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**Valimbavaka Raheimananjara (Val)** is a 26 years old political and public policy analyst based in Antananarivo, Madagascar. Her interest lies more in economic policy issues in Madagascar and economic policy decision-making in Africa. In 2019, she obtained the Chevening Scholarship, which allowed her to complete a Master's degree in Public Administration and Public Policy at the University of York. In addition, she holds two Masters degrees in accounting, management control and auditing, as well as two Masters of Research in management sciences.

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**Mariam Fatima** (she/her) works in the education sector with a passion to build capacity of teachers of low-cost private schools across Pakistan. Having trained a number of teachers, she has a deep understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing Pakistan's education sector. She is currently working to transform traditional teaching methods and introduce new, more effective ways of learning. While also having a passion to deeply appreciate Karachi's artistic and cultural traditions, she believes that music and dance have the power to engage and inspire teachers and students while fostering 21st century skills such as creativity, critical thinking, and collaboration.

**Ammar Murtaza** (he/him) is a third-year student at the College of Media Sciences in Ziauddin University. His major is Communication and Design and he is particularly interested in digital advertising and marketing. Ammar's research interests center around the role of quantitative research in analyzing social problems and he hopes to continue researching topics that are seldom discussed in Pakistani society. He can be contacted at [ammar.15232@zu.edu.pk](mailto:ammar.15232@zu.edu.pk).

**Fatima Bibi** (she/her) is a third year student at the College of Media Sciences in Ziauddin University with a specialization in Communication Design. As a media student, her interest lies in exploring topics that are often overlooked or neglected, particularly those that people are not fully aware of and are hesitant to discuss due to the associated stigma. Fatima's aim is to utilize the power of media to create awareness, facilitate dialogue, and promote understanding. Through her writing, she strives to challenge societal norms and break down barriers, encouraging individuals to address their own mental and physical well-being while fostering a compassionate and inclusive society. Fatima can be contacted at [fatima.15229@zu.edu.pk](mailto:fatima.15229@zu.edu.pk).

# MANAGING EDITORS' NOTE

**Ata Syed**  
**Syeda Rumana Mehdi**

*"I left the room because, and only because, we had said all we could say. The unsaid words pushed roughly against the thoughts that we had no crafts to verbalize, and crowded the room to uneasiness."*

Maya Angelou

A lot is said in the unsaid. A lot is implied and understood in silence that hangs in the air, tangible enough to inhale and feel. Yet we stay silent, avoid confrontation and hope that disruption will go away as we pretend that it simply does not exist. The current issue of JLAHS attempts to break these barriers of silence and discomfort and deals with issues that are often whispered about.

With manuscripts from Pakistan, Madagascar, India and the UK, our authors tackle taboo of performing arts, economic policies, ideology of 3 dimensional cinema, caste system and postpartum depression. The methodologies of these articles are intricate and interdisciplinary and encompass numerous facets of liberal arts including Anthropology, Economics, Media Studies, Gender Studies, Political Science and Public Health.

Delving into policymaking, politics and macroeconomics, Ms. Valimbavaka Raheerimananjara's article titled "Assessment of the policy of the rice market liberalization in Madagascar" presents a critical review of the rice market liberalization in Madagascar in the 1980s. Reflecting on the role of local state actors as well as international organizations such as IMF and World Bank, the article analyses the link between the nation state and global economic policy. Using both national and international perspectives, the article provides insight as well as paves the way for further research pertaining to economic policy, political legacy and strategic importance of nation-states.

Moving from policy to society, Ms. Uthara Geetha's article titled "From the Margins to the Centre: Identifying Caste Ceilings within Kerala's Development Experience" presents a critical analysis of the notion of development and highlights the biases that impact it. The critique focuses on caste and gender based discrimination in particular to understand how development is a biased process and how it might prove to be detrimental to certain members of society. Uthara asserts that caste ceilings need to be recognized first in order for just development to take place which points towards the need for intersectional research with creative and critical methodologies which present different aspects of the issue.

Societal issues don't always have to be grand to be relevant. Using a critical approach in Film Studies, Mr. Alai Naseer's article titled "Drama in the 3rd Dimension," examines the potential of 3 dimensional cinema in creating movies that provide a multitude of different experiences for the viewer. Using movies as case studies, Alai urges for the need to develop stereoscopic filmmaking to ensure an out-of-the-world experience for the audience. Therefore, the article opens opportunities for further research in the legacy of conventional and modern cinema and the broader role that cinema plays in contemporary society. and why it still exists as a strong institution.

Mr. Muhammad Ammar explores political leadership in Pakistan through the lens of dictatorship in his article titled 'Legitimizing a Military Dictatorship: The Referendums and General Elections of Ayub Khan and Zia ul Haq.' Based on quantitative research methodology, the article interprets the notion of legitimacy, leadership, democracy and the nation-state through the case study of Pakistan. The article raises interesting questions about dictatorship and its legitimacy in various parts of the world. It also calls for ethnographic research in this area to understand how/why dictatorship varies from country to country. Apart from cinema, cultural issues can stem from arts as well. In her article titled "Amateurs' Engagements with Music and Dance:



Apart from cinema, cultural issues can stem from arts as well. In her article titled "Amateurs' Engagements with Music and Dance: A Comparative Phenomenology of Performance Arts Practice in Karachi," Ms. Mariam Fatima sheds light on the legacy of music and dance in Pakistani culture and heritage. Using ethnography, she weaves a tale of nostalgia, mental health, performative art and gender discrimination and presents a lost tradition that was once revered and is now frowned upon. The article not only alludes to history but also to Anthropology which opens up avenues for invigorating intersectional research.

What is a society but a collection of individuals? Perhaps none more important than mothers. Mr. Ammar Murtaza's and Ms. Fatima Bibi's article titled "Lack of Awareness regarding Postpartum Depression in Mothers," is a quantitative study of mothers in Karachi. The article focuses on different aspects of postpartum depression and how it impacts mothers as well as broader themes of mental health, support, care and gendered domestic labor. A quantitative analysis makes it easy to see that magnitude of postpartum depression in Karachi and opens doors for further quantitative as well as qualitative research regarding postpartum depression and the steps that need to be taken in order to ensure healthy households.

Therefore, this issue of JLAHS aptly deals with uncomfortable silences and topics that are not openly discussed. The articles, while advanced in their own ways, are also conversation starters which can lead to more pro-active research in the future.

Using creative methodology and critical analysis, the authors have made reasonable deductions and plausible recommendations which are likely to contribute to not just the academic field, but will actually make a difference in society if implemented.

# ASSESSMENT OF THE RICE MARKET REGULARISATION POLICIES IN MADAGASCAR

**Valimbavaka Raherimananjara**  
Madagascar

## Abstract

Over the years, Madagascar has attempted to stabilise domestic rice prices through rice imports and subsidised sales at official prices. This document describes the events that have marked the rice sector in Madagascar and analyses the impact of the policies adopted and the measures taken to stimulate the development of the domestic rice market. It asks what the role of the state should be in the market, depending on the circumstances. The results of the analysis show that the state should intervene indirectly in the market, by remaining a facilitator and avoiding the role of direct importer.

## Introduction

In Madagascar, the rice sector is one of the pillars of economic, social and political development. Rice production is the main economic activity in rural areas, and the staple food of the Malagasy people. It is estimated that the average Malagasy consumes 283 grams of rice per day (FAO, 2019). Overall production is estimated at 4,000,000 tonnes over an area of 1,300,000 ha. This makes Madagascar the 3rd largest rice producer in Africa after Egypt and Nigeria. However, production is barely sufficient to satisfy local consumption. A number of constraints stand in the way of achieving food self-sufficiency in the country. As far as physical constraints are concerned, cyclones and major variations in rainfall intensity damage the harvest every year. Because of the poor state of the roads, the production areas are isolated. Irrigation networks are inadequate. In terms of technical constraints, growers suffer from a low level of equipment. Few producers have access to equipment that could be used to improve their yields. In addition, the rice market in Madagascar is highly dependent on the international market.

Successive governments have intervened in the rice market to find a price that is both acceptable to consumers and likely to stimulate producers. This article attempts to explain the poor performance of the rice sector in Madagascar and to analyse how

it has been regulated over several years. The first part will focus on the evolution of political decisions in the rice market. The second part will focus on the failures of rice price stabilisation policies in Madagascar, highlighting the role of the government in the market.

## Chronology of the policy decisions in the rice market in Madagascar and their impact

This section explains the various government policies concerning the regulation of the rice market through the different economic trends in Madagascar from 1960 to the present day.

### 1960-1972: Neo-colonialism

The situation of the rice sector in Madagascar has not always been precarious. Indeed, during the First Republic (1960-1972), Madagascar was self-sufficient in rice production, and even exported rice until 1971. This situation can be explained by the fact that Madagascar still belonged to the franc zone, and that the government of Philibert Tsiranana maintained colonial economic policies despite independence. The rice sector was in private hands, and French companies accounted for more than two-thirds of the sales of all large companies. The State thus intervened very little, until 1970, when the "Bureau de Commercialisation et de Stabilisation du Riz" (BCSR), created in 1963, took a monopoly over one of Madagascar's largest rice-producing regions, Lac Alaotra (Dabat et al. 2008). Nevertheless, this government had always been successful in regulating the prices and trade of agricultural products and spent heavily on rural infrastructure and services. As a result, the agricultural sector has achieved modest growth in GDP (Barrett 1994).

### 1973-1980: Socialism

When Didier Ratsiraka's government came to power in 1973, it took Madagascar out of the franc zone and eliminated the private sector from rice marketing at the national level (Dabat et al. 2008). The Government set itself the task of regulating the

price of rice by buying paddy from producers through approved agents. From 1973 to 1977, the Société d'Intérêt National des Produits Agricoles (SINPA), a parastatal company, held a monopoly on paddy collection and processing, as well as internal and external rice marketing. Unfortunately, it did not succeed in collecting rice in the same way as the private collectors of the First Republic, who managed to visit isolated farmers (Blanc-Pamard 1985). It also failed to pay back the farmers from whom it bought the rice (Pesneaud 1997). As a result, the Government only managed to collect 10% of production in the early 1980s. A serious shortage occurred (Blanc-Pamard 1985). The government had to import 355,000 tonnes of rice in 1982, compared with 135,000 tonnes in 1977 (Dabat et al. 2008).

From 1978 to 1980, the government implemented the "Investissement à outrance" policy. This was an economic policy aimed at excessive investment and production in all areas. The government went into debt to build large industrial units. However, as a result of fraudulent manoeuvres by the State in the management of these public enterprises (Lakroan'i Madagasikara, 1982) and unforeseen rises in the world price of oil, Madagascar's debt rose from 315 million SDR in 1978 to 1,460 million SDR in 1982 (Rakotomalala, 2015). Inflation rose from 6.8% in 1978 to 18% in 1980 (Dinga-Dzongo, 1994). Thus, the government's excessive ambitions paralysed the economy.

### 1981-1995: Gradual liberalization

In the early 1980s, the inability of the Malagasy Government to pay off its debts accumulated during the 1970s prompted it to turn to the IMF, the World Bank and major bilateral donors. This community of donors noted that State controls were at the root of the sharp stagnation in production and the explosion in rice imports. They therefore called for the rice market to be liberalised. As the Malagasy government was in urgent need of credit to adjust the agricultural sector, the Bretton Woods institutions had more power from the outset in negotiating the design of the reforms. Unfortunately, these reforms failed to adequately address the main difficulties of the rice market.

The first part of the reform consisted of a massive devaluation of the Malagasy franc, a reduction in public spending and food subsidies, an increase in taxes and fees for public services and a reduction in trade barriers (Barrett 1994). These measures were intended to slow the country's economic decline. A second wave of more structural reforms followed in 1986, eliminating most price controls and state monopolies in domestic and

international agricultural trade. These reforms were aimed at achieving economic growth capable of keeping pace with population growth, food security and Madagascar's ability to export rice as it had done in the 1960s. Thus, the formulation of reforms in the context of rice market liberalisation was consistent with New Public Management (NPM) reforms, which prioritise market forces, management efficiency and government accountability (Hope, 2001). The government created parastatals such as SINPA, FIFABE and SOMALAC to improve the efficiency of rice production and marketing. Although it was the central government that created the overall framework for the reforms, policy-making took place at the level of these parastatals (Cairney 2011). These reforms were not accompanied by measures to increase incomes, while the price of paddy rose substantially. Between 1986 and 1987, SOMALAC and FIFABE restricted competition by establishing regional monopolies through informal regulations, road barriers and cartelisation (Barrett 1994). As a result, 63% of the Malagasy population was threatened by food insecurity (Barrett 1994). Faced with this situation, the Ministry of Agriculture created a buffer stock of rice to limit price fluctuations and ensure supplies for people living in remote areas. SINPA and SOMACODIS were given responsibility for managing the rice stocks in Antananarivo and Toamasina. Unfortunately, this initiative only resulted in the isolation of the producing regions, given the poor performance of these two parastatals. At the distribution level, the private company PROCOOPS, dominated import-export. Alone, it owned 300 retail outlets using cooperatives belonging to the political party of President Didier Ratsiraka (Berg 1989). Without competition, it was unable to distribute rice according to market demand.

