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A cultural journey of metamorphosis from the Laccadives to Lakshadweep

Synopsis

A group of people's shared values, beliefs, and behaviors are referred to as their culture, and they are passed down from generation to generation. This dissertation is a travel through the cultural changes of Lakshadweep by applying the theories of neo evolutionism and multilinear evolution by Julian Steward. The research furthermore analyses the multilinear factors that caused cultural evolution in Lakshadweep.

This dissertation is structured in five chapters and the first chapter gives a brief description on Lakshadweep. The Second chapter deals with the basic concepts connected with the theories of neo evolutionism and multilinear evolution. The third chapter deeply analyses the arts and culture of the island Lakshadweep. Fourth chapter delves deep into the cultural change and the environmental factors that caused this change. Fifth chapter concludes the dissertation by highlighting the adverse effects of multilinear factors that lead to cultural evolution and changes in Lakshadweep.

Key Words: Cultural Evolution, Multilinear evolution, Neo-evolutionism, Lakshadweep, Belief

A Cultural Journey of Metamorphosis from The Laccadives to Lakshadweep
Dissertation submitted to Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam, in partial fulfillment for the
award of B.A. degree in English Language and Literature.



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Certificate

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled **A cultural journey of metamorphosis from the Laccadives to Lakshadweep** is a bona fide record of sincere work done by, Mohammed Hisham NP, Register Number: 210021000953, Bharata Mata College, in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in English Language and Literature under the Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam during the year 2023-2024.

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Declaration

I, hereby declare that the presented dissertation **A cultural journey of metamorphosis from the Laccadives to Lakshadweep** is based on the research that I did on under the supervision and guidance of Dr. Thara Gangadharan, Assistant professor, Research Centre and Postgraduate Department of English, Bharata Mata College, in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of the Degree of Bachelor of Arts in English Language and Literature from Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam. This is a report of my hands based on the research done on the selected topic and it is my original work and interpretations drawn there in are based on material collected by myself. It has not been previously formed basis for the award of any degree, diploma or fellowship or other similar title or recognition.

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This project follows MLA 8th edition

Chapter 1

Introduction

Lakshadweep is a group of islands located in Arabian Sea, off the southwestern coast of India. The Lakshadweep Island is Union Territory of India and consists of 36 islands, with only ten of them being inhabited. The culture of Lakshadweep, also known as the Lakshadweep Islands, is a unique blend of various influences, including indigenous traditions, Arab influences, and Indian cultural elements. Based on my own experience as a native of Lakshadweep, this project is an attempt to analyse the culture of Lakshadweep through the lens of cultural studies. The theories that I make use of in my analysis are cultural neo evolutionism and multilineal evolution of culture which argue that the culture of Lakshadweep is dynamic and the external forces of human and commodity influence every facet of Lakshadweep. The research would focus on the language, religion, art forms, cuisine and the dress code of the people.

R. H. Ellis was a British colonial administrator and writer who served in various capacities in British India during the early 20th century. He wrote a book titled "The Laccadive Islands" in 1924, which provides a detailed account of the Laccadive Islands, now known as the Lakshadweep Islands, including Minicoy Island. In his book, Ellis provides a comprehensive overview of the geography, history, culture, and people of the Laccadive Islands. He described the natural beauty of the islands, their marine biodiversity, and the unique way of life of the inhabitants. Ellis also discussed the colonial administration of the islands during his time, as well as the challenges and opportunities faced by the people living there.

The predominant language spoken in Lakshadweep is Malayalam, a Dravidian language spoken in the neighboring state of Kerala. Islam is the primary religion, and the culture of Lakshadweep reflects strong Islamic influences. The traditional attire for men is a white dhoti and shirt, while

women often wear colorful sarees or skirts with blouses. The traditional dress for women also includes a veil or headscarf. The people of Lakshadweep have a rich tradition of music and dance. They often perform traditional dances like Lava dance and Parichakali, which are accompanied by traditional music and singing. The cuisine of Lakshadweep is largely influenced by the local availability of seafood. Coconut plays a significant role in Lakshadweep cuisine, and dishes are often prepared using coconut milk and grated coconut. Seafood dishes like fish curry and rice are popular.

The people of Lakshadweep are skilled in various forms of traditional arts and crafts, including coir weaving, shell craft, and wood carving. These crafts are often used to create beautiful handicrafts and souvenirs. Islamic festivals like Eid ul-Fitr and Eid ul-Adha are celebrated with great fervor in Lakshadweep. These festivals are marked by prayers, feasting, and community gatherings. The people of Lakshadweep have a deep connection to the sea and marine life. Traditional fishing practices and boat building techniques have been passed down through generations, and fishing is an important part of the local economy.

