DOCUMENT AND INFORMATION EXPERIENCE IN VIRTUAL ZENANAS:

AN EXPLORATION OF A DIASPORA SMALL WORLD

Priya Kizhakkethil

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APPROVED:

Shawne D. Miksa, Major Professor
Oksana Zavalina, Committee Member
Brian O'Connor, Committee Member
Gary Burnett, Committee Member
Jiangping Chen, Chair of the Department of
        Information Science
Kinshuk, Dean of the College of Information
Victor Prybutok, Dean of the Toulouse
        Graduate School

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The word *diaspora* is currently understood as the large scale voluntary movement of people, along with capital and goods due to the mechanisms of globalization. Adopting a diaspora, gender and leisure perspective, this dissertation looked at the information and document experiences of a particular fan community of women belonging to the Indian diaspora and the online spaces created and occupied by them (fan fiction blogs which can be viewed as book clubs). The study also looked at memory making and documenting of the same as a part of document experience, resulting in what can be termed as "serendipitous memory archives." The blogs hosting fan fiction and the mediated practices they support were viewed as documents for the study. The online spaces were conceptualized as small worlds and the theoretical framework used for the study consisted of a preliminary model of a small world (based on literature review and my understanding of the world under study), information experience as a concept as well as document experience models. The results show that social ties play a big role in the information and document experience, while memory making and documenting of the same are also seen to happen as part of the document experience. The results also show that adopting a document perspective enables us to see the myriad ways in which information is experienced, freeing us from considering as information only that which helps us in meeting a purpose or which fills a gap. Implications and suggestions for future research are discussed.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For Achan, Amma and Satish.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Nostalgia it's delicate, but potent. Teddy told me that in Greek, nostalgia literally means the pain from an old wound. It's a twinge in your heart far more powerful than memory alone. This device isn't a spaceship, it's a time machine. It goes backwards, and forwards... it takes us to a place where we ache to go again. It's not called the wheel; it's called the carousel. It lets us travel the way a child travels around and around, and back home again, to a place where we know are loved.

Don Draper, from *Mad Men*

Personal Statement

A stormy day in May of 2013, a few days after the end of my second semester as a graduate student, I came across an Indian television show online. Since I was just browsing and didn't have anything better to do at that point in time, I started to watch it. Before long I was binge watching 398 episodes each around 22 minutes long, realizing at some point that this was not like the daily soaps my Amma (mother) likes to watch (or so I thought!) and which I love to tease her about. Madness had struck, and in its wake, I searched online for anything and everything I could find about this show. In that process I landed in a fan forum, my first encounter with all things fan-related. For the next year or so, I was what is technically called a "lurker," I read episode takes, people's conversations about the show, fan fiction and realized that many were like me, not a regular Indian soap watcher and living outside of India. I decided to take the plunge and started interacting, resulting in what I consider an enriching experience, becoming a part of a sisterhood of sorts that spanned the globe. The interactions were not restricted to the forum, but happened on fanfiction blogs, and even WhatsApp groups.

My husband and I had moved to the US just three years prior to this, and even though we had been living outside India for a considerable time, it was only after moving to the US that I first became in a sense cognizant of my cultural identity. I need to reiterate that this

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was not due to any negative experiences, but due to a realization of the sheer geographical distance from our land. I had noticed that I was watching more Indian TV programming, listening to music from that part of the world and felt it was a way of keeping in touch with my ethnic roots. In the beginning it was the participatory culture that I saw on the fan forum that interested me, the creation and sharing of content which has an aspect of learning associated with it. The fascination continued through the rest of the graduate program and into the doctoral program, but without the realization that this could be studied. The reading of an article for a qualitative research course which I had taken, changed things, pointing me to the fact that fan communities are studied. The exposure to globalization and diaspora related literature through a sociology course I had taken, had me thinking of the importance of leisure related digital and online spaces in the everyday life of a diaspora. My immersion in information science literature also left me with questions as to whether a prevalence of a task-oriented view of information and information related activities and what I felt was a narrow conceptualization of what information is, meant that the quotidian, and the unnoticed of human life were left out of the information research eye. The serious leisure perspective which required that anything leisure–related or leisure–oriented had to be placed within the serious leisure category for it to be worthy of being researched was also a source of contention for me.

The gendered nature of these spaces was ascribed by me in the beginning to the genre of the program, but my reading of literature on fan communities pointed me to the fact that this was not limited to a genre or culture. Baym (2000) and Jenkins (2013) among others have written on this and Bury (2005), who, in her study of a X-Files fan group, writes on how by "rejecting this heteronormative, patriarchal standard, the ladies formed cyber spaces of their own" (p. x), arising from a realization that they were being belittled for expressing their liking towards male actors or

desire between male characters which were considered out of place. From my experience of

these feminine spaces and from reading that this was rather common even in the western world, I

thought of terming these spaces as *virtual (digital) Zenanas*.[1] An Amnesty International report in

2017 noted how the online world is a toxic place for women especially on social media platforms

like Twitter. This is true from an Indian perspective, too, with rape and death threats the order of

the day, faced across the board even by women holding places of power like politicians.[2] This

has also made me think about the importance of these "safe spaces" for women online (not that

fandoms, even predominantly female ones, are free of fights, trolling and viciousness), and what

role they could play in their everyday life in a technology saturated world. But my interactions

with women belonging to the Indian diaspora in these spaces and the experience of sociality that

was associated with it made me think of the need that we feel to connect with our cultural

identity and to interact with people who can identify with the same things. There was enjoyment

to be had in discussing a story that was being collectively read, along with sharing our

experiences of being part of a diaspora, reminiscing on growing up in India, all peppered with

doses of pop culture, especially music. Those women who wrote stories drew on their

experiences of growing up and living in India as well as living and making a home outside India.

Due to the vast differences in the Indian population in terms of language and culture, popular

culture, especially movies, and within the Indian context, music from the movies becomes a

great unifier in many ways. A collective memory was being evoked and shared through these

cultural artifacts. I remember hearing a talk on NPR on how people are more engrossed in

recording life rather than experiencing life, due to ease of taking pictures with one's phone and

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[1] The part of a house reserved for women and girls, practiced across South Asia and across religions too.

[2] A recent example is the vicious trolling experienced by India's External Affairs Minister, Sushma Swaraj in 2018.

posting/sharing them immediately through social media. This could be seen as a way of archiving and makes me think, when seeing those images, that what comes to mind is the place and time when the picture was taken or the act of taking the picture. This also lead me to consider whether in the absence of such tools to remember or reminisce (in communities such as these which are not familial or based on personal friendships), the act of sharing a pop-culture artifact is a way of evoking a sense of place and time.

Background

> Migration tends to be accompanied by a confusion about what exactly has been lost, and thus of what needs to be recovered or remembered. This confusion leads to an often deliberate effort to construct a variety of archives, ranging from the most intimate and personal (such as the memory of one's earlier bodily self) to the most public and collective, which usually take the form of shared narratives and practices. (Appadurai, 2003, p. 21)

Diaspora

Originating from the Greek language[3] and in its application to humans, diaspora was thought of as migration and colonization by the ancient Greeks. But the word diaspora used in the context of Jews, Africans, Armenians and Palestinians acquired an evil and violent meaning. Viewed this way, the term connoted displacement and collective trauma, leaving one to dream of a home while living in exile[4] (Cohen, 2001; Safran, 2005; Tololyan, 2007; Singh, 2014). But in the postmodern world, with the changes wrought by transnational capitalism with the resultant

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[3] "The word "diaspora" is derived from the Greek verb *speiro* (to sow) and the preposition *dia* (over)" (Cohen, 2001, p. ix).

[4] Cohen (2001) notes that for over 2500 years a particular idea of diaspora has held sway, highlighting its catastrophic origins through forced dispersal and subsequent estrangement of a people in their places of exile. This comes from the experience of the most commonly recognized diaspora, which is of the Jewish people (The Jewish diaspora is referred to as a paradigmatic example by Tololyan (2007), with the Armenian and Greek diasporas also seen as classical or traditional). Even though this idea of a diaspora may seem to have biblical support, it is too narrow an interpretation of the Jewish experience and not in conformance with the original Greek conception.

movement of capital, goods and people, the term diaspora has shed some of its past connotations. It has come to mean agency, power and voice (Tololyan, 2007). What has changed is also the nature of migration in that it is more voluntary[5], brought about primarily by the mechanisms of globalization. The word immigration refers to the movement of certain ethnic groups across borders, whereas, diaspora points to the dispersion of various ethnic populations globally. In other words, while immigration focuses specifically on the lived experience of certain ethnic communities in a host or adopted land, diaspora focuses on the global spread of a population transcending national boundaries. Studies of diaspora are related to globalization, but the emphasis is on the movement and dispersion of various populations around the world, rather than the movement of capital and transnational corporations.

Putting imagination at the center, Appadurai (1990) as cited by Grainage (2000), theorizes globalization as an interactive, socio-cultural process. Extending the work of Anderson (1983/2016) on imagined communities and the role of print capitalism in its creation, Appadurai (1996) notes the importance of electronic and new media technologies in facilitating the work of imagination which in turn aids in the creation of diasporic identities (Pyati, 2010). Identity formation for diaspora communities is a creative process taking place at the intersection of multiple cultures and nations. Deterritorialization, a hallmark of the modern transnational processes of globalization, brings with it hybridity and heterogeneity, which defines diasporic identity. The deterritorialized or transnational nature of diaspora refers to their origin in a particular land different from their present abode and covers their networks, whether social, economic or political, that spans the globe traversing borders of multiple nation states (Vertovec,

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[5] Though forced migration due to political upheavals continues, with the rise in refugee populations that throng to the west and the issues it brings up in its wake.

1997). Global flow of images and electronic mediation results in the creation or imagination of a new kind of deterritorialized communities.

Media and Mediated Spaces

　　Media has been noted to play an important role in the acculturation process of immigrants, and the host country's role in the same has been noted and studied (Raman & Harwood, 2008, 2016; Dalisay, 2012). But contemporary literature has also noted the role played by home country or ethnic media in the process with ties with one's land of origin seen as a central feature of diasporas. Ethnic media is also used by diasporas for the provision of scripts which enable them to enact and embody their "ethnicity in a transnational, transmedia global culture" (Ramasubramaniam & Doshi, 2017, p. 183). Ramasubramaniam and Doshi (2017) studied the consumption of ethnic language movies by Indian Americans and found that it is done more for ethnic performance, and not due to lack of host language proficiency, as noted by earlier existing literature. Tsagarousianou (2004) states that new media technologies which create a diasporic media enables their audience to be in more than two places at the same time, as well as providing them with the potential of creating new spaces "where remote localities and their experiences come together and become 'synchronized'" (p. 62). According to Mandaville (2001), diasporic media are "spaces of communication in which the identity, meaning and boundaries of diasporic community are continually constructed, debated and reimagined" (p. 169) and not just a means through which information of interest is exchanged. Hegde (2016) views food blogs maintained by South Asian women as personal memory objects, circulating specific kinds of culinary knowledge in a transnational mediated space, while providing a space for the building of transnational lines of connection and the re-imagination of diasporic identities.

Fandom, Fan Communities and Fanfiction

> I come back to my blog after ages and I see WordPress has congratulated me for booming traffic. Never really thought anyone would mention The Lighthouse Cafe here. Thank You so much. (Himakshi commenting on the blog IPKKND Ficverse, an archive of fanfiction based on the Indian TV show "Iss Pyaar Ko Kya Naam Doon," popularly known as IPKKND or IPK, among fans, 2018)

Fan communities have been studied in various fields with fan studies themselves now considered as a genuine area of research. With the advent of the World Wide Web, how fan communities organize and function has changed, as studied by Jenkins (2013), Baym (2000) among others. These communities are not just consumers but are often looked upon as participatory cultures which produce what can be termed as cultural products. The gendered nature of fan communities has been noted by multiple authors including Henry Jenkins whose *Textual poachers* is considered a seminal work.[6] Jenkins (2007) views fandom as both an imagined and an imaginative community. Busse (2017) describes fan artifacts as artistic works as well as cultural documents. Hill and Pecoskie (2017), who examined the information activities of a fanfiction community as serious leisure, describes fanfiction as a "subset, or type, of self-published cultural product" (p. 843). Reiterating the gendered nature of fan communities, Jamison (2013) states that a majority of these self-published and not for profit works are created by women.[7] Fanfiction writers and authors are often characterized as "creators; they work as a collective to form the text" through the process of communication and feedback (Pecoskie & Hill, 2015, p. 621).

Long (2003), writing on women's book clubs, notes the need to look at reading as a

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[6] *Textual poachers : television fans and participatory culture* was first published in 1992.

[7] The extraordinary success of the book series "Fifty shades of grey" (and the movies based on it) has brought fanfiction into the limelight, with its author E. L. James noted to have written it as fanfiction based on Stephenie Meyer's"Twilight" series. But this has also had the impact of upholding the impression that fanfiction tends to be mostly pornographic in nature along with deifying the notion that women and certain genres go together, like romance.

social practice and how adopting a reader-centered model leads to a view of reading as a form of cultural practice and behavior that carries out "complex personal and social functions for those who engage in it" (p. 22). Through reading and talking, women support each other in collectively working out the relationship they have with the "contemporary historical moment and the particular social conditions that characterize it" (p. 22). Long (2003) holds that reading groups may embody the concept of a deliberative space, a "counterhegemonic publics" (Fraser, 1989, p. 167), riding the boundary between public and private sphere. These sorts of spaces may be needed by women as a place where their concerns can be vocalized, to chronicle the peculiarities of their lives, while expanding their cultural repertoires through

> dialogue with narrative in books or from other women's lives, to name what delights or troubles them, to explore dissociations between what matters to them and the social strictures or ideological frameworks that fail in important ways to address them. (Long, 2003, p. 219)

Bhalla (2016), noting that engagement with literary culture has been an important facet of South Asian diasporic identity formation, studied a South Asian American book club whose spirited and collective practice of reading transnational South Asian literature helped to serve as a "complex expression of their sense of belonging in the United States" (p. 1). Suman (2018) found that migration can be gendered journeys and that migration in contemporary times is often due to reasons such as the pursuit of education or better job opportunities, and the accompanying spouses, especially women, are faced with challenges in finding jobs and sustaining careers. This can result in women finding alternate means of accomplishing fulfillment and identity. "The personal act of writing a literary text becomes as much a social activity when few of them form writing communities" (p. 93). The narrative products that arise out of these communities are an outcome of an interesting intersection between migration as a condition and the presence of gendered communities. Drawing on these ideas, fan communities and groups that converge

around the collective reading of fan fiction can be viewed in the same light as reading groups or book clubs. They are gendered communities serving a similar function to women belonging to the Indian diaspora.

Collective Memory and Cultural Artifacts

> Memories establish a connection between our individual past and our collective past (our origins, heritage and history). The past is always with us, and it defines our present; it resonates in our voices, hovers over our silences, and explains how we came to be ourselves and to inhabit what we call "our homes." (Agnew, 2005, p. 3)

Personal memories are those of a single person, which is often based on first-hand experience and contained to that lifetime of that person. Cultural or collective memory, on the other hand, refers to the collective memory of many, spanning generations (Hua, 2005). According to Halbwachs (1992), members of a group, nation or class retain memories of a shared past. These memories are found in written and oral stories, in rumors, gestures, and cultural styles, as well as in cultural activities which are institutionalized (Hua, 2005). Schuman and Scott (1989) argue that knowledge of a past social event, not personally experienced, and widely shared images of the same, which have been collectively created and shared and performs certain social functions, can also be viewed as collective memories. People use constructs to discuss their past, both individually as well as collectively and they form part of what is a socially accepted way of talking about it. "Group memory is always already social because it involves social interaction in discussions about the past" (O'Reilly, Doherty, Carnegie and Larsen, 2017, p. 175). Here memory is not viewed as a storage, or a function or an abstract idea, instead it is seen as a "dynamic, social, process of remembering" (O'Reilly et al., 2017, p. 2017). Memory is cultural for a wide range of reasons, but more so because it's mediated and uses symbols in communication, and the act of remembering is always culturally, as well as socially, situated. Material objects often support memory.

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Van Dijck (2006) holds that recorded popular music has been studied either as a vital component of people's personal memory or as an integral element in constructing collective identity and cultural heritage. It has also been regarded as part of collective cultural memory and identity by anthropologists, cultural theorists and sociologists among others, each coming from varying academic perspectives. "Shared listening, exchanging (recorded) songs, and talking about music create a sense of belonging, and connect a person's sense of self to a larger community and generation" (van Dijck, 2006, p. 357). Personal and collective cultural memory hold between them a recursive and intricate connection. Music is important in the formulation of diasporic cultural identity and studies of music in diasporic communities have demonstrated the ways in which it acts as a social adhesive in connecting a diaspora dispersed around the globe (Diethrich, 1999; Solomon, 2015). Solomon (2015) uses *bhangra* and *rai* as examples of highly mediated popular music genres, which are popular amongst South Asians in Europe and North America and amongst Algerians in Europe, respectively, and which have served the function of connecting these communities not just to their homelands but also to each other. At least two aspects of music make it a particularly powerful tool for the imagination and experience of diasporic identities. Due to technological improvements in the portability of recorded sound, sounds travel far and wide through inexpensive means, further sped up through the Internet by way of mp3 files, YouTube videos, and streaming services. Music can also engender a pleasurable embodied experience and a form of communal sociability through dance, which makes it not just pleasurable but also socially reassuring. One experiences a "validation of one's own sense of self in knowing that people on the other side of the world whom one identifies with in terms of ethnicity and culture are grooving and dancing to the same sounds" (Solomon, 2015, p. 206). In this manner, music can provide a framework for the organization of diasporic

experience, which includes the historical consciousness of having originated from somewhere else, and identification with people of similar origin in other places.

Oxford Dictionaries (n. d.) define the term artifact as "an object made by a human being, typically an item of cultural or historical interest." Turkle (2007) states that it is familiar practice to view objects either as "useful or aesthetic, as necessities or vain indulgences" (p. 5). But it is not common practice to view objects as companions to one's emotional lives or as "provocations to thought" (p. 5). Through the notion of evocative objects, Turkle (2007) brings together the idea of objects functioning as companions to emotional lives as well as an incitement to thought, thereby underlining the inseparability of thought and feelings in one's relationship to things. Sterne (2006) notes that scholars in wide ranging fields such as philosophy of technology, cultural study of technology and science and technology studies have championed the study of technology as artifacts. Viewing a mp3 as a cultural artifact, Sterne (2006) defines it as "a crystallized set of social and material relations. It is an item that 'works for' and is 'worked on' by a host of people, ideologies, technologies and other social and material elements" (p. 826). Drawing on these ideas for this study, a pop-culture (as in popular culture) artifact would be YouTube videos of popular Indian music.

Making of "Sapnon ki Duniya"[8]: Understanding Social Worlds and Small Worlds

Shibutani (1955) wrote that the modern world is made of a "bewildering variety of social worlds" (p. 566), and they are built up through the interactions of people. In other words communication channels can give rise to separate social worlds.

> Each of these worlds is a unity of order, a universe of regularized mutual response. Each
> is an area in which there is some structure which permits reasonable anticipation of the

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[8] Sapnon Ki Duniya or SKD as its commonly used in the fandom can be translated as the world of dreams. It is common to refer to one's regular world as the Asli duniya (AD) meaning the real world and spaces like fan fiction blogs are referred to as SKD, the place one comes to get away from the travails of everyday life.

behavior of others, hence, an area in which one may act with a sense of security and confidence. Each social world, then, is a culture area, the boundaries of which are set neither by territory nor by formal group membership but by the limits of effective communication. (p.566)

Drawing on Shibutani's work, Strauss (1978) defined social worlds as has having a primary activity, sites where in these activities are carried out, involvement of technology and one they are established then they become more organized. He further stated that, social worlds intersect under a variety of conditions and this could result in segmentation into sub-worlds. Unruh (1980), taking the ideas put forward by Shibutani and Strauss, states that the notion of social world emanates from the vocabulary of everyday life (art world, baseball world are given as examples), "but it also communicates the notion that "world views" are often created which unite social actors in terms of practices, procedures and perspectives" (p. 272). He lays down the features of individual involvement in social worlds, the types of involvement in the form of social types, and structural features of social worlds. In addition, he also identifies the level of analysis that would be carried out on social worlds starting with local social worlds, which has been used to explain the life in a small world lived in a round by Chatman (1999).

Elfreda Chatman drawing on the work of Alfred Schutz and Thomas Luckmann and Kochen (1989) used the concept of small world to study the everyday lives of communities marked by socio economic poverty. She described these worlds as having a degree of predictability as far the everyday happenings are concerned. People are seen to share "physical and/or conceptual space within a common landscape of cultural meaning" (Chatman, 2000, p. 3). It is a world which is small through the structuring and defining of its daily activities through a set of social norms and behaviors specific to the localized context of its world (Burnett & Jaeger, 2011). The small world concept was explicated in a full sense in the theory of normative behavior, comprising of the concepts social norms, social type, world view and information

behavior (Chatman, 2000; Burnett, Besant & Chatman, 2001). Burnett and Jaeger (2011), noting that Chatman's work focuses on tightly bound small worlds where information from beyond its boundaries are rarely looked at, along with a failure to adequately account for the interactions that can take place between various small worlds and the broader society in which they exist, also drew on the work of Juergen Habermas, especially the concepts of public sphere and life-world as explicated by him, and combined these concepts with the theory of normative behavior to build the theory of information worlds.

Problem Statement and Purpose of the Study

What is the migratory experience, of being part of a diaspora, like for a woman? How are the social and material aspects of everyday especially in a leisure sense experienced as part of a diaspora? How do these social and material elements help in navigating the liminal or third space occupied by diaspora women? These are the overarching questions that triggered this study. Globalization has resulted in transnational movements of people creating diaspora communities and in today's networked world, technology is used by these communities to stay in touch with not only friends and family but also, in many ways, as a tool to keep in touch with their cultural roots. Information and communication technologies enable the synchronous transnational participation in everyday life thereby altering the diasporic experience (Hegde, 2016). Srinivasan and Pyati (2007) argued that diaspora information behavior should be studied within the dynamic contexts of globalization and diaspora. Most research on immigrant communities tend to focus on place-based scenarios, but Srinivasan and Pyati stated that online diasporic environments are equally important as their information environments tend to be more global. Pyati (2010) noted that diaspora communities are often part of a rich global information network. Appadurai (1996) extended the notion of Anderson's (1983/2016) idea of the role played by print media in creating

an imagined community, to the role played by electronic and new media in creating a diasporic

identity; Srinivasan and Pyati (2007) reiterates this to emphasize the need to study virtual

diasporically mediated grounds such as diaspora web sites, including news sites, social

networking sites, and chat rooms, among others. Mitra (2006) highlighted the need for people in

a diaspora to be able to have the ability to practice things which are familiar and reminiscent of

an older way of life, engendering a sense of safety. The author notes the use of virtual spaces by

Indian diaspora in the west providing them with safe spaces to express their identity through the

sharing of traditional cultural practices. Mediated diaspora spaces brought into being by a

common tie can act as safe spaces; According to Hegde (2016) the food blogs maintained by

diasporic authors enable them to create intimate social networks as well as "different forms of

dwelling, not necessarily circumscribed by geographical parameters" (Mannur, 2013, p. 589).

Kim (2016) noted that most studies on acculturation find that people are more successful

in acculturation, when the host language proficiency is better in addition to regular interaction

with people belonging to the host society and consumption of host country media. Along these

lines most information studies on immigrants have taken a place-based perspective with

researchers like Fisher, Durrance and Hinton (2004), and Caidi, Allard and Quirke (2010) among

others, highlighting the importance of information in successful life transition to a host society.

Komito (2011) looked at the usage of social media by Filipino and Polish immigrants in Ireland

to stay in touch with their friends and family back home, thereby supporting a dispersed

community of affinity, making physical locality irrelevant for their identity maintenance.

Migration can also be viewed as gendered journeys, and even though the migratory flows of

women are not new in human mobility history, women's perspectives and experiences and their

increasing role and significance have been largely underestimated and underexplored, due to the

problematic assumption that migration is overwhelmingly male (Kim, 2013; Suman, 2018). From an information science perspective, Kim (2016) noted the absence of interest in the personal lives of women, with most information studies concentrating on information behavior in work-related contexts. Pollak (2015) notes that in comparison to the overwhelming quantity of studies which look at information behavior in professional and formal contexts, very little is known about experience based and non-documentary (documentary as in tangible sources of information) information which can be found in informal or non-formal contexts. Everyday experiences are neglected very often due to being perceived as unremarkable, familiar and common.

A 2017 United Nations report put International migrants from India as the largest in the world at 16.6 million of which 48-50% is female. The new Indian diaspora has come into being due to forces of globalization, which has resulted in the flow of capital and labor around the world. The boom in the technology industry, especially those related to computer software, also led to a big rise in immigrants from India in the western world, with high profile Indian origin persons holding positions at the head of technology companies like Google and Microsoft. A Pew Research Centre report (2014) found that Indian Americans are among the most highly educated ethnic or racial groups in the Unites States. Due to the gendered nature of migration and the legal aspects of immigration (visa rules which prohibit dependent spouses from working), a population of what is known as "trailing spouses"[9], most notably women, are common in South Asian diasporas. These women take up activities such as writing, Suman (2018) noted the popularity of the romance genre, underlining a fact often missed by critics of

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[9] This should not be taken as a generalization, as many women also come, especially to western countries to pursue higher education and then go on to build successful careers. Women are also part of the workforce that come over from countries like India on projects, especially in technology industries. But the fact remains that a significant proportion of what can be termed as 'trailing spouses' happen to be women.

this genre, that writing and reading romance is a way of subverting patriarchy. Hegde (2016) found that by means of the activity of food blogging, the South Asian diasporic women, through individual recollections of their home and homeland and the comforts afforded by home cooked meals, end up disrupting earlier notions of diasporic insularity and alienation by establishing connections with various others in the diaspora. In this manner they also create digital repositories of culinary knowledge. The blogs themselves act as a "cultural form that works within a circulatory matrix where new configurations of cosmopolitan sociality are being constituted" (p. 89). These blogs also work as cultural reproductions pointing towards that which has been highly gendered in South Asian diasporic contexts and which is reflective of the "feminized spaces of food preparation" (p. 90). As highlighted by Hegde (2016) the gendered nature of food blogs helps to shed light on an aspect of the everyday life of women belonging to the South Asian diaspora and it also underlines the transnational nature of diaspora spaces on the Web. Adopting this approach of looking at the "digital and gendered diasporic ways of being" (p. 91) and drawing on the work of Appadurai (1996) who states that mass media enables collective reading, criticism and pleasure, creating what he (Appadurai) terms "communities of sentiment," that is "a group that begins to imagine and feel things together" (p. 8)[10], this dissertation seeks to examine a particular fan community and the online and digital spaces created and occupied by them from a diasporic perspective. Studies have noted the importance of consumption of popular culture from one's home country as playing a part in the maintenance of cultural identity. Studies on fans and fandom have noted the essentially feminine nature of the spaces occupied by such communities. Serious leisure framework introduced by Stebbins (2007)

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[10] Hegde (2014) also views the social networking that stems from the food blogs as a 'community of sentiment' as defined by Appadurai (1996).

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has been used as a theoretical foundation for many information science studies, but it is riddled with certain limitations as Pollak (2014, 2015) points out, drawing on the work of Gallant, Arai and Smale (2013), who call for the re-envisioning of leisure as a complex experience influencing and influenced by the sociopolitical context" (p. 91). According to Appadurai (2003) the life of those belonging to diasporas are riddled with confusion about what needs to be remembered and recovered, often leading to what is a "deliberate effort to construct a variety of archives, ranging from the most intimate and personal (such as the memory of one's earlier bodily self) to the most public and collective, which usually take the form of shared narratives and practices" (p. 21). Hua (2005) notes that for diasporic women, "memories can act as a catalyst for self-recovery and community building" (p. 205). These feminine spaces coalescing around a common interest can also be conceptualized as a small world. Keeping the above in mind the main purpose of this study is:

- To understand how these gendered diasporic environments which are "privately public and publicly private" (Papacharissi, 2010, p. 142) function as a small world and are experienced in the everyday life of women belonging to the Indian diaspora.

- To draw upon Appadurai (2003) idea of a memory archive, whether the communicative material, (i.e., textual as well as sharing of pop culture artifacts like the posting of YouTube videos of popular music), that is generated, and which supports these spaces, can be conceptualized as a narrative archive

<div align="center">Research Setting</div>

Iss pyaar ko kya naam doon[11] is an Indian television series which aired on the Indian Television channel Star Plus between June 2011 and November 2012. It boasts of a massive online fan following with the show being aired around the world in places as far away as Latin America and Thailand. Even though the fan following can be construed as multi-cultural, a

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[11] It is popularly referred to as IPKKND or IPK.

<div align="center">17</div>

significant part is comprised of Indian women, many of whom are part of the Indian diaspora.

Fan fiction based on the show is very popular in the community and the spaces like blogs where

it is hosted tend to become "Addas" which could be translated as a hanging out place, sort of like

a third place. For the purpose of the study, the population studied were Indian women belonging

to the diaspora, who have been residing outside India for five years and above, and who write

and read fan fiction relating to the show. Five blogs were identified as likely sites, and these

blogs were hosted by WordPress. In Chapter 3, the process adopted for recruitment of

participants for the study is discussed in detail. Apart from this the rationale adopted for the

collection of comments posted on the fan fiction blogs are also discussed.

Research Questions and Theoretical Approach

The Library will focus its efforts on preserving the Twitter collection for future generations. Throughout its history, the Library has seized opportunities to collect snapshots of unique moments in human history and preserve them for future generations. These snapshots of particular moments in history often give voice to history's silent masses: *ordinary people* (Library of Congress in a 2017 update on its Twitter Archive; emphasis on "ordinary people" added)

A two-pronged approach was adopted for the study with the first step comprising of

drawing a sociological picture[12] of the small world of the research setting and the population

under study. This was guided by the research question:

1. How do the fanfiction blogs (or the spaces afforded by them) form and function as a small world?

According to Chatman (1999), "a small world is a community of like-minded individuals

who share coownership of social reality" (p. 213). Savolainen (2008) noted that Chatman

adopted a functional sociology approach in her work and her small world concept with its social

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[12] The term "sociological picture" came from Dr. Tim Gorichanaz in an email exchange.

norms and values fits in with the model of homo soiologius which "explains action by pointing to collective norms and values, i.e., to rules which express a social "ought"; social order is then guaranteed by a normative consensus" (Reckwitz, 2002, p. 245). In her functional sociology approach the emphasis was placed on group specific norms and roles which have the effect of constraining information seeking. But Savolainen (2008) avers that even though context is important as shown by her studies, a broader view of information seeking needs to be adopted in today's times marked by "increasing individualization characteristic of reflexive modernization" (p. 6) and the availability of extensive networked sources. This means that people may be less prone to pressures induced by norms which can direct the seeking of information. Chatman also drew on the work of Robert Merton[13] who is associated with the structural-functional approach in sociology. Chatman's work was mainly aimed at studying impoverished socio-economic worlds with their attendant information poverty. Burnett, Besant and Chatman (2001) looked at the efficacy of using the theory of normative behavior with its concepts of social norms, social type, world view and information behavior, in studying virtual worlds, and found that normativity can be perceived in the frequently asked questions (FAQs) that are posted in virtual communities and as was social types noticed in the world of feminist book sellers. Worrall (2014) who employed the framework of the theory of information world (of which the theory of normative behavior is a part) to study communities fostered by LibraryThing and Goodreads, found social ties, more than social type, played a larger role, where "getting to know one another is more of a process of establishing social ties than socially typing others" (p. 209). Everyday behavior facilitated and supported by social ties start off as non-normative, but turn normative

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[13] The concept of insider/outsider is drawn from Merton's work. According to Reckwitz (2002), Alfred Schutz, whose work Chatman drew on in formulating her concept of small world is known to have taken a critical approach to the models of homo economics and homo sociologicus.

when users share and converge their culture, values and norms resulting in close knit

communities. A sense of community was another aspect noted by the aforementioned study

forged around shared and common interests and values. Worrall (2014) draws on the work of

Fister (2005) who studied an online book club and noted the sense of community that the space

afforded the members.

Figure 1

Preliminary Model of Small World
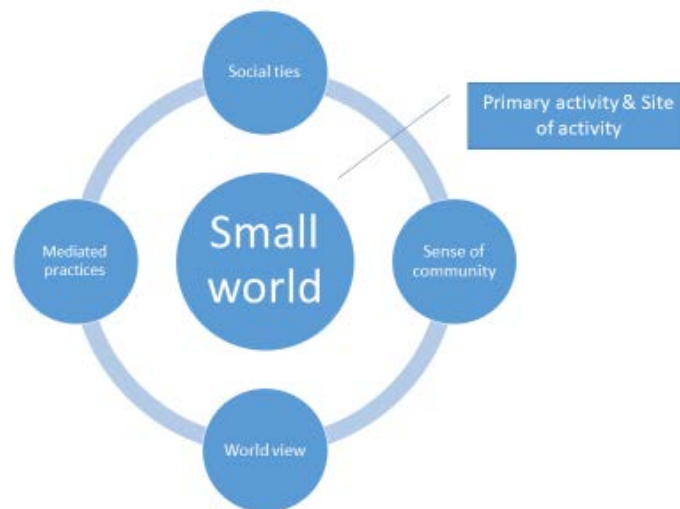
The small world as a concept is useful to encapsulate a world which coalesces around a

common interest, together with a common experience of being part of a diaspora, but it is felt

that a reconceptualization of small world, especially one present in the virtual world was

required for the purpose of this study. This is due to the fact that; (1) the world being looked at is

not information poor, (2) the inhabitants of this world are not explicitly seeking or looking for

information and (3) there is no institutional or organizational structure to impose some sort of

order in the world, leading to establishment of norms. Pushing the idea of information (and

information behavior) aside, an attempt should be made to draw a picture of this world which

would aid in understanding it as a context in which people experience information and then

identifying any associated practices surrounding that experience. In the words of Chatman (1996), "the process of understanding begins with research that *looks* at their[14] social environment and that *defines* information from their perspective" (p. 205). Drawing on the work of Strauss (1978), Chatman (1999, 2000), McMillan and Chavis (1986), Fisher and Naumer (2006), (Worrall (2014), and Skold (2013), a preliminary model of a small world is shown in Figure 1.

Primary Activity and Site of Activity

According to Strauss (1978) social worlds have one primary activity and a site where activities occur. Fisher and Naumer (2006) state that people gather in information grounds for a primary instrumental purpose and social interaction can be seen as a primary activity, a by-product of which is information flow. This is also a characteristic of Oldenburg's (1999) third place, which is a site other than one's home or work place where one likes to hang out.

Social Ties

Social ties refer to the establishment of connections between people who inhabit a common space, through the process of interactions. Engaging in common pursuits help people establish connections between each other and "feel part of a community-as-social-world" (Worrall, 2014, p. 220).

Sense of Community

McMillan and Chavis (1986) define sense of community has having four elements. Membership which is defined as a "feeling of belonging or of sharing a sense of personal

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[14] The chosen population of study.

relatedness" (p. 9). Influence which is defined as a "sense of mattering, of making a difference to a group and of the group mattering to its members" (p. 9). The third element is reinforcement which is "integration and fulfillment of needs" (p. 9) and the last element is shared emotional connection which is "the commitment and belief that members have shared and will share history, common places, time together, and similar experiences" (p. 9).

World View

Chatman (1999) defined world view as "a collective set of beliefs held by members who live within a small world" (p. 213). For the purpose of this study, world view was defined as a common perspective arising out of shared ethnicity and culture, and the experience of migration.

Mediated Practices

According to Skold (2013), virtual communities are characterized by the presence of mediated practices connected to "reading, writing, posting, and commenting via various new media sites" (p. 5). The interactions between people of a virtual world are shaped by practices which are mediated by and documented in a new media ecology. These new-media documents play a constitutive role in virtual environments. Following the approach adopted by Skold (2013), the act of commenting, replying to comments, posting videos, gifs, etc., can be viewed as mediated practices.

The second step or stage of the study was addressed through two broad research questions:

2. What does experiential information look like in diaspora small world? This question was guided by the following;

   a) What is the information/document experience of the participants with respect to the fanfiction blogs?

      • As a creator

- As a reader

3. How is the diasporic small world a serendipitous memory archive?

This overarching research question would be guided by;

a) How is collective memory making enacted in practice?

b) How does the small world environment impact the collective memory making?

c) What role does cultural knowledge play in memory making?

Figure 2

Framework of Second Stage of the Study
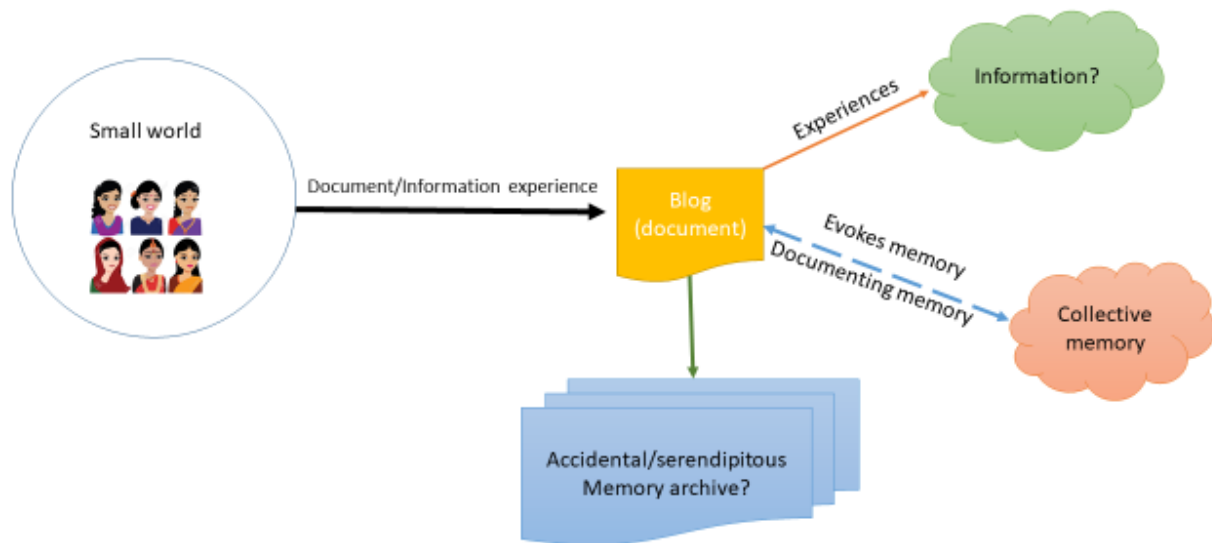
As noted in sections above, leisure in the form of consuming popular culture from the home country has a function in enabling the maintenance of ethnic identity in diaspora communities. Leisure is a part of everyday life, and has been the focus of multiple studies in information behavior, especially as a way of moving away from the overwhelming importance of studying formal and professional contexts. Pollak (2015) studying familiar experiences across the spectrum of work, leisure and everyday life in a small rural community, states that it is essential to view experiences as a source of information. Similar to an approach adopted by

Pollak (2015), drawing on the work of Gallant et al.,(2013) who put forth three challenges to the serious leisure perspective and called for the envisioning of leisure as an experience, a theoretical lens combining Latham's (2014) document experience (which approaches the process from the user/reader perspective), Gorichanaz's (2018) model of document creation (for a first person experience of documentation or a creator perspective) and Bruce, Davis, Hughes, Partridge and Stoodley's (2014) information experience approach would be adopted for the second stage of the study.

Skold (2013) used a document and documentation approach in studying online game communities, making the point that the main advantage of putting the focus of analytical attention on informative objects or documents instead of on their informative–ness or latent information helps to bring the important role they play in the sociocultural life of these virtual communities. This is due to the fact that these virtual worlds are characterized by the pervasiveness of mediated practices through the use of new media technologies. This requires the conceptualization of these virtual spaces and their mediated practices as documents. Skold (2013) draws on Levy (2001, 2003) who defines documents as "talking things" and narrowing the definition further means that documents are primarily about speaking. Viewed in this manner a "document can be understood as a material object connected to an activity aimed at making it talk in some ways, to someone" (Skold, 2013, p. 6). Adopting this view means blog posts, meme pictures, tweets and videos can be seen as documents.

According to Latham (2014) "lived experience refers to the immediate, dynamic and direct experience of the world as it is lived by a person" (p. 544). This means the totality of immediate experiences and activities that forms the world of an individual, in other words "it is the active experience of the lifeworld" (p.544). Understood as a "complex, multidimensional

engagement with information (Bruce, Davis, Hughes, Partridge and Stoodley, 2014, p. 4), information experience has made lived experience an emerging topic of interest in information science (Gorichanaz, 2018). Bruce et al. (2014) conceptualizes information experience as

> the way in which people experience or derive meaning from the way in which they engage with information and their lived worlds as they go about their daily life and work. This goes beyond how they make meaning from an objective entity identifiable as information, to consider what informs them and how they are informed, encompassing the many nuances of that experience within different cultures, communities and contexts (p. 6).

Bruce et al. (2014) noted that researching information experience of people takes one "deeply into their existence, to explore what is experienced as information and how it is experienced, how information is present or appears and its role and influence" (p. 5). Information experience can be viewed as a research domain as well as research object. Considered as research domain, through the adoption of a behavioral, phenomenological or sociocultural lens, a range of topics like information practice, information sharing and information literacy have been studied, wherein a broad view of the experience of humans engaging with information is obtained. On the other hand, as a research object, information experience is concerned with how information is experienced in a particular context.

Bruce et al. (2014) notes that a phenomenological lens "seeks to access, understand and analyze information experience in relation to people's whole life-worlds" (p. 7). Through the use of metaphor, story, reflection, immersion or observation such an access can be obtained. Further, by not making assumptions of the nature and forms of information, the different kinds of experiences encountered are equally valued. A holistic perspective which integrates what is experienced as information, how it is experienced, and the way people engage with the information experienced by them is sought.