### The 2004 crisis

During the first quarter of 2004, two cyclones, Elita and Gafilo, hit Madagascar. Almost 500,000 hectares of the 1.4 million hectares planted throughout the country were damaged. This resulted in a loss of 10% of the country's annual rice production (Minten et al. 2006). The arrival of the first harvests should have lowered rice prices. However, international rice prices began to rise. International transport costs increased due to the rise in diesel prices (Minten et al. 2006). In addition, the Malagasy currency began to depreciate in June, and importers feared that this depreciation would last for some time. They wanted to reduce the level of import prices by offering to pay the Government's shipping and transport costs. But the government did not respond to this request. Banks were also reluctant to

grant them credit. Discouraged, importers turned to local rice and reduced the quantity of imports. However, rice from the Antananarivo harvest sold out quickly after the harvest. Suppliers therefore had to source it from elsewhere. Between June and August, the price of paddy rose by 170% (Minten et al. 2006). Unfortunately, as this price increase took place after the marketing season (April - June 2004), most small farmers were unable to take advantage of it and consumers suffered. The Government was therefore aware that the private sector would not be able to satisfy local market demand. At the same time, it did not want to abolish import duties because it wanted to achieve a certain fiscal objective. However, it had to avoid a rice shortage and reduce or stabilise the domestic price of rice for consumers. It therefore decided to turn to a policy of food aid and to import rice on favourable terms. It signed a trade agreement with Thailand to import 100,000 tonnes of rice at a price well below the import price (Minten et al. 2006). Unfortunately, the first shipments of rice did not arrive until two months later, in October, due to rising transport costs. Up until the beginning of 2005, the government imported a total of 200,000 tonnes of rice. Magro, a company owned by President Marc Ravalomanana, was the biggest beneficiary of the five companies involved in importing government rice. The government allowed these companies to delay payment of import duties, under unclear conditions. Sold at very low prices, government rice was in high demand. As the government could not import a sufficient quantity of rice, it had to limit the quantity sold per person and concentrate rice distribution in the major urban centres. As a result, shortages became widespread and domestic prices soared. The 2004 crisis showed that the Government intervention favoured only a minority of operators and have exacerbated the efforts of private operators.

In 2005, the major exogenous shocks that led to the 2004 crisis have disappeared. With no major natural disasters, the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries estimated national rice production in 2004/2005 at 3.4 million tonnes, an increase of more than 12% on 2004 (Minten et al. 2006). The Government has decided to eliminate import duties at the end of July 2005, and to reduce Value Added Tax from 20% to 18% (Minten et al. 2006). The government has also officially declared that it will stay out of the rice market. However, these decisions were taken rather late. As a result, prices were still relatively higher at harvest time and lower in the lean season than in normal years. So, when faced with uncertainty, farmers tend to stockpile

excessively in the expectation of high prices in the lean period.

### **2007-2008: Cyclones and soaring international prices**

In 2007, several cyclones caused production losses and damage to road infrastructure. However, thanks to exchanges of information between the Rice Observatory, the Government, the National Risk and Disaster Management Office and emergency aid agencies, recommendations were made to remove non-tariff barriers and rapidly rehabilitate damaged infrastructure. As a result, the rise in rice prices remained localised and the situation returned to normal in May-June 2007 (David-Benz et al., 2014).

However, international rice prices began to rise in the last quarter of 2007. They soared in February and March 2008, reaching a cumulative increase of almost 50% (Daviron & Bricas, 2008). In fact, world stocks have fallen. As a result, Asian producing and exporting countries decided to introduce restrictive measures to protect their own domestic markets from inflationary risks. In Africa, countries that rely heavily on the international market have been hard hit by this surge in the international price of rice. Aware of the situation, the Rice Observatory has urged importers to anticipate their orders so that they arrive in mid-2007. For its part, the Government announced that it was negotiating 50,000 tonnes of rice at a preferential price with the Indian Government (David-Benz et al., 2014). The announcement of this order helped to maintain prices at their usual level, despite the delay in the arrival of the order. The Government also decided to exempt the price of imported rice from the 18% Value Added Tax in July 2008 and to temporarily suspend exports, as well as to step up production support for the 2008 off-season. These trade and tax measures helped to stabilise prices within the country (David-Benz et al., 2014).

### **2009-2012: A climate of uncertainty and lack of information**

The beginning of 2009 was marked by a political crisis. The warehouses of President Marc Ravalomanana's food group were looted and set on fire, despite being responsible for the wholesale supply of essential foodstuffs. The 2010-2011 hungerseason was marked by a sharp rise in prices. In February 2011, consumer prices rose to Ar1550 per kg, an increase of almost 30% on the highs of previous years (David-Benz, 2011). This price rise is linked to

several factors. Firstly, production was overestimated, at 6 million tonnes compared with 4.3 to 4.5 million tonnes in previous years (David-Benz, 2011). Secondly, following government intervention on prices, large collectors bought a small quantity of rice during the harvest. As a result, prices were particularly low from June to August 2010. This situation prevented the Plateforme de Concertation et de Pilotage de la Filière Riz (PCP Riz), set up following the 2004 crisis, from establishing a strategy with operators and the government to deal with the lean season. Moreover, importers were uncertain about the shortfall to be made up, and only PCP imported 50,000 tonnes between September and December 2010 to cover the lean period (David-Benz, 2011). The remaining stocks therefore had to be managed.

Against a backdrop of hunger shortages, the breakdown of the supply network and promises of change, the High Authority for the Transition (HAT) launched a "500 Ar/kg rice" (USD 0.25) operation in the major towns at the end of March 2009, at a time when the market price of rice was 1,100 Ar/kg (David-Benz et al. 2014). PCP asked the Presidency to stop this operation and to provide escorts for transporters to secure the collection of local rice. But the HAT continued to sell very cheap rice. In 2011, "Vary tena mora" sold for 1,000 Ariary per kilo (Valis, 2011). This measure did not seem to make sense to some, given that the 2010 harvest was good. Also, only urban households in the urban commune of Antananarivo were able to benefit. For many, this was a discriminatory measure, as in other provinces rice was sold at 1,600 Ar per kilo (Valis, 2011).

In November 2012, the government resumed the "vary mora" operation, selling a kilo of rice at 800 Ar, compared with an average price of 1,290 to 1,320 Ar. This measure seems inconsistent given that production has increased by 6% compared to 2011, i.e. 4,550,000 tonnes of paddy. Also, the domestic market did not experience excessive price pressure during the lean season because the international rice market environment was favourable to imports. The volume of imports in the first 11 months of 2012 was estimated at 170,000 tonnes, placing it among the highest in the last six years (L'Observatoire du riz de Madagascar, 2012).

This period showed that the climate of uncertainty was driven more by overestimation of production, and operators' concern about the risk of State intervention, rather than the international market.

### **2013 - 2018: Rising imports and speculation on the rice market**

In 2017, the main rice-growing regions of northern, central and eastern Madagascar were hit by severe drought. As a result, production fell back following the late start to the rainy season. Madagascar was also hit by cyclone Enawo, which further compromised the 2017 harvest. As a result, national rice production was estimated at just over 3.1 million tonnes in 2017, 20 percent lower than in 2016 and 19 percent below the average for the previous three years (FAO, 2017). In 2018, Madagascar was hit by cyclones Ava (January 2017) and Eliakm (March 2018). Nevertheless, Paddy production increased slightly to 4 million tonnes in 2018 (Trésor Public Malagasy, 2018). As local supply could not meet demand, the Government had to increase the quantity of imported rice. The average quantity of rice imported between 2013 and 2018 was 374,000 tonnes, 48% of which came from Pakistan and 37% from India.

However, rice imports reached a record high of 727,000 tonnes between April 2017 and March 2018 (Trésor Public Malagasy, 2019). The State has zero-rated imported rice entering Madagascar to enable operators to resell it at a lower cost on the local market. However, the price of local rice soared to 2,500 Ariary per kilo during the lean season of 2017 (Rabarison, 2018). In addition to the drop in production, climatic hazards, the low rate of the ariary against foreign currencies and the rise in the price of fuel, this increase can be explained more by speculation on the market. Rice middlemen and collectors are taking advantage of the insecurity and poor road conditions in rice-growing areas to buy tonnes of rice at very low prices and then sell them to wholesalers at high prices. To resolve the situation, the Ministry of Trade and Consumer Affairs has consulted with operators and wholesalers in the sector with the aim of excluding matchmakers and speculators from the market (L'Express de Madagascar, 2018). However, until the end of 2018, the price per kilo of rice remained at around 2,000 Ariary (Observatoire du Riz Madagascar, 2018).

### **The current situation**

In 2020, the government set up the State Procurement of Madagascar (SPM), a company with a majority public shareholding, which has since begun operations. This company acts as an upstream market regulator, given the fluctuating



prices of basic necessities, and also to avoid speculative manoeuvres. The company supplies the local market with essential products, including rice and fuel. It also supports operators in the import process, without competing with them. The aim is to directly import several products that are sensitive to consumers' purchasing power. It should be noted that SPM does not seek to make a profit, but takes a minimum margin to ensure its operation.

Following a prolonged drought, the start of the growing season has been delayed. As a result, the rice harvest fell by 6% to 4,443,000 tonnes in 2021/2022. In 2022, a series of tropical storms and cyclones Batsirai and Emnati devastated 90% of Madagascar's rice harvest (FAO, 2022). The poor supply situation led to an 18% increase in imports of milled rice in 2022 (744,846 tonnes) compared to 2021 (629,414 tonnes) (Agence Ecofin, 2022). According to the government, this is also a policy aimed at encouraging operators to continue importing rice in order to limit the rise in the price of local rice. To relieve the population, the Government is reintroducing "Vary Mora", sold at 1,000 Ariary per kilo through SPM (Randriamiantsoa, 2022). However, consumers are not interested because of the poor quality of the rice compared to local rice. The average retail price of a kilogram of milled rice rose by 2% in one month to 2,657 ariary (\$0.61) in December 2022, whereas a year earlier the price of imported rice was 2,523 ariary (\$0.58) (Agence Ecofin, 2023). Because of the rise in prices, many people prefer to change their consumption habits and eat only twice a day. Unfortunately, despite the Government's efforts to import on a massive scale and keep the price at 2,900 Ariary per kilogramme, the local price remains very high because of the poor state of the roads that prevent products from leaving the country's rice granaries, which have now become landlocked areas. Cyclones Cheneso and Freddy also hit Madagascar's coasts hard in 2023, making it difficult to market rice in the country.

As a result, the price of rice continued to rise, topping the 4,000 Ariary mark in April 2023 (Madagascar-Tribune.com, 2023). However, like many public bodies, SPM's debts have increased, given its port storage costs. It is experiencing difficulties in transporting its goods to Antananarivo and the major cities (Olivier Vallée, 2023). As a result, it has been unable to finance rice imports in the long term to stabilise consumer prices.

### **Analysis of rice price stabilisation policies in Madagascar**

This section will seek to understand the lessons learned from Madagascar's experience of the policies implemented by successive Governments in the context of rice price regularisation.

According to McConnell (2015), a policy is a failure if it does not achieve its objectives, is not implemented as planned, does not benefit the target group, is not appreciated by the stakeholders concerned and does not improve the previous situation. First of all, understanding the failure of a policy through the notion of objectives is a complex process, since several objectives may be linked to the policy. However, for a policy to be considered a success, its main objectives should at least have been largely achieved.

The experience of Madagascar during market liberalisation in the early 1980s has shown that one of the conditions for successful policy implementation is that there are fewer dependencies, i.e. fewer 'veto points', and that policy implementation does not depend on the cooperation of other actors (Cairney, 2011). As some stakeholders created a veto point that hindered the ability for successful implementation, the liberalisation of the rice market was a governance failure. Indeed, the reforms put in place could not increase productivity at lower cost, create fair competition within and between public sector organisations, and improve the effectiveness and efficiency of government to better meet the needs of citizens (Kettl 2000).

It has been observed that during times of crisis, trust between the government and the private sector is very low. This is due to a lack of communication between these key players. On the one hand, traders are accused of being speculators; on the other, the Government is accused of not understanding the costs and risks they face. So the government should develop a clear and transparent policy. If the Government wanted to get involved in setting prices, it should do so at the beginning of the year, taking into account the international and national economic situation. According to Minten et al (2013), the government should make available to all stakeholders and discuss with them statistics and analyses of the rice market, levels of production, storage, trade surpluses, changes in international markets and import conditions. This information should be disseminated through the various media (local and

national television and radio, social networks, by e-mail, on boards in the markets). The setting up of the rice observatory and the PCP in 2005, enabled the government to take appropriate measures and anticipate its actions despite the climatic hazards and soaring international prices. By following their recommendations, the government succeeded in maintaining rice prices at their usual level in 2007. The publication of periodic price bulletins collected regularly in different regions of the country, as well as other economic information relating to the rice sector by the rice observatory, is a good practice that successive governments have continued to this day.

The "Vary Mora" operations (very cheap rice) created economic distortions on the rice market. Following the crisis in 2009, they were unfortunately adopted for political reasons, making rice producers and importers victims even though the harvest was good. They also had a psychological impact on the population, increasing political pressure to continue the operations despite the demand from stakeholders in the sector. This operation should be based on a good targeting of the poor throughout the country who are really suffering from the increase in the price of rice, and should avoid welfare losses for net sellers. However, without information on real household income and assets, it is difficult to target the part of the population that really needs it. There is therefore always a risk that the State will be criticised for implementing discriminatory measures, but also for failing to help those who are really in need.

The elimination of customs duties and the reduction in Value Added Tax on rice imports have reduced the cost of rice imports, increased private sector imports and lowered the prices of both imported and local rice. However, frequent tariff adjustments could undermine the transparency of the government's rice policy, and will impact on the government's fiscal objectives. Frequent government intervention in the sector increases uncertainty among stakeholders and reduces incentives for private sector imports.

According to Minten et al (2013), tariff changes on rice could lead to strong political pressure to reduce tariffs on other products on an ad hoc basis, leading to trade complexity.