The scope of this research widens into the rich tapestry of traditions, languages, arts, and customs that define the unique identity of this enchanting archipelago. With its diverse population, consisting mainly of indigenous people, cultural studies in Lakshadweep uncover the intricate weave of traditions passed down through generations. From the vibrant festivals celebrating local deities to the exquisite craftsmanship of traditional art forms like wood carving and coconut shell decoration, each aspect reflects the islanders' deep connection to their heritage. Moreover, the influence of external factors, such as trade and colonialism, has left its mark on the culture of Lakshadweep, adding layers of complexity to its narrative. By examining the religious practices, linguistic diversity, culinary delights, and folklore, the study might offer a

comprehensive understanding of the island's cultural mosaic, highlighting its resilience, diversity, and enduring charm.

There have been many kinds of culture in Lakshadweep, including the Class system, Marriage,—Parichakalil,—Attam,—Thikkiril,Lava,Bandiya,Dandi dances and —Kattuvulipattull. As indicated above, there aren't many of them in Lakshadweep nowadays. Modern inventions and advances have a tangential impact on Lakshadweep as well. Cultural forms gradually disappear from the community and society because of these changes.

According to the philosophy of neo-evolutionism, technology is what propels human evolution. The argument posits that technological advancements have made it feasible for people to adjust to their surroundings in manners that were previously unattainable, resulting in several modifications to human culture and behaviour. Julian Steward first postulated multilinear evolution in the 1950s.

According to Steward, cultural evolution varies based on social structure and environment. An effective method for comprehending the diversity of human civilizations is multilinear evolution. It can assist us in comprehending how civilizations have evolved over time and how they are changing now.

—Culture is the fabric of our shared humanity, woven through the intricate threads of history, language, art, and social practices. It is not a static entity but a dynamic force, constantly evolving and shaping the way we perceive ourselves and the world around us. Cultural studies invites us to unravel this tapestry, to scrutinize its patterns and meanings, and to engage in critical dialogue about the forces that both construct and challenge cultural norms and values.(Barker)

This research focuses on an analytical examination of Lakshadweep's historical and modern cultures. This chapter provides an outline of the project and a brief summary of Lakshadweep. Theories and studies used in the analysis are covered in the second chapter. The third chapter examines the various cultures of Lakshadweep, including the caste system, marriage, Parichakalil, —Attam, —Thikkir, Lava, Bandiya, Dandi dances and —Kattuvulipattu. The fourth chapter explores how culture has changed in Lakshadweep in the modern era. The concluding chapter demonstrates how the environment, technical advancements, and contact with other cultures have drastically altered the culture of Lakshadweep.

Chapter 2

Neo Evolutionism and Multilinear Evolution

Our knowledge of human societies is based primarily on cultural theories, which provide insights into the intricacies of social interactions, identity development, and cultural dynamics. These theories offer frameworks for examining the ways in which institutions, communities, and individuals are shaped by culture and how these elements in turn affect cultural behaviors and beliefs.

Fundamentally, cultural theories aim to provide answers to the following queries regarding the nature of culture: What is culture, and how is it passed down through the generations? What effects does culture have on expression styles, power dynamics, and social norms? The investigation of various cultural phenomena, such as language, art, rituals, and conventions, is guided by these questions.

—Neo-evolutionism reinvigorates the study of cultural development by emphasizing the role of adaptive processes and complexity in shaping societies. It moves beyond simplistic linear models, recognizing the intricate interplay of environmental, technological, and social factors in driving cultural change. By focusing on patterns of innovation, diffusion, and adaptation, neo-evolutionism offers a nuanced framework for understanding the diversity of human cultures and their trajectories through time.(Wenke)

Neo-evolutionism is a powerful theoretical paradigm that arose in the middle of the 20th century with the goal of reviving and improving the study of the evolution and development of human societies. Neo-evolutionism, which builds on the fundamental theories of classical evolutionism, emphasizes the interplay between environmental influences, technological advancement, and social organization to provide a more complex explanation of cultural

development. One of the main contributors to the development of neo-evolutionism, an important theory in anthropology, was Julian Steward. Steward, who was born in 1902, transformed the area with his work by highlighting how crucial it is to comprehend cultural change within certain environmental situations. Steward underlined the significance of comprehending the process by which cultures adjust to their surroundings—a process he called "cultural ecology." This viewpoint emphasizes how ecology shapes cultural practices and institutions while acknowledging the dynamic interaction between human cultures and their environment.

