



THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON THE FORMATION OF CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS: A REVIEW FROM THE SOCIO-POLITICAL AND CULTURAL SPHERE OF KERALA

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Abstract: It is a fact that social media has a crucial influence on the modern political landscape. Today's social media profiles can significantly influence public opinion formation and shape political and social dynamics. The Accessibility of social media among the public is increasing day by day due to the advancement of Innovation and technology. Various social media platforms can provide a voice and representation for marginalized groups in society. This digital era is creating a political environment where general class consciousness is more easily possible than ever before. The purpose of this paper is to assess this kind of class consciousness that can be formed through social media profiles, particularly in the social context of Kerala. Also, it attempts to introduce the new concepts of marginalized sessions and their passions towards new forms of artistic and literary elements, which help shape the so-called new normal political consciousness. The cultural sphere has supported many movements that have led to revolutionary changes in the political soil of Kerala. The theatre movements that were popular at that time played a major role in contributing greatly to the growth of Left Politics in Kerala. The direct artistic and cultural movements of that era are now becoming an indirect social influence through digital media, such as social media. This paper examines the above factors through Vedan's music in the context of Kerala.

Keywords: - Social media, Marginalized groups, Class consciousness, Left Politics.

INTRODUCTION

In a social environment where rapid changes are occurring in all areas of life, traditional media concepts are also adapting to the times. The advent of social media poses a threat to the undisputed integrity of the visual, audio, and print media. Like other media, social media is becoming more popular. Moreover, there is also the freedom for individuals to openly express their ideas, opinions, agreements, and disagreements and to share them with various circles without hindrance. This shift has transformed ordinary individuals into content creators and opinion leaders, significantly decentralizing the flow of information. As a result, news and narratives are no longer controlled solely by established media institutions but are shaped collaboratively in real time. This democratization of communication has both empowered voices previously excluded from mainstream platforms and introduced new challenges in verifying authenticity and maintaining accountability.

Encyclopaedia Britannica defines social media as "Social media, a form of mass media communications on the Internet through which users share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content."¹ We can see on social media the new relationships and communities that modern man creates by utilizing the infinite possibilities of the internet.

In Kerala's social scenario can see is a high rate of social media consumption and widespread implementation of digitalization of governance. Popular platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube are commonly used for political criticism and disagreement. It is a major drawback that some political debates create ideological upheavals among youngsters in Kerala often end up in various forms of apolitical statements. The reality is that this is creating a lack of participation in electoral processes and a lack of faith in the fundamental value system provided by democracy and the rule of law.

¹ Written and fact-checked by the editors of the Encyclopaedia Britannica
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POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION AND THE RISE OF POLITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS: THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Political socialization plays a crucial role in shaping individuals' understanding of politics and their role within society. It's a lifelong process where people acquire political attitudes, beliefs, values, and behaviours through various agents, including:²

- *Family*: Transmits political values from one generation to the next, with children often adopting their parents' or guardians' political beliefs and behaviours.
- *Educational Institutions*: Provides formal instruction on political systems, civics, and democratic values, increasing loyalty to the country through nationalist ideals and discussions about leaders.
- *Peer Groups*: Influences individuals through discussions and shared experiences, potentially changing their moral outlook.
- *Mass Media*: Shapes public opinion by presenting political news, debates, and narratives, influencing how people understand and engage with politics.
- *Professional Organizations*: Communicates political values and sentiments among members through claims and actions.
- *Religious Organizations*: Indirectly influences political views, especially in societies where religion plays a significant role.

Social media has become a significant factor in political socialization, particularly among younger demographics. Its role includes:^{3,4,5}

- *Accessibility and Reach*: Enables politicians to communicate directly with constituents, bypassing traditional media barriers.
- *Amplification of Political Messages*: Facilitates the spread of information and mobilization of support through viral content and hashtags.
- *Engagement and Interaction*: Fosters a sense of direct interaction between voters and politicians through comments, likes, and shares.
- *Mobilization and Advocacy*: Organizes protests, rallies, and voting drives, overcoming traditional barriers to activism.

However, despite its transformative potential, social media also presents significant challenges in the context of political consciousness and public discourse. One major concern is the creation of echo chambers, where users are primarily exposed to content that aligns with their existing beliefs. This limits exposure to diverse perspectives and hinders meaningful, constructive debate. Additionally, the rapid spread of misinformation on social media can distort public understanding of important social and political issues, especially when false claims are shared widely before they can be fact-checked. Furthermore, social media algorithms often prioritize content that reinforces a user's views, which can lead to increased political polarization. As individuals become more entrenched in their positions, dialogue becomes more difficult, and society risks becoming fragmented, undermining the very democratic engagement social media aims to promote.⁶

To effectively build political consciousness, individuals must adopt a proactive approach to their political learning and engagement. This begins with diversifying information sources—seeking out news, analysis, and commentary from a range of platforms and ideological perspectives to develop a well-rounded understanding of political issues. Equally important is the ability to critically evaluate the information consumed, examining the credibility of sources, identifying potential biases, and distinguishing between facts and opinions. This analytical mindset empowers individuals to make informed judgments rather than being passively influenced by dominant narratives.

