

Review Article

Reproducing Misogyny: The Indian and Malayali Manosphere

Chinchu Chithrangathan¹

1. Centre for Women's Studies, Pondicherry University, India

Recent times have witnessed a significant resurgence of anti-feminist sentiments globally manifesting primarily through digital communities collectively known as the manosphere. This paper outlines the complex landscape of online misogynistic communities, exploring their ideological structures, radicalization processes, and potential societal implications. By looking into diverse manosphere groups including Men's Rights Activists, Incels, and Red Pill communities, the study describes the sophisticated network of interconnected platforms promoting harmful masculinist ideologies. The paper also provides a preliminary look at the Indian manosphere characterized by content creators mimicking global misogynistic influencers and self-styled mentors who provide relationship advice rooted in deeply misogynistic ideologies backed by conservative political structures. The Malayali manosphere is presented as a regional variant with a distinct identity, distinguished by innovative terminologies and spanning both Kerala and the global Malayalee diaspora.

Corresponding author: Dr. Chinchu C., chinchu.c@pondiuni.ac.in

Introduction

The past decade and half has witnessed a notable resurgence of anti-feminist sentiments and movements globally with various local variants, posing significant challenges to the progress of gender equality and women's rights^{[1][2]}. This phenomenon has been characterized by the rise of right-wing political leaders, the amplification of anti-feminist narratives on social media, emergence of new anti-feminist icons, and the emergence of primarily online movements^{[3][4][5]}. These developments have sparked concerns about the potential regression of hard-won gains in gender

equality and the need for a comprehensive understanding of the underlying factors and implications of this phenomenon.

At the centre of these developments is the emergence of the *manosphere*, a heterogeneous group of online misogynistic communities. It consists of diverse groups with some common features that make it possible to analyze them together as a coherent unit. These communities have their own distinctive jargon and internal tensions, and are often associated with online harassment, radicalization, and violence, including mass killings motivated by misogyny^{[6][7][8][9]}. It has been documented that there is a trend of migration of adherents from older and milder communities within the manosphere to newer and more violent ones^[8].

Radicalization of young men that happens within the manosphere has also spilled over to physical violence including mass murders^[10]. Given its scale and its potential influence, this phenomenon which some have called a virtual war against women^[11] needs to be understood and theorized as a new backlash emanating from the manosphere^[11] that is not only opposed to the feminist movement, but also to the idea of gender equality^{[3][4]}.

This paper aims to present an overview of the academic literature and other discussions on the backlash to feminism and gender equality related to the emerging manosphere before proceeding to a discussion of its potential ramifications in the Indian context. The paper also presents the case of a regional variant of this Indian manosphere and discusses a research agenda to address the topic in the feminist academic discourses in India.

Outlining the Manosphere

Research interest on the manosphere has grown significantly in the recent years, with a surge in the number of publications specifically mentioning the manosphere starting from 2019 onwards. Different definitions of the manosphere have been suggested, almost all of them agreeing on some common points such as the manosphere being a constellation of loosely related communities, it as existing primarily on the internet, and united by a masculine perspective and a generally negative attitude against women and/or feminism^{[12][6]}. Social media platforms including TikTok, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, and Facebook, Reddit, YouTube, and various independent websites are the platforms on which the manosphere exists and operates^{[7][13][14][15][16]}.

The term manosphere itself first appeared on the internet in 2009 and became popular with a book by 'porn reviewer' Ian Ironwood in which he likened the manosphere to a comet and defined it as "a collection of internet blogs, cultural discussion groups, interpersonal interactions and digital clubhouses whose focus revolves around issues and interests common to men and masculinity"^[17]. This idea of the manosphere being a collection of independent entities that look like the parts of a 'dirty snowball' while moving together in a shared direction resonates with the nature of the manosphere.

While some contemporary scholars explain it as a detached set of websites and social media groups^[18], some have explained it as a fragmented group of communities that promote misogynist discourses^[19]. Simplistic explanations of manosphere as a new form of Men's Rights Activism have also been proposed^[20] not covering the entire complexity and diversity of the phenomenon. The idea of hegemonic masculinity is used to explain the attitudes and behaviour of those who are considered part of the manosphere^{[6][21]}. Indeed the culture of violence against women that is promoted in the manosphere may be a reflection of hegemonic masculinity as explained by Connell^[22].

