PSYCHOSOCIAL CONTRIBUTORS OF RELIGIOUS FUNDAMENTALISM IN YOUTH

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By

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DECLARATION

I, **Kavitha G Bhaskaran,** hereby declare that the work presented in the thesis entitled **"PSYCHOSOCIAL CONTRIBUTORS OF RELIGIOUS FUNDAMENTALISM IN YOUTH"** is based on the original work done by me under the guidance of Prof. Baby Shari P.A., Professor, Department of Psychology, University of Calicut and has not been included in any other thesis submitted previously for the award of any degree .The contents of the thesis have undergone plagiarism check using iThenticate software at C.H.M.K. Library, University of Calicut, and the similarity index was found to be within the permissible limit. I also declare that the thesis is free from AI generated contents.

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This is to certify that this thesis entitled, **"PSYCHOSOCIAL CONTRIBUTORS OF RELIGIOUS FUNDAMENTALISM IN YOUTH"** is a bonafide record of research work carried out by Ms. Kavitha G Bhaskaran under my supervision and guidance, and that no part of this has been presented before for the award of any degree, diploma, associateship or fellowship of other similar title or recognition.

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To those who carved futures

with their

blood sweat and tears...

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ABSTRACT

Religious fundamentalism is characterised by the conviction that one's religious teachings represent the sole, fundamental, and inherent truth about the world. Religious fundamentalists insist on adhering to the unalterable traditional practices of their religion and hold that this 'truth' is under attack by malevolent forces that must be actively resisted. Those who uphold and defend this 'truth' are perceived as the true followers, with a special connection to God. Scholarly investigation have demonstrated a link between fundamentalist religious mind set and prejudicial attitudes, opposition to modern educational pursuits, propensity for superstitious thinking discriminatory actions, and violent behaviours directed at individuals from different religious backgrounds, ethnic groups, and philosophical stances, as well as women and members of the LGBTQA+ community. The literature review reveals a significant gap in the scientific understanding of the psychological development of a religious fundamentalist mindset. Previous studies have also highlighted the absence of psychological investigations in the Indian context.

This study aimed to explore the psychosocial factors contributing to the formation of religious fundamentalist mindset among youth in Kerala. The researcher used qualitative methodology and grounded theory method of Corbin and Strauss (1996, 2015).The research began with the screening of religious fundamentalist youth (ages 18-29). The screening was done using the religious fundamentalism scale developed by Altemeyer and Hunsberger in 2004. Individuals who scored high on the scale were selected for the next phase, the interview (23 participants). Theoretical sampling suggested the addition of two more datasets. The researcher administrated Thematic Apperception Test from the 11th participant (second dataset-12 participants) and later collected expert opinions as the third data set. Expert opinions were obtained from related magazine articles (25 articles) and semi-structured interviews with 13 experts from different academic disciplines. Grounded theory analysis was conducted and made use of the conditional/consequential matrix by Corbin and Strauss (2015) as a conceptual guide for theory building.

The core categories that emerged from the analysis include ‘historical and sociopolitical context of living’, ‘features of religion and religious texts’, ‘factors of socialisation’, ‘agents and messages of religious fundamentalism’, ‘individual in vulnerable condition’, and the ‘perks of being religious fundamentalist’. The developed theory suggests that in the macro environment, the ‘historical and socio-political context of living’ and ‘features of religion and religious texts’ set the background for the development of religious fundamentalist ideology and vulnerable individuals. From macro environment, the religious fundamentalist ideology travels to the microenvironment and creates it’s agents. The characteristics of the microenvironment influence the nature of ‘agents and messages of religious fundamentalism’ and the vulnerability of individuals. In the micro context, the individual is influenced by the ‘agents and messages of religious fundamentalism’ because of the alignment between 'individuals in vulnerable conditions' (psychological characteristics and situational vulnerability of individual) and the features of ‘agents and messages of religious fundamentalism’. This match provides psychological and physical benefits to individuals, reinforcing the formation and maintenance of religious fundamentalist attitudes. When a religious fundamentalist mindset is established, individuals function as religious fundamentalist agents, either actively or passively. Religious fundamentalists subsequently contribute to religious fundamentalist ideology and activities at both the macro and micro levels.

Key words: Religious fundamentalism, Youth, Psycho social factors.

സംഗ്രഹം

സ്വന്തം മതബോധങ്ങളാണ് ലോകത്തെ കുറിച്ചുള്ള ഏറ്റവും മൗലികവും ആത്യന്തികവുമായ സത്യം എന്ന ബോധവും, സ്വന്തം മതബോധങ്ങൾ പരിവർത്തനാതീതമാണെന്നും ദേശകാലവ്യത്യാസങ്ങൾക്കപ്പുറം അതിനെ അക്ഷരാർത്ഥത്തിൽ അനുസരിക്കേണ്ടതുണ്ടെന്നും സ്വന്തം മതബോധനങ്ങൾക്കെതിരെ ദുഷ്ടശക്തികൾ പ്രവർത്തിക്കുന്നുണ്ടെന്നും ഇത്തരം പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങളെ എന്ത് വിലകൊടുത്തും തടയണം എന്നുമുള്ള മനോഭാവമാണ് മതമൗലികവാദത്തിന്റെ മുഖമുദ്ര. ഈ മൗലികവും ആത്യന്തികവും എന്ന് കരുതപ്പെടുന്ന മതബോധനങ്ങളെ സംരക്ഷിക്കാനും പ്രചരിപ്പിക്കാനും ശ്രമിക്കുന്നവരെ യഥാർത്ഥ വിശ്വാസികളായും അവർക്ക് ദൈവവുമായി പ്രത്യേക ബന്ധമുള്ളവരായും മൗലികവാദികൾ കരുതുന്നു. മതമൗലികവാദ മനോഭാവത്തിന് പക്ഷപാതപരമായ നിലപാടുകളോടും; ആധുനികവിദ്യാഭ്യാസത്തിനോടുള്ള എതിർപ്പിനോടും;

അന്ധവിശ്വാസങ്ങളോടുള്ള ചായ്വിനോടും,' വ്യത്യസ്ഥ മതവംശീയ പശ്ചാത്തലമുള്ളവർ, വ്യത്യസ്ഥ തത്വചിന്താ നിലപാടെടുക്കുന്നവർ, സ്ത്രീകൾ, LGBTQA+ വ്യക്തികൾ എന്നിവരോടുള്ള വിവേചന പരവും ഹിംസാത്മകവുമായ പെരുമാറ്റത്തോടും ബന്ധമുണ്ടെന്ന് മുൻകാല പഠനങ്ങൾ തെളിയിച്ചിട്ടുണ്ട്. എന്നാൽ മതമൗലികവാദ മനോനില ഉടലെടുക്കുന്നതിനെകുറിച്ചും അതിന്റെ വളർച്ചയെക്കുറിച്ചും മന:ശാസ്ത്രപരമായി മനസിലാക്കുന്നതിൽ മുൻകാല ഗവേഷണങ്ങൾ വേണ്ടത്ര ശ്രദ്ധചെലുത്തിയിട്ടില്ലെന്ന് കാണാം. ഇന്ത്യൻ യുവാക്കൾക്കിടയിൽ മതമൗലികവാദ മനോനില വർദ്ധിച്ചുവരുന്നു എന്ന് മുൻകാല പഠനങ്ങൾ സൂചിപ്പിക്കുന്ന പശ്ചാത്തലത്തിൽ മതമൗലികവാദ മനോനിലാരൂപീകരണത്തിനു പിന്നിലെ ഘടകങ്ങളെ കുറിച്ചുള്ള പഠനം പ്രധാന്യമർഹിക്കുന്നു.

കേരളത്തിലെ യുവാക്കളിൽ മതമൗലികവാദമനോനിലാ രൂപീകരണത്തിൽ പങ്കുവഹിക്കുന്ന മാനസിക - സാമൂഹിക ഘടകങ്ങളെ കണ്ടെത്തുക എന്ന ലക്ഷ്യത്തോടുകൂടെയാണ് ഈ പഠനം നടത്തുന്നത്.

ഗുണാത്മകമായ രീതിശാസ്ത്രത്തിൽ, കോർബിൻ & സ്ട്രോഡിന്റെ ഗ്രൗഡഡ് തിയറിയാണ് ഗവേഷണത്തിന് ഉപയോഗിച്ചിരിക്കുന്നത്. ആൾട്ട്മേയറും ഹൻസൻബർഗും ചേർന്ന് നിർമ്മിച്ച 'Religious fundamentalism scale' അടിസ്ഥാനപ്പെടുത്തിയാണ് യുവാക്കളെ പഠനത്തിനായി തിരഞ്ഞെടുത്തത്. തിരഞ്ഞെടുത്തവരോട് ആഴത്തിലുള്ള അഭിമുഖം നടത്തി. തിയറ്റിക്കൽ സാംപ്ലിങ്ങിലൂടെ Themetic Aperception test ഉം വിദഗ്ധാഭിപ്രായ ശേഖരണവും നടത്തി. ശേഖരിച്ച ദത്തങ്ങൾ ഗൗഡഡ് തിയറി അനാലിസിന്റെയും conditional consequenetial metrix ന്റെയും സഹായത്തോടെ വിശകലനം ചെയ്ത് സിദ്ധാന്തത്തിന് രൂപം നൽകി.

'ജീവിതത്തിന്റെ ചരിത്രപരവും സാമൂഹിക രാഷ്ട്രീയ പരവുമായ സാഹചര്യങ്ങൾ,' 'മതങ്ങളുടെയും മതപുസ്തകങ്ങളുടെയും പ്രത്യേകതകൾ', 'സാമൂഹിക

വത്കരണത്തിന്റെ ഘടകങ്ങൾ,' 'മതമൗലികവാദത്തിന്റെ സന്ദേശവാഹകരും സന്ദേശങ്ങളും', 'എളുപ്പത്തിൽ സ്വാധീനിക്കപ്പെടാവുന്ന ജീവിതഘട്ടത്തിലെ വ്യക്തി,' 'മതമൗലികവാദം കൊണ്ടുള്ള നേട്ടങ്ങൾ' എന്നിവയാണ് വിശകലന ത്തിൽ നിന്നും കണ്ടെത്തിയ ആശയതലങ്ങൾ. 'ജീവിതത്തിന്റെ ചരിത്രപരവും സാമൂഹിക രാഷ്ട്രീയപരവുമായ സാഹചര്യങ്ങൾ', 'മതങ്ങളുടെയും മതപുസ്തക ങ്ങളുടെയും പ്രത്യേകതകൾ' എന്നിവ ബൃഹത്തായ ചുറ്റുപാടുകളിൽ (macro environment) മതമൗലികവാദ കാഴ്ച്ചപ്പാടുകളും എളുപ്പത്തിൽ സ്വാധീനിക്കപ്പെ ടുന്ന വ്യക്തികളും ഉണ്ടാവാൻ പശ്ചാത്തലമൊരുക്കുന്നു. വിശാലമായ ചുറ്റുപാടു കളിൽ നിന്നും മതമൗലികവാദം സൂക്ഷ്മതലത്തിലേക്ക് (micro environment) സഞ്ചരിക്കുകയും അതിന്റെ സന്ദേശവാഹകരെ സൃഷ്ടിക്കുകയും ചെയ്യുന്നു. ഈ സന്ദേശവാഹകർ സാമൂഹികവത്കരണ ഘടകങ്ങളുടെ ഭാഗമായി പ്രവർത്തിക്കു കയും വ്യക്തികളെ മതമൗലികവാദത്തിലേക്ക് അടുപ്പിക്കുകയും ചെയ്യുന്നു. മത മൗലികവാദത്തിന്റെസന്ദേശവാഹകരോട് ഇടപെടുന്ന വ്യക്തികളിൽ 'മതമൗലിക വാദത്തിന്റെ സന്ദേശവാഹകരും സന്ദേശങ്ങളും' എത്രത്തോളം സ്വാധീനം ചെലു ത്തുന്നു എന്നത് ആ വ്യക്തിയുടെ വ്യക്തിത്വ സവിശേഷതകളും ജീവിത നിലയും ചേർന്ന 'എളുപ്പത്തിൽ സ്വാധീനിക്കപ്പെടാവുന്ന ജീവിതഘട്ടങ്ങളിലെ വ്യക്തി' എന്ന സങ്കൽപ്പനത്തിന്റെ ഘടകങ്ങളും 'മതമൗലികവാദത്തിന്റെ സന്ദേശവാഹ കരും സന്ദേശങ്ങളും' എന്ന സങ്കൽപ്പനത്തിന്റെ ഘടകങ്ങളും തമ്മിൽ എത്ര ത്തോളം ചേർച്ചയുണ്ടെന്ന് എന്നതിനെ അടിസ്ഥാനപ്പെടുത്തി നിർണ്ണയിക്കപ്പെടു ന്നു. ഇവ തമ്മിലുള്ള ചേർച്ച മികച്ചതാവുമ്പോൾ ആ വ്യക്തിയിൽ മതമൗലിക വാദ മനോഭാവം ഉടലെടുക്കുകയും അത് വ്യക്തിക്ക് 'മതമൗലികവാദത്തിന്റെ ഗുണഫലങ്ങൾ' നൽകുകയും ചെയ്യുന്നു. ഈ ഗുണഫലങ്ങൾ മതമൗലിക മനോ ഭാവത്തെ ഉറച്ചതാക്കുകയും വ്യക്തി പ്രത്യക്ഷമായോ പരോക്ഷമായോ മതമൗലിക വാദത്തിന്റെ സന്ദേശവാഹകരായി മാറുകയും ചെയ്യുന്നതിനൊപ്പം സൂക്ഷ്മ വിശാല തലങ്ങളിൽ മതമൗലികവാദത്തിന്റെ ആശയങ്ങളിലേക്കും പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങ ളിലേക്കും സംഭാവന ചെയ്യുകയും ചെയ്യുന്നു.

പദസൂചിക : മതമൗലികവാദം, യുവാക്കൾ, മന:ശാസ്ത്രപരവും സാമൂഹികപരവു മായ ഘടകങ്ങൾ.

INTRODUCTION

Throughout the history of knowledge production, religion has been understood in various ways. However, no single definition has been universally accepted, partly because the concept is multifaceted and often defies simple categorisation. Among the different definitions there are three main types: intellectualistic, effectivistic (or voluntaristic), and practical. Intellectualistic mode of religion views it as a system of propositions or beliefs. It emphasizes the cognitive aspect the doctrines and ideas associated with religious traditions. According to the effectivistic (voluntaristic) understanding, the essence of religion lies in absolute dependence. It is not just about intellectual assent; it is about surrendering to a higher power or cosmic force. The third type, centers on actions. Here, religion is seen as a set of practices rituals, ceremonies, ethical behaviour, and communal acts. Researchers who study religion argue that practice, feeling, and belief are intricately intertwined. To understand religion fully, one cannot exclude any of these dimensions; they all contribute to its richness and complexity (Kaufmann, 1979).

