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RECONFIGURING FANDOM IN THE DIGITAL SPACE: A STUDY ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF VIDEO STREAMING CONTENT AND THE VIRTUAL FAN CULTURE

Sonia John Markose

Assistant Professor
Department of Communicative English, St. Xavier's College for Women, Aluva
Corresponding Author Email ID: soniamarkose@stxaviersaluva.ac.in

ABSTRACT

Television is a medium which has entertained us for many years. But the emergence of internet and social networks gave rise to a new form of entertainment called video streaming. This phenomenon has gained momentum all over the world. Understanding the promising future of this industry, many players entered into the business of video streaming. Web series, the brain child of virtual business tycoons enriched the online streaming media with diverse content. In a short span of time, this new genre took over the digital space by storm.

Just until 5 years ago the only option to release a film was either in theaters or on YouTube. And then media giants like Netflix, Amazon entered the Indian markets. Along with them many regional OTT platforms like Voot, Hot Star, Zee5, MX Player, Sun Next, and Vodafone Play also emerged. The boom gave a platform to the video content makers.

Web series have gained popularity because they are taking us where mini screen won't. Creative freedom and audiences' convenience to watch shows gave a new facet to this new age entertainment channels and they started to invest heavily in regional content.

This online movement has had a profound impact upon the fan culture, empowering and disempowering, blurring the lines between producers and viewers, creating symbiotic relationships between powerful streamers and individual fans, and giving rise to new forms of cultural production.

As the penetration of mobiles is increasing in India and people are getting cheaper internet, the scope of online video content is also increasing leaps and bounds. A new era has evolved because of this for the content creators. The Indian youth is barely tuning into television with the web shows offering 10-50 minute episodes that has become a way of life. One can understand that the production has touched the clouds with the flooding internet memes, T-shirts and coffee mugs with dialogues from the show.

This paper attempts to study the emergence of fan communities in online spaces, who are well connected with modern technology. Methodologically, web series' content and interaction among the users are analyzed through content analysis and interviews.

Keywords: Fan culture, Fandom, Video Streaming, Web Series, Online Media

Technology is changing the way we consume information and entertainment. Broadcast networks are losing viewers and pay TV customers are cutting the cords and exploring new horizons of digital content. It seems like the world suddenly discovered live streaming. The increasing number of digital devices which are capable of supporting new media along with increasing internet speed has presented consumers with an opportunity to

access the media content in the form of video of their choice, be it information, entertainment or social activity anywhere, anytime.

Video is everywhere and by the end of this decade 80% of the global data will be streaming videos. We are now in the peak of attention economy. The video market is changing. Video is used for marketing businesses, education and entertainment. Global Media consumption has shown tremendous increase and has seen a significant jump from traditional media to new media. The rise of digital media players such as Netflix, Hulu, Amazon Prime and Apple TV are challenging the traditionally maintained preeminence of the television as the main entertainment center.

Virtual media consumption has shown remarkable development over the past few years. Among the digital gadgets, mobiles have taken over as the favorite medium of consuming online content. There is a noticeable change in viewer preferences towards digital media consumption as compared to traditional media. People are spending extra time each day online rather than traditional forms of media. Data from a Joint Survey organized by Cyber Media Research and Chinese Smart Phone Maker Vivo reveals that an average Indian is spending over 1800 hours a year on smart phone. The results demonstrated that the dependency on smart phones has increased. As the ―born in the net‖ generation grows up as digital natives, there will surely be significant increase in the time that people spend on digital media.

The digital environment has opened up new spaces for fans as well. Fans have always been at the forefront of media transformations. The digital space reconfigured the relationship between producer and consumer in the digital economy. Some fans are fascinated by the new opportunities presented by digital technologies, while others grieve over the digitally enabled encroachment of corporate power into the sacred space of fandom.

Fandom is a vibrant, socially rewarding space where groups of people come together to share interests, ideas, and occasionally work to change the world. Fandom is often designed to be participatory and engaging, bringing with it an expectation of performance, and fans are judged on their ability to engage with the source of their shared passion. Socially stunted or not, fandom‗s participatory culture is performed both in online and offline spaces.

Fan Studies is a subsidiary field of Popular Research focused on media fans and fan cultures. Fans might be defined as individuals who uphold a passionate connection to popular media, assert their identity through their engagement with and mastery over its contents, and experience social affiliation around shared tastes and preferences. Fan cultures are the social and cultural infrastructures that support fan activities and preferences. The roots of fan studies can be traced in the early work in the Birmingham Cultural Studies tradition on media audiences but increasingly fan studies focuses on groups and individuals who have self-defined as fans of particular programmes, performers, genres, and media as opposed to audiences that have a more

casual relationship to the content of popular media. Fan studies began as the study of fan reception but have increasingly been re centered on new forms of digital culture which has visible participatory culture practices. One key dividing line in fan studies is between pre-digital and digital era, although many argue that fans have been early adopters of communication technologies and that their social and cultural practices are around contemporary forms of virtual or online communities. This paper highlights that the online movement has deep impact upon the fan culture. Through this study the researcher is trying to find out how the development of video streaming actually shaped the so called virtual fandom and some of the common themes which reconfigured relationships between _creatives' and fans in the digital economy.

To find the information on how web series work with fans, I looked at the YouTube statistics of different web series episodes from different languages, including their trailers and bonus episodes. I focused exclusively on YouTube statistics for a few reasons. Most importantly, the data is public and easily accessible. I binge watched a few popular series in the prominent OTT platforms like Netflix and Amazon to analyze the marketing strategies they have used to woo the fans. I also did a thorough check on the apps created by fans to promote their favorite digital creative. Analysis of the comment boxes in you tube, blogs, Vlogs, news related to web series and fan pages on the social media platforms gave a new facet to my study. Information gathered from News paper articles related to the development of web series and mobile consumption pattern of people today added a new flavor to this paper.

In line with universal trends, the Indian consumer is increasingly consuming the content on digital platforms. This trend is observed for all sorts of content including text, audio and video. Increasing internet penetration and mobile proliferation and convenience of consuming the content anytime, anywhere are the key drivers for this trend. The proliferation of mobile devices, data prices and anywhere connectivity play equally important role in shaping the digital media consumption habits among Indian users.

Web series have gained popularity because they are taking us where mini screen won't. These personalized contents are scalable and can watch it according to our convenience. No one wants to be tied to a Television schedule and a video stream means you can watch your programs when you have the time to watch them. Many services allow viewers to choose the features and functions they want to pay for. Video streaming apps and video stream services make recommendations based on viewing profiles. This creates a customized buffet of recommended content that is targeted toward the viewer's interests. While convenience, scalability and customization are major drivers within the shift toward alternatives to cable TV, most budget-conscious consumers are choosing to cut the cord to save money.

The concept of the binge as viewing protocol related to fan practices. Binge-watching dominates the contemporary media landscape. Emerging video-on-demand industry contributes to the construction of binge-watching as deliberate, self-scheduled alternative to Watching TV at home or Viewing Films in theatres. Virtual fans find gratification from this mode of viewing.

With the advent of OTT players, both domestic and international consumers are equipped with multiple choices around cultural content consumption. We are seeing a shift in viewer's attitude from content ownership to having easy access to a vast library at any time and place. YouTube is the website that has developed the corner on the market in streaming video. This site has grown exponentially in the past few years, globally distributing millions of memes and home videos posted by Internet users. This video revolution gave rise to an increase in the video content where a common man can host, post, watch videos and earn money through it. All video publishers have their own objectives, including business communication, education, and entertainment. Now business owners also post YouTube-style videos on the web.

You tube played an important role in reconfiguring the fan culture. You tube gives a platform to interact with one's fans no matter irrespective of place and time. YouTube's two-way conversation platform enables the creator and fan communities to actually discuss about their favorite actor, episode or show. One will be able to feel deeper connection with your fans and vice versa. YouTube has turned to a rich source of fan material represents not only national stars but transnational film stars. Fans have multiple functions, including a celebration of their idols, an engagement with a transnational audience, and a space in which they can create and project a packaged self. A participatory fan culture has evolved due to the proliferation of new digital means like you tube and other OTT platforms. Often-criticized _fan subject' is now replaced by virtual fans creating and producing blogs, selfies, videos of their favorite actor, show and film. One can clearly state that new media technologies enabled participatory culture through mobile apps, OTT platforms and social networks. Another fascinating truth is that the evolution of ―hater's community" alongside with the Fandom.

Indian web content industry has produced many good series this year. 'The Family Man', a popular web series highlights the issues of the country that are prevailing now. This web series has the potential to come as the game-changer for Amazon Prime Video India. This web series received raving reviews from the fans and the fans are already demanding the season two of the trending web-series. Not only this, the web series is so exciting that the fans are binge-watching many episodes in just one go. Fans have taken to social media to express what they felt post watching the series and it definitely is not disappointing for the makers of the show.

Netflix's long-running prison dramedy "Orange Is the New Black" is another fine example for the popularity of web series. Immediately after the show came to an end eBay and VIP Fan Auctions put up an online sale to honour the series where the Fans could shop more than 950 props and costumes that used during filming of all seasons, including Crazy Eyes' radio, Taystee's prison uniform and Piper's contraband phone.

Karikku is one of the first platforms to launch the digital content production in our state. Karikku brings out web series and short videos known for their quirky humour. Now you can find Karikku fans everywhere. Karikku Fans made different apps to unlock the world of entertainment where you can watch karikku videos at one place. Karikku Whats app stickers are also a byproduct of the fandom. Karikku characters are used in trolls as well. Even the dialogues from the web series are adopted by most of youngsters and use it in their daily conversations.

More and more brands recruit web series into their content creation efforts. Now it is natural to see more and more branded web series. Despite the brand name appearing in the credits as well as an occasional swoosh on the actors' clothing there are many explicit signs that suggest the series is a marketing effort. Web series creators incorporate brand names in the casual conversation to make it appealing to the viewers. Brands started developing their own shows, each with specific marketing and branding goals. The viewership statistics below the video gives the answer why these brands go behind these new creatives.