The analysis of the evolution of ideological communities of men in response to the feminist movements and the resultant changes in social order as presented by Messner^[23] through his conceptualization of historical gender formation offers an avenue to understand the progression of the manosphere and its components. From a focus on family, education etc. and issues related to divorce such as alimony and custody of children which characterised the early communities such as the now defunct Men's Liberation Movement, a shift towards themes like sexuality, socialization of women, and an alleged oppression of men is happening^{[24][19]}.

Drawing on the historical evolution and the current nature of the constituent communities, the manosphere can be defined as a heterogeneous group of online communities commonly characterized by their opposition to feminism, promotion of masculinity, and misogynistic and sexist beliefs which are reinforced and escalated within echo chambers. It includes constituents such as men's rights activists (MRAs), *Incels* (involuntary celibates), *Red Pill* groups, Men Going Their Own Way (MGTOW), pick-up artists (PUAs), and fathers' rights groups among others. These communities have developed their distinctive jargon and internal tensions and are often associated with online harassment, radicalisation, and violence, including mass shootings motivated by misogyny. A cursory description of each of the constituent communities of the manosphere is given below.

Men's Rights Movements (MRM) and Men's Rights Activism (MRA): Men's Rights Movements are the oldest and probably the most organized part of the manosphere. Having originated in the 1970s, the present-day MRM can be understood as an embodiment of the fears, anxieties and rage of primarily privileged men^[25]. The MRM in the United States operates with the conceptualization of the white man as the new 'victim', often taking offence at policy issues such as divorce and alimony laws, and benefits provided to single mothers etc. as discriminatory and penalizing men^{[26][25]} even while some of their arguments on alimony are not supported by evidence^[27]. More commonly called as Men's Rights Activists (MRA) in India, similar groups rally behind similar issues and have equal online and offline presence^{[28][29]}.

Pick-Up Artists (PUA): Relying mostly on pseudoscientific principles of seduction borrowed from practices such as Neuro Linguistic Programming^[30], the movement of Pick-Up Artists is built on the conceptualization of women as sexual objects. These are communities of men – mostly online but also with offline presence – where self-proclaimed pick-up artists act as gurus or coaches to less experienced men on how to attract and have sex with women^[31]. The so-called tricks taught in such communities end up dehumanizing and abusing women^[18]. The objectification of women in the PUA community is evident in the condescending and objectifying language used to refer to women^[32].

Men Going Their Own Way (MGTOW): Men Going Their Own Way (MGTOW) is claimed to be a separatist movement that advocates for men to separate themselves from women, built on the belief that feminism has corrupted society. Founded and mostly operating online, the MGTOW movement carries the paradox of claiming to be a separatist movement of men going their way, the central theme of the entire movement is a fight against gender equality^[33] whereby the majority of discourses within the community contains polarising and misogynistic language which promotes violence against women and feminism^{[33][34]}.

Red Pill: With the term borrowed from The Matrix movie, the Red Pill communities, also claimed as following a certain Red Pill philosophy^[44], present what is supposed to be a form of parallel reality regarding the world, especially gender relations. Within the Red Pill community there is rampant objectification of women, explanatory hierarchies for men with specific jargons for each *level*, and strong negative sentiments towards men who are allies of feminism^[19], all presented while discussing what is claimed to be self-help or seduction techniques^[35]. It is also suggested that membership in such communities could increase one's chances of committing violence on intimate partners^[36]. A

self-image of men being logical and rational in comparison to women is also promoted within Red Pill communities^[37].

Involuntary Celibates (Incel): The community of Involuntary Celibates (Incel) started out as an internet based subculture of those who were not successful in obtaining sex and romantic relationships. The term introduced by Alana Boltwood, a queer female student who meant it to include people of any gender^[38], was later appropriated by heterosexual men and has grown into an echo chamber of amplifying violent discourses^[11]. Initially considered a fringe, online only entity, the Incel community gained notoriety and became known outside the manosphere with the 2014 mass murder in California committed by Elliot Rodger who published a ‘manifesto’ before the act. Though Rodger never described himself as an Incel and identified with a group known as PUAHaters, he was considered an Incel by many commentators because of his stated motivation for the killings, and also for his glorified image within the Incel community as an *inclebrity* and a motivation for further violence^{[39][40][41]}. Recent academic debates have suggested the need to classify Incel violence as acts of terrorism^{[42][43]}. One more facet regarding the Incel community is the suggestions based on narrative reviews that hardened identification with the Incel community may be associated with certain mental disorders and mental health issues^{[10][44]}. Female incels known as *femcels*, male homosexual incels known as *gaycels*, and transgender incels known as *transcels* also exist, though in comparatively small numbers and not as a mainstream within the Incel community, which is predominantly heterosexual and male.

