, Varkala**

Sreenivasapuram P.O., Sivagiri, Varkala, Kerala, India, Pincode - 695145

(NAAC Re-accredited with B++ Grade, DBT Star Status,

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## Anthropogenic Impacts on The Paravur Estuary, Southern Kerala: A Geoenvironmental Assessment of Degradation and Management Strategies

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### Abstract

*Estuarine systems along densely populated tropical coasts, such as those in Kerala (SW India), are under increasing environmental stress due to intense anthropogenic activities. This study investigates the degradation of the Paravur Estuary in southern Kerala, focusing on the cumulative impacts of unregulated sand and clay mining, land use transformations, and poorly maintained engineering interventions like the Flood Water Outlet System (FWOS). These activities have disrupted natural sediment dynamics, resulting in expanded water spread, altered depositional environments, and the emergence of a Flood Tide Island (FTI). Grain size analysis of estuarine sediments reveals a dominance of silt and clay, indicative of low-energy depositional regimes, with notable spatial heterogeneity influenced by human interventions. Time-series analysis from 1920 to 2024 shows significant changes in estuarine landforms, including loss of floodplain deposits and distributary channels. The study emphasizes the urgent need for comprehensive environmental audits, sustainable mining regulations, and estuarine restoration strategies. Recommendations are provided for managing similar tropical estuarine systems under development pressure.*

**Keywords:** Estuarine ecosystem, Sediment dynamics, Land use change, Environmental degradation, Paravur estuary, Sustainable management.

### Introduction

An estuary is a partially enclosed coastal body of brackish water with one or more rivers or streams flowing into it and with a free connection to the open sea. Among the different environmental subsystems of the coastal lands, estuaries rank a top as it hosts one of the most biologically rich and productive habitats in the

land sea interface. Estuaries are subject both to marine influences such as tides, waves and the influx of saline water and to fluvial influences such as flows of freshwater and sediment. The mixing of seawater and freshwater provides high levels of nutrients both in the water column and in sediment, making estuaries among the most productive natural habitats in the world.



Estuaries are one of the most vital and productive ecosystems on the planet, providing numerous benefits to both the environmental and humans, which include nutrient cycling, filtering toxic pollutants, nurseries for commercially important species, attenuation of floods, mitigation of coastal erosion, amelioration of coastal storm impacts and buffering against sea level rise. River-estuarine habitats is one among the first to show signs of degradation in the coastal marine environments consequent to skewed developmental initiatives (Edgar et al. 2000; Holland et al.2004; Van Dolah et al. 2007). Increasing human stress and development pressure have led to the worldwide decline of the health of many estuarine ecosystems. The greatest threat to estuaries is by far their large-scale conversion by draining, filling, damming or dredging. These activities result in the immediate destruction and loss of estuaries. Pollution from the industrial, agricultural, and domestic waste disposal into estuaries, leads to water quality degradation and harm to aquatic life. Construction of ports, harbors and coastal structures, alters estuarine hydrodynamics and affect sediment transport. Removal of sediments and sand from estuaries for construction or navigation purposes, disrupting natural sediment transport processes while clearance of mangroves forests for aquaculture, agriculture and urbanization, leading to loss of biodiversity and increased vulnerability to erosion. Rising sea levels increased storm frequency and change in precipitation patterns, which can alter estuarine dynamics and exacerbate erosion. These human activities have significant environmental and socio-economic impacts on estuaries which including loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services, decreased fisheries and livelihoods for dependent communities, increased vulnerability to natural disasters and climate change.

Kerala state in the southwestern coast of India is endowed with a network of drainage channels, estuaries, and lagoons along its 590 km long coastal stretch, which is known for outstanding natural beauty, economic development, and occurrence of strategically significant beach placer resources (Baba 1986). These systems constitute one of the largest wet land systems sustaining the socio-economic setting of the region (Padmalal et al. 2014). The chain of brackish water lagoons and estuaries (popularly known as kayals) of Kerala state extends over a length of 325 km, covering an estimated area around 2420 km<sup>2</sup> (Annon 1990). Despite extreme socio-economic potential and ecological sensitivity (Barbier et al.2011), these coastal ecosystems are at the verge of sever deterioration due to economic pressure to develop them for various purpose. The Paravur Estuary, the focus of the present study, has undergone severe environmental degradation, primarily due to the indiscriminate mining of sand and clay for agricultural use and construction activities.

### **Study area**

An estuary is a partially enclosed coastal body of brackish water into which one or more rivers or streams flow, and which maintains a free connection to the open sea. Estuaries are influenced by both marine forces such as tides, waves, and saline water influx and fluvial processes, including the flow of freshwater and sediment. Most existing estuaries formed during the Holocene epoch with the flooding of river-eroded or glacially scoured valleys when the sea level began to rise about 10,000-12,000 years ago.

Kerala is endowed with a large number of estuaries and freshwater lakes that play a crucial role in maintaining the ecological balance and supporting the economy of the region.

These water bodies contribute significantly to biodiversity conservation, fisheries, water filtration, shoreline stabilization, and climate regulation. Major estuaries in the state include the Vembanad, Kayamkulam, Ashtamudi, and Paravur estuaries. The present study focuses on the Paravur Estuary, which is located along the southwest coast of Kerala, south of the Achankovil Shear Zone ( $8^{\circ}49'0''$  -  $76^{\circ}40'0''$ ). It is classified as a coast-transverse, bar-built estuarine basin one of the characteristic estuarine types found in southern Kerala.

(Fig. 1). The estuary receives a small, mountainous river - Ithikkara River - at its eastern end which imparts the lake an estuarine condition throughout the year. The estuary is replenished by surface water inflow of 489 mm<sup>3</sup> per year from the River Ithikkara (length 56 km; catchment area 660 km<sup>2</sup>); (CWRDM 1995) and groundwater discharge (estimated) from Quaternary and Neogene aquifers. The area (estuary and its adjoining overbank areas) selected for the present study is situated 15 km south of the Kollam town, a famous trading city of Southern Kerala. The length of the estuary is about 5 km and the width varies from 0.5 to 1.5 km. The estuary was opened (naturally) to the Arabian Sea only during monsoon. The basin is developed over the Neogene sediments comprising the Warkalli and Quilon formations. The seaward side of the estuary has sandy beaches often backed by lateralized Neogene cliffs. Areas surrounding Paravur estuary and the nearby wetlands exhibit patches of mangroves and mangrove associates. Planting of young mangroves plants are also widespread in certain reaches of the estuary. The landward side is fringed by paddy lands which were once the rice bowl of the region. In order to protect the paddy lands from flooding and reduce problems in the timely channelization of flood

waters into the sea, a Flood Water Outlet System (FWOS), with provisions for opening and closure, was constructed in 1968. The shutters of the FWOS were operational till 1992, but later it got non-functional due to poor maintenance and management. This made the estuary an open one till the installation of a new shutter for the FWOS in 2013. The entire area enjoys a tropical humid climate and an annual average rainfall of 2353 mm.

### **Geologic setting of the study area**

The study area is made up of Pre-Cambrian crystallines Tertiary (Neogene) and Quaternary sediments. The Pre-Cambrian crystallines are composed mainly of garnet-biotite gneisses, khondalites and charnockites. These rock types are exposed in the eastern and south-eastern parts of the study area. The Tertiary sediments are represented by Quilon and Warkalli Formations of Lower Miocene age. The Warkalli Formation is composed of sandstones and clays with intercalations of lignite seams at the base (Table 1). The Quilon formation lying below the Warkallis is represented by fossiliferous limestones and sandy carbonaceous clays. The Neogene sediments are exposed on the scarps surrounding wetlands like Ashtamudi, Sasthamkotta, Chelupola and Paravur lakes. Exposures are also seen on the cliffs facing the sea, south of the Thankassery promontory. The Pre-Cambrian crystallines and the Neogene sedimentary sequences are lateritised at the top. The Quaternary deposits are represented by alluvial clays, sandy clays, peat and sand (Vishnu Mohan, 2015). The geology of the area is depicted in Fig. 2.

Geologically, the study area is composed of diverse rock types from Archaean crystallines to recent alluvium. Nearly 90% of the study area

is composed of garnetiferous biotite sillimanite gneiss with or without graphite (khondalite). The remaining area is composed of garnet biotite gneiss with associated migmatites, quartzo-feldspathic hypersthene granulite and garnetiferous granite gneiss. These rocks are intruded at many places by acidic (pegmatites, quartz vein) and, basic (gabbro and dolerite) rocks. A few patches of quartzo-feldspathic gneiss and calc granulite's are also reported from the area.

The most striking feature of the coastal lands of Kollam district is the co-existence and networking of water bodies like lakes, estuaries, lagoons and fluvial channels (Vishnu Mohan, 2015). Lakes are inland, natural, perennial, fresh water bodies of variable sizes and shapes. Sasthamkotta lake - the largest fresh water lake in Kerala, is located in the Ashtamudi basin. Recently, this lake was declared a Ramsar site because of its extreme social, economic and ecological importance. The other fresh water lakes are Chelupola lake, Chittumala chira (in Ashtamudi basin) and Kotta kayal (in Paravur basin) of which Kotta kayal in Paravur basin is in the study area. Traditionally, these water bodies are referred to in Kerala as kayals when the basin is filled with water and Pola or Chira when the water is partially or wholly covered by floating vegetation. A lagoon is a brackish water body seen along the coast and is separated from the sea by spits/bars. Lagoons open permanently or seasonally to the nearby sea. Kayamkulam lagoon (also referred as estuary) is the 3rd largest lagoon in the state which has a permanent connectivity to the Arabian Sea. The Paravur estuary in the study area is a coast perpendicular water body where fresh water discharges from rivers get mixed with sea water. The estuary is separated from sea by spits/bars and are opened to the sea through narrow mouths which remains open only in monsoon season.

Estuary is influenced by freshwater discharge from Ithikkara River. In addition to the Paravur estuary, Nadayara estuary and few fresh water bodies are also seen in the study area. The salient features of these water bodies in the study area are given in Table 2.

## Methodology

The study covers sediment texture, of surface sediments in Paravur estuarine basin in the western coastal lands of the Trivandrum block of Peninsular India. A few surface sediment samples from the different depositional environments of the study area were collected and subjected to textural studies (Fig. 3). This chapter describes briefly the various methods used in the study.

Extensive field surveys were conducted in the Paravur estuary and adjoining coastal lands for collection of primary and secondary data. Information on sand and clay mining was obtained through questionnaire surveys and also from the available secondary data from Mining and Geology Department, Government of Kerala; National Centre for Earth Science Studies (NCESS); Local Self Governments; etc. Time series maps of land use/land cover changes were prepared using Survey of India Topo base maps of the year 1920, 1974, imagery of the year 1999 from Indian Remote Sensing Satellite IRS-1C (LISS-III) and Google Earth Images of the year 2014. The images were georeferenced and mosaiced using the software Erdas Imagine 9.3. The various land cover components of the estuarine system such as water spread area, floodplain deposits, coast line and sand deposits were delineated and the changes were assessed using overlay analysis in Arc GIS 10.1. Geometric correction and ground truth verifications were carried out by field surveys using Global Positioning System (GPS), and

ancillary data from topographic maps. A total of 16 surface sediment samples from the estuary and FTI (Flood Tide Island) were collected by using Van Veen Grab to know the hydrodynamic regime of the estuarine basin (Fig. 4). The Location details of the samples are given in Table 3. Grain size analysis is a typical laboratory test conducted in the sediment mechanics field. The purpose analysis is to derive the particle size distribution of sediments. The grab samples were dried by keeping in an oven until all moisture was gone. 6 g and 9g of samples were taken from the samples to depending on wheather it is sandy or clay sample respectively for analysis. Then each samples were transferred in to a 50ml glass beaker.

Wet sieving ,as its name suggest, is a particle size gradation technique involving the use of a liquid substance .This method involves applying a liquid to test the sample and allowing fine particles to pass through the sieve while also breaking down agglomerates. The sample is then dried and assessed. Wet sieving was done to separate grained material (+63 micro) from fine grained material (-63 micro). As the dispersing of clay particle is completed, the samples were wet sieved using 230 ASTM mesh with distilled water. Particles having size greater than 230 ASTM mesh size (silt +clay) will be collected in the mesh and particles having size lesser than 230 ASTM mesh (sand) will be collected in a glass breaker. The coarser particle in 230 ASTM mesh are transferred to a glass breaker and is left for oven drying. The finer particles collected in the glass breaker in the glass beaker is transferred to 1000ml measuring cylinder for pipette analysis.

The conventional pipette analysis (Galehouse, 1971) is used for grain size analysis of finer (-230 ASTM size) particles to obtain the most desirable results. During wet sieving, a funnel is used to

collect the wet and clay sediments finer than 4 phi (-240 fraction) in a measuring cylinder. Samples containing more than 6% fine fraction were subjected to pipetting. The measuring cylinder were made into exactly one litre by adding demineralized water. The sediments in the measuring cylinder were stirred for 20 seconds by using a mechanical or magnetic stirrer. 10 cm from the top was already marked on the all measuring cylinder. The pipette was cleansed with distilled water and after 1 hour and 44 seconds the sample was pipette out from the depth of 10 cm into preweighed beakers. The samples are then dried in oven at 100oC. The weight of the dried sample are taken and recorded for further data analysis.

## Results and Discussion

Sedimentary sequences are often considered as pages of Earth's history since the development of the physical world and its life forms through ages can be best understood from it. However, interpretation of the evidences in sedimentary framework requires integration/synthesis of all inferences that can be retrieved from the different lithological units/components that encompass the deposit. Particle or grain size is a fundamental attribute or physical property of particulate samples or sediments and sedimentary rocks, The size of particles is directly dependent on the type of environmental setting, transporting agent, length and time during transport, and depositional conditions, and hence it possess significant utility as an environmental proxy. Grain size is related to a multitude of external factors acting on related to the bathymetry and geometry of the basin, nutrient regime, biogeochemical oceanography, coastal processes, net sedimentary inputs from land sources, and outputs.

The change in the grain size can be attributed to the energy level, velocity water and in turn to the climatic condition, especially rain fall (Pettijohn,



1957). Clay size particles indicate lower energy level and low intensity rain fall pattern or calm environment. During high precipitation events, the energy level of the transporting medium increases and as a result sediments being deposited will move to the coarser end such as gravel, sand, etc. (Pettijohn, 1957). The Paravur estuarine basin is blanketed essentially by finer sediments rich in silt and clay with a few patches of sand which is dominated sediments in area close the estuarine mouth. Major sediment type of estuarine basin are clayey silt and silty mud as indicated by the sample collected from 4, 5 & 6 which reiterate that estuarine basin cover about 90% of silt and clay content (Fig. 5). The major sand build up is in the landward side of the Flood Water Outlet System (FWOS). The central portion of the sand build up has turned to a flood tide island with grassy vegetation. In the river influenced zone, the surface sediment pattern is more heterogeneous compared to the marine end. Clay content of the surface sediment ranges from 34.32% to 86.00% in the central basin region and from 0.083-19.1%) in the river end (Table 4). The respective variation in the case of sand is 6.5% to 97.5% from estuarine mouth region especially near to the FWOS and 29.55% to 54.33% from river end. In the case of silt is 0.75% to 33.85% from estuarine mouth and 38.84% to 65.45% in the river end. The surface sediment distribution of the Paravur estuary show a wide spectrum of textural classes viz silt, clay mud, clayey silt, sandy silt, silty sand (Fig. 5). The sand content is high in sample collected from the estuary mouth (Sample No. 16), it shows 97.5 % of sand particle. Based on the classification, the majority of basin area especially the central basin shows mud sediments means the percentage of clay and silt is higher than sand. The percentage of clay and silt in basin of estuary is (19.5% - 48%) and (40.5%-45.37%). The respective sand percentage

in the basin is (6.16%-40%). The scatter plots of sand, silt and clay percentages indicate that the sediments are in general deposited in a low energy regime. But occasional moderately high energy conditions are noticed in areas around the FTI and also river confluence zones (Fig. 6).

Before 1920s, water and sediments carried by the river Ittikara, during rainy season, was flown to the sea, breaking the sand bar (so called Pozhi breakage) in between the lake and sea naturally by the force of flood water, thus, draining the excess water received by the estuary. Nonetheless, on or about 1920 and subsequent years till now, i.e. 2024, due to indiscriminate extraction of sand from the river bed and flood plain sand, mining from the hinterlands of the estuary. Severe floodplain mining occurs near the eastern edge of the Paravur estuary. This leads to significant degradation of the alluvial deposit at its fluvial end. Scientists from CESS stated in a previous study that unregulated floodplain sand mining has left many alluvial areas fallow or flooded (CESS 2005). In addition to sand mining, uncontrolled scooping for brick clays is common in the Itthikkara river's floodplain areas around its confluence zones. This reduced the natural replenishment of water and sediment to the estuary and affected the natural breakage of the sand bar. In order to drain the excess water received by the estuary, the authorities were forced to depute engineering interventions like the Flood Water Outlet System (FWOS). However, its poor maintenance imposed marked changes in the sediment balance of the coastal zone, which ultimately led to the development of a Flood Tide Island (FTI) in the estuary.

Flood water outflow system was intimated in 1958, however, the construction was begun during 1968. On or about 1990 sand deposition had begun to take place. From then onwards and

until now i.e. 2024 sand accumulation has been noted to be increased considerably. The Paravur estuarine basin's time series landform/land cover variation map from 1920 to 2024 demonstrates the system's significant alterations (Fig. 7). In 1920, the water spread in the studied region was 6.31 km<sup>2</sup>. Due to the reclamation of the basin's periphery for agricultural purposes (particularly the planting of coconut saplings) and/or the development of the region for settlements, this subsequently drastically shrank to 5.46 km<sup>2</sup> in 1974. The post-1970s construction boom in Kerala has led to widespread efforts to collect sand and clay, as noted by Padmalal et al. (2008) and Sreebha and Padmalal (2011). This has left the estuary and surrounding coastal areas significantly altered. There were significant alterations seen in the upper section of the estuary where alluvial sediments are deposited (Fig. 7). In 1974, the estuary's water spread was approximately 5.46 km<sup>2</sup>. After that, the alluvial/floodplain deposits surrounding the river confluence zone have been sacrificed in favor of an expanded water distribution area. The floodplain deposit is first taken out for clays used in the production of bricks and tiles, and then for sand needed for building. Pit mining for sand caused significant degradation and disappearance of the distributary channels that had drained the alluvial deposit (Fig. 5 & Fig. 7). A 10.5 km channel network is thought to have drained the alluvial deposit in 1974. But as of right now, only about 2.8 kilometers of the river channel remain visible. Due to uncontrolled sand and clay mining from the alluvial deposits, the remaining portions of the channels have either completely vanished (5.45 km) or are only partially gone (2.25 km). Between 1974 and 2024, the corresponding increase in the spread of water was approximately 2.39 km<sup>2</sup>. A time

series study shows that between 1974 and 1999, there was a maximum landform change of 1.41 km<sup>2</sup>. The estuary basin's reclaimed and land areas have been steadily increasing, according to time series calculations and research.

A total of 1.29 km<sup>2</sup> of the estuary was reclaimed for different uses between 1920 and 2024. Reclamation operations impacted a relatively smaller region starting in 2003 (0.13 km<sup>2</sup>). At the mouth of the FWOS, there was yet another land accumulation. Due to the estuary's connection to the ocean via the FWOS's non-functional closure mechanism, enormous amounts of sand from the nearshore environment have been deposited in the estuary mouth region (marine end). The examination of time series data shows that in 2014, the amount of sand buildup reached 0.10 km<sup>2</sup>. In 2024, it has been increased to 0.15 km<sup>2</sup>. At the island's exposed surface, the largest thickness of sand measured is 5 meters. This sand accumulation during the said period has highly affected the biodiversity, ecosystem, agricultural and transportation activities.

As per records, the total quantity of sand mining amounts to 0.49 million t per year (t year<sup>-1</sup>), a major proportion ( i.e., 0.43 million t year<sup>-1</sup>) of which comes from the local bodies located close to the estuary (CESS, 2005). As a result of indiscriminate sand mining, the riverbed in the storage zone has lowered alarmingly over the years. In addition to mining of sand and gravel from the active channels (ie., In stream mining), a substantial portion of sand is also bring extracted from the over bank areas (floodplain mining) of the river. Floodplain mining is serve in areas close to the eastern periphery of the Paravur estuary (John et.al. 2017). As a result of this, a major portion of the alluvial deposit at its fluvial end is severely degraded.

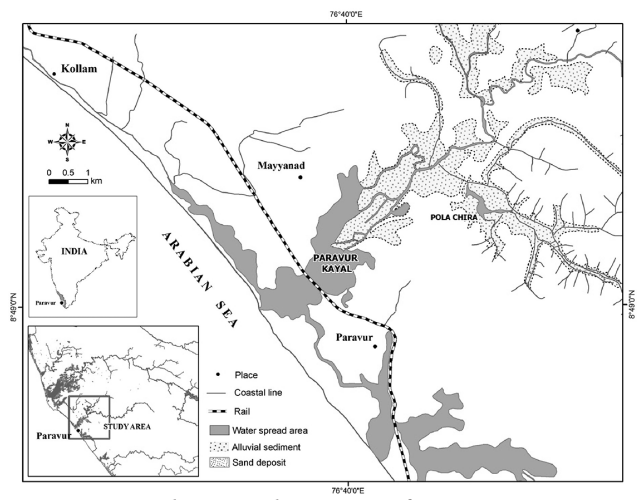


Fig. 1 Map showing location of Paravur estuary in the SW coast of India.

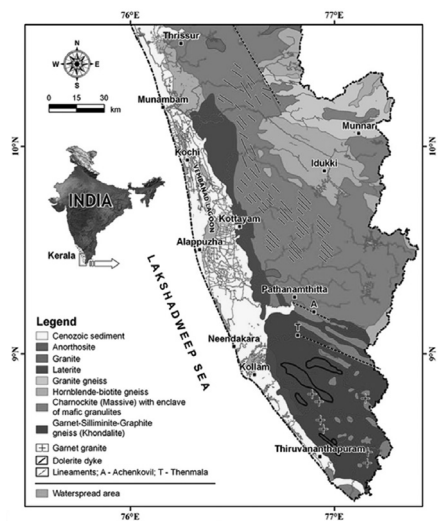


Fig. 2 Geology map of southern Kerala (Source: Soman, 2002).