Neo-evolutionism, at its core, opposes the idea of a linear, predestined route of cultural progress and emphasizes the diversity of human communities. Rather, it recognizes various paths of cultural development, influenced by distinct historical, geographical, and social contexts. The idea of cultural ecology, which highlights the dynamic interaction between culture and environment, is fundamental to neo-evolutionism. Within this perspective, scholars contend that social organization, technology, and environmental resources all play a role in how cultures evolve to adapt to their environments. While there are some similarities between neo-evolutionism and previous evolutionary theories, there are also significant improvements and complications. It criticizes oversimplified theories of cultural advancement and emphasizes the significance of comprehending cultural development within its particular context. A sophisticated framework for examining the variety and dynamism of human cultures is provided by neo-evolutionism, which also offers important insights into the processes of cultural adaptation and transformation.

The term "cultural ecology," which Steward popularized, had a pivotal role in neo-evolutionist theory. According to the theory of cultural ecology, human civilizations use their institutions and cultural practices to adapt to their surroundings. According to Steward, an appreciation of the dynamic interplay between culture and environment is necessary in order to fully appreciate the variety of human societies and their developmental patterns.

Steward's multilinear theory of cultural evolution was presented in his influential work, *Theory of Culture Change: The Methodology of Multilinear Evolution* (1955). In contrast to previous theories of evolution, which proposed a straight line of development from "primitive" to "civilized" societies, Steward proposed that cultures might evolve in a variety of ways, influenced by social structure, technology, and environmental conditions. He underlined that in order to comprehend cultures' distinct developmental trajectories, it is crucial to examine them in their respective ecological niches.

Two closely related theoretical frameworks that originated in the mid-20th century in the field of anthropology are neo-evolutionism and multilinear evolution. While they have certain things in common, their methods for comprehending the growth and evolution of cultures also show clear distinctions. Additionally, Steward put up the idea of multilinear evolution. The theory of multilinear evolution postulates that cultures change along distinct trajectories based on the unique historical and environmental conditions of each culture. In contrast, unilineal evolution maintains that all civilizations develop through a set of predetermined stages. Neo-evolutionism, which is widely represented, recognizes the diversity of human societies while concentrating on discovering broad patterns and principles of cultural evolution. It highlights how social structure, technical advancements, and environmental influences shape cultural trajectories. Neo-evolutionists contend that whereas cultural evolution processes have

certain similarities, various civilizations may take diverse routes as a result of their particular historical and environmental circumstances. Within the field of anthropology, multilineal evolution is a theoretical framework that questions the idea of a single, fixed path of cultural development. According to the theory of multilineal evolution, societies can develop along a variety of paths, each influenced by particular historical, environmental, and social elements. Multilineal evolution recognizes the diversity of human cultures and the intricacies of their development, in contrast to unilinear theories that propose a linear progression from "primitive" to "civilized" societies. It implies that many cultures may use different approaches, shaped by their own cultural settings, to reach comparable degrees of complexity.

The significance of comprehending cultures within their distinct ecological and historical contexts is emphasized by multilineal evolution. It acknowledges that cultures adjust to their surroundings in a variety of ways, creating a complex and innovative cultural tapestry. A more complex understanding of cultural development is made possible by this theoretical framework, which emphasizes the interactions between social structure, technological advancement, environmental influences, and historical circumstances. In addressing oversimplified theories of cultural evolution and advancement, multilineal evolution offers a more thorough understanding of the diversity and dynamism of human cultures by recognizing the multiplicity of cultural paths.

The thesis of neo-evolutionism contends that technological advancements are propelling human evolution. It is predicated on the notion that technology is ever evolving and that people are adjusting to these changes. This adaptation is thought to constitute a kind of evolution, and new human characteristics are thought to be emerging as a result of technology. American anthropologist Leslie A. White was well-known for his contributions to cultural anthropology

and for influencing neo-evolutionist theory. White's neo-evolutionist viewpoint focused on the contribution of technology to cultural evolution.

"Technology is the material basis of culture. It is the foundation on which all other aspects of culture are built" (White), Leslie White's thesis of cultural materialism, which holds that technology is a major factor in the formation of human cultures. According to White, technology—including tools, procedures, and production methods—determines a culture's level of complexity and growth and cultural evolution is driven by technological advancements, which have an impact on belief systems, economic systems, and social structures.

Technology facilitates the development of other cultural components like art, language, religion, and social institutions by offering material tools for human existence and advancement. White's claim emphasizes the close relationship between culture and technology as well as the significant influence of technological advancement on the development of human history. White put out the idea of "cultural materialism," which held that cultures' technological innovations and energy-harvesting practices could be used to understand how they developed. He maintained that societies grow and become more sophisticated as a result of cultural evolution brought about by the ability to utilize increasingly energy-efficient technologies. According to White, technology was not only a tool but also the main driver of cultural change, having an impact on social structure and ideology alike. He thought that in order to understand the processes of cultural change, one must grasp the relationship between technology and culture.

