Residual Mobilities and Religious Practices: Exploring the Experiences of the Hindu Migrants in Canada

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Informed by the previous HCI and CSCW scholarship on residual mobility – a concept that transcends mere geographical relocation to encompass socio-cultural and communal disruptions – this study probes the unique religious and spiritual challenges faced by the Hindu migrants from the Indian subcontinent in Canada. Through interviews with 20 participants, we investigate the role of technology in navigating a diverse religious landscape in professional environments, coping with changing religious materiality, and passing down traditions to the next generation. Our work identifies the community's proactive use of social media and videoconferencing for religious festivals and connection with their religious community. The findings raise several implications for CSCW research on supporting residual mobility experiences of the Hindu migrants, including effective organization of religious event information, virtual support for material aspects of religious rituals, and fostering online environments that enable pluralistic spiritual engagement.

CCS Concepts: • **Human-centered computing** → **Human computer interaction (HCI)**.

Additional Key Words and Phrases: Religion, Hindu, Residual Mobility, Migration, Social Media

1 Introduction

Migration is characterized by a dual nature: the tangible physical relocation and the enduring socio-cultural disruptions that persist well beyond the completion of the migration process [6, 21, 22, 98, 148, 150, 166, 168]. For instance, an international migrant accustomed to attending weekly worship ceremonies might turn to virtual religious gatherings or live streams in their new country due to a lack of local places of worship [29, 112]. These digital platforms, while providing the core content of the service, might lack the communal interactions, the shared expressions of faith, and the subtle rituals that make the worship experience deeply personal, thereby leading to feelings of spiritual detachment and reinforcing feelings of isolation [16]. Such experiences highlight the profound

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intersections between mobility, emotions, and technology use. They also challenge the prevailing assumptions of ubiquitous computing, where users are perceived as uniformly autonomous figures, fully endowed with rights, resources, and freedoms, including the capability to seamlessly shape their spatial and digital interactions [3, 83, 135]. Residual experiences of mobility or *residual mobility*, as outlined by [3, 161], goes beyond mere geographical movements to highlight such intricate socio-cultural, psychological, and spiritual transformations migrants undergo during their journey and adaptation to new environments. The concept of residual mobility aims to capture the complexities faced by the people whose migration experiences diverge significantly from a choice-driven, liberal perspective [3]. It acknowledges the varying degrees of control migrants have over their mobility and the subsequent impact on their technological interactions and cultural adaptations [110]. By focusing on these diverse experiences, residual mobility sheds light on the depth and intricacies of migrant experiences, revealing aspects that are often overlooked in the traditional HCI and CSCW literature on migration and ubiquitous computing.

Residual mobility [3, 161] offers a lens through which we can understand the intricate and lasting challenges faced by international migrants, especially when it comes to their religious practices. In the context of Canada's burgeoning multiculturalism, there is a notable rise in the Hindu migrants trying to harmonize their rich, ancient traditions within Canada's largely monotheistic milieu [30, 31]. There are more than 800,000 followers of Hindu religion in Canada, the vast majority of which have migrated from the Indian sub-continent [30, 31]. Their challenges may extend beyond mere cultural adaptation [120, 178]. This can be exemplified by the challenges regarding the celebration of the annual Diwali festival, known as the Festival of Lights, which has deep religious and cultural significance for Hindus. While in many parts of the Indian subcontinent, it is celebrated with large gatherings, fireworks, and an abundance of traditional foods, in Canada, many Hindu migrants may find themselves in neighborhoods where such boisterous celebrations are unfamiliar or even regulated by local laws and regulations. There is also the challenge of sourcing traditional materials, like specific flowers or clay lamps, which might not be readily available. For a practicing Hindu migrant, these challenges may not be just logistical issues; rather, they could be representative of the deeper, residual disruptions they experience — the constant reminder that they are away from their religious and cultural epicenter. In addition, broader migration challenges such as linguistic barriers and differences in socio-cultural values can amplify these feelings of dislocation and add to the complexities of preserving their religious traditions in a foreign land [6, 22].

The inability to engage in religious rituals and customs can have profound repercussions on both individual and collective wellbeing [149, 178]. On an individual level, religious rituals and practices often provide a sense of comfort, stability, and purpose [124, 130, 131]. They offer a structured way to make sense of life's complexities and navigate personal challenges. When individuals are unable to engage in these practices due to migration-induced constraints such as lack of resources, cultural differences, or social isolation, it can lead to feelings of dislocation, stress, and a diminished sense of self-worth [62, 145]. On a collective level, shared religious rituals and beliefs often serve as a cornerstone for community formation and cohesion, providing a sense of shared identity and belonging [111, 124, 125, 180]. When these communal practices are disrupted due to the challenges of migration, it can lead to a weakening of community ties, social fragmentation, and a sense of alienation [177, 191].

While many Hindu migrants in Canada may turn to digital platforms such as social media and videoconferencing to maintain their religious practices [93], these technologies can often fall short in accommodating the specific needs of religious practices,such as facilitating synchronized chanting or virtual temple visits. This gap highlights a critical area for CSCW research: the need for a deeper understanding of the specific challenges the Hindu migrants face in sustaining their

religious practices through digital means. Such understanding could guide the design of more effective and culturally sensitive technological solutions that address the intricate needs of this community [15, 125].

Our inquiry centers on the experiences of Hindu migrants from the Indian subcontinent in Canada, focusing on the continuation of their religious practices. Drawing on the concept of residual mobility, we aim to uncover the ongoing challenges hindering the Hindu migrants in Canada from seamlessly integrating their religious practices into new cultural landscapes. We dissect these challenges from various angles, encompassing their disengagement from traditional practices and social networks, assimilation into new settings, and community collaboration. Moreover, we scrutinize the role of technology in perpetuating religious practices and maintaining their identity. Our study is designed around the following research questions:

- **RQ1:** What distinctive challenges do the Hindu migrants face when striving to maintain and engage in their religious rituals and practices?
  RQ2: In what ways do these Hindu migrants utilize and repurpose technology to maintain their religious practices in their new settings?

For the purposes of our research, we adopt a more specific definition of international migrants. We define an international migrant as an individual who was born in a different country (the Indian Subcontinent, in our case) and moved to Canada after the age of 18. This definition is particularly salient for our study as it emphasizes individuals who have had most of their formative cultural and religious experiences in their country of origin. Throughout the paper, we interchangeably use the terms "migrants" and "international migrants".

In this study, we engaged with the Hindu migrants in Canada ($n = 20$) through interviews to understand their residual experiences of mobility as they pertain to the practices and transmission of their religion. Participants reported facing challenges in integrating religious rituals into their workplace and maintaining personal spiritual practices. They also noted changes in the material aspects of religious practices and expressed concerns about transferring religious knowledge and traditions across generations. Additionally, participants described how they repurpose existing social media and video conferencing platforms to stay connected with their faith community and to participate in distant religious ceremonies. These findings inform several implications for design, including the development of comprehensive platforms for organizing religious events and resources that cater to the pluralistic aspects of Hindu religious practices.

Our contributions include:

- An exploration of the residual mobility experiences of the Hindu migrants, focusing on the challenges they face in continuing and practicing their religion in new environments,
- Examination of the ways the Hindu migrants use existing social media and videoconferencing platforms to sustain their religious practice, and
- A set of design implications for future technology platforms aimed at supporting the religious practices of the Hindu migrants.

Our research offers important insights into how religion and mobility intersect among the international Hindu migrants. We hope it will lay the groundwork for future research aimed at developing technologies to support diverse migrant experiences.

2 Background and Related Work

We begin this section by giving a brief overview of the diverse traditions and practices of Hinduism, providing context for the religious experiences of its adherents. Next, we consider the residual experiences of international migrants, focusing on the challenges of adapting to a new country.

Finally, we examine HCI and CSCW research on religion, highlighting the sphere of techno-spiritual designs and the integration of technology in fostering religious and spiritual connections.

