

Tracing Counter Memory: An Inquiry into the Mediation of Silence in Empirical Media Coding Practices

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Abstract:

The media's power to direct attention to and from public issues often determines which problems will be addressed or ignored by society. The media may leave out some issues simply by ignoring the actual problem. In a media-saturated culture, this lack of attention means silencing. Silence can also be indicated as an emotion, intent or information that is not being fully addressed during a process.

Notions of archiving, memory, identity and power are interlinked, with archiving, taking a prominent role in controlling what we remember. This paper revisits news and media narratives in the manner of an archive. In this, the contemporary news items are collected and analyzed how it becomes an effective archive. How they would be representing the unheard voices of the people involved in the event. Furthermore, it can be clarified as an attempt to project the ups and downs in the future when it comes to the case of archival. Media narrates news using certain codes that reflect the era of production. To make the audience appeal, these codes reflect certain dominant ideologies and values of the time. The researcher rests upon the question of which materials are coded and which are excluded, keeping the Foucauldian approach of memory, power and the epistemology of resistance through the notion of counter memory. The study also brings into play Martin Heidegger's inquiry into the significance of silence.

The present research examines the mediation of silence in the empirical media codingpractices and the process of remembering and forgetting. It also analyses the role played by silence in the creation of memories. For this purpose, the study focuses on the archival coding of news related to senior citizens during the COVID-19 outbreak and subsequent lockdown in Kerala. Qualitative content analysis of weekly news programs in two top-rated Malayalam TV News Channels is done, along with an unstructured interview with the subjects. The study reveals that silenceexists in media coding practices. They are capable of symbolizing the mere presence of absence and thus creating memories. The research also unfolds the media role in creating, recollection, destruction, modification, and replacement of memories.

Keywords: archival coding, silence, memory-counter memory, forgetting-remembering, senior citizens

Introduction

Memory, like history, is rooted in archives. However, archives are not memory as such similar to the saying history is not the past. Instead, they are considered to be memory carriers or memory triggers. They act as the potential source for the discovery or recovery of memories. Archives play a significant role in influencing and controlling how we recall and see ourselves and others. Archives, history, memory, personality and power are deeply intertwined concepts. This paper revisits news and media narratives in the manner of an archive.

Why media matters?

The media has long been regarded as a powerful force that shapes our perceptions of the world. It has replaced many previous institutions as the principal source of information and understanding of the world.

Gary Edgerton's (2000) preface to a special issue of *Film & History* titled '*Television as Historian*' defines this concept. Today, the majority of people learn about history through television. Just as television has profoundly touched and altered every area of contemporary life, its nonfictional and fictional portrayals have similarly influenced the way tens of millions of viewers think about historical figures.

Therefore people's daily engagements with media are extremely significant and need to be studied. Systematic consideration of collective past, narrated by media which disseminates through it, thus needs special scholarly attention. Realizing what versions of past and present are conveyed through media is just as crucial as recognizing media's role as memory agents.

Media narrates news using certain codes that reflect the era of production. In order to make the audience appeal, these codes reflect the dominant ideologies and values of the time. The researcher rests upon the question of which materials are coded and which are excluded during this process.

In a media-saturated world where communication becomes highly performative and formalized, the retention or absence of an anticipated word or gesture is critical and significant. It needs special attention.

The disputed environment in which people and media operate is one where specific stories remain as privileged, and others marginalized by decisions taken up by those who have the power to create, maintain, recollect, destroy, modify and replace those stories. The media landscape changes what we want to remember and forget, but how do we remember and forget.

Media and Communication during COVID-19

During a crucial pandemic situation like COVID-19, the media plays multidimensional roles. Media can provide relief as well as create panic among its audience. The media's importance was highly acknowledged during COVID-19 by making people aware of the crisis and acting as a link between government/policymakers and society. The role of mass media as the most

authentic primary source of information was highly remarkable when other forms of direct interpersonal and face-to-face communication were limited.

Because of its high accessibility and availability, visual media, particularly television, have high acceptability among media consumers in Kerala. This acceptability and dependency increased during this crucial time. Almost all categories of people can easily understand and decode the messages presented through the television screen. Normal communication barriers, including literacy, language, and education, have limited roles in the case of television. Such an environment demands a keen inquiry into the phenomenon, visual media plays during the critical period.

Senior Citizens

Elderly or old age consists of ages nearing or surpassing the average life span of human beings. The government of India adopted 'National Policy on Older Persons' in January, 1999. It defines 'senior citizen' or 'elderly' as a person who is of age 60 years or above. For this study, the researcher considers those aged 65 years or above as senior citizens.

Demography of India- Perspective of why Senior Citizens

According to the Census 2011, India has a total geographical territory of 32.87 lakhs sq km and a population of 1.21 billion people. India accounts for more than 17.5% of the global population, making it the world's second-most populous country.

Considering the report of June 2011, titled 'Situation Analysis of the Elderly in India', compiled by Central Statistics Office, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Government of India, elderly population or senior citizens in India are about 7.4% of the total population of the year 2001.