White's contributions to neo-evolutionism offered a useful viewpoint by highlighting the material foundation of culture and its relationship to larger ecological and technological contexts. Even though his theories have been challenged and updated throughout time, he has made a

significant contribution to the study of cultural development and has influenced anthropologists and researchers who have come after him to better comprehend the intricacies of human societies. Neo-evolutionism was a significant theoretical approach within anthropology, spearheaded by several influential scholars. Here are some major neo-evolutionists and their key works: Julian Steward, *Theory of Culture Change: The Methodology of Multilinear Evolution* (1955), Leslie White, *The Concept of Cultural Systems: A Key to Understanding Tribes and Nations* (1975), Elman Service, *Primitive Social Organization: An Evolutionary Perspective* (1962), and Marshall Sahlins, *Culture and Practical Reason* (1976).

Since it offers insightful information on cultural shift, environmental sustainability, technology, development, cultural variety, and the dynamics of intricate social systems, neo-evolutionism and multilinear evolution are still significant in the modern day. Through the integration of viewpoints from other disciplines such as ecology and anthropology, neo-evolutionism provides a complete framework for comprehending and addressing modern-day societal issues. In this research I made use of the cultural theories of neo-evolutionism and multilinear evolutionism in order to analyse the culture of Lakshadweep.

Chapter 3

Life in Lakshadweep: Class and Culture

The fascinating archipelago of Lakshadweep, which translates to "a hundred thousand islands" in Sanskrit, is situated in the Arabian Sea off the southwest coast of India. consisting of 36 islands, of which 10 are populated which are Kavaratti, Amini, Androth, Kadamat, Kiltan, Bitra, Kalpeni, Minicoy, Chethlath and Agatti. The class system, marriage, "Thikkir," "Lava, Bandiya and Dandi dances", Parichakali, —Attaml and —Kattuvililare the primary cultural manifestations in Lakshadweep. The aboriginal people continue to follow and practice these customs. These cultures are the foundation of their civilization and community.

On Amini the people are divided into four classes: (1) Tarawadu, (2) Tanakampranavar, (3) Kudiyatis and (4) Melacheries. About 5 percent of the population belongs to the first, 35 percent to 40 percent to the second, 5 percent to the third, and remainder to the last class. The distinction between them appears to have been based originally upon property. (Ellis 69)

Landowners from the Tarawad class are well-known in the community and are regarded as superiors. They frequently hire members of lower social classes to work on their properties. The Tarawad class is mostly made up of the four families Pondambelli, Porakat, Beyamada, and Thepkal. These families were among the first to arrive in Amini, and although they did not work, they are the owners of "Odam"(small fishing boats). Next in line is the superior class known as Tanakampranavar. Some members of this class are landlords, but they do not employ labourers from Kudiyatis or Melacheries.

Different kinds of Koyas, Malims, and Melacheris can be found on other islands such as Kiltan, Chetlat, Kadamat, and Agatti. Melacheris dominated Agatti, while other islands included members of other classes as well. The majority of trees on the islands and most of the odams are

owned by Koya family, who also go by the moniker "Koya". Like the Koyas, some malims are also jenmies, but usually on a smaller scale.

The melacheries are the preferred tenants and servants of the Malim and Koya classes in addition to being toddy drawers. There is very little communication amongst the various classes. It is forbidden for a melacheri to wear sandals, carry an umbrella, or put on a coat or jacket. Melacheries are the sole domain of barbers, blacksmiths and goldsmiths, climbers of trees, coir twisters, water balers, and people who cook on odams while on voyage. Even as melacheries want greater independence, higher classes seem to be driving these divisions closer together. A significant sense of class strife has been present, especially on Agathi and Androth.

A fatherless girl must wait until she reaches puberty before getting married. It is customary for boys to tie the knot between the ages of 18 and 20, and for girls to do so between 10 and 12. The first match was arranged for a lad by the karanavars of both groups. The ceremony is performed just like a Muhammadan Nikka ceremony. It is usually performed at the bride's home if she belongs to the higher class; if she is a Melacheri, it is usually held in a mosque. The customary dowry that a husband gives a lady in Koya culture is Rs. 30, in Malim culture it is Rs. 12, and in Melacheries culture it is between Rs. 3 and Rs. 6. Rich families throw grandiose parties that cost huge sums of money to celebrate a marriage. A very affluent family will even provide enough rice, 15–20 muras, 8–10 cows, and a few goats to feed the entire island. and 5 to 6 jaggery mundans will be eaten. (Ellis 72) The bride's family bears the initial burden of the entire expense. The bride's house hosts a seven-day feast for the groom's family and friends following the public feast. The bridegroom is led singly to the bride's home among the upper classes. Singing is permitted for the Melacheries just within their homes and when travelling.

