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# Aura of Digitalization and Digital Humanism in Tamil Celluloid Screen in the Twenty First Century

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## Abstract

*This paper highlights the applications and uses of technology in the pitch such as digitalization and digital humanism. The former refers to the process of converting information, processes, or activities into a digital form and the latter refers to the outlook that focuses on the ethical and human-centric view of interface with digital technologies. Both are considered as boons for the needy, whereas it is the other way round for those who do not have conviction toward that. The role of technology integrated with digitalization and digital humanism will be appraised in the paper with reference to the select Tamil movies. The sample movies select for this article do not stand as standing testimony either to flaunt or to flounce technology. This discussion will touch on the digitalization in real life situations and portrayal of digital humanism on celluloid screen.*

**Keywords:** Digitalization, Digital Humanism, Technology, Digital Environment, Social Media, Gen Z, Humanoids

## Introduction

The term Digitalization is not amicable to the Generations X (born between 1965 – 1980) and Y (1982 and 1994), as it is for Gen Z (born after 1995). Gen Z has already born into the digital globe and is the spontaneous user of technologies. Moreover Gen Z learns to navigate a tablet, ahead of learning to speak (Gibson, 2016). As a result, their mastery toward digitalization creates a niche. Handling technology, and its companion, digitalization is a cake walk for youths. Digital humanity is the notion concerned with junction of computing and the disciplines of humanities. Digital humanism evolves to fill the void that is created by humans in rendering support to the fellow humans. In the recent years humans rely on Digital Humanism (DH) either for moral support or for physical help. Technology has brought in so many inventions in all walks of life. Technology evolves its role from a substitute to a counterpart in the life of humans. That is, its origin has begun with the intention to reduce human labour now it has reached to the extent of replacing humans. DH has gained reputation in the early twenty first century, mainly because of its visibility given in social media (Gold, 2012). The objective of DH is to make the humans adapted toward the digital environment; with the notion that it will serve us. In the year 2023, the upsurge of robots in

domestic domain is enormous. This paper analyses the deployment of digital humanities in real life and celluloid screens with reference to select Tamil movies “Google Kuttappa” (2022) directed by Guru Saravanan, “Irumbu Thirai” (2018) directed by P.S. Mithran, and “Enthiran”(2010) directed by Shankar. The research highlights the potential threats posed by humanoids or robots primarily and will also analyse how humans are carried away by emotions and create a bond towards DH, risking their lives.

Emergence of digitalization in the field of Education and commercial sectors has reached its summit in the post-covid period. Obstacles and limitations in in-person meeting during lock down period between 2020 and 2022, is the prime reason for the upheaval of digital humanities and digitalization. Alpha generation adapts to this environment in a moment. They stay away from print medium. Digital content seems to be enticing for them, for it does not demand much of their attention and memory. Digitalism reduces their labour and saves time. They trust it, because digital technology has pervaded in the society, during their birth. As a result they become digital natives, who know all nuances in handling digitalization.

### **Objective**

The paper analyses the role of technology in two capacities; one in digitalization and the other in digital humanities. Technology evolves mainly for the comfort of humans. In the early days it spreads its tentacles in the field of communication to keep the relationships closer and convey the message from one place to another in an instant. In due course, there is a transformation that technology is used as a substitute for humans. In that case, digitalization has embarked its wide use in household chores to mitigate the workload of females. Later it replaces humans in industrial sectors. It not only serves as a minion but also does the role of a companion. The paper also aims to highlight the affinity between humans and humanoids with reference to the select aforementioned Tamil movies. The article has perused the execution of technology in the life of common men and how has it flourished the life of individuals and perished them until they are aware of its imminent danger.

### **Methodology**

The paper comprised introduction about the article, stating how the broad umbrella term technology, when integrated with digitalization and digital humanism brought in metamorphosis in the lives of humans. Objective of the research article was explained with reference to the select movies. The summary of the movies was narrated for an easy understanding of story line. The discussion was designed in such a way to give a vivid picture of the fervor that the present generation has got toward technology enhanced life style. Challenges encountered by humans in the technology pervaded society were also tinted. Limitations of this research article were also listed out. This was followed by literature review with the research carried out between 2016 and 2023 irrespective of magazines and journals. The conclusion was drawn with a suggestion that could be realized by all individuals to incorporate ethics while taking endeavours driven by technology.