According to Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India, SRS Statistical Report 2011, India's elderly population is around 8%, or 104 million people (aged 60 years & above). All these reports reveal that India's elderly population has steadily increased throughout the years. United Nations defines a country as 'Greying Nation' if the proportion of individuals aged above 60 reaches 7% of the total population. In 2011, India surpassed that percentage (8.0%) and is predicted to reach 12.6 percent by 2025.

Case of Kerala

According to the 2011 Census report, Kerala is a home to 33.3 million people (2.76% of India's total population) with 12.6 % elderly population. Considering India, Total fertility rate (TFR-average number of children that would be born to a woman in her child-bearing age) is 2.5. It is 2.1 for Kerala. A total fertility rate of 2.1 is regarded a replacement level, implying that the state's population structure will remain stable for a long time. It suggests that Kerala's grey population would continue to increase.

Senior Citizens and COVID-19

Compared to people from other age groups, senior citizens have far greater issues concerning COVID-19 infection and deaths due to their weekend health. Out of this fear they are advised to stay at home even after the gradual withdrawn of the lockdown. During the COVID-19, they remain as one of the most isolated groups of individuals, confronting several challenges and problems that are only understood and admired by them.

Theoretical Framework

Here in this study, the researcher engaged Foucauldian idea of memory, power and epistemology of resistance through the notion of counter memory. Michel Foucault approached memory as the very crucial factor for struggle. He argued that if one controls people's memory, eventually, it controls their dynamism. To claim this memory, one needs the execution of power; to control, administer and determine the composition. According to Foucault 'power is everywhere' and 'comes from everywhere'. Through power-knowledge discourse, Foucault narrates how knowledge is suppressed, and a counter system is produced through power. Foucauldian idea puts practices of remembering and forgetting in the context of power relations. It also illustrates the possibilities of resistance through counter memory. Counter memory is a form of resistance against the official discourses. Official discourses that claims historical continuity occupies a status of 'credible archive'. Retrieving the archival resources and revisiting them availing aid from counter memory will generate different historical perspectives other than the officiated credible ones. The judicious revaluation of the existing data based on the experiences of the people involved would deliver a new sense on the process of inquiring history, thus producing the 'other' as the new power that was dismantled or lost its significant position in the officiated process.

The archive, according to Foucault, is a discursive structure that establishes the possibility of what can be said. Counter-memory emphasizes the 'bottom-up' approach, illustrating the process by which various groups and individuals attempt to influence current knowledge and struggle for recognition of marginalized discourses of past. It is a political act since it tries to influence the existing power relations.

This study's conceptual framework can thus be summarised as follows, which is significant in this context. Anything which gets recorded generally takes the form of an archive. It is more evident with media content where the archival coding system enabled in the present environment looks for the content generated. That content of media especially focusing visual are taken as the fundamental unit of this study. The study thus focuses on the archival coding of news related to senior citizens during COVID-19 outbreak and subsequent lockdown in Kerala. It is done through the qualitative content analysis of two news based programs. The archival value of media in the creation of memory during COVID-19 becomes predominant in this context. Memories of several categories of people's lives during lockdown were formed through media through these narratives.

There is a widespread belief that archives can provide citizens with a feeling of self, locality, history, culture, and personal and collective memory. However, in order to decode the archival value of these materials from the standpoint of counter memory, they must be revalued based on the experiences of those who were directly involved. In this case, the

researcher is attempting to engage senior citizens and make them reveal their experiences during the pandemic. The findings could reveal something very different from the official archival narratives.

Even many archivists regard archives as mirrors of social life, and rarely delving into the fundamental foundations of social life, social creation, social development, and social structure, thus ignoring their dynamic interactions with today's society. Such thinking and practice intentionally or unintentionally push archives to the margins of society and minimize the connections between archives and modern social life. It is like archives only need to be looked back tomorrow. It is not true. The contents, which are going to be archives, should be revisited today itself and go for necessary changes if needed.

The study also brings into play Martin Heidegger's inquiry into the significance of silence in order to understand the core area of the research objective; though in narrow lined traces but may be elaborated for future related updating. Heidegger's approach to silence suggests that silence have existential fundament and understanding. He argued that to be silent does not mean to be mute. Here the researcher identified the "silence" (absence of the everyday experiences) in the archival coding practices created by the media. The inquiry about the representations of the real everyday issues of senior citizens though absent in these news reports, were contradicted by the conversations and field observations held thereafter. They still have problems, which are recognized outside of standard media coding methods.. It shows that to have proper archival decoding, the media coding should be practised with multiple perspectives and multiple layers.

Methodology

The present research examines the mediation of silence in empirical media coding practices as well as in the remembering and forgetting process. It also considers the significance of silence in the creation of memories. For this purpose, the study focuses on the archival coding of news related to senior citizens during COVID-19 outbreak and the ensuing lockdown in Kerala. Qualitative content analysis seems to be the most appropriate method to carry out this research process. Thus the researcher decided to perform a conceptual content analysis of weekly news programs in four top-rated Malayalam news channels for a period of one month, beginning March 25, 2020, when India's lockdown was officially declared.