Gorichanaz (2015) notes that most definitions of documents implies the presence and

activity of at least one human actor. It is through the presence of a human actor that a document can be "observed, consulted or studied" (p. 3). This also implies that without a human actor there will be no one to whom a document can be presented, or who can reconstitute or handle it. Any information object remains a potential document by itself and it is through human activity that a document is created. If we were to conceptualize documents as co-created, then the human actor is inextricable from it. Both the information object and the human actor contribute towards the formation of a document and this occurs in a transaction; "a moment that can only exist by the fusion of the person at that moment with the object in that place" (Latham, 2014, p. 549). Latham (2014) drawing on the works of John Dewey, Louise Rosenblatt's transactional theory of reading, and also expanding on Lund (2010) definition of a document as "any results of human efforts to tell, instruct, demonstrate, teach, or produce a play, in short to document, by using some means in some ways" (p. 743), contends that documents can be understood as any object that means "something to somebody" (p. 550). A conceptualization of a document in this neo-documentation tradition meant that the options were opened, not restricting to text, or museum objects or material culture, but something that would enable a "more expansive understanding of human relationships with things" (Latham, 2014, p. 551). Latham (2014) approached information experience from a document perspective putting forward the concept of *document experience*. As a phenomenological approach, document experience "seeks a holistic, multidimensional account of how humans engage with documents, to include cognitive, affective, temporal and corporeal dimensions, among others" (Gorichanaz, 2016, p. 2). A person is considered to be inseparable from their lifeworld, and as such the infrastructural context of a document along with its lifeworld should be seen as having a bearing on the document experience (Wood & Latham, 2014; Carter, 2016; Gorichanaz, 2016). Drawing on Suzanne

Briet's and Michael Buckland's ideas about document, Sundberg and Kjellman (2018) holds that "a document can comprise all types of signs and symbols which signify/describe/represent and demonstrate an object, a thought, an idea or a notion" (p. 21). Keeping this as a basis they viewed a tattoo as a document because it could signify something; like a memory, a person, an event or an identity. Gorichanaz (2018) states that documentation is an experience viewed from the first person and his model was developed looking at self-portraiture as an act of documentation, working from earlier work which looked at lived experience of document work through a case study of a gardener. This experiential time sensitive framework consists of foundation, process and challenges bringing together or synthesizing earlier models from Lund (2010), Gorichanaz and Latham (2016) and Gorichanaz (2016).

<center>Significance of the Study</center>

As observed information studies of immigrants and refugees have adopted a place-based perspective. There is an absence of studies which have considered the transnational nature of a diaspora. There are also information studies which have looked at virtual spaces from a leisure perspective often employing the serious leisure lens prescribed by Stebbins (2007). For example, Hill and Pecoskie (2017) examined the information activities of a fanfiction community as serious leisure. Forcier (2017) studied a transmedia fandom by focusing on everyday information behavior along with the practices of reading and media consumption. It is hoped this new study will help to address a gap in the information science literature, on the transnational nature of diaspora populations, while also looking at spaces previously studied from a leisure perspective, but when viewed through a diaspora lens could hold more relevance than just as a leisurely pursuit. There is a need to look at everyday life in its totality without making distinctions between various aspects of it, and these distinctions could be made through a process of viewing

something as more information rich, whether in terms of behavior or environment like viewing something as serious leisure and thereby perceiving it as more information rich. This involves moving beyond the traditional ways of knowing and information resources, and looking at "narrative, lived experience, and other non-traditional forms of information as valuable resources and means for understanding everyday life" (Ocepek, 2018, p.404). By adopting a traditional approach towards information and what constitutes information richness, Information behavior research has made everyday life appear poor in terms of information and as such not worthy of research focus (Ocepek, 2018). Hegde (2016) notes that through the act of blogging, a transnational circuit of exchange is established by women belonging to South Asian diaspora, enabling a dynamic connection to the home country, which is not just an object of nostalgia but can also be a "generative living source of knowledge and history" (Kun, 2004, p. 744). This study also seeks to address a gap in information studies which have taken a gender perspective, especially the everyday and private lives of women. By drawing on literature from fields as varied as globalization and diaspora studies, media and cultural studies, it is hoped that this study can lead to more conceptual and theoretical work in the information science field. This would enable us to interrogate existing notions of what is information, what is a document and what is an archive.

Publications from the Dissertation[15]

Parts of the dissertation has been published in conference proceedings and as part of a journal article which is included in a forthcoming issue.

- 2019: Two posters at ASIS&T Annual Meeting, Melbourne, Australia

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[15] Parts of this chapter have been published in Kizhakkethil (2019), Kizhakkethil & Burnett (2019), Kizhakkethil (2020a), Kizhakkethil (2020b), Kizhakkethil (2020c), Kizhakkethil (2020d.)

1. Kizhakkethil. P. & Burnett, G. 2019. Virtual Zenana: Reimagining small world. *Proceedings of the Association for Information Science and Technology, 56*(1), 693-695

2. Kizhakkethil, P. (2019). Memory making and documenting in a diaspora small world. *Proceedings of the Association for Information Science and Technology*, *56*(1), 696-698.

- 2020: Three conference papers

1. Kizhakkethil, P. (2020). Reimagining Small World: A Preliminary Model. In: Sundqvist A., Berget G., Nolin J., Skjerdingstad K. (eds) Sustainable Digital Communities. iConference 2020. *Lecture Notes in Computer Science, vol 12051*(pp. 88-95). Switzerland: Springer

2. Kizhakkethil, P. (2020 in press). Live writing: Modeling a creative activity in a virtual small world. In *Proceedings of ASIS&T Annual Meeting, 2020, 57*, e318. doi: ttps://doi.org/10.1002/pra2.318

3. Kizhakkethil, P. (2020) Information experience in a diaspora small world. In *Proceedings of ISIC virtual conference*, 2020 (forthcoming in Information Research).

- 2020: Journal article

1. Kizhakkethil, P (2020/in press). **"**You make me miss Pune so much": Memory-making and documenting in a Virtual Zenana. *Aslib Journal of Information Management* (forthcoming special issue on doctoral work).

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Communities and Virtual Communities

> To start with, community is a "warm" place, a cosy and comfortable place. It is like a roof under which we shelter in heavy rain, like a fireplace at which we warm our hands on a frosty day. Out there in the street, all sorts of dangers lie in ambush; we have to be alert when we go out, watch whom we are talking to and who talks to us, be on the look-out every minute. In here, in the community, we can relax – we are safe, there are no dangers looming in the dark corners (to be sure, hardly any "corner" here is "dark"). In a community, we understand each other well, we may trust what we hear, we are safe most of the time and hardly ever puzzled or taken aback. We are never strangers to each other (Bauman, 2001, p. 1-2)

This description of a community by Bauman (2001) appears idyllic, and appears like a

dream that we aspire to inhabit and which is unfortunately unavailable to us. "Words have

meanings: some words, however, also have a 'feel.' The word 'community is one of them'" (p.

1). Williams (2015)[16] wrote that the word community never seems to be used unfavorably unlike

other terms meant to signify social organization, like state, society, nation etc. "Community can

be the warmly persuasive word to describe an existing set of relationships, or the warmly

persuasive word to describe an alternative set of relationships" (p. 40). Generally understood the

word community brings to mind the notion of a shared aspect. The lexical definitions of the word

community emphasizes a common factor like a shared interest, a place, a policy, practice,

ethnicity, nationality and even institutional structure. Those sharing a common place of work

and/or a common work role, like in the academic world, would be termed as being part of a

community. Bauman (2001) talked about the presence of a shared understanding among the

members of a community and this understanding is defined to be of the natural and tacit kind and

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[16] Raymond Williams's book "Keywords: A vocabulary of culture and society" was first published in the year 1976. A new edition published is 2015 is cited here.

which acts as the "starting point of all togetherness" (p. 10). An idealized model of a community is distinct, small and self-sufficient. This notion of a community brings with it an insider-outsider perspective, through the idea of distinctiveness. Smallness refers to the denseness of communication amongst the insiders and self-sufficiency is seen as an isolatory notion, where the need to deal with the outside is rare.[17] These three characteristics helps maintain the habitual ways of the community. But with the coming of modernity and globalization the boundaries that protected communities have vanished. Bauman (2001) noted that the emancipation of the flow of information meant that the boundary between insiders and outsiders could not be drawn, let alone sustained. This is similar to the view of Anderson (2016)[18] who noted that any community larger than a little village should be seen as imagined, a sort of negotiated construct by which people view themselves as connected. McMillan and Chavis (1986) put forward a definition of community which called for the presence of four elements; membership, influence, integration and fulfillment of needs and shared emotional connection. Noting the need for a more fluid understanding of community, Wilson and Peterson (2002) "acknowledge that individuals within any community are simultaneously part of other interacting communities, societies, or cultures" (p. 455).

　　With the advent of the World Wide Web and the Internet, the term community is often seen used in relation to the networked world, with online assemblages referred to as virtual or online communities. The term virtual and online are also used interchangeably. In the online world communities form around a common or shared interest or goal and electronic

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[17] This notion of a community is reminiscent of Elfreda Chatman's idea of a small world, which can be seen as bounded, with its own norms.

[18] Benedict Anderson's "Imagined communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism" was first published in 1983. A revised edition published in 2016 is cited here.

communication is the primary mode of interaction. Online communities were pictured by

Liklider and Taylor (1968)[19] as consisting of "geographically separated members, sometimes

grouped in small lusters and sometimes working individually. They will be communities not of

common location, but of common interest" (p. 37). Rheingold (2000)[20] in his seminal work,

defined virtual communities as "social aggregations that emerge from the Net when enough

people carry on those public discussions long enough, with sufficient human feeling, to form

webs of personal relationships in cyberspace (p. xx). According to Burnett (2000) a confluence

of information and communication facilitated by computer mediated technologies brought virtual

communities into being. Discussion forums where a group of people who are geographically

dispersed but share a set of interests are a common form of virtual community. Text forms the

most common form of exchange on virtual communities and it is often seen that these

communities turn into social spaces where active exchange of information and socio-emotional

support is afforded to the members. Komito (1998) posited that only two types of community is

possible in the virtual world; firstly moral communities which are characterized by reciprocal

relations and egalitarian values and, secondly, norm–based communities[21] which have a system

of shared values and rules in place. Even though in the present time, social media garners most

of the interest, the early days of research that looked into the internet and social connectivity had

focused on online communities. The emphasis had been on the liberating possibilities afforded

by virtual community and the "potential for new experiences of sociality" that it provided

(Willson, 2010, p. 748). Rheingold (2000) talked about how the future of the internet is tied to

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[19] Liklider and Taylor (1968) termed these on-line interactive communities.

[20] Rheingold's book "The virtual community: homesteading on the electronic frontier" was first published in 1993. The MIT Press 2000 version is cited here.

[21] Like a small world

the "future of community, democracy, education, science, and intellectual life" (p. xxi). On the other hand, Haythornthwaite (2007) noted the dystopic viewpoint which saw the online world as a threat to the notion of a traditional community, with the absence of face–to–face interaction increasing individual alienation and depression. Researchers also saw involvement in online communities as taking resources and attention away from traditional local communities. The areas of the Internet filled with sexual predators and other criminal elements was also seen as the darker and negative side of online activity. A major study was Rheingold's (2000) study of the WELL community, viewing an online community from the perspective of the sense of community that it engendered for its members by offering social and emotional meaning. Baym (2000) looked at a Usenet discussion group centered on a soap opera fandom where the communication online is structured through the rules and conventions that arose out of the members interests and this is seen to parallel traditional community aspects.

Community and Network

Despite the considerable debate and confusion surrounding them, the notions of community and network have enjoyed an "unrivalled paradigmatic status" (Postill, 2008). "However, in whatever ways they are conceptualized, when they are applied to social forms, both network and community name ways of being together and describe forms of connectivity or relations between people" (Willson, 2010, p. 749). Whether explicitly or implicitly, both community and network describe the rules and norms necessary for their operation, what would make someone an insider or an outsider of one. The differences between the two largely rests on the form or type of relations proposed, the theoretical approaches that have been employed in their study and the disciplinary background of the researchers. According to Willson (2010) network has gained tremendous interest due to the use of social network analysis techniques

especially in online networks like Twitter and also from the work of Manuel Castell (2000) with his network society or Barry Wellman's (2002) networked individual. Researchers using network analysis in an attempt to map them have tried to understand the behavior, potential, and predictability of networks as well as the actors or nodes within them. "The term network is used to describe a process or an activity (*to* network) and an object of study (*a* network). It is also used to refer to specific techniques or methods of analysis" (Willson, 2010, p. 749). This has often caused confusion in the understanding and use of network within the Internet and new digital media studies. Community has also been studied and discussed across disciplines with varying definitions of community being put forth as a result. The dialogue around virtual community has also revolved around whether they exist and, if so, in what form. Questions have also been posed as to whether they could be seen as real communities. But there are instances when the two terms have been conflated, where communities are seen as a network or a part of one, and networks have been seen as replacement for community forms. Structural or organizational modes of sociality have been described using the term network, while the term community has been used to signify "content inasmuch as it refers to a particular type of sociality" (p. 760). One way around the contradiction of network and community would be to see community as a content and network as a form in which a community could manifest while displaying the many features of the form. Here content is meant to refer to labeling ways of coming together. Willson (2010) described this with a slightly different in emphasis then from Castells (2001) who had said that the community has been replaced by the network as the major form of sociality. This notion of community and network put forward by Willson (2010), reminds one of Castells (1999) space of flows and Appadurai's (2010) concept of the circulation of forms. By space of flows Castells (1999) meant "that the material arrangements allow for

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simultaneity of social practices without territorial contiguity" (p. 364). It is seen as a new form of space important for structuring social relations and is organized around connection rather than location. Appadurai (2010) put forward the concept of circulation of forms which indicate a "family of phenomena, including styles, techniques, or genres, which can be inhabited by specific voices, contents, messages and materials" (p. 9). Different forms have different trajectories of circulation generating various interpretations and as a result produce uneven and different geographies. He said that through the circulation of forms and the work of the imagination[22] localities are produced through the negotiation and mutual tensions between them, and not through hybridization of art, contents, ideology or technology. The conceptual tension between community and network could be better resolved by adopting such lenses. Virtual communities as seen today are not just technological forms but also cultural forms.

<center>Information Behavior and Information Practice</center>

History and Development

Information behavior is an umbrella term or concept used to describe the myriad ways in which human beings interact with information, including those which are considered basic and form part of everyday existence. Studies of information behavior constitute one of the most popular aspects of information science currently, with other disciplines also showing interest in human behavior with respect to information[23]. Studies looking into the use of books or

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[22] Imagination has been defined as the "faculty that informs the daily lives of ordinary people in myriad ways: It allows people to consider migration, resist state violence, seek social redress, and design new forms of civic association and collaboration, often across national boundaries" (Appadurai, 2000, p. 6). He argued that imagination as a social force produces locality as a spatial fact and also as a sensibility engendering new social forms which are not constrained by the predatory mobility of capital or predatory stability of a state.

[23] Wilson (1997) notes that information science does not have a monopoly on information behavior research and gives examples of areas including consumer behavior, health communication and organizational decision making as interested in the ways people seek and use information.

newspapers, especially those looking into the use of libraries and mass media as information sources could be seen to date back at least a century[24], with the first published reviews of such literature appearing in the 1940s. By the 1960s studies which looked into the information needs and uses of specialized users like engineers and scientists started to appear regularly in journals and reports. What is termed as a system–oriented approach, the focus was on task–oriented information needs and the use of formal sources or channels to meet them. In the 1970s , a user or person centered approach was adopted, moving away from the system–oriented approach, to look at the users as finders, creators , interpreters and users of information (Case & Given, 2016).

The *Annual Review of Information Science and Technology* (ARIST) featured chapters taking a comprehensive look at information needs and uses studies starting from the year 1966. The chapter by Dervin and Nilan in 1986 is generally considered as a watershed article, bringing the user perspective front and center. Bates (2004) notes that while many consider this article as marking the beginning of modern user–centered perspective in information seeking studies, it does not take into account studies which had taken a user perspective prior to 1978[25], which was the year taken as the base by Dervin and Nilan (1986) in their review. Another landmark article by Dervin in 1976 laid out what she termed "ten dubious assumptions" which dominated the research on information seeking and use. Dervin and Nilan (1986) also called for a more holistic approach to the study of information seeking and use, which took into account the social context to information seeking and use employing a more qualitative approach. In looking at Dervin and

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[24] According to Wilson (2000) the year 1948 in which the Royal Society's scientific information conference was held can be viewed as the beginning of human information seeking studies in the modern era, whereas Case and Given (2016) notes that an 1849 report placed before the British parliament on the effects of libraries on reading could also be seen as an information behavior study in spite of it not being a scholarly study. Wilson (1994) had also noted a 1916 study of public libraries in Cleveland as the beginning of this kind of inquiry.

[25] An ARIST review on information needs and uses appeared in 1978, prior to the one in 1986 by Dervin & Nilan. And as such in the 1986 article covered only literature post 1978.

Nilan's article, Talja and Hartel (2007) had highlighted some of the work that had not been covered by them (Dervin and Nilan), which had called for adopting a more user centered perspective to information seeking and use studies. Paisley (1968) had noted in his ARIST review the need for developing a more refined conceptualization of the context within which scholarly communication takes place. Talja and Hartel (2007) comment that Paisley (1968) had underscored the effect of the cultural system of science which he saw as pervasive and in a sense overlooked by scholars themselves. With the holding of conferences on information seeking in context starting in 1996, the user-centered perspective to information behavior research has seen advancements in the development of conceptual frameworks.

Information behavior as a term has also had its share of controversies with many expressing their displeasure as to whether it is an appropriate phrase to describe a body of work. Criticism has included the assertion that information as such does not behave, but human beings do. Arguments have also raised the issue of information behavior being associated with behaviorist paradigm in psychology by those outside the field. Those who favored the term made the point that studies which come under this label included not just information seeking and use but also concepts like information need and information giving. Adding to the confusion there have been many definitions of what constitutes information behavior. But the fact remains that it has been widely accepted with the term being used extensively in journal article titles and academic courses (Pettigrew, Fidel & Bruce, 2001). Fisher, Erdelez and McKechnie (2005) also pointed out in the preface to the book *Theories of Information Behavior*, that the theoretical activity in the mid–to–late 1990s also corresponded with the wide acceptance of the term as a sub–discipline of the field of library and information science.

Information Behavior

As discussed above, information behavior is an umbrella term that is widely used to refer to the ways in which human beings interact with information, including, information seeking, use, exchange and creation. According to Bates (2010), "Information behavior is the current preferred term used to describe the many ways in which human beings interact with information, in particular, the ways in which people seek and utilize information" (p. 2381). Wilson (2000)[26] defined information behavior as encompassing the whole of human behavior as it relates to the sources and channels, including active, as well as passive, information seeking and use. This broad definition would bring under its ambit face-to-face conversation with others as well as the passive gathering of information from one's environment and where such information is not acted on. Information behavior brings under its folds, information seeking behavior, information use behavior and information searching behavior as its constituents. Pettigrew et al., (2001) defines information behavior as "the study of how people need, seek, give, and use information in different contexts, including the workplace and everyday living" (p. 44). Information seeking has been the most studied of aspects of information behavior with user studies being the term used to describe such activities in the early days. Later, they were referred to as information seeking and gathering or information needs and uses studies. At the same time studies that looked into information searching with specific focus on the act of searching itself was also being carried out, which is in line with the information retrieval side of information science (Bates, 2010). Information seeking has been accorded multiple characteristics by way of studies in various fields like communication, consumer research, health science and information science.

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[26] Wilson who has put forward a model of information behavior in various iterations started off with the term information seeking behavior but does not as noted by Savolainen (2007) give a reason as to why he chose information seeking behavior over the more common information seeking at that point in time.

With a short history, in the earlier days, information seeking was seen in terms of usage of

diverse sources of literature or diverse types of institutions like libraries and the earliest usage of

the term information seeking can be traced to the 1970s. The introduction of and interchangeable

use of related terms like information search, information retrieval and information activities

added to the complexity of the conceptual setting for the term information seeking. Usage of the

term information search by Kuhlthau (1993) when the phenomena under study was information

seeking and Marchionini (1995) used the term information seeking when his focus was on

information search and retrieval are just some examples of the confusion arising from the

interchangeable use of terms in the conceptual arena of information seeking.

The shift and resultant user entered approach in information studies has been dominated

by the constructivist or cognitive viewpoint. Under this approach the "the cognitive and affective

dimensions of human information behavior and the situational contexts that trigger and may

determine the nature and outcome of an individual's engagement with information" are explored

(Fulton, 2010, p. 2520). In their landmark paper, Dervin and Nilan (1986) called for

paradigmatic shift in information needs and use studies, and noted that the dissenting voices that

they found in their study all had called for a focus on "cognitive behavior and developing

cognitive approaches to assessing information needs and uses" (p. 15). This was implicit in the

conceptions of information and information need that was put forth. For example Belkin (1978)

conceived information as that which has the effect of transforming image structures of an

individual. Irrespective of the variety of questions addressed or methodologies employed, a

common object of research has been the knowledge structure of individuals. This cognitive

approach had a powerful impact not just on research but on practice as well. The prevalent view

was that of information as an object and with information practice concerned with the design and

management of systems that delivered information. The cognitive approach resulted in work which focused on attributes of individuals and examines the cognitive and emotional motivations for information seeking which can be applied across contexts (Olsson, 2005). The focus here is on the need of an individual for information triggered by an "anomalous state of knowledge" as put forward by Nicholas Belkin or due to uncertainty as positioned by Kuhlthau and Wilson. The literature of information behavior studies have been dominated by studies that looked into information seeking for the purpose of problem solving or purposive information seeking. The populations that have been studied have also been demonstrative of this fact with studies of scientists, students, work and academic settings leading the cause. Talja (1997) sees the cognitive viewpoint as based on the rationalistic paradigm which has been part of Western thought since Plato. Here the individual is at the center of awareness and is an autonomous and fixed entity, distinct and separate from other such entities. Information studies based on this viewpoint have focused on instrumental use of information. By focusing on the importance of information in rational decision making and problem solving, studies have looked at clear cut and often professional problem situations. This cognitive view point where the individual is the unit of analysis or the idea of an information man[27] could be seen as based on "homo economicus" from classical rational choice theory where action is explained "by having recourse to individual purposes, intentions and interests; social order is then a product of the combination of single interests" (Reckwitz, 2002, p. 245).

Everyday Life Information Behavior

Information behavior studies especially in the early days were dominated by studies that

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[27] Roberts (1982) puts forward the idea of using the concept of information man based on the notion of economic man in information studies.

looked into mostly work and academic contexts of information seeking and use. The work of

Elfreda Chatman who looked into the everyday life information worlds of often marginalized

groups has been instrumental in highlighting the importance of looking into the context of daily

life. "The everyday life information seeking small world concept provides a deep,

anthropological analysis of the situational aspect of information behavior in everyday life

information seeking" (Spink & Cole, 2006, p. 27). Savolainen (1995) introduced a model of

everyday life information seeking (ELIS) in the context of way of and mastery of life and this

was primarily motivated by the need to explicate the role that cultural and social factors play and

their effect on how people select and use information sources in everyday life (Savolainen,

2006). Everyday life information seeking has normally been used in non-work contexts and can

include seeking information about health care and hobbies. In the United States these kind of

studies often termed as citizen information seeking consisted of large scale surveys and the

results showed that people preferred informal sources for everyday problems and information

needs. There has been an increase in studies of everyday life especially using qualitative

methodologies, for example, Chatman employed ethnographic techniques in her studies of

everyday life of small groups. According to Savolainen (1995) "the concept of ELIS refers to the

acquisition of various informational (both cognitive and expressive) elements which people

employ to orient themselves in daily life or to solve problems not directly connected with the

performance of occupational tasks" (p. 266-267). The values, attitudes and interests which are

characteristic of the way of life of a person determines the manner in which a person monitors

daily events and seeks information for the solving of specific problems.

Information Practice

Due to its use in multiple domains, the word practice can be seen to be defined in various way and in a way could be conceptualized as a polysemic term. This makes it imperative that we look at what is meant by practice before one looks at information practice itself. The Oxford English dictionary gives three definitions for the term practice. First, it's the application or use in actuality of an idea, belief, or method, in opposition to theories relating to it. The second definition relates to the normal or customary way of doing something and the third definition relates to the continued or repeated performance of an activity or skill with the intention of obtaining or maintaining proficiency in it (Oxford dictionary, 2017). The social sciences abound with various notions about practice, and as Cox (2012) states there has been an increased interest in adopting a practice approach in disciplines like anthropology, sociology and philosophy among others. According to Reckwitz (2002), the 1970s saw a turn towards the interpretative side in the social sciences and in this atmosphere the practice theories or a theory of social practices seemed to be an attractive alternative. The works of Pierre Bourdieu, Anthony Giddens, Michel Foucault, and Harold Garfinkel are a few which are notable for elements of a theory of social practice. An interest in everyday and life world seems to be tied to the turn towards practice theories. Practice theory can be seen as a subtype of cultural theory and it differs from other cultural theories by placing the social in practices and not in the human mind. Reckwitz (2002) highlights the importance of understanding what is meant by practice and practices from the perspective of the practice theories.

A "practice" is a routinized type of behavior which consists of several elements, interconnected to one another: forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, "things" and their use, a background knowledge in the form of understanding, know-how, states of emotion

and motivational knowledge (Reckwitz, 2002, p. 249)

A practice could also be looked upon as a pattern which could be filled out by a group of single and many a time unique actions which reproduces it. An individual who carries out many practices, uncoordinated to each other, becomes not only a bearer of bodily behavior patterns, but also of certain routinized ways of knowing, understanding and desiring which is of a non-individual quality. By this we mean that such routinized acts and knowing are not only known to the individuals who practice but also to their observers especially if they belong to the same culture. "A practice is social, as it is a type of behaving and understanding that appears at different locales and at different points of time and is carried out by different body/minds" (Reckwitz, 2002, p. 250). Cox (2012) and Savolainen have drawn on the work of Theodore Schatzki (2001), who states that the central core of all practice theorists rests on the idea that practices are "embodied, materially mediated arrays of human activity centrally organized around shared practical understanding" (p. 11). In spite of the diversity in practice approaches there is a common belief that phenomena such as knowledge, meaning, science, power, language, human activity, social institutions, and historical transformations take place within and are aspects of a field of practices. Thus the field of practices[28] can be seen as the "total nexus of interconnected human practices" (p. 11). According to Wenger[29] (1998), the connotation of the concept of practice is doing, but not doing in and of itself. Doing here is always in a historical and social context which gives structure and meaning to what is done and as such practice is always a social practice.

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[28] Cox (2012) talks about Bourdieu's concept of a field of practices, which is a specialist domain with its own set of practices along with their own common sense and logic.

[29] Wenger's communities of practice is probably one of the most familiar of practice theories in information science especially in relation to knowledge management.

The practice turn in information science has been headed most recently by Reijo Savolainen and Pamela McKenzie[30]. Savolainen (1995) first explored the notion through his every day information seeking model which drew on the notion of habitus from the work of Pierre Bourdieu. He went on to further elaborate the practice conception by drawing on social phenomenology and the practice theory of Theodore Schatzki, through the introduction of a model of practice in the context of life world in his book *Everyday Information Practices*. Fulton (2010) in her entry on information practice in the *Encyclopedia of Library and Information Science* (3rd edition), states that information practice should be looked upon as an alternative to information behavior as an umbrella concept. As a concept, information practice, which is grounded in the works of Foucault, Vygotsky, and Garfinkel, is said to question the historical position occupied by the individual as a unit of analysis. The philosophy behind information practice holds that research approaches that focus on the individual as the unit of analysis do not adequately address the social nature of information processes, as information and knowledge creation should be seen as rooted in a sociocultural context. The cognitive or constructive approach has faced criticism in spite of the spike in interest in information seeking in context, for its failure to adequately address the effect of sociocultural elements in knowledge creation or the role of language other than as a tool evidencing cognitive processes. Social constructionism has been put forward as an alternative where a collective perspective is adopted in research. According to Tuominen, Talja and Savolainen (2006) under social constructionism, the attention is placed on talk, interaction and the use of language in diverse contexts. What this does is to

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[30] Savolainen (2008) mentions that the Pamela McKenzie can be considered as one of the prominent proponents of the information practice approach through her work which resulted in a model of information practices for everyday life information seeking. McKenzie (2003) in turn cites Savolainen (1995) and Tuominen and Savolainen (1997) to make a case for adopting discourse analysis using a constructionist approach to the study of practices involved in information seeking.

provide a dialogic view point which aims at "capturing the socially and culturally shaped ways of understanding information practices, that is, the practices of seeking, accessing, rating, using, and sharing information" (p. 328). Olsson (2005) states that social constructionism as a research approach provides a theoretical lens through which a clearer understanding of information users can be gained, not as needy individuals, but as social beings who are experts in their life-worlds. Savolainen (2008) defines information practices as a culturally and socially established manner of identifying, seeking, using and sharing information that is available from a multitude of sources like television, newspapers, and the Internet. These practices can be identified in both work and non-work contexts and are often habitual. In addition, they are embedded in everyday contexts and the term practice is often used in the sense of a primitive term making it self-evident and as such invisible and difficult to discern in considerable detail.

Information Behavior and Virtual Communities

Bates (2010) defined information behavior as "the current preferred term used to describe the many ways in which human beings interact with information, in particular, the ways in which people seek and utilize information" (p. 2381). Wilson (2000) defined information behavior as constituting the "totality of human behavior in relation to sources and channels of information, including both active and passive information seeking and information use" (p. 49). Broadly conceived this would include face–to–face interaction with others as well as the passive intake of information through television viewing and where there is no intention of acting on the information so gained. Everyday life information behavior normally denotes information seeking and use in non-work contexts. Savolainen (2006) noted that the development of the everyday life information seeking (ELIS) model was motivated out of a need felt for elaborating on the part

played by social and cultural factors in the preference and usage of information sources in everyday life.

There are no theoretical or conceptual frameworks which have been put forward specifically relating to information behavior on virtual communities. Burnett (2002) noted that majority of the scholarly literature on virtual communities has tended to draw on definitional work from sociology, philosophy, and political science and can be seen as attempts to understand whether these could be termed as communities and, if so, what kind? Due to this mostly sociological focus Burnett (2000) contended that the role of information has been marginalized and as such to what degree these worlds could be seen as information-oriented is open to question. According to Burnett (2000) the concept of information neighborhood is particularly apt for the study of information behavior in virtual communities. Information neighborhood is an environment where in practical and orienteering information seeking along with directed and undirected browsing can take place. Marchionini (1995) used the phrase information neighborhood as a metaphor in talking of browsing strategies and behaviors, but "virtual communities, by combining the information environment with collectivities of users who see themselves as participants in a community, literalizes the metaphor" (Burnett, 2000, p. 5). According to Haythornthwaite and Wellman (1998) a person's information neighborhood is not only comprised of family, friends and neighbors among others apart from media sources, and information exchange is a fundamentally social interaction irrespective of the situation. Burnett (2000) noted that both dimensions of the ELIS model consisting of practical and orienting information seeking falls into the ambit of information neighborhood activity. Holding the view that virtual communities could potentially support a whole lot of information–related activities, the behaviors within virtual communities were broadly categorized into two: non-interactive and

interactive. Specific information–oriented behaviors were categorized as announcements, queries

or specific requests for information, and directed group projects. Burnett and Buerkle (2004)

used this typology to do a comparative study of two virtual communities which helped in further

refining the categorization of information related activities on virtual communities. Ellis, Oldrige

and Vasconcelos (2004) have noted the usefulness of using Burnett's (2000) typology in

understanding the characteristics of virtual community interactions in terms of information

exchange, as well as in comprehending the extent to which they act as information environments.

Savolainen (2001) examined information seeking activities on newsgroups and found that

even though an interactive forum is brought forth by these groups not all discussions displayed

information seeking behavior. Fisher, Unruh and Durrance (2003) using the concept of

information communities put forward by Durrance (2001), looked at three online community

networks and laid out five characteristics of such information communities. Durrance (2001)

defined an information community as "constituencies united by a common interest in building

and increasing access to a set of dynamic, linked, and varying information resources" (p. 164).

Fisher et al. (2003) noted that information communities display the notions of community and

virtual community with a main focus on information. Chatman's theory of normative behavior

was noted as ideal to study information behavior in virtual communities by Burnett, Besant and

Chatman (2001). "A small world has a specific context that serves a particular population to

permit its members to conduct their business in a routine, expected manner" (p. 536). The

information that flows in from the outside world has no lasting value in a small world and this

aspect of it seems to fall within the description of an idealized community as described by

Bauman (2001). Burnett et al (2001) note that most studies of virtual communities have been on

a structural level without much focus being paid to the content of the information exchange that

takes place. The flow of information that occurs through these textual messages bring forth and sustain the small worlds of virtual communities. The idea of a small world having a specific context and that virtual communities normally form around a shared interest, further points to the utility of this concept in studying virtual small worlds. Savolainen (2009) in talking about spatial context of information seeking and sharing had pointed out the utility of the small world concept and held that it could be extended to the study of virtual communities, too. Jaeger and Burnett (2010) developed the theory of information world building on the theory of normative behavior and adding Jürgen Habermas's concept of lifeworld and public sphere to it. One of the studies in which this framework has been used looked into the lifecycles of virtual scientific teams.

Context and Virtual Communities

Dervin (1997) had termed context as a term frequently used but which is ill defined or defined in vastly varying ways all at the same time. "Context has the potential to be virtually anything that is not defined as the phenomenon of interest" (Dervin, 1997, p. 14). Information behavior is generally said to take place in a context. The necessary condition(s) that aids one in developing an understanding of information behavior phenomena has been termed context by Fidel (2012). Context can also be said to create meaning. Talja, Keso and Pietilainen (1999) put forward an objectified and interpretive approach to context. The objectified approach has been more commonly adopted in information seeking studies. In the case of the objectified approach "context is evoked and described, but not philosophically and theoretically. In the latter, context is not understood as an independent entity, but as a carrier of meaning" (p. 752). In studies of information behavior in virtual communities, the basic level of contextualization would be to view it through the work and non-work prism. From an organizational perspective, Al Muzaffar and AlShare (2015) looked at what factors impact knowledge sharing by individuals in virtual

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networked communities. Hung, Lai, and Chou (2015) looked at professional virtual communities from a knowledge sharing intention perspective. O'Connor (2013) looked at information sharing and use in investment discussion forums. From a non-work perspective, Burnett (2009) looked at the information behavior of members of a forum associated with a music archive. Adams (2009) had looked at information seeking and meaning making in virtual play spaces. Hall, Widen and Paterson (2010) looked at the social motivations behind information sharing behavior in a blogging environment. Since virtual communities normally arise around a common interest, that particular interest could be termed as a context for studying a distinct virtual community. If one were to look at virtual communities in the sense of a traditional community then the context of space would be particularly apt, since some of the metaphors used in information behavior research, like information use environments, information neighborhood, information ground, small world, information community,[31] among others, could be transferred to the online world, too. Komito (1998) drew a parallel between a foraging community and virtual community. Foraging communities are temporary aggregations of people and very often there is little sense of a collective identity. Membership in a community is voluntary and temporary, and individuals move and groups are redefined, depending on ecological and personal factors" (p. 103). Foraging communities are also egalitarian and this can be seen as the ideology of most virtual groups too, as membership in these groups are rarely based on real world attributes. Sandstrom (1994) had drawn a parallel between scholarly information seekers and subsistence foragers. If one were to look at a virtual community as a container, in the sense of using the spatial metaphor as a container as pointed out by Savolainen (2006), then information fields as put forward by

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[31] Information neighborhood, small world and information immunity was discussed as possible theoretical concepts for the study of virtual communities in the section on information behavior and virtual communities.

Johnson, Case, Andrews, Allard and Johnson (2006) would be a good fit, where people are seen

to be embedded in information fields and this determines their knowledge of particular issues

and level of awareness. "The presence of weak ties[32], infrequent, unidimensional contacts with

outgroup members, may expose them to information that suggests the possibility of change

should at least be explored and this may trigger an expansion of the individual's information

field" (p. 571). This also resonates with the idea of a foraging community as Johnson et al (2006)

also talked about the pathways that people would take in their information seeking within the

fields that they are embedded in. Viewing electronic groups as a foraging community, where

people move from one to another, Komito (1998) wondered whether people could be said to

forage for information. The aspect of a foraging community as temporary in many ways, also fits

in with Pettigrew's (1999) notion of an information ground where people create a temporary

environment in the process of coming together for another task, like being in a beauty salon

which can result in spontaneous and serendipitous information sharing. Leisure as a context in

everyday life information behavior has been used in the study of virtual communities. The online

world abounds with communities which are formed around leisure interests. Baym (2000) had

studied a soap opera fan forum adopting a practice approach "which helps in examining the

routinized ways in which such communities organize their social lives allows us to see them as

wholes while simultaneously viewing the details and dynamics that lead to their constant

evolution" (p. 217). Here the community was viewed as a community of interest in the lines of a

community of practice and the activity of posting was seen as an informative practice.

Globalization has resulted in transnational movements of people creating diaspora

communities and in today's networked world, technology is used by these communities to stay in

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[32] Granovetter's strength of weak ties has often been applied in the study of networks.

touch with not only friends and family but also in many ways as a tool to keep in touch with their cultural roots. Srinivasan and Pyati (2007) argued that diaspora information behavior should be studied within the dynamic contexts of globalization and diaspora. Most research studies on immigrant communities tend to focus on place-based scenarios, Srinivasan and Pyati stated that online diasporic environments are equally important as their information environments tend to be more global. Pyati (2010) noted that diaspora communities are often a part of a rich global information network. Srinivasan and Pyati (2007), noting the work of Appadurai (1996), who extended the notion of Anderson's (1983/2016) idea of the role played by print media in creating an imagined community to the role played by electronic and new media in creating diasporic identity, emphasized the need to study virtual diasporically mediated grounds such as diaspora web sites, including news sites, social networking sites, and chat rooms, among others.

Diaspora in Library and Information Science

Srinivasan and Pyati (2007) and Pyati (2010) underscored the need for immigrant information behavior studies to be situated "within the dynamic contexts of globalization and diaspora" (Srinivasan and Pyati, 2007, p. 1734). Using diaspora as a lens situates the information environments of immigrant communities on a global scale, as for most immigrant communities their information realities cross multiple borders. Immigrant communities are often part of a larger diasporic information and media market which includes access to global satellite television and web sites. This underlines the role played by transnational information networks in understanding the needs and behaviors of diasporic populations (Pyati, 2010). However, most immigrant–related research in library and information science tends to be place based, mostly looking at the information seeking behavior of immigrant and refugee populations.

Caidi, Allard and Quirke (2010) addressed the "complexity of the immigrant experience"

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(p. 493), by specifically looking at those information practices which help migrants in their settlement and inclusion process in a new country. Kennan, Lloyd, Qayyum and Thompson (2011) looked at the relationship between social inclusion and information in the resettlement process of refugees. Komito (2011), on other hand, investigated the social media usage of Filipino and Polish migrants in Ireland and found that it supports bonding capital and transnational communities. But, it could also have the impact of slowing down the "process of integration and participation in host countries while also encouraging continual movement of migrants from one society to another" (p. 1075). Lingel (2011, 2013, 2015) studied how immigrants experienced urban environments from a position of otherness, and the information practices employed by such individuals in learning to understand and navigate a new environment. Lloyd, Kennan, Thompson and Qayyum (2013) looked at how refugees developed information literacy practices in the process of learning how to engage with a "complex, multimodal information landscape" (p. 121). The study highlights the importance of social inclusion and how it is enabled when information is provided through a process of sharing by trusted mediators. Lloyd (2014, 2015), explores the concept of information resilience and looks at the experience of a new health environment by resettling refugees and their connection and engagement with health information which could have implications for services that support refugee resettlement. Elmore (2017) explored information sharing in two ESOL classes taken by migrants in an English city, where the classes were perceived as an information ground. Bernstein (2018a, 2018b) studied the information behavior of domestic migrant workers in Israel, struggling with social exclusion, by examining the role played by a Hebrew night school as an information ground and the role of weak ties as sources of social support and information, while they navigate their lives in Israel and make sense of the same.

Quirke (2014) explored the information practices of Afghan refugee youth to Canada, especially within the context of leisure and settlement. Allard (2015) examined the information practices of new Filipino immigrants to Winnipeg, Canada, and how these practices can be seen to be interwoven deeply with settlement activities. A translocal meaning making process was identified as been employed in navigating the new information landscape by these new immigrants. Allard and Caidi (2018) found that through the translocal meaning making process, the newcomers make sense of and "use information across distinct and sometimes contradictory information spaces" (p. 1193). Khoir, Du and Koronios (2015a) investigated the everyday information behavior of Asian immigrants in South Australia and its relation to their settlement experiences and this included their information needs, as well as behavior relating to information seeking, and sharing and their information grounds. Khoir et al (2015b) looked at the information sharing practices of Asian immigrants in community groups as part of their settlement process. These communities were both offline and online and as noted by Caidi et al (2010), they acted as a network of informal support helping an immigrant's settlement process. Adkins and Sandy (2017) studied information seeking among Latinos, especially immigrants in rural areas of midwestern United States. Benson Marshall (2018) looked at the role played by information in the migration experience of Polish women in the UK, noting that research of information behavior of economic migrants is less in comparison to that of refugees.

Lloyd (2017) puts forth the concept of fractured landscape and argues for the need to see refugees separately from migrants by understanding the forced nature of migration in the case of the former. This has implications in the way information is experienced as part of such forced migration. Lloyd, Pilerot, and Hultgren (2017) explore the ways refugees learn ways of reshaping their fractured information landscape and in the process reestablish ways of knowing

which assist their resettlement in a new host society. Lloyd and Wilkinson (2019) examined the information literacy practices carried out in everyday spaces by refugee youth in Australia within the larger process of reforming their fractured information landscape which also enabled informal learning at the same time. Sirikul and Dorner (2016) investigated information seeking behavior of Thai immigrants in New Zealand and the role played by public libraries in their settlement process. Khoir, Du, Davison and Koronios (2017) inquired into the usage of public library services by immigrants and how that contributed towards the generation of social capital. Similarly Shepherd, Petrillo and Wilson (2018) looked at how recent immigrants and refugees into Canada used a large, urban public library and noted the difference in usage from a general population with the library acting as place to study, read and even meet other people for the newcomers. Martzoukou and Burnett (2018) looked at the information literacy practices of Syrian refugees in Scotland which enable them to meet their everyday life information needs and to overcome sociocultural barriers in various stages of the adaptation process. The finding of the study suggests a convergence of various information experiences of past and new knowledge structures, acquired from different migration and socio-cultural experiences.

Leisure and Information

Leisure is generally understood as free time, when one is not engaged in work, formal or informal. Leisure activities are those which we indulge in our free time, and includes hobbies. Hartel (2005) states that the traditional focus of information behavior studies have been on professional and academic settings, and in spite of the fact that leisure is something that is "personally cherished and socially important" (p. 313), it may have been viewed as nebulous, without structure and insignificant. Savolainen (1995) noted that difficulties lie in studying non–work information seeking as it could be seen as ambiguous and residual by nature. But there

could also be overlap between work and non-work information seeking wherein a particular need

could serve in both contexts and these could also share features like the principle of least effort.