Engaging in constructive debates further enhances political awareness. Open and respectful discussions encourage the exchange of ideas, promote empathy, and help individuals understand differing viewpoints. In today's digital era, social media plays a crucial role in this process by serving as a space for dialogue and dissemination of political content. However, understanding the complex interplay between political socialization and social media is essential. While social platforms can be powerful tools for awareness and mobilization, users must navigate them wisely to avoid misinformation and echo chambers. By doing so, individuals can contribute meaningfully to democratic discourse and participate more effectively in the political process.

SOCIAL MEDIA INTERACTION IN KERALA: AN OVERVIEW

Social media has emerged as a powerful tool in shaping public opinion and influencing societal change, particularly in regions like Kerala where digital literacy is high and political awareness is deeply rooted. In the socio-political and cultural context of Kerala, social media platforms can play a crucial role in fostering class consciousness among the population. One of the key contributions of social media is its ability to identify and amplify marginalized voices. Communities that have historically been excluded from mainstream narratives now have a space to express their concerns, share their lived experiences, and demand justice. This visibility fosters empathy, encourages solidarity, and initiates broader conversations about inequality and systemic oppression.

Moreover, the rapid and wide-reaching nature of information dissemination through social media helps raise awareness about social and economic issues affecting various classes and communities. It allows users to access real-time updates, share analytical content, and highlight injustices that might otherwise go unnoticed. In addition, social media plays a vital role in mobilization and activism by enabling the organization of protests, campaigns, and collective action, often bypassing traditional gatekeepers. It also

² 'Political Socialization: What shapes your political views?'- Avijith Biswas, School of Political Science, April 9, 2025

³ 'The influence of Political Socialization on Civic Management' – Dr. Kavitha D, © 2019 IJRAR January 2019, Volum6, Issue 1

⁴ 'Role of social media in modern politics' © 2025 | Political Awareness Super PAC

⁵ 'Social media's role in shaping political consciousness and activism'- Rajesh S, Dr. Anilkumar, IJARST, Volume 12, Issue 12, December 2022

⁶ 'How social media impacts political views'- Lisi Merkley, The Daily Universe, August 6, 2020.

serves as a platform for cultural representation, giving people the opportunity to showcase their heritage, challenge dominant stereotypes, and assert their identity. By highlighting these diverse experiences and narratives, social media contributes to a deeper understanding of class dynamics and cultivates political awareness. Ultimately, it becomes a space where systemic inequalities are examined, and class consciousness is built through the collective exchange of ideas and resistance.

In Kerala's socio-political and cultural context, social media has played a pivotal role in shaping public discourse and influencing societal dynamics. One of the most notable impacts has been its contribution to social movements. For instance, platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram have been instrumental in mobilizing support for various causes, such as the anti-CAA protests and campaigns against land acquisition for projects like the Kochi Metro Rail. These platforms have enabled citizens to organize protests, share real-time updates, and build solidarity across communities, thereby amplifying voices that may otherwise go unheard.

Beyond activism, social media has become a powerful outlet for cultural expression. Many artists, writers, musicians, and performers in Kerala have turned to digital platforms to share their work, celebrate regional identity, and connect with diverse audiences. This has enriched Kerala's cultural landscape and encouraged greater public engagement with art and literature. Moreover, social media has emerged as a crucial space for public discourse, where individuals actively engage in discussions and debates on issues ranging from politics and economics to culture and social justice. By offering a platform for marginalized voices, facilitating information dissemination, and promoting cultural and class representation, social media in Kerala is not only influencing public opinion but also contributing to the development of class consciousness and collective awareness.

Social media in Kerala has become a space for democratizing information and challenging traditional power structures. Unlike mainstream media, which may be influenced by political or corporate interests, social media allows individuals to share alternative viewpoints and expose injustices that might otherwise remain hidden. This has enabled citizens to question authority, hold public figures accountable, and participate more actively in civic life. As a result, political engagement has expanded beyond formal institutions, encouraging greater participation from youth, women, and marginalized groups who were previously underrepresented in public debates.

The accessibility of social media has helped bridge the urban-rural divide in Kerala by giving people from remote areas a platform to voice their issues and concerns. Whether it is a local environmental problem, a labor rights issue, or a case of social discrimination, social media facilitates rapid communication and mobilization. This interconnectedness fosters a sense of collective identity and shared struggle among different sections of society, reinforcing class consciousness. As individuals begin to recognize the systemic nature of their problems and see common patterns across communities, they are more likely to organize for collective change, making social media a catalyst for both awareness and action in Kerala's evolving socio-political landscape.