The songs (Kettipattu) sung on these occasions are printed Mappila tunes from the mainland that were originally produced specifically for the occasion. Naturally, the bride's home is lavishly decorated for the event. For the next forty days, the bridegroom resides at the bride's residence with his two pals (Tholi). Following the marriage, the husband is required to give the wife a set amount of clothes and saris, which can be an expensive gift for those from higher social strata. However, the bridegroom gathers it from his family, returning equal value clothing to each as his turn comes to get married.

Unless the descendants expressly state otherwise, Lakshadweep's Marumakkathayaem law governs the succession of personal property, with the wife and children receiving the majority share. Under the Muslim law that governs the islanders, self-acquired property can be disposed of whichever one pleases; the son is entitled to two shares, while the girl receives only one. Parichakkali (Dance with sword and shield) This is a little altered version of Kolkali. As in kolkali, the dancers wield a wooden sword and shield in place of sticks. This is allegedly a martial art, and some of the forms repeat two-way battles amongst ancient fighters. This starts out slowly and gradually and builds to a climax of deft physical maneuvering. The Lava dance is a customary folk dance performed by the Minicoy people. The Lava dancers perform their skills in a magnificent way while flaunting vibrant costumes. The lava dancer is the most well-liked of the Minicoy dances. Dandi dance and Bandiya dance is two more Minicoy Island-specific dances. This was brought back to life by fans of lava art, mostly from the works of older painters. The lava dance is primarily performed by elderly men from the Raaverian community.

They do it with quick, lively, rhythmic steps, and vibrant costumes that add to the dance's distinctive character. A group of young women known as the Bandiya, dance to the sound of lava holding a symbol that is very important to the island's social structure. The young women in

these Bandiyas carry drinking water to the homes of their bride grooms and their close relatives in accordance with traditions. These Customs on Minicoy Island are still in place.

Religious art known as —Thikkirll is displayed at holidays such as Eid Ul Adha and Eid Ul Fitir. The males dress nicely these days, and they accessories with skull caps. Muhiyudheen and Ujra are two of the most well-known mosques constructed around the islands, mostly for —Thikkirll and prayer. The majority of guys will take part in this artistic endeavor's woman is dressed in new clothing so that she can notice this from a distance. The two Islamic scholars known as Sheikhs Abdul Kader Jeelani and Ahmed Kabeer Rifay are being loved by men. It is performed with Duff, and a range of Baith (religious songs) are also sung, like

Aattal Vali Sheihkee.....

Abdul Kadeere.....

Anna Va Ba Kullum.....

Fokki Tha Sheike

by the attendees. Elders among the participants will sing the main stanzas of the Baith, while others will sing their Jawab, which is a response to the Baith. Praise for their two Sheikhs is Baith's central subject. The group will have a ten- to fifteen-minute art performance in front of the entire house. To cover an entire island, it would take four or five days. The males love this since it offers a variety of steps and positions. The most typical shape shapes to perform are the circle and the line. As a token of their affection for the participants and Sheikhs, some houses provided a feast. The entire island will be present in the two mosques I mentioned above for the grand opening and closing celebrations. Kuth Ratheeb also performed in front of the mosques at the closing ceremony. Kuth Ratheeb is a ritual in which the men who take part are sub-conscious and carry a sword and Laboos (spinning top like shape tool) in their hands to cut and slash their

own body parts as a sign of their love and devotion to the Sheikh. They believe that when they give their entire body and mind to Sheikh during a Kuth Ratheeb performance, they will become detached from their surroundings and experience no pain when slicing. The closing ceremony for —Thikkir᳚ will be one of their celebrations.

—Attam᳚ is a type of art that ladies do on the beaches during festivals like Eid Ul Fitar and Eid Ul Adha. Women will do this because males will be captivated by the —Thikkir᳚ show. The participants in this art will primarily be middle-aged women. The clothing styles used in this artwork are not significant. Women will travel at night to their closer beach to perform art. The most prevalent shape in this work is the circle. Participants encircle each other with their hands while singing traditional songs such as

Narenga thottam.....

Bilathi thottam.....

Narenga ellam folth irinj.....

Umma furappett thekke nukki.....

The song's primary subject is their poverty and the challenges they encountered. Elders are more prioritized to lead the group because of their experience. The closer residence will arrange for refreshments. By taking this action, women will be liberated from all of their burdens and experience relief. Families used to sleep on the beaches during that era of no electricity on the islands, and the ladies perform this art.

