Many-body dynamical phase transition in quasi-periodic potential

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Much has been learned regarding dynamical quantum phase transition (DQPT) due to sudden quenches across quantum critical points in traditional quantum systems. However, not much has been explored when a system undergoes a localization-delocalization transition. Here, we study one dimensional fermionic systems in presence of a quasi-periodic potential, which induces delocalization-localization transition even in 1D. We show signatures of DQPT in the many-body dynamics, when quenching is performed between phases belonging to different universality classes. We investigate how the non-analyticity in the dynamical free energy gets affected with filling fractions in the bare system and, further, study the fate of DQPT under interaction. Strikingly, whenever quenching is performed from the low-entangled localized phase to the high-entangled delocalized phase, our studies suggest an intimate relationship between DQPT and the rate of the entanglement growth – Faster growths of entanglement entropy ensures quicker manifestation of the non-analitics in the many-body dynamical free energy.

I. INTRODUCTION

Isolated out-of-equilibrium systems poses many challenges, and concurrently, offers new possibilities: Whereas it gives rise to complex physical phenomena beyond the reach of equilibrium statistical mechanics, it also opens door for discerning equilibrium statistical properties in an unique manner [1]. Dynamical quantum phase transition (DQPT) [2] constitutes a prime example that has illuminated a new light on the traditional understanding of quantum phase transition, which is developed on the pillars of equilibrium statistical mechanics.

DQPT is built upon by drawing parallel ideas borrowed from equilibrium physics, where Loschmidt amplitude, $\mathcal{L}(t)$, does a similar kind of business that the partition function does in the equilibrium physics of quantum phase transition. $\mathcal{L}(t)$ quantifies the overlap between an initial state and the time-evolved state, and is defined as $\mathcal{L}(t) = \langle \psi_i | \exp(-i\hat{H}t) | \psi_i \rangle$, where $| \psi_i \rangle$ is an initial state, and $\hat{H}$ is the driving Hamiltonian. The signature of a dynamical phase transition is imprinted in form of the non-analyticities at certain time instances, $t = t^*$, in the dynamical free energy, $f(t) = -2 \lim_{L \rightarrow \infty} \ln |\mathcal{L}(t)|/L$.

DQPT has been investigated elaborately in various contexts of quantum phase transitions in quantum model systems [3–18], and also for topological transitions [19–24]. Along with sudden quench, periodically driven systems have been studied as well [25, 26]. Although DQPT is mostly studied with the pure ground state as an initial state, conceptual generalization has been established in the cases of degenerate states, mixed state, or even the open systems [27–33]. Importantly, recent experimental advances with quantum simulators [34–36], that can mimic real-time dynamics of isolated quantum many-body systems, justifies such theoretical investigations. DQPT has already been experimentally verified in laboratory via ultracold atom [37], and ion traps [38].

So far, conventional quantum phase transitions governed by Landau theory of spontaneous symmetry breaking have enjoyed the bulk amount of attention. This work, instead, considers localization-delocalization transition, which cannot be described by simple Landau theory. Localization-delocalization transition has been a subject of intense research since the seminal work of Anderson (1958), which revealed that despite the quantum tunneling processes a quantum particle may get localized in presence of a disorder [39, 40]. Many-body localization (MBL) further considers the effect of interaction in addition to disorder, and off-late, has become a hot research topic [41–44]. Localization-delocalization transition separates the localized phase from the thermal one, and a question that naturally arises is whether the equilibrium physics of localization-delocalization transition leaves a trace on the real-time dynamics, and if the progressing time would play a role similar to the equilibrium control parameter, i.e. the strength of randomness.

Several of the early works with Anderson localization and MBL were carried on disordered quantum many-body systems, such as spin chains in presence of random field or fermionic lattice systems with random on-site potential. Another closely related setting considers quasi-periodic many-body systems [49, 50], also known as the the Aubry-André (AA) model, where instead of pure randomness the incommensurate on-site potential drives a system in the localized phase. In this model, the localization-delocalization transition occurs for a finite incommensurate potential amplitude, say $\Delta = \Delta_c$ [51–59]. This is different from the usual Anderson localization in one-dimension, which requires only an infinitesimal disorder strength to localize all states. It also has been shown that by introducing the interaction in such systems, the ergodic-MBL transition takes place at a critical amplitude $\Delta > \Delta_c$ [60]. Quasi-periodic on-site potentials can be engineered in ultracold simulators in a controlled manner [45–47].