A pilot study was conducted to determine the news programmes and news channels. Nearly six Malayalam news channels, which ranked first through sixth in BARC-TRP-rating during the entire lockdown period, were analyzed to identify the sample. However, the majority of these programs did not fulfil the research's requirements in terms of genre, content, style, and presentation—for example, being too satirical, too specialized, and so on. Among them, two programs from two top-rated Malayalam news channels found to be pertinent.

Population and Sample

Asianet News and Manorama News are the two Malayalam news channels selected for the study. They are Kerala's most-watched news channels in Malayalam. During the entire period

chosen for the study, these two channels ranked first two positions in the weekly list of Broadcast Audience Research Council (BARC) India-TRP ratings of Malayalam news channels, with Asianet News placing first in virtually every week (source: Malayalam news channels BARC-TRP-ratings weekly list). Both channels have high credibility and trustworthiness among the news channel viewers in Kerala. The chosen weekly news analysis programs Cover Story and ParayatheVayya receive high acceptability and viewership among Malayalam news channel viewers, thus making them the top-rated programs in this genre in Malayalam.

Asianet News

Asianet News is the pioneer of television news broadcasting in Kerala's private sector. As the news department of Asianet (first private television channel in Malayalam) it started Malayalam news broadcasting for the first time in the private sector of Kerala on September 30, 1995, at 7.30 pm. It was also India's first live television news broadcast. It became a 24-hour Malayalam news channel in 2003, and later an independent news channel under Asianet News Network Pvt Ltd in 2009.

Cover Story

Asianet News brings the weekly news analysis program Cover Story every Saturdays at 9:30 pm. Hosted by Sindhu Sooryakumar, it completed nearly 635 episodes. Cover Story delves into the motivations and rationales underlying political and policy decisions, as well as critically and satirically analyzing and commenting on the week's significant news events.

Manorama News

Manorama News, the Malayalam language news channel is a unit of MalayalaManorama Television Ltd., owned and operated by MalayalaManorama, one of the largest and earliest media houses in India. It was launched on August 17, 2006. Channel bureaus are located at all district headquarters and other remote locations in Kerala and metros in India. Dubai bureau gives fast and effective access to Gulf region, the extended second home for many Malayalis.

ParayatheVayya

Every Saturday at 9:30 p.m., Manorama News channel broadcasts a weekly news-based show. Shani Prabhakaran, Chief News Producer at Manorama News hosts this show. The host discusses the most important socio-political topics that have arisen throughout the course of the week analytically and critically. It adjudged the best current affairs program at Kerala State Television Awards 2019.

The researcher conducted a qualitative conceptual content analysis of two programmes, Asianet News' Cover Story and Manorama News' Parayathe Vayya, during the entire lockdown period in India following one month of Unlock 1 (announced by the Central government on May 30, 2020 and commenced on June 08, 2020), that is, from March 25, 2020 to June 30, 2020. The selected time frame includes 14 consecutive Saturdays, the day on which both programs broadcast. While conducting the purposive sample selection of these episodes, it was noted that Parayathe Vayya was not telecasted for the first three weeks,

specifically on March 28, 2020, April 4, 2020, and April 11, 2020, due to some lockdown issues. These three weeks thus skipped for Parayathe Vayya. Thus the sample selected includes 14 episodes of Cover Story and 11 episodes of Parayathe Vayya. The study's archive materials were obtained from the channels' websites, apps, and YouTube platform.

An unstructured interview was conducted among 10 elderly people aged 65 and above selected from the Thiruvananthapuram district in Kerala. It was purposefully designed to understand and identify their main concerns and social requirements during the COVID-19 outbreak and ensuing lockdown. The social needs mentioned here refer to their physical, emotional and intellectual needs. Each individual was asked to identify three elements that they think to be the most important regarding their concerns or needs during the above-mentioned time period.

The concepts and codes used in the analysis process were identified through Sociogram scaling techniques.

Figure 1 below shows the visual representation of their responses.