A number of talented actors, theater artists, screen writers and directors found a new platform where they can discover themselves and can show their art freely. Amazon Prime, Netflix to ALT Balaji like digital mediums are featuring new talents along with popular Bollywood actors in strong content come episode-wise and create curiosity with the twist at the end of every episode. Bollywood actors like Akshay, Anupam Kher, Saif Ali Khan, Nawazuddin Siddiqui, Vivek Oberoi, Rajkummar Rao, R. Madhavan, Ali Fazal, Nimrat Kaur, Richa Chaddha and others are part of different Web Series. Akshay Kumar's upcoming digital debut The End and Emraan Hashmi's debut Tigers are fine examples. Veteran actor Anupam Kher, who had worked in more than 400 Indian films made his digital appearance through Netflix's The Indian Detective. Bollywood lead actor Saif Ali Khan is loved by the audiences in Netflix's action thriller web series Sacred Games; he is playing a cop there. Versatile actor R Madhavan and Amit Sadh featured in Amazon Prime's Breathe loved by the audience. Yesterday's lead actress Juhi Chawla plays an important role in ALT Balaji's web Series _The Test case'. Most of them feel that it is global and artists want to experiment with new content and crave quicker results.

The post-television battle for eyeballs has divided home screens like never before. Because of ever-increasing OTT platforms, every person would

have his/her personal list of favourites to watch. The last decade has witnessed the increase of internet series around the world, and Kerala too has jumped on the bandwagon. With access to fast Internet Connection, Netizens streaming, Binge-watching and Sharing ‗webisodes' of their favorite series in vernacular language has become the zeitgeist.

More and more media consumption is happening on digital media, and people spend more time on digital media as compared to traditional media. This increase can be credited to the improvement in mobile devices technology and internet connectivity, which has provided the viewers with the option of accessing digital media content on the go. India has the largest young population in the world that is driving force behind the digital media consumption in India. The busy Indian youth is barely tuning into television with the web shows offering 10-50 minute episodes that has become a way of life. They have become hard core fans of such shows and promote it among their friends communities. Sharing their favorite web series on social media has become a practice among the fans. To an extend it actually helped to increase the popularity of web series in our country. Social Media Status and character stickers instead of emojis boosted the promotion of such streaming content. One can understand that the production has touched the clouds with the flooding internet memes, T-shirts and coffee mugs with dialogues and characters from the show.

As more and more common people continue to pursue web series, we'll get the chance to fully understand this digital creative and see how different elements affect viewership. Hiring established stars and promoting their movies through web series indirectly tells us the fan followers of such programmes. In the age of digital transformation and binge watching, the audiences are no longer interested to watch longer stories that resemble the TV sitcoms and dramas. Short episodes and seasons appear to be effective now. Also, premium streaming services like Netflix, Amazon prime and now YouTube Red fortify their statuses as go-to entertainment channels and we will see more brands on these platforms soon. The industry is witnessing a shift from the offline fans to online fans. It is better to interact with their heroes online than worrying about the inaccessible, semi god like offline heroes. The nature of the fans is changing with the technological advancements. Participatory culture introduced by the new media has given a new look to the concept of fandom. Thus fandom has escalated greater heights than ever.

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PRADHAN MANTRI JAN DHAN YOGANA - A GENERAL OUTLOOK ON ITS OUTREACH FOR FINANCIAL INCLUSION

Ms.Rinu Elizabeth George[1], Ms.Litha Mary Issac[2]

[1]Assistant Professor, Kristu Jyoti College of Management and Technology, Chethipuzha,
[2]Assistant Professor, Mar Athanasius (Autonomous) College, Kothamangalam
Corresponding Author Email ID: rinuelizabeth93@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The grace of our economy has been shadowed with the uneven and inadequate financial development of various marginalised groups within it. These people have been out of the bliss of our economy from a very long time period. Government had been taking very many initiatives to bring these financially excluded underprivileged groups within the brackets of our structured economy. One among the most outreached one is Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yogana. The study is actually aiming to bring into light the benefits and present stature of the scheme from the perception of its beneficiaries. The study concluded that many of the beneficiaries are not fully aware of the benefits provided by the scheme and also there are still many hurdles to be removed to make it more beneficiary friendly.

Keywords: Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yogana, Financial Inclusion

Introduction

Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yogana is a scheme which tries to include the disadvantaged and low income segments of society into organized financial sector and tries to provide them banking facilities at affordable costs. Since independence many reforms have been taken place to include the poor and vulnerable sections of the society into the main stream financial system. In 2014 a scheme called Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana was announced to pass the fruits of organized financial sector to the low level income and vulnerable group. Many programs were conducted by frontlines of different banks like nationalised, scheduled, and even private banks to make them understand the importance of opening a bank account thus being part of the organized financial system. Though known by many names during different regimes of the ruling party, the basic objective of financial inclusion remains unchanged.

The government of India took many steps like Nationalisation of bank, appointing the business correspondence, opening new branches in unbanked and rural areas, setting of regional rural bank, relaxation on know-your customer (KYC)norms for financial inclusion .In this context the major scheme called Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yogana was introduced to achieve the goal of financial inclusion. The main feature of this scheme is that one can open bank account without any initial deposit. The account holders are provided with a rupay debit card. The wider perspective of the scheme is to create a cashless economy and thereby fulfilling the concept of digital

economy in India. The paper focuses on the awareness of Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yogana.

Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana

Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana is an innovative scheme launched by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi on 28th August 2014 for financial Inclusion. The scheme focuses on uplifting the poor and downtrodden section of the society by enabling them to get all the benefits of the banking system prevailing in India. The account can be opened with a zero balance .To transact cashless, the account holders are provided with a Rupay debit card like any other bank accounts, the account holders are eligible to get interest on their deposit and can avail overdraft facility if their account is active for the last six months of availing for credit. The accidental insurance of Rs 1 one lakh and other pension schemes attract a large number of population to open account through the scheme. The scheme also envisages financial literary program for the beneficiaries to make them aware of the benefits of the scheme. The business correspondence also known as bank mitra of various banks assist the beneficiaries for availing various services. Various subsidies of government, wages of Mahatma Gandhi national rural Employment Guarantee Act and other direct benefit transfers from government can be availed through this account. Even during the pandemic of covid -19, the Finance Minister, Nirmala Sitharaman announced financial assistance to women account holders of the scheme which clearly pinpoints the need of availing a bank account through the scheme.

The study was chosen as the Prime Minister declared financial assistance to women account holders of Jan Dhan Scheme during the covid pandemic 19. This put forward the need for the study of the awareness of Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yogana among the people. The scope of the study is limited to Pampady Grama Panchayat. A sample of 60 participants were chosen for study. Primary data were collected using questionnaire.

Objectives

- To know the general awareness of people about the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana scheme.
- To study about the awareness of the benefits enjoyed by the people under the scheme.
- To examine the reasons for opening the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana account.
- To examine the difficulties faced by the beneficiaries while opening the account under Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana
- To measure the satisfaction level of respondents regarding the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana.

Hypotheses

$H_0 1$: The respondents have a moderate level of awareness about the benefits of PMJDY scheme.

$H_0 2$: The mean rank of the opinion of respondents do not differ significantly as regards the reasons for opening the PMJDY accounts.

$H_0 3$: The mean rank of the opinion of respondents do not differ significantly as regards the factors determining the difficulties faced while opening the account

$H_0 4$: The respondents possess a moderate satisfaction about the services provided under PMJDY scheme.

Importance of the Study

Many studies and reforms of the past revealed that there is a positive correlation between economic growth and financial inclusion. Access of formal financial services by all segments of the society is one of the key indicator that accelerates the economic growth of the nation . PMJDY is one such scheme introduced by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi for including different segments of the society in the organised financial system of the nation there by achieving economic growth.The scheme focuses on having atleast one account for every households in the nation. One can open account with zero balance and the account holders are provided with Rupay debit card. Providing debit cards will help the account holders to be part of the digital economy as the wider perspective of the scheme is to create a cashless economy and thereby fulfilling the concept of digital economy in India. The most recent benefit of the scheme is that the women account holders were given financial assistance of Rs 500 for 4 months during the covid pandemic. This study depicts the awareness of people towards Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana. Hence it is justified that Pradhan Mantra Jan Dhan Yojana is a boon in the present day's population to enhance financial circulation. Hence, there is a need to understand the awareness of PMJDY with regard to financial inclusion.

Methodology of the study

This is a descriptive study for evaluating the awareness of people towards PMJDY. This study uses both primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected using direct interview method. The interview schedule was used for this purpose and it was prepared with utmost care and attention. Secondary data were collected from published sources.. The sample designs consist of convenient sampling. The data were collected from 60 sample respondents of Pampady grama panchayath viz from ward numbers 11, 12 and 13. The study conducted relating to the PMJDY scheme came out with the

following findings. The findings are classified under four headings as under based on the objectives and the tentative conclusions.

I)   Awareness about PMJDY scheme

- From the study it is revealed that the majority of the respondents 46 (76.7%) are aware of PMJDY and the rest 14 (23.3%) are unaware of it.

- Regarding the awareness level (76.7%) of the respondents, the majority (35%) came to know about PMJDY by media advertisement. Also it is interesting to know that 26.7 percent of respondents came to know about the same with the help of business correspondence.10 percent by friends and the rest by banks

II)   Awareness about the benefits under PMJDY

The awareness of the respondents about the benefits obtained to beneficiaries of PMJDY scheme is examined and seven variables were pointed out. The answers were marked in a three-point scale for best expressing their opinion. The first benefit, accidental insurance of Rs 1.lakh has mean 2.3913 and standard deviation 0.82941; the second one is no minimum balance required has 2.8261 and standard deviation 0.52933the next reason is life insurance cover of 30000 with mean 1.9565 and standard deviation 0.78758;interest on deposit has mean 2.6957 and standard deviation 0.62786.The next reason is overdraft facility of Rs.5000 with mean 1.7391 and standard deviation 0.82825;whereas facility of withdrawal up to Rs.10000/-has a mean 1.5000 and standard deviation 0.72265. Finally, availability of Rupay debit card has 2.9348 and standard deviation 0.44233. The benefit of availability of Rupay debit card is the most prominently regarded benefit as it is having the highest mean (2.9348), followed by no minimum balance requirement with mean 2.8261.

The notable point in this regard is that one sample t test results revealed that all the beneficiaries are having good knowledge about the benefits like accidental insurance, minimum balance, interest on deposit and availability of Rupay card as all the p values are less than 0.05 and mean values are more than 2. The beneficiaries are having moderate knowledge about the life insurance benefit of the PMJDY accounts as its p value is   0.710 and also there is low level of awareness about overdraft facility and withdrawal limits as mean value is less than 2 and p value is less than 0.05.

