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Digitalization and Family Dynamics: A Comparative Review of Intergenerational Experiences in Urban Sri Lanka

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Abstract: Digitalisation has changed family structures, communication styles, and intergenerational connections, which have become a defining factor in modern social life. Digitalisation creates both opportunities and conflicts in families in places like Sri Lanka, as traditional family values are challenged by the rapid advancement of technology. This paper explains how to critically analyse the body of research on the impact of digitalisation on the family institution, with a focus on generational differences among urban Sri Lankan families.

The method used for this study is a secondary data collection method, drawing on academic literature, policy documents, and empirical studies at international, regional, and Sri Lankan levels. The analysis is guided by Modernization Theory, Network Society Theory (Castells), and Digital Divide Theory to examine digitalisation, changing family structures, and intergenerational differences in digital access, adoption, and social interaction.

According to the findings, digitalisation has changed family communication with a connection and a decrease in in-person encounters at the same time. While older generations struggle with adaptation, creating intergenerational gaps, younger generations, as digital natives, exhibit greater digital knowledge and dependence on online platforms. Digital tools build up education, employment, and long-distance family relationships in metropolitan Sri Lanka; however, they also go far beyond authority, cultural values, and family unity. Family experiences are further hindered by gaps in digital literacy, gender inequality, and unequal access.

The literature review leads to the conclusion that digitalisation creates both a divide while changing family life in intricate and paradoxical ways, and a connection. To reduce digital divides and foster family unity in Sri Lanka's changing digital society, Policymakers and educators should encourage inclusive digital literacy programs and intergenerational learning models.

Keywords: Digitalization, Digital Divide, Family Institution, Intergenerational Relationships, Urban Sri Lanka

Introduction

Digitalization is one of the most influential social changes today, or the integration of new technologies such as the internet, smartphones, social media, digital data systems, and so on into social, economic, and cultural practices (Castells, 1996). Although new technologies have been developed and incorporated into systems and practices of specific sectors in the past, this is the first time that technologies have pervaded almost every aspect of social life. Thus, digitalization is not an exclusive phenomenon of the so-called developed nations; South Asian countries are equally experiencing digitalization.

While looking at the sociology of digitalization, the most relevant fact is the movement from industrial societies to information/network societies. According to Bell (1973), Knowledge and information have become the primary means of social organization, replacing industrial production. In this sense, Castells (2000) conceptualizes the “network society,” where social relations and power are distributed and enacted through digital networks, rather than through other physical means. This change can be observed in South Asian countries where digital networks mediate communication, commerce, governance, and education, for example, Sri Lanka and India.

In South Asia, a significant contributor to regional digitalization is the increasing availability of internet connectivity. Since the mid-1990s, South Asian countries have increased internet accessibility owing to mobile telecoms and affordable data services (ITU, 2021). Digital adoption has been accelerated through broadband expansion and the e-governance and ICT education and public services initiatives of the e-Sri Lanka Programme and Digital Sri Lanka 2030 in Sri Lanka (Ministry of Digital Infrastructure and Information Technology, 2020). Consequently, digital technology has been integrated into daily life, especially for residents of urban and semi-urban areas.

Smartphones have significantly changed social life in South Asia. People in socioeconomic backgrounds can now access social media, messaging applications, and internet services due to the availability of inexpensive cell phones (Donner, 2015). The people in Sri Lanka stay in touch with family because of access to educational materials, and conduct business, including online transactions and digital payments, using applications like Facebook, YouTube, and WhatsApp (Jayawardena & Gunathilaka, 2020). These platforms have developed into vital communication tools, particularly for families split apart by urban mobility or labour migration.

In South Asian societies, social media has also changed identity development and cultural customs. People can be attracted to global cultural trends while upholding local customs using social media sites like Facebook and Instagram, especially younger generations (Arora, 2019). Like Sri Lankan families are using digital platforms to plan religious events, share celebrations of festivals, and keep up and expand family networks via video calls and group chats (Wijesinghe, 2021). This explains that digitalisation catalyzes social transformation as well as a means of maintaining cultural continuity.

