

A Qualitative Content Analysis on Tamil Humour Podcasts

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Abstract—Podcasting has emerged as an important form of digital communication, providing creators with opportunities to combine entertainment, information, and social commentary. Within the Tamil digital media landscape, humour podcasts increasingly address contemporary social and cultural issues through satire, irony, parody, and everyday conversational humour. However, limited academic research has examined how humour functions as a discursive strategy in Tamil podcasting. This study aims to examine how humour is used to represent and comment on social issues in selected Tamil humour podcasts. A qualitative content analysis was conducted on twelve episodes from six Tamil humour podcasts Vocal Oli, Om Cream, Vada Poche, Schumy Vanna Kaviyangal, Am Sorry da Kanna, and The Ichiraku Podcast selected through purposive sampling. The episodes were analysed thematically across six categories: type of humour, social issue, social message or commentary, target of humour, tone of discussion, and representation style. The findings indicate that satire, irony, parody, and observational humour are prominent forms used to engage with issues including caste, gender, digital culture, political ideology, class, sexuality, and transgender rights. The analysis further shows that humour frequently targets social behaviours, dominant ideologies, and structures of power rather than marginalized communities. The podcasts also employ Tamil orality, Tanglish, digital slang, popular culture, memes, and conversational speech to make complex social issues accessible and relatable. The study concludes that Tamil humour podcasts function beyond entertainment as spaces of social commentary, cultural negotiation, and public discourse, demonstrating how humour can facilitate engagement with sensitive contemporary issues in the Tamil digital sphere.

Index Terms—Tamil podcasts, humour, qualitative content analysis, social commentary, satire, digital media, Tamil digital culture

I. INTRODUCTION

Podcasting has been a part of the entertainment filed since the early 2000s. Ben Hammersley in the year 2004, coined the term “podcast” in The Guardian newspaper article (Eya Chafroud, 2020). Throughout the years since, podcasting has grown rapidly both in transformation and popularity. In the initial stages, podcasting was seen and used for timepass or a hobby where the sole purpose was just entertainment. But today it has evolved into a form of mainstream media with multiple purposes of educating, informing, entertaining and spreading awareness. Millions of platforms like Apple Podcasts, Spotify, and Google Podcasts are available to listen as well as to create podcasts.

The launch of platforms like Apple Podcasts in 2005 helped to popularize the format, making it easier for creators to distribute their content and for listeners to access it. This accessibility was a game-changer, fostering a new generation of audio creators and consumers. Since its inception, podcasting has undergone significant evolution. Initially dominated by niche interests and amateur creators, the landscape has expanded dramatically. Today, podcasts cover an astonishing variety of topics, including true crime, technology, health, politics, storytelling, and much more. Major media companies have entered the space, producing high-quality, professionally curated content, while independent podcasters continue to thrive.

The rise of smartphones and streaming services has also contributed to podcasting's growth. With millions of people using apps to listen on-the-go, the format has become a staple of daily life, providing an engaging alternative to traditional media like radio and television.

As of recent statistics, there are around 4.19 million podcasts available globally and around 4.6 million listeners throughout the world. This number is expected to reach 5.4 million by the end of 2024 (Anil Agarwal, 2024). India has emerged as the third-largest market for podcast listeners globally (Press Trust of India, 2024).

Podcasting as a medium enables intimacy and informality, which are rarely found in traditional news or television comedy. The conversational format allows creators to engage directly with their listeners, creating a participatory environment that blends reflection and laughter. Scholars such as Berry (2016) have described podcasts as “the intimate medium,” emphasizing their role in constructing relationships between creators and audiences through voice and tone. Similarly, humour, as argued by Kuipers (2008), is not merely a form of entertainment but a cultural performance that negotiates identity, power, and belonging. In Tamil digital spaces, humour podcasts serve as sites of cultural translation, where serious topics such as caste, gender, and social inequality are reframed in accessible, comical ways.

Tamil humour podcasts like Vocal Oli, Om Cream, Vada Poche, Schummy Vanna Kaviyangal, Am Sorry Da Kanna and The Ichiraku Podcast represent this intersection between popular culture and social awareness. These podcasts are widely streamed on platforms like Spotify and have developed large followings among urban Tamil youth. Each of them uses humour to engage with different dimensions of everyday life ranging from digital addiction and anonymity to caste discrimination, LGBTQ+ identity, gender inequality, and alcohol consumption. While the humour is entertaining, it also performs a pedagogical function, inviting listeners to reflect on ethical and cultural issues that shape modern Tamil society.