As Rudolf Otto defines it, religion is the encounter with the sacred. Building upon Otto's definition, Watch proposed that this encounter takes on diverse forms of expression. First is doctrine which is a theoretical expression. Here the focus is around concepts related to God, the world, and humanity. Second is cult, a practical expression in which faith finds its voice through religiously inspired acts rituals, symbols, sacraments, and sacrifices. Third is sociological expression, which encompasses both collective and individual religious practices. As to the psychological experience of religion, it is a harmonious blend of all three

expressions (Otto, 1923; Wach, 1947). The Oxford English Dictionary gives multiple definitions to the word 'religion', and the one that is relevant for the present study is

> Recognition on the part of man of some higher unseen power as having control of his destiny, and as being entitled to obedience, reverence and worship; the general mental and moral attitude resulting from this belief, with reference to its effect upon the individual or the community; personal or general acceptance of this feeling as a standard of spiritual or practical life (Oxford English Dictionary, n.d).

In the pursuit of understanding religion, two distinct branches have emerged. First, there is theology a discipline focused on analysing, interpreting, and explaining specific traditions of faith. Second, there is the general science of religion which seeks to comprehend the essence of all religions. This broader field encompasses phenomenology, history, psychology, and sociology of religion. Being a social construct, religion demands insights from multiple disciplines. To fully grasp any religious phenomenon we must draw from diverse areas such as psychology, history, and sociology (Wach, 1947).

In the initial stages of psychological research on religion, prominent scholars such as William James, Leuba, Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, Gordon Allport, Eric Fromm, Otto Rank, David Baken, and Abraham Maslow conducted investigations. Their studies focused on religious experiences, the psychological origins and nature of religion, individual religious attitudes, religious values, and peak experiences. Contemporary research in religious psychology has endeavoured to elucidate the

neurological factors in religious beliefs, the influence of attachment style and personality, God image formation and its variations, religious identity development, life span patterns in religious beliefs, religious switching, religious motivation and attitudes, psychopathology, health, and coping styles related to religious beliefs. Researchers have also examined the psychology of various religious behaviours, including prayers and rituals, religious thoughts, religious feelings and their consequences, and extreme religious beliefs encompassing religious fundamentalism (Argyle, 2000; Loewenthal, 2010; Nelson, 2009).

Religious fundamentalism is a term casually used to indicate extreme, rigid, non-compromising beliefs towards one's own religion and actions to establish its dominance through different means. People are familiar with the term as it is used loosely in media and political arguments, yet its precise definition remains elusive (Emerson & Hartman, 2006). It is not an easily definable term for scholarly purposes and poses a challenge to researchers. Researchers are still attempting to more accurately define and access this variable (Phillips, 2024). In previous research, the term was used to refer to 1. an ideology (to represent a particular set of beliefs—an unwavering stance on matters of faith) 2. adherents (people who wholeheartedly embrace and follow that ideological framework. 3. movements (political movements advocating for its principles). The challenge in defining fundamentalism partly stems from its historical context and the nuances of labelling. Initially, it was closely tied to biblical fundamentalism a movement championed by Protestant Christians in the 19th century. Interestingly, the term 'fundamentalist' did not appear in print until after 1920. 'Religious fundamentalist' was initially defined by Curtis Laws in the

'National Baptist weekly' in defense of a group among the protestants Christians, who sought to protect and preserve the authenticity of Christianity. This was a reaction against the liberal wing of Protestants who tried to make their beliefs more consistent with the secular ideas of the time (Davis, 2005; Emerson & Hartman, 2006; Waxman, 1995).The term gained people's attention after it made appearance in a newsletter called 'The Fundamentals' which was distributed by Protestant Christians in the USA. The editors of 'The Fundamentals' established the World's Christian Fundamentals Association in the USA. Following these two developments, the word 'fundamentalism' became established in the vocabulary. It was also a time when the fight to reclaim religious values lost during the Enlightenment era gained momentum. Hatred towards modernism was the most common expression of religious fundamentalism in the 20th century. They did not accept historical criticisms against Christianity and protested against the changes that were happening in the Christian religious formulations. They urged to bring back the traditional Christian belief system. This ideological position began to spread to other religions and other nations around the world (Chennamangaloor, 2015).

Modern research has different arguments related to the term 'religious fundamentalism'. In the early years, researchers argued that it could only refer to Protestants because it was initially used to refer to them. Later, researchers used the term to refer to conservative movements within the Abrahamic religion but not other religions (Lawrence, 1989). Researchers observe that groups cannot be classified as fundamentalist solely because they strictly abide by their religious teachings. Critics argue that such an approach conflates post-colonial nationalist movements with

traditional religious movements. Many scholars argue that fundamentalism is a contextual phenomenon that cannot be understood apart from modernity as the term is new and consistent with the emergence of science and modernity. Researchers also argue that one cannot name a group as fundamentalist unless they identify themselves as such (Emerson & Hartman, 2006).

In his review essay, Watt (2007) says that it is hard to define religious fundamentalism. While reviewing books on religious attitudes, he asserts that existing definitions are neither compelling nor rigorous. He says that the definitions are vague and can be applied to various religious movements. Watt observes that owing to the difficulty in defining the term clearly and objectively, some writers opt to use it only in settings where its meaning is unmistakable. He suggests that scholars should refrain from using the term vaguely and should use it only for people they typically think of as fundamentalists. Some scholars from both the left and right-wing believe that the term became polemical towards religious movements. As a result of this, its use is not preferred in scholarly articles except when referring to Protestants who identify themselves as fundamentalists. Right-wing scholars argue that religious liberals use the term to unfairly criticise people who uphold their religious and traditional values. At the same time, left-wing scholars have point out that Westerners use the term 'Islamic fundamentalism' to degrade Islamic movements that resist western invasion (Berger, 1992, 1996; Harris, 1994; Said, 2002).

Even though all these arguments and counterarguments exist in the realm of religious fundamentalism, the similarities in the nature of fundamental movements

in the 20th century cannot be ignored. One can discern fundamentalist impulses in many Hindu, Christian and Muslim movements (in fact, in many other religious movements) as they insist that everyone should strictly adhere to their respective scripture and obey moral codes of conduct based on their religious text (Munson, 2008). By 1995, researchers had begun to conceptualise religious fundamentalism as a global phenomenon. They argued that irrespective of the differences between the movements, there were commonalities in religious fundamentalism of every religion (Emerson & Hartman, 2006). Riesebrodt (2000) argued that all conservative religious movements share many features that should be understood in common ground to address these movements' sociological and psychological growth and influences. Such movements take form and develop under similar sociological conditions. He says that a deeper understanding of the nature of religious fundamentalism can be arrived at by considering it as a variable needing theoretical and empirical development. As Riesebrodt argued in sociology, if one intends to rely on psychology to understand the mindset of religious fundamentalist people, irrespective of their religion and physical participation in any movement, it should be understood as a mind set and studied with due consideration to their socio-cultural background. In the 20th century, journalists widely began to use the term fundamentalist to refer to religious conservatism (Berger, 1996; Harris, 1994). It is possible to observe commonalities in fundamentalist religious ideology and practice regardless of the country or religion. For example, all of them are intolerant to criticism and are against gender equality. They view modernity and secularism as rivals and all of them are eager to establish a religious country. The separation of

religion from politics is not acceptable to religious fundamentalists (Chennamangaloor, 2015).

Researchers who have previously worked in this area have made suggestions regarding the use of the term' religious fundamentalism' in scholarly articles. Munson (2008) suggests that when using the term in comparative research, it is better to restrict the research to those conservatisms that suggest strict adherence to the text as it is stated to be. He also adds that while studying an incident of religious fundamentalism, it is advisable to focus on the multiple socio-political aspects that could have ignited the situation and led to explosive unrest, rather than viewing it merely as a result of violation of one primary principle. While researching, one should avoid assuming that the anger produced by breaking religious values is a mere reflection of nationalistic, ethnic, or other social attachments. At the same time, the researcher should not ignore the social factors that are suggested to be an essential source of fundamental behaviour if the available evidence suggests so. In the book titled 'The Fundamentalist Mindset: A Psychological Perspective on Religion, Violence and, History', Strozier and Boyd (2010) points out that it is dangerous to put the term within straightjacket definitions and instead suggests that ambiguity gives the term the advantage to be used under larger conceptual frameworks. In Galan's review of the same book, he has shed light on the dangers of ambiguity around the definition of fundamentalism. He says that if the term is defined vaguely, one will be able to discern fundamentalist attitudes and tendencies in every believer (Galen, 2011).

Researchers have also warned against the employment of labeling. They assert that while using the term in research articles, one should be careful not to label a group using epistemological power. In many cases, Western scholars have branded certain religious groups as fundamentalists due to their resistance against Western culture's domination. This epistemological privilege grants Western scholars and public the power to brand certain sections or groups as fundamentalists without appreciating local sensibilities. The Fundamentalism Project was a significant effort made in publishing research related to religious fundamentalism. It was a collection of works on religious fundamentalism worldwide, edited by Marty and Appleby in five volumes. The contributors themselves opinionated that, the approach adopted by the project which was based on the assumption of the existence of a global fundamentalism without considering the local sensitivities denied them the space to present the local specifications in their works. Apart from internal criticism, the project also faced backlash for using epistemological privilege to identify what fundamentalism is (Nagata, 2001; Williamson, 2020).

As mentioned above, there were different controversies and opinions regarding the research of a variable like religious fundamentalism. The present study conceptualised religious fundamentalism as a global phenomenon with commonality irrespective of religious beliefs. It is understood as a religious attitude irrespective of the individual content of the religious system. At the same time, the researcher also acknowledges that the socio-political and cultural context in which a person lives should be taken into consideration while understanding the phenomena. Hence, the researcher focusses on the Indian context of religious fundamentalism.

Religious fundamentalism has been studied at different levels, at an individual level, on an ideological level, and at a group/movement level, even though none of these is independent of the other. The present research focuses on the individual level- on the individual who believes in a fundamentalistic interpretation of his/her respective religion. Zizek has talked about two types of fundamentalists: authentic and inauthentic. The authentic ones are secure enough in their belief such that they treat non-believers and people who believe in other cultural world views without hostility. The inauthentic manifest their lack of conviction through acts of intolerance towards others. Zizek argues that the second type of fundamentalists are deeply bothered, triggered and fascinated by the sinful life of non-believers(Žižek, 2009 as cited in Coulter, 2016) The present study was interested in studying the second group as they are intolerant towards the other, which can negatively affect the harmony and cooperation among communities in a multi-religious nation like India. Altemeyer and Hunsberger's (1992) definition of religious fundamentalism also aligns with the second type fundamentalists identified by Zizek. According to Altemeyer and Hunsberger (1992):

> Religious fundamentalism is characterized by the belief that there is only one correct set of religious teachings that clearly contains the fundamental, basic, intrinsic, essential, inerrant truth about humanity and the deity; that this essential truth is fundamentally opposed by forces of evil, which must be vigorously fought; that this truth must be followed today according to the fundamental, unchangeable practices of the past;

> and that those who believe and follow these fundamental teachings have a special relationship with the deity (p. 118).

The researcher has selected this definition as the operational definition of religious fundamentalism for the present research as this focuses on the belief of religious fundamentalist individuals irrespective of the religion they belong to. Moreover, this definition has been widely used in other psychological researches related to religious fundamentalism (Beller & Kröger, 2017).

There are a few other terms that are similar to religious fundamentalism, which also represent extreme religious beliefs and they must be differentiated from religious fundamentalism. They include religious orthodoxy, communalism and terrorism. In his book 'Jihad and Other Essays', Asghar Ali Engineer attempts to differentiate between religious fundamentalism, religious orthodoxy, communalism and terrorism. According to him, the people who adhere to religious practices precisely concerning their religion are religious orthodox; this only indicates literal adherence to the text on a ritualistic level within the boundaries of their personal lives. Communalism is related only to the political and economic interests of a community. But religious fundamentalists will enforce sectarian practice to achieve power and to strengthen religious orthodoxy. In the case of terrorism, not all terrorist movements are instances of religious fundamentalism, and neither are all religious fundamentalist actions part of terrorism. However, there are terrorist movements which are motivated by religious fundamentalist beliefs (Engineer, 2013). Pollack et al (2023) distinguishes religious orthodoxy from religious fundamentalism by saying that orthodoxy is when certain religious beliefs are considered to be the binding

beliefs of a religion, and religious fundamentalism is how people act upon such religious ideas. So, religious fundamentalism is a form of religious belief, while orthodoxy is the content of such belief. Another difference they point out is that religious fundamentalism claims universal supremacy of their religion while orthodoxy does not do that.

Previous researchers have found that religious fundamentalism is correlated with attitudes of prejudice, discriminatory action and violence against people who belong to other religions and races, people who believe in other life philosophies, women and LGBTQA+. They also display tendencies such as right-wing authoritarianism, anti-education attitude and superstition (Hunsberger & Jackson, 2005; Laythe et al., 2001, 2002; Maranell, 1968; Peek et al., 1991).Researchers have also found that religious fundamentalism is positively correlated with sexism and controlling the rights of women in matters ranging from clothing to reproductive rights. Researchers have reported violence carried out by religious fundamentalists in this regard against women and abortion clinics, which include ostracizing, abusing and killing of women. Religious fundamentalists also have issues with women's rights workers and feminists (Connolly, 1991; Dhaliwal, 2014; Feldman & Clark, 1996; Peek et al., 1991) . Such regressive attitudes can pose hurdles for a developing country like India, which demands cooperation and collaboration from all sectors of people for national development.

Indian society does not have a monolithic structure. The history of religions in India shows that it was a geographical plane where Hindu, Buddha and Jaina traditions originated and flourished. Religions such as Christianity and Islam were

introduced in India and later got incorporated into India's cultural, social, and political fabric. Indian history shows that exchange of knowledge and cultural aspects existed between all these religions and attempts were carried out to combine values from different religions (Veerendrakumar, 2016).

Religion predominates in the daily life of Indians, irrespective of the religion they belong to. Indians lead a life intertwined with religious and ritualistic traditions, continually symbolized through language, food, dress and so on. It is a country recognized as the 'museum of world religions'. If India needs to sustain itself as a country, the people in the country should be cooperative enough to embrace India's social, cultural, linguistic, racial and religious diversity. The nation's unity is based on the psychological togetherness of people, irrespective of these differences. The primary threat against the concept of Indian nationality arises from conflicts related to caste, language, and religion. Religious conflicts and intolerance are the most pressing issues that the country faces today. It calls attention to the need to understand and address conflicts and violence that arise from matters of religion. Sensitive matters related to religion need to be dealt with care as religious unrest can spread across the nation like wildfire (Azmi, 1991; Veerendrakumar, 2016).