There are some problems with digitalisation in South Asia. We still have differences between men and women, old and young people, and people who live in cities and those who live in the countryside when it comes to digitalisation. The digital divide is an issue. People who live in areas and on estates have a hard time because they do not have adequate facilities for internet, and they cannot afford it. On the one hand, people who live in cities usually have better facilities for internet, and they know more about computers and the internet. This is what the Department of Census and Statistics said in 2021. Digitalisation is still a problem in South Asia, and the digital divide is a part of it. Whereas older generations always struggle to connect with the new technologies, but the younger people, also known as “digital natives,” easily incorporate digital tools into their daily lives (Prensky, 2001; Jayawardena & Gunathilaka, 2020). These differences mentioned the unequal social impact of digitalisation and how different social groups experience it.

Finally, digitalisation is an important modern social process that influences institutional life, communication, and cultural practices in Sri Lanka and South Asia. It creates new social challenges and exacerbates existing inequalities while also providing new chances for inclusion. Building up the digitalization's impact on social institutions like the family and looking at intergenerational changes in digital engagement requires an understanding of its regional and cultural factors.

Literature Review

The Family as a Social Institution in the Digital Age

A very important social structure is the family, which has long been acknowledged. It's carrying out vital tasks like socialization, emotional support, behaviour patterns, and the generational transfer of cultural values (Murdock, 1949). The family is mainly in establishing social continuity since it is the main setting where people learn social rules, roles, and identities. The family is dynamic and changes in reaction to social, economic, and technical developments, in all social structures (Giddens, 1991). Digitalisation has mainly impacted on the modern era, which is changing family life and how connections are created, sustained, and experienced.

Instant messaging apps, social media sites, and cell phones are examples of digital technology that have involved family communication habits. The traditional people-to-people connection and shared family values are increasingly being replaced by technology-mediated communication (Valkenburg & Peter, 2013). Scholars show that whereas digital tools facilitate continuous connectivity and instantaneous information sharing, they also affect the depth and quality of interpersonal relationships within families (Turkle, 2017). The families now frequently communicate via

digital platforms, indicating more customized forms of communication, even when family members are on opposite sides in the same home.

Digitalisation has an impact on family structures. Despite geographical isolation brought on by migration, work, or education, nuclear, extended, transnational, and blended families now find it easier to manage their relationships with the growth of digital communication (Madianou & Miller, 2012). In societies like Sri Lanka, family structures and intergenerational living have historically been important. Digital platforms now play a critical role in maintaining over physical distance (Liyanage, 2020). Nuclear homes, which are maintained by physical proximity rather than proximity to extended family members, are becoming more and more common as a result of increased urbanization and digital interaction.

Another result of digitisation is changes in family roles and relations. As digital technologies enable women to participate in online work, education, and entrepreneurship, because of this, they are disrupting traditional divisions of labour and gender roles inside households (Fernando et al., 2019). As younger family members frequently take on the role of technical mediators, helping older generations navigate digital platforms, a process known as "reverse socialization," authority relations within families are also changing (Correa, 2016). These changes' strength is Intergenerational collaboration, but they may also cause conflict, especially if digital competencies become sources of power disparity.

Family standards and values are impacted by digitalisation. In contrast to collectivist family notions that emphasize obedience, respect for elders, and shared responsibility, now it expand to global digital information it gives new cultural ideals relating to individuality, privacy, and self-expression (Hofstede, 2011; Jayawardena & Gunathilaka, 2020). Families in Sri Lanka's semi-urban and metropolitan areas usually have to choose between upholding traditional moral standards and adjusting to digitally connected lifestyles.

In conclusion, the family is a social institution that both continuity and change in the digital age. The family structures, communication styles, roles, and values, even though their fundamental functions are still crucial, partly changed by Digital technologies. Analysing how digitisation impacts intergenerational relationships and family cohesiveness, especially in quickly urbanizing cultures like Sri Lanka.