The success of rice price regulation policies depends very much on the success of other physical and technical factors. Despite the

favourable agro-ecological conditions for growing rice, Madagascar's terrain is mountainous. As a result, rice-growing soils are not naturally very productive. In addition, the lack of water control in the various rice-growing regions is a major problem. According to Andriamparany (2010), out of an irrigated rice-growing area of 800,000 ha, 500,000 ha are under poor water control. Most production areas are also located in landlocked regions. The government has not invested in the infrastructure needed to develop Madagascar's agricultural sector, such as roads, railways and equipment. As a result, even if producers achieved high yields, the effects of production were weak because transport between and within regions was expensive and dangerous. The lack of competition in the rice market is also due to the lack of better equipment and access to it. Farmers continue to use traditional methods and techniques such as the spade, sickle, oxen and plough (OECD 1999). Rice growers rarely use power tillers, tractors and good quality inputs (mineral fertilisers, selected high-yield seeds, plant protection products) because of their high price.

Every year, Madagascar is hit by cyclones, which devastate agricultural crops and reduce production. To anticipate the harmful consequences of these climatic hazards, the government should create a security stock for rice, which could be managed by an entity outside the government. However, this stock should not pose a threat to private stocks and should not cost the State too much in terms of tax revenue. For greater transparency on the market, and to avoid any form of fraudulent manoeuvring, the price at which rice is sold on the market should be announced before the main planting season and remain fixed for a year (Minten et al., 2013).

### Conclusion

This article has shown that, over the years, government policies to stabilise or reduce the market price of rice have varied considerably. Yet fluctuations in the price of rice threaten food security in the country. So what role should the state play in the market? In the case of Madagascar, state intervention in the market has failed to achieve the objectives of increasing the quantity of production and reducing the selling price of rice. However, tax incentives seem to have produced more positive results and fewer market distortions. The government should therefore intervene indirectly in the market. It should invest in infrastructure to reduce the transaction costs associated with rice marketing. For

irrigationsystems to solve problems of quality, volume and late harvests. To avoid high transport costs, the government should invest in road infrastructure, so as not to discourage producers infrastructure, so as not to discourage producers and so that produce held up in enclave rice granaries can be marketed throughout the country. The country's rice supply is fragile, as it is highly dependent on the global economic situation. What's more, the country is hit by cyclones every year, which affect the harvest. It would therefore be appropriate to carry out an in-depth analysis of price stabilisation solutions, so that the government and private sector rice importers can anticipate their actions. The lack of consultation and mistrust between government and private sector players, the lack of transparency about decisions taken by the state, and the uncertainty about the official selling price have been factors that have discouraged importers and consequently reduced supply on the market and increased the price of rice. The production of information by the Rice Observatory and the consultation of the various stakeholders who are members of the PCP have enabled the State and the major operators to gain a better understanding of the market, thereby contributing to price stability. It is therefore important to inform all players in the production chain, including small operators and producers, about prices and production levels in order to build confidence. Nevertheless, producers need to be helped to understand market mechanisms and the workings of agricultural and trade policies in order to improve their trade-offs and strategies.

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# FROM THE MARGINS TO THE CENTRE: IDENTIFYING CASTE CEILINGS WITHIN KERALA'S DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCE

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## Abstract

The academic curiosity of scholars to discover and map the development trajectory of the relatively poor left-leaning state of Kerala in the late 1900s and early 2000s advanced the framing of the Kerala model of development. Two strong strands of critique emerged from caste and feminist scholars who identified the exclusion of the oppressed castes and the invisibilisation of women from the development process. Subsequently, the discovery of paradoxes and outliers within Kerala's development pattern demoted its position from being considered a model to terming it as a unique experience. More recent reassessments of the Kerala model provided evidence of convergence of high human development with economic growth albeit with spectacular failures which left untouched the socio-economic exclusion of the oppressed castes and have widened gender inequality. The ignorance extended to the caste and gendered inequalities has also resulted in the lack of innovative frameworks to dissect the long-standing issue of rising relative inequality. This paper introduces the concept of 'caste ceiling(s)' to be used as a framework or tool to understand the widening inequality and policy gaps by focusing on Dalit women who occupy the intersectional space of caste, class, and gender with special focus on the employment trends. This paper is an attempt to re-read the development and labour experience of Kerala, keeping Dalit women at the centre, to highlight the role played by gendered caste inequalities in hampering the development of the state.

## Kerala's Development Blind spots

With a more or less comparable demographic distribution among the three religions of Hinduism, Christianity and Islam, a large array of caste denominations, and a modern communist movement (that came to power through the ballot) that tried to level and unify some of these disparate social hierarchies, Kerala is unique even within a

diverse country like India (CDS and UN, 1977). Kerala stood out for its achievements in the physical quality of life driven by public action despite low economic growth securing top ranks in human development indicators and was considered a unique model of development with potential to be mimicked by other developing regions (Jeffrey, 1992; Franke, 1994; Dreze & Sen, 1997; Tharamangalam, 2006). Kerala's success in the arena of extreme poverty alleviation is attributed to the strong demands for public actions led by its civil society. The state witnessed the institutionalisation of democracy before capital transformation and is characterised by the systematic incorporation of wage-earning classes (rural and urban) into the socio-political arena developing active state-society relations (Heller, 2000). However, the outcomes of the much-acclaimed reforms and policies were highly uneven and dependent on the initial resources and class-caste position of the groups (Rammohan, 2010).

In 2000s, empirical studies on Kerala provided evidence for the convergence of economic growth and human development accelerated through the implementation of neo-liberal and globalised policies by sacrificing the pro-poor agenda and thus, expanding inequality. This growth convergence was accompanied by an erosion of the ability of the working classes to organize and bargain with the government resulting in between- and within-class inequality accentuated by a phased withdrawal of the welfare-oriented state (A.P & Vakulabharanam, 2016). Therefore, the contemporary socio-economic development of Kerala is characterised by a lower incidence of poverty coupled with widening relative inequality between the social groups. Kerala's development has precluded the ends of inclusivity and social justice, wherein, the burden of inequality falls disproportionately on two groups namely, the oppressed castes and women.

Historically oppressed and economically deprived, Dalits continue to face severe socio-cultural oppression and exclusionary practices. Occupations considered to be 'polluting' such as scavenging, leatherwork, sanitation work and bonded labour are still largely earmarked for the oppressed castes. Nationally, Dalit worker's share in the middle and low-level occupation is very high (70.56 percent) relative to the oppressor castes reproducing inter-generational caste-poverty and occupational immobility (Thorat, et al., 2021). Kerala is no exception and follows the national pattern of caste-based inequality. In particular, the inter-caste disparity in rural and urban Kerala is pervasive within food expenditure, landholding, education, and employment (Deshpande, 2000). There is consensus on the existence of caste inequalities, however, the narrative of development gains suppresses the evidence of growing inequality. This has also resulted in the passive acceptance of the state failure to mainstream the problem of caste inequalities as a welfare issue. Moreover, post-state formation in 1956, the dominant social, political, and religious organisations co-opted and subsumed the oppressed caste movements denying its separate mobilization (Heller, 2000; Mohan, 2015). This in turn has enabled the perpetual rescheduling of urgent discussions around Dalit marginalisation within and outside labour economy.

In contrast to the wilful ignorance extended to issues of caste, the woman question of Kerala is considered complete and thus, obsolete. The Kerala Model Woman as theorised by Jeffrey (2003) identify the emancipation of women from the traditions and the egalitarian developmentalist public action as the drivers of high social development in Kerala. This argument was based on the high performance of Keralan women on conventional development indicators such as literacy, life expectancy, sex ratio, average age of marriage, infant and maternal mortality in comparison to the rest of nation (CDS and UN, 1977). However, feminist scholars strongly rejected the thesis highlighting the dismal performance of Kerala women in non-conventional indicators which shows increased vulnerability, limited agency and mobility of Keralan women. Kannan (2022) in his recent paper carried out a 60-year revisit of the Kerala model of development highlighting that the state's unique path of development has not tackled the high degree of underutilisation of

labour and gender unfreedom.

The female labour force participation in Kerala follows a U-shaped pattern in relation to their economic status and education wherein, two cohorts of women namely, those belonging to the lower class-caste and the upper class-caste form the majority (Eapen, 1992; Andres, et al., 2017). A large segment of educated middle class and elite women who hold the (limited) choice to work salaried jobs withdraw from work after bypassing a certain threshold of family income and education due to lack of appropriate (read- socially accepted) employment opportunities instead of expanding their participation to the other areas of work. Furthermore, the ignorance towards gender relations within development programs has led to the creation of a highly hierarchised education model wherein, women as a social category are pushed into non-vocational degree courses as a status marker to better marriage prospects (Kodoth & Eapen, 2005). Thus, the socio-cultural conservatism of the state, ignorance towards rigid gender roles and employment crisis restricts educated elite women to either to specific jobs or the domestic sphere.

However, the oppressed caste women have been an integral but less acknowledged part of the labouring class and do not conform to the U-shaped pattern of female labour force participation i.e., their poverty increases the likelihood of paid work (Panda, 2003). It highlights the interconnection between processes of class-caste formations and patriarchal norms within production circuits. The (re)production of intra-group hierarchy within the seemingly homogenous group of women along caste lines establishes a highly hierarchical labour market. Furthermore, socially disaggregated data reveals those women belonging to Dalit and tribal communities fall far short even in the conventional indicators (Bhaskaran, 2011). For example, keeping the quality of education aside, the field of education is characterised by severe caste segregation. There is evidence of wider caste-based inequality in tertiary education and higher job positions including prevalence of intra-caste disparities, wherein, Dalit women are identified as the most alienated social group (Gupta, 2019). The enrolment rate of the Dalit population within tertiary education is just 20.8 percent along with an underrepresentation of 50

percent within the higher paying jobs (Madan, 2020). Additionally, in Kerala, the rise of 'internationalised' and specialised curriculum in elite educational institutions accessible to the socially advantaged further widens the educational gap and thereby, the employability (Sancho, 2016). Therefore, women belonging to the oppressed castes do not fit the Kerala Model Woman. Women are heavily impacted by the workings of Brahmanical patriarchy and cannot be studied as one single unit especially while analysing production and reproduction circuits. We need to understand the intra-group dynamics within the larger social group of Kerala women. The concepts of intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1991) and conjugated oppression (Lerche & Shah, 2018) are helpful in unpacking the multiple systems of domination imposed on Dalit women (Agarwala, 2013) and in acknowledging the multiple identities shaping their opportunities and limitations. The closest epistemology and theoretical framework Dalit scholars can draw on is Black feminist thought, which recognized the double burden of class and race borne by women of oppressed groups (hooks, 1981; Collins, 2009). Intersectionality and Black feminist standpoint theory are frameworks which helps to shed light on conjugated oppressions imposed upon Dalit women emerging from their positioning at the bottom of caste, class and work socio-economic and cultural hierarchies

Furthermore, the overarching narrative of the transition from a traditional to modern capitalist society is used to contain caste identity within class while also preventing detailed studies on caste-class and gender composition within production (Lindberg, 2001; Devi, 2002).

A critical analysis of Kerala's development experience will help us understand that the benefits of the initial pro-poor policies and public action did help to minimise the degree of severe poverty. However, it refused to affect the caste-gender hierarchy leading to the reproduction of relative inequality and exclusion. Over the past six decades, the oppressed castes and women have been caught between the weight of growing inequality and unemployment hampering potential social mobility of the marginal groups. Development scholarship has been side-lining questions of caste and gender (and their interconnections) as sub-altern topics. A comprehensive look at the development failures of

the state will inevitably point to the need to address the twin issues of caste and gender inequality as core development issues to remedy the on-going pattern of exclusionary growth. This will entail a (re)invention of appropriate frameworks, tools, and concepts which fit the specific needs of the state and will help to address the issue of exclusivity to aid overall development. The next section will introduce the concept of caste ceiling inspired by intersectionality and feminist coinage of glass ceilings to focus on the specific issues faced by Dalit women located at the bottom of the intersectional spaces of caste, class, and gender within the labour market(s) to understand the exclusivity embedded within the Kerala model of development and the resulting caste-class immobility experienced by Dalit women.

### **Caste ceilings and social mobility**

The widening inequality witnessed post-liberalisation observed pan-India and within Kerala can be witnessed in its utmost severity within the social group of Dalit women. Women's agency and path to autonomy, especially in a highly marginalized society, are often indirect with particular articulations of resistance, negotiations and manipulation built on limited bargaining power. Bina Agarwal in her works on household dynamics and its interaction with other social hierarchy(s) stresses on the importance of access to land and resources in shaping women's capabilities (2000; 2003; 2018). Dalit populations were bounded labourers with no right to property; they remain predominantly landless (Bakshi, 2008; Ambedkar, et al., 2016). Therefore, women of lower caste rely on the 'transformative potential of employment' (Kabeer 2008) as the driving force to make strategic choices to improve their standard of living and as a fall-back option from social and economic insecurities (Sen, 2000; Rao, 2014). It is also important to note that paid employment and its potential depends on a complex range of local (caste and class) and global factors (race, country and labour rights) which in turn affect capabilities, income, and related achievements. Therefore, an exploration of Dalit women and their path to social mobility cannot be disentangled from their struggles within the labour market and economy of education.

