# THE INVESTIGATOR

An International Peer-Reviewed Journal of Multidisciplinary Explorations
(Vol. 10, No. 3) September 2024



**Association for Cultural & Scientific Research**

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## Editorial Board

Editor's Note
*The Investigator* is an International Peer-Reviewed Multidisciplinary Journal published quarterly (March, June, September and December), launched under the auspices of the academic community *Association for Cultural & Scientific Research* (ACSR). Keeping the panoramic scopes of research as a vibrant path, *The Investigator* intends to reflect on the skilled minds attitudinally conjuring from humanities to other disciplines. The journal explores the currents of criticism and unleashes divergent thinking. It welcomes original, scholarly unpublished papers from the researchers, faculty members, students and the diverse aspirants writing in English. It is a peer reviewed journal that brings the scholarship of academicians and practitioners around the world. *The Investigator* hopes and wishes to provide a self-assuring means to you for your further accomplishments.

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# The Faginization of Shylock in *Oliver Twist*: Demonizing the "Jew" As an Arch-Criminal

*Shylock is an archetypal example and prototype of financial villainy for ages. Today the name 'Shylock' has been vastly diffused and generalized to the extent that he has passed into the popular consciousness as the synonym for miser and usurer. His grotesque caricature has been well imprinted in the unconscious minds of the readers that his villainy is still alive to be connoted negatively. Literature has used Shylock from Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice as a prototype in its various genres for centuries. The reptilian Fagin, from Dickens's Oliver Twist with his parasitic qualities, is one of the examples, though they are separated in time by over two centuries. This paper examines how far the image of the Jew as a 'bad subject' influenced the author in faginizing Shylock. The study proceeds to explore how anti-Semitism is reflected in such Jewish literary stereotypes. A comparative analysis of the characters Fagin and Shylock shows that Jewish characters are generally portrayed as dehumanized social beings whose individual, personal traits border on madness and monstrosity. Always and already interpellated as 'bad subjects,' Jews are expected to make explicit representations of arch criminals or demons. Why are Jews exploited as antagonists to invoke the morality tradition of Christianity? Why do the characters like Shylock, Svengali, and Fagin remain Jewish literary stereotypes, continuing to be prototypes and common nouns for usurers, child molesters, and personal manipulators?*

**Key Words:** *Bad subject, Shylock, Fagin, Faginization, Jewish*

Much has been written about the puzzling characters of Shylock and Fagin. The term 'Faginization' was introduced by Michael Shapiro in his book *How Shylock Became Fagin's Cousin: The Jewish Old Clothes Man in Shakespeare, Dickens, and Victorian Burlesque Theatre* (2009). The character sketch of Fagin in *Oliver Twist*, written in the 19th century by Charles Dickens, dovetails with the character of Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice* by Shakespeare, written in the 16th century. Jews had been expelled from England in the 13th century, and so there is no reason to believe that Shakespeare invented a stereotyped Jew in Shylock. However, Jews entered late medieval Europe and its literature because, by then, Jews became the money lenders as the church and its laws of faith condemned the practice of usury.

The Jew went down in the literature of late medieval Europe as a usurer and became the target of hatred and ridicule in the Christian world. The tradition of villainy being attributed to the Jews is not surprising to find in various genres of literature. Carrying the historic charge of deicide, they were accused of abducting and murdering Christian children as part of their religious ritual. They were destined to be interpellated as "bad subjects" in the domain of literature, as epitomized by Barabas, Shylock, Svengali, and many more. Ranging from financiers and bill collectors to pawn brokers, the Jewish villainy extends beyond the actual attitude of the character. Though a character like Riah in *Our Mutual Friend* (1864) is an antipodal pair to Fagin, the image of the Jew "suffers from the debilitating gravitational pull of an all-powerful stereotype," as observed by Rosenberg (370). The saintly and honorable Jew in Riah has been assumed to be the author's apology (Sicher 147). The formulation of Jewish images as grotesque and distorted in English fiction, poetry, and drama is based on mythical allusions, starting with the terrible blood libel accusation. The mythical beliefs grew gradually, as did the stereotypical image of the Jew, eventually solidifying the myth into reality. Blood libel or ritual murder is a medieval Christian accusation against Jewish people, stating that they used the blood of Christians for certain Jewish religious rituals. This anti-Semitic canard accuses Jews of murdering Christian boys in order to use their blood for baking matzo, which is an unleavened bread eaten during Passover. The narrative of blood libel was repeated across generations to spread anti-Semitism. The blood libel allegation gives Jews the image of heinous perpetrators who commit mutilation and murder. The crime becomes even more cannibalistic and inhuman, as the typical victims are children. This hateful ideation of conspiracy dehumanizes the Jewish community as an 'evil other' with immutable devilish characteristics. The repercussions of this accusation are still alive today. The characters of Jews appear in literature as clowns, bogeys, parasites, wanderers, sorcerers, arch criminals, etc. They are expected to represent villainy of any form. Dickens's paternalistic approach forces him to give a moral lesson to Victorian England through his novel, *Oliver Twist,* about how Christians should be willing to help the poor. Aiming at a paternalistic social commentary and moral center, Dickens exploited the existing prejudice against Jews. Mrs. Davis, known for highlighting issues of anti-Semetism in Dickens' works, supports this argument by stating: It has been said that Charles Dickens, the large-hearted, whose works plead so eloquently and so nobly for the oppressed of his country, and who may justly claim credit, as the fruits of his labour, the many changes for the amelioration of the condition of the poor now at work, has encouraged a vile prejudice against the despised Hebrew. (145). Dickens portrayed Fagin with all familiar anti-Semitic stereotypes to make him a formidable antagonist to Oliver, who is

depicted as a virtuous Christian. The constant repetition of the epithet, 'the Jew,' in *Oliver Twist* and *The Merchant of Venice* is notable, similar to how Mark Antony's repeated use of 'Brutus is an honorable man,' in *Julius Caesar* aims to portray Brutus as ungrateful and treacherous. Antony's repetition turns Romans against Brutus. Similarly, the refrain of "the Jew" in *Oliver Twist* leads readers to unconsciously perceive the term 'Jew' as derogatory, view Jews as inherently negative and as always, a 'bad subject.' Michel Pecheux introduced the term 'bad subject' to represent the minority that does not freely consent to adapt to the power structure and ideology or the subjugated position offered by the dominant oppressors. Bad subjects are quoted as the 'trouble makers' of the larger society:

> In short, the subject, a 'bad subject,' a 'trouble-maker,' counter identifies with the discursive formation imposed on him by 'interdiscourse' as external determination of his subjective interiority, which produces the philosophical and political forms of the discourse- against (i.e. counter-discourse) which constitute the core of humanism (anti-nature, counter-nature, etc.) in its various theoretical and political forms, reformist and ultra-leftist. (Pecheux 157)

The faginization of Shylock became an easier task for Dickens to envisage as Jews have always and already been interpellated as 'bad subjects' by the time Dickens brought out the disparaging Jewish image of a child snatcher and fence like Fagin in the 19th century. Dickens carefully introduces Fagin as part of a social environment and connects him to poverty and crime in the real topography of London. Fagin is portrayed as living in a dilapidated, crime-ridden neighborhood, establishing him as a product and part of the city's underclass. Dickens vividly describes the squalid conditions in Fagin's dwelling and the neighborhood, painting a bleak picture of urban poverty. This portrayal not only locates Fagin in the harsh realities of London but also links his criminal activities with the systemic issues of poverty and social decay prevalent at that time and place.

Dickens reinforces the portrayal of a sinister, inhuman Jew following the precedent set by Shakespeare's Shylock. "Fagin's name, like Shylock's, has become a synonym for meanness and depravity, and Dickens' and Shakespeare's villainous Jews are the best-known Jewish characters in English literature" (Stone 223). Dickens had to merely copy and paste the Shylockian traits in Fagin to gain acceptance because the dominant ideologies of the society have already interpellated the counter-identifying minority- the Jews as villainous and treacherous. Any minority, irrespective of geographical diversity, that counter-identifies or

resists the dominant ideologies are vilified and victimized mercilessly- Jews are one of the many examples to quote.

**The stage convention**

The stage convention has fashioned and defined Jewish villainy in its own terms. E. E. Stoll says of Shylock thus: "That he is a Jew, we see by his beard and gabardine, probably also by his high hat, red hair, big nose and foreign accent" (139). The features which Stoll mentions are the traditionally offered costume for Jew on stage. All these traditions have influenced the unconscious mind of the audience. Fagin represents a dark force. He is described as an alien who feeds on the diseases of the modern city: As he glided stealthily along, creeping beneath the shelter of the walls and      doorways, the hideous old man seemed like some loathsome reptile,            engendered    in the slime and darkness through which he moved: crawling forth, by night, in search of some rich offal for a meal" (19). While Shylock feeds on the innocent flesh of Antonio, Fagin like a reptile is feeding on the urban city. Fagin here seems to be another Jewish type like Shylock. The image of a loathsome reptile attributed to Fagin gives an exaggerated archetypal image of the devil to the Jew. Minority ethnic groups are attributed to have a higher level of pathological behavior by the mainstream discourse. This is a notion that prevails predominantly among the elites. It could be the same notion that prompts the anti-Semites to equate the Jews with demons, attributing pathological behavior. Such a pathological behavior is attributed to both Shylock and Fagin.Constant stigmatization at times triggers extreme and unreasonable responses from the target groups. It engenders a higher level of pathology in marginalized communities. Shylock insisting on having a pound of flesh from Antonio is one such response. Later, When he gives his famous speech in Act 3 Scene 1 of *The Merchant of Venice*, beginning with 'I am a Jew,' Shylock seems to be pleading for acceptance by defending himself about his gullible nature. A slight tinge of subjugation before the aggressor can be observed at this stage in the case of Shylock.The psychological process of identification with the aggressor occurs when individuals find themselves in a subordinate or uneasy position as the result of severe criticism or admonition by an authoritarian figure and thus defend themselves- either consciously or unconsciously- by adopting the attitudes, values and symbols of power of the authoritarian figure. (Bolaffi 140). A social position is assigned to the addressee through a process of hailing. The repeated usage of the epithet 'the Jew' in a negative shade is an example of hailing. The author also refers to Fagin as 'the Jew' 274 times in the first 38 chapters. Unconsciously, the marginalized minority recognizes and accepts how

they are addressed. This constitutive process is called interpellation. The unconscious acceptance of hailing prompts shylock to give his famous speech: "Hath not a Jew" (Act 3, Scene 1). Both Shylock and Fagin are brought to the shade of villainy by hailing them derogatorily as Jews. While physical features like red hair, a high hat, a big nose, and a foreign accent are secondary, primarily, the type of names with which they are addressed or hailed broaden the Jewish caricature. The interpellated image of the Jew as a 'bad subject' is so tangible in the readers' minds that the introduction of a character like Riah as a 'good subject' only leads much to the consternation of the readers. The subject that spontaneously adapts to the power structure and ideology without resistance is emblematic of a 'good Subject'. The subject's internalization of the core ideologies of the hegemonic classes is the interpellation-identification mode. The subject in this mode spontaneously adapts to the power structure and ideology without resistance. The critical consensus of Riah's virtuous behavior was that the benevolent Jew seemed to be artificial and grotesque. A Jew with an optimistic shade of character was unacceptable to the mainstream; the Jew could never be exonerated from the image of a 'bad subject.' As per the dominant ideology of the mainstream, the Jews have always and have already been interpellated as the 'bad subjects.' Riah seems very much like an atonement of Fagin but fails to convey any real life and remains a "needless and unconvincing character" (Gibson 118). "Dickens is so intent on emphasizing his meekness, his kindness, his noble nature, that he fails to endow him with any real life" (Gross 218). The only acceptable version of the Jew that satisfies the mainstream ideology is the image of the Jew as a demonized arch-criminal. Fagin, quoted as a loathsome reptile, is symbolic of Satan, the dark force. Fagin, followed by Shylock, fits the pejoratives of the dominant ideology as villainous Jews; their characters remain convincing and acceptable. Dickens intended to bring an apt opposite/ antagonist for Oliver, who is symbolic of the 'Good Samaritan' in the New Testament of Bible. The novel's subtitle, *The Parish Boy's Progress* indicates that *Oliver Twist* is a parabolic tale with Christian sentiments: Oliver Twist is a parable, and as such, it is connected with a tradition of      parabolic writing that has always commanded an important place in      English

literature. Primarily, Oliver Twist is a story in the tradition of      Bunyan,      the

morality play, and the homiletic tale - its subtitle is "The Parish Boys      Progress"

(Marcus, 66-67). Dickens tries to draw a parallel between Oliver and John Bunyan's Christian by comparing *Oliver Twist*'s subtitle and *Pilgrim's Progress*. Struggling on the path to heaven, Christian is beset by the Devil just as the Jew obstructs Oliver. As a virtuous character with Christian values, the allegorical role of Christian needs a counter-figure who embodies arch-criminal traits and possesses sinister, satanic qualities. A demonized Jew serves this purpose

since he is charged with deicide and vilified as the anti-Christ and the incarnation of Satan himself. "*The Pilgrim's Progress* as subtext invites the reader to see behind the adventures of Oliver's story an archetypal struggle between the forces of good and evil for the hero's soul" (Larson 537). Faginization helps in amplifying the melodramatization of the morality tradition of Christianity. Oliver's life is brought out as the journey of a Christian - a 'good subject,' while that of Fagin's- a 'bad subject' who comes to obstruct the Christian path and faith with satanic waywardness. "The satanic Jew's role as anti-Christ, for example, surfaced in "The Prioress' Tale," and Chaucer's story would have been remembered by readers of Dickens' '*Parish Boy's Progress*,' which tells of the temptation by the Jew of an innocent Christian child" (Sicher 139-40). The socially normalized anti-Semitism of the Victorian age demanded a phoenix-shylock and thus Dickens culminated in the character of Fagin to satisfy the mainstream. The same parallel of Christ versus Satan, and good versus bad, pertaining to the Jew versus Christian is seen in Shylock- Antonio's encounter. While Antonio is symbolic of Christ, ready to shed blood and sacrifice himself as an offer for the love of Bassanio and Portia, Shylock is symbolic of Satan plotting the death of an innocent Christian soul asking for the pound of flesh. Shylock is the 'bad subject,' while Antonio is the good subject irrespective of the fact that the latter is indebted to the former. The Christian hypocrisy is left unquestioned while Shylock's human rights are denied. His rhetorical questions remain unanswered:

Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? Fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer as a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die? (Act III Scene 1). Any minuscule righteousness that Shylock deserves fades away in the light of his origin as a Jew. Shylock's plea for his rights resonates down the centuries. In Act 3, Scene 1, Shylock refers to Antonio's disparagement of him thus: He hath disgraced me and hindered me half a million, laughed at my losses, mocked at my gains, scorned my nation, thwarted my bargains, cooled my friends, heated mine enemies—and what's his reason? I am a Jew.

**Conclusion**

'Shylocking' as an intransitive verb in Webster indicates how the tarnished image of the Jew as a loan shark has been interpellated to its modern form over the centuries, and the verb was introduced after the death of Dickens in 1934. The process of interpellation is robust here

because Shakespeare's Shylock has become the universal representation of a miser and money lender. Shylock has been shylocked and interpellated over the centuries, resulting in the 19th-century Fagin. The process of interpellation and hailing of Shylock as a 'bad subject' has not yet reached a culmination. This is an ongoing process, interpellating and re-interpellating Shylock and Fagin, producing a chain of new Shylocks and new Fagins. The coming centuries are awaiting other demonized arch criminals- the renewed demonic representations of Shylocks. The dominant group allocates to them roles and rights based on its own political and cultural experiences. This is however, not a conscious effort on the side of the state. A social position is assigned to the addressee through a process of hailing. Unconsciously, the minority recognizes and accepts how they are addressed. This constitutive process is called interpellation. The ethnic minority is hailed and interpellated as subjects of the dominant ideologies of the state.

Interpellation is a constitutive process whereby individuals acknowledge and respond to ideologies, thereby configuring and recognizing themselves as subjects. It is a process through which we encounter the dominant culture's values and internalize them even without consciously recognizing it. The French philosopher, Louis Althusser first popularized it in his seminal essay, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses." Interpellation incorporates individuals into the power structure and reconfigures them unconsciously according to the templates of the hegemonic culture. The operation of interpellation and ideology produce the subject who fits in with the definitions of a citizen. Hence an individual gets interpellated through various mediums. The pervasiveness of ideology and the process of interpellation are one and the same. In fact, both are co-terminus processes that cannot be accounted for in terms of a mere cause and effect formula. 'Ideology has always-already interpellated individuals as subjects.'

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# The Impact of Remote Work on Employee Productivity and Organizational Culture

*The COVID-19 pandemic has drastically transformed workplace dynamics, with remote work becoming a prevalent model. This paper examines the impact of remote work on employee productivity and organizational culture. Through a comprehensive review of recent literature and a survey conducted among remote employees, the study reveals that while remote work offers flexibility and can enhance productivity, it also poses challenges to maintaining organizational culture. The findings suggest that organizations must adopt strategic measures to balance the benefits of remote work with the need to preserve a cohesive and engaging work environment.*

**Keywords:** *Remote Work, Employee Productivity, Organizational Culture, COVID-19, Work-Life Balance, Virtual Communication*

## Introduction

The advent of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020 led to a significant shift in work practices globally, with remote work emerging as a dominant model. This shift, driven by the need for social distancing, has prompted organizations to reassess their operational strategies. This paper explores the dual impact of remote work on employee productivity and organizational culture, drawing on recent studies and empirical data. The rapid transition to remote work has had profound implications for how organizations function and manage their workforce. As businesses grapple with the new normal, it becomes crucial to understand both the benefits and the challenges associated with remote work. This paper aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of how remote work influences employee productivity and organizational culture, offering insights that can guide management practices in the post-pandemic era. The COVID-19 pandemic has acted as a catalyst for an unprecedented shift in work practices, forcing companies worldwide to adopt remote work models almost overnight. While remote work was already on the rise due to advances in technology and changing attitudes towards work-life balance, the pandemic accelerated this trend, making it a central feature of modern work culture. As businesses and employees navigate this new landscape, understanding the impact

of remote work on productivity and organizational culture becomes crucial. Remote work presents a paradox; on one hand, it offers increased flexibility, autonomy, and potential for enhanced productivity. On the other hand, it poses significant challenges in maintaining cohesive organizational culture and effective communication. The shift to remote work has led to varying outcomes across different sectors and roles, with some employees thriving in a home office environment, while others struggle with the absence of in-person interactions and the blurring of boundaries between work and personal life.This article delves into the multifaceted impact of remote work on employee productivity and organizational culture. By examining the benefits and challenges associated with remote work, we aim to provide actionable recommendations for both employers and employees. These insights will help in leveraging the advantages of remote work while mitigating its drawbacks, ensuring a balanced and effective approach to this new way of working. The goal is to understand how to maintain productivity and foster a positive organizational culture in a remote work setting, paving the

way for a sustainable future of work

**Objectives**

1. To examine the impact of remote work on employee productivity.
2. To assess the challenges remote work poses to maintaining organizational culture.
3. To identify strategies that organizations can implement to enhance productivity and preserve organizational culture in a remote work setting.