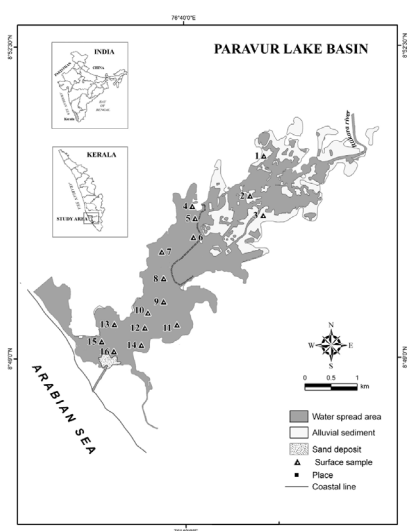


Fig. 3 Map showing locations of the surface sediments collected from Paravur estuarine basin.

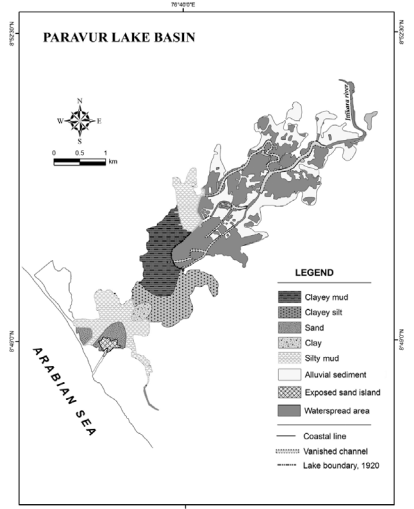


Fig. 5 Surface sediment distribution pattern of Paravur estuarine basin



Fig. 4 Field photos showing sediment sampling from Paravur estuary and FTI.



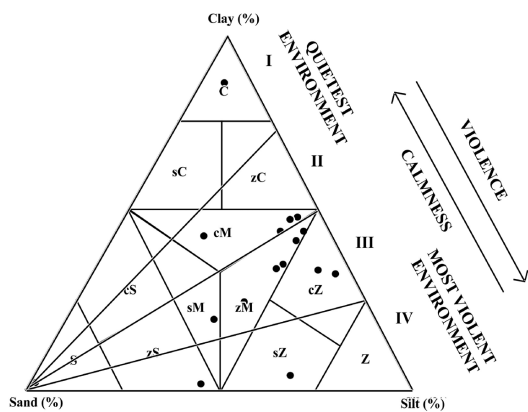


Fig. 6 Sediment types (after Picard 1971) surface (Pejrup, 1988).

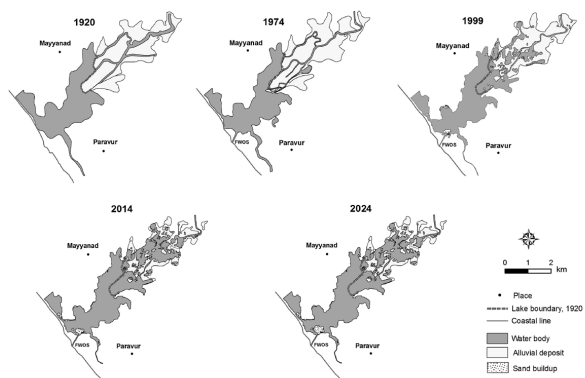


Fig. 7 Time series changes (1920-2024) noticed in the Paravur estuary and the alluvial deposit at the landward end of the estuary. Note the development of sand build up at the landward end of the floodwater outlets system (FWOS) , (modified after John et al., 2015)

Table 1 Generalised stratigraphic sequence of Kerala (Modified after Najeeb, 1999).

QUATERNARY	SEMBANAD FORMATION	Sands, clays, molluscan shell beds, riverine alluvium and floodplain deposits.
TERTIARY (NEOGENE)	WARKALLI FORMATION	Laterite capping the crystallines and Tertiary sediments
		Sandstone and clay with lignite seams.
	QUILON FORMATION	Limestone, marl, clays/calcareous clays with marine and lagoonal fossils.
	VAIKOM FORMATION	Sandstones with pebbles and gravel beds, clays and lignite, and carbonaceous clay.
Unconformity		
MESOZOIC TO ARCHAEOAN	Intrusives: Veins of quartz, pegmatites, granites, granophyres, dolerite and gabbro.	
	Garnet sillimanite gneiss, hornblende-biotite gneiss, garnet-biotite gneisses, quartzo-feldspathic gneiss, charnockites, charnockite gneiss, etc.	

Table 2 Salient features of water bodies in the study area

Sl. No.	Type of water bodies	Name of the water body	Salient features
1.		Paravur estuary	Coast perpendicular estuarine system; fed by Ithikkara river.
		Nadayara estuary	Coast perpendicular estuarine system; fed by Ayiroor river.
2	Lakes	Vatta <i>kayal</i>	Nearly freshwater lake in Kayamkulam basin.
		Sasthamkotta lake	Freshwater lake in Ashtamudi basin.
		Chelupola lake	Freshwater lake in Ashtamudi basin.
		Chittumalachira	Freshwater body in Ashtamudi basin.
		Cherayathu lake	Nearly freshwater body in Ashtamudi basin.
		Kotta lake	Nearly freshwater body in Paravur basin.
		Polachira	Freshwater wetland in Paravur basin.
		Poovakal wetland	Freshwater wetland in Nadayara basin.

Table 3 Sampling Location and study area

Location Number	Latitude	Longitude
1	8°50'52.79"N	76°40'55.16"E
2	8°50'59.74"N	76°40'56.32"E
3	8°51'08.29"N	76°40'56.47"E
4	8°50'42"N	76°40'56.47"E
5	8°50'33.8"N	76°40'7.8"E
6	8°50'19.5"N	76°40'05.1"E
7	8°49'51.1"N	76°39'55.2"E
8	8°49'46.4"N	76°39'49.4"E
9	8°49'34.1"N	76°39'33.2"E
10	8°49'05"N	76°39'12.7"E
11	8°48'05"N	76°40'35.7"E
12	8°49'30"N	76°39'12.7"E
13	8°49'05"N	76°39'02.10"E
14	8°49'24.01"N	76°39'11.7"E
15	8°49'09"N	76°39'02.7"E
16	8°49'03"N	76°39'03.11"E

*Table 4 Textural characteristics of surface sediments of Paravur estuary.*

Sample No	Sand (%)	Silt (%)	Clay (%)	Sediment type (Picard, 1971)
1	41.44	38.84	19.72	Sandy mud
2	29.55	65.45	5.00	Sandy silt
3	54.33	45.58	0.08	Silty sand
4	6.12	48.63	45.25	Silty mud
5	6.16	45.34	48.50	Silty mud
6	31.83	43.26	24.91	Silty mud
7	32.33	24.02	43.65	Clayey mud
8	8.38	43.85	47.77	Clayey mud
9	12.33	42.46	45.21	Clayey mud
10	8.38	57.77	33.98	Clayey silt
11	4.14	62.55	33.31	Clayey silt
12	6.50	7.50	86.00	Clay
13	18.36	47.32	34.32	Silty mud
14	9.36	49.33	41.31	Silty mud
15	15.36	48.62	36.02	Silty mud
16	97.5	0.75	1.75	Sand

### Summary and Conclusions

Estuaries have been classified as one of the most vulnerable and diverse ecosystem on the earth. In the past three to four decades, these estuaries system, especially in the densely populated area of world. Are subjected to immense pressures due to various kinds of human interventions, among which indiscriminate mining for construction grade sand and clay from alluvial deposit is a major activity.

River Ittikara is the main sediment source of estuary of Paravur. As per present studies and observations, it is understood that Ittikara river is subject to high anthropogenic activities like sand mining, construction, agriculture, farming etc. As a direct result of this deposition of clay and silt has been far exceeded than sand and hence the river mouth and the basin has been filled with the silt and clay. As a result of minimal

sand accumulation, the formation of delta is affected which in turn give rise to backflow of the estuary. In comparison to 1920s, the size of the delta is very much reduced in 2024. If this phenomenon is continued to be taken place, alluvial deposition will be reduced in river mouth and in marine region sand deposition would be increased and this region will be backfilled (the reason for backfilling can be directly attributed to construction of floodwater outlet system which connects the estuary face and the marine).

All these point to immediate need for the multidisciplinary studies in the estuarine environments of southern Kerala for assessing the extent of degradation consequent to various anthropogenic pressures. This is very important for laying down strategies for regulating the human interference and also for creating awareness on their impacts on physical and

biological environment of these life support systems. The under above observations and findings, a set of recommendations are also made for the wise use and management of the Paravur estuary in particular and estuarine ecosystem of densely populated tropical regions with similar geoenvironmental setting, in general

### Recommendations

Using EIA studies, any development project in or close to coastal aquatic systems should be carefully examined.

Regular and sporadic environmental audits ought to be incorporated into the post-project phase.

To restore the many environmental elements of the Paravur estuary, a restoration plan must be created. This needs to be implemented as soon as possible and on a priority basis. The estuary's native vegetation and land use should ideally be preserved as much as feasible.

Environmental audits conducted by a qualified body should be a prerequisite for permitting alluvial mining.

Promote clay bricks and alternatives to river sand for building. Increase research efforts to develop appropriate, affordable, and readily accessible substitutes for traditional building materials.

A mix of soft and hard engineering solutions, along with suitable bio-fencing employing native riparian plants and/or mangroves, may be used to restore the original network of the distributary system in the alluvial zone.

There should be awareness campaigns regarding the value of protecting coastal ecosystems and the environmental services they provide at different levels of society.

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## Heritage in Transition: Cultural Assimilation and Identity Preservation among the Anglo-Indians

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### Abstract

*The Anglo-Indian community of Kerala is embedded with a distinct cultural and historical legacy of the colonial experience, hybrid identities, and transnational connections. They were once prominent in fields which includes railway, postage and education, this community has gone through insignificant transformation during post-independence and post-globalization eras. This study explores how the currently residing Anglo-Indians of Kerala are negotiating the tension between cultural assimilation into society and preservation of their unique heritage. Using a qualitative ethnographic approach, the research arrives at an in-depth collection of data, interviews and participant observation conducted in urban centres of Kochi and Kollam. The study investigates how language, food, religion, family traditions, and community rituals are either retained, adapted, or lost across generations. Special attention is given to the role of youth, intermarriage and emigration in reshaping the identity of the community. The research shows a fascinating divide while older generations still hold tight to traditional Anglo-Indian customs and institutions, younger people blend with local roots. At the same time, the community's fading political voice, especially after the 104th Constitutional Amendment, has left many wondering how it will affect their unity and visibility in the long run. The study contributes to broader insights on minority resilience, cultural hybridity, and the politics of identity in contemporary India. This paper explores the complexities on How the Anglo-Indian identity is being preserved or diluted in Kerala's evolving social fabric?*

**Keywords:** Cultural Assimilation, Identity Preservation, Anglo-Indians, Heritage Transition, Multiculturalism

### Introduction

There are many communities who are marginalised on the grounds of treatment towards them be it Social, Economic or Political. One such marginalised community is the mixed-race community which developed as a result of the colonialist expansion policy in the so called 'Anglo-Indian' community. They are microscopic in number, having unique identity and culture of

their own. Their contribution in exposing western pattern of lifestyle in India is worth mentioning, in course of time which was adopted by other people of the society as a way of assimilation into the global economy. Through this paper an attempt has been made to focus on the condition of the Anglo-Indians by focusing on racial identity, mother tongue and language barrier, cultural identity and migration issue.



## **Heritage in Transition: Cultural Assimilation and Identity Preservation among Anglo-Indians in Kerala**

The Anglo Indians are a group of people who come under the status of minority community, they were the byproduct of the European policy of developing a set of people who were Indian in nature but European in thought, and were loyal to the British crown. Once the number of Anglo Indians outnumbered the actual Europeans in India, the East India Company tactically removed the Anglo Indians from important positions of army and other administrative posts and appointed them in subordinate positions like the railways, postage and telegraph, the actual outgrowth of the Anglo Indians in India made the Europeans fear their own existence. The Britishers who later became concerned of the racial purity, not only excluded Europeans but also pure Europeans born in India as they feared the shift of loyalty in due course of time. This shift in thought especially after independence had a drastic change in position, thought and commitment of the Anglo Indians<sup>1</sup>.

The Article 366(2) of Indian constitution states

“An Anglo-Indian” means a person whose father or any of whose other male progenitors in the male line is or was of European descent but who is domiciled within the territory of India and is or was born within such territory of parents habitually resident therein and not established there for temporary purposes only<sup>2</sup>” And this once gave them a special place in the political arena of the nation. With the independence of India and by the end of the colonial rule they began to migrate to countries like Britain, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the US. This questions their idea of belonging, we can state that they were one of the earliest results of globalisation<sup>3</sup>.

The term Anglo Indian itself states that they didn't belong to England but they had been a part of India. But on the other hand, the heart of these people was deeply rooted in the colonial Raj, the sense of belonging haunted them leaving behinds, a dilemma of identity. The issue of mixed-race identity and racial discrimination bound up more insecurities among the Anglo Indians. The aspiration for fair skin was seen as something that qualified their identity<sup>4</sup>. The Anglo Indians with dark skin tone bore questions of their identity in the migrated countries. The fair skin Anglo-Indians were considered as descendants of the British and this helped them with easy migration to countries like Australia. This firmly helped them to reach the recognition of European discordancy which on the other hand couldn't be availed in India.

The migration of the Anglo-Indian children to other countries have been increasing in number ever since the independence, in reality the Anglo-Indian institutions have failed to educate their own children. Being monolingual among the competitive bilingual peers made them backward in the educational sector also, thus the option of migrating to countries where they could build up their career have been their prime concern.

In a general way, the Anglo Indians are usually intrinsic in nature. They usually used to seek spouse only within their community with same skin tone. The dark ones preferred the dark and the fair ones prefer the fair, but in recent trend, they changed and the mixed marriage system within and outside the community have made a drastic change within the community. This have affected their basic culture, tradition and manners. Many have forgotten their communal identity and have amalgamated themselves into the wider Indian social system.

One among the most basic need for livelihood is housing, majority of the Anglo-Indian community people residing in India especially the senior citizens and single parent family lack proper housing facility, this is a grave problem which require an immediate intervention and attention from the concerned authorities<sup>5</sup>. Assimilation of the western culture into the indigenous culture, and dissimilation of the Anglo-Indian community with the indigenous people made Anglo-Indian cultural pattern a contemporary lifestyle.

The AngloIndians are very fond of fashion and are more likely to be in western style of dressing with ladies in miniskirts and gowns with a hat and men with formal shirts and pants neatly tugged in with a tie around the neck during formal occasions<sup>6</sup>. Women of this community were earlier not seen with heavy ornaments but now things have changed drastically they have begun to wear churidars and sarees and are at times indistinguishable from the others, on adoption of western dress by the common people the Anglo Indian now don't have a dressing style of their own or can be stated as the commoners have adopted the Anglo style of dressing. This can be seen in their cuisine, once withsandwich, stew and vindaloo are now changed to appam and dosa<sup>7</sup>. Their unique cuisinehas now constrained to only special occasions.

The reservation of seats for AngloIndiansin Lok Sabha and state legislative assembly was extended till 2019 through several amendments, it was discontinued by the 104th amendment bill of 2019, but even at that time the Anglo Indians were not adequately represented. The government claimed through the census of 2011 that the total population of AngloIndians in India is nearly 300 which is claimed by the all-IndiaAnglo-Indian association as a false

calculation<sup>8</sup>. It was bare minimum number for a community to exist, and if so, it can be stated as an 'endangered community'. This dispute on the population count has left them out of the deserving representation and reservation in the legislative assembly.

## Conclusion

The journey of Anglo-Indian community through India's complex social and political landscape highlights both the resilience and vulnerabilities of this microscopic minority group. Despite their invaluable contributions to India's cultural evolution, the Anglo-Indians have often been overlooked, and marginalized and battling with a persistent identity crisis. Their dual heritagehas left them suspended between acceptance and exclusion, assimilation and distinctiveness. By recognizing and nurturing the Anglo-Indian heritage we can strengthen national unity by embracing every part of it.

To preserve this unique part of India's cultural fabric, it is crucial to recognize and address the socio-economic and identity-based challenges they face. Respectful inclusion and genuine efforts toward equality can empower the Anglo-Indian community to thrive alongside the diverse populations. In doing so, India not only honours the legacy of this community but also reaffirms its commitment to a truly inclusive and multicultural society.

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## Journalistic Ethics and the Aiyar Era (1936-47)

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### Abstract

*Journalism, as a profession, was considered eminent in the 1940s. But the game changed after due course of time. The revelation started when the mass were unable to recognise whether it is a private or public endeavour, a business or service. This degeneration of journalistic ethics did not happen in one or two days. A great deal of incidents contributed to the current status where journalistic interests rely on eye-catching incidents and in claiming the first place in reporting everything, no matter whether it is true or not. To exist for long and to earn profit, public support is necessary. However, truth should be more important than pleasing the mass. One such tainted story was the issues between Sir C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyar, the Diwan of Travancore (1936-47) and the newspapers which reported his dictatorship stories. He became the diwan under Sree Chithira Thirunal, who is even more responsible than him in the issues of the state. All the orders of the diwan passed with the permission of the state. Knowing all these, Travancore newspapers neglected the inner reality of things and blamed only the diwan for his extreme measures. This is obviously against the ethical and moral policies of newspapers being a forefront warrior in spreading truth. Even some of them, for maintaining their 'business' intentionally supported the government policies. Throughout his tenure, C. P. faced a huge amount of criticism which could have been shared with the other responsible person too, if investigated properly. However, major news agencies denied the chance to know the truth. Of course, the flow of information to a large mass can make even truth a lie and vice versa as well. Sir C. P. and the Travancore issues were one such case among a sea of such incidents. Here, the Aiyar Era is referred to as the period of his diwanship, i.e., from 1936 to 1947.*

**Keywords:** Sir C.P., Travancore, Newspapers, Journalistic Ethics

### Introduction

Literally, information means “facts provided or learned about something or someone”. As for journalists, it is more than information as it is more close to the term ‘fact’. That’s how media became one of the most popular medium in the democratic world. It is true that newspapers play a major role in impacting the public, especially during the national movement. The fearless reports of the patriots helped in unifying the

nation to a great extent. Kerala’s newspapers too formed a part of this venture. That was one of the reason they continuously attacked Sir C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyar through their articles. Sir Chetpat Pattabhiraman Ramaswamy Aiyar was the Constitutional Advisor to the Maharaja Sree Chithira Thirunal of Travancore from 1931 to 1936, and from 1936 to 1947 he was the Diwan of Travancore. Knowing how much unpopular,

he was as a foreign Brahmin, he bravely took the diwanship only because of his cordiality with the Junior Regent Maharani Setu Parvati Bai and the Maharaja Sree Chithira Thirunal. At that time, India was moving towards the final phase of the independence movement. As one among the high authority of the princely state as well as the spokesperson of independent Travancore ideology on behalf of the ruling family, a tussle between Sir C. P. and the newspapers was inevitable. Sir C. P. banned most of the newspapers published at that time. His orders made it impossible for the newspapers to maintain their attitude towards freedom. C. P.'s suppressive methods towards newspapers made him a sworn enemy of the former. But it should be noted that he was not the one who introduced the press regulations. Besides, there was, in Travancore, a long tradition of curbing press freedom as embodied by the Press Regulation of 1903, amended in 1917, 1926 and 1930.

### **Journalistic Ethics And The Aiyar Era (1936-47)**

Newspapers are a kind of public servant. It is their duty and responsibility to give accurate information to the public. Journalists have special moral rights and correspondingly special moral responsibilities. C.P. oppressed the newspapers using his power and authority. But that was not a necessary reason for the truth holders like newspapers to intentionally leave other involved parties behind. This was more evident when C. P. introduced the famous American Model Scheme for independent Travancore. Widespread agitation occurred against this scheme and obviously public blamed him for this. But during his diwanship there occurred many prominent events such as the Temple Entry Proclamation in 1936, introduction of Travancore State Transport Department (TSTD) in 1938, Pallivasal project which was the first hydroelectric power station

in Kerala in 1940, the abolishment of capital punishment in 1944 which was a landmark event as historically Brahmins were exempted from it and much more. The then ruler of Travancore, Sree Chithira Thirunal was enormously praised for these contributions while only his diwan was censured for the scheme of independent Travancore. Bethink, he was not the first diwan for the Raja but almost the last one (penultimate, as P.G.N. Unnithan being the last diwan from 1947-48), if he was not attacked and seriously injured due to his American model. It is here to be noted that, not all leaders of the princely state were against this ruling model. Among the politicians of Travancore, the moderates such as Pattom Thanu Pillai and P. S. Nataraja Pillai wanted the scheme to be given a trial. They wanted it knowing that the majority of the Travancore population desired to join the Union of India and attain independence together as a country. Even today, most of the people believes C. P. to be the sole instigator of the bloodshed for independence. However, according to Professor A. Sreedhara Menon, Aswathi Thirunal Gouri Lakshmi Bai stated that independent Travancore was the decision of the royalty. Unfortunately, the dailies also failed in popping out more persons involved in this idea.

The Punnapra-Vayalar bloodshed for a responsible government and C.P.'s order to crush it made him even more villainous than ever before. C.P. was not able to order such a suppression without the permission of the palace is one case. On the other hand, who could have instigated the working class of Ambalappuzha-Cherthala to start a rebellion with equipment like Vaarikuntham (a kind of weapon made of wood or metal) against a group with machine-made guns. Then, should C.P. alone be made responsible for the matter is a question of consideration that



should have been taken up by the journalists and their respected newspapers. Sir C. P., the palace authorities as well as the working class leaders together created the chaos which resulted in the death of a large number of common folk. As a public information provider, newspapers and its correspondents should have been responsible to impart the information accurately. Journalists are morally committed to maximally relevant truth telling in the public interest.

Certainly, his relation with the press persons worsened after the start of the responsible government struggles, especially with the Malayala Manorama, a leading daily in Malayalam. Newspapers had a major role in making C. P. a villain of the freedom movement and that was an ethical deviation from what they ought to have done. However, Kerala Kaumudi took the other way round. It apologized to the government and regained its banned reporting license. After winning the license back, considering only its own interest, Kerala Kaumudi avoided a direct confrontation with the government. Against the public interest, it supported the independent mission of Diwan as well. A newspaper that could deviate from its stand for the larger public interest is morally correct. But the same daily to move away from its own path is morally wrong. In such a way, the newspaper becomes a business platform sustaining for its own profit which does not come under the ethics of journalism.