Generational Differences in Digital Engagement and Family Dynamics

One of the most important aspects of digitalisation inside the family is the generational divide in digital involvement. Academics often make a distinction between digital natives and digital immigrants to explain differences in technology use, behaviours, and competencies across age groups. The younger generation who works easily with the digital generation, we can introduce them as digital natives. Additionally, adopting digital technology later in life and struggling to adapt to quickly evolving digital settings for the older generation, it can be introduced as a digital immigration (Prensky, 2001). This generation divide impact for Power dynamics, communication styles, and family connections.

According to research, younger family members always connect digital technology into their daily lives easily, using cellphones and online platforms for identity development, social engagement, education, and entertainment (Valkenburg & Peter, 2013). For them, digital communication is important way to preserve relationships rather than other things. According to Vaportzis, Clausen, and Gow (2017), older generations, on the other hand, tend to digital technologies more sparingly and mostly for practical goals like finding information, communicating with distance relations, or obtaining necessary services. Families may experience miscommunication and misunderstandings as a result of this divergence in usage patterns, especially if there are differences in expectations for availability, response, and styles of engagement.

These generational divides are particularly prevalent in Sri Lanka's metropolitan setting because of the country's fast digital growth and strongly ingrained cultural traditions that value face-to-face communication and respect for elders. Influenced of the global digital cultures, urban people often use social media sites like Instagram, TikTok, and WhatsApp to express themselves and stay in touch with their relations (Jayawardena & Gunathilaka, 2020). Most of the older family members viewing such behaviours as excessive or detrimental to traditional family unity which is the result of Intergenerational conflict. According to studies conducted in Sri Lanka, parents and grandparents worry that too much screen time diminishes family relations and traditional values, including group decision-making and shared family traditions (Wijesinghe, 2021).

However, digitalisation also makes it possible to improve interactions between generations. Through video conversations and instant messaging, digital platforms allow families that who are separated by work migration,

schooling, or urban mobility to stay in contact and emotional ties across generations. That is the advantage of this digitalization (Liyanage, 2020). Helping elderly relatives use digital services, social media, and cell phones, thus younger family members in many Sri Lankan households play a role as digital mediators. By presenting younger generations as sources of technological thing, this process, known as reverse socialization, challenges established knowledge hierarchies (Correa, 2016). Intergenerational things can be strengthened by these exchanges, which can promote a lot of reliance and understanding.

But not everyone gives the equally from digital participation. Because family communication is more build-up taking place online, older people with low levels of digital literacy feel left out (Friemel, 2016). These situations always reduce elders' involvement in family decision-making and social contact in Sri Lanka, where digital communication is becoming part of daily life. As a result, generational are crucial to comprehending how digitalisation family relations by facilitating new kinds of connections in addition to causing conflict.

Materials and Methods

With a focus on urban Sri Lanka, this study uses on secondary data to analyse how digitalisation affects family institutions and intergenerational relations. Instead of using measurement, a qualitative technique is match for this research since it enables a thorough comprehension of social processes, meanings, and patterns seen in previous research work (Bryman, 2016). The study's design for a methodical synthesis of current evidence to explain, within a sociological framework, how digital technologies affect family structures, communication styles, and generational change thing.

For sociological research that aims to evaluate social patterns, theoretical viewpoints, and policy developments through time, secondary data are especially way for this (Johnston, 2017). The use of secondary data enhances the study's analytical area and academic reliability by enabling it to show from a variety of empirical findings and theoretical views made by other researchers.

To ensure thoroughness and academic rigor, a methodical and structured search strategy was used to collect pertinent secondary data for this study. To find reliable sources, a number of academic databases were consulted, including Google Scholar, ResearchGate, JSTOR, and ScienceDirect. Carefully chosen search terms, such as "digitalization and family," "intergenerational relationships," and "digital divide in Sri Lanka," were combined with Boolean operators (AND, OR) to narrow down the results. Peer-reviewed English-language publications from the early 2000s onward were the main focus of the inclusion criteria; non-academic, duplicate, or methodologically flawed sources were not included. A final sample of 55–65 sources was chosen for in-depth analysis following systematic screening and evaluation of the roughly 120–150 sources that the initial search produced. This final sample included a variety of secondary sources, such as scholarly articles and journal articles.