As a nation-state, the Indian constitution celebrates the diversity of its people and identifies India as a secular democratic country. Social scientists understand secularism as a process that emerged in the aftermath of the transformation from a traditional agricultural society to a modern industrialist society. The idea emerged in Europe during the industrial revolution (Azmi, 1991).In medieval Europe, secularism was understood as a principle that went against the values of Christian

missionaries. After the emergence of nation-states in the 19th century, secularism was released of its perceived resistance to Christianity and instead came to represent attitudes essential for social welfare. Morality was redefined on the basis of that which will benefit the social good rather than what the religion instructed (Karthikeyan, 2017; Thapar, 2016). Globally, three systems of secularism are prevalent. Under the first kind, the State considers religion as a private matter and refrains from any sort of interference in all religious matter. In the second system, a particular religion is accorded importance in matters of the state, while other religions are tolerated and permitted to carry out their activities without the state's interference. In the third system, the state ensures the freedom of all religions but does not take responsibility for controlling its internal affairs (Singh & Singh, 2008).

Independent India adopts three significant ideas of secularism, the Indian state permits the practice of any religion, the state is not associated with any one religion, and the state honours all religions equally. Even before the word secularism was inserted into the preamble of the constitution, different provisions in part III (articles 14 to 16, articles 23 to 30) and part IV (article 44) indicated that makers of the constitution intended to reflect the idea of secularism in the constitution (A. K. Singh, 2021). Secularism is an attitude that cannot be cultivated in individuals through law enforcement. In the case of a religious society like India, secularisation is a slow process that needs conscious effort both at the individual and organizational level. Religious fundamentalism can hinder the process of secular mindset formation as it leads to the creation of stereotypes, acts of discrimination and violence against believers of other religions. Indian youth need to have a secular

mindset to keep the democratic nature of the country alive. Understanding the psyche of Indian religious fundamentalists becomes essential here. Without a secularist attitude towards the religious diversity of the nation, it will not be possible for its citizens to act cooperatively towards a common goal. Religious fundamentalism can pose challenges to the secularist mindset of the country, threaten India's social equilibrium, and hinder the country's development (Azmi, 1991).

Youth are the most productive and energetic section of society. They have a significant role to play in achieving their own development and ensuring a positive youth development in the country, which aims to promote competent, successful and healthy youth (Benson et al., 2007). Among the BRICS countries, India is considered the youngest country due to its large youth population. This youth bulge offers possibilities and challenges to India as a developing country. Youngsters of the county are considered to be the critical thinkers, change-makers, innovators, communicators and leaders of the country. The youth of today are the ones who can play a crucial role in the success of the 2030 agenda put forward by the UN in September 2015 for sustainable development which aims at integrating its three dimensions: environmental, social and economic. The country's sustainable development agenda aims to end poverty, protect the earth, and ensure that citizens enjoy peace and prosperity. Religious fundamentalism can hinder the process as it can influence all the three dimensions of sustainable development negatively. It can destroy the peace and prosperity of citizens by fuelling prejudice, stereotypes, discrimination and violence. The activities of the youth play a significant role in

achieving the goal of sustainable development. To this end, their commitment towards creating an inclusive environment, upholding constitutional values and secularism will determine the future of Indian democracy and its existence as a nation-state (Joshi & Kunduri,2016 ; National Statistical Office,2022)

Propagation of religious fundamentalist activities and attitudes in a country can influence the youth and determine where they invest their energy and efforts. It could either engage them to creating a glorified past based on their religious beliefs or towards the development of the country and its democracy. Rather than working for the nation's sustainable development, religious fundamentalists try to bring about social changes based on their religious belief and even forcefully impose their faith on others(Pollack et al., 2023). All of these facts indicate the possibility that youth with religious fundamentalist orientation can pose a threat to any country. But they are even more perilous to a democratic secularist country with multiple religious beliefs like India. Hence it is essential to understand more about religious fundamentalist youth of the country.

Bloodshed in the name of religion has a long history and there has been a recent rise in religious conflict and religious fundamentalism in the Indian context. Historians have observed an increase in religious polarisation and religious fundamentalism in Indian society (Thaper, 2008; Venu, 2017). Religious fundamentalism has become a dominant tendency in India, and youngsters have been getting involved in it in large numbers. Different religious groups have unleashed violence in the name of religious fundamentalism. These acts of violence range from individual killing to organised mass attacks. The increasing involvement

of youngsters in such heinous activities is alarming (Kumar, 2002; Venu, 2017). Writers like Asghar Ali Engineer say that since the 1960s, there has been an increase in incidents of communal issues, and this hike was mainly observed in urban areas. In recent times it has spread into rural areas too. Fight over resources and jobs can be seen as a triggering factor in many such incidents. At times communal issues flare up merely for the reason that an individual from another religion has set up their store in a neighbourhood where the majority of the store owners practice a particular religion. Religious fundamentalism can contribute to the fueling of these conflicts, and an increase in such conflicts threatens society's harmony and stability. Even though religious fundamentalism is present in various forms in different societies, its mode of operation and development as well the degree of impact it creates are felt differently in different cultures. The unique socio-political and cultural legacy of India makes the experience of religious fundamentalism witnessed here different from the way it has developed and progressed in other parts of the world (Engineer, 2013; Kumar, 2002).

The rise in religious fundamentalism in India demands a unique and rigorous enquiry to explore the psychological elements that contribute to this phenomenon and its impact on Indian society. The researcher has carried out a review of the literature to understand the previous developments in the area and to find out the research gap, which is presented in the next chapter.

Need and Significance of the Study

Previous research has demonstrated that religious fundamentalism is a predictor of prejudice and violence towards out groups. The concept of multiple or

relative truths is incompatible with the fundamentalist perspective. Any ideology that contradicts the religious fundamentalist worldview and belief system is perceived as evil and requires vigorous opposition. Religious fundamentalism engenders prejudice and violence against alternative belief systems and religious perspectives. Previous research has established a correlation between religious fundamentalism and attitudes of prejudice, discriminatory behavior, and violence towards individuals of other religions and races, those who adhere to different life philosophies, women, and LGBTQA+ individuals. Furthermore, religious fundamentalists exhibit tendencies, such as right-wing authoritarianism, anti-educational attitudes, and superstitious beliefs (Hunsberger & Jackson, 2005; Laythe et al., 2001, 2002; Maranell, 1968; Peek et al., 1991). Research has also demonstrated that religious fundamentalism exhibits a positive correlation with sexism and the restriction of women's rights in various domains, including attire and reproductive choice. Scholars have documented instances of violence perpetrated by religious fundamentalists against women and abortion facilities, encompassing social exclusion, maltreatment, and femicide. Furthermore, religious fundamentalists have been observed to express opposition to advocates of women's rights and feminist proponents (Dhaliwal, 2014; Feldman & Clark, 1996; Peek et al., 1991; Srinivasan, 2004).

Previous research has shown that religious fundamentalism can lead to violence, prejudice, stereotypes, and discrimination against people who don't follow religious fundamentalist version of religion. However, the psychological and social factors that lead to the creation of a religious fundamentalist mindset remain

insufficiently explored. Earlier investigations have demonstrated that the need for meaning in life, mortality salience, a lack of self-esteem, death anxiety, and existential anxiety are psychological variables that contribute to the formation of a religious mindset (Friedman, 2008; Hohman & Hogg, 2015).

India is characterised by its linguistic, cultural, religious, and ideological diversity. Its tradition is founded on the principles of tolerance, cooperation, and collaboration. The religious history of India demonstrates that it served as a geographical region in which Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain traditions originated and flourished. Religions such as Christianity and Islam were subsequently introduced into India and later integrated into the country's cultural, social, and political fabric. Indian historical records indicate that an exchange of knowledge and cultural aspects existed among these religions, and efforts were made to synthesis values from various religious traditions (Kumar, 2022). In such a country stereotypes, prejudice, discrimination, intolerance and violence by religious fundamentalists can be detrimental. It will not only affect the peace and integrity of the country but also will negatively impact the collaboration and corporation that is needed by different sections of people for the development and prosperity of the country, so for the state of Kerala.

As a developing nation, India needs sustainable development, which is not simply based on construction and technology but extends to individuals of the nation and their views as well as perspectives. In countries such as India, people must act cooperatively, irrespective of their religious beliefs, to actively participate in the development of the nation. An increase in religious violence, stereotypes, and

discrimination negatively affects the peace and development of the country. Even though there is a lack of psychological enquiry into religious fundamentalism, researchers from different disciplines agree that there is a rise in religious fundamentalism in India, which is harmful to its secular democratic existence and sustainable development (Kumar, 2002; Ozzano, 2009; Robinson, 2001; Sen & Wagner, 2009). Writers such as Asghar Ali Engineer say that since the 1960s, there have been increased communal issues, and this increase has mainly been seen in urban areas and has recently spread to rural areas (Engineer, 2013).

Secularism cannot be cultivated by individuals through legal enforcement. In the context of a religiously diverse society such as India, secularisation is a gradual process that necessitates deliberate efforts at both the individual and organisational levels. Religious fundamentalism can impede this process of secular mindset formation, as it engenders the creation of stereotypes, acts of discrimination, and violence against individuals who do not adhere to the religious fundamental ideology of a particular faith. Young individuals constitute the most productive and dynamic segment of society. They play a crucial role in facilitating their own development and ensuring positive youth development within the nation, which aims to foster competent, successful, and healthy youth. Their attitudes towards different groups in society are important. A religious fundamental mindset will negatively impact this necessary collaboration and can produce far-reaching consequences (Benson et al., 2007). Indian youth must develop a secular mindset to maintain the country's democratic nature. Without a secularist attitude towards the religious plurality of the nation, it would not be feasible for its citizens to collaborate

effectively towards a common objective like national development. Religious fundamentalism presents challenges to the secularist mindset of the country, threatens India's social equilibrium, and hinders its development (Azmi, 1991). Understanding the development of the psyche of religious fundamentalists will give insights into the actions that are needed for cherishing and protecting a secular mindset in Indian youth.

Kerala is a state that holds a prominent position in multiple developmental indexes in India; its population is highly educated and possesses a culture of religious collectivity. However, observations of social interactions and social media conversations indicate an increase in religious fundamental mindset among Kerala youth, which is expressed through religious hate speech and fundamentalist religious arguments. Research has also highlighted the growth of religious fundamentalism and communalism in the Kerala context. Researchers had observed the turning of liberal religious politics into communal religious politics in the context of Kerala (Jayaraj & Pokker, 2012; Mannathukkaren, 2016) . Religious fundamentalism shows a positive association with anti-education positions (Maranell, 1968), which can backfire on the educational and socio -economic achievements of the state. A study conducted by Lowicki et al.(2021) showed that religious fundamentalism is positively correlated with beliefs in Corona virus conspiracy theories and promotes socially maladaptive behaviours, which include non-adherence to social safety guidelines and protocols. Religious fundamentalism negatively predicted belief in climate change, the moralisation of environmental actions, and behavioural intentions to conserve energy and reduce waste,(Łowicki et al., 2021; Preston &

Shin, 2022; Skalski et al., 2022) which is also alarming in the current environmental crisis that the state is facing.

The researcher is trying to attempt to explore factors that contribute to the religious fundamental mindset formation of youth. The insights from the current research will contribute to reducing the theoretical dearth in the psychology of religious fundamental mindset formation. In the Indian context, there is a lack of psychological studies addressing religious fundamentalism. The study is expected to understand the process of religious fundamental mindset formation in the cultural context of India, which has not yet been explored by psychological research. Understanding the formation of religious fundamentalist mindsets among Kerala youth could facilitate comprehension of the delicate balance between peaceful coexistence and potential religious conflict, as well as aid in developing strategies to address the emergence of religiously fundamental mindset in young individuals.

By understanding psycho-social factors that make a person a religious fundamentalist, a correctional approach may be sought, if possible, through intervening in those factors. Knowledge about the formation of a religious fundamental mindset will provide valuable insights into which psychological and social factors should be modified to reduce religious fundamentalism and the resulting prejudice, discrimination, and violence while fostering a culture of tolerance and cooperation among youth of diverse religions and belief systems.

Statement of the Problem

There is a dearth of theoretical frameworks to explain the formation and development of religious fundamentalist mind set. This study attempts to create an

understanding of how a religious fundamentalist mindset is formed in Indian youth, focusing on the Kerala population. The aim of the present research is to explore the psychosocial factors that contribute to the religious fundamentalist mind set formation among youth in Kerala. So the current study is entitled as **"Psychosocial Contributors of Religious Fundamentalism in Youth"**.

Working definitions of key words

Religious fundamentalism

Among the multiple definitions of religious fundamentalism, the definition by Altemeyer and Hunsberger was found to be appropriate for the current research .According to Altemeyer and Hunsberger (1992):

> Religious fundamentalism is characterized by the belief that there is only one correct set of religious teachings that clearly contains the fundamental, basic, intrinsic, essential, inerrant truth about humanity and the deity; that this essential truth is fundamentally opposed by forces of evil, which must be vigorously fought; that this truth must be followed today according to the fundamental, unchangeable practices of the past; and that those who believe and follow these fundamental teachings have a special relationship with the deity (p. 118).

Youth

The researcher adopted a definition from India's National Youth Policy (2014), which defines youth as *"*persons between the ages of 15 and 29". As the legal age of adulthood in India is starting from18, the researcher narrowed down people aged between 18 and 29 as participants.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

To understand the existing research on religious fundamentalism, the researcher conducted an extensive search online and offline. The aim it was to find empirical psychological studies related to religious fundamentalism. To do this, the researcher referred to online and offline journals and visited the libraries of Calicut University, Kerala University, S.S.U.S. Kalady, MG University, and Kannur University in Kerala. She has also searched the libraries of Pondicherry Central University, Calcutta University, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel University, and Hyderabad Central University. However, the search did not yield the desired result, and the researcher realised the dearth of research that has studied the psychology of religious fundamentalism in the Indian context. India, a multicutural and multireligious country founded on the principles of secularism and diversity in unity, demands a study exclusively focussing on the religious fundamentalist aspect of Indians.

Based on previous research, the researcher tried to understand the process by which previous researchers had traced people with religious fundamentalist tendencies to include them as participants in the research. It was a crucial step in researching religious fundamentalism and, at the same time, was also one of the most challenging phases of the current research: finding out people who carry within them religious fundamentalist attitudes. From the review of existing empirical studies related to religious fundamentalism, it has been noted that different studies have used different criteria and methods to identify a population that could be defined as having religious fundamentalist tendencies. Previous researchers used the religious fundamentalism scale developed by Altemeyer and Hunsberger, the three-

item religiosity index, the Muslim religious orientation scale, and the interview method independently and in combination to assess religious fundamentalism. Some studies have resorted to labeling some religious groups as fundamentalists based on prevalent prejudices and stereotypes that exist against the group.