Later, a Press Commission was set up in 1952 for organising the press activities and the journalistic ethics. Among the significant recommendations of the commission were the constitution of an All India Press Council, the formulation of a code of ethics for journalists, the arrangement for state supply of newsprint and a set of steps for the protection of the interests of the journalists. The irony was that C. P. was also a member of this 11-member commission. While

he was the one who suppressed newspapers with his unlimited powers, he was also the one among others who formulated rules for protecting the interest of journalists. Not to say, he was a man with his own principles.

### Conclusion

It is not an intention to say that newspapers are bad for the society or they are rumour mongers. It's just that they could have been more responsible while holding a major position in the society. But that doesn't mean C.P. was the one-man army behind all that had happened. Aiyar could have resigned from his post if he had any conflict with the opinions of those in power. Sir C. P., favourite to the British officers like Wellington who called him 'the ablest Indian in India', could have given a more promising future to the state if his intelligence was used by the authorities in a proper manner. Even in all these unrest and with the unwelcoming attitude of the natives of Travancore, he strived and created many wellness schemes including a huge university to our credit. As the only important medium between the public and the authority during that time, newspapers could have investigated deep into those issues. One of the most prominent scholar Dr. C.K.N. Nair once wrote an article on how the C.P. Government treated him well when he met with a huge car accident, even though they didn't know his whereabouts. A man, from whom we get ample benefits, should not be attacked like a traitor while we were going to enjoy our independence.

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## The Revolt of 1857: Analyzing Its Representation in Fictional Narratives

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### Abstract

*The Indian Rebellion of 1857 has been a focal point of intense scholarly debate and has inspired a diverse range of literary and creative works across genres such as adventure, mystery, and romance. This paper critically examines the fictional representations of the revolt, analyzing nine literary works and one cinematic production. It aims to explore how the rebellion has been interpreted and reimagined in different narrative forms, reflecting broader cultural and historical discourses, including Orientalism and colonial ideologies.*

**Keywords:** revolt of 1857, Orientalism, historical narratives, literary analysis, history in fiction, historical fiction

### Introduction

The Revolt of 1857 has long been a focal point of scholarly debate, with its true nature and implications being the subject of extensive historical scrutiny. Regardless of the diverse and often contentious evaluations of the event, the revolt has inspired a considerable body of literary and creative works spanning various genres such as adventure, mystery, and romance. These works have captivated the imaginations of both Western and Indian authors, dramatists, and filmmakers.

This paper endeavours to critically examine the fictional representations of the Revolt of 1857, analysing a selection of nine literary works and one cinematic production. Through this analysis, the paper aims to explore how the rebellion has been interpreted and reimagined in different narrative forms, and how these portrayals reflect broader cultural and historical discourses.

### Orientalism in Fictional Portrayals of the Revolt of 1857

Orientalism, as defined by Edward Said, refers to the depiction of Eastern societies as exotic, backward, and inferior by Western literature and culture<sup>1</sup>. Orientalism refers to the depiction of Eastern societies by Western literature and culture in a way that emphasizes exoticism, mysticism, and perceived inferiority. This perspective is evident in various fictional works that address the Indian Rebellion of 1857, often emphasizing the perceived savagery and chaos of the uprising rather than the legitimate grievances of the Indian populace.

### The Sepoy Mutiny by V.A Stuart

“The Sepoy Mutiny” by V.A. Stuart is a historical fiction novel set during the Indian Revolt of 1857. The narrative follows Alexander Sheridan, who commands a diverse cavalry unit comprising civilian volunteers, unemployed



officers, and loyal Indian soldiers. The novel portrays the conflict from multiple perspectives, highlighting the atrocities committed by both sides<sup>2</sup>. Stuart's depiction emphasizes the theme of evaluating individuals based on their merit rather than their ethnicity or religion. The novel offers a fictionalized account of the events, blending historical facts with creative storytelling to vividly depict the period.

### **The Steam House**

In Jules Verne's novel "The Steam House" (1880), the Indian Rebellion of 1857 serves as a significant historical backdrop. The narrative unfolds in the post-rebellion period and is enriched with historical context that Verne intricately weaves into the story. The plot follows a group of British colonists traversing India in a mechanical, steam-powered elephant-driven house<sup>3</sup>. Verne's narrative integrates historical commentary and social observations, providing insight into the lingering tensions and psychological impacts experienced by both the Indian population and British colonists after the uprising. The inclusion of the character Nana Sahib, a notable historical figure from the revolt, offers a fictionalized account of his fate following the rebellion's suppression.

### **On the Face of the Waters**

In Flora Annie Steel's novel "On the Face of the Waters" (1896), the Indian Rebellion of 1857 is depicted with scrupulous historical accuracy and detailed narrative. The novel is structured into five books, each offering a multi-perspective view of the uprising. The narrative encompasses the experiences of the royal family of Delhi, native Indian soldiers and their allies, and the English army involved in the recapture of Delhi<sup>4</sup>. Steel's extensive research is evident throughout the text, as she meticulously documents events, specific

dates, and even weather conditions pertinent to significant historical occurrences. The novel's protagonists, including Jim Douglas, a former soldier, and Kate Erlton, a colonial wife, navigate the turmoil and complexities of the rebellion, providing a comprehensive and immersive portrayal of this pivotal period in Indian history. Steel's novel provides a detailed account of the rebellion from a British perspective, emphasizing the heroism and resilience of the British characters. The depiction of Indian characters varies but often leans towards the portrayal of rebels as irrational and fanatical, aligning with the Orientalist view of the East as chaotic and in need of Western control<sup>5</sup>.

### **The Siege of Krishnapur**

In J.G. Farrell's novel "The Siege of Krishnapur" (1973), the Revolt of 1857 is examined through the fictional siege of Krishnapur, highlighting the experiences of British colonists who are besieged by Indian sepoys. Set against the backdrop of the uprising, the narrative scrutinizes the British colonial mindset and the inherent absurdities of the class system of the time. Farrell offers a critical portrayal of the reversal of power dynamics; illustrating how the British, typically the oppressors, endure the same privations and harsh conditions they once imposed on the local population. The characters, including the District Collector, Dr. Dunstaple, and George Fleury, grapple with extreme hardships such as starvation and disease during the siege, emphasizing their struggle for survival<sup>6</sup>.

Known for its incisive wit, historical reconstruction, and imaginative depth, Farrell's novel serves as a poignant commentary on the follies of empire. The work won the Booker Prize for Fiction in 1973 and forms part of Farrell's "Empire Trilogy," which delves into

the decline of the British Empire. Farrell's novel, while more nuanced, still reflects Orientalist themes by focusing on the British experience and the civilizing mission. The Indian characters are often depicted as antagonists or faceless masses, reinforcing the colonial perspective of the revolt as a threat to British order and stability<sup>7</sup>.

### **A Flight of Pigeons**

In Ruskin Bond's novel "A Flight of Pigeons" (1978), the Indian Rebellion of 1857 is depicted through the lens of the protagonist, Ruth Labadoor, and her family. Set in Shahjahanpur, the narrative follows the Labadoor family's harrowing experiences during the upheaval of the rebellion<sup>8</sup>. The novella commences with the tragic murder of Ruth's father by Indian insurgents within a church, establishing the dire circumstances the family must navigate for survival. Seeking refuge, Ruth and her family are sheltered by their loyal friend, Lala Ramjimal. However, their precarious safety is further endangered when Javed Khan, a Pathan leader, abducts Ruth and her mother, taking them into his household. Despite the abduction, Javed Khan's character is portrayed with complexity, as he harbours a deep infatuation for Ruth. The narrative intricately explores themes of survival, loyalty, and the multifaceted nature of human relationships amidst the turmoil of the rebellion. Bond's portrayal of the revolt is both evocative and humanizing, providing an intimate glimpse into the personal lives impacted by the broader historical events.

### **The Wife and the Ward: or, a Life's Error**

"The Wife and the Ward: or, A Life's Error" by Edward Money, published in 1859, is a novel that provides a detailed portrayal of British life in India during the time of the Indian Rebellion of 1857. The novel explores the power dynamics between

the British colonists and the Indian population, emphasizing the tensions and conflicts that arise from the colonial rule. The Revolt of 1857 is portrayed through the experiences of British characters living in India during the rebellion. The novel provides a detailed depiction of the social and political climate of the time, focusing on the personal lives and relationships of its characters amidst the chaos of the uprising<sup>9</sup>. The narrative captures the tension and uncertainty faced by the British community, highlighting their struggles to maintain order and protect their interests during the revolt. Money's work is notable for its historical accuracy and the way it integrates the events of the rebellion into the personal stories of the characters.

### **The Mutiny**

In Julian Rathbone's novel "The Mutiny" (2007), the Indian Rebellion of 1857 is depicted from a predominantly British perspective, emphasizing the dramatic and tumultuous events of the uprising. The narrative is set in the late spring of 1857, when the British residents in India, under the auspices of the East India Company, are engaged in leisure activities. The novel centers on Sophie Hardcastle, a newlywed disenchanted with her soldier husband, and Bruce Farquhar, a mysterious lieutenant. The rebellion is vividly portrayed through the eyes of these characters, highlighting the sudden and violent insurrection of the native soldiers against their British officers. Rathbone chronicles the ensuing chaos and brutality, including the infamous massacre of British women and children in Cawnpore, and the harsh retaliatory actions by the British<sup>10</sup>.

Rathbone's work provides a comprehensive and sombre examination of the period, capturing the wide-ranging impact of the revolt from the opulent settings of Government House to

the valour of common soldiers and peasants. The novel also delves into themes of religious fanaticism and the horrors of war, offering a critical reflection on the broader implications of the uprising. This narrative serves to underscore the human cost and the profound disruptions caused by the rebellion, resonating with contemporary readers.

### **With Sword and Pen: A Story of India in the Fifties**

“With Sword and Pen: A Story of India in the Fifties” by H.C. Irwin, published in 1904, is a historical novel that meticulously depicts British life in India during the mid-19th century. Set against the backdrop of the Indian Rebellion of 1857, also known as the Sepoy Mutiny, the novel offers a vivid and detailed representation of the social and political milieu of the period<sup>11</sup>. The narrative focuses on the experiences of British characters as they navigate the intricacies and challenges of colonial governance. Irwin’s work is distinguished by its historical accuracy and its ability to capture the tensions and conflicts that characterized the rebellion. The story provides comprehensive insights into the British community’s efforts to maintain order and safeguard their interests amid the uprising, highlighting the broader implications of colonial rule and resistance.

### **The Sign of Four by Arthur Conan Doyle**

In Arthur Conan Doyle’s “The Sign of Four”, the Revolt of 1857 is depicted through the historical backdrop that informs the narrative’s central mystery. The treasure, which plays a crucial role in the plot, is tied to events from the Indian Rebellion of 1857. The character Jonathan Small recounts his involvement in the revolt, detailing how he became entangled in a conspiracy to acquire the treasure during the

chaotic period of the mutiny<sup>12</sup>. Doyle integrates the historical context of the rebellion to enrich the novel’s narrative depth, using it to provide a compelling back-story for the characters and their motivations. The portrayal of the revolt emphasizes the lasting impact of colonial conflicts on individual lives, illustrating how the turbulence of the era reverberates through the subsequent actions and fortunes of the characters involved.

The novel reflects the attitudes and perspectives of its time, which can come across as stereotypical and biased by modern standards. The portrayal of Indians in the novel includes both positive and negative characterizations, often influenced by the colonial mindset prevalent during the late 19th century. Some characters are depicted in a negative light, such as the portrayal of the Indian mutineers and the sense of threat they posed to the British characters. However, the novel does not uniformly portray all Indian characters negatively; there are instances where Indian characters are shown with complexity and agency, albeit within the confines of the colonial narrative. Doyle’s novel portrays Indian characters and cultural elements through a lens of exoticism and mystery<sup>13</sup>. The narrative surrounding the Thuggee cult and the treasure associated with the revolt reinforces the idea of India as a land of intrigue and danger, necessitating British intervention and control<sup>14</sup>.

### **Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom**

In “Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom” (1984), the Indian Rebellion of 1857 is not directly addressed or depicted. The film primarily centers around the fictional narrative of the Thuggee cult, which is loosely based on a historical group known for banditry and assassination in India. The plot is set in the 1930s, well after the events of the 1857

rebellion, and focuses on the adventures of the protagonist, Indiana Jones, as he encounters this secretive cult. The film takes substantial creative liberties, portraying the Thuggees as engaging in exaggerated and fictional practices such as human sacrifice, child slavery, and dark magic. This portrayal is situated within the broader context of British colonial rule, which serves as a backdrop for the adventure story. However, it is important to note that the movie does not aim to provide a historically accurate account of the Thuggees or the Indian Rebellion of 1857<sup>15</sup>.

The representation of Indian culture and characters in the film has been subject to criticism for perpetuating stereotypes and cultural inaccuracies. The fictional and sensationalized depiction of the Thuggee cult serves primarily to enhance the adventure narrative rather than to offer a factual historical portrayal. Temple of Doom serves as a quintessential example of Orientalism, as conceptualized by Edward Said. Orientalism refers to the Western depiction of Eastern societies through a lens of exoticism, mysticism, and perceived inferiority. The film's portrayal of India and its cultural elements heavily relies on these Orientalist tropes<sup>16</sup>.

The film situates India as a land imbued with mystery and superstition, populated with exotic rituals and arcane practices. This portrayal aligns with the Western fantasy of the "mysterious East," emphasizing its otherness and impenetrability. The narrative exaggerates the Thuggee cult, depicting its members as engaging in human sacrifice, child slavery, and black magic. Although the Thuggees were a historical group known for their criminal activities, the film's portrayal is highly sensationalized. This depiction reinforces the stereotype of Indian culture as inherently barbaric and malevolent<sup>17</sup>. Indian characters in the film are often depicted in a dichotomous

manner: either as subservient to the British colonialists or as malevolent antagonists. The Western characters, particularly Indiana Jones, are portrayed as the rational and heroic figures, upholding the notion of Western superiority and moral authority. The film perpetuates several cultural inaccuracies, particularly in its depiction of Indian cuisine and religious practices. These misrepresentations serve to exoticize and distort Indian culture, reinforcing Orientalist stereotypes of the East as strange and uncivilized<sup>18</sup>.

### Conclusion

These fictional depictions often serve to justify colonial rule by presenting the revolt as an irrational and violent outburst, rather than a legitimate struggle for independence. The portrayal of Indian characters as either villainous or passive reinforces the notion of Western superiority and the civilizing mission. Such narratives contribute to a skewed understanding of the revolt and the broader historical context. In conclusion, the portrayal of the Indian Rebellion of 1857 in fiction often mirrors the broader trends of Orientalism as identified by Edward Said. These fictional works frequently depict the East as exotic, mysterious, and inherently inferior to Western civilization. Such portrayals serve not only to entertain but also to reinforce the colonial mindset that justified British rule in India. From the sensationalized depictions of the Thuggee cult in "The Sign of Four" to the nuanced yet biased perspectives in "The Siege of Krishnapur", these narratives underscore a persistent tendency to view Eastern societies through a lens of Western superiority. These portrayals often simplify the complexities of the rebellion, reducing it to a backdrop for tales of British heroism and Indian villainy.

While modern scholarship and contemporary literature have begun to challenge these



Orientalist depictions, offering more balanced and historically accurate representations of the Indian Rebellion of 1857. By bringing to light the diverse perspectives and legitimate grievances of the Indian populace, these works contribute to a more nuanced understanding of this pivotal historical event. As we continue to reassess and critique these fictional portrayals, it becomes imperative to recognize the impact of Orientalism on our historical narratives and to strive for representations that respect the complexities and humanity of all cultures involved. In doing so, we move towards a more inclusive and accurate recounting of history that acknowledges the shared and intertwined experiences of both colonizers and the colonized.

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## From Tradition to Transition: The Transformation of Travancore Society

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### Abstract

*The multiplicity of castes in Trivandrum had created enough tensions in the past. The religions also played an important role to foster this tension. The feasts, celebrations and pilgrimages, though they are occasions of true spiritual experience, need not change the attitude towards the fellow human beings. Christianity was not an exception to it. At the same time it was through Christianity that many social changes like abolition of slavery, right to wear upper cloths, liberation of women, have taken place in the society. Colonial modernity and missionaries, coming of social reformers provided new secular and modern space within the social campus which already existed.*

**Keywords:** social pyramid, punishment, conversion, mobilization, reforms, societal change.

### Introduction

Kerala society and culture, immediately before the advent of the British were stagnant and decadent. There were no inherent social forces in India capable of bringing about an evolution from this stagnant and decadent state. In the social pyramid of Travancore, a position below the upper caste was miserable. In one way or another, they faced many atrocities. In the same time within the upper castes, the condition of women in particular was very poor. They faced many degradations.

Untouchability, unapproachability, unseeability, prohibition from temple entry, oozhiyam, denied the right to use upper cloth, denied access to education, social status, basic rights, customs like makkathayam, marumakkathayam, different type of punishment, system of pulapeddi, mannapeddi etc were adorned by the Travancore society. Travancore which was decorated with these, was gradually transformed into the society it is today.

The emergence of powerful leadership from among the people, led to the formation of a counter ideology and social movement. The emergence of powerful leadership from among the people led to the formation of a counter-ideology and social movement. A key concern in the process of modernization is the persistence of paradoxes, even after the gradual introduction of Western democratic values, political institutions, and technology into traditional society. Change in the material conditions of production, and where the social category remains differentiated and disjointed. Such changes mainly favoured the interests of the dominant social groups and since the social and political life was controlled by the high-status group, the deprived communities were not able to achieve the benefits of the process of modernization. These factors in various permutations when symbiotically related with deprivation produce the sufficient condition for social protest and consequently for social mobilization. In certain situations interface with

external forces- a colonial power for instance- may accelerate or even inaugurate the process of change. The social change that took place in Kerala during the 19th and 20th centuries was a byproduct of all these factors.

Nobody would dispute the fact that Christian missionaries played an incremental role in challenging the tradition order in Travancore and beating it into shape so that it could imbibe the Christian ethics of equality and humanity. Education became the tool to preserve the statuesque. As in the case of occupation, here also the exclusion- inclusion criteria was not based on any intelligent or rational principle. Lower castes were denied knowledge simply on the basis of their inscriptive ties.

After the spread of English education, westernization and influence of Christian missionaries, they realized their needs. The protest movements organized by the backward castes for social justice and mobility subsequently were the byproducts of all these. And those who break old setting, habits and commitments with the help of a leadership naturally want their inductions and raise demands such as temple entry, abolition of untouchability and unapproachability, educational rights, equality of status of opportunity, voting right, land for all, more wages to the labourers and recruitment from all social groups into the Bureaucracy. The leaders of backward castes shape public policy and fill the vacuum in the process of socio-economic and political modernization.

The conversion marked the beginning of a new epic, where the lower class earned what they were denied. Starting with the upper cloth movement by the Shannar's of South Travancore, it ended with a proclamation on 26th July, 1857 allowing

Nadar women to cover their bosoms with a jacket or an upper cloth irrespective of their religion. Following them, the Pulayas, Parayas and other lower-class people also got the right to use the upper cloth. The event is a significant chapter in the social history of Kerala because it marked the beginning of a series of protests and demonstrations by the backward communities for equality before law. The echoes of this loud out-burst of suppressed civic consciousness were heard later in the Malayali Memorial, the Ezhava Memorial, the Vaikom Satyagraha and other socio-political movements.

Protest movement was the authentic vehicles through which the backward castes in Travancore attempted social mobility in the pre-independent period. These were, of course, caste movements or social movement. The social mobilization of the substantial part of the population is initiated and engineered by magnetic leaders and their social reform movements. The social structure with its rigid caste and sub-caste divisions practically forced reformers to begin with their own group. By confronting the political authorities or by locking themselves in peaceful or violent conflict with some other element of the society, social movements provoke trials of strength between contending forces. Such social movements gave new orientation of information and leadership. A group of personalities put their lives on hold to bring Travancore society to this change like Sree Narayana Guru, Chattambi Swamikal, Ayyankali, Sahodharan Ayyappan, Aratupuzha Velayuda Panikkar etc.

All the social reformers of the period had the same intention of eradicating the negative characteristics of Hindu belief and customs. But their strategies varied. While Narayana Guru's efforts had the traits of Sanskritization, it definitely challenged the Brahmin dominance.

But while Narayana Guru accommodated temple, idols, and rituals, Vaghabatananda was in sharp contrast rejecting idol worship, rituals and beliefs relating to religion. Chattampi Swamikal dreamt of a casteless society. These reformers had a protesting role to perform. Social themes became the main dialogue and engaged a number of leaders in realizing a social cause which stood for equality, humanism and liberalism.

When democracy with its ideals of justice, liberty and equality was introduced in Kerala, the traditional caste hierarchy and social structure of Kerala and also Travancore society underwent rapid transformation and change. There is hardly any difference between the caste groups and religious groups in the society in the context of the socio-economic and political functions they performed. In Kerala every community is organized and community becomes a determining factor in the socio-economic and political life of the people replacing the caste system of the traditional society.

The first two decades of the 20th century witnessed an intense form of modern social reform movements among the major communities in the Travancore and also Kerala state. Being the most enlightened among the Hindu population of the state, the Nairs and the Ezhavas took the lead. Soon this wind of change affected other untouchable castes in order to move up the scale of status and power by instilling self-confidence and unity among its members as the first step. From this solid base of unity and self-confidence alone could they progress on part with changing times, so all of them began with a self-reformatory process from which they could forge unity and then march ahead confident. All of them gradually and steadily marched towards it. Travancore witnessed many important protest movements of the backward

castes towards the beginning of the 20th century which defined the growth and development of the society since then, Sree Narayana movement organized by the Ezhavas and the Ayyankali movement organized by the Scheduled castes were important among the protest movements of backward castes. Sree Narayana movement was the first powerful protest movement to take birth in Travancore. Its relevance lay not in as much as it organized the Ezhava community or gave it a new identity and self-respect. The major initiative of Vakkom Moulavi's was to liberate the Muslims from the mess of self-delusions.