III)   Reasons for opening PMJDY account

The study has attempted to describe the reasons for opening PMJDY account. The study identified certain variables and the respondents were asked

about their opinion on the reasons or the ground on which they opened a PMJDY account. Friedman test has been used to reach a statistical finding.

The study has also made an attempt to know the reasons for opening PMJDY account. For the study certain variables have been identified and the respondents were asked to express their opinion regarding the reasons for opening the account on a three-point scale. Friedman test has been administered to find out the same.

The results show that the reason of increased savings has a mean rank of 2.63. whereas to avail government subsidy has a mean rank of 2.44 and to avail wages NREGA has 3.17 as mean rank other reasons have mean rank (1.75). The analysis of the reasons revealed that to avail wages (NREGA) is the most prominent reason to open PMJDY account. The p value (.001) is less than 0.05(**Chi Square= 17.238)**, it is inferred that there is significant difference in the attitude of the beneficiaries of the scheme relating to the benefit which they found as a reason for opening a PMJDY account. The savings benefit is the most relevant one with regard to the beneficiaries as it is having the high mean rank (2.63).

IV) Difficulties Faced while Opening the Account

In this study an attempt has been made to know the difficulties faced by beneficiaries while opening account under the PMJDY account. Three variables have been identified and the respondents were enquired to express their opinion regarding on the difficulties faced while opening PMJDY account. Friedman test has been used to reach a statistical finding.

The mean rank of first difficulty ie., lack of awareness is 2.23; second one is lack of education (1.92) and third is delay in process (1.85). The value of Chi square is 2.154 and p value is 0.314; as p value is more than 0.05 it is revealed that there is no significant difference in experiencing the various difficulties faced by the beneficiaries. Lack of awareness about the scheme and its allied details is having the highest degree of difficulty with regard to PMJDY account.

V) Overall Satisfaction Level

The satisfaction level of the beneficiaries marked a mean value of 2.30 on a three point scale with standard deviation 0.695; one sample t test results with p value 0.000 which states that the satisfaction level of the beneficiaries with regard to PMJDY scheme is significantly different. which reveals that the respondents have a good level of satisfaction about PMJDY scheme.

Suggestions

Even though many are aware of PMJDY scheme, the outreach to the beneficiaries is not complete and hence some suggestions are put forward to create the scheme more acceptable. Some of the steps which will be well appreciated can be noted as(i) the banks should make adequate initiatives to create awareness among people about PMJDY scheme particularly about the benefits of the scheme so as to popularise the scheme. (ii)rovide necessary support and awareness drives to the illiterate people to remove the hurdles in opening an account under the scheme. (iii)the scheme should be made user friendly and easy to operate. (iv)The business correspondents should act as consultants to get over the difficulties even after opening the account.

Conclusion

The success of the financial schemes lies with its acceptance by the beneficiaries**. The** PMJDY scheme is a   novel one which has been designed to effect financial inclusion to the maximum possible extent. Yet there are many hurdles which to overcome to reach to the maximum beneficiaries like lack of awareness, difficulty in opening the account etc,. However many are taken to avail the schemes through many fruitful initiatives from the service providers ie.,the banks. But some constraints are there which are yet to be corrected fully. We can also take note of some hurdles in the path of   the PMJDY scheme which can constraint the success of similar schemes in future too.

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A STUDY ON THE POPULARITY OF ONLINE PLATFORMS DURING COVID PERIOD

Ms. Dhanalakshmi Menon[1], Ms. Maria Jenitta V.B[2]

[1] Research Scholar, St. Xavier's College for Women, Aluva
[2]III B.Com, Chinmaya College of Arts, Commerce and Science, Tripunithura
Corresponding Author Email ID: dhanapraji@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The Novel-Corona virus is here to change the world in multiple dimensions. One of these dimensions is internet as an infrastructure. Now more than ever internet access is a lifeline not a luxury. The pandemic has graphically illustrated the importance of digital network and service platforms. As majority of the people are at home and have no access to outdoor entertainment avenues, data from over - the - top. (OTT) media, service players such as Netflix, Amazon prime, Youtube etc. show an unprecedented surge in content consumptions. The study enables us to understand why internet is consumed more than ever by the people during this pandemic and also about the popularity and necessity of some online platforms. The study clearly shows that a number of daily activities have shifted online ranging from the provision of health services to educational programs that enables home schooling.

Key Words: Internet, OTT, online platforms, digital services, Covid-19

1. Introduction

Human beings consider themselves to be the most advanced and superior species and claim to overpower nature and its resources through their intellectual evolution and technical know -how. However, some phenomenon occurs once in a century which takes a real test of this claim and tends to turn the table upside down. Covid-19 pandemic is one such phenomenon which has created havoc on this planet; claiming lakhs of lives and brought the global economy to a standstill. Economies of various nations have contracted with millions losing their jobs.

The Novel-Corona virus is here to change the world in multiple dimensions. One of these dimensions is internet as an infrastructure. Now more than ever internet access is a lifeline not a luxury. The pandemic has graphically illustrated the importance of digital network and service platforms. With the nationwide lockdowns, people have been asked to stay indoors and initiatives such as work from home (WFH), online teaching and learning; digital payments, online health care etc. are being taken and implemented. As majority of the people are at home and have no access to outdoor

entertainment avenues, data from over - the - top. (OTT) media, service players such as Netflix, Amazon prime, Youtube etc. show an unprecedented surge in content consumptions. With social distancing measures the new norm across the globe; we are living our lives online. From online learning to working from home, live streamed religious services, even weddings and funerals the web connects us to the loved ones in this time of physical isolation. The outbreak of Covid-19 has created a global health crisis that has had a deep impact on the way we perceive our world and our everyday lives. This undertaken research attempts to make a comparative study on increase in usage of internet during Covid period.

2. Significance of the Study

If there were any lingering doubts about the necessity of digital transformation, the Corona Virus has silenced them. The pandemic the world is facing now has forced many people to stay home. This means internet usage has increased tremendously. Restaurants, movie theatres, gyms and other recreational activities have been shut down. This is causing the world to spend more time online. The Covid-19 pandemic has drastically changed the way we live our daily lives. Many of us now work from home, turn to telemedicine to see a doctor, watch more online streamed programs for entertainment, uses online communication tools and even offices and schools have been moved into our basements and living rooms. In a contactless world, the vast majority of interactions with customers and employees must take place virtually. The only way to stay in business during the mandated shutdowns and restricted activity is operating digitally. The new decade is expected to witness the next wave of digital world aided by the recent pandemic which has catalysed the internet consumption. So it seems necessary to explore the ways how people have found to cope with pandemic situation one side with social isolation on the other side that might have never seen before. This study will be useful in analysing the increased usage of internet during the pandemic period.

3. Objectives of the Study

a) To study the increase in usage of internet during the pandemic period.
b) To study about the popularity of various online platforms during the Covid period.
c) To understand the significance of online platforms in the life of common people.

1. Research Methodology

The present study is conducted in Ernakulam district. The study enables us to understand why internet is consumed more than ever by the people during this pandemic and also about the popularity and necessity of some online platforms. This study reveals that why internet is essential in this present

world to get connected one another and for getting things done. The entire life style has been changed after this pandemic and it is necessary to study the change in our lives during the pandemic. For accomplishing the predetermined objectives of the undertaken research, the primary and secondary sources have been used.

2. Data Collection

The following techniques were adopted for data collection.

5.1 Primary Data: Questionnaire, interview etc. were the methods used to collect the data. The data was collected from 50 respondents, using convenience sampling method, who were students, teachers, people who work from home and people from every section of the society those who make use of such online platforms.

5.2 Secondary Data: The study consists of information gathered from magazines, newspapers, internet, articles and dissertations etc.

3. Review of Literature

Akala, Khetarpal (2020): As the use of video and audio-conferencing tools increases significantly, organizations will ramp up their technology infrastructure to account for the surge. This will lead to increased investment in bandwidth expansion, network equipment and software that leverages cloud services. With employees becoming acclimatized with the idea of work-from-home (WFH), meeting and transacting online, firms will shift to WFH as a norm rather than as an exception.

Shah (2020): Education is another domain in which there a dramatic shift to the online mode of transacting occurs. Since the beginning of the lockdown, schools, colleges and universities around the world have shifted their classes to video conferencing platforms like Zoom and Google Meet. Along with these synchronous modes of teaching, asynchronous platforms like edX and Coursera have also seen an increase in enrolments.

Bhattacharya (2020): The gig economy is driven by online platforms that hire workers on an ad hoc, short-contract, and mostly informal basis. Well known examples of these includes Uber and Airbnb globally and Ola and Swiggy in India. These platforms have grown immensely since the wide availability of smart phones from 2010 onwards. During the lockdown, workers, employed by these platforms have suffered heavily, as the demand for their services, Taxi rides, rentals or skill work, has disappeared. Further since these workers had no guaranteed salaries their incomes dropped dramatically.

Morrison – Smith &Ruiz (2020): Work-from-home and gig work has received attention in IS research, through topics in telecommuting, digital nomads and virtual teams. One key issue is that work allocation and collaboration across and inside teams, and across projects. This issue will face a rise in scale and importance in the cost pandemic world as the number of WFH and gig workers increases. Research may focus on aspects of the design of the work norms, work contracts and team building amongst others.

Kaila (2020): Another aspect of digital use by large sections of the working population is that of constant work place monitoring and being on-the-job continuously. Those working from home using video conferencing technologies find themselves under intense scrutiny and all interactions are ―hyper-focused.

Yu (2020: Many users are beginning to rely on digital resources extensively, some for the first time, and are becoming targets for fraud and scams. Organizations and government aware of this threat and are taking countermeasures – for instance, some governments took a strong stand against Zoom session for education, forcing the platform provider to upgrade security.

7. Rise of Online Education Platforms

ZOOM: The video conferencing software that went more public during the pandemic. Many students and even working people depend on this particular app for a virtual classroom and for online workspace respectively. People have flocked to the service to keep up with friends, build digital clubs and even host weddings. Record number of users has started using this application during the pandemic.

MICROSOFT TEAMS: Microsoft teams chat and conferencing app gained more than 12million daily users in one week as more people worked from home and more online classes were conducted during the Covid outbreak. As Covid-19 is continuing to impact people & countries around the world, TEAMS are moving everywhere to remote work.