There has been a very recent effort in understanding the fate of DQPT in the context of the single-particle localization-delocalization transition in case of Aubrey-andre model [48], where an analytical expressions of the transition times ($t^*$) can be derived for a limiting situation of end-to-end quench between two distinct phases.
In order to build an in-depth understandings of the many-body aspects of the DQPT in localization-delocalization transition, we consider fermions and probe the AA model at finite filling fractions. Owing to the added complexity associated with many-body generalization, we perform time extension of density matrix renormalization group (tDMRG) calculations via matrix product state (MPS) formalism [65–67]. We investigate the appearances of the non analytic points and identify their trends for varied filling fractions, interaction strength and initial states. Similar to the single-particle calculation, we also find that the nonanalytic points in dynamical free energies bearing the signatures of the DQPT appear only if an sudden quench is performed across the transition point, i.e. the system is suddenly driven from the localized (delocalized) to the delocalized (localized) phase. Moreover, we investigate entanglement entropy, which often offers useful insights on quantum many-body phenomenology [61, 62]. In particular, it has been recently suggested that the DQPTs may breed enhanced entropy production around the transition times [12, 38]. We find this to happen whenever the system is driven from a low-entanglement (localized) regime to high-entanglement (delocalized) regime. In-fact, our results provide solid evidence, which suggest that occurrences of DQPTs are intimately related to the rate of information spreading, i.e. the entanglement growth rate. However, this may not be uni-vocally true, particularly, decisive statements cannot be passed for a sudden quench occurring other way around as highly-entangled initial states are driven by low-entangled Hamiltonians, hardly any entanglement production occurs. It’s now possible to measure entanglement entropy in cold-atom experiments [63, 64], and hence our results can be experimentally verified.

Here is how the rest of the paper is organized. In Sec. II, we introduce the model. Section III discusses DQPT in fractionally filled non-interacting systems. In particular, we concentrate on the situation when quenching is performed between phases belonging to different universality classes, i.e. the system is suddenly quenched from the (delocalized) localized to the (localized) delocalized phase. Moreover, we also study entanglement production associated with DQPT. In Sec. IV, we investigate the effects of interactions. Finally, we draw conclusions in Sec. V.

II. MODEL

We study a system of fermions in an one-dimensional lattice of size $L$, which is described by the following Hamiltonian:

$$
\hat{H}(\Delta) = -\sum_{i=1}^{L-1} (\hat{c}_{i}^{\dagger} \hat{c}_{i+1} + \text{H.c.}) + \Delta \sum_{i=1}^{L} \cos(2\pi \alpha i) \hat{n}_{i} + V \sum_{i} \hat{n}_{i} \hat{n}_{i+1},
$$

where $\hat{c}_{i}^{\dagger}$ ($\hat{c}_{i}$) is the fermionic creation (annihilation) operator at site $i$, $\hat{n}_{i} = \hat{c}_{i}^{\dagger} \hat{c}_{i}$ is the number operator, and $\alpha$ is an irrational number. Without loss of any generality, we choose $\alpha = \frac{\sqrt{5} - 1}{2}$ for all the calculations presented in this work. In the absence of interaction i.e. $V = 0$, the Hamiltonian $\hat{H}$ is known as Aubry-André (AA) model. It supports a delocalization-localization transition as one tunes $\Delta$. In the thermodynamic limit, $\Delta = 2$ corresponds to the transition point [49].

For the most calculations in this paper, the system initially prepared in a ground state $|\psi_i\rangle$ of the Hamiltonian $\hat{H}$ for $\Delta = \Delta_i$. We study subsequent unitary dynamics of the initial state following a sudden quench: $\hat{H}(\Delta_i) \to \hat{H}(\Delta_f)$. The time evolved state is given by $|\psi(t)\rangle = e^{-i\hat{H}(\Delta_f) t} |\psi_i\rangle$. In order to detect DQPT, we focus on dynamical free energy, which is described by,

$$
f(t) = - \lim_{L \to \infty} \frac{2}{L} \ln \langle |\psi(t)|\psi_i\rangle.
$$

It has been recently reported that DQPT occurs in single particle Aubry-André model, once the quenching is performed from the localized phase to the delocalized phase or vice-versa [49]. Here, our interest is to understand the fate of the DQPT when finite number of particles are loaded in such systems. The filling fraction is identified as $\nu = N/L$, where $N$ is the total number of fermions. Given that we use tDMRG method for all our calculations, we restrict our-selves to the open boundary condition.