Following the Nadars in the early 19th century and Nairs and Ezhavas in the last quarter of 19th century the Dalits also became aware of their depressed situation and entered into the arena of social reform under the leadership of Ayyankali, from the Pulaya caste. His persistent effort to reform the community was crowned with continuous successes. He realized that the redemption of backward class was possible only through education. He recommended to the government that the Pulaya children should be given admission in government schools and in 1904 he himself started a school at Venganoor. To establish the right of his people to use public roads and appear in public places, was his initial concern which subsequently hovered towards their right to education. As a result of the vigorous struggle carried on by the backward and depressed classes against discriminations by the high castes, there was a gradual change in the attitude of the government of Travancore. It was decided to give representation to these classes in the Sri Moolam Assembly by nominating a representative. It was through the representation in the Sri Moolam Assembly that Ayyankali could raise his voice for the needs of the community before the government. . Following



the riots Ayyankali instructed the Pulaya women not to wear traditional chains with a kind of stone beads and glass pieces which symbolized the lower class and servitude. Instead, he asked them to dress decently covering the upper part of their body, as in the case of any other higher castes. These social changes introduced among the backward class had a great influence in society. This was the beginning of the change in the concept of right for the Upper class and duties for the Lower class.

Attribution of the caste structure and the traditional social order and the rise of a social and political realization among the poorer sections of the population was one of the important aftereffects of caste movement which in turn led to the articulation of their claims through collective mobilization –fully decipherable today-. The role of caste activities as the initial phase in the course of transformation in the social perception has meant an important inherence in the settlement of the basis for the subsequent organization of different social groups, which became the base of the present Kerala society. However, it is interesting that in Kerala even though the social order has changed, caste identity still exists and caste movements and associations have come into political life, provoking an increasing politicization of caste. This can be observed in the fact that different political parties or those who have created their own parties have adopted their own positions. Unavoidably, after independence, the development of new sources of power and new political processes have provoked a change in the patterns of political mobilization, which in turn have altered the traditional power relations. Protest movement was the authentic vehicle through which the backward castes in Kerala attempted social mobility in the pre-independent period. These were, of course, caste movements

or social movements. The social mobilization of the substantial part of the population is initiated and engineered by magnetic leaders and their social reform movements.

### Conclusion

Thus, the major objective of social reform movement and social mobilization is to promote and justify major innovations in social policy, economic organization and political participation. In short, it means the elimination of the contradictions and to fill the vacuum by leveling up the inequities existing in every field of social life. It created a social transition. The present day society is not inclined to tolerate all the unnecessary customs of the society just to please the Brahmins. However, the presence of Brahmins and their priestly services in the Hindu temples would be acceptable even in the changing society. Although the Nairs have lost the old prestige in the society with the social awakening of the low castes, they hold an upper position in the Kerala society.

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## സാമൂഹ്യ ഭാഷാശാസ്ത്രത്തിന്റെ അടയാളങ്ങൾ എഴുത്തച്ഛന്റെ കൃതികളിൽ

ഡോ. സിനി വി

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### പ്രബന്ധ സംഗ്രഹം

ആധുനികഭാഷാ ശാസ്ത്രത്തിന്റെ ശ്രദ്ധേയമായ ഒരു ശാഖയാണ് സാമൂഹ്യ ഭാഷാശാസ്ത്രം. ഒരു കാലഘട്ടത്തിലെ സാമൂഹികവും സാംസ്കാരികവുമായ സവിശേഷതകളും ജീവിതരീതിയുമെല്ലാം ആ കാലഘട്ടത്തിലെ ഭാഷയെ സ്വാധീനിക്കും. എഴുത്തച്ഛന്റെ കൃതികളിൽ സാമൂഹിക ഭാഷാശാസ്ത്രം എപ്രകാരം കടന്നുവന്നിരിക്കുന്നു എന്ന പി എൽ അന്വേഷണമാണ് ഈപ്രബന്ധം.

താക്കോൽവാക്കുകൾ : സാമൂഹ്യഭാഷാശാസ്ത്രം, ഭാഷാഭേദം, പ്രയുക്ത ഭാഷാശാസ്ത്രം

### ആമുഖം

ഭാഷയാണ് മനുഷ്യൻ ആർജ്ജിച്ചെടുത്തവയിൽ ഏറ്റവും ശ്രേഷ്ഠവും ജീവസ്സുള്ളതുമായ സിദ്ധി. തന്റെ ഉള്ളിലുള്ള ആശയത്തെയും വികാരവിചാരങ്ങളെയും പ്രകടിപ്പിക്കുന്നതിന് ഉപയോഗിക്കുന്ന ഏറ്റവും പ്രധാന ഉപാധിയാണ് ഭാഷ. മൃഗഭാഷ, ആംഗ്യഭാഷ, കഥകളിഭാഷ എന്നിങ്ങനെ പല സന്ദർഭങ്ങളിലും ഭാഷ എന്ന പദം ഉപയോഗിക്കാറുണ്ടെങ്കിലും ഭാഷാശാസ്ത്രകാരൻ ഭാഷയുടെ കൃത്യമായ നിർവചനത്തിൽ ഒരുങ്ങിനിൽക്കുന്നു. 'മനുഷ്യൻ ആശയവിനിമയത്തിനും വികാരവിചാരങ്ങൾ പ്രകടിപ്പിക്കുന്നതിനും ഉപയോഗിക്കുന്ന കൃത്രിമ സങ്കേതം' എന്ന നിർവചനമാണ് പൊതുവെ ഭാഷാ ശാസ്ത്രം അംഗീകരിച്ചിട്ടുള്ളത്.

Edward Sapir ഭാഷയെ ഇപ്രകാരം നിർവചിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നു.

'language is a purely human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas emotions and desires by means of systems of voluntarily produced symbols.'

'മനുഷ്യൻ തന്റെ ആശയങ്ങളെയും വികാരങ്ങളെയും ആഗ്രഹങ്ങളെയും വിനിമയം ചെയ്യുന്നതിന് വേണ്ടി സൃഷ്ടിച്ചതും സഹജമല്ലാത്തതുമായ പ്രതീകങ്ങളുടെ കൂട്ടമാണ് ഭാഷ.'

ചുരുക്കത്തിൽ മനുഷ്യൻ തന്റെ ആശയപ്രകാശനത്തിനുവേണ്ടി സൃഷ്ടിച്ചെടുത്ത അനേകം ഉപാധികളിൽ ഒന്നുമാത്രമാണ് ഭാഷ. ഈ കൃത്രിമ സങ്കേതത്തെ

വ്യവസ്ഥാപിതമാം വണ്ണം സജ്ജീകരിക്കപ്പെട്ടതും പരീക്ഷണ നിരീക്ഷണങ്ങളാൽ തെളിയിക്കപ്പെട്ടതുമായ അറിവിന്റെ സമാഹാരം ഉപയോഗിച്ച് വിലയിരുത്തുന്നതിനെയാണ് ഭാഷാശാസ്ത്രം എന്ന് വ്യവഹരിക്കുന്നത്.

ഭാഷയെ സംബന്ധിച്ചും ഭാഷകൾ തമ്മിലുള്ള ബന്ധത്തെക്കുറിച്ചുമുള്ള ശാസ്ത്രീയ വിശകലനം ആണ് ഭാഷാശാസ്ത്രം നിർവഹിക്കുന്നത്. സാമൂഹികശാസ്ത്രം നരവംശശാസ്ത്രം, മനഃശാസ്ത്രം, മനുഷ്യ ശരീരശാസ്ത്രം തുടങ്ങി നിരവധി ശാസ്ത്രമേഖലകളുമായി ബന്ധപ്പെട്ടിരിക്കുന്നു. ഭാഷയിലെ ലിപിയെക്കാൾ ഭാഷണത്തിനാണ് ഭാഷാശാസ്ത്രം പ്രാധാന്യം നൽകുന്നത്. അതായത് ഭാഷയുടെ പ്രായോഗികതയാണ് ഭാഷാശാസ്ത്രകാരന്മാർ അപഗ്രഥിച്ച് വിലയിരുത്താൻ ശ്രമിച്ചത്. ഇവിടെയാണ് പ്രയുക്ത ഭാഷാശാസ്ത്രത്തിന്റെയും അതിന്റെ ഒരു പ്രധാന ശാഖയായ സാമൂഹ്യ ഭാഷാശാസ്ത്രത്തിന്റെയും പ്രസക്തി. പ്രായോഗികജീവിതത്തിൽ ഭാഷയും ഭാഷണവും എപ്രകാരം പ്രയോഗ ക്ഷമമാകുന്നു എന്നും ഭാഷാപ്രയോഗത്തിൽ സംഭവിക്കുന്ന പ്രശ്നങ്ങളെന്തെല്ലാമെന്നും വിശകലനം ചെയ്യുകയാണ് പ്രയുക്തഭാഷാശാസ്ത്രം. മനുഷ്യൻ ഒരു സാമൂഹിക ജീവിയാണ് എന്നതിനാൽ തന്നെ അവൻ നിരന്തരമായി ഭാഷ പ്രയോഗിക്കേണ്ടതായി വരുന്നു. അതിനാൽ സാമൂഹിക ബന്ധങ്ങളുടെ നിലനിൽപ്പിനുമേൽ ഭാഷയ്ക്ക് പറയത്തക്ക സ്വാധീനം ഉണ്ടാകുന്നു. അനുദിനം വളർന്നുകൊണ്ടിരിക്കുന്ന സമൂഹവും അവിടെ വ്യവഹരിക്കപ്പെടുന്ന ഭാഷ

യും പരസ്പര പൂരകങ്ങളായി നിലകൊള്ളുന്നു. ഇപ്രകാരം ഭാഷയെയും സമൂഹത്തെയും വീക്ഷിക്കുന്ന ഭാഷാ ശാസ്ത്രകാരൻ സാമൂഹികശാസ്ത്രത്തിന്റെ സിദ്ധാന്തങ്ങളിലൂടെ ഭാഷയെയും അതിന്റെ പ്രായോഗികതയെയും പഠിക്കാൻ ശ്രമിക്കുന്നു.

പ്രയുക്ത ഭാഷാശാസ്ത്രത്തെ ഭാഷാ ശാസ്ത്രകാരന്മാർ പ്രധാനമായും രണ്ടുതരത്തിൽ സാമൂഹികശാസ്ത്രത്തിന്റെ രീതിപദ്ധതി ഉപയോഗിച്ച് അപഗ്രഥിക്കാറുണ്ട്. പ്രാദേശിക വ്യത്യാസങ്ങൾക്കനുസരിച്ച് ഭാഷയുടെ പ്രയോഗത്തിൽ വരുന്ന വ്യത്യാസങ്ങളെ അപഗ്രഥിക്കുന്ന ഭാഷാഭേദവിജ്ഞാനവും ഭാഷാഭേദഘടനയെ സാമൂഹിക ഘടനയുമായി ബന്ധിപ്പിച്ചു കൊണ്ടുള്ള പഠനമായ സാമൂഹിക ഭാഷാ വിജ്ഞാനവും. ഈ സാമൂഹിക വിജ്ഞാനത്താണ് സൈദ്ധാന്തികമായി സാമൂഹ്യ ഭാഷാശാസ്ത്രം എന്ന് വ്യവഹരിക്കുന്നത്.

ഒരു സമൂഹത്തിൽ പ്രയോഗിക്കുന്ന ഭാഷ ആ സമൂഹവുമായി ബന്ധപ്പെട്ട അനേകം ഘടകങ്ങളാൽ എപ്രകാരം സ്വാധീനിക്കപ്പെടുന്നുവെന്നും അത് ഭാഷയെ ഏതെല്ലാം വിധത്തിൽ പരിവർത്തനപ്പെടുത്തുന്നുവെന്നും സാമൂഹ്യഭാഷാശാസ്ത്രം വിശദമാക്കുന്നു. ചലനാത്മകമായ ഭാഷ സമൂഹത്തിൽ ചെലുത്തുന്ന സ്വാധീനവും പഠനപരിധിയിൽ ഉൾപ്പെടുന്നു. ഭാഷാഭേദവിജ്ഞാനീയത്തിന്റെ ഘടകങ്ങൾ കൂടി സാമൂഹ്യ ഭാഷാശാസ്ത്രം ഉൾച്ചേർത്തിരിക്കുന്നു.

ഒരു ഭാഷ അത് പ്രയോഗിക്കുന്ന സമൂഹത്തിലെ അനേകം ഘടകങ്ങളെ ആശ്രയിച്ച് പരിവർത്തനത്തിന് വിധേയമാകുന്നു. സാമൂഹിക ചരങ്ങളായ മതം, സമുദായം, പ്രായം, വിദ്യാഭ്യാസം, പദവി, സ്ത്രീപുരുഷഭേദം, അധികാരം തുടങ്ങി അനേകം ഘടകങ്ങൾ ഭാഷാപ്രയോഗത്തെ സ്വാധീനിക്കുന്നു. വക്താവ് ഭാഷണത്തിനായി തെരഞ്ഞെടുക്കുന്ന പദങ്ങൾ ഇത്തരം ഘടകങ്ങളുടെയും പ്രദേശത്തിന്റെയും പ്രത്യേകതകൾക്ക് അനുസരിച്ച് വ്യത്യാസപ്പെട്ടിരിക്കും. എന്നുതന്നെയുമല്ല ഭാഷണസന്ദർഭം വക്താവിന്റെയും ശ്രോതാവിന്റെയും സാമൂഹിക വ്യക്തിത്വം എന്നിവയെല്ലാം ഏതുപദമാണ് തെരഞ്ഞെടുക്കേണ്ടത് എന്നതിന് ആധാരമായി തീരുന്നു. സംഭാഷണത്തിന്റെ സാമ്പത്തിക വ്യത്യാസങ്ങൾ സാമൂഹിക ഭാഷാശാസ്ത്രം പരിഗണിക്കുന്നു. ഓരോ പദവും ഓരോ പ്രത്യേക സാഹചര്യത്തിൽ പ്രയോഗിക്കുന്നത് എപ്രകാരമാണെന്ന് ഭാഷാ ശാസ്ത്രകാരൻ ചിന്തിക്കുന്നു .

ഭാഷണസന്ദർഭത്തിനും ഭാഷണശൈലിക്കും സാമൂഹികഭാഷാ വ്യാകരണത്തിനും പ്രാധാന്യം

നൽകുകയും പ്രാദേശികവ്യത്യാസത്തേക്കാൾ ആവേദകരുടെ എണ്ണത്തിന് പ്രാമുഖ്യം നൽകുകയും ചെയ്യുന്നു. സ്വാഭാവികമായ ഭാഷണ ശൈലിയെ സ്വീകരിച്ച് പഠിക്കുകയാണ് സാമൂഹ്യ ഭാഷാശാസ്ത്രത്തിന്റെ രീതി.

സാമൂഹ്യഭാഷാ വ്യാകരണത്തിനാണ് സാമൂഹ്യ ഭാഷാശാസ്ത്രകാരന്മാർ പ്രാധാന്യം നൽകുന്നത്. ഭാഷണ സന്ദർഭത്തിനും ശൈലിക്കും വക്താവിനും അനുയോജ്യമായ ഭാഷണ സമ്പ്രദായമാണ് സാമൂഹിക ഭാഷാ ക്ഷേത്രം അപഗ്രഥിക്കുന്നത്.

വിവിധ ദേശങ്ങളിലെ ഭാഷണ വ്യത്യാസമല്ല മറിച്ച് വിവിധ വ്യക്തികളുടെ ഭാഷണപ്രയോഗവും സാമ്പത്തികമായും ശൈലി പരമായും അതിനുണ്ടാകുന്ന വ്യത്യാസവുമാണ് സാമൂഹികശാസ്ത്രം ചർച്ച ചെയ്യുന്നത്. ഇങ്ങനെ ചിന്തിക്കുമ്പോൾ സാമൂഹിക ബന്ധവും ഭാഷാപ്രയോഗവും തമ്മിലുള്ള പാരസ്പര്യം തന്നെയാണ് സാമൂഹ്യഭാഷാശാസ്ത്രം പഠനവിധേയമാക്കുന്നത്. സാമൂഹിക ബന്ധമാണ് വ്യക്തിഭാഷയെ വ്യത്യസ്തമാക്കുന്നത്.

ഭാഷ ജൈവികമാണ് എന്നതിനാൽ മറ്റു ഭാഷകളുമായുള്ള സമ്പർക്കം ഓരോ ഭാഷയിലും ധാരാളം പുതിയ പദങ്ങൾ കടന്നുവരുന്നതിനും അവയുടെ സ്വാധീനത്തിനും കാരണമാകുന്നു. മലയാളഭാഷയെ ഇത്തരത്തിൽ സ്വാധീനിച്ച രണ്ട് പ്രധാന ഭാഷകൾ സംസ്കൃതവും ഇംഗ്ലീഷും ആണ്. അതിൽ തന്നെ ഭാഷയുടെ വളർച്ചയ്ക്ക് കാരണമായി തീർന്ന ഭാഷാസമ്പർക്കം സംസ്കൃതവുമായിട്ടുള്ളതാണ്. തമിഴിൽ നിന്നോ ദ്രാവിഡത്തിൽ നിന്നോ വളർന്നു വികാസം പ്രാപിക്കുന്നതിന് മലയാളഭാഷയെ സഹായിച്ചത് ഈ സംസ്കൃത ഭാഷാ സമ്പർക്കം തന്നെയാണ്. മലയാളഭാഷയുടെ വികാസ പരിണാമ ഘട്ടത്തിൽ സംസ്കൃതഭാഷയുടെ സ്വാധീനം ലിപിപരമായും പ്രായോഗികതലത്തിലും കൃത്യമായി അടയാളപ്പെടുത്തിയിരിക്കുന്നു.

ഭാഷയിൽ സംസ്കൃതത്തിന്റെ സമ്പർക്കം കൊണ്ടുണ്ടായ പരിവർത്തനങ്ങളും തമിഴിന്റെ തനിമയും അനുഭവിച്ചറിയാൻ കഴിയുന്ന ഒരു പ്രാരംഭ ഘട്ടം മണിപ്രവാളത്തിന്റെയും പാട്ടിന്റെയും കാലത്ത് ഭാഷാപണ്ഡിതന്മാർ ചൂണ്ടിക്കാട്ടിയിട്ടുള്ളതാണ്. തമിഴിലേക്ക് ചാഞ്ഞു നിൽക്കുന്ന ഒരു ഭാഷാ രീതിയും ചമ്പു കാരന്മാരുടെ സംസ്കൃത പ്രാചുര്യം കൂടുതലുള്ള ഭാഷയും എഴുത്തച്ഛന്റെ കാലത്ത് നിലവിലുണ്ടായിരുന്നു. അദ്ദേഹമാകട്ടെ ഈ രണ്ടു രീതിയും അനുകരിക്കുകയോ മാതൃകയാക്കുകയോ അല്ല ചെയ്തത്. പകരം പ്രായോഗികവും കേരളീയരുടെ അഭിരുചിക്ക് അനുസരിച്ചുള്ളതുമായ ഒരു



പുതിയ ഭാഷാ രീതിക്ക് തന്റെ കൃതികളിലൂടെ രൂപം നൽകി. കാവ്യാവതരണത്തിലും വർണനകളിലും നൈസർഗികമായ ഭാഷയുടെ പ്രതിഫലനമാണ് എഴുത്തച്ഛൻ കൃതികളിൽ ഉള്ളത്. മലയാളത്തിലെയും സംസ്കൃതത്തിലെയും വിഭക്തിപ്രത്യയങ്ങൾ ഉപയോഗിക്കുകയും ശരിയായ മലയാളം എന്ന തോന്നൽ ജനിപ്പിക്കുകയും ചെയ്യുന്നതിന് ശക്തമായിരുന്നു ഈ ഭാഷ.

എഴുത്തച്ഛന്റെ കൃതികളിൽ പ്രയുക്ത ഭാഷയുടെയും സാമൂഹ്യഭാഷയുടെയും ആവിഷ്കാരം എത്രത്തോളമുണ്ടെന്ന് നോക്കാം. കേരള സംസ്കാരത്തിന് ഉണ്ടായ അപചയം ഇല്ലാതാക്കി ജനതയെ സാംസ്കാരികമായി ഉയർന്ന തലത്തിലേക്ക് നയിക്കുക എന്നതായിരുന്നു എഴുത്തച്ഛന്റെ പ്രധാന രചനാ ലക്ഷ്യം. അതിനായി അദ്ദേഹം ഭക്തിമാർഗ്ഗം ആണ് സ്വീകരിച്ചത് ഈ മാർഗ്ഗത്തെ ലക്ഷ്യത്തിൽ എത്തിക്കുന്നതിന് അദ്ദേഹം സ്വീകരിച്ച ഭാഷയാണ് സാമൂഹികമായ അംശങ്ങളെ എത്രത്തോളം ഉൾച്ചേർത്തിരിക്കുന്നു എന്ന നിലയിൽ ഭാഷാശാസ്ത്രകാരന്മാർ പഠിക്കുന്നത്. താൻ ജീവിക്കുന്ന കാലഘട്ടത്തിലെ ഉൾത്തുടിപ്പുകൾ മനസ്സിലാക്കി പുരാണങ്ങളെ മലയാളത്തിലേക്ക് എത്തിക്കുകയാണ് എഴുത്തച്ഛൻ ചെയ്തത്. സ്വതന്ത്രമായ ജീവിത ദർശനവുമായി ചേർത്തു വച്ചാണ് എഴുത്തച്ഛന്റെ കൃതികൾ വായിക്കാൻ കഴിയുന്നത്.

എഴുത്തച്ഛന്റെ കൃതികളിൽ സാമൂഹിക ഭാഷയുടെ അഥവാ വ്യവഹാരഭാഷയുടെ ആവിഷ്കാരം ധാരാളമായി വായിച്ചെടുക്കാൻ സാധിക്കും.

‘ഇടിവെട്ടീടും വണ്ണം വിൽമുറി  
ഞ്ഞൊച്ചകേട്ടു  
നടുങ്ങീരാജാക്കന്മാരുരഗങ്ങളെപ്പോലെ  
(അദ്ധ്യാത്മരാമായണം)

എന്നിത്തരം പല ജാതി പരകയും കണ്ണു നീരാലോല വാർത്തു കരകയും നന്നായ് മുറുകെ മുറുകെത്തഴുകയും പിന്നെച്ചുടുച്ചുടെ ദീർഘമായ് വീർക്കയും’ (അദ്ധ്യാത്മരാമായണം)

ഇവിടെയെല്ലാം സാധാരണ വ്യവഹാരഭാഷയുടെ അടയാളപ്പെടുത്തലുകൾ കാണാൻ കഴിയും. വ്യക്തിഭാഷയിൽ കാണുന്ന ധാരാളം പദങ്ങൾ ഇപ്രകാരം പ്രയോഗിച്ചിട്ടുണ്ട്. ഒച്ച, മുറുകെ മുറുകെ, ചുടു ചുടു തുടങ്ങിയ പദങ്ങളെല്ലാം ഇത്തരത്തിൽ സാധാരണ ജനങ്ങളുടെ ഇടയിൽ കാണുന്ന സാമാന്യ ഭാഷാപ്രയോഗങ്ങൾ തന്നെയാണ്. ഇവ അവതരിപ്പിക്കുന്ന ഭാവത്തിന് ഏറ്റവും കൃത്യമായ ആവിഷ്കരണ ചാരുതയും പകരുന്നു.