The adoption of the concept of everyday life information seeking helps legitimize non-work

contexts. But this should also not be seen as an effort towards creating a false dichotomy

between work and non-work contexts because they complement each other. Fulton and

Vondracek (2009) argued that the impact of leisure on our everyday lives needs greater attention

and this includes information behavior, the use of technology in leisure activities and the social

outcome of interactions by way of leisure activities. Earliest leisure related research in LIS dates

back to the 1980s and includes Elfreda Chatman's (1983, 1985) work that looked at the

interaction of ordinary people with media during their leisure time and scrutinized the "exchange

and relationship of information to the ordinary person in this context" (p. 613).

Hartel (2003) introduced serious leisure to LIS and it can be defined as a "constellation of

insights about the activities that happen within leisure time" (Hartel, 2005, p. 313). It can be

viewed as useful in studying information behavior with respect to the leisure part of everyday

life. "Serious leisure" was coined by Robert Stebbins in 1982. As a sociologist Stebbins viewed

serious leisure as interdisciplinary because it draws from almost all social sciences (Hartel,

2005). It can be seen as a framework to examine the activities that people engaged in that are

voluntary non-work, pleasurable and non-maintenance. It has been used to study diverse leisure

pursuits like hobbies, sport, tourism, volunteering among others and populations which are

aging, gendered and disabled (Pollak, 2014). Stebbins (2007) defines serious leisure as the

systematic pursuit of an amateur, hobbyist, or volunteer core activity that people find so

substantial, interesting, and fulfilling that, in the typical case, they launch themselves on a

(leisure) career centered on acquiring and expressing a combination of its special skills, knowledge and experience (p.5).

According to Hartel (2005) the word "serious" in serious leisure means the presence of dedication and concentration in such activities while been fun. One of the reasons given for the usefulness of the concept in information behavior research is the necessitude for acquiring skill and knowledge in pursuing serious leisure. There are three forms found within serious leisure: hobbies, voluntarism and amateurism. Hartel (2005) argued that hobbies are a good starting point for information behavior research due to their prevalence. Some of the studies in LIS which have used the serious leisure perspective have looked at gourmet cooking (Hartel, 2006, 2010), amateur photography (Cox, Clough, & Marlow, 2008), food blogging (Cox and Blake, 2011), hobbyist collectors (Lee and Trae, 2009), quilting (Gainor, 2013), music record collectors (Margree, MacFarlane & Prie, 2014), motor sport enthusiasts (Joseph, 2016), fan fiction community (Hill & Pecoskie, 2017; Price, 2017), among others.

Gallant, Arai and Smale (2013) noted that the serious leisure theory as put forward by Stebbins has remained unchallenged and unchanged to a large extent, pointing to the durability of the concept. At the same time, it "reflects its somewhat intractable links to its past and the intellectual context from which the theory emerged" (p. 92). In the earlier scholarly engagements with leisure it was seen in contrast to work, and in many ways as a sphere of life with the potential to contribute in meaningful ways to human life. This instrumental view of leisure, as something that restores one to work, led to efforts to see leisure as providing benefits similar to ones that accrue from work, like "feelings of accomplishment, rewards and success" (p. 93). This has also led to many leisure scholars imbuing leisure with traits similar to work in order to justify

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its importance. Such a viewpoint has led to the commodification of leisure as well as a utilitarian, instrumental and functionalist perspective of leisure.

There are three aspects of serious leisure that have imposed certain limitations. First, many studies make the assumption that if a person is participating in a certain activity then that person is necessarily engaged in serious leisure and, in turn, is enjoying the benefits that accrue from it. In the second instance, the addressing of psychological aspects of individual leisure pursuits within serious leisure has been limited. Thirdly, serious leisure theory has not looked at the social contexts in which leisure activities occurs. Keeping these limitations in mind, Gallant et al., (2013) argues for an "expanded view of *experiences* of leisure in general, and serious leisure more specifically, particularly the gendered and commodified nature of these experiences, as well as the potential for diversity and innovation" (p. 94). They draw on feminist communitarianism as a perspective, enabling a deeper understanding of the complex and textured nature of leisure experiences. Under this perspective, a community is not defined in contrast to individualism, but are considered as mutually augmenting aspects of a tolerant and respectful society. Homogeneity and unity are not considered as necessary precursors for a caring and collective society and in this way the perspective brings forth notions of solidarity, identity, social ties, equity and difference. It could also be said that feminist communitarian perspective stands apart from the normative concerns which are indicative of certain communitarian perspectives.

The increase in information behavior studies looking at leisure contexts has coincided with the introduction of serious leisure perspectives to LIS. Stebbins (2012) himself wrote on the rich variety of information related behaviors which could be facilitated by leisure pursuits. However, these studies have been limited to activity–based contexts and those who pursue them,

giving credence to the limitations held up by Gallant et al., (2013) who contend that the focus of serious leisure perspective on activities limits unnecessarily the complexity with which leisure can be perused. The second limitation raised by Gallant et al., (2013) is that socially constructed, unacknowledged dichotomies limit the study and interpretation of serious leisure, a fact reiterated by Pollak (2014). Associating leisure with positive psychology means situating work and leisure in a positive/negative dichotomy which is unnecessarily limiting. Pollak (2015) states that information behavior research in many ways welcomed the leisure perspective for the "refreshingly positive viewpoint it brings to our frequently problem–based perspective in studies of information seeking and use" thereby underscoring the dichotomy persistent in the perspective (p. 32). The third limitation noted by Gallant et al., (2013) is the lack of attention given to social context and the potential that exists in leisure pursuits to foster social ties and to help build identity. Pollak (2015) notes that certain constraints associated with researcher interest, lack of funding, and accessibility has meant that there is an absence of studies that look at leisure information experiences and practices in unique cultural contexts in LIS.

Fans and Fan-Communities in Library and Information Science

Burnett (2009) looked into a fan forum for the music band Grateful Dead through the prism of the theory of normative behavior, especially the concept of a world view, and found that differences in world view created multiple small worlds. "When worlds collide, the place of information, taken for granted by each of the worlds, becomes a place of battle" (p. 707). He noted that leisure materials could be meaningful and essential elements in the lives of people, every bit as essential as what is considered important or related to work. This has implications for libraries as library materials should be seen as a function of its users' worldview and not just from the value viewpoint, as what is perceived as trivial by some could be extraordinarily

important for others. Similarly Hart, Schoolbred and Butcher (2009) examined the bibliographic structure of fan information through the case studies of two fan communities, one for the artist Frank Zappa and the other a Star Trek fandom. They make a case for realizing the importance of such resources of information and the need for those in the LIS field to understand such sub-cultures. The fan communities are generally known to create huge amounts of content. It would be interesting to study how these materials are organized and made available for a particular community. How something is perceived and how a common meaning and understanding is arrived at by a community could have an impact on their information related activities, too. Harlan, Bruce and Lipton (2014) studied the information practices of teenagers in digital communities based around digital content creation and sharing. In their study they identified that teens engaged in information actions in the form of accessing, evaluating and the use of information and they experienced information by way of participation, information, collaboration, process, and artifact. In her dissertation study that looked at information behavior of fan communities as serious leisure, Price (2017) noted that studies of information behavior of fans or fan communities in general have been sparse. But the recent years have seen a rise of such studies such as Dalton's (2012) study of the tagging system and its use in a fanfiction archive, Bullard's (2016) study of classification design in a fanfiction repository, Martin's (2014) study of information sharing and connected learning in a fan community, Hill and Pecoskie's (2017) study of information related activities in fanfiction communities as serious leisure, and Forcier's (2017) look at a transmedia fandom's everyday information behavior.

Documents and Documentation

We live in a world filled with things, objects that are experienced, encountered, appreciated, taken for granted, used, made and kept. Many of these upon which humans ascribe

meaning are documents. In the ordinary sense, textual records are seen as documents, but with the rapid expansion and use of technology, questions have arisen as to what can be perceived as a document (Buckland, 1997). Similarly, Smith (1984), talks about the ubiquitous nature of "textually mediated communication, action and social relations" (p. 59) in contemporary society with our lives been "infused with a process of inscription, producing printed or written traces or working from them" (p. 59). She further notes that technology has extended these documentary processes, garnering attention as a political issue with implications for personal privacy. Suzanne Briet (2006) held that anything which can function as a representation of something, is capable of being termed as a document. She defined a document as "any concrete or symbolic indexical sign (indice), preserved or recorded towards the end of representing, of reconstituting, or of proving a physical or intellectual phenomenon" (p. 10). Buckland (1991) held that we are informed by a variety of objects and events and not only through intentional communications,. Any object or artifact could have latent information in it, and irrespective of the form or medium, a certain context could determine whether an object or artifact is informative (Buckland, 1991; Sundberg & Kjellman, 2018). Buckland (2014) notes about Frohmann (2009) that he makes a case for starting with things that are considered as documents or activities, which can be seen as instances of documentation, and then through a process of telling stories new cases of the same can be introduced through the usage of analogy, similarity and resemblance. Frohman (2012) asks how something gets inscribed; "how do writing, traces, and documentation emerge from the interactions between a thing" (p. 174) and its arrangements along with other things? He introduces the concept of documentality, which has three major features.

- Functionality: Documents perform social functions and define social roles.
- Historicity: Documents are embedded within a particular historical context.

- Social complexity: Documents involve heterogeneous arrangements of technologies, people and information.

Further discussion on documents and documentation is included under theoretical framework in chapter 1.

Summary

In this chapter I have reviewed a range of relevant literature, looking at literature relating to communities, information behavior and practice, leisure, and immigrant/diaspora related work.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Overview of Research Design

The overall purpose of this study was to look at the lived experience of women belonging to the Indian diaspora as part of a fan community and in the process to understand what role this leisure pursuit could play in the overall experience of migration. The specific research questions that were addressed:

RQ 1. How do the fanfiction blogs (or the spaces afforded by them) form and function as a small world?

RQ 2. What does experiential information look like in diaspora small world? This question would be guided by the following;

a) What is the information/document experience of the participants with respect to the fanfiction blogs?

- As a creator

- As a reader

RQ 3. How is the diasporic small world an accidental or serendipitous memory archive? This overarching research question would be guided by:

a) How is collective memory making enacted in practice?

b) How does the small world environment impact the collective memory making?

c) What role does cultural knowledge play in memory making?

According to Creswell and Poth (2018) qualitative research is conducted because the exploration of an issue or problem is needed. "This exploration is needed, in turn, because of a need to study a group or population, identify variables that cannot be easily measured, or hear silenced voices" (p. 45). Qualitative research also requires the researcher to situate herself within the study so as to reflect her culture, history and personal experiences. This helps in focusing how these factors shape all aspects of the research project, "from their choice of a question to

address, to how they collect data, to how they make an interpretation of the situation, and to what they expect to obtain from conducting the research" (p. 49).

<div align="center">Phenomenology as Metatheoretical Position</div>

Schwandt (2011) defines phenomenology as a complex, multifaceted philosophy which defies simple characterization as it is not a unified philosophical perspective. It includes multiple streams like the transcendental phenomenology associated with Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger's hermeneutical one, the existential forms associated with Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Jean Paul Sartre, among others. Phenomenologists are against scientific realism and its accompanying view that the empirical sciences are in a privileged position for identifying and explaining the aspects of a mind-independent world. Cibangu and Hepworth (2016) holds that phenomenology can be seen to extend back to the days of Aristotle and ancient wisdom, but was founded by German mathematician and social thinker Edmund Husserl with writings stretching from the later part of the 1800s to the first half of the 20th century. Phillips-Pula, Strunk and Pickler (2011) state that there are three general types of phenomenology: transcendental, existential, and hermeneutic. Transcendental phenomenology makes the essential meanings of individual experience as its focus of attention, while existential phenomenology makes the nature of the reality that holds the concept or phenomenon together (p. 68) as its focus. Hermeneutic phenomenology focuses its attention on examining the structure and interpretation of texts with attention been given to language and communication. Cibangu and Hepworth (2016) contend there are six important trails of phenomenology which are not mutually exclusive and which can be distinguished. These are realistic, constitutive, existential, hermeneutic, historical and embodied. Of particular interest for this research study is realistic, constitutive and hermeneutic trails of phenomenology. Under a realistic approach one has to look at the issues that impact

people's lifeworld(s), while the constitutive trail of phenomenology is most often used one in social sciences and "emphasizes the idea that lifeworld and consciousness interact with and influence one another, and are thus mutually and originally constituted through a variety of forces (e.g., culture, organization, economy, person, technology, art)" (p. 151). Constructivism as a school of thought arose from constitutive phenomenology, and Alfred Schutz[33] developed the social aspect of the same. Hermeneutic phenomenology, according to Cibangu and Hepworth (2016), looks at the patterns of meaning that can be found in a given topic or phenomenon. Outhwaite (2015) describes hermeneutics as the "science, art or technique of interpretation, paradigmatically of written texts but by extension of human actions and other social phenomena" (p. 785). This extended sense of hermeneutics brings within its ambit a variety of approaches like symbolic interactionism, social phenomenology, social constructionism and ethnomethodology among others. Social phenomenology is associated with Alfred Schutz and is often loosely referred to as hermeneutics within the context of social sciences. Annells (1996) places hermeneutical phenomenology research within the constructivist paradigm of inquiry, ontologically, epistemologically and methodologically while noting that it could be equated to interpretive paradigm. Creswell and Poth (2018) view social constructivism as a paradigm or worldview and state that it is often described as interpretivism. They state that the constructivist world view can be perceived in phenomenological studies through the description of experiences by individuals.

VanScoy and Evenstad (2015) note that a variety of phenomenological approaches have been used in library and information science. For example, Dalbello (2005a and 2005b) adopted

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[33] One can trace the impact of constitutive phenomenology in the work of Elfreda Chatman and Reijo Savolainen in their use of the work of Alfred Schutz, while the work of Gadamer associated with hermeneutic phenomenology has been used by Dervin in drawing up the metatheoretical aspects of her sense making methodology.

a general phenomenological perspective and grounded theory analysis to look at technological innovation and creative decision making. Suorsa (2017) adopted a phenomenological viewpoint and an ethnographic methodology to look at knowledge creation as an event and experience. Suorsa and Huotari (2016) note that hermeneutical viewpoint "emphasizes the deep and complex nature of the phenomenon" (p. 139). Gorichanaz (2018) used Van Manen's phenomenology of practice approach to study self-documentation through the act of self-portraiture. I feel employing a purely phenomenological approach methodologically, especially in terms of analysis wouldn't enable me to meet the purposes of this study. I felt that by viewing phenomenology metatheoretically and employing the social constructivist framework, and maintaining a phenomenological attitude, it would enable the adoption of methods (data collection and analysis) which would better serve the interests of the study. Creswell and Poth (2018) state that the social constructivist world view focuses attention on the specific contexts within which people live and work and which helps in understanding the cultural and historical settings of the participants of a study.

<div align="center">Social Constructivism and Research Approach</div>

Originating in the work of Edmund Husserl, phenomenology can be termed the "title of a family of ideas" (Szanto, in press). What is agreed upon amongst all is that phenomenology studies the conscious experience from the perspective of first person. The object of study could be diverse as perceptions of objects to various kinds of social formations. In the first three decades of twentieth century it evolved alongside classical sociology. Husserl identified intersubjetivity as a central tenet to be addressed by phenomenology and called for a phenomenological sociology, and this plea was taken up by among others, Alfred Schutz, whose work later was developed further by Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann. Social constructivism

associated with the work of Berger and Luckmann is seen as the most significant phenomenological contributions to sociology. As such these two ideas should not be seen as incongruent to each other. It rests on the idea that our everyday life world is an intersubjective world that we share with some, but not all people. A phenomenological position would be that, unless we understand our essentially social nature, we would not be able to fully comprehend reality. "Phenomenologists, however much they differ in degree and commitment, all agree on the basic idea that humans are intrinsically social beings, acting within specific historical and cultural contexts, and embedded in a shared life-world" (Szanto & Moran, 2015, p.2-3).

Table 1

Social Constructivism as Interpretive Framework

Possible Research Goals	Potential Researcher Influences	Examples of Researcher Practices
To understand the world in which they live and work	Recognition of background as shaping interpretation	Interprets participants constructions of meaning in their account

Adapted from Creswell and Poth (2018), p. 32.

Table 2

Social Constructivism and Associated Philosphical Beliefs

Ontological Belief (Nature of Reality)	Epistemological Belief (How Reality is Known)	Axiological Belief (Role of Values)	Methodological Belief (Approach to Enquiry)
Multiple realities are constructed through our lived experiences and interactions with others.	Reality is co-constructed between the researcher and the researched and shaped by individual experiences.	Individual values are honored and are negotiated among individuals.	More of a literary style of writing is used. Use of an inductive method of emergent ideas (through consensus) is obtained through methods such as interviewing, observing and analyzing texts.

Adapted from Creswell and Poth (2018), p. 35.

The social constructivist viewpoint is visible in the literature that formed the basis of the preliminary model of a small world which acts as a context to the experience of documents in the form of fan fiction blogs. The phenomenological approach and attitude would be in the use of in–depth interviews to understand the experience of blogs as a creator, reader and as an interactive space, and remaining reflexive which enables one to "better understand and challenge one's perspective and biases" (Gorichanaz, 2018, p. 78), which is important in qualitative research but particularly so in phenomenological research studies.

Role of Researcher

> I'm at a conference & literally ran out of a session to read this! How do you expect us to last a week? Beautiful, I could feel the pounding of her heart as if it were mine. Thank you, m***a, for that spot of joy you bring into my life"(a comment posted by Kizh72/Ladkikijhy, a userid I use while commenting on blogs on March 21, 2016)

I remember running out of a session at the 2016, IConference in Philadelphia to read a new chapter that had been posted in a fanfiction blog that I had been following for a year. I found a quiet place, plugged in my headphones to my iPad and read, while listening to the song that was part of the narrative. I couldn't wait to read the chapter and then look up the comments to see what others were saying. What I like to think of as a quintessential, classic Hindi film song takes me back to that moment every time I've listened to it since that day, and I'm pretty sure will continue to do so.

The idea for this dissertation has come from my own life experience, including the self-reflection I have done on my life as part of the Indian diaspora. My status as an insider, both as an Indian woman who is part of the diaspora and who is also part of the IPK fandom, gives me the advantage of being able to understand the experience of migration as well giving me insight

into the fandom practices. I'm also able to understand the cultural nuances of the language(s)[34]

used and other media related practices. At the same time, even with my interactions as a lay

person with the women belonging to the study population, the truth is that I don't really know

them enough to term it as close friendships.[35] Our life trajectories in terms of migration are

different, and most of us belong to different states in India (which have their own distinct

cultures) and speak different languages. This puts me in the place of an outsider to my study

participants due to how diverse India is in terms of culture and due to differential migration

experience. Sherry (2012) observes that insider researchers need to be aware of both similarities

and differences that they share with their research participants. This reiterates the need for a

researcher to be reflective about the consequence of being an insider and in turn by "highlighting

the effects that this identity had on the nature of the data collected, such connections with the

field can be regarded as a strength of a particular form of immersed qualitative research" (p.

433).

Methodology

Ocepek (2016) used a methodology inspired by institutional ethnography and that was

"designed to explore the social relationships that construct the context around a given

phenomenon through the descriptive analysis of the localized lived experience of research

participants" (p. 15). She affirms that Dorothy Smith's (1987) reinvention of methodologies in

sociology can prove to be an inspiration to create our own methods, especially in the arena of

everyday life information behavior studies with a focus on the lived experience of individuals.

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[34] Most of us tend to be multi-lingual. I speak Malayalam (my mother tongue) and Hindi apart from English. I can also follow Tamil to an extent.

[35] I know the first names of some, the places they belong to in India and where they are currently located in the world.

Institutional ethnography was developed by Dorothy Smith as a feminist methodology for showing the "social organization of patriarchy" (Townsend, 1996, p. 179), it can be viewed as a qualitative research approach grounded in critical social science and feminism. This research approach adopts a "standpoint located with those who know their everyday world and shows how that everyday world is socially organized" (Townsend, 1996, p. 181). In contrast to phenomenological and grounded theory methods, institutional ethnography helps highlight the ways in which every day micro experiences are interconnected with macro systemic processes. Campbell (2003) states that institutional ethnography can be seen as a methodology and a sociological theory and has its roots in phenomenology, ethnomethodology, symbolic interactionism, Marxism and feminism.

Adopting a similar approach to Ocepek (2016) is appropriate for this study, since one of the notions underpinning Dorothy Smith's approach is that "the making of the world(s) that people live in, the social organization of those experiences" must be taken into account in research (Campbell, 2003, p. 10). This would enable the understanding of the context provided by migration and the transnational processes associated with it, as well as the small world context provided by the functioning of the fan community and associated mediated practices in the document and information experience of the study participants. According to Ocepek (2016), individual cases can be used as a "point of entry, the locus of an experiencing subject or subjects, into a larger social and economic process" (Smith, 1987, p. 157). Broader general statements about a particular population under study can be drawn from the individual cases as they prove to be "the ideal units of analysis precisely because of their specificity and awareness of their lived experience. The context surrounding the cases are created by the social relationships that impact all members of the population within that context" (Ocepek, 2016, p. 210). DeVault and McCoy

(2002) puts forth institutional ethnographic research in a different sequential manner. Here research follows the sequence: "(a) identify an experience, (b) identify some of the institutional processes that are shaping that experience, and (c) investigate those processes in order to describe analytically how they operate as the grounds of the experience" (p. 755). For the purpose of this study institutional processes could be seen as the migration processes and technologically mediated processes associated with the online world.

Data Collection

In this section the methods adopted for collecting data are discussed. Two kinds of data were collected; semi-structured interviews and comments posted on five fanfiction blogs. The interview guide and the consent forms used in the study are provided in appendices. Table 3 lays down the kind of data that was originally planned for each research question.

Table 3

Research Questions and Kind of Data

Research Question	Data Collection Method
How do the fanfiction blogs (or the spaces afforded by them) form and function as a small world?	Thematic analysis of the comments posted on five blogs and in-depth semi structured interviews.
What does experiential information look like in diaspora small world? This question would be guided by the following; (a) What is the information/document experience of the participants with respect to the fanfiction blogs? • As a creator • As a reader How is the diasporic small world a serendipitous memory archive? This overarching research question would be guided by: (a) How is collective memory making enacted in practice? (b) How does the small world environment impact the collective memory making? (c) What role does cultural knowledge play in memory making?	In-depth semi structured interviews.

Interviews

A purposive sampling approach was adopted for this study. A total of 15 participants were recruited, a mix of writers and readers. One participant withdrew citing health issues. In qualitative research a participant needs to be a person who has experienced or is experiencing the particular phenomenon under study and is willing to contemplate and provide a detailed experiential account of the experience to the researcher (Morse, 1991). To recruit participants, a writer of a fanfiction blog that I follow was approached and was asked whether she would be willing to participate in the study. On her expressing her willingness, a short comment asking others to approach me if they are willing to participate in the study was posted by her along with one of her updates on November 15, 2018. See Figure 3 for screenshot of the post

Figure 3

Screenshot of Post Asking for Participation

3) P████████s looking for volunteers to participate in a research study (for dissertation). Indian women living outside India for five years and above, part of IPK fandom and who like to read ffs. Email her at ████████████████ or pm █████on IF if you are willing to participate for details.

A total of eight women contacted me expressing their willingness to participate, three of whom were writers.

On receiving the Institutional Research Board (IRB) approval for the study in June of 2019, the eight women were approached again to ask whether they would be ready to participate. Appendix A shows the write up that was sent along with email, giving details of the study. They were also asked to recommend others who would fit the profile for research participation. Some of them forwarded to me details of persons who fit the profile. A total of 20 women were approached, of which 15 consented to participate. Once the participants expressed their

willingness, they were sent consent forms to sign. The participants were assigned a code based

on the order in which the signed consent forms were received. They were given the option of

doing the interviews in two stages: the first part via email and the second part as an audio

interview. Zoom online meeting service was used to conduct the audio interviews. I used the

Zoom access provided by the university and set up a personal meeting room. The link to the

same was sent to the participants if they opted for audio interviews. On receiving the signed

consent forms, the participants were sent a link to an online survey setup using Qualtrics, to

collect some personal information. This data was anonymized using the code that was assigned

to each participant on receiving their signed consent form.

Of the 15 participants who agreed to participate, Participant 5 withdrew citing personal

reasons. In the end, 14 interviews were conducted. Table 4 shows the number of participants who

opted for email interviews and those who opted for audio.

Table 4

Number of Participants and Mode of Interview

No. of Participants	Mode of Interview
8	Email
6	Audio

The participants were all sent the same set of questions to answer, and on receiving the

answers, the follow up questions were sent to them. In the case of those who opted for audio

interviews for the second stage, the follow-up questions were asked during the audio interview.

The interviews were conducted between July 2019 and January 2020. Appendix A has the basic

set of questions used for the interviews.

Participant Profiles- Group

The following section gives an overall profile of the 14 participants. Figure 4 shows the countries where the participants are located. The majority (8 participants) are located in the US, 3 in the UK, and one each in Canada, United Arab Emirates, and Australia.

Figure 4

Location of Participants

Age Range

Figure 5 shows the age range distribution of the participants. Majority (8 participants) are in the age range 40-49, followed by 3 in the age range 50 and above, 2 in the age range 30-39 and one participant in the age range 25-29.

Figure 5

Age Range Distribution of Participants

Age range
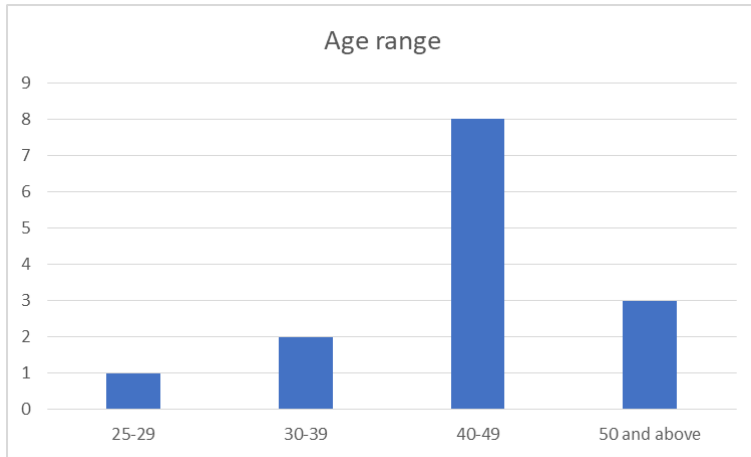
Years Spent Outside India

Figure 6 shows the distribution of the number of years spent outside India by the participants. The majority (7 participants) have been outside India for above 20 years, followed by 6 participants who had lived between 11 and 20 years outside India, and 1 participant who had lived between 5 and 10 years outside India.

Figure 6

Number of Years Lived Outside India
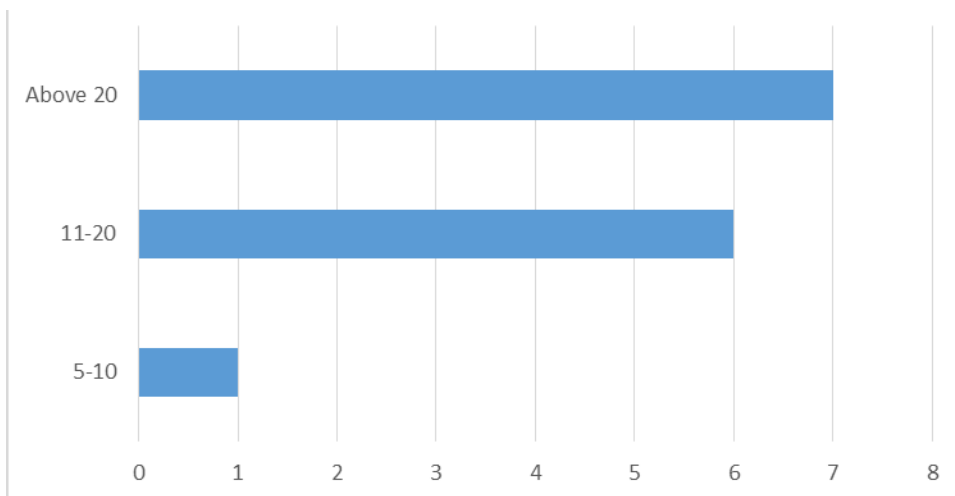
Participant Profiles: Individual

- Participant 1: She lives in Australia and has been living outside India for more than 20 years and gave reason for migration as "just to experience life outside India. We came here on skilled independent Visas." She has lived in two countries, Belgium and Australia apart from India. She is in the age range 50 and above, and works as a technical officer.

- Participant 2: She lives in Canada and has been living outside India for 15 years. She migrated as a dependent after marriage. She has lived in UK for a year, in the time she has lived outside India. She is in the age range 30-39, and works as an audit professional. She writes fan fiction.

- Participant 3: She lives in the US and has been living outside India "for a little over 11 years." About her reason for migration she said: "I came here for a short-term work-related project and later got married and moved states." She is in the age range 30-39 and works as a data analyst.

- Participant 4: She lives in the US and said she has lived outside India "for close to sixteen years now." She came to the US after her marriage. She is in the age range 40-49, and is a software engineer. She is currently not working and writes fan fiction.

- Participant 6: She lives in the US and has been living outside India "for almost 20 years." She migrated post her marriage and began working in the IT sector. She is in the age range 40-49.

- Participant 7: She lives in the UK and said that she and her husband "moved for work." She has lived outside India for almost 20 years, and has lived in the UAE prior to moving to the UK. She is in the age range 40-49, used to work in IT, but is not currently working. She writes fan fiction.

- Participant 8: She lives in the US and came here as a graduate student. She has been living outside India for more than 20 years. She is in the age range 40-49, and works in risk management.

- Participant 9: She lives in the UK and has been living outside India for over 30 years. She gave her reason for migration as marriage. She is in the age range 50 and above, and works in administration. She has written and continues to write short pieces of fan fiction, and also helps out other writers as a beta reader.

- Participant 10: She lives in the US and migrated for work. She has been living outside India for 8.5 years. She is in the age range 40-49 and is an engineer.

- Participant 11: She lives in the US and has been living outside India for 27 years. She came to this country as an under graduate student and said she "met my spouse here and we decided to make this country our home." She is in the age range 40-49, and works in Finance.

- Participant 12: She lives in the United Arab Emirates and has been living outside India for more than 24 years. She migrated after her marriage. She is in the age range 40-49 and works as an editor.

- Participant 13: She lives in the UK and unlike the other participants was born to Indian parents in East Africa. She mentioned in her interview that

> It was as if we were in India. We celebrated all the religious festivals like Janmasthami, Holi, Navratri as well as Diwali and the Hindu New Year. I went to a girls school were we were taught Gujarati, Hindi, Sanskrit as well as English. We used to go to cinema regularly to watch Hindi movies (there was no TV). Listened to the radio especially All India Vividh Bharti broadcasts

She mentioned going to India for further studies where she made friends with others in the diaspora, who like her had come to India for studies. In her interview she mentioned that even

though they were of Indian origin and spoke Indian languages, they were treated like foreigners in India. She is in the age range 50 and above and is retired as a government scientist.

- Participant 14: She lives in the US and has lived outside India for more than 20 years. She migrated after marriage. She is in the age range 40-49 and is an engineer. Even though she has done some writing feels that it doesn't qualify her to be termed as a writer.

- Participant 15: She is the youngest of all the participants and is in the age range 25-29. She currently is splitting her time between US and India. She came to the US as a graduate student and has lived outside India for 10 years. She is a software engineer and is the only one amongst the participants who has had multiple fandom experiences.

Table 5

Break Down of Comments Collected

Story Name	No. of Chapters	Total Comments	No. of Comments Collected	Percentage of Total Comments
"A River Runs Through It"	60	24255	449	.019
"Silver Sands"	60	6671	289	.043
"Entangled"	44	10941	393	.035
"Second Chances"	14	1538	56	.036
"Odyssey"	34	2972	68	.023

Five blogs were identified and comments posted on them were collected using the screen clipper feature of OneNote. Following an approach adopted by Skold (2015), the non-probability sampling approach resulted in a data sampling approach geared towards providing rich data. According to Wildemuth and Cao (2016) such sampling methods depends on the "judgment of the researcher. As you develop your sample, you will rely on your knowledge of the research question and its context, as well as your knowledge of the particular setting in

which you are collecting data" (p. 137). My approach would fall under what is termed as theoretical sampling. "Taking this approach, the goal of the sample is to provide data that will support the development of theory" (p. 138). I started with the preliminary model of the small world to guide data collection and then let the patterns that I discerned in the interview data determine how the data was sampled and collected. According to Coyne (1997), "a more accurate term for theoretical sampling could be 'analysis driven purposeful sampling' or 'analysis governed purposeful sampling'" (p. 629). A total of 1255 comments were collected. For ease of coding, a conversation thread (between two or more persons) was counted as one comment. It was noticed that the data collection had reached a saturation point, in that no new or different patterns were noticed in the comments been sampled and collection was stopped at 1255 comments that were collected at that point. Table 5 shows the total number of chapters, the total number of comments, the total number of comments collected and percentage of comments collected to total number of comments. The first three stories are completed ones while the last two are still been written (at this point in time they have been put on hold by the writers due to personal reasons). It can be seen that the percentage of comments collected from the first blog hosting the story "A River Runs Through It" is comparatively small compared to the others. This particular story is an extremely popular one and consequently the number of comments posted the blog hosting it is significantly higher than the other blogs. In addition, the story is also bigger in terms of number of chapters and both these factors accounts for the disparity.

The data collected was stored on my laptop and on a separate hard disk designated for the purpose. A file naming convention was developed prior to collection of data so that it would be easy to keep track of the various data files. Creswell and Poth (2018) note that developing a data

collection matrix would provide a "visual means of locating and identifying information for a study" (p. 175). In keeping with best practices with respect to ethical issues associated with participant protection, participant names were masked so as to avoid inclusion of identifiable information in the data files set up for analysis.

Data Analysis: Interviews

Braun and Clarke (2006) describe thematic analysis (TA) as one of the foundational methods of qualitative analysis. It is a method for the systematic identification, organization and offering of insight into "patterns of meaning (themes) across a data set" (Braun and Clarke, 2012, p. 57). Even though the focus is on meaning across a data set, employing TA allows a researcher "to see and make sense of collective or shared meanings and experiences" (p. 57). In other words, TA is a "way of identifying what is common to the way a topic is talked or written about and of making sense of those commonalities"(p. 57). Braun and Clarke (2012) views TA as a flexible method which enables the researcher to focus on the data in multiple varied ways, whether it is analyzing meaning across a data set or examining a particular aspect of a phenomenon in depth. As a result the TA suits a wide variety of research topics and questions. According to Braun and Clarke (2012), TA offers a "way into qualitative research that teaches the mechanics of coding and analyzing qualitative data systematically, which can then be linked to broader theoretical or conceptual issues" (p. 58).

Data analysis for this study employed thematic analysis combining both deductive and inductive approaches. A deductive approach is a top down approach, where the coding is driven by certain concepts, topics or ideas that the researcher brings to the process. The initial analysis was guided mainly by the conceptual framework relating to small world while keeping oneself open to the themes the data brings up apart from it, which is what an inductive approach is like; a

bottom up approach which is driven by what is present in the data. This would enable the capturing of the experiential accounts of the participants.

Familiarizing with the data is a process common to all forms of qualitative analysis. I read the interview transcripts multiple times, and in the case of audio interviews, the transcription process also enabled me to become familiar with the data. I maintained a note book in which I noted my thoughts every time I read a transcript or even at the time of transcribing as a form of Memoing. Apart from my thoughts, I included any connections to literature that I perceived. Figure 7 shows a picture of a page from the note book.

Figure 7

Page from My Memoing Notebook
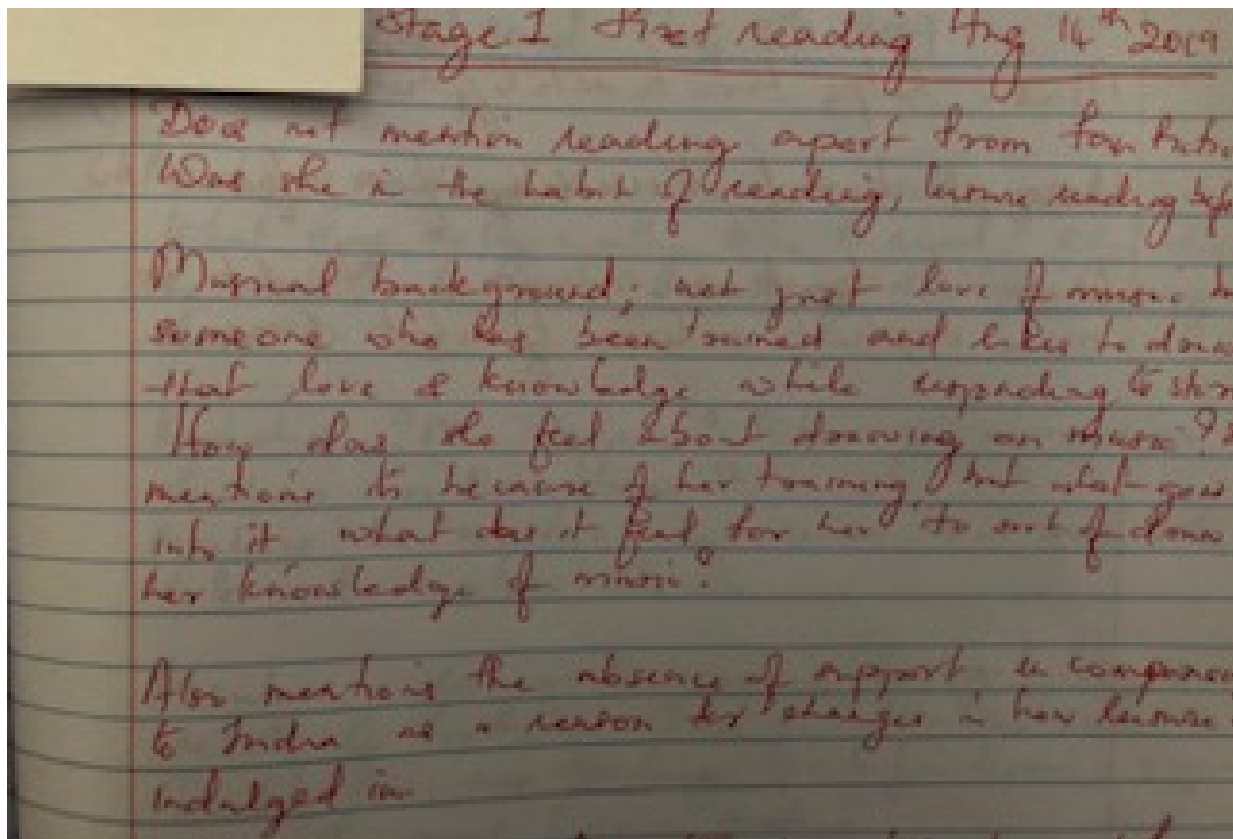
At times I would put aside a transcript for a few days after a reading and then come back to it. I would also go over the notes I had made previously to see if there were any

changes to my reading. The transcripts were printed out and preliminary coding consisting of descriptive sentences were noted down on the transcripts themselves. This process started after the first two interviews were done, and I continued doing the same throughout. Figure 8 shows a picture of a transcript with my handwritten notes on the border.

This process helped me to refine my codes as well as to see patterns across the transcripts. After the completion of the last interview in January 2020, I started another round of coding and this time I used the comment feature of Word. I felt more comfortable using Word even though I had subscribed to Nvivo. This is probably due to the multiple iterations of pen and paper coding that I had done throughout. At this stage I started to arrange the data under themes. These themes were driven by the conceptual framework as well as those that were discerned in the data. I also developed a code book, with definitions for the themes and snippets of data as examples. This process helped me to refine the themes. Figure 9 shows a screen shot of a transcript with the coding done using the comment feature of Word.

Figure 8

Interview Transcript with Handwritten Notes as Part of Coding
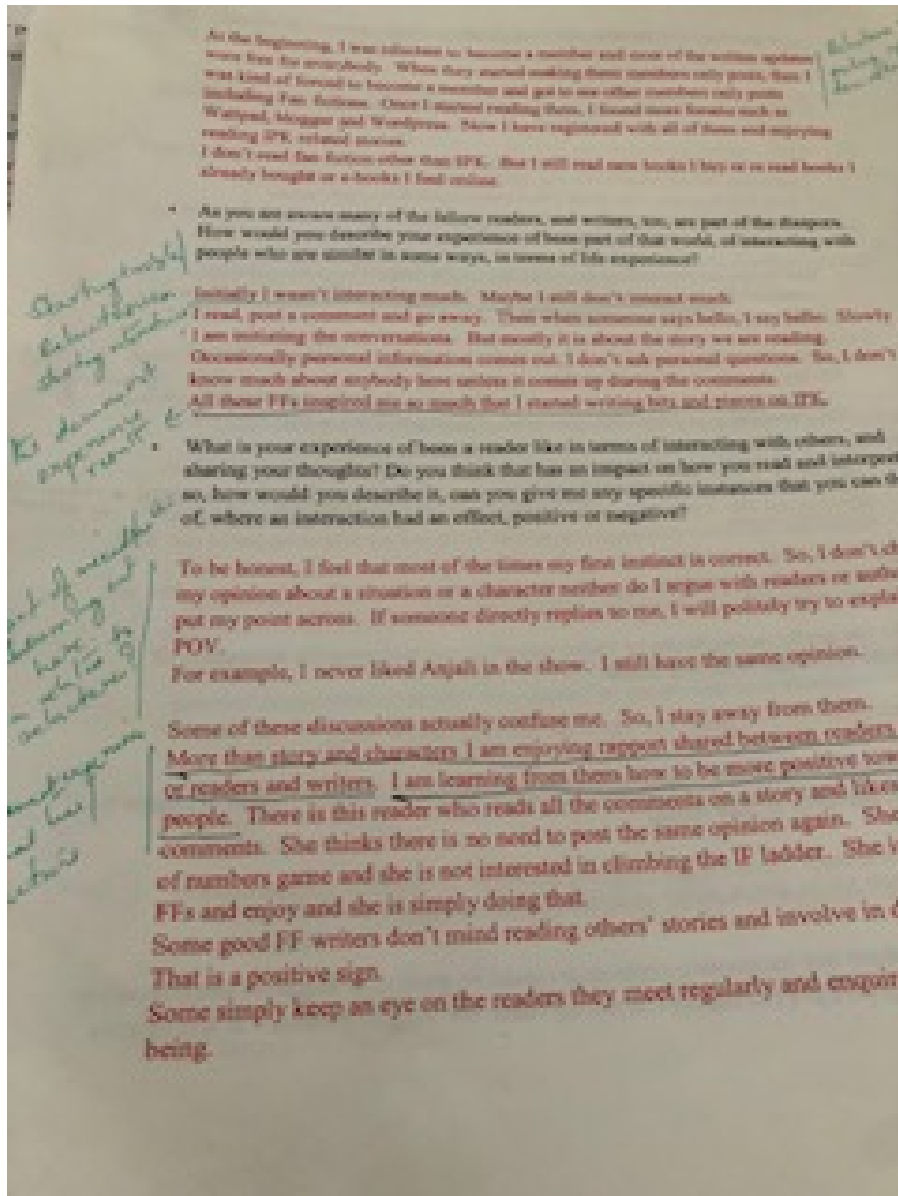
Figure 9

Screen Shot of Transcript with Coding Performed with Microsoft Word

first time or you have always dabbled in writing?