The analysis of causes and consequences of social inequalities need to be studied taking into consideration the current social processes which (re)produce and sustain it. The ability of



Brahmanical patriarchy to reconfigure to fit the modern (neo-capitalist) 'globalised' Indian labour market to maintain hierarchy(s) though recognized is not given due importance. While drawing conclusions about labour markets, it is important to account for context specific meanings and practices which intersects global capitalism and its systemic logic of value extraction and capital formation. Caste system is a convenient system of value extraction for capitalist (re)productions while also propagating a version of the myth of disposability (Wright, 2008) of Dalit workers. To quote De Neve, 'Capitalism in India, as indeed elsewhere, is clearly not incompatible with unfreedom, it actively thrives on it and reproduces it' (2019, p. 2). Dalit women workers are one of the most oppressed communities globally in the 21st century, inequality in pre-conditions and accumulated disadvantages acts as barriers to their occupational mobility making their lives precarious. Nevertheless, theorization on similar lines has not been extended to research gendered workings of Indian labour market(s) along caste lines, especially in the formal sector. The mainstream academia and development scholars of Kerala limits the importance of gender and caste to additional socio-economic variables ignoring its systemic presence as Brahmanical patriarchy which reproduces inequality at multiple levels and hampers inclusive development of Kerala.

Kerala's development requires new sets of analytics to address its decades old issue of inequality. Persuasive sociological and anthropological works restricts caste to non-modern areas of religion and caste-politics overlooking caste within what is dubbed as 'modern casteless meritocratic economy' (Mosse, 2020). This public rhetoric of casteless merit also safeguards the state by transforming the welfare issue to a social mobility issue tied to an individual. The origin and foundation of the caste system is built on the ideological and ritual notion of pollution and purity. However, caste as a social stratification is firmly constructed in material conditions of power, whereby the oppressed castes are systematically denied access to almost all forms of capital (Bourdieu, 1986) forging a strong relationship between caste and class. The entangled (at times oppositional) histories and theories of feminism and Marxism could inspire new and separate theorization of labour to examine the intersectional issues arising out of the modernity of gendered caste of labour. Due to the

absence of generational wealth, sizeable relative income and power derived from dignified work is the most important factor which could encourage upward social mobility for the oppressed castes. Therefore, vertical occupational mobility is excellent starting point to investigate the caste-class-gender workings in the labour market.

Historically, the main elements intrinsic to a caste group were hierarchy, inherited occupational specialization and endogamy. Hereditary specialization of occupation was at the root of the caste system; guilds had petrified into castes in a hierarchical order, and the more primitive and ancient an occupation, the lower was its ranking (Nesfield, 1885). This restricted occupational mobility of individuals (horizontally and vertically) effectively constraining lower castes from gaining wage above subsistence level and access to capital which still hinders their ability to make strategic life choices. Due to the highly prescriptive nature of the inherited ritual status, there is a penalty imposed upon the oppressed castes in terms of socio-cultural status (and power)- a ceiling. To elaborate, caste system is a fixed descent-based order within which a convergence of ritual status between two or more castes and/or sub-castes remains an impossibility. Therefore, every individual inherits a socio-cultural ritual stature corresponding to their caste position within the order. This in turn affects their material conditions through accumulated (dis)advantages and (in)accessibility to different forms of capital and acts as a ceiling to their social mobility. Caste ceilings are historically constituted, socio-culturally and economically maintained, and reproduced affecting life outcomes of individuals belonging to all castes within the Indian sub-continent. While caste (and thus, ritual) position of an individual is immobile, upward class mobility has the potential to disrupt and reduce the effects of accumulated disadvantages for the oppressed castes and positively influence the height of the caste ceilings and thus, their socio-cultural status.

Drawing from Black feminist epistemology and research frameworks (Hooks, 1981; Crenshaw, 1991; Collins, 2009; Davis, 2017), caste ceiling(s) in the context of employment may be defined as a unique set of impediments emerging from Dalit women's social location at the bottom of caste, class and gender hierarchies, disallowing career advancement and thus, social, and economic

mobility in comparison to upper caste people and their Dalit counterparts. Oppressive systems function interdependently and continuously to reproduce inequality. Therefore, a concept such as caste ceiling can be an effective tool of analysis as it centres intersectionality and could connect seemingly separate arenas to map trajectories of growth and mobility. For example, caste ceilings can help to understand obstacles faced by different sub-groups of Dalit women in accessing education, entering formal white-collar jobs, and advancing careers. Here, linking higher education and labour entry (which is highly correlated) will enable to identify possible policy interventions. Angela Davis critiques the concept of glass ceilings by pointing out how Black women does not possess privileges akin to other social groups compete, let alone break the glass ceiling (Davis, 2017). This argument holds true for majority of Dalit women in India. However, the implementation of reserved seats for Dalits acts as a narrow rope bridge for a handful of Dalit women to gain entry to non-Dalit socio-economic spaces.

#### **Modernity of caste and labour within Kerala**

A critical analysis of occupational composition along gender and caste lines affirms the existence of caste ceilings within the Kerala labour market and its temporal rigidity (Geetha, 2017). In 2012, around 19 percent of oppressor caste women were employed in elementary occupations while 55.6 percent Dalit women engaged in the same. The share of Dalit women in elementary occupation doubled over a decade (26.8 percent in 1999) which might have been offset by the reduction in their share in the skilled agriculture and fishery workers from 34.2 percent to 4.3 percent. Interestingly, in 2012, 32 percent of oppressor caste women were employed as skilled agricultural and fishery workers in comparison to 22.4 percent Dalit women. These comparative statistics of occupational mobility points towards two main phenomena- deskilling and proletarianization of Dalit women, and rigidity of caste hierarchy.

Firstly, the oppressor caste women did not traditionally engage in manual paid work which counted as a polluting job under the Hindu caste order. However, in modern Kerala, the lowest pay and dignity is offered within the elementary occupations which are considered unskilled while agriculture and allied work has become relatively desirable reflected by the increase in the

proportion of oppressor caste women in these sectors as noted above. Therefore, oppressor caste women (possibly from lower class) have accepted to a degree the agricultural occupations but have strongly rejected the urban lower paid jobs. Secondly, this has resulted in an aggressive shift of Dalit women workers from skilled agricultural to elementary occupations in Kerala resulting in the deskilling of the oppressed caste female labourers. While elite Kerala women can shift in and out of occupational groups in line with the transformation of the economy, Dalit women are pushed into modern slavery without the stability of regular/fair salary and social security benefits. Thus, Dalit women are repositioned at the bottom of the occupational ladder which falls into the work category classified as blue-collar occupations which is predominantly wage labour. This showcases the ability of caste to rearrange itself to suit capitalism wherein the least desirable jobs are being performed by Dalit women.

The presence of worker organisations within the unorganised sector and the growing informalisation of previously formal sector jobs in the Kerala economy complicates the definitions of informal and formal jobs. In the context of social mobility and for simplicity, it is appropriate to utilise the occupational categorisation of blue-/white-collar. In addition, it also lends to capture the dignity of work and status crucial to understand the workers' occupational standing vis-a-vis caste-class consciousness. The precarity and wage structure of blue-collar jobs will not facilitate upward class mobility for Dalit women. Therefore, it is imperative to situate Dalit women within the white-collar salaried job market which provides regular employment with social security benefits. A focus on the concept of career instead of the socio-culturally 'sanctioned' blue-collar/ agrarian jobs in relation to Dalit women will offer new insights. Naudet (2008) in his work on social mobility of Dalits (pan-India) and the altruistic tendencies exhibited by the community footnotes his inability to find Dalit women professionals who achieved sharp mobility. What is the caste-gender composition of white-collar jobs in Kerala? In Kerala, the proportion of Dalit women in the first three divisions on the occupational scale which can be defined as white collar jobs has increased at a slow pace from around 3 percent in 1999 to 6.8 percent in 2012 (NSSO). There is an urgent need to address issues of inter-caste gradations of inequality that will seek to



and comparable datasets prevents further analysis to investigate the intra-group pattern and composition. The employment stagnation, severe labour market discrimination and limited scope of affirmative policy leads to reduced wage income enhancing the (inter-generational) poverty of the oppressed castes as a group. The resulting relegation of Dalit women to the most precarious underpaid unorganised work signifies the stability of the historically established social order. Nevertheless, the evidence of a small section of Dalit women securing white-collar jobs in the recent past is an important point of inquiry for further research.

Kerala labour market is increasingly characterised by high levels of competition for a constantly decreasing number of regular paid jobs in both state and private sectors, thus foreclosing Dalits' attempts to escape precarious labour. According to the official estimate, in Kerala, the unemployment rate is 10 percent and women account for 63.1 percent of the job seekers. It should also be noted that only 10 percent of workforce are employed in public sector out of which 65 percent are men. Formal sector jobs in general, and white-collar jobs in particular, require university level education as the minimum eligibility. In Kerala, the university enrolment rate of Dalit students is only 13 percent of the total student body (KSPB, 2020). Moreover, 70.18 percent of female Dalit students were enrolled in arts and science degrees which bears much lower chances of employability than other professional degrees (Tripathi, 2019). Furthermore, a rising number of expensive private schools which provide specialised curricula, language training and skill development courses designed to secure jobs in the highly competitive formal sector exacerbate the employability gap between castes (Sancho, 2016).

Dalit women workers are active in the labour market and is a segment of the population who have been utilising schemes such as Kudumbashree, MNREGA and other micro-finance programs as a bargaining tool to converse with the state. Therefore, retracing and understanding the struggles and strategies employed by Dalit women against political issues, economic deprivation and social isolation is crucial to address contemporary development issues of Kerala (Raj, 2013). They represent a labour class with potentially high

employment elasticity and scope for capability building which could also help in de-gendering and de-casting the Kerala labour market. However, this will entail structural changes including the reclamation of society as the central arena of distributive conflict which could help invoke mobilisation of Dalit women workers separate from regional party politics. Meanwhile, policymakers should address the issues of widening educational and employment gap, socio-economic immobility of Dalit women and dilution of reservation policy with utmost immediacy.

### **Conclusion**

Current debates on policy bottlenecks, rising inequality, and affirmative action need to be informed by research on the gendered working of caste in the political economy. The governmental and academic disinterest towards caste and gender puts its working in a policy blind spot, wherein, equal opportunity policies precede the research on inequality. It is important to name and state certain problems which might escape the mainstream to thwart the status-quo and (re)invent new theoretical paths. Caste ceiling is a conceptual tool which will help to centralise the caste-gender conjugation enabling continued inequalities and can be extended beyond the region of Kerala and issues of employment mobility. Acknowledging the existence of caste ceilings in the socio-economic spaces of the Indian sub-continent will help to analyse the effects of the same at different points to map trajectories of social groups and to delve deeper to analyse the factors which influence the height and formation of the caste ceilings. It can also provide a unique vantage point to evaluate the possible successes and shortcomings of development policies directed towards redressing multiple and mutually reinforcing forms of inequality and exclusion..

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# AMATEURS' ENGAGEMENTS WITH MUSIC AND DANCE: A COMPARATIVE PHENOMENOLOGY OF PERFORMANCE ARTS PRACTICE IN KARACHI

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## Abstract

In a space where performance art forms are losing their appeal, this research attempts to understand the value of music and dance by evaluating lived experiences of Pakistani amateur musicians and dancers in Karachi. While exploring the phenomenology of music and dance, the study analyzes subjective engagements of amateur musicians and dancers to provide insights into their personal realities, linking their respective art forms with society, culture, class, gender, religion, philosophy, and history.

Ultimately, such an analysis relates to social development, insofar as findings corroborate the need to destigmatize the practice of music and dance, to perceive performance arts as strategies to facilitate therapy, cope with social pressure, develop psychic processes, formulate self-identity, and promote human wellbeing.

The study proves that amateur musicians and dancers engage with their art forms on an emotional level that goes beyond mere technique or skill. Music and dance became outlets for their emotions, allowing them to express themselves, cope with challenges, and connect with others who share their passion. Since there is limited scholarship available on the phenomenology of music and dance in Pakistan, this research presents itself as a contribution to this particular avenue of research.

## Introduction

Pakistan's rich cultural heritage embraces various forms of artistic expression. Music and dance, in particular, hold a significant place in the country's history and culture. Artistic expression through music and dance has the potential to serve as a form of cultural exchange, individual and community expression, and social activism.

In the global cultural and historical landscape, music and dance have become powerful tools for

activism and social change, enabling artists to spread awareness and advocate for their rights. While highlighting issues such as, religious discrimination, gender inequality, and social injustices, these art forms are used to convey important social and political messages. Karachi, the hub of cultural diversity, blends artistic expressions from various south asian, central asian, middle eastern, and western traditions. The city is also a melting pot of various regional cultures and traditions from different parts of Pakistan. This fusion of cultural elements creates a unique and diverse artistic scene, showcasing the rich tapestry of Pakistan's historical and cultural heritage through performance arts.

During the 1930s, a pinnacle stage of music emerged in the Indian subcontinent as a significant number of Muslims began attending music schools (Sakata, 1997). Subsequently, along with the emergence of cultural engagement in classical music-making, this historical period also celebrated classical dance. The art of dance was passed down from generation to generation through folklore and katha (stories). To make these katha more interesting, the kathaks (story tellers) would use bodily movements and expressions to narrate their stories. Later, as a result of the intergenerational progression of music and dance, Pakistani cultural art forms borrowed practices from centuries of evolved cultural interactions between Indo-Muslim and Hindu-Muslim traditions (Sakata, 1997).

Today, artistic expression through music and dance in Karachi often faces challenges due to cultural, religious, and societal norms. Although classical forms of music such as qawwali, ghazal, and classical ragas are deeply rooted in the fabric of Karachi's artistic scene, music has faced censorship and restrictions as a result of conservative cultural and religious narratives. Some traditional elements of society view certain forms of music, such as pop or rock, as western and inappropriate. Similarly, traditional dance forms like the classical Kathak, folk

dances like Bhangra and Sindhi dance, and contemporary dance styles have found their place in Karachi's cultural landscape. However, dance forms that involve physical contact between male and female performers are often frowned upon, and modern dance styles are perceived as provocative and posed with criticism and backlash (Al Faruqi, 1978).