Island women conduct the art form known as kattuvili in relation to the voyage and the Padaar of odams (The period of delay for boats to return to the islands due to heavy rainfall). Chaste ladies offered this to the winds in exchange for the safe return of the odams to the islands. Women gather around any dargas(shrines of saints) or makbaras(cemeteries or saints where

people usually come to pray) and give the locals dharmakkanji (porridge like food item usually served to people). Following that, women assemble to dance and sing while addressing the wind.

AkkattumKattilla IkkattumKattilla Keelavadakkepoyi Veeshiadikatte Allah kollookatte

Women typically act as though they are floating with the wind and waves of the sea, bending and swaying their bodies to the rhythm of the music. The purpose of this act is to appease the winds and waves and protect their family members from potential maritime mishaps. This act is seen by women as a sort of ritual or prayer for their husbands, dads, and sons. It is believed that a woman has an obligation to take part in this act in order to demonstrate her concern and care for her male family members. For the benefit of her spouse, she is expected to maintain her modesty and control her cravings and sexual impulses.

Chapter 4

The Factors Influencing Lakshadweep Culture's Evolution

In the modern era, the culture of Lakshadweep is disappearing from their societies.

People are beginning to respect foreign cultures more than their own, which is having a negative impact on their lives. Lakshadweep is experiencing multilinear evolution and neo evolutionism since the environmental conditions have changed from the past. In this instance, we can observe how multilinear evolution results from advancements and modifications in industries such as education, transportation, tourism, communication, and clothing styles, which in turn influence culture. Since 1970, Lakshadweep's infrastructure and technologies have significantly developed. We can use a multilinear approach to evaluate the environmental factors that have influenced Lakshadweep's cultural evolution. Odams were once used by the Lakshadweep people to transport goods from the island to the mainland and back. Odam is a small fishing boat that is propelled by wind. The trip's duration was not specified; it might take a week or a month at times. Odam mostly transports copra for sale on the mainland. It was their only source of revenue. They purchase their families' yearly groceries after selling the copra. The inauguration of Odam took place in a modest ceremony. Food is prepared for them in the odam by the crew and sailors while they are travelling. They will call off the trip if the weather is unfavorable. Since there is no assurance that they will live, some will not come back.

However, modern times see the use of mechanized ships for transportation. The trip will only take roughly 16 hours, though the exact time will depend on how far apart the islands are. Travelers are guaranteed safe passage by the vessel. Islanders began moving to the mainland in search of employment and a better living because of the easier access to transportation. The

infrastructure and facilities on the mainland caused the islanders' culture to adapt to that of the aliens. The end of the Odam era brings with it the collapse of the indigenous civilization.

One of the most crucial elements in the transformation of culture is education. Through schooling, we acquire knowledge about our culture and how to engage with it. Developing new ideas and communicating them to others are two further benefits of education. This may cause us to reconsider how we view the world and conduct our lives. The people of Lakshadweep were cut off from the mainland and illiterate at the start of 1970. Fishing and coconuts were the only sources of revenue. People changed from their outdated beliefs to a new way of thinking that could handle difficulties. The educational system aids in introducing students to other cultures and ways of living. The islanders' original culture was impacted by the information. As a result of the knowledge gained via education, they began to alter their culture and behave in ways that were foreign to them, which aided in the promotion of societal change.

One of the most crucial elements in the evolution of culture is the development of communication. It enables the exchange of concepts and knowledge, which might result in novel inventions and behavioral modifications. Since communication fosters interpersonal connections, it is also crucial for the evolution of modern culture. Building relationships and trust through this can promote cooperation and collaboration. Furthermore, communication can foster a feeling of belonging and community, which inspires people to cooperate to better their lives. New habits and ideas can proliferate with the aid of communication. Social norms and behavior may alter as a result. After three months, the news of India's independence from colonial powers in 1947 reached Lakshadweep. There were no telephones in use at the time, therefore correspondence was done through letters. Through Odam's, they transmitted their knowledge from the island to

the mainland. The time it takes to get to the reception and respond to the letter will both be excessively long.

The advent of mobile phones and telephones has had a negative impact on the customs and way of life of Lakshadweep society. People began using social media more frequently. The number of in-person interactions between people is declining. Social media knowledge inspired them to alter their society in a deadly way. Through their ideas and vision from the post humanist universe, they began to adopt alien cultures. To improve the lives of its citizens, the Indian government approved the installation of optical fiber throughout the entire island of Lakshadweep in 2024. However, it also caused Lakshadweep's ancient cultural heritage to vanish. People's interactions within the community will be disrupted, and their traditions and sense of community will also be weakened.