Interacting with fellow readers, sharing thoughts and stories was easy and comfortable, and over the period of time, a pleasure. Writing a fan fiction was the next step in the progression I think. I have never written anything before and would have laughed had anyone suggested the same before this.

- **Describe your experience of writing. Tell me some particular instances, including how you felt. What do you draw from when you write? Describe the process. Include things like any research that you do.**

When I was writing the first piece, besides trepidation, there was a feeling of having finally given wings to all those thoughts and feelings regarding different things and situations around me that had unknowingly accumulated inside me over the years. What I perceive this world as, what I observe, what I think about and what I infer — I realised I am constantly making notes in my head unknowingly. Writing just tapped into that reservoir and surprised me. It has introduced a new 'me' to myself and the process has been very engaging and satisfying.

I haven't written anything that has required a lot of research yet, and whenever I have needed some information, Google has been very helpful.

- **What is the impact of the interaction with your readers like? Can you describe few particular instances? How do you see it in the context of writing and sharing the same?**

I have been fortunate to enjoy a wonderful readership. Many readers have become my friends in real life. It has helped reduce the anxiety, has created an encouraging and a friendly atmosphere for me to express my thoughts freely.

- As you are aware many of the fellow readers, and writers, too, are part of the diaspora. How would you describe your experience of been part of that world, of interacting with people who are similar in some ways, in terms of life experience?

Priya Kizhakkethil
Social ties and interactions as motivator.

Priya Kizhakkethil
Drew on accumulated life experiences/knowledge Learning experience.

Priya Kizhakkethil
Sense of community and the comfort it brings

I started the coding process with an "answer to a question" as the unit of analysis. This was done because most of the interviews were done via email, and so the data was in the form of questions and answers. I remained flexible so that the same content or excerpt or portions of the same was coded with multiple codes.

Data Analysis: Comments

I decided to use a thematic analysis of the comment data, instead of the content analysis I had originally planned. This is because thematic analysis provides the systematic element that is characteristic of content analysis "but also permits the researcher to combine analysis of the frequency of codes with analysis of their meaning in context, thus adding the advantages of the subtlety and complexity of a truly qualitative analysis" (Loffe & Yardley, 2004, p. 57). For the comment data, I used Nvivo for the coding. Nvivo enables the importing of OneNote files as a portable document file (PDF). One reason for the choosing of Nvivo was its ability to import material from OneNote, as compared to other software that did not. In this case the collection

itself had been driven by concepts, and the initial coding of data from two stories helped me to refine the codes further and to collapse them into themes. The ability to run reports summarizing the coding helped in the refining and development of themes. This was found to be especially helpful considering the nature of the data in comparison to the interview data. Coding of interview data was easier in comparison even though the collection and analysis of the comment data had been driven not only by the conceptual frameworks, as well as other concepts derived from the literature, but also by my understanding of the world under study. The comment data was initially meant to answer RQ1 relating to the small world context of the study, but the patterns by way of themes that I discerned in the interview data helped with not only the collection but also the analysis of the comment data, enabling me to use the data to support the answers to RQs 2 and 3.

Ethics

Several issues relating to ethics were kept in mind through the life cycle of the research. According to Case and Given (2016) "ethics reflect our beliefs about what is just and right behavior versus what we judge to be unjust and wrong" (p. 231). Standards of conduct have been developed in social research reflective of group consensus. In any investigation involving humans, four general guidelines are followed as far as ethics is concerned. Case and Given (2016) state these guidelines as:

- The participants of the study will not be harmed in any way.

- The participants of the study will not be deceived in any manner.

- Participation in the study will be voluntary

- All data collected, especially relating to participants will be treated confidentially

Whether rightly or uniquely, a major concern in fan studies is ethics and this could be ascribed to the fact that fan practice is still considered deviant to a certain extent. Fan work like *Slash* (a genre of fan fiction) can be sexually explicit, and in such situations, exposure as a fan could prove to be damaging to an individual (Price, 2017). Although published on the Internet and hence considered freely available, fan publications are often viewed as existing in a "closed, private space" (Busse & Hellekson, 2012, p. 42). Pseudonyms are often used to protect privacy. These online spaces in many ways are perceived as semi-private or semi-public (Price, 2017).

Keeping in mind the general guidelines put forth by Case and Given (2016) and following a process followed by Price (2017) drawing on the work of Busse and Hellekson (2012) who are in favor of putting fans first, the following processes were followed:

- To ensure privacy, numerical or alphabetical identifiers were given to all participants.
- URLs are not provided while citing particular fan work.
- If identity of a person can be discerned in a screenshot, the same is obscured[36].

Where fan work is mentioned, in this case a blog, the URL is not provided and the format followed was to state "blog hosting the story…" Even though the title of a story is given, the blog address tends to be different. In addition, the keywords associated with the particular fandom, is also not provided. The keywords in many ways act like "open sesame," acting as the key that opens up the door to these worlds. Without this information, it would be difficult to access the said stories. A certain amount of technical skill would be required to be able to get to these stories, and this falls within the measures suggested for providing privacy even if the said works are in the public domain.

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[36] This has been followed for the comment data collected for this study. In Chapter 5 and Chapter 6, a tweet thread and a screen shot of a Facebook page have been included as part of discussion. The identities of persons visible in these two instances have not been masked.

Trustworthiness of Qualitative Data

Some of the most common criticisms of qualitative research is 1) it is an assembly of anecdotal and personal impressions, where there is a strong chance of researcher bias, 2) it lacks reproducibility, and 3) it is not generalizability. This means that qualitative research falls short of quantitative research in terms of ensuring validity and reliability of research findings. A basic strategy to ensure rigor in qualitative research is being systematic and self-conscious in terms of research design, data collection, interpretation and communication of results (Mays and Pope, 1995).

Some of the approaches put forward by Barbour (2001) were adopted for the purpose of the study, specifically disclosing researcher bias and engagingin reflexivity, maintaining an audit trail, and member checking:

Disclosing Researcher Bias and Engaging in Reflexivity

Disclosing my biases, values, and experiences with respect to the study at the offset helps readers understand the position from which I'm conducting the inquiry (Creswell and Poth, 2018). This also enabled me to practice reflexivity so that I was constantly aware of my biases and ideas that I bring helped me to maintain a "phenomenological attitude," of being open to understanding and interpreting the experiences of the participants. I tried to diligently record the whole process of data analysis including my thoughts at each and every stage.

Audit Trail

I maintained an audit trail starting at the beginning with the creation of a tracking document, where I recorded the various steps taken such as sending out consent forms, the dates when they were received back, interview agreements, etc. At the analysis and interpretation stage, I created memos to add to the creation of an audit trail. "Memos are short phrases, ideas or

key concepts that occur to the reader" (Creswell and Poth, 2018, p.188). Following Creswell and Poth (2018), memoing was prioritized at all stages of the analysis process which helped in tracking code and theme development as well as in tracking my thought process throughout.

Member Checking

Member checking was done at two stages. Firstly, in the case of audio interviews, the transcribed interviews were sent to the participants and they were asked to go through them and make any changes they would like to it. Secondly, the individual analyzed reports were given to the participants to verify if their views and voices have been reflected in the analysis. Word documents with the coding done using the comment feature were sent to all the participants. Of the 14 participants 12 responded saying they agreed with the interpretation. I didn't hear back from the other. Some of the participants were curious as to how the coding was done and how it would be used. For example, one participant asked me if she could read something that I had published for her to get an idea of how this kind of research works, and another participant wanted to add a further clarification to one of her answers. Some of the participants, especially those who opted for audio interviews, were amused at the repetition of certain terms like "you know" that they seemed to do while talking. One told me that she felt like correcting some of the grammatical errors.

In addition, I let the participants' voice speak for itself while presenting the results of the analysis, generating what are termed as "rich, thick descriptions" (Creswell and Poth, 2018, p. 263). I believe this helps to illuminate the thought process behind the coding and analysis. As an attempt towards data triangulation, two types of data were collected. For RQ1 I decided the primary data to answer the question would be the comment data, but it turned out that I found support for some of the aspects of the small world model in the interview data as well, lending

further support to the comment data. For example, social ties were seen as one of the main takeaways for all the participants, and the themes "being comfortable" and a "sense of commonality" also pointed towards both the presence of social ties as well as a sense of community. Similarly, some of the participants talked about how they adopted mediated practices like posting songs or gifs to better communicate what they wanted, as part of their document experience. For RQs 2 and 3, the interview data was meant to be the primary data but I found additional support through the theme of "sharing" in the comment data, providing actual examples of how information and document experiences were manifested. I believe these methods that I adopted go a long way in ensuring the truth worthiness of my study.

Summary

In this chapter, the methodology adopted for the study was discussed in detail, starting from the metatheoretical position adopted and continuing to the measures taken to ensure the trustworthiness of the qualitative data.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS[37]

Findings from Interview Data

This section presents the findings from the interview data. The analysis is described in detail in the methods chapter. The themes that were derived from the analysis are presented below, categorized based on the questions asked in the interview guide as well as the research questions.

Migration and Leisure

One of the purposes for this study was to understand a particular leisure activity against the background of migration and diaspora. The participants were all asked about their reasons for migration, their leisure interests, changes in leisure post–migration and the reasons for the changes.

Reason for Migration

In Table 6, the reasons for migration of the participants are shown. Participant 5 withdrew and hence is not included, as well Participant 13 who, unlike other participants. was born outside India to Indian parents and grew up in East Africa. Their reasons for migration include education, work, and marriage. Marriage was the main reason for migration with 6 of the 14 participants citing it. This is followed by work, with 4 participants citing that as the reason and 3 citing education as the reason for migration.

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[37] Portions of this chapter appear in Kizhakkethil (2020a), Kizhakkethil (2020b), Kizhakkethil (2020c), Kizhakkethil (2020d).

Table 6

Reason for Migration

Participant	Education	Work	Marriage
1		X	
2			X
3		X	
4			X
6			X
7		X	
8	X		
9			X
10		X	
11	X		
12			X
14			X
15	X		

Leisure Interests

Most of the participants described themselves as avid readers, and fan fiction was just

something that added to it.

Table 7

Participant Leisure Interests

Participant	Interests
1	Reading, listening to music, watching movies, television, playing chess and solving puzzles
2	I like to read and quite enjoy female authors that touch upon migration and immigrant experiences; and also stories that are set in different cultures and countries. Watching Indian films, and Netflix shows. And listening to Indian movie music and sometimes instrumental music. I also enjoy cooking and baking. I recently started writing a fan fiction as well, and enjoy the writing process very much. It is more fulfilling when you see a germ of a thought developing into a plot, characters, scenes and dialogues. This sense of creative achievement I get from writing makes it more than just a leisure past time experience. Participating in blogs is another past time, though it has been very limited in the last year due to busy work schedule. I also like to go on walks and cook/ bake

(table continues)

Participant	Interests
3	• Watching movies • Few selected shows on Netflix & Hotstar (mostly IPK) • Reading IPK fan fictions • Listening to music • Playing cards, carrom with friends & family
4	• Reading is my number one hobby. I love any kind of fiction but romance are my "pick me up anytime" goto things. I love historical romance stories and contemporary romances which are on the cleaner side(I don't much care for man meets woman and they fall in bed kind of stories!). Of late, I have begun to enjoy well written stories by Indian authors too. Murder mysteries where complex mind games are played, come a close second. I also enjoy paranormal mystery stories(like those of author Kay Hooper). Interestingly, the Harry Potter series is my all time favorite series. I haven't been able to figure it out. I don't know whether it was the fantasy in it that captured my heart or whether it was the fight between the good and the evil that did it, but I have read the entire series more than ten times and it still hasn't bored me. Somehow, no other series(either young adult ones or the adult fantasy ones) have been able to impress me. • I am also a huge(and I mean a really huge) movie buff and can watch movies in any language. I love fantasy and sci-fi movies. LOTR series is my all time favorite set of movies. I also enjoy action movies and masala flicks. I like them more than the romance stories when it comes to movies. I honestly feel movies, especially the Indian ones, don't do romance very well. (Or maybe I am just too picky!) I am also big on "happily every afters" both in movies and in books and tend to shy away from stories that don't feel like it would end that way. • Recently(as in sometime last year), I began watching East Asian tv shows and dramas(Korean and Chinese mainly) that has me completely hooked. I love them mainly because the plot lines make sense and they don't meander much. That they usually end in less than twenty episodes(I only pick ones that are less than thirty episodes) is a big motivator. There was a period in between when I diligently tried Indian television but somehow, apart from IPK, I couldn't get into any show nor could watch any show for more than a couple of weeks. I think there is nothing more I find tiresome than a long running show with insipid plots and a regressive story lines. • I don't sing but listening to Music is not a hobby per se. It is just something that I always do. I listen to music when I drive, cook, and work(I was in the IT industry till about three years back when my second one was born). I tend to lean towards Indian film music though I do like certain English pop and rock bands. I generally like melody more than fast beating songs. I don't have a favorite composer and tend to like songs that have little classical touch.
6	Reading – romance, fanfictions; watching rom-coms on television, movies, meeting up with friends and spending time with them, singing
7	Reading, listening to music, watching movies, television, craft. Writing is a new addition to the list and I seem to be enjoying doing that a lot of late.
8	Reading (fiction and non fiction), cooking, gardening, travelling and photography
9	Reading, writing, going to concerts, art galleries, listening to music, watching movies, television, formula 1

(table continues

Participant	Interests
10	- Cooking is therapeutic. That's one of the leisure activities - Listening to music - Reading fan-fictions - Catching up on world news (on internet) - The last two years, seasonal classical music choir practices
11	- I am an avid reader and will read anything be it newspapers, comic books, magazines and/or books. I enjoy listening to music and also frequent music concerts of western and Indian artists. - I like watching movies on the big screen but in recent times enjoy watching movies and shows on Netflix, Prime, Hulu, etc. in the comfort of my home. - I also enjoy watching Indian programming especially reality shows that showcase exceptional talent (young and old). I do not watch any Indian soaps. - I love nature and like to go on nature walks/hikes. - I also enjoy baking as it helps me de-stress
12	I am a voracious reader. These days, it is not merely books, but e-books and a whole lot of fare on the internet that is rife with so many reading apps. Sheer heaven for someone like me who is just so obsessive about the reading habit! I also love music, theatre, cinema and solving jigsaw puzzles and riddles. Word games are a huge passion too. Indian and world music are great interests as well
13	- These days I do not read as much as I used to and I do not to watch Hindi movies. I do watch TV but not much Indian soaps. I like watching mythological serials like Ramayam, Mahabharat etc. I do watch a lot of English and American programmes. My favourite ones are wildlife documentaries, Cooking ,Dancing and sports (mostly athletic).I love watching TV adaptations of classics like Pride and Prejudice , Jane Eyre, Shakespearean plays etc. One BBC soap I watch is *Eastenders* - Coming to Uk has given me a lot of opportunity to learn different things .I learnt French, Keyboard music, dancing. I am retired but I attend Yoga classes, tai chi classes, go to gym , I make silver jewellery and make mosaic pictures from glass and mosaic craft tiles. For these I attend workshops where I have made friends from different races and religions.
14	Reading, music, movies, half marathons
15	- Reading fiction is one of the activities I indulge in almost every day. Books do take me to places. I enjoy every bit of reading I do. I am always hunting for good books and anything that will pull me into another world. I have recently started to propel into other literary genres; currently reading about design interior design - Traveling to different places in search of history, varied cultures make the trip fun for me. - I quite enjoy watching tv shows mainly period dramas, witty comedy shows. Witty shows top the list for me; have to have a good laugh; that's the motto in life. - I love to design websites for friends and families. Interacting with them, learning what they want helps me in getting to know their interests and passions and designing something that they would like, puts me in a happy place

Changes in Leisure Interests Post Migration

Based on what the participants said in their interviews, changes have been captured under

three themes that arose as far as changes to leisure interests post–migration. The changes were ascribed to a variety of reasons, with migration being one that had the effect of bringing about wider exposure.

Role of Technology

The first theme relating to change in leisure activities points to the role of technology in how the activities were carried out. Participant 1 felt the way she carried out leisure interests had changed, and didn't feel migration or where she lived played a part in it. She talked about the role of technology in the same.

> How I go about them has changed not the activities or interests. I attribute the change to time and technology not the migration or place of living. In the past, I used to borrow books from libraries or buy them. Now I subscribe and read them online. In the past the only way to watch a movie is either on TV or big screen. Now I watch movies on laptops, desktops or even smart phones along with TV and big screen. Same with listening to music. Nothing has changed in solving puzzles or playing chess.

She talked about how the kind of things that she liked to read or watch hadn't changed but the way they were carried out or accessed had changed. Fan fiction was an addition to the things that she read. She went onto say that it would've been the same even if she had been living in India due to the wide spread usage of information and communication technologies. Participant 4 talked about how technology has made it easier to do many things like watching Indian movies:

> There was a time when getting to watch Indian movies was not easy. I remember driving to another state to watch a Bollywood flick. But, these days, online streaming devices have made content from all over the world available at the click of a button.

In a similar vein, Participant 6 spoke about how difficult it was to access Indian programming when she had first migrated: "I got married in the 1998 and I came in, didn't really have a whole lot of TV at that point, Indian shows and all that were like a dream." Participant 7 also highlighted the role of technology in how leisure interests are carried out.

> I don't think the interests have changed over the period of time, but the sources to engage

in them have. I think before the Internet took over the world, the leisure activities were pretty much restricted to, and had everything to do with just telly, radio, going to the cinema and books. Now the same is available at the tip of the fingers, just a click away.

Change in Life Circumstances

Changes in leisure activities due to changes in life circumstances include starting to work, getting married, moving countries, etc. This includes passage of time and the changes that it brings in a person. Most of the participants ascribed changes that they perceive in their leisure activities to changes in life circumstances. Participant 2 talked about what she thought about the changes in her leisure activities.

> The leisure interests have changed over time. The initial 6-7 years I used to watch a lot more TV and movies. But this has now reduced with more time spent on reading and writing. The reasons that could explain the change: The phase in my life with a young child while juggling home and work, where the time I got for myself (in the later years) was primarily during my commute. It was easier to read on a train, or listen to e-books during driving. I had little time to watch. It made me more selective with picking any movies or TV shows to watch in the limited time I had.

For Participant 3 marriage and the accompanying changes resulted in changes in her leisure activities, too. She also felt that social interactions outside of work was more frequent when she was in India compared to post–migration. She also described herself as an introvert which also didn't help as far as social interactions were concerned.

> My leisure interests did change over a period. But it's mostly more due to change of priorities rather than migration. I guess marriage had more to do with it than migration ☺ Earlier, weekends were spent chilling, hanging out with friends, dining out, watching movies, etc. Now it's more about groceries, cooking, cleaning, laundry and other mundane stuff. Leisure activities are restricted to watching Netflix and reading.

Participant 6, who described herself as someone who enjoys reading romances and watching rom-coms, talked about changes in her leisure activities this way:

> I used to read romantic novels when in India but that reduced once I started working. Then I got married and came here…Got back to reading before I started working. Began to follow some television shows and came across the fan fictions forum and was hooked.

Participant 8 who came to the US as a graduate student said she had been too young when she left India and in many ways felt she had grown up in the US. She had this to say about the changes that have happened to her as a person as well as her leisure interests are concerned:

> I was too young when I left India. I grew up in US ☺ So yes my leisure activities has changed based on the different stages in life. I always read but read more fiction in India and now it is a mix of nonfiction and fiction (now fan fiction for last few years). Also I did not know how to cook in India and learned it as a necessary necessity as a student with less money and being a vegetarian.

Touching indirectly on the support network available for things like child care in India, and similar to Participant 3's comments about reduced social interactions, Participant 10 ascribed changes in leisure activities as "mainly due to changes in work-life balance, and handling kid's after-school activities. Had I been in India, I would have met friends, relatives; watched TV; practiced music at home. Mainly because I would have had more help in handling chores." Participant 14, on the other hand, felt she could focus on herself more post–migration. She commented that "in India it was mainly you had to be reactive and living day in and day out." Acknowledging the passage of time on evolving taste, and the trajectory of her migration journey, coming to the US as a teenager to pursue under graduate studies, Participant 11 spoke about the influence of wider exposure on her leisure interests:

> Living in the US I have been exposed to different genres of music, be it country, jazz, R&B, hard rock or hip-hop. I have also been fortunate to watch live performances by living legends – both western and Bollywood/Indian artists, which in turn has helped me develop a whole new appreciation for different kinds of music.

She went on to talk about the changes in perspectives that came from her migration experience, as well as from the absence of the sheltered atmosphere in India.

> Living in the US has allowed me to look beyond fixed cultural and ethnic boundaries. I now enjoy knitting (scarves) for my kids and nieces which I considered a chore when my mother tried teaching it to me when I was a young girl. I love to bake (therapeutic activity for me) whereas I was not allowed to step into the kitchen growing up in India for fear of hurting/burning myself.

I also enjoy long drives versus flying within the US which is not something I would consider doing growing up in India or even today when I visit.

Similarly Participant 15 felt the changes in interests were mainly due to the passage of time and the maturity and growth that it brings.

New interests and experiences have made me explore things that I wouldn't think of doing otherwise. In India, it is a more protected kind of living, so with independence away from home it made me learn things and also enjoy exploring my interests and passions more deeply.

Wider Exposure

Changes due to migration includes access and exposure to more things and ideas, including through interactions with others from other ethnicities. For Participant 2 it was a boss who gave her the idea of reading books set in other cultures because it gave a "window into others and that kind of seemed like a, like, an interesting thing to me. So I tried, and there were a few book recommendations that came from her." Participant 4 spoke about her fascination with public libraries when she first came to the US.

What my migration did was open up a lot of avenues to fuel my interests, in the sense that all it took for me to get books to read was a trip to the library. That library books were completely free of cost boggled my mind when I first came here

She went to speak about how the way she viewed fellow Indians itself changed after her migration. She remarked "while you're in India, you tend to stereotype the nation." She felt that meeting people from a wide range of ethnicities made her question notions she had held about people from her own ethnicity. Using the analogy of reading, a leisure activity that she loves, she talked about her interest in reading books by non-Indians while in India and how her migration experience has made her more receptive to work by Indians, as it enables her to understand how people from her own ethnicity perceive various things, going beyond stereotypes.

Not just meeting other Indians but meeting a wider range of ethnicities has made me

become more open to the eccentricities of us Indians. It also made me entertain the notion that certain ideas I had regarding how we are may not actually be right.

The wider exposure meant that she is more open to exploring things which she may not have before. Using the example of watching television she said:

Had I been in India, right, I would have never picked up a Korean show to watch, I've always been interested in TV, and really, it shouldn't have mattered whether I'm watching a Chinese or Korean show but having lived abroad for so many years, and having interacted with people from all walks of life, I would you know if somebody suggests even a Filipino show to me tomorrow, I would definitely watch it, keeping an open mind……Not just not just as the show that's just an example, but I think my mindset itself has broadened so much that I don't really feel something is off like tomorrow if you wanted me to, if somebody said that this, this, this show is more about, like, let's say, same sex couples, it wouldn't put me off I feel like I'm sure had I been in India I wouldn't have.

Participant 8 spoke about the changes wrought by wider exposure from migration experience this way:

As someone once said I lived in a barn in India ☺ ☺ implying life was too cushioned, unaware, and homogenous. Living independently and fending for self (education was not funded by parents) I became more self-reliant, even more independent in decision making. Exposure to the world made me more aware of differences and learned to appreciate others way of living and thinking. Say for example family values are equally strong in an American family. The expression of it is just different

Touching on the passage of time and its effect on one's taste and perspective, Participant 9 spoke about how the wider exposure gained from migration has made a difference in her leisure activities: "Greater exposure and accessibility to a wider range of things has played a large part….The people I have met and interacted with has also had a bearing on it for me." Participant 12 also felt that the passage of time brings about changes in one's taste and was thankful for the wider exposure that she got from migration.

Other Migration Related Changes

Other migration–related changes included an increased interest in spirituality, wanting to

stay connected to one's roots, making sense/meaning of one's experiences through the experiences of others, etc. Participant 2 spoke about how her own migration and associated experiences made her "curious to read and understand how people in similar situations handle such displacements - be it from my own background or other backgrounds." Participant 6 spoke about becoming more spiritual after her migration saying "also noticed that I got more spiritual/religious after I came to this country. One ends up feeling a lot closer to their traditions and values when outside their country."

Fandom Experience

This section looks at the themes that arose in the interview data from the questions that were asked relating to the participants experience of being a part of a fandom. These ranged from how they discovered the show, became a part of the fandom, and any experiences, whether negative or positive, that has stayed with them.

How I Met IPK

The participants were asked about how they discovered the show and became a part of the fandom. For many of them, this was the first time they had avidly followed an Indian daily soap, and their first experience of being a part of a fandom. Participant 6 and 15 had prior fandom experience, with Participant 6 mentioning that she had been a part of another Indian show fandom. Participant 15, on the other hand, is part of multiple fandoms, including Harry Potter, Lost, and Downton Abbey. She is also the youngest participant, which could have an impact in her interest and participation in fandoms generally. Participant 11 mentioned that she had read some Harry Potter fan fiction but had never posted a comment or interacted with anyone. The following are the themes that came up with respect to how the show was discovered leading to the discovery of the fandom along with activities like fan fiction reading and writing.

Mothers and Daughters

Discovering the show while watching television with their mothers was a theme that came up. Participants 2, 4, and 11 related discovering the show due to their mothers. Participant 2 spoke about discovering the show with her mother who was visiting her, and who used to watch it.

> We had a lot of time at home, it was just my mother, me and Meera at home. And I was just making fun of her and I don't know for what reason I started watching. I watched, I finished watching all of those in like two nights and like I couldn't put it down (laughing) I didn't realize, I've never watched anything like that neither have I watched anything after that, it's only for ipk and it was like binge watching over like two nights or three nights.

She went on to talk about how she discovered fan fiction.

> Actually watched it a few more times and then I don't know how I even eventually ended up in fanfiction. God knows how, I really don't know. I ended up and then one after the other there were like few really good ones…… finally I came to River, but that's how I kind of came into IPK, I think I should thank my mother (laughs)

> Participant 4 had this to say about how she discovered the show.

> So my mom, she was there with me at that time and she was watching Vijay TV. So in between, I think when she, while she was watching there was an ad or she had left the TV on, no there was no ad she had left the TV on and I saw the Tamil version of the " I love you dammit" scene trust me, hooked me. And then I went back and watched, looked searched for the Hindi original and I watched all the episodes.

She went on to talk further about feeling disappointed about how the story line proceeded at a point, and that led her to look up material that would treat it in a different way. This got her hooked to fan fiction. She further spoke about how she felt the fan fiction she read were much better compared to other fiction she was reading at the time:

> I think it's such a wide, wide platform and it's such an awesome thing because you have so many writers who are so, so very good and that was a time I was kind of trying out all kinds of fiction. I had recently joined Kindle Unlimited. And I was trying out all these new authors and so many of them were so poor. So decided, okay, there's no point in reading really bad authors (slightly laughing) when I have such a, such a really rich umm (pause) this thing to pick from. So that's how I kind of got into fanfiction.

Participant 11 talked about coming across the show while watching television with her

mother who was visiting at that time:

> Let me start off by saying I have never watched any Indian soaps on television. In late spring of 2011 I had added Indian channels to my television programming for my visiting parents. One evening I was sitting with my mother while she watched one of her Indian soaps and I happened to see the preview of an upcoming Indian soap. The tagline "Nafrat paas aane na de - Mohabbat door jaane na de" along with the good looking protagonists piqued my interest and I made a mental note to watch the show when it started that summer. Summer of 2011 came and went, parents went back to India and Indian programming on television was cancelled. Fast forward to Dec 2011 a week before Christmas. I was scrolling through some YouTube videos and happened to come across an episode of IPK. It was the famous "missed kiss" episode. The chemistry between the leads was incendiary and I was intrigued. I decided to watch the soap from the first episode. I was hooked and binge watched all the episodes of IPK that had aired thus far in that one week. For the first time in my adult life I found myself watching and re-watching episodes of an Indian soap.

Participant 12 on the other hand was visiting her mother in India when she came across

the show, something she described as a happy accident.

> IPK was a happy accident. I was visiting my mother in India in October 2011 – and she was watching that Diwali episode where Khushi surrounds herself in a circle of diyas and Arnav steps up to rescue her at Lavanya's behest. I was hooked by the strange intensity these two protagonists portrayed and their searing chemistry – that elusive togetherness which one does not find in so many on-screen couples. Reckon that was it for me! When I got back to Dubai, I binge watched YouTube and Daily Motion to catch up on all the earlier episodes….and then repeated the whole process! The obsession has been like no other – and no, I do not follow any other fandoms.

Accident

For some participants like Participant 3 and 7, discovery of the show was quite

accidental. Participant 3 had this to say:

> I have never watched a single serial after I moved to US. Even in India, I used to catch few episodes that my Mom or Granny used to watch, whenever I had time. But with IPK, I feel, I was destined to watch it LOL. There's some sort of connection 😜 I happened to watch the scene where Arnav is collapsing on the kitchen floor and Khushi is trying to revive him. I was sold right there. Then I hunted to see where I could see the whole series and landed on hotstar. It used to be free then. Rest, as they say, is history.

Participant 7 found the show through the forum for another show, while looking up write ups for episodes she had missed. She humorously claimed that she forgot the other show in no time. For Participant 8, who claimed to be not into Indian TV shows, watching one with cousins while on a visit to India, led to the discovery of IPK and as a corollary the fan fiction world. She termed the fan fiction world, particularly one blog hosting a story and the social atmosphere there, as acting as an emotional crutch. Participant 10 also had a story about stumbling on the show accidentally: "Chanced upon "Teri Meri Prem Kahaani" song that was re-created in IPK. Mesmerized by the chemistry between the lead actors of the TV series. Watched the series… then stumbled upon the fan-fiction world." Participant 13 also spoke about coming across the show by reading write-ups posted on a website: "I stumbled upon Myedunia site where I saw a lot of writers commenting on the serial every day .I was fascinated how they were analysing each scene, the clothes worn, the colour of the Khushi's pompoms, etc." For Participant 14 fan fiction paved the way towards the show. Participant 15 discovered the show after seeing a teaser of it online, and it in turn gave her a taste of fandom for the first time.

Hearing from Others

For some participants their introduction to the show was through hearing about it from others. Participant 6, even though she used to watch the show and had been a part of another fandom, heard about IPK from friends and then started watching it. Similarly for Participant 9, who liked watching the odd serial here and there, was told by a friend about IPK:

> I used to follow the odd serial on and off before IPK. Usually for the first few months before the story went into free fall. I was getting bored with Bade Acche Lagte Hain, the serial I was following at that time, and asked a friend in India what was popular. She mentioned IPK, so I checked out the first episode. Got totally hooked while she never watched even a single episode!

For Participant 7, the discovery of the show happened while watching and following

another one, in a period after the delivery of her second child. In a very hilarious way, she spoke

about discovering the show, mixing up Hindi in between.

> I used to follow a serial a very, very crappy serial called Navya. And it was probably the crappiest but I had just delivered a baby at that time and had absolutely nothing to do other than breastfeed. So, you know, it is so bad. So just trying to follow it and at times I would miss a lot of episodes and then I needed some sort of repository, which stores links for, you know, for catching up and that's how I winded up in India forums, I remember that very well and I remember then people actually making posts about particular topic and I got very interested in, like, you know, a different take. And you know, I started seeing that and then I just thought that, oh, there are like hundred people thinking hundred different things of the same scene. And I was like I was I was, I was very happy reading. And I've always read, I've never participated. There was some girl, I don't remember her name now. Who used to talk on her posts about the serial where there is and she used to make fun of it, saying that there are dupattas[38] flying all over the scenes all the time and (laughing) and I was really intrigued (laughing) kya dupatta dupatta (what dupatta) I read it a couple of times and I then I figured out I need to check this out. And that's how I winded up on IPK, I saw my first I think my first dupatta, teej ka tha shayad (I think it was the teej episode) and I was like forget the dupatta, yeh aakhen mujhko dedo thakur (give these eyes to me Thakur: a film dialogue) he was shockingly amazing in that, that particular scene and his eyes, that eye lock, Oh my god, I was gone that Navya flew out of the window, everything just flew out of the window, then I was like completely hooked.

She spoke about becoming a part of the fan community and discovering fan fiction:

> Being a part of the IPK fan community, I was introduced to the world of fan fictions after the show ended. I was fortunate enough to read some brilliant pieces of work written by some really good writers. After combing through a plethora of fiction pieces, it took time to single out a few writers and follow their work.

Small World

In this section the results relating to small world context is presented. The concepts

associated with the preliminary model were used to drive the coding while remaining open to

other themes. These results came out of questions asked about the participants' experience of

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[38] Dupatta is a piece of cloth that is a part of traditional attire known as salwar kameez. It is worn around the neck and is used to cover one's chest.

being a part of the small world, and which was seen to play a part in their overall experience.

Social Ties

Social ties and the importance of the same is a theme that came up in all the interviews. Most participants held it as one of the key takeaways from their experience of reading and in some cases writing fan fiction. Table 7 shows excerpts from all the 14 interviews pointing to social ties and also a sense of community. The importance of social ties also points to a sense of community.

Table 8

Excerpts from Interviews Pointing to Social Ties and a Sense of Community

Participant	Excerpt
1	More than story and characters I am enjoying rapport shared between readers or writers or readers and writers.
2	I realize that it is very addictive - at least at the beginning. While it started out as a more passive, one-way reading experience, it soon became more. The stickiness, for me, however, came not from the name of the IPK characters though that was the initial pull. I find the approachability and the possibility of real time interactions with fellow readers and authors to be the biggest pulls.
3	It's an overwhelming feeling to know there are others out there who share the same sentiments about the show as you and appreciate the show for what it's worth. I have also connected to many of the members and it feels nice to share thoughts and anecdotes with them
4	It's the kind of people I've met at the kind of genuine talents that I've met kind of genuine people who are who think alike, who enjoyed a lot of same things that I do. I think it's been a great experience interacting with everybody whoever I interacted with so far it's it's really, really been awesome, kind of, I really want to meet you guys like face to face, you know, I think we would have a great time and that has been my biggest takeaway as a reader
6	This one, this one is we are still there (laughing) we're still talking we're still chatting. Yes, I'm not a regular anymore, but it's it's just a time thing, right, it still, you know, I know that if and when I will come back again, you know, I won't say If I say whenever I decided to come back and comment on the blog I know everybody will still be there and, you know, we will pick it up right there. So, I miss that, in the sense that, you know, there is a distance or something right it. No, it's like whenever you're on the blog, it's, it's, you know, you're back to square one. Again, you have the same, you know, you end up behaving in the same manner. It is the kind of relationship we've built on right i mean we have all been through the craziness together. So I just feel that there is that connect.

(table continues)

Participant	Excerpt
7	The biggest draw from the experience is that it has enabled me to meet new people and form strong friendships. In today's hectic lifestyle, where time management is a necessary skill, where investing time in yourself and friends is not easy as it used to be, this community has been the best available platform to get to know new people through common passion
8	I used ff reading as a stress buster. Something I don't need to dwell on. I read it if it light and a funny read. Today I read it only because a friend maybe writing it.
9	Interacting with other readers and writers, both those part of the diaspora and those who aren't, has played a big part in the longevity of this passion for me
10	In addition to reading mind-blowing work of the various authors, I have had the chance to interact with wonderful ladies whom I met in the virtual world. People from all walks of life seem to converge in this virtual world which I heard, is fondly called "Sapno Ki Duniya (SKD)" – the world of your dreams. True that. You are transported into a different world for some time. It is relaxing. And the interaction with fellow readers makes it all the more engaging.
11	Like you know I had never ever thought that, you know, there would be a time in my life where I'd be interacting with people who I have never met and they would like, you know, become good friends.
12	The whole experience brought me in contact with a virtual world and fandom – many of these people became my close friends - as dear as my real-life ones!
13	I have become aware that a lot of writers and readers are living in UK .USA and Africa. I have seen some have formed friendships and that can be seen in their comments. I was pleasantly surprised to find out that Ravens lives in Dar es Salaam, where I was born. She is taking a break at the moment but we do write to each other and compare notes on Dar now and then
14	I was a silent reader for a very long period but I saw or read some authors how they felt and were hurt..that forced me to start sharing my thoughts slowly in concise way to begin with and then connecting to people who impressed their way into my heart. I wanted to know them be them and be their friend, I knew these people will know make me a better person. They were all good people and empowered women, inspiring!
15	It's a good feeling to share anecdotes and incidents from our lives with the people who understand the culture and background of the events. Its instant connection and the anecdotes ring a bell of nostalgia every time we chatter about things.

Sense of Community

A 'sense of commonality' and 'being comfortable' are themes that came up in the interview data. This theme, along with the importance of social ties, points to a sense of community. All the participants emphasized the presence of commonalities as important in forming social ties. Location, as in whether a person belonged to the diaspora or not, was not deemed as important in establishing social ties. It simply added to the number of factors that one

shared in common with another. Participant 3 talked about it this way:

> If I were to guess, it's because it's easier to make time when you are abroad than in India. The time zones also play a big part, I think. I don't necessarily find a difference in the interactions. Maybe the topics could be slightly different, but otherwise it's mostly the same. Or let me put it this way – the demographics don't influence the interactions, it's the bonding with the person itself.

Participant 8 felt that migration does not always have an effect of broadening one's

perspective, and that commonalities in perspective where important in developing and

maintaining social ties. Location did not matter.

> I used to think that exposure and having experience living outside India can open people mind or say they would now be more open to revisit their beliefs etc. I don't think so anymore. So folks (men and women) who have lived outside India even for 20 years their mindset has not changed. The men may look down upon a woman who does not make parathas for her husband or a woman may think that once she marries her husband identity is her only identity. Who we are depends a lot on our upbringing and our family environment and our own basic personality,

> So the similarity in thinking is not because they are in India or outside. I found similarities with some because how we thought about an issue. (Radhika of Tewari fame is in India, RB is another one).

At the same time Participant 2 found that similarities with respect to migration was

something that she enjoyed sharing with social ties:

> I accidentally stumbled on to IPK FF blogs. The opportunity this platform provided for both communicating with the authors, as well as with fellow readers opened up a new social circle that I never knew existed. It enabled sharing experiences with like-minded people with backgrounds (including people that have migrated outside of India) that I could understand and relate to. This led to friendships with people who shared the same story of growing up in India, and moving out later, and having to get attuned to a different culture, dealing with aging parents back home, and raising kids outside your native land.

She also said that most of the social ties she made happened to be part of the diaspora:

> Most of the people that have come across in in the fan fiction world, for some reason, I don't think it was by design. But it so happened that they were all people, mostly outside like the people that I've talked a lot to, honestly. Aah like other than that it was mostly Nivi or maybe a couple of other people in India.

This was echoed by Participant 6 who said most of her social ties belonged to the diaspora, but didn't think it was the key factor in developing ties. Participant 4 touched on feeling comfortable and having commonalities, in sharing things like even a piece of music:

> The first and foremost, the very fact that I'm willing to share it, kind of, oh, hey, I can always say, hey, I like this song, you know, kind of be it like a random song pop song, but nobody likes, the very fact that you're comfortable sharing a song that not many people would like itself shows a level of comfort that is not probably you wouldn't feel comfortable sharing or telling it to people with whom you meet, like, face to face, maybe because you're worried about how they would think so, like, like I said, that itself shows because I think in my mind I I know that I wouldn't be judged. You know, we're all a certain set of we are a group of people who have certain things in common already so the fact that I feel that you wouldn't be judged very harshly for liking or disliking something I think gives you a level of comfort that is that you might not that I don't think I would get anywhere else outside when I said, unless they are friends who are really close. So that is something really nice.

She also highlighted the role of gender in adding to the sense of comfort, by comparing her experience of this community with another one of which she was a part. She explained the difference between the two communities this way:

> Kind of like being in a Co-ed school vs a girls school. I used to study in a Co-ed school where we were always on our guard. Talk a certain way, behave in a certain manner. When I joined an all–girls school later on, it was as though, suddenly there were no restrictions. It felt as though I had been let loose.

Participant 11 talked about her experience on the blog hosting the story "A River Runs Through It" as equivalent to being part of a sisterhood: "I guess river gave us that opportunity to really bond and come together as a sisterhood, and I feel very fortunate to have made friends on the virtual space." She went on to talk about how she felt comfortable to share her views:

> I remember for Arjun we (used) to have such diverse comments and thought process and whatever. And we would argue with you know, not in a malicious way. It was more like, you know, back and forth, exchanging (exchanging) views and done in a very harmonious kind of an environment like you know it was never like you know I'm right or you're wrong. It was like, you know, respecting the other person's perspective, and then, you know, putting forth your own view too. So it was a lot of fun. It was like a lot of back and forth, but never, never did I feel uncomfortable. In fact, I always thought, felt very welcome.

Mediated Practices

Practices like posting comments, liking comments, replying to comments, posting videos, images and gifs are in many ways what constitutes the small world. These mediated practices can be seen as a way of expressing one's self and is a part of the reading experience. Participant 3, who enjoys posting images and gifs, had to this to say: "I am a strong believer of "A picture is worth a thousand words." Sometimes the point I am trying to make becomes more obvious when I use a pic/gif/song instead of writing it down." In a similar vein, Participant 12 said: "In all the comments I have posted on fan fiction, I try to embellish my personal review with songs and media that are relevant. A picture (or music video) after all speaks a thousand words – or more!" Posting of music videos is a very common mediated practice, and Participant 10 talked about her love for posting music videos as part of the comments she posts:

> I try to include music as much as I can. More because I have a musical background (training) and I love music. I tend to relate to situations with songs (Bollywood or otherwise). It just makes me feel more engaged with the story.