During the 1970s and 1980s, the rise of radical Islam culminated in the conservative dictatorship of General Zia-ul-Haq, which led to several attempts to dismantle the aesthetic traditions of performative art forms (Burki, 1988). This created a cultural climate in which performance artists no longer felt safe. As a result, the community of artists were forced to navigate through cultural and societal norms and push through their struggle to remain resilient and innovative while finding ways to express their creativity.

This paper attempts to destigmatize individual engagements with music and dance by exploring their relevance to the social wellbeing of young aspiring musicians and dancers in Karachi. The analysis of lived experiences of amateur artists reveals how these two forms of art can contribute to social development in Pakistan.

### **Methodology**

To maintain the overall setting of the research as predominantly interpretive and subjective, this research uses ideologically nuanced perspectives that have given cultural meanings to dance and music. A total of 7 interviews were recorded, two of which were recorded in Urdu and the remaining in English. In each interview, close attention was paid to discrete emotional details that revealed how the participants expressed themselves, coped with challenges, and connected with others who shared their passion.

Before conducting the interviews, the participants were given prior briefing sessions. This was done for two necessary reasons: first, to build rapport with the participants, second, to brief them about the research and what was expected of them, mainly for preparatory purposes. In order to maintain the internal validity of the research, these briefing sessions were crucial in verifying the data collection process.

All participants were interviewed and observed with consent, and provided pseudonyms. Before each interview session, a pre-interview exchange was conducted to allow respondents to better understand the objectives and themes of the interview. Every participant had a different relationship with the researcher, and close attention was paid to the participants' comfort and well-being. It is very important to keep a close check on the sensitivity of the matter, while asking questions. This research will strictly protect the rights of participants, NGOs and dance and music institutions involved in the project.

A limitation of this research is that this study cannot be appropriately generalized on other Pakistani amateur artists because of limited representation in the sample size.

### **Engagements with dance**

These findings are drawn from three interviews, one journal entry and one observation session that were collected from two amateur dancers, pseudonyms: Rosa and Arif.

It was noted that both Rosa and Arif had once contemplated whether to completely withdraw from dance considering its negative connotations. Arif specifically addressed the misrepresentation of dance in Pakistani films. He argued, "Dance is considered wrong because the kind of dance that they have seen is demeaning, sultry, and predominantly feminine." At another point in his interview, Arif elaborated on the presumptions of dance, he said, "The fact that dance is subsequently considered feminine and demeaning is very telling of how our society views women." He then added, "I believe that whatever we do, there should be a message in it for others, whether it is peace, independence or love. And my goal is to carry this mission forward." He then finally voiced his own struggle as a dancer as he said, "I had to hide it from everyone. It is heartbreaking because dance has taught me to be respectful and it makes me very happy, then why is it considered so wrong?"

Dance jeopardized Rosa's relationship with her family. But she still aspired to be a belly dancer. For this reason, she would secretly attend dance classes. Rosa's father was a pastor at the local church. For him, his daughter's respect was important because it could potentially affect his own. Rosa expressed, "My father says it's not socially accepted to allow girls of the family to dance. But



this is my passion. I come here [to the dance studio] to dance without my father knowing." She started showing strong resentment towards her father after her parent's separation. She said, "We belong to a big pastor family. But people make all sorts of comments about how we should live. My father says if I start dancing then people will ridicule our reputation."

Rosa and Arif explained that their emotional engagement with dance encouraged them to constantly improve themselves. Arif shared, "When I dance, I disappear to a world. I become a new person. I feel connected to the real me. Everything is in sync. My heart beats at a rhythm and my eyes move with grace. It gives me endurance and strength."

Arif felt that he had re-discovered himself through dance. He added, "I have realized that this is what I want to do. I could have given into the social pressure and left dance but I believe that nature made a way for me to return to dance. My mind keeps me awake sometimes at night, thinking about dance but I am happy this way. If that stops, I will not have a reason to live."

Despite the overwhelming criticism she received, Rosa used dance to challenge her father's authority and the regressive views of her community. She said, "it is God's gift to me, and I have the passion to pursue it." Throughout the most difficult years in her life, Rosa would dance to disconnect from the negativity and use her true calling to keep herself sane.

Consequently, both Arif and Rosa found dance to be expressive and multi-dimensional. Their identities were shaped through their engagement with dance. It embodied values, self-expression, and meaning-making. These engagements prompted deep self-reflections. Both Arif and Rosa felt alive, enthused, and refreshed when they danced. Therefore, proving that dance can serve as a form of therapy and prompt spiritual awakening.

### **Engagements with music**

The following themes were extracted from 4 interview recordings and 1 additional audio recording presented by the 2 amateur musicians, pseudonyms: Mona and Usman. Mona and Usman connected on emotional levels with music that were both consciously and subconsciously

constructed by them. They had innately different capacities of indulging in their conscious social realities. As explained by both amateur musicians, levels of deep engagement with music began with their journey of building self-confidence.

Usman particularly described his vivid memories of listening to music from an early age. He explained that he was exposed to particular types of music that his father used to play, such as blues and gospel music. These musical influences set the foundation for Usman to indulge in self-reflection from an early age. However, Usman explained that he was a 'restless' child who was forced into taking music classes by his mother to 'discipline' him. It was noted that Usman was able to develop a deep engagement with music when he saw his own potential in music. This synchronic realization came to him later when he was introduced to a Bob Dylan song by his sister. He shared, "A folksong by Dylan was one of the most obscure abstract poetries that I had ever come across. It was a moment when I realized there was something more beautiful to music that Bob Dylan was clearly manifesting. It was a moment that was very important to me. It was so out of the box; I had never heard anything like that before. The music made me feel like this was something that I could do, and work on." He then added, "For me, music is formative." Usman's diachronic engagement with music, inclusive of his early musical influences from his father and a particular cartoon tune, may have conscious or subconscious connections with this synchronic realization.

Nonetheless, this realization marked the onset of a phase in which he began experimenting, discovering, learning, and unlearning. However, this was also a point in Usman's life when he started facing social pressure. He explains, "I have been bullied a lot for my obscure choices in life, film, and music. Whenever there was a gathering, people wanted to play music for fun. No one would pay attention to it like I did. I felt alienated in this way."

Through this quote, Usman proved that his biggest fear concerning music was his personal struggle of being 'socially accepted'. He later explained, "I tried to become as socially and politically charged in my conversations because of the music I was listening to and because other people did not want to listen to it. They didn't like it. People didn't like Dylan or Pink Floyd, or Led Zeppelin or Pearl Jam.



The majority of people don't really give that attention to that kind of music in this day and age, and that in itself is very isolating. It's not necessarily a bad kind of isolation. It can be bad sometimes because I remember there were incidents where I would be labeled as a certain type of person because of the music I listened to." Usman made a conscious decision of reacting to the world in a way that he maintains his musical bond and new found confidence. Subsequently, Usman developed an inter-mediated engagement with his feelings as a result of his deep engagement with music and found his catalyst reaction to the world. This formed an interesting interplay of his actions and their impact in his conscious social reality.

Much like Usman, Mona was also forced attend music classes but developed her deep engagement with music when she found her own potential in it. Pointing to this realization, Mona said, "it was that feeling when you are playing, that this is what you want to do."

In both cases, Mona and Usman felt confident and discovered their musical talents when they were able to make tangible progress through music. Mona shared, "My music has definitely made me more confident." She used music to cope with her conscious social reality. There was a conscious pattern of her engagements with music every time she was in stressful situations. Soon, this coping mechanism became her escape from the world, and served as therapy.

Mona and Usman also shared how they felt challenged through their engagement with music. Usman expressed that, "Art is about pushing the boundaries. Performance is also about pushing your own self-defined boundaries. I think this has been very instrumental in luring me to perform.

As an artist, I have to be fearless." Mona explained that she felt challenged through music when she performed on stage because she felt obligated to conform to expectations of her audience. She illustrated, "The audience in front of me is my world, I feel compelled to give in. I play the songs they want to hear. It's not personal anymore."

Drawing from previously explained themes, both Mona and Usman had to decenter their positions as amateur musicians to form their identity. Surrounding the notions of social expectations, social obligations and social function, these

amateur musicians had to tackle their personal struggles through their engagement with music. The time, space and music that they performed determined their positionality in the world as artists. This stems from their conscious understanding that music is for entertainment for the crowd.

Since Mona and Usman were aware of the implications of their deep engagement with music, they felt the need to justify their engagement with a particular type of music. However, they gradually adapted to that music genre to underline their artistic persona. Subsequently, for both amateur musicians, their formation of identity was dependent on a series of personal negotiations with the world as a catalyst for freedom.

### Summary of Findings

The comparative experiences of the participants revealed that dance is relatively stigmatized more often than music because it includes bodily movements, nonconforming masculine/feminine roles, and the internalization of characters.

All the amateur musicians and dancers engaged with their respective art forms on a deeply emotional level as they became outlets for them to express themselves, connect with others, and experience profound emotions. For amateur musicians, the melody and rhythm of the music they create can evoke a wide range of emotions, from joy and excitement to sadness and nostalgia. The process of indulging in music allows them to channel their emotions into their performance while expressing their innermost thoughts and feelings. Moreover, amateur musicians often find solace and comfort in their music. Therefore, playing an instrument or singing can serve as a form of therapy. Similarly, dance can also be a cathartic experience for amateur dancers. Since dancing is an embodiment of emotions through movement, dancers express themselves physically, using their bodies as instruments to convey emotions. The fluidity of their movements, the grace of their gestures, and the passion in their expressions allow them to communicate their emotions through their performance and connect with others at a visceral level.

If we think of sovereignty, not as a "fixed and exogenous" concept but as a relational feature The amateur artists shared a struggle with sustaining their artistic identities in their social circles.

Subsequently, they mutually expressed their frustrations towards those who failed to understand their artistic engagements. As a result, they felt possessive about their art and integrated their artistic expressions in their personal and social identities. As music and dance become means of self-expression, an outlet for their emotions, amateur artists were able to navigate the complexities of life while challenging traditional norms.

Furthermore, the role of the significant other was prevalent in all the lived experiences of amateur artists. Respectively, they consciously share their views on the role their parents, peers, and mentors played in either encouraging or discouraging them from pursuing performance art. While the effect of their significant others had different results in their lives, it was noted that all amateurs' experiences the urge to feel socially and emotionally validated. Although the engagements with music and dance provided safe spaces for the artists to express their emotions, they also felt trapped in their internal subconscious dispositions. There is a need to provide external support to amateur artists. Joining bands, orchestras, choirs, dance groups, classes, or meeting like-minded individuals who share their passion for music or dance, can help build a sense of community, camaraderie and belonging, creating deep emotional connections with and for fellow artists. These communities can provide a supportive environment where amateur artists collaborate, learn from one another, and share their emotions through their art.

### Conclusion

Music and dance have always been an integral part of Pakistani culture, with deep-rooted traditions that have been passed down through generations. Beyond their artistic and entertainment value, these practices also play a crucial role in the social and holistic development of individuals. Pakistan can benefit from interventions to destigmatize music and dance in the following ways.

Firstly, introducing music and dance in school curricula and after-school programs can drive academic achievement of students as they will be able to improve coordination, enhance social interaction, retain focus, regulate emotions, and develop gross motor skills. A student-achievement program called Opening Minds Through the Arts (OMA) was launched in 2000 in various public elementary schools across Tucson and Arizona in

the United States. The program conducted independent research that revealed that using music, dance, and visual arts to teach skills in reading, writing, math, science, and other subjects, can improve teacher effectiveness and test scores. Hence, music and dance can act as powerful tools for education.

Secondly, music and dance can bring people from different backgrounds together, transcending social and cultural boundaries. Local festivals featuring music and dance performances can provide opportunities for people to appreciate diverse cultures, languages, and ethnicities. This promotes social integration and fosters a sense of unity and harmony among diverse communities, promoting social cohesion and peaceful coexistence.

Thirdly, music and dance can provide outlets for self-expression, creativity, and emotional release. While Rosa and Arif felt threatened when they expressed their emotions through dance, they felt compelled to challenge traditional norms through their creativity. For instance, Arif challenged gender conforming stereotypes through his dance. He said, "I don't believe in this male-female dichotomy. My dance is gender-neutral, and I will prove to others how powerful dance is."

Furthermore, these arts forms can reduce stress, anxiety, and depression and improve mental health, and also promote physical health. Artists that learn coordinated movements, rhythms and beats tend to retain focus. Since dance and music appeal to a person's senses, they can be used to address emotional conflicts, express unspoken concerns, improve body image and self-esteem, and be used as an effective relaxant for infants and children in hospitals and care centers. For these reasons, music and dance can greatly contribute to the wellbeing of individuals.

In addition to this, music and dance have the potential to promote tourism and economic development in Pakistan. Diverse forms of music and dance, such as qawwali, ghazals, bhangra, and classical dances like Kathak and Bharatanatyam performed by local artists at events can attract tourists and generate revenue through cultural tourism. to certain songs. It is safe to say that I am increasingly becoming socially aware and this has played a significant role in my personal growth."

In conclusion, music and dance can greatly contribute to social development in Pakistan, contributing to various aspects of society, including education, individual and public well-being, community cohesion, and economic growth. Additionally, this provides access to a global community of young aspiring artists transcending borders and embracing their cultural identities while also contributing locally for a more inclusive and prosperous society in Pakistan.