**Research Questions**

How does remote work affect long-term productivity across different industries?

**Factors Affecting Remote Work**

1. Technology Infrastructure: Reliable internet connections, access to necessary software, and secure networks are crucial for remote work success.
2. Company Policies: Clear guidelines and policies regarding remote work help set expectations and provide structure.
3. Nature of Work: Some roles and tasks are more suited to remote work than others, impacting productivity and feasibility.
4. Employee Adaptability: Individuals' ability to adapt to remote work varies, influencing their effectiveness and satisfaction.

5. Management Practices: Effective remote management practices, including regular check-ins and feedback, are essential to maintaining productivity and engagement.

6. Home Environment: The home workspace and environment can significantly affect an employee's ability to work effectively.

7. Support Systems: Access to support, whether technical, emotional, or professional, plays a critical role in the success of remote work.

## Literature Review

### Remote Work and Productivity

Several studies have shown varying impacts of remote work on productivity. A study by Bloom et al. (2020) found that remote work can increase productivity by reducing commuting time and offering a flexible working environment. Employees working from home can allocate time more efficiently, leading to enhanced focus and output. The study highlighted that remote workers often work longer hours, contributing to increased productivity. Conversely, other studies highlight the challenges of remote work, such as distractions at home and the difficulty of maintaining work-life balance, which can negatively affect productivity. Grant et al. (2021) identified that while remote work provides flexibility, it also blurs the boundaries between personal and professional life, leading to potential burnout and decreased productivity. The lack of a structured work environment can result in employees facing interruptions and difficulties in managing their time effectively. A comprehensive meta-analysis by Allen et al. (2021) evaluated multiple studies on remote work productivity, concluding that the effectiveness of remote work is highly dependent on individual job roles, the presence of effective remote work policies, and the use of technology to facilitate communication and collaboration.

### Organizational Culture in a Remote Work Setting

Organizational culture encompasses shared values, beliefs, and practices within an organization. Remote work poses unique challenges to sustaining this culture, as traditional means of communication and socialization are disrupted. Studies by Spicer (2020) and Kosslyn (2020) emphasize that the lack of face-to-face interactions can lead to weakened social bonds and a diluted sense of organizational identity. A study by Golden et al. (2020) found that remote work can erode the informal networks and spontaneous interactions that are essential for a vibrant organizational culture. Without regular in-person interactions, employees may feel

isolated and disconnected from the organization's mission and values. The absence of casual conversations and impromptu meetings can hinder the transfer of tacit knowledge and weaken the organizational fabric. Maitland and Thomson (2021) conducted a longitudinal study on remote work and organizational culture, finding that organizations that proactively fostered virtual engagement and maintained regular communication were more successful in preserving their culture

## Research Design

This study employs a mixed-methods research design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive understanding of the impact of remote work on productivity and organizational culture. The quantitative component involved a survey to gather numerical data, while the qualitative component comprised in-depth interviews to explore nuanced insights and experiences.

## Sampling Technique

The study utilized a purposive sampling technique to select participants who have been working remotely since the onset of the. This technique was chosen to ensure that the participants have substantial experience with remote work, thereby providing relevant and informed responses. A total of 100 remote employees from various industries were surveyed to gather quantitative data. The survey included questions on productivity levels, work-life balance, and perceived changes in organizational culture. Additionally, in-depth interviews were conducted with 20 managers from different organizations to gather qualitative data. The managers were selected based on their roles in overseeing remote teams, providing valuable insights into the organizational strategies employed to maintain culture and productivity.

## Conceptual Model

The conceptual model for this study outlines the relationship between remote work, employee productivity, and organizational culture. It illustrates how remote work influences productivity and organizational culture and identifies key factors that mediate these relationships.

## Components of the Model:

1. **Remote Work Environment**:

- o Technology Infrastructure
- o Home Workspace
- o Company Policies
- o Support Systems

2. **Employee Factors**:
   - o Adaptability
   - o Job Role Suitability
   - o Mental Health
   - o Work-Life Balance

3. **Organizational Factors**:
   - o Management Practices
   - o Communication Tools
   - o Organizational Culture

4. **Outcomes**:
   - o Productivity
   - o Employee Satisfaction
   - o Business Operations Efficiency
   - o Environmental Impact

5. **Challenges**:
   - o Communication and Collaboration Issues
   - o Social Isolation
   - o Security Risks
   - o Work-Life Boundary Blurring

**Relationships:**

- Remote Work Environment Influences Employee Factors and Organizational Factors.
- Employee Factors and Organizational Factors directly impact Outcomes.
- Challenges act as moderating variables that can hinder the positive impacts of remote work on Outcomes.

This conceptual model helps visualize the relationships between remote work environment, employee factors, organizational factors, challenges, and outcomes, providing a structured framework for understanding the impact of remote work on productivity and organizational culture.

**Findings**

**Impact on Productivity**

The survey results indicate that 65% of respondents experienced an increase in productivity while working remotely, attributing this to reduced commuting time and flexible work hours. Respondents highlighted that the ability to work during their most productive hours and the absence of office distractions contributed to higher efficiency.

**Productivity Levels During Remote Work**



Factors Affecting Productivity
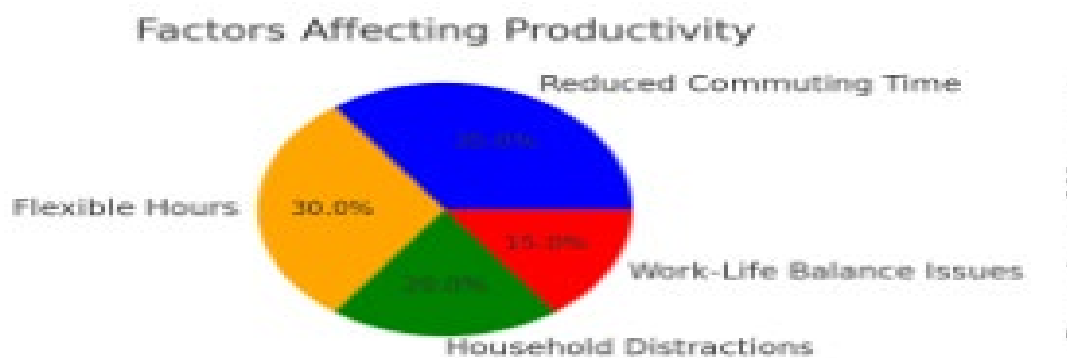
However, 20% reported a decline in productivity due to household distractions and the blurring of work-life boundaries. These respondents cited challenges such as managing childcare, dealing with household chores, and the difficulty of creating a dedicated workspace as factors negatively impacting their productivity.

**Factors Affecting Productivity**

The remaining 15% of respondents reported no significant change in their productivity levels. These findings suggest that the impact of remote work on productivity is influenced by

individual circumstances and the ability to create a conducive work environment at home.
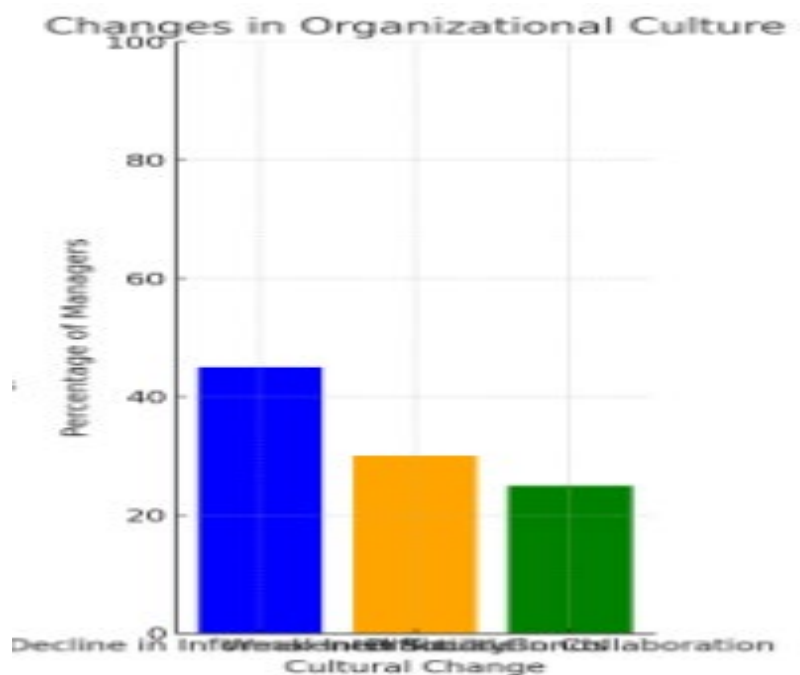


## Impact on Organizational Culture

The findings from the interviews reveal that maintaining organizational culture in a remote setting is challenging. Managers noted a decline in informal interactions and spontaneous collaboration, which are crucial for a cohesive culture. The lack of face-to-face meetings and social gatherings has made it difficult to foster a sense of community and shared purpose.

## Changes in Organizational Culture

Virtual team-building activities and regular communication were cited as effective strategies to mitigate these issues. Managers emphasized the importance of frequent check-ins, virtual social events, and transparent communication to keep employees engaged and connected. However, they acknowledged that these measures are not a complete substitute for in-person interactions. The conceptual model is grounded in several organizational and management theories that explain the dynamics of remote work, productivity, and organizational culture.

## Remote Work

Remote work is underpinned by telecommuting theories, which suggest that working remotely can lead to higher job satisfaction and productivity due to reduced commuting time and increased flexibility (Mann & Holdsworth, 2003). However, these theories also recognize

the potential challenges, such as social isolation and difficulties in communication, which can impact overall work performance and employee well-being.

**Employee Productivity**

The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007) provides a framework to understand how remote work can influence productivity. According to the JD-R model, job resources (e.g., flexibility, autonomy) can enhance motivation and productivity, while job demands (e.g., household distractions, work-life balance issues) can lead to stress and reduced performance. The balance between these demands and resources is crucial for maintaining productivity in a remote work environment.

**Organizational Culture**

Organizational culture theories, such as Schein's model of organizational culture (Schein, 2010), highlight the importance of shared values, beliefs, and practices in shaping employee behavior and organizational identity. In a remote work setting, maintaining these cultural elements becomes challenging due to reduced face-to-face interactions and the absence of a shared physical environment. The Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) also explains how individuals derive a sense of belonging and identity from their organizational culture, which can be weakened in a remote work context.

**Benefits of Remote Work**

1. **Flexibility**: Employees can work from any location, leading to a better work-life balance.
2. **Cost Savings**: Both employers and employees save money on commuting, office space, and daily expenses.
3. **Talent Pool Expansion**: Companies can hire from a global talent pool, not limited by geographic location.
4. **Reduced Environmental Impact**: Less commuting means lower greenhouse gas emissions.

**Challenges of Remote Work**

1. **Communication and Collaboration**: Maintaining effective communication and collaboration can be challenging without face-to-face interactions.
2. **Isolation**: Employees may feel isolated and disconnected from their teams.
3. **Work-Life Balance**: The line between work and personal life can become blurred.
4. **Security Risks**: Remote work can pose cybersecurity risks if proper measures are not in place.

## Recommendations for Employers

1. Invest in Technology: Ensure employees have access to reliable tools for communication, collaboration, and project management.
2. Promote Work-Life Balance: Encourage employees to set boundaries, take breaks, and prioritize their well-being.
3. Foster Communication: Use regular video meetings, chat platforms, and virtual team-building activities to maintain strong communication and team cohesion.
4. Provide Training: Offer training on remote work best practices, time management, and cyber security.
5. Monitor Performance: Use clear metrics to assess productivity and performance without micromanaging employees.

## Recommendations for Employees

1. Create a Dedicated Workspace: Set up a comfortable and quiet area for work to increase focus and productivity.
2. Stick to a Routine: Maintain a consistent schedule to help separate work from personal time.
3. Stay Connected: Use communication tools to stay in touch with colleagues and participate in virtual social activities.
4. Take Breaks: Schedule regular breaks to avoid burnout and maintain productivity.
5. Prioritize Health: Incorporate physical activity, healthy eating, and mental health practices into your daily routine.

## Discussion

The dual impact of remote work on productivity and organizational culture highlights the need for a balanced approach. Organizations must leverage technology to facilitate communication and collaboration while promoting a healthy work-life balance. Investment in virtual team-building and regular feedback mechanisms can help sustain a strong organizational culture.

**Balancing Productivity and Culture**

To maximize the benefits of remote work, organizations should implement strategies that address both productivity and cultural challenges. This includes providing employees with the necessary tools and resources to work efficiently from home, as well as fostering a supportive and inclusive remote work environment.Flexible work arrangements, such as allowing employees to choose their working hours and providing options for hybrid work models, can help maintain high productivity levels. Additionally, organizations should offer training and support to help employees manage their time effectively and create a healthy work-life balance.

**Enhancing Organizational Culture**

To strengthen organizational culture in a remote setting, organizations should prioritize regular and transparent communication. This includes keeping employees informed about organizational goals, updates, and changes, as well as encouraging open dialogue and feedback. Virtual town halls, Q&A sessions, and regular team meetings can help maintain a sense of community and shared purpose. Organizations should also invest in virtual team-building activities and social events to foster connections among employees. These can include virtual coffee breaks, online games, and virtual celebrations of milestones and achievements. Recognizing and celebrating employee contributions can help reinforce a positive and inclusive organizational culture.

**Limitations**

1. **Data Availability**: The rapid shift to remote work is recent, and long-term data on its effects are limited.
2. **Industry Variability**: Different industries experience varying impacts, making it difficult to generalize findings.

3. **Employee Diversity**: Individual differences, including personality and personal circumstances, influence remote work outcomes, complicating universal recommendations.

4. **Technological Access**: Not all employees have equal access to the necessary technology and internet connectivity, which can impact the effectiveness of remote work.

**Scope for Future Research**

The study of remote work is still evolving, and there are several areas where future research can provide deeper insights:

1. **Longitudinal Studies:** Examining the long-term effects of remote work on productivity and organizational culture can provide a more comprehensive understanding of its impact.

2. **Industry-Specific Analysis:** Different industries may experience varying effects of remote work. Future research could explore these differences and identify industry-specific strategies.

3. **Employee Well-being:** Further studies could investigate the impact of remote work on employee mental health and well-being, providing insights into how organizations can support their remote workforce.

4. **Technological Advancements:** As technology continues to evolve, future research could examine how new tools and platforms influence remote work dynamics.

5. **Hybrid Work Models:** With many organizations adopting hybrid work models, future studies could explore the optimal balance between remote and in-office work.

**Conclusion**

Remote work is likely to remain a significant component of the future work landscape. While it offers potential productivity benefits, it also necessitates strategic efforts to preserve organizational culture. By adopting innovative practices and fostering a supportive remote work environment, organizations can harness the advantages of this model while mitigating its challenges. The findings of this study provide valuable insights for managers and organizations navigating the complexities of remote work. As the work environment continues to evolve, it is essential for organizations to remain adaptable and proactive in addressing the needs of their

remote workforce. By striking a balance between productivity and culture, organizations can thrive in the new era of work. Remote work is here to stay, offering numerous benefits but also presenting unique challenges. By understanding its impact and implementing the right strategies, both employers and employees can thrive in a remote work environment. Embracing flexibility, investing in technology, and prioritizing communication are key to making remote work successful and sustainable. Additionally, addressing mental health, fostering organizational culture, and supporting professional development will ensure that remote work remains a viable and productive option for the future. As remote work continues to evolve, ongoing research and adaptation are crucial. Employers must remain flexible and responsive to the changing needs of their workforce, while employees should strive to develop the skills and habits that enable them to succeed in a remote environment. Together, these efforts can create a balanced, effective, and fulfilling remote work experience for all parties involved.

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# Reviving the Rhythm: Chavittunatakam Reborn

*Performing arts serve as a profound reflection of a society's social, cultural, and historical context, embodying the evolution of socio-cultural dynamics. Through gestures, body language, costumes, and narratives, performers bring to life traditions passed down through generations, offering insights into the human creativity and societal values of a specific era. These art forms not only captivate audiences but also convey moral, ethical, and religious ideas, profoundly influencing the human mind. Due to their distinctiveness in presentation—elaborate costumes, expressive body movements, and rhythmic choreography—performing arts stand as a cornerstone of cultural heritage. They serve as a vital tool for understanding a society's culture, with cultural narration being a key element of their expression. In essence, performing arts act as a catalyst for comprehending age-old traditions.One such significant performing art form in Kerala is Chavittunatakam. This vibrant musical dance drama is not only rich in color but also reflects the martial traditions of Kerala. Predominantly flourishing within the Latin Christian community of the region, Chavittunatakam is celebrated for its grandeur and storytelling. This paper seeks to explore the defining characteristics of Chavittunatakam, examine various interpretations of its origins, and highlight the recent initiatives aimed at reviving this ancient art form.*

 ***Keywords****: Performing Arts, Cultural Heritage, Cultural narration, Chavittunatakam*

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## Introduction

The Kerala state in India is renowned for its diversity of arts and culture. This cultural diversity has produced some performing arts that are highly regarded worldwide. All these performing arts and its sole features bear the stamps of Kerala culture and tradition that help us to understand the glorious heritage of this land. The most important performing art forms in Kerala are Kathakali, Kooth, Koodiyattam, Theyyam, Mohiniyattam, Thullal, Padayani, Chavittunatakam, Margamkali, Oppana, Kolkali, Duffmuttu, etc      In Kerala  Chavittunatakam is one of the important performing art forms and highly colourful musical dance drama. It also reflected the martial traditions of Kerala. It flourished among the

Latin Christian community mainly in the coastal areas between Kodungallur and Quilon regions. Chavittunatakam is popular among the Latin Christian community of Kerala, living in and around old forts and coastal centres, where Portuguese influence once prevailed. These areas have a tradition of Chavittunatakam Kalari's. From the available historical sources, Gothuruth is regarded as the home of Chavittunatakam in Kerala. This paper tries to find Gothuruth, the home of Chavittunatakam, and trace its historical background and tradition.