ഭാരതത്തിൽ

‘ദുഃഖിച്ചു മൂന്നും വിദൂരർ പറഞ്ഞതു  
മൊക്കെ നിനച്ചു നിനച്ചു സുയോധനൻ  
കാൽനടേ തന്റെ ഗദയുമെടുത്തുകൊ  
ണ്ടാനനം കുമ്പിട്ടു തീർത്തു വശം കെട്ടു പേടിച്ചു  
പേടിച്ചു നോക്കി നോക്കി തുലോം  
ദുഃഖിച്ചു ദുഃഖിച്ചു നാണിച്ചു നാണിച്ചു ദുഷ്കർമ്മ  
ശക്തികൾ ചിന്തിച്ചു ചിന്തിച്ചു  
കേണു കേണത്തരം വീണു വീണുഴിയിൽ  
പ്രാണഭയത്തോടു പാഞ്ഞു പാഞ്ഞത്രയും  
ദീനനായ് മാനിയായോരു സുയോധനൻ’

ഇവിടെയും സാമാന്യ ജനതയുടെ വ്യവഹാരഭാഷയിൽ പ്രയോഗിക്കപ്പെടുന്ന അനേകം പദങ്ങൾ കാണാൻ കഴിയും.

മഹാഭാരതത്തിൽ തന്നെ

‘ചളിപ്പ് കൈവിട്ടങ്ങടുത്തു കൈവാളാൽ  
പൊളിച്ചു മാറിടം നഖങ്ങളെക്കൊണ്ടും  
പൊടു പൊടെ പൊടിച്ചുടനൂടൻ  
ചുടുചുടുടെത്തിള  
ച്ചരുവിയാർ പോലെ  
തുടുതുടുടെ വരും രുധിര പൂരത്തെ കുടുകുടുടെ  
കുടിച്ചലറിചാടിയും’

എന്ന പ്രയോഗത്തിലും ഇത്തരം പദങ്ങൾ കാണാനാകും.

കുമ്പിട്ടു, വീർത്തു, നാണിച്ചു, ചളിപ്പ്, ചുടു ചുടു ഇത്തരം സാമാന്യ വ്യവഹാര ഭാഷ ധാരാളമായി എഴുത്തച്ഛൻ പ്രയോഗിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നത് കാണാം. ജനങ്ങളുടെ അനുകരണീയമായ ആചാര്യോപചാരങ്ങളും മറ്റ് സമ്പ്രദായങ്ങളുമാണ് എഴുത്തച്ഛൻ വർണ്ണിക്കുന്നത്. ഇവിടെയും സാമൂഹ്യ ഭാഷാശാസ്ത്രം അനുശാസിക്കുന്ന സാമ്പദിക ഭാഷാഭേദമാണ് കാണാൻ സാധിക്കുന്നത്. തനിമലയാളപദം എന്ന പ്രതീതി ഉളവാക്കുന്ന മുദുല സംസ്കൃത പദങ്ങളും മലയാള പദങ്ങളും മേളിച്ചുവരുന്ന രചനയാണ് എഴുത്തച്ഛന്റേത്.

സാമാന്യജനങ്ങൾ അവരുടെ സാധാരണ വ്യവഹാരത്തിൽ ഉപയോഗിക്കുന്ന പദങ്ങളും അവരുടെ വൈകാരികഭാവത്തിന്റെ പൂർണ്ണമായ ആവിഷ്കാരത്തിന് ഉപയോഗിക്കുന്ന പദാവർത്തനം പോലും എഴുത്തച്ഛന്റെ ഭാഷാ പ്രയോഗത്തിൽ കാണാൻ കഴിയും. സാമൂഹ്യ ഭാഷാശാസ്ത്രം അനുശാസിക്കുന്ന മറ്റൊരു പ്രധാനതലം ഭാഷണ സന്ദർഭം വക്താവിന്റെയും ശ്രോതാവിന്റെയും സാമൂഹിക വ്യക്തിത്വം തുടങ്ങിയവ പദസ്വീകരണത്തെ സ്വാധീനിക്കുന്നു എന്നുള്ളതാണ്. സംഭാഷണത്തിന്റെ സാമ്പദിക വ്യത്യാസം

സാമൂഹിക ഭാഷാശാസ്ത്രം പരിഗണിക്കുന്നു. ലക്ഷ്മണോപദേശം എഴുത്തച്ഛന്റെ ഭാഷാപ്രയോഗത്തിന് നിദാനമായി എടുത്തു പറയുന്ന ഭാഗമാണ്. സാമൂഹ്യ ഭാഷാശാസ്ത്രം ദീക്ഷിക്കുന്ന സാന്ദർഭികവും വൈയക്തികവുമായ പ്രത്യേകതകൾ ഈ ഭാഗത്തും നമുക്ക് വായിച്ചെടുക്കാം.

ജ്യേഷ്ഠ സഹോദരനും പക്ഷമതിയുമായ രാമൻ പെട്ടെന്ന് പ്രതികരിക്കുന്ന അനുജനോടാണ് സംസാരിക്കുന്നത്, അവിടെ രാമൻ തന്റെ സംഭാഷണത്തിൽ പ്രകടമാക്കേണ്ടതായ ഗൗരവവും ആ സന്ദർഭത്തിൽ പാലിക്കേണ്ടതായ പാകതയും പ്രകടമാക്കുന്നു. അത്തരത്തിൽ പാകപ്പെടുത്തിയ ഭാഷയാണ് എഴുത്തച്ഛൻ ഉപയോഗിച്ചിട്ടുള്ളത്.

‘പഞ്ചവർണ്ണക്കിളി പെൺകിടാവേ തെളി  
ഞ്ഞെൻ ചെവി രണ്ടും കുളുർക്കെപ്പറക നീ  
നെഞ്ചം തെളിഞ്ഞ കുറുക്കിക്കൊഴുത്ത പാൽ  
പഞ്ചസാരപ്പൊടി കുട്ടിക്കുഴമ്പാക്കി  
നല്ല കദളിപ്പഴങ്ങൾ തെരിഞ്ഞു ഞാൻ  
മെല്ലെത്തിരുമ്മിയുടച്ചു തേനും വീഴ്ത്തി  
വെല്ലവും ശർക്കരയും പൊടിച്ചിട്ടതിൽ  
വെള്ളിത്തളികയിൽ മേളിച്ചു വെച്ചേറെ  
വെച്ചിരിക്കുന്നതെടുത്തുദാഹമുണ്ടെങ്കിലോ  
നീലക്കരിമ്പു തൻ ചാറുമിളനീരും പാലും  
മധുവും കുടിച്ചാലുമാവോളം’

ദ്രോണപർവ്വത്തിൽ എഴുത്തച്ഛൻ അവതരിപ്പിച്ചിരിക്കുന്ന ഈയൊരു ഭാഗം മാത്രം മതി മലയാളഭാഷയുടെ മാധുര്യവും ശക്തിയും വെളിവാകുവാൻ. എഴുത്തച്ഛന്റെ കൃതികളിലെ ഭാഷ സംസ്കൃത സമ്പർക്കം കൊണ്ട് നവീകരിക്കപ്പെടുമ്പോഴും മലയാളഭാഷയുടെ തനിമ ചോർന്നു പോകുന്നതേയില്ല.

താൻ ജീവിച്ചിരുന്ന കാലഘട്ടത്തിൽ പ്രയോഗിച്ചിരുന്ന ഭാഷ തന്നെയാണ് തന്റെ കൃതികളിലും അദ്ദേഹം അവതരിപ്പിച്ചത്.

അവിടെ ഭാഷയുടെ ഗാംഭീര്യമോ പ്രൗഢിയോ ഒന്നും പ്രത്യേക മമതയ്ക്ക് കാരണമായില്ല. പകരം സന്ദർഭാനുസരണം ഗുരുത്വവും ലഘുത്വവും അദ്ദേഹത്തിന്റെ ഭാഷ ഉൾക്കൊള്ളുന്നതായി കാണാൻ കഴിയും.

അദ്ധ്യാത്മരാമായണം കിളിപ്പാട്ടിൽ ആവിഷ്കരിക്കപ്പെടുന്നതിനേക്കാൾ കുറച്ചുകൂടി മലയാള

പദങ്ങളുടെ സ്വീകാരം ഭാരതം കിളിപ്പാട്ടിലാണ് കാണാൻ സാധിക്കുന്നത്. പ്രൗഢിയുള്ള സംസ്കൃതബന്ധമേറിയ പദങ്ങൾ ചേർത്തുവയ്ക്കുമ്പോഴും തനിഗ്രാമ്യ മലയാള പദങ്ങൾ സാഹിത്യത്തിൽ സ്വീകരിക്കുന്നതിന് അദ്ദേഹം മടികാണിച്ചില്ല. സാമൂഹിക ഭാഷാശാസ്ത്രം മുന്നോട്ടുവയ്ക്കുന്ന എല്ലാ വസ്തുതകളും എഴുത്തച്ഛൻ തന്റെ കൃതികളിൽ സ്വീകരിച്ചിട്ടുണ്ട്. താൻ ജീവിച്ചിരുന്ന കാലഘട്ടത്തിലെ ജീവിത രീതിയും സംസ്കാരവും സാമൂഹിക ബോധവുമെല്ലാം അദ്ദേഹം തന്റെ കൃതികളിലെ ഭാഷയെ സ്വാധീനിക്കുന്ന ഘടകങ്ങളായി സ്വീകരിച്ചിട്ടുണ്ട്.

ഭാഷാശാസ്ത്രകാരൻ വിവക്ഷിക്കുന്ന രീതിയിലുള്ള ഭാഷാപദങ്ങൾ കണ്ടെത്തുന്നതിനും അദ്ദേഹത്തിന് സാധിച്ചു. സാമൂഹ്യഭാഷയുടെ പ്രത്യേകതകൾ അവതരിപ്പിക്കുന്ന പദങ്ങൾ എഴുത്തച്ഛൻ സ്വീകരിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നത് കാണാം, അവതരിപ്പിക്കുന്ന ഓരോ സന്ദർഭങ്ങളിലും ഭാഷണശൈലിയും വ്യക്തിഭാഷയും സാന്ദർഭികവും സാമൂഹികവുമാക്കുന്ന ആവിഷ്കരണ ശൈലിയാണ് എഴുത്തച്ഛൻ സ്വീകരിച്ചിട്ടുള്ളത്.

ഭാഷയെ സംസ്കൃതീകരിച്ച് പുതുഭാഷയാക്കി മാറ്റി ഭാഷാപിതാവ് എന്ന പേര് നേടുകയായിരുന്നില്ല എഴുത്തച്ഛൻ.

മറിച്ച് തന്റെ കാലഘട്ടത്തിൽ നിലനിന്നിരുന്ന ഭാഷയെ സ്വീകരിക്കുകയും ഉചിതമായ വിവേചന ബുദ്ധിയോടെ നവീകരിക്കുകയും ചെയ്ത് എക്കാലവും നിലനിൽക്കാൻ പോന്ന ആർജ്ജവം ഭാഷയ്ക്ക് കൈവരുത്തുകയാണ് അദ്ദേഹം ചെയ്തത്. അതിനാൽ തന്നെ പ്രയുക്ത ഭാഷാശാസ്ത്രത്തിന്റെ കൈവഴിയായ സാമൂഹ്യ ഭാഷാശാസ്ത്രത്തിന്റെ എല്ലാ തലങ്ങളും എഴുത്തച്ഛൻ കൃതികളിൽ കാണാൻ കഴിയും.

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## Confronting the Crisis: Evaluating Knowledge and Understanding in the Information Age

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### Abstract

*The digital world's profound influence on how we generate, access, and share knowledge is undeniable. This leads us to consider whether the internet changed our learning and knowledge acquisition paradigms. Has it, perhaps, instigated a shift from deep understanding to merely superficial information gathering? How does this incessant flow of information impact our cognitive capabilities? Are we, as a result, becoming less adept at deep thought and rationalistic reasoning? These critical epistemological and social questions are explored by examining the insights of eminent philosopher Michael Patrick Lynch. This article examines his key concepts, including the extended mind, the illusion of reason, and the notion of receptivity, to illustrate how the effortlessness of information acquisition can hinder our ability to critically engage with information. This article explores Lynch's arguments concerning the distinction between knowledge and understanding, as they are impacted by our progressively digital world. Lynch contends that while the internet provides unprecedented access to information, fostering a sense of "Google-knowing", it simultaneously poses a significant challenge to the development of genuine understanding. By analyzing Lynch's work, this article argues that fostering understanding requires more than simply possessing information, it demands active engagement, critical evaluation, and a recognition of the limits of our own knowledge. This analysis offers insights into the cognitive and social implications of our digital environment. Lynch calls for a more active and engaged approach to knowledge acquisition in the digital age, arguing that genuine understanding requires not just access, but active participation in the construction of meaning.*

**Keywords:** Google-knowing, Actionable Information, Understanding, Testimony machine, Receptivity, Information cascades, Reasonableness

### Introduction

What is the relationship between information, knowledge, and understanding? How do these concepts differ, and how does technology affect their interplay? What are the epistemic consequences of relying on digital technologies for knowledge acquisition? How can we cultivate understanding in a digital world that prioritizes information? What strategies can we employ to

ensure that we are not simply accumulating data but also developing the critical thinking skills necessary to make sense of it? This article aims to explore the views in this regard expounded by eminent philosopher Michael Patrick Lynch, Provost Professor of the Humanities and Board of Trustees Distinguished Professor of Philosophy at the University of Connecticut. Lynch argues that the growth of digital knowledge and rapid

technological change are altering both how we acquire knowledge and our responsibility towards it. He suggests that while the internet provides passive access to vast amounts of information, this ease of access through information and communications technologies (ICTs) hinders our ability to know in more profound ways.

For any person, there are some things they know, and some things they do not. What exactly is the difference? What does it take to know something? It is not enough just to believe it—we do not know the things we are wrong about. Knowledge seems to be more like a way of getting at the truth. The analysis of knowledge concerns the attempt to articulate in what exactly this kind of “getting at the truth” consists (Chikawa&Steup, 2024).

Technology and its various manifestations have become virtual obsessions in discussions about politics and society on a wide variety of fronts. Social scientists, politicians, bureaucrats, corporate managers, radical students, as well as natural scientists and engineers, are now united in the conclusion that something we call “technology” lies at the core of what is most troublesome in the condition of our world (Winner, 1977).

In a future world, integrating technology into the human body raises unsettling questions about our society, our individual identities, and the nature of consciousness. More fundamentally, it challenges our understanding of information and knowledge itself. How is technology shaping both the content of our knowledge and the ways in which we acquire it? What are the societal implications if, in addition to our increasing knowledge of the world, the world also gains greater access to information about us? These questions compel us to consider not just the mechanics of knowing with technology,

but, more importantly, the ethical dimensions of how we should use it. This crucial ethical and philosophical dilemma is the central focus of the problem Lynch brings to our attention

### **Google-Knowing**

The invention of writing, says Lynch, is one of the most important developments in human history. He compares the written word with the significance of the changes being brought about by the internet. Writing, though a tool or technology, revolutionized more than just information sharing. It fundamentally altered how we understand the world and ourselves. By enabling communication across time - with both our past selves and others - writing offloads memory, freeing up our minds. This capacity to preserve and transmit thought across generations makes writing one of humanity's most significant inventions, effectively granting us the ability to time travel and access the minds of those who came before us.

From prehistory until the dawn of the electronic age the ability to manipulate symbols, images and ideas was limited by the power of the human brain. Less than fifty years ago, scientists began to produce silicon devices which had the capacity to process data electronically. From these inauspicious beginnings there emerged an industry which has overtaken all other industries in the race for resources and markets. Now computers magnify the reach of our senses, as the machines of the industrial age magnified our muscle power (Jonscher, 1999).

Lynch states “The Internet is bringing about a similar revolution in our ways of knowing. Where the written word allows us to time-travel, the Internet allows us to teleport—or at least to communicate in an immediate way across

spatial gulfs. Changes in information technology are making space increasingly irrelevant. Our libraries are no longer bounded by physical walls, and our ways of processing and accessing what is in those libraries don't require physical interaction. As a result, we no longer have to travel anywhere to find the information we need. Today, the fastest and easiest way of knowing is 'Google-knowing', which means not just "knowledge by search engine" but the way we are increasingly dependent on knowing via digital means. That can be a good thing; but it can also weaken and undermine other ways of knowing, ways that require more creative, holistic grasps of how information connects together" (Lynch, 2016).

### **The Dilemma of Knowing**

Analogizing with the apprehensions of Russell during the postwar technological expansion in the 1950s, that growth in knowledge without a corresponding growth in wisdom is dangerous, Lynch expresses the view that his concern is with the expansion of knowledge itself, with how the rapid changes in technology are affecting how we know and the responsibilities we have toward that knowledge. The core issue raised by these questions is not merely descriptive—how we know with technology—but deeply normative: how we should know. This philosophical and ethical question, says Lynch, cannot be disregarded without consequence. "My hypothesis is that information technology, while expanding our ability to know in one way, is actually impeding our ability to know in other, more complex ways; ways that require 1) taking responsibility for our own beliefs and 2) working creatively to grasp and reason how information fits together. Put differently, information technologies, for all their amazing uses, are obscuring a simple yet crucial fact:

greater knowledge doesn't always bring with it greater understanding" (Lynch, 2016, p.12).

Lynch points to how the internet is changing our lives and minds. The readily available information through Google gives us a sense of increased intelligence, and its unavailability is met with frustration. This "knowing by Google" has become so integrated into our lives that it has achieved a level of seamlessness previously associated only with direct perception. The saying "seeing is believing" has been replaced by "Googling is believing." But this very ease of access creates a paradoxical situation of making us more susceptible to believing misinformation. Like our tendency to see what we want to see, we often Google what we want to believe.

### **Why Knowledge Matters**

Lynch explores the question of what knowledge really is and offers a 'minimum definition of knowledge'. Data and information are distinct in his view. Drawing on Claude Shannon's mathematical theory of information, data is equated to noisy signals, while information is the meaningful content extracted by filtering out the noise. Just as Shannon focused on extracting clear signals from noisy telephone lines, the general principle is that raw data (bits of code) is not information itself; information is what remains after the noise is removed. Yet, Lynch believes that all information is not good information. Information alone does not amount to knowledge. "What grounds our opinions or beliefs matters for action. The old intelligence services adage is that knowledge is actionable information. Actionable information is information you can work with—that, in short, you can trust. Guesses are not actionable—even if they are lucky, precisely because they are guesses. What is actionable is what is justified, what has some ground. So:

whatever else it is, knowing is having a correct belief (getting it right, having a true opinion) that is grounded or justified, and which can therefore guide our action. Call this the minimal definition of knowledge” ((Lynch, 2016, p.19). This minimal definition of knowledge allows knowledge formation in different ways, such as knowledge derived from reliable sources, knowledge based on personal experience or reasoned justification, and a more comprehensive form of knowledge termed “understanding”. The first involves acquiring information from established sources such as expert texts and reputable online resources. The second emphasizes the role of personal experience and logical reasoning. The third, “understanding,” denotes a holistic and often intuitive comprehension of the subject, typically associated with highly creative experts.

### **Inevitability of Understanding**

‘Understanding’ for Lynch is not a passive reception of information, but an active process of constructing explanatory frameworks. It goes beyond mere responsiveness to evidence by engaging creative insight into the causal relationships between observed phenomena. Understanding seeks to answer not just “what” is the case, but “why.” This active pursuit of causal explanation is evident in scientific endeavors to understand the cause of phenomena like Ebola outbreaks and in interpersonal attempts to recognize the underlying causes of personal experiences such as a friend’s mental depression. Lynch states: “In real life, all the ways we have of knowing are important. But without understanding, something deeper is missing. And our digital form of life, while giving us more facts, is not particularly good at giving us more understanding. Most of us sense this” (Lynch, 2016, p.20). While offering abundant information, our digital lifestyle is less effective

at fostering true understanding. This motivates parents to prioritize real-world experiences, like outdoor play, over screen time, as direct interaction with the physical environment cultivates a deeper understanding of physical processes and causality that digital experiences cannot replicate. ‘Understanding’, not only provides causal explanations (“why”) but also guides the formation of relevant inquiry (“which”). While knowledge empowers action, it is understanding that enables the identification of appropriate questions, thus guiding subsequent action. Socrates prioritized understanding over mere accumulation of facts, a capacity of critical importance in contemporary society. Though seemingly self-evident, the cultivation of this Socratic method of inquiry remains essential.

The way we access information has undergone a dramatic shift. Online search engines have become the primary gateway to knowledge. “Googling it” has become the dominant mode of knowledge acquisition. Lynch assesses that “Research involved footwork, and many academics still doubted the veracity of information acquired online. But that battle is long lost. The Internet is the fountain of knowledge and Google is the mouth from which it flows. With the Internet, my challenge is no challenge at all answering the questions is easy. Just ask the knowledge machine” (Lynch, 2016, p.25).

Despite the modern nature of online searching, it is not entirely disconnected from past methods of information seeking. It is not a completely new idea. This point was humorously illustrated in a 2013 College Humor video that explored the hypothetical scenario of Google as a person. The video, while amusing, also elicited a sense of unease by presenting the absurdity of posing typical search queries to a human individual, such



as a well-meaning but overburdened office worker. This exercise highlights a frequently overlooked yet readily apparent aspect of our interaction with search engines. Lynch explains that “We treat them like personal reference librarians; we ask them questions, and they deliver up sources that claim to have the answers. And that means that we already treat their deliverances as akin—at least at the level of trust—to the deliverances of actual people. Of course, that is precisely why the bit is funny: Google isn’t a guy (or anyone, male or female); it doesn’t create information, it distributes it. Yet this is also why it makes sense for us to treat Google like a person—why the video rings true. The information we get from the links we access via Google is (mostly) from other people. When we trust it, we almost always trust someone else’s say-so—his or her “testimony.” Indeed, the entire Internet, including, of course, Wikipedia, Facebook, the blogosphere, Reddit, and most especially the Twitterverse, etc., can be described as one giant knowledge-through-testimony machine” (Lynch, 2016, p.26). Google knowing helps describe how we acquire information and knowledge via the testimony machine of the Internet. It is easy, fast and yet dependent on others. That is a combination, says Lynch, that, at least in this extreme form, has never been seen before. Moreover, we can essentially no longer operate without it. He further states that we increasingly perceive knowledge gained through online search as more valuable and natural than other types of knowledge.

