

KERALA SOCIETY AND THE DIMENSIONS OF ETHNICITY: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

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Kerala is a multiethnic, multilingual, and multireligious state that is located in southern India, between the Arabian Sea and the Western Ghats. The ethnic groups of Kerala society are referred to by the words “Keralite” and “Malayali,” where “Keralite” denotes membership in Kerala society and “Malayali” denotes membership in the linguistic ethnicity. The alteration of pre-colonial social edifices and the impacts of colonialism are contentious issue among sociologists, historians, linguists, cultural anthropologists, and other academics. The relationship between foreign power and transformation is examined in the process of ethnic alteration during colonialism. This study uses a qualitative research approach, combining historical, sociological, and anthropological perspectives to understand the dimensions of ethnicity in Kerala society. The conceptual framework integrates theoretical insights from various disciplines to analyse the complex dynamics of ethnicity in Kerala. The article challenges the distinction between “natural” and “manufactured” ethnicity, emphasizing the boundary-maintenance method as the significant issue in social stratification based ethnic groups; and emphasizes the importance of considering power dynamics and social hierarchies that underpin ethnic relations and how these dynamics shape the experiences of different ethnic groups.

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