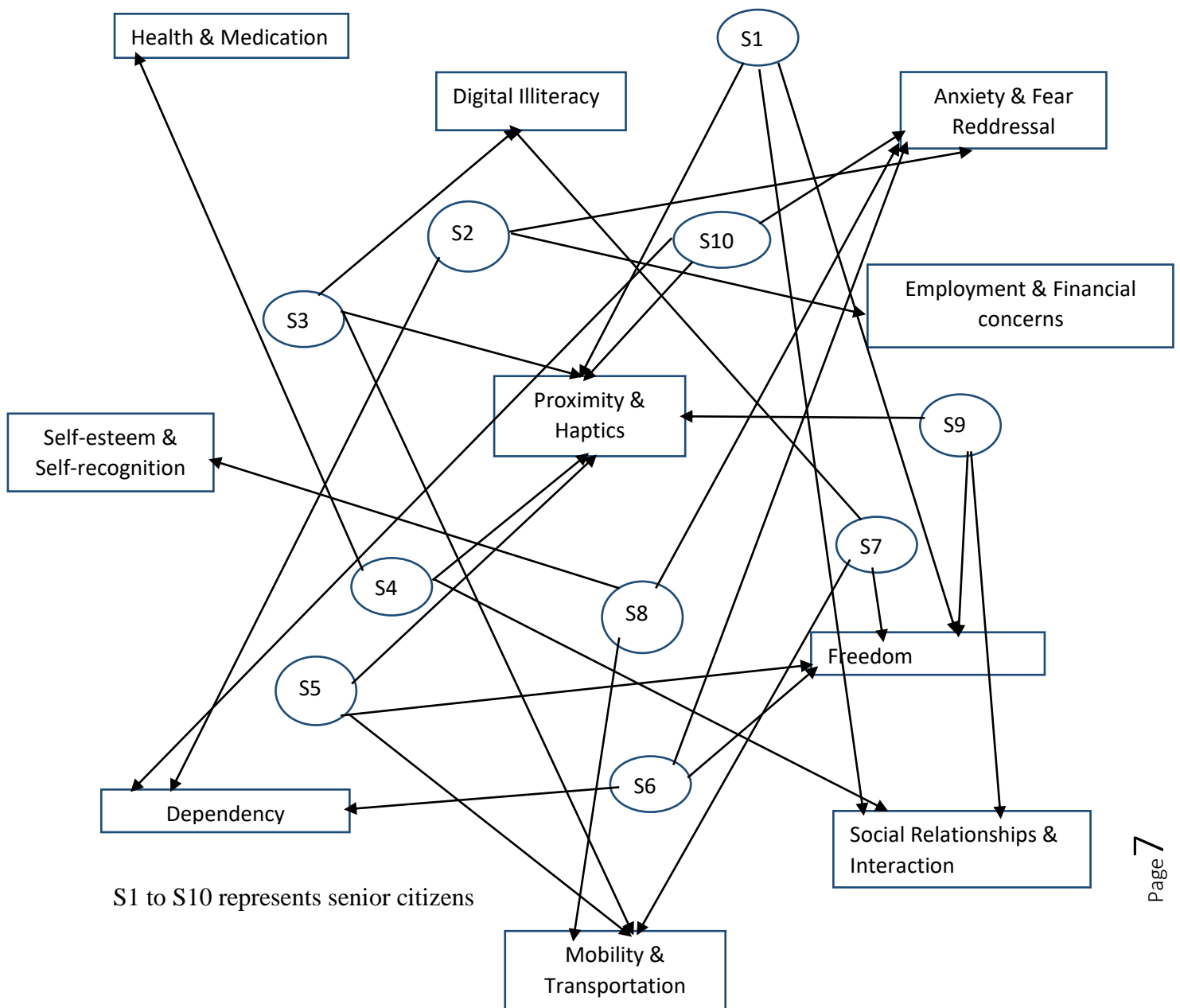


Figure 1

Ten concepts or themes were developed to analyze the sample, based on its relevance, priority, and relationships with each other; some concepts were left alone, while others were grouped together based on their inter-relational value. The concepts chosen are given below in the order of most important to least important (considered by senior citizens); other concepts that the subject deems unimportant are excluded.

1. Proximity and Haptics
2. Freedom
3. Anxiety and fear redressal
4. Mobility and transportation
5. Social relationships and interaction
6. Dependency
7. Digital illiteracy
8. Self-esteem and Self-recognition
9. Employment and financial concerns
10. Health and Medication

Analysis and Findings

Cover Story

This program's 14 episodes were examined and analyzed in total. Table 01 indicates which episodes included news or materials about senior citizens (even in a minimal format) and which did not.

Name of the programme: Cover Story			
Sl. No.	Date of Telecast	Contains news related to senior citizens	
		Yes	No
1.	March 28, 2020	✓	
2.	April 04, 2020	✓	
3.	April 11, 2020	✓	
4.	April 18, 2020		✓
5.	April 25, 2020		✓
6.	May 2, 2020		✓
7.	May 9, 2020	✓	
8.	May 16, 2020	✓	
9.	May 23, 2020		✓
10.	May 30, 2020	✓	
11.	June 06, 2020	✓	
12.	June 13, 2020	✓	

13.	June 20, 2020		✓
14.	June 27, 2020		✓

Table 01

Table 02 details how media coded the issues under consideration and which are the concepts used.

Name of the Programme: Cover Story												
Sl. No.	Date of Telecast	Concepts										
		Proximity & Happiness	Freedom	Anxiety & fear redressal	Mobility & transportation	Social relationships	Dependency	Digital illiteracy	Self-esteem & self-	Employment & financial issues	Health & Medication	Others (if any, as identified in media material)
1.	March 28, 2020								✓			Basic needs, human rights
2.	April 04, 2020										✓	
3.	April 11, 2020										✓	Personal rights
4.	May 09, 2020											Basic needs
5.	May 16, 2020											Basic needs
6.	May 30, 2020										✓	
7.	June 06, 2020										✓	
8.	June 13, 2020						✓			✓	✓	

Table 02

After reviewing 14 episodes of Cover Story, it was found that only 8 of them contain news or events related to senior citizens, at least in a least format.