Upon examining past studies on religious fundamentalism, it becomes evident that most of these investigations aimed to explore religious fundamentalists' engagement in society. But, there is a lack of research that has explored the psychosocial influences which can explain the origin and development of such mindsets.

Galen, Smith, Knapp and Wyngarden, conducted a study entitled "Perceptions of Religious and Nonreligious Targets: Exploring the Effects of Perceivers' Religious Fundamentalism". Participants with low and high degrees of religious fundamentalism were asked to form an impression of a target's moral and social dimensions. The target's religious identity was presented either explicitly (Studies 1 and 2) or implicitly (Study 3). Participants who exhibited a high degree of religious fundamentalism consistently rated the religious target more favorably than the nonreligious target on both dimensions. On the other hand, for individuals with a lesser degree of religious fundamentalist attitude, the target's religiosity was not a deciding factor in rating their morality. This shows that religious fundamentalist individuals have a favourable attitude towards religious people who belong to the same religion even when both religious and non-religious people behave in the same way. This favourable attitude towards in-group members logically leads to the

prediction that religious fundamentalists can be prejudiced against others (Galen et al., 2011).

When we look into the existing literature, researchers seem to be curious about the attitudes of religious fundamentalist people towards different categories of people in society. Researchers have found that religious fundamentalism is directly related to prejudice. For example Maranell, while attempting to describe the attitude profile of religious fundamentalist college students who belonged to the United States, (the sample included 625 students from four universities, two southern, one mid-western, and one best described as border) found direct relationship between religious fundamentalism and prejudice. Hunsberger and Jackson conducted a survey of studies from 1990 to 2003 on religion and found that religious fundamentalist people showed consistent prejudice towards gays, lesbians, women, communists, and religious out groups (Maranell, 1968; Hunsberger & Jackson, 2005). Another research conducted by Johnson, Rowatt, Brak, Peckham, Labouff, and Carlisle among two hundred eighty-nine undergraduate psychology students showed that religious fundamentalism is the strongest mediator in the relationship between religiosity and prejudice (Johnson et al., 2011).

Further, researchers were interested in understanding the factors that influence the relationship between religious fundamentalism and prejudice. Research conducted by Hunsberger et al. (1999) identified a positive correlation of religious fundamentalism with right wing authoritarianism. Survey conducted by Hunsberger and Jackson (2005) on studies from 1990 to 2003 also revealed the same. Hathcoat

and Barnes (2010) indicated that this relationship travels through certain simple and omniscient authority.

Researchers have also enquired about the factors that influence the relationship between religious fundamentalism and prejudice. Right-wing authoritarianism has a consistent influence on the religious fundamentalism - prejudice relationship. When it comes to understanding ethnic prejudice, Laythe et al. (2002) conducted a study among three separate samples (total N = 320) and the study revealed that religious fundamentalism is positively related to ethnic prejudice when orthodoxy was statistically controlled. The study also found out that religious fundamentalism was negatively related to ethnic prejudice when authoritarianism was statistically controlled. And when both authoritarianism and orthodoxy were controlled simultaneously, fundamentalism was unrelated to prejudice.

In the case of racial prejudice, the survey of Hunsberger and Jackson (2005), on studies in this area , pointed out a positive correlation between religious fundamentalism and racial prejudice in five studies and no relation in six studies. There are studies which indicate how right wing authoritarianism interacts in the religious fundamentalism-prejudice connection. Study conducted by Laythe et al. (2001) showed that religious fundamentalism acted as a negative predictor of racial prejudice when authoritarianism was controlled and Johnson et al. (2011) found that religious fundamentalism is the strongest mediator of value violating prejudice in the relationship between religiosity and prejudice. A study conducted by Rowatt and Franklin (2004) also discovered that religious fundamentalism has a negligible influence on racial prejudice. Studies conducted by Mavor et al. (2009) revealed that

higher religious fundamentalism led to lower racial prejudice when right wing authoritarianism was controlled.

Brandt and Reyna (2014) identified authoritarianism and traditionalism as two core values of religious fundamentalism that independently contribute to the fundamentalism racial prejudice relationship. They contextualized the relationship and suggested that religious fundamentalism shows prejudice based on the concept that African Americans are value violating. After comparing all three samples in their research they argued that, fundamentalism is related to increase in symbolic racism but decrease in negative effect towards African Americans. And this is mediated by authoritarianism and traditionalism. Study by Sulistio et al. (2020) revealed that intergroup contact has the ability to reduce prejudice against the other (moderate religious groups) and this relationship is mediated by religious fundamentalism and group identity.

Studies that have examined the religious fundamentalism-racial prejudice link have also examined the relationship between religious fundamentalism and prejudice against homosexuals. The results of these studies showed that, irrespective of controlling for right-wing authoritarianism, religious fundamentalism acted as a positive predictor of homosexual prejudice. The survey by Hunsberger and Jackson showed a consistent positive correlation between religious fundamentalism and prejudice towards homosexuality (Hunsberger & Jackson, 2005; Laythe et al., 2001; Laythe, Finkel, et al., 2002). Another research about religious fundamentalists' attitude towards homosexuality was conducted by Schwartz and Lindley (2005) among Bible belt community which found that religious fundamentalism is a

significant predictor of homophobia and male religious fundamentals are significantly more homophobic than female. Study by Jonathan (2008) using implicit measures, study by Leak and Finken (2011) using structural equation model, and study by James et al. (2011) in Australian sample yield the same results.

In India, research conducted by Pal and Sinha (2016) also found a positive association between religious fundamentalism and homophobia among Hindus. Study by Arli et al. (2020) found that Indonesian religious fundamentals perceive lesbian and gay people as an immoral and dangerous group. Study by Mbote et al. (2021) among Kenyan religious leaders also showed that religious fundamentalism is negatively associated with acceptance of gender diversity and positively associated with social distancing towards homosexual people. Through these studies we can see that religious fundamentals are prejudiced against homosexuals in different populations. This sort of prejudice can be seen in parents and this can be negatively affecting their children who belong to queer community. A national survey conducted by Rootes, Wiegand and Bono in 2019 to understand how religious fundamentalism and parental acceptance is linked with depression of sexual minority adults found a conditional indirect effect of religious fundamentalism on depression through parental acceptance (Heiden-Rootes et al., 2019).

Religious fundamentalism showed positive association with anti-education attitude as well. The study conducted by Maranell (1968) showed that anti-academic attitudes are related to fundamentalist religious beliefs in the southern sample of the USA. Darnell and Sherkat (1997) found that religious fundamentalism has

significant and sustainable negative influence on educational attainment. Previous research also indicated that fundamentalist parents with religious fundamental attitude hinder the educational attainment of their non religious fundamentalist children and support the education of religious fundamental children (Sherkat & Darnell, 1999). Atoi (2022) noted that 'Boko Haram', a religious fundamental group in Nigeria showed hatred towards western education and demonstrated the hatred through violent attack on educational institutions and people who represent it. He added that the hatred towards western education is predicted by religious orthodoxy.

Previous researchers in the area of religious fundamentalism showed interest in religious fundamentalist's concept about women. Peek, Lowe and Williams conducted a study on religious fundamentalism and sexism in 1991. Analysis of covariance of data from 1985 and 1988 general social surveys revealed that fundamentalism, both on individual and group level, are connected with sexism in the entire sample. For women, sexism is related to fundamentalist personal beliefs rather than to fundamentalist affiliations. For men, the opposite occurs: sexism is related to fundamentalist affiliations rather than to personal beliefs in the literalness of The Bible (Peek et al.,1991). Researchers observed that religious fundamentalists perceive women as inferior to Man. Religious fundamentalist groups, such as 'legalistic literalists', see women as less qualified than men, and women are even prevented from achieving religious qualifications. They consider women as intellectually and morally weaker than men, sexually dangerous, and polluters of sacred spaces. As per their beliefs women are forbidden to interpret sacred texts and preach their beliefs. Researchers argue that the religious fundamentalists' concept of

gender is associated with assertive muscularity and ornamental femininity. It was also found that fundamentalism make people more susceptible to patriarchy (Riesebrodt & Chong, 1999; Öztürk,2023). Dhaliwal (2014), in her article, argues that fundamentalists try to control both the bodies and minds of women. Religious fundamentalists believe in the traditional roles of women and consider women as the upholder of culture and the one who is responsible for passing over the legacy as well as morality related to religion. Women who refused to take on this role were ostracized, shamed, and even subjected to physical violence and murder.

According to previous research, when religious fundamentalists addresses the question of women and their role in society, they base their arguments on their text, in fact some selective arguments from the text. They use religion to justify the gender subordination of women through legitimisation of the existing system. In a patriarchal society like India, even though there are female Goddesses, the rituals and acceptable behavior of women in society were determined by men after a certain era in history. These rituals and behaviours sometimes become devaluating and even humiliating women. Therefore, the combination of patriarchy and religious fundamentalism becomes more dangerous to women. Researchers' also noted that female characters from religious texts are selectively highlighted by religious fundamentalists, and women in society are supposed to act like these characters to be treated as humans (Chakravarti, 1983; Poonacha, 1993).

Researchers have also argued that, religious fundamentalists try to control women's bodies, movements, and roles in society. To do this, they engage in different forms of actions, including violent campaigns. Previous researches

emphasized that religious fundamentalist groups use violence to regulate women's clothing, revive old customs that victimized women, and make continuous aggressive statements about the position of women in society (Chhachhi, 1989; Srinivasan, 2004). In India, a religious riot in 1992 witnessed women from one religious community supporting gang rape and joining men in stoning, and humiliating women from another religion (Mazumdar, 1995). These incidents show that a religious fundamentalist attitude can lead to violent behaviour, and there is a need for psychological enquiry to understand the factors that contribute to the formation of religious fundamental ideology. According to previous studies, religious fundamentalism interferes with women's reproductive rights. For example, Feldman and Clark noted that there were violent incidents against abortion clinics, not only direct physical violence against the institution but also forcing government to take a stand against abortion and starting fake hotlines. There are cases in different countries, irrespective of the religious base of the movement. Religious fundamentalists argue that women are becoming selfish about their happiness and not doing their duty of having and raising children (Feldman & Clark, 1996).

Scholars have also discussed the impact of the interaction of religious fundamentalist governments with women. Chachhi, through her research, argued that women in south Asia (especially in countries like Sudan, Nigeria, Egypt and Malaysia) are dealing with the problems created by state sponsored religious fundamentalism (Chhachhi, 1989). In Iran, as a result of religious fundamentalist rulers, women were confined to the roles of wives and mothers, the age of marriage was returned to 13, and divorce become impossible for women (Afshar, 1985). In

the U S Senate, there was opposition to the Equal Rights Amendment, which was referred to as a 'holy terror' by senators known for their religious fundamentalist political stance. In Bangladesh, women were forced to cover their heads and asked to not to wear 'bindis' (a colourful spot in the forehead). These dictate gained ideological and legal support later (Chhachhi, 1989). When it comes to reproductive rights, irrespective of the religious base of the country, which is ruled by religious fundamentalist politics, the government tries to control the reproductive rights of women by making abortion illegal. In Algeria, the religiously fundamentalist government imposed religious law, which made women legally inferior. It also prescribes women to obey their husbands and respect their families. The change in divorce law made it anti-women and lead to homelessness of many women and children (Feldman & Clark, 1996).

Every religion gives immense importance to the traditional family structure and gender relationships that exist in the traditional family system (Fulton et al., 1999). For example, in the USA, by the 1950s, there was a shift in fundamentalism towards a pro-family orientation, especially among evangelical Christians. Islamic movements are also concerned about the conservation of traditional family structures and showed anxiety about discourses on gender roles and female sexuality (Bendroth, 1999). Researchers have indicated that religious fundamentalists strictly believe that women are supposed to nourish the family system (culture and religion in family), and any intervention that can make women live differently from the religious, traditional way of living should be opposed at any cost. Social scientists argue that women are seen as an easy target for the distortion of dignity when men

are powerless over the external conditions of modern life (Feldman & Clark, 1996; Haj, 1992; Poonacha, 1993). In addition to violence, the celebration of womanhood through glorifying motherhood is another characteristic of religious fundamentalism. Fundamentalists also portray women as the mother of their nation who is responsible for transmitting cultural heritage to the younger generation. This can be seen as an extension of the restriction of women's reproductive roles. Jad and Hammami argued that fundamentalists use the structure of the family to attain social and political control (Berer & Ravindran, 1996; Jad & Hammami, 1992).

Research done by Blogowska and Saroglou (2011) showed that religious fundamentals are prejudiced against feminists. Afshan Jafar studied women's NGOs and religious fundamentalism in Pakistan by collecting ethnographic data from January to June 2004. The study showed how religious fundamentalism creates unique challenges for women's NGO in the country. In her study, she includes statements by religious leaders, reports of violent activities towards girls' schools, and murders of NGO workers to show how religious fundamentalism interacts with women's empowerment activities. The prominent argument against women's NGOs by religious fundamentalists include deceiving women in the name of freedom and equality, the alleged efforts destroy the harmony of the homes, and their efforts to promote the norms of Western society in their country. The researcher indicated that religious fundamentalists are threatened by any intervention into the society which is not led by religious rules. For religious fundamentalists, any activity that adapted from anywhere other than religion is threatening to the existence of their belief system (Jafar, 2007).

Research conducted by Hill et al. (2010) found that need for cognition partially mediated the relationship between religious fundamentalism and both homophobia and benevolent sexism. According to them preference for consistency partially mediated the relationship between religious fundamentalism and hostile sexism. The interaction between need for structure and fear of invalidity partially mediated the relationship between religious fundamentalism and both homophobia and hostile sexism. In a study conducted by Hannover et al. (2018) male participant's benevolent sexism was mediated by religiosity and religious fundamentalism while in the case of female participants it was explained by higher religious fundamentalism. In 2003 Altemeyer conducted a study to understand why religious fundamentalists are prejudiced. He argue that this is because of the strong and early emphasis of religion which can lead to in-group favoritism and acquisition of prejudice. Batson and Burries argue that religious fundamentalists have a desire to view one as good religious member by themselves and others. The prejudice against homosexuals reflects conformity to perceived church position. It helps to feel as a good member of the group (Altemeyer, 2003; Batson & Burris, 1993). Hunsberger et al. (1996) argues that religious fundamentalists are convergent thinkers and therefor more likely to attach new information to existing schema which may lead to clinging towards existing stereotypes.

The thriving of religious fundamentalists to keep the legacy of their religious beliefs and way of living can be seen in their parenting. Danso et al. (1997) conducted a study in two stages. In the first , they used a hypothetical situation and samples were college students. They found that in college students' religious

fundamentalism is positively linked with wish to keep their children in their faith. The religious fundamental students showed approval for corporal punishment and gave high value for obedience. In the second stage 83 mothers and 71 fathers were taken as the sample. Religious fundamentalist parents desired to religiously socialize their children. Parents' religious fundamentalism is positively linked with increased emphasis on obedience and negatively linked with child's autonomy. The religious fundamentalism score of mothers is positively linked with corporal punishment. Research by Beller, Kroger and Kliem showed that belief in heaven is the reason behind the support for corporal punishment among religious fundamentalists (Beller et al., 2019). A study conducted in an American sample showed that, in the case of child rearing, religious fundamentalists prefer the principle of order and discipline. They expressed dislike towards psychological experts in child rearing (Bendroth, 1999).