### **The Real as Virtual**

The problem of distinguishing the real from the unreal, or the true from the untrue, is hardly the result of the digital age. What’s new is how the problem manifests itself. One reason for this is that the Internet is a construction.

That’s partly because the World Wide Web is obviously something we’ve made—a literal artifact. By a literal artifact, I mean something that has been intentionally brought into being by human activity directed at that very purpose. The servers, cables, and circuits that compose the physical backbone of the Internet are all literal artifacts. But so are the packets of information that compose the body of the Internet itself. Websites, user interfaces, jpeg files, movies on Netflix, cookies, are also literal artifacts. They are, in a clear sense, as real as anything is. But the way in which informational objects are real, and the manner in which they are constructed, is very different (Lynch, 2016). Informational objects, such as digital files, exhibit abstract qualities due to their “typified” nature. This phenomenon stems from the mechanics of digital replication, that is, the simultaneous creation of multiple copies yields indistinguishable tokens, each possessing an equivalent claim to origination. Consequently, given their concurrent generation, none can be accurately characterized as a derivative of another. This shift indicates an expansion of our conventional understanding of reality, moving beyond a purely materialist perspective (defined by tangible, physical objects) to encompass “dephysicalized” objects and processes.

### **Trust and Receptivity**

Lynch focusses on the danger of misplaced trust. This is a key point. Because our minds have evolved to readily absorb information in specific environments, we instinctively trust our receptive abilities. This trust is generally appropriate for sensory experiences. However, extending this trust to online search is a mistake. In fact we shouldn’t automatically assume the reliability of information found online. Lynch explains receptivity by the analogy of sorting good apples from bad. We need reliable ways

to distinguish true from false information, like a device that reliably sorts good apples from bad, regardless of our understanding of how it works. This reliable tracking of good apples (true information) is crucial for survival and is called “being receptive”. Receptiveness is about taking in facts through our senses. Seeing, smelling, and remembering are examples. Our sensory systems process data into information that represents the world. Accurate sensory perception leads to knowledge (Lynch, 2016).

### **Receptivity – Belief**

Receptive states of mind, unlike intellectual understanding, are about directly tracking the environment. This form of knowing does not require conscious awareness or language. These states directly connect environmental stimuli to an organism's behavior. In humans, we refer to these states as beliefs, which can be either true or false. Lynch contends: “This sort of automatic filtering that accompanies our receptive states of mind is described by Daniel Kahneman and other researchers as the product of “system 1” cognitive processes. System 1 information processing is automatic and unconscious, without reflective awareness. It includes not only quick situational assessment but also automatic monitoring and inference. Among the jobs of system 1 are “distinguishing the surprising from the normal,” making quick inferences from limited data and integrating current experience into a coherent (or what seems like a coherent) story” (Lynch, 2016, p.30). He declares that in many everyday circumstances, this sort of unconscious filtering—coherence and incoherence detection—is an important factor in determining whether our belief-forming practices are reliable. Although “fast thinking” helps us navigate, it also leads to predictable errors. This is because it seeks coherence even with limited information,

causing people to jump to hasty conclusions. Lynch warns that the “fast” receptive processes we treat with default trust are reliable in certain circumstances, but they are definitely not reliable in all. This is a lesson we need to remember about the cognitive processing we use as we surf the Internet. Our ways of receiving information online—Google-knowing—are already taking on the hallmarks of receptivity. We are already treating it more like perception (31).

### **Information Cascades**

Online platforms like social media are easily affected by “information cascades.” This happens when people share opinions one after another, and early opinions strongly influence later ones. Lynch says that if the first few people agree on something, others tend to follow along, even if they have different thoughts. The more people who have previously voiced a particular opinion, especially within one's social network, the more likely others are to adopt or at least favor that view. He contends that social scientists (and advertising executives) who have studied this phenomenon have used it to explain not only how information often moves around the Internet, but how and why songs and YouTube videos become popular. The more people have “liked” a video, the greater the chance for even more people to like it (Lynch, 2016). He declares it as a kind of mob mentality that has exerted its influence since the earliest gatherings of crowds. In Lynch's view while misinformation, rumors, and ignorance spread rapidly online, it is not feasible to abandon online research (like using Google).

### **Information Co-ordination Problem**

It is evident says Lynch that accurate, verifiable information—knowledge—constitutes a valuable resource. In situations characterized by initially low levels of trust, information



exchange becomes necessary. This necessitates addressing what can be termed the information coordination problem. The information coordination problem is not just hypothetical. All societies face it, since no society can survive without its citizens trading information with one another. Lynch asserts, “You can’t just look and see the truth in my brain. What you need is some reflectively appreciable evidence—you are looking for a reason to believe that my apple sorting is reliable, so to speak. By a “reason” here, I mean a consideration in favor of believing something. Not all reasons are good ones, of course. But when we are consciously deciding what to believe, we are engaging in our capacity for reflection, or “system 2” as Kahneman calls it. We are trying to sort the true from the false. When we do so successfully, we are knowing in a different way: we are not just being receptive. We are being reflective, responsible believers” (Lynch, p.38).

However, to meet the norm of reasonableness it is not enough that participants be responsive, reflective, and cognitively empathetic: for if they are so epistemically arrogant that they never recognize the reasons offered by others as ones that could in any way improve their epistemic situations, then it makes little difference whether they are responsive, reflective, and cognitively empathetic – their beliefs would never change anyway (Ballantyne & Dunning, 2022).

## Conclusion

A central challenge of navigating the interconnected world is avoiding passive absorption of others' opinions due to the ease of access to vast amounts of information. Lynch explains that while Locke and Descartes may have overstated the role of reason, we must equally avoid the opposite extreme. We learn much faster and rely on others more than

thinkers like Descartes or Locke ever thought possible. This makes it easy to think learning is just passively absorbing information. He argues that to be active learners, we need to think for ourselves, forming our own beliefs based on reasons and principles we truly believe in. We need to be willing to explain ourselves to one another in terms we can both understand. It is not enough to be receptive downloaders and reflective, responsible believers. We also need to be reasonable.

Reasonableness is not just about politeness, it serves a public purpose. Giving reasons for our views is important because it provides evidence of our credibility. Reasonableness is often understood as a property of beliefs, statements, arguments, or theories. It would be more accurate to say that we are making ourselves less reasonable with the help of the Internet. It is inaccurate to blame the internet for our declining reasonableness. Rather, we are using the internet in ways that diminish our own capacity for reason. More precisely, the internet amplifies existing challenges to reasonableness, making them more severe. In both cases; it is the very availability of so much information that is part of the problem. The Internet has created an explosion of receptive knowledge. While this is beneficial in many respects, it is not enough. We need to exchange reasons and play by shared epistemic rules if we are going to solve the information coordination problem faced by societies. We need to be mindful of these challenges and develop strategies to use technology in a way that promotes rather than hinders genuine understanding.

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## Hyperhistory, Infosphere and the Human Condition: Examining Luciano Floridi's Philosophy of Information

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### Abstract

*This article examines Luciano Floridi's concept of the Infosphere. The Infosphere is the complete, all-encompassing environment of information that surrounds us. It is not just data, but every informational entity and their interactions, constantly deciding how we exist and experience the world. Floridi argues that the rise of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) has blurred the traditional distinctions between our online and offline lives creating an "onlife" existence within the Infosphere. This study explores the key characteristics of the Infosphere, including its ontology, its relationship to cyberspace, and the notion of humans as "inforgs" that is, beings whose existence is increasingly defined by their informational nature and interactions within this new environment. It investigates the multifaceted ways in which the Infosphere is reshaping human life, areas such as identity, social interactions, ethics, and the nature of reality itself. By assessing Floridi's ideas, this article aims to contribute to an understanding of the opportunities presented by our increasingly information-saturated living. This study aims to understand how human life is changing in our new, information-filled world.*

**Keywords:** Fourth revolution, Hyperhistory, Inbetweenness, Infosphere, On-life, Inforgs

### Introduction

The human experience is constantly being reshaped by technological advancements, but few transformations have been as profound as the one we are currently undergoing. Luciano Floridi's calls this the Fourth Revolution which is a fundamental shift in our understanding of reality, moving from a focus on the physical world to an "infosphere" dominated by information and communication technologies. This revolution challenges our traditional understanding of human existence, raising crucial questions about identity, agency, and our relationship with the world around us. This

paper examines the implications of Floridi's Philosophy of Information. It overviews the transition from history to hyperhistory stressing the fundamental shift in human history driven by information and communication technologies. This Fourth Revolution is characterized by the rise of the "infosphere"- a digital environment that increasingly shapes our reality. This paper attempts to gain insight into how human existence is being redefined in this new informational landscape.

### Information

Information is a broad term that can refer to many different things. In the most general

sense, it is any kind of knowledge or data that can be communicated or interpreted and can be communicated in a variety of ways, including through speech, writing, images, and symbols. Information is essential for human life and society, constantly helping us to understand the world around us, make decisions, and solve problems. It is also used to create new knowledge and technology.

The concept of information is important in a variety of fields. In computer science, information is defined as data that has been processed in such a way as to be meaningful. In communication studies, information is defined as the meaning that is communicated between people. In philosophy, information is defined and understood in various ways depending on the theoretical perspective and context. Logical Positivism perceives information as a factual statement, verifiable through experience or observation. Information as a concept is unravelled by analysing into its constituent parts. Hermeneutics values Information as interpretation, context-dependent and subjective. Poststructuralism views it as fragmented, decentralized and resistant to fixed meanings. The diverse theories and current debates on this topic of information continue to evolve and plays a transformative role in the present day technologically driven landscape, posing challenges and concerns for the contemporary society.

### **Philosophy of Information**

Philosophy of information is a sub-discipline of philosophy, intricately related to the philosophy of logic and mathematics. Philosophy of information is interested in the investigation of the subject at the most general level: data, well-formed data, environmental data etc (Driaans, 2024). The philosophy of information is an interdisciplinary

field that explores both the fundamental nature of information and computation, as well as their practical applications to philosophical inquiries. This is evident in Floridi's definition. "PI is defined as the philosophical field concerned with the critical investigation of the conceptual nature and basic principles of information, including its dynamics, utilisation, and sciences, and the elaboration and application of information-theoretic and computational methodologies to philosophical problems (Floridi, 2011). When Floridi refers to the philosophy of information, he has something quite different in mind, something that is at once more specific, larger in scope, and more ambitious. In short, he thinks that there is just one philosophy of information, that it does not apply merely to the study of information in the narrow sense (i.e., the technical notion), and that its goal is to transform the nature of philosophical theorizing (Allo, 2011).

Floridi contends that while technological advancements continue to progress in an incremental manner, it is also essential to engage in an in-depth exploration of the conceptual foundations of the information age. By gaining a comprehensive understanding of its essence and subtle consequences, along with its impact on human and environmental well-being, we can anticipate difficulties, identify opportunities, and resolve emerging problems. He highlights the need for contemporary advanced information societies to engage with the urgent task of formulating a coherent philosophy of information. Floridi states that Experts like the EGE (European Group on Ethics in Science and New Technologies) and UNESCO have shown us how important technology has become in shaping our world and ourselves. They have made the creation, management, and use of information, communication, and computational

resources crucial to our understanding of the world, our interactions with it, and even our sense of self. In essence ICTs have ushered in a 'fourth revolution' (Floridi, 2014).

### **The Fourth Revolution**

The Fourth Industrial Revolution, or 4IR, is a new era of rapid technological advancement, driven by data, artificial intelligence, and the Internet of Things. Unlike previous industrial revolutions, the 4IR's impact is far-reaching and transformative. This revolution is different because it's affecting almost everything, from how we get healthcare to how we grow food. While it promises to make things better and faster, it also brings up some tough questions about privacy and what it means to be human (Floridi, 2014). Floridi views this not just as a technological shift, but as a metaphysical revolution that fundamentally alters our understanding of reality, our identity, and our ethical obligations. It is less about specific technologies and more about the philosophical and existential shift caused by their integration into our lives. It is a call to understand this new informational reality and develop the ethical and conceptual tools necessary to navigate it responsibly.

### **Hyperhistory**

Luciano Floridi's concept of hyperhistory refers to our current era, in which human progress and well-being increasingly relies on the effective management of information. This marks a notable departure from earlier historical periods, where advancement was predominantly fueled by physical resources and labour. In hyperhistory, information has become the most valuable resource, surpassing traditional resources like land and labour ((Floridi, 2014).

Floridi proposes that human history has evolved through three distinct phases: prehistory,

history, and hyperhistory. While prehistory predates written language, history involves the era since its invention. The most recent epoch, hyperhistory, is characterized by a profound shift, where human progress and well-being are increasingly dependent on the effective management of information. Floridi argues that most people currently inhabit historical societies, where ICTs are used to record, transmit, and process data, but remain secondary to other technologies, particularly energy-related ones. However, a growing number of individuals are experiencing hyperhistory, where ICTs and their data-processing capabilities are indispensable for societal welfare and personal well-being. For example, all members of the G7 group—namely Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America—qualify as hyperhistorical societies because, in each country, at least 70 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP, the value of goods and services produced in a country) depends on intangible goods, which are information-related, rather than on material goods, which are the physical output of agricultural or manufacturing processes (Floridi, 2014). These economies are transitioning to a knowledge-based model, heavily reliant on information-intensive services and information-oriented public sectors.

ICTs became mature in the few centuries between Guttenberg and Turing. Today, we are experiencing a radical transformation in our ICTs that could prove equally significant, for we have started drawing a new threshold between history and a new age, which may be aptly called hyperhistory (Floridi, 2015).

The transition from history to hyperhistory is underway, with advanced societies becoming increasingly dependent on ICTs. As processing power increases and data volumes expand



exponentially, the value of networks grows significantly. Nevertheless, storage capacity and communication speeds are not keeping pace. Floridi concludes that though hyperhistory represents a new era in human development, it is still bound by the inherent limitations of space and time (Floridi, 2014). A crucial question that Floridi poses is: What kind of hyperhistorical environment are we creating for ourselves and future generations? The answer he says lies in the infosphere.

### **In-betweenness**

Building on this base, Floridi goes on to develop the idea of in-betweenness as the most significant characteristic of any technology. He claims that one of the most obvious features that characterizes any technology is its in-betweenness. Citing the case of an imaginary figure Alice living in Rio-de Janeiro, Floridi illustrates the concept of in-betweenness as the objects that mediate her interaction with the environment (A hat shields her from the sun, sandals protect her feet from the hot sand, and sunglasses guard her eyes from the bright light). Our anthropocentric bias leads us to focus on the human user of technology. However, we lack a term for the other side of the relationship, the entity that prompts or facilitates interaction. The sun, for instance, prompts the development and use of hats. Floridi terms this as the 'prompter' to designate this other side of the technological in-betweenness. The term 'prompter' effectively conveys the idea of inviting or enabling technological mediation. It is a fresh term in the philosophy of technology, distinct from its theatrical meaning (Floridi, 2014).

Floridi (2014) distinguishes between three orders of technologies. When technologies are in-between human users and natural prompters,

he qualifies them as first-order. He mentions the wood cutting axe as probably the first and oldest kind of first-order technology between the human (the user) and the wood (the prompter) that he would like to cut. Second-order technologies are those that sit in between a human and another technology. If it is the case of a screwdriver with its screw, or a hammer and a nail. Second-order technologies are those relating users no longer to nature but to other technologies; that is, they are technologies whose prompters are other technologies. Floridi comments that most of the comfortable appliances we enjoy in our houses today in terms of conception are all either first- or second-order technologies, working between human users and the relevant prompters and declares that they signify a world poised for a revolutionary, third-order leap.

Floridi (2014) explains that recently, we have witnessed the rise of third-order technologies, which facilitate interactions between technologies rather than humans and machines. This shift, where information exchange occurs directly between technologies, has removed humans from the loop, making it increasingly difficult to control and understand the complex chain of in-betweenness that defines information technologies. Third-order technologies eliminate human involvement, facilitating direct interactions between technologies. These technologies, primarily information and communication technologies (ICTs), enable the exchange of information between provider and user technologies. Modern stock trading exemplifies this, where computers autonomously process market data and execute buy or sell orders. We can already conceive a fully automated, computational system that may not need human interactions at all in order to exist and grow but they illustrate well what the future looks like.



Smart and autonomous agents no longer need to be human. A hyperhistorical society fully dependent on third-order technologies can in principle be human-independent.

Here Floridi (2014) leads us to another crucial question. What facilitates successful technological in-betweenness? How do technologies interact with users and prompters? The answer, he says lies in interfaces. Interfaces mediate the relationship between humans and technology, acting as a bridge between the physical and digital realms. All digital technologies are by definition bifront. They have two primary interfaces: the 'user interface' designed for human interaction, and the 'protocol' which governs its communication with other technologies. As technological in-betweenness increases, the protocol face may become less apparent, leading to a situation where the user interface is treated as the sole interface. Ultimately, says Floridi, even the user interface may disappear.

A modem exemplifies third-order technology. It modulates digital signals into analog form for transmission and demodulates them back into digital form at the receiver's end, often over a telephone line. This technology-technology-technology interaction is a classic example of third-order technology. The interfaces between these technologies are often interpreted as protocols. These protocols ensure that the intermediary technology, such as a modem, can effectively interact with both the user and prompter technologies.

The dynamic, automated process of negotiation of protocols, which sets the necessary and sufficient parameters required for any further communication, is known as handshaking. It is what goes on between your and my computer, between your computer and your printer, when they 'see' each other, or between your smartphone and your laptop, before they can

agree to synchronize your digital diary. You and I are neither invited to, nor involved in, such a handshaking. We are out of the loop entirely (Floridi 2014).

### **The politics of in- betweenness**

The "in-betweenness" of technology, means its mediating role between humans and the world. This has political implications that can be understood by examining extreme interpretations. The political aspects of technology's in-betweenness can be interpreted variously. While no serious scholar endorses extreme positions, understanding these extremes provides valuable insights into the multifaceted nature of technological development. One extreme view interprets technology's in-betweenness as a harmful detachment from the natural world and authentic experiences. This perspective may even associate it with disembodiment, delocalization, globalization, and consumerism, which devalue physicality and uniqueness.

The other extreme view celebrates technology's in-betweenness as a liberating force, enabling greater communication and personal fulfillment. It sees technology as an empowering tool, rather than a means of control. This perspective suggests that increased technological mediation leads to greater freedom, control, and choice. Floridi (2014) remarks that ICTs make us think about the world informationally and make the world we experience informational. ICTs are leading our culture to conceptualize the whole reality and our lives within it in ICT-friendly terms, that is, informationally. ICTs are modifying the very nature of, and hence what we mean by, reality, by transforming it into an infosphere.

Floridi argues that in our current hyperhistorical age, Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) have become the dominant

and defining type of technology. He highlights their omnipresence, user-friendly nature, and how they increasingly mediate our interactions with both the world and other technologies. He points out that ICTs possess the unique characteristic of being able to interact with themselves, often in an invisible way. Floridi states, “Today, when we think of technology in general, ICTs and their ubiquitous, user-friendly interfaces come immediately to mind. This is to be expected. In hyperhistorical societies, ICTs become the characterizing first-, second-, and third-order technologies. We increasingly interact with the world and with our technologies through ICTs, and ICTs are the technologies that can, and tend to, interact with themselves, and invisibly so” (2014, p.75).

### **The rise of the infosphere**

The infosphere is a global information environment created by interconnected information and communication technologies (ICTs). It is a complex and dynamic space where information is constantly created, shared, and transformed. Infosphere is a neologism coined by Floridi (1999). It is based on ‘biosphere’, a term referring to that limited region on our planet that supports life. It is also a concept that is quickly evolving. Minimally, infosphere denotes the whole informational environment constituted by all informational entities, their properties, interactions, processes, and mutual relations. It is an environment comparable to, but different from, cyberspace. Maximally, infosphere is a concept that can also be used as synonymous with reality, once we interpret the latter informationally (Floridi, 2014). The difference between the two readings is a function of our understanding of information, as something that has only semantic properties (e.g. web open source) or also ontic properties (information as data patterns, e.g. the

magnetic structure of a digital support) (Floridi, 2013).

Floridi understands that the equivalence of these concepts will drive significant technological advancements along with arising complex challenges for humanity.

We are experiencing simultaneous information and computing revolutions. Luciano Floridi argues that the material world is losing its primacy, with human agency being significantly diminished. The ascendant infosphere—the information landscape as Floridi terms it—is rapidly becoming the foundation of our reality. Remarkably, approximately 95 percent of all existing data has been generated by the current generation. This era is characterized by the blurring boundaries between the digital and physical realms. This interconnected environment, the “infosphere” is our new habitat. Like the biosphere that sustains life, the infosphere is where we now live, constantly immersed in information. Online and offline experiences are merging, enveloping us in a vast ocean of data. Effectively navigating this landscape requires the ability to discern and utilize information strategically. This is where philosophy, as a tool for conceptual design, becomes essential, providing a framework for understanding the infosphere's complexities. This intersection also marks a critical point of convergence between philosophy and artificial intelligence.

### **Infosphere and Humanity**

The next step is a rethinking of increasing aspects of reality in informational terms. It is becoming normal to consider the world as part of the infosphere says Floridi. As we reinterpret various aspects of reality in informational terms the world is increasingly perceived as an integral part of the infosphere. This shift is

not towards a dystopian future as portrayed in *The Matrix*, characterized by a stark contrast between the digital and physical realms. Instead, it is evolving towards a hyperhistorical, hybrid reality, as exemplified by the fictional metropolis of New Port City in 'Ghost in the Shell' (Floridi, 2014). The infosphere will not be a virtual environment supported by a genuinely 'material' world. Rather, it will be the world itself that will be increasingly understood informationally, as an expression of the infosphere. At the end of this shift, Floridi remarks that the infosphere will have moved from being a way to refer to the space of information to being synonymous with reality itself. He argues that the infosphere is becoming synonymous with reality itself. This means we are undergoing a fundamental shift in how we understand the world. We are moving away from seeing information as something about the world, and towards understanding the world as information. Our lives are now so interwoven with technology that the traditional divide between "online" and "offline" disappears, making us increasingly interpret our environment through an informational framework.