For this research, reviewed journal papers, academic books, government publications, national policy documents, and reports from international organizations were among the many authoritative sources gathered. Academic databases like Google Scholar and ResearchGate were used to find scholarly journal articles on subjects like digitalisation, family sociology, modernisation, intergenerational connections, and digital gaps. These theoretical rigour, foundational sociological theories including Modernisation Theory (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005), Network Society Theory (Castells, 1996; 2010), and Digital Divide Theory (van Dijk, 2020) were taken from scholarly books and referenced journal articles.

To have a proper understanding of digitalisation in the Sri Lankan context, government reports and policy documents were also used. Important publications included statistical reports from the Department of Census and Statistics (2021) and national sources like Digital Sri Lanka 2030, that was released by the Ministry of Digital Infrastructure and Information Technology (2020). These sources are in the data on digital literacy, internet area, and sectoral differences between urban, rural, semi-urban, and estate populations. To place Sri Lanka's digital transformation big global and regional trends, reports from international organizations like United Nations, UNESCO, World Bank, and International Telecommunication Union (ITU) were examined (UNESCO, 2021; World Bank, 2021).

The material covers the period from the early 2000s to the early 2020s, with Sri Lanka's and the world's rapid digital expansion. While recent research was given priority to capture present changes like smartphone usage, social media acceptance, and the digitalisation during the COVID-19 epidemic, earlier classical works were included when made theoretical foundations. Both historical and contemporary relevance were guaranteed by this temporal equilibrium.

This research employed the systematic and reflective qualitative method to reduce internal bias in the examination of secondary verbal, textual, and visual data. Initially, triangulation of sources was utilized by contrasting results from

various forms of data, such as peer-reviewed journals, books, policy documents, and institutional publications, to minimize Reliance on a singular viewpoint. Thematic analysis was performed utilizing well-defined coding categories to guarantee consistency and clarity in interpretation to tackle textual bias. Emphasis was placed on trustworthy, peer-reviewed, and contextually pertinent sources, especially those concentrating on Sri Lanka and South Asia. Visual and statistical data from reports were carefully analysed by verifying them against relevant literature to prevent misrepresentation. Researcher reflexivity was upheld during the process by thoughtfully considering possible subjective interpretations and ensuring consistency with recognized sociological theories like Modernization theory and Digital Divide Theory. Moreover, temporal balance was maintained by incorporating both classical and contemporary studies, minimizing recency or historical bias. These integrated approaches improved the dependability, accuracy, and objectivity of the result by making certain that interpretations were based on varied, trustworthy, and methodically examined data sources.

Overall, thorough and comparative research of the effects of digitalisation on families was made possible by the variety of secondary sources. The study approach offers a strong methodological basis for how digital technologies transform family life and intergenerational interactions in a quickly modernizing society by fusing global theoretical perspectives with national-level data and Sri Lankan case studies.

Theoretical Framework and Analytical Approach

The impact of digitalisation on family structures and intergenerational connection in Sri Lanka is investigated in this study using a theory-driven analytical method. To systematically make secondary data and place social changes within larger processes of social transformation, sociological theories are employed as interpretive tools. An understanding of digitisation as a structural force and a socially mediated rather than just technological advancement is made able by the use of several theoretical stances.

This study is based on Modernization Theory. Modernization theory, its way in classical sociological theory, describes social development as a move from traditional to modern forms of social organization, urbanization, industrialization, and technical advancement (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005). According to this, digitisation is seen as a modernization that modifies social roles, communication patterns, and power structures in institutions like the family. The hypothesis is especially helpful in understanding in gender roles in urban Sri Lankan families, the transition from extended family structures to nuclear family structures, and the increase in individualism among younger generations. Thus, digital technologies are seen as contemporary social norms, such as efficiency, autonomy, and rationalization (Lerner, 1958).

Manuel Castells' Network Society Theory is used to study the structural of social factors in the digital age in addition to modernization theory. In basic to physical or hierarchical structures, Castells (1996, 2010) trying to say modern societies are increasingly structured around digital networks. This approach is especially useful for how information and communication technologies (ICTs) mediate family relations like interactions. The growth of digitally mediated family connection, can choose it's like closeness, transnational family links, and constant connectivity via social media and messaging platforms, is explained in this study by Network Society Theory. It also explains information, power, and emotional support spread via digital networks, changing communication patterns and family geographic borders (Wellman, 2001).