Apart from these communities, there are more groups organized through messaging boards such as 4chan and 8chan, and messaging platforms such as clubhouse and telegram and independent websites which can be considered as part of the manosphere^{[45][15][46][16]}.

What Dangers Does the Manosphere Pose?

As discussed earlier, the constituent communities of the manosphere differ from each other in their fine workings, but operate on some common attitudes and sentiments, with misogyny as one of the core elements. Most members, especially of the newer communities, enter these communities seeking self-help advice or solution to some issue that they experience, such as a lack of intimate relationships or a break-up from a relationship^{[35][47]}. What happens within the communities needs to be understood in detail.

Nature of Discourse: The discussions that happen within the different communities of the manosphere are complex and multifaceted. Based on an analysis of the contents from different communities, Han and Yin^[19] categorized the discourse that happens within the different manosphere communities as that of an anti-feminist countermovement, and personal masculinist discourses. For instance, the majority of content on MGTOW forums were found to be misogynistic^[48], and othering of women, creating a binary opposition of us vs them^[33] which can also be seen as a desperate defence of patriarchy. Earlier, it was shown that the discourse within manosphere contained different forms of misogynistic rhetoric involving physical and sexual violence, racism, homophobia etc. and that the hostility and violence within manosphere is increasing steadily^[49]. A form of networked misogyny is suggested as a defining feature of the discourse within manosphere^[18].

Indoctrination and Radicalization: Communities within manosphere act as echo chambers, amplifying violent ideas and attitudes. Indoctrination happens when young men enter these communities seeking guidance on a variety of issues such as fitness, managing breakups, overcoming loneliness, self-improvement, financial advice etc^[47]. Once inside, there is a step-by-step process of indoctrination which starts from harmless – and oftentimes beneficial – activities such as diet control and physical fitness, which later graduate into the spreading of violent ideas against women, feminism, and men who support feminist ideas. Loneliness is converted into resentment or anger and later into hatred^[50]. These extreme ideas are solidified because of the echo chamber effect of these communities^{[51][47]}.

Radicalization that happens within the manosphere is not limited to young men, and is not related to the proliferation of ideas alone either. While young and vulnerable men are the most likely targets^[20], older men are also influenced by the exchange of misogynistic ideas. A large scale analysis involving more than 28 million posts on the manosphere communities found considerable overlap of members between different communities and a migration of members from older and less violent ones (such as MRA and PUA) to newer and more toxic ones (such as Incel and the Red Pill)^[8]. Radicalization in the manosphere can start with mere participation, and has implications to the targets' attitude and behaviour in the physical world^[52] and could lead to instances of physical violence including murders^[53].

Convergence of Groups and Ideologies: Manosphere communities can act as a catalyst for otherwise disconnected and sometimes opposite ideologies and groups to converge, motivated by the common thread of misogyny and opposition to feminism^[18]. It has been suggested that manosphere can act as a gateway to far-right groups^[15]. Studies on far-right extremist communities on social media have included manosphere among the analytical categories^[54].

There have been instances of far-right western Islamophobic commentators softening their stand towards Islam because of a perceived common ground of opposition to feminism and LGBTQ rights activism. Conservative Muslim and Christian groups have started opposing SOGIESC training in schools^[55]. Reciprocally, popularity of gender equality debates and activities is seen as a threat to traditional Muslim masculinity and this reflects in the surge in a rising support and fan base to manosphere poster boys such as Jordan Peterson among conservative Muslim men^[56].