Episode: March 28, 2020 (Duration: 21 minutes 36 seconds)

It was the first episode since India was placed under lockdown on March 25. Numerous worries were floating around about the lockdown and its related issues. The program begins by depicting Kerala's COVID-19 status, then compares it to those of other states and countries. Following that, the programme gradually shifts its focus to migrant labour concerns and their exodus to their homelands. The report emphasized the situation of senior citizens along with children and women who are unable to meet their basic necessities, such

as food and water. The term 'elderly' appears only once in a sentence, along with the words 'children' and 'women'.

It then shows a recent incident in which police officers ridiculed some senior citizens in public, accusing them of violating lockdown regulations without considering their age, health, or other associated issues. It was the day's most important news. The programme viewed this as a breach of senior citizens' human rights.

The program means to convey that activities occurring in various parts of the state under the guise of lockdown limitations should be regulated. Concerns about senior citizens' self-esteem being diminished are implicit here.

Episode: April 04, 2020 (Duration: 24 minutes 52 seconds)

The program took a critical look at what happens following a lockdown. The session begins with assessing the role played by Kerala's public health sector in efficiently controlling COVID-19 and raising public awareness. They backed up their claim by citing the story of an elderly couple aged 93 and 88 years old respectively, who overcame all obstacles and recovered from COVID-19.

In the entire program, this is the spot where there is a mention of senior citizens. However, they were utilized as a symbol to showcase the accomplishments of Kerala's public health sector in the fight against the corona virus pandemic. Again it's tied to the theme - health and medication. The rest of the program discusses the limitations and challenges faced by Kerala's public health sector, especially in Kasargod district.

Episode: April 11, 2020 (Duration: 22 minutes 30 seconds)

The episode begins with the detailed analysis of global nation's approaches to combating the spread of corona virus with a special emphasis on UN. In relation to this content, the program mentions the criticism levelled at various European countries for personal directives for senior citizens, claiming that they knowingly allow older persons to hug death during this pandemic time.

In most European countries, senior citizens may have prepared a personal narrative in advance that specifies whether they wish to be hospitalized, utilize ventilators, and so on. During COVID-19 epidemic, however, this issue drew harsh criticisms from around the world, with some accusing it of depriving elderly people necessary medicines and hospitalization, ultimately allowing them to die.

However, the programme is attempting to establish that these are concerns of civic rights, and that citizens in most European countries have the same right. They also include a byte of a health practitioner from Canada (0.29 seconds duration) to support their claim. They just deny criticism of human rights violations in the name of civic rights preservation.

Episode: May 09, 2020 (Duration: 25 minutes 41 seconds)

The authorities' attitude toward ordinary people during lockdown period, as well as their interests in policy creation, is a major issue in this episode. Migrant labourers, overseas Indians, Keralites working or living in other states/countries, women, children, the elderly, and others are among those mentioned here. This is the part where senior citizens found a small slot in this report. They are mentioned in the analysis section, which explains the challenges people returning to Kerala from other states encounter. According to the report, passengers must wait a long time to enter the Kerala border, sometimes up to several hours. This group includes children, women, and old citizens. They are confronted with numerous problems, including the lack of necessities like food, water, and sanitation facilities. Senior citizens were clubbed together with other groups of people, in this case, implying that the difficulties and obstacles they encounter are common. Here also, senior citizens are unable to establish a distinct identity. This point becomes even more important when we consider that the same episode details the difficulties faced by Malayali expatriates (Pravasi) and their concerns about returning to their homeland, the way migrant labourers are treated by the respective governments, increases in air and railway fares, and so on.

Episode: May 16, 2020 (Duration: 25 minutes 03 seconds)

This episode's evaluation yields conclusions that are nearly identical to the prior one. In the report detailing the difficulties and concerns experienced by migrant labourers, a single term senior citizen appeared alongside children and women. The programme raises major concerns regarding the government's stance toward migrant labourers, their experiences during COVID-19, and their journey back to their hometown. However, senior citizens have once again been identified as a subset of a larger group of people with whom others believe they share common problems. Another significant conclusion is that whenever the program discusses the issues of migrant workers or ordinary people, it includes visuals or images of elderly people as supportive material.

Episode: May 30, 2020 (Duration: 22 minutes 58 seconds)

This is the final episode of this program before the launch of Unlock 1 process in June 2020. It aired on May 30, 2020. Despite the fact that the country had been under lockdown for more than two months at this point, the country still concerned about the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. It's likely that this is why the programme addresses many queries and uncertainties that exist among the general public about COVID-19 and explains it through doctors, health professionals, and people who have recovered from the disease. The case of senior citizens is discussed in this section. However, it is solely based on their fears about their health and medicines, as expressed by two doctors' statements (bytes). When compared to people of various ages, senior individuals are more prone to COVID-19 infection and related death, according to these health specialists. It is just a factual report that attempts to communicate their concerns about senior citizens' health and medication. But through the unstructured interview with the senior citizens, the researcher has found that health and related difficulties are the least important topic they are cared about.