GOOGLE MEET: As Covid-19 turned our world into a more physically distant one, many people began looking to online video conferencing to maintain social, educational and work place contact. MEET was driven by huge number of additional uses during the pandemic. Also it recorded a 30 fold growth since the beginning of the year.

BYJU'S LEARNING APP: Covid 19 pandemic helped BYJU'S to become a decacorn. The free learning content and live classes fascinated the students in the country and provided them with useful stuffs.

5. MANORAMA MAX: It is unique service through which a student can get complete access to over 300 plus entrance exams, carrier guidance,

educational guidance etc.. The pandemic witnessed the highest download of app and its increased usage to a very great extent.

8. Rise of OTT Platforms

PAYPAL: It is the fastest & safest way to send or receive money which has its reach around 200 markets. The II nd quarter 2020, which was all about Covid – 19 turned out to be a phase of accelerated growth of PAYPAL. One of the most accepted modes of contactless payment QR code enables the users to make payment just by scanning a code. This helped many small merchants to survive during the pandemic.

2. GOOGLE PAY: GOOGLE PAY is Google's new addition. It not only enables smooth digital transaction but also reduces the risk of spreading or Corona Virus. People refused to step into ATM to reduce social contact during the pandemic. This aided the speedy growth of GOOGLE PAY. Reports show that its usage has increased to 52% during pandemic.

3. PAYTM: PAYTM founder Vijay Sharma said the company is witnessing up to 3.5X growth in transaction on this platform. He also said that the company has also seen growth in the average number of transactions being conducted in a week.

4. YONO SBI: YONO (You Only Need One) is n integrated digital platforms offered by SBI to enable the uses to access a variety of financial and other services such as ticket bookings, online shopping or medical bills. April and September 2020, the time when the spread of virus was in its peak, 10.4 million new users started making use of this app.

5. PHONEPE: It is a digital wallet platform and online payment company. It has seen its new user acquisitions swell by 50% during the pandemic with a record of 550 million transactions in the month of June alone.

9. Data Analysis

Table 9.1: Profile of the Respondents

Particulars	Categories	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Gender	Male	35	70
	Female	15	30
Age	18 – 25	25	50
	26 – 33	16	32
	34 – 41	4	8
	42 – 49	3	6
	50 and above	2	4

	Self employed	6	12
Employment Status	Professional	10	20
	Employee	14	28
	Student	20	40

50 respondents were selected for the study and has observed that, 70% were male, 50% belong to the age category of 18 to 25, 40% were students.

Table 9.2: Usage and Preference of Online Platforms

Particulars	Categories	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Use of OTT and TV	OTT	32	64
	Television	18	36
Preference of watching functions Live streamed	Yes	34	68
	No	16	32
Frequency of Using Food Delivery Apps	Never	4	8
	Rarely	8	16
	Often	17	34
	Frequently	14	28
	Always	7	14
Usage of Social Media	Yes	47	94
	No	3	6
Preference of method of Shopping	Online	23	46
	Offline	27	54
Preference of method used for financial transactions	Online	38	76
	Traditional	12	24
Frequency of using Online Programs & Movies	Never	0	0
	Rarely	6	12
	Sometimes	22	44
	Always	22	44
Use of Telemedicine Apps	Yes	15	30
	No	35	70
Use of Paid-up Fitness Apps	Yes	7	14
	No	43	86

More than 60 percent of the respondents use OTT platforms, they prefer to watch functions being live streamed and 88% of them enjoy watching online programs and movies. 34 percent of the respondents often use food delivery apps. Social media are very popular among the respondents as 94 percent of them use these media. 54 percent of them still prefer to offline shopping to online shopping but 76 percent of them prefer online mode of financial transaction than traditional mode. Majority of the respondents are not interested in using Telemedicine and Paid-up fitness Apps.

10. Conclusion

Coronavirus pandemic and related containment measures have grossly affected the daily life and created a need of alternative ways of social communication and entertainments. While the world is struggling with Covid-19, many technologies have been implemented to fight against the disease. During the pandemic, physical distancing is necessary to reduce the spread of the virus. To compensate this lack of social encounters, people have been advised to connect with others via digital or internet platforms.

We understand that a pandemic can have severe consequences including changing the political, economic, social, and personal lives. For the Covid-19 pandemic we envisage a dramatic shift in digital usage which impacts all aspects of work and life. A lack of access to the internet significantly impacts people's lives during this time. The internet enables us to share vital information about the pandemic and the measures being put in place to tackle it. It helps us to understand and scrutinize our government's actions. And with the majority of population social distancing or living under quarantine conditions, technology helps us to work, study, shop and communicate.

The study clearly shows that a number of daily activities have shifted online ranging from the provision of health services to educational programs that enables home schooling. The Coronavirus pandemic has highlighted that, how essential is access to internet and digital technologies to all communities irrespective of economic, political, social or geographical circumstances. Today more than ever, it is clear that wide availability of internet infrastructure and services delivered without discrimination is fundamental for strong societies.

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BIKE RIDING SUBCULTURE: A FORM OF RESISTANCE WOMEN RIDERS AND GENDER DISCRIMINATION

Ms. Sidia Mathew

Assistant Professor,
Department of English, Noble Women's College, Manjeri
Corresponding Author Email ID: mathewsidia@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Subculture consists of a group of people who oppose a culture they view as a hegemonic and see the dominant culture as one that enforces conformity. The cornerstone for many of these subcultures is the act of resisting this system and living, so as to challenge what the population as a whole agrees upon to be ―normal‖ and ―polite.‖ A subculture can be organized around a common activity, occupation, age, gender, status, race, religion, or ethnicity. These factors help unify the group, as each member takes on the attributes appropriate for the social conditions in the subculture. This article focuses on Bike riding as a subculture. Bike riding subculture and the attitude of the society towards bike riders, has always been predictably negative. This distinct youth sub culture has had to deal with the prejudices and labeling of the society. It is an adolescent based subculture with unmistakable styles, practices, and interests. This was considered as a form of resistance to the societal structure since it involved the youth who started to carry on with their life as per their wish and to adore the life on wheels. They began to be viewed as outlaw gangs with independent styles and taste for fashion. Tattooing, body piercing, affinity towards biker jewelry etc. distinguished them from the ordinary people in the society and serves as distinct symbols of resistance.

Social role of men and women to each other rests on the cultural norms of that society, which lead to the creation of gender systems. These articles also try to examine the gender discrimination existing in the field of bike riding. Women had to and still have to overcome numerous obstacles to make a wish come true travel. Young women riders challenge these gender stereotypes by riding the streets on motorbikes. Destruction of the socially assigned gender roles through riding bikes can be seen as a form of resistance by women.

Keywords: Subculture, Resistance, Bike riding subculture, Gender discrimination

Resistance is a complex social phenomenon that can include different behaviors and actions. Resistance can occur at a micro level all the way to the macro level of protests that bring down whole governments. Subculture consists of a group of people who oppose a culture they view as a hegemonic and see the dominant culture as one that enforces conformity. The cornerstone for many of these subcultures is the act of resisting this system and living, so as to challenge what the population as a whole agrees upon to be ―normal‖ and ―polite.‖ Such social groups resist the norms and values of a culture they see as exerting ideological and coercive control over their lives. Through their resistance, subcultures undermine the hegemonic social meanings and power relationships that influence our actions in many ways. There are multitudes of ways in which scholars define resistance. Haenfler in his book Straight Edge (2006) asserts that Action and Opposition are defined to be the two basic

elements of resistance. Action is the idea that resistance is not a quality or state of being, but active behavior done in opposition. Opposition means that resistance is against someone or something that is seen as unjust or unfair. Thus opposition is the degree of deviance from the dominant culture. Subcultures resist hegemonic cultural norms and engage in a deviant lifestyle without intending to change the larger system. Dick Hebdige's, Subculture: The Meaning of Style (1979) theorized resistance in cultural appropriation, in which people take everyday objects out of their normal cultural meaning and integrate them into style to create new resistant and subversive meanings. One example of appropriation is the punk practice of using safety pins as piercings. To Hebdige, Subculture is similar to that of an alternative lifestyle which is different from the mainstream culture and is generally perceived to be outside the cultural norm. Hebdige argues that subculture refers to a group of people within a culture that separates itself from the parent culture to which it belongs frequently keeping up some of its establishing standards.

A subculture can be organized around a common activity, occupation, age, gender, status, race, religion, or ethnicity. These factors help unify the group, as each member takes on the attributes appropriate for the social conditions in the subculture. The group may have distinctive sets of behaviours, norms, beliefs, and values that help the group to be identified as a subordinate group when compared to the dominant society. Subcultures build up their own standards and qualities regarding social, political and sexual issues. Subcultures are also a part of the larger society while keeping their characteristics intact. It is important to stress again that subcultures are only one of the many responses which the young can make to the situations in which they find themselves. Subcultures take shape around the distinctive activities and _focal concerns' of groups. When these tightly-defined groups are also distinguished by age and generation, we call them _youth subcultures'. People belonging to the mainstream culture, adhering to the societal norms and values consider subcultures and its practitioners as outcastes. It's the young generation that always tends to show definite deviations from the drawn lines. _Youth subculture' is an adolescent based subculture with unmistakable styles, practices, and interests. Youth subcultures offer members, the possibility for a new identity that remains outside the accepted norms laid out by the social organizations, for example, family, work, home, and school. Youth sub- cultures form the terrain of social and cultural life. Some youth subcultures are regular and persistent features of the _parent' class-culture. But some subcultures appear only at particular historical moments. They soon become visible, and are identified and labeled easily. Despite several differences, we should stress that, subcultures continue to exist within and coexist within the dominant culture from which they are spring.