## Conclusion

Floridi's Fourth Revolution, characterized by the omnipresence of information compels us to reconsider our understanding of reality, agency, and responsibility. We are no longer simply users of technology, but integral parts of a complex infosphere. This concept of Infosphere is not merely a metaphor, rather, it defines a new ontological stratum of reality, fundamentally composed of information and its interactions. There is the need to re-evaluate core philosophical ideas about existence, knowledge, and action. This redefines humans as "inforgs," inherently linked to our informational environment. This new digital world has its share of problems. We

need to worry about privacy, security, and whether algorithms are fair. Some people might also get less information than others. A collaborative solution may help fix these problems. The need is to make sure this digital world works for everyone and builds a fair society.

Floridi teaches us that information is valuable, but it can also spoil, just like anything else. This is important now because we are surrounded by so much digital information. With more and more digital data and smart AI, the quality of information directly affects how well we live and how healthy our society is. So, Floridi attests we really need new rules for how we handle information. Our lives are now a mix of online and real-world experiences. The Infosphere helps us understand how we fit with technology. It makes us more careful and responsible with the information we make, use, and share. Floridi's theoretical contributions are indispensable, offering a strong foundation for tackling problems such as algorithmic bias and informational inequality. His thoughts provide a strong basis for addressing issues, such as biased AI or unequal access to information. These ideas help us use the many chances we get from all the information around us today. It is important to follow good rules for the internet and data. By being fair and responsible, we can create a better digital future for everyone.

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## A Study of Changing Global Strategies and Pakistan's Conundrum Post 'Operation Sindoor'

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### Abstract

*Operation Sindoor marked a shift in how global powers engage with Pakistan, while international institutions extend financial support, their diplomacy is now guided by caution, not alliance. This article explores Pakistan's geopolitical repositioning through its internal instability, regional tensions, and diplomatic recalibration, arguing that Pakistan is now treated more as a 'managed liability' than a pivotal partner.*

**Keywords:** Global geopolitics, Pakistan foreign policy, Operation Sindoor, Strategic realignment, Security challenges

### Introduction

India's 'Operation Sindoor' a precise, limited-scale military operation against terrorist hotspots in Pakistan-administered territory marked a turning point in geopolitics especially in South Asian region. Striking with strategically calculated restraint, India demonstrated its capability to neutralize threats while also keeping the risks in escalation at minimum. The operation's success, also with Pakistan's muted retaliation, put forward Islamabad's diminished capacity to counter India's military and diplomatic capability.

Conducted with surgical precision and less diplomatic fallout, 'Operation Sindoor' reframed and restructured India's security doctrine while exposing Pakistan's loopholes. The muted international response illustrated a global perceptual shift: India's assertiveness was seen as legitimate, while Pakistan's narrative appeared somewhat fatigued. This reorientation situates Pakistan at the edge of diplomatic

marginalization, as even traditional allies now approach it with caution rather than alliance.

### Strategic aid Vs. Strategic Doubts

Despite severe and continuous domestic crisis and deviation of funds to non-state actors, Pakistan still continues to receive international financial support. In April 2025, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) disbursed USD 800 million to Pakistan, reinforcing efforts towards infrastructure and economic reform. Concurrently, an IMF Stand-By Arrangement imposed stringent structural conditions. Meanwhile, China has stalled its CPEC expansion due to the concerns about security. As Moeed Yusuf cites, Pakistan is no longer seen as a 'strategic pillar' but as a 'fragile economy needing oversight'. China's hesitation on CPEC stems from Baloch insurgent attacks on Chinese workers and the Gwadar port's under performance. The IMF's conditions like tax reforms, subsidy cuts etc. risk further public unrest, worsening Pakistan's political and economic courses in the future.



## **Change of Strategy and Bilawal Bhutto's Outreach**

In order to counter regional isolation, Pakistan Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari launched a diplomatic campaign at the UN, promoting Pakistan's commitment to peace and Kashmir dialogue. However, limited international resonance followed, reflecting enduring skepticism about Pakistan's counter terrorism resolve. His approach signals a shift from conventional methods used by Pakistan but lacks substantive returns in foreign policy traction or economic guarantees. Bilawal's rhetoric clashes with the military's hardline stance, creating a disjointed and unparallel foreign policy. The U.S. and EU remain unconvinced, given Pakistan's continued ties to groups like Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Muhammed (Fair, 2018).

## **The Baluchistan Situation**

Unrest in Baluchistan continues to challenge national unity. The Pakistan Army's narrative, branding the insurgency as "Fitna-al-Hindustan," blames India for domestic turmoil. However, structural issues like alienation, repression, disappearances persist, fueling resistance. Armed groups like the BNA and BRAS threaten internal stability and deter foreign investment, especially from China. The lack of reconciliation initiatives risks further radicalization.

China's reluctance to invest deeper in Baluchistan reflects security fears, weakening CPEC's viability. Human Rights watch (2024) documents enforced disappearances, undermining State legitimacy.

## **Intensified Militant Activity from Afghanistan**

The Cross-border attacks by TTP and ISKP have intensified from early 2025 itself. Pakistani troops face increasing casualties, while

Afghanistan's passive stance emboldens these groups. Talks of Kabul granting diplomatic space to Baloch separatists amplify tensions, pushing bilateral relations into deeper hostility. This escalation affects Pakistan's security calculations and regional diplomacy. The Afghan Taliban's implicit support for TTP strains the Doha Agreement's remainders. ISKP's rise introduces a new jihadist dimension, complicating counter terrorism efforts. The current scenario of thinking to establish a mutual ambassadorship between both regimes under the mediation of China provides a chance to Pakistan but a problem to India.

## **U.S. Re-Hyphenation and Strategic Caution**

The United States has subtly returned to a hyphenated India-Pakistan framework post-Sindhoor. Back channel diplomacy facilitated by CENTCOM aims at de-escalation of the conflict. While India remains central to U.S. Indo-Pacific strategy, Pakistan is framed more as a destabilization risk than a strategic partner. Ashley Tellis (2023) argues this re-hyphenation reflects 'proximity to volatility, not parity'. U.S. military aid to Pakistan has shifted from counter terrorism to nuclear risk management. India's growing U.S. ties (Quad, tech partnerships) further sideline Pakistan. Yet, the statement by American President Donald Trump and further enticement of this by the Russian administration and the Pakistan regime of America playing a mediator between Pakistan and India, puts in doubt the major aspect of the Shimla Agreement (1972),

## **Indus Waters Treaty in Abeyance**

India's suspension of engagement under the 'Indus Waters Treaty (1960)' acts as a diplomatic leverage. Though not a formal withdrawal, this abeyance signals India's intention to

hold Pakistan accountable for cross-border terrorism. As Shashi Tharoor (2025) states, this strategy of "non-rupturable leverage" merges environmental and strategic posturing without legal breach. Pakistan's water insecurity could worsen agricultural crisis (especially in Sindh and Punjab region), fueling domestic unrest. World Bank mediation remains stalled, reflecting waning international sympathy.

### **Domestic Politics and AsimMunir's Leadership**

General AsimMunir's rise has deepened military control over Pakistan's institutions. Since 2022, Munir has:

- Dismantled PTI's political apparatus.
- Centralized media and judiciary control.
- Secured Gulf funding for economic survival.

Yet, domestic legitimacy remains fragile. His model prioritizes 'stability over pluralism', reflecting Pakistan's paradox of internal repression juxtaposed with external dependence. Gulf states (UAE, Saudi Arabia) back Munir for migration labor deals and anti-Iran alignment. Crackdowns on Imran Khan's PTI risk long-term political destabilization.

### **Conclusion:**

#### **Pakistan's Image as a 'Managed Risk'.**

Pakistan's global role is transitioning towards 'a managed risk' from an indispensable ally.

'Operation Sindoor' exposed the constraints of its strategic posture. Global powers offer conditional aid but distance themselves diplomatically. Until Pakistan resolves internal contradictions and proves its reliability in the region, it will remain least important in South Asia's evolving strategic architecture. The future hinges on whether Pakistan will become a "frozen conflict" state (like North Korea) or will seek GCC-mediated rehabilitation. Meanwhile, China's next move—whether to double down or disengage—will further shape Islamabad's trajectory in the regional and the global stage.

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## Electoral Reforms: An Analysis of Progress and Challenges of elections in India

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### Abstract

*India is the largest democracy in the world which has witnessed significant electoral reforms since its independence. Elections are the most integral and important part of politics in a democratic system of governance. True democracy can function only when elections to the offices of power are held in a free and fair manner. Electoral reforms play a major role in strengthening democratic institutions and ensure free and fair election in a transparent manner. The study highlights significant reforms undertaken so far including Electronic Voting Machine (EVM), Electoral Photo Identity Card (EPIC), None of the Above (NOTA) etc. The main objectives of this study are to analyze the progress of various electoral reforms for conducting free and fair elections since its independence, to explore the various Supreme Court judgements related to electoral reforms, and to analyze the challenges faced by election and electoral reforms in India. The research paper relies on secondary data sources such as court judgments, reports, and articles related to electoral reforms. The paper also discusses recent proposal, recommendation of various committees, civil society organization and the various judgement of Supreme Court of India.*

**Keywords:** Democracy, Election, Electoral reforms, Election Commission

*“At the bottom of all tributes paid to democracy is the little man, walking into a little booth, with a little pencil, making a little cross on a little bit of paper – no amount of rhetoric or voluminous discussion can possibly diminish the overwhelming importance of the point.”*

Winston Churchill

### Introduction

India is the largest democracy in the world. Periodic elections are the most integral and significant part of politics in a democratic system of governance. The democratic nation can function only when elections at the offices of power are held in a free and fair manner. With over 968.8 million registered voters, multiple political parties, and diverse socio-cultural, linguistic and economic demographics, the Indian electoral process plays a major role in shaping the country's governance and policy directions. Periodic Elections are the most integral and important part of politics in a

democratic system of governance. A democratic nation can function only when elections at the offices of power are held in a free and fair manner. Electoral reforms in India refer to the initiatives undertaken by authority with an objective to strengthen the overall credibility and efficiency of electoral processes. The democratic process relies heavily depends on the conduct of free, fair, and transparent elections. However, over the decades, major challenges such as electoral malpractices, vote-buying, the influence of black money, criminalization of politics, and declining voter participation have underscored the need for comprehensive electoral reforms.

Electoral reforms commonly refer to the systematic changes introduced in the legislative, procedural, and institutional frameworks governing elections, with the objective of improving the overall credibility and efficiency and transparency of the electoral process. These reforms have evolved over time, responding to emerging political challenges and public demands for greater accountability. The role of the Election Commission of India (ECI), constitutional amendments, judicial intervention, and recommendations from various committees such as the Goswami Committee, the Indrajit Gupta Committee (1998), Law Commission of India, National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution (NCRWC) have significantly influenced the trajectory of these reforms.

Some path breaking changes include the introduction of Electoral Photo Identity Cards (EPIC), the implementation of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs), Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT), None of The Above (NOTA), the requirement for candidates to declare their criminal records and assets published in the various dailies, stricter norms for campaign financing, and measures to enhance women's and marginalized communities' participation. Despite these advances, systemic issues continue to plague the electoral system. Electoral bonds and opaque funding channels have raised questions about transparency; the influence of muscle power and populism remains a concern; and the lack of internal democracy within political parties weakens the spirit of representative governance.

This paper aims to provide an analysis of the progress of various electoral reforms for conducting free and fair elections since its independence, to explore the various Supreme

Court judgements related to electoral reforms, and to analyze the challenges faced by election and electoral reforms in India. By examining constitutional and legal measures, institutional efforts, judicial intervention, and the role of civil society, this study seeks to contribute to the broader discourse on strengthening democracy through electoral integrity.

### **Objectives**

The objective of this paper is to analyze the progress of various electoral reforms for conducting free and fair elections since its independence, to explore the various Supreme Court judgements related to electoral reforms, and to analyze the challenges faced by election and electoral reforms in India.

### **Methodology**

The study is descriptive in nature, and it primarily relies on secondary sources of data obtained from a range of documents, including various committee reports, Books, Magazines, Journals, Newspapers, the Internet, and various government publications that have been referred to understand the electoral reforms.

### **Discussion**

Electoral reforms refer to the initiatives undertaken by authorities with an objective to strengthen the overall credibility and efficiency of electoral processes. They are very important due to the dynamism displayed in the political nature of India. Bringing about reforms from time to time is necessary to establish India as a sovereign socialist secular democratic republic as outlined in the preamble and other constitutional principles. The major constitutional and legal provisions about elections are discussed below. Constitutional and Legal Provision about Elections

Elections are fundamental to any democracy, and in India, they play a crucial role in shaping the governance at both the national and state levels. The legal and constitutional framework that governs elections in India ensures transparency, fairness, and inclusivity, while upholding the democratic values enshrined in the Indian Constitution. India follows a representative democracy, where citizens elect their representatives for various legislative bodies, such as the Lok Sabha (House of the People), Rajya Sabha (Council of States), State Legislative Assemblies, and State Legislative Councils. These elections are conducted based on a comprehensive set of laws and regulations that ensure the participation of all eligible voters, regulate political parties, and promote fair electoral practices.

**Article 324: Superintendence, direction and control of elections to be vested in an Election Commission.**

The superintendence, direction and control of the preparation of the electoral rolls for, and the conduct of, all elections to Parliament and to the Legislature of every State and of elections to the offices of President and Vice-President held under this Constitution shall be vested in a Commission<sup>1</sup>.

**Article 325: No person to be ineligible for inclusion in, or to claim to be included in a special, electoral roll, on grounds of religion, race, caste or sex.**

There shall be one general electoral roll for every territorial constituency for election to either House of Parliament or to the House or either House of the Legislature of a State and no person shall be ineligible for inclusion in any such roll or claim to be included in any special electoral roll for any such constituency on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex or any of them.

**Article 326: Elections to the House of the People and to the Legislative Assemblies of States to be on the basis of adult suffrage.**

The elections to the House of the People and to the Legislative Assembly of every State shall be on the basis of adult suffrage; that is to say, every person who is a citizen of India and who is not less than [eighteen years] of age on such date as may be fixed in that behalf by or under any law made by the appropriate Legislature and is not otherwise disqualified under this Constitution or any law made by the appropriate Legislature on the ground of non-residence, unsoundness of mind, crime or corrupt or illegal practice, shall be entitled to be registered as a voter at any such election<sup>2</sup>.

**Article 327: Power of Parliament to make provision with respect to elections to Legislatures.**

Subject to the provisions of this Constitution, Parliament may from time to time, by law, make provision with respect to all matters relating to, or in connection with, elections to either House of Parliament or to the House or either House of the Legislature of a State including the preparation of electoral rolls, the delimitation of constituencies and all other matters necessary for securing the due constitution of such House or Houses.

**Article 328: Power of Legislature of a State to make provision with respect to elections to such Legislature.**

Subject to the provisions of this Constitution and in so far as provision in that behalf is not made by Parliament, the Legislature of a State may from time to time by law make provision with respect to all matters relating to, or in connection with, the elections to the House or either House of the Legislature of the State including the preparation of electoral rolls and all other matters necessary



for securing the due constitution of such House or Houses.

**Article 329: Bar to interference by courts in electoral matters.**

The validity of any law relating to the delimitation of constituencies or the allotment of seats to such constituencies, made or purporting to be made under article 327 or article 328, shall not be called in question in any court; no election to either House of Parliament or to the House or either House of the Legislature of a State shall be called in question except by an election petition presented to such authority and in such manner as may be provided for by or under any law made by the appropriate Legislature.

**Representation of People Act–1950**

The Representation of the People Act of 1950 (RPA 1950) is an act made by Parliament of India, which was enacted to deal with the electoral system of the nation at the national and state level.

The objective of the Representation People Act 1950 is to provide for the allocation of seats to House of People and State Legislative Assemblies, and State Legislative Councils, delimitation of constituencies for the purpose of election, qualifications and disqualifications of voters, preparation of electoral rolls and manner of filling the seats. There are four schedules under the Representation of People Act 1950. The first Schedule deals with the allocation of seats to the States in the House of People. Second Schedule deals with the total number of seats in the Legislative Assembly of each State. Third Schedule deals with the allocation of seats in the Legislative Councils of the States, the Third Schedule deals with Local authorities for purposes of elections to Legislative Councils.

**Election Commission of India**

Election Commission of India (ECI) is a constitutional body created under Article 324 of Constitution. It consists of the Chief Election Commissioner and such number of other Election Commissioners. They are appointed by the President of India on the recommendation of the three member committee headed by Prime Minister, Leader of Opposition in the House of the People, a Cabinet Minister to be nominated by the Prime Minister. The elections conducted by Election Commission of India are (i) Election to the offices of the President of India and Vice-President of India, (ii) Election to the House of People and Council of State. (iii) Election to the Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council of the States. (iv) Election to the Legislative Assembly of the Union territories (of Puducherry, National Capital Territory of Delhi and Jammu and Kashmir) having legislative assembly. Other major functions of the Election Commission are (i) Recognise the political parties for election, be it national, regional, or state. (ii) Issue symbols for the respective political parties who are participating in the election. (iii) Prepare and update the electoral rolls. (iv) Issue the date and time for the polling process.

**Committee and Commissions related to electoral reforms in India**

In India, the functioning of the electoral system is shaped by various committees and commissions that are designed to address specific challenges and ensure the smooth, fair, and transparent conduct of elections. These committees and commissions play a crucial role in shaping election laws, proposing reforms, and overseeing the overall electoral process. They act as advisory bodies, provide recommendations, and sometimes implement

necessary changes to the legal and administrative framework. The role of these bodies is critical in maintaining the integrity of elections, improving voter participation, ensuring fairness, and upholding democratic values. From the Election Commission of India, which is a constitutional body, to various reform committees and policy-making commissions, each has a distinct function aimed at enhancing India's electoral process. The various committees and commissions which have examined our electoral system, election machinery as well as election process and suggested reforms are mentioned here.

### **Indrajit Gupta Committee-1998**

To create a level playing field for parties with limited resources, the Indrajit Gupta Committee recommended state funding of elections in 1998. The Committee advised placing two restrictions on state funding. (i) Only national and state parties with a symbol should receive state funding. Independent candidates should not. (ii) Only recognized political parties and their candidates should get short-term state funding in kind in the form of specific infrastructure.

### **Law Commission Report on Electoral Law Reform-1999**

In 1999, the Law Commission headed by Justice B P Jeevan Reddy submitted its report in which many reforms were suggested to make the Electoral laws in India more effective and inclusive. The main highlights of the report and the chief recommendations are it is desirable that total state funding should be introduced but on the condition that political parties are barred from raising funds from any other source. Only partial instead of total state funding is feasible in the prevailing economic conditions in the country.

### **The National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution (NCRWC) -2001**

The National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution (NCRWC) was set up by a Government of India in 2000. The 11-member Commission was headed by M.N.Venkatachaliah submitted its report in 2002. The major recommendation of the commission are (i) Candidates should not be allowed to contest election simultaneously for the same office from more than one constituency, (ii) Any person charged with any offence punishable with imprisonment for a maximum term of five years or more, should be disqualified for being chosen as or for being a member of Parliament or Legislature of a State, (iii) Criminal cases against politicians pending before Courts either for trial or in appeal must be disposed of speedily, if necessary, by appointing Special Courts, (iv) The election code of conduct should be given the sanctity of law and its violation should attract penal action.

### **Second Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC)-2008**

Second Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC) headed by Veerappa Moily submitted its report in which many reforms were suggested in their fourth report titled Ethics in governance related to elections. The Second Administrative Reforms Commission advocated a system for partial state funding should be introduced in order to reduce the scope of illegitimate and unnecessary funding of expenditure for elections 8.

### **Law Commission Report on Electoral Reforms (2015)**

In 2015, the Law Commission headed by Justice A P Shah submitted its report in which many reforms were suggested to make the

electoral process in India more effective and inclusive. The main highlights of the report and the chief recommendations are (i) the Commission says that opacity of political funding and under-reporting of election expenditure are two main issues in this area. (ii) It suggested that political parties should mandatorily disclose all contributions in excess of Rs.20000. (iii) Paid news be made an electoral offence. (iv) if a candidate fails to file election expenses and contributions received, the disqualification period be increased from the existing 3 years to 5 years. (v) the report had also not agreed with the right to recall as well to reject a winning candidate, if the votes polled by him/her were less than those opting for none of the above (NOTA) keeping in mind many factors including the fact that India follows the first-past-the-post system 9.

### **Major Judgements of Supreme Court on Electoral Reforms**

The Supreme Court of India, as the guardian of the Constitution, has played a pivotal role in upholding democratic principles and ensuring the integrity of the electoral process. Over the years, the Court has delivered a series of landmark judgments aimed at reforming India's electoral system, enhancing transparency, and curbing criminalization in politics. These judicial interventions have strengthened the rights of voters, imposed greater accountability on candidates and political parties, and reinforced the foundational values of free and fair elections. *Association for Democratic Reforms vs Union of India - 2024*

The Supreme Court declared that the Electoral Bond Scheme was unconstitutional for violating the right to information of voters under 19(1) (a) of the constitution. *People's Union for Civil Liberties & Another vs Union Of India & Another-2013*

Supreme Court direct the Election Commission to provide necessary provision in the ballot papers/ EVMs and another button called "None of the Above"(NOTA) may be provided in EVMs so that the voters, who come to the polling booth and decide not to vote for any of the candidates in the fray, are able to exercise their right not to vote while maintaining their right of secrecy.

### **Lily Thomas vs Union of India –2013**

The Supreme Court held that convicted Members of Parliament and Members of Legislative Assembly will be immediately disqualified from holding membership of the House without being given three months' time for appeal, as was the case before.

### **Major Electoral Reforms in India**

The Supreme Court of India has played a vital role in strengthening the country's democratic framework by initiating key reforms in the electoral system. Through a series of landmark rulings, the Court has worked to improve the fairness, transparency, and accountability of elections. These judgments have addressed critical issues such as criminalization in politics, disclosure of candidate information, and the protection of voters' rights.

By exercising its constitutional authority—particularly under Articles 32, 136, and 142—the Supreme Court has actively responded to public interest cases and the efforts of civil society. In doing so, it has filled important gaps in electoral laws and regulations. As a result, the Court has not only upheld the right to vote but has also ensured that voters have access to necessary information to make informed choices in a democratic system.