Past researchers have also been interested in understanding how human tendencies, such as forgiveness and altruism, are influenced by religiously fundamentalist attitudes. A study conducted by Brown et al. (2007) found that religious fundamentalism was significantly associated with pro-forgiveness attitudes, but not with the tendency to forgive. A study conducted by Applegate et al. (2000) showed that fundamentalist aspects of religious beliefs are related to public correctional preference and religion influences support for rehabilitation and punitiveness. Blogowska and Saroglou (2011) conducted a study on religious fundamentalism and pro social behavior .The study included two experiments .Results showed that religious fundamentalism predicted prosociality towards a non-

feminist but not a feminist target in need (Experiment 1) and willingness to help friends but not unknown people in need in the same hypothetical situations (Experiment 2). This limited pro sociality of religious fundamentals was in contrast with their self-perceptions of being universally altruistic. The same researchers conducted a study in 2013 and tried to enquire how religious text exposure affects the pro social behaviour .The results showed that in neutral condition religious fundamentalism was unrelated to helping unknown targets but after exposure to the Biblical texts that legitimize violence , religious fundamentalism became negatively correlated to helping unknown people. After the exposure to the text praises unconditional pro sociality, religious fundamentalism becomes positively correlated with helping people who get in to trouble because of their negligence, but in neutral condition religious fundamentalism was negatively correlated with helping people who get in to trouble because of their negligence. In continuing research they concluded that fundamentalism is unrelated to pro social behaviour towards atheists and it became positive after reading pro social religious text and became negative after reading violent religious text (Blogowska et al., 2013) . Another study conducted by Gribbins and Vandenberg (2011) is consistent with this research, showing that religious fundamentalism is significantly positively related to helping religious in-groups.

Genia (1996) showed that religious fundamentalism is negatively associated with quest religious orientation. Study conducted by Yelderman and Miller (2017) found that religious fundamentalist beliefs predicted punitiveness in individuals with low intrinsic religiosity. In 1993 Sethi and Seligman showed that members of

fundamentalist religions were much more optimistic than members of liberal religions. Religious fundamental people are significantly more religiously influenced, involved, and hopeful (Sethi & Seligman, 1993). Study conducted by Maranell (1968) shows that fundamentalism directly related to superstition. A study conducted by Witzig and Pollard (2013) found that religious fundamentalism is not significantly related to scrupulosity.

There have been studies related to the cognitive ways of religious fundamentalists to understand the peculiarities of cognitive actions of people who hold fundamentalist mindset. A research done by Saroglou found that religious fundamentalism was associated with the total need for closure and a preference for order and predictability. The findings suggest that religious fundamentalists have less complex thinking related to existential issues. Researchers also indicated that low religious fundamentalists are the ones who doubt the religious system, while high religious fundamentalists only have concerns about others who are not living up to religious standards. Low religious fundamentalists are open to information and show complex and critical thinking, while high religious fundamentalists are inclined towards convergent thinking (Hunsberger, et al., 1994, 1996; Saroglou, 2002a). El-Haq et al (2016) studied the relationship between religious fundamentalism and creativity and found that religious fundamentalism is negatively related to creativity. A 2017 research by Warlick, Ingram, Multon and Vuyk had similar line of results, in their study religious fundamentalism showed no relationship to investigative interest and showed negative relationship to artistic interests (Warlick et al., 2017) . In the case of humor creation, Saroglou conducted a

study named “Religiousness, Religious fundamentalism, and Quest as Predictors of Humor Creation”. Religiousness and religious fundamentalism were found to be negatively correlated with humor creation. Researchers also found that religious fundamentalists hold more fatalistic thinking. Study conducted by Moaddel and Karabenick among young Muslim fundamentals in Egypt and Saudi Arabia showed same results (Moaddel & Karabenick, 2008; Quinney, 1964; Saroglou, 2002b). Previous research also added that, people with religious fundamental beliefs showed lesions in dorso lateral prefrontal cortex (dlPFC) and effect of this lesion was found to be significantly mediated by decreased cognitive flexibility and openness. The research indicated that openness and cognitive flexibility is needed for flexible religious commitment and this is depended on dlPFC functions (Zhong et al., 2017) .The Study conducted by Bronstein et al. (2019) showed that religious fundamentalists are more likely to believe in fake news and researchers assume that this is because of a lack of open mindedness and analytical thinking .

Researchers have also examined the memory processing of religious fundamentalists. Galen et al. (2009) conducted a study entitled ‘Religious Fundamentalism as Schema: Influences on Memory for Religious Information’. The participants were instructed to read text about money or sex with a judgmental or non-judgmental message based on religious belief. The result showed that higher religious fundamentalism was associated with more accurate recall and fewer memory intrusions. And religious fundamentalist were more likely to recognize false alarms for sentences that were not presented. High religious fundamentalism is

positively associated with memory for religious information and also increase familiarity with related but not presented information.

Researchers also checked about the impact and processing of death thought among religious fundamentalists. McGregor et al. (1998) found that mortality salience may lead to increased possibility of pain inducing aggression towards the people who believe in different world view. Pyszczynski et al. (2006) conducted a research among Iranian students. They were asked to evaluate paragraphs about martyrdom. The participants' showed preferences to the paragraph that supported martyrdom after being exposed to death reminders. And the researchers suggested that increase of mortality salience in the social condition increase the chances of religious fundamental movements.

Friedman and Rholes (2008) conducted a study on "Religious Fundamentalism and Terror Management". The results showed that participants who scored high in religious fundamentalism scale engaged in less worldview defense after thinking about their death while participants with low religious fundamentalism score engaged in more worldview defense. It was also found that high fundamentalists' writings about death had a more positive emotional tone. Study conducted by Friedman (2008) showed that religious fundamentalists' responses to mortality salience were less cognitively complex, contained more positive emotion, and were more future and socially oriented. A study by Routledge, Abeyta and Roylance indicated that mortality salience accelerated apocalyptic belief among religious fundamental participants while it decreased among participants who scored low in religious fundamentalism (Routledge et al., 2016) . Greenberg et al. (1992)

reported that the combination of mortality salience and compassionate religious values led to decrease in negative reaction to the criticism from others and also to decreases in support for military interventions. Rothschild, Abdollahi, and Pyszczynski (2009) showed the same results among participants who scored high in religious fundamentalism scale. This research also showed how religious information influence religious fundamentalists. The decrease in preference for military intervention depends on the connection of the compassionate values with an authoritative religious source. Presentation of compassionate values in relation to a secular sourse had no effect on religious fundamentalists. The researchers found similar effects in an Iranian sample also. In the replication, reminder of death increased anti-western attitudes among participants but it decreased among those primed with compassionate values from the Quran (Rothschild et al., 2009). Study conducted by Moaddel and Karabenick (2008) in Egypt and Saudi Arabia found that religious fundamentalists are more likely to rely on religious authorities as the source of knowledge and study by Wamser et al.(2011) pointed out that higher levels of religious fundamentalism is associated with preference for religious rather than psychological help-seeking.

Baurmann (2007) argued that the belief forming and maintaining system are similar for both fundamentalists and non-fundamentalists (who believed in 'enlightened world view'). Both of them believe in their authorities of knowledge (scientist or religious scholars) , epistemic rule of their group and testimony of people who belong to their group .The importance of textual information in the case of religious fundamentalism was also seen in the study conducted by Sethi and

Seligman (1993) related to optimism. As there was high optimism in the religious text provided, the optimism of religious fundamentalists increased. Similar to these studies, research conducted by Yelderman and Miller (2017) took jurors as a sample and showed that priming religious fundamentalist beliefs increased punitiveness in both verdict and sentencing decisions. Muluk et al. (2013) conducted a study on sacred violence. The study was done in two phases. In the first phase they authors interviewed nine people from both groups. The results showed that intratextualism increases support for religious law and belief in sacred violence. In the second phase they studied 1320 Indonesian citizens and showed that intratextualism is the theological root of sacred violence. The research by Yustisia et al. (2020) showed that religious fundamentalism may enhance collective narcissism and this would in turn increase the tendency to extreme behavior.

Researchers enquired about how religious fundamental mindset influence people's political attitude. Dirilen-Gumus (2011) showed that religious fundamentalism is positively related to system justification thoughts. Hood and Morris enquired about boundary maintenance, social-political views, and presidential preference among high and low fundamentalists in 1985. Participants were from one of the most documented fundamentalist areas of the USA and results indicated that high fundamentalists were more likely to select as a presidential candidate seen as most near their own religious beliefs even though religious beliefs do not significantly predict presidential preference (Hood & Morris, 1985). Study by Moaddel and Karabenick (2008) in Egypt and Saudi Arabia found that religious

fundamentalist youth support religious law to be established in the state. Study conducted by Muluk et al.(2013) in Indonesia showed supporting findings.

Empirical studies showed that the inclination towards discipline and military order is common trait of religious fundamentalists. Its' expression was noted in religious fundamental groups which give importance to the Jat culture and warrior legacy rather than Gurus who gave importance to peace and reflection. There are religious fundamental group in India which give importance to 'akhara' (a sort of gymnasium) and 'lathi' (a kind of stick) and conduct martial arts training classes in its centers. A model composed of military and domination was put forward by this group to strengthen their religion so that the warriors can confront enemies of the religion (Andersen & Damle, 1987). Research done by Rothschild et al.(2009) pointed out that among Americans, religious fundamentalism was associated with greater support for extreme military interventions, except when participants were primed with compassionate religious values . The research by Beller (2017) yield same results amongst Egyptian youth. The research further observed that personal meaning to God reduced affiliation towards military intervention.

There were studies that inquired about the impact of religious fundamentalism during Covid 19 outbreak management. A study conducted by Lowicki et al. (2021) showed that religious fundamentalism is positively correlated with Coronavirus conspiracy theories and promoted socially maladaptive behaviours which included non adherence to social safety guidelines and protocols. Sobol et al. (2022) found the same relationship in internet users aged 18-60 and added that there is an indirect effect of religious fundamentalism on conspiracy beliefs through

delusions .When it comes to environmental attitude , it was found that religious fundamentalism negatively predict belief in climate change, moralization of environmental actions, behavioral intentions to conserve energy and waste reduction while spirituality predict strong positive attitude towards these aspects. The relationship is found to be mediated by right wing authoritarianism (Preston & Shin, 2022; Skalski et al., 2022).

There are a very few studies that shed some light into the psychosocial factors that contribute the development of religious fundamentalism but none of them had a comprehensive approach. Study conducted by Quinney (1964) found that political alienation is associated with high religious fundamentalism. A study conducted by Schaafsma and Williams (2012) showed that, exclusion by ethnic in-group members led to more support for religious fundamentalist beliefs. Participants consisted of 720 adolescents (336 ethnic minority participants and 384 ethnic majority). They used a hypothetical play situation for the study and results showed that among all ethnic groups, exclusion by ethnic out-group members led to more hostility toward the co-players and the co-players' ethnic group than exclusion by ethnic in-group members. This was mediated by attribution of exclusion to the racist attitudes of co-players (Schaafsma & Williams, 2012).

A study conducted by Schwartz and Lindley (2005) predicted a relationship between secure attachment style and religious fundamentalism. The study was in a Bible belt community and securely attached people scored more in religious fundamentalism than dismissingly attached individuals. The results were supported by Granqvist and Hagekull (1999). They argued that securely attached individuals

get religiously socialized by their primary attachment figure if the primary attachment figure is religious while insecurely attached people attempt to find their relationship with God as an emotional compensation. In contrast there are researches which argue that fundamentalist mind set is a mental state in which the God act as a 'care taker' who generate an insecure anxious attachment. Religious fundamentalists have an anxious attachment characterized by fear of abandonment and also a harsh image of God. Researchers added that religious fundamentalist are emotionally insecure (Moaddel & Karabenick, 2008; Strozier & Boyed, 2010) .

There are theoretical arguments put forward by different social scientist regarding the factors that contribute to the involvement of people in religious fundamentalist movements and how religious fundamental mind set is created. One such argument by social science researchers are that, religious fundamentalism is a byproduct of modernity and globalization. According to them, modernity led to division of labor and division of life. The social life was divided into public and private and people were forced to act differenty in different areas. Modernization led to rationalization and urbanization which in turn created cultural pluralism. The exposure to different religions and cultures, which was foreign to most religious believers, made some of the people adhere more to their religion to make sense and find meaning in the chaos (Emerson & Hartman, 2006). According to Lawrance (1989), fundamentalism is an ideology rather than theology formed in conflict with modernism. In Sociology the inquiry about religious fundamentalism turned into two directions. One of them was secularization theorists, who believed that fundamentalism is a 'collective last attempt of religion'. These secularization

theorists argued that religion is making a last attempt to stay alive and preserve. Second group – 'new paradigm'- argued that modernization and secularization acted as a reinforcing factor for religious fundamentalism. Religion had basically two reactions to the modernity. Both reactions were attempts to return the followers to the origin of their religion. One was 'utopian', the religion tried to use its liberating spirit in order to transform the given society. It advocated more egalitarian social and gender relations. The other one was mythical, which suggested return to morality that perceived to restore the divine order and argued for hierarchy, and patriarchal autonomy. According to Riesebrodt the above mentioned reactions are what is called 'religious fundamentalism' (Riesebrodt, 1993,2000). Psychological researchers also agree with these sociological assumptions. They argued that religious fundamentalism is a logical possibility for any religion, it is a form religion take when threatened by claims of modernity (Hood et al.,2005). Researchers noted that Jew fundamentalism wasn't a result of modernity but was resulted from a history of persecution (Munson, 2008). This indicates that researchers need to be sensitive to the social, cultural, and historical factors to understand the commonalities and differences of the psychological mind set of religious fundamentalists.

Researchers argued that the growth of religious fundamentalism is the result of social and economic changes of the 20th century. These changes led to loss of community, financial security, identity and social status in many and most of the time modernity and secularization failed to satisfy the expectation of people. The pressures of capitalism got strengthened in one side which ignored the poor and the

expected alternatives get shattered after the collapse of the USSR. Then there existed an ideological gap to alternate capitalism and religious fundamentalism filled the gap and gave hope of rewards and after life to people. Modernity with right wing politics began to rule the world which had abundance of products and wealth which was not accessible for all. The wide gap in economic status, decreased job opportunity, consumerism, homogenization of culture and its submission to capitalist power and increased poverty led people to lean towards something that gives them a better life before or after death. This reinforced religious fundamentalism. The frustrated people become ready to do anything for their religious fundamental ideology, because it gives a purpose to their poor, jobless, and struggling life. They got something to fight for, live for, and die for (Bruce, 2008; Feldman & Clark, 1996; Litonjua, 2008; Salzman,2008). Analysis of fundamentalists groups in Arab world find that religious fundamentalists are young, educated and from lower middle class, the people who had 'great expectations but left with nothing in the capitalist world' (Ayubi, 1991).