Subcultures often consists of the study of the symbolism attached to clothing, music, and other visible aspects common to the subculture, and the

ways in which these same symbols are interpreted by members of the dominant culture. The biker culture can be viewed as a youth subculture that is identified as minority groups of people who were considered deviant. The development of biker culture as a youth subculture can be traced back to the Japanese subculture ‚Bosozoku', and the ‚American choppers' and ‚Greasers'. Bosozoku subculture relates to customized motorcycles. The term, Bosozoku means running-out-of-control. The first appearance of these types of biker gangs was in the 1950s. A Chopper is a type of custom motorcycle which emerged in California in the late 1950s. The Chopper is perhaps the most extreme of all custom styles, often using radically modified steering angles and lengthened forks for a stretched-out appearance. Greasers are a youth subculture which was popularized in the 1950s to the 1960s by predominantly working class and lower class teenagers and young adults in the United States. The subculture remained prominent into the mid 1960s and was embraced by certain ethnic groups in urban areas, particularly Italian-Americans and Hispanic- Americans. Rock and roll music, rockabilly and doo-wop were part of the culture. Bikes entered the scene significantly after the Second World War. What would evolve into the one percent motorcycle clubs first began as a brotherhood, born out of the need of World War Two veterans to feel that sense of belonging and camaraderie that they had in the military. The Hollister Riot of 1947 was somewhat of a turning point in the evolution of motorcycle culture and helped to cement common perception of riders. The Hollister Riot was an event which occurred at the Gypsy Tour Motorcycle Rally, sanctioned by the American Motorcyclist Association (AMA), in Hollister, California from July 3 to 6, 1947. Many more motorcyclists than expected flooded the small town to watch the annual rallies, and to socialize and drink. A few of the motorcyclists got out of control and caused a commotion in the town, although at the end of the event, the damage was considered minor. The incident known afterwards as the Hollister riot, was sensationalized by the press with reports of bikers ―taking over the town" and ―pandemonium" in Hollister. The strongest dramatization of the event was a staged photo of a drunken man sitting on a motorcycle surrounded by beer bottles. The Hollister riot helped to give rise to the outlaw biker image. What was indeed a small disturbance at the Fourth of July, Gypsy Tour event in California, was sensationalized by the press and presented the image of lawless bikers terrorizing the town.

Biker culture developed in societies where bike riding was considered just as a form of transport. A particular group of people especially the youth began to explore the world and experience new things by means of long ride via bikes. This was considered as a form of resistance to the societal structure since it involved the youth, who were viewed as bound to take up an occupation and care for the family after the completion of studies. Youth started to carry on with their life as per their wish and to adore the life on wheels. They began to be viewed as outlaw gangs with independent styles and taste for fashion. Tattooing, body piercing, affinity towards biker jewelry and

long biker wallet chains, bandana scarfs etc. distinguished them from the ordinary people in the society and serves as distinct symbols of resistance. Biker culture was always seen to exercise a border maintenance function by serving to construct the very existence of ‗youth' as a distinct group.

An individual's, gender identity refers partly to which a person sees themselves as either masculine or feminine. Femininity and masculinity are rooted in the social (one's gender) rather than the biological (one's sex). Society decides what it means to be a male or female, also how to be the same in power and dominance. In such situations, men will generally respond by defining themselves as masculine by taking on particular traits, while women will generally define themselves as feminine and take on a more submissive role. Categorizing males and females into social roles creates a problem, because individuals feel that they must be at one end of a linear spectrum and must identify themselves as a man or woman, rather than being allowed to choose a section in between. Globally, communities interpret biological differences between men and women to create a set of social expectations that define the behaviours that are "appropriate" for men and women and determine women's and men's different access to rights, resources, power in society and health behaviours. Although the specific nature and degree of these differences vary from one society to the next, they still tend to favour men, creating an imbalance in power and gender inequalities in most societies. Many cultures have different systems of norms and beliefs in gender, but there is no universal standard to a masculine or feminine role across all culture. Social role of men and women to each other rests on the cultural norms of that society, which lead to the creation of gender systems. The gender system is based on social patterns in many societies, which include the separation of sexes, and the primacy of masculine norms. According to the Philosopher Michael Foucault, in his book The History of Sexuality, ―as sexual subjects, humans are the object of power, which is not an institution or structure, rather it is a signifier or name attributed to ‗complex strategical situation.' Because of this, ‗power' is what determines individual attributes, behaviors, etc. and people are a part of an ontologically and epistemologically constructed set of names and labels. For example, being female characterizes one as a woman, and being a woman signifies one as weak, emotional, and irrational, and incapable of actions attributed to a ‗man.' It is not the behaviors themselves that are important, but the meanings implied by those behaviors."

Beginning at birth, the self-meanings of one's gender are formed in social situations, stemming from ongoing interaction with significant others such as parents, peers, and educators. While individuals draw upon the shared cultural conceptions of what it means to be male or female in society which are transmitted through institutions such as religion or education, they may come to see themselves as departing from the masculine or feminine cultural model. A person may label herself female, but instead of seeing herself in a

stereotypical female manner such as being expressive, warm, and submissive, she may view herself in a somewhat stereotypically masculine fashion such as being somewhat instrumental, rational, and dominant. That is people have views of themselves along a feminine-masculine dimension of meaning, some being more feminine, some more masculine, and some perhaps a mixture of the two. It is this meaning along the feminine-masculine dimension that is their gender identity, and it is this that guides their behavior. In western culture, stereotypically, men are aggressive, competitive and instrumentally oriented while women are passive, cooperative and expressive. Anthropologist Margaret Mead addressed the issue of differences in temperament for males and females in Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies (1935). This early study led to the conclusion that there are no needed differences in traits or temperaments between the sexes. Observed differences in temperament between men and women were not a function of their biological differences. Rather, they resulted from differences in socialization, and the cultural expectations held for each sex. The gender theorist, Simone de Beauvoir argues that ―One is not born a woman, but rather becomes one." The gender theorist, performance artist and American author, Katherine Vandam ―Kate" Bornstein has been identified as gender nonconforming. Bornstein's, Gender Outlaw: On Men, Women, and the Rest of Us (1994) states that the way to liberate women is to deconstruct gender. To Bornstein, women couldn't be oppressed if there was no such thing as ‗women' and the doing away with gender is key to the doing away with patriarchy. Gender fluidity is the ability to freely and knowingly become a limitless number of genders, for any length of time. Women have been fighting long to define establish and achieve political, economic, personal and social equality of sexes. This includes seeking opportunities for women that are equal to those for men. There is little doubt that gender differences exist in subcultures, however postmodern subcultural research suggests that because of the more transient sociality's, there may be less constraint placed on gender and more choice for all. The gender differences make a subculture more exclusive and increasingly difficult for female inclusions. In many countries, women are still unable to purchase their own property, vote or even wear what they want. In Saudi Arabia women are not allowed to drive. Yemeni women are some of the least empowered women in the world. In Nepal if a woman is raped or assaulted, the perpetrators are not punished, they aren't even arrested. These are all examples of extreme discrimination of women worldwide, but we can find more subtle examples of discrimination in minor fields such as bike riding as well. There used to be a time when almost everyone who rode a bike was a man, but times have changed. After being stuck on the back of a bike for a while, some women decided it was time to start doing the riding themselves and the motorcycle community is better off because of it. Today there are plenty of female riders who've never been pillion riders, and are simply following their heart and have begun to ride. Thus, the act of riding bikes by women can be seen as a fight against gender discrimination. Discrimination of

women in the world is still a very real problem. Even though we have made huge strides, it is still devastating worldwide. Asian women were generally underrepresented in the biking world. Bike riding was considered a ‗male activity.' In our country, motorbikes are considered as the regular means of transport for men. Some people even argue that female attires are not comfortable and do not suit the purpose of riding and this was the reason why bike riding was restricted to the men, Society tends to treat the body as something that is fixed and rigid. Over the years and especially since the middle of the last century, attempts have been made to question such notions and view body seriously as a text in which societal taboos and cultural values are symbolically inscribed. Women had to and still have to overcome numerous obstacles to make a wish come true, from seeking permission from parents to book hotels at affordable places. Safety is another issue that they face, when they travel solo. However, when it comes to men, they are free to explore the world. Even in an ordinary family, the father enjoys the privilege of travel without restrictions whereas the mother is bound to the family and the house. Women today are empowered and they have been able to overcome the socio cultural barriers in the field of riding bikes.

Young women riders challenge these gender stereotypes by riding the streets on motorbikes. Destruction of the socially assigned gender roles through riding bikes can be seen as a form of resistance by women. People are amazed to see lady riders. Men who ride bikes are seen as conforming to their gender while women who ride bikes are seen as denying theirs and are marked as ‗gender traitors'. While the core principles of masculinity and femininity differ somewhat from group to group, there are some common beliefs. Men are seen as strong and action oriented. Women are seen as nurturing and gentle. Women riders claim that certain motorcycle clubs are even reluctant to give membership to women. They consider women as intruders. Women riders are facing more questions from the part of people and society than men riders. Women who participate in the riding world combine biking with a vision of femininity and can bring about a change to the very meaning of the word ‗feminity.' All women bikers in part have revised, modified, and redefined the word ―feminine." Certain feminist scholars claim that riding bikes has nothing to do with the movement of feminism. Earlier women were not that bold enough to resist the social taboos and conventions. But since time passed, empowered women began to question the meaningless confinements, and to enter into the fields that were once held solely by men. Nowadays, more and more women are getting into the field of bike riding. But still there is something that holds them back or put a control over them from being a full time traveler. Managing menstrual cycles is one of the biggest challenges that women riders usually face while planning a long solo trip. Facing the possibility of sexual assaults and molestations is another problem faced by women bikers. Riding helps to blur the lines of gender and it's a more wonderful experience than masculine or feminine. Women wearing leather

jackets, high heels and even headscarf ride bikes such as CBR Repsol and Royal Enfield flawlessly and beautifully sometimes far better than many of the men folk. They generate a passion for riding among other women and intend to encourage a more female riding culture and to propagate the idea that anyone and everyone can ride. Breaking of such gender norms in a conservative country perfectly portrays the struggle to attain equality. Only the eradication of gender discrimination can ensure perfect equality. If we can keep shedding a light on the discrimination of women throughout the world, we can hopefully change things for the better. Away from the dark depths of the complex and aged Ocean of gender, women are jamming the wind to touch the sky and be the sunshine for the future. Bike riding is a socially productive subculture, having a place with youth culture as an alternative type of resistance towards conventions. It focuses on the fractured nature of modern life; a world that is transitory and has unique cultural features such as music, style, fashion, objects, and images that are becoming increasingly important and valued. Biking provides possibilities for escape, transcendence and resistance, providing an outlet that is simultaneously different, yet a part of the mainstream society.