2.1 Background on Hindu Religion

Hinduism today serves as an umbrella term encompassing a wide array of religious phenomena, from animism and polytheism to more abstract forms like panentheism and monism [57, 70, 118, 175, 178, 179]. Unlike other major religions, Hinduism does not conform to a single unified doctrine, instead offering a complex tapestry of religious philosophies and practices [57, 58, 120, 162, 178]. The multifaceted nature of Hinduism is manifest in its variety of rituals, which can diverge greatly in terms of their focus, methods, and intentions, depending on the religious factions, castes, and sub-castes [58, 175, 176]. Linguistic discrepancies, regional traditions, and local customs throughout the Indian sub-continent augment this complexity, engendering a rich array of localized religious beliefs and practices [57, 70, 175, 178]. To illustrate, regional variations in Hinduism are epitomized in the celebration of the festival of Diwali, which mirrors regional historical and mythological narratives [104, 137]. For instance, in the northern parts of India, Diwali is celebrated to mark the return of Lord Rama after his 14-year exile. In contrast, in the southern regions, the festival commemorates the victory of Lord Krishna over the demon Narakasura. This differentiation extends to various Hindu sects, such as the Vaishnavites and Shaivites, each with their unique ritual practices and symbols, including the 'tilak', a mark applied on the forehead [36, 117].

Another significant aspect of this diversity is the regional variation in temple architecture across South Asia, influenced by climatic conditions and material availability [126]. In North India, temples often feature towering structures with intricate carvings [114], while in South India, temple complexes include long corridors for deity processions, showcasing the Dravidian style [95]. In contrast, temples in Bengal typically have flat or curved sloping roofs, a design necessitated by the availability of clay and regional climatic conditions [107]. These diverse architectural styles reflect the varied religious practices and cultural narratives intrinsic to those areas.

The religious plurality of Hinduism is also evident in the worship of numerous gods and goddesses, with specific regions and communities honoring particular deities like Lord Jagannath in Odisha or Goddess Durga in West Bengal and Bangladesh [32, 132, 157]. The diverse regional interpretations of sacred scriptures, such as different versions of the epic Ramayana, further underscore this diversity [20]. Even ceremonies specific to certain castes, like the 'Upanayana' or thread ceremony, exhibit significant variation [139]. The funeral practices also range widely, with cremation being the common practice, while burial is preferred by some groups [57]. This complex mosaic of beliefs and rituals, influenced by regional histories, local traditions, and caste distinctions, highlights the profound diversity embedded within Hinduism.

We recognize the historical role of caste in Hindu society, deeply embedded in India's socio-religious fabric and influential in shaping its social hierarchies. Having originated in ancient scriptures, defining societal roles through birth-based classes, the caste system has evolved into a more intricate and rigid mechanism [7, 142]. These caste definitions and hierarchies exhibit considerable variations across different regions, such as North India, South India, West Bengal, Nepal, and Bangladesh [7, 108]. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's seminal works, such as "Annihilation of Caste" [7], provide critical insights into the origins and impacts of this system. Ambedkar's analysis emphasizes how caste divisions, while initially perhaps more fluid, have solidified over time into a rigid hierarchy that profoundly affects social interactions and opportunities. The caste system's varied interpretations, for instance, the historically marginalized position of Dalits and their exclusion from certain religious practices, have led to significant disparities and discrimination within the Hindu community [142, 175]. These longstanding issues continue to resonate in contemporary global dialogues, with recent discussions in the technology industry highlighting the persistence

of caste-based discrimination, both within India and in diasporic communities [94, 171, 175]. In our study on Hindu migrants' religious practices, we have taken a mindful approach to discussing caste. Our goal has been to ensure that our discussions and proposed technological interventions do not unintentionally perpetuate caste biases. Instead, we are conscious of the necessity to respect and uphold the principles of anti-discrimination. This careful consideration of caste dynamics is further elaborated in our discussion of participant demographics and researcher positionality in Sections 3.1 and 3.4, respectively.

2.2 Residual Experiences of Mobility by International Migrants

The concept of residual mobility emerges against the backdrop of commonly held assumptions about ubiquitous computing, which often envisions users as having free choice and access to stable infrastructures [3]. Yet, this view starkly contrasts the experiences of many global populations subjected to migration, disruption, and displacement. Building on the ideas of Star and Bowker [164], residual mobilities reflect those experiences of mobility and technology use that markedly deviate from the liberal, choice-based model. Such deviations underscore the need for CSCW to reconsider how computational tools fit into these varied experiences, especially given the critiques about technology reinforcing north-south dependencies and a western-centered perspective on development [3, 45, 83, 150]. This paradigm shift is further supported by sociological and geographical studies. Prior works like Urry [174] and Sassen [153] have emphasized that while mobility has become central to contemporary societies, there is a vast differentiation in the nature and outcomes of such mobilities. Massey [110] also highlighted that this differentiation does not merely stem from the act of being mobile but rather the control one possesses over these mobility experiences.

There is a substantial body of research investigating these disparities encountered by international migrants in their new locales [6, 21, 22, 98, 99, 166, 168]. For instance, Brown and Grinter [22] revealed the Rohingya refugees' communication issues in the USA, like complex topic explanation difficulties and limited English skills. Likewise, Caidi et al. [27] noted similar challenges among older Chinese migrants in Australia and Canada, contributing to their feelings of alienation and anxiety in adapting to new environments. Almohamed and Vyas [6] scrutinized the impacts of displacement on the social capital of refugees and asylum seekers, investigating aspects such as stressors associated with displacement, acceptance in host communities, access to social resources, and technology use. Their findings show that displacement leads to nostalgia and reduced social capital, worsened by family separations and assimilation challenges due to cultural and language differences. Adding another dimension, Brown et al. [21] reported the stress borne by immigrant women in the USA due to adaptation challenges, leading to family tensions and abuse. In a study involving Middle Eastern newcomers in Canada, Sabie et al. [150] highlighted several cultural differences in space usage and architecture. Participants preferred houses with central courtyards and distinct public-private entries, unlike typical North American homes with rear kitchens, open-plan designs, and box-like architecture. Other studies in this body of work have highlighted disparities in technology expectations among migrant populations in various contexts such as health, education, and administration [56, 148, 166, 186].

The studies mentioned above highlight the broader challenges of maintaining wellbeing faced by the migrants [150]. In this context, reminisce - the act of recalling past experiences - is emphasized as a crucial process in regulating personal development, especially in the context of the migrant population [73, 75]. The process of reminiscence helps migrants sustain continuity in both their external life circumstances and their internal sense of identity [10]. A relevant concept that emerges here is collective memory [67], defined as the shared reminiscences of the past events and experiences that occur within the context of a group (e.g., family, society) with which individuals identify. In situations of significant transition or periods of 'limbo', such as becoming a newcomer

in a new country, collective memory can offer a comforting anchor. Schwartz [156], Twyman et al. [173] argues that its role goes beyond being a mere reflection of the past — it also acts as a beacon, providing guidance for the future and serving as a societal template that individuals can refer to while adapting to their new circumstances. Thus, collective memory can not only foster cohesion among the migrants, but it can also contribute to their resilience, emphasizing its crucial role in the migration context [54].

However, the current body of literature does not offer much insight into the residual mobility experiences of the Hindu migrants, particularly when it comes to practicing their diverse and pluralistic faith within the Canadian context. The migration of Hindu population to North America, spanning several decades, has primarily been motivated by the pursuit of better economic opportunities, education, and an enhanced standard of living [93, 121]. This migration trend has been particularly notable in the United States and Canada, attracting individuals and families from the Indian subcontinent, especially those seeking professional advancement in fields like technology, healthcare, and academia [121]. The perceived political stability and diverse cultural landscape of North America have further contributed to its appeal as a destination for migrants, including those from marginalized groups, seeking a safer and more accepting environment away from the instability in their own countries [140]. The UK has also seen significant Hindu migration, predominantly for similar reasons [178]. Beyond North America and the UK, the Hindu diaspora has established itself in various global locations, each driven by distinct historical and economic factors. During the colonial era, many Hindus migrated to the Caribbean, Fiji, and Mauritius as indentured laborers, responding to labor demands in these regions [178]. Similarly, in African nations such as South Africa, Kenya, and Uganda, the colonial history and economic opportunities shaped the Hindu migration patterns [61]. These movements have resulted in the formation of dynamic Hindu communities, which have adapted their cultural and religious traditions to the new surroundings while preserving their unique heritage. However, we limit our study to investigating the experiences of the Hindu migrants in Canada and attempt to form a nuanced understanding of the specific challenges and complexities the Hindu migrants face in sustaining their religious practices after relocating to Canada.