Episode: June 06, 2020 (Duration: 22 minutes 03 seconds)

This is the first episode following the May 30, 2020 announcement of Unlock 1, which will premiere on June 8, 2020. The central government was gradually opening up the country, with Unlock 1 being the first phase of this upliftment, which involved the reopening of non-containment zones around the country under a tight set of Standard Opening Procedures (SOPs) that lasted until June 30, 2020. Naturally, the program emphasized the significance of citizens and government being extra watchful during the unlocking process. There was a detailed inquiry into the steps that each individual is expected to follow. Along with that they mentioned politicians who are more than 65 years old. Politicians are particularly susceptible to corona infection since their daily routines include attending official and public meetings, organizing relief efforts, and interacting with general public. Because many of them are in their 60s, 70s, and 80s, things get more dangerous. The program goes on to discuss the steps that these public personalities should take to lower their risk of contracting COVID-19.

Despite the fact that this section goes into great detail about the difficulties and solutions facing the elderly, it is focused on a certain group of senior citizens who are more powerful and have more privileges than others.

Towards the end of the program, the demands that persons who wish to visit houses of worship be permitted to do so even if they are over the age of 65 were criticized. It warns that removing these limits could expose a huge portion of the population to corona virus, particularly the elderly. In this scenario, the concern is solely about health-related issues.

Episode: June 13, 2020 (Duration: 21 minutes 10 seconds)

This episode focused on how people's attitudes on COVID-19 have changed, with the realization that people are taking the matter too lightly. They expressed their displeasure with such a public response. In addition, the program tackles the then-current political dispute over the reopening of shrines in Kerala during COVID-19 situation.

The following session examines the challenges and limitations encountered by Kerala's public health system, in light of COVID-19's rapid expansion across the state, which has resulted in an increase in those affected. To support their claim, they cited the fact that people returning to Kerala from all over the world do not have access to government-run quarantine facilities. Senior citizens over the age of 70 with other health difficulties are among those who fall into this category. This is, once again, solely a health and medication issue.

Then it focused on the unique situation of senior citizens, emphasizing that the virus is more severe among elderly, and that they must remain at home for their own safety. It also raised strong concern about people's careless attitude toward these instructions, particularly that of senior citizens. As proof of justification, the report uses the bytes of five senior citizens who came into the public place for varied reasons. From their words, it appears that people are leaving the house to meet a variety of unavoidable needs, such as purchasing medicine, banking, visiting government offices, and finding work. They have no one to rely on for these

requirements. These remarks encapsulate the reasons why, even in the midst of an epidemic, most older people prefer to stay outside. Despite this reality, the report plainly criticizes senior citizens for violating the guidelines.

ParayatheVayya

There were 11 episodes in total that were evaluated and analyzed. Table 03 displays which episodes have included news or materials about senior citizens (even in the least form) and which have not.

Name of the programme: ParayatheVayya			
Sl. No.	Date of Telecast	Contains news related to senior citizens	
		Yes	No
1.	April 18, 2020		✓
2.	April 25, 2020	✓	
3.	May 02, 2020		✓
4.	May 09, 2020		✓
5.	May 16, 2020		✓
6.	May 23, 2020		✓
7.	May 30, 2020		✓
8.	June 06, 2020	✓	
9.	June 13, 2020		✓
10.	June 20, 2020	✓	
11.	June 27, 2020		✓

Table 03

The Table 04 below details how media coded the issues under consideration and which are the concepts used.

Name of the Programme: ParayatheVayya												
Sl. No.	Date of Telecast	Concepts										
		Proximity & Haptics	Freedom	Anxiety & fear redressal	Mobility & transportation	Social relationships	Dependency	Digital illiteracy	Self-esteem & self-	Employment & financial issues	Health & Medication	Others (if any, as identified in media material)
1.	April 25, 2020										✓	

2.	June 06, 2020											spirituality
3.	June 20, 2020										✓	

Table 04

Episode: April 25, 2020 (Duration: 22 minutes 63 seconds)

Moving forward by admitting the existence of the corona virus is the key concern of this episode. The corona virus is likely to persist even after the curve flattens. Social distancing, wearing masks, and using hand sanitizers will become the new normal. The specific case of senior citizens is highlighted here by providing the byte of Kerala's health minister, K. K. Shailaja. It's a legitimate concern of senior citizens' health difficulties. Senior citizens are supposed to stay at home because they are at a higher risk of viral infection, she said. Another byte from a health practitioner appears in the same episode, stating that it is everyone's responsibility to safeguard senior citizens from COVID-19 infection. It's about health issues once more.

Episode: June 06, 2020 (Duration: 22 minutes 28 seconds)

A considerable portion of this episode is devoted to a specific issue, death of a pregnant wild elephant, which was a major source of controversy at the time. This incident sparked a political debate and flagged a 'hate campaign'. This topic was discussed for about 14 minutes out of the entire program. The program expresses concern about the general public's attitude toward relaxations that are supposed to be part of the unlocking process. It then returns to the political debate surrounding the reopening of shrines in Kerala. It also criticized the arguments for granting elderly, children, and pregnant women permission to enter shrines. In this context, a single word, senior citizen, refers along with other groups of people. It is just presented as a sort of criticism, not as a topic to discuss.