Despite the growing influence of humour podcasts, there remains limited academic scholarship on this emerging medium within the Tamil context. Most existing studies on Indian digital media focus on political communication, influencer culture, or YouTube comedy, leaving podcasting as a relatively underexplored field. Moreover, few studies have analysed how humour functions as a discursive strategy for addressing social issues in regional languages. This research seeks to bridge that gap by conducting a qualitative content analysis of selected Tamil humour podcasts to understand how humour is

structured, what social issues are foregrounded, and how humour contributes to public discourse in the Tamil digital sphere.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Venkatesh & Sripriya (2023) “A Content Analysis on Spotify Tamil Top Podcasts” analyzed Tamil Spotify podcasts using qualitative content analysis to explore freedom of expression in the digital audio space. The study found that Tamil podcasts are characterized by creative autonomy, moral responsibility, and dialogic engagement are the key elements redefining communication outside controlled broadcast systems. It demonstrated how Tamil podcasters use humor and narrative flexibility as cultural discourse tools to reflect youth opinions and critique social issues. In Mozhi Tamil (2024), it analyzed How Tamil Language Shapes social media Trends examined the role of Tamil language and humor in digital culture, identifying memes and podcasts as agents of linguistic modernity and cultural assertion. It traces humor’s power in connecting digital citizens through shared irony, political satire, and cinematic parody. Within Tamil online spaces, humor acts simultaneously as entertainment and social resistance, echoing the performative structure of your selected podcasts. According to Meserko, V. (2010) Podcasting and Popular Culture in an Alternative Comedy Scene is a classic study on U.S. comedy podcasts remains relevant for its conceptualization of podcasting as performative conversation, in which improvisation blurs lines between humor, critique, and intimacy. His argument that podcasts act as community-building mediums for counter-publics parallels how Tamil podcasters use informal comedy to critique caste, gender, and digital life.

According to Parameswaran et al. (2022) Satirical Analysis of Political Humour through Podcast is a linguistic analysis applied critical discourse analysis to Indian political humor podcasts. Through coding of voice tone, sarcasm markers, and ideological layering, the study found satire functions as discursive activism, translating social critique into digestible humor. It highlights how coded humor can expose inequalities and signal resistance without direct confrontation. Triyono & Putri (2020) in their article “A New Social Media Freedom Podcast Construction in the Millennial Generation” study explained podcasting’s

dual freedom existential and moral suggesting that digital conversation offers self-expression while requiring ethical boundaries. It contributes theoretical grounding for examining how Tamil humor podcasts balance satire and respect within sociocultural norms. According to McHugh, S. (2016) “How Podcasting Is Changing Audio Storytelling” introduced the concept of intimacy and informality as distinctive features of the podcasting medium, noting its conversational tone and reflective spontaneity. This directly supports the narrative device used by Tamil humor podcasters who employ colloquial dialogue, sound effects, and rhythm variation to create a sense of familiarity and critical awareness.

Laor, T. (2022) in the study “Radio on Demand: New Habits of Consuming Audio Content” positioned the podcast as a post-broadcast medium foregrounding personalized listening habit. This study provides conceptual insight into why Tamil audiences engage with humor podcasts: they signify autonomy and language-based intimacy, offering alternatives to restrictive or elitist media. According to DW Akademie (2025) “India’s Podcasting Boom: Growth and Challenges” report provides macro-contextual evidence that regional-language podcasts especially Tamil are key to India’s cultural democratization. By offering unfiltered everyday discourse, humor podcasters have carved new expressive spaces for subaltern voices and middle-class self-reflection, which your research further extends. According to the Hindustan Times (2019) Meme-Makers Catch Tamil Nadu’s Imagination discusses how Tamil digital satire expresses collective frustration by humorously exaggerating political and social norms. It establishes the tone and intertextual dynamics that influence humor podcasting, where banter operates as critique wrapped in laughter.

III. METHODOLOGY

This study employs a Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA) approach, a method well-suited for interpreting the meanings, patterns, and themes that emerge from communication content. According to Schreier (2012), qualitative content analysis involves systematically describing the meaning of qualitative material through categorization and interpretation. It enables the researcher to explore both the manifest content (what

is explicitly said) and the latent content (the underlying meanings and values).

The qualitative design was chosen because the goal of this research is not to quantify humour or frequency of themes but to interpret how humour operates as a cultural and discursive phenomenon. Through close listening, transcription, and thematic coding, this method allows for a detailed exploration of tone, style, representation, and message construction in podcast humour.

The sample for this study comprises six Tamil humour podcasts that have gained significant popularity and critical attention on Spotify for their socially conscious content:

1. Vocal Oli – A podcast that uses intellectual humour and satire to reflect on issues related to technology and online behaviour.
 - Episode 3: Digital Bodhai – Discusses misuse of digital platforms and overconsumption of online content.
 - Episode 11: Art of the Anonymous – Explores the benefits and consequences of anonymity in digital spaces.
2. Om Cream – Known for politically aware comedy and sharp social critique.
 - Episode 1: Saadhi – Addresses casteism and discrimination within Indian society.
 - Episode 5: LGBTQ – Discusses acceptance, stereotypes, and the struggles of the LGBTQ+ community.
3. Vada Poche – A conversational humour podcast focusing on relatable social issues with youthful energy.
 - Episode 19: Why Do We Drink Alcohol – Reflects on peer pressure, masculinity, and alcohol culture.
 - Episode 101: Gender Equality – Challenges gender stereotypes and promotes equality.
4. Schummy Vanna Kaviyangal – A politically oriented Tamil humour podcast that uses sarcasm, rationalist critique, and ideological debate to challenge dominant narratives.
 - Episode 9: Reservation la Ulla Vandha Pasanga - A focused episode on India’s reservation/caste system, discussing equity, representation and politics.