2.3 Traditional and Digital Landscapes in the Sociology of Religion

The sociological study of religion heavily relies on the works of Emile Durkheim, Max Weber, and Karl Marx [40]. Durkheim defined religion as a complex system related to the sacred and emphasized its functional role in society [48]. Weber, in contrast, left room for varied interpretations without providing a concrete definition [182]. The distinct perspectives offered by Durkheim and Weber birthed two main schools of thought within the sociology of religion. Durkheim's 'functional' perspective situates religion as a societal force that performs essential roles, while Weber's 'substantive' perspective centers around the inherent content within religious beliefs and systems [38]. However, they both consider religion as a lived experience, intertwined with materiality that facilitates the dissemination and comprehension of religious beliefs and practices within and across societies [77, 79, 181].

The fields of HCI and CSCW have been gravitating towards the integration of technology and religion, giving rise to the concept of techno-spiritual design [9, 15, 18, 23, 24, 28, 146, 189]. This approach explores the relationship between technology and spirituality, aiming to create transcendent experiences by crafting platforms that foster connections with higher consciousness or divine aspects. An example is the Candle Altar by Bayley and White [14], designed to support spiritual expressions and create personal bonds through symbols like candles. Aligned with this, a body of work has explored the realm of transcendent experience (TX) design, aiming to create technological interfaces that support states of consciousness beyond individual identity [19, 60, 65,

68, 69, 74, 80, 101, 187, 189, 190]. This body of work has opened doors to various application areas, merging scientific and esoteric knowledge while considering ethical dimensions [9, 51, 60, 119, 158]. For instance, Seymour and Van Kleek [158] have incorporated Japanese Shinto notions of the soul into social robot design, thereby challenging and broadening conventional technological paradigms. Rifat et al. [146] advocated for leveraging religious values to encourage sustainable behavior changes within closely-knit religious communities in the Global South. Other works have informed the design of tools that support mindfulness practices [51, 100], as well as emphasized the significance of culturally sensitive approaches to spiritual inquiry [60, 103, 123].

These notions have found reflections in diverse research, demonstrating the possibility of integrating religious values into technology design to enhance accessibility and reinforce religious identity [19, 60, 68, 103, 123, 124, 147, 158, 192]. For instance, studies like Hammer [69] used Judaic practices for creative design, while Woodruff et al. [187] explored technology's support for religious traditions in domestic settings. Examples like the "Sun Dial" app aiding Islamic prayer practices [188], or Ibtasam et al. [80]'s work in Pakistan for Muslim women, exhibit the potential for technology to facilitate and even deepen religious practices. Caidi et al. [28] described various technological adaptations by Muslims during Ramadan, such as using digital bookmarks for prayer calls, viewing Ramadan-themed programs on YouTube, and connecting with family via videoconferencing during key fasting times. Collectively, these studies demonstrate that technology can both facilitate and deepen our understanding of esoteric and religious experiences [68].

Finally, the Internet's capacity to transcend geographical barriers has fostered the growth of online religious communities, enabling individuals with similar beliefs to connect and build communities irrespective of physical proximity [17, 29, 112]. These virtual communities, which can be extensions of physical ones or exist solely online, offer platforms to reinforce beliefs and foster relationships. At the same time, they also present challenges and complexities [78, 89]. For instance, the dynamics of these digital spaces allow identity exploration and self-expression but can also harbor distortions of religious identities and misrepresentations, particularly catalyzed by features like anonymity and avatars [33, 82]. Moreover, online environments might mirror the hierarchical structures of traditional communities, potentially leading to power imbalances and the spread of extremist views [29, 138]. These multifaceted aspects of online religious communities prompt a critical examination of their dynamics and integrity.

In this study, we focus on exploring how the Hindu migrants leverage various technology platforms to sustain their religious practices. This includes aspects such as facilitating their rituals, navigating the complexities of their faith, and maintaining connections with their religious community. By examining these technological interactions, we aim to identify where the conventional assumptions of ubiquitous computing fall short in addressing the unique needs of this community. This understanding will, in turn, guide us in formulating specific design recommendations to make technology more inclusive and effective for the Hindu migrants.

3   Method and Data Collection

In this research, we adopt an interpretive approach [163], which inherently focuses on detailed, context-specific analyses over broad generalizability. We consider the researcher as a "human instrument" [163] that leverages their unique personal and cultural insights to deeply explore the nuances of social interactions and individual experiences. This perspective allows us to capture rich descriptions of how participants perceive and interpret their own experiences, emphasizing the importance of understanding these experiences within their specific cultural and environmental contexts. As such, the aim is not to generalize findings universally but to provide a profound understanding of the studied phenomena in its natural setting. We describe our research method and the data collection process below.

3.1 Participants

We recruited 20 participants through email and social media invitations. We recruited participants on a rolling basis and continued the process until we reached data saturation. Initially, we contacted potential participants through emails utilizing our extensive network, which includes university contacts, local temples, office groups, former colleagues, neighbors, and relatives. This strategy helped us engage a broad range of participants. To expand our participant pool even further, we employed a snowball sampling method, encouraging initial participants to refer their contacts. Following recommendations from our networks, we also chose to use social media channels like Facebook and WhatsApp. Our networks noted that these platforms are frequently used by individuals to stay connected with family and friends back home, making them particularly effective for reaching participants from diverse educational and professional backgrounds. Considering the ubiquitous internet and social media usage rates in Canada [25, 113], our multi-tiered recruitment method should reach sufficient diversity of education and digital proficiency that exists among Hindu migrants in Canada. Prior works like Das et al. [44] also note that recruitment methods like ours could be effective for democratizing and broadening the scope of data collection.

All participants were born and raised in the Indian subcontinent and had moved to Canada after the age of 18. The eligibility criteria mandated participants to be at least 18 years old and self-identify as Hindu. Our participant pool represented two genders, with 11 women and 9 men (other gender options were available in the recruitment forms). They had varied lengths of residency in Canada, ranging from 1 to 22 years, and came from diverse professional backgrounds. A detailed overview of the participant demographics can be found in Table 1.

To acknowledge the complex and regional nature of caste identities, we gave participants the flexibility to self-identify their caste, rather than confining them to predefined hierarchical categories. We recognized that caste definitions and hierarchies exhibit considerable variations across different regions. Our participant pool mirrored this diversity, with individuals self-identifying as follows: five as *Ksatriya*, three as *Brahmin*, two as *Kayastha*, two as *Shudra*, one as *Baidya*, one as *Banya*, one as *Namashudra*, and one as belonging to *Other Backward Classes (OBC)* (a category of people in India recognized by the government as being socially and educationally disadvantaged [63]). Four of our participants chose not to disclose their caste. To protect participant privacy and adhere to their requests, we present these classifications in aggregate form only and have excluded them from Table 1. Revealing caste, especially of participants from marginalized castes, could risk unintended identification due to their unique socio-cultural position and often distinct population size in specific regions or communities. For readers seeking a deeper understanding of the nuances and regional variations of caste identities, we recommend exploring texts such as [7, 8, 47, 142], among other resources.

3.2 Interviews

Participants were invited to partake in a semi-structured interview session. These interviews were facilitated through Zoom or Google Meet video conferencing platforms, except for two participants (P6 and P7), who were interviewed in person at temples. The interviews were conducted in English by the first author, who identify as a follower of the Hindu religion and migrated to Canada at the age of 25, living there for two and a half years. The interviews were conducted between June and September 2023.