There was a theoretical analysis by Taylor and Horgan (2001) which attempted to explain the psychological and behavioral basis of religious fundamentalism. Their behaviouristic explanation suggested that Immediate reinforcement attained through religious activities, distant reinforcements (a better world or heaven), chaining (movement towards a desired end through interconnected activities), presentation of contingency rules in the religious text, and extreme ideological control characterized by lack of secular interaction act as behavioural basis of religious fundamentalism. This belief is proposed to be

associated with a feeling of injustice which emerges from an individual's sense of undeserved suffering when he or she fails to attain material benefits despite living God's rule based life.

Researchers looked more into how globalization contributed to the development of religious fundamentalist mindset of people. The researchers suggested that fundamentalism is a manifestation of resistance to globalization. Globalization creates inferiority in people. It can be through lack of status, money, living standards and unsuccessful life. This inferiority creates an aversive state and religious fundamentalism gives a way out of it. The gap in living accelerated by globalization may be psychologically reduced by intense belief in God and religious meaning system that instruct what to do to get close to God (Ghorbani et al., 2019). The fundamental belief system reduces anxiety and gives a sense of meaning through actions that are supposed to protect the religious world view (M.Friedman, 2008; Koenig et al., 2001) Globalization produce a system threat to the system of meaning related to culture/ religion and when culture/religion is in system threat, it become tighter (Bonanno & Jost, 2006; Gelfand et al., 2006). Researchers also argued that losing one's own root due to the spread of global culture led to loss of identity. Growth of capitalism led to cutting off the root of people; putting them in identity crisis and in material deprivation. Religious world view attracted people as it promised alleviation of all kind of deprivation in after life. It also offered a meaning system, which acts as a foundation of self-esteem (Salzman, 2008) .

Hood et al (2005) argue that a man need meaning and religion is the most available meaning system. As religion give a system of values it facilitate

construction of self-esteem and self esteem act as a safety buffer against anxiety. When two cultures come in contact with each other they clash in some point. People, whose self-esteem is totally based on the meaning system given by their cultural world view, will stick to it intensely, will find argument to prove their meaning system is the single ultimate truth and react aggressively to the other meaning systems that they come in contact with (Friedman, 1999; Salzman, 2008).

Researchers like Lifton understand extreme religious belief as a wish for heroism. Through identification with God or with a warrior who protested for the value given by God, religious fundamentalists try to become heroes themselves. The members of religious fundamental groups believe that the higher power, they believe in, assigned them to restore the social order. The wish to rebuild a so - called sacred history is common in religious fundamental movements. As a group member, believing that one's group is in a heroic struggle for the ultimate power to destroy evil addresses the member's wish for heroism. It may also enhance the meaning of life and help in reducing existential anxiety (Lifton, 1866/2000; Riesebrodt & Chong, 1999).

Some researchers assert that the ability of religion to function as as a moral guide reinforced the growth of religious fundamentalist ideology. In the absence of a secular morality, with the help of religious organizations religion began to act as the only source of morality (Ayubi, 1991) .There are researchers who tried to analyze the political influences that reinforced religious fundamentalism. They argue the reinforcement is happening through action of conservative religious leaders who have their political target to achieve and politicians who try to please some section

of society to stay in power. And sometimes fundamentalist group become major source of funding for the political parties. In this political process political leaders assert a group identity based on a mythical past which had the ideal social order. Through this the political leaders aim to influence the group which holds that identity for political purpose. This assertion of identity reinforce followers in a religiously sentimental way, which increases their identification with the religion and attract them to religious fundamentalism (Feldman & Clark, 1996; Poonacha, 1993) .

As sociologists and philosophers, psychologists also tried to theoretically explain the phenomena of religious fundamentalism. In doing so they mainly used terror management theory, social identity theory and realistic group conflict theory. Researchers who used realistic group conflict theory to explain religious fundamentalism intended that religion based prejudice increases when religious fundamentalists feel that they are in a fight with people of another group for valuable resources. Researches also showed that perceived competition can lead to development and intensification of hate and aggression towards other religious groups (Hunsberger & Jackson, 2005; Struch & Schwartz, 1989).

Another theory used by psychological researchers to explain religious fundamentalism is social identity theory. The theory suggests that humans earn their self-esteem through belonging to groups and have a strong tendency to divide the world into 'Us vs. Them'. As individuals engage with and perceive their group as superior and distinct from other groups, their sense of belonging to this group enhances their self-esteem. The need for psychological belongingness and the

resulting self-esteem leads to religious fundamentalism in a world that is continually changing and creating existential anxiety (Herriot, 2009; Hunsberger & Jackson, 2005; Salzman, 2008).

Terror management theory was also used by researchers to explain religious fundamentalism. The theory produces two hypotheses. First one is the anxiety buffer hypothesis .It assumes that adherence to a system acts as a buffer against anxiety through providing self-esteem which has an anxiety reducing effect. Second hypothesis is the mortality salience hypothesis which says that reminders of death (primary fear) can lead to increase in need for psychological structure to attach the self with. Adherence to cultural world view gives value and meaning for life through which it provide hope of transcendence of death. Religions also provide literal immortality through the concept of hell, heaven, reincarnation and martyrdom. In the unbalanced current world, when the belief system is shaken or the value system is perceived to be in danger, there exists increased anxiety which lead to a 'terror management" response. The response can be destructive which includes harming others (Greenberg et al., 1990; Pyszczynski et al., 2003; Salzman, 2008).

Each society will have its own specific effect on the development of religious fundamentalism. The history, religious co-existence, specific culture etc. of a country will have an influence on factors that affect the development of religious fundamentalist mind set. In the context of India, even though it is a secular nation with co existence of multiple religions, there is no notable psychological inquiry into the religious fundamental mindset. Even though there are no psychological inquiries, there are historians in India who shed some light to the issue. According to Bipin

Chandra, historians have argued that religious fundamentalism and communalism is a byproduct of colonial development and it is most commonly located in the middle class. After the colonial era the existing class identities were collapsed, the migrated and non-migrated middle class needed to fight for the resources and needed an identity and group to belong with. This made their minds easily accessible for religious ideologies because it gave them an identity and group they can belong to. Small issues related to religion then become a threat to their identity. (Chandra, 2008). The review of existing literature indicates lack of comprehensive understanding about the factors that are capable of contributing to the formation of religious fundamental mindset among youth in the Indian context.

Summary of review

In this chapter, the researcher inquired about how knowledge related to the variable 'religious fundamentalism' was constructed, the information available on the variable, and its interaction with different aspects of human life. From the studies and theories discussed so far, the researcher tried to understand how the variable was treated by previous researchers and what the already existing understanding related to the variable is.

The review of the literature revealed that the variable is explored in psychological research, and confusion and contradictions exist in the studies. The review makes it clear that religious fundamentalism is a multidisciplinary variable, and the inquiry into the formation, development, and maintenance of religious fundamentalism was eagerly studied by Sociologist, Historians and Philosophers as compared to Psychologists. Inferences from the review suggest that for a clear

understanding of psycho-social contributors of religious fundamentalism, the political and historical aspects and their interaction with the human mind should be taken into consideration.

While analysing previous inquiries about religious fundamentalism, we can see that there were inquiries about the interaction of religious fundamentalism with prejudice (especially to homosexuals, out-group members, women, and racial prejudice) and how it is affected by authoritarianism and textual information. Sociologists have enquired about the influence of religious fundamentalism on a democratic society and its effect on state policies and attitudes. They were also curious about religious fundamentalists' attitude towards Education and Science.

Psychologists inquired about the influence of religious fundamentalism on forgiveness, altruism, divergent thinking, creativity, humour creation, memory processing, spiritual and psychological well being, attachment style, aggression, attitude towards military intervention, punitiveness, and child-rearing. The investigations are fewer in number and scattered, and the results are contradictory in some cases.

The understanding of the psychosocial contributors of religious fundamentalism is mostly theoretical. The dominant arguments arising from social and historical research are that modernism and globalisation are the main contributing factors to the development of religious fundamentalism. A few existing psychological arguments revolve around issues of self-esteem, death anxiety, mortality silence, and the fight for resources. However, there is no comprehensive understanding of the formation and development of religious fundamentalist

attitudes among individuals, and there is no psychological inquiry related to the contributing factors of religious fundamentalist mindset formation in the Indian context. The review of existing literature indicates that there is a dearth of psychological enquiries related to the development of a religious fundamentalist mindset in a comprehensive way, and a multidisciplinary approach is needed to explain this phenomenon.

Objectives

- To explore the psychosocial factors contributing to the formation of religious fundamentalist mindset among youth in Kerala
- To understand the process of religious fundamentalist mindset formation among youth in Kerala.

METHOD

The present study tries to explore the psychosocial factors that can contribute to the development of religious fundamentalism among youth. As India has multiple religions co-existing with a constitutional value of secularism, understanding what leads to fostering religious fundamentalism is essential. The widespread use of the term religious fundamentalism and the term's growth into different meanings was the first challenge faced by the researcher. So, initially, the researcher searched for a comprehensive and researchable definition of religious fundamentalism and selected the definition by Altemeyer and Hunsberger (1992), which was used by most previous researches reviewed .A review of available literature in multiple disciplines was conducted to understand the available knowledge regarding the variable and where the research gap exists.

For the current research, researcher opted for the constructivist philosophical paradigm. Honebein (1996) describes the constructivist philosophical paradigm as an approach that asserts people construct their own understanding and knowledge of the world through experiences and reflecting on those experiences. This approach aims to comprehend the phenomena under study through the lens of participants' experiences by utilising various methods of data collection. It also posits that the researcher formulates interpretations of the phenomena being investigated based on their own experiences and those of the participants in the study. The nature of reality is viewed as subjective, as it stems from the individual perspectives of those involved, resulting in multiple or diverse interpretations. In this framework, the researcher derives meaning from events through interactions with others within social and cultural contexts. Investigations rooted in the constructivist philosophical

paradigm typically commence with open-ended enquiries framed as research questions (Honebein ,1996 as cited in Adom et al., 2016).

The research design involves qualitative methodology and grounded theory method .Qualitative methodology allows researchers to examine meaning and context and adopt a holistic approach to the research problem. It enables in-depth exploratory investigations and involves data collection in the form of naturalistic verbal reports. This methodology is particularly suitable for engaging with, describing, and interpreting participants' personal and social experiences. (Hayes, 1997; Smith, 2003).The researcher decided to take a qualitative approach to the research as the area has been less thoroughly studied before and as the researcher was attempting to get an in-depth and holistic understanding from the research question in inquiry. After multiple discussions with subject experts in the field, the researcher decided to use the grounded theory method to deal with the research question as its techniques could help to extract information regarding the social situations from multiple data collected and can help to bring them together to build a comprehensive understanding regarding the question under inquiry .It can eventually help to construct more abstract theoretical categories and also give freedom to the creativity of the researcher to add and edit multiple techniques with a sensitivity to the basic philosophy behind the method (Suddaby, 2006).

The grounded theory method was proposed by Glaser and Strauss in 1967. The core of their approach was allowing the theory to emerge from the data (Licqurish& Seibold, 2011). Since the introduction of the approach, there have been multiple developments and additions by different researchers. The variations in the

grounded theory approach include Glaser and Strauss's approach, Glaser's approach and Strauss and Corbin's explication. Charmaz's and Bryant's approach is closely related but has its own unique nature. Another development in the grounded theory method is Clark's situationist extension. The approaches differed in the paradigms on which they based their worldview, the way in which the data is analyzed, and the theory is presented. However, all approaches agree with the basic rules of constant comparison, memo writing, theoretical sampling, saturation, and theoretical sensitivity (Belgrave & Seide, 2019).

In the scenario of this particular research, the researcher is more inclined toward the Corbin and Strauss framework of grounded theory. The approach was introduced in Strauss and Corbin's 'Basics of Qualitative Research', published in 1990. In this work, they continued earlier objectivist assumptions yet added specific methodologies for data analysis. Post-positivism made its introduction into the grounded theory analysis through them. Nevertheless, in later editions of the book, Corbin moved towards a more interpretive approach, and the overall meaning of her work has been transformed from post positivist to constructivist (Belgrave & Seide, 2019; Charmaz & Belgrave, 2012). Corbin and Strauss (2015) put it like

> I agree with the constructivist viewpoint that concepts and theories are constructed by researchers out of stories that are constructed by research participants who are trying to explain and make sense out of their experiences and lives, both to the researcher and themselves. Out of these multiple constructions, analysts construct something called knowledge (p.47).

The approach of Corbin and Strauss since 2015 suggests that it is crucial to consider what the researcher brings into the research, like the researcher's professional background, gender, education, philosophies, etc., which can influence the research process from the beginning, like topic selection. It is also suggested that the theory constructed from the data represents both the researcher and the participant. The theory's validity is determined by its groundedness in data and the ability to provide insights into human behavior (Corbin & Strauss, 2015).

The conditional /consequential matrix provided by Corbin and Struss helped to understand the linkage between interactions and conditions that affect the phenomena better. The suggestions regarding the need for self-reflexivity and agreeableness with the constructivist viewpoint make the grounded theory more aligned with the researcher’s viewpoint related to knowledge construction. It gives a possibility to use multiple data resources, a systematic way of data analysis and theory building with appreciation to the context, and also addresses the need to be sensitive towards what the researcher brings into the research. The approach also provides considerable freedom to the researcher to make choices in the research process without losing the soul of the primary grounded theory method (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Corbin & Strauss, 1996).

Mode of Data collection

As the researcher was using the grounded theory method, data collection and analysis were happening simultaneously. Purposive sampling was done and snowball sampling and theoretical sampling were included. The researcher arranged the total data into three data sets. The first one was interviews of subjects who were

young religious fundamentalists. According to the definition of National Youth Policy (2014), the age range of youth in India is mentioned as 15-29. As the legal age of adulthood in India is starting from18, the researcher narrowed down people aged between 18 and 29 as participants. Information from the analysis of the data set one directed to further data collection and led into changes in the interview guideline and finding more data resources. Through theoretical sampling, the other two data sets were included in the research to bridge the gaps in the developing theory.

Data Set 1

Stage 1: Gaining access to the field

To begin with, the researcher had to find people who have religious fundamental mindset. The researcher conducted an online survey which asked a single question: which are the religious organisations that you think are religiously fundamental? 235 responses were collected and most frequently mentioned associations were selected to start the data collection and also ensured that associations related to three major religions were included in the selection. The researcher informally enquired and found people who are active members of these associations.