A main way for analyzing disparities related to digitisation is provided by the Digital Divide Theory. This approach focusses access, abilities, and outcomes associated differences with digital technology use rather than assuming uniform access and benefits (van Dijk, 2020). The three dimensions of the digital divide are access to digital infrastructure, digital literacy and skills, and the social and economic of digital use are all in the analytical framework (Wei, Teo & Chen, 2011). The intergenerational disparities within families, is especially important because younger members act as "digital natives," whereas older generations struggle with limited exposure and confidence (Prensky, 2001; Helsper & Reisdorf, 2017). These disparities are seen as the main factor of dependency in family as well as intergenerational conflict.

According to structural and agency-based theories, the study also cooperates with social constructivism and technological space. While social constructivism emphasizes how cultural norms, customs, and social norms influence the less and use of technology, technological determinism emphasizes the transformative power of digital tools in how to shape the family norms and interactions (Smith & Marx, 1994) (MacKenzie & Wajcman, 1999). In Sri Lanka, digital activities are discussed within cultural frameworks that focus family cohesiveness, respect for elders, and communal responsibility, this dual approach is especially pertinent.

The study focuses on the theoretical way with findings from the body of current literature using a theme and comparative methodology. The research digitisation results in both general patterns and context-specific impact by

contrasting studies conducted globally, regionally, and in Sri Lanka. A thorough and grounded intricate effects of digitalisation on modern family life are made possible by this theoretical framework.

Results and Discussion

Generational Differences in Digital Use and Family Interaction Patterns

The results of this study highlighted that there are generational differences in digital use and family connection path among urban Sri Lankan families. Let's compared to older generations, younger family members exhibit higher levels of digital literacy. Younger participants, introduced as "digital natives," always use the smartphones, social media sites, online apps, and digital services for entertainment, education, and communication. Additionally, older family members are less tech-savvy, depending mostly on voice calls and messaging, and often need help from younger family members to use digital devices. This pattern is confident with Prensky's (2001) distinction between "digital natives" and "digital immigrants," because age is a main factor in show the technological proficiency.

The intent of technology use also shows differences. Younger generations use digital devices in a higher way, mostly for gaming, social networking, online education, and content. They use digital platforms like YouTube, Instagram, and WhatsApp daily. Additionally, older generations typically use technology less focus and more strategically, concentrating on keeping in touch with family, getting news, or managing necessary services. Studies conducted in Sri Lanka have shown similar patterns, with younger people being more connect with technology and older adults using it law and middle of the way (Jayawardena & Gunathilaka, 2020).

The ways that families prefer to communicate are influenced by these generational differences. Even when living together, younger family members almost prefer digital communication, using messaging apps over face-to-face conversations. Apart from that older generations value face-to-face communication more and believe that it is crucial to preserving emotional ties and family harmony. This difference can cause miscommunication because younger members see digital communication as effective and useful for their social life, while older members might see it as emotional detachment. Confirming this, Wijesinghe (2021) emphasizes how this disparate communication styles can lead to emotional distribution in Sri Lankan households.

Accordingly, it seems that modern technology significantly impacts on day-to-day family relations in current society. Younger family members use screens to decrease opportunities for group interaction by reducing shared family activities like meals and talks. Digital tools make it able to be connected all the time, especially like family members live far away, but they may also make in-house relationships less effective. This result supports the claim made by Valkenburg and Peter (2013) that digital communication increases contact, it may also lower the quality of relations.

Digital gaps between generations also impact the emotional bond between family members. While older members are emotional with engagement and physical, younger members has feel emotionally attached through continuous online connection. Perceptions of emotion may consequently emerge, especially among elderly parents and grandparents. Furthermore, digital competency is influencing authority and decision-making styles inside families. By managing digital ways, gaining access to online information, and assisting elders with technology use, younger members establish informal power. The findings of Jayawardena and Gunathilaka (2020) pointed out that digital knowledge can change power within Sri Lankan households are supported by this transition, which questions established age-based authority systems.