In the interviews, we focused on the challenges that the Hindu migrants encounter in practicing their religion and the ways in which they have adopted the existing technology to address these challenges. In line with Durkheim's conceptual framework on religion [48], we formulated our

Table 1. Participant Demographics

ID	Age	Gender	Years in Canada	Occupation	Marital Status
P1	27	Women	7	Software Engineer	Single
P2	26	Women	2	Student	Single
P3	29	Men	1	Student	Single
P4	34	Women	3	Program Manager	Married
P5	28	Men	1.5	Student	Single
P6	52	Men	21	Priest	Married
P7	45	Men	22	Priest & Insurance Agent	Married
P8	29	Women	1	Student	Single
P9	33	Men	4	Technology Consultant	Married
P10	30	Women	4.5	Student	Married
P11	23	Men	2	Student	Single
P12	33	Men	8	Assistant Professor	Married
P13	30	Women	4	Physician Assistant	Married
P14	45	Men	6	Warehouse Manager	Married
P15	38	Women	6	Warehouse Employee	Married
P16	24	Women	2	Student	Single
P17	44	Women	14	Software Engineer	Married
P18	25	Women	1	Student	Single
P19	26	Men	2	Student	Single
P20	30	Women	8	Software Engineer	Married

questions to explore the beliefs and values held by the participants, as well as the specific religious rituals they engage in. The questions included, but were not limited to:

- What aspects of your religious beliefs and values do you find most challenging to maintain while living in Canada?
- What are the religious rituals or practices that are important to you?
- What challenges do you face in taking part in these rituals or practices in Canada?
- What are the difficulties you encountered when you participated in any online or in-person religious activities or events since moving to Canada?
- Have you used social media platforms to connect with other members of your religious community? If so, which ones have you used, and how have they helped you connect with others?
- What are some of the features that you would like to see in a technology platform or app designed to support your religious practices?

We also realized that research involving religious practices and beliefs can raise several ethical considerations, and we have addressed these issues throughout the research process. At the beginning of the interviews, the participants were informed that they could leave the conversation or skip any questions if they felt uncomfortable when discussing their religious beliefs or practices. The interviewer was also trained to approach the subject matter with respect and empathy, acknowledging the deeply personal and sometimes complex nature of religious beliefs and practices.

The interviews lasted 40 to 60 minutes. The participants were compensated $15 CAD for their participation. Research activities were approved by the Research Ethics Boards at the first author's university.

3.3 Data Analysis

After transcribing the interview data, we conducted a thematic analysis [41] to analyze the qualitative data collected from the interviews. Two members of the research team initially reviewed all the interview transcripts to acquaint themselves with the content. Next, they engaged in an open-coding procedure [87], where they individually labeled segments of the information with specific codes. Each coder independently created an initial codebook, after which they met to agree on a unified one. During these meetings, they discerned the common codes, honed the definitions, and removed codes that did not pertain to the central research questions. Subsequently, each coder applied this unified codebook to a portion of the data (comprising six interview transcripts) and reconvened to further modify the codebook to align more closely with the data. After several iterative steps of this process, the coders reached a consensus and used the finalized codebook to code the remaining data, dividing it equally between them.

3.4 Reflexivity

Prior works in HCI have highlighted how positionalities of researchers bring certain perspectives into affinity and relate to the tensions in research with marginalized communities [96, 155]. The first author – who is also the interviewer – is both a practicing Hindu and a migrant in North America from South Asia. Two of the authors of this paper are Hindus, representing both dominant and marginalized castes of this religion. The rest of the authors are from different faiths, but all originated from South Asia and migrated to North America. While the authors' positionalities in and related to the studied communities motivate the study, researchers' perspectives and scholarly experiences inevitably shape the research process [35]. To reflect on that, the authors' backgrounds in and familiarity with science and technology studies and critical HCI scholarship shaped the study's research questions, which inclined toward problem identification and informed the methodological decisions. Additionally, each author is an avid reader of Hindu and other South Asian religious literature due to their keen interest in comparative religion and philosophy. Consequently, every participant would see themselves reflected in the research team to some extent. However, there were female research participants and no female researchers, which limits our ability to interpret their data to the fullest extent possible.

Being mindful of the historical and ongoing issues of caste-based discrimination, we approached our research with a strong commitment to anti-discrimination principles. This stance was crucial in ensuring that our interactions, analyses, and interpretations did not inadvertently reinforce caste biases. The research team included individuals from varied caste backgrounds (e.g., one with Indo-Iranian heritage recognized as general caste in India, one from the non-Aryan aboriginal Dasa community). We refrain from providing individual disclosures for each member of the research team to avoid the potential risks of religious and caste-based marginalization that might arise from specific personal revelations.

We also implemented the following measures in line with previous studies advocating against caste-based discrimination [11, 43, 116, 128, 175]:

- We undertook rigorous scrutiny of our interview questionnaire to identify and eliminate any language or insinuations that could potentially reinforce caste hierarchies.

- In conducting interviews, we were prepared to exercise heightened sensitivity to the complexities of caste discussions, ensuring our approach was respectful and non-intrusive, particularly when addressing caste-related topics.
- Throughout the data analysis and interpretation process, we made a conscious effort to avoid caste-based generalizations, choosing instead to concentrate on the unique experiences and viewpoints of each individual participant.

4 Findings

We begin by providing a brief overview of the diversity in the religious commitment as revealed by the participants. Following this, we delve into the central themes that emerged from our interviews, specifically focusing on the experiences related to residual mobility and religion.

4.1 Overview of Participants' Commitment to Religion

All participants self-identified themselves as Hindu, yet they reported a wide range of variations in the intensity and expression of their religious commitment. For instance, P6, who introduced himself as the head priest of a large Hindu temple in Toronto, reported conducting daily prayers in the temple three times a week and leading educational initiatives to impart religious teachings to the children. In our study, participants over the age of 30 generally described themselves as regular followers of the religion, often engaging in evening prayers and attending major religious festivals.

Among those under 30, self-reported religious beliefs and practices were more diverse. P1, P5, and P18 stated that they perform prayers almost daily and visit temples regularly; P2, P3, P11, and P19 indicated belief in core values but less frequent practice; P8 and P16 expressed selective belief in certain aspects of the religion and interest in participating only in the festivals.

4.2 Residual Mobility Experiences of the Hindu Migrants

Participants shared a variety of experiences and challenges they face in practicing their religion in the new environment. These are detailed in the following sections.

4.2.1 Navigating Faith in Fragmented Communities. Participants in our study highlighted a number of difficulties they faced when attempting to participate in religious activities and rituals in their new environment. Foremost among these was a noticeable decrease in the number of accessible temples compared to what they were accustomed to in their home countries: India and Bangladesh. Back home, the ubiquity of temples meant that they were readily available for prayer and worship, often within walking distance. However, in their current circumstances, temples are few and far between, requiring them to travel significantly longer distances.

A predominant issue pointed out by the participants who do not live with a family or are university students, is that the local Hindu community organization is largely spearheaded by an older generation, who have been in Canada for a longer duration. This generation's settlement patterns have naturally influenced the locations of the temples. These temples have predominantly been established in residential areas where family-oriented Hindu communities are prevalent, which often do not align with the locations of the college or university campuses. As a result, students or single individuals living near their educational institutions face logistical challenges in accessing these temples, inhibiting their participation in community activities and rituals.

The logistical challenges were further compounded by difficulties in accessing specific ritual materials. P18 highlighted this aspect by sharing the struggle to find *Tulsi* leaves, an essential element in many Hindu rituals. Tulsi, or holy basil, holds significant religious and medicinal value in Hindu culture, often used in daily worship and special ceremonies. In their native countries, Tulsi plants are commonly grown in household gardens or are readily available in local markets,

making them easily accessible for religious practices. However, in Canada, P18 and others found that such culturally significant items were not as readily available, especially in areas distant from established Hindu communities.

P19 explained that these logistic issues, combined with the demanding work schedule and the harsh cold weather typical of their new location, posed a formidable challenge to maintaining regular temple visits. As such, their ability to engage in religious practices, which were once seamlessly integrated into their daily lives, has become a considerable endeavor in their migrant context. These comments illustrate the disparate experiences of mobility among international migrants.