### **Acknowledgements**

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# DRAMA IN THE THIRD DIMENSION

**Alai Naseer**

UK

'Why is Martin Scorsese, the one-time doyen of edgy American New Wave cinema, now looking at me straight in the eye and telling me that "while you and I are sitting here talking, we're talking in 3D" as if that somehow justifies making a new movie that we'll all have to watch through those bloody silly glasses? What's wrong with this picture? Let us be absolutely clear about this: 3-D cinema is a con.' (Kermode, 2012, p. 126)

On the 5th of November 2013, an unprecedented historical moment in film history took place, thanks to a YouTube video. British film critic, journalist, author and scholar Dr. Mark Kermode, possibly the world's most popular film critic after Roger Ebert, released a short video as part of his Kermode Uncut blog series entitled 'An Announcement'. It bore the description: "It is with a heavy heart that I make this weighty announcement about a new film." (Kermode, 2013) Sitting in front of the camera as he usually does, he spends a full one-and-a-half minute silently fidgeting, making false starts, unable to speak until he finally composes himself and utters the words: "Gravity is worth seeing in 3D. That's all, thank you!" He then takes off his glasses covers his face with his palm. This was coming after all, from the most hardened and vocal denigrator of stereoscopic cinema.

Alfonso Cuarón's multi-award-winning blockbuster *Gravity* (2013) did indeed provide a watershed moment for 3D cinema when the medium desperately needed it. James Cameron's breakthrough *Avatar* (2009) had begun a digital stereoscopic revolution in filmmaking and prompted a complete overhaul in cinema projection and home video technology. However, within only the span of a year, the advent of the art form went from a source of amazement for audiences to widespread public derision against the format. Keen to cash-in on the record success of *Avatar*, major studios instigated last-minute, and ushered in with 3D conversions of big blockbuster films originally filmed and edited in standard 2D only

which, lead to a very substandard quality of pseudo 3D product in cinemas. This practice was enforced as a gimmick to add a premium charge on cinema tickets in order to make those films more commercially successful, thereby making distinguishing 'genuine' 3D product, i.e. movies filmed and rendered stereoscopically, harder to distinguish from a mainstream perspective and leading audiences to be disenfranchised with 3D cinema altogether.

Mark Kermode had been leading the charge against 3D even before the release of *Avatar* (2009), and the conversion commotion only added fuel to his claim and helped steer public opinion in his direction. In the first edition of his 2011 book *The Good, the Bad and the Multiplex*, Dr. Kermode published a 50-page long scathing yet well-evidenced indictment of the medium through its third chapter entitled *The Inevitable Decline of 3D*. He wrote: 'the current 3D revival is not about enhancing the audience's cinematic viewing experience. On the contrary, their entertainment is entirely secondary to the primary purpose of 21st century 3D, which is to head off movie piracy and force audiences to watch badly made films in overpriced, undermanned multiplexes. It is a marketing ploy designed entirely to protect the bloated bank balances of buck-hungry Hollywood producers. It is not a creative leap on par with the advent of colour or sound; if it were, it would not have faltered on so many previous occasions.' (Kermode, 2012, p. 127) The last sentence of the quote does well to address the topic of this dissertation.

The central debate with regard to the quality of stereoscopic cinema is not over the problems and methodology of conversion, but whether the addition of stereoscopy in itself makes a film any better. Dr. Kermode remained unconvinced on this point for the longest time, and many more esteemed critics and specatators remain so. My assertion as a researcher is that stereoscopy is every

bit as crucial an addition to cinematic storytelling as advents of colour and sound, and most importantly, to enhance the drama of storytelling. When utilised correctly, 3D can be an indispensable tool to create visual grammar. The key to understanding why would be to comprehend a measurement called Z-Space.

'Far from being new and exciting, 3D cinema is the oldest trick in the book – as old in fact, as cinema itself. And there's good reason why it has been consistently rejected by audiences for more than a hundred years.' (Kermode, 2012, p. 127). 3D filmmaking admittedly failed to sustain itself in multiple decade-long attempts over the past century since its inception, the reason being the severe limitations borne out of the celluloid process. Misaligned, monochromatic anaglyphs had plagued the medium since the Lumière Brothers' *The Arrival of a Train* (1896), impediments that even Alfred Hitchcock was not able to overcome with *Dial M for Murder* (1954). What little praise 3D movies garnered since the 1950's was for their worth as ostentatious fairground spectacle. Digital stereoscopic technology developed in the mid-2000's was able to achieve perceptually what stereographers had been striving for: a tangible, malleable Z-axis.

A graph of a standard photographic frame has two axes of measurement: the horizontal X-axis, and the vertical Y-axis. A stereoscopic frame adds the third dimension: depth, measured by the Z-axis. One of the greatest artistic struggles of both still and motion pictures has been to create depth, or at least the illusion of it. A sense of visual depth is essential for storytelling purposes; the artist needs to render the position of objects in relation to each other for the viewer's comprehension. Selective focus in 2D certainly helps give an image a three-dimensional illusion, as can universal focus if lit skilfully. However, neither of those monocular techniques is truly 3D, and it means the cinematographer in question having to work extra hard with field-of-focus, lens aperture adjustments and arranging lighting to gain a sense of three-dimensionality out of an image that is flat. It begs to question why they do not simply add a second camera, in whatever side-by-side configuration, in order to render depth the way human eyes do. Imagine if Orson Wells and Gregg Toland could have shot *Citizen Kane* (1941) in 3D, or if George Lucas had today's stereoscopic tools for *Star Wars: Episode IV* (1977).

Stereoscopy can help make objects within a frame perceivably 'come out of the screen' (its hallmark trait), and 'go deep into the screen' (a trademark post-*Avatar*). The point where the viewer perceives the plane of the screen itself to be is called the 'convergence point'; it is the position where the left and right images converge. A stereoscopic image has two further measurements of relevance along the aforementioned Z-axis. The space where objects appear to stick out of the screen is called 'negative-space' upon the Z-axis, and the portion where the scenery stretches far behind the screen is called 'positive-space'.

Z-Space has become a realm where 3D filmmakers, with a mastery of the format, can experiment to create and deliver an enhanced emotional experience for dramatic, character-based scenes. Herein, 'Drama in the 3rd Dimension' is more than just a catchy title, but an empirically measurable actuality. This is only possible in native productions. It is important to note that large-scale natively filmed 3D movies, which were artistically lauded for their 3D cinematography such as *Avatar* (2009) and *Gravity* (2013), took five whole years in production. Therein is the reason why such films are so few and far between, allowing for multiplexes to fill with Z-Space deprived conversion jobs.

Watching *Gravity* may have softened Mark Kermode's approach to 3D cinema, and it was a long time coming, yet it may have been too little too late. In his full review of the film, Kermode only acknowledged *Gravity* as an IMAX 3D thrill-ride. Though he may have begun to slowly engage favourably with the medium after interviewing Martin Scorsese for *Hugo* (2011), then reviewing Ang Lee's *Life of Pi* (2012), his tendency has always been to return to the assertion that 3D adds little to nothing of worth in the cinematic experience, and if anything, is detrimental to the future of cinema. Though I have tremendous respect for Dr. Kermode and share his strife to improve cinema standards, it is upon this point where I seek to disprove him, plus the whole anti-3D ideology.

To this end, I have chosen three natively filmed stereoscopic motion pictures, which fully exploit Z-Space for dramatic purposes to elucidate my point. They were released within a few months of each other, during an epoch where digital stereoscopy was rapidly improving. The three of them also happen to be adaptations of famous books, and stories that

have been told in media prior. The reasons for those projects becoming 3D in the first place are inherently tied to them being adaptations of recognisable sources. The directors sought to humble the audience with familiar material in an unfamiliar format, and breathe surprising new life into it simultaneously. With *Hugo* (2011), Martin Scorsese used 3D to portray the world from the eyes of a child, with *The Amazing Spider-Man* (2012) Marc Webb sought to use 3D to bring emotional gravitas to a superhero actioner, and with *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey* (2012), Sir Peter Jackson pushed filmmaking itself farther than James Cameron ever could.

### **Wearing Those Silly Spectacles**

"A director needs to see 3D, feel it, master and embrace it live and on set in order for them to stamp their personality on it," urges Legato. "It's about using 3D as part of the whole set of tools that will now take filmmakers to the next level of movie making." (Pennington & Giardina, 2013, pp. (Kindle Locations 2352-2354))

One film that truly showed a filmmaker's mastery of 3D was *Life of Pi* (2012), which was released one week after *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey* (2012) and was also nearly four years in production. Based on Yann Martel's 'unfilmable' existential tome, it was directed by Ang Lee after failed attempts from M. Night Syamalan, Alfonso Cuarón and Jean-Pierre Jeunet since the Man Booker Prize winner's release in 2001. Academy Award winner Ang Lee has been quoted multiple times as saying the only way he could tackle the problematic modern classic was by envisioning it in 3D, and incorporating 3D into the entire adaptation process. From an interview with *The Telegraph* in December 2012: "I thought if I did it in another dimension, maybe it would work," he says. "I wanted the experience of the film to be as unique as the book and that meant creating the film in another dimension. 3D is a new cinematic language, and no one really takes it as an art form yet." (Hiscock, 2012)

The reason I bring it up for my concluding point is because of an experience I shared with two MA Film students when I first undertook this research. Soon after the film's release, I convinced those two 3D-sceptics to help me study *Life of Pi*'s use of stereoscopy at an IMAX 3D screening. One of these students had already seen and loved the film in 2D, and had balked at the idea of watching it 3D, since

she hated the format. *Life of Pi* is a story about the nature of storytelling itself. During the course of the film, the titular character Pi narrates the tale of his 227 days long survival on a lifeboat in the Pacific Ocean with an adult Bengal tiger, and three other animals who do not last the first few days. The shocking plot twist at the end has Pi telling a second story with a different version of those events, with people in place of animals, letting the audience decide which story is the truth. The choice is presented to the audience for them to reflect on their worldview as individuals.

My aforementioned 3D-hating classmate came out believing the first story after her first 2D screening, then came out believing the second story after the IMAX 3D screening with me. The change of format had provided her with an extraordinary shift in perspective. The different ways the story of Pi Patel is told are intended to entice different reactions, whether it is the story Ang Lee tells with the film version, the one Yann Martel presents with the book. Lee the artist ingeniously presents the audience's subconscious minds with his personal interpretation of Pi's story, through subtle stereoscopic visual effects.

At one point in their relatively empty Pacific journey, Pi and the tiger encounter a Meerkat-inhabited island that provides them some respite, until it turns carnivorous by night. At 1 hour and 40 minutes into the film's runtime, a very wide establishing shot filled by the sideways view of the entire green island at night appears. The shot lasts close to 7 seconds. Watching it in 2D, one wonders why such an establishing shot is sustained so long, perhaps only to help shift the scene's tone darker. Viewing the same shot again in 3D, the keen-eyed notice a shockingly brilliant design trick: the green trees of the island couple together to form the sideways profile shape of a woman lying on her back. Not just any woman, it is a symbolic clue for Pi's mother, whose face was also seen formed previously by water plankton. The presence of Z-Space allows the rounded contours of the woman's body-shape and face to be perceptible on the island's image. Multiple such hints can be noticed throughout the film for keen-eyed viewers; I myself did notice the detail until the IMAX 3D screening, despite having seen the film before on a smaller 3D screen. Stereoscopy has played an integral part in helping Lee skew the audience to believe in the story without the animals. The 3D image helps



engender the seed of thought that the carnivorous island's respite is an analogy for Pi's shameful bout with cannibalism, and Meerkats as maggots upon his mother's corpse. It's a harsh reality so brutal that it needs a fantasy story with a zebra, orangutan, hyena and tiger to help make sense of it; at least that is the point of view Lee is using 3D to convey. The mind-blowing, worldview-altering impact of this shot and many others in the film were points of discussion between my once 3D sceptical, now converted classmates. It should stand as a testament to exactly what well-designed stereoscopic imaging adds to this masterpiece of a motion picture, and what 3D can bring to many films as well.

'So, is 3-D here to stay this time? Ask anyone within the industry and they'll tell you that too much money has been spent to turn back now. Experiments are currently afoot to develop projection systems that will allow 3D movies to be viewed without glasses (the holy grail) while home-viewing systems employing various forms of 'autostereoscopy' are already on the market. Yet so far the outlook remains distinctly dodgy, despite the vast amount of money that has been spent.' (Kermode, 2012, p. 161). In this instance, Dr. Kermode was right. 3D cinema still faces a distinctly uphill struggle. This is despite a multitude of both technological and artistic breakthroughs in the field, and a handful of highly acclaimed 3D films.

Audience figures for 3D releases continue to drop in favour of their 2D counterparts. Not a single 3D film has been nominated in either the Cinematography, Directing or Best Picture categories for the coming Academy Awards, despite the 3D films winning or being nominated in them consistently. Major consumer and prosumer electronics manufacturers such as Sony, Panasonic and Fujifilm, who once led the revolution for 3D consumer products in 2011, have now ceased all production and development for new 3D enabled products. The companies sought to capitalise on a post-Avatar world's fascination with digital stereoscopy. In just over an year since Avatar's (2009) release they had not only developed but also brought to market a range of passive as well as active-shutter enabled 3D televisions, Blu-Ray Disc players, and most importantly stereoscopic compact cameras and handheld camcorders for average layman users. Some of these cameras even included breakthrough autostereoscopic live displays, thanks to glasses-free lenticular technology, coming close to

'the holy grail' Mark Kermode wrote about. Similar technology was even placed in the Nintendo 3DS portable gaming console's display. The public's slow adoption of these technologies, coupled with the severe lack of broadcast 3D content, as well as user-generated 3D content on web, led to those pioneering companies ceasing investment and giving up on their technologies in favour others without allowing them a chance to develop and evolve.