THE ROLE OF ART AND SOCIAL MEDIA IN FOSTERING CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS AMONG MARGINALIZED SECTIONS IN KERALA: A STUDY ON VEDAN'S MUSIC

In Kerala, music, drama, and other art forms have emerged as powerful tools for fostering class consciousness and awakening among marginalized sections. Social media platforms have played a significant role in amplifying these voices, allowing artists to reach a wider audience and build a sense of solidarity among the oppressed. One notable example is Vedan, a Kerala-based rapper who has gained recognition for his socially conscious music addressing issues of caste, class, and social justice.

The Power of Art in Social Commentary

Vedan's music, particularly his breakout album "Voice of the Voiceless," has resonated with audiences for its raw and unapologetic portrayal of systemic injustices in Kerala. ⁷His lyrics draw inspiration from his personal experiences as a Dalit individual and the socio-political landscape of Kerala, making his music a powerful tool for social commentary. By using his platform to highlight the struggles of marginalized communities, Vedan has become a voice for the voiceless.

Class Consciousness and Awakening

Vedan's music has contributed to class consciousness and awakening among marginalized sections in Kerala by highlighting the struggles and injustices faced by these communities. His lyrics challenge the status quo and encourage listeners to think critically about the social and economic systems that perpetuate inequality. By sharing his own experiences and those of his community, Vedan has helped to create a sense of solidarity among marginalized groups and inspired others to speak out against injustice.

The Impact of Vedan's Music

Vedan's impact extends beyond his music. He has become a symbol of resistance and defiance for Kerala's youth, particularly those from marginalized communities. His unapologetic approach to addressing social issues has sparked controversy and debate, but it has also earned him recognition as a powerful voice for social change. As M V Govindan, state secretary Communist Party of India (Marxist), noted, "Vedan's politics is powerful and stands with the marginalized". ⁸

The Political consciousness that 'Vedan' creates through his anti-poem

'Vedan' is a talent in the Malayalam hip-hop scene. Vedan's poems reveal the deep-rooted caste and color discriminations in the political and social spheres of Kerala, as well as a historically based questioning of feudalism. Vedan's music has already been

⁷ 'Vedan: Kerala rebel rapper's rise, drug arrest, and Leopard tooth controversy explained
His gritty lyrics always touches a nerve, but today he's courting headlines not for art'
Last updated: April 30, 2025 | 07:02
Manjusha Radhakrishnan, Entertainment Editor, Gulf News

⁸ How Vedan, the rapper, has become a voice of defiance for Kerala.', Tezzbuzz.com

discussed and received globally. By exposing the casteism that once existed so strongly in Kerala society, and the many atrocities that occurred as a part of it, 'Vedan' also attempts to dismantle the political cliques that foster communalism in the contemporary political landscape. Similarly, 'Vedan's' rap poems create a counterculture that deeply connects with the marginalized through the importance of its vibrant music and the uniqueness of its language.⁹ A cosmopolitanism that globalizes Kerala can be seen in Vedan's poems.

In his anti-poems, Vedan symbolizes the social, cultural, and political frustrations that stem from systematic exclusion, with all their political overtones. The new generation of those who have become victims of such exclusions is able to gain a closer understanding of the political and social crises facing their existence and, through that, build a clear political awareness through young voices like 'Vedan'. In Kerala, today, there are people from all walks of life who support Vedan's music and Vedan. An example of this is the large number of people who gather in front of the venues where 'Vedan' events are held. Vedan is showing new paths to freedom through a new generation of music that is more easily accessible to the youth. Through music that the young generation loves, Vedan is building a political consciousness that can destabilize and subvert dominant cultural and political spaces.

Vedan's artistry represents a radical departure from conventional modes of expression in Kerala's cultural and political discourse. By integrating the rhythm and appeal of hip-hop with raw social commentary, he makes political critique both accessible and emotionally resonant for younger audiences. His lyrics are not abstract; they are grounded in lived experiences of oppression, discrimination, and marginalization. This deeply personal yet collective storytelling enables listeners—especially those from disenfranchised communities—to see their realities reflected and validated in the public space. His songs become a mirror and a weapon, offering both reflection and resistance. In doing so, Vedan not only critiques the lingering remnants of casteism and social hierarchy but also reclaims public and cultural spaces for narratives that were historically silenced.