### **Summary**

The select movies picturised how the Artificial Intelligence (AI) powered robots by name Kuttappa in “ Google Kuttappa” and Chitti in “Enthiran” have changed the life of a father, named Subramani, the protagonist and a scientist by name Vasikaran respectively. The movie “Irumbu Thirai” has pinned up the message to the common man, how digitalization siphones off innocent lay men and make them victims through phishing by using technology as their lash to harness the victims. The research also focused on the usage of technology not only for the construction but also for depletion.

## Discussion

Gen X always values human relationship. On the contrary, Alpha generation and Gen Z dislike the glitches that erupt out of family relationship. They want freedom and dislike to be intervened by relatives. In an interview with Able Joseph, Founder and CEO of House of Aisle (Hindustan Times, dated Jan 29, 2023) HT Lifestyle, he revealed that,

Gen-Z's journey with self-love and setting personal boundaries has redefined what they seek out of dating entirely. For the newest generation of daters, being single is much more intentional than before. Gaining self-confidence and self-worth independently are prioritised over depending on a partner to fulfill those needs.

This is mainly because they prioritise their privacy and individual self. Their love life is taken as a survey by *India Times*, dated October 21, 2023 revealed the view thus:

As Generation Z makes more values-driven dating decisions, they are emphasizing putting themselves first, setting boundaries, and expressing their true selves.

This is one of the reasons, they rely much on social media and their friendship sprouts mainly on social media platform. This makes them become machines and think like machines without empathizing their parents' emotions in their old age.

The protagonist Subramani's son in the movie "Google Kuttappa" bought a robot for his father with the intention that it would be a caretaker of his father in his absence. The robot was enhanced with artificial intelligence provided with features such as ability to do housekeeping work inclusive of cooking and also serves as a mobile to stay connected with friends via social media platforms. The father was neither surprised nor shocked to see a Digital human in his home. Rather, he disliked the robot because he strongly believed that a machine could not be the replacement for his son. The father did not have intimacy with his son, even then the presence of his son at home, gave solace to him. On contrary to the father's opinion the son firmly believed that instead of being left alone in his old age at least the presence of the robot will make him and his father stay connected.

Not all the humans think alike. That's why; technology fails and makes humans victims. The affinity between Subramani and Kuttappa, the robot takes a turn when the robot did rituals to the urn which held the ash of his wife. The protagonist did not mind the robot when it served him but the sentiments that he had toward his dead wife had ignited his trust toward the robot. He asked the robot regarding the rituals. The robot replied, "I have googled it". Nothing matters, except the sentiments for the protagonist. He started caring the robot like his son. The relationship grew stronger. The entire village was attracted towards the robot. At one juncture, the village had selfie with the robot on its arrival. Digital humanism entices all. No one can stay away from it. It has the magnetic pull, which attracts even the uneducated.

The second movie "Enthiran" focuses on technology driven society in war field. The motto of the scientist, Vasikaran was to save humans from casualties that they faced. The humanoid, Chitti saved the heroine of the movie from villains in a fantabulous way; it did household chores in an orphanage and impressed every one. It coerced its entire task in a short span. The humanoid was admired by everyone especially by girls. The robot, that we came across in the movie "Google Kuttappa" had a typical look of a robot. It did not have any features like humans, whereas Chitti robot had features like humans, especially like its creator scientist Dr. Vasikaran. So it had additional charm and charisma in its appearance.

## Challenges Faced

Even though robots are friendly they lack emotions and empathy. They are subordinates to their masters but when they fail to apply discreet skills, it costs the life of a human. Subramani had too much of hesitation to get accustomed with Kuttappa, the robot, but once the robot did all his needs,

he copes with it. His gelling with the robot has made him look into its horoscope. He treated it typically like his son. He stopped missing his real son. Even then one day news of mishap reached the local authority alleged that the robot was the cause of the murder of his brother-in-law. He took the robot under custody. Subramanian's son, Aadhi released the robot by the potential order issued by the central government of India.

Like Subramani's robot, Kuttappa there were many robots, sold across the globe by the same company. A casualty was reported in Germany, because of one such robot. So a warning was issued to all the stake holders. On account of that, the robot named as Kuttappa by villagers was asked to be dismantled. Despite the warning, the protagonist's affinity toward the robot did not ward off. Aadhi, once saw his father's robot being hacked by his company people. And he was triggered by the unethical practice of his colleagues. Besides during another incident, towards the climax, the robot's in-built security reflex activated its defense mode, and attacked Subramani's son Aadhi. That juncture made Subramani realize his mistake. He realized the negative impact and decided to discard the robot. The story unfurled the note that machine is a machine which cannot be replaced entirely with humans.