The popularity of the concept of Red Pill within different manosphere communities reflect a propensity for conspiracy thinking. Across the manosphere there is belief in 'misandry', the notion that feminists hold prejudice and hatred towards men, despite strong evidence against such wide existence of misandry^[57]. This, coupled with evidence-based misogyny, the use of discursive tools of abuse and misinterpretation of statistics, studies, news etc. to support misogynist narratives^[58] and the trend of misuse of scientific fields such as evolutionary psychology^[12] provide a common ground for the manosphere with the far-right in using conspiracy theories and misinformation as political tools. Anti-feminist views are an important political issue in the United States^{[59][25]} and elsewhere^{[2][5][60]} with major implications for the future of democracy.

The Terrorism Argument: The radicalization within manosphere and especially in the Incel communities pose a real threat of the emergence of a new form of terrorism, which has already come into existence according to some^[61]. It is argued that the narrative of Incel murderers being 'lone wolves' is not valid since there is a stepwise pattern of emergent behaviour from digital hate speech to physical violence^[51]. The celebration of murderers like Elliot Rodger and Alek Minassian as *Incelebrities* within the manosphere, the global existence of misogyny as a social phenomenon, and the echo-chamber effect of the online communities are all presented supporting factors to approach the manosphere from a lens of terrorism studies^{[42][43][61][53]}.

Regional Variants of Manosphere

Apart from the United States, there are multiple regional ‘versions’ of manosphere that have been discussed including Swedish, Spanish, Bulgarian, Canadian ones^{[62][63][64][65]}. Though referred to by geographical names, these online communities are better understood as linguistic entities. For instance, a member of the Spanish manosphere can be residing in any part of the world, as long as they are part of an online community and shares the jargons and attitudes cultivated within it.

An Indian Version?

The existence of an Indian version of the manosphere has received only limited attention from the academia though there have been writings in popular platforms and media on the topic. Given the patriarchal and traditional social structure in India, it can be assumed that the manosphere exists and thrives in the Indian internet space as well. Contemporary India presents factors favourable for the flourishing of manosphere communities including the normalisation of misogyny even by influential persons^[66], political climate and messaging that emphasises masculinity^[67], a renewed trend of celebrating ascetic masculinity^[68], and the rise in internet penetration which is also correlated with high prevalence of violence against women online^[69].

While trying to situate the manosphere in the Indian context, the first hurdle faced is the lack of a common language. India has 22 scheduled languages and numerous others, including many dialects. Hindi is the most used Indian language on the internet and is expected to outgrow English as the dominant language^[70]. Hence the nature of the Indian manosphere has to be assumed as having different compositions and characters, depending upon the major language used. Each language community may evolve its own terminologies and narratives, albeit influenced by the global/English manosphere. Here is an attempt to look at the evidence that exists for the existence of an Indian version of the manosphere and an argument for why the manosphere in the Indian context is to be understood through the various language variants of it, through the case of a regional language variant.

Features of the Indian Manosphere

Defining and understanding the Indian manosphere is made difficult because of the linguistic diversity of the Indian diaspora. Hence as a starting point the various components of the manosphere

ecosystem with the majority of content being produced and consumed in Hindi is being taken as the unit for analysis. While this may have shortcomings, Hindi being the most prominent Indian language on the internet provides a vantage point for an analysis. An effort is made here to illustrate how there is a Hindi manosphere which has considerable influence on Indian men and what the components of this manosphere are. It is to be noted that Hindi is not spoken or understood equally across India, with specific regions having very little usage of the language.

Video sharing platforms like YouTube and social media platforms such as X (formerly Twitter), Facebook, Instagram, and Reddit are among the most active platforms on which the manosphere content thrives in India^{[71][72]}. Each platform may cater to different demographics of men. Some media writings such as blogs and media articles have labelled the anti-feminist discourse happening on YouTube and social media platforms under the term of Incel violence^[73] but there has been scarce discussion on how these are part of the manosphere ecosystem. Most academic work on the anti-feminist movement in India has been limited to the Men's Right Activism (MRA)^{[74][75][76]} and not covered the other elements of the manosphere.

A major proportion of Hindi content creators belonging to the manosphere ecosystem concentrate on providing advice to young men on sexual and relationship matters. Most of these content creators are young adults, and model themselves on Western misogynist influencers like Andrew Tate^[77]. Some of these creators attract huge followership. The language employed and style of these creators mimic that of the global PUA community. Some use the term 'dating coach' to describe themselves and even offer courses and seminars for a fee^{[78][79]}. Even if the platforms shut down the accounts following complaints of misogynistic and violent content, new accounts are created and the cycle of the content continues^[80].