- Episode 14: Myth Busting: Tamil Politics - Breaks down political myths circulating in Tamil Nadu, unpacking misinformation and public perception.
- 5. Am Sorry Da Kanna – A socially reflective Tamil humour podcast that blends satire, digital culture, and everyday observations.
- Sutham Ulla Veedu Thaan - A look at social biases against domestic workers and caste/class expectations inside households.
- Desperate Netizens and Dumb Behavior - A take on social media culture and how online behavior reflects broader societal issues of attention and validation.
- 6. The Ichiraku Podcast – A Tamil socio-political podcast that uses humour, irony, and activist discourse to address power, identity, and social injustice.
- Episode 9: Saptiya - it includes discussion connecting food, society, and politics relevant to cultural politics
- Episode 6: The State of Trans Politics and Social Oppression – talks about oppression against transwomen and addresses trans politics.

A total of twelve episodes (two from each podcast) were selected through purposive sampling, ensuring that each episode dealt with a distinct social issue while maintaining a humorous tone.

IV. CODING PROCESS

The analysis followed a thematic coding structure derived inductively from the data. Through repeated listening and reading, seven key categories initially emerged; after refinement, six main coding categories were finalized for systematic analysis:

1. Type of Humour – Identifying the dominant style (satire, irony, parody, self-deprecation, etc.).
2. Social Issue – The societal or cultural problem addressed through humour.
3. Social Message / Commentary – The moral or reflective standpoint communicated.
4. Target of Humour – The person, idea, or social behaviour being critiqued.
5. Tone of Discussion – The emotional and rhetorical style of the delivery.
6. Representation Style – The linguistic and cultural manner in which humour is presented.

Each episode was coded along these categories, allowing for comparison across podcasts. Patterns and contrasts were then interpreted to develop broader thematic insights.

V. DATA ANALYSIS

This study analyzed six episodes across three popular Tamil humor podcasts Vocal Oli, Om Cream, and Vada Poche to understand how humor functions as a tool of social commentary. Using qualitative thematic content analysis, the episodes were coded across six categories: type of humor, social issue, social message, target audience, tone of discussion and representation style. The findings reveal how humor operates as both entertainment and critique within Tamil digital media spaces.

VI. TYPE OF HUMOUR

The first and most central category captures how the comic effect is constructed and delivered across the podcasts. The analysis shows that satire, irony, and self-deprecating humour dominate the Tamil humour podcast space, functioning as mechanisms for social reflection rather than mere entertainment.

In Vocal Oli's episode "Digital Bodhai", the hosts use ironic exaggeration to compare social media addiction to substance abuse, calling it "a digital bodhai (intoxication)" that clouds human judgment. This linguistic play humorously mirrors the compulsive behaviours of online users while subtly critiquing the moral consequences of digital dependency. In "Art of the Anonymous", irony is again central as hosts celebrate fake online identities as "freedom zones" but quickly undermine this by highlighting the dangers of online trolling. Here, humour oscillates between glorification and critique, creating a dual narrative that captures both sides of digital anonymity.

In Om Cream's "Saadhi", dark humour and satire are used to confront caste discrimination. The episode uses exaggerated stories about caste pride and privilege to ridicule social hierarchies. Similarly, the "LGBTQ" episode draws upon inclusive and situational humour, employing irony to expose ignorance surrounding sexuality and identity. Vada Poche's "Why Do We Drink Alcohol" relies heavily on self-deprecating humour, where the hosts mock their own social habits to normalize honest discussions around drinking culture. The "Gender Equality"

episode blends parodic and role-reversal humour, where the male hosts humorously mimic gender stereotypes, exposing their absurdity.

The humour used in Schumy Vanna Kaviyangaal is largely satirical, confrontational, and ideologically driven, positioning the podcast as a form of rationalist political commentary rather than light entertainment. In Reservation la Ulla Vandha Pasanga, sarcasm and irony are strategically deployed to ridicule dominant-caste resistance to reservation policies. The hosts exaggerate popular claims about the “loss of merit” and the “unfair advantage” of marginalized communities, transforming these arguments into absurd caricatures. By doing so, the humour exposes how such claims are rooted not in evidence but in the anxiety of caste privilege being challenged. The laughter produced is therefore not neutral; it operates as a form of social critique that destabilizes the moral authority of anti-reservation discourse. In Myth Busting: Tamil Politics, parody and ridicule are used to deconstruct widely circulated political myths, propaganda narratives, and ideological slogans. The hosts mimic the language of political speeches and media debates, exaggerating their contradictions and logical gaps, thereby converting misinformation into objects of comic scrutiny. This form of humour encourages listeners to question political common sense and to approach political narratives with scepticism rather than passive acceptance.