In "Enthiran", until the Chitti robot remained as a machine it was human friendly. It had irrational impulses when Vasikaran tried to reprogramed it to have emotions. It had connived with the villain character, yet another genius like Vasikaran, Professor Bohra. There lie the flaws of technology and its master that is human. The hold over technology is left to human discretion.

The movie "Irumbu Thirai" opened up the bottle neck situation, that majority of the individuals encounter while handling technology. Technology saves much of our time and user friendly too, only if we know the nuances. Or else we become the scapegoat for technology. The protagonist Kathiravan and his father Rengaswamy met with financial crisis because of the adversity they had faced while withdrawing money from ATM. The statement was issued to them that money was debited but they had not received any. The protagonist was an army official. Even then he had faced odd situations to resolve the issues. Since he was a Gen Z, he succeeded in tracing the monsters behind the scam, but at the cost of his father's life. There was a wide network for which there was a leader who controlled all the Black-hat hackers (unethical hackers or security crackers). He assertively said that, "Yes, we siphon off money from people. We will be trapped or traced only when we do massively. We deduct less money from many people, so that people won't file a case or launch a complaint for meager amount". The protagonist got his turn to revenge the black-hat hacker by using the same technology. This story is an eye opener for all the audience. We should be cautious of our move with technology. Nothing can be taken for granted.

Replacing humans with technology, such as deploying robots in executing certain tough tasks won't be successful all the time. Of course, robots reduce human labour, but they cannot be trusted at the grass root level. They should be monitored to avoid risks that we do not anticipate. A latest happening published in India TV news channel dated October 16, 2023, has released shocking information that a robot in South Korea misidentified a man as a vegetable box. It was not programmed to be sensed during its task of lifting boxes and keeping them in the conveyor belt. The employee checked the sensor operations ahead of its test run. The robot pushed him against the conveyor belt and it ended in a casualty. Machines lack discrete skills, though artificial intelligence-powered robots, they cannot serve as substitutes for humans to the core. This real time incident gives us a hint that technology should be handled with care because it is fragile as well as tough.

### **Literature Survey**

The escalation of activity in digital humanities kick started in the early 21st century. The comprehensive definition for DH was engagement between humanities and information technology

through different modes of engagement (Patrik, 2010). The digital was a way to the qualitative improvement of the humanist's moral goal (Eileen et al. 2015).

In his book *Crowd Sourcing in the Digital Humanities*, Susan et. al. (2015) analyses how online activities have to be controlled. Kim Gallon (2016) opined that crossroads of technology with humanistic fields had to set boundaries and demarcations. Digital humanism dispensed complex relationships between people and machines in digital times. It acknowledged the potential of Information Technology. DH also dominated the complex interplay of technology and humankind in the direction of an enhanced society and life fully respecting universal human rights (Werthner, 2022).

### Limitations

As the works of art researched are movies, the dialogues uttered by the characters were translated as per the discretion of the researcher. The researcher has concentrated only on a few incidents from the three movies which served as ERCs (explain with reference to the context) to be quoted in the place wherever necessary.

### Conclusion

Technology is bane as well as boon. The technology that costs money and life at times saves us miraculously. One recent incident, the trapping of forty one workers in Uttarkhand tunnel and their relief after seventeen days without any human loss is an apt illustration for the use of technology. It is observed that there should have been an escaped tunnel built in that place before the tunnel work started and negligence of this, resulted in the trappings of forty one lives. This incident strikes an alarm to all our future endeavours that we should anticipate all consequences and proactive measure also has to be taken at the right time. Expansion of technology in various arenas gets us into certain adventures like this; however we need to acknowledge that the same technology acts as a guardian angel.

Anne Beathe Tvinnereim, the Norwegian Minister of International Development shared her perspective on India's digital journey in her article published in *The Hindu*, November 15, 2023 that "India has been able to issue digital identities to almost all citizens". This has given them door way to "social services, digital economy, government support services and more". She has also acclaimed the social protection provided to every Indian. She has concluded her article stating that India's blue print will be set as bench mark by other countries to "leapfrog the digital divide just like India has". So taking the reins of technology for safe digital journey is everyone's concern.

The research does not have any findings as such but a prominent suggestion is given that Petrarch humanism ought to be implemented while expanding and implementing Digital Humanism. It advocates moralizing practical approach to knowledge as useful to men, to improve human nature, inculcate human virtues.

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