Participants, in general, also noted the difficulties they faced in explaining their religious festivals to their coworkers and in requesting leave to observe these holidays. P4 commented:

> "*I often find that my coworkers don't fully grasp the complexities of the Indian culture. This becomes evident when I attempt to explain our numerous religious celebrations. For instance, if I try to explain the significance of 'Saraswati Pujo' [[a festival dedicated to Saraswati – the Hindu goddess of knowledge, music, art, speech, wisdom, and learning]] among other pujas (festivals), they seem confused. They're familiar with 'Diwali,' but many other celebrations remain foreign to them. It feels as if they might dismiss me if I were to request time off for every single festival. ... Most people here primarily celebrate Christmas or Thanksgiving, very different from the numerous festivals we observe in India. There's no direct counterpart for these Western holidays in our culture, which makes drawing parallels challenging.*"

P12 expressed a similar sentiment as P4 but added an additional layer of personal conflict. P12 felt a certain unease when it came to celebrating these festivals, largely due to their aspiration to excel in their career. The fear that taking time off for these numerous celebrations might create a sense of alienation amongst their colleagues was a significant concern. This fear also extended to those colleagues who shared the same Hindu faith but did not actively partake in the celebrations of these festivals. These complexities in balancing professional responsibilities with cultural and religious observances highlight how migrants strive to maintain their identity in the face of new societal norms.

4.2.2 Changes in Materiality of Religion. Participants in our study highlighted significant contrasts in the materiality of religious practice when comparing their experiences in the Indian subcontinent to their new environment in Canada. A key focus of these discussions centered on the structural differences of temples between these distinct geographical and cultural contexts.

P3, for instance, spoke at length about the grandeur of these architectural designs. The towering structures or 'Shikharas' of the temples contributed significantly to their visual and symbolic prominence, according to him. He expressed that the height and intricacy of these features underscored the sanctity of the space, marking it as a distinct realm for spiritual engagement. P17 also reflected that the extensive use of sculptures and carvings, portraying an array of deities, mythological beings, and scenes from Hindu epics and scriptures, contributed to creating visually stunning and spiritually charged environments in religious venues. Their works highlight that the physical aspects of religious places can serve as potent symbols of cultural difference.

However, upon migration to Canada, these participants observed a stark difference in the architectural and spatial design of temples, primarily driven by local climatic conditions. P8 and P9 noted that due to Canada's often harsh and extremely cold weather, open spaces associated with temples are largely non-existent. Temples in Canada tend to be single-structure buildings that are enclosed to protect against the weather. Participants also highlighted that these buildings often bear a resemblance to regular, everyday structures, lacking the distinctive architectural features such as

towers and open courtyards common in their countries of origin. These differences impacted their naturalness to engage with their religion. P3 commented:

> "*It's funny, but I never thought about roofs in temples back home in India. But the first thing I noticed in Canadian temples? The roof. I get it, it's all about the cold weather here. But seeing that roof... it just doesn't feel like a 'mandir' [[temple]]. It's like I'm in some different place, not the temple I remember from my childhood.*"

The architectural differences in Canadian temples extended to various aspects of home-based rituals. Participants like P4 and P18 shared experiences of unintentionally activating smoke alarms during 'dhup', a common incense-burning ritual. The sensitivity of residential smoke detectors to the ritual's smoke contrasted with their experiences in their native homes, where such practices were commonplace and unproblematic.

Participants in our study further delved into the contrasting atmosphere they experienced during important festivals after migrating to Canada. They painted vivid pictures of how the spirit of these festivals infused their lives back home, highlighting the stark difference in their experience in the new country. P16 fondly recollected her experiences during Diwali. She reminisced about wearing traditional Indian attire, participating in celebrations with family and friends, and immersing herself in the vibrant festive ambience that permeated her surroundings. She pointed out that even those who were not initially keen on partaking in the festivities could not help but be drawn into the joyous occasion, such was the infectious nature of the festive spirit. However, P2 reflected that her experiences of the same festivals in Canada felt markedly different. Here, the day of the festival felt much like any other ordinary day. The atmosphere was noticeably devoid of the usual festive buzz, making the celebrations feel more isolated and less community-oriented.

P1 and P12 further echoed P16's sentiments. They pointed out that the impetus to celebrate has to be self-driven. They found that unlike back home where festive preparations were collective and community-driven, in Canada, it was more of an individualistic endeavor. P12 commented:

> "*You know, back home, the whole community would come alive during festivals. You didn't even have to try. The festive spirit was just in the air. But here, it's like I have to remind myself to celebrate. I've got to dress up, do the rituals, and keep the vibe going, all on my own. ... Makes me really realize how much has changed in how I practice my faith since I moved to Canada. It's way more of a solo journey now, and that hits different.*"

For some, the responsibility of keeping tabs on various festivals could also feel overwhelming. For instance, P5 mentioned instances where he had forgotten about some festivals when he had not spoken to his family for a few days.

Consequently, several participants were in search of ways to efficiently organize information about religious festivals and events. They felt that existing online calendars were not efficient in notifying them about religious events, especially the less popular ones. P18 proposed the idea of a platform that could consolidate information about all major and minor religious festivals, categorizing them based on their cultural relevance. P5 expanded on this idea, suggesting that temples and religious communities should improve their event promotion on platforms like 'Eventbrite'. Echoing this sentiment, P12 voiced a desire for a digital version of the Hindu *Panjika*, an astronomical almanac that chronicles the timings of all major and minor festivals. Nevertheless, P13 also recognized that traditional *Panjika* might be more accessible to individuals versed in religious texts, suggesting the creation of a simpler version tailored to a broader demographic.

4.2.3 Mixed Realities of Digital Worship. Most of our participants shared experiences of engaging with religious rituals through online videoconferencing platforms. Their digital engagement ranged

from joining larger community events via platforms like Zoom to more personal connections via WhatsApp video calls.

P4 recalled her experiences during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021. As a recent arrival to Canada, she keenly felt the absence of her traditional celebrations of 'Durga Puja', a five-day festival celebrated during the fall every year. Concerns about safety kept her from attending any in-person celebrations. In an attempt to participate from a distance, she turned to digital means. She shared:

> "*Being new to Canada then, I was really missing the Durga Puja celebrations back home. I discovered that some local temples here live-streamed the prayers, including the 'Chandi Path' [[recitation of the sacred Hindu text, Chandi]]. I initially logged in with a lot of enthusiasm, but soon it hit me - I was just staring at a screen. The feeling of actually being there, amid the festive buzz, was missing. Sure, it provided a certain level of comfort knowing I was still participating in my own way. But honestly, it was nowhere near the experience of an in-person celebration.*"

Many of our participants shared experiences of joining religious events through personal video calls. P1, for example, reflected on a unique experience she had while offering flowers to goddess Durga. Traditionally, this is an in-person event where the priest chants *slokas* (religious texts), and devotees offer flowers at the feet of the goddess after each round of recitation. P1 recalled that she had to join this ritual virtually and shared how she worked around the physical limitation. She video-called her father, who was present at the temple. He positioned his camera towards the idol of the Goddess, and she chanted the slokas in tandem with the priest through the call. Symbolizing her presence at the temple, she offered flowers on her phone as if she were offering them at the feet of the goddess. However, she also acknowledged the challenges involved in this process, primarily due to her father's lack of familiarity with technology. In her opinion, the effort to coordinate and conduct this virtual participation was significantly greater compared to a regular in-person celebration. Participants' comments highlight the ingenuity with which individuals adapt religious rituals to fit the constraints of digital platforms. Yet, these adaptations also introduce a set of challenges that can affect the integrity of the religious experience.