As of 2014, Sony, Panasonic and Samsung made the big push towards Ultra-HD 4K instead, bringing to market a wide range of 4K resolution televisions and monitors, as well as prosumer cameras and even flagship camera-phones 4K video recording abilities. Tech-behemoth Apple have released and sold a massive number of iMac computers with the 5K Retina display. Multiplexes and IMAX theatres with DLP projectors are favouring 4K and 5K resolution projection capabilities over improving their stereoscopic projection quality. Gravity (2013) was the last instance major cinema chains enthusiastically supported and promoted an IMAX 3D product; the situation has worsened to the point that it is impossible for this researcher to find an HFR IMAX 3D screening of *The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies* (2014) within the cinema-loving metropolitan city of London, UK.

It has to be noted that the present '4K Revolution' we are witnessing is not a revolution at all. An increase of pixel density, and thereby an increase in resolution, is a very natural and predictable evolution within digital media technology. 4K or Ultra-HD, is not nearly as revolutionary as the Full-HD resolution was, which allowed the digital video format to finally compete with the quality of celluloid. If we are to factor in Moore's Law, 4K had been the very precisely planned and utterly unsurprising step-up from Full-HD, or 2K resolution. There is no doubt whatsoever, that within only a few years time, massive 8K displays and camera sensors will become commonplace. Throwing more pixels on the screen or image sensor does not add anything new to visual storytelling, it only incrementally improves an image as it is rendered or captured. Stereoscopy on the other, literally adds a whole new dimension to the image being captured and seen, and thereby adds a whole new dimension where visual storytelling can thrive. Using a higher than normal frame-rate for playback of the motion picture, such as 48 frames-per-second, coupled with stereoscopy,

pushes the envelope in visual storytelling even further. Both of these advances make us reconsider how we look at the motion picture media we consume, how we choose to perceive the visual stories being told. And that is what it all comes down to in the end, how our eyes look at things.

The question of how two-eyed sentient beings look at the screens, pictures and other visual information all around them has to be addressed before further improvements can be made to curb the problems of stereoscopic viewing. For a great number of the human species, putting on darkening spectacles and holding one's head at a particular angle for a length of time in order to view something is simply asking too much, especially when there is great deal of more conveniently consumable content which is just as good or better. For some, even switching the orientation of the screen displaying said content to properly accommodate it is asking too much. If stereoscopic images were to become as commonplace as 2D images are now, it would mean asking for a complete overhaul over the way the screens and prints which surround us everyday display their images, and our relationship with them. The quest for an autostereoscopic experience to match what today's 2D media can deliver in terms of comfort, convenience, quality and affordability is nothing short than a quest for 'the holy grail'.

Though in the face of adversity, this change will come and it has been worth the wait. James Cameron developed a new non angle-restricted autostereoscopic technology with Dolby, and the director's *Avatar 2* exhibited at a whopping 48-frames-per-second. It comes back to the man and the movie that changed everything in the first place. Historian Ray Zone, in his 2012 textbook *3D Revolution* wrote: 'The prophetic view for stereoscopic cinema holds that one day, all films will be produced in three dimensions. 3-D, like the sound and colour revolutions that preceded it, will become normative in motion pictures. People will expect to see motion pictures in depth; just the same way they expect colour, sound and widescreen today. *Avatar* marked the beginning of this prophetic divide for stereoscopic cinema. At last, the fundamental defect of flatness in cinema could be circumvented. It had to happen' (Zone, 2012, p. 390).

Until then, I shall continue to happily don my dark silly-looking polarized spectacles to enjoy 3D masterpieces, as well as the poor conversion jobs

that populate our screens. Being only one of three students in the University's history to show an active interest in stereoscopic filmmaking, I urge fellow academics, filmmakers and critics to consider the research, analysis and findings presented in this dissertation, and to perhaps enhance their practices and pedagogy accordingly. I hope reading it has gone some way to prove 3D's viability for motion picture storytelling, and that filmmakers everywhere think of it as a potential tool to add to and improve their works of art. Most importantly, I do not mean to apologise for the presence of spectacle in stereoscopic cinema, the draw of a resplendent thrill-ride is every bit an essential function of the cinematic experience as being emotionally moved is, it is only the latter which has not been as fully appreciated in 3D.

I am just as much a cinema fundamentalist as Mark Kermode, but that is the very reason I believe in 3D. For myself, the manifestation of 3D is inexorably connected with the magic of cinema itself. In an iconic scene from the horror classic *Ringu* (1998), the terrifying spirit of the girl Sadako crawls out of a television screen to attack the one watching. Sitting in the theatre, when the projector fires up, when the lights go down, and I put my 3D glasses on, I dare to dream that something indeed may come out of the screen.



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# THE LACK OF AWARENESS OF POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION IN MOTHERS KARACHI

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## Abstract

Postpartum Depression (PPD) is a debilitating mental disorder with a high prevalence. This study aimed to investigate the impact of postpartum depression and its different types on the overall well-being of mothers. The research strategy included a combination of keywords that showed the risk factors for postpartum depression in the area of social factors, psychological, obstetrical history, and lifestyle. There is also a stigma around mothers that disclosure may lead to neglect and fear of lack of support. The study also reviewed the prevalence of PPD during the time of Covid 19 Pandemic. The results showed that the prevalence of postpartum depression among the participants was high, the results of the study showed that baby blues had the strongest impact on general well-being among the three independent variables. The findings of this research suggest that postpartum depression and its different types have a significant impact on the overall well-being of mothers and can be used to develop interventions and support programs to address the effects of postpartum depression and improve the overall well-being of mothers. Data from this study can be used for designing screening tools for high-risk pregnant women and for designing prevention programs.

## Background of the study

A woman's body and mind go through many changes during and after pregnancy. Most women feel sad or empty, within a few days of giving birth. For some, it lasts for a couple of days but if they feel sad for longer than 2 weeks it indicates that they might have postpartum depression (John, 2017).

In Pakistan, it is common that right after delivery, women are supposed to adapt to the role of the mother without doing a relaxed frame of mind. If any woman shows any signs of distress or discomfort, the consequence becomes a crucial warning

to their ability to look around for professional medical help. Negative societal state of mind towards women while suffering from postpartum depression is frequently common, which increases depression and changes in behaviors, resulting in devastating effects on mother self-harm, harming of baby and serious effect on the family, feeling hopeless in most cases and can put in highlights which led the way to suicide (Ghaedrahmati, Kazemi, Kheirabadi, Ebrahimi, & Bahrami, 2017).

Besides societal barriers, it is important to discuss and highlight that there is also a cultural barrier in our society, especially when it's come to postpartum depression, as most people rarely discuss their personal feelings, physical condition, or, mental health problems with anybody within the family or outside the family. Frequently, shame and blame are to uphold norms within the family, driving toward extra-mental and emotional instability (Bibi, et al., 2019).

It is crucial for society to recognize postpartum depression as a serious health issue and not dismiss it as a normal responsibility for new mothers. Cultural stigmas surrounding postpartum depression should be removed to allow affected individuals to feel comfortable seeking necessary help and treatment without hesitation or shame.

## Research Questions

- What are the perceptions of postpartum depression in our society?
- What is the impact of postpartum depression on women?
- Is postpartum depression treatable?
- How much support women do get while suffering from postpartum depression?
- What type of postpartum depression is commonly faced by mothers?

### Scope

The study will focus on postpartum depression in females between the ages of 20 to 40, specifically within the upper-middle-class and lower-middle class.

### Limitations

Due to the short time our research is limited to Pakistan and the city of Karachi.

Our course duration is four months and we have to complete our research within that time.

Our topic is not very common among people, the main reason is our cultural norms.

### Literature Review

Postpartum depression is a debilitating mental disorder with a high prevalence. The aim of this study was to review the related studies which were carried out in recent years. The research strategy included a combination of keywords that showed the risk factors for postpartum depression in the area of social factors, obstetrical history, and lifestyle and history of mental illness were detected. There is also a stigma around new mothers that disclosure may lead to abandonment and fear of lack of support. This activity reviews the treatment, and complications of postpartum depression. The study also reviewed the prevalence of PPD during the time of Covid 19 Pandemic. The data from this study can be used to create screening tools for high-risk pregnant women and to develop prevention programs. The review of the literature serves as a foundation for forming hypotheses and creating questionnaires for research.

### Rise of Postpartum Depression

Postpartum depression affects women, infants, and families severely and has one of the highest rates in Asia in Pakistan, with a range of 28 to 63%. Because of ignorance or social impact issues, is frequently not acknowledged in Pakistan. (Bibi, et al., 2019) Similarly, (John, 2017) points to that an emotional and behavioral illness connected to puerperium that manifests itself six weeks after delivery is postpartum depression. In our society, if a mother's health is affected, the whole society is affected as well as the family. Various countries and societies have different PPD prevalence rates. It is reported to have an impact on women nationwide. 10 to 27% in Western civilizations, 15.8% in Arab nations, 16% in Zimbabwe, 34.7% in South Africa, 11.2% in China, 7% in Japan, and 18% in Pakistan. Furthermore, Due to the lack of social support, PPD was

historically thought to not exist in non-western nations. Though the prevalence of PPD is only 13% in North America and western European nations, recent estimations indicate that PPD is much more common in South Asia. Only 0.4 percent of health-care spending in Pakistan goes toward mental health, and 69% of patients with neurotic and stress-related mood disorders are female. Women with PPD diagnoses are not found among these patients. Due to cultural norms, underreporting is one of the reasons women with PPD are not frequently identified in mental health care facilities. PPD, however, is a significant issue in Pakistan, where prevalence rates vary from 28.8% to PPD is a serious issue in Pakistan, where prevalence rates range from 28.8% to 94%, with Pakistan having the highest rate among Asian nations at 63.3%.

### Types of Depression

There are three terms used to describe the mood changes women can have after giving birth.

#### Baby Blues

The baby blues, which last for the first two weeks after delivery, have faced depressive emotions and tearfulness. Women who experience the baby blues recover quickly. Baby blues reportedly occur in 50% to 80% of new mothers. Symptoms typically resolve within a few days to 1 to 2 weeks following delivery. It can be treated with emotional support and reassurance (Bauer, 2018).

#### Postpartum Depression

PPD takes longer and affects women's ability to return to normal function. PPD has an impact on the mother's relationship with the child. Mothers' brain activity and behavior were compromised during PPD. Also, up to 50% of PPD cases in new mothers go undiagnosed as a result of a privacy conflict and the lack of willingness to disclose to close family members (Bibi, et al., 2019). Furthermore (Bibi, et al., 2019) state that, women who experience PPD report side effects such as uneasiness, feeling blameworthy or useless, self-blaming considerations, mood swings, and fear of not being a dominant mother.

#### Postpartum Psychosis

A mental health emergency that carries a risk of suicidal behavior and infanticidal risk is postpartum psychosis. A woman may experience psychotic symptoms, mental confusion, and trouble sleeping for several nights, restlessness, and abnormal

behavior. It is characterized by an extremely severe start of bipolar disorder or depressive psychosis within the first few days as well as weeks after birth.

Additionally, (Bibi, et al., 2019) state that, there is a stigma surrounding new mothers as well because of the possibility of abandonment and fear of lack of support if it is revealed. On the other hand, (Ghaedrahmati M. , Kazemi, Kheirabadi , Ebrahimi, & Bahrami, 2017) observe that, in the world, the prevalence of postpartum depression ranges from 5.8% to 60.8%. When a patient is suffering from a serious illness, depressive thoughts can negatively affect life and lead to suicide. Therefore, 20% of maternal deaths happen during childbirth because of this factor. Problems like a lack of attachment to the baby (34%), a fear of harming the baby, and even, in extreme cases, child suicide attempts have been reported. The health of the family is seriously affected by these symptoms. Therefore, in order to provide care, it is necessary to identify susceptible individuals before the delivery.

### **Postpartum Depression in COVID-19**

According to (Usmani, et al., 2021), in COVID-19 pandemic, which began to spread worldwide in early 2020, has led to a lot of unexpected challenges, affecting people physically, mentally, emotionally, and economically. The lack of support during these tough times due to social distancing and quarantine measures has caused or worsened mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, stress, frustration, phobias, obsessive-compulsive symptoms, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Those with pre-existing physical or mental health issues are the most likely to be subjected to the pandemic and have negative mental and psychological effects. Pregnant and postpartum women are also significantly affected. Childbirth involves numerous biological, psychological, and social changes. One of the main reasons for under-reporting was the stigmatization of mental illness during the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore (Simhi, Cwikel, & Sarid, 2021) states that, during the COVID-19 pandemic, pregnant women reported more perceived support from their partners than non-pregnant women during the pandemic. In times of crisis, partner support is a protective factor against postpartum depression. Partner support significantly predicts lower levels of depressive symptoms among pregnant women. Furthermore, (Boekhorst, et al., 2021) state that this epidemic has resulted in significant changes in maternity care,

such as a decline in the frequency of face-to-face visits throughout pregnancy.

### **Risk Factors**

Postpartum depression has several risk factors including psychological, obstetric, social and lifestyle factors. These factors can include a history of depression, stress, lack of social support, and unhealthy lifestyle choices, among others. Understanding these risk factors can help in identifying and providing early interventions for women who may be at risk for developing postpartum depression.