In Am Sorry Da Kanna, humour takes the form of observational satire shaped by digital culture and everyday social behaviour. Sutham Ulla Veedu Thaan uses ironic humour to reveal how ideas of cleanliness, hygiene, and respectability are deeply intertwined with caste and class. Jokes about “clean homes” and “dirty work” subtly expose how domestic labour and social purity are unequally distributed, making invisible hierarchies visible through laughter. Rather than directly accusing, the podcast allows irony to do the work of critique, enabling listeners to recognize the persistence of caste prejudice in ordinary household practices. Desperate Netizens and Dumb Behaviour rely heavily on exaggeration, mimicry, and caricature to portray social media users who are obsessed with likes, followers, and online validation. By turning digital narcissism into comic spectacle, the episode critiques the performative nature of online identity and the emotional emptiness produced by attention-driven platforms. Here, humour becomes a way to reflect on

how digital spaces reshape self-worth, social interaction, and public behaviour.

The Ichiraku Podcast employs political irony and activist-oriented humour, blending everyday conversation with structural critique. In Saptiya, humour emerges through casual discussions of food, but these conversations gradually reveal deeper class, caste, and cultural politics embedded in eating habits, affordability, and taste. What appears as light talk about food becomes a lens through which social inequality and cultural hierarchy are exposed. In The State of Trans Politics and Social Oppression, humour is more restrained and often dark, reflecting the seriousness of the subject. Irony is used to highlight the gap between symbolic political inclusion and the lived realities of transgender communities. By pointing out how legal recognition and media visibility coexist with everyday discrimination, violence, and exclusion, the episode uses humour to underline injustice rather than soften it. In this way, humour functions not as distraction but as a powerful narrative device that draws attention to structural oppression while keeping the listener emotionally engaged.

Across all podcasts, humour emerges as a discursive strategy of safe critique an art of saying the unsayable. By embedding social commentary within laughter, the hosts encourage listeners to engage with discomforting truths without resistance.

VII. SOCIAL ISSUE

The Social Issue category identifies the core theme or societal problem around which each episode is structured. The chosen podcasts engage with diverse yet interconnected issues that reflect the contradictions of contemporary Tamil society digital ethics, anonymity, caste, sexuality, gender, and lifestyle.

In Vocal Oli's “Digital Bodhai”, the central issue is digital overconsumption and the loss of real-world connection. The hosts humorously discuss scenarios where individuals prefer virtual validation over genuine human interaction. Meanwhile, “Art of the Anonymous” explores the paradox of online anonymity how the digital veil empowers self-expression but simultaneously fosters irresponsibility. These episodes present humour as a reflective response to technological modernity and its psychological consequences.

In Om Cream, social issues are overtly political and identity-driven. “Saadhi” boldly tackles caste-based discrimination, historically a sensitive subject in Tamil discourse. Through laughter, the hosts transform this divisive topic into a space for dialogue, exposing how caste hierarchy persists in daily life. The “LGBTQ” episode similarly engages with sexuality and social inclusion, presenting humour as a bridge between ignorance and understanding. The hosts use comic analogies to normalize conversations about gender and identity, challenging heteronormative assumptions.

Vada Poche’s episodes represent social behaviour and gender relations. In “Why Do We Drink Alcohol”, the issue of substance uses and social expectation is discussed through jokes about peer pressure, masculinity, and escapism. “Gender Equality” takes on patriarchal double standards, humorously reenacting stereotypical male and female dialogues to highlight everyday sexism. Collectively, these episodes demonstrate that Tamil humour podcasts are not escapist but are deeply rooted in the sociocultural anxieties of their audience.

In Schumy Vanna Kaviyanga, Reservation la Ulla Vandha Pasanga centres on caste-based inequality and affirmative action, addressing how reservation policies are publicly misrepresented as unfair advantages rather than mechanisms of historical correction. The episode exposes the tension between constitutional ideals of equality and the lived reality of caste privilege, showing how dominant groups frame social justice as personal loss. Myth Busting: Tamil Politics engages with political propaganda, ideological myth-making, and media manipulation, highlighting how political narratives are constructed, circulated, and naturalised in public discourse. Together, these episodes frame politics not as neutral governance but as a contested space where power is maintained through stories, symbols, and misinformation.

In Am Sorry Da Kanna, social issues are rooted in the micropolitics of everyday life and digital culture. Sutham Ulla Veedu Thaan examines caste, purity, and domestic labour, revealing how hierarchies operate inside private spaces such as homes, kitchens, and workplaces. The episode shows that caste is not only a public or institutional system but also a lived, embodied practice embedded in ideas of cleanliness, respectability, and social distance. Desperate Netizens and Dumb Behavior explore digital capitalism and online performativity, critiquing how social media

platforms turn attention, emotion, and identity into commodities. By focusing on influencer culture and validation-seeking behaviour, the episode highlights how digital spaces reproduce new forms of inequality, surveillance, and self-exploitation.

In The Ichiraku Podcast, social issues are framed through structural marginalisation and political exclusion. Saptiya uses food as an entry point to discuss class, caste, and cultural politics, showing how what people eat, can afford, or are allowed to consume reflects deeper hierarchies of power and belonging. Food becomes a cultural marker through which inequality is normalised. The State of Trans Politics and Social Oppression directly address gender identity, institutional discrimination, and the failure of the state to protect transgender citizens, revealing the gap between symbolic political recognition and the realities of social violence, economic precarity, and everyday humiliation faced by trans communities.