Episode: June 20, 2020 (Duration: 19 minutes 66 seconds)

Concerns about Malayali expatriates (Pravasi) who were left stranded in various areas of the world dominated this episode. It then moves on to the political debate over the mandated pre-flight COVID test for all pravasis returning home from overseas.

In the centre of the issue, there is a single statement on senior citizens. According to the report, senior citizens constitute roughly 14% of Kerala's population. As a result, if the virus spreads further, the situation may become uncontrollable. The case of senior citizens is used as illustrative material for the situation in general.

Discussions

Media archives and memory creation

The mass media continues to serve as a vital open access archive of collective and individual memory. This fact was highly evident throughout this research. Both the programs discussed

here will function as important media archives, capable of constructing and disseminating memories relating to India's struggle against COVID-19 pandemic. It will serve as a reference in future, for individuals seeking to understand the fundamental themes of India's response to a pandemic. When all other kinds of non-mediated interpersonal and face-to-face communication were halted as part of maintaining social separation distancing during COVID-19 outbreak and subsequent lockdown, mass media became the primary source of information. In addition, it restricted the reconstruction and recall of personal and private memories in a social setting. In creation of memory, mass media took over the entire scene and supplanted all previous sorts. Memories of several kinds of people's lives during the lockdown were formed through media through these narratives. Migrant workers, women, children, pravasis, and, of course, senior citizens are among these categories, though in a limited manner. This is the point at which it is necessary to address the fact that media has an impact not only on what we remember, but also on how do we remember.

Mediation of Silence in Forgetting and remembering

The researcher examined the distribution of concepts (chosen from an unstructured interview with senior citizens) across all selected episodes of Cover Story and Parayathe Vayya.

Concepts arranged in the order of their emphasis in both programs

Sl. No.	Concepts chosen for analysis	Number of occurrences
1.	Health and Medication	7
2.	Employment and financial concerns	1
3.	Dependency	1
4.	Self-esteem and Self-recognition	1
5.	Proximity and Haptics	0
6.	Freedom	0
7.	Anxiety and fear redressal	0
8.	Mobility and transportation	0
9.	Social relationships and interaction	0
10.	Digital illiteracy	0

Table 05

This study made a detailed analysis of different concepts to comprehend the archival coding of media materials. The findings reveal that there are gaps in the archival coding process. Six of the ten concepts chosen did not appear in any of the samples, despite the fact that they were rated extremely important by senior citizens. They remain silent.

What are the implications of these omissions? Does it have any significance? If the answer is yes, then it should be considered as a matter of discussion. If what is recognized is a sign, then what is not acknowledged should be regarded as a sign as well. Silences, significant omissions, gaps, and erasures are implementations of these signs. It encourages us to remember what is being forgotten. Even the most basic concept - senior citizens - was coded haphazardly in this context. Even the subject finds a place outside of the coding process's structure. This is one of the key findings of this research.

The research then throws light on a crucial question: are these silences intentional or not? If it is an intentional act, there is great possibility of diffusion of power. This corresponds to Michel Foucault's concept of power: power is everywhere, not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere. Governing this power over others entails shaping others' potential fields of activity. It is particularly relevant in the context of the media environment. Selection, organization, preservation, and dissemination of media archives have the power to directly influence the creation of memory. It is possible to purposefully avoid using a certain theme or concept as long as one remembers that it is not intended to be used by.

It also raises another important question: what are the motivations underlying the remembering and forgetting processes? Whether remembering and forgetting a simple task or one that necessitates conscious efforts? During the 5th century B. C., Simonides of Ceos, the pioneer of 'art of memory,' offers to teach it to Themistocles, an Athenian statesman. This suggestion is countered by Themistocles, who claims that art of memory is easy. Deliberately trying to remember something is a simple and straightforward task. The art of forgetting is more demanding. To consciously forget something, one must make conscious efforts. He or she must think about that exact thing over and over again, and this thought process is incompatible with the art of forgetting.

The same is true with media narratives. If the memory producers purposefully remember to constantly forget some codes during the archiving process, it is true that they have not forgotten these codes. Instead, it causes that particular memory to be reinforced. To repress social or collective memory, like in Freudian repression, constant efforts and attention are required.

According to Sigmund Freud, human mind has immense capability to forget what it finds forgotten. In summary, it shows that forgetting is a highly motivated process that demands mental presence. It's same as someone's capacity to remain silent even when they have

something to say but choose to be silent purposefully and knowingly. Silence does not imply nothingness. This is consistent with Heidegger's notion of silence.

There is silence only in the possibility of expression,. It's the same with absence and presence. One of the key functions of silence is to represent the very absence of expression. It represents what is not expressed directly.

If the presence of silence in this context can be considered as the result of execution of power, the power being exercised here can also be thought of as a productive action that produces reality - the reality of silence, which reveals the presence of something beneath this mere absence. And that 'something' will almost certainly be the truth. Silence can be misinterpreted or deceiving at times, but it can never be deceiving. Silences have the ability to represent the mere existence of absence.