### **Psychological**

The primary causes of PPD worldwide are psychological problems. Because the mother is the main caretaker for her newborn baby, PPD affects both the mother and the baby (John, 2017). Furthermore, In accordance to (Mughal, Azhar, & Siddiqui, 2022), Postpartum depression can be caused by many different factors, including a negative attitude toward the baby, issue when it comes to the baby's gender, and a history of sexual abuse. Postpartum depression is impacted by a history of depression and anxiety, as well as premenstrual syndrome (PMS). Further (Ghaedrahmati M. , Kazemi, Kheirabadi , Ebrahimi, & Bahrami, 2017) declare that, it has been reported that a history of moderate to severe premenstrual syndrome (PMS) is a factor affecting the onset of postpartum depression.

### **Obstetric risk factors**

According to (Ghaedrahmati M. , Kazemi, Kheirabadi , Ebrahimi, & Bahrami, 2017), Risk during pregnancy is higher in younger women. The highest rate of depression has been reported in mothers aged 13-19 years, while the lowest rate has been observed in women aged 31-35 years. According to research conducted on 1950 women between 2 and 12 weeks after giving birth, maternal self-efficacy and advancing maternal age are linked to a lower risk of postpartum depression. Further more (Ghaedrahmati M. , Kazemi, Kheirabadi , Ebrahimi, & Bahrami, 2017) state that, pregnancy at risk, which may involve an urgent C-section and pregnancy-related hospitalizations is also associated with an increased risk of postpartum depression. PPD is linked to meconium passage, umbilical cord prolapses, low birth weight or preterm babies, and low hemoglobin levels (Mughal, Azhar, & Siddiqui, 2022). According to (John, 2017) state that, a few

other health-related factors have also been related

### **Social Factors**

Social support refers to emotional support, financial support, intelligence support, and empathy relations. Reducing social support is the most important environmental factor in the onset of depression and anxiety diseases (Landman-Peeters, et al., 2021). At the International Conference on Population and Development of the time, decision-making power at home and increased support of the better half have been considered the most important solution to promote women's reproductive health (Galvão, 2021). Partner sexual violence and other forms of domestic violence during pregnancy are seen as factors contributing to the prevalence of postpartum depression (Ludermir, Lewis, Valongueiro, Araújo, & Araya).

In addition to the women's relationship with family members and community, actions similar to smoking during the prenatal period, are social factors associated with an increased prevalence of postpartum depression 1.7 times (Jansen, et al., 2010). The simultaneous relationship between smoking and socioeconomic position and the relationship between a socioeconomic position with depression complicate the association between smoking and postpartum depression. Still, the physiological changes of pregnancy may seem like a stressful event for some mothers and lead to the onset of depression symptoms and the start of smoking (Gürber, Baumeler, Grob, Surbek, & Stadlmayr, 2017). Another social factor is employment status, especially professional careers, which have been associated with a reduced threat of postpartum depression. Still, education and low income are associated with the threat of postpartum depression (Huang, et al., 2015).

### **Lifestyle**

Food intake practices, sleep cycles, physical activities, and exercise may affect postpartum depression. It has linked vitamin B6 to postpartum depression through its conversion into protein and, later, serotonin, which affects mood. A factor affecting the risk of depression is the sleep cycle. It linked lack of sleep to postpartum depression. Exercise and physical activity reduce depressive symptoms. Exercise can reduce depression-caused low self-esteem. The benefits of exercise are to improve mental health. This boosts self-confidence, increases problem-solving ability, and helps in focusing on

their surroundings (Mughal, Azhar, & Siddiqui, 2022). Furthermore (Ghaedrahmati, Kazemi, Kheirabadi, Ebrahimi, & Bahrami, 2017) explained that, depressed women have experienced extended periods of severe lack of sleep after giving birth. Insomnia affects glucose metabolism, inflammatory processes, social interactions, mental health, and quality of life. Moderate physical activity during the third trimester of pregnancy reduced the postpartum depression scale six weeks later. Moreover (John, 2017) indicates that, parenting self-efficacy, unplanned birth, and history of risky lifestyle choices are all predictors of PPD. Researchers have found a relation between mother self-efficacy (psychopathology, maternal background factors, childhood parenting experiences, and the father's and mother's insecure attachment appearance) with PPD. A low sense of parenting competence strongly predicted PPD. Unplanned pregnancy is another risk factor for PPD. It identified unplanned birth as a risk factor for PPD in a study of new mothers in Taiwan. This could be because of feeling unprepared and, as a result, having lower parental self-efficacy.

### **Treatment**

The treatment usually happens in the form of counseling (or psychotherapy) or patients are recommended some antidepressants. At an initial stage, women do recover through counseling and some may have to undergo counseling in conjunction with the use of antidepressants (Green, Haber, Frey, & McCabe, 2015). Antidepressants are the most common treatment for PPD, in fact, there have been extensive investigations of a broad spectrum of antidepressants in the treatment, and have been found associated with symptomatic improvement and it may be effective as a usual counseling session (Sharp, et al., 2010).

If a woman is breastfeeding, the risks and benefits of taking antidepressants should be discussed with her. If she decides to take the medication despite its effects on her child, other treatment options may also need to be considered in order to keep both mother and baby healthy. Repetitive transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (TMS) may provide an alternative option for women who breastfeed and are concerned about their babies being exposed to medication. Although there is little data on the use of sertraline to prevent and treat postpartum depression, it has been shown that breastfeeding while taking an SSRI is relatively safe. After 12 weeks,

had significantly higher levels of depression than any other group. This shows how important early intervention is when dealing with this illness (Beck, 2006).

Patients with severe postpartum depression may not respond to psychotherapy or pharmacotherapy. For patients who do not respond to four consecutive treatment trials, electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) is recommended (Yonkers, Vigod, & Ross, 2011). It was evaluated that the efficacy and safety of electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) in patients with psychotic depression, suicidal intent or plans on committing suicide, and refusal to eat led to malnutrition. Several observational studies have shown that ECT is a safer option for lactating mothers than traditional antidepressants, which may cause adverse effects on both mother and infant (Robakis & Williams, 2013).

## Research Methodology

### Research Design

This study is based on a quantitative approach in which an explanatory strategy is used for explaining the lack of awareness of postpartum depression in new mothers in Karachi, Pakistan. This is a mono-method study. The sample size for the study was set at a minimum of 250 participants, this sample size provided us with a large enough sample to conduct statistical analysis and generalize the findings to the larger population of women experiencing postpartum depression in Karachi, Pakistan. The convenience sampling method was chosen because of its ease of implementation, low cost, and ability to provide a representative sample of the population of interest.

### Procedure

The data were collected through an indigenously structured questionnaire based on the literature review, a search done on the topic of lack of awareness of postpartum depression in new mothers in Karachi, Pakistan. The questionnaire was divided into three sections: Section A provided information about demographic characteristics, section B extracted information on types of postpartum depression and its symptoms and causes, and section C collected data about the awareness of seeking treatment and support. English versions of the questionnaire were used. The data will be collected between the months of December 2022 to January 2023, and, as a result, having

lower parental self-efficacy.

### Variable and Hypothesis

The independent variables are baby blues, Postpartum Depression, and Postpartum psychosis while the dependent variable is the Mother Health:

H1: There is a significance relationship between Baby Blues and their effect on Mothers' Health.

H2: There is a significance relationship between Postpartum Depression and their effect on Mothers' Health.

H3: There is a significance relationship between Postpartum Psychosis and their effect on Mothers' Health.

H4: There is a positive relationship between support and awareness towards Postpartum Depression.

### Data Analysis

The research was conducted among the females of different areas in Karachi. In Figure 4.3(1) below shows the demographics ratio as well as in figure 4.3(1). Total number of respondents were 205 in which most common age of our respondents are between (20-25) which makes 33.7% of are target population rest of them lies in between (25-30) and (30-35), which makes the same percentage of 23.4%. our third range lies in between 35-40 that makes 15.6%.

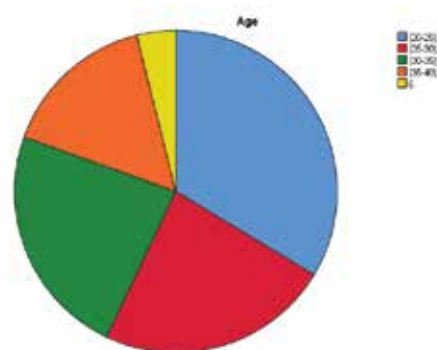


Figure4.3(1)

### Descriptive Statistics

The respondents were asked about their thoughts on postpartum depression. Figure 4.4 (1) below shows statistics of the general questions which were about the respondent's perception of support and awareness towards postpartum depression and all



three types of postpartum depression which were about which type is most effected to mothers. It has been found out that postpartum depression can have lasting effect on mothers and her family, as the mean score of this statement is high that suggest the respondent agreed the most to this statement. Therefore, it can be said that awareness and support is the only way out to decrease the rate of postpartum depression with a lasting effect on mother and her family.

From the total 205 respondent 23.4% were affected from baby blues, while 28.4% were affected from Postpartum Depression and 27.5% were affected by Postpartum Psychosis. Therefore, it can see that postpartum depression which the second type of the depression is affects most of the women. In table 4.4 (1) below are the given means of each type of research question.

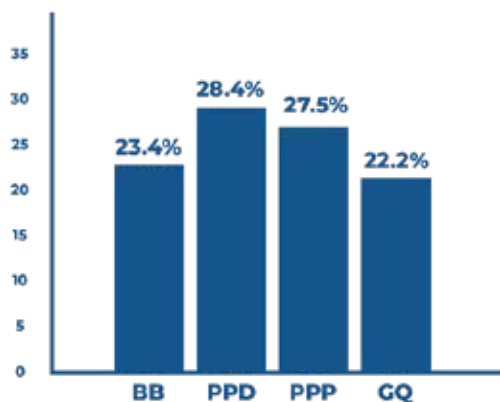


Figure 4.4 (1)

### Correlations Analysis

In addition to measuring the reliability of the questionnaire, we also conducted a correlation analysis to examine the relationship between the independent variables (baby blues (BB), postpartum depression (PPD), and postpartum psychosis (PPP) and the dependent variable general questions GQ which is mother health. The correlation coefficient measures the degree of association between the variables and can indicate whether there is a positive or negative correlation. A significant value less than 0.05 indicates a high level of confidence in the relationship between the variables.

#### Baby Blues

- The correlation value between GQ (mother

health) and BB is 53.0, indicating a strong positive-correlation between the two variables.

#### Postpartum Depression

- The correlation value between the GQ (mother health) and PPD is 43.5, indicating a moderate positive correlation between the two variables.

#### Postpartum Psychosis

- The correlation value between the GQ (mother health) and PPP is 40.6, indicating a moderate positive correlation between the two variables.

### Result of Hypothesis

The table below summarizes the results of the hypothesis developed in the research methodolo-

Hypothesis	Accepted/Rejected
H1A: There is a significant relationship between baby blues and the negative effect on mother's health.	Accepted
H1B: There is a significant relationship between postpartum depression and the negative effect on mother's health.	Accepted
H1C: There is a significant relationship between postpartum psychosis and the negative effect on mother's health.	Accepted
H2: There is a positive relationship between support and awareness towards postpartum depression.	Accepted

### Recommendations

**Increase education and training for healthcare providers:** Healthcare providers play a crucial role in identifying and treating postpartum depression. Therefore, it is important that they are adequately trained to recognize the signs and symptoms of postpartum depression and to provide appropriate care and support. This could include regular training and continuing education programs for healthcare providers, such as doctors, nurses, and midwives.

**Improve access to mental health services:** Mothers dealing with postpartum depression often face barriers to accessing mental health services, such as lack of insurance coverage or long wait times for appointments. Increasing access to mental health services for mothers, such as through telehealth or community-based programs, could help ensure that mothers receive the support they need.

**Increase community-based support:** Community-based support groups for mothers with postpartum depression can provide a safe and supportive environment for mothers to share their experiences and to receive support from others. This can help mothers feel less isolated and more connected to their community.

**Increase awareness and education campaigns:** Many mothers may not be aware of the signs and symptoms of postpartum depression or may not know where to turn for help. Increasing awareness



and education campaigns can help mothers identify postpartum depression early and seek the support they need.

Increase research: Further research is needed to better understand the causes and risk factors of postpartum depression, as well as to evaluate the effectiveness of different interventions and support strategies. This could include studies that focus on the experiences of specific groups of mothers, such as those from low-income or marginalized communities.

Encourage fathers and families to support the mothers, encourage fathers and families to take an active role in supporting mothers with postpartum depression, as this can help reduce the negative impact of the condition on mothers and their families.

Implementing these recommendations could help to improve support and awareness for mothers dealing with postpartum depression, and ultimately reduce the negative impact of this condition on mothers and their families.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, our research on postpartum depression revealed that a significant number of respondents were affected by postpartum depression, with others affected by postpartum psychosis and baby blues. The data collected from the survey, which focused on the respondents' perception of support and awareness towards postpartum depression, showed that respondents disagreed with the given statements about postpartum depression support and awareness, indicating a lack of support and awareness for mothers dealing with this condition. The decreasing statistics observed throughout the analysis further reinforced this lack of support and awareness.

Moreover, our research suggests that postpartum depression can have a lasting effect on mothers and their families. This highlights the importance of providing support and increasing awareness about postpartum depression, as it can help reduce the negative impact of this condition on mothers and their families.

Overall, the findings of this research suggest that there is a need for more support and awareness for mothers dealing with postpartum depression, in order to mitigate its lasting effects on mothers and their families. This could include more education and training for healthcare providers, as well as more resources and support groups for mothers and their families.

This research suggests that postpartum depression and its different types have a significant impact on the overall well-being of mothers. The research found that baby blues had the strongest impact on women among the three independent variables. These findings can be used to develop interventions and support programs for mothers to address the negative effects of postpartum depression and improve their overall well-being.

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