One of the objectives of this study, to explain generational differences in digital literacy and family technology use, is immediately addressed by these results. Age continues to access, competency, and patterns of digital engagement in urban Sri Lankan families, as seen by the difference between younger members who are proficient with technology and older generations like lack such confidence. Furthermore, according to my second objective, the observed variations in communication emotional expression through digital versus face-to-face interaction highlight how digitalisation alters family communication practices, emotional intimacy, and authority structures through generations.

Impact of Digitalization on Family Cohesion, Conflict, and Role Changes

According to the study's findings, digitalisation is both integrative and disruptive effects on family life, changing role, cohesiveness, and conflict patterns in urban Sri Lankan households. Digital technologies create a dual situation on one hand that strengthens emotional ties and the other hand, creates new forms of conflict and negotiation inside homes, in line with research.

Strengthening family is a great important benefit of digitalisation, especially geographical separation. Family members that are physically created the distance from migration, work, or education can stay in constant contact thanks to digital

communication tools like Facebook, Zoom, and WhatsApp. This is noted with research by Liyanage (2020), who found that despite physical distance, Sri Lankan families are depending more of the digital media to maintain emotions. Digital resources became main part for preserving family relationships, education, and organizing duties during emergencies like the COVID-19 pandemic (Senarathna et al., 2022). By maintaining social help networks and interdependence, these technologies assisted families in maintain to lockdown conditions, the claim made by Abeykoon and Karunaratne (2021) that digitalisation can improve family distance during disruptive times.

The results try to show that family interactions are both strengthened and disrupted by digitisation. The digital tools develop emotional support and connectivity over long distances; excessive screen time and less people engagement led to emotional strain and misunderstandings between generations. These contradictory results digital technologies both influence modern family harmony and discord in metropolitan Sri Lanka.

No way, the results also show several linked to excessive digital engagement in addition to these advantages. A significant worry was the decline in person relations, especially among younger family members who spend a lot of time on social media and smartphones. Valkenburg and Peter's (2013) claim that digital communication may lower the quality of interpersonal relationships is supported by this decrease in shared family time, which undermines emotional intimacy and reduces opportunities for intergenerational discourse. This attitude is frequently interpreted by older family members as social disengagement, which causes irritation and emotional detachment within households.

Another significant effect of digitalisation is intergenerational conflict. Misunderstandings and power disparities are caused by differences in digital literacy and usage between younger "digital natives" and older generation introduced as "digital immigrant" (Prensky, 2001). Elderly members of urban and semi-urban Sri Lankan households often find it difficult to adjust to new technology, while younger members control digital technology and communication channels (Jayawardena & Gunathilaka, 2020). This gap may cause older people to feel like keep out and less involved in family decision-making (Wijesinghe, 2021).

Gender parts and family relations have also changed as a result of digital society. Digital platforms give women the chance to work, learn, and interact with other people to online, but they also frequently build up unpaid digital labour, such as looking and care of the children's online education and family communication (Fernando et al., 2019). Despite greater technological participation, mothers are responsible for e-learning during the pandemic, which is the traditional way (Perera & Wickramasinghe, 2020). Also, rather than reducing standards, digitalisation often has gender disparities already existing in households.

Most of the time, elder-youth connections, and family standards have all changed as a result of the digitalization of society. Along With parents keeping an eye on their kids' online activities to make sure they are safe, parenting has become more mediated through digital observation, which can result in disputes autonomy and privacy (Livingstone & Helsper, 2008). In addition, younger family members serve as digital middle players for older family members, inverting established power through "reverse socialization" (Correa, 2016). These dynamic factors show how Sri Lankan households' intergenerational connections have significantly changed response to Objective three, which seeks to discover ways for buildup generational digital divides, is the practice of younger and teenage family members helping older relatives with digital technology. Intergenerational digital learning and revising socialization are two unofficial but powerful factors for fostering inclusion, lowering things, and bolstering family unity. These results imply that digital literacy practices within families can maintain intergenerational collaboration while reducing generational gaps.