## Historical background of chavittunatakam

It is generally believed that Chavittunatakam flourished in the coastal areas of Kerala as a part of Portuguese colonization. Chumar Choondal renowned Scholar in Chavittunatakam pointed out that, the Portuguese promoted this cultural art form to fill a void in the cultural life of Latin Christian Community because the Synod of Diamper in 1599 prohibited Latin Christians from taking part in Hindu ceremonies. The Synod of Diamper Decree IV prohibited Pagan worship and Hindu ritualistic art forms. Hence Chavittunatakam filled the vacuum in the theatrical performances of Christians.

## Different perspectives on the genesis of chavittunatakam

There are three interpretations related to the origin and growth of Chavittunatakam in Kerala. Portuguese tradition, native tradition, and Tamil tradition. According to Portuguese tradition, Portuguese missionaries might have caused the origin of Chavittunatakam. This art form mainly flourished in Portuguese stronghold centres like Gothuruth, Ponjikara, Ochanthuruth, Mathilakam, Vellarpadam, Kumbalangee, and Venduruthy in Ernakulum districts. Pallipuram, Arthungal, and Chellanam in Alappuzha districts. Chummar Choondal stated that "In Chavittunatakam, the role of Kings and military chieftains were given to persons with fair complexion. The Indo-European families were attracted by this art form and gave their patronage. Their association with this art form was so intimate that they even identified it as Parankikalute natakam - the drama of the Portuguese". Sabeena Raphy pointed out that Chavittunatakam had its Native Origin. In her famous book "Chavittunatakam" she stated that "There was a theatre troupe at Kochi, they performed visual art performances at Udyamperoor to entertain the Menezes Archbishop of Goa. For this above-mentioned argument, she stated that Kochi and Kodungallur is are the birthplace of Chavittunatakam. Literary evidence proved that Chavittunatakam might have come from the Tamil region; the language used in this art form is the colloquial blend of Tamil and Malayalam. The Asan of Chavittunatakam is known as Annavi, the term Annavi is also of a Tamil origin. According to Tamil oral tradition, Chinnathambi Annavi who belonged to

Tamil Nadu, composed Chavittunatakam and propagated this art form. Kattiyakaran is another important character, he played a dominant role in Chavittunatakam. The term Kattiyakaran itself is a Tamil word, that means Fool or Vidooshakan. Ammani Pattu is a folk song that was mainly sung by Latin Christians in their Church festivals. Devamatha Ammani, which is about the history of Saint Mary, is famous among them. Early Tamil scholars and missionaries might have been the composers of these Ammani songs.  In Devamatha Ammani there is a reference to Venpa and Viruttam.Venpa is the Vadanam part. Viruttam Muulal is the orchestral Music for two hours before the play starts. Venpa and Viruttam are the important part of the Chavittunatakam. The textual similarities between these Devamatha Ammani songs and Chavittunatakam performances show that they originated in the Tamil region.

**The Unique Aspects of Chavittunatakam**

 The Chavittunatakam has generously incorporated elements of Kalarippayattu, opera, Tamil folklore music, and biblical themes to derive a distinctive style of its own. A peculiar feature of this musical dance drama where the actors pounded (Stamping or Chavittu) the dance floor producing resonant sounds emphasizes the dramatic situation developed. Chavittunatakam is noted for its rhythmic high-stepping, elaborate costumes, detailed gestures, and well-defined body movements of the characters presented in tune with the rhythmic play of black music and complementary percussion. In this new hybrid art form, the performers stamp their feet hard into the wooden stage to make a loud noise, which gave the form its name: 'Chavittunatakam', literally 'stamping drama'. In a typical show, there would be 150-200 people on stage. Now the performers are down to 75 and the duration of a show is shortened to 2-3 hours. According to Keli Ramachandran, the art form provided a channel for people to express their frustration for the communities in the coastal regions, Chavittunatakam was an escape from their realities. The performers led a war against the neglect of their families and the colorism and casteism of the Savarna people. It was a dream of every performer to become Charlemagne, The Emperor of Rome at least once in his life. According to him, many chavittunatakam chuvadikal helped the Christian community learn the customs of their religion too.

**Gothuruth - A Centre of Chavittunatakam Heritage and Tradition**

Gothuruth, a village located in the Ernakulam district, in the state of Kerala, holds great historical and cultural significance as the birthplace of Chavittunatakam. It is a coastal area under the direct control of the Portuguese and the population of this region were newly converted Latin Catholics. Gothuruth village has a strong history of chavittunatakam tradition. Its unique Chavittunatakam tradition that cannot be claimed by any other village in Kerala.

Because there was no other village where four chavittunatakam troops were still active. This region is full of the cultural spirit of this art form. Four important Chavittunatakam Sangam's of Gothuruth are *Yuvajana Chavittunatakam Kalasamithi, Kerala Chavittunatakam Academy, Gothuruth People's Arts Club, Sabeena Rafee Folklore Centre*. Each troupe had it's unique themes and *Asan.* Kerala Chavittunatakam Academy, Gothuruth takes lots of initiative, it is doing a remarkable job by training students from various schools throughout Kerala. The Academy has staged around 1000 performances since its launch. Today, Chavittunatakam is performed at all places, both public and private, religious and non-religious. One important piece of evidence related to the early existence of Chavittunatakam in Gothuruth is the second house name associated with some of the families. Their house names were known as Rajav, Manthri, Chekuthan, Malagha, Predam, Koothadiparambu, etc. depending on the part played by them in Chavittunatakam. In early times some characters were performed traditionally by some families. This practice resulted in the second house name for that family. Thus, it created keen interest and love in the younger generation towards this colorful traditional art form. *Koothadiparambu* is the second name given to areas where chavittunatakam was performed in earlier times. Gothuruth Village is very much involved in the preservation of this art form. Kerala Chavittunadaka Academy Gothuruth is an institution exclusively for the promotion of this theatre form established in 2005. Chavittunataka Academy came into being to revive, sustain, and strengthen the centuries-old art form. The prime vision and mission of the Academy are to document the cultural legacy of *Chavittunatakam* to promote it as one of the unique theatre art forms of Kerala. The Chavittunadaka performers now perform on Gothuruth Island, where the Kerala Chavittunataka Academy has been performed in a vibrant manner. Chuvadi is an annual fest organized jointly by Kochi Biennale and Gothuruth Sports and Arts Club. Since 2012, the fest has been organized for five nights to celebrate the New Year. The most important peculiarity is that different communities are involved in the training sessions in this village, which shows the transformation of the art form from a religious to a secular perspective. Among the contemporaries who worked selflessly to promote Chavittunatakam, the name of Sebina Rafi, the wife of writer Ponjhikkara Rafi needs a special mention. She extensively researched the costumes and took great pains to get a play staged in Delhi before Jawaharlal Nehru and other dignitaries. She also wrote a book titled *Chavittunatakam* in 1964. It provides a lot of information about this art form.

**Promotion of Chavittunatakam in Gothuruth**

Thambi Payyapilly is the chief exponent of this art form at Gothuruth and one who has excelled in it for around 33 years on and off the Chavittunatakam stage. His efforts have assisted many schools in Kerala to achieve higher laurels in the Chavittunadaka Competition in the Kerala School Youth Festivals *"I have been training school students for more than 10 years. They are mostly children from the fifth standard to the Higher Secondary level of Gothuruth St. Sebastian School. Chavittunatakam must be taught and learned as any other art form, meticulously, so that it can be passed on to the next generation. There are so many who pursue learning even after completing school. We need such people to promote it further, across India and abroad,"*. says Thambi Payyapilly in an interview, who has lots of hopes pinned on him, and who passionately imparts lessons. Gothuruth is famous for the art form "chavittunatakam". If you ask someone in Gothuruth how many times they have watched a chavittunatakam performance, they are likely to say they have lost count. And they would say *"We belong to Gothuruth and have seen the art from a very young age. Our parents and teachers are associated with it. We found our friends learning and enjoying it, and soon we too were a part of it."* Thambi Aashan teaches this art form with many reasons to learn a unique art form, to win various competitions, to enjoy ourselves, to entertain others, to help maintain the exceptionally impressive for the artist and viewer. Thambi attests that his experience with students is more heartening than the land's cultural legacy.

**Conclusion**

Though Chavittunatakam is believed to have originated in areas near Fort Kochi, it was revived and is flourishing, in areas like Gothuruth, thanks to the efforts of the art-loving people of this unique village. There are a lot of people who were passionate lovers of Chavittunatakam, they spend the utmost time promoting this traditional art form. The Kerala Chavittunadaka Academy is doing a remarkable job by training students from various schools throughout Kerala. Thus, it created keen interest and love in the younger generation towards this colorful traditional art. This art form particularly reflected the socio-economic religious and cultural condition of the society in which it originated and showcased the distinctive elements of this art form. In short, the rejuvenating efforts of Chavittunatakam in Gothuruth played a pivotal role in reviving the interest and preserving the unique traditions of this art form. Through dedicated training programs, *community involvements and active* performances of different *Chavittunatakam* clubs like *Yuvajana Chavittunatakam Kalasamithi, Kerala*

*Chavittunatakam Academy, Gothuruth People's Arts Club, and Sabeena Rafee Folklore Centre, was able to capture the hearts of the younger generation and keep the legacy alive for future generations too.*

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# Temples in Travancore with Special Reference to the Flood of 1924

*The present paper is about the Temples in Travancore that destructed during the unexpected event of the 'thonnoottionpathile Vellappokkam', according to the english calendar, the year is 1924. At that time, temples played a crucial role in the social formation process of the Kerala. Caste system which was the dominant force of the time and people were separated on the basis of their Jati. The paper examines the flood reports of the Devaswom Commissioner to Chief Secretary; here he described the destructive effects of flood on the temples of Vaikkom, Ambalapuzha and Trivandrum districts.*

## Vaikkom District

The Devaswom Commissioner stated that the major Devaswoms of Peruvaram and Mannam escaped from the ravages of flood and that the only temples subject to inundation were Thirumuzhikulam, Thiruvalur and Kannankulangara. At Kannankulangara water flowed into the Thirumittam but no damage was caused to the buildings. A portion of the parapet wall surrounding the temple tank was however washed away[1]. Among the minor devaswoms, Kothakulangara temple was the most affected temple. The roofing of the Srikoil was completely swept away and poojas in the temple were suspended from the 2nd and 11th karkadakom, after which the daily functions were resumed after performing the necessary expiatory ceremonies. Two other minor Dewaswoms, Thathappalli and Neeleswaram also suffered on account of the flood. A portion of the Thidappalli attached to the Thathappalli temple was collapsed and the rest of the structure stands in imminent danger of tumbling down. Neeleswaram temple was a safe shelter to the refugees who flocked in large numbers with their cattle. The Thidapalli, which is only a thatched shed, was thrown open for their occupation and they have now left it completely spoilt. At Trikariyur, water entered the precincts of the temple on 7th karkitakam. The inundation reached its climax at midnight and water rose up to the pedestal of the Bimbom. Water receded in the next morning itself. The southern and western walls of the Oottupura collapsed. Besides the temple referred to, the Oottupuras at Peruvaram

and Kannankulangara afforded timely accommodation for a large number of castes hindus and their cattle who came from the flood stricken areas. The Gopuram buildings were thrown open to the refugees and even the office building of the Group Superintendent was placed at their disposal for about five days. Dharma conjee was being doled out to the poor by the Muncipal authorities but those of the refugees who were unable to take advantage of the same were served with the Nivedyam rice of the temples. The Devaswom vessels were also allowed to be utilised in connection with the distribution of Dharma conjee. It was reported that the Oottupura building at Alwaye sustained serious damage and a good portion of the roofing and walls were completely destroyed.According to the report of Thiruvarpu Group, a large portion of the parapet wall of the Keralapuram tank has been knocked down by the fall of the branches of a banyan tree standing close by during the heavy rains. The repairing works estimated to the cost of rupees 100. The Nellukuthupura of the Thalayil Devaswom was also collapsed and a large number of the tiles of the Thirunakkara temple blown off by the storm. At Thiruvarppu every portion of the village except the temple was under water and the caste Hindu inhabitants of the village flocked to the temple with their cattle. The Oottupura and the outhouses were placed at their disposal and every possible convenience was afforded to them by the Devaswom officers. The superintendent of Thiruvarppu Dewaswoms, with the cooperation of other officials, collected more than 100 rupees by public subscription and supplied Dharma conjee to the distressed. The feeding was conducted on five days from the 5th Karkadakom. The other temple affected by the flood in the Vaoikkom district was Elankavu temple where the Oottupura and Nellukuthupura were slightly damaged In the case of Ettumanur Group, no loss of any serious nature of damage was reported. Here the Dewaswoms officers freely cooperated with the revenue and Police authorities in the various relief centres. The services of the Dewaswom subordinates and vessels of the several temples were placed at the disposal of the relief staff in connection with the feeding of sufferers.

**Ambalapuzha district**

Compared with Kuttanad and other low-lying places, the Ambalapuzha temple stands on a higher level. Water was almost knee-deep in the Thirumittam. The buildings attached to the temple were thrown open to the caste hindu people who rendered homeless and destitute by the devastating floods, flocked in large numbers from the surrounding places. One of the Kalithattus of the temple fell down and fallen materials were at once collected and stocked in one of the Oottupura rooms. Beyond this, Devaswom did not suffer any serious damage and the daily ceremonies went on as usual[1]. At Karumadi water entered the Nalambalam of the

southern shrine and caused serious damage to the south – eastern wall. The eastern wall also stands in imminent danger of falling down. A large number of people and cattle took refuge within the Oottupura and other buildings attached to the temple. Poojas and daily ceremonies continued without any interruption. The Ayiroor Puthiyakavu temple (Thiruvalla group) subjected to the greatest ravages of the flood. It situated on the banks of Pampa river. Water rose to the roof of the Srikoil and the Bimbom was lifted up from the Nalam and deposited on the floor. Poojas resumed after the performance of necessary Sudhi rituals. The Nalambalam, the Mandapam and Thidappalli of the temple were seriously affected. The whole of the Srikoil, Nalambalam, Vilakkumadam and the premises filled with sand and silt to an average depth of $1^{1/2}$ feet. The Nellukuthupura, the Kazhakkaran's house, where provisions for Nityanidanam were stored, the shed put up by the Maramat contractor with the materials kept therein and a portion of the kalithattu etc washed away by the river. The Thottakad temple was the other seriously affected temple of the Thiruvalla group. Here the valiyambalam and thidappalli seriously damged. Aranmula Devaswom escaped from the ravages of the flood. By the 12$^{th}$ Karkidakom almost all the houses near the temple were swept away by the raging Pampaand the hindu folk took refuge within the premises of the temple where they were forced to stay for about three days. At Chegannur the vicinity of the major Devaswom was unaffected and people from the flooded areas flocked to the temple buildings for shelter. The minor devaswoms to the west of the Chegannur such as Thiruvanvandur and Budhanur and those in the Ranni Pakuthi were subjected to serious damage. The devaswoms in the Mavelikkara and Karthikappalli taluks, the Trippakudam, Veeyapuram, Vellamkulangara, Panjikulanara, Marakulangara, Kannannurkulangara, Kaduvankulangara, Kalleli, Karunad, Padanilam, Neendur, Kollakal, Perumadom, Valiakulangara, Vazhuthanam, Erattakulangara, Mullakulangara, Pullampada, Kodumtharu, Kattuvalli, Mampuzha, Manapuram, Mithrakari, Puthiamadam were subjected to the attack of the flood but only slight damages caused to the most of the temples. On account of the flood in the panthalam river, water entered the premises of the Valikoikkal but did not do any great harm to the buildings. The temples mostly affected by the flood were those of Kuttanad. The heavy rains and flood caused great havoc to the Changamkari Devaswom buildings. The walls of the Nalambalam and outhouses were greatly damaged. In the Palliyarkavu devaswom, the water entered the Srikoil and Bimbom was fully under water. At Monkombu he floods entered the shrine but did not hamper the conduct of pooja. The virakupura attached to the temple fell down and one of the Kalithattu completely damaged. The mionr Dewaswoms of Oorukari, Kodappunnakkavu, Kallampalli, Melkad, Chakkamkari, Kottummel, Kunnummel, Cheruvalikkavu and Thevalakad were affected by the

flood but the damage caused to the most of them was not all serious. In all the temples water entered the Srikoils, but except in Thevalakad, the water did not rise above the Bimbo

## Trivandrum district

In Shencotta, the Ayikudi and Samburvadakara devaswoms suffered by inundation for a few days, but beyond the inconvenience caused for passage in and out of the temple, no serious harm was done to the buildings and the daily ceremonies went on as usual[1]. The flood reached the Marthandeswaram temple in Kallada inthe Quilon group and caused damage to the records and some paddy stored there. The water rose almost to the roof of the temple building, but it soon receeded. The devaswom officers took the inititive of arranging the shelter in the devaswom with food and accommodation and cooperated with the public in collecting subscription for relief work

## Conclusion

The majority temples in Travancore were destructed in the flood situation of 1924 and those temples escaped from flood acted as relief centres with other relief institutions like schools, satroms, government offices etc. These temples arranged food and shelter to those who affected by the flood including both higher and lower caste. The ideology of caste that existed for a long time replaced for a short period in this crucial moment.