For Participant 1 adding things like music or gifs to her comment is not necessary but it is something that she loves to do: "I love to post pictures or GIFs or lyrics or music if they come to my mind. But, it is not necessary, and I don't get worried about it, if I can't find something." Participant 6 talked about needing space and time to write out comments, and also said she was not good at attaching media files.

> I need, I need that time to write it down. And that is where it takes time for me right, to even comment. I'm never, the only instant comment is Hey, I'm here. That's it. I read the update, but then coming back to comment is a process of its own. I need to find the time, I need to find the space, I don't need anybody disturbing me at that time. Because I need to collect my thoughts together. I've to read the update a couple of times, go into that zone and then write out a comment, right. So it takes time, it is time consuming and that is where the frustration is, right. That you're not able to instantaneously put out a comment there, I end up not commenting, most of the time, so that is what is happening with Sohni's stuff also I'm not able to get that half, that one or half an hour space, to get into that zone that nobody is disturbing either home or at work.

Similarly Participant 11 also spoke extensively about how she went about commenting

for the stories that she read.

> When I read something I have to read an update a couple of times. And then like, you
> know, process it in my mind. And then I need some quiet time just to think about, like,
> you know what I read, in order to pen my thoughts from that. And if a song calls out to
> me like you know there's a particular update that would remind me of a particular song I
> will post a song but not necessarily with every update will I want to post a song because
> like with some authors like with Sohniye each of her updates has a song. She has posted
> some song with it. And if I am reminded of some other songs lyrics, or like, you know,
> while reading the update, another song comes to mind. I will either like you know, put
> out some lyrics, or like I would attach a YouTube video but not necessarily does a song
> pop into my head when I'm reading something. I just like reading and rereading and like,
> you know, just to get what's put out there because I feel that with each reread I feel I've
> understood it a lot better than my prior reading? So that's one of the reasons I really can't
> put a comment out there immediately I have to kind of absorb it and understand it and
> then like, you know, be in the right mind frame to write something.

She also felt it was important that she showed her appreciation by posting comments which was

not always possible:

> I guess it's just my demanding real life that doesn't allow me because I feel guilty if I
> read something and I'm not able to comment on it. Because all these women, they are
> busy women too regardless of whether the stay at home moms or they have careers. Like
> you know they put themselves out there by putting out their stories, their work. I feel
> guilty if I read something and not comment on it.

For Participant 7 an instance where an author engaged with her, after posting a comment,

prompted her to continue commenting, eventually resulting in her starting to write. She spoke

about adding music to her comments, drawing on in many ways her own knowledge of music.

> If it rhymes with the scene or whatever has happened in that episode or scene or chapter
> or whatever, then I love doing that because kind of runs on a parallel thread I am
> completely into music I've trained in Hindustani classical trained in classical dance….My
> life is all about it, actually, I'm very much into it so it's just something that is a part of
> me, which comes out at times I quote songs or add songs. Oh, yeah. Yeah, so that that
> that came very naturally there was nothing, there was not much thought given to that.

> Participant 8 was not into including any media files as part of her comments: "I never

post anything else. Well sometimes a quote or poem because I may have remembered it." She

also spoke about not reading other comments before posting her own so as not to color her perception. This is something that was mentioned by the majority of participants. Participant 9 spoke about how a word or phrase could act as a trigger for her to comment: "Usually, a phrase or a word in the update will strike a chord. I like adding poems, songs and parodies." For Participant 13 commenting is a way of letting a writer know that she's reading the story and she loves to share anecdotes from her everyday life.

> These days I comment to let the writer know I am reading their stories and my comments are very short and not as interesting as some of the fellow readers. I do many times write about my experiences in the comments. I do write about the festivals we celebrate in the UK. When I read stories set in London or New York I do write about my experiences in these places when I make comments. I write about the weather in London, I love writing about the birds and trees in my garden.

> Participant 14 termed herself lazy with respect to posting comments, while saying she enjoyed reading other perspectives and viewpoints.

> I am very impulsive and post and don't take too much time to process at times. I process for 24 hours or at times in a week. Songs come to my mind few times but not always. I am not very good at even checking grammar and spell at times. I am too lazy.

> Reading and then analyzing is important for Participant 15 to post what she termed "from the heart and mind comments." She also said "Yes, music and pictures add to the comment. Sometimes thoughts need a song to express better I think."

Feeling of a Place

The blogs as sites of activity were referred to as a place by participants, by using terms which give the idea of a third place. Participant 6 spoke about how she missed hanging out at the blog hosting a story titled "A River Runs Through It."

> Seriously, I miss the river. Like, I don't know like a part of me is missing, you know, feel so incomplete, you know, while I don't have the lot of time to go back to that story, but it's, you know, it was there always right at any time for 5-10 minutes if you have some time and you just want to… I miss that place.

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Participant 7 talking about her experience on the above mentioned blog described it as "it was like a Katta man, it was like a college Katta very honestly." Katta[39] is a term peculiar to the part of India that she comes from, and is a short wall on which one sits around with friends. It is generally associated with populations attending school or college. Figure 10 has an image of a "Katta" that was obtained through a google search. For Participants 2, and 15 reading fan fiction and the blogs as sites of activity gave the feeling of been part of a reading club. Participant 2 said "this was my first foray into anything similar to a reading club. The multiple interpretation of the same writing by the various readers was a fascinating realization."

Figure 10

Image of a Katta[40]

Participant 15 said "the experience of reading and interacting with others is more like an online book club for me."

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[39] Katta is a term used in the western Indian state of Maharashtra.

[40] Source: http://ruiakatta.blogspot.com/2010/05/coolest-places-to-hangout-in-mumbai.html

Document Experience – Reader

The participants were all asked about their experience of reading fan fiction. As seen in the above section, the social interactions were a big part of the reading experience. All the participants described their experience as a learning one or enriching one. By learning they meant things like how to be more positive towards life, discovering and nurturing a talent/skill. They also spoke about becoming more "active readers."

Participant 1 spoke about her document experience this way:

More than story and characters I am enjoying rapport shared between readers or writers or readers and writers. I am learning from them how to be more positive towards life and people. There is this reader who reads all the comments on a story and likes all the comments. She thinks there is no need to post the same opinion again. She is not a fan of numbers game and she is not interested in climbing the IF ladder. She is here to read FFs and enjoy and she is simply doing that.

This highlights the role of social ties and interactions with them in the document experience. She went on to talk about what one can take away from a story for which the credit should go to the authors; "I sometimes quote fictional incidents to put my point across in real life. I guess it is up to the individual what to take from the story or an interaction." She went on to add: "we can always learn something from stories or articles we read. I don't read fiction because I want to learn, but, I can learn while reading. If I quote them, I will remember them longer." We can say the document experience here includes not just the reading of the story but also the interactions that takes place via the mediated practices supported by the blog.

Participant 2, who is also a writer and who took up writing after becoming a part of the fandom, had this to say about her document experience as a reader:

With participation in discussions, came a new dimension to reading. This was my first foray into anything similar to a reading club. The multiple interpretation of the same writing by the various readers was a fascinating realization. River was the biggest draw for me - it made me pause and savor the reading experience altogether. Before, I used to rush through a book, without pausing to appreciate the writing, just focusing on the what

next or whodunnit. And attempting to write, has altogether changed how I read. It has made me realize the beauty and joy that any form of art can bring into one's life.

She talked of how her experience of reading fan fiction made her into a more "active reader," the interpretive skill so acquired is carried on to the consumption of other media as well.

> This FF reading, has also helped me in being a more appreciative and selective reader in other fiction. It is like I got a new perspective with which I read, and appreciate the writing and motivations of characters. I now like to delve into the sub-texts (even when watching movies), without being a passive reader (or viewer).

> Participant 3, similar to Participant 1 highlighted the role of interactions in her document

experience, again using the term "learn" to describe them.

> Sometimes the conversations are off topic (not related to the FF itself) and it feels nice to talk about general stuff or even learn more about different cultures, in some cases. There have been several occasions when my days ended a lot better than they started just because of these chats ☺

When asked to elaborate on what she meant about different cultures, she touched on interacting with those belonging to other parts of India compared to where she comes from and how that has meant sharing aspects of the culture from those places. She said, "we spoke about festivals, various places, or discussed about sarees." She further went on to talk about her reading experience, shedding light on the role played by the comments of others on her own interpretation.

> For the FFs I absolutely love, I end up reading each update more than once and these subsequent readings are sometimes influenced by the comments. They make me see a certain situation or character in different light. Interacting with other readers is an experience in itself. I love reading their views, regardless of whether I agree with them or not. It definitely has an impact on how I read & interpret. There have been multiple occasions when my views about a certain character or situation has changed after reading someone's comment or having had a discussion with them. Classic example is our discussion on Sea Mist, where I am severely influenced by many of the comments. Every reader brings their own perspective and it's fascinating to read their thoughts.

> Participant 6 put the spotlight on how the different perspectives put forward by way of

comments helps to broaden one's vison, apart from learning about other people.

There were things that I would realize really after reading some comments or hey, this, this is another way of looking at it, right. You know we are so set in our own ways of thinking, right, that we do not think (of) another perspective. And so reading gives you different perspectives of how different people think how they come up with, you know, their theories, an insight into that person as well. My, I've probably gotten to know a lot more about a lot of people. And I don't know whether that was right or wrong. You know, if you read their comments, you have an opinion or you form some sort of this, you know, a vague image in your mind about that person, right. Hey, how you know they've been like this. And, you know, so this is the kind of person she's okay, it's not necessarily right or wrong. It's just that we are meeting virtually right and we haven't seen each other. We haven't met each other and just, you know, a vague opinion that kind of forms. And I think, you know, having healthy discussions is awesome. Right. I mean, yeah, like that. There are so many different ways of looking at a particular character so many different ways of thinking about certain situations and, you know, why a character could have behaved the way he or she did? I can think from one point of view, but then I have 10 other people having 10 different points of view and it, it helps my perspective grow as well, right, hey, this would be a possibility too. So I think it helps broaden your vision in that aspect.

Similarly Participant 7 also talked about getting exposed to various perspectives, which not only provides a glimpse into the mind of the person posting the comment but also helps with your thought process:

There have been times when a one specific scene has garnered like six or seven different responses. And it's kind of (slight pause) gives you, you're thrown because you get like these many perspectives out of one given situation and you know you can form an opinion about, not opinion that's a strong word but you can get a glimpse into the head of person who's writing it right so you can learn. Oh yeh sa bhi soch sakta hai (you can think like that too). Yeah, this is a nice way to look at it. So it kind of changes you on many levels, actually. Your thought process changes, you're obviously besides factual information static information that comes out of it as well.

She went on to talk about how she perceived her document experience in terms of learning about people as well as gaining information about things she didn't know about. She gave the example of writing to an author about what is involved in a business consultant's life, something she mentions having no idea about.

You see shades of people when they comment. Their personalities, their quirks, their, they're talking about something or the other. My biggest learning point to a point where I actually mailed meera and I said, Dude, can you tell me what do people who are not consultants do with those chapters kind of a thing. There were two or three chapters were

it just went on and on about the kind of work Khushi was doing, Kaveri sorry and I was like, I have no point of, you know, I couldn't relate to it at all. Because I don't know what the hell that life is. And I don't know that there's nothing wrong about the chapters. They're amazing chapters, whatever they were, but I could not relate to it, but it was also a peek into it sitting there on the laptop and just reading it. I'm getting information. Of something I didn't know about. Yeah. So yeah, it obviously you're constantly educated this way or that way. Get to know more types of people you meet mad people like Madhuri, nice people like P.

Participant 8 talked of how interactions with people who she may not have met or interacted in the real world meant that she learned from their thoughts and experiences: "It made me interact with folks I would normally not do in AD."[41] So I learned from their experiences and thoughts. Forced me (to) dwell on subjects I would not do otherwise." In the same vein as others, Participant 9 also talked about the different perspectives that she encountered and what she gained from it: "It has given me different perspectives to my thoughts. It has also given real time lessons in how circumstance and environment shapes people's thinking. What you think you project, and how people read it is sometimes so far apart." Participant 10 talked about how her experience of reading fan fiction improved her existing skills: "I may not be a voracious reader of fictions, but part of my education needed me to read-analyze/interpret-criticize-improvise. Reading and analyzing comes more naturally to me. Doing that in the fan-fiction world is actually strengthening these skills even more!" Echoing the thoughts of other participants, she spoke about how she viewed other perspectives while also touching on how it could be counterproductive too; "Interacting with others can have a mixed influence. It is interesting to see how the same set of words can be interpreted in different ways. That sets the mind thinking on possibilities, explanations and more." While talking about how she went about posting her views on what she's reading, Participant 10 emphasized the need to put away reading of others'

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[41] AD stands for Asli Duniya or the real world.

comments until after posting hers, so as to not get influenced in her thinking : "My comments are genuinely my thoughts. I go through the other comments after I post mine – and that sets my mind thinking about other possibilities. It makes the story reading a very interesting and enriching experience." Similarly, Participant 12 also talked about drawing on an existing skill set and how it got sharpened due to her document experience: "Reading and interpretation are integral to my work, so I would say this experience perhaps complemented my existing skills and sharpened them!" Identifying herself as "not a techie" she spoke about the challenges involved in learning how to use various platforms.

Describing her document experience as an "enriching reading experience," Participant 11 also talked about the role that interactions play in making her experience so; "I never imagined I would be comfortable and/or enjoy exchanging views, engaging in lengthy discussions involving fictional characters with so many funny, articulate and intelligent women, that too in virtual space." She further talked about the impact that social ties, especially with authors, has made on her reading experience

> Feeling close to the person who puts it puts the story out, it makes you like, you know, go in and like, you know, dig a little more like, you know, try and see if there are certain nuances that speak to you and like you know like, are there hidden meanings behind certain phrases or certain words and things like that. Which I won't do when I first started reading fanfiction. Now I do that more.

For Participant 13, her document experience taught her how to express herself. "I was a silent reader but I have started to comment and have become confident in expressing my views, learnt to agree to disagree with other people's views." Participant 14 also spoke about how she learned from other perspectives and others way of expressing themselves. She spoke about what she gained from her experience as "I understand people better and I have become better at listening, writing and summarizing. Story telling is very important in every aspect, people

remember things better when it's a story." She also highlighted the importance of social ties and

interactions in this process by saying

> I was a silent reader for a very long period but I saw or read some authors how they felt
> and were hurt…that forced me to start sharing my thoughts slowly in concise way to
> begin with and then connecting to people who impressed their way into my heart. I
> wanted to know them, be them and be their friend, I knew these people will make me a
> better person. They were all good people and empowered women, inspiring!

Participant 15 described the setting of the document experience as a book club: "The

experience of reading and interacting with others is more like an online book club for me." She

spoke about her experience as

> The exchange of information in a setting where nobody knows who you are is more
> straightforward and organic is my experience. The fan community ranges of different age
> groups, the views, perceptions exchanged make the community interesting. The
> perceptions and opinions I get to read sometimes open my eyes and sometimes make me
> wonder about things that are out in the world. My knowledge base has increased
> concerning people, behavior, perceptions.

She also helps out others by acting as a "beta" reader and in setting up blogs. Speaking about

carrying a set of skills from her professional life to this leisure context, she said

> I tell my friends, whoever is writing the story that you should present your blog really
> well it should have all these things, it should help out the readers, it should not be a place
> where they should feel sad. They should come out and they should feel, they should feel
> happy being on a blog, basically. So for that, there are a couple of pointers, which I use
> where should be the menu where should be the links, it should be easy. It should be user
> friendly.

She further spoke about what she takes back from these experiences to her professional world:

> I can try out things. And if something works I can make use of it at my workplace. It's a
> good thing for me that I'm learning something new and I can put it across into my
> professional world. So that's one good thing about doing it in different places………… I
> get good things from both the sides and I try to use it here and there, like, whichever
> place I'm doing, I try to gain few pointers and try to use it in my other world. So, it helps
> me.

Document Experience: Creator/Writer

Of the 14 participants who were interviewed, three of them (2, 4 and 7) were writing or

had written novel length (25 chapters or more) stories at the time of interview. A further two

participants had also written short pieces but didn't feel it qualified them to be termed as writers.

Participants 2, 4 and 7 spoke at length about their experience of documentation. The themes that

were identified from the data analysis of their interviews, along with the rest of the data analysis,

led to the construction of a model to describe the experience. Even though it is not one of the

stated purposes of this study, understanding document experience from the reader and most

importantly the creator side, the data provided an opportunity to model this creative activity,

which Participant 2 termed as "live writing," as equivalent to writing in front of an audience.

This feature or aspect of the activity is underscored by the importance of the social context in the

document experience both from a reader and writer perspective. Figure 11 is a pictorial

representation which tries to capture the stages involved in this activity (i.e.,, in the experience of

it). It represents the flow of activity over three stages. The stages have been named "interactive

reading," "first step" and "live writing" and the themes that arose in the interviews have been

arranged under each one.

Figure 11

Mapping Live Writing

Interactive Reading

The term "interactive reading" came from Participant 7 who described her small world reading experience in comparison to regular leisure reading this way: "The biggest difference in leisure reading was that this reading is what I would call interactive reading. Interaction with the author and the readers made it more interesting than non-participative reading." This term is used to describe the first stage of the process starting from becoming a part of the small world to establishment of social ties. For Participants 2, 4 and 7 this was their first experience being part of a fandom. The section on fandom experience overs how they discovered the show and in turn fandom activities like fan fiction reading.

The second aspect captures the document experience associated with reading which includes the posting of comments and interacting with others. The act of commenting is seen as a way of thinking through, interpreting, and putting down words. It is also seen as a way of showing appreciation. Participant 2 had this to say about her experience of reading a story titled "Careless Whispers";

> When she wrapped up Careless Whispers the second time she had put a note saying please give feedback and it made me want to take it really seriously, right. So I went and re-read it and I wrote chapter by chapter notes of everything. In my head at that time, I was thinking aah, probably she's looking at publishing it so anything that I can say will only be of help to her…..I still have that Notepad somewhere.

This need to show appreciation is something that has been mentioned by others while talking about their document experience. Participant 7 also spoke about how an interaction with the writer of the story "Careless Whispers" led to her commenting on a regular basis.

> When she rewrote careless whispers that was the time when I actually read the whole thing in a go because the whole thing was open…. I commented, and she had given me a very sweet reply, she sort of engaged me, which is very unlike her, but she did that and I was sort of thinking ki agar yeh bandi phir se likhti hai tho (if this girl were to write again) I'll probably wind up commenting and then the river happened and you know the rest because that's when I started commenting. I started commenting from the seventh or

eighth chapter I think, when I actually got sucked into the story, basically, and that's when I started writing and eventually, obviously you know the history, what happened after that is like madness (laughing).

It should be noted that for both Participant 2 and 7, this was their first foray into writing of any kind, whereas Participant 4 had some experience of writing, having written what she termed articles on popular culture for a website.

The third aspect, document experience associated with reading, leads to the establishment of social ties. As seen in the section "Small World," social ties is one of the biggest takeaways for all participants. For Participants 2, 4 and 7 social ties also resulted in motivation and peer support as far as their writing was concerned. For example, Participant 7 had this to say about what she gained out of her experience of being a part of the small world.

> Friendships man friendships, biggest takeaway. I think more than anything else. And then obviously figuring out in the process that I can sort of manage to throw, spew out a few lines write a story, yeah, whatever the thing that I'm churning out right now. But yeah, it's the biggest draw, I think, has been friendship, because that probably has kept me here as well.

First Step

In the second stage, steps are taken toward the start of the activity or the documentation process. Motivation for the same comes from self-interest or from encouragement or goading from social ties. For Participant 4, the motivation came from her own self-interest and she had this to say about starting to write fan fiction:

> I kind of have this habit of, kind of thinking of stories, even in shows like, I would wish for, particular scene had been shot differently or the story, I'm sure all of us do it. You know, I wish the story had taken a different path. But that's how it started. And then from there, kind of wanting to tell my own story started, you know, initially the first piece of writing was just, a kind of, it was supposed to be a one shot, but it ended up being like a shot with an epilogue kind of thing. It's just an interest Priya, it is just you know something, some story which I think would be dramatic and nice, and I guess because I read a lot, because you kind of want to have your own, want to give your own spin on things, so that's how I see it.

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For Participants 2 and 7, the motivation came by way of encouragement and goading from the social ties they had developed in the small world. Participant 2, on the other, hand talked about the encouragement she received from social ties based on the comments she used to post for the story known popularly as "River."

> I took it really seriously when I was writing a comment, I really took it seriously and then when people responded to it, saying like, especially Appu, like she'll say oh you've written really well, this is so good. I'm like, really?...... and then people are saying you can write, you can write.

Participant 7 had a humorous take on the encouragement and goading she got from her social ties.

> It was like constant thape on my toosh all the time like kuch likh kuch likh (constantly behind my back saying write something, write something) holy thu rukh jao (hey hang on) S kuch tho likho, kuch tho likho (S write something) I mean all of them danda lekhe khade (Everyone seem to be standing with a stick in hand) Baad mein tho (after a while), it came to a point like ke aaj danda milega (you'll get told off first) and then we'll chat I mean.

Talking further on her experience of starting this creative activity, she spoke about writing her first piece:

> It's the first thing I've ever written, and I myself have shocked myself, you know, it's like ha did I, did I write this, I probably reread it a 1000 times just to believe I've written it, and then for the editing part of it as well.

The social ties also provide peer support, and this was especially noted by Participant 2 and 7. They talked about the role of peer support and how important it was especially at the start of the process of writing or documentation. Participant 2 spoke about the support she received from one of the social ties who acted as a "beta"; "if there's a person who is very important to where the story came to, where it is right now, it's L. In the initial days she used to read and provide comments." Participant 7 spoke about the support she received from another writer and how they went about the process:

M, her blog has been a teacher, basically. Its, it's more of, I've seen so many comments, a mixture of comments of them coming. And I've seen that she has carried on writing, irrespective of what was written? So I just had to keep, keep that in mind so had I been getting negative as well, I would still stick to what I'm writing because she had told me it's easy to get swayed, because you can go off path, you can go off track.

She reminisced about her first attempt at writing by noting the support she got from her "beta":

"I still remember, my first draft that I sent to M and she was extremely happy with it. When I now look at it, it's probably one of the worst things that I've written in my life."

Live Writing

In the third and final stage, the process of documentation is set in place, along with an audience as part of the journey. Validation plays a big role at this point in motivating the person writing and comes in the form of comments and appreciation from social ties and other readers. Participant 4 talked about the impact a message from a reader had on her:

> Something I've written has touched someone's heart, you know, when for "holding it together" especially, there was a person who actually told me her father had committed suicide and she always blamed him for it. But then she could actually see the kind of suffering he was going through and she thanked me and she said, you know, you actually made me open my mind a little bit. I always felt so bad and I was so angry with him. So you know that it kind of just completely shook me, you know, is to say it was it's a really great feeling when people say things like that, you know, and if I can open through my writing, if I can make people think a little bit beyond their normal enjoyment I think it's kind of, that gives me the kick. It's the payback for me.

> Participant 7 spoke about the role of reader comments and how she has been lucky so far in getting mostly good comments.

> All have fortunately have been good comments I have not got a single negative one touch wood. For ODAAT or blue dust, tabhi kitne aake jaadu se maara (people have been cribbing these days) So in a way, I'm happy. Second, good, all of them have affected because, you know, it just adds to your (pause) this bhooth (bhooth means spirit or a ghost) that is in my head, it kind of polishes it a little bit ki haa yaar you can be a bigger bhooth tomorrow (basically saying it motivates her and keeps her spirit going, validates what she is doing).

Participant 2 spoke about how a drop in readers affected her, highlighting the role that the audience and their validation plays in the process of writing/documentation:

> When you're a new person whose writing and when suddenly the readership goes down, you don't know whether you're, you know, that is your calibration, it is like your North Star to say whether you're doing something right or wrong, because that's the positive and negative of writing week by week fanfiction. And you get real time feedback, it nourishes you, it makes you stronger and it would not have been what it is right now, if not for that feedback. I will never dispute it, right, it has become so rich, only because of that feedback. But on the flip side, it also brings so much self-doubt when someone is not commenting, when people are, you're losing people you know it is you can't attribute everything to yourself. But it never gets out of your head too you think like, am I doing something wrong, am I doing something wrong. The wrong, this could not be what you're doing because it is your story. If the story doesn't resonate, people are not gonna read. Which is a different thing, you know that logically in your head, but it is still hard when you're a new person trying to write.

From Participant 2's views above it can also be seen as one of the challenges or obstacles associated with the process, maintaining reader interest. She also spoke about how peer support from social ties helped her through these challenges. Apart from this, finding time to write was something all the three participants spoke about. Participant 7 had this to say about her writing process, "so it's like, sometimes it just flows and sometimes nothing comes to you for days." Participant 4 spoke about how she found it challenging to sometimes convert what is in her mind to paper in an effective way.

> To kind of show the progress, of the gradual changes that happened between, within the characters themselves, as well as you know, because when you're writing, it's not you, whatever you think doesn't always translate onto paper. So that's one thing I have had a little bit of difficulty with actually.

The validation and motivation that it provides, plays a part in making the activity personally meaningful. According to Gorichanaz (2019a), personally meaningful information activities are those carried out by a person "freely and for their own purposes, and which reinforce the person's senses of efficacy, value, and self-worth" (p. 1304). Participant 4 talking about the role of reader comments,

It inspires you to write, you know, in lot of ways. And when you know your readers are expecting the story to move forward and they like what you write. And you know, I love it when somebody tells me oh this is so so true to life, you know, kind of this I can so relate to this character and it's what happens in our lives you know it feels it feels so (pause) so very nice to you know it will in a lot of ways, it's, it's so it gives you the satisfaction, you feel vindicated, I feel vindicated.

She viewed her document experience as a writer as a learning experience, the process helped her to realize something about herself.

As a writer my biggest takeaway is just the fact that I do have the ability to put something, build something, nurture something for so long and actually finish it, you know to see it developed. So it's something that I've learned about myself. Not that I give up anything halfway, or I have this whether it's a movie or a show or a book I have to know the ending kind of things. So that kind of motivates me, myself, but the very fact that I could do something that I never thought I would be able to do.

Participant 2 spoke about the joy she found in the activity, of discovering a side to herself, "it has helped me realize a possibility and a talent that is worth my time and attention." She went on to state "It is more fulfilling when you see a germ of a thought developing into a plot, characters, scenes and dialogues. This sense of creative achievement I get from writing makes it more than just a leisure past time experience." Elaborating on the sense of joy she felt in the realization she could write, she went on to say:

I found I could write, nothing else can beat it honestly, nothing else can beat it. Aah, I think that's the biggest one, the sense of joy, you get when you when you, when you find something this phenomenal and and the kind of power I felt, even though the story is incomplete (laughing), the kind of power you felt like one small germ of an idea slowly blossoms and and you feel you're so powerful because you can pull the strings as to what this person is doing, what that person is doing, and who's coming, who's good it's like a whole creation entirely in your hand (laughing), you know it's like super power, honestly, you can do whatever you want with a set of people and that's power like nothing else.

Participant 7 had this to say about her document experience as a writer and discovering a side to herself.

When I was writing the first piece, besides trepidation, there was a feeling of having finally given wings to all those thoughts and feelings regarding different things and

situations around me that had unknowingly accumulated inside me over the years. What I perceive this world as, what I observe, what I think about and what I infer — I realized I am constantly making notes in my head unknowingly. Writing just tapped into that reservoir and surprised me. It has introduced a new "me" to myself and the process has been very engaging and satisfying.

Looking at Documentation

The section above covered themes that capture the journey of documentation from a creator side, starting from becoming a part of the community which provides the social setting for the activity, and ending with the activity becoming personally meaningful. The social context is seen to play an important role through the social ties who encouraged and motivated, provided support to the writers as well as a ready audience for their work, acting as a barometer and providing input through comments, that went into the creative process. Of the three participants who are writers, this was the first experience of writing for two (2 and 7), coming out of their document experience as a reader and a part of the small world. Participant 7 had prior experience of writing. Gorichanaz's (2018) first person model of documentation was mainly used to examine the document experience from a writer's side, apart from the document phenomenology framework. The first person model of documentation considers the document phenomenology framework with its four kinds of information as a part of the model. It also has three aspects to the document experience: foundation, process and challenges. This is based on earlier work where in an "underlying foundation supports the process of document work, and that this process is marked by certain challenges" (Gorichanaz, 2016, p. 5).

Foundation

Here foundation is understood as those things that is drawn on in the creative work, what feeds into it, especially at the beginning of the process. From the previous section we saw that motivation and goading from social ties in the small world plays a role apart from self-interest.

One can say document experiences as a reader also plays a foundational part. Apart from this, the following are the themes that came up in the interviews.

Life Experiences

The three participants said they had drawn on their life experiences a lot in their writing. Participant 2 talking about how she started on her maiden story said, "it was a, it was a germ of an idea, something that is there is like a bit of a truth from where you, a line that you pick up from your life." Elaborating further on what laid the foundation for her story, she said she drew on

> The roads that I walked in….at least for the first time writer right, I can't like completely go out of what I don't know, I can't go and touch something that I have no visibility into, it started as something which was very personal to me and that touch to reality will always be there. Having said that, it is not a true story. It can't be right? Like, so it is like you take, take a small thread and then you weave around it, you weave around it a lot. So of course, there is a lot from my own personal experience you draw into (pause), but you see it in a different lens with age and experience that you've had, that you didn't have before.

Participant 4 talked about writing a story titled "holding it together" which touched on the issue of suicide. She spoke about the genesis of the idea behind it: "when I wrote "holding it together," "that story was really close because aah it is, it was about an incident and about or rather it germinated because of an incident that personally affected me quite a bit." Participant 7 spoke about drawing on her experiences of growing up in India for writing her first novel length story "one day at a time," which she termed as "pumping a lot of life into something very piggly wiggly, and that piggly wiggly just decided okay I'll write." She went on to say:

> I was writing a very familiar environment because I have grown up in that, I was Khushi you know in a five, six story building in the suburbs of Pune basically, and so it, the character I could relate to a bit, but it was not me. Of course not. I am not as sassy, I'm not blah, blah, blah, whatever that she is but, I had drawn, I think it's more of the observations that I've had in my life about people, what I've watched, what I've read that comes into it.

Memories

Closely tied to life experiences are memories which also acts as fodder for the creative process. Participant 2 talked about drawing on her memories of the place she had spent her childhood in.

> In those chapters with Khushi when she's talking about the Temple and the initial scenes in which NK they are going to the village, that's my native place. I love that place Srirangam, so I could really, I really loved writing those chapters, honestly, because they were the places that I used to go when I was like 11 year 12 year girl…the Kaveri[42] that I used to go to.

> Participant 7 spoke about drawing on the memories of been a teenager in writing her story "blue dust"; "whatever memories I have of what I was, when I was 16-15 or whatever and sort of try to imagine the scenario as in like if I was a, a 16 year old A was planted in that situation."

Document Experiences as Reader/Consumer

Document experiences like reading other fan fiction, books, movies, etc., play a role in the creative process. For both Participant 2 and 7, their experience reading a story titled "A River Runs Through It" and their interactions with other readers played a role in their starting this creative journey. Participant 2 referred to the comments she wrote for a story as her first foray into writing. She spoke about the effort she put in giving feedback requested by the writer of a story titled "careless whispers" post the end of the story:

> I have chapter by chapter summary, positives, negatives, and then a big timeline of everything in careless whispers (pause) and like character sketches, positives, negatives and I think she had a set of like three or four questions she had asked, so I was reading through all the chapters re-reading them actually to be able to answer those chapters, to the best that I could. And it, I've never ever done that in my life. And (pause) it felt very important to me, honestly, I didn't know this person. I had never commented anywhere else before…. so I answered these questions. So that was like the first foray into writing.

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[42] Kaveri is a river in South India.

She also spoke about how a Tamil movie she had watched spurred an idea she had:

> a *keeda* (germ/worm) came in my head saying that, why should Arnav and Khushi always be together (laughing), okay I don't want her to cry in the end, but they won't be together, but they'll love, but they won't be together and it still can happen. That doesn't mean that they don't love right? Like you know I'm like, this is what was there in my head, and then like I'm like you know Anu you're crazy. You want to write an Arnav-Khushi story and you're gonna tell they're not going to be together but they'll still love (laughing). I'm like, it seemed like a great idea at that time right (laughing). I'm gonna try it and that's how it started, so those two small things, that people keep saying that you're good at writing, you're good at expressing and I didn't, I didn't know what to make of it. But then suddenly this idea came in and like, you know what, I'm going to take it as a challenge… But that's how it all started. Like a few ammunitions from other people and a weird thought that came as a challenge and then yeah, it fed into each other, the momentum fed into each other, but it was a lovely process like when I started writing, nothing like it.

Here the motivation and goading she received from her social ties and something she thought of, arising out of a document experience, led to her taking up writing as a personal challenge, resulting in her first attempt at writing a story. Participant 7 spoke about how her document experiences with other stories/blogs had her adopting similar practices, especially those ones which she personally enjoyed as a reader, like adding a song at the end of each chapter.

> I think it's something that people enjoyed on river as well. And I loved it myself, at times I've seen myself looking forward to what song she posts. So, that stayed and I just thought, I'll just put it on mine as well, because people enjoy and there are lot of people who post songs as well.

She went on to talk about the influence of the books she has read on what she writes:

> I think it's just a lot to do with (slight pause) I think reading books. Also, I was a very avid reader. I used to read a lot and I think I've read, read a lot of crap, as well as a lot of good stuff. So both help and all that shabby humor that comes across, is I think a lot of crappy books that I have read (laughing). It's probably a teenager in me. Bakwaas bhi padi hai mein ne P (I have read lot of rubbish P).

Process

The actual work involved with writing and the creation of the document. This includes the sources that are used for required information and the personality traits of the person.

Personality Traits

Personality traits has a major impact on how the process is carried out. In the interviews the three writers came across as different from each other in their approaches. Participant 2 mentioned that she discovered that she was a very methodical person in the process, whereas Participant 7 described herself as been more on the wild side. Participant 4 talked about how one of the main reasons behind writing for her was to make people think. She spoke about how that has been part of who she is and went on to say:

> I've always been like that. When I was in India, and I wanted to do, actually, social work. And then do my bit for the society, but obviously it's not easy, doing what you want to do in India (laughing). I did computers and I became a software developer. So that was like put on hold. Kind of it's always been my interest to help people. I'm very, very interested in reading people and trying to talk to them, trying to see if I can make a difference. So some way, I hope some time.

Describing herself as been very organized and methodical, Participant 2 talked about how she learned the mechanics of writing in the process. She said "there were outlines and I write like copious notes." This trait of hers came through when she spoke about writing comments for stories where she felt she needed to give feedback to the author. She had talked about having a notepad where she had taken notes for the purpose of writing her feedback comment. Appearing very keen to talk about how she went about the process, she went into the nitty gritty of her process.

> In this chapter, my high level objective is this. This is what I'm trying to achieve in this chapter, so if I'm trying to achieve this in a chapter, how can I show it. Whose perspective should it be in and (pause) what kind of scenes do I wanna share.

Participant 7 opined that compared to some of her social ties who were writers, she was not very organized or methodical.

> A couple of people who are writing are in close association with me, who told me I know they're very methodical about it. M was very methodical about it. They had a plan. They had post its, they had, you know, all those kinda all shebang. They're very, very

organized and they know okay iss key aage kya ho jaayega (what will happen after this) you know that kind of a thing. I am more on the wild side I have no plan. I have no I have no idea how I finished that goddamn story. I just, it's like a shock even when I look back right now because there was no plan. There was no this thing I just the characters just grew on me and then they they are like bhoots (ghosts/spirits) yaar, I can't find the bloody word for it. It's like they are with you all the time. They interact with you. This is positively telling you that I'm cuckoo in the head, isn't it?

Looking for Information

The process also involves looking up information apart from drawing on one's own existing knowledge, experiences as well as memories. For all three participants, Google was their go to place for information. Their attitude towards what and why they looked up information was also different. Participant 2 and 4 said that they wanted to get things right, with respect to what they were showing in their stories. Participant 2 talked about speaking to a social tie who is a doctor about a medical condition and reading up about the same;

> I actually asked Meenu once because when I wrote, I wanted the mother to fall sick and come to this house…. that's when I think like when I wrote about the accident of her kneecap and she had to get a surgery and physiotherapy so that piece I wanted to make sure that it was logical, I didn't want to write some stupid story. So I read a little bit about what that surgery, what is the convalescence time and all that. I didn't know, nobody I knew had fallen down and broken the kneecap and got a surgery done, so for that I had read up a little so wherever it warranted reading I had done it. I took it seriously though. Yeah, I took it seriously.

Participant 4 spoke about researching about a place she wrote about in her story, a place that she had never visited.

> Dehradun. So I kind of researched. I've never been to Dehradun, so what I did was I researched online. I kind of looked at maps, I looked at houses, I looked at the plants that would grow there because she's interested in gardening and she kind of you know, I looked at the seasons, how it feels going from Dehradun to Shimla and, from Shimla to Dehradun actually. I took a look at the amount of time it would take for her to go, to reach and the kind of flights they have and things like that.

Participant 7, on the other hand, said there was no research that much of the things that she wrote about came from her own experiences.

There is no research. I didn't have to write. I only, I think the only research I've done in ODAAT was aah (slight pause) Khushi's profession. Because I had no clue what pharma company does and how it goes. That's the only point I looked up and Arnav's profession I'm sort of familiar with. So I could, I didn't have to write much about it anyway. So whatever I could is the knowledge that I have. I didn't have to look it up. So yeah, that's about it. Because it's such a run of the mill simple story, technically, a very simple story. So there was not much research involved in it.

Challenges

Some of the obstacles associated with the document experience was examined in earlier sections. Maintaining reader interest and finding time were a few of things that the participants talked about as challenging. Apart from that, certain aspects related to the writing, like character portrayal, affective aspects associated with the process, like drawing on one's emotions are seen as challenging. Participant 4 spoke about how she found it emotionally difficult to write a scene about a character finding out about the death of their spouse

> Couple of chapters in "holding it together" they were really, really difficult to write. One was when Arnav loses his wife to an accident and that scene when he's at the hospital, waiting for the doctor to, hoping and waiting for the doctor to come out and, you know, tell him that everything was okay but then the doctor comes out and says she is no more, he loses it, that scene was really difficult. Kind of hard to write which I think was (pause) I don't know which I think, I don't know from where I thought that's how he should feel, but that's how I, I had to put myself in that position and imagine if I was in that position, how I would feel to actually write that chapter. So that was really hard.

Participant 7 spoke about a chapter which she found difficult to write, in terms of getting across the right image of a character to her readers.

> The tough one was the face off, of Kabir and Arnav on the terrace. Umm (slight pause) The challenge was to not (slight pause) paint Kabir as an asshole… the idea was to not show him really in a very, very bad light yet give a slight negative tinge to his, that manipulative kind of a streak? And get Arnav to a point where he comes to like shit, *yeh hogaya ya nahi ho gaya* (did this happen or not) kind of a thing, you know, it's like though he's very much sure that has not happened that seed had to be planted. It at least made, probably made Arnav think *ke khushi ne jhooth tho nahi bola hoga?* (did khushi lie), you know, or is there something that has gone wrong or is there something that's been hidden from me, you know, So I wanted to sort of, sort of umm (pause) what's the word, unsettle him? It had to come to a point where I wanted to unsettle Arnav as well as not paint Kabir in a very bad state. So all those Wringer chapters I think where a

challenge for me, but I have probably enjoyed writing them the most, because there is a lot of drama, right. And I like a lot of drama so…

For Participant 2, as a first time writer, challenges lay in learning the techniques, of understanding what should be done so that the reader understands what is been portrayed, among other things. Her interest in learning the craft of writing came through in her interview. She spoke about how after starting to write, she seemed to be looking at the work of other fan fiction writers with a fresh eye, looking beyond the narrative:

> When I'm reading other people I was becoming more aware of how they were writing, how they were expressing the same idea. And it was a learning like while I'm writing. And then when I'm reading something, it's so much more easier to appreciate the mechanics of it, rather than just read the story.

Memory Making

Reminiscing and Sharing

The participants were asked about sharing common memories with those similar to themselves. Participant 2 talked about how the "nostalgia associated with what you have left behind" has an impact on how you relate to your social ties and what you share with them. She went on to speak about nostalgia and music, and the joy associated with sharing it as part of interactions and document experience.

> It, nostalgia is very powerful right Priya? it's one thing to, anything that that in any way goes and touches, some of the things that brought you joy at one point in time is always joyful. Anything that helps you remember and relive even be it for a very short period of time is always happy, right. So like when you, when most of the time I think it's the demography, pretty much is about the same age. So when the songs come, they are mostly the things that you've listened to when you were young. And those days are really carefree days right? and they bring back like the real sweet memories associated with it and it just makes you so feel so much more happy. So definitely, yes. And of course, when the songs come, they are mostly in the language that you grew up, and it is not too foreign for you too. So I think it just is a matter of, that common happiness and the relatability, yeah, I think that that that's mostly it.

Participant 4 spoke about her experience of reading the story titled "Odyssey" and how it triggered memories of her hometown.

> Another scene from another fan fiction that brought my school days to mind, was a scene from ****'s "Odyssey." Though I gave up the story mid-way, it made such an impact on me especially the initial chapters mainly because the story was set in Chennai, from my part of Chennai to be precise. I have spent so many countless evenings meeting friends at the beach after school. My house was close enough to the beach that I could see the ocean from the balcony. The smell of the sea in the air as she describes it brought it all so vividly to mind. Yup, this was another story that had me feeling so nostalgic.

Participant 10 in her interview had this to say about the YouTube videos of songs which are posted either as part of the story or by readers as part of their comments; "listening to songs in the era of no-internet was a family affair in my growing up years. I cherish those times. And seeing references to those songs in today's fictions makes me emotional... very happy!" Sharing happens as a part of social interactions and Participant 10 had this to say in her interview about reminiscing with others as part of the small world: "I thoroughly enjoy going down-memory-lane with my fellow readers. In this busy life that we lead today, we hardly get to do that. And this virtual world provides you a platform to do just that." Along similar lines, Participant 3 had this to say about sharing memories:

> Reminiscing old memories and able to relive them is a lot more fulfilling when you have someone to share it with. Staying abroad for all these years, it's difficult to find such familiarity with people you interact with on a daily basis. So, finding someone with whom you can share memories from the past was a great experience, and I thank the show & fandom for this.