VIII. SOCIAL MESSAGE OR COMMENTARY

While humour provides entertainment, each episode carries a social message or moral undertone that transforms laughter into reflection. This category identifies what the podcasts seek to communicate beyond comedy awareness, critique, empathy, or reform.

In Vocal Oli’s “Digital Bodhai”, the underlying message warns against mindless digital addiction, encouraging self-awareness among listeners. The hosts’ sarcastic remarks such as describing the phone as a “modern-day temple” invite laughter but also prompt introspection. “Art of the Anonymous” carries a balanced message: while anonymity allows self-expression, it must be coupled with accountability.

Om Cream’s “Saadhi” delivers a bold critique of caste prejudice. Through humour, the episode underscores the absurdity of social stratification and questions its persistence in a modern democracy. The “LGBTQ” episode promotes acceptance and normalization, using inclusive language and empathy-driven jokes to dismantle stereotypes. Rather than mocking the community, the humour is directed toward ignorance and prejudice, revealing an ethical dimension in comic representation.

In Vada Poche’s “Why Do We Drink Alcohol”, the message subtly critiques peer pressure and escapist behaviour, suggesting self-control and responsibility

without moralizing. “Gender Equality” ends with a strong emphasis on shared responsibility and respect, using humour to reframe gender equality as a collective social goal rather than a women-centric demand. Thus, humour becomes a pedagogical tool, converting laughter into social learning.

In Schumy Vanna Kaviyagal, the overarching message is that social inequality is actively concealed and legitimised through political storytelling. Reservation la Ulla Vandha Pasanga critiques how affirmative action is misrepresented as an unfair privilege, when in reality it functions as a corrective to centuries of caste-based exclusion. Through humour, the episode exposes how dominant groups use the language of “merit” and “fairness” to defend inherited advantage. Myth Busting: Tamil Politics reinforces this critique by encouraging audiences to interrogate political slogans, historical myths, and media narratives instead of accepting them at face value. The humour promotes a form of political literacy, urging listeners to see politics as a contested arena shaped by ideology, not as neutral truth.

In Am Sorry Da Kanna, the social message shifts toward the everyday reproduction of inequality. Sutham Ulla Veedu Thaan reveals how caste hierarchies survive not only through law or tradition but through routine practices such as cleaning, hiring domestic workers, and defining what is considered “pure” or “respectable.” By making these invisible practices visible through humour, the episode calls for moral self-reflection rather than abstract condemnation. Desperate Netizens and Dumb Behaviour critique the moral economy of digital platforms, showing how social media rewards attention-seeking, outrage, and shallow performance over empathy, depth, or integrity. The message here is that digital culture, while seemingly liberating, often amplifies alienation, competition, and emotional emptiness.

The Ichiraku Podcast delivers a more explicitly activist and rights-based message. In Saptiya, the podcast suggests that everyday cultural practices, such as eating and food preference, are shaped by class, caste, and access, revealing how inequality is normalised through routine life. The State of Trans Politics and Social Oppression articulate a powerful call for recognition, dignity, and justice for transgender communities, exposing the contradiction between symbolic political inclusion and lived social

exclusion. Humour here does not trivialise suffering but makes injustice more visible and emotionally resonant, reinforcing the demand for structural change.

IX. TARGET AUDIENCE

The Target of Humour refers to the person, group, or idea at which the humour is directed. Understanding the target reveals whether humour reinforces or challenges social hierarchies.

In Vocal Oli, the humour primarily targets social behaviour and public hypocrisy rather than individuals. The satire in “Digital Bodhai” ridicules the collective obsession with validation, while “Art of the Anonymous” humorously exposes both trolls and moral guardians. The self-aware humour ensures that critique is directed at social patterns, not people.

Om Cream’s “Saadhi” targets institutionalized caste hierarchies and upper-caste privilege, employing sarcasm to mock discriminatory customs. In “LGBTQ”, the humour is aimed at social ignorance, specifically the heteronormative discomfort with difference. The joke is not on the LGBTQ+ community but on those who misunderstand it. This distinction positions the hosts as social commentators rather than provocateurs.

In Vada Poche, “Why Do We Drink Alcohol” targets societal double standards and peer culture, while “Gender Equality” targets patriarchal stereotypes through playful imitation. The hosts parody sexist attitudes to expose their illogical nature. By directing humour upward toward social systems, not marginalized groups the podcasts maintain a critical and ethical balance, using laughter as a form of resistance.

In Schumy Vanna Kaviyagal, the primary targets of humour are caste privilege, political manipulation, and ideological domination. In Reservation la Ulla Vandha Pasanga, satire is aimed at upper-caste narratives that frame social justice policies as personal loss, mocking the entitlement that underlies claims of “merit.” Myth Busting: Tamil Politics similarly targets political propaganda, media-driven myths, and unquestioned nationalist or party-based loyalties. By ridiculing these dominant narratives, the podcast destabilizes their moral authority and encourages listeners to adopt a more critical political consciousness.