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## The Impact of Belief: How Self-Efficacy Influences Success Across All Areas of Life

*Self-efficacy, a concept introduced by Albert Bandura, refers to an individual's belief in their capacity to accomplish tasks, set objectives, and overcome challenges effectively. This psychological construct plays a crucial role in motivating individuals, shaping their behaviours, and influencing their performance in various life areas. This article examines the theoretical foundations of self-efficacy, its impact on personal performance, its connection to gender differences, and its significance in youth development and the digital age. Additionally, it explores strategies for cultivating self-efficacy to promote personal growth and improve societal well-being*

***Keywords***: *self-efficacy, personal performance, Gender differences, societal well-being*

### Introduction

Self-efficacy, a concept introduced by renowned psychologist Albert Bandura, refers to the belief in one's ability to successfully execute actions needed to achieve specific goals and overcome challenges. This psychological construct is essential for understanding human motivation and behaviour, as it significantly impacts decision-making, effort, perseverance in the face of obstacles, and overall success in various aspects of life. Self-efficacy is crucial in areas such as academic achievement, career advancement, personal growth, and mental well-being. Individuals with high self-efficacy tend to approach challenges confidently, engage in problem-solving, and persist through difficulties, driven to set and achieve ambitious goals. In contrast, those with low self-efficacy often struggle with self-doubt and avoid situations where failure is possible, potentially missing valuable opportunities for growth. As a result, self-efficacy not only determines the level of effort someone invests but also shapes their response to adversity and their likelihood of achieving their desired outcomes. This article explores the theoretical underpinnings of self-efficacy through Bandura's social cognitive theory, examining its influence on performance in various domains of life. It highlights the role of self-efficacy in motivating individuals to take on challenges and stay committed to their goals. Additionally, the article investigates the intersection of self-efficacy and gender, focusing on how societal norms and stereotypes can influence the self-belief of individuals, particularly women in male-dominated fields. The importance of fostering self-efficacy in youth is also discussed, emphasizing how early experiences and mentorship can help build resilience and

competence. In today's digital age, the article further explores the role of self-efficacy in developing digital competence, a critical skill for adapting to technological advances. Ultimately, the goal is to emphasize how cultivating self-efficacy can lead to personal growth, societal well-being, and empowerment in an ever-changing world.

## Theoretical Framework of Self-Efficacy

Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) presents self-efficacy as a core element in understanding how individuals interact with their environment. According to SCT, human behaviour is influenced by the dynamic interplay of personal factors (such as beliefs and cognitive processes), behavioural patterns (such as actions and habits), and environmental conditions (external influences). Within this framework, self-efficacy serves as a critical mechanism that governs individuals' choices, motivation, persistence, and overall ability to navigate challenges and achieve success. The theory emphasizes that self-efficacy is not a static trait but a fluid and context-dependent belief, that can be shaped and reshaped through experiences and interactions with others.Bandura identified four main sources through which self-efficacy is developed and strengthened

## Mastery Experiences

Mastery experiences are the most influential and robust source of self-efficacy. These experiences occur when an individual completes a task or achieves a goal. Such successes build a person's confidence, reinforcing their belief that they can handle similar challenges in the future. On the other hand, setbacks and failures, although challenging, can also serve as valuable learning opportunities. If individuals perceive these experiences as part of the learning process rather than as personal shortcomings, they can enhance their self-efficacy by teaching resilience and problem-solving skills. Importantly, each success, no matter how small, contributes to reinforcing the belief that future challenges can be conquered, which further propels individuals to take on new and more complex tasks.

## Vicarious Experiences

Vicarious experiences refer to the process of learning by observing the successes of others. When individuals see others achieve goals, especially those who are perceived as similar to them, they begin to believe that they too can succeed in similar tasks. The more relatable the role model, the more likely an observer will draw inspiration from that person's success. This process is not merely about observing others; it involves interpreting these observations in a way that reinforces self-belief. For example, seeing someone overcome challenges in a similar

context (e.g., a student succeeding in a difficult academic subject) can help others believe that they can achieve the same outcomes, even if they initially felt uncertain about their abilities.

## Verbal Persuasion

Verbal persuasion, or positive reinforcement from others, is another critical factor that influences self-efficacy. Encouragement and constructive feedback can significantly bolster an individual's belief in their abilities. This type of external support often helps individuals focus on their strengths and potential, rather than on shortcomings or setbacks. Verbal persuasion plays a particularly important role in nurturing a growth mindset, where individuals see their abilities as something that can improve with effort and persistence. Rather than simply celebrating the results, effective feedback emphasizes the process of effort, perseverance, and learning, which encourages continued motivation and the willingness to face new challenges.

## Physiological and Emotional States

An individual's physical and emotional states also influence their self-efficacy. Positive emotions, such as excitement, joy, and enthusiasm, typically lead to higher self-efficacy, as individuals feel energized and capable of achieving their goals. Conversely, negative emotions such as stress, anxiety, and fatigue can diminish one's confidence and reduce the likelihood of success. Understanding the impact of emotional and physical states is key to developing strong self-efficacy. Effective emotion regulation—such as maintaining focus in stressful situations, managing fear of failure, or learning to reframe negative emotions—can help individuals sustain belief in their abilities, even when external challenges arise. Being able to manage and positively interpret physiological responses (such as nervousness before a presentation) allows individuals to maintain a higher sense of self-efficacy and to approach tasks with greater resilience.

## Self-Efficacy and Performance

Self-efficacy has a profound impact on performance across various life domains. The belief in one's ability to succeed directly influences how individuals approach tasks, persist in the face of difficulties, and ultimately perform. Research has consistently shown that individuals with high self-efficacy are more likely to achieve their goals, due to their proactive behaviours and resilience.

## Problem-Solving

Individuals with high self-efficacy are more inclined to approach problems systematically. They tend to break down complex challenges into manageable steps and develop strategic plans

to overcome them. These individuals do not view obstacles as insurmountable barriers, but as temporary setbacks that can be solved through effort and creativity. They are more likely to explore various solutions and persevere until they find a suitable resolution, thus fostering an iterative process of improvement. High self-efficacy encourages a mindset focused on finding solutions rather than succumbing to frustration.

## Setting Ambitious Goals

A strong sense of self-efficacy also leads individuals to set higher and more challenging goals for themselves. Their belief in their abilities drives them to push the boundaries of what they can achieve. By setting challenging yet realistic goals, individuals with high self-efficacy stretch their limits, which often results in more significant accomplishments. These ambitious goals are essential for growth, as they encourage individuals to take initiative, commit to sustained effort, and seek out new opportunities. High self-efficacy also promotes resilience, helping individuals remain focused and motivated when obstacles arise in pursuit of these goals. Individuals with high self-efficacy typically experience greater success because they actively engage with tasks, maintain a positive and persistent approach to challenges, and are willing to stretch their capabilities. Their belief in their ability to perform successfully empowers them to set and achieve more ambitious goals, contributing to a positive feedback loop of growth and accomplishment. Therefore, fostering self-efficacy is essential in maximizing an individual's potential and ensuring that they remain motivated and resilient in the face of challenges.

## Emotional Regulation and Self-Efficacy

Emotional regulation plays a pivotal role in maintaining and enhancing self-efficacy. It refers to the ability to manage and respond to emotional experiences in a way that is constructive and conducive to achieving one's goals. Self-efficacious individuals are typically adept at regulating their emotions, enabling them to stay calm, focused, and composed, even in high-pressure situations. This emotional control allows them to think, make rational decisions, and take effective actions toward their objectives. For example, when faced with a challenging task, self-efficacious individuals may experience stress or anxiety, but they can manage these emotions by using coping strategies such as deep breathing, reframing negative thoughts, or focusing on the task at hand. These emotional regulation techniques prevent feelings of overwhelm from clouding their judgment, allowing them to maintain a sense of clarity and

direction. By staying focused on the task rather than getting bogged down by emotional distractions, they can approach challenges systematically, persist through setbacks, and continue making progress toward their goals. Moreover, emotional regulation also enables self-efficacious individuals to manage negative emotions such as frustration, disappointment, or failure. Rather than becoming discouraged by setbacks, they view these experiences as opportunities to learn and grow. This mindset of resilience, coupled with emotional control, fosters a greater sense of persistence and optimism, key qualities that are essential for long-term success. In contrast, individuals with low self-efficacy often struggle with emotional regulation, particularly when faced with challenges. They tend to experience heightened anxiety, fear, or self-doubt, which can impair their ability to think clearly and solve problems effectively. These emotional reactions may lead them to avoid difficult tasks altogether or to give up easily when faced with obstacles. Rather than viewing setbacks as opportunities for growth, they may perceive them as confirmations of their incompetence, which further undermines their self-belief and confidence in their abilities. This emotional response often results in a cycle of avoidance and disengagement, limiting their capacity to improve or achieve their goals. Furthermore, the inability to regulate emotions can exacerbate the feelings of helplessness and stress that low self-efficacy individuals often experience. In situations where they encounter challenges, their tendency to focus on the negative aspects of the situation—such as feelings of inadequacy or the fear of failure—can prevent them from exploring solutions or taking proactive steps. This avoidance behaviour, whether it involves procrastination or simply disengaging from the task at hand, perpetuates a cycle of poor performance and self-doubt. Overall, the ability to regulate emotions is a key differentiator between individuals with high and low self-efficacy. Those with high self-efficacy can maintain emotional balance, stay focused under pressure, and continue working toward their goals despite adversity. In contrast, those with low self-efficacy may struggle to manage their emotions effectively, leading to avoidance, disengagement, and a reduced likelihood of achieving success. As such, emotional regulation not only influences how individuals respond to challenges but also plays a crucial role in shaping their overall performance and personal growth. By cultivating emotional regulation skills, individuals can enhance their self-efficacy, thereby improving their ability to manage stress, stay focused, and overcome obstacles. Developing emotional intelligence—through practices such as mindfulness, self-reflection, and cognitive restructuring—can help individuals build greater emotional resilience and confidence, empowering them to tackle life's challenges with greater effectiveness and persistence.

**Mental Imagery and Self-Efficacy**

Mental imagery, also known as visualization, is a psychological technique that involves vividly imagining oneself performing a task successfully. This technique plays a critical role in enhancing self-efficacy—the belief in one's ability to accomplish a specific goal. By mentally rehearsing successful actions, individuals can strengthen their belief in their capabilities, which can lead to improved performance in a variety of contexts. Mental imagery works by activating neural pathways that are involved in actual physical performance. When individuals visualize themselves successfully performing a task, it is similar to practising that task in real life, as the brain processes the mental rehearsal in much the same way as physical practice.The effectiveness of mental imagery in boosting self-efficacy lies in its ability to provide individuals with a sense of accomplishment before they engage in the actual task. This mental rehearsal helps build confidence by reinforcing the belief that success is possible, especially in situations where individuals may feel uncertain or anxious. The power of mental imagery has been widely recognized in fields such as sports, public speaking, performing arts, and other performance-based domains. In these fields, mental imagery allows individuals to visualize successful outcomes, thereby reducing anxiety, improving accuracy, and enhancing coordination. For instance, athletes regularly use mental imagery to improve their performance. A basketball player might visualize making a perfect shot, a gymnast might imagine executing a flawless routine, or a runner might mentally rehearse crossing the finish line first. These mental exercises not only help them refine their skills but also boost their self-efficacy, which is crucial for maintaining motivation and overcoming performance anxiety. The repeated visualization of success encourages a mindset of confidence and competence, further. enhancing their belief in their ability to perform under pressure. Additionally, mental imagery is beneficial in reducing anxiety, a common obstacle for many individuals, particularly in high-stakes situations. By imagining a successful performance, individuals can approach tasks with greater calmness and less fear, as they are less likely to focus on negative outcomes or potential failures. As a result, mental imagery serves as a powerful tool to help individuals manage stress and perform at their highest potential.

**Gender Differences in Self-Efficacy**

Self-efficacy is influenced by various social, cultural, and personal factors, and one of the most prominent factors affecting self-efficacy is gender. Gender differences in self-efficacy are especially noticeable in areas where one gender is underrepresented or faces societal stereotypes and biases. For example, women in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering,

and Mathematics) fields or men in caregiving roles often experience different challenges related to their self-efficacy beliefs, largely due to societal expectations and lack of representation.

**Challenges Faced by Women**

Women, particularly in male-dominated fields such as engineering, technology, and physics, often face barriers that hinder the development of their self-efficacy. These challenges include a lack of mentorship, fewer opportunities for hands-on learning (which limits mastery experiences), and the presence of societal pressures to conform to traditional gender roles. Women may also face higher expectations to be perfect in their work, which can increase feelings of self-doubt and lead to perfectionism. This pressure can discourage them from taking risks or pursuing challenging tasks, thus stunting the development of their self-efficacy. Moreover, women entering these fields may encounter an environment that is not as supportive as those typically found in more gender-balanced or female-dominated fields. The lack of representation and role models who share similar experiences can lead to feelings of isolation and undermine their confidence. In such environments, women may internalize the belief that they are not suited for success in these areas, even if their actual abilities suggest otherwise.These barriers contribute to the gender gap in self-efficacy and career progression.

**Addressing the Gender Gap**

To combat the gender disparities in self-efficacy, several strategies can be employed. First, ensuring equal opportunities is crucial. This includes providing women with access to mentorship programs, leadership development initiatives, and hands-on learning experiences. Equal access to these resources allows women to build the skills and confidence necessary to succeed in male-dominated fields. Second, the importance of diverse role models cannot be overstated. Highlighting successful women in STEM and leadership roles inspires and shows others that success is achievable. Role models who have faced similar struggles and overcome challenges are particularly impactful in demonstrating that gender does not dictate one's abilities or potential for success. Finally, creating supportive environments is essential for fostering self-efficacy in women. Workplaces and educational settings should be designed to encourage a growth mindset, where failure is viewed as a natural part of the learning process rather than a reflection of one's limitations. Positive reinforcement, constructive feedback, and a supportive network are vital in helping women build their self-confidence and resilience.

**Self-Efficacy in Youth Development**

Self-efficacy is especially important in youth development, as it forms the foundation for adolescents to navigate the challenges they encounter during their transition into adulthood. Developing a strong sense of self-efficacy in young people can significantly influence their ability to pursue opportunities, manage setbacks, and achieve their goals.

**Empowering Adolescents**

Youth programs that provide adolescents with meaningful opportunities to take on leadership roles or engage in community projects can play a critical role in boosting their self-efficacy. By taking on responsibilities, such as organizing events or participating in team-based activities, young people are given the chance to demonstrate their abilities and gain confidence in their skills. This process of taking initiative and achieving success in real-world contexts helps adolescents build their belief in their ability to influence outcomes, solve problems, and overcome obstacles.

**Positive Relationships**

Mentorship is another key component in fostering self-efficacy in young people. A supportive mentor-mentee relationship provides adolescents with the emotional support, guidance, and constructive feedback they need to thrive. Mentors who recognize and encourage the strengths of young individuals can help them believe in their potential and reinforce the idea that they are capable of achieving their goals. This relationship helps adolescents build a sense of competence and autonomy, both of which are central to developing strong self-efficacy.

**Encouraging Resilience**

Youth programs that focus on building resilience are also essential in developing self-efficacy. Resilience is the ability to bounce back from setbacks, and it is a crucial skill for facing the challenges that life inevitably presents. Youth programs that encourage individuals to reflect on and learn from their failures help to cultivate a growth mindset. When young people understand that mistakes are part of the learning process, they are more likely to persist through difficulties and develop greater self-efficacy.

**Self-Efficacy in the Digital Age**

In the digital era, self-efficacy has extended to how individuals interact with technology. Digital self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their ability to effectively use and adapt to digital tools and technologies. As technology continues to evolve at a rapid pace, individuals

need to have high digital self-efficacy to remain competitive in the workforce and adapt to changing technological environments.

**Implications for Education and Workforce Development**

As the digital landscape continues to evolve, digital literacy has become a cornerstone of education and workforce development. Educational institutions must prioritize teaching digital skills and ensuring that students are well-equipped to navigate digital technologies. By providing training on emerging technologies, schools can help students develop the digital competencies needed to excel in the modern job market. These efforts also play a key role in boosting students' digital self-efficacy, as they become more confident in their ability to use technology to solve problems and accomplish tasks.

**Fostering Lifelong Learning**

Encouraging lifelong learning is another key strategy for enhancing digital self-efficacy. As technology continues to change, individuals must stay current with new tools, systems, and digital platforms. Fostering a culture of continuous learning enables individuals to adapt to these changes, build new skills, and maintain their digital self-efficacy. By remaining open to new learning opportunities, individuals can stay agile and competent in an ever-changing digital landscape.

**Strategies for Enhancing Self-Efficacy**

Several practical strategies can help individuals enhance their self-efficacy: Setting Achievable Goals: Breaking down larger tasks into smaller manageable goals allows individuals to experience frequent successes, reinforcing their belief in their capabilities. Providing Constructive Feedback: Positive feedback that focuses on strengths and offers guidance for improvement helps individuals understand how they can enhance their performance and continue to build self-efficacy. Encouraging Reflection on Past Successes: Reflecting on previous achievements reminds individuals of their potential and capabilities, fostering motivation and a sense of competence. Offering Opportunities for Mastery: Providing individuals with opportunities to gain mastery in specific areas helps build competence, reinforcing self-efficacy and encouraging continued growth.

**Conclusion**

Self-efficacy is a powerful psychological force that influences an individual's ability to achieve goals, overcome challenges, and perform in various domains of life. By understanding the

sources of self-efficacy and the factors that influence its development, individuals, organizations, and educators can create environments that nurture resilience, confidence, and motivation. Fostering self-efficacy through strategies such as goal-setting, positive feedback, and mentorship is essential for empowering individuals to reach their full potential in personal, academic, and professional contexts.