Participant 15 had this to say about sharing anecdotes and memories as part of interactions with social ties:

> It's a good feeling to share anecdotes and incidents from our lives with the people who understand the culture and background of the events. Its instant connection and the anecdotes ring a bell of nostalgia every time we chatter about things. Nostalgia and close to home stories pull me into the conversation and engage me for long. Reminiscing the old and talking about new ways is always interesting.

Participant 9 spoke about how it became apparent to her on becoming a part of the small world that, "quite a few of the readers and writers share a similar nostalgia about India" and how this meant that "there is a feeling of comfort in knowing the other person can understand where you're coming from, it gives you the freedom to express your thoughts more openly." In a similar vein, Participant 3 had spoken about how she found it "easier to converse/connect with someone who has shared the same background or is familiar with things I am referring to." In Participant 6's opinion those who are living outside India are "more Indian than those living in India is what I would say, right. I mean, there is a more natural affinity towards your own how would I say culture, something to that extent." She felt the implicit commonality that comes from this along with a common interest means, "you react to certain things in, you know, in some form or the other, your reaction to a particular thing is pretty much similar. It may not be exactly the same, but then you will find some common points there." This results in a sense of comfort which leads to one recollecting and sharing common memories. Although this points to the presence and importance of a sense of commonality, both Participant 9 and Participant 1 reiterated how important being comfortable in a particular site of activity was for them, in order to be able to share things like memories. When asked about the experience of sharing memories and how she felt about it, Participant 1 said, "I only share memories in the threads where the author is OK with them. If I notice the author is not OK with them, even if I have something to share, I stop myself from adding it to the comment." In answer to the same question, Participant 9 had this to say, "the personal anecdote would depend upon how comfortable I feel in the space created by the author." Participant 11 also mentioned she was comfortable sharing common experiences, but would draw the line at sharing what she considered very personal information like how she met her husband.

Role of Cultural Knowledge

Here cultural knowledge is understood as the ability to recall and use knowledge of cultural specific things like popular culture in one's document experience, that is in interpreting and making meaning of what is been read, along with the social interactions that go along with the experience. Participant 7 and 10 both spoke about their love of music, the training that they have had in it, using their knowledge of music in their document experiences and the pleasure they got from it. Participant 7 talked about adding music to her comments and also as part of chapters for the story she wrote.

> if it rhymes with the scene or whatever has happened in that episode or scene or chapter or whatever, then I I love doing that because kind of runs on a parallel thread I am completely into music I've trained in Hindustani classical trained in classical dance….My life is all about it, actually, I'm very much into it so it's just something that is a part of me, which comes out at times I quote songs or add songs. Oh, yeah. Yeah, so that that that came very naturally there was nothing there was no such a thought given to that.

Similarly, Participant 10 spoke about how she enjoyed adding music to her comments drawing on her knowledge of music:

> I try to include music as much as I can. More because I have a musical background (training) and I love music. I tend to relate to situations with songs (Bollywood or otherwise). It just makes me feel more engaged with the story.

She had also mentioned how encountering music of her younger days as part of her document experience, always made her nostalgic and happy. At the same time, Participant 8 had mentioned how her lack of interest in Indian popular culture meant that she didn't have much to share as far as cultural memories are concerned. At the same time, it has made her take more interest in it, as the inability to participate fully is something that she faced socially, too.

Findings from Comment Data

This section presents the findings from the analysis of the comment data collected from five blogs. The collection and analysis was largely driven by the literature review, especially the

model of the small world that was drawn up. The major themes and the number of references are given in Table 9.

Table 9

Major Themes and Number of Coding References

	Theme	No. of Refs
Information sharing		32
Mediated practice.		55
Social ties and sense of community		117
Sharing	Experiences from reading	217
	Memories	105
	Personal anecdotes	170

Information Sharing

The sharing of information is when a question is asked and answer for it is provided. Figure 12 is an example of a person is talking about issues she had with getting notifications for which another person is offering a solution which worked for her. This is from the blog hosting the story "Second Chances."

Mediated Practice

These are comments containing videos, images, poetry, song lyrics, etc. Figure 13(a) has images posted by a reader asking the author if the rooms she had described in a chapter, what she had in mind while writing, matches the images she had posted. Figure 13(b) is a song which the reader says she was reminded of while reading.
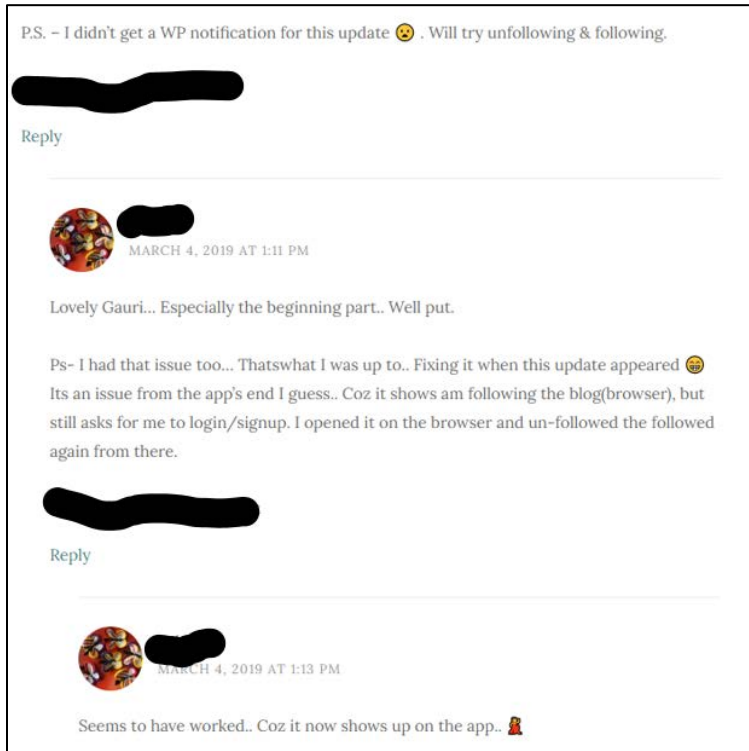
Figure 12

Example of Information Sharing

Figure 13

Examples of Mediated Practices

(a)	(b)

Social Ties and Sense of Community

These two themes are intertwined. Comments point to the presence of both social ties and

sense of community. Figure 14 is an example where a regular reader is apologizing for been

tardy in posting comments, and sharing something about her life. The author in turn is thanking

her for her continued support. This could also be seen as an instance where the social ties is

providing motivation and support to the writer.

Figure 14

Example of Presence of Social Tie and Its Role in Providing Motivation to Writer

Sharing

This themes is comprised of the sharing of experiences arising from reading including the reading of comments, the sharing of memories, and the sharing of personal anecdotes. This could be relating to everyday life like references to work, kids, experiences similar to what is mentioned in a story, etc. It also includes reminiscing about things from the past or drawing connections to other work. Information is also shared as a part of the reading experience (there is no explicit question asked). This also points to a sense of comfort, commonality, and as an extension to the presence of a sense of community.

Figure 15 is an example of two women having a conversation about finding time to read and hang out with others. They are talking about school timings and work.

Figure 15

Sharing of Everyday Life

Gosh — you girls here are a riot –led by the most riotous of the lot Sohni!!!
Miss being able to chat here.. If weekdays are crazy, the weekends are worse!!! pata nahin kab time milega .. rather when i will be able to steal a few minutes for some rivering!!!

Reply

AUGUST 15, 2016 AT 10:09 AM

Time milta nahin hain ...nikaalna padta hain ! lol Quote from Munna – Movie Tezaab! ;)

Kitna kaam karti ho jaaneman! I understand your situation, but we do miss you :) Aaj Monday hain, so sab time adjustments kar ke idhar pahonch jaao bass. :D

Reply

AUGUST 15, 2016 AT 12:27 PM

Sohni jaan — dekh time nikala subah ke 5.30 ko!!! Aaj se schools reopen!! Added work 😩!!

Haan aaj monday hain!! Frequent teips to the breakroom to read and re read the update 😊

I hope things ease up in a couple of weeks — changing the group that i work with at work!!

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Figure 16 is an example of a reader drawing connections to the weather, making references to the canon as well as to another story by the author. This is from the blog hosting the story "Entangled."

Figure 16

Reader Drawing Connections
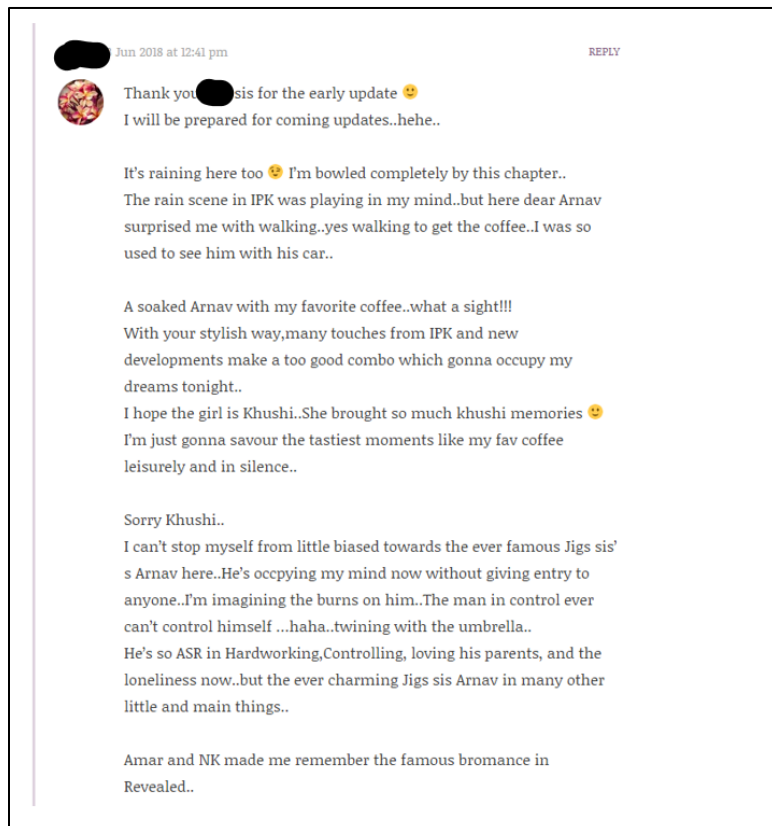
Figure 17 is an example of one reader posting a song to go with a chapter and in response others are expressing their opinion on it. Figure 18 is an example of sharing personal anecdotes and thoughts, where a reader is expressing her opinion on what could be considered a common experience for many women from the sub-continent. It also points to an implicit sense of familiarity and the understanding that comes from it. Lastly, Figure 19 is an example of information shared as a part of reading experience. A woman has shared information that she had looked up as a result of what she read.

Figure 17

Sharing of Experience Surrounding Mediated Practice of Posting Video

Figure 18

Sharing Personal Anecdote and Thoughts on an Issue

This is a beautifully written chapter. A young woman married off to a stranger and shipped to another state/continent may be a familiar s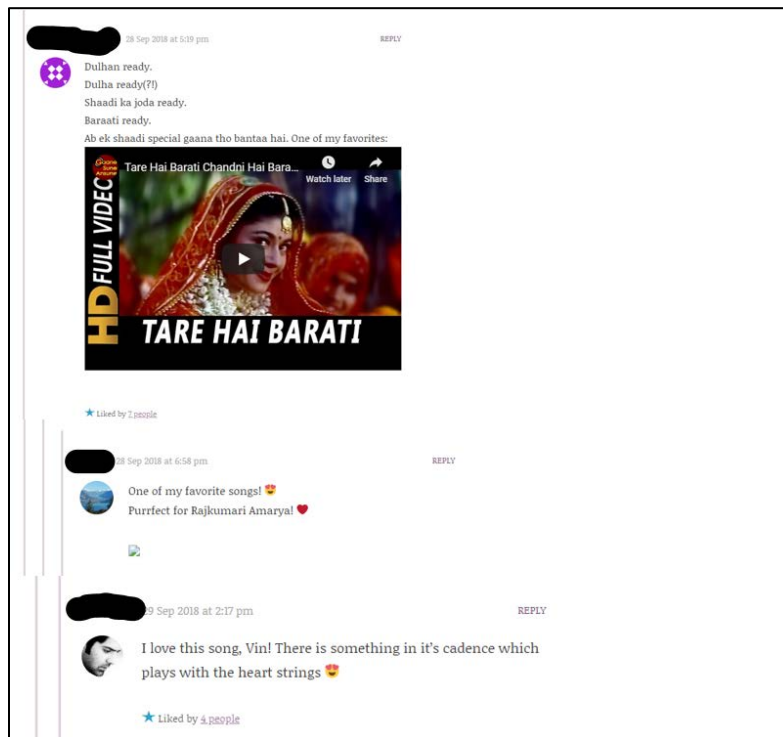tory of many a women of the subcontinent. Unequal power where one person has everything and can abuse and exploit. Explore the city,take the cash, soon have a supplementary credit card,be independent, get a degree, be financially independent- is what NK said. Should he be praised? No this should be given. (How else is an individual suppose to live in a unknown country!) The reality is so poor for some indian households that we think that he is amazing. (I have heard comments when my husband helped in the kitchen that he is a gem. so what if my work hours were super long compared to his....a man does not chop veggies!)

It is hard to be in another shoes. I was rightfully chided by my friend's wife that I have no idea what it is like to have no friend, no family support in a unknown country. To me marrying someone so young not financially independent is wrong but good family, boy earns well (some also do matching of stars) is all that takes for arranged marriages to take place.

Figure 19

Information Sharing as Part of Document Experience

I looked up on the web to know more about "Flying Fox" and below are the pictures I found about them.
It looks very thrilling.

Further data examples are presented in next chapter through the inclusion of screen clippings to support the arguments been made.

Summary

This chapter presented the results of analysis of both interview and comment data under various themes. The themes are based on the theoretical framework used as well as inductively derived from the analysis of the data.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION[43]

In this chapter the results of the study are examined in the context of the research

questions. The chapter has been divided into three sections based on the three research questions.

In the first section, the small world context of the study is examined and the final version of the

model is presented. In the second section, the research question concerning the information and

document experience of the participants are addressed, and the in the final section, memory

making as an aspect of document experience is discussed.

Research Question 1: Virtual Zenana

RQ1: How do the fanfiction blogs (or the spaces afforded by them) form and function as
a small world?

To answer this question, a preliminary model of a reconceptualized small world was

drawn up based on literature review and my understanding of the fanfiction community under

study. The small world is defined as having a primary activity with sites where the activity is

carried out, supported by mediated practices by way of technological affordances, and

characterized by the presence of social ties, a sense of community, and a world view. The

concepts associated with the model were used in the thematic analysis of both the comments

collected and interview data, while remaining open to other themes.

Primary Activity and Site(s) of Activity

The primary activity is self-evident as the study looked at a fan fiction community. The

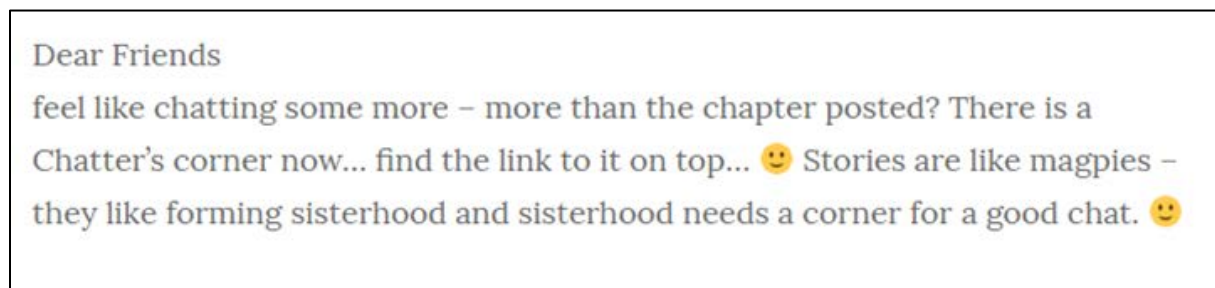primary activity of the small world is the writing and reading of fan fiction. The sites where the

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[43] Portions of this chapter appear in Kizhakkethil (2020a), Kizhakkethil (2020b), Kizhakkethil (2020c), Kizhakkethil (2020d).

activity takes place are various platforms where the stories are hosted. Platforms like fanfiction.net, Tumblr, blogspot, WordPress, Wattpad, among others, are seen to host fan fiction relating to this particular fan community. For the purpose of the study, based on popularity, blogs on WordPress.com where chosen and as such can be viewed as sites where the primary activity takes place. A blog can host multiple stories or just one based on how it is set up by the owners. Some writers host their stories on multiple platforms. Plagiarism concerns are also seen as a reason for preferring certain platforms over others. Separate tabs are often set up by writers for general chatting, and interactions seem to be encouraged by this practice. The writer of a story titled "Second Chances" posted this note on her blog (see Figure 20).

Figure 20

Note Posted on Blog Pointing to Separate Tab for Chatting

Dear Friends
feel like chatting some more – more than the chapter posted? There is a Chatter's corner now... find the link to it on top... 🙂 Stories are like magpies – they like forming sisterhood and sisterhood needs a corner for a good chat. 🙂

This is also in line with the concept of an information ground and Oldenburg's third place, where there is a primary instrumental purpose, in this case it would be the reading of fan fiction. At the same time, social interaction also becomes a primary activity. The blog hosting a story titled "A River Runs Through It" and shows a separate tab set up as an "Adda," similar to a chatter's corner, titled "Nadiya Kinare" (means Riverside). Similarly, the blog hosting the story "Entangled" has a Chatter's Booth and another blog hosting multiple stories has a tab titled Prescription Pad, which is a place the writer describes as one where everything including dental

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woes can be shared. Figure 21 shows screen clippings of these three above mentioned examples

of chatting spots set up as separate tabs.

Figure 21

Screen Clippings of Tabs Set Up as Chatting Spots

PRESCRIPTION PAD

Hi friends,

So I realized I am in a habit of writing notes between updates, and this seemed like a good place to have for that. This place could also be somewhere we could collectively share our dental woes, random songs and jokes, pen twirling attempts, and pretty much anything under the Sun. I've never had a single notebook that didn't have random doodling on the margins, some of my own and some by my friends, so it'd be shame to have a squeaky clean blog.

This prescription pad is therefore open to the doctor, the patients, and to the world at large to scribble upon 😄

Acceptable at all pharmacies.

(You can access this pad any time from the tab menu on the blog).

Chakrabarty (1999) describes an "Adda" as a "place of gathering" (p. 112)[44], it can be seen as similar in idea to a third place as enunciated by Oldenburg. The theme of "feeling of a place" seen in the interview data also lends support to this idea of a third place through the terms used by participants as well as in the way the blogs were referred to as a place. For example Participant 7, used the term Katta similar in meaning to an Adda. The two comments posted on the blog support the space being referred to as a Katta (the word has been entered in the Devanagari script) and an Adda (see Figure 22).

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[44] Chakrabarty (1999), writing on the cultural and social practice of 'Adda' among Bengalis, describes it as "roughly speaking, it is the practice of friends getting together for long, informal, and unrigorous conversations" (p. 110). Adda is a common term used to talk about any place where one hangs out.
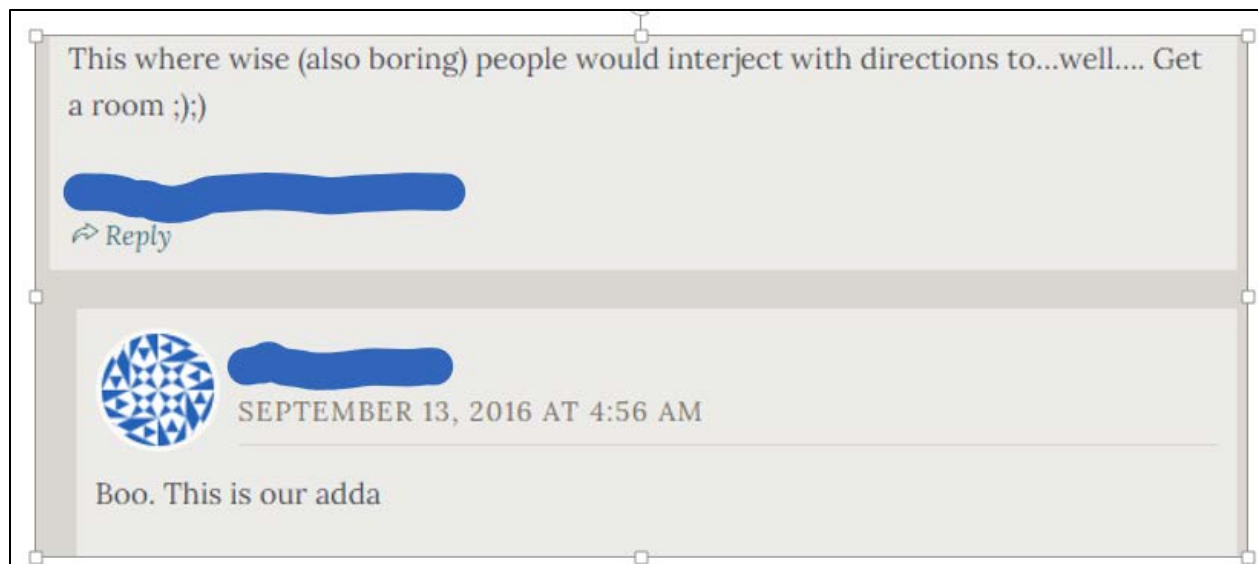
Figure 22

Examples of Adda and Katta Comments

As I confessed earlier, I never saw the serial and so I never visualize the actor or actress but the story is beautiful as a stand alone one.

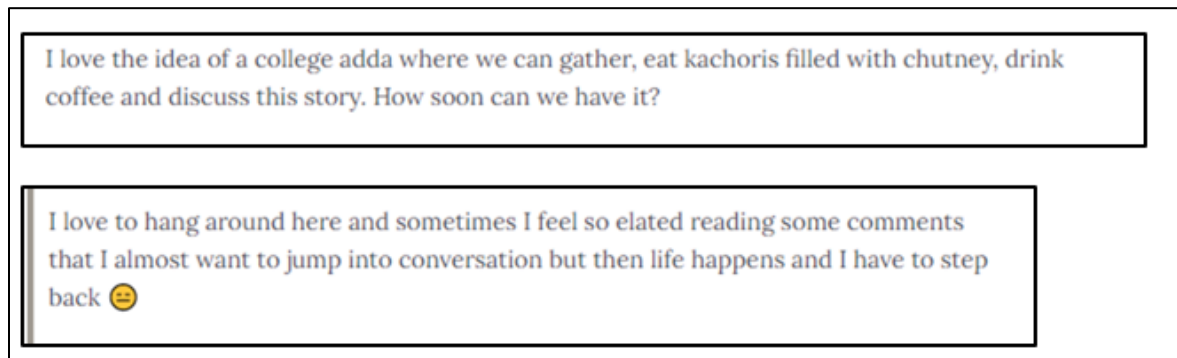And the cherry on top is this place to talk, share, argue and just be happy.

Thanks for this कट्टा, as we call it in Marathi. A place where friends meet.

This where wise (also boring) people would interject with directions to...well.... Get a room ;);)

↪ Reply

SEPTEMBER 13, 2016 AT 4:56 AM

Boo. This is our adda

According to Oldenburg (1999) "third place is a generic designation for a great variety of public places that host the regular, voluntary, informal, and happily anticipated gatherings of individuals beyond the realms of home" (p. 16). The ideas of Adda and Katta would fall within the ambit of that definition. Although Oldenburg developed his concept based on physical places, it can be applied to virtual spaces. Social dimensions of third places like a playful and fun atmosphere, the presence of regulars, sociability and diversity can be seen in virtual third spaces, too. Figure 23 show examples of two comments showing support to the social nature of the blogs in the lines of a third place.

Figure 23

Examples of Social Nature of Blogs

> I love the idea of a college adda where we can gather, eat kachoris filled with chutney, drink coffee and discuss this story. How soon can we have it?

> I love to hang around here and sometimes I feel so elated reading some comments that I almost want to jump into conversation but then life happens and I have to step back 😑

Mediated Practices

Strauss (1978) highlighted the role played by technology in a social world, which he described as "inherited or innovative modes of carrying out the social world's activities" (p. 122). Mediated practices as affordances of technology, like the blogs themselves, can be seen in the same manner. Practices such as posting comments, liking comments, replying to comments, posting videos, images and gifs are in many ways what constitutes the small world. These mediated practices can be seen as a way of expressing one's self. This is supported in the interview data results, with Participant 3 saying "I am a strong believer of 'A picture is worth a thousand words.' Sometimes the point I am trying to make becomes more obvious when I use a pic/gif/song instead of writing it down." The posting of music videos is a very common mediated practice and Participant 10 in her interview had this to say about her love for posting music videos as part of the comments she posts:

> I try to include music as much as I can. More because I have a musical background (training) and I love music. I tend to relate to situations with songs (Bollywood or otherwise). It just makes me feel more engaged with the story.

Figure 24 shows three examples of mediated practices from the blogs from which comments were collected for the study. In the first instance an image has been posted as part of a

comment. In the second case a YouTube video of a song with some of the lyrics is included as part of a comment. The third case is again a YouTube video of a Tamil song and the person who has posted it has provided a link to a translation of the lyrics for those who don't understand the language.

Figure 24

Three Examples of Mediated Practices from the Comment Data
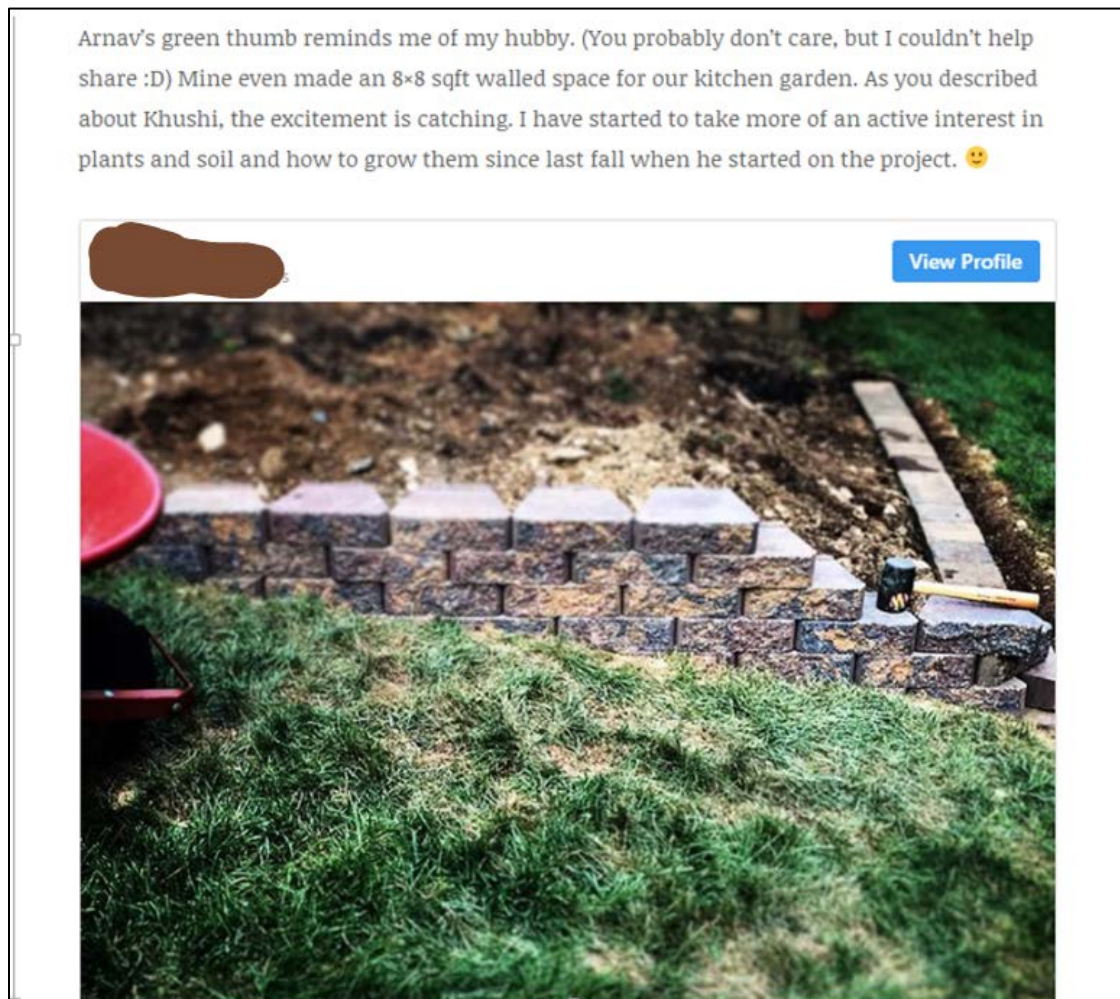
Here's a song dedicated to Arnav and his Khushi — "Annie's Song"

"You fill up my senses, like a night in a forest
Like the mountains in springtime, like a walk in the rain
Like a storm in the desert, like a sleepy blue ocean
You fill up my senses, come fill me again"

★ Liked by you and 20 other people

I just saw the video of the River song for this update – oh mu goodness... it was awesome. Of course, no understanding of language is required to enjoy the music and the exuberance and vivacity of first love portrayed in the video. Thanks for sharing Meera :)

It reminds me of this Tamil song – I absolutely loved the melody and the lyrics when I heard it first. I watched the video much later. While these are not the stunning of artists, the picturization was reflective o f the spirit of the song. It is a recent movie set in the 70's and hence the styling of the leads. Nevertheless, every time I listen to the song, I am left with a smile and lightness in the heart :)

Here is a link with translation of the lyrics in English if anyone is interested –
http://kvany.blogspot.ca/2010/04/kangal-irandal-translated-into-english.html

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Social Ties

Interactions that happen via mediated practices result in the establishment of social ties and in engendering a sense of community. This arises due to the participation in a common activity and sharing of a space. Figure 25 shows examples of comments posted on three blogs that points to the presence of social ties.

Figure 25

Comments from Three Blogs Pointing to Social Ties

The results of the interview data strongly supported the importance of social ties. Most participants held it as one of the key takeaways from their experience of reading and, in some cases, writing fan fiction. In looking at the document experience of writers, the importance of social ties in the form of motivation, peer support and validation was seen to be supported. For example, Participant 1 talking about her experience of been a part of the community said "more than story and characters I am enjoying rapport shared between readers or writers or readers and writers." Similarly, Participant 9 said "interacting with other readers and writers, both those part

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of the diaspora and those who aren't, has played a big part in the longevity of this passion for me." Participant 2, a writer, had posted this note on her blog before posting the first chapter of her story "Odyssey," (see Figure 26) thanking her social ties for encouraging her to write and share.

Figure 26

Writer Thanking Social Ties for Their Support and Encouragement

> My dearest friends from the Riverside, I can't thank you enough for your support and encouragement. If not for your words, I would not even have dreamed about writing. Thank you for seeing something that I never saw in myself. And thank you even more for pushing me at every opportunity! I feel blessed, and that is all I can say!!!

Participant 7 had spoken about the support she had received from another writer, "I still remember, my first draft that I sent to M and she was extremely happy with it. When I now look at it, it's probably one of the worst things that I've written in my life."

Sense of Community

A "sense of commonality" and "being comfortable" are themes that were identified in the interview data. These themes, along with the importance of social ties, points to a sense of community. In the comments' data, the theme "sharing" was the most prevalent one, where sharing means the exchange of personal experiences with respect to the reading, one's life experiences with an emphasis on the everyday, memories and information, in the course of social interactions. All the participants emphasized the presence of commonalities as important in the forming of social ties. Location, as in whether a person belonged to the diaspora or not, was not as important in establishing social ties. Rather, it just added to the number of factors that were shared in common among the participants. Figure 27 shows a conversation on the blog hosting

the story "Second Chances" pointing towards both the presence of social ties as well as a sense

of community. The first part of the conversation, translated goes like this:

First person: Moon of Eid (basically saying it is rare to see this person), where are you? Long time no see

Second Person: Sweetheart, how are you? Busy days, what can I say
(Asli Duniya means the real world)

Figure 27

Conversation Pointing to Social Ties and Sense of Community
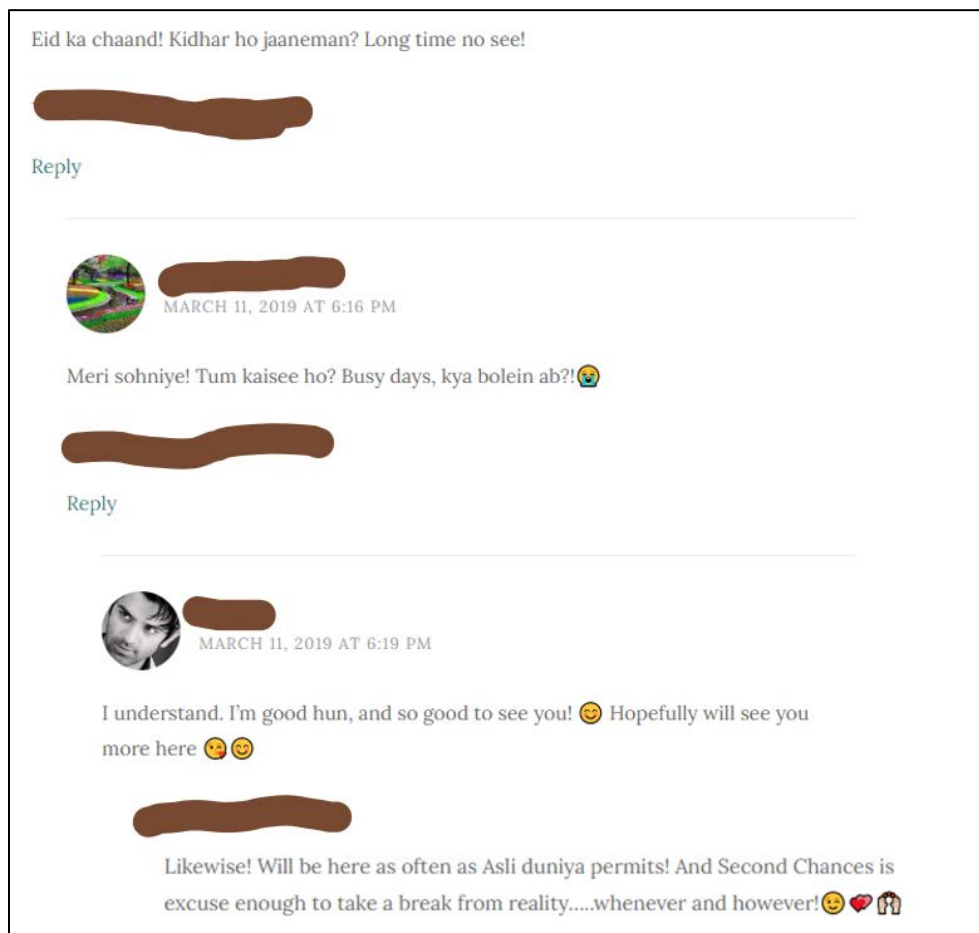
Figures 28 to 31 give examples from the comment data that show "sharing"; exchange of

personal experiences with respect to reading, one's life experiences, memories and information.

These are also illustrative of the themes of "being comfortable" and "sense of commonality."

Figure 28

Experience Arising from Reading

> Reading it again brings back the same emotions.. a knot in chest.. even though we know how
> it is gonna proceed , reading evokes fresh feelings.. You are incredible with words.. waiting to
> reach the point you stopped.. To tell you the truth , according to me this is not a story which
> needs reminding the previous chapters to continue further.Anybody who has read this before
> will clearly remember each and every incident you wrote . I remember it vividly. But its a
> great pleasure to reread and wait ...

Figure 29

Memory Shared Example

> A musical update..and i love these evergreen songs..it always bring out my best moods..and
> Arjun's reference to antakshari had me grinning and reminiscing the countless times we had
> these sessions in school and college ..golden memories :)

Figure 30

Everyday Life Conversation: Three Women Joking about Their Visiting Mothers-in-Law

MAY 24, 2016 AT 8:03 AM

You and me both have MILs visiting. God bless you, girl! And me too. 😛 I have SIL
and BIL too! 😩

★ Liked by 3 people
↪ Reply

MAY 24, 2016 AT 8:14 PM

Even better....now both out MILS can babysit their and our kids so we can have a
well deserved break....hahaha

★ Liked by 4 people
↪ Reply

MAY 25, 2016 AT 2:51 AM

Their kids totally need more baby sitting than ours :)

Figure 31

Explicit Information Sharing
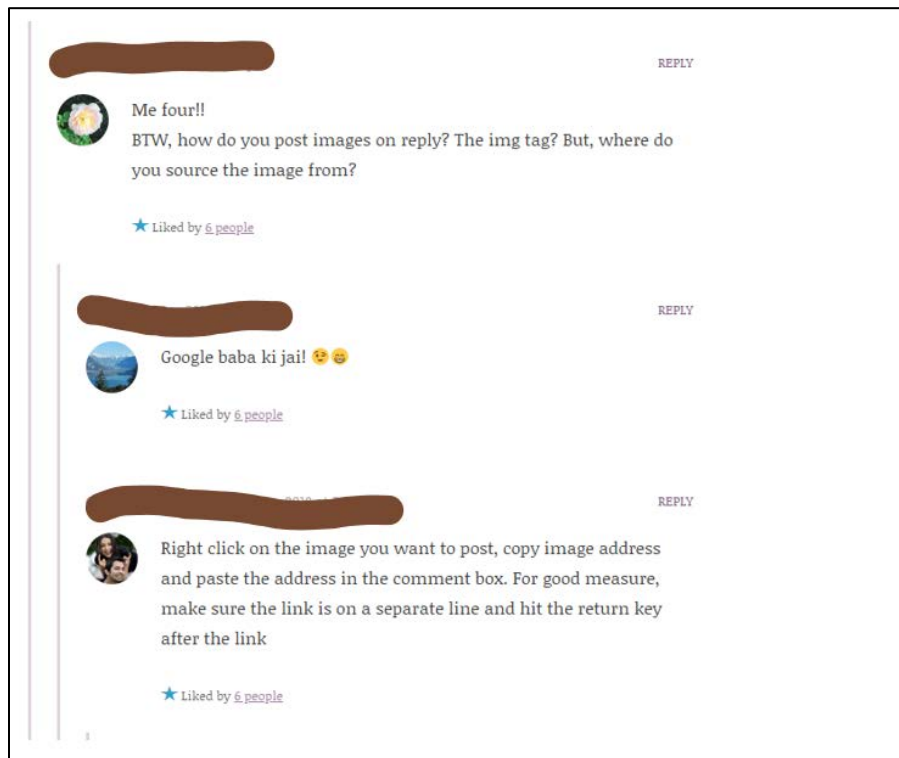
Discussion

Fisher and Naumer (2006) noted the need for exploring how information grounds could form a part of small worlds, a point reinforced by Savolainen (2009) who argued for the research potential in viewing "small world" and "information ground" as complementary constructs. Savolainen felt that if one were to re-conceptualize a small world from the perspective of information ground and vice versa, then new social and spatial characteristics could be found. This study has attempted to do the same by re-conceptualizing the small world in a virtual space by drawing on the literature, including that of information grounds. The first concepts of primary activity and sites of activity are in line with information ground as well as the concept of third place. The primary activity is what draws people to these sites. The sites of activity, the blogs

where fan fiction is hosted, have a life cycle. They tend to see more activity in terms of social interactions between the writer and readers and between readers themselves, when the story is being written. Among the three completed story blogs looked at for this study, the life cycle ranged between 15 months to three years. This is an aspect that Fisher and Naumer (2006) had pointed out as necessary to address in future studies of information grounds. The study also shows that information grounds is an aspect of a small world, the difference being the implicit membership, specifically becoming part of the fandom, which draws an invisible boundary resulting in a small world. In Chatman's work small world denoted concrete locales, but the theory of normative behavior has been used to study virtual communities, too. In the virtual context one could also look at it as a spatial metaphor, since the document experience, the reading, and the social interactions surrounding that activity evoke memories of space, leading people to use terms like "Adda" and "Katta" to describe the online space, ascribing similar characteristics to it. Here the social dimensions of a place are seen as more important, and it's the social interactions and the social ties with the feelings arising from it that leads to a place being ascribed with meaning. At the same time one needs to keep in mind the technological affordances of various platforms and the role it plays in supporting community formation. In this case the mediated practices supported by WordPress plays a role in supporting social interactions, which in turn leads to establishment of social ties and engendering a sense of community. The extent of the role played by these technological affordances of the platform was not addressed in this study but is a definite avenue for future research.

Social ties are important because they engender a sense of community. Social interactions lead to the establishment of social ties, which is in line with the concept of information ground where social interaction is a primary activity and information sharing is seen as a by-product of

that activity. This is shown in the comment data, where the theme sharing includes information

sharing, which happens as part of social interaction. The presence and importance of social ties is

also in line with Worrall's (2015) study, where social ties were seen to be more important than

social types. Both small world and information ground use social types as a characteristic. Social

types are not explicitly visible here, or seen as important, but if necessary we could categorize

members as, say, writers and readers, regulars versus non-regulars, Indian/Non-Indian,

Nonresident Indian/Resident, etc. But from what the participants expressed such types are not

really important when it comes to social interactions and establishing ties. Two participants

observed what could be seen as that presence of opinion leaders, and a certain typecasting of

readers. Participant 8 talked about the herd mentality she perceived:

> A realization that no matter how well you understand and state your position most folks
> are not willing to change their own position. Myside bias is rampant and there is a herd
> effect where many outsource their thinking. Something that is true for all social media I
> guess. It can get petty and personal and the whole purpose of it is lost.

Whereas Participant 10, in talking about the presence of plagiarism even in comments,

had this to say:

> From what I have decoded the readers – they belong to three categories. (i) sincere
> readers who like to comment as a gesture of appreciation to the talented author (ii)
> readers who drop a brief thank you note for lack of time or just to be in the good books of
> the authors so they are allowed access to private fictions (iii) readers who perhaps spend
> hours writing up a polished (sometimes over-the-top) comments…I notice readers from
> categories (ii) and (iii) inadvertently or deliberately copying the essence of an already
> written comment.

This could be seen as an implicit typing and even the presence of opinion leaders, whose

thoughts and ideas are emulated by others in their comments. It can also mean that there is a

vested group of regulars who, through sharing their experience of the reading and through

interactions with similar others, end up providing support to the writers.