When members of different religious organisations were found, the researcher contacted them either in person or through phone. The researcher introduced herself and said that she was intending to do a research on religious beliefs and activities of youth, and enquired about the age group they belong to. If the person belongs to the age group of 18-29 the researcher explained more about

the research and tried to get consent to take part in the research. Most of them were suspicious and were not ready to be a part and some told that they wanted to get permission from their religious organisations and never got it. The people who were ready to participate were met after fixing time and date for the meeting.

As membership in any religious organisation does not mean that a person is religiously fundamental, the researcher used the religious fundamentalism scale by Altemeyer and Hunsberger (2004) for screening purposes. People who scored high on the religious fundamentalism scale were selected for the next stage of research. The religious organisation members were also asked about people who they think are 'true religious believers' and found more people to contact for data collection. This procedure provided a mixed group (religious believers who were members of certain religious organisations and those who were not) from which the participants were selected using a religious fundamentalism scale for screening.

Religious fundamentalism scale (RFS)

The religious fundamentalism scale was first developed by Altemeyer & Hunsberger in 1992, which was a 20-item scale. As it is criticised for not covering all aspects of religious fundamentalism in relation to their definition, the Altemeyer & Hunsberger later developed a better, more internally consistent and short version of it in 2004.The revised version contains twelve items .The scale includes phrases like "God has given humanity a complete, unfailing guide to happiness and salvation which must be totally followed" as well as "to lead the best, most meaningful life, one must belong to the one, fundamentally true religion." Responses were coded to reflect increasing levels of religious fundamentalism, which means Higher RFS

scores reflect greater religious fundamentalism. The scale's alpha reliability was .90. Even though the scale was constructed with Christian sample, the scale is proved to be able to capture religious fundamentalism in different religions as it measures attitude related to one's religious belief rather than the belief itself and was established in Hindu, Jews and Muslims with alpha ranging from .42 to .56. (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 2004; Bradly, 2009; Bridges & Harnish, 2015)

For the current study, the items in the scale were translated into Malayalam. According to Efstathiou (2019), the translation process requires multiple steps and was used as a guideline by researchers in the present study (Efstathiou, 2019). In the first step, the religious fundamentalism scale was translated from its original English version to the target language, Malayalam. This process was conducted by two independent translators, both of whom possessed fluency in both languages. One translator had an academic background in Psychology, while the other had an academic background in Literature. In the second stage (synthesis of translated versions), a third translator compared the original scale with both translated scales. Three of the translators, along with the researcher, discussed and resolved discrepancies in the translations, and synthesised the two translated versions into one. Subsequently, a blind backward translation was performed. Another two independent translators (bilingual - from the subject of psychology and English) back-translated the synthesised version of the scale in the target language to the original language. The translators were unaware of the original scale. Following the backward translation, a discussion was conducted with all five translators, the primary researcher, and additional psychology researchers to synthesise the back-

translated version and compare it with the original version. Discrepancies were resolved during this stage as well. The translated scale was subsequently evaluated by five postgraduate students who were fluent in Malayalam. These students were instructed to review the items and instructions and provide feedback regarding the clarity of both. Items that seemed unclear or confusing by twenty per cent of the participants were subsequently revised. Subject experts and researchers from Psychology, Sociology, and Political Science (six of them), who were fluent in Malayalam, were also asked to evaluate the conceptual equivalence and content equivalence of the translated version. Both conceptual equivalence and content equivalence were achieved when the expert committee was confident that the translated version's construct and content of each item were equivalent to the original. The translated scale was re-standardised in the Kerala population. The details of the re-standardisation have been appended as appendix A.

The Screening Procedure

The researcher met the participants as per appointment time and date. After briefing the study respect and confidentiality were ensured. As the research topic is sensitive and the trust towards the researcher was important, building trust was a significant focus of the first meeting. The researcher established a good rapport with the participants and acquired trust to proceed. The researcher ensured the research purpose of the data and confidentiality of the identity of the participant and their belonging association. The participants were also informed that they can withdraw from the study at any stage of the research. After building the rapport and trust, the scale was administered with directions on mode of responding to the items.

The participants were instructed to blacken a bubble of the bubble sheet in such a way that blacken (-4) if very strongly disagree, -3 if strongly disagree, and so on up to +4 if very strongly agree, to express how they feel about each statement. It was also instructed to blacken the "0" bubble if their feelings are perfectly and precisely neutral towards something. Sometimes, responses to various parts of a message vary. For example, one might very strongly disagree ("–4") with one idea in a statement but slightly agree ("+1") with another idea in the same item. When this happened, they were asked to combine their feelings and record their overall sentiment (in this case, a "-3") in response. Confusions of the participants were cleared accordingly (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 2004). Items number 2,4,7,9,10, and 12 were worded in a con-trait direction, so the scoring was reversed for those items. The scoring was done immediately after the completion of the response by the participants. Religious fundamentalism scale used for the screening is appended as appendix B. People who scored higher on the scale were requested to continue participating in the research.

Stage 2: In-depth Personal Interview

An in-depth interview involves conducting thorough conversations with a limited number of subjects. Researchers utilising this technique dedicate substantial time to each participant, adopting a conversational style. The questions posed are predominantly open-ended, fostering a discovery-orientated process. In-depth interviewing aims to gather comprehensive information that illuminates an individual's viewpoint, experiences, emotions, and the significance they attribute to a specific subject or matter. The process requires a substantial time commitment and

involves close, personal interaction between the researcher and the study participant (Rutledge & Hogg, 2020).

The semi-structured interview is known for its ability to create in-depth conversations. It is flexible, and its interactive nature gives space for changes and additions according to the evolving conversation. The active participation from both parties involved in the semi-structured interview will lead to the taping of the in-depth realities of the interviewees. Semi-structured interviews are generally conducted based on a guide that describes the major topics that should be present in the conversation. The guide not only helps to lead the interview without losing focus on the major themes to be enquired but also provides flexibility in the interview (Kakilla, 2021). In the present study, the researcher decided to use in-depth personal interviews in semi-structured form as a technique for data collection. For the first interview, the interview guide was prepared after discussion with the subject experts. As the researcher adopted the grounded theory method, the guide of the semi-structured interview was constantly changed from participant to participant as the research progressed, and the change was determined by the data collected in the previous interview. A comprehensive version of the interview guide is appended as appendix C.

To start with the data collection, the researcher needed consent from the participants. The first twelve screened-in participants rejected the request immediately. The 13th one was ready, but he wanted time to think about it. It took two weeks and multiple phone calls to gain the first appointment of the first interview in the research.

The trust-building was again the central focus. The participants were very conscious and suspicious at the beginning. It took a long time to break the ice and move from single-word answers to more open and spontaneous answers. The researcher was very conscious and reflective about her position with religious belief. It was assured that curiosity, empathy, and a non-judgmental attitude was there throughout the process. The researcher also ensured that no religious feelings were hurt and that the researcher was not becoming a critic verbally or nonverbally. A consent form was signed by the participant, which informed the participant about the research project and how the data would be recorded and used (copy attached as appendix D). The researcher also signed a declaration form that promised anonymity of the participant, confidentiality of the data, and respect for the fundamental rights of belief offered by the constitution of India (copy attached as appendix E).

Whenever a question related to the religious background and faith of the researcher was raised during the initial conversation, the researcher tried to be true to herself and the participants. When the participants enquired about the religiosity of the researcher, she disclosed that she is from a family which is not practicing religious rituals. This position of the researcher was helpful because the lack of adherence towards any religion gave an open mental space for the researcher while listening to the participant, and the participant was eager to teach and talk more about their religious belief and personal stories, which was contributing significantly to the richness of the data.

As the conversation with the first participant ended, the researcher again made sure that the participant was not offended, disrespected, or hurt, especially in the level of religious sentiments. The subject was also asked whether he would be willing to clarify or add details if needed. The participant was happy and willing to provide any clarification if needed.

After meeting the first participant, snowball sampling was done, as the participant was able to suggest people whom he thought could provide more information. The suggested people were contacted later, and the same screening procedure was done for the selection. In latest stage of research theoretical sampling was added. Theoretical sampling is defined by Corbin and Strauss (2015) as

> A method of data collection based on concepts derived from data. The purpose of theoretical sampling is to collect data from places, people, and events to maximize opportunities to develop concepts in terms of their properties and dimensions, uncover variations, and identify relationships between concepts (p.146).

The grounded theory method suggests doing the data collection and analysis simultaneously. So, after getting the first interview data, the analysis was started. The analysis of the first interview gave indications regarding modifications in the interview guide, and this kind of contribution from analysis to data collection and data collection to analysis was there in the entire process of the research.

Analysis

The grounded theory methodology suggests that, in the research process, it is crucial to be present with the data. The researcher enters the field with specific basic questions that guide the interview process. It was essential that no vital information from the ground must be missed during the research process. Also, in grounded theory, data analysis directs the research process (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). So, the researcher analysed the very first data available, and further information gathering was directed by the cues given by the data.

After finishing the first interview, it was transcribed line by line, noting the changes in tone, pauses, hesitations, and skipping or redirecting of conversation. The dimension of transcription used was denaturalised one, which is typical for grounded theory (Howitt, 2016). Before entering into the coding procedure, the researcher read the interview multiple times to familiarise with the data.

In the process of open coding, data was considered in sections. The researcher tried to identify what each section means and named the section at a conceptual level. The researcher asked multiple questions about the data to facilitate the process. The codes were tentative, which means that they can be changed while analyzing subsequent data or while comparing with other emerging concepts. When the researcher had a handful of concepts, she grouped them under a higher-order concept, through which primary categories evolved in the analysis. These categories were also tentative. The concepts and categories were re-examined and rearranged throughout the entire process. Analysis of new interviews contributed to the formation of new concepts, renaming of existing concepts, formation of new

categories, arrangements of concepts into different categories, and renaming of categories. All these processes were continued throughout the analysis. While new interview data were analyzed, the categories were also modified in terms of properties and dimensions. As the analysis progressed, more constant concepts and categories emerged. Some previous categories were submerged into new constant categories.

Through the process of axial coding, categories were linked to their sub-categories. This process of linking categories to sub-categories gives a more comprehensive and precise idea about the phenomena under observation. The sub-categories help to explain the phenomena by answering the questions about when, why, where, how, and who related to the phenomena. The process of axial coding was continued throughout the analysis. As the analysis developed, the categories, sub-categories, and links became more apparent and constant. As the process continued, the categories and sub-categories were renamed and rearranged multiple times.

The process of open coding and axial coding was not happening sequentially; the researcher continued coding for concepts and dimensions as she started looking into the relationship between the concepts. Both processes were happening parallelly. The process continued until the categories got saturated, meaning no new concepts arrived through the coding, and no new dimension, relation, action, or interaction could be derived from the available data.

Constant comparison was also done throughout the process. Constant comparison means the researcher constantly compared incidents in the data for their

similarities and differences. The conceptual labels and categories were also compared constantly so that the similarities and differences could be noted and changes could be made accordingly in the conceptualization and categorization. Whenever new data was analyzed, the concepts and categories that emerged were continuously compared with the previous ones. This constant revisiting of the analytical results helped to refine the concepts, categories, and their linkage to sub-categories through renaming and rearranging them as suggested by the new understanding of the data.

Researcher had noted important information, observations and understandings related to each interviewee and interview (memo-writing) and it started with the first analysis and continued throughout the process of analysis and integration. It included notes of the researchers' understanding of the data, her insights, questions, and more. Later it was also used to develop dimensions of emerging concepts, refining of categories, and understanding the development of the formation of sub-categories. It helped in making comparisons and finding relationships between concepts, categories, and sub-categories, keeping track throughout the research. The process of writing memos made it visible to the researcher what she carried to the research and data analysis regarding her professional and personal background.

Qualitative researchers strive for sensitivity rather than objectivity. It is nothing but the researcher's ability to find out the critical events and issues during the process of data collection and analysis yet not force meaning onto data (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Accordingly, in the present study the researcher maintained

sensitivity by improving the experience by participating in other researchers' analyses, taking help from experts in analysis, and cross-checking the concepts, categories, and sub-categories evolved from the data. The researcher also worked with the concepts evolved from the data, focusing on their properties and dimensions so that she could understand the similarities and differences better rather than being carried over by mere description, and kept self-reflection throughout the process.

The theoretical comparison was another tool used in the grounded theory analysis of the present research. Theoretical comparison helps to understand what a researcher should look for while doing theoretical sampling. In the present study the researcher compares the concepts developed from data against the ideas gained through the subject expertise, personal experiences, and literature. The result of the analysis was used to determine the possibility of the development of the concepts and to determine from where and which data should be collected to expand the dimension of the concept. It helped to guide the research path and helped to attain theoretical saturation. Asking 'So what?' and 'What if' questions were also used to guide the theoretical sampling and to attain saturation. Selective coding procedure led to integrating and refining the emerging theory. It helped to develop a substantive theory from data. The process was begun at the level of the personal interview itself, but the major selective coding procedure was happening later in the study. As the research is based on religious fundamentalism, a through theoretical background and literature review made the researcher develop theoretical sensitivity. She was looking into the data and developing concepts and categories with that theoretical sensitivity, which she attained through her academic life and research

process. The theoretical comparison was used to stimulate the thinking about properties and dimensions of developing categories through which it can be understood whether the category can develop further.

It was evident to the researcher that there are categories that need more development and cannot be provided by the interviews of religious fundamental participants only. Even though categories related to subjective psychological factors were emerging, it was evident that categorical saturation would not be attained only through personal interviews. So, the researcher determined to collect new data in this regard (theoretical sampling). The researcher decided to use Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) to get more information regarding implicit psychological factors of the religious fundamentalist participants. The data collection was started after finishing eleven personal interviews. From this point, two forms of data collection and analysis were happening simultaneously. The researcher decided to stop the personal interviews with 23 personal interviews, as the data obtained saturation.

In the same way, the theoretical sensitivity of the researcher and theoretical comparison also suggested that the personal interviews do not give enough information regarding the development of categories related to how the socio-political factors influence the religious fundamental mindset formation. There were codes and categories related to this, but as stated earlier, the categories needed to be more developed and showed scope for further development. New interviews of religious fundamentalist participants could not provide any new information in this

regard. At this point also, the researcher needed new source of data to develop the theory. It leaded to the use of two more data sources.

1. Magazine articles, which can be seen as the opinion of the people who wrote the articles.

2. Interviews of experts from multiple disciplines who can contribute their arguments regarding the religious fundamentalist mindset formation.

The first and second sourses were considered as a single data set and employed the same analytical techniques that were used to analyse of personal interviews of religious fundamental subjects.

The data and the insights gained from the personal interviews of religious fundamental participants were helpful in the interview of experts and analysis of the data. All the three data sets interacted with each other in the process of analysis and data collection.