What makes Vedan's contribution especially powerful is his ability to connect local issues with global frameworks. His use of multilingual expressions, hybrid musical influences, and digital platforms helps place Kerala's socio-political realities within a broader global conversation on inequality and identity. This creates a form of cultural cosmopolitanism where local resistance gains international visibility, and in turn, global solidarity reinforces local movements. Vedan's music stands at the intersection of protest and performance, using sound, language, and community to inspire a generation to question authority, challenge oppression, and assert their place in the political narrative of the state. Through this, he fosters not just awareness, but a deeper, action-oriented political consciousness that has the potential to reshape Kerala's socio-political landscape.

SOCIAL MEDIA AS A PLATFORM FOR AMPLIFICATION

Social media has revolutionized the way artists, especially those from marginalized communities, share their work and engage with audiences. In Kerala, artists like Vedan have leveraged digital platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook to bypass traditional media institutions that often overlook or suppress dissenting and subaltern voices. These platforms offer a space where content can be uploaded freely, allowing artists to retain creative control over their work and message. For individuals and communities historically excluded from mainstream representation, this shift is transformative—it offers not only visibility but also a means of building influence and solidarity.

One of the most significant aspects of social media is its ability to dismantle traditional gatekeeping structures. In the past, gaining exposure often required approval from publishing houses, music producers, or media outlets, many of which were embedded within dominant socio-political and cultural frameworks. Today, an artist like Vedan can directly reach audiences with no mediation from institutions that might otherwise dilute or censor his content. This democratization of access allows marginalized artists to speak in their own voice, use their own language, and define their own narratives, making their messages more authentic and impactful.

Vedan's success is a clear example of this potential. His music video *Voice of the Voiceless* gained over 17 million views on YouTube—a testament to how social media can magnify voices that reflect lived experiences of caste and class oppression¹⁰. The widespread reach of this video not only brought Vedan's work to the attention of local audiences but also connected him to global conversations on race, caste, and inequality. The virality of such content demonstrates how social media serves as a tool for political awakening, especially when traditional media outlets fail to give space to radical or critical content.

Social media enables the formation of online communities around shared experiences and ideas. Vedan's followers and supporters often engage with his content through comments, shares, and online discussions, turning passive viewership into active participation. These digital interactions build a sense of collective identity among marginalized groups and their allies. By responding to his audience and incorporating real-time feedback, Vedan strengthens the connection between his art and his community, creating a participatory model of resistance that was previously difficult to achieve.

The algorithmic nature of social media can work both as an advantage and a challenge. While it allows content to be widely disseminated when it garners enough initial engagement, it also requires artists to be digitally literate and strategically active. Vedan's success on platforms like YouTube is not accidental; it reflects a conscious effort to use music, visuals, and storytelling to engage with digital audiences effectively. His ability to tap into the emotions and frustrations of marginalized youth ensures that his content not only spreads but resonates. This resonance transforms listeners into active participants in political discourse and cultural resistance.

⁹ 'vedan prathikavithayude aavishkaara dhikkaarangal' by Dr. T T Sreekumar, *Deshabhimani varika*, 25 May, 2025

¹⁰ Who Is Kerala Rapper Vedan Aka Hirandas Murali, In the News Over Controversial Song? By Oneindia Desk Updated: Saturday, May 31, 2025

Social media is not merely a platform for broadcasting art—it has become an essential space for political engagement, community-building, and consciousness-raising. For artists like Vedan, it provides a powerful stage to challenge caste hierarchies, critique socio-economic inequalities, and encourage collective introspection. As digital platforms continue to evolve, their potential to empower the oppressed and amplify resistance remains immense. In the context of Kerala's social fabric, social media serves not only as a tool of communication but as a crucial force in redefining the cultural and political narrative from the ground up.

CONCLUSION

Class consciousness in society is generally created through a combination of factors that lead individuals to identify with a particular social or economic class. This identification can influence their perceptions, attitudes, and actions towards others in different classes. People experiencing similar social and economic conditions tend to develop a shared awareness of their position in society. This can lead to a sense of solidarity and common interests among members of the same class. Recognition of inequalities in wealth, power, and opportunities between different classes can foster class consciousness. When individuals perceive these disparities as significant and impactful on their lives, it can lead to a heightened sense of class identity. The cultural and historical contexts of a society play a significant role in shaping class consciousness. Traditions, values, and historical events can influence how classes are perceived and how individuals identify with their class.

In a political society that has created caste-based and communal political consciousness, the political and social representation of marginalized people will always be a question mark. It can be understood that the formation of such a responsive political consciousness is essential for a democratic society and is the most suitable factor for strengthening democracy. Class consciousness can lead to solidarity among members of a class, motivating them to take action to address their common interests or grievances. Conversely, heightened class consciousness can also lead to conflict and division between different classes, especially if individuals perceive their interests as mutually exclusive. Understanding class consciousness and the factors that contribute to divisive thoughts among people can provide insights into social dynamics and the challenges of fostering cohesion in diverse societies.

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