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TAKING A SECOND LOOK AT THE LENSES":
DECONSTRUCTING FANTASISED WOMANHOOD IN
MALAYALAM CINEMA

Ms. Treesa Petreena

Research Scholar
St. Xavier_s College for Women, Aluva
Corresponding Author Email ID: petreena91@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Kerala society is appropriated by patriarchy, where gender hierarchies are highly nurtured. Women who are _represented by men' are considered to be a part of this patriarchal circle, and thus _real women' are seen as outcasts. A woman's body becomes a social and cultural construct while men enjoy a sense of toxic privilege in our society. Here, it is in this context that the role of cinema calls much attention as it acts as a watchdog and propagator of patriarchal ideologies. While analysing the history of cinema, only men had the access to power, opportunity and material resources as filmmakers, cinematographers and producers. Men controlled the scene not only as makers, but also as the majority of the spectators, and therefore male fantasies are exalted since cinema is _made by men and for men'.

This research paper aims to re-read various instances and tropes within Malayalam Cinema and how it has aided in creating conditioned images of womanhood according to male fantasies. Also the study intends to prove that the status of women remains unexplored and unknown unless it is narrated by female voices.

Keywords: Male gaze, abjection, cultural hybrid, voyeurism, hyper-realism, gender performativity, gender, absence and presence.

Among the Indian states, Kerala stands apart socially, culturally and politically in terms of high literacy rates, economic development, balanced sex-ratio and lower infant mortality rates. Therefore, an illusion about women of Kerala enjoying greater empowerment circulates widely. But the fact is that, compared to women who enjoyed matrilineal advantages in certain communities in pre-independent Kerala, the modern women is in a double trap within the label of empowerment. Even though we have women's collective groups which advocate gender equality and workplace impartiality, it fails to address women's submissive position in family and relationships. The ironic situation of _liberal patriarchal pseudo-feminism' that exists in Kerala continues to emphasise that women are essentially wives and mothers (Pillai, 5). The prevailing state of our society puts the position of women problematic as well as confusing, that whatever their career designation maybe, women hurries to get back to their households to settle down with their essential selves. Such forced notions of femininity which is regarded as normative eventually curtails woman her actual identity.

The concept of ‚modern womanhood' is materialised into reality when a woman steps out of her house. Our society never tolerated a progressive femininity within one's household, and was seen as a potential threat which could harm tradition and identity. The concept becomes acceptable only if the woman could balance domestic life with her radical outlook even-though it is self-contradictory. The myth of modern womanhood is thus ‒a mix of the dominant Victorian and brahminical values", and this idea was clearly reflected in cinemas (Virdi 62). Thus modern Kerala woman is a typical example of how one could never equalise a woman's higher literacy rates and salary scale with that of her liberation and independence. It was eventually a combination of a much stronger restraint that put together the upper-caste Hindu ideal and purity of Victorian remains, resulting in the formation of a new cultural hybrid.

For a deliberate erasure of the possibilities in modifying the oppressive means of patriarchy, the medium of cinema has been used to naturalise the essentialist notions of hegemonic culture. The unwritten but strictly nurtured protocols regarding gender expressions, sexuality and gender roles are widely circulated among the common mass by means of cinema. Cinema is a popular medium in which dominant cultural values are constantly contested through the construction of powerful images and through cinematic codes, gender roles are specifically assigned to each mainstream genders respectively. The formula for an ideal Indian woman or a man is the appropriate mixture of certain particular characteristic features like ‒submissiveness, self-sacrifice, traditional values, norms and attire, chaste, and virtues are feminine traits. Where on the other hand, dominance, rational, masculine and muscular bodies, protector, fearless, assertive and independent are all associated with masculinity and the heroes of the film"(Raza 63). Any departure from this agreement causes rupture in the stability of the gender hierarchy and this is why the image of a ‚social butterfly', that is ‒a metaphor for women of leisure" (Diwakar 247), is always a problematic model, which is constantly ridiculed and shamed over the decades through the medium of cinema. A butterfly image is given for an educated and free-willed woman because ‒the metaphor evokes images of restless, flighty, colourful creatures who are difficult to pin down or control" (Diwakar 248). In Malayalam cinema, such wild and independent image of a modern woman is highly at risk, which is always in comparison with the obedient and dutiful image of a traditional Indian woman who eventually wins the contest. Popular cinemas celebrate this notion of ‚heroine and the vamp' dichotomy, idealising the virtuous woman and comparing her to the Hindu mythological figures such as ‚Sita'. The ‚reckless' woman is taught a lesson by dragging her towards the limits of patriarchy, and is transformed to a traditional submissive woman, which she eventually learns as ideal and meaningful, as in the film Aaramthampuran (1997, directed by Shaji Kailas). Ambition is often seen as detrimental, and the women in male fantasy learn to give up on themselves.

The hatred towards modern femininity and the admiration for the traditional chaste innocent woman continues throughout Malayalam film history and in most of these films the problem is resolved, as the _free-willed' woman submits herself by glorifying existing patriarchal norms. Most of the examples can be drawn from films of 1990s such as Njangal Santhushtaraanu (1999), Kaliveedu (1996), Deepasthambham Mahashcharyam (1999) etc. This modern to traditional transformation theme is repeated numerous times in Malayalam cinema and most of them are huge successes, which show how much the theme is desired and accepted by the audience. A similar threat posed through cinema is the village belle's desire towards urban ways, which is considered as a destructive cause of any ideal family. Number of films has been released on such theme, which proves that it has been always a dreadful nightmare for the patrilineal society. Films such as Amma Ammayiamma (1998), Thalyana Manthram (1990), Ayalathe Adheham (1992), Sreekrishnapurathe Nakshathrathilakkam (1998) etc. instructs women about the evilness of urban society and sanctity of a cosy family life in a village. The repeated assertions of these fabricated gender role performances through cinema, naturalises the phenomenon as essential and it is passed on to the succeeding generations.

Another ploy that is very frequently observed in movies is the veneration of _motherhood' as an embodiment of kindness and self-sacrifice. The mother-son relation is often regarded as the personification of the relationship between the nation and its citizen, where the son is even willing to die for his mother's love. Here, the notion of motherhood is unnecessarily exalted and never portrays her as an ordinary human being with self-love. Kaviyoor Ponnamma is often casted as the ideal mother and through such characters only one ideal face of motherhood is shown and admired. Any mother who deviates from the ideal figure is pushed towards guilt and shame. The role of cinema cannot be undermined here as a mere entertainment, but it is to be analysed with a critical eye as its reach is far and deep.

For several decades, the exclusion and silencing of women had been a common practice in the male-centred domain of cinema. Theories like Laura Mulvey's _male gaze' and the feminist interpretation of Derrida's theory of _Absence and Presence' in the context of cinema, have aided in widening an awareness about the objectification as well as passivity of women characters in film industry. The camera movements are directed in such a way as to interpret woman's position agreeing to a man's fantasies, and only certain kind of women characters either _black or white' are projected through films whereas the rest of the _shades of grey', pertaining to the infinite dimensions of a woman's personality, are conveniently made invisible from the limelight as if they never existed. Malayalam film industry is never distant from this reality of cementing the patriarchal propaganda through movies, where it acts as a watchdog of society.

While analysing the history of cinema, only men had the access to power, opportunity and material resources as filmmakers, cinematographers and producers. Men controlled the scene not only as makers, but also as the majority of the spectators, and therefore male fantasies are exalted since cinema is _made by men and for men'. The foundation of male fantasies can be traced right back from the concept of the chivalric prince-charming coming in rescue of the beautiful and lost princess, and the variations of this concept are still circulated through our films. If Tamil and Hindi cinema portray this fancied image directly in their films, Malayalam cinema, which is reputed for its realistic content, is adamant about keeping even that fantasy close to reality, which makes it even more frightening.

One of the many fantasies of man which recurs in Malayalam movies is that it is better to love or marry a beautiful innocent and ignorant woman rather than a bold, informed and a career oriented one who raises her opinions. The moral, financial and physical dependency of woman is much desired and appreciated by men in our society. Narasimham (2000), Iniyum Kadha thudarum (1985) Vatsalyam (1993) Thooval Kottaram (1996) etc are some of the examples that resonates patriarchy's inherent hatred toward bold women and obsession with innocence. The recurring image of _Husband is God' trope seen in most of the Malayalam movies (eg: Balachandra Menon movies) is also a potential threat that encourages domestic violence, where wife is regarded as a slave. The opposite image where wife becomes the decision maker of a family (like in Gandhi Nagar Second Street (1986)) is usually inserted in a film as a laughter element and is portrayed with contempt and labels such men who cannot _control' their wives as effeminate. Such naturalisation of gender performances make deep marks within the mind-set of audience and results in the realisation of such wronged ideologies.

A physical attack or mis-behaviour is picturised as a romantic gesture in our films as in the movie Kanmadham (1998). The consent of a woman is given zero value and stalking her even after she says no to a marriage proposal is a common and accepted act in our movies. Stalking women and troubling her unless she says _yes' is the theme of most of the songs produced in our film industry. The meaning of _no' twisted and interpreted as _yes' is definitely not an innocent act and circulation of such messages are quite distressing. Another demeaning act which is advocated in movies is the casual representation of sexual attacks against women and blaming the victim for the violence occurred. Such culture treats a rape victim as an outcast and resolves the problem by making her marry the tormentor (Hitler, 1996). Rape is also seen as a way to teach free-spirited women a lesson. During the formative years of children, as they confront such negative awareness about gender performativity, sexuality, and gender binaries, the concept imbibed by them is quite precarious which lasts for a life time.

Gender parodying through cross dressing is included in films to bring comic relief, and for the purpose usually male to female cross dressing is preferred in movies as it elicit much laughter and ridicule. Mayamohini (2012) is an apt example for gender parodying which flaunts male fantasy in the most offensive way. In the same manner through the film Chandupottu (2005) the transgender community has also been ridiculed and mis-interpreted rudely and inappropriately sending wrong information about them, by which they suffered mercilessly before the public.

Happy and wealthy joint family trope is a very common image loaded with many misogynistic elements weaved into it. Vazhunnor (1999) is one among such many films which drew a clear cut definition for how men and women should act in a family and society. Here hero is a brave man from upper class family who resolves problem that concerns family honour and fulfils hyper- realism. All the men in the family are shown drinking and discussing about their next fight with the villain, whereas women are always in the kitchen preparing meals. Family's meeting place is usually the dining room where women are seen to be serving men food and advising them not to go for further fights and retires to the kitchen itself. Here the women dwell mostly in the kitchen and they are seen in the lounge area for the purpose of serving tea for the male members. The recent film The Great Indian Kitchen (2021) particularly satirises and critiques such acts of space occupation entitled to each gender types.