A significant factor in the change of culture has been electricity. It has made it possible for new technologies to be developed, such as the computer, phone, and lightbulb, which have revolutionized how we live and work. In addition to facilitating easier communication and information sharing, electricity has contributed to the global dissemination of ideas and cultures. Electrification of the Lakshadweep Islands was initiated during the second Five Year plan. Minicoy was the first Island electrified in 1962, followed by Kavaratti Island in 1964, then Amini and Andrott in 1965 and respectively. Bitra was the last Island electrified in 1982. The introduction of electricity to Lakshadweep causes more modifications to customs and ways of life. Due to a lack of electricity in the previous few days in Lakshadweep, folks slept beside the shore. Attam was also performed on beaches in front of families as they were retiring to bed, as I indicated in Chapter 2. With the widespread use of electricity, individuals began to

sleep at home, which led to the decline of Attam in both society and customs. People desire to live in more modern lifestyles and are more at ease in their current homes.

One way to communicate nonverbally is through clothing, which can be used to convey connection, status, and identity. Additionally, it can be utilized to convey political and social statements. People's clothing choices are frequently shaped by their culture, and changes in culture can be observed in the development of fashion trends. The evolution of fashion trends reflects shifting social mores and worldviews. The methods by which people express themselves through their wardrobes evolve along with the societies they live in. Neo-evolutionism can be used to analyze fashion by examining the persistence of historic clothing trends. Because they are viewed as a means of establishing a connection with one's background or culture, traditional dress codes frequently endure.

In the past, males in Lakshadweep wore lungis, which are rectangular pieces of cloth that might be white or colored. The women's waists are encircled with silver thread. The tips of the lungis are drawn by the elderly, but on exceptional occasions, a beautiful piece of silk or cotton cloth with embroidery is wrapped over the shoulder of the shirt. The thattam, a shirt worn across the shoulders, is the headgear worn by ladies. The thattam, a head covering with scaff for the head and shoulders, is the headgear worn by ladies. There were no foreign clothing brands or fashions on the islands. Through their clothing choices, they were preserving their culture and traditions. By the end of the 1970s, communication and travel had exposed individuals to a wider range of clothing styles, which had a profound impact on attitudes towards and conceptions of indigenous cultures. The guys began wearing jeans and trousers as they began to adopt foreign fashions. Kurti, maxi, and tops for ladies. Through their new fashion choices, society was changing from one component of its culture to another. Individuals began to lose sight of their

inherited customs and culture. They themselves depict how their obsession with foreign culture causes them to lose touch with their own indigenous customs.

Tourism is one of the primary factors driving the cultural development of Lakshadweep. One way to see tourism as a form of neo-evolutionism is through its ability to expose us to many cultures and environments that could challenge our preconceived beliefs and views. This might lead to both development on a personal level and a better understanding of the world around us. Tourism can lead to the spread of new concepts and technological advancements. Travellers often bring new ideas and technologies with them to unfamiliar places. Then, the local population can embrace these new ideas and developments. At the moment, Lakshadweep tourism is actively promoted by the Indian government. In the tourism business, Lakshadweep takes front stage after the Indian prime minister's visit. Locals are getting more and more interested in tourism since it brings in money. People's cultures suffer from the intrusion of outsiders and their ideals through tourism. The islanders adopt the foreign guests' culture through their thoughts and vision. Because Lakshadweep tourism encourages people to adopt foreign traditions, native culture is declining.

The research was an in-depth analysis of the culture of Lakshadweep which focused on the multifaceted layers of life and culture of the people there. From my first hand experience and observations as a native of the island, I would conclude the research by arguing the cultural change in Lakshadweep as multi linear and the process is a result of neo evolutionism. Though there are positive effects of the scientific and technological advancements in the culture of Lakshadweep, there are chances of complete revival of the long cultural tradition and the

uniqueness of the life of Lakshadweep in near future. The scope of this research lies in the further particular studies of the many layers of the culture that I discussed in the research. Hence the research can be a first step in the revival of the cultural heritage of Lakshadweep without denying the positive impacts of technology.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

—Cultural change is the heartbeat of human societies, pulsing with the rhythms of innovation, adaptation, and exchange. It is the force that propels civilizations forward, reshaping beliefs, values, and practices in response to shifting social, economic, and environmental dynamics. As cultures collide and blend, as technologies advance and traditions evolve, the landscape of human experience transforms, giving rise to new ways of seeing, being, and belonging. (Guest)

The process through which culture shifts throughout time is known as cultural evolution. It's a multifaceted process affected by a wide range of elements, such as human behavior, technology, and the surrounding environment. A collection of people's shared views, values, and customs make up its culture. It is acquired and transmitted from one generation to the next. A group's culture can vary greatly from another's and evolve over time. Individual interactions play a significant role in the evolution of culture. People exchange ideas and learn from one another, which can cause cultural shifts.