Electoral reforms undertaken by authorities to strengthen the electoral processes for a free and

fair election. The major electoral reforms in India are discussed below.

The 61st Amendment Act -1988: Reduced the minimum age for voting from 21 to 18 years.

Electoral Photo Identity Card (EPIC): EPIC was introduced in 1993. It is used to prevent voter impersonation and electoral fraud.

#### **Electronic Voting Machine (EVM):**

Electronic Voting Machine is a device used to store the votes electronically. They were first used in the Paravur Assembly Constituency of Kerala in the year 1982. Since 1998, the Election Commission has increasingly used EMVs instead of ballot boxes.

#### **None Of the Above (NOTA):**

NOTA was introduced in elections in 2013 as per Supreme Court direction. It ensures voters' right to abstain from voting discreetly.

#### **Voter-Verifiable Paper Audit Trail System (VVPAT):**

Election Commission of India started exploring the possibility of introducing a Voter-Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) system to increase transparency and verifiability in the poll process.

#### **Model Code of Conduct (MCC):**

It is a consensus document. The political parties have themselves agreed to keep their conduct during elections in check and to work within the Code. The MCC is operational from the date on which the election schedule is announced until the date of the result announcement.

#### **Immediate disqualification of convicted MPs and MLAs:**

Convicted Members of Parliament and Members of Legislative Assembly will

be immediately disqualified from holding membership of the House without being given three months' time for appeal.

#### **Key Challenges in the current electoral system**

Elections are the foundation of any functioning democracy, and India—being the world's largest democracy—conducts elections on an immense scale. While the Indian electoral system has evolved significantly since independence, it continues to face several deep-rooted challenges that hinder the goal of free, fair, and transparent elections. Issues such as the criminalization of politics, misuse of money and muscle power, lack of internal democracy in political parties, and low voter awareness continue to raise concerns about the integrity and inclusiveness of the process. Despite the efforts of the Election Commission, the judiciary, and civil society, several loopholes persist in both the law and its implementation. These challenges not only undermine public trust in democratic institutions but also limit the ability of citizens to make informed and empowered electoral choices. Addressing these issues is critical to ensuring a more accountable, transparent, and representative political system in India.

There are multiple challenges plaguing the electoral process in India. Some of the most prominent ones are mentioned below.

#### **Criminalization of politics:**

A huge number of elected representatives face criminal charges, raising concerns about the integrity of the political system. According to reports from the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) 2025 report Out of the 543 winning candidates analyzed in Lok Sabha 2024, 251 (46%) winning candidates have declared criminal cases against themselves. Out of 539 MPs analyzed during Lok Sabha elections in



2019, 233(43%) MPs had declared criminal cases against themselves. Out of 542 MPs analyzed during Lok Sabha elections in 2014, 185(34%) MPs had declared criminal cases against themselves. Out of 543 MPs analyzed during Lok Sabha elections in 2009, 162(30%) MPs had declared criminal cases against themselves. There is an increase of 55% in the number of MPs with declared criminal cases since 2009. All recent committees on politics and electoral reform have observed the criminalization in Indian political system almost unanimously. Criminalization of politics has many forms, but perhaps the most alarming among them is the significant number of elected representatives with criminal charges pending against them.

#### **Influence of Money Power:**

Exceeding the spending limits of election expenditure of the candidate, lack of transparency in political funding and no spending limits of election expenditure on parties undermine the democratic process.

#### **Hate speech and misuse of campaigning:**

Use of abusive language, caste and communal appeals, spread of unverified and false information during the election campaigns.

#### **Delimitation and Representation:**

The population explosion that happened in our country during the last five decades has been uneven with some States like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan having a greater increase than States like Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh.

#### **Electoral roll issues:**

Allegations of duplicate Electoral Photo Identity Card (EPIC) and manipulation of voters list highlight the need for robust mechanisms to maintain the integrity of voter lists.

#### **Communalism:**

One of the main issues in Indian political system is Communalization of politics. It is a major threat to our nation, national integrity, secularism, multicultural, democracy, federalism, sense of pluralism as well as Constitution of India.

#### **Misuse of Government Machinery:**

There is a common perception that the ruling party misused government machinery or investigating agencies specifically at the time of elections, such as the Enforcement Directorate, Central Bureau of Investigation and other important means to threaten their opponents to win elections.

#### **Concerns Over EVM Tampering:**

Many Political parties, civil society organization etc. sought are turn to paper ballots citing concerns regarding EVM tampering.

#### **Suggestions**

The study puts forward several recommendations for improving the electoral process to effectively deal with the challenges outlined above. It highlights the main problems in conducting elections and suggests appropriate measures to address them.

#### **Regulating campaign practices:**

Enforcing stringent penalties for hate speech, misinformation, communal statement, and unethical practices can promote fair and issue-based campaigning.

#### **Strengthening the Election Commission of India (ECI):**

The Election Commission of India should be given more autonomy and legal authority to act against electoral malpractices, hate speech, communal statement.



**Electoral roll issues:**

The Election Commission of India (ECI) launched the National Electoral Rolls Purification and Authentication Program (NERPAP) in 2015 to address issues like duplicate entries in electoral rolls. It aimed to link Voter IDs (EPIC) with Aadhaar numbers for authentication. The Election commission endorsed the call for a lifetime ban in the apex court. It had argued that such move would champion the cause of decriminalization of politics.

**Restriction on the number of seats which one may contest:**

The law should be amended to provide that a person cannot contest from more than one constituency at a time. Restrictions on Government sponsored advertisements:

Advertisements of achievements of the governments, either Central or State, in any manner, should be prohibited for a period of six months prior to the date of expiry of the term of the House, and in case of premature dissolution, from the date of dissolution of the House. The Goswami Committee Report of 1990 recommended that the Election Commission should be empowered to take strong action on the report of returning officers, election observers, or civil society in regard to booth capture or the intimidation of voters. The Election Commission budget be treated as "Charged expenditure" on the Consolidated Fund of India.

**Misuse of religion for electoral gain by political parties:**

The Goswami Committee on Electoral Reforms, in its report in 1990, made the following recommendations: "Election Commission shall have the power to make recommendations to the appropriate authority (a) to refer any matter for investigation to any agency specified by the

Commission (b) Prosecute any person who has committed an electoral offence under this Act or (c) appoint any special court for the trial of any offence or offences under this Act (RPAct 1951)14."

**Adjudication of election dispute:**

A dedicated election benches designated for election petitions only should be formed in the High Court.

**Review of Anti-Defection Law:**

The National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution recommend that "the power to decide on questions as to disqualification on ground of defection should vest in the Election Commission instead of in the Chairman or Speaker of the House concerned15.

**VVPAT Matching:**

The counting of the paper trail from the Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail should be carried out in each polling station in all constituencies to ensure a free and fair election in India.

**Conclusion**

The concept of free and fair elections is a basic structure of the Indian Constitution, as per various judgments of the Supreme Court. Electoral reforms are crucial to strengthening the foundations of its democracy. India the world's largest democracy must ensure that its electoral processes are transparent, inclusive, and fair. Reforms such as curbing the influence of money and muscle power, ensuring speedy disposal of election dispute, strengthening anti-defection law, Election Commission of India should be given more autonomy, purification of electoral roll based on Aadhar data, addressing voter apathy, and enhancing the role of technology in election process can significantly improve the integrity of elections. A committed effort from

three pillars of democracy such as legislature, executive and judiciary, citizens, civil society, the Election Commission is essential to bring about meaningful and lasting change. Only through such reforms can the true spirit of democracy be realized and sustained in India.

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## Regency of Gauri Parvathi Bai and Women Emancipation in Travancore

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### Abstract

*The accession of Gauri Parvathi Bai as a Regent of Travancore immediately after the untimely death of Rani Lakshmi Bai, was more powerful and efficiently administered the state for fourteen years, from 1815 to 1829. She was the first woman to rule a state for an extended period of time. She had a more sympathetic attitude toward women and other subaltern groups, such as the lower castes. Gauri Parvathi Bai was considered to be the most powerful women ruler of Travancore. Even though she was traditional in outfit, she was modern in outlook and administration. Her tireless efforts for women's emancipation and advancement had a significant historical impact on Travancore. A thorough analysis on the measures taken by the Regent would help us to get a clear understanding of the importance of the regency in the liberation and transformation of the condition of women in Travancore.*

**Keywords:** Travancore, Royal family, Royal women, Regency, Gosha, Aajanpanam, Adiyara, Mennipponu, Sati,

### Introduction

Travancore was one of India's most infamous states, with caste rigidities and female oppression at their peak. Women were treated as mere objects of pleasure. They had to deal with a number of handicaps and limitations. Even royal women were not excluded from these archaic caste and customary rules. Female members of the Royal family were required to wear a gosha and were not permitted to meet any male members of the Royal house outside of their immediate family. The Ranis were forbidden from speaking publicly about state matters and from meeting any Europeans, including the Resident.<sup>1</sup> Notable women's emancipation initiatives during the regency period of Gauri Parvathi Bai was particularly noteworthy.

### Objectives

- To draw sketches of Regency rule in Travancore and understand her personality, principles, ideologies and contributions.
- To trace out the progressive social regulations implemented by the Regent Gauri Parvathi Bai of Travancore for the benefit of common people.
- To highlight the various policies and programs introduced by the Regent Rani Gauri Parvathi Bai of Travancore for the upliftment of women in Travancore.

### Hypotheses

- The plight of the women during the pre-regency Travancore was miserable and degraded because of severe socio-religious restrictions and these conditions

reduced the status of women to the level of commodities.

- The Regent Rani Gauri Parvathi Bai of Travancore gave special consideration to the emancipation of women and made a number of progressive legislations and reform initiatives for their betterment.
- Regent Regent Rani Gauri Parvathi Bai of Travancore was not properly portrayed in the pages of history may be because of their ideologies and approaches towards most sensational issues and the celebrated authors of Travancore history intentionally or unintentionally evaded them from the mainstream writing.

## Methodology

The present study generally adopted a qualitative methodological approach based on a combination of analytical, descriptive and interpretative reflections. The study relies heavily on primary sources while not undervaluing the significance of the secondary sources. Unpublished and published archival materials gathered from the repositories of Kerala state archives make up the primary sources used in the study. The books, articles and literary compositions are mainly used in the study for collecting secondary sources which supplement enough materials to interpret primary sources.

## Analysis and Interpretations

The regent Gauri Parvathi Bai showed a tremendous deal of warmth and sympathy to the womenfolk of the state. Only a woman could truly understand with the anguish, agony, and struggles of her fellow women. They only could realize the realities behind their sorrows, distress and troubles and find solutions and remedies to those problems. Here in Travancore, the

coming of woman as regents was a boon as far as the womenfolk were concerned. The Regent was eager to do whatever in her power to find solutions to the challenges because she could relate to the anguish and suffering of the state's female citizens. To raise the status of women in the state of Travancore, the regent made a number of important proclamations and took a number of significant initiatives. Even though the caste ridden and conservative Hindu state like Travancore, under the leadership of the Brahmin overlords, wasn't readily accepted these reformatory attempts in favour of women, these reforms made far reaching impact over the condition of the womenfolk in the society.

It was during the regency period of Gauri Parvathi Bai, the women emancipation and reformatory measures for women took a new turn in Travancore. Even though these attempts of reforms had the influence of British authorities and Christian missionaries, it was their modern outlook and mentality that favoured and created the ground for these reforms. Her reforms in favour of women, such as permission to wear upper cloth for converted Christian women, abolition of adiyara for wearing ornaments, fixing the age limit of marriage for women, limiting the amount of dowry etc. enhanced the status and position of the women of Travancore from mere creatures or objects of pleasure to a decent and respectable human being.

## Prohibition of Aajanpanam

The prohibition of the ceremonial gift of money known as aajanpanam was another key reform enacted in Travancore under the Regency of Rani Gauri Parvathi Bai in favour of femininity. During the 19th century in Travancore, there was an unnecessary custom of forcing ordinary people to provide positional gifts to powerful



members of society during events such as talikettukalyanam, thirandukuli, pulikudi, and others as a display of respect and regard. The common people had to plead the upper class for permission to hold such events at their homes and to give gifts as well. Aajanpanam was one such positional gift conferred on the upper class. During the marriage or any other ceremony related their girl child, this traditional present was mostly collected from the parents. The noble class of society forcibly snatched this from the householder as a hereditary privilege. Despite the fact that the traditional practice was discontinued at an early age, the forcible extraction of this aajanpanam was continued in numerous places. Those who failed to pay these tributes were barred from performing any type of family ceremony in the future.<sup>2</sup> At many occasions due to the non-payment of aajaanpanam, the nobility have frequently disrupted and destroyed marriages and other rituals.<sup>3</sup>

The Regent Maharani Gouri Parvathi Bai received various complaints from kudiyaans about their troubles regarding this aajanpanam. After careful consideration, Maharani, on August 1815 (18 Karkkidakam 990), declared that granting and accepting so-called status entitlements such as aajanpanam was completely forbidden.<sup>4</sup> It was finally deemed to be illegal and those caught in practice were asked to be prosecuted.<sup>5</sup> This insightful declaration however curbed the sovereign power of feudal masters and strengthened the power of the monarchy. The above declaration also aided the common folk in their progress. This gave the parents of the girls some sort of relief from their social and economic burden. The unwanted loss of money in the form of gift was ended and the parents could spend that money for some other purposes. This also reduced the amount of debt of the parents

who, sometimes, borrowed money from money lenders for this purpose.

### **Abolition of Adiyara for Wearing Gold and Silver Ornaments**

Another notable reform measure introduced by the Maharani Gauri Parvathi Bai for the enhancement of the condition of women in Travancore was the abolition of adiyara for wearing gold and silver ornaments. Women belonging to the Sudra, Ezhava, Shannar or such communities had no right to wear silver and gold ornaments. But if they wished to wear ornaments they had to pay certain amount as adiyara to the government.<sup>6</sup> The adiyara amount varied according to the caste stratification. Mennipponu was one such payment extracted from the non-Brahmin womenfolk of Travancore for getting the right to wear gold ornaments. The paradox was that even after the payment of this tax, the lower castes were not permitted to wear pure gold. They wore gold ornaments after mixing copper or other metals with it.<sup>7</sup>

While some paid adiyara in possession of such ornaments, others did not pay but kept and wore ornaments secretly. They were afraid that if they paid more adiyara for owning and wearing more ornaments, the authorities would notice their affluence and tax them more. So many people kept the ornaments secretly. When this was brought to the attention of Rani Parvathi Bai, the Regent realized that it was necessary to remove any such restrictions on the wearing of ornaments to please and satisfy all the subjects, including the tenants. Thus, on 1st May 1818, Rani Parvathi Bai issued a proclamation granting the Sudras, Ezhavas and Shannars the right to possess and wear gold and silver ornaments of their choice, in the same manner as the high caste Hindus, without paying adiyara or special money



payment and without informing the government.<sup>8</sup> This proclamation gave great boost up to the unprivileged womenfolk of Travancore. Until 1818, only Brahmins were allowed to use gold and silver ornaments. Now the non-Brahmin women also got the same privilege to have gold and silver ornaments of their own choice. The Proclamation was vehemently opposed by the Brahmins as it removed the stratification barriers in the case of ornaments. But Parvathi Bai without giving any consideration to the Brahmin opposition implemented the order. This synchronic and effective action of social legislation led to the dissolution of a particular royal and Brahmin privilege and turned it to the common right of any ordinary women in the state.

### **Fixing the Age Limit for the Marriage of Namboodiri Girls and Fixing the Limit of Maximum Dowry**

Another important social legislation that had a profound impact on the lives of women of Travancore was fixing the age limit of the marriage of Namboodiri girls. The women of the Brahmin community faced severe restrictions. They were under the control of male dominations. The social evils like dowry, polyandry, etc. distorted their personality. Their life was worse than that of the slaves. According to the law of succession of Brahmins, the eldest male member of the family inherited the entire property of the family. The girls in a Namboodiri family were looked upon as serious misfortune because of the responsibility of giving them in marriage to proper husbands.<sup>9</sup> According to custom, for every bridegroom a very heavy dowry had to be given. During the 18th and first half of the 19th century, it was the practice that continued among the Brahmins of Travancore to demand and pay huge amount as dowry in connection with marriage. The

amount of dowry was generally 2000 panams and sometimes it was even higher.<sup>10</sup> There was no law in Travancore for controlling the dowry system. The Brahmins who could not afford to pay such huge amounts were forced to dispose of their Brahmaswom lands or other properties. But those who had no such possessions found it impossible to give their maiden in marriage. As a result many of the Namboodiri women remained unmarried till thirty or forty years and were ruined ultimately.<sup>11</sup>

In order to avoid such tragedies in future and to maintain the welfare of the people of the state, Rani Gauri Parvathi Bai, in 1823 (Karkkidakam 11, 998 ME) issued a proclamation which ordered that all virgins in the families of Namboodiris and Pottis should be married between the ages of ten and fourteen.<sup>12</sup> The proclamation also ordered that the unmarried women above fourteen remaining shall be married within a period of two years from the date of this proclamation. Through the Proclamation, Rani also restricted the amount of dowry to maximum of 700 panams.<sup>13</sup> She specifically mentioned in the order that no person shall demand and none shall be given more than 700 panams.<sup>14</sup> The proclamation warned that those who do not abide by this rule should be tried in a court of law and severely punished in accordance with Dharmasastras.<sup>15</sup> This gave a great hope to the Namboodiri women because this proclamation reassured the poor Brahmins from the heavy burden of dowry and specifically ordered that no girl above the age of fourteen shall remain unmarried in a Namboodiri family. As a result all the Brahmin women began to receive the right to marry. This proclamation had great significance in the history of women emancipation because this proclamation stood as a torch bearer to further legislations regarding the marriage and dowry system of other communities.

### **The Stand against Sati**

Sati was a common practice in northern India. According to this custom if the husband died, the wife should end her life by jumping in to the funeral pyre. The Sati was so widespread in Bengal that the social reformer, Rajaram Mohan Roy came forward and in 1829 William Bentick banned sati. However, there are no historical records that substantiate the existence of the evil practice of Sati in Travancore. But in AD 1818 (993 ME), one woman named Veeramma asked permission from the Travancore sarkar to jump into the pyre after the death of her husband, Shitharaman. As this practice was unusual in Travancore, Maharani Parvathi Bai denied permission. But Veeramma started Satyagraha on the way to Huzur Cutchery which lasted for many days.<sup>16</sup> Following this, Rani Parvathi Bai issued an order stating that the custom of sati is not in practice in Travancore and would not be given order from pandaravaka to perform it. Rani also mentioned that if this custom was permitted in Pandirajyam, Veeramma should go there and do it, and if she wanted money to go to her village, she could be paid from Pandaravaka.<sup>17</sup> People who were her relatives came and persuaded her in various ways and took her to her village and gave her 500 panams from Pandaravaka for her expenses.<sup>18</sup> This stand of the Queen was lamentable as it put a stop to such demands from others and also through this act she illustrated her stand against such inhuman practices.

### **Permission to Wear Upper Clothes by Christian Shannar Women**

One of the most notable steps taken by the regents of Travancore for the emancipation and mobility of the womenfolk was the proclamation permitting the converted Christian women to wear upper clothes. By an age-old custom, women of

the lower caste people in Travancore had always been forbidden to wear an upper cloth like those by the high castes.<sup>19</sup> The women who covered their bosoms contrary to the custom were severely punished. It was the Christian missionaries who took initial steps for providing the women the right to wear upper clothes. Though their attempts were mainly intended for getting more people converted to their Christian faith, it became a boon for the people of this native state. Inspired by the attempts of the Christian missionaries Col. Munro, the Diwan of Travancore at that time, issued an order in 1812, which permitted the converted women to cover their bosoms like the Christians in other countries.<sup>20</sup> However, two years later, Maharani issued an order which said that Christian Shannar women were allowed to wear jackets or kuppayam,<sup>21</sup> but prohibited from wearing upper clothes as was usual among the Nairs.<sup>22</sup> This was a great achievement as far as the womenfolk of Travancore were concerned. For the first time in the history of Travancore a woman of lower caste got the privilege to cover their bosoms. It was considered by historians as a milestone in the acquisition of women's rights and transformation of womanhood in Travancore.

The Shannar women who had been converted to Christianity considered wearing upper clothes as a symbol of their enhanced position and started to wear additional clothes or scarves over the shoulder like the women of upper castes. These pretensions of the converted Shannar women were resented by the Caste Hindus. Wherever the Shannar women appeared with upper parts of their bodies covered, they were ill-treated by the caste Hindus.<sup>23</sup> Consequently, a communal riot took place in different taluks of the state. It was in this situation that Rani Parvathi Bai issued a Royal Proclamation on 3 February 1829 which confirmed the decree of 1814, allowing Christian

Shannar women to cover their bosoms, but not wearing additional clothes or scarves over the shoulder like the Nairs.<sup>24</sup> They were sanctioned to wear kuppayam (jacket) “as worn by the Syrian Christians and Muslim – Muppillas”,<sup>25</sup> but not like the Nairs. The main purpose behind this Proclamation was to maintain the status quo of the Travancore society.

The proclamation of Rani Gauri Parvathi Bai gave a great impetus to the attempts of women emancipation. It gave the womenfolk of Travancore, even if it was to the Christians, some freedom and dignity. This proclamation paved the way for further movements towards social mobility and equality of the women. After the proclamation so much change took place among the womenfolk of Travancore. Firstly the Shannar Christian women and imitating them later on the Hindu counterparts of Shannar and Ezhava castes, in certain localities began to adopt the ‘upper cloth’ as worn by the Nair women, over the kuppayam. This again caused communal tensions and finally led to the Proclamation permitting the womenfolk of Travancore irrespective of their castes to cover the upper part of their body.<sup>26</sup> With this declaration, the restrictions imposed on Travancore women in terms of dress were lifted, and women began to enjoy complete freedom in terms of clothes, decorations, and other aspects of their appearance. The regent, Gauri Parvathi Bai, took women-friendly measures that freed the ladies from their age-old sufferings and handicaps.

### Conclusion

To concluded that Regency also resulted in significant changes to several of dominant beliefs. Her rule demonstrated the need for tolerance rather than depriving a specific community of full rights. The impression that untouchable peoples

are also humans actually developed since her time. Because of humane administrative measures adopted by the regent at least some relief could be attained by the downtrodden sections of the population. Regent showed that she was stronger and tougher than some of the male rulers in their own descent.

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