Jyothika Virdi in her work The Cinematic imagination: Indian Popular Films as Social History observes that ―Reading women's lives from the film texts alone would be flawed, particularly when the lives of actual women, especially in the film industry, are an apogee to their screen representation (61). Women's direct experiences and fantasies hardly get recorded and the gap is obvious in the ratio between male and female centric films that gets released. Even though changes do occur in the current decade, where few female actors like Nayanthara and Manju warrier emerge as female superstars amidst the chaos that happen in the film industry, it is impossible to avoid the fact that ―women are still doubly vitiated and subordinated by a nationalist patriarchy and a sexist film industry" (61).

Man's position in our society is specially enriched with a kind of ‗toxic privilege‘ where most of the societal institutions are developed in such a way as to nurture it even more, and cultural tools such as mass media, television and cinemas reflect it, so as to normalise such a privilege. In popular Indian films, men are represented as the bearer of power, meaning and strength who fights the evil and resolves the problems. Here, male fantasies and perspectives are exalted since cinema is made by men and for men. When people constantly and repeatedly watch films from a male point of view, it moulds their thought process so as to neutralise male gaze and normalise it. Margaret Atwood in her work Robber Bride asserts about an ironic tendency -

‖You are a woman with a man inside watching a woman. You are your own voyeur". This is much applicable our society where women also becomes the proud spokesperson of patriarchy and male fantasies unknowingly.

The recent changes in the representation of women which tries to address real femininity in Malayalam cinema itself are proof of this positive evolution. Films like 22 Female Kottayam (2012), Rani Padmini (2015), Oru Muthassi Gadha (2016), Mayanadhi (2017), Ishq (2019), Jallikattu (2019) are some of the notable films which have marked the beginning of an era that courageously portray the essence of real womanhood in Malayalam film industry. But unfortunately there are not many women centric movies narrated by female directors in Malayalam and a change is complete only when one's story is narrated by oneself.

There is an assumption that men are like open books, and women are complicated beings who are unable to decode. It is largely due to the fact that, almost all the dimensions of male characteristics and fantasies are explored through our films, while the existence of female fantasies remains unknown. A person or a community becomes ambiguous in their representation before the world, when they remain unexplored. People, who are privileged and mainstream, develop discourses about the unknown, and usually end up misrepresenting them since their knowledge is incomplete. The perception of the West about the orient as ‗exotic' as well as ‗mysterious' is one such instance traced back from history and it proves that this pattern always recurs. Whenever the marginalised community fight back by telling stories from their perspective, a progressive change in their status is visible, making them less unknown and more acceptable. Overcoming this danger through the process of ‗unlearning' is possible when more women get access to power in the film industry and receive opportunity to material resources as filmmakers, cinematographers and producers.

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DESIRING THE INVISIBLE; A MOVE BEYOND HUMAN NEED

Mr. Vijay Francis

Research Scholar
Department of Philosophy, Sree Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit, Kalady.
Corresponding Author Email ID: vijayfrancis7@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

What is the use of objects and other human beings to me? In the present world this shall be the immediate question that human being address when he relates with other individuals and objects of the world. Man thinks about only the usefulness of objects to fulfil his needs. With this consumerist attitude he creates a world where the ego is the centre. Exploitations that take place in the nature and towards the other human being are the result of it. Man can live only in relation with others and it is in every case not fulfilling needs. This study proposes an analysis of need and desire from the point view of Emmanuel Levinas for enquiring the possibility of having a blissful experience of life beyond usefulness. In Levinas's philosophy the relation with ‗Other' always have an invisible nature and the questions related to the notion of invisibility can be seen throughout his writings. It is better to say that the invisibility of the other is explained through the infinite experience of desire, face, and responsibility. It shows the impossibility of reducing the other into a concept. The invisibility of the other leads to an experience of infinity, which is an overflowing experience of otherness. Everyone try to make everything visible in order to have a better use of it. Infinity that is the experience of the invisible is the fear of modern men because it always ruptures the equilibrium of their self-identity.

Keywords: Autrui (Other), Need, Desire, Self, Alterity, Consumerism

Introduction

In the present world human being is very much alienated from the world, from others and even from himself. He tries to become a specialist in every sphere and techniques, and has no time for the other. The present consumerist culture compels everyone to use the world of products and other individuals for their self-gratification. Thus including others, everything has been taken to be mere objects. In an at most consumerist world human beings are also used by the same gender to sustain themselves. If humanity continues in this manner they will not be able to experience better states of existence. The study seeks possibilities to retrieve of man from the world of products to the real world where true engagement with other is possible. World has now become a market where everything can be exchanged. It does not take a different attitude to other humans. Everything or everyone is now turned into the disposable objects in the consumer world. ‗Use and throw' has become the slogan in all relations that take place in this world.

Consumerism has become one of the major issues that are to be dealt in relation with the interpersonal relationship. Possibility of authentic interpersonal relationship is in question in a world where everyone considers

modern goods more necessary for their life than the other individual. For instance, in modern house men feel the objects such as computer, washing machine, mobile phone, fridge etc., are indispensible. They give sufficient and suitable place for these objects in their home. But the same home does not provide a place for old parents who are not functional in any manner. They remain alienated from their home world to a constructed world where everything is determined by the capability of functioning. In order to solve these ethical issues, a conscious choice is necessary from the part of the subject. Use of objects provides happiness or sadness to man in the present society, but not contentment. Modern man always end his goal with attaining happiness that is what he aims from the use of objects. Beyond the happiness of life there is contentment which is a blissful moment in human life. This thesis is an invitation to all humanity to have contented life which is possible only with the true engagement with the other person. For this purpose, philosophy of Levinas is the best choice, because Levinas in his philosophy always emphasises the importance of the encounter with the radical other.

Levinas and Consumerism

Levinas in his philosophy try to give a clear picture about the role of objects in human life. It is always necessary for men to have relation with objects that sustain their life. Levinas recognizes this fact and consider the use of objects as a _the moment of restoration' (Levinas, 1979, p.111). He considers objects not as mere means of life but they are _the objects of enjoyment' (Levinas, 1979, p.110) which nourishes the human life. Nourishment which is attained by man from the use of objects makes him happy. In that sense every needed objects functions the duty of food in human life because food provides happiness and satisfaction to the one who feels hunger. In the same manner attainment of a needed object provides happiness or satisfaction to man. He considers human life as something special. It is not a bare existence but every human being lives in this world with a love of life. _The bare fact of life is never bare. Life is not the naked will to be, an ontological Sorge for this life' (Levinas, 1979, p.112). It is because of this reason, self engages with objects that provide satisfaction to it. This love of life compels man to use objects which are not even indispensable for the maintaining of their life.

How far Levinas extends the use of object in human life? When levinas speaks of objects he considers only those objects which are necessary for human life, the objects without which human life is impossible. In Levinasian sense to nourish means to sustain in life which is very fundamental to human life. It becomes so explicit in Levinas's writings. He uses food, air and light as the examples of objects in his writings. In this sense he considers objects as necessary for human life. _It is necessary to earn one's bread and it is necessary to nourish oneself in order to earn one's bread' (Levinas, 1979,

p.111). Every object possesses certain energy with itself. By using those objects that energy gets transferred from the object to the self. This energy becomes the fuel for self to confront the demands of the ‗Other'. He was against the use of objects at the cost of replacing the encounter with the other.

This is not the case with the present society the objects play significant role in human life. They are used not to meet the basic needs of human life but used excessively to satisfy human greed. Does the consumerism that is prevalent in our present society allow us to have an authentic encounter with the other? It functions as the very foundation of the society. It has become a way in which everyone communicates and converse with each other. Its effects were always present in the world, but now it functions as a sovereign king. It determines our morality. How did it achieve a significant role in our life? What are the impacts of it? Does it give any consideration for interpersonal relationship?

There are innumerable objects in the present world and they have some features too. The objects that the self encounters in this world can divide into two categories that are natural and artificial. As the time goes the use of natural objects become very less comparing to the artificial products. There is a tremendous growth in the number of artificial objects which are used by the self in this world. In the ancient life man never used any artificial objects to sustain their life. Nature was rich enough to provide everything for men. But the so called development that happened in the world vanish the richness of nature. At present most of the free gifts of nature were replaced by the artificial products of the market world. For instance, air conditioning of houses are necessary in the present world because natural coolness of nature has disappeared from the nature. Thus we the human beings in most of our life time encounter products of the modern world.

The so called artificial objects that we encounter in our daily life have only very short life span. The objects come into existence and goes out of existence very soon. Thus it becomes possible for every individual to experience the birth, life and death of many objects in their life itself. It is one of the reasons for the increase of objects in the present world and it is also can be considered as a hidden strategy employed to increase the object use.

Since the life span of objects is very short the objects which are used by the individual get changed very soon. As the objects change, the individual get engaged with new objects that provide new identity for the self. Consumerism brought a collective identity in this world in which the individuals takes part by using the innumerable goods of the present society. They get changed by the very change of product that they use in their life. So consumerist tendencies that are prevailing at present creates its own micro

world where the intersubjectivity happens in an abstract level which lacks authenticity.

Every object in the modern world has a seducing nature. It appears as so necessary for human life or it appears as those objects without which human life is impossible in this world. The objects that only remained in dreams become the necessary requirement for a satisfied life in this world. By the attractiveness of objects, human beings are made to buy a variety of objects through which one differentiates oneself socially and culturally in this world. In such a world where there is abundance of objects human beings get engaged with objects rather than other individuals (Baudrillard, 1999). The very possibilities to enter into intersubjective relation itself become a question in such a world. The objects take the central position either by mediating the relation between the self and the other individual or by remaining as the goal of every relation. Thus man always deals with certain objects that have certain function to fulfil. This attitude creates great issues in the life of the self. It becomes functional in all its engagement. For instance, a baby who was somehow missed by his parent in jungle lives with wild animals and became one among them. He uses both hands and legs for walking and also shows all the behavioural patterns of animals because it lives with them. In the same manner one who get engaged with only objects transform themselves into the nature of objects. Man forgets to live in a world where every engagement of man is determined by the functions of certain objects. They become the part of the cycle and move according to the rhythm of the ceaseless succession of objects (Baudrillard, 1999). Thus they lose the dignity as human beings. In such a world man does not want to get questioned by the gaze and speech of the other individual. So by entering into the world of objects men negates all the possibilities for confronting other individual.