There is another set of content creators whose content can be described more as misogyny and objectification presented as self-improvement advice for young men. Though their content come with titles related to grooming and health advice, the underlying misogyny and objectification is obvious^[13]. One such creator named Sarthak Goel who describes himself as a "Men's Personality development Mentor & Life Coach" has a subscriber base of more than 5,51,000 on YouTube. He is active on other platforms such as Instagram and Facebook as well. The most popular video on the channel had more than 12,04,000 views as of December 2024 and provides advice on how to develop a *playboy* mindset, an obvious reference to sexual objectification of women. Other popular videos also

contain similar or more misogynistic content including ones that claim to explain female nature and flirting and messaging tips. Under the topic of ‘Psychology’, his website provides advice on how to control girls, how to make girls obsessed with oneself, and how to break girls’ ego among other topics. He also offers one-on-one consultation sessions for a fee. Many of his videos reflect the typical PUA themes, but the language used is largely reminiscent of the MGTOW rhetoric which reproduces hegemonic masculinity^[34]. This intersection of content is also typical of the intersectional and networked nature of communities that form the manosphere^[48].

Some content creators, who are also referred to as ‘influencers’ cater to the right-wing and conservative political ideologies similar to the case of their western counterparts, and this provides them with a loyal followership because of the synergy between conservative political ideologies and misogyny^[81]. A case in point is that of the controversial influencer Elvish (Siddharth) Yadav who has a total subscriber count of more than 23 million and 3 billion on YouTube as of December 2024. Despite public displays of misogyny and other uncivilised conduct^{[82][83]} there has been no concrete action taken that could address the issue of this person continuing to influence a large population of youngsters.

The one manosphere community whose name could be familiar to many on the Indian social media is that of Incel. On social media, the term Incel is used widely to refer to young men who use misogynistic language or subscribe to anti-feminist ideas. Such usage of the term may not be based on an accurate understanding of the term, but used as a way to put a label to communication deemed as anti-feminist^[71]. Within the western manosphere, there is a conceptualization of ‘Currycel’ which refers to men of mostly Indian and South Asian origin who blame cultural heritage and ethnicity as an additional reason for their inability to obtain sexual or romantic relationships^{[84][85]}. The term *Currycel* is not usually used by men who reside in India, but mostly by those residing outside the country. *Currycels* blame women of Indian and South Asian origin of favouring white men over them^[85] in addition to the alleged influence of feminism. *Currycel* groups also refer to the concept of ‘black pill’ which is inspired by the red pill analogy of Incels and also a passing reference to skin tones^[86]. There is some overlap between the *Currycel* and MGTOW communities, evidenced by a number of men who self-identify as *Currycels* using the term ‘mgtow’ in their profile names on platforms such as Facebook. There is also a dedicated Indian MGTOW website with articles having references to ‘red pill’ and other terminologies typically used within Incel communities. There is another community of ‘Ricecels’ who are men of East Asian origin, harbouring similar complaints as

Currycels. The tendency of self-deprecation seen in these Incel groups could also be an indication of low self-esteem or deeper mental health issues^{[87][88]}.

Unlike in the western manosphere, there are no identifiable discrete Red Pill communities found on the Indian social media. Those who subscribe to the red pill ideology and the variations of the same are probably a part of the Incel groups as has been seen in the case of *Currycels*.

Fathers' rights groups similar to those in the west are not found in India. However there are distinct groups working under different names which share the common focus on *saving* the Indian family system. Their demands and working mirror the MRA movements and fathers' rights groups. Some of these groups take up the issues of fathers in domestic disputes and their rights related to visiting their children^[89]. In India several men's rights activists and groups have also taken up legal advocacy and activism, particularly targeting the alleged misuse of Section 498A of the Indian Penal Code which was introduced to address criminal violence against women related to the outlawed practice of dowry^[90].

The western manosphere has found allyship from the 'Trad Wife' movement which consists of women content creators who attempt to glorify conformity to traditional gender roles assigned to women^[91]. On the Indian social media too there is a growing trend of women who style themselves on the western model of trad wives, often portraying traditional gender roles. Not all of them may necessarily self-identify as trad wives or subscribe to the far-right ideology of western trad wives, but nevertheless add to the growing phenomenon of romanticising traditional and regressive ideals^{[92][93]}.