III. FRACTIONALLY FILLED BARE SYSTEMS

Given that our main aim is to understand the many-body aspects in DQPT for localization-delocalization transition, we first focus on the Hamiltonian $\hat{H}$ in the absence of interaction i.e. $V = 0$. Subsequently, we study two distinct cases - quenching the Hamiltonian from (A) the delocalized to localized phase and (B) the localized to the delocalized phase.

A. Delocalized to localized case

In this section we primarily investigate the behavior of dynamical free energy $f(t)$ as we quench the Hamiltonian (1) from the delocalized phase to the deep into localized phase, i.e. $\Delta_i = 0.2 \to \Delta_f = 100$. Figure 1 shows the variation of $f(t)$ with time for different values of the filling fractions. Two different system sizes are studied $L = 40$ (Fig. 1(a)) and $L = 60$ (Fig. 1(b)). In the single-particle limit, an analytical expression for $f(t)$ can be derived in the thermodynamic limit, $f(t) = -\frac{2}{\pi} \ln |J_0(\Delta_f t)|$, where $J_0$ is is the zero-order Bessel function, for end-to-end quench with $\Delta_i = 0 \to \Delta_f = \infty$ [48]. It implies that the non-analytic points in the dynamical free energy appear at $t_c^\Delta = x_c/\Delta_f$, where $x_c$ with $c = 1,$
2, 3 . . . are zeroes of \( J_0(x) \). Even for our choice of quench parameters (where \( \Delta_i = 0.2 \) and \( \Delta_f = 100 \)), it turns out that the non-analytic points are \( t^* \approx x_c/\Delta_f \) for \( N = 1 \). However, the non-analytic points in \( f(t) \) start shifting with increasing number of particles. Given that in this work we primarily concentrate on the 1st non-analytic point, it turns out that as we increase the filling fraction \( \nu \), the 1st non-analytic point starts moving towards smaller values of \( t^* \). We find that while for the single particle case, \( \Delta_f t^* \approx 2.41 \), for \( \nu = 1/2 \), \( \Delta_f t^* \approx 1.95 \). In the inset of Fig. 1(b), we show the positioning of the 1st non-analytic point as a function of filling fraction for different system sizes, \( L = 40, 60 \) and 80.

Next, we analyze finite size effects on the 1st non-analytic point. For this, first we consider different values of \( \Delta_i \), while keeping the driving Hamiltonian \( (\Delta_f = 100) \), filling fraction \( (\nu = 1/2) \), and the system size \( (L = 40) \) fixed. Fig. 2 (a) demonstrates variations of \( f(t) \) with \( \Delta_f t \) for different choices of the initial states, which are determined by setting \( \Delta_i = 0.1, 0.2, 0.5, 1.0, 2.5, \) and 5.0. It is evident that the cases with \( \Delta_i = 0.1 \) and 0.2 are characterized by presence of "cusps" in time dynamics, providing clear signatures of the non-analyticities. However, the non-analytic features are not very clear for other values of \( \Delta_i \). In contrast they appear like "humps".

In fig. 2 (b) and fig. 2 (c), we show the variation of these "humps" as we increase the system size \( L \), for \( \Delta_i = 0.5 \) and \( \Delta_i = 5.0 \), respectively. We find that while for \( \Delta_i = 0.5 \) the "hump" is getting sharper as we increase \( L \) (this feature has been observed for other values of \( \Delta_i \) as well as long as \( \Delta_i \lesssim 2 \)). On the other hand, for \( \Delta_i = 5.0 \), the peak flattens with increasing \( L \). The trends clearly indicate that in the thermodynamic limit the non-analytic behaviour survives when the quench is performed from the delocalized phase to localized phase. However, when we quench the Hamiltonian \((1)\) without crossing the phase boundary i.e. \( \Delta_i > 2 \), the signature of non-analytic behaviour in \( f(t) \) tends to wash away. Similar conclusions also has been achieved for \( N = 1 \) as well in Ref. [48].

**B. Localized to delocalized case**

Now we focus on a quench from the localized phase to the delocalized phase. Figure 3 shows the results for a quench from \( \Delta_i = 100 \rightarrow \Delta_f = 0.2 \). For the single-particle case i.e. \( N = 1 \), it is straight forward to analytically track the non-analytic points in \( f(t) \) corresponding to a quench from \( \Delta_i = \infty \rightarrow \Delta_f = 0 \). The non-analytic points in \( f(t) \) corresponds to \( t^* = x_c/2 \), where \( x_c \) are zeroes of \( J_0(x) \) [48]. Even for our choice of quench parameters i.e. \( \Delta_i = 100 \rightarrow \Delta_f = 0.2 \), our single-particle numerical results agrees well with the analytical results for the transition times, \( t^* \approx x_c/2 \). However, as we increase the filling fraction, \( t^* \) starts relocating. This is shown in the inset of fig. 3 (a). We further show, by varying \( \Delta_i \), while keeping \( \Delta_f = 0.2 \) and filling fraction \( \nu = 1/2 \) fixed, that if we quench from the deep into the localized phase to the delocalized phase, the non-analytic features become much sharper, at least for our choice of system size (see Fig. 3 (b)). On the other hand, when...
we change our initial states.