A sense of community is engendered by the social ties and the important role they play

for the members of the small world. The presence of a sense of commonality and of feeling comfortable point to aspects of a sense of community as defined by McMillan and Chavis (1986). Membership is implicit here as part of the fandom and also as Participant 13 puts it: "We are all Indian women who love to write and read about our favourite TV show." McMillan (1996) looking to update earlier work, states that a spark of friendship should be given greater emphasis as it in turn becomes the spirit that symbolizes a sense of community. A connection to others is needed by all of us, thereby providing us with a setting and an audience to whom we can express those aspects which are unique to our personality. This setting is one "where we can be ourselves and see ourselves mirrored in the eyes and responses of others" (p. 315-316). Participant 4, who had experience of being a part of another online community, spoke about a greater sense of comfort and belonging here due to it been just women. Whether this is due to cultural factors or that it may be prevalent in other communities is open to question. Looking at other fandom related work, the prevalence of women-only spaces have been highlighted by many studies, whether due to the genre like Baym's (2000) or like Bury's (2005) study of women who created their own spaces due to denigration and varying degrees of harassment they faced on male-dominated online spaces. Similarly studies of women's reading groups have also noted a sense of community being felt by the members of various groups (Sedo, 2003; Long, 2003; Fister, 2005). Two factors put forward by McMillan and Chavis (1986), influence and reinforcement, was not found in the data, unlike membership and a shared emotional connection. Thus, a sense of community here can be defined as membership through a sense of belonging, a sense of commonality and comfort, and a shared emotional connection through similar experiences.

The preliminary model included "world view" as a concept, but the data did not show any

support for the presence of a common world view. Jenkins (2008), drawing in turn on Cohen (1985), mentions that differences of opinion, world view, and other fundamentals should be seen as normal and inevitable between members of a community. Membership in a community implies a sense of things which match and the "participation in a common symbolic domain" which does not mean either a "consensus of values or conformity in behavior" (Jenkins, 2008, p. 112). The feeling of comfort, of not been judged expressed by the participants lends support to this assertion. Participants expressed the presence of an atmosphere which allowed for divergent views to be expressed and the same time being respected. Participant 8 talked about her experience of this world as an eye opener and as an emotional crutch at a time when she needed it:

> Have made friends with some even though we may have nothing in common! I mean life experiences. But who are wonderful companions and who I look forward to chat and share ☺ ☺. So as humans they are someone I admire and care for ☺

It could be argued that the preliminary definition of world view adopted for the study is far too narrow and vague, and as such does not capture what could be construed as a world view in the data. This does open up the opportunity of exploring this aspect in depth in future. A future study, ideally a longitudinal one involving more than one platform should address some of the shortcoming of this study, like looking at how much of a role is played by social types. A longitudinal study would also be able to locate the presence of any norms and values present in the community, including those which are related to a particular culture. Participant 15 who has been a member of multiple fandoms talked about the prevalence of "swearing" in spaces related to fandoms like Harry Potter and Lost, and how the same is taken for granted. She noted the absence of such practices in the fandom under study. This could very well be ascribed to cultural norms.

Model of a Re-Conceptualized Virtual Small World

Based on the results of the data analysis the preliminary model has been updated

and is presented here in the form of propositional statements.

1. The small world has both a primary activity and sites of activity. Along with the instrumental purpose, social interaction can be seen as a primary activity.

2. The sites of activity have a life cycle on which the volume of social interactions are seen to depend.

3. Mediated practices support the establishment of community through social interactions.

4. Social interactions result in social ties which are seen as important.

5. Social ties engender a sense of community which is defined by membership through a common interest as well as a sense of belonging, a sense of commonality and comfort, and a shared emotional connection through similar experiences.

6. The sites of activity during their life cycle can be information grounds as well as third places.

Research Question 2: Information and Document Experience

RQ2: What does experiential information look like in diaspora small world?

(a) What is the information/document experience of the participants with respect to the fanfiction blogs?
- As a creator
- As a reader

To address this question, the interviews were used as the primary data source, and the

main theme that became apparent was the participants terming their experience as a "learning

experience." The participants were asked to talk about their experience of the small world,

especially the sites of activity which in this case are the blogs hosted on WordPress, with an

emphasis on their reading experience. They were also asked to talk about their leisure interests

and how that has changed over the course of migration. What has been made clear from the study

is the importance of social context in the document experience of the participants. Apart from

seeing social ties as an important takeaway, the participants described their experience as an

enriching or learning one. By learning, they meant things like adopting a more positive attitude

towards life, discovering and nurturing a talent/skill, and becoming more "active readers" by

way of sharpening their interpretive skills, through the exposure to a wide variety of

perspectives. Apart from this, the writers were also asked to describe their experience of

documentation, in other words the writing of a story. The role of information and what

constitutes information in this process were also examined. In addition, at the stage of member

checking, I also sent a model (see Figure 32) with two questions that I asked them to answer.

They were asked what they perceived as information.

Figure 32

Model Shared with Participants
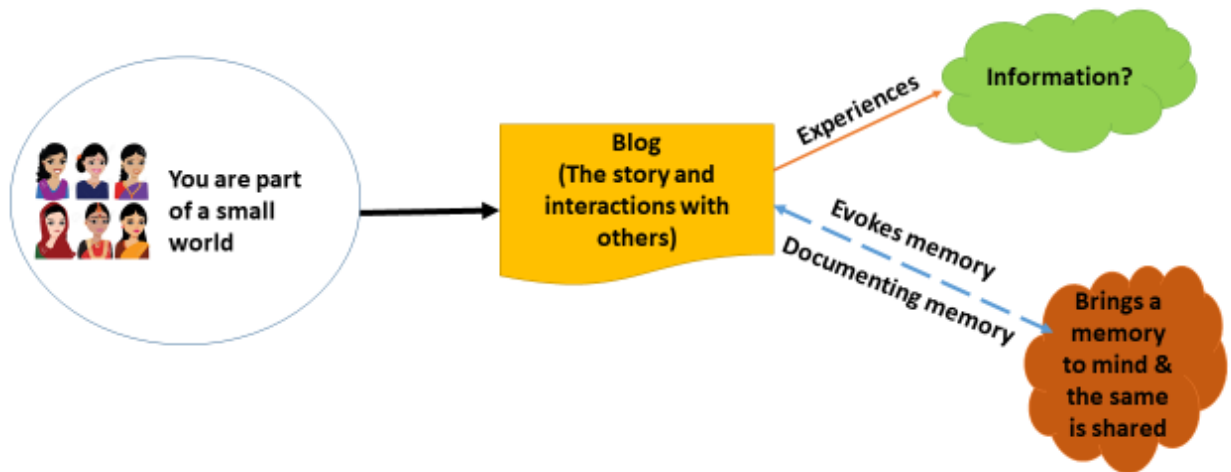
The answers are presented in Table 10. It shows a wide variety of perspectives on what is

seen as information, starting from what is generally understood or termed as information, to even

culturally driven differences.

Table 10

Participants' Responses to "What is Information?"

Participant	Response
1	Information about real places mentioned, medical issues and terminology used or legal issues and terminology used or English words or acronyms or IT issues and terminology used. I also take information which lets me have a better outlook on life.
2	If there are 2 key take-aways from the stories or my participation in the blogs, it would be: • How many of the participants had a lot of things in common that brought us together and enabled to shed some barriers and open up (sometimes with guard on, off course). • How the exact same words or incident can be perceived in numerous ways by the recipient - which in turn is colored by their own life experiences and prejudices.
3	The SKD was initially a medium to get a respite from AD. But gradually, it has become a world of it's own. I wasn't much of a reader, but ever since IPK, I have been reading a lot. Some stories are motivational, some thought provoking, some humorous and some even have the power to make my day change for better or worse. Same goes with the interactions with fellow readers and friends. There have been instances where few conversations on the blogs managed to spark up an otherwise gloomy day, especially in the current times. So, not sure if I actually have a take away, but I thoroughly enjoy the experience. Both, reading and interacting.
4	Hmm...One of the biggest things that struck me was that the people that generally inhibit these forums are rather still very traditional in their way of thinking. That is not to say they are regressive but compared to how we-you, me, and a few other people who are in one of the developed (read western) countries, the way of thinking of the women in India (and other conservative countries) is still a little behind. Could be the society, could be the exposure, but it struck me quite forcefully during the course of my interactions with people. It made me wonder whether irrespective of the level of formal education women receive if we are all just products of our upbringing and/or consequences of the society we inhabit?
8	Information:. I think the biggest takeaway I have had from the ff blog space are not the stories but the comments of fellow readers. Their life experiences which are reflected in the comments. In everyday life my association are with likeminded folks, similar background etc. So this has been an eye opener. One would think it should not be a surprise but it is/was. On a personal front made me realize (what I had taken as given) that I have a lot to thank my parents and family.
9	I think information in the literal sense would be physical places written about in the story and mentioned in interactions with readers. Another thing is a better understanding of general life issues and differing outlooks of people in different parts of the world. Also, more information about popular culture.

(table continues)

Participant	Response
10	To me, information is treasure. And this fan-fiction world gives you a great lot of it. Based on first- or second-hand experience, an author sets the location for the story to be a certain city (and/or cities). Some authors have a penchant for describing the places as vivid as one can imagine. It is their way of bringing visuals of a place to the readers. I thoroughly enjoy such journeys. Here, I should mention charlotte74, a fan-fic author, who does an exemplary job of basing her stories out of different locations. And giving us a tour through her words. And then, there is so much you can learn about a certain profession (Jigs does so well with describing medicos) or certain life-style culturally or geographically (be it in a specific city in India or a different country). Readers chime-in with their experiences too. That, again, is information. I remember while reading Meera's River, several of us shared our first experience stepping on a foreign land (similar to the protagonist Khushi's).
13	I found that taking the same characters i.e. Arnav ,Khushi etc from IPKKND, writers have written stories which are unique .Their own interpretation of the characters have given me the idea of the mindset of the writers. I also see a lot of emotions I felt about the storyline, the portrayal of Arnav or Khushi in their stories and comments. I love reading these stories and I wait eagerly for the updates everyday. Each writer has made Khushi and Arnav their own version different from the original e.g. Jigs has written stories set in different parts of the world and Arnav and Khushi are completely different in each story. It is wonderful to read each story, different but having the same protagonists. I find that I am enjoying the comments written, responding to them and getting a response to my comments. Now a lot of times I feel a part of a group enjoying having a discussion about the story or comments.
14	Information is the setting like where the scene takes places, the authors have a wonderful way of describing even a common room to something extraordinary. What I take away is to look for beautiful things around you. Professions and understanding of various skills from the story. For instance when I read a story about an NFL player, you learn a lot about the game, a story about a vivid photographer, there is lot you learn about the profession. The authors taking time to make the story more real with facts.

Note. Pariticpants 6, 7, 11, 12 and 15 did not respond.

When it comes to looking at the document experience from a creator side, apart from information seeking in the form of research that is done, the support provided by the social ties, in the form of motivation, peer support, and validation, is seen to play a big role not only in the process of documentation but also in the journey to it becoming a personally meaningful activity. Based on the analysis of the information and document experiences, along with the analysis of the comment data, information can be seen as:

- As everyday

- As social ties

  o   As interaction

  o   As motivation

- As awareness

- As memories

Information as Everyday

Information as everyday encompasses things like learning about different places, different cultures, different professions and its allied aspects, popular culture, sharing other things like information about restaurants, hotels, books, movies, etc. For example, Participants 1, 9, 10 and 14 talked about the places mentioned in stories as something that they have taken away from their experience. Participant 3, in the course of her interview, had talked about learning about different cultures in her interactions with others as part of her document experience. Participants 1 and 10 talked about learning about things related to professions like medicine and law, while Participant 7 mentioned learning about business consultants and their work. This is reiterated when they were directly asked what they saw as information. For example, Participant 14 says that "information is the setting like where the scene takes places, the authors have a wonderful way of describing even a common room to something extraordinary." Figure 33 contains a screen clipping showing a conversation where a person is talking about her vacation in India and recommending a good place to stay.

Figure 33

Everyday Life Information Shared as Part of Social Interaction

Yes I am, very much 😊. Returning to Ooty/Coonoor after 25 years. Got to take my family to all my little hideouts and meet some childhood friends that are still here. My daughter is just loving it. She is looking fwd to return next yr. Which is prompting my hubby to actually consider buying a property here…. I have some damage control to do 😔😔

★ Liked by 1 person

REPLY

JULY 17, 2017 AT 1:19 AM

You are making me interested too… lets see if I can make it to Coonoor in Aug when I go myself 😊 Fingers crossed 😊

JULY 17, 2017 AT 1:25 AM

I hope you do too 😊 I highly recommend Tea Nest Estate in Coonoor. You can book thru agoda.com

Everyday can also be talking about things like parenting as part of social interaction. Figure 34 shows a conversation between three women about their kids. One lady has two kids under 6, another has a 13 year old, and the third has a 10 year old.

Figure 34

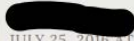*Parenting Conversation as Example of Everyday Life Sharing*

Translation

Main toh ek 13yr old ke saath hi thakk jaati hoon: I get tired with one thirteen year old

You are like me then. Read till you drop! And don't talk about sleep darling, I don't know what it means lol. 2 kids under 6... I shall say no more! :D

↩ Reply

JULY 25, 2016 AT 10:30 AM

Two kids under 6! What more is there to say!

↩ Reply

JULY 25, 2016 AT 10:32 AM

Hahaha! :D

↩ Reply

JULY 25, 2016 AT 1:30 PM

Tussi mahaan ho Sohni!! Handling 2 kids under 6 and yet finding the time to engage in these conversations and also be able to write so beautifully!!

Main toh ek 13yr old ke saath hi thakk jaati hoon!!!

You spoke my mind Kavi!!! I was going to say that... but instead of 13-year old it is 10-year old...

CA... my fab place.. esp So Cal... I spent a week in LagunaNiguel during Xmas... it was a dream come true... off with down jackets!!!!

↩ Reply

JULY 25, 2016 AT 2:01 PM

Well, 6 and 3 to be precise. I don't know about me handling them, but, at times it feels the other way round definitely! ;) They've started teaming up re Kavi! Its awesome how two girls can come together and defeat(I am using a very kind word here!) their common enemy ! :D Its a task dealing with the 6 yr old, I shudder to think what I would do when she is 13!

★ Liked by you and 5 other people
↩ Reply

JULY 25, 2016 AT 2:06 PM

Lol Aparna... all the best!!!! I see the pain...

I cry more than my daughter (internally though) when it come to getting her to do anything... piano practice or HW or clean -up... just that I dont let her know about my trepidiation...

Such logical arguments for excuses... now she wants to read Disney FF coz I am reading IPK FFs... ☺ ☺ ☺ ☺ so am forced to bring my craze down when she is around ... that leaves mid nights and early morninng and of course work ☺ ☺ ☺

This falls in line with what is known as everyday life information behavior where the emphasis is on non-work related activities. And, in line with the idea of information ground, the information is exchanged as part of social interactions, where the primary purpose is not information seeking or sharing.

Information as Social Ties

Social ties is one of the biggest takeaways for all the participants from their experience of the small world. The impact of interacting with others and sharing their reading experiences is seen to be a big part of their document experience which adds to what they refer to as a learning experience. Information as social ties has been further categorized into information as interaction and information as motivation.

Information as Interaction

Interactions with social ties plays a big role in the document experience. All the participants highlighted what role that interacting with others played in how they interpreted what they were reading and what they gained from the experience. Here interactions mean exposure to other perspectives, learning about other people, and also getting exposed to information that one didn't have before. Participants spoke about how this turned them into more active readers, how they learned to look at and understand other perspectives. For example, Participant 8's answer to the question of what she considered information in the small world context was "Information: I think the biggest takeaway I have had from the ff blog space are not the stories but the comments of fellow readers. Their life experiences which are reflected in the comments." Similarly, Participant 6 had this to say about her experience:
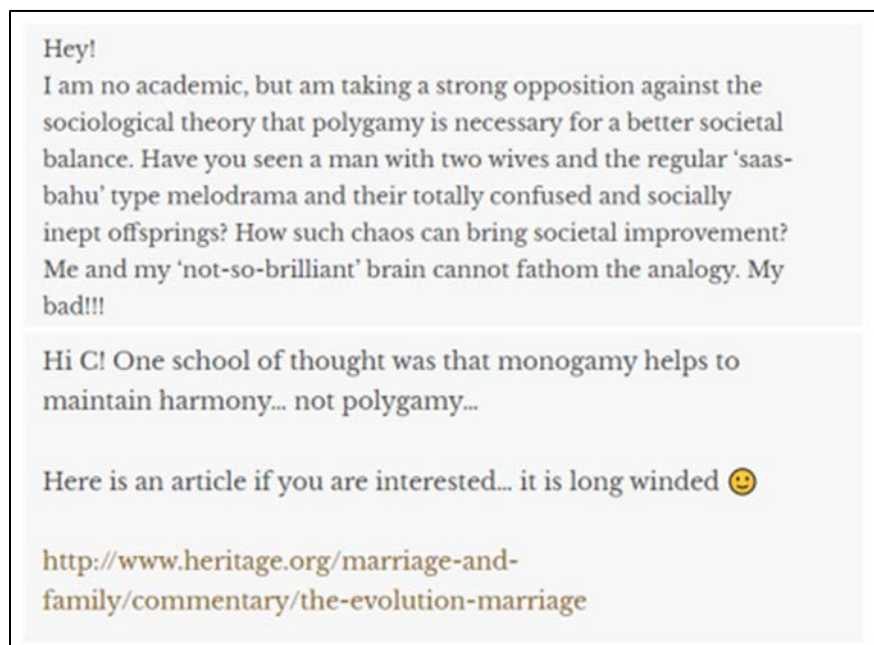
> There were things that I would realize really after reading some comments or hey, this, this is another way of looking at it, right. You know we are so set in our own ways of thinking, right, that we do not think (of) another perspective. And so reading gives you

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different perspectives of how different people think how they come up with, you know, their theories, an insight into that person as well.

Participant 10's answer to what she saw as information included "readers chime-in with their experiences too. That, again, is information." Figure 35 shows a conversation between two women, where one is sharing what she thought a situation touched upon in the story and the other woman (writer) is sharing an article she had found on the subject.

Figure 35

Information as Interaction

Hey!
I am no academic, but am taking a strong opposition against the sociological theory that polygamy is necessary for a better societal balance. Have you seen a man with two wives and the regular 'saas-bahu' type melodrama and their totally confused and socially inept offsprings? How such chaos can bring societal improvement? Me and my 'not-so-brilliant' brain cannot fathom the analogy. My bad!!!

Hi C! One school of thought was that monogamy helps to maintain harmony… not polygamy…

Here is an article if you are interested… it is long winded 😊

http://www.heritage.org/marriage-and-family/commentary/the-evolution-marriage

Information as Motivation

For the participants who are writers, the motivation received from their social ties played a role in them writing as well as helping them in the process by way of peer support. For Participants 2 and 7, the encouragement and goading from social ties played a big role in them starting to write. For all three, reader document experience expressed by way of comments played a big role in motivating and helping them in overcoming challenges. The reader

experiences act as information about what is working or not working as far as their story is concerned, and played a part in the learning process associated with writing. It also takes the form of peer support from social ties, who act as beta readers as well as helping in other things like setting up the blog. Participants also spoke about how appreciation for comments made them feel good as well as helping out others in mediated practices like posting videos, gifs, images, etc. In both situations above there is exchange of information involved whether by way of support or in actual terms like providing opinions or help. Figure 36 has a note posted by a writer on her blog thanking a set of her regular readers for their presence and interactions on her blog.

Figure 36

Writer Thanking Readers for Their Presence and Interactions on the Blog
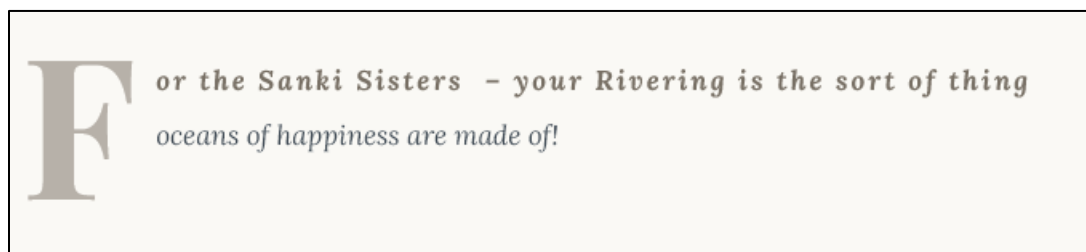
Information as Awareness

Participants described becoming aware of facets to their own self, or even the sharpening of a skill set that they already had as a result of their document experience. This can be conceptualized as a kind of information that is experienced. For participants who are writers' awareness or discovery of a side to themselves through the process of writing and sharing the same is seen as very enriching. Awareness about self can also be in relation to others or one's life experiences. For example, Participant 4 in her answer to the question of what is information for her talked about the difference in way of thinking that she perceived between those living outside of India and those who live in India, irrespective of education. She said "it made me

wonder whether irrespective of the level of formal education women receive if we are all just products of our upbringing and/or consequences of the society we inhabit?" In a similar vein, Participant 8 said the interactions she had with people in the small world "made me realize (what I had taken as given) that I have a lot to thank my parents and family." This was brought about by her interactions with those who were unlike her, whose life experiences were different to her own.

Information as Memories

Memories are evoked as part of document experience and are used in making meaning, and as information in the interpretive activity. In the document phenomenology framework, Gorichanaz and Latham (2016) states that four kinds of information come together in document becoming. Two come from the object and two from the person perceiving it. Adtrinsic information comes from a person and is the "personal historical information that comes to the fore through memory associations during a document transaction" (p. 1121). Such information can be either personal or social and these are often intertwined. Individual experiences are socially processed while social encounters could be individually experienced. Memories evoked by individual document experience is socially processed through the documenting that takes place through mediated practices, and this leads to a sort of collective memory making by way of social interactions surrounding such experiences. Memories as adtrinsic information also feeds into the creative process as noted by Gorichanaz (2019b) in his first person model of documentation. Memory as adtrinsic information is seen to be well supported in the data. Similarly memories evoked fall within the ambit of the themes "object link" and "being transported" of Latham's (2014) document experience model.

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Information as Meaningful Experience

Anything can be experienced as information. Like beauty, information lies in the eyes of the beholder (Lupton, 2014). According to Bruce (2008), information is anything that is experienced as informing. It does not always have to be a visible object, it can be a physical action or an emotion, and it can also be embodied (Harlan, 2014). Information experience from a document perspective is known as document experience. A purpose behind this study was to understand the document experiences both from a reader and writer perspective situating it within the large context of diaspora and leisure. Through this, an attempt was also made to understand what is experienced as information. The main theme that came up in the interview data was the participants describing their experience, both reading and being part of the small world as a learning or enriching one. One of the main themes in the comment data was sharing, which included everyday life including anecdotes, memories, and also information. In addition, the participants were also asked what they perceived as information. Taking all this into consideration information was seen to be experienced as every day, interaction, motivation, awareness, and memories. These results are in line with Harlan (2014)'s study of teen content creators. For her participants, information experience was closely aligned with learning. Harlan noted that when it comes to content creation and content sharing information is experienced in multiple ways, and that it cannot be conceptualized in just one way. Information was experienced as participation, inspiration, process, artifact and collaboration. This finds support here also in that information is seen to be experienced as interaction and motivation which plays a part in what the participants described as a learning experience.

Silverman (1995,) drawing on Dervin (1981), posits that information as well as meaning can be referred to as a process of negotiation between two parties wherein meaning and

information are not transmitted but rather created. Meaning can be said to be "in the eyes, head and heart of the particular beholder" (Silverman, 1995, p. 161). In relating this to visitor meaning-making in museums, Silverman (1995) highlighted the active role of a visitor in creating meaning out of her museum experience through the context that she brings along, and is also influenced by the presence of companions, leisure motivations and self-identity. Similar ideas have informed the work of Latham (2014) in which she views document experience as a person-document transaction. According to her, an aesthetic person-document transaction is the "coming together of the person – living, breathing, with memories, knowledge, feelings, moods, environment, etc. – with the document, a complex representation of some reality or realities" (p. 551). Within the ambit of document phenomenology, it is the coming together of four kinds of information; two from the document and two from the person encountering the document resulting in the document meaning. Silverman (1995) sees meaning making as a "constant process of remembering and connecting" (p. 162). Learning and perception depend on how we accommodate newly gained information in our existing mental frameworks and structures. Speaking of museums, she states that people place what they encounter, whether object, text, perspective or a fact, within the background of their own experiences. In addition there are motivations behind a museum visit and the same has an impact on meaning making. Similarly one's identity as well as one's social context in the form of companions play a role in how meaning is made.

Latham (2014) drew on the work of John Dewy and Louise Rosenblatt in developing her model of document experience. Document experiences in the form of a transaction falls in a continuum ranging from the efferent to the aesthetic and the stance taken by the person has an impact on it. A person is considered to be inseparable from their lifeworld, and as such the

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infrastructural context of a document along with its lifeworld should be seen as having a bearing on the document experience (Wood & Latham, 2014; Carter, 2016; Gorichanaz, 2016). We see similarities between Silverman's ideas on meaning making and Latham's document experience framework drawing on Rosenblatt's transactional theory of reading. For this study, combining Silverman's work with Latham's document experience model helps to better explain the results of how information is experienced. Silverman's motivations can be seen as Rosenblatt's stance. Where it can add to Latham's work is bringing the role of the social context, the presence of others and their role in meaning making, to how we understand document and information experience. This could be seen as the infrastructural context of a document and its life world along with the person's lifeworld. Transaction for this study would not be just the transaction with the document (the story by itself) but transaction with others by way of their comments. This transaction can also fall in a continuum between efferent and aesthetic; efferent when there is information sharing (information as every day) and aesthetic when information is by way of say motivation or awareness. Silverman (1995) notes that visitors to museums often learn new things through the knowledge and past experience of companions. Similar to other realms of one's life, people make meaning in museums "through the filter of their interpersonal relationships" (p. 163). This can be seen to be supported here by the importance placed on social ties by all the participants and the role they mentioned it played in their individual document experiences.

Silverman (1995) states that meaning making strategies are common behaviors that are basic to all humans. In a similar vein, Harlan (2016) views learning as a daily activity that is rooted in our life world. In the process one encounters information which requires us to "make connections between new information and existing knowledge. Therefore, learning is, in a word,

connected. When we engage with information we connect to ourselves, our understandings, our experiences, as well as with others and to the world around us" (p. 110). This is in line with what Silverman (1995) says about making of meaning involving remembering and connecting. This idea of learning goes with what is understood as learning experience for the participants and the conceptualizations of information that came from it. For Harlan (2014), information for her participants was not only transformation and subjective, pointing to information being something experienced as informing. She states that the same had elements of Buckland's classification of information as an object, as a process and as knowledge, with an element of simultaneity. Based on the results of the study and taking into account the literature discussed above, I state that information should be viewed as a meaningful experience, which encapsulates within it Buckland's classification of information as an object, as a process and as knowledge. Here information as object is the document itself (including the mediated practices which are viewed as documents), as a process which is the meaning making that happens in the person-object transaction including information as motivation and awareness and finally as knowledge which are the changes that happens as a result of the meaning making in one's existing knowledge structure. This broad conceptualization of information frees us from the narrow idea of information as something that helps us in solving a problem, addressing a gap, or as something that is sought (considering the overwhelming number of information seeking studies) or, drawing on Rosenblatt's work, that which falls only in the efferent side of the continuum. As a meaningful experience, it can cover the whole spectrum of information experiences and the activities associated with them. Adopting the document approach, where the analytical focus is on the document rather than its latent information (Skold, 2013, 2015), also helps bring to light a more holistic experience of information.
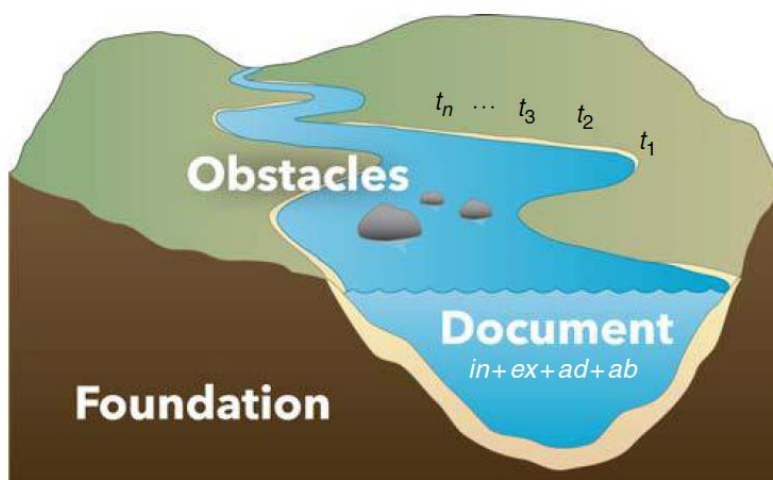
Meandering through Experience of Documentation

> *I am an intelligent river which has reflected successively all the banks before which it has flowed by meditating only on the images offered by those changing shores.*
>
> Victor Hugo

Gorichanaz's (2018) three aspects of the documentation experience; foundation, process and challenges, is useful to arrange the themes that arise showing the journey of documentation. The themes can be different, except for some common ones like memories, or reference materials (similar to research done here), but it is a useful framework to organize the experience of documentation, while enabling the capturing of individual features of various types of documentation. Gorichanaz likened and described the experience of documentation to the flow of a river. A river consists of the riverbed (foundation), the flow of water (process) and obstacles (challenges) as seen in Figure 37. According to Dewey (1934), "a river as distinct from a pond, flows. But its flow gives a definiteness and interest to its successive portions greater than exist in the homogeneous portions of a pond. In an experience flow is from something to something" (p. 38).

Figure 37

Gorichanaz' First Person Theory of Documentation (2019b, p. 194)

Taking this forward, the term "meander" can be used to signify the flow of the river or the experience of documentation. According to Klaver (2014) meandering of a river is "deeply spatial, temporal, and specific – continually finding its trajectory, while making it. It is profoundly responsive to the lay of the land, the nature of the climate, the character of human interventions, and a multitude of other vectors" (p. 38). Understood and used this way, the term meander encapsulates not only the experience of documentation but takes into account the social context, the presence of the audience/readers and their document experience in the process of document becoming. The process is not linear or straight, and also helps to capture the temporal nature of the documentation process. Klaver (2017) states that meandering is a slower process when compared to progress as a straight line. "Meandering proceeds by covering more ground, percolating into deeper depths, listening to the murmurs of more voices, being what it is when and where it is observed" (p. 217). When applied to the documentation activity covered in this study, this signifies the discovery and growth as a writer, learning and meeting the challenges associated with it and in the process listening and imbibing the voices of social ties and other readers. Here as the experience meanders over time, the surrounding (land and sky) can symbolize the social context as well as drawing on Rosenblatt's continuum, the two sides represent efferent and aesthetic. Figure 38 displays a preliminary model of writer document experience where in the meandering of the river helps capture the social context of the experience. This figure is based on Gorichanaz's (2019b) first person model of documentation (Fig. 37), taking the idea of the flow of a river from the same.

Figure 38

Preliminary Model of Writer Document Experience
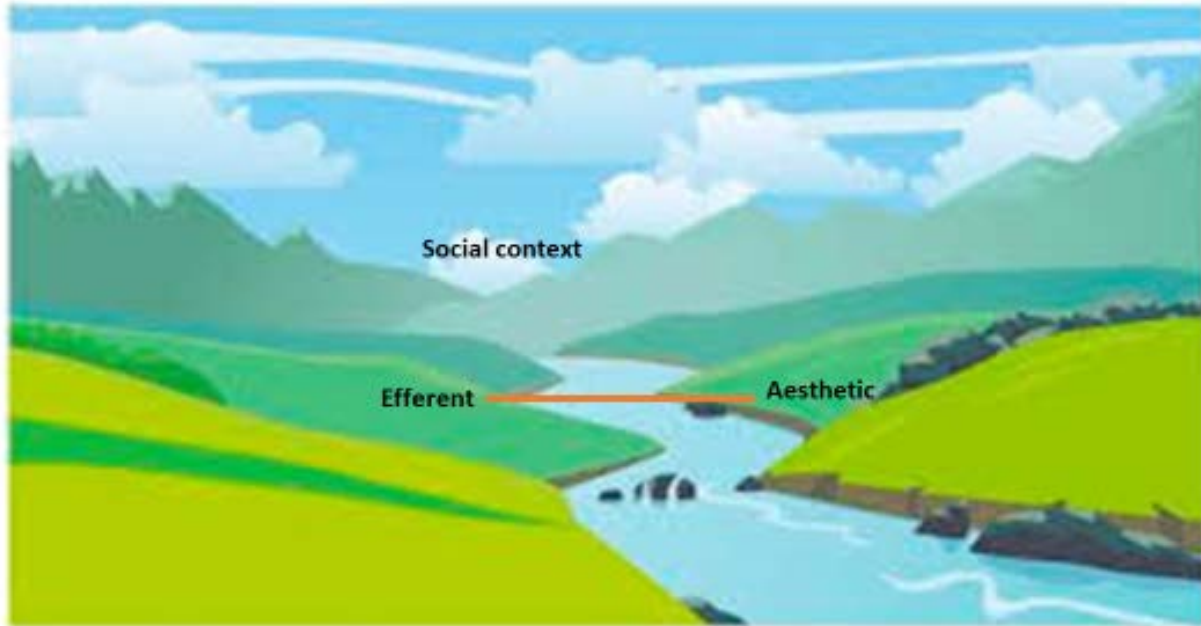
As per Latham's (2014) document experience model, the document experience is a

transaction that falls in a continuum between efferent and aesthetic. Using Latham's document

experience model, one could dissect possible document experiences in the form of a transaction

that falls in a continuum ranging from the efferent to the aesthetic. Rosenblatt adopted the term

"transaction," from Dewey's epistemological writings, (Connell, 1996, p. 395) and the

"epistemological position that both knower and known constitute, and are constituted by, the

process of inquiry" (p. 396). According to Rosenblatt (1982), "reading is a transaction, a two-

way process, involving a reader and a text at a particular time under particular circumstances" (p.

34). Along the same line, the process of documentation can also be seen as a transaction and I

hold that even the document experience from a creator perspective can be seen as a transaction

that falls in a continuum between efferent and aesthetic. In her work, and by drawing on

Rosenblatt's work, Latham (2014) notes that "stance to the document is crucial to experience –

the experiencer's purpose, focus, and goals can determine the kind of encounter, efferent or aesthetic" (p. 558). Here efferent can denote the experience of information throughout the process, whether as information that is sought explicitly or information in the form of interaction, motivation, and awareness. For example, Participant 2's looking up information about a medical condition, and also seeking information about it from a social tie. Or it could be Participant 4's looking up information about a place, including flight timing if one were to actually travel. The aesthetic side of the transaction can imply the affective dimensions involved in the writing. For example, the emotional toll involved in writing about the loss of one's spouse, where Participant 4 had to put herself in her character's shoes to write about the experience. Or Participant 2's having to deal with loss in readership, and not allowing it to impact her in continuing to write. Like Rosenblatt held, the transaction will dynamically move back and forth between the two ends of the continuum. To continue with the river metaphor, one bank may be preferred at one time compared to the other, depending on the stance of the creator. Gorichanaz (2019b) holds that his model provides a "way to think about the development of a document over time (including the person, object, tools, setting, etc., as relevant to the given experience) in a way that honors the first-person experience thereof and tries to bring together previous literature" (p. 194). By introducing the term meander to this model, it helps capture the social context of the experience, considering the nature of the activity. It helps address the part played by the document experience of the readers in the process of documentation.

Research Question 3: Memory Making and Serendipitous Memory Archive

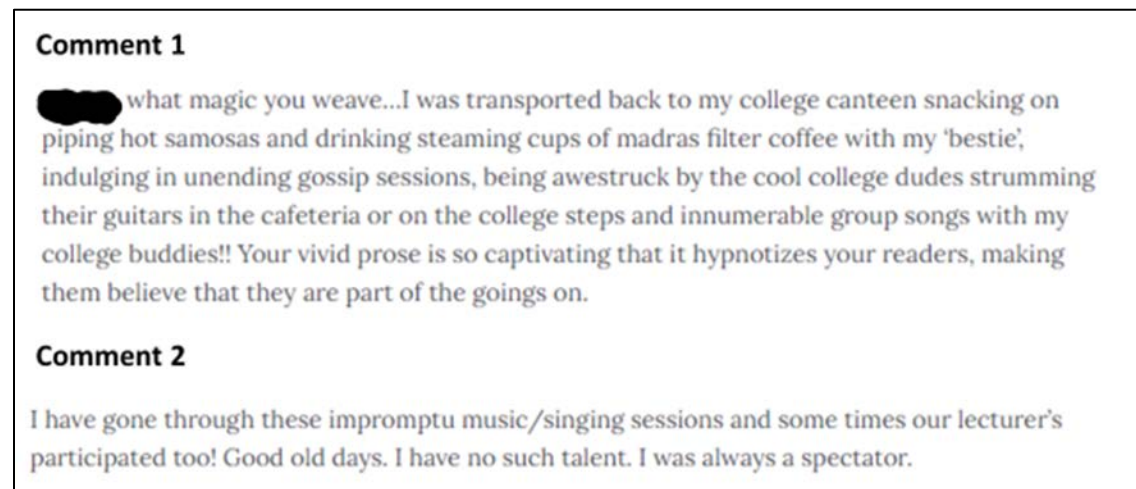RQ 3: How is the diasporic small world a serendipitous memory archive?

a) How is collective memory making enacted in practice?
b) How does the small world environment impact the collective memory making?
c) What role does cultural knowledge play in memory making?

Document Experience as a Trigger

Memory-making can occur as part of document experience, where the document is an evocative object. As part of the document experience, both in reading and interacting with others, the experience is shared by way of posting comments and the sharing of other media like YouTube videos. A main theme that came up in the comment data is "sharing" and this includes the sharing of memories, too. Figure 39 shows two comments posted on the blog hosting the story "A River Runs Through It." In Comment 1, a reader shares a personal memory as part of her document experience, and in Comment 2, another person shares a similar memory as part of hers. Seen through the prism of the theme "sharing," along with the evoked memories, their feeling or perception of the experience as well as something in the nature of a personal anecdote is shared.

Figure 39

Examples of Memory Shared Comments

Comment 1

what magic you weave...I was transported back to my college canteen snacking on piping hot samosas and drinking steaming cups of madras filter coffee with my 'bestie', indulging in unending gossip sessions, being awestruck by the cool college dudes strumming their guitars in the cafeteria or on the college steps and innumerable group songs with my college buddies!! Your vivid prose is so captivating that it hypnotizes your readers, making them believe that they are part of the goings on.

Comment 2

I have gone through these impromptu music/singing sessions and some times our lecturer's participated too! Good old days. I have no such talent. I was always a spectator.

Here sharing happens via mediated practices which results in documenting. Another instance of the evoking of a memory as part of document experience and the documenting of it is show in Figure 40. In the first instance a reader has posted a song as part of her comment for one

of the chapters. In a reply to that, another person has mentioned a memory associated with that song.

Figure 40

Mediated Practice: Memory Triggered then Shared

Similarly in Figure 41, a person is sharing her nostalgia as well as drawing on her memory of a movie in sharing her document experience.

Figure 41

Sharing of Nostalgia as Part of Document Experience

In Figure 42 an interaction around memories of growing up in India are shared, including sharing instances of popular culture like a song that was used in an advertisement. This arises out of a reader sharing her document experience by drawing on her own life experiences and her own memories.

Figure 42

Sharing of Memories of Growing Up in India

First and foremost congrats to you. You have depicted the stupidity of 90's that was so famous. Why just boys I even know girls who would not speak to their hearts content directly. They always needed that extra help mostly from their best friend to speak out their dil ki baat. Even our movies at that time depicted it graciously. I had few of those stupid real stupid friends who would tell me that the guy or girl they liked is just a friend. Seriously that time that i lived in was full of naivety and stupidity, Young adults these days are far more advance and I am not sure if the young readers here will understand the severity of what you have written here. Hell even letters were written by their friends since some of the guys/gals were chicken. So bravo to you woman.

NOVEMBER 17, 2016 AT 3:54 AM

I remember blank call days all through 11-12 grades..... everyone will get freaked out at home before the days of caller ID :) So much that my mom started suspecting any guy that would turn up at the house ... it was funny and scary at the same time :)

Oh the story of naivety that we have is epic. How can we forget those blank calls. I still remember someone calling my mom and telling her that I used to visit boys hostel whereas the reality was there was no need to be there since every tom dick and harry used to be at girls hostel. (lol) Our pranks too were so different. Mixing Humdard's safi to water and giving as a drink rather than drugging someone and taking their nude pictures.

(Humdard's Safi used to be the most bitter medicine i have ever tasted. It was worst then quinine)

NOVEMBER 17, 2016 AT 5:12 PM

😄😄

Did you grow up in India?
Yaar, there used to be this advert which had caught every teenager's interest then, A Monte Carlo advert which used to play the song "Nothings gonna change my love for you"....this is teenage for me, can't remember the exact time. Sigh! Beautiful song and beautiful ad.
There was a UP ka guy in our next building who would follow me everywhere and never talk. He couldn't sing to save his life nor speak english, but he would sing this song, rather scream this song from his bathroom! Oh god hilarious, everyone in our building waited for him to do that everyday! Was a good 2 week patch! Thoroughly enjoyed it. :D

NOVEMBER 18, 2016 AT 12:01 AM

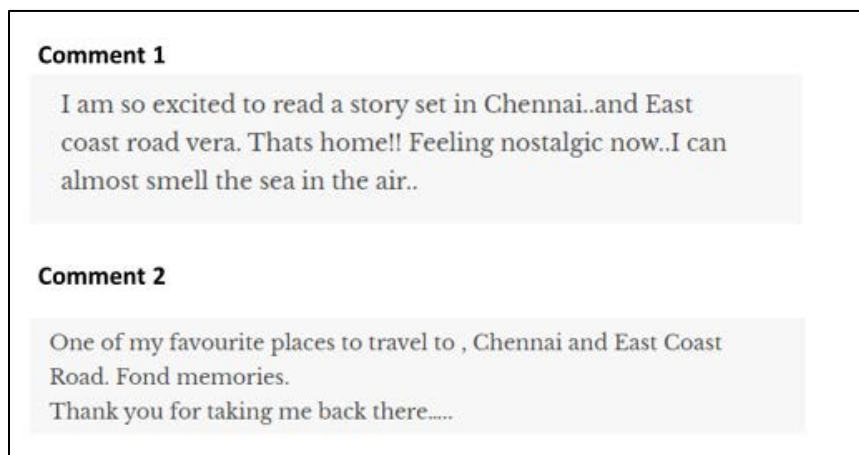Monte Carlo Classic Indian Advertisement   Watch later   Share

This was the one. O those high school days!