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# Sustainable   Development Strategies and Practices in Higher Education

*Sustainable education or Education for Sustainable development (ESD) aimed at entrenching in students, school, and communities the values and motivation, to act for sustainability now and in the future- in one's own life in their communities, and on a world-wide platform. The curriculum for Education for Sustainable Development includes formal, informal, and non-formal sources of education. The curricular areas consider by UNESCO (2006) are under three dimensions- economic, environmental, and social. For long term economic, environmental, social and well- being, sustainable practices and strategies in Education are essential.   These practices aim to a more equitable, reliable, resilient and environmentally responsible educational system. It prepares students to become more responsible global citizens. Some strategies and practice that can bring sustainable development are Green campus Initiatives, Integration of sustainability in Curriculum, Environmental Stewardship, Experiential Learning, Social and Cultural Awareness, Professional development, Technology Integration, Collaboration and Partnership. Educational institutions can contribute to a more sustainable future by equipping students with the knowledge and skills needed to address the complex challenges of the 21st century by implementing these sustainable practices and strategies  .*

## Introduction

Sustainable education or Education for Sustainable development (ESD) aimed at entrenching in students, school, and communities the values and motivation, to act for sustainability now and in the future- in one's own life in their communities, and on a world-wide platform.  The four pillars of sustainability are human, social, economic, and environmental. The curriculum for Education for Sustainable Development includes formal, informal, and non-formal sources of education (UNESCO, 2006).

 Formal education is that which is imparted through schools through a defined curriculum designed to achieve certain pedagogical goals. Technical and Vocational Education and Training also prepares people for work in range of sectors (eg.

Construction, Waste management etc.) that consume enormous amounts of energy and raw materials, educating these individuals with regard to more sustainable practices presents an opportunity for substantial marginal improvement in resource outcomes (UNESCO, 2006).  Informal education includes publication in journals, newspapers, and magazines as well as documentaries and specials available on television and the internet among others (UNESCO, 2006). Non formal education is education that exists outside of the formal education system and is usually flexible and learner- centric. It is also known as participatory approach which includes nature centres, nongovernmental organization, public health educators and agricultural extension agents (UNESCO, 2006). The curricular areas consider by UNESCO (2006) are under three dimensions- economic, environmental, and social. Under the dimension of economic the curricular areas are Consortium and ethical trade, Cooperate Social Responsibility (CSR), Rural and Urban Development, Combatting Poverty, understanding costs and Supply chains, Living standards and valuing and Sustainable livelihoods. Under Environmental dimensions the areas are Biological diversity, ecological principles, ecosystems, natural resources management, climate management, disaster prevention, energy and waste .

  For social dimension the suggested areas are Peace and human security, conflict resolution, citizenship, democracy, governance, participatory decision making, gender equality, cultural diversity and intercultural understanding  (Tilbury and Mula, 2009).

**Strategies and practices for Sustainable Development in Higher Education**

  It is critical now a days for embedding sustainable practices in higher education institutions. It is clear that integrating sustainability principles in the decision making and activities of higher education institutions can be achieved without necessarily resulting in a deficit or sacrificing in return. (Walker et. al, 2023). For long term Environmental, Social and Economic well- being, sustainable practices and strategies in Education are essential .  These practices aim to a more equitable, reliable, resilient and environmentally responsible educational system. It prepares students to become more responsible global citizens . Some strategies and practice that can bring sustainable development are given below.

**Green Campus Initiatives**

Green campus initiatives are a viable strategy for disseminating sustainable development concepts in higher education institutions, enhancing the student's knowledge and pro activity regarding sustainable development  (Ribeiro et.al, 2021).

  They are focused on implementing sustainable infrastructure, reducing environmental

impacts and economic costs, and raising student awareness regarding the concept of SD (Patel and Patel, 2012) . Some of the Green initiatives that higher education institutions can practice is

- Implement energy- efficient lighting and heating systems
- Promote waste reduction and recycling programs
- Develop green spaces and foster biodiversity in campus

**Integration of sustainability in Curriculum**

Today, universities are trying to develop sustainability curriculums to further increase sustainability awareness and to provide undergraduate students with a toolkit that would provide them with a competitive advantage in the job market  (Tasdemir & Rado, 2020). They developed a course curriculum that integrates modern management techniques and sustainability concepts with wood products industry dynamics, which also focuses on project-based learning (PBL). The number of higher education institutions that integrate sustainability curriculum into university curricula significantly increased  (Hill, 2018). Some of the ways that can be used to integrate sustainability in curriculum are

- Infuse sustainability principles in to the curriculum across all subjects by incorporating sustainability concepts, principles and issues into various subjects and grade levels.
- Create courses and programs focused on sustainability and environmental studies
- Encourage project- based learning that addresses real- world sustainability challenges

**Environmental Stewardship**

The term environmental stewardship has been used to refer to such diverse actions as creating protected areas, replanting trees, limiting harvests, reducing harmful activities or pollution, creating community gardens, restoring degraded areas, or purchasing more sustainable products .  Bennette et. al, (2018) proposed a clear definition and comprehensive analytical frame work could strengthen our ability to understand the factors that lead to the success of environmental stewardship in different contexts and to support most effectively and enable local efforts . Some of the actions that can be taken by higher education institutions are

- Promote responsible consumption and reduce waste in institutions

- Implement water and energy conservation measures
- Establish eco- friendly transportation options for students and staff

**Experiential Learning**

Experiential learning and sustainable development are defined as a hand-on, action-oriented learning process that enables the learner to experience, reflect and change the way the learner conceives their place in the world and to take action towards sustainable development  (Gaffney& O'Neil, 2018).   Experiential learning encompasses diverse action-oriented pedagogies often described as "learning by doing," a term coined by experiential educational theorist John Dewey  (1938). Experiential Learning practices for sustainable development can include

- Offer hands-on experiences like gardening, eco-clubs, and field trips.
- Provide opportunities for students to engage in community service and sustainability projects.
- Facilitate internships or partnerships with local sustainability organizations

**Social and Cultural Awareness**

Zheng et.al (2021) investigated the importance of culture in achieving sustainable development goals and concluded that consideration of culture is vital if we are to achieve sustainable development goals  . Different ways for developing social and cultural awareness for enhancing sustainable development practices are

- Foster cultural diversity and inclusion in the curriculum
- Teach empathy, social justice, and global citizenship
- Create a safe and inclusive environment for all students

**Professional Development**

Professional development through education and training increases the capabilities of individuals and improve the productivity of the work- force. It enhances the quality of workforce in different sectors including education, health, economic, environment, and human rights . It thus helps to build sound human resource development of a country, a foundation for sustainability  (Havea & Mohanty, 2020). Some professional development means are

- Provide training and workshops for educators on sustainability topics
- Encourage teachers to incorporate sustainable practices to their teaching methods
- Support ongoing learning through access to resources and networks

**Collaboration and Partnership**

Collaboration has become an essential paradigm in sustainable development research and in strategies for meeting the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (Payumo et.al, 2020). Bin et.al (2022) analysed the necessity of collaboration and partnership among the states and assessing how partnerships can help implement Sustainable Development Goals . Some practices for collaboration and partnership are

- Collaborate with local communities, NGOs and business for sustainability projects.
- Partner with educational institutions for knowledge sharing and joint initiatives
- Engage parents and the wider community in sustainability efforts

**Technology Integration**

Digital technologies and innovative solutions play a crucial role in promoting sustainable development (Al- Emran & Griffy- Brown, 2023). They identified and analysed the key opportunities and challenges associated with technology adoption in sustainable development . Mondejar et.al (2021) explored how digitalization can assist in attaining SDGs in different sectors such as (i) food-water-energy nexus, (ii) industry, (iii) citizens' health and wellbeing, (iv) climate change and biodiversity protection . Some ways of integrating technology in education for sustainable development are

- Use technology for virtual learning and reducing the carbon footprint of education
- Implement energy- efficient IT infrastructure and practices
- Encourage digital literacy and responsible technology use.

**Conclusion**

By implementing these sustainable practices and strategies, educational institutions can contribute to building a more sustainable future while equipping students with the knowledge, skills and values necessary to address the complex challenges of 21st century.

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## The Tunes of the Adventurers: Exploring the History of the Portuguese Musical Traditions

*Portuguese musical traditions reflect multifarious historical, cultural, and political processes with influences from non-European cultures from both North and sub-Saharan Africa and Brazil. Its genres range from classical to popular music. Portugal's music history includes musical history from the medieval Gregorian Chants through Carlos Seixas' symphonies era to the composers of the modern era. Portuguese music encompasses musical production of the Middle Ages, Renaissance, Baroque, Classical, Romantic and Modern eras. Portuguese music reflects its rich history and privileged geographical location. These are evidenced in the music history of Portugal, which despite its firm European roots, nevertheless reflects the intercontinental cultural interactions begun in the Portuguese discoveries. The identity of Portuguese Culture is always dominated by certain preconceived notions. We have always ignored them as 'pirates', 'uprooted', 'cruel', 'uncivilized' , 'uncultured' and many more negative adjectives. However in the present paper an attempt has been made to understand the culture of these adventurers through their rich history of music. The present paper is an attempt to explore the nuances of Portuguese musical traditions through the ages.*
**Keywords***: Portugal, Portuguese Music, Portuguese Empire, Portuguese Renaissance, Protest Music, National Identity*

Portuguese musical traditions are a vibrant mosaic woven from centuries of exploration, cultural exchange, and artistic innovation. Portugal's history as a maritime power and its unique geographical position have allowed it to absorb and adapt influences from across Europe, Africa, and the Americas. Geographically isolated from the rest of Europe, Portugal, with neighbouring Spain, at one time ruled the entire world due to a papal decree that divided all territories between them. The enormous wealth that came to Portugal from their colonies created the possibility under monarchs who were pre-disposed to the arts to develop cultural patrimony. These are evidenced in the music history of Portugal, which despite its firm European roots, nevertheless reflects the intercontinental cultural interactions begun in the Portuguese 'Discoveries'. Portuguese music reflects its rich history and privileged geographical location. During the Age of Discoveries, Portugal's seafaring adventures connected it to distant lands, bringing back not just spices and treasures but also melodies, rhythms, and instruments. In Renaissance Portugal, the royal court and the Catholic Church were central to the growth of musical traditions. The court hosted musicians from Italy, Spain, and beyond, fostering a blend of styles. At the same time, the Church established choir schools, such as those in Évora, where young boys were trained in the art of polyphony. This dual influence created a robust musical heritage that flourished during Portugal's golden age. These

voyages infused Portuguese music with African percussion, Brazilian rhythms, and Asian tonalities, enriching its European roots. Music became a medium through which the cultural encounters of the explorers were preserved and celebrated. This story of musical evolution is not only about entertainment but also a reflection of the adventures that defined the nation's character and its place in the world. The Baroque era, particularly under King John V, saw music rise to new heights of grandeur. The king's patronage of Italian composers like Domenico Scarlatti introduced operatic and keyboard innovations to the Portuguese court. This period of artistic prosperity, fueled by Brazil's gold, left a legacy of lavish compositions and sophisticated performances, blending local traditions with European styles. If adventure is one side of Portugal's musical identity, longing and nostalgia are the other. Fado, the country's most famous musical genre, captures the deep emotional essence of the Portuguese people. Rooted in urban traditions and accompanied by the distinctive Portuguese guitar, Fado expresses themes of love, loss, and saudade a uniquely Portuguese concept of bittersweet longing. In the 20th century, music became a tool of resistance during the Estado Novo regime. Protest songs, or canções de intervenção, gave voice to the people's struggles and aspirations for freedom. Artists like José Afonso used metaphors and poetic lyrics to challenge oppression, proving that music could entertain while inspiring change.Portuguese music was influenced by music from Ancient Rome's musical tradition brought into the Iberian Peninsula by the Romans and the rich artistic European tradition. Its genres range from classical to popular music. Portugal's music history includes musical history from the medieval Gregorian Chants through Carlos Seixas' symphonies era to the composers of the modern era. Musical history of Portugal can be divided in different ways. Portuguese music encompasses musical production of the Middle Ages, Renaissance, Baroque, Classical, Romantic and Modern eras.Portugal's height of artistic glory flourished under the reign of King John V (1707-1750). There was no other court in Europe to equal this one. Short-lived, the decline of this bountiful state came with the deadly earthquake on 1 November 1755 that shook the Portuguese capital and destroyed many of Lisbon's art, artefacts, and architectural treasures, along with many valuable manuscripts and libraries. As a result of this unfortunate tragedy, the need to re-build took on modest proportions. Never again would Portugal witness its historical supremacy. Little by little Portugal's valuable lands in South America, Africa, India, and Asia were lost, leaving the Portuguese people today with deep remorse and fewer natural resources. With the Renaissance of Portugal, which benefited greatly from the extra-musical events known as the "Age of Discoveries", contact with the best schools of arts, humanities, and culture were made with Portugal continuing to be influenced by the Franco-Flemish tradition.

**Music and the Empire**

Portuguese musical trends often followed European norms later than other countries, perhaps due to geographical considerations. Portuguese Renaissance music was classified as 'high' or 'low'. In the first category music for out-of-doors festivities, such as of the ceremonial or military types that used very sonorous instruments, was found. The second category was reserved to describe music at the court, particularly dance music as played on more refined and softer-sounding instruments. The courts of Afonso V (1432-81) and John II (1455-95) brought many foreign musicians to Portugal, with strong representation coming from Italy and Spain. As might be expected, rivalry between Portugal and Spain was not uncommon. "Leonor of Aragon, the Spanish princess who married Dom Duarte in 1428, delighted the Portuguese court with her singing and playing of the manicorde. Excellent players were trained at Duarte's expense; one of them, Álvaro Fernandes, so pleased John II of Castile that Duarte had to ask sharply for his return." Most notable of the musicians at that time was Tristão de Silva, Afonso's chapel-master, who came to Lisbon in the 1470's and was considered important enough to be cited by theorists until the seventeenth century. Like other European courts, the Portuguese court had a predilection for religious music rather than for secular music. The intimate connection between the court and the Catholic Church brought some long-lasting results, such as the creation of musical training centres, situated in the chapels connected to the great Portuguese cathedrals. The formation of a Centre that promoted excellence in vocal polyphony performance thus necessitated the creation of a school for the boys' choir where the gifted received a musical education. Primary amongst all of these chapels were those found in the southern city of Évora, where thirteen such centres existed in the mid-fifteenth century and where the training of Portuguese composers took place for almost two hundred years. This primacy was due to the court of John III, and others, being present there. John III's decree in 1538 to ban secular content of the autos, a type of dramatic play of a religious or serious character, often accompanied by incidental music in ecclesiastical ceremonies was not very effective and eventually the way was paved for the introduction of opera into Portugal during King John V's reign. Pedro do Porto, known in Spain as Pedro de Escobar, was an important Portuguese composer serving as cantor from 1489-1499 in the Spanish court during Queen Isabel the Catholic's reign. From 1507-1514, he served at the Seville Cathedral as the director of the boys' choir, returning to Évora in 1521 and perhaps remaining there until 1535. His works include more than twenty religious and eighteen secular works, including a Magnificat. Further north, at the University of Coimbra, the Chair was given to the Spanish musician Mateus de Aranda, who published the first part-music of two- and four-parts in his Tratado de

canto mesurable (Lisbon, 1535), as well as the first music book to be published in Portugal, the Tractado de cãtollano (1533). Other early sixteenth century Polyphonists active at Coimbra were Fernão Gomes Correia (Bishop's cantor in 1515), Vasco Pires (Chapelmaster), and João de Noronha (d. 1506) of the Santa Cruz Monastery. Portuguese part-music tended to be more lavish than its Spanish counterpart, as the Spanish Hierónimo Román noted in his Republicas del mundo (Salamanca, 1595): "I will say in brief why the Portuguese exceed us, and that is because the lavishness of their instrumental music and singing during Divine Office gives them pride of place in the Catholic Church." Portuguese polyphony flourished in the seventeenth century, represented by the masses and Magnificat settings of Manuel Cardoso (1566-1652) and Filipe de Magalhães (1570-1652). Parody masses based on Palestrina and Francisco Guerrero were particularly common. Mention should also be made of the religious polyphonic works of Pedro de Cristo (d. 1618) who was the Chapelmaster in Coimbra and Lisbon. Other seventeenth century composers include: Manuel Correa (d. 1653), Manuel de Tavares, Estevão de Brito, Gonçalo Mendes Saldanha (whose works were known in Cartagena and Bogotá), and Manuel Mendés (known in Puebla, Mexico) and others in Évora, Elvas, and Lisbon, such as António Marques Lésbio (1639-1709). Between 1630 and 1650 organ playing during religious services, mostly for the educated people, was authorised. Also significant is the publication in 1630 by the court organist Manuel Rodriques Coelho of the first instrumental music collection not in tablature. Frequently the instrumental parts (organ, harpsichord, clavichord, or harp) of religious Renaissance music resulted from transcribing polyphonic vocal parts Primary amongst organ composers may be considered António Carreira (d. 1599), who had a predilection for monothematic ("mannerist") tentos or fantasias. In the seventeenth century, King John IV, a composer and an admirer of Palestrina, distinguished himself as one of the great patrons of the arts and learning, spending lavishly on acquiring one of the best music libraries in all of Europe. One such example shows his cultural dedication when he patronised the Roman publication of João Lourenço Rabelo's (c.1616-1661) Psalmi pro Vesperi in 1657.