Our participants also recounted their experiences with live-streamed religious activities. Drawing from the experience of Durga Puja, P11 conveyed that while priests primarily conducted the prayer and recited religious texts, the wider community played a supportive role in various ways such as assisting the priests with accessories or cleaning the utensils. However, this sense of communal participation was notably absent in online live streams of the festival. P11 equated watching the Puja online to 'watching TV', stating that it was unengaging unless there was an interactive element, such as someone on the other side responding or conversing with the viewers. In sum, the shift to online live-streamed religious activities, while offering some level of accessibility, may lack the communal and interactive elements that participants find vital for a fully engaging religious experience.

4.2.4 Social Media Engagement for Religious Connection. Participants in our study emphasized varying degrees of engagement with different social media platforms to cultivate and maintain connections within their religious community. They connected with fellow members through WhatsApp groups, Facebook groups, and by following religious pages on Instagram and Facebook. The use of these platforms had distinct purposes, with WhatsApp groups commonly used for information sharing and coordinating festival attendance, while Facebook groups facilitated more in-depth religious content discussion and reflection. The degree of engagement varied among participants; some were active in discussions and event participation, while others preferred a more passive role. P10 and P13 remarked that occasional exposure to religious content on

Instagram provided opportunities for introspection and spiritual connection. Both P2 and P5 further underscored the importance of these virtual platforms, sharing that they were helpful in coordinating visits to temples or religious festivals with fellow community members. These findings highlight how individuals repurpose social media platforms to facilitate improvised forms of religious engagement, particularly when faced with the complexities of sustaining their faith traditions in unfamiliar cultural landscapes.

However, several participants in our study voiced concerns about the dynamics within the mainstream Hindu community in Canada. They expressed frustration that both physical community spaces and online platforms can often be dominated by individuals holding more extreme views. The female participants were particularly outspoken about their experiences with unsolicited advice regarding their behavior and dress code within Canadian temples. While acknowledging the presence of similar issues back in their home countries, they voiced disappointment about encountering such situations in Canada. They had anticipated a more tolerant and accepting environment given the country's diverse demographic makeup. As P2 and P15 shared, such intrusive suggestions dampen their enthusiasm and motivation to actively participate in the community.

The concerns were not always gender-specific, however. Across the board, participants mentioned instances where they witnessed blatant criticism directed towards other faiths, such as Islam, originating from a small group within the Hindu community itself. These criticisms were often from the community members who possess more radical beliefs. Reflecting on this, P3 shared:

> "*Most folks I know are respectful towards different faiths and views. But they often hold back, afraid of being seen negatively. This silence leaves a gap, and those with extreme views step in, freely criticizing other religions and beliefs. This creates a kind of toxicity that sometimes pushes me away from the community.*"

This prevailing concern also deterred some participants from engaging in social media groups on platforms like Facebook and WhatsApp, particularly those involving open discussions about various aspects of life. According to participants such as P4 and P17, these groups could potentially become hotbeds for the spread of conflict, negativity, and even religious hatred, primarily fueled by this small segment of the Hindu community. P1 and P2 echoed this sentiment, stating they prefer to engage in groups that are solely for the dissemination of event information, rather than those promoting open sharing of opinions. P5 added that these social media platforms often amplify a singular viewpoint, typically a more extreme or inaccurate interpretation, while alternative perspectives remain underrepresented due to the reticence of more moderate individuals. Consequently, these radical beliefs receive undue attention and gain traction within the community. In conclusion, these findings highlight the need for more inclusive spaces and dialogues that respect and acknowledge the diversity of faiths, views, and cultural practices within the community, thereby fostering a more welcoming and harmonious environment.

4.2.5   Continuing Faith Practices within Families. Participants in our study also expressed apprehension about the transmission of their religious traditions to subsequent generations amidst the experiences of cultural dislocation. P6 and P7, for instance, shared the observation that, in the Indian subcontinent, even those who do not actively practice religion are generally well-versed in basic rituals and customs. However, for the next generation growing up in a different cultural context, opportunities to familiarize themselves with their ancestral religion may be limited. This disconnect from their cultural and religious roots may contribute to a sense of identity crisis among young migrants, as noted by P4. Reflecting on her observations of children growing up in similar circumstances, they shared that these children may develop feelings of cultural inferiority when they fail to comprehend or articulate the significance of their religious rituals.

Our participants further provided insights into how such a mindset could develop within younger members of their community. For instance, P8 highlighted that the older generation or parents might sometimes lack the detailed knowledge needed to explain the contexts and significance of religious rituals. This inability to provide comprehensive explanations, coupled with the increased emphasis on academic assignments and other activities, might result in religious learning taking a backseat in a child's upbringing.

P6 highlighted a significant shift in language preference among children who, despite their origins in the Indian sub-continent, may lack fluency in their parents' native language. Drawing from his interactions with children whose parents were both born and raised in Bangladesh, he commented:

> "*The kids, who are growing up here, they are from Bangladesh, but after living here for a couple of years, they are very, very slowly forgetting the Bengali language. They are more used to in English and if so, we have a challenge here. ... We need to translate all the mantras, all the procedures in English, so that our next generation can easily follow.*"

Furthermore, participants like P8 and P16 shared their personal experiences of learning about key Hindu epics, such as the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, through mediums like comics and animated series. They proposed that these engaging resources could be utilized for imparting religious knowledge to both the younger and older generations. In line with this, P12 suggested the creation of a centralized platform or repository where individuals could easily find and access these comic books and animated series, facilitating the process of learning about their religious heritage in a captivating and interactive manner.

Participants expressed a keen awareness of the necessity to transmit their religious values and traditions to the younger generation. However, they also emphasized the importance of not imposing these beliefs unduly. They recognized that any forceful insistence on adherence to religious norms could potentially alienate the younger generation from their religious practices. Therefore, participants recommended that educational resources intended to familiarize children with their religious heritage maintain a balanced tone. The goal would be to educate about religious values in an informative, yet unimposing manner, preventing the perception of any coerciveness.

5 Discussion

In our discussion, we initially focus on how our findings address our specific research questions and contribute to the existing body of literature. Subsequently, we explore the design implications that emerge from our findings, specifically targeting how technology can be leveraged to mitigate the challenges faced by the communities we have studied in sustaining their religious practices.

5.1 RQ1: Specific Difficulties Encountered by the Hindu Migrants

Our study offers a nuanced contribution to the concept of residual mobility [3, 161] by studying the particular challenges confronted by the Hindu migrants within a largely monotheistic environment. We illuminate not only the tangible aspects of their migration, such as physical relocation, but also the more profound, intangible facets related to the preservation and continuation of religious faiths and rituals.

Our study calls into question the prevailing assumptions in ubiquitous computing that often attribute to users a wealth of rights, autonomy, resources, and decision-making freedoms [3, 164]. For example, participants in our study highlighted situations where they were unable to attend important religious festivals due to work commitments, despite their desire to participate. These residual mobility experiences indicate a significant lack of agency for the Hindu migrants in their new settings, further supported by existing research [110, 153, 174]. Our work also resonates with

earlier studies by emphasizing the communication challenges the Hindu migrants face, especially when attempting to explain their unique religious and cultural practices to colleagues or friends who may not share their background [6, 22, 27]. Moreover, participants reported instances where they felt torn between conforming to workplace norms and fulfilling their religious practices, often having to prioritize the former over the latter [183]. This conflict underscores the profound tension between adhering to traditional religious obligations and adapting to the exigencies of contemporary life [146]. Taken together, these factors frequently resulted in the Hindu migrants' inability to fully engage in their religious rituals and festivals. Similar challenges may also impact other international migrant communities in various urban settings around the world, particularly those whose religious practices significantly differ from the predominant religions in their new environments.

In adapting to their new environments in Canada, our participants' experiences were influenced by the stark architectural differences in religious spaces. Unlike their home countries, where temples typically feature open courtyards and intricate designs, Canadian temples are often enclosed structures designed to withstand the local climate and often characterized by relatively unadorned designs. The marked contrast in architectural styles led to temples in Canada feeling different and less familiar for many Hindu migrants. This sense of unfamiliarity may also be shared by Hindu migrants in many regions of the USA and Europe, where similar climatic conditions necessitate comparable temple structures. As indicated in studies like [149, 150], this architectural mismatch extends beyond mere physical structures; it also impacts deeper aspects of community integration and belonging. Participants highlighted the absence of communal participation in religious activities, noting a shift towards self-initiated practices. This individualization of religious experience can foster a sense of estrangement, further alienating them from their cultural and spiritual roots in an already unfamiliar environment [120, 150, 166, 186].