Next, we study the entanglement dynamics for the same set of initial states once we let it evolve under the unitary evolution governed by a Hamiltonian belonging in the delocalized phase $\hat{H}(\Delta_f = 0.2)$. Given that the dynamics is unitary, the entire system remains in a pure state. The reduced density matrix $\rho_A$ of a finite subsystem A of length $L/2$ is defined as $\rho_A = \text{Tr}_B [\psi(t)\psi(t)\dagger]$, where the trace is over the degrees of freedom of the complement B of A. Here we only restrict ourselves to one of the most useful entanglement measures, the von Neumann (entanglement) entropy $S = \text{Tr} [\rho_A \ln \rho_A]$.

Figure 4(b) shows the results for the entanglement growth for the same set of initial states for which $f(t)$ has been plotted in the fig. 4 (a). We find an extraordinary correlation, i.e. the appearance of the non-analytic point (at least the 1st point) $t^*$ depends on the entanglement growth rate. At least among the choices of our initial state it seems that the entanglement growth rate for the Neel state i.e. $|\psi(0)\rangle = \prod_{i=1}^{L/2} |1\rangle_{2i} |0\rangle_{2i+1} = |10100..0\rangle$ is maximum and where as, the entanglement growth rate of $|\psi(0)\rangle = |11110000..0\rangle$ is minimum. That is also reflected in the $f(t)$ vs $t$ plot in fig. 4 i.e. the value of $t^*$ for the Neel state is much smaller compared to other states. Intuitively we would expect that as well. Given that the non-analytic points in $f(t)$ corresponds to the zero fidelity $\mathcal{L}(t)$ in the thermodynamic limit, we would expect the speed at which the memory of the initial state will be washed away should also depends on the entanglement growth rate. If the propagation rate of quantum correlation is higher, fidelity is expected to vanish in a much shorter time compared to the case where the rate of propagation of quantum correlation is smaller. This is precisely what has been manifested in Fig. 4.

Now given that the quench Hamiltonian $\hat{H}(\Delta_f)$ is integrable in the limit $\Delta_f \rightarrow 0$, the entanglement dynamics also can be described extremely efficiently within quasiparticle picture [68]. To understand why this is the case, let us first briefly describe the quasiparticle picture for the entanglement spreading which is applicable to generic integrable models. According to this picture, the initial state acts as a source of quasiparticle excitations which are produced in pairs and uniformly in space. After being created, the quasiparticles move ballistically through the system with opposite velocities. Only quasiparticles created at the same point in space are entangled, and while they move far apart, they carry forward entanglement and correlation in the system. A pair contributes to the entanglement entropy at time $t$ only if one particle of the pair is in A (of size $\ell$) and its partner is in B. Keeping track of the linear trajectories of the particles, it is easy to conclude [68, 69]

$$S(t) = \sum_n 2t \int_{2|\nu_n|\ell} v_n(k) s_n(k)dk + \ell \int_{2|\nu_n|\ell} s_n(k)dk.$$  

(3)

Here the sum is over the species of particles $n$ whose number depends on the model, $k$ represents their quasi-
momentum (rapidity), $v_n(k)$ is their velocity, and $s_n(k)$ their contribution to the entanglement entropy. The quasiparticle prediction for the entanglement entropy holds true in the space-time scaling limit, i.e. $t, \ell \to \infty$ with the ratio $t/\ell$ fixed. When a maximum quasiparticle velocity $v_M$ exists (e.g., as a consequence of the Lieb-Robinson bound), Eq. 3 predicts that for $t \leq \ell/(2v_M)$, $S$ grows linearly in time. Conversely, for $t > \ell/(2v_M)$, only the second term survives and the entanglement is extensive in the subsystem size, i.e., $S \propto \ell$. The validity of Eq. 3 has been tested both analytically and numerically in free-fermion and free-boson models [68, 70–82] and in many interacting integrable models [69, 83–87].