When compared to more general Asian literature, our results show comparable trends seen in South Asian and Indian contexts, where digitalisation increases gendered and generational tensions while also strong family ties (Chakraborty & Dey, 2021; Sarkar, 2019). Normally, families constantly discuss the boundaries, duties, and connections in an buildup digital social context due to the complicated and effects of digitalisation on family life.

Additionally, by emphasizing the wider developmental impact of digitisation within families, the results support the last objective of the study. In line with the Sustainable Development Goals pertaining to high-quality education, gender equality, and decreased inequality, digital tools facilitate access to information and services, encourage women's involvement in online economic and social activities, and support access to education through e-learning platforms. However, continuing gender-based and generational digital differences suggest that, in inclusive digital literacy programs, digitalisation may exacerbate rather than lessen already-existing social injustices.

Conclusion and Recommendation

This literature review assessed the multiple ways digitalisation has affected families, relationships, and intergenerational communication. Relational impacts focused on the urban and semi-urban of Sri Lanka. The studies reviewed do not articulate digitalisation as simply a change in technology, but as a social phenomenon that alters social processes and institutions, communication, and the roles of generational members (Castells, 2000; Giddens, 1991). Digital technology, such as smartphones, social media, and video calls, strengthened the dispersed geographically family relationships. However, they have changed the family interaction and practices (Valkenburg & Peter, 2013; Hertlein & Blumer, 2014).

Literature has documented generational gaps in the adoption of technology. The older generations are often digitally illiterate, and younger generations, as digital natives, incorporate technology into their daily practices (Prensky, 2001; Jayawardena & Gunathilaka, 2020). At the same time, digitalisation has enabled new forms of intergenerational bonding through reverse socialization, where younger family members support elders in adopting digital skills (Correa, 2016).

In reaching conclusions from the examined data, great care was taken to reduce internal biases and guarantee fair interpretation. The research combined results from various secondary sources using a comparative and thematic method, which aided in recognizing common patterns while steering clear of overgeneralization from any one study. Conflicting results in the literature were not omitted, rather they were carefully analysed to offer a detailed insight into the digitalization intricate effect of digitalization on family dynamics. This method minimized confirmation bias and enhanced analytical rigor. Additionally, conclusions were based on established theoretical frameworks, ensuring that interpretations were not merely subjective but backed by sociological reasoning. Reflexivity was crucial in recognizing the constraints of secondary data, such as possible publication bias and contextual deficiencies. To address this, focus was directed towards cross-verification and contextual significance, especially with the Sri Lankan context. The research also steered clear of absolute conclusions by acknowledging the dual aspect of digitalization as both advantageous and disruptive. Consequently, the findings discussed are not definitive but rather analytically grounded, context-aware, and backed by extensive evidence, thus improving their reliability and scholarly strength.

In addition, the literature review mentioned how digitalisation builds up inequality in terms of gender, socio-economic status, and areas. Despite government actions like the Digital Sri Lanka 2030 Roadmap, unequal access and poor infrastructure continue to hinder inclusive digital participation, particularly for older people and digitally disadvantaged households (Department of Census and Statistics, 2021; ICTA, 2021). Therefore, digitalisation increases family connections and simultaneously deepens social and age divides.

Several suggestions are made in light of the literature review. To improve family cohesion and lessen digital exclusion, intergenerational digital literacy programs should be expanded with an emphasis on older adults (Jayawardena & Gunathilaka, 2020). In the first stage, community-based training can improve intergenerational understanding and promote shared learning within families. Second, in order to address the social and cultural effects of digitalisation, such as family wellbeing, privacy, and moral technology use, policy should go beyond infrastructure development (Wijesinghe, 2021). Third, in order to manage emotional closeness and traditional values, families should be urged to develop balanced digital practices, such as shared screen-time activities and technology-free family interactions (Turkle, 2017). In order to better way to inform culturally sensitive digital policies and family-centred interventions, it is advised that future empirical research examine lived family experiences across generations in Sri Lanka, especially in semi-urban areas.

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