In Am Sorry Da Kanna, humour targets the everyday performances of respectability and social superiority.

Sutham Ulla Veedu Thaan directs its satire at caste-coded ideas of cleanliness and domestic order, exposing how social hierarchy is maintained through seemingly innocent household practices. Desperate Netizens and Dumb Behaviour target digital narcissism, influencer culture, and the attention economy, mocking how individuals are pushed to perform happiness, success, and virtue online. Here, humour critiques not individuals but the social systems that reward superficiality and self-promotion.

In The Ichiraku Podcast, the targets are explicitly institutional and cultural forms of oppression. Saptiya subtly challenges cultural elitism and class privilege by revealing how everyday practices such as eating and taste are shaped by access and power. The State of Trans Politics and Social Oppression directly confront state neglect, transphobia, and symbolic inclusion without material support. The humour here is directed at political systems, social prejudice, and cultural norms that marginalize transgender people rather than at the community itself.

X. TONE OF DISCUSSION

The Tone of Discussion reflects the emotional and affective register through which humour is delivered ranging from playful to confrontational, serious to reflective.

Vocal Oli maintains a light yet reflective and self-aware tone, in which humour is used as a soft entry point into ethical and social questioning. The conversational style resembles friends casually discussing everyday experiences, but beneath this informality lies a consistent undercurrent of moral reflection. In Digital Bodhai, playful jokes about phone addiction gradually evolve into a critique of how technology erodes attention, relationships, and self-control. The hosts do not directly moralize; instead, they allow humour and ironic exaggeration to guide listeners toward self-recognition. In Art of the Anonymous, the tone similarly balances amusement with caution. The hosts joke about fake profiles and online bravado, but the laughter slowly gives way to concern about accountability and online cruelty.

Om Cream, by contrast, adopts a more politically charged, confrontational, and morally assertive tone, especially in episodes dealing with caste and sexuality. In Saadhi, sarcasm frequently borders on provocation, as the hosts deliberately disrupt polite discourse

around caste by using sharp humour and exaggerated scenarios to expose prejudice. The tone is intentionally uncomfortable, forcing listeners to confront the brutality of social hierarchy rather than evade it. However, in LGBTQ, this confrontational tone is softened by warmth, care, and inclusivity. While the episode still challenges heteronormative assumptions, it does so with empathetic humour that affirms queer identities rather than merely criticizing ignorance.

Vada Poche adopts a playful, conversational, and highly relatable tone that closely mirrors the speech patterns of everyday youth culture. The podcast relies heavily on banter, teasing, and casual storytelling, making it sound less like a formal discussion and more like friends chatting in a familiar social setting. In Why Do We Drink Alcohol, jokes about peer pressure, masculinity, and social rituals are delivered with light-hearted humour, allowing listeners to recognize their own behaviours without feeling judged. The laughter here works as a form of social bonding, encouraging openness rather than defensiveness.

In Gender Equality, this same playful tone becomes a powerful rhetorical strategy. By using humour, role-play, and exaggerated stereotypes, the hosts expose patriarchal assumptions without turning the conversation into confrontation. Instead of accusing or lecturing, they invite listeners to laugh at the absurdity of gendered expectations, thereby making inequality visible in a non-threatening way. This approach allows difficult topics such as sexism, domestic roles, and emotional labour to be discussed within a comfortable and familiar atmosphere.

Schumy Vanna Kaviyangaal maintains a distinctly assertive, argumentative, and confrontational tone, often resembling a political debate or ideological critique rather than casual entertainment. In episodes such as Reservation la Ulla Vandha Pasanga and Myth Busting: Tamil Politics, the hosts speak with certainty and urgency, directly challenging dominant narratives about caste and politics. Sarcasm is used not merely to entertain but to provoke discomfort and critical thinking. The tone frequently borders on polemical, positioning the podcast as a counter-public that openly disputes mainstream political discourse and demands rational engagement from listeners.

In contrast, Am Sorry Da Kanna adopts a more casual, conversational, and digitally inflected tone, even while addressing serious social issues. Episodes like Sutham Ulla Veedu Thaan and Desperate Netizens and Dumb

Behaviour resemble everyday conversations among peers, filled with slang, memes, and informal banter. However, beneath this relaxed style lies a sharp ironic edge. The lightness of tone makes sensitive topics such as caste-coded purity and online narcissism easier to engage with, lowering resistance while still delivering pointed social critique. This tonal strategy allows the podcast to reach younger, digitally savvy audiences without sounding overtly moralistic.

The Ichiraku Podcast employs a serious, reflective, and activist-oriented tone, where humour is used selectively and strategically rather than playfully. In Saptiya, everyday humour softens the entry into discussions about class and culture, but the tone gradually shifts toward reflection and critique. In The State of Trans Politics and Social Oppression, the tone is even more intense and politically charged, marked by urgency and moral seriousness. Here, humour functions as a rhetorical device to highlight contradictions and injustice rather than to produce continuous laughter. The podcast positions itself closer to activist journalism than to conventional comedy.