**Experimentations and Transformations**

The beginning of a significant turning point in Portugal's political, social, and cultural history came during the Baroque reign of King John V. The discovery of gold in Brazil, the first indications of which were felt in Lisbon in 1699, began a period of lavishness and prosperity in Portugal that lasted until the end of the 18th century. Lest it not be forgotten, the origin of the word Baroque probably derives from the Portuguese (barrôco: "pearl of irregular shape") to denote in a derogatory way an overabundance of ornaments. Political peace and economic affluence characterized King John's monarchy. Reformation of royal institutions were

undertaken, such as the nomination of the Royal Chapel in Lisbon to that of Patriarchal Cathedral in 1716 and the creation of a royal musical education centre in 1713, known as the Patriarchal Seminary. Italian musical influence became dominant. Portuguese musicians were sent to Italy to apprentice (António Teixeira at the age of ten in 1717, and Francisco António de Almeida in 1720, for example), while great Italian musicians, such as Domenico Scarlatti (Chapel-master in Portugal between 1719-1729) were brought to make their contributions to the Portuguese court. Little known is the fact that Scarlatti was a virtuoso singer and composer of cantatas. However, his duty as teacher to the King's gifted daughter, Maria Bárbara (and her brother), led to one of the greatest legacies of eighteenth century keyboard music - the composition of more than five hundred and sixty sonatas. His Portuguese keyboard contemporaries included two important composers, Carlos de Seixas (d. 1742 predisposed to Empfindsamer Stil music) and Frei Jacinto. The rapid substitution of the Spanish tradition by the Italian tradition in Portugal witnessed several changes. The Spanish zarzuela, a type of allegorical opera would be traded in for Italian opera or Italian serenatas, a type of semi-operatic production that was sung without costumes or scenery. Italian music was in many ways as opposite to Iberian music as it could be, favouring long recitatives to short coplas; frowning on imitation, of which the Spanish and Portuguese were so fond; and generally preferring major-minor modes to the Iberian predilection for the Church modes. Probably as a result, John V banished the vilancico, small-scale Spanish poetical musical verses in court musical life. With Italian opera now the norm in Portugal, Portuguese opera composers writing in the Italian vein began to appear, such as: João de Sousa Carvalho (1745-1798); António Leal Moreira (1758-1819); and Marcos António da Fonseca Portugal (1762-1830), whose operas were sung in 104 cities, from Russia to Brazil. Other Italian composers, such as Giovanni Giorgi and David Perez (1711-1779), were also in the forefront in Lisbon. After an attack that left King John V paralyzed on one side of his body in 1742, he forbade the production of comic or profane operas in Lisbon theatres, such as that of the Teatro do Bairro Alto. With the death of John V in 1750 and the devastation of the Lisbon earthquake just five years later, Portugal's future would be drastically changed. The reconstruction of Lisbon under the Marquis de Pombal's orientation focused on modest, if not commercial, expressions of art. Gone was the Opera House, the Royal Chapel and Patriarchal Seminary, the former secular and religious expressions of an absolute power. In their place were less imposing structures, such as the Teatro de Ajuda with seating capacity of approximately hundred and fifty people. A small replica of the La Scala Opera House, the Teatro São Carlos, was inaugurated in 1793. The Royal Chamber Orchestra of fifty one musicians, which now substituted the Royal Chapel and

of which there was no European rival, still consisted of principally Italian instrumentalists (also Spanish and German). Instrumental builders, such as the Haupt family for winds or the Antunes family for pianos, thrived for a time. The Portuguese guitar, similar to the English cittern, became the preferred accompaniment to the popular fado .Modinhos  from Brazil were sung while lundums  of Afro-Brazilian origin were danced. Figuring important amongst instrumental art music of this period was the unique example of published harpsichord sonatas by Francisco Xavier Baptista (d. 1797). His contemporaries include João de Sousa Carvalho and Frei Manuel de Santo Elias. In the nineteenth century, German musical influence began to supplant that of Italian. Many important Portuguese musicians went abroad to study in Berlin, Köln, or other German cities.  England and France too became other important destinations for some Portuguese musicians, such as João Domingos Bomtempo (1775-1842), who performed and published abroad. He later returned to his native soil and became the first director of the National Conservatory of Music in Lisbon. Mention must also be made of the composer of the Portuguese national anthem and several operas, Alfredo Keil (1850-1907). Pianist-composer José António Vianna da Motta (1868-1948) went, on the advice of Liszt pupil, Sofie Mentor, to Berlin to study where he encountered the intellectual and musical elite. Later studying with Liszt in Weimar, he returned to Portugal because of the ensuing First World War, becoming Director of the National Conservatory. Liszt's visit to Lisbon in 1845 caused something of a stir, abundantly documented today. An important innovation in Portugal took place with the creation of the Real Academia dos Amadores de Música in Lisbon at the end of the nineteenth century, which is still in existence today. It had a main objective to encourage the taste for good music through teaching (via a Germanic education), concerts, and conferences. A sixty two member orchestra was created. One of the important composers connected to this institution is Alexandre Rey Colaço (1854-1928), from Morocco. In Porto, the creation of the Sociedade de Quartetos in 1874, the Sociedade de Música de Câmara in 1883, the Quarteto Moreira de Sá in 1884 and the Orpheon Portuense in 1891 reflected the growing musical activity in the north of Portugal. Óscar da Silva (1870-1958), former piano pupil of Clara Schumann, spent many of his productive years in Brazil as a composer. The Revolution of 1910 marked the beginning of a new democratic Republic that, although never stable, lasted until 28 May 1926 when a military coup d'état led by Gomes da Costa took its life. In 1933 the New State was born, led by Dictator Oliveira Salazar, similar, at first to fascism in Italy and emphasizing hierarchical allegiance to "God, Fatherland and Family". Strict social behavioural codes were endorsed. Gradually artistic standards came to be adopted, such as the development of a "high" art for the upper classes, in which the art forms should symbolize economic, political and intellectual

supremacy of these classes. The lower classes could be represented in a dignified manner through popular art forms espousing nationalism and the simplistic rural people. One of the most important composers in this respect is Fernando Lopes-Graça (1906-1994), whose field work closely paralleled that of Bartók and Kodály and whose prolific compositions reflect the respective influences of Bartók. Falla, and Stravinsky. According to him, "there was no Portuguese music because there was no classical music tradition, no interest in popular music (almost unknown and neglected by the authorities), no interest in the development of a national musical life as it was understood in Germany, France, England..." Only in the mid-twentieth century does Portuguese music really develop as a national idiom. Yet many Portuguese composers benefited from sojourns abroad in France, such as Armando José Fernandes (1906-1983), Jorge Croner de Vasconcelos (1910-1974), and Cláudio Carneyro (1895-1963), or in Italy, such as Joly Braga Santos (1924-1988). Portugal's first modern composer may be considered to be Luís de Freitas Branco (1890-1955) who well encapsulated the neo-classic European trends. With claim to democratization, the Portuguese Revolution of 25 April 1974 gradually broke down barriers and opened doors for global communication, as reflected by composers such as Filipe Pires (b. 1934), Emanuel Nunes (b. 1941), Cândido Lima (b. 1939), António Pinho Vargas, and Jorge Peixinho (1940-1995) who have brought innovations that continue to have ramifications in Portugal today.

**Instruments and Pedagogy**

Instrumentalists and pedagogues have enriched the musical fabric of Portugal in the twentieth century: Bernardo Moreira de Sá (1853-1924), director of the Conservatório de Música do Porto; violoncellist Gullihermina Suggia, intimate of Pablo Casals; pianists such as Fernando Laires (b. 1925 and now residing in upper state New York) whose cycle of thirty two Beethoven sonatas at the age of nineteen made history as the second Portuguese to perform the complete opus between Vianna da Motta in 1927 and Florinda Santos) or Helena Sá e Costa (b. 1913) renowned for her Bach "48", Sequiera Costa, Maria João Pires, and Artur Pizarro, who have brought international stature to their country. Mention must also be made of musicologists M. Santiago Kastner and João de Freitas Branco (b. 1922). The creation of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation in 1956 has immensely enhanced the cultural activity of Portugal and its musicians in recent times thorough its financial support. Important also is the creation of music associations (APEM, EPTA, etc.) and music programs in the universities and superior schools that greatly stimulate learning and musical development. In 1970 the founding of the Grupo de Música Contemporânea has had a marked presence. The current generation of composers such as João Pedro Oliveira (b. 1961), Isabel Soveral (b. 1962), António Chagas

Rosa (b. 1960) and Tomás Henriques (b. 1963) have already made important contributions to their country in the fields of acoustic and electronic music. Like many other countries political agendas and opinions has been expressed by the Portuguese through Music. This type of music was categorized as Música de Intervenção or Political music. Political songs (canções de intervenção) played an important part in the protests against the totalitarian regime that ruled Portugal from 1926 up to the 1974 revolution. Once it was created as an object to criticize what was wrong, mainly in a political point of view. One of its main protagonists was José (Zeca) Afonso (1929-1987) but others also contributed to its development, for example Adriano Correia de Oliveira, José Mário Branco, Luís Cilia, Francisco Fanhais, José Jorge Letria, José Barata Moura and Sérgio Godinho. They traced a new course for urban popular music and influenced a further generation of musicians, some of whom also participated in the protest movement and are still active, including Fausto,Vitorino, Janita Salomé and Júlio Pereira, among others. This musical style reflects a confluence of influences from traditional music, French urban popular songs of the 1960s, African music and Brazilian popular music. During the reign of the fascist regime music was widely used by the left-wing resistance as a way to say what could not be said, singing about freedom, equality and democracy, mainly through metaphors and symbols. Many composers and singers became famous and prosecuted by the political police, some of them being arrested or exiled. After the Carnation Revolution that same music was used to support left-wing parties. Political ideas and causes, like the agrarian reform, socialism, equality, democratic elections, free education and many others were a constant presence in these songs' lyrics, often written by well-known poets.

**Conclusion**

Scholars such as Robert Stevenson (1980) emphasize the significant role that Portugal's colonial history played in shaping its musical traditions. Stevenson argues that Portugal's maritime empire was not only a source of wealth but also a vehicle for cultural exchange. The fusion of African, Brazilian, and Asian elements with traditional European styles contributed to the development of a distinctly Portuguese sound. This was particularly evident in genres such as Fado, which, while originating from Lisbon, absorbed influences from various colonial territories. Gerhard Doderer (1991) further posits that these cultural exchanges were not unidirectional, Portugal also spread its music to its colonies, creating a dynamic flow of musical ideas across continents. In the Renaissance and Baroque periods, João de Freitas Branco (1995) and Manuel Carlos de Brito (1992) suggest that Portuguese music evolved within a tension between religious and secular realms. While the Catholic Church was a key patron of music, especially through its chapels and religious rituals, secular music found a thriving space in the

royal courts. These scholars argue that the rich polyphonic music associated with the Church was counterbalanced by the rise of more elaborate secular compositions in Portugal, particularly during the reign of King John V. One of the most contentious topics in Portuguese music scholarship revolves around Fado and its connection to the national concept of *saudade*, a term often translated as "longing" or "nostalgia." Amália Rodrigues, a seminal figure in Fado music, is often cited by scholars such as Francisco Monteiro (2001) as embodying the essence of *saudade* in her performances. However, scholars like Fernando Lopes-Graça (1994) argue that the romanticized interpretation of Fado as a genre of melancholic longing overlooks the social and political dimensions of its lyrics, which have often reflected the struggles of the working class and political resistance. The impact of political events, especially under the Estado Novo regime (1933–1974), is a significant area of scholarly focus. José Afonso and other *canções de intervenção* (protest songs) composers are widely discussed by scholars such as Azevedo (1998) and Paes (2001). These scholars argue that music became a powerful medium for political resistance, even as it navigated the constraints of censorship. Paes argues that these protest songs were not just forms of dissent but also tools of national identity-building in the face of a repressive regime. Through metaphor and allegory, these composers articulated a vision for a free and democratic Portuga. As Portugal entered the 20th and 21st centuries, the integration of global musical trends posed questions about the preservation of traditional forms. Jorge Croner de Vasconcelos (1974) and Luís de Freitas Branco (1955) highlight the tension between traditional forms like Fado and modern influences, such as jazz, pop, and electronic music. While some scholars celebrate this fusion as a sign of cultural vitality, others argue that it risks diluting the authenticity of Portuguese music. The adoption of Italian opera and Germanic music in Portugal during the 18th and 19th centuries has been a topic of scholarly debate. Scholars such as Manuel de Brito (1992) and Robert Stevenson argue that Italian opera became the dominant form during the Baroque period, particularly under King John V's patronage. However, Stevenson suggests that this Italian influence led to a "substitution" of traditional Iberian music, which some scholars argue is a loss of Portuguese musical identity. In contrast, João Domingos Bomtempo blended. Beethoven's symphonic ideals with local musical elements, creating a unique intersection of German and Portuguese styles. The history of Portugal's rise and fall of political and musical supremacy is marked by good luck on the one hand and misfortune on the other. The identity of Portuguese culture is always dominated by certain preconceived notions. The Portuguese have always described as 'pirates', 'cruel', 'uncivilized', 'uncultured' and awarded with many more negative adjectives. However in this present paper an attempt has been made to understand the nature of Portuguese culture through

their rich history of music. What Portuguese music in the twenty first century will offer to the world remains to be seen. However, if the young and gifted generation is any indication, the future is indeed very bright. Today, Portuguese music continues to thrive, blending tradition with modernity. From the haunting strains of Fado to the innovative compositions of contemporary artists, Portugal's musical journey reflects its adventurous past and enduring love for storytelling through sound. As Portugal looks to the future, its music remains a celebration of the adventurous spirit that shaped its history. The scholarly arguments surrounding Portuguese music are diverse, focusing on cultural exchange, identity, resistance, and modernization. While some scholars celebrate the hybridity of Portuguese music as a reflection of its history of exploration and colonialism, others caution against the loss of traditional elements in the face of global influences. Ultimately, Portuguese music remains a rich and evolving tapestry that reflects the nation's complex history and cultural resilience.

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## Contemporary Developments in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR): Transforming Communities and Companies.

*This article deals with the contemporary developments in Corporate Social Responsibility and the way it is transforming the community and the companies. It is mainly divided into five subheadings. They consist of the connection between CSR and Sustainable Development Goals, environmental sustainability initiatives by the technology giant Microsoft, the latest reports published by the Reserve Bank of India, and the government websites discussing the top CSR spent companies and states in India in the Financial Year 2022-23. The article also focuses on the relevance of technological integration such as Artificial Intelligence, and Data Analytics in the field of CSR. Further, it discusses the importance of CSR communication in this present world, ESG, Green Branding, and the relationship between CSR, Stakeholder engagement, and Brand advocacy. The results showed that the COVID-19 pandemic had a prominent role in the growth and acceptance of CSR Initiatives and the mandatory CSR rule under section 135 of the Companies Act 2013 made it more significant. Healthcare, Education, and environmental sustainability are the highly preferred CSR Development sectors by the Indian companies. By effectively contributing the CSR Funds, the companies can transform the community and enhance their reputation, goodwill, and profit.*

***Keywords:*** *Corporate Social Responsibility, Sustainable Development Goals, Environmental Sustainability, Technological Integration, Corporate Social Responsibility Communication, Corporate Social Responsibility Report, COVID-19 Pandemic, Community Transformation*

Corporate Social Responsibility refers to the business activities that go beyond the law in incorporating social, environmental, ethical, and consumer issues into their business practicesto create shareholder and stakeholder value (Newman et al. 2020, 1455). In 2009, the Ministryof Corporate Affairs issued Voluntary Guidelines on CSR as an initial step towards popularizing theconcept of Business Responsibilities. In 2011 it was further refined as the National Voluntary Guidelines on Social, Environmental, and Economic Responsibilities of Business. Section 135 (4) of the Companies Act, 2013 mandates every company qualifying

under section135 (1) to make a statutory disclosure of Corporate Social Responsibility. These mandatory provisions of CSR under section 135 of the Companies Act 2013 came into effect on 01.04.2014 (Ministry of Corporate Affairs 2023). Following this act, India became the first country to mandate Corporate Social Responsibility legally. Corporate Social Responsibility is widely recognized as a predominant part of development inIndia and globally. Considering the present scenario, Corporate Social Responsibility holds a prominent role in transforming the communities, as well as the companies. Along with giving back to the society in which the companies operate, Corporate Social Responsibilty can also help them enhance their credibility, goodwill, customer generation, and stakeholder engagement and can strengthen the overall brand including better sales and profit.

**Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**

In this modern world, companies are shifting their focus toward more integrated, impactful, and transparent Corporate Social Responsibility Activities that not only address the most pressing societal issues but also contribute to the brand value. Recently, several notable developments have emerged in the area of Corporate Social Responsibility. One of the major developments is that nowadays companies aim to integrate sustainability into their business strategies, and practices. The Corporate Social Responsibility Activities mainly revolve aroundor align with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). In 1987, The United Nations Brundtland Commission defined Sustainability as "meeting the needs of the present generations without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs" (United Nations 2024) (Desai and Brundtland 2007). There are mainly seventeen Sustainability Development Goals. Some of these are no poverty,good health and well-being, quality education, climate action, and clean water and sanitation. Aligning the company values with impactful initiatives will help in building a harmonious symphony that aims at societal development. Nowadays businesses have demonstrated a loud commitment that is diverse and inspiring indicating a shared dedication to promoting a positive change. In addition, by aligning the Corporate Social Responsibility Activities with the Sustainability Development Goals the companies are not only addressing the global challengesbut are also enhancing, and showcasing the company's commitment to social responsibility, and sustainability for the long term. The Unprecedented changes made by the COVID-19 Pandemic, and the heating climate crisis made the companies to largely focus on the Corporate Social Responsibility Development Sectors of Health Care and wash, environmental conservation, and education in this contemporary world. The effect of the

COVID-19 pandemic, the wavering impact of climate change, and the changes in the global economy paved a path for more acceptance and progress of the Sustainability Development Goals and their alignment with Corporate Social Responsibility, and the Business Practices (United Nations Statistics Division 2024).

