

## Good as Gold: Ornaments in circulation and the making of moral personhood in South India

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This research offers an extensive analysis covering historical, anthropological, and modern viewpoints on the use of gold in South Indian society. It highlights how organized international trade, which is centred on the purchase of gold, has maintained the symbolic value of gold and serves to legitimize fiat currencies. It also highlights how important gold is to modern global finance. Through a combination of qualitative interviews, field research, and anthropological investigation, this study offers a deep and comprehensive understanding of the significance of gold in the concerned area of study and also contributes to understanding how people in the villages coped with the impact of COVID-19 pandemic and related lockdowns, with transactions around gold emerging as central in many accounts. This study then presents an intricate relationship between gold and economic activities, particularly in the context of production cycles, wages, and capital circulation. It underscores the potential of gold to offer insights into the process of meaning-making and cultural specificity of value production in India. It also aims to contribute to theories of capital and global financial infrastructures, while delving into the semantic meanings of Dalit and Muslim gold ownership offering innovative contributions which build on foundational work in anthropology. The findings of this study reveal cultural practices surrounding gold ownership, including its role in religion, gender-based norms, marriage exchanges, credit access, power dynamics, and its impact on perceptions of wealth and inflation. Furthermore, the study's interdisciplinary approach and in-depth analysis provide valuable insights into the complex interplay between gold, value production, and social dynamics in the region.