Hence, in Fig. 4(b) we also show the quasi-particle results using solid lines for $\Delta_f = 0$ and for different initial product states. Also since, our tDMRG results are for open boundary condition, we replace $t \to t/2$ in Eq. (3). It seems that entanglement growth rate obtained within this semi-classical picture matches reasonably well with our numerical results even though our simulation is for finite size system and $\Delta_f = 0.2$. Note that even though the correlations between the entanglement growth rate and the positioning of the non-analytic point $t^*$ is extremely apparent when we quench from the localized phase to the delocalized phase, but entanglement dynamics is featureless when quench is performed from the highly entangled delocalized phase to the localized phase. However, signature of the DQPT remains present in the temporal variation of $f(t)$ [see Fig. 1].

![Figure 4](image1.png)

**FIG. 4.** Entanglement production and quasi-particle predictions. (a) Dynamical free energy as a function of time for different initial product states for $L = 40$ and $\Delta_f = 0.2$ at half filling. (b) shows the entanglement entropy for the same set of initial states and parameters. Solid lines correspond to quasi-particle predictions.

![Figure 5](image2.png)

**FIG. 5.** Effects of interaction. (a) Dynamical free energy, $f(t)$, variation with time, $t$, for different interaction strengths, $V$, for $\Delta_i = 100$, and $\Delta_f = 0.2$. (b) shows entanglement dynamics for the same set of interaction strengths and system parameters.

IV. EFFECTS OF INTERACTION

For all our previous calculations, we set the interaction term in the Hamiltonian $\hat{H}$ (see Eq. (1)) to zero, i.e. $V = 0$. Here we investigate the effect of interactions. While we know the Hamiltonian in (1) exhibits localization-delocalization transition at $\Delta = 2$ in the non-interacting limit, the effect of interaction usually tends to delocalized the system. However, it has been shown that even in the presence of interaction for the sufficiently large value of the disorder strength (in this case the strength of incommensurate potential) localization-delocalization transition takes place, which is also known as ergodic to Many-body localization transition [60].

Here, we perform a quench from the deep in to the many-body localized phase to the delocalized ergodic phase phase corresponding to $\Delta_i = 100 \to \Delta_f = 0.2$ and $V \neq 0$. We find that as we increase the interaction strength $V$, the signature of the non-analyticity in $f(t)$ slowly fades way as shown in fig. 5 (a). However interestingly we also observe that the value of $t^*$ becomes smaller with the increase of $V$. These results can also be complimented by the entanglement dynamics results in Fig. 5 (b), which show that indeed the entanglement growth is comparatively faster if we increase the interaction strength.

V. SUMMARY AND DISCUSSIONS

The primary goal of this work is to understand the many-body aspects in the context of DQPT, for which we turned our focus to a less explored quasi-periodic system supporting a localization-delocalization transition.
Our many-body results indicate that DQPT is a generic feature of sudden quenches across the localization-delocalization transition point.

First we consider the non-interacting systems with finite particle densities, and investigate how the DQPT gets modified as a function the filling fraction when the system is quenched from the delocalized (localized) to the localized (delocalized) phase. Further investigation is followed in order to understand the effects of interaction. In the presence of interaction, single particle localized phase modifies to athermal MBL phase. Here, we find a clear signature of non-analyticity in the dynamical free energy, as well. Since, unlike the usual quantum phase transition (which involves only the ground states of the Hamiltonian), the highly excited eigenstates of the system are also involved in MBL transition, we do not restrict ourselves to the only ground state of the pre-quench Hamiltonian – We find that the signature of DQPT persists even for the highly excited states.

While quenching from a low-entangled localized phase to high-entangled delocalized phase, we find that DQPT is accompanied with entanglement production. Crucially, following the trends of entanglement growth, we conclude that the positioning of the non-analytic points $t^*$ intrinsically depend on the rate of entanglement growth.

However, the rate of entanglement growth does not solely determines the positions of $t^*$. Clearly, the onsets of $t^*$ do not require the quasi-particles to travel across the entire system and coming back to the initial point in the space. The time required for quasi-particles to do so is given by, $[\tau_{\text{rev}} \sim nL/(v_M)]$ with $n$ as positive integers [88], which is much larger (also scales linearly with system size $L$) than the transition times.

This is even more clear for the case when quenching is performed from the delocalized phase (initial state is highly entangled) to the deep into localized phase, which is only associated with a negligible entanglement growth. However, even there the values of $t^*$ changes with the filling fraction. Hence, further investigations are required to understand the correlation between the entanglement growth and the DQPT. It will be interesting to explore the roles of local entanglement or global genuine multiparty entanglement. Even identifying the relations between quantum scrambling and DQPT is also another potential future direction [89].

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