Need and Desire in Human Life

Human life is a very complex phenomenon. Even now philosophy and science conduct new investigation in their respective field to reveal the complexities of life, yet those complexities are not fully revealed. It is good to say that this complexity makes the life more beautiful. Need and desire are two motivating forces of life and they should be examined in Jacques Lacan who is a contemporary philosopher and a psychoanalysist provides a systematic account of desire and need in his philosophy. He explains the notions of _need' and _desire' basing on mother-child relationship. Infant starts to live in this world with an inseparable relation with its mother. According to Lacan, mother is the one who fulfils all the needs of the child. The baby in this state of need does not recognize any distinction between itself and the object that met its needs and it is recognised as a stage of _Real' in Lacan. _Lacan's real is without zones, subdivisions, localized highs and lows, or gaps and plenitudes: the real is a sort of unrent, undifferentiated fabric, woven in such a

way as to be full everywhere, there being no space between the threads that are its stuff' (Fink, 1995, p.24). But it is necessary that the infant must get separated from its mother in order to form a separate identity. When the child knows the difference between itself and its mother, it becomes not only an individual being but creates an awareness of otherness within itself. This awareness brings insecurity and anxiety in child's life. Then baby demands a reunion and return to the fullness and all its engagements are directed towards it. In Lacanian Point of view men go behind objects in remembrance of the fullness enjoyed in the initial stages of life.

Emmanuel Levinas who is a well discussed philosopher for his different approach towards philosophy gives a totally different explanation for the same and to have a better clarity on the notions it is good to know his understanding of otherness and sameness. Levinas considers that the fundamental drawback of traditional philosophy is _sameness'. Sameness always represents a totality where the part has intelligibility solely through its place within the whole. _The project of whole western philosophy rests on sameness because it always understands everything in relation to some self intelligible whole' (Gutting, 2001, p.335). In sameness objectivity or otherness is reduced into egos existence. It offers a meaning to everything and tries to explain everything in relation to it. _Any relation with the other on the basis of correlation, symmetry, reciprocity and equality reduces the other into the same' (Critchley, 2002, p.13). Thus self exist with a constructed meaning not an actual meaning in this world because all the cognitive or intellectual attempts that ego makes to understand the other leads to the reduction of other into same. To get out from the vicious circle which was formulated by sameness was one of the central tasks that he carried out in his philosophy.

Levinas gives great importance for the otherness of other in his philosophy. He makes a distinction between two forms of other in his philosophy, the relative other and the absolute other. The relative other represents the objects such as the building, table, books etc. These are the realities whose existence is reduced into the self (Critchley, 2002, p.16). Their existence is considered as the extension of the self as food shelter or instrument. The absolute other in Levinas always represents the other human being who remains independently in the world by establishing the absolute alterity of its existence that which cannot be reduced into self's existence. _The other becomes available for the self only in an ethical experience of other'(Critchley, 2002, p.16) and towards this men can only be responsible with unconditional and infinite responsibility.

Need is an inevitable aspect of human life. The whole life of man is filled with different kinds of needs and most of our activities are directed towards fulfilling those needs. A baby who cries demands food or care from his parents when its demands are fulfilled it stops crying. In this sense a need

can be described as a lack or negation even though these words do not comprehend all aspects of need. Every object in the world possesses certain special characteristics by which they show their unique identity in the world. The self who is in need of that quality has to possess that particular object or absorb that special feature of particular object into the self. Thus the self fulfils its needs. In that sense need is considered as the void in the self. According to Levinas, ‗the needs of men originate not from the world of objects or other individual but within the subject himself' (Levinas, 1979, p.115).

Is it possible for man to live in this world without any need? No, because the sensibility and understanding of all human being compel them to possess so many things from the world to satisfy their need. A satisfied life is always the aim of human being. Everyone strife for that by fulfilling the needs of their life but the real fact shows that man never reaches at a fully satisfied life. Levinas considers the future of man as indeterminate. It is not possible for the self to have any precise assumption about future. This situation of life brings insecurity in need' (Levinas, 1979, p.137). When a need is fulfilled other needs take possession of us and we are after that. This is a never ending process in the life of all human beings. Man in his life undergoes endless cycle of needs. What is really a need? In Levinasian terms need is a happy dependence for satisfaction which brings happiness to human life. He considers need as not mere lack but man gets happiness and enjoyment by fulfilling needs. The life that is life from something is happiness. Life is affectivity and sentiment; to live is to enjoy life. To despair of life makes sense only because originally life is happiness. Suffering is a failing of happiness; it is not correct to say that happiness is an absence of suffering. Happiness is made up not of an absence of needs, whose tyranny and imposed character one denounces, but of the satisfaction of all needs (Levinas, 1979, p.115)

In need man can acquire objects which are finite or in need man acquire only the objects which are finite. The sphere of infinity is locked here. Finite entities to which the self integrate or relate become part and parcel of self's existence. Their ‗otherness' is reduced into the existence of the self. Thus they become relative other. Thus by fulfilling needs, self formulate his own world where every part of it remains within the grasp of the self. Human labour has got a significant role in life for fulfilling need. According to Levinas, ‗only by labour need can attain the realm of satisfaction' (Levinas, 1979, p.112). The self and its needed objects maintain a distance which does not remain as same always. It is being removed by the labour of the self. Thus through labour self assimilate the object into itself. The energy of the other gets transferred from it and it becomes self's energy but if self fails to fulfil its needs, which cause sufferings in the self. In order to avoid this suffering ‗self is even ready to risk its life in this world' (Levinas, 1979, p.115).

Desire is traditionally understood in various ways. It was considered as that which arose from a determinate lack. But in Levinas's philosophy desire is treated as metaphysical desire. The word _meta' means beyond, which shows that the object desired has a peculiar nature that is it remains in the realm of infinite. _Levinas himself points out that metaphysical desire tends towards something entirely other' (Levinas, 1979, p.34). The self cannot experience other as it experiences other objects. It can only have a desire towards it. According to him, _desire is a relation with the absolute and unanticipatable alterity. It is a desire for the absolute other'(Levinas, 1979, p.34).

The other has no place in the world of the self. It exists outside the world as a foreigner and all the attempts that the self makes to possess the other fails. The unity between the self and the desired other is not possible. The other keeps its distance always and remains forever as a desired other. This non-possessed other become the cause for desire in man. The desire that which the self has is not originated from the self because it is not arose from a lack but from the experience of otherness of other human being. Separateness is a necessary condition for desire. There are other objects whose existence can be reduced into the self. Those objects never create a desire in man.

Since desire is a desire for the other whose otherness is not reduced into the self, it always remains as unsatisfied. The self get satisfaction only from those things whose existence is reduced into the self. According to Levinas, such reduction is impossible with regard to the other so the desire that which arises from the other remain as unsatisfied (Levinas, 1979, p.34). This Unsatisfied desire provides a glimpse of understanding about the remoteness, alterity and exteriority of the other. Whatever the self do or whatever happens in the world of the self cannot meet the satisfaction of this desire. The other whose nature is infinite can only be desired with an unquenchable thirst. The self cannot have a rest with peace after fulfilling its desire because desire is situated beyond the realm of satisfaction. So the self is restless with its desire until its death.

Human Need and Desire from the Present Day Perspective

How the need and desire functions in the present day human life or what is the role of desire and need in the life of man? Human needs underwent a drastic change in the few decades. There is an explosion of new needs. The children of the present day wishes to engage with best smart phones and computers rather than to be friendly with other children. This was not the case with the previous generations. They had possibilities for living naturally in this world. But now their lives have been made into a craving after consumer goods. There is an essential difference between _need' in Levinas and the need of the present world. In Levinas it is not an intellectual construction of

the self rather the very demand of the life. The sustaining and fulfilling of need is demanded in Levinas so that the self can offer its life for fulfilling the infinite responsibility towards the other. But the need of the present world cannot be understood in the same sense because it is well constructed by the intellectual powers of the self under the influence of market. The cognitive powers of the self create a vacuum within himself and tries to fill that vacuum by its talents and capacities. It is because of this reason the world has become insufficient to satisfy human needs. The world that which appears as fast growing creates different needs in the humans by creating new products by the world of economy. They create not only new products but also needs in man to use such products. Use of such products which are not so important in human life is often misunderstood as growth of life. It is true that needs are necessary to sustain in human life but those who live only with needs cannot be treated as human in an ethical sense.

The enjoyment that happens in the present world is not the enjoyment that derives from the sensible experience but from the intellectual experience of the world. In intellectual experiences man uses his or her intellect to relate with the world. This is not an experience of the given world but a constructed world where self shows its mastery and intellectual power. This experience does not reveal the otherness of other rather it only reveals the function of objects. Others are also approached here in utilitarian attitude. The experience of function of objects leads to use for the sake of the self. The present world also witnesses a change of taste in every second in relation to enjoyment that the modern man makes. For instance, a person who was in need of a car work hard to achieve it and become worthy to possess a car. As soon as a person possess a car, it brings lot of happiness and joy to him but further usage of that car may not provide the same happiness for that person. He soon loses interest in it. He may think of buying another car which has more facilities than the old one. This kind of thirst for objects never quenches and creates danger in the ethical intersubjective relation with the other.

Conclusion

In this world man always go after the pleasurable resources to fulfil their needs. This approach of the self not only assimilates the object but also destroys it. The intellectual enjoyments of the world always have a destructive nature. It destroyed so many natural objects from the world. The enjoyment or happiness which is attained from the world of the objects does not provide contentment for the self. The self, by fulfilling its needs of life really is in search for contentment but fails to find it. It can experience in the opinion of Levinas, only by encountering the irreducible alterity of the other.

Levinas considers desire as ‗the desire for the absolute other' (Levinas, 1979, p.34). Is man capable of such a desire in the present world? Majority of

men who live in this world with intellect as the sole resource cannot have a desire because they are incapable to ethically confront the other in their lives. Their others are constructed others whose existence is determined by the meaning given by the self. They have existence only in relation with the self, so they are not capable of giving birth to desire in the life of the self. Needs have captured the whole life of man and they became desire less persons in this world. In such a world the people who go after the needs loses the fundamental aspect of human life that is the encountering with the absolute alterity of the other. Man gets less chance to have genuine interaction with the other in this world. The other gets vanished from the world so he fails to evoke desire in the self. Thus the experience of otherness and infinitude become impossible.

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Bull AT (2004) Microbial diversity and bioprospecting. ASM press, New York

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