Data Set 2

Administration and analysis of Thematic Apperception Test (TAT)

The Thematic Apperception Test was developed by Murry and Morgan in 1935.It is a projective test that is known to measure deeper layers of the personality of the subject. The test includes 30 picture cards and one blank card, which has specifications regarding the gender and age of the participants to whom the cards can be administrated. In the cards, some pictures are well structured, and some are ambiguous; some pictures deal with usual events and some with unusual events. The

pictures encourage fantasy and imagination, which in turn reveals the inner dynamics of the person who creates stories from the pictures. Generally, the subject identifies with one or more characters in the picture and projects his ideas, which can be a reflection of his/her personality. It can reveal some aspects of his/her personality that he/she is not aware of. The stories can show what the subject stores on a subconscious or unconscious level, including his/her experiences, drives, emotions, complexes, conflicts, and sentiments (Mehrotra, 1992).

In the present study, the Indian adaptation of the Thematic Apperception Test by Uma Chowdhury was used, which includes 14 cards and one blank card. The test reconstructed the pictures in accordance with the Indian culture without losing the universality of the psychological elements. Uma Chowdhury reported that while drawing the pictures and selecting them, an attempt was made to incorporate the family structure and religious sentiments of Indian society into it to capture the minds of Indian subjects (Chowdhury, 1960).

After finishing the interview, the subjects were asked whether they could contribute to the research more by doing a simple creative task. It was introduced as a test that helps to find out the personal peculiarities of the subject. As the interview was lengthy, the TAT administration needed another appointment. The researcher contacted the subjects willing to take the test, fixed the appointment, and met them personally for data collection. The early rapport and trust helped in the procedure to get the appointment and administration of the test. The manual by Mehrotra (1992) and TAT blank by Bhargava (1971) was used as a guide for the administration and analysis of the test. In the analysis, importance was given to the categories that were

suggested by the personal interview data (of religious fundamentalist participants) analysis.

To start the administration of TAT, the subject was made to sit comfortably in a quiet room. Demographic data were collected, which include gender, age, occupation, marital status, details of siblings (age, gender, and number), and details of parents (whether alive or dead). After establishing rapport and making the subject comfortable, the researcher explained the test and given instructions as per the manual. The researcher informed the subject that to see how well his imagination works, he will be given some cards that contain pictures, and he has to tell stories based on the picture on the card. The significant instructions given by the researcher related to what should be there in the story was

- The stories should contain a description of the picture and the reason for that situation (past).
- There should be a description of what is happening now and what will happen later in that picture.
- Explanation about who are the people in the picture and what they are thinking and feeling (Mehrotra, 1992).

The subject was also instructed to give the first stories that came to mind while seeing that picture. The researcher showed the first card and asked to be reminded of the past, present, and future and description of the characters in the story. Ten cards were presented with the same instruction. When the subject was stuck or missing the necessary elements, the researcher motivated him to perform better.

The responses were recorded by writing down the verbatim of the story while the participants were narrating it. The total time taken, along with other actions during the administration, which included confusions of the subjects, questions, comments, pauses, corrections, anxieties, emotional expressions, and clarifications done by the administrator were also noted.

Inquiry about the stories was another essential part of the TAT administration. It was ensured that no leading or aggressive questions were asked during the inquiry time. The researcher adopted a cooperative and empathetic attitude so that the subject felt comfortable and safe. If the subject omitted any aspects of the instruction, inquiry was used as an effort to complete it.

There were also

- Inquiry about the plot, which included questions related to whether the plot in the story was created, borrowed from any other stories, or is it from one's own or other's experience. If borrowed, it was also asked why they felt that particular story would be apt to the picture that was given.
- Inquiry about identification and empathy, which included questions about the age of the main characters, which character is favourite , and why.
- Inquiry about ambiguity, which happened only when the researcher felt a lack of clarity in the story that was made. When there were expressions like ‘somebody' and 'something' in the stories, which created ambiguity, the researcher asked questions like "Who is that somebody?”
- Inquiry about omission and introduction happened when a subject omitted a particular picture content while storytelling. The researcher inquired about

the reason for that omission. Whenever there was an introduction of content into the picture, the researcher inquired about the motivation behind the introduction and also asked to explain more about the introduced content.

- Inquiry about the pauses, hesitations, and rejections, were included when the subject showed any rejection of the picture that was introduced or when the participant hesitated /paused while narrating the story. Inquiry was made through multiple questions regarding such issues.
- Inquiry about the most and least liked picture was made by asking about which is their most liked and least liked picture and why so (Mehrotra, 1992).

Interpretation of the responses

The interpretation was done with the help of the TAT blank by Bhargava (1971) and the manual of TAT by Mehrotra (1992). The TAT blank gave way to a systematic analysis of the stories with its arrangements to record significant factors that should be taken out from the data as part of the analysis. It gives separate spaces for analysis of form, analysis of content (including hero identification and interpersonal relations, needs press interaction and thema),significant conflicts and defenses, feelings and emotions, basic traits of personality, and reaction time (the TAT blank is appended as appendix F).

The researcher read the stories repeatedly by giving attention to the psychological and dynamic structures in them. Attention was also given to the presence of repetitive patterns in different stories, which can contribute to the understanding related to the dynamics of personality.

In the analysis of form session, the general tendency in all stories was recorded in terms of whether the plot of the stories is structured or unstructured, real or bizarre, how the stories were organized, what the status of imagination, and what peculiarities the used language has and what other details were observed during data collection. In the analysis of the content session, hero identification in terms of type and level was recorded separately for each story, thema was recorded with the need - press interaction and outcome, and nature of interpersonal relation in each story was also recorded.

Major needs, significant conflicts, feelings and emotions, and basic personality traits of the hero were rated on a 5-point scale based on their intensity, duration, and frequency in each story. The strength of the variable (a particular need, conflict, emotion, or personality trait) is determined by the total score he attained after adding the ratings from individual stories. It is based on the following criteria :

1-5 : negligible

6-15 : Slightly significant

16-30 : Significant

31 and above highly significant (Mehrotra, 1992).

The resulting score and rating were also recorded in the TAT blank. It was helpful to get the whole picture of which needs, conflicts, emotions, and personality traits are significant to the person, which was reflected through the heroes of individual stories. Even though there is no space for the nature of anxiety in the TAT blank, the researcher was looking for it, too, as the categories developed in the

interview suggested the presence of anxieties in the religious fundamental individuals.

After analyzing the stories of all the subjects, the significant conflicts, needs, emotions, personalities, nature of anxiety, and peculiarities of the super-ego were found to be the critical categories that will contribute to the theory building. After completing the 12 TAT analyses, the researcher stopped collecting more TAT data, as the analysis showed no new information regarding the categories mentioned above.

Data Set 3

The third data set was the experts' opinions regarding the factors that can contribute to forming a fundamental religious mindset in youth. It contains two forms of data.

1. Articles published in magazines related to religious fundamentalism
2. Interview data of experts from different areas of expertise

Collection and analysis of magazine articles

The researcher searched and identified articles which contain opinions regarding religious fundamentalism from two popular magazines from Kerala, which was published in the time period of 2016-2017.The articles were collected from the Central Library of the University of Calicut (a list of the articles are appended as appendix G). After obtaining permission from the authorities, all the articles were photocopied and analyzed using the same coding system that was used

for the analysis of personal interview data, which includes open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. From these categories, sub-categories were formed.

Expert interview

Data was collected through semi-structured interviews. Interview guide was prepared with support of experts and based on information from previous data analysis so that theoretical saturation can be attained (a comprehensive interview guide is appended as appendix H). As the researcher adopted grounded theory method, data collection and analysis were happening simultaneously, and the analysis of the first interview data suggested modification in the interview schedule for the following interviews. Theoretical sampling was used as the whole interview was intended to fill the gap in the developing theory. The researcher was going to experts who will be able to provide information about the concept and categories that need to be developed more. The constant comparison and theoretical sensitivity directed the researcher to decide which subject experts should be met next for the effective development and saturation of the categories.

Thirteen experts were interviewed from the fields of Philosophy, Politics, Psychology, History, and Cultural Studies. The experts include research scholars and teachers who were experienced in research of similar sort. For the interview, experts were contacted through telephone and appointments were fixed. The researcher met them personally /online for the interviews at the fixed time and date. Rapport was established, confidentiality was assured, and data was collected.

In the analysis, the data was considered as the continuation of the analysis of magazine articles. The same grounded theory procedure was employed, and the emerging concepts were compared constantly with the concepts from the magazine article analysis, which in turn contributed to the naming and renaming of categories and the development of categories in multiple dimensions. As both data from the magazine article and the expert interview were considered as single data (expert opinion), data saturation was attained by the 13th interview, and the researcher stopped data collection.

Analytical ordering and Theoretical integration

At this point of research, the researcher had three mutually contributed and theoretically interconnected yet independent sets of categories and sub-categories that were developed from the three different datasets. For theoretical integration, the categories and sub-categories derived from the three different data sets were compared and contrasted with each other, and a new combined table was formed, which included more developed / newly formed categories and sub-categories with newly formed/developed category sub-category connections. From the combination of three data sets, six major categories evolved. From this, the researcher identified the core category and critical interactions. To build a theory, it is necessary to integrate all the concepts and relationships between the concepts into a theoretical whole. Even though the selective coding procedure was started early in the analysis, this was the phase in which selective coding became a more important process. Through selective coding, all categories are unified around the central core category, and categories that needed more explication were filled in (Corbin & Strauss,1990).

Throughout the analysis, the researcher was aware of the presence of interaction which was called as 'process' by Corbin and Strauss (2015). Whenever it emerged from the data and was identified by the researcher, it was added to the memos. There was no separate coding done for the process analysis, but the researcher was conscious about keeping the processes that were became evident in the data analysis. In order to build the theory, the researcher needs to appreciate the context in which the action-interaction takes place. The researcher was adding the memos at the time of analysis to bring the context into the research findings. In analyzing the personal interviews and expert opinions, the researcher used 'paradigm' (an analytic tool) to classify and arrange concepts by thinking about possible linkage.

To look at the complexity of the relationship of conditions, action interactions, and consequences, to understand the interactions between the micro and macro environment in the context of the development of religious fundamentalist mindset and to put it all together, the researcher adopted the conditional/consequential matrix proposed by Corbin and Strauss (1996) as a conceptual guide, with specific changes to fit it into the current question under inquiry. There were multiple developments in the representation of conditional/ progressive matrix made by Corbin and Strauss. The present study adopted the model published in 2015, with changes to suit the phenomena under study. The matrix was represented by them as concentric interconnected circles with arrows which represent the mutual interaction. The directions of the arrows were determined by contingencies and changes in condition and consequences. The

authors used metaphors like a kaleidoscope and billiard board to show how the connection changes according to the contingencies and how the chain reactions happen non-linearly as the ball falls into the pockets (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, 2015) . In the present study the researcher used this model as a tool to develop the diagrammatic representation of the theory through understanding the connections and contingencies. According to Corbin and Strauss (2015), connections in data can be of different types. It can occur at the same level and move to various levels. Connectivity can be upward, downward, or both. Among these multiple connectivity paths, the researcher's intention was not to trace all of them but only the most relevant paths, which helped to understand the contributing factors of religious fundamentalism and its interconnections.

The researcher was well aware that the micro and macro environments are intertwined in the actual situation, and one must look into the interplay between them to grasp the dynamics of the development of a religious fundamental mindset .Conditions and consequences can vary in character, and scope. At times, a consequence can act as a condition in subsequent interaction, which makes it more complex. So, as suggested by Corbin and Strauss (1996), the researcher was supposed to make choices from the multiple possible conditions and consequences that confronted her. In the present research, the researcher made that choice based on the most relevant conditions and consequences that derived from all three data sets.

While attempting to integrate all the findings around the core category the researcher used diagram making (with the help of conditional/consequential matrix and selective coding), and from that diagram, the conceptual story was written. The

diagram aided in logical thinking and kept the researcher at the category level. To reach this diagrammatic representation, the researcher reviewed the concepts, categories, category sub-category connections, conditions, processes, and memos written during the process of analysis, along with writing a summary memo.

To finalize the theory, the researcher reviewed the developed categories regarding their properties and dimensional ranges. The researcher took the help of four reviewers from the field of research to cross-check whether the categories were well developed and also to cross-check whether there was any logical gap in the theory. It was also a way to validate the theory. Along with that, the researcher went back to the raw data with the developed theoretical structure and checked whether the structure can explain most of the cases.

Credibility of the Study

There are different tools and techniques that aid in reducing validity threats and enhancing the credibility of the study. In the context of interview research, experts recommended the use of mechanical recording devices to improve credibility. Furthermore, they advocate the use of full verbatim interview transcripts rather than selective interviewer notes (Coleman, 2021). In the current research, the researcher followed this suggestion; the interviews were recorded with the permission of the participants, and the full interview verbatim was transcribed and used for the analysis.

Another way to increase credibility in qualitative research is triangulation and fair dealing. In triangulation, the researcher compares results from two or more

methods of data collection and/or two or more sources of data collection. This approach rests upon the contention that no single method can provide a comprehensive understanding of the phenomena under study (Brink, 1993; Coleman, 2021). In the present study, the researcher used more than two method of data collection (interviews and implicit personality test- even though the personality test was administered to develop the theory, personality factors emerged from the interview were also verified using personality test) and more than two data sources (religious fundamental participants and different subject experts). Gathering data from different relevant groups also ensured that the viewpoint of one group was not represented as a total understanding of the phenomena under study. This also adds to the credibility, and experts call this 'fair dealing' (Coleman, 2021).

The researcher also employed the technique of member checking in the study to enhance credibility. The technique involves the researcher informally confirming the accuracy of their understanding with participants through paraphrasing or by enquiring for more clarification of the participant's answers to the interview questions. This allows the researcher and participants to correct any misinterpretations from the researcher's side (Brink, 1993; Coleman, 2021). During the data collection process, the researcher paraphrased and sought confirmation from the participants to ensure congruence between the statements made and the researcher's understanding. In instances of ambiguity, the researcher requested clarifications.

The expert suggests that transparency and a detailed description of the research design and implementation will contribute to the 'auditability', which

means that readers can follow the progression of the study and understand the logic behind it (Brink, 1993; Coleman, 2021). The researcher provided a comprehensive description of the rationale, research design, and methodological process, thereby enabling readers to follow and audit the research. This also contributes to the 'procedural trustworthiness' of the research (Stiles, 1993).

It is also important to add that, credibility in qualitative research, including grounded theory, is attained through the integrity and self-reflexivity of the researcher rather than that of her indifference (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). In the present research, the researcher was aware of the importance of what she was bringing into the research as a person and that it would influence the research. To keep track of this, writing reflexive journal memos was helpful. The incorporation of member checking, triangulation in terms of sources of data and technique of data collection, cross-checking of codes and categories by four other researchers and a non-academician, constant comparison and theoretical comparison, the simultaneous data collection and analysis, and providing a thick description helped to address the trustworthiness issues in the study.