XI. REPRESENTATION STYLE

The representation style across the six Tamil humour podcasts that is Vocal Oli, Om Cream, Vada Poche, Schumy Vanna Kaviyangal, Am Sorry Da Kanna, and The Ichiraku Podcast reveals a rich blend of Tamil orality, digital hybridity, and political expressiveness. Together, these podcasts construct a distinctive audio culture where humour is shaped by spoken language, everyday interaction, and ideological positioning rather than scripted comedy or formal broadcasting norms.

Vocal Oli uses a highly conversational and digitally inflected style, closely mirroring the language of everyday online interaction. In Digital Bodhai and Art of the Anonymous, Tanglish, internet slang, and influencer-style speech are used to parody digital addiction and online anonymity. The hosts frequently imitate social media users, motivational speakers, and content creators, turning familiar online voices into exaggerated performances. This creates a sense of immediacy and relatability, making complex issues about technology and online ethics feel like part of ordinary peer conversations.

Om Cream employs a more politically grounded and culturally specific style, blending Tanglish with

regional Tamil dialects and caste-coded expressions. In Saadhi, the use of socially recognizable speech patterns helps expose how caste operates in everyday conversation, while in LGBTQ, inclusive language and empathetic phrasing soften difficult discussions about sexuality. The representation style situates humour firmly within Tamil social reality, allowing political critique to feel authentic rather than abstract. Vada Poche relies heavily on colloquial Tamil, playful banter, and youth-oriented slang, creating a relaxed and friendly listening experience. In Why Do We Drink Alcohol and Gender Equality, the hosts narrate personal anecdotes, mimic friends and family members, and use informal dialogue to explore social norms. This style makes serious topics such as gender roles and drinking culture feel accessible, as if they are being discussed within a trusted social circle rather than a formal debate.

Schumy Vanna Kaviyangal adopts a rationalist and ideologically driven representation style, characterized by the use of political terminology, historical references, and argumentative language. In Reservation la Ulla Vandha Pasanga and Myth Busting: Tamil Politics, the hosts use sarcasm, rhetorical questions, and ideological critique to challenge caste privilege and political misinformation. Although the discourse is intellectually charged, it remains grounded in spoken Tamil, allowing the humour to stay approachable while maintaining analytical depth.

Am Sorry Da Kanna is shaped by digital vernacular, meme culture, and colloquial speech, closely resembling how young people communicate on social media. In Sutham Ulla Veedu Thaan and Desperate Netizens and Dumb Behaviour, internet slang, viral references, and exaggerated online behaviours are used to critique caste-coded cleanliness and digital narcissism. This representation style makes social critique feel culturally current and emotionally engaging rather than distant or academic.

The Ichiraku Podcast blends activist discourse with everyday conversational Tamil, producing a hybrid style that bridges journalism and grassroots dialogue. In Saptiya, casual talk about food gradually opens into discussions of class and cultural identity, while in The State of Trans Politics and Social Oppression, rights-based vocabulary and political analysis are woven into accessible speech. This stylistic combination allows the podcast to address issues of trans rights and social

inequality in a way that feels both serious and personally resonant.

XII. FINDINGS

The qualitative content analysis of twelve episodes across six leading Tamil humour podcasts reveals that humour functions as both an entertaining and socially reflective medium within Tamil digital culture. Across all podcasts, satire, irony, parody, and observational humour emerge as dominant forms, employed strategically to critique social norms, political ideologies, and everyday inequalities.

In Vocal Oli's Digital Bodhai, exaggerated metaphors liken smartphone addiction to intoxication, using irony to provoke reflection on digital overconsumption. Similarly, in Art of the Anonymous, humour oscillates between celebrating online freedom and exposing its dangers, allowing listeners to recognize the ethical dilemmas of anonymity through laughter.

In Om Cream's Saadhi, humour is darker and more confrontational, with biting sarcasm directed at caste privilege and social hierarchy, while LGBTQ uses situational comedy and irony to challenge stereotypes and promote empathy. Vada Poche's episodes rely on self-deprecating and observational humour; Why Do We Drink Alcohol exposes peer pressure and social rituals surrounding drinking, while Gender Equality parodies everyday sexism to reveal its absurdity.

In Schummy Vanna Kaviyangal, Reservation la Ulla Vandha Pasanga and Myth Busting: Tamil Politics use confrontational satire and ideological parody to critique caste-based resentment and political misinformation. The humour here is argumentative, turning dominant narratives about merit and nationalism into objects of ridicule. Am Sorry Da Kanna's Sutham Ulla Veedu Thaan and Desperate Netizens and Dumb Behaviour employ observational and digital satire to expose how caste-coded ideas of purity and online validation shape everyday behaviour. The Ichiraku Podcast pushes humour into a more activist register: Saptiya uses food talk to reveal class and cultural politics, while The State of Trans Politics and Social oppression employ restrained, often dark irony to highlight the marginalisation of transgender communities.