Participants in their interviews spoke about reminiscing, about the nostalgia involved in sharing memories with similar others. For example Participant 2 termed nostalgia as powerful and something that brings joy to oneself through reminiscing. This is seen to have an impact on how you relate to social ties and what you share with them. Participant 4 had spoken about a memory of her hometown that got triggered bringing to mind "the smell of the sea." Figure 43 is a comment that she had posted on the blog hosting the story "Odyssey" expressing similar sentiments. In Comment 2, another reader also expresses how she was taken back to a place that she loved.

Figure 43

Reminiscing Examples

Comment 1

I am so excited to read a story set in Chennai..and East coast road vera. Thats home!! Feeling nostalgic now..I can almost smell the sea in the air..

Comment 2

One of my favourite places to travel to , Chennai and East Coast Road. Fond memories.
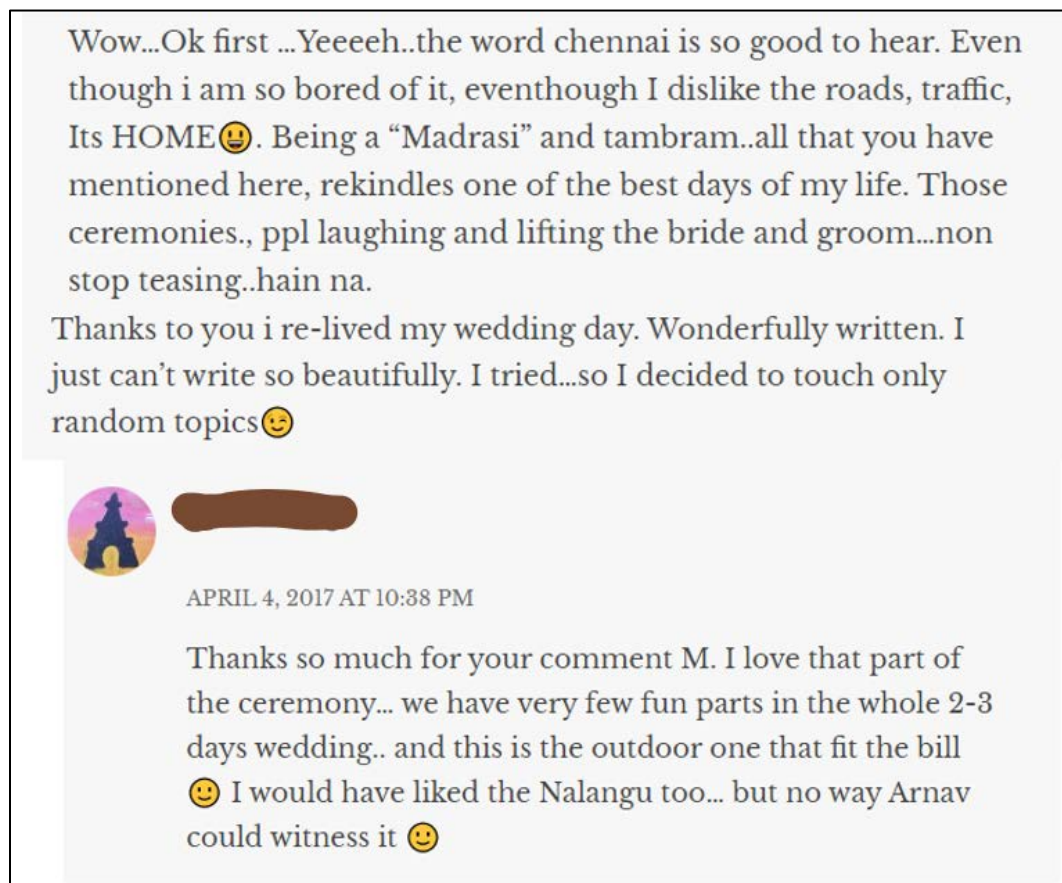Thank you for taking me back there.....

According to Latham (2014) the document experience can fall in a continuum which ranges from the efferent to the aesthetic. On the efferent end of the continuum, a person looks to take away something, like information from reading a newspaper. Whereas at the aesthetic end of the continuum, the transaction "involves deciphering images and concepts of words that lead to an interpretation of the text aroused through one's feelings, associations, attitudes and ideas" (p. 546). Two of the themes in Latham's framework is object link and being transported; triggering of memories as part of the experience can be seen to fall within the ambit of these two

themes. Object link is defined as "the object initiates an experience that links the experiencer to the past through both tangible and symbolic meanings" and "being transported," defined as "the experience is felt as if Being Transported to another time and place; it affects the experiencer temporally, spatially and bodily" (p. 552). As per the definition for "object link," here the document as an evocative object triggers an experience linking the person to the past through the summoning of memories. In the same way, as per the definition for "being transported," the experience takes a person back to a time and place in their life and which is expressed here as the sharing of a personal memory. As an example, Figure 44 has a conversation between two women about memories of their wedding day, triggered by a chapter of the story titled "Odyssey."

Figure 44

Sharing Wedding Day Memories

APRIL 5, 2017 AT 12:08 AM

Yes kno..but i got tired by the time nalangu came. And husband won by cheating😂😂...But best part of my wedding was 14 plus bridesmaids and 4 at husband's side..😉..You have brought out the memories nicely.. purfecto 😊

★ Liked by 2 people

REPLY

APRIL 5, 2017 AT 12:10 AM

Let me guess... muhurtham at ungodly hour! Of course when nalangu came you would have wanted to curl up and sleep 😊 Mine was at 6am.. meaning i had slept for less than 1 hour the previous night 😊

Along with being asked what they perceived as information the participant were also asked whether they agreed that their experience of reading and interacting with social ties triggers memories which then get documented through comments (see Figure 32 for the model that was shared with the participants). Table 11 has their responses.

Table 11

Memory Making and Documenting

Participant	Response
1	Yes, but I only share memories in the threads where the author is OK with them. If I notice the author is not OK with them, even if I have something to share, I stop myself from adding it to the comment.
2	Absolutely agree in most instances. At times, they evoke memories and you just want to mull over it in your head because it is so personal that you want to reflect on and not yet ready to post for the wider audience because it could be deep and personal.
3	I agree with this. You have captured it quite well :-)
4	Yes, absolutely! No doubt about it!
8	Experiences: Yes it does evokes memories. Both by story itself and interactions with other readers.

(table continues)

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Participant	Response
9	Yes, I would say this is the usual pattern when it comes to writing comments. The personal anecdote would depend upon how comfortable I feel in the space created by the author.
10	VP – In continuation of point (ii) from above, When Sohni talks about the British way of life, I soak it all in, as information. Growing up, I had watched Brit-based TV series, so this a way of re-living those memories. Then, there are numerous songs, situations and places that take you down memory lane. And this makes the reading experience even more interesting. Songs, of course, hold a lot of importance for me. I liked Meera's selection and now Sohni's. Sometimes, there are songs that other readers post, that bring back age-old memories; or it would be a song you would have never heard before… thereby exposing you to something new. Readers and interactive authors even discuss movies, fashion and miscellaneous other topics. To me, these interactions make the whole process of reading fan-fictions worth way beyond just reading the story.
13	M's 'River' had me remembering my college days and experiences that I had .I remember telling my experiences after each chapters. There was a lot of me in those comments. There are many stories where the writers include a song which reminds me of what was happening around me when the song was on. I would love to post a song video but I just do not know how to but I write the lines of the song or quote from films or from famous authors. (Shakespeare, Charlotte Bronte or Jane Austen to name a few)
14	Some of them definitely leads to reminding of you something in your past or present..a memory too. A college life for example, songs that are shared and time period it belongs to brings up memories of your days. Certain relationships like sibling love or friends bonding. Yes I would agree.

Note. Participants 6, 7, 11, 12, and 15 did not respond.

All the participants agreed to their document experience acting as a trigger for memories. Participants 1 and 9 reiterated the importance "being comfortable" for them to be able to share personal anecdotes and memories. They had mentioned the same in their interviews, too. Participant 2 said that deeply personal memories that got triggered may be just mulled over and not actually shared. This is in line with what Participant 11 had said in her interview about being comfortable sharing only common experiences and nothing very personal. For Participant 10 information and triggering of certain memories are seen to be intertwined.

Sharing in the Small World

The concepts of social ties and sense of community, along with the theme of "being

comfortable" which supports it, has a bearing on the sharing that happens as part of document experience. Social interactions are seen as an important part of the document experience, the reading of fan fiction. The two themes, "being comfortable" and "sharing" point to the role played by the social context in which document experience takes place and the documenting of that experience through the act of posting comments and other related activities. The mediated practices that support the small world context engender a community, which is seen to have an impact on the individual document experience. For example Participant 10 had said "I thoroughly enjoy going down-memory-lane with my fellow readers. In this busy life that we lead today, we hardly get to do that. And this virtual world provides you a platform to do just that" pointing to the sharing that happens as part of interactions in the small world. Participants also spoke about the importance of being comfortable and sense of commonality in sharing memories with social ties. For example, Figure 45 shows a conversation between two women where the first one is sharing a memory that got triggered reading a particular chapter and the second one in reply is sharing her memory of a similar experience.
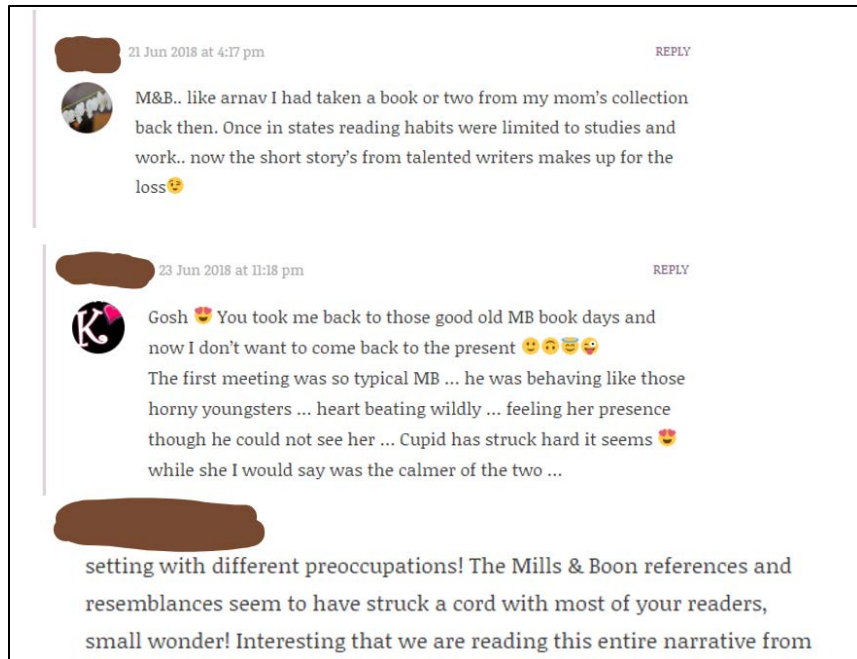
Figure 45

Sharing Similar Experiences

Figure 46 shows comments posted by readers talking about similar memories related to

reading Mills & Boon, the popular romance publishers, referred to as M&Bs, triggered by a

chapter in the story titled "Entangled."

Figure 46

Memories of Reading M & Bs

The above examples underline not only how memory making is manifested as part of document experience through social interactions, but highlights the importance of the small world context in the process, by way of the social ties and sense of community it invokes.

Role of Cultural Knowledge

Cultural knowledge is understood as the ability to recall and use knowledge of culturally specific things like popular culture in one's document experience, especially in interpreting and making meaning of what is been read, along with the social interactions that go along with the experience. Looking at the findings, Participant 7 and 10 talked about their interest and training in music and how that came into play in their document experiences. Whereas Participant 8 spoke how her lack of interest in Indian popular culture often stood in the way of fully participating in discussions. Figure 47 is an example of people posting songs as way of remembering and as part of the document experience.

Figure 47

Posting Songs as a Way of Remembering

Sri, lovely song and so apt. Jen is making us remember all the golden melodies of the 90s right.

★ Liked by 6 people

Reply

Hi Kavi!!! Yessss!!!! You read my mind spot on ! That's why I posted this song! This song is for AR & AN and for us too!

Remembering the good old days how we longed for her updates and chatted countless threads for ARHI! Nostalgia dear!
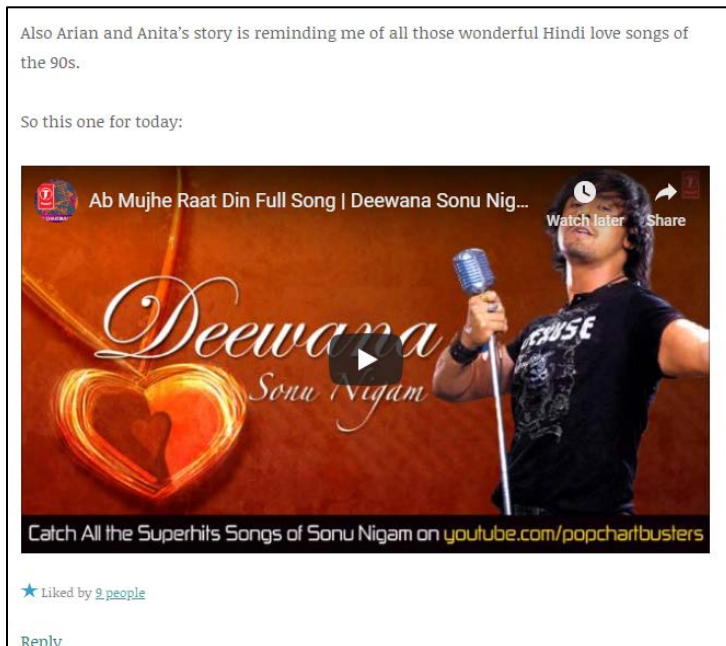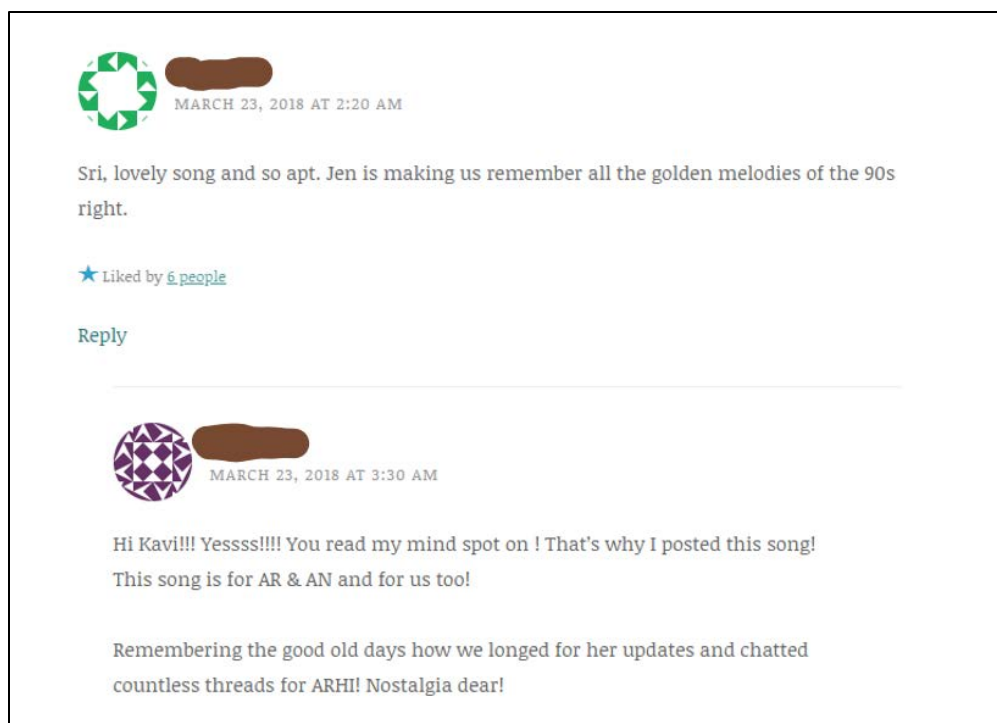
Figure 48 has a three women playing a virtual "antaakshari" or a version of it. The game involves singing four lines of a song that the next person/group has to continue using the last alphabet. The game calls for a wide knowledge of songs as well as the ability to recall it fast. Here the women are posting song lyrics that are on a particular theme, as a response to each other's posts. These show that a certain amount of cultural knowledge is involved in sharing popular culture and memories of it. The comment data in general showed that some people are seen to include other media very frequently as part of their comments. Which, in turn, is seen as a trigger for conversations as well as sharing of memories. One could say that where the sharing is of common cultural memories, especially relating to popular culture, the knowledge of it and the ability to recall it can be viewed as important. But at the same time the data does not show a strong support to make such a claim.

Figure 48

Virtual Antaakshari

Memory Archive or Site of Memory Making?

Adopting the approach followed by Skold (2013) of viewing the blogs and the mediated

practices as documents and thereby putting the analytical lens on them, instead of on their

informativeness or latent information, helped in bringing to light the important role these

documents play in the sociocultural life of the virtual community under study. Further viewing these documents as evocative objects, as "provocations to thought" (Turkle, 2007, p. 5) and also as memory triggers as seen here, reiterates the point made by Skold (2015) that memory-making and documenting should be seen as part of the full range of human information behaviors and studying that behavior in virtual and digital spaces is essential. According to Millar (2006) "memories are generated when we encounter a trigger: an object, a scent, a word, a document" (p. 116). The mediated practices not only result in recording the activities of the community, but more specifically the recording of the flow of the creative activity of writing, as well as the readers' reception of the same. Skold's (2015), drawing on the work of Bowker (2005) termed memory making as the "process in which memories emerge as a result of interactions with recorded information" (Skold, 2015, p. 296). Drawing on this idea and based on the data, memory making in this study is understood as the process by which memories are triggered as a result of document experience, both reading and interactions with others. The memories are also put to work in the interpretive activity that forms part of the document experience. But is this enough to view these sites of activity as serendipitous memory archives? Serendipitous as memory making happens unconsciously in many ways, as a part of the document experience and not by design. There is the question of intent when it comes to an archive, or at least the way it has been traditionally understood. Gibbons (2019) views archivalisation as the "act and process of recordkeeping for multiple purposes, such as witnessing and memorialisation, as well as administration and evidentiality. Archivalisation is not just about creating and managing records but necessarily must concern intent" (p. 2). If we are to go by this definition then there is no intent to archive while there is evidence of memory making and the documenting of the same, which is not carried out consciously or with an express intent.

I drew on the work of Arjun Appadurai (2006) on memory archives in arriving at the concept of a serendipitous memory archive. Appadurai argues that we should move away from seeing archives as the "tomb of the accidental trace, rather than as the material site of the collective will to remember" (p.17). He also talks about migrant archives as ranging from the personal to the collective which usually takes the "form of shared narratives and practices" (p. 21). Any documenting that supports memory can be deliberate, as well as driven by a specific intent for a variety of reasons, or can be unconscious or coincidental (Bowker, 2005). So the "making of communal memory can also be structured by accounts, stories, and states of affairs that are recorded for other reasons than to inform about things past" (Skold, 2015, p. 297). New media platforms like Twitter, blogs, etc., act as repositories that enable and support memory making in virtual communities. They perform as *lieux de mémoire* (Nora, 1989) or sites where memory of virtual communities is embodied, through the retention of the traces left by their members with varying intentions as well as degrees of awareness (Skold, 2015). Mortensen (2020) views Nora's (1989) site of memory as a rearticulating of past in the present, as well as a condensation of collective memory. They may be of physical-material nature as well as discursive or of metaphorical nature like celebrations or even songs (Rejinders, 2011). By keeping these ideas in sight, as far as this study is concerned, memory making and documenting happen, and the documenting mostly happens with the intent to express document experiences as well as by way of interactions with social ties, which again is a part of the overall document experience. The mediated practices as platform specific affordances, support this process and the small world's sites of activity become sites of memory making, too, replicating Nora's (1989) "lieux de création de mémoire." Apart from this, for the individual owners of blogs it becomes a repository of their work, the memories associated with that process which includes the reception

of their work by the readers, who leave their traces through the mediated practices. I posit that these sites of memory making in turn become serendipitous memory archives of these communities of sentiment. One could argue that it does not fall into the strict parameters of what an archive is traditionally understood as, but in what is termed liquid times and considering the networked arena where they are situated, we need to have more fluid interpretations of these terms. Similar to an approach taken by Skold (2013, 2015) and adopted for this study, Sundberg and Kjellman (2018) drew on the works of Susanne Briet, Michael Buckland, Dorothy Smith, Brown and Duguid among others to view a tattoo as a document and the tattooed body as an archive. These ideas of documents and archives go beyond the traditional notions of what are documents and archives. Bowker (2005) says that things can be both objects as well as archives; "as objects they function in the world and as archives they maintain traces of their own past" (p. 36). So serendipitous memory archives are sites of memory making in the virtual world, resulting from the mediated practices enabled by the affordances of technology, and arising as a result of document experiences and social interactions. Future studies should explore how these sites, in this case blogs are viewed by the persons who set it up to host their work, apart from understanding the experience of the creative work as was done in this study. How are these sites viewed at the end of the creative journey by the owners? This would provide more empirical support to the idea of serendipitous memory archives and enable a better definition of it. Here the serendipitous memory archive is also a diasporic archive. Featherstone (2006) drawing on Appadurai's (2003) notion of a memory archive, states that the "diasporic archive" or the "migrant archive" (Featherstone, 2006, p. 594) can be viewed as an attempt to create new collective memories by migrant communities, which are distinguishable from the official memories, whether of the former home or the new host country, through a process of creative

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and imaginative work. This can be viewed as "an active aspiration, a tool for reworking desires and memories, part of a project for sustaining cultural identities" (p. 594). The underlying, implicit idea of a shared cultural identity plays a role in generating a sense of commonality and also a sense of comfort, even though it is not something that is explicitly touched on by my participants.

How can the term serendipitous memory archive be used to look at other instances of memory making and documenting? Figure 49 has a screen clipping of a tweet thread. The original tweet has someone sharing a picture of her grandmother at a protest event against a new citizenship law that was put out by the current Indian government. She's also sharing something of the life story of her grandmother. In reply to the tweet others are sharing similar stories. This is an example of a serendipitous memory archive. Going by the conceptualization of a document used for this study, the tweet and the thread can also be viewed as documents, and the replies to the original tweet can be seen as document experiences.

Figure 49

Serendipitous Memory Archive Tweet Thread

oops_im_a_mistake @oopc92 · 22 Dec 2019

she doesn't have a birth certificate, no records of her family from before her schooling. Can't imagine thinking what would happen to her if she was on the wrong side of this. Go protest, fight #IndiaAgainstCAA_NRC

💬 1   ♻ 29   ♡ 198

Shasvathi Siva @shasvathi · 22 Dec 2019
Replying to @oopc92

SAME story with my grandmother too. Walked to Calcutta from Burma. Lost her father, 3 siblings on the way.

💬 3   ♻ 11   ♡ 84

oops_im_a_mistake @oopc92 · 22 Dec 2019

mannn, we need to find a way to document all their stories!

💬 3   ♻ 2   ♡ 36

Shasvathi Siva @shasvathi · 22 Dec 2019

My grandmother's mom actually started writing her experience a little after they reached india. Last year, the book started to fade a little, my mother rewrote the whole book and now we've digitised it. :) It's heartbreaking, but also so good that we know exactly what happened.

💬 4   ♻   ♡ 33

oops_im_a_mistake @oopc92 · 22 Dec 2019

that's amazing!! 👏 Would love to read it if it's online somewhere and its up for people to read.

💬 2   ♻   ♡ 6

Kavya Chimalgi @KavyaChimalgi · Dec 22, 2019
Replying to @oopc92 and @Revathe92

My grandma and her siblings fled to India from Burma too! She was 13 and the youngest was still in her nappies. Ive been wondering too- what would she have done?

💬   ♻   ♡ 3   ⬆

Jonathan Ananda @JonathanSAnanda · 22 Dec 2019
Replying to @oopc92 @gm_madras

My ammachi told me years ago, before she passed, that she and her family stowed away on a ship from Rangoon to reach Chennai.

💬 1   ♻ 1   ♡ 16

Jonathan Ananda @JonathanSAnanda · 22 Dec 2019

She passed a very long time ago, and I do not remember many of her stories. But, one thing still remains with me. Her last memory of the anti-tamil violence in Burma, she told me, was being in a hand rickshaw and seeing the rickshaw puller beheaded right in front of her.

💬 1   ♻ 3   ♡ 13

2 more replies

نتاشا Natasha @nuts2406 · 22 Dec 2019
Replying to @oopc92

My father in law was born a couple of days before his family fled war torn Burma in 1942. What stories I've heard about how everytime there was an air raid warning, his mother would climb out of the train with two toddlers and a nursing baby and hide under the train.
No documents

Anisha Sheth @anisha_w · Dec 23, 2019

Replying to @oopc92 and @kaaashif

My granny also lived in Burma as a small child and fled with her family coz of world war 2.
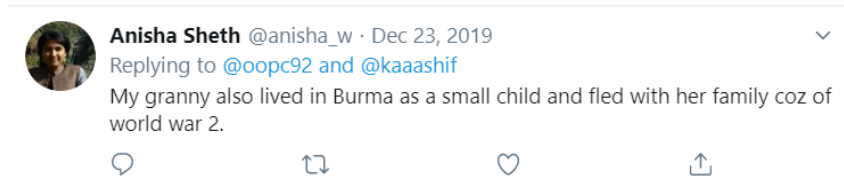
Limitations of the Study

There are several limitations to this study. The small purposive sample makes the study not generalizable which is a disadvantage often ascribed to qualitative research. Since the study is focused on women belonging to a particular culture, the study results may be different from the immigration experiences of women belonging to other cultures. In addition, there could be differences pertaining to age and educational background which might have an impact on the phenomenon under study and may not be adequately addressed due to the small sample size. There might also be differential experience between those who migrated as adults and those who migrated as a child or who were born to Indian parents outside of India. Though I had one participant who was different in terms of experience because of having been born to Indian parents outside India, this may not be enough to address differential experiences in a substantial way. The majority of the participants fell in the age range 40-49, followed by those in the age range 50 and above. In addition, WordPress is the only platform that was looked at. These two factors, the age of the participants and the fact that WordPress is an older platform can have an impact on how the experience is viewed and expressed through the mediated practices. In addition, I feel if all the interviews had been audio ones, it might have brought out more out of the participants about their experiences. I could see the difference in the responses on prodding at the second stage of the email interviews. I feel a longitudinal study looking at the entire process of documentation (writing of the story), covering more than one platform, with interviews done at intervals throughout, would provide more insight not just on the documentation experience

part, but also in life cycle of information grounds as part of small worlds. To address my role as an insider and any bias that can arise from it, I used theoretical framework to guide by analysis, but this could have had the effect of not allowing the data to fully speak for itself.

Summary

In this chapter, I looked at the research findings in the context of the research questions. A model of a reconceptualized virtual small world is presented as well as a preliminary model for looking at writing as a document experience.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Reflections on a Virtual Adda

In the middle of February 2020, a social tie from the small world, K, recommended to me an ongoing story hosted on Wattpad. It was not fan fiction, but she felt that I should give it a shot. She had mentioned how her husband and kids were annoyed with her for been stuck to her phone while she was reading the story. I read it and in turn recommended it to others. S who writes a story herself, posted a note on her blog recommending the story to her readers. Some of us who were reading it, wished we had a space to discuss it, as all of us found Wattpad interface not conducive to having conversations. At some point in the last five years, I had created a blog on WordPress, mainly to understand its workings. I had no inclination towards blogging of any kind and as such had kept it private, but it didn't stop the requests I have gotten for access to my private blog. I felt maybe it is time to put it to use and decided I'll open it up as an "Adda" for us, to talk about this story which had all of us in a state. In the background, there were increasing news reports of a virus which was creating havoc in China. Some weeks down the line, in the middle of March, we knew that this was more serious than we had all assumed, and we found ourselves cooped inside our houses. Figure 50 is a clip of a post I had made on my blog in March. On the blog, my posts consisted of pictures mostly of my parents' garden back home in Kerala, India, along with pictures taken during vacations, and those of my cat niece Paru. In an increasingly scary time, we hung out not just discussing the story, but asked after each other, worried about our families in India, shared music, movies/series/story recommendations and recipes. In the beginning if we didn't see someone around for couple of days, we worried. S, whose younger son had fallen and broken a tooth, told us how worried she was about taking him

to the dentist. K's mother–in–law and couple of other family members in India, tested positive

for the coronavirus, and we all hoped they'll get better, and thankfully they did. At the same

time, I was working on this dissertation and somewhere I felt that my study looking at these

online spaces, could have something to offer at a time when we find ourselves at home, without

any definite idea about when things will go back to normal. The joy one can find hanging around

with people you have not seen in real life, but still connect to on the basis of shared leisure

interests, and common ethnic background. When I'll look back at 2020, my blog, a personal

memory object (van Dijck, 2007), will hold so many memories of what it was like to live

through a time which felt dystopian, and something none of us had imagined living through even

in our worst nightmares. As something that helped us amidst the doom and gloom, enabling

through mediated practices, the sharing of things that were familiar and had the comfort of home.

Figure 50

Example of One of My Personal Blog Postings

Small Worlds of Sentiment

Hegde (2014) looks at food blogging by women in the South Asian diaspora and opines that their blogs "serves as a cultural form that works within a circulatory matrix where new configurations of cosmopolitan sociality are being constituted" (p. 89). Along with circulating "specific types of culinary knowledge in a mediated space" (Hegde, 2016, p. 69), the food blogs also provide a space for assembling transnational connections. Drawing on van Dijck (2007), blogs maintained by the diasporic women are seen as personal memory objects. The food blogs enable the establishment of intimate social networks, leading to the creation of "communities of sentiment." Supporting the observations of Hegde (2016), the online spaces in this study shed light on an aspect of the everyday life of women belonging to the Indian diaspora, while highlighting the transnational nature of diaspora spaces on the Web. This is also in line with what Arjun Appadurai (1996) noted about the enabling of collective reading, criticism and pleasure by mass media resulting in the creation of groups "that begin to imagine and feel things together" forming "communities of sentiment" (p. 8). According to Bhalla (2016), "in the twenty-first century, the practice of reading continues to be an expression of our associations and of our desire to forge particular communities, both imagined and real" (p. 1). These could be communities of fantasy fans, romance readers, literary connoisseurs, foodies among others. In the same way meaning is derived from their literature of choice by readers, the meaning in turn can be "circumscribed by readers' aspirations for particular affiliations" (p. 1). The community of sentiment formed by Indian women with transnational networks connecting them, around a shared interest in reading and writing fan fiction can be seen in this light.

Viewed through the lens of LIS literature, this study adds to growing volume of studies that look at immigrant and refugee populations, but of which not many have taken a diaspora

perspective. Though studies by Quirke (2014) and Allard (2015) have noted the importance of transnational networks in the lives of immigrants and refugees in their settlement experiences, these networks continue to be a part of immigrant communities throughout their lives. Studying diaspora communities and their everyday cultural practices such as media consumption, eating ethnic food or even reading shed light on how the same is used to "define a sense of identity and establish sites of community *for themselves*" (Bhalla, 2016, p. 128). This should extend to sites of community on the Web also. Quirke (2015) looking at the importance of leisure amongst Afghan refugee youth, noted the relevance of information grounds in studying leisure settings. Though she points out how "social conditions such as trust, inclusion and a welcoming environment are established in these settings, or how the characteristics of members (such as language, ethnicity or race) may affect information seeking and sharing" has not been determined (p. 243). In this study, the sites of activity of the small world can be seen as information grounds and the role of social ties and the importance of being comfortable in sharing information and other things are clearly supported. The ease that comes from a sense of commonality was pointed out by all the participants. "Shared leisure within one's immigrant or ethno-cultural community, for instance, may provide opportunities for bonding social capital, the transmission of linguistic and cultural traditions to the second generation or other opportunities for cultural maintenance" (Quirke, 2015, p. 241). In this sense, there is a potential role that diasporic communities can play in "welcoming newcomers and shaping their leisure" (p. 241). Taking a diaspora perspective and looking at the everyday life activities of immigrant communities, including leisure activities, would open up more avenues to understand how information is experienced. Future studies should look at diaspora communities as this would definitely help in designing services for incoming immigrant and refugee populations. This study

also highlights the importance of looking at the gendered nature of migration, and how the same is negotiated by women.

<p style="text-align:center">Documents, Evocative Objects and Sites of Memory Making</p>

This study proceeded on the idea that any object or artifact could have information latent in it, and irrespective of the form or medium, a certain context could determine whether an object or artifact is informative (Buckland, 1991; Sundberg & Kjellman, 2018). I also adopted the approach of Skold (2013) in studying virtual gaming communities, putting the analytical lens on documents instead of their latent information, thereby bringing to light the role played by these documents in the sociocultural life of virtual communities. This is also an approach adopted by Urban (2020) in looking at experiences with documents in a 3D story telling world. Based on the results of this study, adopting a document approach enables one to see all the ways in which information can be experienced, freeing us from only considering that which can help meet an objective or fill a gap. Taking this approach further and viewing documents as evocative objects, supports Skold's (2015) finding of memory making as a "process in which memories emerge as a result of interactions with recorded information" (p. 296). Memory making and documenting of the memories occur as part of participants document experience and gives further credence to the argument put forward by Skold (2015) that memory-making and documenting should be seen as part of the full range of human information behavior, and studying the same in virtual and digital spaces is essential. The study also supports the assertion made by Worrall and Hyduk (2016) that information sharing often lead to the creation and invocation of cultural memories. In this study, the sites of activity of the small world also functions as sites of memory-making. This could be an aspect to be considered in future studies of online information grounds. I feel this has an implication for digital collections and archives of various kinds, and how by utilizing the

affordances of technology, document experiences could be recorded to become part of rich collections. To illustrate this, I'm using UNT's Portal to Texas History patent collection (see Figure 51). In my experience of working as a teaching assistant/fellow for the INFO 5223 metadata course, I've often found myself fascinated by the patent records, and have wondered many a time, if someone would have these things in their houses, or is there someone who could tell stories about these people who were the patent holders?

Figure 51

Portal to Texas History Patent Metadata Record Example
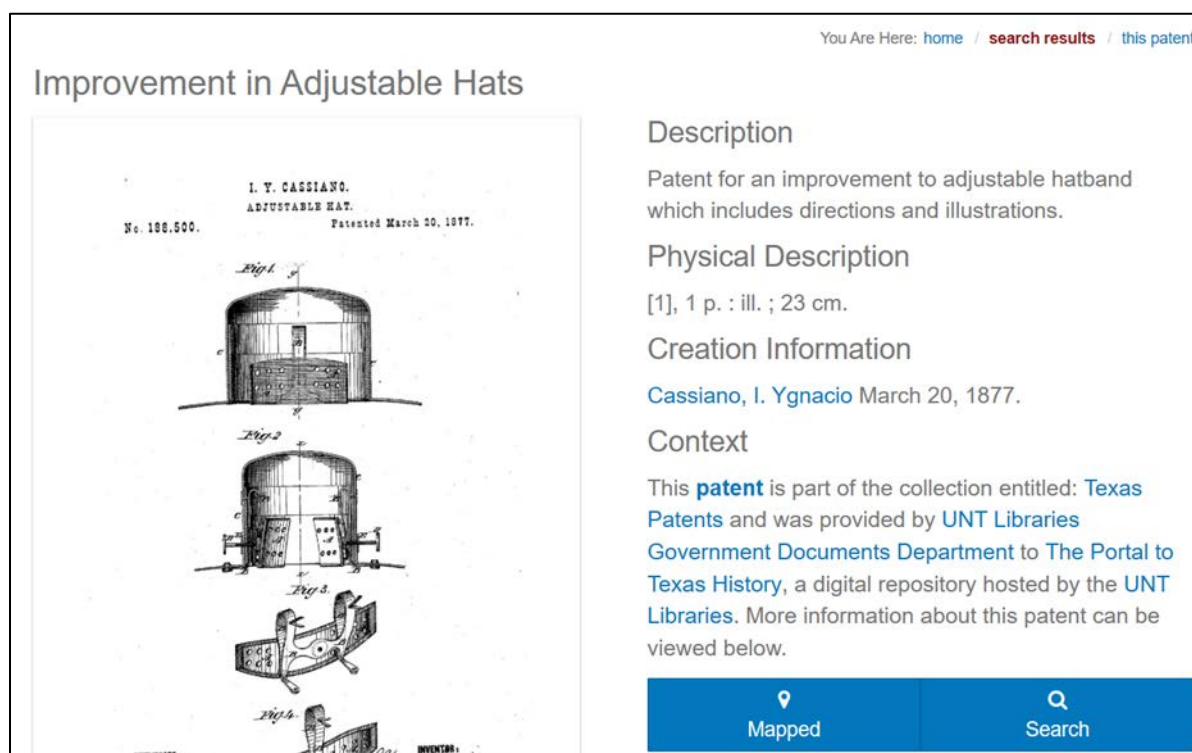
The Portal to Texas History has obviously a presence on social media, and on clicking a random picture on their Facebook page, I found one comment. Most of the posts are of photographs which are part of the collection. In Figure 52 we can view the photograph as a document and evocative object, and the comment posted as documenting of someone's experience of the same object.

Figure 52

Example of Portal to Texas History Facebook Page

A similar example from this study is shown in Figure 53, a comment posted on a blog, talking about a song that is part of the narrative, in the form of a personal anecdote, a memory.

Figure 53

Comment Containing a Personal Anecdote

That song – *Paani Paani re*… I have one of my fondest memories associated with that song. Gulzar *saab* was here at our campus several years back. He was here for a special lecture. I was a young fan of his and one of the organisers took pity on his "Mam's" daughter and asked me to come up on stage; he took it a bit too far and asked me to sing. Always the weird one, at 15 I picked this song to sing. I received a pat on the back from the poet himself – he said he was glad his words found meaning even with the younger generations. I think he was just being kind but that was one of the best days of my life. Sigh. I still feel it was perhaps a dream!

The Europeana Library's world war collection is an example of collecting oral history, which made the personal anecdotes relating to the world war collected on social media a part of the collection itself. What if the affordances of technology that support mediated practices is

built into collections, enabling the documenting of expressions of experiences? Extending the notion of document as used in this study and that of evocative object to digital collections would open up interesting avenues to study various experiences of these collections.

Fiction, Personally Meaningful Activities and Information

There has been a steady increase in studies that have looked at leisure within information science. Even if it is "personally cherished and socially important" (Hartel, 2005, p. 313), leisure is still viewed as insignificant, nebulous and without structure. Kari and Hartel (2007) called for the study of that which is pleasurable and profound and along the same lines Gorichanaz (2019a) called for information studies into personally meaningful activities. He defines personally meaningful information activities as those carried out by a person "freely and for their own purposes, and which reinforce the person's senses of efficacy, value, and self-worth" (p. 1304). The results of this study show that fan fiction reading and writing can be seen as a personally meaningful leisure activity, in which information is experienced in a multitude of ways. Ross (1999) who looked at what went into the choosing of books in reading for pleasure, found that the kind of experiences that were desired went into the choice and alongside things like browsing, and serendipity played a part in how the books were chosen. In addition to the question how books transform readers, she found that it provided connection, solace, and awoke new perspectives. These are supported by this study, too. Doty and Broussard (2017) called for the viewing of fiction as informative, and doing so helps better address problems in information science theory like the "frustrated attempts to define *information*, the (generally hidden) gendered character of information science and information behavior research, the misguided conduit metaphor and an overemphasis on cognition at the expense of practice, documents and materiality" (p. 61). Viewing fiction as informative also helps in better understanding of

information behavior. I see this study as an attempt in this direction, adding to the studies that

have looked at activities that are found to be meaningful, without being constricted by any

clearly stated goal.

APPENDIX

BASIC SET OF QUESTIONS USED FOR INTERVIEWS

Questions for Interviews – Writer

- How long have you been outside India?

- What was the reason for your migration? Say studies, work or as a dependent.

- How many countries' have you lived in?

- Can you describe your leisure activities? I mean everything, say reading, listening to music, watching movies, television. Has it changed over the years? How different is it from your time in India?

- Would you say your leisure interests have changed over the time you have spent outside India? What impact has your experience of migration had on it?

- Describe your experience of being a part of a fan community? Are you a part of any other fandom apart from IPK? If so, how is it different from this?

- Describe your experience associated with reading fan fiction. Have you read fan fiction apart from IPK related or any amateur fiction let's say? Has it made any difference to your leisure reading in general?

- What made you take up writing fan fiction yourself? Is it something you're trying for the first time or you have always dabbled in writing?

- Describe your experience of writing. Tell me some particular instances, including how you felt. What do you draw from when you write? Describe the process. Include things like any research that you do.

- What is the impact of the interaction with your readers like? Can you describe few particular instances? How do you see it in the context of writing and sharing the same?

- As you are aware many of the fellow readers, and writers, too, are part of the diaspora. How would you describe your experience of been part of that world, of interacting with people who are similar in some ways, in terms of life experience?

- Can you talk about your experience of reading fanfiction, especially sharing your thoughts with other readers? Does it have an impact on you as a writer and if so, can you describe what it is like.

Questions for Interviews – Reader

- How long have you been outside India? What was the reason for your migration? Say studies, work or as a dependent. How many countries' have you lived in?

- Can you describe your leisure activities? I mean everything, say reading, listening to music, watching movies, television. Has it changed over the years? How different is it from your time in India?

- Would you say your leisure interests have changed over the time you have spent outside India? What impact has your experience of migration had on it?

- Describe your experience of being a part of a fan community? Are you a part of any other fandom apart from IPK? If so, how is it different from this?

- Describe your experience associated with reading fan fiction. Have you read fan fiction apart from IPK related or any amateur fiction? Has it made any difference to your leisure reading in general?

- As you are aware many of the fellow readers, and writers, too, are part of the diaspora. How would you describe your experience of been part of that world, of interacting with people who are similar in some ways, in terms of life experience.

- What is experience of been a reader and sharing your thoughts about what you read with others like?

- How would you describe yourself as a reader? Especially in terms of sharing your thoughts, and interacting with others. Do you think that has an impact on how you read and interpret? If so, how would you describe it, can you give me any specific instances that you can think of, where an interaction had an effect, positive or negative?

- Can you describe how you go about comments? Do you like including music to your comments or any other media?

- How do you see your interactions with others in the diaspora in terms of sharing cultural memories?

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