Regional Variants: The Case of Malayali Manosphere

As discussed earlier, it is to be expected that every regional language diaspora in India can be expected to have their own specific variations of manosphere communities, influenced by factors such as cultural milieu, literacy and education, technology use, and exposure to global communities. Kerala presents an interesting case in this context given the historical contacts with the other parts of the world, high levels of literacy and technology use, and a sizable migrant community across the world providing constant channels of communication with the outside world. The Malayalees or persons who speak Malayalam as their native language have their presence in at least 182 of the 195 countries of the world^[94] with the numbers estimated to be more than 50 lakhs.

Keralites have been known for keeping up with cultural changes and literature from across the globe, exemplified by the translation and popular reception of renowned books to Malayalam^{[95][96]}. In

trying to locate this regional manosphere variant, I use the term 'Malayali Manosphere' because the participants in this ecosystem are equally likely to be located within and outside the geographical boundaries of Kerala and India, especially in the context of increased International migration of Malayalee youth driven by aspirations and affordances^[97].

Kerala has had a history of misogyny in the public and private sphere despite the overall human development it has achieved^{[98][99]}. Hence it is to be expected that given the backdrop of cultural exchanges with the western world and the high levels of connectedness, the manosphere discourse would have a Malayalam version, with participants from the global Malayalee diaspora. Indeed Malayalees online have adapted the various components of the western manosphere and have also formed communities and synthesised terminologies of their own.

Malayalee manosphere participants have also coined terminologies of their own along with using concepts and ideas drawn from the western manosphere as such. There is the term 'Meninist' which is used by some men who consider it to be an opposite for feminist. There is a YouTube channel named Mallu Meninist (*Mallu* is an informal term used to denote Malayalis). The channel produces videos denigrating women, transgender persons, and feminists and has content that is inspired by multiple western manosphere communities. There are other social media pages too with the same name, producing memes that abuse women and feminists.

Another term that is used widely in the Malayali manosphere is *pavada*, which translates to skirt in English and is used as a synonym for the term Simp, which is a slang for men who support women and is therefore weak or not masculine enough. Feminist women are usually addressed using the derogatory term *feminichi*. YouTube content creators with large following who do not necessarily form part of any manosphere community also use these terms frequently^[100]. Perhaps the most interesting coinage is that of 'Peacock Feminism' which was introduced by a writer and atheist campaigner named C. Ravichandran through one of his speeches which was posted on YouTube later. He describes peacock feminism as a tool used by men who want to get the sexual or romantic attention of women by calling themselves feminists^[101]. The term is used as a derogatory label for men who support feminist ideals by many on the Malayali manosphere. Misogyny expressed by atheists is also a global issue which seems to have found its Malayalam version^{[102][103]}.

Compared to the Hindi or other Indian manosphere spaces, the Malayalam manosphere has developed a sizable group of young men (and a few women) who subscribe to the so-called Red Pill ideology and

call themselves as part of the Red Pill community. The Red Pill movement in Malayalam is active on multiple social media platforms and has established a funnel for indoctrination of potential members. There is a dedicated website providing links to Red Pill groups on different social media platforms. It also disseminates written articles and links to various other content, such as books and the Indian Men's Right Activists' websites. There are multiple YouTube channels where content from English are reproduced in Malayalam, and independent videos are produced. The Red Pill Malayalam YouTube channel has videos that claim to debunk feminist research findings and other content creators who produce feminist content. The Clubhouse group named Red Pill Malayalam has a mix of male and female members who describe themselves as rationalists and those who are religious fundamentalists. The members of these Red Pill groups are called by others, particularly feminists, as Incels. The members rarely use the term to describe themselves.

The discourses have also improvised on the language of the western manosphere. It also produces its own instructional content to educate the community members. There are social media content and blog posts that paint intersectionality as a form of identity politics and as a major reason for the difficulties faced by young men and for them being 'oppressed'. This is an improvisation over the much simpler explanations used on western manosphere spaces^[47].