The topics of cultural evolution and related ideas like multilinear evolution and neo evolutionism were covered in my research. Julian Steward's idea of "neo evolutionism" combines aspects of biological and cultural evolution to explain how societies evolved. It makes the case that societies change through a process known as natural selection, in which the most adaptable societies procreate and endure, while the least adaptable societies eventually disappear. Neo-evolutionism also highlights how culture shapes social evolution, contending that culture actively influences how societies evolve rather than being merely a biological byproduct. The neo-evolutionistic shift in Lakshadweep tradition and culture are analyzed in Chapter 4.

The customs and traditions of Lakshadweep. A theory of cultural evolution known as "multilinear evolution" highlights the significance of several elements, including history, geography, and technology, in influencing changes in culture. Multilinear evolution was used in Chapter 4 to illustrate the changes in Lakshadweep culture. According to Leslie A. White, culture is a superorganic phenomenon that develops independently of biological evolution and according to its own rules. Additionally, he argued that technology is what propels cultural evolution and that the best measure of a society's total cultural development is how advanced its technology is.

The way we communicate has changed because of technology. The only way that people could communicate in the past were in person, by letter, or over the phone. But since the invention of the internet, individuals have been able to instantaneously and globally connect with one another. People are increasingly exposed to other cultures and ideas on a daily basis, which has resulted in a more globalized civilization. Lakshadweep was a cultural legacy, as I indicated in chapter 3. The Koyas, Malims, and Melacherie's class structure reveals the remnants of their prehistoric cultures. Lava, Bandiya, and Dandi dances are examples of arts that showcase Minicoy Island culture. The principal customs and cultures of Lakshadweep were Parichakali, Attam, Kattuvulipattu, and Thikkir. The people of these places were defined by their customs. They devote more effort to practicing and maintaining their culture. However, communities and society were negatively impacted by environmental variables in some way.

A new cultural system that was not their own was formed by environmental variables or multilinear elements such as communication, dress codes, tourism, transportation, electricity, and education. Communication breaks up eye contact, which weakens the bonds that bind people together. People are becoming more aware of the world and gaining new knowledge and ideas

through education as a result of changes in the educational system. The transportation industry's radical changes also contributed to the decline of culture. The invasion of mechanized vessels encouraged people to migrate to the mainland in search of better living conditions. People have additional traditions and rites from the Odam era, such as Kattuvulipattu and the Odam inauguration ceremony, which symbolize the people's oneness. However, we are unable to find any such art like Kattuvulipattu in the modern period. People who migrate grow fixated with foreign cultures. Environmental elements like electricity also contributed to the fading of some artwork, such as Attam, which was created during Lakshadweep's blackout. Women carried out this tradition while creating art in front of their families and sleeping on the beach. Following the arrival of electricity, people began to camp out on beaches and sleep inside homes, which caused the Attam people to disappear from their culture. Under the pretext of development, the government transformed Lakshadweep into a popular tourist destination. People's beliefs and ways of thinking were altered by the influx of foreigners into Lakshadweep through their interactions with other cultures. Visitors introduced locals to their cultures and ideals. They began to mimic and adopt foreign cultures by utilizing their technology, concepts, and ways of thinking, as well as appropriating foreign fashions. From a multilinear perspective, clothes have an impact on the development of culture. The islanders used to wear very different clothes. Men wore lungis, and women had silver thread wrapped around their waists. After the 1970s, people began to wear more foreign clothing, such as churidars, tops, sarees, trousers and jeans. Their inherited customs and cultures were also eradicated as a result of this shift.

Multilinear elements contribute to cultural evolution, as demonstrated by the cultures of Lakshadweep, as described in chapter two. The research was an in-depth analysis of the culture of Lakshadweep which focused on the multifaceted layers of life and culture of the people there.

From the experiences and observations as a native of the island, the research can be concluded by arguing that the cultural change in Lakshadweep is multi-linear and the process is a result of neo evolutionism. Though there are positive effects of the scientific and technological advancements in the culture of Lakshadweep, there are chances of complete revival of the long cultural tradition and the uniqueness of the life of Lakshadweep in near future. The scope of this research lies in the further particular studies of the many layers of the culture that I discussed in the research. Hence the research can be a first step in the revival of the cultural heritage of Lakshadweep without denying the positive impacts of technology.

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