**Role of Corporate Social Responsibility on Environmental Sustainability Initiatives**

Several companies are coming forward with environmental sustainability initiatives globally and in India. One of the companies is Microsoft. As per the Environmental Sustainability Report published by Microsoft on May 15, 2024, Brad Smith – Vice Chair and President, and Melanie Nakagawa – Chief Sustainability Officer said that the company has made significant progress in its environmental sustainability initiatives which will have a global impact beyond their sustainability works. The company has mainly focused on carbon removal, carbon reduction, and carbon-free electricity. Microsoft has done exceptionally well on reducing direct operational emissions, accelerating carbon removal, improving biodiversity and safeguarding more land than it uses, and reducing waste through circular design and reusing the cloud hardware. In addition, the report also states that Microsoft needed to work more on reducing its water usage and replenishing more water than it consumes in its data center operations. The company further states that climate change is the most pressing social issue we have today, and no issue connects every individual on this planet other than the challenges around climate change. Microsoft is committed to extensive procedures to identify and develop measures to reduce its (Scope 3) emissions. This includes demanding that high-volume suppliers use 100% carbon-free electricity for the company-delivered goods and services by the year 2030. In addition, the report even stated the words of Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella as he called climate change the "defining issue of our generation", and to meet this generational challenge the company is considering sustainability as the center of their work. This shows the importance of Sustainability, and aligning Sustainability Development Goals in business practices in the present world (Thomson 2024). Along with that, it also showcases the increased demand for environmental sustainability and renewable energy all across the globe. This trend is highly visible in our country too. When it comes to India, our companies are increasingly investing in activities that align with the Sustainability Goals. The changing landscape of Corporate Social Responsibility provides an opportunity for companies in India to bring a positive change, thereby creating a balance between socio-economic progress and environmental

conservation. To effectively utilize the Corporate Social Responsibility funds for the environmental development sector requires a long-term strategy that collaborates with the various stakeholders such as the local communities, and specialized institutions and proper investment in technologies for better results. The schedule VII of the Companies Act, 2013 has included the environment as a key area to focus on. In addition, the latest report published by the Reserve Bank of India on May 03, 2023 (Reserve Bank of India 2023), on the currency, and finance has listed equitable Corporate Social Responsibility Funding as a major policy option to mitigate the climate risk. Along with the Sustainability Development Goals, the Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) is another area that has been creating a buzz inthe market for quite a couple of years. Companies all across the world must work hard to incorporate both these areas; SDG and ESG to bring a change in reducing the carbon footprintsand protect our environment (Tandon 2023). Another term that goes hand in hand with environmental conservation and catching the eye in today's world is Green Branding. Further,it shows that inculcating these aspects will not only make the brand more appealing to the consumers who are becoming aware of the need for environmental conservation but will also help in brand building.

**2023 – The Golden Year of Corporate Social Responsibility**

While discussing the contemporary developments in Corporate Social Responsibility there aretwo main updates that cannot be excluded. The one is the recent report published by the CSR Journal discussing the top 50 companies for Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainabilityin 2023. The report states that 2023 was a remarkable year for Corporate Social Responsibilityand Environmental Sustainability. Several companies from various sectors significantly contributed to creating a greener and more socially responsible future. The top 5 are; RelianceIndustries Limited, State Bank of India (SBI) Limited, ITC Limited, Hero MotoCorp, and JSWSteel. In addition, this report also states that these companies have not just effectively contributed their Corporate Social Responsibility Funds but are also redefining the concept ofbeing socially conscious and environmentally responsible (Thacker 2024). The other is an article published by the Business Today. It states that during the FY 2022-23 the Corporate Social Responsibility spending by the companies that are listed on the National Stock Exchange(NSE) has exceeded by 5% to Rs. 15,524 Crore. As per Business Today, the top 10 companiesthat have spent the highest Corporate Social Responsibility Fund in the FY 2022-23 are HDFCBank (Rs 820.89 crore), Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) (Rs

783 crore), Reliance Industries(Rs 744 crore), TATA Steel (Rs 480.62 crore), Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) (Rs. 475.89 crore), ICICI Bank (Rs 462.66 crore), Infosys (Rs 391.51 crore), ITC (Rs 365.50 crore), Power Grid (Rs 321.66 crore), and National Thermal Power Corporation Limited (NTPC) (Rs315.32 crore). In addition, the article states that these companies have together spent 33% of the total spend on the Corporate Social Responsibility Fund in the FY 2022-23. Further, it givesa gist of the top states that have received the maximum Corporate Social Responsibility spend in India. This includes; Maharashtra (Rs 355.78 crore), Rajasthan (Rs 344.19 crore), Gujarat (Rs 193.39 crore), Tamil Nadu (Rs 185.68 crore), Chhattisgarh (Rs 167.83 crore), Uttar Pradesh(Rs 156.82 crore), Haryana (Rs 154.10 crore), Telangana (Rs 147.63 crore), Odisha (Rs 140.08 crore), and Karnataka (Rs 123.91 crore) (Oberoi 2024). This shows the importance CorporateIndia is giving to Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainability in our country in the present world when compared with the previous years. Along with that, these reports point outthe relevance Corporate Social Responsibility holds in developing a positive change in the communities as well as in the corporate sector.

## Corporate Social Responsibility and Technological Integration

Another major trend is purpose-driven communication focusing on the impact of Corporate Social Responsibility Activities and the way it is connected with the brand value and culture. By doing so, the companies not only enhance their brand loyalty but also lead to customer generation. In addition, it creates an impression that the company is ethical in nature and is socially responsible. Communication is the key; Along with communicating these aspects to the general public, companies are now communicating it within the organization too. Integrating sustainability, and Corporate Social Responsibility into business practices and communicating it effectively across the organization from top to bottom will help the companies in employee retention, and stakeholder engagement. Along with that, it will also motivate the stakeholders to become a more productive, and committed workforce. In addition, companies are now integrating technologies with Corporate Social Responsibility. Presently, Companies rely heavily on multiple platforms, and advanced technologies including Artificial Intelligence and Data Analytics to monitor and evaluate the impact of Corporate Social Responsibility Activities. This will help the companies in increasing their efficiency and transparency (Le 2024). Further, the companies particularly the ones that fall under the category of Fortune 500 in India are active on various digital platforms to

communicate the impact of Corporate Social Responsibility Activities and the awards and recognitions they have received in the field of Corporate Social Responsibility with the public. As per the research I have conducted and several other studies point out that social media, particularly Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter or X, and Facebook are the companies most commonly used social media platforms for effective communication. The other communication platforms that are widely used are the company websites, blogs, newspapers, and television. By communicating the impact of Corporate Social Responsibility Activities, and the awards and recognition through Social Media Platforms companies can ensure better brand visibility, brand engagement, brand recall, and reputation making them stand out in the competitive market. Along with that, it will help other companies in creating a benchmark. Adding to it, it will also motivate them to effectively utilize Corporate Social Responsibility funds for societal development and communicate the impact further.

**Stakeholder Engagement and Brand Advocacy**

A company consists of a wide range of stakeholders. It includes the employees, customers, media, government, etc. All these stakeholders are interconnected in one way or another. This makes stakeholder engagement a critical component in identifying and executing effective Corporate Social Responsibility strategies. Proper engagement with the stakeholders helps the companies identify the most pressing societal issues and come up with a Corporate Social Responsibility activity that can mitigate them. Effective stakeholder engagement combined with communication will help the companies in building trust, transparency, and accountability. It will also make people aware of the socially responsible activities of the companies, and their impact. Along with that, it creates a sense of collaboration and ownership among the stakeholders, local communities, and NGOs. It is always better to involve the various stakeholders in the planning, and implementation of the Corporate Social Responsibility activities. Making them actively involved and considering their ideas and actual needs will increase their efficiency and engagement throughout the implementation of the Corporate Social Responsibility activities, and in their relationship with the company for the long term. This will also boost their satisfaction, and employee morale making them more committed to working towards the success of the company. It can even make the employees volunteer for an activity in the future and strengthen the community engagement activities. In addition, It will also help the companies in ensuring that they have addressed an actual issue that will transform the communities for the good. Further, effective stakeholder engagement will help the company in risk management. As the company is

collaborating with various stakeholders from the initial stage for the Corporate Social Responsibility activities, they will be more aware of its various stages. The company can make use of it in identifying the addressing the risks such as the environmental, social, or governance before they escalate and turn out to be a crisis. By doing so, the company can have a better outcome, and reputation, and enhance long-term sustainability (Tandon 2023). By analyzing the trends, and considering the present scenario, we can undoubtedly say that Corporate Social Responsibility is a supreme factor in transforming communities, and companies. Aligning Corporate Social Responsibility with Sustainable Development Goals, and effectively communicating the impact of Corporate Social Responsibility Activities with the shareholders, and stakeholders can bring remarkable changes and development to our society and the companies.

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# Temples as sanctuaries of wisdom: Unveiling the educational heritage of Kanthallor and   Parthivipuram salai in Medieval kerala

*Temples in medieval Kerala have their unique ceremonial traditions and practices and play a very active role in the learning activity of Kerala society. The temples of medieval Kerala are not only places of worship. Sometimes, their influence extends beyond the religious and spiritual domains; from time to time, they influence the social, cultural, economic, and educational spheres of the people of Kerala.*

*Keywords:* *Medieval Kerala, worship, religious and spiritual domains, educational spheres*

 In medieval Kerala history, we can find that temples played multi-faceted functions. Sometimes, it was an educational center for the people, a refuge for charitable activities, and a center for the activities of art and architecture. It served as the governing body of local government, a place for entertainment activity, an agent for the developing, consolidating, transmitting, and conserving the legacy of culture, and a birthplace for traditional art forms and historical records. It acts as an economic powerhouse of the society, which means the owner of land and holder of the land revenue, and it gives employment opportunities to the people, significant consumers of the local product. Sometimes, it acts as a bank, which means borrowing money from the people. In this article, I mainly focused on the temples as sanctuaries of wisdom in medieval Kerala, with particular references given to the Kanthallor and Parthivapuram sala. Temples in medieval Kerala served as educational centers, fostering spiritual, cultural, and literary growth. Students received holistic education, focusing on training the mind. Medieval Salas provide valuable insights into the evolution of the learning activities of Kerala.

**Temple as educational hubs in Medieval Kerala**

The temple was a center of education in the medieval period, supported by many historical inscriptions, literary works, and archeological evidence. Like Buddhist and Jain monasteries, the Medieval temples supported and promoted education. It played a significant role in fostering the educational activity of medieval Kerala. The educational activities of the Medieval temple mainly focused on teaching stories from Puranas, Mahabharata, Ramayana,

and Bhakti literature. The teachers were well-versed in Vedic and Puranic traditions and taught their students spiritual and traditional knowledge.

## Salas: Centers of Learning in Medieval Temple Education

During the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Ay rulers of South India and Chera power under Kulasekhara significantly contributed to temple education. At this time, enormous temples were constructed throughout Kerala. In Medieval Kerala, the emergence of Brahmin settlement and changes in the socio-political and economic field sparked a new religious revival. As a result of this revival, many temples were constructed throughout Kerala. Most of these temples attached an educational institution in the temple complex known as Salais. Salai in Medieval Kerala is considered one of the essential bases for the academic advancement of Modern Kerala society. Salais's main aim is to impart knowledge in Vedic and allied subjects. The admission of these Salais was exclusive, and only the Brahmin students of high intellect were admitted. Medieval Salais were known by different names like Ghatika, Matha, Agrahara, etc…The educational system of the Salais is different from the ancient Gurukal System. In Medieval Salais, teachers received salaries, and students enjoyed several benefits and concessions that boosted their sense of respect and self-worth. It provided free education, tuition, food, accommodation, etc.… These students were also obligated to demonstrate their intellectual ability and capacity for learning enjoyment. Manipravala lyrics of the later period give some detailed descriptions of the features of the students in Salais. The students of Salais are known as Cattan, Cathiran, or Cathran. The etymological meaning of these terms is Sanskrit Sasthra, which means proficient in science. The legendary works of Unniyaticharitham of Damodhara Bhattathirii in the 14<sup>th</sup> century and Unniciruthirevi of the 13<sup>th</sup> century also refer to the information about the students of Salais. The functioning of Salais mainly depended upon the donations and gifts from the rulers or their Vassals. The administrative functions of the Salais are primarily controlled by the temple committee known as Uralas. The properties set aside exclusively for the functioning of Salais were known as Salapuram, and the revenue collection for the functioning Salai was known as Salabhogam. The Vedic Salais are mainly located in modern places between Kanyakumari in the South and Talipparambu in the North.

## Prominent Medieval Salas in Kerala

Various historical records and inscriptions of ancient and medieval Kerala throw light on the existence and functioning of medieval Salais. Kanthallor Salai, Pravathipuram Salai, Muzhikkalam Salai, Tiruvalla Salai, Kottarakara Salai, etc… were the most important. Kanthallor Salai and Pravathipuram Salai owed their patronage to the Ay kings of South India.

The Muzhikkalam Salai and Tiruvalla Salai assumed considerable importance in the Kulasekhara period. Huzur copper plate inscription of Ay king Karunandakkan provided information about the parthivipuram Salai. It sheds light on the different educational disciplines, administrative systems, rules, and regulations of Parthivipuram Salai. The educational system of Parthivipuram Salai is mainly practiced using the same model as Kanthallor Salai. The Thirumulikkalam inscription of Bhaskkara Ravi Varman mentions the functioning of the Muzhikkalam Salai, and the Thiruvalla Copper Plate inscription provides detailed information about the Thiruvalla Salai.

### Kanthallor salai

 The Salais of Kanthallor were well known among all other Salas. Its rules and regulations are the model for other Salais. It is a historically significant institution that reflects the impact of Dravidian, Aryan, Buddhist, and Jain traditions. It was located in the present city of Trivandrum and was established during the early medieval period. The name of Kanthallor Salai was first mentioned in the Parthivapuram Copper Plate issued by Ay King Karunathakkan in 866 C.E. Many historians considered it similar to the ancient universities like Nalanda and Tashashilla. The primary discipline of Kanthallor Salai is mainly based on Vyakarana, Buddha Dharsana, Samkhya Dharsana, Vaisesika Dharsana, Mimamsa Dharsana, Lokayata Dharsana and Materialistic philosophy etc…In addition to the meta-physical knowledge, military training was also imparted to the students. Kanthallor Salai is a residential area. It provided basic facilities for boarding and lodging services for its students. Educational grants were provided, allowing these grants to help the students to meet their essential needs. The administrative system of Kanthallor Salai is well-disciplined- disciplined. Punishments and fines were given to offenders. The significant cause for the decline of Kanthallor sala was the Chola -Chera war, and the political upheavals of the region significantly impacted the stability and educational functioning of this institution. Changing the political power and the rise of the new political power primarily affected royal patronage, another critical cause of its decline. The rise and development of new religious powers and movements affected the development of the traditional educational centers, gradually leading to the decline of the Kanthallor salai; another critical cause for the decline of Kanthallor sala was the natural calamities, which mean floods, earthquakes, and other environmental changes might have played an essential role for its deterioration. The loss of academic rigor among students is another important cause of its decline.

**Parthivipuram Salai**

Parthivipuram Salai is one of the important educational institutions in medieval Kerala. Parthivipuram sala originates from the Ay rulers in 788 AD to 025 AD. It is located in the southern part of present Kerala. Huzur Copper Plate of Karunandadakkam is one of the essential and authentic records providing information about the administration, educational system, rules and regulations, discipline, etc… of this sala. The Huzur Copper Plate points out that the salai was constructed in 866 AD. Parthivipuram Salai's educational discipline is based on the Kanthallor Salai model. Strict rules and discipline prevailed over both the students and the employees in the salai. The main academic disciplines were Vedas, Puranas, philosophy, astronomy, etc. There were 95 seats for admission to Parthivipuram Salai. The sala attracted scholars and students from various parts of the region. Learned Brahmins and scholars served as teachers in this sala. The economic functions of the sala were based on royal patronage.[1] Parthivipuram Salai played a vital role in the educational and cultural scenario of the Ay period and medieval Kerala society. The significant cause for the decline of the Parthivipuram Salai was the Chola- Chera war of the 11th century, which created social disorder in society. Some scholars argued that the decline of royal patronage and the shift in political power contributed to the decline of Parthivipuram Salai. Destruction of the social character and caliber of the students is another critical cause for its decline. Despite this decline, the legacy of Parthivipuram Salai is essential in the cultural and intellectual life of medieval Kerala.

**Conclusion**

The temples of medieval Kerala are the main integrative factor binding the disparate elements for learning and educational advancement. The medieval temples of Kerala are not an island of religious or spiritual learning but a dynamic center that influenced every aspect of human life. Their impact extended beyond spiritual realms, shaping society's social, economic, cultural, political, and educational fabric. The people of India, especially those of south India, considered the place without a temple or religious institution unfit for habitation. The village temple is the nerve- center of South Indian culture.  In short, the temple of medieval Kerala played a vital role, going far beyond a religious institute. In short, the temples of medieval Kerala played a vital role, going far beyond a religious institution. It acts as a center for learning and educational advancement in society. Kanthallor and Parthivipuram salai are the best examples of the learning sanctuaries of medieval Kerala society. They played a foundational role in shaping the educational landscape of Kerala. It prompts holistic and material approaches

in the educational system and boosts educational and developmental practices. It plays an essential role in preserving and transmitting cultural and literary heritages of Kerala society.