The Malayali Manosphere has provided an interesting meeting place for non-religious groups or atheists and religious fundamentalists with opposition to feminism as their common ground. This presents an even more interesting parallel to the phenomenon that is emerging in the west where religious fundamentalists have found common ground with the far right^[55]. However, it is the Hindutva right-wing that is seen to be closer to these atheist groups in their opposition to feminism than the Islamic fundamentalists as is seen in the west^[104]. This can also be seen in the light of the apparent efforts by Hindutva to influence the cultural sphere of Kerala^[105].

Men's Rights activism is found both online and offline in Kerala. There have been instances where men accused of sexual harassment were felicitated when they were released on bail by self-proclaimed men's rights activists. Men who claim to be such activists are also invited by television channels as panellists in discussions on various topics involving women's rights or violence against women and are allowed to be part of TV shows as well^[100]. There is a Facebook group named *Purushavakasha* Commission (translated as Men's Rights Commission) with more than 94,000 members. There have also been public demonstrations conducted by different collectives demanding the formation of such a

commission by the government^[106]. Members of such groups tend to include older men when compared to the other manosphere communities.

The Way Forward: A Research Agenda

The amount of research conducted and academic literature available on the manosphere communities that are active in the Indian diaspora appears to be very low. The fragmented nature of terminologies used to describe the different communities also poses a hurdle to those trying to read the existing readings. To understand this phenomenon systematically there is a need for further research which will enable evolving a concrete definition of the Indian manosphere and its nuances.

A mapping of the specific linguistic and cultural adaptations of manosphere ideologies in the Indian context is an immediate concern for the academia and the state. Physical and online violence perpetrated by the different manosphere communities can only be addressed if the origins and motivations are explored and understood. The intersections of caste, class, and masculinity in Indian manosphere discourse is another area of exploration. The role of political systems as enablers of systemic misogyny is also to be explored. The pathways of indoctrination and radicalization mediated by the different cultural factors also need to be mapped for actionable knowledge creation.

Conclusion

The manosphere represents a complex and evolving hybrid ecosystem of misogynistic communities that pose significant challenges to gender equality and social progress across the world. These interconnected groups, ranging from new forms of Men's Rights Activists to Incels, collectively represent a sophisticated backlash against feminist movements, characterized by networked misogyny and increasingly radicalized discourse. The manosphere is not merely an online phenomenon but a potential catalyst for real-world violence and social regression as emerging evidence shows.

The dynamics within these communities reveal a systematic process of indoctrination where vulnerable individuals, often seeking self-improvement or guidance, are gradually exposed to increasingly extreme ideologies. Young men, in particular, are susceptible to a radicalization from seeking personal development to embracing violent anti-feminist narratives. The echo chamber effect within these digital spaces amplifies hostile attitudes, converting personal loneliness and frustration

into structured resentment against women and feminist principles. Within the cultural and political context of India, this presents particular challenges and research questions.

The manosphere in the Indian context represents a complex digital ecosystem characterized by linguistic diversity and shaped by patriarchal structures and regressive socio-political climate. Predominantly active on social media and messaging platforms, the Hindi-language manosphere is particularly large, with content creators mimicking global misogynistic influencers and offering content that objectifies women. This ecosystem is marked by its ability to continuously regenerate content even when individual accounts are shut down, and it intersects with right-wing conservative ideologies, creating a loyal and expansive followership among young men.

The Malayali manosphere emerges as a unique regional variant within the broader Indian digital landscape, distinguished by its global connectivity and sophisticated adaptation of western manosphere concepts. Characterized by innovative terminologies like 'Meninist' and 'Peacock Feminism', this digital community spans both Kerala and the global Malayalee diaspora. The Malayali manosphere also includes an active Red Pill community with dedicated websites, YouTube channels, and social media groups that actively reproduce and localize international misogynistic content with regional flavour. This regional variant also presents a complex interplay of atheist discourse and misogynistic rhetoric, creating a unique platform for spreading anti-feminist ideologies among Malayalee youth both within and outside geographical boundaries.

Further research on the Indian manosphere and the regional variants of it should target a comprehensive mapping of these communities, with special attention to how misogynistic narratives are constructed and propagated in the regional contexts. Urgent academic attention is needed to comprehensively map the linguistic, cultural, and systemic dimensions of the Indian manosphere, exploring the intersectional dynamics of caste, class, and masculinity while tracing the pathways of ideological indoctrination and radicalization to understand and mitigate physical and online violence.

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.