Across all twelve episodes, the podcasts foreground major social issues relevant to contemporary Tamil society, including digital ethics, caste inequality,

gender identity, political ideology, and class hierarchy. While Vocal Oli centres on technology and online behaviour, Om Cream and Schummy Vanna Kaviyangal address structural inequalities and ideological power more directly. Vada Poche and Am Sorry Da Kanna locate social critique within familiar, everyday contexts, while The Ichiraku Podcast introduces an explicitly rights-based and activist perspective. Together, these podcasts demonstrate how humour can function as a bridge between personal experience and structural critique.

A striking pattern across all podcasts is the ethical targeting of humour. Jokes are directed primarily at systems of power, dominant ideologies, and socially privileged positions rather than at marginalized communities. In Vocal Oli, humour critiques digital obsession and online hypocrisy; Om Cream and Schummy Vanna Kaviyangal target caste privilege, political propaganda, and ideological arrogance; Vada Poche and Am Sorry Da Kanna focus on peer culture, class-based respectability, and digital narcissism; and The Ichiraku Podcast targets state neglect, transphobia, and cultural elitism. This ethical orientation ensures that humour functions as a form of critique and resistance rather than stigmatization.

The tone of discussion varies across podcasts, reflecting different modes of engagement with social issues. Vocal Oli maintains a reflective and conversational tone, Om Cream adopts a bold and confrontational stance, Vada Poche uses playful banter, Schummy Vanna Kaviyangal is assertive and ideological, Am Sorry Da Kanna remains casual yet ironic, and The Ichiraku Podcast employs a serious, activist tone. This tonal diversity shows that humour is not a single communicative style but a flexible rhetorical resource that adapts to issue sensitivity, political urgency, and audience expectations.

The representation styles across the podcasts further reinforces their social impact. All six employ spoken Tamil, Tanglish, popular culture, and digital references, creating cultural intimacy with listeners. However, each uses this hybridity differently: Vocal Oli and Vada Poche mirror everyday youth speech, Om Cream and Schummy Vanna Kaviyangal combine local idioms with political critique, Am Sorry Da Kanna draws heavily on meme culture, and The Ichiraku Podcast blends activist language with conversational Tamil. This stylistic diversity allows complex social

and political issues to be communicated in ways that feel both accessible and meaningful.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that Tamil humour podcasts operate as sites of cultural negotiation and public discourse. Humour is not merely entertainment; it is a strategic mode of engagement that normalizes difficult conversations, exposes inequality, and invites critical reflection. Through satire, irony, parody, and everyday storytelling, these podcasts address issues ranging from digital capitalism and caste discrimination to gender equality and transgender rights, illustrating how humour has become a powerful medium for social awareness and civic dialogue in the Tamil digital sphere.

XIII. CONCLUSION

This study set out to understand how humour functions within Tamil podcasting as a cultural and communicative practice rather than merely as entertainment. By analysing twelve episodes across six Tamil humour podcasts, the research demonstrates that podcasting has become a crucial site where Tamil-speaking audiences encounter, negotiate, and reinterpret social realities. More than offering jokes or casual talk, these podcasts have emerged as spaces of meaning-making, where humour becomes a way of processing inequality, political change, and digital life. One of the key contributions of this study is showing how humour in Tamil podcasts operates as a mode of mediation between lived experience and social structure. Issues such as caste, gender, online identity, and political ideology are not presented as abstract problems but are embedded in everyday conversations, stories, and shared laughter. This allows complex and often painful realities to be discussed in ways that are emotionally accessible and socially intelligible. Podcast humour, therefore, acts as a bridge between personal experience and public discourse.

The study also highlights how Tamil humour podcasts represent a shift in who gets to speak and how they speak in the digital public sphere. Unlike mainstream media, which is often constrained by commercial pressures and political caution, podcasts provide creators with greater freedom to experiment with tone, language, and perspective. Through informal speech, Tanglish, satire, and storytelling, podcasters construct alternative voices that challenge elite or dominant

narratives. This reconfiguration of voice is especially significant in a society where caste, gender, and political power have long shaped who is heard and who is silenced.

Another important implication of the research is the role of humour in reducing the distance between media and audience. Podcasting creates a sense of intimacy that transforms listening into a shared social experience rather than a one-way transmission of information. When difficult topics are discussed through humour, listeners are more likely to remain engaged, reflect on their own beliefs, and reconsider taken-for-granted assumptions. In this way, humour podcasts function as quiet but powerful spaces of cultural learning.

At a broader level, the findings suggest that Tamil humour podcasting is part of a wider transformation in regional-language digital media, where audiences are no longer passive consumers but active participants in meaning-making. These podcasts demonstrate how digital platforms can be used to create public spaces that are local in language, global in form, and critical in spirit. They show that serious social engagement does not have to be solemn or formal; it can be woven into laughter, stories, and everyday talk.

In conclusion, Tamil humour podcasts should be understood not simply as entertainment but as a new form of cultural communication that reflects how Tamil society is thinking, arguing, and evolving in the digital age. Through humour, these podcasts allow people to talk about what is difficult to say, question what is usually taken for granted, and imagine alternative ways of understanding the world around them.

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