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# RADICAL EMPTINESS: EXPLORING MADHYAMAKA BUDDHISM'S ANTI-REALIST PERSPECTIVE

*One of the significant schools of Buddhist thought, Madhyamika, emphasizes the concept of emptiness (Shunyata). It challenges the very notion of intrinsic reality. The nature of reality according to them is understood to be neither absolute nor independent, rejecting both ontological realism and nihilism. They assert that all things are devoid of inherent existence and arise dependently on causes and conditions, a concept known as dependent origination (pratityasamutpada). At the heart of Madhyamika thought lies the doctrine of emptiness, which means that nothing possesses an essential, unchanging self-nature (svabhava). The anti-realistic stance of Madhyamika Buddhism is a response to both essentialism and nihilism. On the one hand, it denies the essentialist idea that objects possess a permanent and unchanging essence or identity. On the other hand, it also avoids nihilism by not denying the existence of the world but by reframing it as dependent and relational rather than fixed or substantial. The Madhyamika view thus rejects a realist interpretation of the world that assumes an objective, independent existence of phenomena, and instead emphasizes the interdependent, conditioned nature of all things. This paper delves into the anti-realist doctrine of Madhyamaka Buddhism, particularly focusing on its core teaching of emptiness (shunyata)*

**Keywords:** Emptiness, Middleway, *pratityasamutpada*, Anti-realism, Two-truth

**Introduction**

Madhyamaka Buddhism, often referred to as the Middle Way philosophy, is one of the most influential schools of thought in Mahayana Buddhism. The term Madhyamaka itself means 'Middle Way' in Sanskrit, and it is a system of thought that avoids the extremes of eternalism, the belief that things have an inherent, permanent existence; and nihilism, the belief that things have no existence at all. In Madhyamaka, the focus is on the teaching of emptiness (śūnyatā), which asserts that all things are empty of inherent existence and arise dependently through interdependence and causal relationships. This school thought developed around the second century CE under the guidance of the philosopher Nagarjuna, stands as one of the most profound and complex philosophical systems. It presents a radical critique of both realism and

nihilism, emphasizing the emptiness (*shunyata*) of all phenomena. Central to Madhyamaka is the claim that all things are devoid of inherent existence, meaning that they do not possess an independent, unchanging essence. Instead, everything arises interdependently through a web of causal relationships. This anti-realist stance, which denies the existence of an intrinsic, independent nature of reality, fundamentally challenges traditional metaphysical conceptions of the world, especially those that assert the inherent reality of objects or selfhood. Madhyamaka presents a unique challenge to traditional views of reality by rejecting the notion of inherent existence in all phenomena. Madhyamika's anti-realism critiques both essentialism and nihilism, offering an alternative understanding of the nature of existence. The doctrine of emptiness argues that phenomena do not possess intrinsic, independent natures but arise dependently through interdependent causality. The implications of this view challenge not only metaphysical realism but also conventional understanding and practice. This is the reason to argue that the key teaching of Madhyamaka is emptiness or śūnyatā, which asserts that all phenomena are empty of svabhāva inherent essence or self-nature. In other words, nothing exists in isolation with an independent, fixed identity; instead, all things arise dependently and are interrelated. This view can be seen as antirealistic in several ways, and of course needs some points to get more clarity on the issue. This paper analyzes the Madhyamaka perspective on reality, exploring Nagarjuna's key philosophical arguments, such as the tetralemma and the two-truths doctrine, while examining their broader consequences for Buddhist practice, ethics, and liberation.

## The doctrine of Emptiness and Dependent Origination

Madhyamaka plays a critical role in Mahayana Buddhism by providing a deep philosophical foundation for understanding the nature of reality, suffering, and liberation. It is one of the two main philosophical approaches of Mahayana, alongside the Yogācāra school, which emphasizes mind-only or consciousness-based interpretations of reality. However, Madhyamika's emphasis on emptiness and dependent origination distinguishes it from other Buddhist traditions. The term emptiness can be misleading if understood as mere nothingness; rather, it signifies the absence of a fixed, inherent nature in all things. According to Madhyamaka, phenomena do not exist independently or in isolation but are instead dependent on other factors. This interdependence, known as dependent origination (*pratītyasamutpāda*), is a central Buddhist doctrine that posits that all things come into being through causal relationships, with no phenomenon existing on its own. Emptiness, therefore, is not a nihilistic doctrine that denies the existence of things altogether. Instead, it reframes the nature of

existence itself. Things exist conventionally, but their conventional existence is not grounded in any permanent essence. This teaching invites practitioners to see the world not in terms of fixed categories, but as an ever-changing, dynamic process where all things arise and dissolve in dependence upon each other. In this context, emptiness is not a negative or destructive concept but a liberating one. By understanding that things lack inherent existence, one can dissolve the attachments and reifications that bind them to suffering. The realization of emptiness, then, is essential for achieving enlightenment, as it helps free the mind from the delusion of permanence and solidified identity. One of the primary tools Nagarjuna uses to establish the doctrine of emptiness is the tetralemma (Catuskoti). The tetralemma is a logical framework that asserts four possibilities regarding the nature of a phenomenon: it either (1) exists, (2) does not exist, (3) both exists and does not exist, or (4) neither exists nor does not exist. Nagarjuna's approach, however, is not to accept any of these possibilities as definitive but to demonstrate that they all lead to contradictions when applied to the nature of reality. According to Nagarjuna, "There is nothing that exists independently. Everything depends on something else. The truth is emptiness".[1] By using the tetralemma, Nagarjuna systematically deconstructs essentialist notions of inherent existence. If we were to say that something exists in an intrinsic sense, we would be asserting a fixed, unchanging essence. However, this claim leads to difficulties when confronted with the Buddhist teachings on impermanence and interdependence. If something were to exist inherently, it would not be subject to change or causality, yet all phenomena are in constant flux and arise due to causal conditions. Thus, asserting inherent existence contradicts observable reality. Similarly, if we claim that a phenomenon does not exist, we would be disregarding its conventional existence, which we can directly perceive. For example, while a tree lacks inherent existence, it still exists as a tree in the conventional sense. The middle path that Nagarjuna advocates lies in the realization that all phenomena are neither ultimately existent nor non-existent. They exist in a conventional sense, but their ultimate nature is empty. Thus, one of the core aspects of Madhyamika's antirealism is its focus on dependent origination or dependent arising or *pratītyasamutpāda*. This principle teaches that all phenomena arise due to causes and conditions. Nothing exists in isolation or independently; everything is interconnected and interdependent. Madhyamaka takes this further by asserting that even concepts like cause and effect themselves are empty of intrinsic existence. While cause and effect work conventionally in our experience, they are ultimately constructs that don't have inherent, self-sustaining existence. For Nagarjuna, "If anything has a self-nature, it would follow that things do not arise dependently; but since everything arises dependently, nothing has a self-nature".[2] Therefore, reality is a web of

interdependent relations, and none of its constituents have any inherent, fixed essence. However, the rejection of inherent existence is one of the important aspects of Madhyamaka antirealism. They teach that no object or phenomenon possesses an inherent, independent existence. Everything is dependent on causes and conditions and does not have a permanent, unchanging essence. This means that the way things appear to us is a result of our conceptual impositions, rather than a reflection of some objective, unchanging reality.

## The Middle Way and Two-Truths

The Middle Way and the Two Truths are foundational concepts in Madhyamaka Buddhism, offering deep insights into the nature of reality and guiding practitioners towards enlightenment. These teachings are not only philosophical principles but also practical tools for transforming how we experience and relate to the world. In Madhyamaka Buddhism, the Middle Way and Two Truths can be viewed as an anti-realist perspective that fundamentally challenges the realist belief in an independent, objective reality. By rejecting the idea that things have inherent existence and instead embracing the view that all phenomena are interdependent and empty of self-nature, Madhyamaka offers a radical view of reality that emphasizes the contingency and subjectivity of all experiences. This anti-realist perspective shifts the focus away from the search for an objective, fixed reality, and toward an understanding of the world as relational, dependent, and constructed through perception and conceptualization. The Middle Way is a path that avoids the extremes of eternalism and nihilism. Eternalism is the belief that things have a permanent, unchanging essence, while nihilism denies the existence of anything meaningful or real. The Middle Way navigates between these extremes by asserting that, although phenomena appear to exist and function in conventional ways, they are ultimately empty of inherent existence. This means that things do not have an unchanging, independent essence of their own; instead, they arise due to a network of causes and conditions. By recognizing that phenomena are impermanent and interdependent, practitioners can free themselves from attachment and the suffering that comes from clinging to things as permanent. At the heart of the Middle Way is the realization that while things appear in a conventional, practical sense, such as people, objects, or experiences they are ultimately not fixed or independent entities. The Middle Way teaches us to engage with the world, recognizing the impermanence of everything, while also cultivating a sense of detachment and non-clinging. It encourages a balanced approach to life, where we live with awareness, avoiding the extremes of excessive attachment or rejection. Understanding the emptiness of all phenomena allows us to see things as interdependent rather than independent.

This means that nothing exists in isolation; everything is part of a vast web of causes and conditions. This interdependence also means that phenomena do not have an inherent essence of their own, but are empty of self-nature. When we understand this, we no longer cling to things as permanent and unchanging. Instead, we develop an attitude of equanimity, learning to navigate the fluctuations of life with calmness, acceptance, and non-attachment. This perspective brings us to the Two Truths, which clarify the distinction between the way things appear in the conventional world and the deeper truth that underlies them. The Two Truths Doctrine of Madhyamaka distinguishes between two levels of truth they are Conventional truth or *samvṛti-satya* and Ultimate Truth or *paramārtha-satya*. Conventional Truth refers to the everyday, ordinary way of talking about and interacting with the world. For example, you can still say that a chair exists, a person is walking, or the sun is setting, and this is practically useful for navigating the world. The Ultimate Truth refers to the deeper insight into the nature of reality, where things are seen as empty of inherent existence. From the ultimate perspective, the chair, the person, and the sun are not truly independent, self-sustained entities; they are merely conceptual labels applied to interdependent phenomena. Nāgārjuna suggests that while conventional truth is necessary for functioning in the world, it is ultimately grounded in the ultimate truth, which reveals the emptiness of all things. This teaching emphasizes that while things appear to be real in conventional terms, they lack any true, fixed essence when viewed from a deeper, more critical perspective. Thus, the conventional truth is the reality we experience in everyday life, the world of objects, actions, and social relationships. This is where we operate in the world, where we navigate life based on the roles, labels, and categories that society and our minds construct. It is practical and functional, but it is not the ultimate truth. In this realm, we call things by their names, people, places, and things, but these are all provisional, temporary ways of seeing the world. On the other hand, ultimate truth points to the deeper, unchanging reality that is hidden beneath the surface of conventional appearances. From the perspective of ultimate truth, all things are empty of inherent existence. They do not have a permanent, independent nature, but exist only in relation to other things. This realization allows us to see the fluidity and impermanence of the world. We understand that everything we encounter is dependent on other factors, nothing exists on its own. Thus, ultimate truth helps us move beyond superficial appearances to realize the emptiness of all phenomena. The second, ultimate truth, refers to the deeper, fundamental nature of reality. It is the truth that is revealed when we look beyond appearances and see that everything is empty of inherent existence. Ultimate truth shows us that all phenomena are interdependent, meaning they exist only because of the conditions that give rise to them. This understanding of emptiness reveals

that no phenomenon, whether mental or physical, has an independent or permanent essence. Everything arises due to causes and conditions, and when these conditions are no longer present, those things cease to exist. Ultimate truth does not negate the conventional world, but rather clarifies its impermanence and interdependence. The relationship between conventional and ultimate truths is not one of opposition, but rather a complementary understanding. Conventional truth helps us live and function in the world. Without it, we would not be able to interact or communicate meaningfully. Ultimate truth, however, provides the deeper understanding that allows us to see through the illusion of permanence. By recognizing the emptiness of all things, we can free ourselves from the clinging and attachment that lead to suffering. In this way, the conventional and ultimate truths work together to provide a full picture of reality, one that helps us live wisely and compassionately while also leading us toward liberation.

## Embracing Emptiness: An Anti-Realist Perspective on Reality

From an anti-realist perspective, emptiness challenges the idea of an objective truth that exists independently of human perception or conceptualization. The realist position holds that there is an objective, external world that exists as it is, regardless of how we perceive or think about it. Emptiness, however, asserts that there is no such thing as a fixed, independent reality. Instead, what we experience as the world is a convention, a conceptual framework that we use to navigate the world. This does not mean that nothing exists or that the world is merely an illusion; it means that the way we categorize, label, and understand things is contingent and context-dependent. The world we experience is not an objective, unchanging entity, but a relational, impermanent construct that is shaped by the interplay of causes, conditions, and perceptions. This makes emptiness a radical anti-realist position, one that rejects the idea that there is an independent, objective reality to be discovered apart from our perception and understanding. In essence, Madhyamaka doesn't deny the conventional reality of the world we experience, but it does challenge the idea that it has an objective, inherent, or independent existence outside of our conceptual and linguistic constructs. So, in a way, it proposes a kind of "antirealism," in that it rejects the traditional realist view of a mind-independent, objective reality. However, this rejection is not the same as nihilism, it simply points out that our ordinary conceptions of reality are mistaken in assuming that things have fixed, independent natures. We can explore more about Madhyamika's antirealism by focusing on how Nāgārjuna's philosophy challenges conventional ways of thinking about reality and the nature of existence. The notion of emptiness or śūnyatā in Madhyamaka is thus central to understanding its

antirealism. Chandrakirti points out that, "Emptiness is the absence of inherent existence. If something has inherent existence, then it must be independent and unchanging. But everything is dependent and transient. Therefore, everything is empty of inherent existence."[3] Nāgārjuna's assertion is that things don't have an intrinsic, unchanging essence or nature. For instance, when you look at a chair, you typically perceive it as a "chair," but according to Madhyamaka, this "chair-ness" does not exist independently of the conditions and conceptual frameworks that bring it into existence. There's no essential "chair-ness" that persists regardless of context, perspective, or time. This emptiness is not a negation of all existence, it's a way of showing that what we normally take as fixed, independent entities are actually just the result of interdependent causes and conditions. Chandrakirti says "The world is neither inherently existent nor non-existent. It is merely the product of interdependent causes and conditions. Emptiness is the understanding of this process."[4]This position is quite radical because it challenges the assumptions of both materialism which assumes that objects exist independently in the world and idealism which holds that only mind or consciousness is real.  Through emptiness, Madhyamaka Buddhism invites a transformation in perception, leading to a more fluid, interconnected understanding of reality. By recognizing that nothing exists in isolation and all phenomena are dependent on others, one can overcome attachment and suffering, gaining liberation through wisdom and compassion. This anti-realist doctrine challenges the way we experience and relate to the world, offering a path toward greater freedom and insight. The radical nature of emptiness in Madhyamaka Buddhism is that it presents a deeply anti-realist perspective on reality, one that fundamentally challenges our conventional understanding of the world. By denying the inherent, independent existence of all things, emptiness reveals the interdependent, contingent, and constructed nature of reality. This perspective does not deny the practical existence of things but shows that their essence is not fixed or inherent. According to Thich Nhat Hanh, "Everything is interconnected, and everything is made of non-material elements. Emptiness is the way things exist in relation to one another, not in isolation. The world is made of interbeing, and all things are contingent upon one another".[5] The world is not a collection of independent, self-sustaining objects, but a network of relationships and conditions. This anti-realist view dissolves the dualistic thinking that separates subject from object, and it invites a more fluid, interconnected understanding of reality. On a practical level, the understanding of emptiness leads to liberation from the attachments and conceptualizations that bind us to suffering. By recognizing that our usual perception of objects, the self, and other phenomena is rooted in misunderstanding and conceptual imposition, we can begin to see through these illusory distinctions. This

transformation is not just intellectual but also experiential: realizing emptiness provides a liberating freedom from rigid attachments and fixed identities, leading to a more equanimous and compassionate engagement with the world. In brief, the anti-realist nature of Madhyamaka Buddhism's emptiness doctrine is radically transformative both in its philosophical implications and its practical applications. It deconstructs the conventional, realist view of a fixed, objective reality and replaces it with a vision of the world as interdependent and impermanent, offering a profound shift in how we understand existence and ultimately how we live our lives.

**Conclusion**

Madhyamika's antirealism has significant implications for how we think about the nature of reality. While it does not necessarily advocate for a nihilistic view, it pushes us to question the solidity and permanence of the world as it appears to us. It calls into question the "realism" that sees a world of independent, fixed entities existing "out there" waiting to be discovered or understood. In this way, Madhyamaka offers a more fluid, relational conception of reality that emphasizes process over substance, context over essence, and interdependence over independence. Its antirealism is not a rejection of all experience, but a radical critique of the assumptions we make about the nature of that experience. Their antirealism challenges the assumption that the world has an inherent, fixed, or independent existence. Instead, it teaches that everything is empty of inherent nature and arises dependently. While this may seem abstract, it has profound implications for how we understand the world, ourselves, and our place in the universe. By embracing the emptiness of all phenomena, Madhyamaka invites us to see the world as more fluid, interconnected, and dynamic, and in doing so, it offers a transformative perspective on reality that is radically different from the views typically found in traditional philosophical realism. Madhyamika's anti-realist philosophy is not merely theoretical; it has profound practical implications for how one lives and practices as a Buddhist. The realization of emptiness is considered a transformative experience that radically alters one's perception of self and the world. In meditation, practitioners are encouraged to focus on the emptiness of all phenomena, including thoughts, emotions, and perceptions. By recognizing that these experiences do not possess inherent existence, the practitioner can let go of attachment and identification with them. Madhyamika's anti-realist philosophy calls into question the way we conceptualize not only the external world but also our very selves, pushing us toward a transformative perspective that can dissolve attachments and lead to liberation from suffering. Madhyamika's anti-realist stance has profound ethical implications, particularly in

how it shapes the Buddhist path to liberation. If all phenomena, including the self, are empty of inherent existence, then the attachment to a fixed, unchanging self is seen as the root of suffering. Our desire to hold onto a permanent identity or to view the world through fixed categories leads to attachment, fear, and misunderstanding. In contrast, by recognizing the emptiness of both self and world, practitioners can cultivate compassion and wisdom. The realization that all beings are interconnected and that their apparent separateness is illusory can inspire a deep sense of compassion. The Bodhisattva, the ideal figure in Mahayana Buddhism, embodies this wisdom and compassion by dedicating their life to the liberation of others. The Bodhisattva's path involves the recognition that all beings, like oneself, are trapped in the illusion of inherent existence, and thus the Bodhisattva vows to help all beings awaken to the truth of emptiness. Ethically, this understanding of emptiness leads to a more flexible and compassionate approach to both others and oneself. Rather than rigidly defining others by fixed categories, such as race, status, or personality, Madhyamaka encourages a view that sees all beings as part of a larger, interdependent process. This understanding leads to greater openness, empathy, and a sense of shared humanity. Thus, Madhyamaka Buddhism, with its radical anti-realist doctrine, offers a transformative philosophy that redefines the way we understand existence, suffering, and liberation. By rejecting the notion of inherent, independent existence, Madhyamaka presents a vision of the world as interdependent, fluid, and empty of fixed essence. This view challenges conventional metaphysical and existential assumptions and offers a middle way between realism and nihilism. Through Nagarjuna's philosophical arguments, particularly the tetralemma and the two truths doctrine, Madhyamaka shows that both realism and nihilism are inadequate for understanding the true nature of reality. The insight into emptiness, however, opens the path to liberation, guiding practitioners toward the cessation of suffering and the realization of wisdom and compassion. Ultimately, the Madhyamaka path invites us to live with greater flexibility, openness, and understanding, seeing the world as it truly is, empty, interdependent, and ever-changing.

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