Participants in our study also expressed apprehensions about the intergenerational transmission of religious and cultural values, a recurring concern amongst many migrant families [4, 105, 152]. While the first-generation migrants grappled with maintaining their religious identities in a foreign land, they found it even more challenging to instill these values in their Canada-born children. The younger generation, having been born or brought up in the host culture, sought alignment with their native Canadian peers, often leading to decreased engagement with their ancestral culture and religion. This struggle for cultural and religious continuity is a common challenge among international migrants in various global settings [27, 105, 150, 152, 191].

In summary, our research enriches the concept of residual mobility [3] by unveiling the complex realities the Hindu migrants face in a predominantly monotheistic Western context. This shift in cultural and religious landscapes necessitates a continual negotiation of identity and practices for these migrants [110, 164]. They confront the challenge of reconciling their deeply-held religious traditions with the norms and infrastructures of their new environments, which are often unaccommodating or unfamiliar. This situation leads to a varied form of residual mobility characterized not just by physical dislocation but also by cultural and religious displacement. Our findings underscore the need for CSCW research to broaden its scope, acknowledging the multifaceted nature of residual mobility and its impact on diverse migrant populations.

5.2 RQ2: Utilization of and Repurposing Technology by the Hindu Migrants

Our findings reveal various ways in which the Hindu migrants have been utilizing technology to participate in religious rituals. Participants spoke of employing video conferencing platforms to virtually participate in festivals and rituals, especially those taking place in their native countries. These virtual connections are more than mere technological advancements; they reflect a conscious attempt to engage with past experiences, a process of reminiscence that can help sustain continuity

in both external life circumstances and internal sense of identity [10, 28, 73, 75]. They recounted experiences of joining personal video calls to engage in rituals, using devices to simulate the sensation of standing before the deities. In doing so, they are not just connecting with distant physical locations but are also engaging with a collective memory [67] – a shared reminiscence that could act as a comforting anchor in an unfamiliar environment [54, 156, 173, 191]. However, these digital platforms are not without their own set of limitations. The effort required to coordinate virtual religious activities can be significantly higher, particularly for those less familiar with technology. Additionally, the shift to online platforms often lacks the communal and interactive elements that are crucial for a fully engaging religious experience. Therefore, while technology offers some level of accessibility, it can still fall short in replicating the depth and richness of in-person religious practices [188].

The theme of reminiscence is also noted in participants' activity in social media platforms. Whether through in-depth religious content discussion, festival coordination, or mere exposure to religious contents, these online interactions could enable the Hindu migrants to sustain continuity in their practices and identity [6, 10, 99]. By engaging with these platforms, participants could virtually participate in a shared cultural space, preserving memories and collective experiences. This emphasizes the promise of technology in preservation of religious values and community resilience [54, 156].

However, participants voiced concerns over the proliferation of intolerant and extremist ideologies on online platforms, underscoring the transfer of offline hierarchies into online spaces [29, 138]. This imbalance of viewpoints could marginalize more balanced or dissident voices, resulting in a less inclusive space for the exchange of ideas and viewpoints [106, 134, 170]. Furthermore, such restrictive environments could deter individuals from participating in online discussions, leading to feelings of isolation and disconnection. The potential for these negative experiences to foster disengagement from religious practices and even cultivate a sense of aversion toward their faith underscores the importance of fostering a more welcoming and respectful digital ecosystem [170].

In summary, these observations reflect how the Hindu migrants, facing the realities of residual mobility, adapt technology to maintain their cultural and religious practices in a new environment. Their use of digital platforms for participating in religious activities and sustaining community connections illustrates a subtle form of resilience and resourcefulness within the framework of residual mobility [3]. Their actions are not just utilitarian uses of technology; they are strategic responses to the discontinuities and dislocations experienced in the process of migration [2, 3, 28]. By repurposing technology in this manner, the Hindu migrants are actively shaping their experiences of mobility, underscoring the dynamic nature of cultural adaptation and the role of technology as a mediator in this process [28]. This insight contributes to a broader understanding of residual mobility, highlighting the nuanced ways in which migrants navigate and respond to the challenges of cultural preservation and adaptation in their new surroundings.

5.3 Design Implications

Our research uncovers several avenues where technological platforms might meaningfully support religious rituals and foster community connections among migrants. Drawing inspiration from the existing body of work on techno-spiritual design [15, 18, 23, 24, 189], and informed by studies addressing migratory challenges [6, 149, 150, 166, 167], we identify promising opportunities for technological interventions.

5.3.1 Comprehensive Organization of Religious Events Information. Participants in our study expressed a strong interest in technological solutions that can help them track diverse religious festivals and events. A key design consideration is the organization of religious event information

in a manner that is both comprehensive and easy to navigate [5, 18, 86, 133]. Given the spectrum of significance different festivals hold for distinct individuals, it is essential for such a platform to offer a personalized experience. This can be achieved by gathering details about the users' birthplace, background, and key festivals during the initial sign-up process [97]. Users should also have the ability to tailor their calendars to reflect the religious events that resonate most with them. Integration of such platforms with existing digital calendars would allow users to consolidate their various commitments and observances in one place, making it easier to manage their time [15, 172].

The recent ascendance of Hindu culture in the Global North is an important development in this context, evidenced by its increased visibility in corporate and political arena [76, 122, 136, 171]. This growth is further amplified by the increasing influence of Indian popular culture, including Bollywood movies and Yoga, which has played an important role in promoting and enhancing the visibility of Hindu traditions globally [13, 84, 136]. Concurrently, key Hindu festivals like Diwali have gained official recognition in North American countries [76, 122], reflecting a broader societal acceptance of Hindu traditions. The portrayal of Hindu culture in a more central role in mainstream American media [13] also reflects a significant shift from its earlier marginal depiction. These developments can play essential roles in shaping the identity and religious practices of the Hindu migrants, fostering a sense of validation and inclusivity in their new communities. Our proposed platforms could aim to mirror these societal changes by featuring local and government-sponsored festivities, thereby enabling users to engage with and celebrate these traditions. Such features could further the platforms' role in fostering community collaboration and shared learning among the Hindu migrants and their families.

Our findings also reveal that communal engagement is integral to current information systems, where participants often depend on family or social networks for updates on religious events. This aspect underscores the need for these platforms to facilitate the creation of family or community groups [46, 66, 102, 149, 185], where members can share information about religious events with each other. The more enthusiastic or knowledgeable members could even be given the opportunity to contribute additional information, such as the specifics of festival observances, recommended activities, or resources for further learning. This aspect might enhance the collaborative and communal nature of these platforms, encouraging collective engagement and shared learning within families or communities.

5.3.2 Supporting Material Experiences of Religion. Our participants' accounts underscored the distinct differences they encounter in their material experience of religious rituals and festivals compared to their home country. These differences manifest in various aspects, such as the structural design of temples, the execution of specific rituals during festivals, and even the overall festive ambience in their surrounding environment. Such findings underscore the necessity of facilitating a process of reminiscence [73, 75], enabling migrants to reconnect with their religious and cultural roots in a more tangible manner [26, 166, 167].

Emerging technologies such as Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR) can potentially provide some contribution in this regard. Their immersive capabilities can simulate environments like Hindu temples, replete with architectural details and devotional music [37, 141, 150]. AR can provide real-world overlays for ritual guidance, while VR can create virtual spaces for communal religious participation, replicating the community aspect lost in online streams [59, 71, 109, 151]. This is especially significant for festivals like the Durga Puja, where participants can possibly interact with each other in the virtual space, perform tasks such as bringing accessories to the priest, and take part in communal chanting.