In this sense, the mere existence of silence implies the process of forgetting. Keeping with Foucauldian notions of resistance, it refers the process of remembering too. That opposition, according to Foucault, is not something that is exerted from outside powers, but within it. In the battle among power/ knowledge frameworks, some rise to the top and become dominant, while others fall behind and become subjugated. Subjugated knowledge, according to Foucault, are marginalized modes of experiencing and remembering. Analyzing in this perspective, the current research, in its broadest form, generates counter-memories or counter-history, as well as resistance to a power framework. In this resistance process, the capacity to recognize omissions and silences is crucial.

As Milan Kundera advocated, resistance is possible through memory. The struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting. Silence plays an important role in creating these memories.

Forgetting is a key factor in creating memories. It emphasizes the importance of being remembered as a form of resistance against power. According to the Roman historian Tacitus, memory can remain in the face of political repression. He also believes that political repression enhances memory.

Memory modification and memory replacement

Not only does media modifies what we have to remember, but it also changes how we have to remember it. Media can influence the construction and recollection of memories. The act of familiarisation is closely linked to the act of creation and recollection of memories. If people continue to expose or familiarize with certain concepts, they tend to regard them as more significant and important. The current study's analysis reveals that one particular theme – health and medication– is strongly emphasized, both in terms of number of occurrences and the manner of presentation. It should be noted that this is least considered by the senior citizens. They have many other things to bother about. A large majority of senior citizens, for example, are worried about concepts like proximity, haptics, and freedom.

Senior citizens find it extremely difficult to maintain social distance. They feel relaxed when they are with their family and friends. Being physically close to their loved ones (proximity) and even a mere touch means a lot to them. Moreover, the truth is that they are eagerly anticipating these activities to take place during the pandemic. The same may be said for their desire for freedom. Unfortunately, the media failed to recognize and address these issues. To put it other words, media emphasized just those concepts that they believe are significant, relevant, and crucial.

The same may be said for construction of memories related to senior citizens, the core subject of this study. They have incorporated into the coding process' framework in a very minimal format. Considering Cover Story, almost half of the 14 episodes examined depict news pertaining to senior citizens. More disappointing is the case with Parayathe Vayya.. The news about senior citizens was barely mentioned in three episodes out of eleven. This is the case of a channel that professes to never fail to raise the voice of the oppressed, marginalized, and unheard (source: manoramanews.com). The crucial thing to note here is that even the episodes with news related to senior citizen do not address the issue as it is. Rather, senior citizens get grouped together with other groups of people and presented problems and challenges as common to all of them. These groups include migrant laborers, women, children, and pravasis. Media fails to recognize that different people experience different issues and it is not a common topic to address. Senior citizens lost their identity as unique individuals. It's also worth mentioning the words used to code senior citizens. They are not coded as such. In most cases, they are referred to as weakest, patients, digital illiterates, and other terms. All these cases are clear indication of memory modification and memory replacement.

This cannot be considered as complete absence. The apparent absence of relevant themes altogether is notable. Meanwhile, it is recalled in reference to other concepts. It cannot be considered as a practice of destroying memory, rather replacing the memory.

The majority of the times, memories are created rather than occurring naturally. Therefore, they are not mere interpretations of objectively documented events. There's every chance they're cultural devices serving the interests of the people who create these memories.

Memory modification and memory replacement should be seen as far more important and harmful than their absence or destruction. Because it has the potential to dictate our priorities, leads to invalid categorization and improper prioritization of concerns. Replacement of memories will eventually lead to the replacement of identities.

Conclusion

The present researchexamines the mediation of silence in empirical media coding practices as well as in the remembering and forgetting process. Through an investigation into the archival coding of news articles relating to senior citizens during the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown in Kerala, it also examined the function of silence in creation of memories.

Memories, like history, are often created rather than arising naturally, according to the study. Therefore, scholarly investigations should broaden their purview beyond what is remembered and forgotten to include how it remembered/forgotten, by whom it is remembered/forgotten, and with what effects.

As an important open access archive of collective and individual memory, media continues to play a significant role in the formation, recollection, destruction, modification, and replacement of memories. Memory created through media fits within the framework of time and space.

Absence, omissions, silence, and marginalization exist in the process of archival coding and creation of memories. Silence in these processes is not the result of simple ignorance; rather, it is the result of memory producers choosing to incorporate information that they believe is vital and important while omitting information that they believe is not. If these silences are the result of a deliberate act, it is reasonable to assume the diffusion power.

The silence here refers to selective emphasis as well as active omissions. They serve as a constant reminder of what is not being said. Analyzing from this perspective, the study reveals that silence plays an important role in the processes that lead to forgetting and remembering things. Silences are capable of symbolizing the mere presence of absence. This is a form of resistance that arise within the structure of power. Resistance is possible through memory. Silence plays an important role in creating these memories.

Media possess the immense capability of modifying and replacing memories. In most cases memories are modified and replaced than destructing it. In reality, when compared to the absence or destruction of memories, this act of replacement is the most dangerous and threatening. It eventually leads to the modification and replacement of identities as well.

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