There are some existing platforms that have begun exploring these possibilities, such as websites facilitating virtual visits to prominent pilgrimage sites and temples [88, 92], and AR/VR games

inspired by Hindu mythology [52, 194]. Yet, feedback from our participants indicates a need for more focused research on supporting reminiscence processes. Future design efforts should aim to tailor these platforms to the unique needs and preferences of the Hindu migrants in this context. Such research could contribute to enhancing the material experience of religious practices for the Hindu migrants in a foreign land.

5.3.3 Cultural Education for Inter-Community Understanding and Youth Engagement.

A recurring theme in our study was the need for resources that can provide clear explanations of religious contexts and significance for various rituals and festivals [23, 42, 53, 149]. Consequently, it becomes crucial that technologies aimed at supporting religious practices for the Hindu migrants contain information on relevant historical or mythological events. This would allow the Hindu migrants to either familiarize themselves with necessary contexts if they are unfamiliar or to reacquaint themselves if they have been disconnected. Our participants highlighted the need for multiple layers of explanations through apps or websites catered to different audiences.

One layer could be tailored for professionals or individuals who have little to no background knowledge about Hindu practices. By employing easily comprehensible language, these explanations could foster meaningful conversations in multicultural work environments or social circles [129]. These resources can foster interfaith dialogue, promote inter-community harmony, and encourage appreciation for cultural diversity [1, 85, 144, 160]. Such resources become even more important if one considers the broader context of interfaith relations in Canada. For example, the Hindu and Sikh communities in Canada have historically faced instances of tension and conflict, mirroring larger religious and political issues in the region [90, 127]. Recent diplomatic disputes between India and Canada, involving allegations about the Indian Government's role in the assassination of a Sikh activist, have further intensified these tensions [169]. While our study was conducted before this recent tension, we note that acknowledging and addressing these events is crucial in platforms designed to support religious practices and interfaith understanding. Educational resources that provide balanced insights into the histories, beliefs, and practices of different religions could play a significant role in easing these tensions [1]. By facilitating informed dialogue and mutual respect, such resources can help in building bridges and fostering a sense of a shared community among diverse religious diasporas in Canada.

A separate layer of explanations could cater to individuals within the Hindu community itself, aiming to enrich internal discussion and strengthen religious practice. This version would serve as a medium for individuals to engage more deeply with their religion, fostering a sense of belonging and continuity [81, 145, 166]. This might be particularly valuable for the older generation, who face the challenge of explaining religious practices to the younger generation. Having a detailed, culturally nuanced explanation at their disposal can enhance their confidence in imparting religious teachings, ensuring that the younger generation can develop a strong connection to their cultural heritage.

5.3.4 Designing for Pluralistic Religious Engagement.

Our research emphasizes the critical necessity of acknowledging the intricate nature of Hinduism when designing technology platforms geared toward religious or spiritual engagement. Drawing from Diana Eck's theory of pluralism [49, 50], we posit that the complexities of Hinduism cannot be fully supported by technology that merely accommodates diversity; it must actively engage with it. Eck posits that pluralism is not simply about diversity, but involves an energetic engagement with that diversity, moving beyond mere tolerance to an active quest for understanding. In this light, current technological platforms, which often streamline religious practices into measurable or structured outcomes, risk simplifying the diverse spiritual paths found within Hinduism [55, 165].

Rather than directing users along a single route, our recommendation is for platforms to support multiple avenues for spiritual exploration. Such platforms can thereby serve as virtual spaces for authentic interactions between different Hindu traditions, rituals, deities, and philosophies [6]. By deliberately incorporating the philosophy of pluralism into the architecture of social media platforms, we can also work toward creating a more balanced digital environment that makes it challenging for extremist views to dominate [49, 50, 143]. Consequently, platforms should be consciously designed to offer inclusive spaces where the diverse Hindu traditions and philosophies are not only represented but also become a part of active discussions. Moderated dialogue forums can foster meaningful conversations among the individuals who adhere to various Hindu philosophies and practices, as well as between the followers of Hinduism and other faiths, promoting mutual understanding and respect [34, 184]. Additionally, algorithmic designs that prioritize diversity could systematically showcase a variety of perspectives. These algorithms would not only diversify the contents presented to the users but also disrupt the formation of digital echo chambers that often become breeding grounds for extremist ideologies [12, 82, 91, 134]. Such efforts can act as a safeguard against the proliferation of extremist ideologies, offering a more balanced representation of Hinduism.

While we identify potential areas where technology could assist religious practices, we also note the inherent limitations and potential pitfalls of a purely technological approach. First and foremost, ethical dilemmas may arise, particularly for the Hindu migrants. Sacred rituals and traditions might be at odds with certain technological applications [154, 159], and navigating these contradictions will require a further nuanced understanding of both technology and faith. Commercialization poses another risk [39, 193]; the transformation of religious practices into marketable products could dilute their spiritual essence, reducing profound beliefs to superficial consumer experiences.

Moreover, the notion that technology might universally aid religious practices overlooks the reality that it could exclude or alienate those who lack access or skills and reinforce inequalities within religious communities [64, 115]. Furthermore, technology's inherent concreteness may struggle to encapsulate the abstract, multifaceted nature of religious belief [72]. The tangible, structured nature of technological platforms might be at odds with the fluid, interpretive, and deeply personal aspects of faith.

These complexities demonstrate that while technology presents promising opportunities to support religious practices, it is not a panacea. The integration of technology into the religious life of migrants, particularly in the context of Hindu practices, must be approached with caution, sensitivity, and a thorough understanding of the unique challenges and nuances involved. An overreliance on technology, without recognizing its inherent limitations, may inadvertently hinder rather than help the spiritual journey of those navigating the complexities of a new cultural landscape.

5.4 Limitations and Future Works

We acknowledge some limitations in our study. First, our participant pool is predominantly composed of college-educated individuals, including current students and degree holders, potentially limiting the representation of the broader Hindu migrant community. To enhance understanding, future studies should encompass a more diverse range of educational backgrounds and focus on intergenerational perspectives. Additionally, while our research includes eleven married participants, a more detailed exploration of family dynamics, particularly in second-generation Hindu families, could offer important insights into the intergenerational transmission of cultural and religious

values [177, 191]. Future research should, therefore, conduct studies at the family level to better understand the experiences and dynamics within Hindu migrant households.

Second, our study, limited to single-instance interviews, could gain depth from long-term engagement with participants. Future longitudinal research could better reveal how societal integration, family changes, career development, and evolving religious and cultural practices shape residual mobility experiences [149, 177]. Such studies might also unveil challenges that extend beyond significant festivals, encompassing everyday and routine aspects such as obtaining ritual items and managing cross-time zone activities.

Third, while our study included participants from various caste backgrounds, none reported instances of caste-related discrimination in Canada. This absence of discrimination incidents in our data could be attributed to the demographic profile of our participants, who were predominantly college-educated. Furthermore, participants may have hesitated to share personal experiences or thoughts about discrimination in the context of a single interview session, potentially due to discomfort or the sensitive nature of such topics. We acknowledge this as a limitation and an area for future exploration. We recognize the need for more targeted research to understand the perspectives of the individuals from marginalized castes, who often face unique struggles and systemic discrimination, both within their countries of origin and as migrants [7, 108, 142, 175]. Given their relatively smaller population size in diasporic contexts [94, 171, 175], their voices are frequently underrepresented or overlooked. Future research should specifically focus on engaging with these marginalized groups, aiming to understand their distinct experiences and the ways in which caste-based discrimination influences their migration journey and settlement in new countries.

6 Conclusion

In this paper, we explore the experiences of the Hindu migrants in Canada as they navigate the complexities of residual mobility. Through interviews with 20 participants, we delve into various aspects of their lives, including the challenges of practicing faith within professional environments, shifts in the materiality of religious observance, and the utilization of digital platforms like videoconferencing and social media to maintain connections with religious communities and rituals. Our findings illustrate multiple instances where participants have utilized technology to better align with their unique needs and circumstances. We also identify key design considerations that could support the Hindu migrants in sustaining their pluralistic religious practices. We believe our research will serve as a foundation for future inquiries into the intricacies of religion and mobility among international migrants.

Acknowledgments

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